

## The Wholeness of You by Swamini Saralananda

*This is the tenth part of the serial article, continuation from Feb 2022 newsletter.*

### Happiness Is 'I' The Beingness

We have not had any understanding of this so we don't know that the peaceful happiness there is the essence, the essential beingness, the very content of my mind. It is like how water is the content essence, of every wave. If there is nothing there to disturb the mind then that natural state is just I-one-in-being-happiness.

So, when there is no agitation to disturb and as though cover it, my happiness-nature will just be as it is, uncaused and free. Therefore, it is not really objects that I love- it is my pleased mind that I love, because it allows the happy Being, to just shine there. And that is the unconditional love. It is never not there. Could this be what my creator wants me to discover, or is it intended that I have come to this earth to suffer and stay confused about the meaning of life and love?

### 'The Peace That Passeth All Understanding' Is Myself

The nature of self is peace. "The peace that passeth all understanding", this means it is beyond my usual way of understanding things. Call it Happiness, Peace, Wholeness, Fullness, Infinite Oneness, Unity Consciousness, Unconditional Love. All these are just different words trying to make us understand the one same Self.

When I can be centered and well rooted in this Self which is the deepest profoundest being that I am, the Ultimate Happiness, then I no longer have to chase after happiness. This is when I can say I have 'made it' in life. There is nothing more desirable, more precious and lovable, than the non-wanting-free-from-lack-happy-Self. And that self is saintly because only out of that kind of absolute security in Fullness there is never any fear or need to compete with or hurt anyone. This fullness of Happiness is the ultimate wholeness-oneness of myself, the fullness and wholeness of oneness, which we all long for.

### Gaining Self-Knowledge

In the ancient eastern teaching tradition called Vedanta, which is a collective name for all the Upanishads, there are two excellent metaphors which clearly show how there is a unique teaching method to gain self-knowledge. If the teaching method is understood clearly, the student can better facilitate his/her own learning; the student can actually observe the how and why of the teaching methods. Otherwise there can always be some

subtle doubt and distrust about 'why is this supposed master teaching like this'. These examples make the topic transparent and we will closely look at them.

### Self-Evident Validity

The ignorance, as we have seen, is not any ordinary ignorance, it is a spell of all the erroneous trappings in which everyone is caught up in just naturally since birth. In order to dispel this unique ignorance, there should be an appropriately unique knowledge and teaching method. This Eastern wisdom, and from whatever part of the world it may come does not matter, when properly taught will stand on its own 'legs' i.e. it will reveal its own validity. It should not depend on any cultural trappings, no personal interpretations, it must reveal and hold its own self-evident truth.

What is meant by this is, for instance, "fire is hot"; this is only determined by what fire itself is and not any human, cultural, or scientific conceptualization. There is no English fire, Russian or Japanese fire; it's just fire. There should be finally one simple Truth, not 'many different truths': 'my truth, your truth, his truth, Bible truth, Koran truth, New Age truth, etc.'. These cannot be 'Truth' unless as we said, they stand on their own self-validating, self-evident 'legs'. Exactly the way 'fire is hot' is not something that can be negated, i.e. proven wrong. It is not a matter for belief, or creativity nor any kind of projection or opinion. Fire just is what it is, to be known as it is and not differently. We have a choice over whether we want to know it or not know it but no choice over how it is to be known, no interpretations here.

### The Non-negatable Truth Of The Self

In the previous chapters we talked about an ultimate truth of the Self and that it is a fact of my already accomplished Being-ness. It does not need to be created, hauled up, developed in anyway shape or form; it just is the very nature of who I am, a self-evident, self-revealing, existent being. Even as I am right now, I am that being. "I am" means I exist, this is not something you can negate and nor does it even ask my permission to be. The 'am' equals 'is', it exists, it cannot be denied and negated. And the 'I' is the witnessing subject, the knowing principle that knows the is-ness which is the 'am'.

Nor do I need to be improved or purified before I can know the fact of my being. Hence the effort would not be one of actually doing something to get it, but one of recognizing a mistaken identity. An imposter we call 'ego' has stepped in to take residency in my mind. And in fact, what we will see ultimately is that it is not a matter of gaining some knowledge in the way we have always done, as it is the correction, the removal, of the

MISTAKE. The teacher would be the one to remove my ignorance; she's the one to dispel the darkness and actually that is what the word "guru" means, the one who removes darkness.

### An Irreplaceable, Invaluable Story

A story: In a rural ashram there was a small group of young students, getting ready to set out on a pilgrimage; the teacher appointed the oldest one to lead and keep the group safely together. After some hours, they came to a river, and even though it was in spate, it did not look formidable and the leader asked all of them if they were sure they could swim well enough to get across. They all were sure they could and so they all entered the water; the water was so cold and the current stronger than what they had thought it would be. The leader is the first one across and now he needs to make sure they have all gotten across safely. So, he counts them as they each come up onto the bank. He knows for sure that they were 10 when they left the ashram. So, he is counting 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8, 9, .....oh my God the 10th man is missing!! He counts again and still only gets 9; lines them up differently counts again still only 9. He asks the other boys also to count and they all get 9. They had probably had a heightened level of anxiety when in the river, so all are doing the same, discounting themselves. And what made it worse, none of them could even remember who the 10th one was because a good number of students stayed back in the ashram. So, they are all now in extreme despair, especially the leader; they had checked down river; nothing; most of them are weeping.

