

Doing – Help or Hindrance?

Human beings are great at doing – and quickly bored if doing nothing; most waking hours are spent ‘doing’ something, even if it is only watching TV. If you look at cats or birds or lizards they spend a lot of time just being conscious (or being unconscious in the case of cats!) though prepared to react if necessary.

Q. ‘But surely Zen masters and God-realised Yogis are in a state of ‘just being’ where they are not doing anything. Isn’t that the same?’

That is not a **Tamasic** (*left-sided*) ‘just being’ where one is submerged in worldly illusions; it is the **Sattvic** (*centered*) ‘just being’ of knowing the Self and our identity with the ‘Great Self’ of the Universe, witnessing Reality within and without as the same.

‘You become in the center. You are neither passive nor active, you just watch, you become a witness of the whole thing. The Sun, he just emits, he is in non-action, he is doing nothing, he is just emitting. You go into a state where you do not do anything. By doing something you will develop your Ego. By not doing something you develop your Super-ego. But by becoming realized it just emits. You become a hollow personality. ‘You’ are not there.’¹

29-09-80, Zürich

Humans have evolved from the **Tamasic** -‘*lethargic, darkness, sleep*’ Earth Realm, the animal level of consciousness, to the Right-sided Atmospheric Realm of **Rajas** - Action and Passion. This was achieved by the development of Speech enabling conceptual thought and projection into past and future, and the use of technology (*Fire*); both qualities associated with **Swādhiṣṭhāna Chakra**², the Root of the Right Side.

¹ Quotations in Maiandra font are by H.S.H. Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi.

² **Swadhishtana Chakra** is not on the Central Channel and does not play a role in Spiritual Evolution, but it is significant in the Left and Right Channels. The legs and feet are expressions of **Swadhishtana** and may be considered extensions of the **Ida** and **Pingala Nadis**, which is why foot-soaking is so effective to reduce Left and Right Side activity.

There are advantages and disadvantages of 'doing'.....

Advantages of Doing

The main advantage of 'doing' is that it gets us out of the Left Side. The development of the heart, mind and intellect through education enables a human being to gain control over the base instincts of the physical body which we can call the 'Lower Self'. Once controlled by the ¹heart, mind and intellect, the 'Higher Self', these can be channelled in a constructive way.

In civilised man, the sexual drive is repressed and limited to a constructive 'marriage' creating a stable family unit; anger and violence are restrained and sublimated through work or sports; food intake is regulated to what is healthy and suitable to our lifestyle.

Self-restraint creates the 'civilised' person, who can live in health, peace and security within the society. A large part of 'culture' is the code we learn for dealing with our fellow humans in the many roles we may play. Good or civilised culture is where all aspects of creation and all people are respected, speech is sweet and polite, and the needs of others are put above our ²own.

Education is essential for all members in a civilised society. It is apt that young people are kept in school from five to eighteen – a very impressionable and energetic age - giving them a channel for their energies and moulding their social personalities; and causing children to ask 'Why do we have to do all this useless stuff?'

¹ *This is 'Heart' in the higher sense of compassion for others.*

² *We can see that 'Western Culture' as epitomised by Europe, USA or Australia does not fit this description well; hence the old joke (attributed to a French journalist) about America going 'from barbarism to decadence, without having civilisation in between'. During the Second World War, when Europe was tearing itself apart, the Americans countered that if that was civilisation, then they were glad they had missed it.*

Sure, quadratic equations are unlikely to be useful unless you become a scientist or a Maths teacher, but developing the brain's ability to utilise abstract concepts strengthens the heart/mind/intellect giving more control over the 'Lower Self'.

Disadvantages of Doing

The disadvantage of Doing is that it leads to the development of Ego. 'If I fulfil all my conditionings, I am a 'Good Person'; 'I'm more educated than him so I'm superior.', 'I do more than him therefore I am a 'Better Person' than he is.'

