MEDITATIONAL LESSON NO. 1

Consciousness is self-awareness, and the power of response. Man's consciousness can respond to that which is less than himself, to that which is equal to himself and to that which is greater than himself. Below and behind him are aeons of time and experience less than human and before and above him infinite possibilities of experiences more than human. Hence, human consciousness implies two other orders, the sub-human and the super-human.

Power to know involves Power to be and Power to be includes Power to do. To know, to be, to do naturally follow each other. Whenever there is any kind of feeling, there Consciousness exists and where Consciousness exists, mind exists, where mind exists, activity takes place. Mind is the interpreter between the super-human and the sub-human, between matter on one side and Life and Soul on the other side. An interpreter must be dual in his functions, he must know both of the extremes which meet in him or he cannot translate each to the other and bring them into unity.

Learned no less than the ignorant are dealing exclusively with their own consciousness. They give us their conception of the world, never the world as it is in Itself. To get at this we must pass beyond both the sub-human order of sensation or matter, and the human order of mind, thought and feeling into the Spiritual Order which is the immediate Consciousness of Knowledge. If Consciousness were to effect here and now a transition from both the objective and subjective world of experience into the realm of Consciousness in Itself, we should be quit of the burden of Past and Future, since the idea of Time with its countless ages backward and forward in the process of becoming would give place to the realization of an Eternal Now of Perfection and Being.

There is a vital intelligence diffused throughout the physical organism without which it could not exist for a moment, a power ceaselessly working within us in strange and wonderful ways, and we are dependent upon its silent ministrations for every breath, every thought, every feeling. Of ourselves we can do nothing, we can not self-consciously digest a particle of the food we eat or control the least of the vital processes which maintain us.

We cannot make a single atom of the living matter which is perpetually being manufactured in our bodies. By no exertion of our self-conscious will or intelligence can we create one of the sixty trillion protoplasmic cells, which we are using at this moment, and consider as our own exclusive property. The only part of the process which actually does belong to us and for which we are responsible is the distinctive half, the part which receives and spends what is given, which demands what it requires and is supplied in accordance with its demand. As personal and relative creatures, we have only to do the asking, the seeking, the knocking; the other side is done for us.

The law of evolution is a continual unremitting process of overcoming, to evolve the Spiritual Consciousness we have to overcome the world. We exist by holding our own against the energies which act upon us from without, we live on condition that we conquer our environments.

We must face and conquer the world, not run away from it; we must learn how to practice our silence in the world. We do not shut the world out from our silence, we take our silence into the world. We must learn to come into individual possession of Eternal Life, each soul must be quickened and transformed by direct original inspiration by its own Christ Substance. The little personal gleam, which we call knowledge, is no more than a will-o-the-wisp flickering over the black swamp of our sub-conscious ignorance.

There is but one way in which the human consciousness can be quickened into the Divine and that is by dying to all its evolutionary experiences in sense, both personal and cosmic, by forsaking all its memories, self-conscious and sub-conscious, by transcending both the separate and the universal self, by voluntarily letting go both the actual and the ideal world. This kind of death is the way of Resurrection into Life, this kind of self uplift is the way of satisfaction, this kind of renouncement is the way of wholeness, completeness, fulfillment. If any man will seek the Christ Consciousness, let him deny the Consciousness, which now makes up his life.

Life on the Physical and Psychical planes is not spontaneous, it only manifests in response to an excitant, it has to be called out by the impact of some external force.

Our highest states of Consciousness alternate with their opposites; we do not know Goodness, we apprehend it in thought and feeling by contrast with evil. We can not begin the regeneration of our consciousness while we mistake our Psychical experiences as knowledge. People say "it is impossible for man to evolve the Spiritual Consciousness while he is in the flesh," whereas scriptures and Saviours positively point out that it could and must be done right now and here. It is within our present Consciousness, if we will take the pains to explore the depths of that Consciousness, without counting the cost. To think and feel beautifully about Jesus and the other Saviours and Masters and to act beautifully upon the impulse of those thoughts and emotions, will not give us this new Consciousness. Such efforts are useful and necessary as a preparatory stage, a preliminary exercise in the development of intelligence, of sensitiveness; but in and of themselves, they are a second-hand experience, an imitation, a Psychic reproduction by suggestion of other people's Consciousness, a repitition of Race Memories.

Instead of living other peoples' lives over again in imagination; instead of turning over and over the memory of what other men have done and thought and felt, we have to get at that Original Substance of ourselves by which alone we can know the Truth of them. Jesus got His knowledge of His "Father," or origin, out of the substance of His own Soul. We have been given an exactly similar nature; we have the human heritage of cosmic Consciousness as He had: We have also the Divine birthright of God Consciousness as He had - but He did not depend upon any second-hand derived knowledge of God. He was not content reading Moses and the Prophets. He learned from them in His childhood, just as He was then subject to His parents, but as full grown man He knew the Truth for Himself, within Himself, as Himself. We cannot realize the Divine unity of Consciousness, which made Jesus the Christ of Humanity, by trying to live on the ghostly recollection of a life lived two thousand years ago. We cannot enter into Eternal Life by letting Jesus know God for us, anymore than we can live Physically by letting another man eat our daily bread for us.

Our actual existence here and now has all the possibilities of heaven in it. There is no fence around the Infinite. Perfection is common property, open to any one who chooses to enjoy it.

Things have no power at all if we have control of the mind. But control must be voluntary as well as involuntary; it must include the Heart and the Mind, the sub-conscious mind, as well as the self-conscious. There must be mental wholeness or unity, before we can be still enough to know God.

We can say to our hands, "Be still for five minutes," and they will be still. If, however, we say to the Mind, "Be still for five minutes," we find it goes on moving as busily as ever. Even when we try to make the Personal Consciousness quiescent by imagining the highest order of Consciousness, saying to it "Be still and know that I am God," we again find ourselves strangely incapable of obedience.

If knowing God depends upon mental stillness, we can measure our ignorance by our mental restlessness. For as soon as we try to make the mind rest silently and steadily upon any single idea of God, it will instantly begin to work with that idea and produce a host of others.

We feel bewildered, when we try to think of ourselves as something beyond thought, beyond feeling, beyond sensation, something which will use the mind as we use the body, making it work or not work as we choose. It is not enough to know how the mind works, we must know how to work the mind.

When we pass from the outward appearances of things inward to the ideas of mental images of things and again from that ideal plane pass or try to pass still more inward to that which we feel we must be before even a mental image could exist, is there anything left to us except Silence and a Name, of which we do not know the Corresponding Substance?

How then do we come by that Name, if we have no experience of the Consciousness for which it stands?

The self-conscious side can be learned in a few weeks, if one works at it with all one's might, but this essential and regenerative way of meditating has to be learned by a Process of Initiation, of quickening, of silent and sub-conscious teaching, from one who has already developed it. We have to condescend to be helped if we mean to get at the Spirit of Meditation. There has never been a True Teacher yet, who did not first pass through the period of discipleship. If we could possess our Soul, we could possess the world. How?

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