

On the Distinction between Means and Objective

It has already been said that we all have one common Goal and that is Full Enlightenment. But to attain that Goal various means are employed adapted to the peculiar needs of each individual. It is found from experience that all individuals do not respond in the same way to the same means. A method which helps one individual to attain Enlightenment may fail to help another or may even increase his difficulties. We have already seen how means is in some way related to the psychological constitution of the individual and to his relative stage of development. So in finding the appropriate means that will work effectively in any individual case we must know something about his psychological organization and the level of consciousness on which he now rests.

All means employed may be regarded as a form of discipline or training. When dealing with groups that are not segregated according to types the means employed must be general and rather eclectic so that different needs may be satisfied. Some of the elements will be valuable for some individuals and some for others, but not all will be of equal value for all individuals. Now it should be clear that general or group work must be extensive and preliminary rather than intensive and advanced. Very few students at present are ready for the more intensive and advanced work.

It is impossible to include all psychological types in a single group-discipline since the technique of some of the requisite means are incompatible with the technique

of others. Any large organization that is united as to Goal but designed to meet the needs of all types would have to be divided into various orders so that some types would enter some orders and others other orders, but no one individual would pass through all. In each of these orders there would be important differences of teaching and practice, but a common agreement as to goal. At present our group work unites on the common denominator of intuition as is revealed in the type analysis. The evidence is that none of the students ~~are~~^{is} predominantly strong in thinking, ~~feeling~~ and sensation though there are a few in ^{whom} ~~which~~ feeling may predominate.

In connection with one who teaches it is important to distinguish between the final value or state aimed at and the method that is taught. The method given to a student may differ radically from that which was used by the teacher. In such ~~in~~ a case the teacher may tell the student to follow a course which diverges in important respects from his own life-practice. It is possible, then, to draw the conclusion that the teacher does not practice what he teaches and sets a poor example. But this view is superficial. If the teacher has not as yet himself attained the objective, his faithfulness would have to be evaluated by the way he follows his private discipline and not by his conformity with the discipline he prescribes to a student who is of different type or standing on a different level. Since, in some respects, the living by one discipline involves the violating of the norm of alternative disciplines, it is impossible to live

and practice in accordance with all methods at once. There is no contradiction in a teacher's prescribing a method for a student which he does not himself follow.

If a given teacher has attained the objective of the discipline he has followed he is no longer under the necessity of continuing that discipline, for all methods are means to ends and not ends in themselves. Means should be abandoned when they have accomplished their work, otherwise there may be attachment to particular technique which forms a new kind of bondage. Such a teacher is to be valued by what he is rather than by what he does. It is not sufficient for the student to do as he does, but he should follow the instruction that fits his own private need and refrain from judging his teacher or other students of different type by that standard.

Often a teacher will practice a mode of life as an example to others although the practice is unnecessary to him as an individual. It is said that Shankara continued religious practices in this sense. There is much to be said for this course of action. But it helps only when the practice is valuable for all individuals who come under the teacher's influence. When the teacher's influence extends to widely diverse types difficulty arises in trying to be an example in this sense, for that course of action which attracts and helps some individuals may prejudice others who are differently oriented ^{but} and have equal spiritual possibilities. For a teacher to have broad influence among types his private life-practice must not be confused with his teaching.

It is the teaching that should be followed and not the private practice of the teacher. Again, it is what the teacher is that is important and not what he does.

We of the West tend to over-emphasize function and correspondingly to under-value Being. We tend more to be impressed by personal example than by principle. Thus we have generally attached more importance to the life of Jesus than to His teaching. This always narrows the possible usefulness of a teacher. It means that his help is largely restricted to those who are of a type similar to his ~~own~~ own, or of the type to which he deliberately adapted himself during his lifetime. Such teachers cannot carry an universal appeal. So if any teacher is to have the widest possible appeal there must be a radical distinction between his empiric life and his significance.

Buddha is a more universal Teacher than Shankara or Jesus just because He was less oriented to any one type than either of the latter. Yet, even He could not help but have a particular psycho-physical organism and, therefore, a more or less specialized type-structure through which He functioned. Generally, He alienated the Brahmin while finding a common ground for most other men. Some of the Buddhist~~s~~ Arhats helped to correct~~/~~this by giving a different technical emphasis, but largely the correction came through Shankara. Buddha also often said that a man should find his own Way and stand on his own feet, thus doing what He could to guard against mere copying.

Each man is responsible for living by the technique he has accepted from his teacher or has found for himself, but he has no right to impose his norm upon others.