

GOD, MYSTICAL EXPERIENCE, NOT A SCHOLASTIC EXERCISE.

SWAMI VIVKEANAND'S ATTUNEMENT WITH LORDS BUDDHA AND CHRIST.

THE MYSTERY OF "AHOO" - "HE IS" - IN MAZDAYASNI DAENA AND ITS CHRISTIAN AND JEWISH VERSIONS.

Prayer is our communication or communion or attunement with God, with ourselves at one end and God at the other.

We, at our end, are a mixture of good and evil, and are commanded by God, through His Messengers, to melt and transmute the evil into good by following the path of Dharma, Daenaa. One of the weapons for transformation of our 'wolf' into 'cow', is the Manthra prayer.

The other end of the prayer line is God. He is not just an intellectual concept. He cannot be thought out. He is to be experienced deep within us and outside us. All attempts to understand God by the non saintly intellect of the humans has led to atheism. What exists is the God of Prophets and Saints and Seers. What does not exist is the God of 'scholars' and professors.

The scholarly thinking on God leads us, into a jungle of confusion. One God, many Gods; montheism, polytheism; absolute, relative; infinitie, zero; light, darkness; formless, with form; ... there is an endless jargon of words and words. How can God or Gods of Hinduism reconcile with no God of Buddhism in our heads? Father Bede Griffiths said that the word God has infinite meanings and is so much beyond our mental equipment that Lord Buddha did not want this followers to bother about it, and asked them just to follow the eight-fold path. The rest will come by itself. Swami Vivekanand required his Guru Sri Ramkrishna's divine touch to break off the agnostic mesh his mind was ensnared in. And once the light is on, no confusion remains. One day, driven by an inexplicable craving for Lord Buddha, Swami Vivekanand had gone to Bodh-Gaya and meditated for long hours under the sacred tree where Lord Buddha had attained enlightenment. **Swamiji keenly felt the presence of Lord Buddha Himself and was overwhelmed by a flood of compassion and divine bliss.** On another occasion, after the death of Shri Ramkrishna, Swamiji and his brother disciples were meditating around FIRE, as the Hindu Monks do, when he experienced a divine flash from Lord Jesus Christ. (From Swami Nihilanand's biography of Swami Vivekanand.) **Once God is experienced in whatever manner or at whatever level, all the intellectual equations are reduced to Zero and all apparent contradictions and confusions disappear.** The dilemma of no God in Buddhism and many Gods in Hinduism vanish. The lesson for us is, then, that it is no use entering into scholastics about God. The best way is to establish communication with Him by Manthra prayer, with a burning feeling of devotion: **"Whatever thou art oh God! please be with me, lead me towards Thee, and reveal Thy self to me when i am fit to receive Thee."** Is this not enough for us? Yet, we do have a desire to know something about Ahuramazda with our feeble mind. We still have a craving to bring Him to our intellectual level. That is a very difficult almost impossible exercise, since in the very nature of things, we will have just to believe in certain truths with Faith alone, recognising that our thinking process is too ill-equipped to understand them.

Love and Devotion - Contact Between Intelligence and Mystery

This humble writer ventures to take you a little in the Truths regarding Aho, Ahura, Ahuramazda, as narrated in the Religion of Zarathushtra and elucidated by its authentic mysticism, IIm-e-Khshnoom. **If you desire to have knowledge, you must erase all your preconceived notions and prejudices, and go in search of truth with an open and clear mind.** Once you drink a little from this divine Jam-e-Khshnoom (the vessel of Khshnoom), you will experience a serene peace of mind. Your heart will throb with inexplicable devotion for Asho Zarathustra. We, the ordinary humans, have intelligence; but there is mystery in the universe. Our intellect, in the present stage, is incapable of probing the mystery and can just hover over its surface. **When our deficient mind establishes a contact, howsoever feeble, with some mystery of Nature, our heart throbs with love and devotion; because an intense sense of wonder passes through us and electrifies us.** Love, devotion is thus the contact between the mind and the heart, between intelligence and mystery. And what is mystery? A pointer towards Reality. It is just a pointer, because Reality

is a matter of experience, a matter of expanding consciousness, which, at our present stage, is beyond our mental equipment and capacity. **But the pointer pricks our heart sharply with ecstasy and bliss. That is called "Khshnoom" in our holy Manthra Prayers.** Gatha Yazashney Haa 48-12 and 53-2 have the word 'Khshnoom', directly. Its various forms and variations from the root "Khsnu", are found at several other places, like "Khshneyvishaa" (Gatha - Yaz Haa 28-1); "Khshnuteym" (Gatha 'Yaz. Ha 51-9); "Khshna-auseymno" (G. Y 4618); "Khshnooto" (Fravardin Yashta - K - 2,8) "Khshnaa-ve-yeiti" (Khorshed Niyash); "Khshnaothra", "Khshanaothraaicha" (in all Niyash's and Yashta's).

