

The Nature of Spirituality - December 1, 2020

In current times, with the pandemic and other problems, the systems of religion find themselves in a decline. But, nonetheless, we each must have and keep our sense of a spiritual path. Finding that path, and pursuing it, is the central message of these lectures.

The difficult times force people to take a pragmatic view of their spiritual approach. The realities of daily life, work, and family constrain us to do certain things, and leave little room for seeking deeper truths.

The Divine spark within ourselves, called Atman in the Hindu philosophy, is revealed only by removing the obstructions of ego and daily life. Religions are reluctant to allow the individual freedom needed to dive deeply into our own experience, and thus are of little assistance. This makes it difficult for one to discern truth from empty dogma, but the very questions which arise from within can lead one to this discernment and thus point to the path for a refined aspect of one's interior life.

Each culture leads to a personal picture of God, and thus God seems quite different across the world, and over time. In this way it can be said that we create our own personal God, our own 'truth', and become trapped in that view. The Hinduism, unlike other philosophies, allows for different viewpoints. By not denying each different group or view, it allows for these views to be seen as merely reflecting the diverse nature of the unified One Divine. Most importantly, Hinduism allows for individual experience, the essence of religion, and perhaps this is why it has survived for so long while others decline.

In matters of spirituality, mankind is objectivizing when interpreting the religious mysteries in terms of one's own experience and culture. We surround ourselves with objective statuary or icons that sooth our sense of protection. We even appropriate or adopt symbols of protection from other cultures, such as statues of Buddha or certain crystals. The human nature requires that our system of belief be completely defined and within specified limits in order to bring the limitless Supreme Being within the human parameters. This is why so many religions depict God as a man, anthropomorphically. In other words, we cannot really think about God without using the power of our imagination. Everyone does it; we cannot stop. Nonetheless, the attempt to objectivize or paint an attribute of God can only result

in illusion. Yet, the process, while not yielding an absolute truth, can lead one to truth if they also are open to listening to the voice within. One can't gain a higher perception if they focus only upon the mundane. One must allow themselves to perceive the higher realms even though they cannot 'see' them. Even the visionary needs imagination to express the vision. In so doing he or she succumbs to the exigence of the 'finite'. It is the result of the protoforms "if such is mankind, God will; surely reflect into that image".

The Christian sees God as a mother whose heart is full of compassion and tenderness toward her children. We feel that we are children of God. Every way of access, every communication follows the disposition of human thinking.

While admitting the diversity of descriptions of God, we must not to fall into a form of polytheism. These different representations do not indicate what God is, but what God is within us supporting essentially the closest of our needs.

Whenever God is mentioned by us, the nature of our needs follows closely and therefore its representation.

The supra-personal and personal representation of God are respectively the absolute and relative means to express the unique reality. Whenever we mention the real truth we tend to refer to an absolute God. And whenever we mention his relation with us, when we have a special request, it then becomes a personal; God by reference.

It therefore requires a constant evolution of God knowledge until we no longer have a single representative notion remaining. This leads to a continual change of conception although it is in mankind's desire to elaborate a finite conception of God.