

Chapter II. From Truth to Truth

Questions may be asked and doubts expressed by many about the state of a person after attaining fulfillment, the fullness of awareness. The person's life will be saturated with unexcelled divine bliss (*ananda*). The person will experience oneness of thought, emotion, and knowledge with all. The person will be in ecstasy, immersed in the One and Only, the eternal divine Principle, for that alone can confer joy during the process of living. Genuine joy is this and no other. God is the embodiment of eternal ever-full joy. Those loyal to Indian (*Bharathiya*) culture, whatever sect or faith they claim as their special mould, accept this axiom: God is the highest source of joy. This conclusion (*matha*) they accept as dearest and most pleasurable (*abhimatha*).

Self is fullness and bliss is wholeness

Fullness means wholeness. Wholeness implies One and not two or three. There cannot then be any place for the individual. When an individualized *Atma* or soul (*jivi*), the particularized differentiated self, has become whole and full, there is no possibility of its return to the consciousness of the objective world—such doubts may arise in the minds of many, but these doubts are not correct. When the individualised soul becomes fixed in the totality (*samashiti*), it loses all ideas of distinction and is ever in the consciousness of the totality, the One that subsumes the many. The person will then be aware that the Reality of each is the Reality of all and that that Reality is the One Indivisible *Atma*. The person will not exhibit any consciousness of distinction between individuals.

The Divine that it knows as the core of each “thing and being” is now recognized by it as the Divine that it itself is, so it will be deeper than ever in the fullness of bliss (*ananda*). How can it then experience separateness? No, it cannot. The rays of that bliss illumine all religions. The sages and great wise people (*rishis*) became aware of the bliss. They communicated that experience to the world in easily understandable language. The unreachable moon is made known by pointing a finger in the direction where it can be seen! So too, they brought within the purview of people the truth that lies beyond the reach of mind and speech, according to the state of consciousness that each of them had attained. Their teachings were not only simple but varied to educate and elevate all levels of understanding.

Merging of the individual in the Total

One feels happy when one has the knowledge that this one little body is one's own, right? Then, when one knows that two bodies belong to one, shouldn't one be twice as happy? In the same way, with the knowledge that one has an increasing number of bodies, the experience of happiness goes on increasing. When the whole world is known to be one body and world consciousness becomes part of the awareness, then the bliss will be full. To get this multi-consciousness, the limited egocentric prison walls must be destroyed.

When the ego-self (or *jivi*) identifies itself with the divine *Atma*, death will cease. When the ego-self identifies itself and merges with the bliss of the One, sorrow will cease. When it merges with spiritual wisdom (*jnana*), error will cease. “Material individualness is born out of delusion; this body, which creates that impression, is only an ever-evolving atom of a boundless ocean; the second entity in me is the other form, namely, the embodied Self; when the ego of mine merges with the divine Self in me, then the delusion disappears through the upsurge of its opposite, supreme knowledge.” When one's thought matures in the process of time, undoubtedly all schools of

thought have to reach this conclusion.

Significance of idol worship

A tree's value is estimated with reference to its fruits. Take idol worship, for example. Moralists, metaphysicians, philosophers, adherents of the path of devotion, and the foremost among the virtuous in all parts of the world have all agreed that idol worship is highly beneficial. As long as attachment to the material body and possessions persists, worship of a material symbol is necessary. It is but a means, but many decry it as a superstition. This is not correct. It is not the right approach. Such an attitude is just an outburst of foolishness.

Is it not a fact that the belief in one's being the body is a superstition? Can the body last forever? Is it not a skin doll with nine apertures, in which life is so perilously existent that a sneeze may cause collapse? Again, should we not characterize the life people lead, believing in the reality of this world, as another superstition? Isn't all the self-importance assumed by people who have positions of power and a great quantity of riches another foolish pose?

But acts done on the basis of faith in the *Atma*, the Reality within, can't be dubbed as superstitious or foolish. For every opinion one expresses, if proper reasons are given, all will rejoice. But to declare as superstitious all that one doesn't like is a sign of frenzy, foolishness, or egotism.

We will find it impossible to love God or adore Him unless we meditate on some form; this is as essential as breathing is for sheer living. This is a necessary stage in the process of living. One has to accept it as such. Childhood is the father of old age. Can old age condemn childhood or teenage as evil? To experience the divine Principle, idol worship is and has been a great help to many. How then can the aspirant and the practitioner of spiritual disciplines condemn idol worship after passing through that stage and deriving benefits from it? That would indeed be very wrong and inappropriate.

