

The Wholeness of You by Swamini Saralananda

This is the eleventh part of the serial article, continuation from March 2022 newsletter.

Another Brilliantly Simple Metaphor

Picture this: a traditional sculptor is going to sculpt a particular piece of his chosen Lord Shiva. Experienced as he is, he sees the exact figure in his mind even before he starts. First, he goes out into a field where there is a good selection of large pieces of stone and he chooses one that looks just right, visually knowing exactly what he wants to bring out.

He never loses sight of that form; it is very clear in his mind all the time. He has all just the right tools and he begins to sculpt. He does so with no rush to meet a deadline; he pays very careful attention to the detail of every piece he has to chip away. *As he sculpts, he is not building anything--he will simply remove every bit of the stone that is not the Shiva.* He alone knows the particular Shiva, which is there covered by 'all the rest of the stone' which is not the Shiva.

There Is Nothing For Me To Do?

This is how a Vedanta teacher works on his students; he never loses sight of the beautiful, unconditionally loving conscious being which is the 'inner' you. It is the deepest, profoundest, sacred Self. He knows it has always been there, is there now and always will be. He knows that you cannot do anything to accomplish and create it. And this is one of the first big hurdles for the student to get over because the mind, body and soul knows that absolutely everything we have ever gained and achieved in life is because of what we have done. We've never had one iota of an insight that there is a difference between BEING and doing.' When my teacher said: "This will be an accomplishment of the already accomplished... there is nothing really for you to do except just be here and listen. "Who wouldn't balk at that? But he meant really BE there, like the tenth man, like the rope-snake man; how intently, with all alertness they listened because they wanted to be free. That's the kind of listening that is needed, and the only tools the teacher has, is words. And how he uses those words in a special way, is like with the tenth man.

And he will be, like the adept sculptor, chipping away at our most cherished pieces of erroneous 'knowledge'; they all have to go. And sometimes it is painful, to watch your favorite sayings and ideals put up on a chopping block to be dismantled because they are not truth, they cannot 'hold water'. My teacher used to say: "Truth is ruthless, it will

never make room for sentiments. “That fire is hot, has nothing emotionally fearful or pleasing or spiritual about it; it just is what it is. And that is how we have to know the Self...as a truth, which can never lend itself to be interpreted in different ways.

Sounds Emotionally Dry

You may be thinking at this point, “How emotionally dry that seems, this teaching will be boring. Where is there room for the heart? Who wants it? Maybe a few lonely retired Indian professors. “But why this is not so is because what the teacher is trying to make you see is the most beautiful, loving, compassionate being that you actually, really are. He sees that ‘you’ very clearly and by using the words that were used on him and he was taught to use, he is holding up a word mirror for you to see that loving Self. The absolute unconditional love. This has nothing to do with all the small bits and pieces of conditional love and attachments we have experienced spread across the terrain of our individual lives. That is the only kind of love we have ever known so it is no wonder that we stay stuck in and attached to that.

The Most Beautiful Me In A Word Mirror

But here the teacher is trying to make us see something much bigger, by using words in a very unique way. The ‘I’ I will see reflected in his words is the fact it is infinite, literally. It’s like we have been sipping water, quenching our thirst out of tiny muddy puddles (emotional reveries) when a whole vast lake of pure, clean water is available to us. And your Full Self is nothing but unconditional love, it is like that lake. It takes an extraordinary teaching and a faith and trust to match, because it will take some time. The spell of the habitual ignorance is a monstrously strong die-hard. Thus, the teacher needs to be granted the time to ‘bring out’ the diamond of a Self you are. Nothing great and wonderful is ever cheap and easy to attain. To come to know the truth of who you are is a miracle, but, a realistic one. Perhaps one of the most difficult things to be in life is simple and open minded. Brahman, the essence of myself, is the simplest of all things...it has no conditionings and it is there in everything you perceive and do, ever available never away from you. It has no agenda; it doesn’t care whether you know it or not...It is too simple and that is its only ‘problem’. Because of that we miss it.

To be continued...