Ego, the sense of separate identity, is the obstacle to our enlightenment; to knowing the Oneness of our Consciousness with the All-pervading Spirit. We have escaped from the **Tamas**- 'darkness' only to find ourselves trapped in a brightly-lit illusion. More 'Doing' only makes the illusion stronger.

'Doing anything is **Rajo Guna**, the Right Side Action, is done through our Ego.'

02-10-78, UK

Most spiritual masters consider the attachment to 'doing' as one of the greatest hurdles to finding the Ultimate Truth. In his **Viveka-chudāmāni** – 'Crest-jewel of Discrimination' **Shri Ādi Shaṅkarāchārya** states:-

'The Tendency to Action always gives rise to modifications of the mind such as attachment and other qualities producing sorrow'. **v.113**

The great Tamil saint **Ramana Mahārshi** set much store by the ancient Sanskrit text '**Tripura Rahasya**':-

'Having gained one purpose, why does man look for another? There can be neither the gaining of pleasure or removal of pain, so long as the incentive to effort lasts. The feeling of a need to work in order to gain happiness (being the index of misery) is the misery of miseries. Only those who need not engage in action, are happy; they are perfectly content, and self-contained, and they experience a happiness which extends to all the pores of the body.'

Tripura Rahasya Ch.1. v.43-47

‘As long as a man is afraid of the nightmare, obligation, so long must he placate it, or else he will not find peace. How can a man stung by that viper, obligation, ever be happy? Therefore, some men have gone mad, as if some poison had already entered their blood and were torturing their whole being, while others are stupefied by the poison of obligation and unable to discriminate good from bad. Wrongly do they ever engage in work, being deluded; such is the plight of humanity stupefied by the poison of the sense of obligation.’ *Ibid. Ch.2. v.34-37*

Someone asked **Shri Ramana** how come he was often busy, helping to chop vegetables or sweep the compound, if, as he said, he was not doing anything. He answered that the body knew how to do those things by itself and he (as the Self) could witness it all happening without being involved.

‘All these things are managed by **Paramchaitanya** – ‘*Supreme Consciousness*’. I am doing nothing. I am **Nishkriya** – ‘*without action*’. I'm just sitting down and watching.’ *10-11-96, Lisbon*

A physical result of so much Doing, and the Ego and material greed it produces, are today's environmental problems. Three-quarters of our rapidly-depleting petroleum is burned up for transport – mainly cars and aeroplanes – as we all rush about the planet. Certainly this has some benefits such as creating a more unified humanity, but if there is to be a sustainable universal human lifestyle over the next few thousand years, we will need to calm down.

Information overload from computers, TV and mobile phones is causing attention difficulties in our young people and an inability to relate normally to each other. Labour- and time-saving machinery has made modern man busier and more stressed.

The Buddha told a story of a man who built a raft to cross a wide river and when he reached the other side he thought that the raft had been so useful that perhaps he should carry it with him. Mental development is like this; it may have got us across the river of surviving on this planet, but it will drag us down if we cannot go beyond it.

So, as usual, the truth is a paradox: humans had to develop thinking, 'Doing' and Ego in order to rise to the point where it was necessary to let go of them and enter the next stage of evolution, the Kingdom of Heaven.

'When you think too much we get into problems with this (*Agya Chakra*) centre on the right side, where the Ego goes on bloating into bigger and bigger balloons on the right side of the brain and covers our complete discretion.'

Meta Modern Era, Ch.11

'If you have to enter the Kingdom of God come as a humble person. Give up all your ideas about your big positions and big education and all that. Be a humble person. If you are humble then it will work out; and not only that it will work out but it is the only chance we human beings have to change the whole world. There's no other chance I can see.'

13-06-83, UK.

'For dedication you have to do nothing but give up your Ego and Superego. Take these loads off and create a space which is the Heart.'

24-05-81, UK.

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Jay Shri Mataji!