

## Vigilance

There is a difference between effort and struggle. Effort is necessary for any attainment but not for struggle. Contrary to common belief, we never struggle with people, conditions or things but *with our own selves*.

For me to experience struggle, there has to be something to struggle against. Since struggle is experienced in me, this something else, opposing energy or force must also be in me. The amazing thing is that even while I am struggling, I am aware of the struggle. That which is aware of the struggle cannot be struggling itself, or it would never know there is struggle.

The *awareness that knows* there is struggle, also knows all things that can be known. Awareness is the *more pervasive form of our existence* or ourselves yet we somehow do not experience this, being rooted in personality only by habit.

Personality is the sum of our likes and dislikes—the inner label factory and the labeler. This personality has no real existence, as 'I' am aware of it so it has to be some sort of abstraction. In confusion, the personality assumes 'all of me' or existence and looks at everything outside from its conditioning, as that is its existence and it accepts what suits it and rejects what does not.

This leads to an increase in conditioning and decreased clarity. Vigilance is a state where the mind or ego is continually watched, not just while in seated meditation but continually—at all times and in all activity.

When the mind is watched without remission, vigilance itself changes the inner equation—that which is watching regains, so to say, the subject impulse. Awareness maintains its subjectivity, and thoughts rise and fall in the mind just as before but without making assumptions, or if I may say, consuming 'me'.

Initially, we may feel that that it is difficult to be aware of all activity of the mind and everything outside. There are two reasons for this: mechanical habit by which we are used to sensory perception which is one dimensional, perceiving everything outside and apart from one and other, and, dynamic habit which seems to be our very world, the world of values we have ascribed to all outside.

It is not difficult to get over the first, the mechanical habit of perceiving all things as outside and separate. If one sits quietly, with the attention on the breath, with or without the mental repetition of a mantra—one will realize that the same awareness is aware of sounds outside and the rise and fall of thoughts inside. Both happen in the same awareness without spatial separation—this is experienced here, that is also experienced here only.

Dynamic habit seems to be harder to get over because we try to push it away while holding onto it firmly. This is because awareness is pure, it does not respond to all that is perceived with our usual flavoring of likes and dislikes. Awareness is awareness, it is aware of these likes, dislikes and moods, just as an ocean would be aware of waves and ripples within it. The ocean does not get perturbed by the waves or currents in it, as it remembers itself as ocean only.

So sitting in meditation and trying to bring about awareness by the mechanical process only, we realize that we are very soon distracted. There is a difference between the rise and fall of thoughts and being distracted. Thoughts will rise and fall, let them. When I sit, there should be perfect awareness in which not only thoughts, but all experience rises and falls—why should I get distracted or get carried away by participating in thoughts?

The mechanical process or technique cannot overcome the dynamic process. The dynamic process of psychological disentanglement cannot begin after mastery in sitting quietly, which requires inner quietness as well. This brings us to the important point of psychological disentanglement. How does one not get caught up in thoughts that rise and fall?

The key to attention or vigilance is interest—deep and abiding interest. Where the heart is, the mind finds itself. Distractedness is a tug-of-war by and in the mind. Part of the mind trying to meditate while the larger part strolls about the mind's side streets. Deep interest is not an activity, it is a state of being, and who we are in its wider dimension is also aware. There must be this wanting to sit, to be still, physically and inwardly and to know—to *really know by direct observation* what really is. When this feeling of not knowing and wanting to know is felt in every cell of one's being, one sits physically and psychologically. This is not to say that thoughts will not rise and fall, for they surely will, but when there is this wanting to know, there is already a little psychological disentanglement and the disentangled part sits in meditation.

We have given far too much importance to thought for too long. This has crystallized as the personality with which we are identified and it is in this identity we have our connections with the world we know. There is both subtle and deep fondness for this inner world and tremendous resistance to so much as question these masks, let alone venture to uncover them. It seems that our entire being and all its associations will fall apart and this, we are not willing to do. Conditioning is a habit that we have given too much importance to, that is all.

Nothing can substitute for deep abiding interest. No amount of sitting and forcing oneself to meditate can raise awareness if the whole being does not want to sit and know the truth of things. Interest comes when one clearly sees the flaws and danger of a life without vigilance. When a chronic smoker sees clearly what continuing to indulge will result in, in that clarity there is energy and resolve—the change is immediate and there is no resistance since there is no opposing force—all of him is on board the train of change. Till such an onboardness comes about, there is struggle. We are the cause of all struggle we experience and can at once stop all struggle if we only will. This is an inner revolution brought about proactively, by wisdom.

The slow path is trying to bring about inner change by outer change—an attempt to bring about an inner revolution through conditions that happen. Life has several occasions where things happen in ways quite contrary to anything expected or envisioned. In these moments or conditions, we sit to reflect and try to bring about change within by changes outside but this does not work. We even make resolves and begin to bring about change, but it does not last because these resolves are in the field of the mind only and not in the heart.

So, just how does one bring about a change of heart? Observe life and all its workings including that which we consider near and dear or that which is felt to be avoided and instead see everything for what it is afresh. When the danger of giving importance to conditioning or thought is seen, the clarity of direct perception at once releases energy which resolves—"enough of this!" Clarity in perception is at once action—light and energy are not two different things.

Clarity is *already there* but it is not realized because we hold onto and vehemently defend non-clarity or conditioning. No one can help you here, as the inner hold on conditioning is uniquely one's own. When one sees that all hurt in one's life and subsequently to others stems from one's own conditioning, one will zealously seek to dislodge it. This zeal is psychological disentanglement and instantaneous, a devaluation of inflated values assigned to people, things and conditions that are not part of them. Existing conditioning will still surge on the charge of residual energy, but it is bound to exhaust itself if one persists.

Without ongoing vigilance, practice is mechanical at best and may give some performing expertise. Yoga is the discovery of non-division that already exists. For this to be discovered, there first has to be non-division in me—all of me has to be on board and stand inseparable from things as they are, not as they should be. All of me has to face all of what is as it happens and without holding on. This continually facing the outer and inner without separation or break is vigilance—living meditation. When meditation enters life, life enters meditation.