The Indian (*Bharathiya*) march toward the supreme Reality is not from untruth to truth. It is from truth to truth, from incomplete truth to complete truth, from a partial truth to full truth. For what are spiritual exercises? Every effort made by people, from remote forest dwellers and unsophisticated tribals who adore the gross forms of Divinity to highly evolved seekers who adore the Full and the Absolute, is a spiritual exercise. Each such effort will take one a step forward in progress.

Each individual soul (*jivi*) is comparable to a bird; by longer and higher flights, it can rise up into the sky. And a stage may finally be gained when it can fly right up to the full splendoured orb of the sun.

Eschewing dogmatism and violence

The basic truth of nature is the One in the many; that is the key to its understanding. The Indians (*Bharathiyas*) grasped this truth; they held fast to this key. People of other countries were content to lay down certain axioms and enforce belief in them. They insisted on acceptance of these axioms and observance of rules and regulations that arose out of them. They held one single coat before the individuals of the society where they lived and required every one to wear that same coat; there was no alternative coat for people it did not fit. They had to live without a coat to protect them against the chill wind.

The Indian approach was quite different. For each aspect or variation of feeling and thinking, volition and action, they made available a distinct name and form and provided modes of worship and ways of adoration in

accordance with the emotional needs and intellectual calibre of the aspirants and devotees. Of course, a few had no need for such special consideration and treatment, but many took advantage of this concession and advanced in their march toward spiritual wisdom and liberation.

For one thing, never was it laid down as part of the Indian spiritual endeavour that idol worship is a must or a stage that has to be gone through. But there is one fact that each one must preserve in their memory: Indians may have attachment to their bodies, they may be attached to the upkeep and development of their standards of living, but they would never yearn to cut the throats of others. Indians who are fanatic about religion would rather immolate themselves in flames raised and fed by them than, through hatred, burn alive those who do not accept and revere their religion. Indian spirituality negated the destruction of the *Atma*, the One inextinguishable Truth.

The message of India (Barath)

The ancient Indian religion fostered the faith that the Self in a person is no other than the Overself, or God. Indian religion directs long journeys by men and women toward the goal of the splendour of God consciousness or the consciousness of the Divine —through varied paths, confronted and controlled by varied circumstances, but encouraged and enlightened by various types of faith.

Although the practices and rites might appear on the surface to be crude, they are not opposed to the ultimate truth. The seeming contradictions have to be interpreted as incidental to the need to inspire people with varied intellectual, moral, economic, and social backgrounds. For example, the light that comes through a tiny piece of coloured glass is of the same origin as bigger, clearer light. The extent, clarity, brightness, etc. of light depends only on the medium. The source of all light is the One Truth, the Source of all, the Basis of all, the Goal of all, the Reality in all, and the Centre in all. Like the thread on which pearls are strung as a rosary, God or the Overself is interpenetrative in all beings. In all beings. That is the message of India (Bharath). All beings everywhere, anywhere!

Examine carefully all texts and scriptures that deal with Indian culture and traditions. Find out whether any of them mention that liberation (*moksha*) or the highest realization is available only to Indians and not to others. Can you produce a single statement on those lines? It can be emphatically asserted that you cannot. Indian spiritualism has limitless vastness and immensely high ideals; it is a full stream of sanctifying ideations, flowing along with no decline or diminution, straight and smooth to the ocean of divine grace. The journey is direct, along a royal road toward the supreme goal.

Another point: The source of all spiritual principles recognized and revered by Indians (*Bharathiyas*) is God; He is the one supporting pillar. Therefore, no other support is needed for faith. Ancient Indian spirituality is the very foundation of all other faiths; it stands on the very summit. It has achieved victory over many opposing faiths, confronting them with many valid arguments and theories. Indians have no need to follow any religion or spiritual discipline besides their own, for nowhere else can one secure a discipline or truth that is not existing herein. Other faiths have adopted only some one or other of its beliefs and principles and placed them before people as ideals to be adopted.

What has to be borne in mind is this: Indian (*Bharathiya*) texts on spirituality are the most ancient in the whole world; they are the earliest studies and discoveries of the *Atma*, of personal and impersonal God, and of codes of conduct, individual and social, based on those revelations and discoveries. In no other country, among

no other peoples, have such ancient teachings seen the light. There may be some misty ideas or brief glimpses, but they do not deserve the name “spiritual text” or “literature”. The *Vedic* literature pictures not only spiritual inquiries by the sages and spiritual aspirants and their results but also their lines of thought, their yearnings and aspirations, their secular struggles and temporal problems.