

All that is here is only Īśvara
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Continuation from previous month...

THE EQUATION

The hallmark of Pūjya Swamiji's teaching is his unequivocal stand that the Vedic vision of God does not require one to believe it. God is a matter for understanding. In Pūjya Swamiji's words, "it is a challenge for one to know." In his words, *idam sarvam* – all that is here, is equal to *Īśvara*. All includes everything that is known and unknown in the world plus the body-mind-sense complex of the individual who confronts the world. This 'all' equals the Lord, and this represents an equation. Pūjya Swamiji's definition of an equation is that when there is a seeming difference between two things, yet there is an essential non-difference between them, then an equation is required to show the identity. This equation, 'All = *Īśvara*' is like the famous equation, $E = mc^2$ (energy equals matter). Any equation is to be understood and not to be believed. Any statement, which is simply a matter for belief, does not require an equation. If the equation 'All = *Īśvara*' is understood, then one can say that there is only God. With this understanding it is easy to appreciate that nothing is created by anyone, and all the resources are given. No one can claim ownership. According to Pūjya Swamiji, the notion of ownership is the greatest myth in the world.¹⁴ An attitude of humility will grow in a person and subsequently letting God into one's life will become simple. One can totally trust the infallible God who is in the form of the various orders. A simple shift in the vision of *Īśvara* endows one with the capacity to relax in the appreciation of the ever-prevailing degrees of order. One then lives an alert life in harmony with the order. In every expression of life, one sees *Īśvara*. In any inappropriate expression also, there is *Īśvara*, but the contribution from the immodest and ignorant individual dominates. The vision of the infallible *mahā* order as *Īśvara* ensures a dynamic relation with *Īśvara* and makes one a religious person.

'All that is here is *Īśvara*', means that *Īśvara* is the whole and that every phenomenon is *Īśvara*. One can invoke *Īśvara* in a given phenomenon or as the phenomenon itself. For example, a phenomenon such as fire can be invoked as a deity (*dēvatā*).

¹⁴ "Bringing *Īśvara* into your life," in Talks and Essays of Swami Dayananda, Compiled by Swamini Srividyananda, Vol. II, p.331, 1st edition 2006.

The total can also be invoked in any given form. For example, to draw the attention of someone, one can touch the person with one's little finger. That little touch is enough to draw the complete attention of the person. Similarly, *Īśvara* can be invoked totally in any form, providing an altar for worship. Many forms are handed down to the Hindus traditionally, and every form becomes sacred as an altar for worship. The *pūjā* room in a Hindu home will be adorned with the pictures and *vi-grahas* of many Gods and Goddesses. There is generally a misconception that Hindus worship idols. Pūjya Swamiji was unequivocal in dismissing this stereotypical perception by asserting that nobody worships an idol, and everyone worships the Lord.¹⁵ In the declaration of the second Hindu-Jewish Leadership Summit, Pūjya Swamiji was steadfast in including as one of the affirmations that a Hindu relates to only one Supreme Being when he/she prays to a particular manifestation.¹⁶ On hearing the word God, one's mind is immediately connected to the form of one's *iṣṭa-dēvatā* such as Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, Vināyaka, Kārtikēya, Lakṣmī, Durgā, Śiva and so forth. This connection is the result of a rich tradition supported by a vision. Sometimes even a particular form is not necessary. A lump of turmeric powder is enough to invoke Lord Gaṇēśa. Once the Lord is invoked in the form, then it becomes an altar to perform the *pūjā*.

GRACE

At any one time during one's life, what is to be done in a given situation is called what 'is', and what 'is' is *Īśvara*. It is *Īśvara* in the form of dharma. Any appropriate action in a given situation is the manifestation of *Īśvara* and that becomes *svakarma*, one's action. *Svakarma* is doing the right and appropriate thing at the right time and at the right place. Then, one lives a deliberate conscious life in harmony with dharma, in harmony with *Īśvara*. This is how one earns grace which comes from the Lord. It is the favorable result (*karmaphala*), which is called *punya*, of doing one's *svakarma*. Grace (*kṛpā*) is not something distributed by *Īśvara*. One has to tap it and the tapping is done by the right and appropriate action alone. Besides *Īśvara*'s grace, there are other types of grace. There is the grace of *guru*, *guru-kṛpā*, the grace of the *śāstra*, *śāstra-kṛpā*. Finally, there is *ātma-kṛpā*, one should be earning the grace. One has to discover that one's life is one of grace all the way. One

¹⁵ "The need for a Cognitive Change," in Talks and Essays of Swami Dayananda, Compiled by Swamini Srividyananda, Vol. II, p.285, 1st edition 2006.

¹⁶ The joint Declaration of the Second Hindu-Jewish Leadership Summit, held in Jerusalem, February 17-20, 2008 by The Chief Rabbinate of Israel and The Hindu Dharma Acharya Sabha. http://www.millenniumpeacesummit.org/Hindu-Jewish_Summit_Information.pdf

earns the grace by reaching out, recognizing a cause and contributing to it, acknowledging a situation where one has to do something and then doing it. One has to become a contributor by sharing one's time, talent and treasure.¹⁷ In reaching out one is bigger than what one thinks of oneself. This is the way to grow.

OBJECTIVE LIVING

To appreciate *Īśvara* is to appreciate all that is given to one.¹⁸ One has to learn to look at oneself in relation to the larger scheme of things. One can discover one's slot only when one's own likes and dislikes are kept to the minimum. Relating to *Īśvara* increases in proportion to the reduction of one's own subjectivity. One has to start with accepting all that is given to oneself and begin to contribute to the creation of the Lord, the *Īśvara sṛṣṭi*. Identifying oneself as the individual ego, one becomes small. This smallness has to be abandoned by building the relationship with the total. This relationship with the total is the fundamental relationship common to all beings.¹⁹ The *Īśvara sṛṣṭi* can be likened to a five-star guest house into which one enters.²⁰ All amenities are provided in the guest house. One enjoys the guest house as long as one is allowed to stay. When one leaves one cannot take anything from this guest house. However, for the duration of stay one has to share the amenities with other guests and make the stay enjoyable for all. One has to embellish it to the extent one can for the future guests. This five-star guest house, called the world, is a courtesy of *Īśvara* provided gratis to all in the creation. Every moment of stay in the guest house should be lived in the awareness of the owner and in gratitude. This is surrender to *Īśvara* with the awareness that all that is here is *Īśvara*.²¹ The whole life then becomes prayerful with the knowledge of *Īśvara* as the giver and the given. One becomes a simple person. The simpler one becomes, one comes closer to discovering the reality of oneself, *jagat* and *Īśvara*. Then, the purpose of life is fulfilled.

Om Tat Sat

¹⁷ Swami Veditatmanandaji condenses contribution into the 3-Ts, Time, Talent and Treasure.

¹⁸ "Relating to *Īśvara*", in Talks and Essays of Swami Dayananda, Compiled by Gyanakumari, 1st edition 1999, p.274.

¹⁹ "What is devotion?" Swami Dayananda Saraswati, a booklet published from an excerpt of the lectures given by Pūjya Swamiji in Bombay, India, in 1978.

²⁰ Bhakti and knowledge of *Īśvara*, Swami Dayananda Saraswati, a book in Tamil, published in 1996 by P.R. Ramasubramanya Raja

²¹ Purpose of Prayer, Swami Dayananda Saraswati, Moments with Oneself Series: 7, Arsha Vidya Centre Research & Publication, Chennai, India, 2013 .