

The Wholeness of You by Swamini Saralananda

This is the seventeenth and concluding part of the serial article, continuation from Oct 2022 newsletter.

How Does This Relate To Me?

“What does this all mean to me, in my life? Philosophically and intellectually, if I agree that God and I are not separate, still, that is just words. So, we need to bring the discussion closer in ‘to home’ where we live right here and now. If “god and I are one” how can we understand what our relationship to god should be. If god is everything and everywhere then it should be obvious, that is, the easiest thing to see. Ironically, it is and it isn’t. We need to turn our attention and ‘eyes of inquiry’ to the task, to want to understand and see.

The All-knowing, all-powerful god can be seen in the palm of my hand. I hold in it one leaf. Think about the phenomenon of photosynthesis. Keeping in mind that no human mind has yet learned to replicate it, we can only continue to study it. What is there in the leaf is a whole mini universe of intelligent laws working to give me air and food. The intelligent laws work so that my toxic exhalation is taken in by leaves and given back to me as fresh air. “Laws” means they never fail to do what they are meant to do. Maybe I need to look at all the flora, all the greeneries around me differently. They also give protection. Trees protect us from the scorching rays of the sun and vouchsafe our water. Not to speak of beauty. All given to us by a Giver who is the Lawmaker. (Remember, no personage implied). And this is more perfectly expressed as the infinite, intelligent, infallible Order.

Think about the sun: It is the source, the ‘parent body’ of the earth. For that to be so, earth coming from the sun, it involved an unimaginable complex of intelligent laws for that to happen in just the way it did. Because of that we can exist on this living planet. A new creation Earth came into being directly from the sun. All.... Intelligent creative energy at work. And further, the sun’s energy sustains us, in fact, all energy is heat which means that the source of all energy for our Earth is the Sun. All secondary forms of energy trace back to, are sourced in, are dependent on the sun.

Typically, people think of it as only a big, gaseous, burning ball in the sky. But it is the ‘great generator’ in the sky generating energy for absolutely everything. The sun sustains our life, our body warmth, the growth of our food, all happening according to definite,

dependable laws, intelligent laws. The sun maintains our electro-magnetic field with the intelligence that the earth as we know it, is neither too close to it to burn nor far enough away to totally freeze. That same field keeps us intelligently in orbit and maintaining our law of gravity so we can sit comfortably without floating up.

A Real Understanding of Dependency

We can easily understand with this example: A mother is like a god for her child; she gave birth to it and she is the one to sustain it. As the child grows up, mother has many capacities, ways in which her child can ask for help. If he asks for help with his homework, mother is the tutor. If he is hungry he can ask mom to cook something; she becomes a cook; if the child asks her to take him to soccer practice, she becomes his driver and if they reach there and the child says, “please mummy stay and watch me play” he is invoking his all-powerful mom through her eyes to watch him. When he needs to tell mom something he invokes her through her ears. There are countless things that mother can be for her child, while all the time she is only one mom.

The child can ask her for anything, sometimes mom will give him what he wants and sometimes she won't because mom knows better, she has more knowledge. Sometimes she will say “maybe later you can have what you want”. You can say the child ‘prays’ to his mom... This can give us a better idea of our relationship with the One God who is anything and everything for us. And we do implore and invoke Gods’ grace in whatever way we so choose because within the laws we are also given the faculty of choice. We are given the capacity to envision god in this more enlightened way by the use of symbols.

The Symbology Of Vedic Deities

Keeping all this in mind, the Vedas had a lot to say about deities, all the different specific aspects of power that belong to ‘Only God’ which can be looked at from many different standpoints. Those aspects are appreciated because of what-for do I wish to relate. Deity is a word we can use for ‘the powers that be’. What was recognized by the ancient seers was that we are connected to the universe in a relationship of total dependency from countless aspects; all these aspects can be conceived of as deities.

One cannot deny this as a reality, that we are dependent on this dynamic creation, all the realms of powers affect my life. And thus, the whole universe was variously and specifically deified, in all its realms near and far. Water is a deity because water is/has living energy, power; air is deity, fire, mother earth, all the stars and planets are energies/powers. The Universe is said to be the Totality of all the deities, the ‘powers that be’ that govern all the various spheres of laws. Every time we use the word ‘law’ it means intelligence,

plus its power. All these laws are a manifestation of the infinite, intelligent, infallible order. It is this Order which is God. In other words, it is not that God is the Universe, it is that this infallible Order called the universe is God.

