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FUNDAMENTALS

By NEVILLE

WITH so vast a subject, it is indeed a difficult task to summarize in a few hundred words what I consider the – most basic ideas on which those who seek a true understanding of metaphysics should now concentrate. I shall do what I can in the shape of three fundamentals. These fundamentals are: Self-Observation, Definition of Aim, and Detachment.

The purpose of true metaphysics is to bring about a rebirth or radical psychological change in the individual. Such a change cannot take place until the individual first discovers the self that he would change. This discovery can be made only through an uncritical observation of his reactions to life. The sum total of these reactions defines the individual's state of consciousness, and it is the individual's state of consciousness that attracts the situations and circumstances of his life.

So the starting point of true metaphysics, on its practical side, is self-observation in order to discover one's reactions to life, reactions which form one's secret self – the cause of the phenomena of life.

With Emerson, I accept the fact that "Man surrounds himself with the true image of himself . . . what we are, that only can we see."

There is a definite connection between what is outer and what is inner in man, and it is ever our inner states that attract our outer life. Therefore, the individual must always start with himself.

It is one's self that must be changed.

Man, in his blindness, is quite satisfied with himself, but heartily dislikes the circumstances and situations of his life. He feels this way, not knowing that the cause of his displeasure lies not in the condition nor the person with whom he is displeased, but in the very self he likes so much. Not realizing that "he surrounds himself with the true image of himself" and that "what he is, that only can he see," he is shocked when he discovers that it has always been his own deceitfulness that made him suspicious of others.

Self-observation would reveal this deceitful one in all of us; and this one must be accepted before there can be any transformation of ourselves.

At this moment, try to notice your inner state. To what thoughts are you consenting? With what feelings are you identified? You must be ever careful where you are within yourself.

Most of us think that we are kind and loving, generous and tolerant, forgiving and noble; but an uncritical observation of our reactions to life will reveal a self that is not at all kind and loving, generous and tolerant, forgiving and noble. And it is this self that we must first accept and then set about to change.

Rebirth depends on inner work on one's self. No one can be reborn without changing this self. Any time that an entirely new set of reactions enters into a person's life, a change of consciousness has taken place, a spiritual rebirth has occurred.

Having discovered, through an uncritical observation of your reactions to life, a self that must be changed, you must now formulate an aim. That is, you must define the one you would like to be instead of the one you truly are in secret. With this aim clearly defined, you must, throughout your conscious waking day, notice your every reaction in regard to this aim.

The reason for this is that everyone lives in a definite state of consciousness, which state of consciousness we have already described as the sum total of his reactions to life. Therefore, in defining an aim, you are defining a state of consciousness, which, like all states of consciousness, must have its reactions to life. For example: if a rumor or an idle remark could cause an anxious reaction in one person and no reaction in another, this is positive proof that the two people are living in two different states of consciousness.

If you define your aim as a noble, generous, secure, kindly individual – knowing that all things are states of consciousness – you can easily tell whether you are faithful to your aim in life by watching your reactions to the daily events of life. If you are faithful to your ideal, your reactions will conform to your aim, for you will be identified with your aim and, therefore, will be thinking from your aim. If your reactions are not in harmony with your ideal, it is a sure sign that you are separated from your ideal and are only thinking of it. Assume that you are the loving one you want to be, and notice your reactions throughout the day in regard to that assumption; for your reactions will tell you the state from which you are operating.

This is where the third fundamental – Detachment – enters in. Having discovered that everything is a state consciousness made visible and having defined that particular state which we want to make visible, we now set about the task of entering such a state, for we must move psychologically from where we are to where we desire to be.

The purpose of practicing detachment is to separate us from our present reactions to life and attach us to our aim in life. This inner separation must be developed by practice. At first we seem to have no power to separate ourselves from undesirable inner states, simply because we have always taken every mood, every reaction, as natural and have become identified with them. When we have no idea that our reactions are only states of consciousness from which it is possible to separate ourselves, we go round and round in the same circle of problems – not seeing them as inner states but as outer situations. We practice detachment, or inner separation, that we may escape from the circle of our habitual reactions to life. That is why we must formulate an aim and constantly notice ourselves in regard to that aim.

This teaching begins with self-observation. Secondly it asks, "What do you want?" And then it teaches detachment from all negative states and attachment to your aim. This last state – attachment to your aim – is accomplished by frequently assuming the feeling of your wish fulfilled.

We must practice separating ourselves from our negative moods and thoughts in the midst of all the troubles and disasters of daily life. No one can be different from what he is now unless he begins to separate himself from his present reactions and to identify himself with his aim. Detachment from negative states and assumption of the wish fulfilled must be practiced in the midst of all the blessings and cursings of life.

The way of true metaphysics lies in the midst of all that is going on in life. We must constantly practice self observation, thinking from our aim, and detachment from negative moods and thoughts if we would be doers of truth instead of mere hearers.

Practice these three fundamentals and you will rise to higher and higher levels of consciousness. Remember, always, it is your state of consciousness that attracts your life.

Start climbing!

Neville