



Dedication to everyday living and its reflection on inner meditation practice.

When outer meditation practice has been established in the tasks of everyday living and that which you have been working so hard to achieve is fulfilled, a form of psychological freedom is generated. It is a sensation not unlike being beyond perception from a particular point, in which there is no perceiving agent in the area of cognition, in which there seems to be a lack of control in one's own processes, making the necessity of looking for or finding an objective or an owner of particular perception disappear, when a subtle touch of non-dependence arises, of not depending on anything or anybody.

With the strengthening of our experience of outer meditation practice this attitude comes about naturally and spontaneously and in no way can it be produced by one's own free will. Accordingly, how does this sensation of inner freedom arise? Scholars of the Vedanta induce it through what is known as *vairāgya*: "mental non-attachment" from sensory objects, and it should not be confused with the same term used in the West, where "non-attachment" means the simple action of avoiding objects which generate conflict.

In everyday life "mental non-attachment" can be brought about by dedicating ourselves to the correct execution of actions at the right time and right place, an attitude which is normally difficult to instate given that human beings have the tendency to anticipate the beginning and postponing the natural end to tasks they come across daily. A simple example would be when having dinner with some friends you get sleepy and, because you are having such a good time you stay up late, even though you know you have responsibilities to comply with the following day. You decide not to go to bed on the false hope that you will not have to pay the consequences the next morning. It can be deduced that you do not want to leave, even though you know this is the right thing to do, as you may miss what you consider to be enjoyable moments.

The same thing happens when you are eating and you begin to feel full up, your body subtly says "that's enough", but you continue eating excessively with no effective control, for the simple reason you still have food left on your plate. Also countless other reasons crop up to justify this type of activity, for instance, "I have to nourish myself" or "I've been invited to dinner, so I should eat it all out of good manners". We have no capacity to put natural limits on events that happen spontaneously in everyday living, by not allowing them to cease in their own good time out of fear of their lack, which makes them go on too long unnecessarily.

In these cases, when it comes to impulsive reactions, adults are just like children. For instance, when a father on coming home from work, says to his son that they are going to buy the toy the little boy really wants, the child impatiently bothers him to do what he has just promised. In spite of his insistence on going to buy it immediately, his father goes about doing all the necessary chores (such as getting changed or looking for the car keys) and then will wait for the appropriate time to go to the shop. The little boy does not know how to wait for the right moment to go, while, in this case his father does know how to recognise the moment things begin, since he knows and does what he has to do and just simply waits for the appropriate condition of events to come along that enable the right time to go. After buying the toy the father will know that they have to go home as he will clearly recognise that the moment has come for the situation to come to an end. However, when the child gets to the shop and rushes over to the toy he wants, he spots another one on another shelf. The moment of satisfaction of going to buy the toy he wanted so much initially becomes lost to him, since the thought that the other toy may be better, immediately appears. In this case the child does not know how to find the adequate end to each situation.

In the same way, people, in their everyday lives, are not experts at letting things happen or allowing them come to an end all in their own time and they do not know how to start or stop them either. They live in the hope that their circumstances will get better than those that the present moment life presents them with, or that the ones they do not like will simply not occur. If something bad does happen they just diligently wish them to happen quickly, without waiting for them to end in their own good time. It is difficult for the human psyche to discriminate when the beginning and end should be in everyday occurrences. For this reason it is said that masters in the art of action are those who are skilful at recognising the moment of the birth and of the death of things.

The same thing happens when you miss someone you love. You suffer because since they left you have not been able to share or experience things with them again, you want to get in touch with them and see them again. But those who know the moment in which something ends also understand that in every instant that passes another one is reborn. That is why the only logical option open to us is to surrender ourselves to the newly spawned action. In the extreme case of a loved one dying, the person who operates from this perspective knows with certainty that when someone dies they simply do not come back. This deep inner certainty reduces and even cancels out any suffering.

There are times, whilst deep in the practice of inner meditation, which pleasant thoughts and feelings come to us. They may be very pleasing, and we have the tendency to recreate them and stay with them, although we know they are only thoughts and when it comes down to it we know that the only coherent option is to cut them off. The extraordinary thing is on cutting them off, a new cognitive state, known as Observation, arises. In inner observation the preceptor is the silent witness to the absence of thought and is immersed in an atmosphere of complete homogenous, amorphous, undifferentiated inner emptiness. Later, the witness succeeds in casting the emptiness of the Observation state to one side and is afforded a glimpse of the inner state of Concentration. There, in Concentration, the new witness of cognition focuses their attention on themselves and not on the emptiness of void, and here they transform into knower of themselves.

In Inner Concentration, the witness is aware of himself being the only object of knowledge. In inner Observation, the witness knows the emptiness in the absence of thought; it resembles the pitch dark of a starless night. It is an experience which can become habitual and relatively easy to maintain, or at least it can be perceived even if only for fleeting moments.

In the same way, people really desire intimate, romantic moments in their outward daily lives, but when these things happen they are terrified that they may be too romantic or too intimate because they do not know what to do. They do not allow themselves to completely surrender and they always hold back some feelings so as to not show themselves totally. This reserve is what prevents the experience from being complete or from living it with its due intensity.

