

In these difficult times, we find ourselves enduring a pandemic and rising social unrest; and other institutions, even religions have been somewhat silenced and separated from their members. Although the spiritual void has caused great suffering, one can also take the challenge to undergo a lot of self-searching and question their life route and purpose as to raise the three fundamental questions in philosophy: where do I come from, who am I, and where am I going.

The attitude towards spirituality requires new avenues for the intellect to be subordinate to the intuition, the dogma to be subordinate to one's own experience. This is quite novel thinking as the opposite occupies the society at large dominated by the dogma of material intellectualism. The grasp of one's culture and various institutions is strong enough to force a general consensus of thinking and acceptance of fate. People have grown to favor the beliefs of their intellect and their reasoning to overcome their own fear much more than their intuition. Fear during the great plagues of the medieval times, when survival became the dominant instinct, lead to the impoverishment of the spiritual life. Likewise during our times we are acting with similar behavior. More distant from the protection of the established religion, each of us may seek answers beyond the usual reasoning and find other refuges in spite of the intense desire for survival.

However, it is the attention to intuition, listening to your heart, which is a spiritual 'must' for one's quest. (Note that intuition is different from desire, which is merely a physical appetite). True spirituality will also not engage in the comparison of religious beliefs or systems, as they mostly the result from large controlling institutions.

So it can be said that in time of fear people tend to rely on their own judgements, and are more inclined to engage in seeking their true nature (this is consistent with the notion that we are entering the age of Aquarius.)

The spirituality has for its utmost objective to reveal and authenticate the existence of the real Self (the Atman which is the universal self) and its power of universal unity. The path is revealed through the intuition, the heart. The Atman is covered up and hidden by the 'ego' and by the many hardened beliefs and experiences which imprison our minds into a tough "shell" of denying our true self. The knowledge of the heart can pierce through this egoic 'shell' and apprehend the

Atman, the true self. Whenever the atman is apprehended, a release of the grip of the ego is in effect where desires are replaced by pure acts, detached from emotion and material considerations. This leads to 'non-actions in the sense that they don't create a karmic imprint, rather they transcend our being to make our experiences truly a spiritual enlightenment rising our human condition to the mirror of our true self.

In all the religious institutions and spiritual philosophies, the mystic, that is, the person on a serious spiritual quest, is led to achieve his or her experience primarily in accordance with the prevailing formal religious belief system taught by that institution. Thus we note that the visions of the saints were always painted in accordance with their own religion beliefs. One who is on this path should then guard against the attraction of beautiful visions, icons, or images, since they are just transitory, even illusory; the truth is beyond the visible. Obviously, the use of icons are understandably needed by religions to support their teachings, but should merely be considered as stepping stones toward the apprehension of the truth. As said by Robert Browning, 'The truth is inside and the truth is outside, between the two is the error, the truth is what last'.

As noted, we approach an age where individuals will be more responsible for their own progress, and where spirituality will be more personal. Spirituality has been subordinated to a catalog of dogma or opinions that have been carried out for centuries. Eschatology describes the experience after death with the after-life, the end of the world, and the destiny of the soul in humanity. The Hindu spirituality however has not adopted such dogmas, but coexists with many different views, and focusses on adhering to the purpose to make for each person his or her own experience.

This experience does not need the validation of any institution, but only by one's own heart, one's own intuition. Thus, you can do it on your own! (note that the 'final judgement' in many religions is indeed conducted by the soul reviewing his or her own past life, as it is also reported in many near death experiences. In ancient Egypt and in Christianity, a scale is used to weigh the heart against their own Truth.)