



Impersonal Universal Vision

Swami Nirmalananda



It was a bright and beautiful morning when the gentle rays of the rising sun infused a new life into everything. Even a blade of grass or a petal of a flower began to throb with life. After many days of continuous downpour, the entire forest looked fresh and fragrant. Wild animals moved about in freedom when man left them undisturbed. The gentle deer, the green parrot, the lovely woodpecker and the shy robin looked healthy and clean, whereas the domesticated animals and fowls were not so healthy and clean. By leading natural life in freedom, these wild animals and birds are free from diseases and they manage well without the help of doctors and medicines. With too much of modernisation and artificial way of life, we not only invite diseases, but also forget our essential oneness with Nature. By cultivating the intellect without corresponding development of the heart, we remain incomplete and fragmented beings. When undue emphasis is given to intellectual development, we lose our balance and innate simplicity and thereby develop a kind of hypocritical attitude of trying to be different from what we are.

He was a poor hill tribe, simple and primitive in many ways. Short and a hunchback, with long matted hair left loosely around his neck and shoulders and with features resembling a cave-man, he would often wander alone in the vast forest unafraid of wild animals. A small dhoti, a shirt and a sheet were all the garments he had, and they were torn and dirty with long use. Yet he did not bother to wash them. His wants were few and his earthly possessions consisted of a crowbar for digging wild roots, an axe for chopping firewood, a sickle, a couple of mud pots and a small tumbler. Carrying the crowbar and the axe, he would go into the dense forest taking his dog with him. After digging up wild tubers and roasting them in the fire, he would eat after sharing it with his dog. Before getting dark, he would select one of the nearest caves and would make fire in front of it to scare away bears and other wild beasts that frequented the place. After spreading a torn gunny bag on the floor of the cave and another one for his dog, he would spend the night there.

People called him 'Ogari Madha' (Ogari means cave and Madha is a crude abbreviation of Mahadeva). Ogari Madha had no need for politicians or even for the government. Just as the monkey needed no permission of anyone for jumping from tree to tree, so also he did not have to obtain any sanction from anyone for wandering in the forest. Whenever he needed a couple of rupees for his smoke, jaggery and coffee decoction, he would chop firewood or cut wild grass and carry the heavy load on his head to the village. During the season, he would bring honey-combs for squeezing them in your presence. Occasionally he would bring wild roots and then he would narrate his strange and dreadful experiences and encounters with wild elephants, tigers, bears, cheetahs and pythons. Despite his ignorance and dirty dress, he was extremely simple and sincere. Above all, there was something unspoilt in him which we often lose as we get more educated and civilised. More than anything else, it was this aspect which made you love and like him. Whenever he came to the ashram, he became the focus of your attention.



Sometimes god came on him and he was used as a medium when his whole body would shake with the power of the Invisible. On those occasions, tribal men and women would come to him seeking guidance from god in warding off evil spirits and in solving their troubles and problems. He would give them suitable answers as to how to avert dangers and how to appease the wrath of god. He would then hit his lower abdomen with the sickle he carried. A couple of years ago, while so hitting, it is said, he inflicted a wound over his abdomen and blood began to ooze out of it. But he never got perturbed about it nor did he want to go to any doctor for treatment. He simply applied some holy ashes over the wound and remarked : 'It was my punishment for this foolish Madha for his disobedience of eating food instead of fasting until I came on him'.

Man is here for the supreme purpose : 'of know himself'. It is because of the lack of Self-Knowledge that we, knowingly or unknowingly, create more misery and suffering in this sorrow-ridden world. One may be highly educated, or may possess a lot of wealth or may occupy the highest position in society or may roll in all sorts of luxuries and comforts, yet it is impossible to find perfect peace and happiness unless one knows oneself. Unless the ego-shell is broken, it is not possible to find the Self-kernel which is the Living Truth in all. The world is too much in all of us. Its nagging problems impinge us all the time from all directions. Yet the world is only a reflections of the mind. Therefore, it is foolish to run away from it to a forest or to a holiday resort or to a foreign country where everything on the surface looks nicer and appealing. We carry the mind wherever we go and, therefore, we cannot escape from life and its problems until and unless we tackle the mind itself. The truth is only the truth of our own being and, therefore, it is of paramount importance to know oneself. Without Self-Knowledge, our knowledge of all other things has no basis at all. The Self-alienation makes one feel incomplete and it is the cause of one's unhappiness. When we get trapped in our own thoughts and activities, we feel isolated from the Self and thus remain cut off from our Source. Unless the root is one with the branch, it will not bear fruit. Thinking is not the nature of the Self and, therefore, we should stand apart from the thoughts if we want to be free and happy. If we want to be whole and complete, we should feel our inherent perfection.

Without the seer, nothing is seen. Surely, beauty lies in the beholder. We say that the world is real. But does the world tell us that it is real ? We seem to know the world. But does the world know us ? Or is the vision of the world only an experience of each person often modified by the changing mood of the mind ? When the mind wakes up, the world rises up in the mind and when the mind ceases to exist, the world also comes to nought. Moreover, the world does not appear to all in the same light, as each one has a different conception of the world. Seeing the world in its present plight, we all react to it in different ways. Even the ordinary mind is greater than the world, because, after one travels around the world, the entire world and what all one has seen, appear within the mind. Even when it seems to us that the objective world and the subjective mind are two different things, in deeper analysis a stage is sure to reach when the apparent boundary and distinction between the mind and matter vanish completely. What we then discover is the veil of pure awareness, the Universal Mind or the Formless Self.

