

The Wholeness of You **by Swamini Saralananda**

This is the third part of the serial article, continuation from July 2021 newsletter.

I Cannot Give What I Do Not Have

I cannot give something that I do not have within myself. This is why self-love is not self-ish, if I have unconditional self-love, it will be a natural consequence that others around me will enjoy that presence of my being. That self-love, is not an accomplishment, it is my BEING, my ESSENTIAL NATURE. It is like a cool, fresh oasis in the desert where animals come to drink, the water is not forcing itself to be wet and thirst quenching...it just is, what it is. I can be unconditionally loving towards others simply because that is my nature not because I have to create it by anything I do. There is nothing more important in one's life than to discover this fact of one's being.

The Fundamental Problem of Wanting

Who we seem to be in this life, bottom line, is a constantly wanting being? While we can place blame on the culture of consumerism with its endless enticements, we ourselves fall for it and thereby support it. This is because a feeling of emptiness, no matter how vague, unrecognized and unacknowledged is relatively painful. Most people helplessly and unconsciously do their best to stay distracted from these feelings. I can easily avoid feelings of emptiness by keeping myself busy engaged in cogitating about and going after what is to want next. The feeling of 'always something missing' is a symptom of the original alienation that stays deeply buried in the unconscious.

What Do I Really Want?

Often times we don't know what we want or should want; what's going to do it, what will fill the emptiness. We want relationships so that we won't feel lonely; we want certain things: "If only I could have...or be...or my significant other would be....". Not that this is bad, it just is the way we unconsciously keep ourselves on a mechanical treadmill of an unexamined life. What we need to see is that no matter how much pleasure I get from fulfilling desires, the satisfaction never lasts and just leaves me wanting more. Everyone can make a list of wants and life is just an ongoing challenge to keep working on our never-ending list. But what I really want is just to simply feel full and complete, content within myself, not having to depend on anything outside.

First, I just need to become more conscious and aware of how I am living and why. I need

a better, deeper understanding of what underlies my struggle. Like for instance, we always think that the unhappiness and problems we have in life are due to the difficulty we have in getting what we want. Since we live in a culture of 'more', an embarrassingly indulgent consumer culture, it could easily be said that consumerism is our actual national religion. We always want more.

Think of it, wherever we take our heart that it feels most inspired, and give attention to that 'altar', that is a religion. For a lot of people that's The Mall and now of course especially the on-line mall. The underlying principle that runs this everyday religion is, "If a little bit is good then more is better. "The better car, bigger TV, latest computer etc., etc., etc. The great worldwide business of advertising wins, it dupes us and dopes us; it creates and encourages our desires constantly; and we enthusiastically respond to it. But do I want to stay duped?

Constant Is A Problem

Even with just a relative degree of maturity and common sense we can begin to see the game that is running and the false value that we place on the things and things that we are sold on. What we really need is to see is that what we want is not the problem, it is that we want. The wanting itself is the problem. Because no matter how much we gain and achieve it's never enough. This is the fundamental problem of our lives; we are never free from want. Wanting and desiring are not comfortable, they are like itching that demands scratching. I am an 'itching', wanting being first and last in my life. In-between I get some spells of satisfaction but they never last.

Typically, the wanting being that I am and any feelings of emptiness are not recognized, analyzed, and labeled for what they really are. I am just not yet awake there. In their deepest and most well entrenched form they stay buried in the unconscious where they never get resolved and they run our conscious, everyday life. We will never find any real and lasting contentment in life unless we look at and deal with this deepest, fundamental root of the problem first, that I am a dissatisfied, incomplete, wanting being. I need to ask 'why'.

As we gain more common-sense maturity from our life experiences, hopefully we become more introspective and observant of life itself; we can consciously at least begin to see this problem. Early on, even with a conscious acceptance of this fact, if it is still something difficult to assimilate, we continue to seek and manage to find ways to avoid facing it. Even if there is ambivalence at least it is no longer totally unacknowledged, at least I

am more aware.

