

The Nature of Spirituality - November 8, 2020

It's important for all of us, particularly spiritual seekers, to seek the experiences of life, and to challenge the dogma of our own culture. We are too often inclined to let the ministers and professionals lead the way, and do it for us. We need to remove the anguish of the feeling "I can't do it". There is much available to us, the Divine is open and loving and continually floods us with the direct experiences of life.

For the Hindu, the philosophy of religion starts from the basis of experience, and recognizes that, to avoid becoming 'too big', institutionally, it needs to always return to these fundamentals. All institutions eventually endeavor to expand their own membership. However, one cannot advance in spirituality by blindly following some religion like a sheep, he or she must seek their own experience. The value of a spiritual teaching is only good if it encourages people to do this.

The Western spiritual concept is associated with the Judeo-Christian revelation and makes this revelation as a unique absolute authority to provide a path to salvation. The ancient teachings of the church are thus said to be the only path to this salvation. (Of course, this approach excludes most peoples of the earth, which is fundamentally in conflict with the idea that 'we all are One with the Divine'.)

The Christian theology admits one to this salvation through only a strict adherence to certain spiritual experiences, and refutes other experiences as illusory since they are not recognized by canon law. However, the Eastern experience was never characterized by this authoritative and dogmatic attitude and allowed other experiences, even less perfect or less noteworthy, to gain recognition so long as they lead to purification of the heart, and thus help them to overcome the adversity of the world. The Eastern thinking is quite ready to admit other points of view, regarding them as worthy in dignity as their own. As found in Confucian teaching, one must respect all those who are above, below, or even with themselves.

Admittedly, the human race, though different creeds or cultures, is at different stages of receiving the multiple aspects of God's grace, yet still manifests an equally diversified wisdom. Diverse respective scriptures illuminate the different emotions and intuitions of various cultures on the developing canvas of humanity. Through deep introspection and a spiritual quest, one may find the right prism of vision that suits his or her personal experience and development. It is not advisable to enter into a religious syncretism (an amalgam of different religions and cultures, such as a 'faith based' or inter-faith teaching), since that might generate a large amount of confusion. It is not therefore in the merging of different cultures that one

might find his well-deserved personal wisdom. Our experience and path is unique, and doesn't fit into some intellectually crafted group of teachings. One's full acceptance of a given teaching, while helpful, can lead them to forego and disregard their own emerging experience. Any tradition, even if primitive, that helps mankind in raising their souls toward God should be regarded worthy of admission. Diversity in the maturity of experiences is to be recorded and acknowledged.

Tradition not a phenomena of the past, but is alive. It is the unravelling process of personal experience over the ages. It permeates one's experience to light up their past, and assists one in living, not out of Karma, but out of their current experience. The Tradition is incessantly recreated and re-elaborated through the active freedom of its adepts. As each experience is the product of an individual embedded within its flawed character. It nonetheless, in the immense collective unconsciousness, contributes to an ever purification of a new contemporary revelation.

Each philosophy is familiar to a variety of God's images depending on the culture or the archetype of religions from which they proceed. All religious experience is not only a rough representation of reality but the reality tainted by the perceiving spirit. The animation of one's spirit automatically shows and illuminates throughout their personality, and all their actions.