

Some aspects of the teaching of Vedanta.

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**I**t is truly said that time and space are illusory. To one who is conscious of his eternal existence, time has no meaning. Why we are not stable-minded and balanced as yet, is because we are running after transitory things. It is the succession of ideas due to the ever-changing and shadowy phenomena that creates sense of time. As soon as this succession or "the modification of the thinking principle" is stilled or stopped, the sense of time will lose its reality.

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The eternal, the *Parabrahma*, the Absolute is all-pervading and mightier and greater than the *Māyā*, the material side of the Universe. So to a spiritually-minded man the difference between sacred and profane has little meaning. He has more reason to sense the blessedness in everything with which he comes in contact than an ordinary man of the world. There is more joy and bliss for him. Such a person cannot be blinded by matter. The existence of misery, sorrow and suffering which we see all round, is explicable. Most of the human beings rush headlong into material enjoyment, oblivious of their true being, which is *Sachchidānanda*; they identify themselves with matter and seek pleasure, happiness, security and peace from something (matter) which is incapable of affording any abiding happiness. To seek any happiness from worldly objects

is to search for the impossible. Therefore this futile attempt should be given up.

(3)

Those treading the *Nivṛtti-Mārga* or path of return, and having once for all made up their mind to turn inward, spirit-ward, should whole-heartedly devote all their energies to the cultivation of moral qualities and constant identification of themselves with the higher and the spiritual life.

We have long been associated with the life of matter, so we have to spend an equal number of years on the spiritual path before we reach our goal. Having fully realized the immensity of our task and the true nature of higher life, we should never be discouraged even for a moment, if we fail in our attempts; every effort that we make takes us onward and ensures our final triumph.

We have to perform a twofold task: one is the persistent, unceasing, and earnest effort spirit-ward; another is service. The life of unselfish service will not only elevate us and help us to realize our oneness with *the all*, but it will to a great extent free us from our past Karmic liabilities, without which we cannot attain our goal, *i. e.*, liberation.

(4)

What does evolution mean from the Vedantic point of view? The self in all is the same. It is immutable, all-pervasive, stable, ancient, unborn, undying;

it is perfect at all times. What is it, then, that evolves ?

Sometimes the Self identifies itself with the not-self, and, when it begins to emerge from the depth of Mayaic forms, it is said to evolve and gradually rise from the bewildering varieties of multifarious forms. Or, better still, the gradual conquest of self over matter may be called evolution.

( 5 )

Humanity is one; human thoughts and aspirations have common bonds with one another. They are so closely allied that they constantly act and react upon each other, and thus prove the kinship of all that lives. As an instance of this fact we might say that poetic instincts, search for truth and mutual influence of ancient and modern languages and of vernaculars and dialects upon one another, are so patent that the influence of a common stock pointing to human brotherhood at one time is perhaps irresistible.

( 6 )

To put an end to pain is the object of philosophy, according to Indian thinkers. Everything material is pain-giving and in the long run illusory. The best remedy for sorrow, suffering, misery and misfortune is *Jñāna*, wisdom, a clear and keen spiritual insight into the meaning of birth and death. A man plunged in grief and sunk in sorrow and sufferings of all kinds should try to cultivate spiritual insight, and it is this that will launch him safely across the "valley of the shadow of death."

A spiritually regenerate man remains calm, balanced and unruffled in

the midst of trials and heart-burnings. He begins to look upon every kind of suffering as a passing shadow and does not allow himself to be affected by any untoward circumstances.

As he grows in spiritual development he gradually realizes that his innermost self is the spirit eternal, and the tabernacle of the flesh is but a changing, decaying, and therefore unreal form. With this thought he calmly dwells in peace.

( 7 )

"Liberty" or freedom is the general cry of the modern world. People demand freedom from all restraints and restrictions, uninterrupted and uninterfered with, to have a free hand in all their affairs, social and political, to organize their business and political associations in any way they think best. In short, most of the advanced civilized nations of the West have now attained to a greater amount of personal, social, religious and political freedom than their forbears did; and yet in another sense they still remain shackled and trammelled. Of true inward freedom they have none; nor in the true sense of the word they are really free and unfettered.

Man is said to be the master of his own destiny and yet he does not fully realize that he has allowed himself to be enslaved by so many bonds and restrictions. He is, truly speaking, the slave of his desire and passion, at the mercy of every passing fancy, torn by anger, assailed by fear and haunted by all kinds of hopes and expectations. How can such a person be called free ?

True freedom consists in freeing one's self from one's lower, unworthy

considered perfect beings have simply transcended the limitations of matter and overcome its seductive forces. In their inner self there has been no increase. It always serenely persists beyond good and evil. As in a vast ocean bubbles rise and fall, waves ebb and flow, waters rush forth in torrents, and yet it as a

whole remains unchanged, similarly, in the one Supreme Reality who is the Soul of our souls, there is never any ripple of change. Says Śrī Kṛṣṇa: "Know that to be indestructible by whom all this is pervaded. Nor can anyone work the destruction of that imperishable One."

