

Human Aspirations

We humans act with a norm or standard that is to be achieved in our minds however small or big the action is, otherwise one would never become dissatisfied and seek something better. Suppose a man goes to drink coffee for the first time. He cannot possibly know whether it is a good cup of coffee because he has no norm or standard by which to judge it. He will observe the others having the same coffee and if they uniformly say that is good coffee, perhaps he will form a norm for coffee in his mind. That will form the norm for the rest of his life, norm for good coffee.

Now let us look at the larger picture. In life one finds oneself dissatisfied, uniformly. So there is already some kind of norm for satisfaction, which we see across all sections of society and that norm is a pleased "me," a pleased self, to begin with as a child, later the pleased self aspires to be ,total,' with no let or hindrance in any time and place.

A human child is unique, in the sense it is born with total trust on its handlers, be it mother, father, grandparents or any caretaker who handles the child. The oneness with the total is the norm, standard, with which it is born. The ,total' is the immediate surroundings in which it is born. The pleased ,me' is one who enjoys the total trust and the world around the child conforms to that total trust. It looks at mother as God. It thinks infallible is mother.

As days pass by, the child comes to see, mother can't do this, mother can't do that. The mother transfers the trust to father. He also fails. Still the child cannot survive without trust. The disappointment is stored in the child's memory as unconscious and forgotten to be processed at a later date when the child becomes an adult. For the present the child continues to trust. Without the trust, the child would die of despair. Pujya Swamiji says it is sheer Īśvara's grace that the disappointments are temporarily forgotten and stored in the unconscious to be handled at a later date when the child grows into adult and is in a position to recall and handle those disappointments. This is where modern parents can tweak a bit and play an important role in the child's growth.

They should keep the child's trust as far as possible. Be affectionate, be around, be cuddling, even if the child is sent to KG, either a parent or grandparent should be in the vicinity. The child while playing, will look around, and if it sees the mother, will go back and play. If it can't see the mother, the disappointment will get added to the unconscious. The child will think there is something wrong with itself, that is why mother is not around. The child will do anything to win the trust and appreciation of the mother. If these aspects are kept in view and to the extent they can help if the parents do not disturb the trust, then the child would be able to grow healthily with less unconscious.

So the norm for totality, completeness, total trust is still lurking in the background. All along as we grow up we contend with the erosion of trust, the erosion of total trust one began life with. So, later when the child becomes adult and when another trusted person walks into his/her life, the process of seeking the total trust by seeking to address disappointments stored in the unconscious through that intimate relationship begins.

The child in the adult sees safety in that relationship to give expression to the unconscious. The expressions can be love, seeking and giving trust, letting out childish desires through various forms; when not responded properly can give way to anger, tantrums, etc. The adult couple, together they should be able to be understanding with each other and process the expressions; we can't postpone them any further. This is the time to turn to Īśvara. Why Īśvara? Pujya Swamiji refers to Īśvara as super therapist.

We are lucky we are born in this culture, and what I say can easily be appreciated by people who are born and brought up in this culture. Hence it is equally important that we have Īśvara awareness, that everything around us is governed by Īśvara's order and for all that we take up in life, we should pray to Īśvara and seeking his anugraha we should do whatever is appropriate in a given situation, referred to as svadharma, and take whatever comes to us as result as prasāda. That Īśvara buddhi as we grow can offer the cushion in our life. We should cherish this culture and guard against fissiparous tendencies in the growth of the child. The prasāda buddhi leads to prasannata, a cheerful disposition.

As young parents, as we process our own childhood hurt and guilt by pūjā, rituals, temple visits, etc, we should also be aware that to our children we should give the least disturbance, help them grow healthily with minimum scars, hurt and guilt. We should always appreciate their small achievements, play down their mistakes, correct the mistakes by making them know that appreciation is around the corner when they correct the mistakes. Maybe occasional surprise gifts, for a mistake corrected would be in order. When they grow as mentally sound individuals with less unconscious, you as parents would reap the benefit of a harmonious home. They would be able to see how their parents resolved any uncomfortable situation at home by pūjā, rituals, temple visits, how the prasannata, the cheerful disposition helped the family have the space to wait out difficult situations, adjust themselves to setbacks and give them the buoyancy to get back to sanity, in short live a life of dharma without any undue pressure. Because everyone is fallible, only the extent differs, this appreciation is there when one grows into an adult. The child, grown into adult, be it wife (would be mother) and husband (would be father) should know that it is incumbent on their part to mutually understand that the tantrums and anger are part of the growth process, and the fallibility of everyone, processing the unconscious, the scars and disappointments carried from their childhood can only be resolved by understanding the total as Īśvara.

We have to know that there is no choice, as the norm is already set for a human being. A human being cannot accept anything less than total. This awareness will help them understand that hurt and guilt we pickup all through life are inevitable unless we see the order, and Īśvara as all-knowledge order. Pujya Swamiji talks of īśvarising all hurt, guilt as an order of karma; Swamiji refers to Īśvara as a supertherapist.

The question still remains, how to get to be the total pleased self at all time and place.. With the cheerful disposition thus acquired, śāstram (vedas) paṭha. The śāstra, guru upadeśa, the keenness to do a thorough enquiry into life, can lead to understanding 'that total, Īśvara, I am'. The guru can ensure even in these days when everything has changed since vedas' days, the guru can contemporaries the teaching so that we can still pursue the study and make it during our lifetime. It is a pleasant journey all the way because we are moving towards 'total,' the norm for fulfillment

by

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