

FROM THE EDITORIAL DESK:

WHAT IS RELIGION? HOW IS IT THAT THERE ARE MORE THAN ONE RELIGIONS?

Can Religion Be Devoid of Mysticism? What is Mysticism?

Is Not Our Life On Earth a Profound Mystery?

A man was walking on the road with his eyes intently towards the ground, as if he was looking for something. The devil and his friend were following him at a little distance away.

"What is he looking for?" Devil's friend asked. "The Truth", replied the devil.

The man suddenly stopped, bent down and picked up something. It looked like a shining crystal emanating beautiful colours. The man was so over-joyed that he began to dance. The devil standing a little away also started dancing.

"Why are You dancing? You are the king of Untruth; You lead people away from Truth. It is no occasion for you to be joyful when that man has found the Truth. You must be sorry. You have lost one of your disciples."

The devil laughed heartily. "On the contrary, I have gained him. He will now be on my side," the devil said.

"How?" the friend asked, "with the Truth in his hand, he will now discard all your trickeries, which you employ for leading people away from God."

The devil chuckled. "You don't know my ways. This man has at present seen the crystal in its true colours. As he reaches home, I shall start my work on him. I shall raise up the ego at present dormant in his mind. As his ego inflates, he will feel proud. You know what is pride? It is a nice inlet for me to enter the human mind. Gradually the inlet becomes a big gate allowing all my friends to enter, like anger and jealousy and greed and hatred and passion. His vision will change. His eyes will not be able to see the true colours of the crystal of truth; they will be polluted. The Truth will flicker now and then or here and there before his eyes, but that will be too negligible. The beautiful spectrum will be surrounded by the gray smoke of pride and ego emanating from his own eyes."

"What a way? No doubt, devil's ways are not only cautioned against, but even praised, in God's Scriptures," the friend said with an almost abominable admiration.

"Oh that poor God! His task is much more difficult than mine", the devil said. "His Love finds it extremely arduous to enter the human heart; but my ego has a straight easy entry in the human mind. First he will feel proud to have possessed the Truth Crystal and if his neighbour tells him 'I have also one', he will say, 'Mine is better than yours', and both will start arguing and soon come to blows. Then I laugh and dance, and say within myself, 'what fools they are? Fighting over the Truth! Oh donkeys! take out the smoke of ego and see the pristine spectrum...'"

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This is the work of devil on the humans. God has provided different Crystals of Truth - namely different Religions, and these humans have made them weapons of war.

Just look! Lord Jesus said, "My God has many mansions, and the fanatic Christians started saying: those who do not follow Jesus shall go to hell. (By now the hell must be terribly overcrowded). Lord Mahamood said I come to confirm all Faiths, and here are the fanatic Muslims who call all non-muslim Kaafir's i.e. in their sense, infidels. Here is the great Religion of the Hindus with its Rishis and Saints and Avatars, the very

personifications of love and devotion, fanatically breaking down other mansions of God.

WHAT ABOUT US - THE PARSIS?

And here are Parsis, who say: we do not convert because we are 'superiors', although the real reason for non-conversion is the profound respect and love for other Prophets and Religions; if we convert a Christian, are we not insulting his own Prophet Lord Jesus and boasting that 'mine is better than yours', as if we have the capacity to compare and contrast between the two Prophets, both of whom have talked with God!! There is a Jafri in America, a Mohammedan, who boasts of converting Muslims to Parsis, thereby impliedly degrading his own Prophet!

As the devil in the above story says, he clouds the beautiful spectra of Truth with the smoke of ego. Every Religion is a declaration of Truth. The devil creates the fanatics and make them furiously fight with each other.

The main stick with which he ignites the human ego is the fraudulent belief that the human mind is capable of arriving at the truth through its common sense and logic. From the day Newton presented his "Principia" to the Royal Society - that was 28th April 1686 - the devil started developing this belief furiously fast. The Western humans started to forget all spirituality and devotion to God until by the end of 19th century "the intellectual Godlessness" became rampant in the West. Religion became superstition and a subject of "critical studies". Poor Jawaharlal Nehru fell a victim to the devil's snare. The Western studies of our Parsi Religion found out a passage in the Gatha allegedly preaching: apply your mind and arrive at the Truth through your common sense and logic. See? How powerfully scientific our Religion is to teach the superiority of the human mind? No other Religion teaches this. We are so proud of it! That was devil's work - to boost the pride and to inflate the ego. "Pride goes before the fall", is a great Truth declared by Lord Jesus. Little did we realise that this was a belief destined to be shattered in the 20th century; and the talk of extinction is hotly in the air. That passage in the Gatha is found not to talk of common sense. It talks of "Soochaa Mananghaa" - the most enlightened Mind which has gone beyond its three dimensional darkness of ignorance and is in spiritual attunement with Divine Entities!

IS IT SCIENTIFIC?

After four centuries of intellectual exertions, modern science has now arrived at a dead end. The notion that common sense and logic are the only criteria to find out the truth has proved to be wrong. The Nature does not come to an end where our five senses and consciousness cease to register it. This is now a scientific statement. The Nature is much deeper than the modern science thought it to be. The most common thing like physical matter say, a piece of metal or a drop of water or a leaf of the tree or an ounce of air now defies common sense. It can be said without any hesitation that modern science has come to a point where it cannot understand even a speck of dust. All its exertions have led to deeper and deeper mysteries, notwithstanding the amazing technological advances. Technologies are based on assumptions and presumptions which are not the truths of Nature. They do work, but their working is no proof that they are the true laws by which Mother Nature operates.

In other words modern science is now found to be knocking the door of mysticism.