By chance there was an old man sitting under a tree here on this side of the bank; he had seen them when they were on the other side all happy and excited; now he sees they are all just the opposite. Curious, he goes over to them and asks what the trouble is. The leader explains how ten of them left the ashram and when they came to this river and they all swam across the river, but now on this side of the bank, one is missing. And they could not even think who is the missing one. The old man, hiding a smile, seeing the real problem, he is calm and wise, a 'seer', says to the leader, "So you're sure you are only 9 now? "Yes", the boy says. Then the man tells him, in a thoughtful, caring way, "Be at peace, all is well, I know where the 10th man is". The leader excited: "You do, oh thank god,...where, where is he". "Be calm...be patient". Since the boy is anxious for everything to be ok and since this old man seems to have nothing to gain, he's not asking for anything, there seems to be no reason not to trust what he is saying.... the boy relaxes and waits.

The old man now tells him to count again and the boy thinks.... 'what is this' and says...

“But I’ve counted so many times” .... and the old man just says, “I know, but just do it anyway, but now do it slowly”. So, the boy, managing to have a trusting attitude, begins to count again slowly. He counts out all the nine boys and then turns to the man and says “You see, only 9....”. The old man without pause then says.... “and the tenth is you. If ten of you left the ashram .... well then you have forgotten to count yourself.” So, this leader and all the other boys are of course more than relieved; in fact, the leader now feels very sheepish, has an embarrassing smile on his face to think that he could make such a silly mistake. The mistake was a temporary spell due to the over-excitement of the moment, during the spell the 10th was never lost and all it took was someone who was calm and objectively outside the problem and was able to win the boys’ trust in order to make the boy see and discover the mistake. The boy did not do something to get the 10th man, except to listen to the old man. The old man was in the right place at the right time so that he became the ‘10th man’s guru.’ So, they all got ‘enlightened’, not about how to get or where to find the 10<sup>th</sup> man.....they only needed the mistake to be pointed out and therefore corrected.... their vision was temporarily but totally clouded.

### The Salient Points And Symbology Of The Story

The boys have innocently entered the river thinking it was “all’s well and good.” Like that we have entered an ocean of ignorant ‘becoming, doing, getting and suffering’. It is a spell we are born under, and not knowing any better we discount, hardly the word, ourselves, believing just the opposite of who we really are, to be the only truth. Because it is a spell, we cannot see out from under it and neither can anyone else around us. It is a universal error. And no matter how brilliant an un-enlightened person is, it will always be the blind leading the blind.

Because of the conditions in the river, which almost overwhelmed the boys, they were all shaken up, when reaching the other side. And so, they slipped under a spell. The old man’s simple, compassionate, patient, curiosity made him approach the leader. Then he was wise enough to know (he had a teaching method) that he could not just blurt out: “You silly boy, you are not counting yourself”. Their minds were not calmed down enough to listen and get it and it may have just caused more confusion to hear such an insensitive insult. So, the old man first speaks in such a way that the boy could trust and hold on to hope. This made it so that the boy’s mind became receptive before the old man put him to ‘the task of counting’. We can say that at this point, the boy chose to have faith; but this was a faith pending discovery. Not a blind faith, because the old man had communicated that right here and now, I will show you the tenth man. It is a verifiable, tangible

10th man he was talking about. He never said, “The 10th man is not dead, he exists,....in heaven with god. “This would never be discoverable, i.e. readily verifiable; and if it is not verifiable, then it can be negated because it is not a self proving truth.

The 10th man is immediately there to be readily seen in flesh and blood; this is an incredibly important and profound distinction to be made, that there is both blind faith and a faith pending discovery. They are poles apart. Then, when the boy now knows that he had lost himself and has ‘gained’ himself back.....will there be any pride and self-congratulation? Will he become self-serving or self-promoting? Actually, discovering the error humbles one.

This story tells us that there was little to no effort on the boy’s part.... his spiritual path of the moment was to just trustfully and alertly listen to the guru of the moment. It was the gurus’ effort of reaching out to the boy and ‘teaching’ him, pointing out the mistake to him, in just the right manner at the right time. The means of knowledge for the boy to ‘get back’ who he really was, was in the form of words. They were not from reading a book for self-study, but spoken words from the wise one who could see clearly the falsity of the mistake. And he also had enough care to bother to teach the boy. Unfortunately, our ignorance takes more time...only because we have been mistaken for so long. There is no instant realization.

*To be continued...*

“For those who know that they seek freedom, there is a teaching whose topic is the Self – its nature; the Self as whole, unisolated from anything. This teaching is *Vēdānta*, which gives you knowledge of your true nature. With this knowledge you find yourself free from all forms of limitation and isolation. Full and complete in yourself, you strike harmony with the entire universe.”

- Swami Dayananda Saraswati