When this realisation dawns in man, he knows without a trace of doubt that I AM (AHAM) the Infinite Truth, the whole of Life or the all-pervading Self, which is not limited to one's body. From this realisation springs genuine love, ethics and morality. When I AM All or when All are I AM, if I harm another, it amounts to harming myself. It is like cutting the base of the branch on which I sit and thereby I myself fall to the ground, hurting myself. **To see everything as my real Self and my true Self in everything is the right vision.** Mere intellectual knowing of this fact is no knowing at all. We have already gathered a lot of knowledge and this knowing will be one more piece of information to be added to the store-house of our know-

ledge. The Self-knowing is a state of being, not a process of accumulating knowledge. For the realization of I AM ALL, there is no need to force and strive, with the mind to become anything. All that is needed is just BE what I AM. If we want to be as free as a bird, what is required is to live in the moment giving complete attention to what we are and what we do. It is this realisation that brings SAMADARŚANAM (the sameness of vision) Without this all-embracing impersonal universal vision, one will never be able to say that 'I AM not in the world, but the world is in Me' or that 'I AM the Truth, the Way and the Life'.

As the world is not different from us and as we are not different from the world, when we change our vision and thinking, we find that the world is already transformed. As we are, so the world is. When our concept of the world is completely changed, the world and its happenings will have a different significance for us. Moreover, why try to change others, when they are I AM in different forms? The fact is that by changing ourselves, we change the world. Therefore, there is no need to set right the world. What is needed is to set right one's own mind for precision, clarity and lucidity of the mind.

The Self-knowing is not possible when the mind's attention is turned towards other objects. Our so-called concern for others is often to disguise our own self-centred activities and preoccupation with our ego. If we really had deep concern for others, we would have instantly changed to be benefactors of the world and humanity. When each one of us is seeking blindly one's own ambition and success and when greed and selfishness rule our life, of what use is our thinking and talking about others? What is needed is love in action and action in love. We often pretend to be what we are not. For Self-investigation, one should be sufficiently interested in oneself, though, of course, not in a selfish way. Pretension, wearing a mask, make-up, outward show, vain and proud display of one's wealth and knowledge, position and status have become the mania of our modern times. We seem to dress not for our own comfort and convenience, but to please others. When this tendency goes too far, we will not be true to our own being, but will dance to the whims and fancies of other people. We do not realise that the pretense of doing good is self-deception. Therefore, one should be honest and sincere to oneself to the core.

As the world consists of people of different interests, ambitions and aspirations, and, as all of them are at different stages of their mental and spiritual development, there will be chaos and confusion in the world, as it has always been. War, violence, brutality of every kind, on a big or small scale, are bound to prevail in society. Trying to bring order in this disorderly world, without first bringing order and clarity in one's own mind, is like trying to change the image of the face in the mirror without first correcting the face itself. Similarly, trying to escape from life and its problems which we ourselves have created, is like coming out of one trap and then falling into another trap. To seek escape is to invite sorrow. Undoubtedly, the world makes many demands on us. As we solve one problem, further problems continue to confront us all the time. Life is a shoreless ocean and the only shore is found in one's own Self. Behind the facade of glamour and pleasure, there is much ugliness and pain, and we all get greatly agitated about them. But if we are able to look beyond these dualistic impostors, we may find beauty and bliss. In the midst of darkness, light exists and in the midst of sorrow, happiness prevails. When one overcomes the world, safety and security are found in one's own Self which is the source of all blessings.

The usual tendency to blame the world or others for all the troubles arises from lack of Self-knowledge. When one's own vision is set right by conquering the mind and by putting it in its proper gear, perhaps there may be no need at all to reform others or to improve the lot of the world by our unnecessary and unwarranted interference which often does more harm than good. When we attempt to make others happy according to our notion of happiness, we are, in fact causing them more unhappiness. Despite all the benefit that accrues from education,



science and technology, the number of poor and illiterate people in the world is on the increase. What does it prove? It clearly shows that we have no genuine love in our heart for all. We do not sufficiently realise that we are the cause of the world's sorrow. When we realise it, we will cease to trouble the world and the world will then cease to trouble us.

True love cannot be awakened in the heart by preaching ethics and morality to others. When one is in need of it in himself, first one should reform the reformer that is himself. One should light the lamp of love in one's own heart and feed it with intense feeling and profound reverence. Love and compassion, generated in the heart of an enlightened soul, can be a more effective cure for the world's sorrow than all the organised charity, philanthropy, social work and social reform put together. In this sorrow-ridden world we need more love and compassion which come as a result of the wisdom of self knowledge. Let love, therefore, inspire our actions, let love reign in our hearts and let love lead and guide our lives !

Mind from the light of the Truth-Consciousness, Life from the energy of the Consciousness-Force, Matter primal substance of Existence—these things are derived from Spiritual-force. The Mystics had the Vision of the plane of the Truth-Consciousness whose power is inherent in all the living beings; and this power of Truth-Consciousness quicken that Manifestation towards which man is progressing in his evolution. And so, manifestation would therefore mean the ascent of man into a higher than his present mental plane of Consciousness.

—*The Vision of India*