

## THE MEDITATION OF ACTION

By Josephine Ransom

The great secret of true action is that it is devoid of fruit. It is dedicated action. Perhaps there is no better description of the real nature of action than this oft-recited verse: "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Mat. 5:16). These words are used mostly to preface an offertory, or as a preliminary text to a service, but their import is far greater than such usage implies.

The phrase "good works" is an excellent equivalent of the ancient dictum that the high mystery of any deed in any world is skill in action. Such skill is a revealing of wisdom in the operator, wisdom born of long effort, and of practice in meditation. Right action provokes no wrong reaction, makes no claim upon the future, holds no bondage of readjustment—which necessitates careful planning of births so that all engaged in the original action may work out its effects together. Performance of true action is a revelation of the glorious "works" of God—action as it should be, skilled, complete.

How should such action be aimed at and practiced? Meditation is the method, for meditation is the spring of all spiritual force. Again a text comes to our assistance: "When thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly" (Mat. 6:6). Here, in a nutshell, is the whole instruction as to meditation, put so tersely, yet with clarity and beauty: with clean body, quiet emotionally, and outer mind steadied, daily to withdraw to the silent place. There to present one's thoughts to God, and to align to his thought the delicately poised inner mind. The inner mind has as a characteristic the quality of divine patience that knocks constantly at the door of the Self, who is of the Father and is aware of his glory. Slowly the door swings open and the light of the Self shines through, and the reward in personal life is plain for all to see. It is potent good; for it is of God.

For meditation to be of most value, it is necessary to have some purpose in view, some dedicated plan of life, however simple. Not a plan 'disengaged from the many everyday tasks of all sorts, but a plan that glorifies them, making of them the "perfect service."

The deeply revealing religious literature of the world has innumerable phrases, sentences, and verses setting forth the necessary daily dedication, fine intimations of the lines along which eternity flows. Part of the period of silence should be given to brooding over one or more of these intimations, until the moment of concentration arises,

followed by the quiet of meditation, when the truth of the statement is felt or seen. During this effort the outer mind will try to wander, such is its age-long habit; but with cheerful persistence restrain it until it respects its master and falls into acquiescence. It will then pause and wonder at the glory of the light that comes through the inner mind.

We use the phrase “act of God” for unusual physical happenings—for violent storms, severe cold, great heat, peculiar “accidents,” and so on. But all acts are of God, each is a movement of larger or small significance in the vast machinery of Nature, God’s unfinished garment. To know how this machinery should work with the greatest ease and efficiency is accomplished by cooperating with its purpose. It is the mystery of Karma-yoga (karma = action, yoga = union). It is to know God’s will and to *do* it. This is the grand human task.

Personality clamors to satisfy its nature qualities.<sup>1</sup> Ethics have no meaning for it. Ethics arise out of experience—physical, emotional, mental-sifted, blended, judged, and finally accepted by the soul according to its own inner life. While meditating, the soul has the opportunity of examining, and begins to control the choice of experience and to direct the method of daily life. The soul will, in fact, begin to prejudge the day’s affairs and invest them with the quality of “good works.” There may be many failures, but they need not be dwelt upon, so that they do not assume undue importance, and thus become obstacles in the way of success. It is sufficient quickly to decide upon their lack of merit and determine they shall not be repeated. The flower has many setbacks during growth, but persistently it pushes forward to fulfillment, in spite of all discomforts or distractions. We can do likewise, and even more.

If meditation is persisted in, then, with all dedicated certainty, the Real, the Self, invests all dedicated acts, and earth becomes the promised Heaven.

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<sup>1</sup> These are said to be basically three (their permutations are infinite): 1. tension, called also inertia; 2. extreme restlessness, mobility; 3. harmony, balanced rhythm; or in the Sanskrit; *tamas-guna*; *rajas-guna* and *sattva-guna*.