We are not to blame that the heart is tempted to keep this issue under wraps, it's only because we have no idea how to pay attention to it. So, the uncomfortable, 'itching' of wanting remains as the background music of my life: "I want.....I want...I want." We still naively wait and hold on to the hope of that promised day of 'happily ever after'. It is a dream we are easily sold because it was already very well seeded in childhood. It is a monstrous die-hard. It was one of the greatest disservices done to us that we were fed fairy tales like "Cinderella ". "Happily, ever after", a proverbial carrot hangs on at a very emotional level as a distant dream of what's at the end of the road and it keeps us in the cycle of doing and getting that never satisfies. "I can't get no... satisfaction" sang the Rolling Stones. When will a time come that we can feel, "All that I have is enough, I have finally made it in my life"? The dream keeps our life in an expensive, deluded flow with an occasional 'glow'. It keeps the whole society dancing, running, going round and round, here and there with both hands out to grab the next new something. These days we are so addicted to both novelty and instant gratification. But all our winnings in this grabber-game of life never work to stop the wanting and fill the emptiness lying in wait inside. The consumer dance can keep us so busy that we don't take time to look at the real issue.....the great grand dysfunction of seeing value where there really isn't any. 'I' the wanting being never gets any direct attention.

Societal Addiction To Pleasure

Especially in the west, the societal addiction to excitement and pleasure is a form of false therapy, because I do not see the connection between what I really want and what I get. Our gratifications serve as a fix. Without the success-achievement and pleasure fixes, we have to be with, sit with, our self, the one who is just an empty costume waiting to be 'filled out' for the next new act or game to begin. We can't even be put on hold for a telephone call but that we need to have music.

The main point being made here is, that we need to see why our wanting is never satisfied. It is because what I really want is fulfillment in a never-ending contentment. Now make a big jump in the thinking here: Can we ever want something that is unknown to us? Would you desire to have some *ubguloda*? You'll have to find out what it is first and if it sounds good to you, you can say 'yes.' But never do we long for and want something that is totally unknown to us. So, we need to ask the question, "*Do I want to feel whole and complete, a happiness in a contentment that lacks nothing? Is this a most fundamental want*". In addition to that what else is there to want? It would be the end of all want-

ing. We all want this and therefore this state of being cannot be something totally unknown to us. Somewhere, sometime, somehow we have known, at least tasted, glimpsed, such heights of our being. We have experienced instances of feeling Whole and Complete and we want to get back to that again, and stay there all the time.

Deep Intuition That I Should Be Whole

Thus, this desire can only be there because we do know what that state of being is. It may be very quietly unpronounced, maybe not consciously acknowledged, it matters not, the point is that it is not unfamiliar. We have all had peak experiences where at least for a few moments, “I was feeling so ‘on top of the world’ that my worst enemy could have come and kicked me and I would have just felt nothing but love for him anyway. In those moments nothing can diminish our Fullness. And it is something so profound and potent to experience that once we have ‘tasted’ it, we will never lose that glimpse of knowing how real it is. And even long after even if we can’t seem to reexperience it. We will always remember, because of the very fact that it was not something separate from me. In those ‘high’ moments, we are not enjoying happiness like in the way we lick an ice cream cone. Those moments are profound because the ‘I’ and the happiness are one and the same, one wholeness of being. *It is not an experience of happiness, “the happiness is me”*.

Even if the glimpse does not stay with us consciously, still it will never be lost. It will remain in the unconscious, waiting for the right time to stand revealed again and get some attention. In fact, even when buried beneath the turmoil and embroilments in terms of our life as a wanting being, it will never let us be; the longing for that ultimate state of my true nature, keeps demanding to fulfill itself as though it has a life of its own. And actually, it does because the desire to be Full was not picked up by my choosing it. It is inborn and universal to all and will finally fulfill itself when it is assimilated to already be my very nature. **It is something to know and be, not something to do and get.**

To be continued...

“*Vēdānta* does not promise a salvation to the soul. In its vision, the soul is already free from any limitation. Freedom from limitation (*mōkṣa*) is a fact and the release of the individual from this sense of limitation is the outcome of understanding the equation, ‘*tat tvam asi*’ (that thou art).”

- Swami Dayananda Saraswati