Believe, Be Not Faithless

In the intellectual contact which you are going to have while reading further, you will come across mysteries, which you will have to believe without asking for so called 'logical' and 'rational' "proofs". Today, Mother-Nature has given sufficient shocks to the scientific community to indicate that so much of logic or rationality we have, is entirely inadequate to give us even a glimpse of the Mother's mysteries. Quantum physics and Liar's Paradox have shaken to the core, the human ego of putting Nature in the pocket of the human brain, which is described as "the darkest continent of the century"

"Aho" - " He Is"

With this mental preparation, let us enter into the surface - realm of the Mystery of all Mysteries, "Aho". Mind! I say, 'Aho', not 'Ahuramazda'.

Aho is the highest peak of the incapability and incapacity of our mental equipment. All that can be said about Him is that "He Is". But Who Is He? Answer: Don't ask! Question permitted, but not the answer. If it is a 'He', a pronoun, then He must have a noun or name. No! He is nameless. He has no attributes, no qualities, no adjectives. You can't even say He is nothing or anything or something. He is unthinkable, unconceivable. But to say that He is unthinkable, is itself a 'thinking', isn't it? You think that HE is unthinkable, so HE is thinkable.

Liar's Paradox

This is an incident of Liar's Paradox, which enwraps the entire thinking process of the humans.

Suppose a Parsi tells you "All Parsis are liars". Is this statement true? Are Parsis liars or truthful? If they are really liars, then that statement by a Parsi is a lie. But if it is a lie then it means **Parsis are not liars i.e. they are truthful.** If so, then that Parsi is speaking the truth i.e. his statement is true; but if it is true, then **Parsis are liars** because that's what he says! And we go round again.

From Bible to Artificial Intelligence (A I)

I am presenting this not as just a mental teaser. This paradox is so much entwined in the human thinking process that it occurs from Bible to the latest computer! St. Paul in his epistle to Titus says that a Cretan prophet himself said that "all cretans are liars". From here this Liar's Paradox or Epimenides Paradox entered the 'science' of logic; from there it ran into Mathematics through a brilliant mathematician Kurt Godel; from there to computer pioneer Turing's machine; then via computers to the great debate on Artificial Intelligence (AI) where the issue is **whether a computer can think like humans, i.e. whether the thinking human is just a computer machine;** and from there to what is human thought itself, and ultimately to the question who is a human i.e. back, after a horrible full circle, to Socrates's root question **"Who am I.?"** This is one of the most modern and most complex subjects in Science. The debate on AI is so huge that the advocates of either side write huge books and are compelled to include everything in the debate, like physics and philosophy, consciousness and cosmology, entropy and evolution, music and neurology, time and tide and what not. The debate has a significant pointer, **"that we have something a machine can never have - an ability to grasp truth intuitively in the absence of formal evidence"** (Bryan Appleyard in his book par excellence "Understanding the Present" Picador 1992 - p.219). **There is no proof that truth can always be proved. There is no proof that for every truth there is a proof. There is no proof that a proof proves the truth. There is no proof that a truth always requires a proof. A truth can be intuitive and inspirational.** It can emanate from divine insight. This means there are mystical truths beyond our so called rational thinking. Our process

of thinking is based on our limited four dimensional rationality (three of space and one of time). Our rules of reasoning are incapable of leading us to truth, beyond a set limit. As Paul Davis, the professor of Mathematical physics at Adelaide University in his book "The Mind of God", "The Scientific Basis for a Rational World", (Touchstone 1993), after reviewing in a wonderfully simple style the progress of the modern science and its logical, mathematical and rational thinking, says on the last page:

"We are barred from ultimate knowledge, from ultimate explanation, by the very rules of reasoning that prompt us to seek such an explanation in the first place. **If we wish to progress beyond, we have to embrace a different concept of "understanding" from that of rational explanation. Possibly the mystical path is a way to such understanding.**"

Here is science, physics, mathematics, rationality knocking the door of Mysticism - in the Lord's year 1993.

To repeat, then, 'He is'. He has no name, yet He is - Aho. He is unthinkable, unconceivable, unfathomable, unimaginable; boundless: He is Light of all Lights, yet Darkness of all Darkness. He is zero, yet infinity; Zero, yet non-zero; infinity, yet transinfinity; without any beginning and without any end; void and voidless.

We just do NOT understand how can all this be. Zero there can be, but what is nonzero? The word "Asunaa" occurs in Gatha Yaz Haa 28-10, which sounds like A-shoonya, non-zero!

