

## Reality Check

I start with a long illustration received from a friend encouraging the benefits of positive thinking and avoiding negativities in these difficult times. I have followed that illustration with my understanding from sastra Read on.

\*What's important while eating, taste or the stone in the bite\*

\*A great thought\*

\*In a restaurant, one well-known chef cooked very tasty pulav using high quality rice. As soon as the pulav was ready, its aroma spread all over. Everyone's mouth started watering. \*Now they were all eager to taste the pulav. About a hundred people were served the pulav.\*

\*Just when every one was about to take the first bite & put it in their mouth, the chef came and said that there is a small stone in the pulav. As it was of the same color and size of the rice grain, he couldn't find it. He said as it may come in anybody's plate he would want them to be careful while eating & the stone might injure them if it comes in between the teeth.\*

\*The flavor of the pulav is good.... the taste is also great but now the fun of eating has gone. Everyone was like forcefully swallowing one bite after other without paying attention to the taste while eating. The more they became aware, there was no talk, no gossip among them. All were quite & silent. Before the start of the meal it was fun to be together. Now even though they were together, one by one, they fell into a trance. Everyone ate until the end. Even the last bite was taken carefully\*.

\*After completing the meal everyone sighed relief for not getting the stone. They washed their hands. Just then, someone noticed that no one got the stone\*

\*Then they called the chef & asked him 'you had said that one of us will get the stone while eating!\*

\*The chef said 'I had removed most of the stones, but if there was one left by mistake, I wanted to warn you'\*

\*They started looking at each other. There was no discussion about the very delicious pulav. Everyone was exhausted after the meal, because the ease of eating had gone. They had found it was so hard to eat\* !!

\*Due to this pandemic at present, our condition has become like the stone in the pulav. It is not possible to say who will get this stone.\*

\*Ease of living is gone. Even the helping hand which comes forward, we think will get Corona? Milkman, vegetable vendor, grocer,... while buying every necessities of life, we are worrying what will come with it & this is how we are living our lives\*!

\*Earlier when one sneezed, we said 'God Bless' But now we think whether nature has pulled out our file or what...? No one knows how many days this will continue\*.

\*But it is a humble request not to let your happy life become useless like the delicious pulav. Don't read negative news, posts. Read motivating posts, information, books. Cultivate hobbies and buy happiness in kilos & tonnes just from yourself!\*

To follow up on this nice story, I add something more and in my understanding more profound.

Positive thinking is good, But can't carry the day for long, especially in such prolonged pandemic times. There has to be something genuinely more profound as the truth of life, these fears cannot be eliminated by merely hypnotizing ourselves with positive thinking. That can help tide over the fears temporarily.

But fundamentally one has to understand that the self-aware being we are is the same self-aware universe. This I would say a pratijna statement by sastra, a statement meaning oneness is the truth of life, the reality check. I try to expand this truth below.

There are no objects, or things, or events. There are only sensations and perceptions based on application of thought process on the sensations both within and without, together is mirage of life. Every event in life is captured in a frame by the light of (truth) consciousness through the lens (sastra refers to this cidaakasa in an individual) wherein this light of consciousness reflects in an individual captured as scenes through sensations obstructed by opaque material, (man, material, etc) called objects on the screen of mind, time and space. Every scene from every individual (all jivas including animals and all other living beings, bacteria, virus, inclusive) is etched on the screen in different time and place and the collective scenes a mixture of the lighted obstruction mixed with perceptions, concepts, memories and emotions superimposing, like even in all film rolls after film rolls that are run through in a movie and all of us (jivas) watch the perennial movie janma after janma, means birth after birth. The truth is, there is only being (one light of consciousness) running through all, there are no things, time or space; the movie is that of the creator, ishvara whose truth also is the same light of consciousness. He is called ishvara as he displays the all-knowledge, the same light of consciousness. The power of all-knowledge allows all transactions in life - feeling, thinking, doing as though - instead of just being. Being is oneness, there is no division and hence nothing to fear. This understanding is not self-hypnosis and hence can stay with us. To go further, once we understand that the reality of 'I' and Ishvara is the same being, how do we go about life? First in case of a movie scenario, we walk out, forget the movie world and step into the so-called real world and start doing our normal activities. But here the so-called real world is falsified meaning it is as real it seems, it keeps changing moment to moment and is only a

construct, sastra calls it citta spandanam, spin of the mind, the world we transact is a combination of citta spandanam of all beings at all times, "Samsāraḥ svapnatulyo hi"( ātmabodha-4). But we continue with our transactions with the understanding at the back of the mind we, collectively, all beings keep spinning further, but thank God, the niyati, order of Ishvara keeps the spin in order. The order includes Rudram and Sambhavam, meaning unpleasant and pleasant due to our own spinning. Now with this understanding, let us not distort the spin further. Let us transact with ishvara arpana buddhi, all actions unto Him, and prasada buddhi, do everything as per dharma, (commonly understood values, like 'do unto others as I would like others do unto me') as arpanam to Ishvara and take the results as prasada. The understanding of 'I' the being is one with 'Ishvara the being' gives us the cushion that we have no stakes in our transactions other than looking at this world as Ishvara's sannidhanam. Everything including our body is the temple. Living life like this, continuing with further listening to Vedanta from the acaryas will strengthen our understanding and give us shantam, shivam, sundaram, oneness with Ishvara. That is not self-hypnotisation, but oneness with reality.

To continue, one important quote from Vedanta Dindima, a text by Adi Shankara -When one sees a flower, seeing is the only truth the oneness in which both seer and seen are. The seer and seen are divisions created by the mind, then naming, differentiating all other divisions follow. They are all empirical whereas oneness in seeing is the truth, 'sampashyataam muktih' - means, 'oneness in seeing is clear seeing and that is freedom.' when we see a movie, the light and the screen appear as images and the scenes and the story appear real. It is not the light and screen play a trick on us, they are inanimate. It is not the mind and senses take the scenes as real, they are also inanimate. It is 'I' the being lights up the 'vrttigataam I - the I thought' the movement in consciousness called 'ego - the operating I thought", which is kshanikam, changing moment to moment, hence fictitious, this ego makes the story of life appear real by naming, differentiating, labelling, relating, etc. The ego and its objects called life(movie) the whole thing is empirical, you transact so it is real. Empirical because it is reproduced day in and day out by all jivas, so it is referred to as empirically true. But the reality is just being, just seeing, just hearing..... All knowledge by the means of knowledge and the understanding, 'I the being is Ishvara, the being.' is the only reality, everything else is empirical. Transact with the empirical, do not distort the spin, remain the being.

*Om tat sat*

- Swami Ramesvarananda Saraswati, Jnanapravaha, Manjakudi