What is Mysticism? It can be tersely defined as the Science of the Unseen, the Unobservable and the Unknown; the Science that is beyond the consciousness of the common non-saintly humans. Can it be fathomed? Is there a method which can take us beyond? Can the jammed door open?

Here is where Religion enters. All Religions declare that Mysticism is a science, but not unfathomable. There is an ART to open the door. Religion teaches us the art in several mysterious ways.

Religion cannot therefore be without mysticism. To say that Religion is a matter of common sense and logic is a contradiction in terms. As early as in 1930 a formidable mathematician Kurt Goddel has presented a devastating theorem that every statement, written or spoken in human words has an unprovable element within it. That means: not always you can shout: "Prove it logically." The theorem is called Goddel's Incompleteness Theorem. He developed it and presented its startling conclusions till his death in 1978. The point is that there is a mix of the known and the unknown in everything. To know the unknown is the ART of

Mysticism. **Religion is therefore a Science to know and also the Art how to know.** That Art consists in living our life on the Path of Religion, following the rules prescribed by Religion, whatever be our status or circumstances or plight in which we live or are destined to live on this earth. The rules are prescribed by the Paigambar's, Prophets, Saoshyant's of all Religions.

THE MYSTICS OF ALL RELIGIONS.

In addition to those Prophets and Avatar's, who established the great Religions, every Religion is vibrant with its own lines of Saints and Mystics, who have taught the Art of living in various ways. The great Hindu Religion has the Rishis of ancient times and the sages of present times like Mirabai, Tukaram, Narsinh Mehta, Gnyaneshwar, Akho Bhagat, Namdeo, Surdas, Kabir, Tyagraja and a host of others. Islam has its mystic Sufis like Rumi, Hafez, Saadi, Mansur, Al-Ghazali, Farid, Kabir, Mir, Patlu Sahib, Sultan Bahu. The great Religion of Jesus has St. John of the Cross, Ramon Lull, St. Francis, St. Augustine, St. Bernadette, Jacob Boehme, Meister Eckhart, John Main. The Jews have their Saints and Mystics like Isaac of Akko, Azriel of Gerona, Hayyim Vital, Moses Cordovero. Buddhists have their lines of Lamas. There are, then, more modern mystics like Raman Maharshi of Arunachalam, Saibaba of Shirdi, 14th Dalai Lama, Father Bede Griffiths, Baba of Dungarpur, Ramkrishna Paramhans, Swami Vivekanand and Yoganand and their upper lines of Gurus.

We Parsis have Adarbad Maraspand, Ardeshir Kermani, Nairyosang Dhaval, Azar Kaiwan, Meherjirana, Pesuji, Kukadaroo, Baheramshah Shroff, Bomanshah Hakim, Framroze Chiniwalla and many unknown Magav's, Mobeds and Dastooors of Iranian Empires and India spread over numerous centuries right upto the 20th.

The basic Truth taught by every Religion and every Mystic is the same. It is that we were once with God; we separated from Him; had a long Journey away from Him; and are now on our way back to Him. The way is divided into many Paths. This Universal Truth is expressed in varied words, figures and pictures by every Prophet, every Saint and every Mystic.

They have then taught: Follow the Path of God which is assigned to you. The Rules on the Paths have different procedures Tarikats, practices, Yogas, disciplines. It is the duty-dharma of every human to follow the disciplines, exercises and Tarikats of his or her own Religion and look to other Religions with profound respect and adoration, keeping in mind the Truth that every Religion and each of its Tarikats have a deep spiritual and mystical foundation. Moral principles and practices form a very important part of such Tarikats in every Religion and are founded on the Truths weaved in Mystical Sciences. Morality is manifestly founded on Spirituality and is the most essential element of the Art of life and living. The other tarikats like Sudreh Kushti, Atash, Manthra Prayers etc., of the Parsis; Ramzaan fast of the Muslims; Yogic practices of the Hindus; covering the head by the Sikhs, Parsis and Jews; the exercises, practices and ceremonies in the Temples, Mosques, Gurudwars, Synagogues, Agiary's; festivals ordained by different Religions; meditational disciplines; - **all these are meant and intended to lead the different groups of humans to the Art of living; to awaken spirituality and devotion in the heart; to generate internal spiritual energy so as to be able to resist evil thoughts, words and deeds and to practice the rigours of moral teachings and most importantly to generate love towards all mankind and all creation of God and to wipe off all hatred and all sins fermenting within us.**

THAT is the ART of life, ART of Religion, ART of Mysticism. And therefore life is Religion, Religion is life; life **means** travelling on the mystical Path of Religion. It is a mystical path because our temporary journey on this tiniest of the tiny globe is wrapped in mysteries. We do not have the faintest idea from where we are dropped on the globe, where are we going, what was life-before and what will be life-after, and above all WHY all this. We are in the global school, which leads us to the answers to these questions. But we have to follow the rigorous rules of disciplines whilst in the school. The rules are prescribed by the Masters i.e. Prophets, Avatars Saoshyants, Saints, Sages, Seers, Mystics.

Different Religions are different classes in the school. We have to learn and live according to the rules of our class. The rules differ from class to class but the ultimate result is the same- the final Degree - call it Mukti, Moksha, Salvation, Liberation, Frashogard. While in the school, let us not hesitate to play with the children of other classes, to know what they are learning in their own classes, compare their learnings with

ours. But in practice follow the rules prescribed by our own class-Masters.

Gatha Ha 31-11 reveals the secret of there being different Religions and 34-11 proclaims that every Religion can lead to salvation, if its Rules taught by its Master, are followed duly, properly and rigorously.

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(Parsi Pukar Jan.-Feb.-Mar. 2004 - Vol. 9; No. 3)