

13. The mind use and misuse

The mind causes rebirth to beings

The mind causes release to beings

The mind confers victory to beings

In the struggle to attain the four:

Goodness, Fullness, Fruition, Freedom,

Dharma, Artha, Kama, Moksha.

The mind confers mergence everlasting.

THE mind wills, yearns, prompts and insists on effort and action. This process is named *Sankalpa*. These are like *Sasanas* (commands). Everyone has to be aware of the variety and validity of the actions induced by these promptings. The mind is host to fifty million such! Of the thoughts that appear and vanish, the clouds that pass silently, many stay and stir the mind into activity. These are referred to as *Sankalpas*. Until these are well understood against their vast background, man cannot live happily and in peace. Good *sankalpas* can elicit the best out of man and help him .to use all strength for his uplift, Man has to recognise bad *sankalpas* or urges as soon as they arise and render them ineffective by the systematic cultivation of beneficial *sankalpas*. These latter alone can save a person from disaster and keep him close to *Prasanthi* (supreme calm).

Ships at sea are guided by the compass along the desired direction; without it, they risk being wrecked on rocks or icebergs. Man has to sail safe across the ocean of *Samsara* (Flux and Flow). So he needs a one-pointed agitation-less mind to guide him and guard him.

The face is moulded by the mind

One can discover for himself how difficult it is to equip oneself with such a mind. The face photographs the mind; its moods, its decisions and desires; its *sankalpas*, in short. Consider a gramophone record; its contents---words, songs, noises--can only be heard, they cannot be seen; but the contents of the mind--evil *sankalpas* based on anger, hatred, envy, despair, arrogance, egotism or good *sankalpas* based on truth, love, charity, compassion--can be seen on the face, though they cannot be heard.

The face is moulded by the mind. Every single *sankalpa* (or thought accepted and acted upon) is a streak or line which affects its shape. We can picture it as the Notice Board, which announces to all concerned the activities inside the institute.

The sankalpa cannot be hidden or kept under cover. All attempts in this direction are as foolish as the ostrich's behaviour when pursued. It sticks its small head into the loose sands and considers itself safe from being killed by hunters. But its huge body attracts the eye. It is soon destroyed and dragged away. Evil *sankalpas* as well as good are reflected on the face of man.

The mind activates the sense organs

A sankalpa affects the consciousness more subtly than an electric charge. It manifests as a need, a motive with a name and form. It colours the thought stream in a distinct way. It is no scribble on a blank mind; it causes clusters of reaction in the blankless mind. Its potency depends on time

and circumstance. *Sankalpas* breed further *sankalpas*; they play their role, unaided through their own latent force.

The mind activates the eye and ear, the tongue and nose and every organ of perception and action. The mind initiates its activation when a *sankalpa* influences it. The mind is the unseen witness, the interested observer, as the queen inside the Raja's palace, watching the flow of men and vehicles on the road below through holes in the wooden window panes of the zenana. Whence do the *sankalpas* originate? From the ego, the "I" and the "I"? From the inmost *Atma*.

Sankalpas or Conations or Inner Resolutions tend to be attracted towards one another, when they flow in the same direction or are related to similar desires. Cranes fly together as flock; they do not mix with crows. Crows form their own groups. Among beasts of the forest, bisons have herds of their own kind; they have no comradeship with elephants, which keep bisons away and mingle only with elephants. Deer too form groups by themselves. Similarly, a musician attracts musicians around him. Teachers seek teachers for company.

The decisions which the mind makes, either to commit or omit, are amazing, for, the Cosmos and all its contents can be described as their consequence. The mind decides on the fact or facet of the objective world which it has to notice. The *Sankalpa* bears fruit and the fruit conforms to the seed from which it springs. It has to reveal its impact, sooner or later. So, man has to avoid evil *sankalpas* and cultivate good ones.

Examine every thought with care

For example, one might entertain a thought to harm or injure someone. And, it might fructify as harm or injury on him. But, the *sankalpa* will surely rebound on the person bringing with it hundredfold harm and injury. A bad *sankalpa* hurts both the person and his target. A poisonous worm injures all who handle it. The Mahabharata relates how the Kauravas fed and fostered the *sankalpa* to adopt various tactics to disgrace and eliminate their cousins, the Pandavas; the result was their total elimination along with those who supported them. The Pandavas survived crowned with glory. Their *sankalpa* and their subjects were happy.

