

How I fashion my daily life

When it comes to looking at what we mean when we talk about daily living we have a very important epistemological (order pertaining to knowledge, what it means) order. It is closely related to ontological (order of realities) order. The vision of *sastra* is - there are three orders of reality, subjective, objective and oneness. Epistemology is our knowledge of these three realities and together they constitute understanding of life. The moment we see that as understanding, the pursuit towards this understanding becomes choice less, means it is no more available for option. The pursuit becomes imperative, inevitable as less understanding we can't live with.

Subjective reality is 'the world as we see it,' from our own prism of limited understanding, bias and prejudice, a set of values we have imbibed. As we make efforts to improve our level of understanding, reduce bias and prejudice we move to an objective world, 'the world as it is.' It is a never-ending process. The moment we see it as never-ending, again we can't live with it, we look around and see how to end this. It is intelligent living, hard work, therefore there must be a solution. Veda offers the solution. The third level of reality "oneness" is the solution. In fact once understood oneness is seen as the only reality. That can wait. The study of "oneness" promises fulfillment, completeness, a life in harmony with the total.

Our life now gets added meaning. The process is set. Keep moving from the world as we see it to the world as it is. Live our daily life in such a way by doing what it takes to progress in this. Simultaneously pursue study of knowledge of "oneness." In fact Veda says our daily life lived in this fashion makes us more and more qualified and facilitates the study of the knowledge of "oneness."

Our life in this world was seen as an absolute end in itself initially. Now our daily life becomes a means towards the vision of oneness and loses its status as being of ultimate importance. This clear understanding of oneness as our end, as well as an appreciation of its value is the context and the only context for the study of Vedanta. According to Pujya Swamiji without this, nothing will work and the benefits of this study will not be available to us.

With this primary understanding as to our ultimate end and its value we now have before us the task of using our everyday life as a means to transform the quality of our minds so that our minds become a suitable "place" in which the oneness vision can arise so that we have an ascertained knowledge which is clear and doubt free. Without a change in the way we see ourselves, fellow beings, the world and *Ishvara* and a subsequent change in the way we live (what we do and don't do), we will never be able to understand the veda's vision. How we see things and what we do on a daily basis, has a profound effect on the quality of our minds. Our cardinal prayer of *Gāyatrī* mantra epitomizes this: '*dhiyoyonah pracodayat.*' In fact the quality of our minds is the natural consequence of how we see the important existential factors in our lives and how we respond to them. Veda unfolds an objective vision as well as a total vision of oneness.

The objective vision is encapsulated in the words 'everything is Ishvara .' This is a way of seeing not a philosophical proposition. It is a discovery that is possible for us. Without this discovery we can't be relatively freed from our subjectivity. As we will see the Veda's vision of Ishvara which is objectivity itself is what relatively resolves our existential issues (guilt, hurt, envy, anger, delusion fear, depression, etc) and transforms the quality of our minds. This step can't be bypassed.

In fact the daily life gives us an opportunity to make the shift, lift ourselves from the subjective world to objective world. That is a reward in itself in the sense that it gives us a pleasant disposition. It becomes easy to claim the *upanisad's* vision of the pleased person is me, the oneness which is essentially the truth of the total, from which all beings are born, sustained by and resolve into. We all deal with the good, bad and ugly things in life. When we progress in this study from subjectivity to objectivity to oneness, the bad and the ugly lose their sting and come back to me as good as 'good.' **Om tat sat.**

-Article by Ramanathan

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