

Yoga in the Western Tradition – Eugene Halliday

An excerpt - pgs 52-54

The procedure for entering higher worlds is always the same. It is by **IDENTIFICATION**.

We have inside ourselves various levels of awareness each of which has its own laws. Our physical body is under the laws of gravity and mass and momentum and so on. If we wish to enter with our consciousness into the physical world, we focus our attention on the weight and mass of our body, we feel the tension of our muscles, pressure of our weight on the soles of our feet, or, when we are lying down, on the couch or bed or floor. We feel the expansion of our chest or the movement of our diaphragm as we breathe. We open our eyes and look at the things which reflect the light around us. We listen to the noises made by things, the sounds of pots being used, of motor cars going down the road, of doors being opened or closed. We use all our five sense organs to gain such information, and by focussing on it we are enabled to hold ourselves in contact with the physical world of material objects, to **IDENTIFY OUR CONSCIOUSNESS** with the material facts of this world.

When we do so indentify our consciousness with our **physical body**, by this fact we tend to create within us a belief that we are **PHYSICAL BEINGS**. If we persist in this identification throughout all our waking hours we may come to believe that we are MERELY physical beings and nothing more. This is how so many people are brought to a belief in materialism.

But we have other facts of experience than merely physical ones arising from focussing our attention on our physical body and on the material objects of the physical world. Within ourselves we also experience **feelings** and **emotions**, We like and dislike things, prefer some activities to others. We love and hate. And these feelings and emotions are not subject to the same laws that govern the world of outer material objects; so if we are to remain true to the facts of our experience, we have to say that when we focus our attention in our feelings and emotions, we enter into a level of being very different from that in which we experience external material objects. This level of feeling and emotion is a world in itself, governed by its own laws, filled with its own energies. To move about freely in this world we have to learn **TO CONTROL OUR FEELINGS AND EMOTIONS**, just as in the physical world we have to learn to control our muscles in order to move our physical body in chosen directions.

The method of controlling our feelings and emotions is based on the fact that when we make ourselves fully conscious of them, we become aware that our feelings are assessing something for its capacity. for introducing some degree of pleasure or pain into our consciousness, and that emotions are overflowings of energy in our organism which tends to lead us into some kind of **REACTIVE BEAVIOUR** determined by the pleasure or pain we believe will result from this behaviour.

As we become aware that our feeling is assessing the degree of pleasure or pain which may arise in us from some experience, and that our emotions tend to carry us into action because of our assessments, so we find that our **AWARENESS** of these facts begins **OF ITSELF** to modify our feelings and emotions, which then become calmer and more balanced.

What we are saying is that **FULLER CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE RESULTS** of our feeling assessments and emotions results in more balanced, more **INTELLIGENT** action.

Once the awareness of this fact has become sufficiently established in us we can move about with surety in the world of feelings and emotions. We become able to look into the patterns of feelings emotions which fill this world, not only the patterns of our own feelings and emotions, but also those of other beings. We find that we can feel other person's feelings and emotions, and anticipate, their reaction to different stimuli in different situations. We begin to understand that although our physical bodies are separated from each other in space, our feelings and emotions are not completely insulated from those of other persons. We begin to see that in our feelings and emotions we share in an ocean of life-force which extends far beyond our physical bodies. We find by our own emotions and experiences that the expression "a sea of emotion" is not just a figure of speech. Now we understand one of the significances of the "fish" symbol used by the early Christians, "He who would swim must become a fish". If we are to become able to direct ourselves in the common sea of emotion, which we share with other living beings, we must become as sensitive as a fish to every thing that might affect our feelings.

When we can swim in the great sea of emotions, sure of our own feeling assessments, and in charge of our own emotions, we can live in the world of feelings, the world of the life-force which animates every living being, without losing our self-control or direction. Then, because of our emotional stability we can help other less controlled people towards a similar balance of feeling-forces. When we are balanced enough in the feeling world we can enter the next world, the world of **serially presented ideas** without losing our way.

By "serially presented" ideas we mean the appearance in our thinking processes of ideas, one after another, in a series. With our attained balance of feeling we are able to look at each idea as it presents itself in a new way,

Ordinarily each idea we find in our serial thinking has a feeling charge upon it, a degree of liking or disliking, which tends to make us in the one case "hang on" to the idea, and in the other case to turn away from it or to suppress it.

It is just this tendency which causes us so much suffering in our minds and hearts.

If we think very carefully, we will find that every idea we have, simply because it is an IDEA, if it is not charged with excessive feeling or emotion, must be as "real" as any other idea. An idea of a box, **AS IDEA**, is as real as an **IDEA** of a broken box. But if we have a material box to which we have attached certain feelings or emotions. perhaps because it was given to us by someone we love, then the **IDEA** of this box will tend to have associated with it the same FEELINGS and emotions. Now if some person comes to us and tells us that our beloved box has accidentally been broken, we will tend to be emotionally upset, and perhaps become angry, and this even if we have not yet seen the **ACTUAL BOX** but have so far only the **IDEA** that it has been broken.

From this we can see how important it is for us to be able to balance our feelings and control our emotions. Perhaps in fact the box has not been broken. Perhaps our informant is having a joke at our expense, because he knows that we ...

Comprehension ...

Contemplation ...

To be continued ...