Therefore, as soon as a passing thought sprouts in the mind as an urge or desire, one has to examine it with care to discover whether it would tarnish or promote one's reputation, hinder or help one's progress, weaken or strengthen one's character. If it is of the former category, cast it away, as a foul stinking object. And, save yourself by saturating the mind with good intentions. Earnestness in this direction is heightened by mutual encouragement. *Rishis* in their sylvan settlements benefited largely from such consultative, confirmative processes.

Effects of evil *sankalpa*

The nature of the *Sankalpa* that motivates a person can be sensed by others. The story of Ted Ross, a lone farmer in Holland, illustrates this quite well. He left his brother and mother in order to live in peace and freedom and settled on a forty-acre farm in a cottage he built thereon. He had interest in poultry farming and raised chicken. Killing birds for food was part of the culture he grew in. One night a fox entered the yard and made a meal of them. Its visit continued, night after night. So, the farmer took a decision (*Sankalpa*) to kill the fox and kept awake with gun in hand. But, though fowls disappeared, the fox was not seen. He could hear its approach, the flutter of the birds and its exit, but he could not spot where it was. His vain vigil persisted for five long years.

He consulted many elders about the mystery. A pure hearted sympathiser told him, "Ted! Your mind is so free from blemish that even a tiny blot is patent to all. The fox is aware of your intention and is taking clever measures to avoid being noticed." Animals have this capacity. It is a gift of nature. A dog curled on the brink of the road will not be afraid of your approach, when you are *Sankalpa*-free. Plan to hit it, while even twenty feet away; the dog will rise and run!

When animals have this sensitivity, why mention, men? Man's *sankalpas*, their manifestations in action, can be detected easily. A person who has committed wrong, who has 'robbed another's property, who has scandalised another or uttered a lie--look at his face; examine it closely. You will notice the signs of confusion and fear. The anxiety makes the blood cells become weak; the face becomes pale; lips quiver. The person suffers in health. Suppression is dangerous; expression brings about infamy. This is the effect of evil *sankalpa*. It must, therefore, be plucked by the roots and thrown out.

Every urge must be cleared by *buddhi*

Unrest, anxiety and anarchy are fed by evil *sankalpa*. You must see good, hear good and act good, so that evil intentions do not arise. People who move with criminals or read or write about them are likely to be infected with the evil. *Sadhaks* who move in the company of the godly are prone to develop serenity and compassion.

The mind travels quicker than sound, far quicker than even light. Just as one holds under greater control a car that moves at a speed faster than the rest, one has to exercise greater control and mastery over the mind. Obey the mind's vagaries; you become a beast. Let discrimination control the vagaries; you become a candidate for Divinity. Every urge must undergo test, must be cleared by a judge, namely *Buddhi*. Does it prompt one to ridicule or defame another? Then, dismiss it as unworthy. Good intention sprouts as action; action fructifies into *Sadhana*; from *sadhana* emerges *Seela* (virtuous character) that draws down the shower of Grace. Intentions can all be beneficial, when the person persists in good company. Of course, one cannot gain them from without; they have to grow from within, from the heart, freed from the weeds of pride and greed. Good company helps to purify the heart.

This is the lesson people have to learn today cultivate *Sath Sankara* (good thought) by seeking out and sheltering in *Sathsanga* (good company). Planting poisonous seeds, people hope to get nutritious fruits! Why blame God when bitter seeds do not yield sweet fruits? Man is the only animal that imbibes and expresses *Ananda*. The smile on the face is the blooming of the joy that fills the heart; it wafts away discontent and depression from other faces.

The mind can be an instrument to gain success in any of the paths of *Yoga* and in the struggle to gain the goals of life. If it is given licence to foster any type of wish or conation, it is certain to plunge man in bondage. The mind shapes life and the world wherein one lives. The mind of the individual, the 'i' has originated from the Cosmic Mind of God, *Brahman*. One's duty is to merge it in the source. Then, the 'i' becomes 'I'. Before the mergence, the 'i' is known as man and announces itself as limited. In order to achieve the mergence, the consummation, saturate the mind with *Sathsankalpa*. Remember: "From good thoughts, good minds; from good minds, good God."

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