To find a way out of this mode of clearly experiencing actions absolutely, one must seek to adopt a vital attitude that leads us to perceive new states of consciousness: to achieve surrender, this is the understanding that allows us to consciously give ourselves, letting ourselves go without fear of the reciprocating action, not look or yearn for something that does not exist in the present moment.

One of the clearest examples to illustrate this fact is the one mentioned earlier: when you are eating and you get to the point where you shouldn't continue. If you pay a little attention, it is very common for your own organism itself to tell you it has had enough and there is no need to eat any more. The big problem is that you tend to have this sensation usually when there is delicious food on the plate before you. You do not know how to stop eating; you cannot give up that sensation of taste and it is so hard to leave any scrumptious mouthful on the plate. You are not skilful in knowing the

turning points where life changes from one happening to another. You do not know how to stop and channel all your willpower into the next process, you do not recognise the moment in which things come to an end; you always want something else, and instead of letting them finish of their own accord, what you do is add yet another erroneous volitional act to them. We always want good things to continue but sometimes things which are too good get sickly, and then it is too late, because when you want to stop it is not the right moment, and in the case of the previous example, our organism will suffer the excess of consumption.

In contrast, little babies go from one state to another instantly. They may have hurt themselves, but as soon as their attention is drawn to something pleasant the pain immediately disappears and they pay attention to the new event, demonstrating their capacity for surrender to the next moment, to the next action.

Finding the right moment to begin an action and where this action must be left to one side, presents a great problem to human beings. It is difficult to learn to say "no" when "no" has to be said and "yes" when "yes" has to be said. For most people a "no" is a "maybe" or "not today, tomorrow", showing that they do not know how to say one or the other.

Decision taking should be something which is done without any effort, without the disruptiveness of volitional acts. It should be similar to when people fall asleep and wake up, for example: both options happen with no effort, being the physical or neuro-vegetative systems which have control of these processes. Nobody can fall asleep by making him or herself do so. In the same way consciousness takes on the role of controlling, without the necessity of willpower.

We have to become aware of the moment where things finish so that we can make the jump from one action to another. For example, disciples of some Zen schools use certain types of exercises and practices that allow them to be correctly disposed to identifying these moments, providing them with an impressive capacity of definition and decision. For example, when they eat they always stop while they are still a little hungry, leaving a little food on the plate. This action which seems so easy demonstrates great mental structuring, a solid condition of balance in the psyche and a very strong inner control.

Such situations generate symmetry in the inner World, paving the way for expectation of effortless thought, the surrender to day-to-day activity without any effort and the loss of volitional control over any mental content, allowing for appearance of perception associated to superior states of cognition.

However, this activity of effortless action, with no interest in reward happens infrequently in human beings. People are almost always so submerged in the effort of wanting to do, of desiring a reward for their action, that their intention becomes obvious even on occasions when there is no need to show the slightest effort. It is not easy to understand that "doing nothing" equals "doing without anybody doing anything", of experiencing action without the presence of conscious will. It is easy to detect action which is associated to effort, but it is not easy to detect action which lacks it.

It is difficult for human beings to become aware of themselves living, existing or knowing themselves without making any effort to do so; they are only capable recognising themselves or becoming aware of themselves through intermediate agents such as their own bodies or memory. Their own self-awareness is very difficult without recurring to these intermediates. Nevertheless, on rare occasions when they experience this conscious act without any intermediation, that is, being attentive on attention in inner meditation practice, they recognise the power of existence with rare intensity. There is no other experience that contains within itself the vehicle and the experience of where attention is attentive on itself. "Being aware of yourself being aware" is so strong and intense that it crosses all cognitive boundaries, allowing for the Non-dual experience.

The door which leads us into outer meditation practice is the act of perceiving any object in our surroundings (awareness) without perceiving yourself (being aware of yourself or self-awareness). This first step in the outer meditative experience known as Outer Observation still generates a dual representation of the World. This sense of duality is solved by installing a sense of simultaneous awareness and self-awareness, a situation which only occurs when it is possible to know events that form part of the present. Perceptive outer awareness enables attention to be placed uninterruptedly on any external event which may be happening. The permanence of attention on external objects, which need the intermediation of the senses, is the key to be able to enter into the Non-dual experience later on.

The first step to achieving Non-dual cognition comes about through the permanence of attention on an inner or outer present time object. If the event to be known is external, attention must be placed uninterruptedly on what is being known; in contrast, if the event to be known is internal, attention must be uninterruptedly placed on the observation of mental objects, thoughts. Only in this way can the path which opens the doors to Non dual experience be travelled. Changing realities spring from intermittent attention, realities that momentarily form part of the present and the next instant form part of the future or the past.

When confronting any day to day circumstance, every human being will know that there is a moment to finish with this and begin another. Freedom is finding a way to realise the action in the right place and right time.

Our own and nature's systems of intelligence constantly show what must be done; you only have to be attentive to the signs life manifests to see. The intelligence of nature in its self has no will of its own nor does it try to appropriate anything, it has no desire to control the action; it goes about action, realisation, in a pure way. Intelligence associated to the present operates in every moment and instant. It determines when actions must be born and when they must die. The skill in the act of allowing the birth and death of actions, is learnt by surrendering your will to the present, a situation where your "I" disappears which gives birth to ordered intelligence that will finally lead us to the Non-dual experience.

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