

Always New

Swami Suryadevananda

Weariness

Inner tiredness and fatigue sap one's zeal and enthusiasm, and our attitude or posture towards life as a whole has much to do with it. Life in all its forms is constantly changing. Being part of the stream of life, we are evolving and changing too. If we stay ever fresh as we are, and see everything afresh as they are, how can there be inner tiredness and fatigue?

Our posture is our overall attitude in life—physically, mentally and emotionally. How we see and respond to life are two halves of one whole. This seeing is quite different from a mere philosophical outlook and ability to articulate lofty ideas; it is backed by how we live.

There is a part of us that is changing as it is with all things, but the fact that we exist does not change. Yoga looks to discover the unchanging amidst the changing so that we can live in an orderly and peaceful way.

Weariness often results from mechanical living or by trying to stay ahead of change—anticipating change only to find it has taken an unexpected turn someplace. The frustration when things don't go as anticipated or '*preferred*', if you wish gentler language, adds to the building up of anxiety along the way and causes much fatigue. Why anticipate anything at all?

When we anticipate, we become more concerned with result than with effort—knowing full well at the gut level that this is folly, as things are going to be as they will be and no amount of anticipation or worry will change the design to come. Omar Khayyam's lines on the 'Moving Finger' are to the point here...

The Moving Finger writes; and, having writ,

Moves on: nor all thy Piety nor Wit

Shall lure it back to cancel half a Line,

Nor all thy Tears wash out a Word of it.

Posture

In the Yoga Sutra, Patanjali says that *asana* or posture should be firm and pleasant at the same time. Don't limit *asana* to a physical posture but to the complete posture: physical, mental and emotional. Can I face life in all its change—firm and pleasant at the same time?

Firmness in wanting one point of view becomes obstinacy, but firmness in wanting to discover the truth of things suggests some sort of steadiness so that change can be observed directly and the truth animating change can be known. Add to this the second ingredient, 'pleasant', which for the yogi implies functioning in such a way that does not hurt others or oneself. Both go together inseparably and one cultivates steady awareness where the mind is continually observed and there is dexterity in action so that pain, sorrow and suffering that has not yet arrived is avoided.

Memory

There are two types of memory, static and dynamic. Static memory is mere data or information; it is useful and does not interfere with action in the present. Dynamic memory is charged with our feelings about things—not only data of information but our positive or negative feelings about it in such a way that data and feelings are inseparable and indistinguishable—dynamic memory. When data is recalled, feelings about it immediately burst to the surface, hitting us with full force and the static data becomes a mere occasion to experience our feelings about the object.

When the mind is repeatedly filled with feelings, these feelings respond to life—not to us. These feelings are the old us, a snapshot in time based on our past reactions and the clock insists on standing still to tell the same old time though much time has lapsed.

Life does not cater to our feelings and so we are always anxious, and this causes fatigue and weariness. Yoga suggests that it is possible to avoid this inner weariness by a total change in our outlook to life—total means without exception. The mind has to be rewired to function differently and this cannot be done selectively. More so, the mind has to be made new while it is used, or rather, by using it wisely.

In the path to financial stability or recovery, there are three essentials: working hard to generate income; being frugal and watching the expenses; and having a savings plan—all three have to work together at the same time. The discipline towards financial stability is not punitive but positive and hence undertaken enthusiastically. The very same principles apply to success in deflating dynamic memory.

Unrelenting vigilance is requisite just as frugality is for financial stability. One has to be alert to ensure that each action or experience ends with the act or experience. This is not always the case, as the act or experience continues psychologically—in one's mind long after the act. All events are alike even though they have different distinguishing characteristics. What makes them different is that we somehow single some out and charge them with positive or negative values—a little bit (or a whole lot) of our own selves. A simple static event becomes part of the psychological make-up and joins the inner family called personality. From here, when the event

or its characteristics are recalled, the personality rises into action and one feels helpless, as it is one's own self as the rise of habit against one's better judgment or wisdom.

Time

The Yoga Vasistha tells us that there are two types of time. One is the time in which events rise and fall; people are born, get old and die; things are put together or made and taken apart. But there is also another type of time which is the end of action. This time is the inevitable result or fruition of all action and is called *kritanta*. The act or experience is over physically and psychologically and something new has our full attention, but the law of nature gives reaction to every action and this comes in its own timing.

We discussed the importance of letting all action and experience end with the act or experience and now we tie in the idea of acting expertly so our actions are without agency. Finding a way to act without agency or selflessly becomes the way to avoid the impact of reactions or *karma*.

Reactions cannot be avoided but its impact can be avoided. For example, if a secretary representing a company shops for some items, the items purchased for the company are paid for by the company, whereas items she buys for her personal use must be paid for by her individually. In much the same way, if our actions are devoid of agency or completely selfless, it is not an individual action but a universal action and the reaction is absorbed by the universe, as the individual is not present. The individual was just an organ of the universe that acted and the universe absorbs the reactions of her own law.

Karma Yoga plays an important role in discovering the ego and then gradually absenting the ego by universalizing existence. You cannot say it is universalizing 'your' existence, as the 'your' is not there once existence is universal. In the Bhagavad Gita we are told, "Do what needs to be done..." Not what we think needs to be done or what is in our best interests but what 'needs' to be done. For this, the doer has to feel seamlessness with the need. The need itself responds through you and does its own work.

Does this mean that one will never feel any pain or suffering? Not necessarily. These things may come to be experienced but the 'one' is no longer there to feel the experience as something personal—either avoiding it or being elated about it. Using the above example of the secretary purchasing something for the company, the bill will certainly come but it will be paid for by the company in full. This example cannot be taken literally, as in this case, she is still there and does make personal purchases which she has to pay for herself. In yoga, the transformation is total and there is no private account or account holder.

When a child playing with a toy is given something new, he tosses out the old toy and starts playing with the new one without fear of losing the old or safeguarding it somehow for later. Being focused is not the same as awareness. One can be focused or concentrated though the

inner unseen springs could be guiding the action—this is what happens very often. Awareness is a state of being awake without break; to what has your attention externally, the rise and fall of memory or conditioning for action and the impact of actions on others, the environment and one's own self without any division.

Swami Sivananda sings...

When shall I be free?

When I cease to be.

Just as some days are warmer and some cooler, experiences too will still come, but the anxiety drops as it belongs to individuality and this anxiety is the only suffering. The price tag is the 'I' and it is such a relief to pay this for freedom.

Conclusion

Weariness results when we keep trying or hoping for an outcome all the while things take their own shape—sometimes the way we like, mostly some other way. Anticipation and worry about the outcome drain one's zeal and bring about a small inner world or mechanical living which can never be a happy state. Let the chips fall as they may—why does it matter? Every moment is a brand-new opportunity for fresh effort so be fresh with a fresh attitude and effort. You don't even have to let go of the past, it lets itself out of the door—just see the shining present that replaces the fading past and you will gradually enter the stream of presents.

When you give yourself to the present, all presents are given to you, as you realize that the machinery that makes dynamic memory slows and eventually stops by disuse. The mind has to be used in a different way in order for it to be made new. Mind is thought—think differently and back this up by a whole-souled demonstration in life so there is never any dichotomy—and flowers of sincerity will flourish in the inner garden. Giving yourself to the present should never be at the cost of inner awareness. Watch the thoughts, as these are the springs of later troubles. Each time memory takes a positive or negative charge, it takes charge of you.

Karma Yoga shows the way of walking without leaving footprints or acting without agency. If you are not there, the mailman cannot deliver. Let every action be universal—do what needs to be done without the 'you' and you will gradually absent yourself while living a full, happy, contented and peaceful life.

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