HE IS; but He is NOT with the universe or creation. He is beyond creation. He is NOT the Creator.

The Creator Ahuramazda is in the creation but AHOO IS NOT.

All that we can do is to say "HE IS" and stop at that.

"HE IS" in Bible and Qabalah

This highly mystical Truth is found in different and varied forms in all the great Mysticism and Religions of the world. The Gospel of John begins with: "In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God and the word was God". Paul Brunton in his "The Inner Reality" explains the esoteric significance of this Biblical Axiom thus: -

"The 'word' represents the very first motion of the creative power. The term "God" does not here stand for the Absolute, the Great void which is the ultimate of all things, but for the individualized creator of a universe.

"Properly to understand this verse, we must also understand something of the process of creation and realise that in the beginning there was nothing but the Great Void, the true Absolute wherein all was still, empty, lifeless and silent, and where there was eternal darkness.....

"In that undifferentiated, motionless and silent Void, in which was neither condition, thought, nor individuality..... in That there somehow appeared a mysterious point of Light, the primary birth, God!" (Ch.XIII)

You will please observe how this comes near to the Truth of "HE IS", and distinguishes 'HE' from the Creator God. In the terminology of the Mazdayasni Daenaa, the Creator God is "Daadaar Ahuramazda". Avesta phrase is "Dathusho Ahurahey Mazdaao", The word 'Aho' in "Yathaa Aho Vairyo" prayer denotes that "HE IS".

In the Jewish Mysticism, which is known as "Qabalah", the following is stated:

"The Primal Cause is called the Ayin – the No-Thing; that is Something which, transcending the human intellect can only be described negatively. "It is so named because we do not know, and it is impossible to know, that which there is in this Principle, because it never descends as far as our ignorance and because it is above Wisdom itself" ."

These words are from "The Secret Wisdom of the Qabalah" by J.C. Fuller, a standard and highly acclaimed work, which has remained ever green since about six decades. The inside quotation is from "Zohar", which is described by Fuller as "the fountain head" of the Qabalah doctrines. The original root author of Zohar is traditionally stated to be Rabi Simeon ben Yohai of the second century A.D. Look at the language of the above quotation. Seemingly contrary terms are used; No-Thing with capital 'N' and 'TH' is paired with

Something. IT does not come down to the level of human ignorance as it is above Wisdom ('W' capital) itself! This is not to bewilder the reader. The very Truth is incapable of being expressed in human words. No sooner it is brought down to the human level, confusion and contradiction spring up with a bang! But that cannot be helped.

My dear reader, you must have now got a glimpse of how difficult are the subject matters of Religion and how hard it is to absorb, even a little, the great Truths of Religion. There cannot be any Religion without mysticism. Today even the science of matter, physics, has a bruise with mysticism. Reality is enwrapped in mystery. The key to open the door is FAITH, LOVE, DEVOTION, PRAYER.

What Are: Artificial Intelligence (AI) Computer Systems?

Hutchinson's Dictionary of Science (1993) gives a sober definition of AI thus: "Branch of science concerned with creating computer programs that can perform actions comparable with those of an intelligent human". At the end of the entry it says. "In May 1990 the first International Robot Olympics was held there" (at the Turning Institute, Glasgow, U.K.) "including table tennis matches between robots of UK and USA".

Not merely table tennis but chess even! There are chess computer systems which can consistently beat most human players! On 11-2-96 an IBM Computer beat the human world champion Garry Kasparov at Philadelphia! (Times 12-2-96). In several other areas of expertise the computer can compete with human experts.

Question :- Can it be said that "the computer attains any genuine understanding of what it is actually doing"? It is "hard to maintain" this, says Roger Penrose in his latest book, "Shadows of the Mind" with the subtitle "A Search for the Missing Science of Consciousness" (Oxford - 1994). The AI systems work not because "that it understands anything, but that human programmers' understandings have been used in the construction of the program".

Penrose also points out that although AI systems can make judgements based on deeply complicated computational procedures, they fail "in the 'common sense' activities that the humblest among us indulge in most of our walking lives." "As yet, no computer controlled robot could begin to compete with even a young child in performing some of the simplest of everyday activities: such as recognising that a coloured crayon lying on the floor at the other end of the room is what is needed to complete a drawing, walking across to collect that caryon, and then putting it to its use." At many points even an ant in its everyday activities far surpass the most complicated AI systems, Penrose says (P. 45-46). He contends that some aspects of the human mind lie beyond computation.

Penrose is the Rouse Ball Professor of Mathematics at Oxford and the winner of Wolf Prize jointly with Stephen Hawking in Astrophysics.

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