Knowledge Made Manifest

The totality of all the deities are the one infallible Order, the cosmos. Because it is the total intelligence running the universe, we can say it is intelligence/knowledge made manifest. It is not any different than your knowledge of a cake recipe made tangibly manifest into a cake when you use your power to make it. So, knowledge made manifest means knowledge tangibly brought into being.

In all the endlessly different specific ways and forms of this phenomena, the Vedas, refer to them as 'deities'. And all the laws are envisioned as deities. In the Sanskrit language of the Vedas, the definition for the word "deity" is far beyond Western conceptualization. Literally, it means 'a shining being' and 'shining' means that it is consciousness, never inert. To be infused and pervaded by the light of consciousness is to be 'shining' when we speak of a manifestation of intelligence/ knowledge, knowledge cannot be anywhere outside or away from consciousness. Can I have non-conscious knowledge of my house or anything? Non-consciousness cannot have any knowing in it. So, a deity means existence-consciousness and it is never separate from the total infinite all-knowing conscious being which has been referred to as Brahman.

[I would like to interject here: Can you notice how the words have to be used in such a novel way; we are trying to explain something so esoteric and subtle that both writer and reader needs to be careful not to slip into the everyday meaning of the words used like 'consciousness', 'Order', 'infallible' etc.]

Therefore, when we want to give our attention to the Universal Conscious Being from a specific stand point of one particular realm of a functionary power, then it gains the status as a specific 'deity'. (Like mom playing the role and having the power to be a driver, she becomes driver god because of her knowledge and the child's dependency.) Each deity governs a specific sphere within the Total Universe. The Total-One-Whole-God is the one All - knowing Organizing Principle 'over-seeing' and 'wielding them all'. None of them is separate or outside of God –the- Total.

Still, how does all this relate to You, Me, Us? The gods: Sun, Water, Air, Earth Wind, Moon and Ocean, let's just say there are as many, as you are willing to 'see'. How near or far away from us are they; how immediately are they affecting my life; how dependent am I on all these? How separate am I from all of them? They are my world. In fact, they

are all in me, as the very substance of my body: space, air, fire (warmth of aliveness, water and earth. This is exactly the microcosm. And it is not mere poetry to say that we are nothing but star-dust.

I am not on the earth; I am of the earth. Land cannot really belong to me, I belong to the land, as most 'primitive' peoples intuitively knew. I am born of earth, sustained by the earth and go back unto the earth. The Vedic culture of ancient India is spoken of as being polytheistic only because this understanding of 'deity' is wrongly construed. The envisioned countless deities are symbolic of all the universal energies.

'Only God' All That Is Here

It is only one god who includes all the specific powers that be. In fact, it is not one god which the seers taught about, they said there was ONLY GOD. Where would there be any cause to fight amongst religions if this were understood.

This, then implicates that the entire universe deserves reverence. If someone places a picture of the sun on an altar as worshipful, is it so far-fetched? (Actually, a lot of Westerners are their own kind of 'sun worshippers' who lie on the beaches, but of course the intent does not involve 'reverence'.) Yet not only does it make sense, it is based in the factual realities of my existence.

And what can be a prayer to the Sun as a Deity? "Oh Lord Sun, I thank you for this day, for you are the daymaker". This is the day the Lord hath made, let me be grateful in it. The sun is a Lord because it lords over my entire life. The sun is the deity governing all-life-energy. It is never away from me, always sustaining me. To have the profound appreciation of this fact and an attitude of gratitude is absolutely real prayer.

"ONLY GOD" can be looked upon as all the many deities and how we choose to relate to God will be according to our hearts desire, according to our specific needs and wants. I can invoke their grace, their help, and even if I just entertain this 'biggest picture' understanding with an attitude of "thank you for all that is given" it is enough.

This is all a matter for a spiritually oriented life because here 'god' is not to be merely believed. In this, the One Whole, is to be discovered and understood-known. It is the most intimate relationship I can have with god and myself, since God and I are, and have always been ONE.

