

## My understanding of Life

### My own submission :

As an young kid, I was told by all elders around, whatever you read, try to understand, do not just read.

Life is like reading, without understanding do not venture into it. Yes, you have been brought into it without your choice as a child. But we have grown now, as we read this, my humble submission is let us start understanding. The understanding has to begin with me, the individual, world, what we call jagat and the powers that be.

When you read a book, you are always curious what it has finally to convey, the end of the story. So I begin here with the promise from my Guru, when you really understand the book called 'life' it has a happy ending in store.

Why I bring in Guru here because Life is too complex a book to be read by yourself, more so to understand by yourself. You need the guide in the form of the guru. I was fortunate to get the guidance of my Guru from early days.

All means of knowledge - perception, inference, presumption, illustration and negation - are all handled by the knower, whereas understanding of life begins with

the knowledge of the knower, what they call self-knowledge and the means has to be different. The teaching tradition introduces an independent means of knowledge called Vedanta pramana. My Guru Swami Dayananda Saraswati is from the tradition and the teacher of Vedanta.

As I mentioned earlier the happy ending is briefly mentioned from the teachings to begin with and takes you further. Wish you happy reading of 'Life'.

From the teachings of Swami Dayananda Saraswati of Arsha Vidya Gurukulam:

Advaita, non-dual whole is the truth learnt by the study of Vedanta. The study of Vedanta is not an academic study. The study is meant for a mumukshu, moktum icchuh mumukshu, one who has initially discovered an urge to break-free from a sense of limitation, lives a life of dharma - a life wherein one does what is appropriate in a given situation at all times, earns the grace of a mind with great integrity, meaning the mind is available for deliberate action at all times, earns the grace of powers that be, as a result of such a living, assiduously cultivates the mental space and discriminative capability to sort out life and develops a commitment to understand it

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thoroughly and break-free from ignorance of life. The Guru plays a pivotal role in this process. By following his teachings and his responses in realtime, one gets a clue how to go about in this entire process.

The Knowledge of Advaita or non-duality essentially frees the human being from perceived alienation from the whole. The whole is limitless and undivided and hence not made up of parts. The whole 'is' and evident. The 'I' in every one of us, living beings is self-evident. Everything else including my body, mind, senses, etc are evident to me, the self. The study of non-duality results in understanding 'I' am the undivided self-evident whole.

When we say whole, it appears inanimate, and the perceived alienation does not disturb me. But we sit up when I say the next person I am alienated from, that sounds true. Why go that far, our own body-mind-sense complex is the next person, we are not sure of this person either and the alienation starts from there and extends to the whole world known and unknown.

So the 'bhaya hetu,' the reason for fear - of alienation from the whole leading to insecurity, lack of fulfillment, mortality - is there until we understand advaita. So the study of Vedanta leading to knowledge of self as Advaita or non-dual whole, a whole which does not suffer a second, is to understand this by studying with the help of a Guru. Words essentially have been coined to deal with relative reality dealing

in the means of knowledge like perception, inference, presumption, examples of existence and non-existence. The words used by these means of knowledge have objects of knowledge other than the knower. For example, the knower of the pot is different from the pot. Obviously, the means of knowledge for which the object of knowledge is the knower himself/herself is a separate means of knowledge and that is Vedanta pramana. In this pramana, the same words and other words are handled by the Guru carefully keeping the relative empirical meaning of the words in the mindset of the student suspended, and lead him to the Vision of the self which is the Whole. The guru himself has received this knowledge from his Guru through the (sampradaya)teaching tradition what they call, (karna parampara,) listening tradition. Every other means of knowledge is handled by the knower, whereas this parampara, teaching tradition uses the words as mirror for the knower to see his true self and hence it is an independent pramana – means of knowledge.

You, the being is the Whole – isness - the invariable satyam by its sheer presence, throws light on all thought frames bringing alive a thing of the past, thus so called time comes into being, a thing in a different place, thus so called space comes into being, image of horse different from image of cow, thus bringing alive a so called object, the object itself is nothing but a name, word and form, meaning associated, which can be further broken down to parts, names, words and meanings, stitched together by

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a niyati, order, which can be bifurcated into physiological order, biological order, psychological order, order of karma, epistemological order – order of knowledge forms - so on and so forth. The orders themselves trace their origin to the being 'isness' which by the being's invariable presence lends cetanam, substance to every step in an order, and connectivity between the steps, referred as sutratma, source of 'all-knowledge' that strings together the order of orders. The orders on display are the so-called objects and activities. Pardon me for using the word so-called repeatedly, because the truth is only the 'isness', everything else is transitory, characterised by the word mithya in the sastra, meaning relative reality, 'anirvacaniyam' means nothing categorical. For example, potness cannot be an attribute of pot because as we know an attribute adds value to the noun and potness you do not see in clay either. As the potness develops in the hands of the pot-maker, the pot is born. So potness is nothing but pot-knowledge and pot is just a name of the object, it is not the object. But the pot is useful, available for transaction, vyavahara, as just name and form, and the pramana refers to this as nama-rupa, mithya. This example is given only to open up your mind to the order of reality that governs all transactions, life of vyavahara. In fact vyavahara is what we all do in our daily life without enquiring into its reality. Hence, the being 'isness' gives life to the world and the world itself is nothing but the same 'isness' as 'all-knowledge', a

permutation and combination of all orders referred to in the sastra as Ishvara, giving an ever-changing jagat, mithya jagat, world of objects and activities. So the truth of the mithya jagat is satyam, 'isness', caitanyam 'all-knowledge' and limitless because 'isness' is never not there, sat-cit-ananta(aananda). So call it matter-energy, substances and activities, all form part of a seamless undivided whole. This has to be discovered as the understanding, not as just words.

The understanding of this seamless whole instantly eliminates alienation because there is no reason for fear, there is nothing other than me, the self-evident whole - isness, all-knowledge, always there - and the second thing being mithya, useful and available for transaction. The understanding of this equation 'self-evident me = isness = all-knowledge whole' through the teachings of the guru who unfolds the sastra pramana makes my understanding of life complete.

Then the question is what are we striving for all these years. We are striving alright but without understanding the whole. The famous saying of my guru is we do not have the whole view, the view of the whole is whole view. Unless we have the whole view, the parts do not fall in place. Okay, so what? not every one has the knowledge of the whole. But can you stop looking for it? think over, you do not have a choice, a human being cannot be complete without understanding the whole - me, the world and the powers that be.

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