Absolute Identity, I And God Are One

With a bigger picture understanding, my vision broadens and I can see the entire universe as a temple. It is a temple where all living things are sacred, every mountain, river,

mother earth. I can come to understand I am always connected to everything. It is all ONLY GOD.

Following are poetic verses for contemplation on the Sun as a Deity:

Oh Lord I meditate upon you as the Sun.....from Your rising to Your setting Your presence is writ in everything I see and do and feel. You are the absolute source of all aliveness...You give me life.

Whenever I lift my eyes to You, remembering to think of You, I seek to comprehend Your power and omniscience that pervades everything I see. There is order, an intelligent order, everything is in its own place. You are that order oh Lord....and everything is perfect whether I understand it or not...I pray to understand Your order.

You are the Lord of all gods, the various powers that be, for they all, like me, have their source in You. You are the parent body of our world. How stunningly majestic is the sight of You...all the colors of the spectrum are in You, come from You since you are the source of all light. You are the fire golden rays at rising.... You are the blue and white skies of day...you are the pink and lavenders when softly setting. Amazing brilliance and all colors You are...all shades and forms of light are only You.

In this play of colors, You gift me the tranquility of dawn and dusk.

When I behold You in the form of the little flame I light.... I am at once calm because I know You can grant me fearlessness. I meditate upon You now as the flame of life in my heart....as the warmth of aliveness pulsating all through my body.

When I look out around me.... I see the warmth of Your life touch everywhere. I can trust in this perfection and love the beauty of Your Grand Order. You are the maker of the day, the maker of the seasons so you alone are the Lord of time. You alone are the maker of all the meteorological conditions we call weather.... how can I miss that You are the Intelligent Order.

Even in the darkness of night, You are there as my heart warmth, granting me the blessing of sleep. While all the beings are asleep You are ever awake as the abiding aliveness of consciousness in all. Oh Lord, Giver of all life, I hear You in the birdsong, I taste You in the fruit and grains. You are the fragrance in the rain and the rose and the herbs. I feel the kiss of soft breezes which come all from You alone. Yet I respect and fear Your scorching rays. I see Your fierceness when You bring drought and famine to the earth. You who is the giver of all life also takes it away. Yes, You are also Lord of Death being the All Encompassing ONE.

Oh Lord You are the Infinite Order; nothing is outside of You. In You time itself stands, therefore the beginning and end of all things is in Your keeping. A tender sprout turns its leaves towards Your light and also forest fires roar in wild flames by Your hand alone. You are the great author of time passing and therefore the bringer of death.

Oh Lord You are the great purifier...whatever is laid down before You is made clean. I invoke Your grace - oh Lord to purify me...keep the lamp of my hearts devotion burning.... always turned towards You. For You alone purify my darkness to become light. You give me warmth when I am cold. You bring forth all that is new and fresh to nourish me. For no reason at all You gift me the rainbow and the showering trees of flowers. You gift me the autumn leaves, a splendorous show of Your fire golden colors.

Oh Lord I see you as every form of light and I bask in that all pervasive stillness. When I am still in Your light, I can know that I am not separate from You. You alone are my sanctuary, my refuge, for You are The All. You are the one source being of all things and me.

Seeing Your splendor and power in everything moving and unmoving, You are the omniscient presence everywhere. I can be free of fear. I ask, oh Lord, please teach me to be more grateful. May I remember all that you bring forth, sustain and renew.

I now meditate upon You as All Knowledge and All Power pervading All things. In any time or need or affliction I know You are with me for I am in You and there is none else.

This offering is an embellishment of the prayer from the Ramayana "ADITYA HRIDAYA".

Om Tat Sat

**** This is the concluding part of this serial article. ****

About The Author:

Swamini Saralananda was one of Swami Dayananda's senior most disciples. She attended the first long-term course conducted by Pujya Swamiji in Bombay from 1972 to 1975. Following that course, she taught for a number of years in her native place, Hawaii. Later, she was on the teaching staff when Pujya Swamiji taught the same course in California. Besides being a well-seasoned Vedanta teacher, she was well versed in cross-cultural issues. She had taught in Arsha Vidya Gurukulam, Saylorsburg, USA, in Canada and Europe.

Due to printing space constraint, we cannot publish the serial article "Valmiki Ramayana - As taught by Pujay Swamiji" in this month's newsletter — Editor