

Discourses/Articles
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Analysis of the Self

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Human consciousness is characterised by objectiveness. It is more a cognition or a perception than simple consciousness. The cognitions and perceptions are the processes of knowing through the mind and the senses. In the waking state of ordinary consciousness, the different senses receive different kinds of knowledge, and the function and knowledge of one sense is quite unconnected with those of another. For instance, the eye alone can perceive forms and the ear alone can know sounds. Knowledge differs with regard to the different senses. But, even if these different kinds of sense-knowledge are entirely cut off from one another, the person experiencing this sense-knowledge is one and the same. The person is the synthesizer of sense-perceptions which, by themselves, (are not interrelated). The same person experiences forms, sounds, touches, tastes, smells, etc., and feels: "I am the seer, the hearer, etc." and does not feel that the seer is different from the hearer. The ultimate knower must, therefore, be an absolutely indivisible whole of consciousness. Even if there is the slightest distinction within the constitutive essence of the knower, i.e., if the knower is made up of parts, complete synthetic knowledge would never have been possible. If there is a division within the knower, what is the relation between one part and another? The question cannot be answered, as knowledge does not admit of space within itself, because knowledge is presupposed by the idea or conception of space. If these parts within the knower are not differentiated by anything other than the knower, then the knower does not become a composite whole of parts, but an undivided dense existence of pure consciousness, which is absolutely identical with itself. The nature of the knower must be knowledge itself. If not, what is his nature? This question, again, cannot be answered. The most fundamental experience is consciousness or awareness, pure and simple, free from all self-contradictory divisions and fluctuations of thought. None can experience anything greater than or equal to consciousness as the ultimate basis for all experiences in life.

Hence the knower of sense-perceptions cannot be the mind, though the mind is able to know without the help of the senses and is able to coordinate, arrange, and systematically synthesize sense-perceptions. Thoughts differ in different places, times and conditions. Hence, there must be some other synthesizing agent of even mental cognitions. Otherwise a person cannot know that he is the same individual experiencing different kinds of thought. Mental cognitions and sensuous perceptions are heterogeneous in their nature. Therefore, the possibility and the experience of a unified completeness of self-identical, absolutely immediate and direct consciousness shows that the true Self is Pure Consciousness in its essence, which is not affected by the revolting activities of the mind and the senses. The essential nature of the Knower or the Self must be simple consciousness, because in the state of deep sleep it is seen that when

the body, the vital currents, the senses, the mind, the intellect, the ego, the subconscious, and everything that goes to make the individual gets suspended and denied its validity as an existence, the person still exists as is testified to by the following experience which, with great certainty, identifies the person who has woken up with the person who slept previously. The existence of the essential person, the Self, in the condition of deep sleep, was one of “awareness of nothing”, “awareness together with nothingness”, which means “mere awareness”, as “nothingness” has no value whatever. Further, the existence of the experience of the Self is corroborated by the subsequent remembrances of the existence of oneself in deep sleep. A remembrance is not possible without previous experience, and as experience is never possible without consciousness, we have to conclude that the Self does exist in deep sleep as mere Consciousness. This Consciousness, therefore, exists in the waking state as the unchanging basis of the changing mind and the senses. In the dreaming state it exists as the synthesizer of mental cognitions. The objects in the waking and the dreaming states differ from one another, but the consciousness of objects is one and the same; it does not differ in relation to objects. The only difference between the waking and the dreaming states is that in the former, experience is the effect of the function of the mind with the help of the senses, whereas in the latter experience is the effect of the function of the mind alone. But the consciousness is the same, both in the waking and the dreaming states. As this consciousness is proved to exist in the deep sleep state also, it is evident that this One Consciousness endures without even the least change in itself in all the states of experience, during all the days, nights, weeks, months and years, i.e., till eternity. It does not differ from another consciousness, nor does it differ from itself now and then, here and there, in this or that experience, as objects and mental states do. Consciousness is always one and is ever secondless. We cannot conceive of two consciousnesses, though mental states may be two or more. Hence consciousness must be eternal. Metaphysically, anything that is eternal must be infinite, unlimited. Consciousness is unlimited, for the consciousness of limitation shows that consciousness is greater than limitation. Hence, the Self is eternal, infinite, Absolute Consciousness. The ignorance that is said to exist in deep sleep cannot really exist or have any value, for, if it does, it would be an eternal antagonist of consciousness, and consciousness would be limited and perishable, and not infinite or Absolute. The illogicality of the existence of ignorance cancels its validity and posits the existence of the Absolute Consciousness. One experiences consciousness, and not ignorance, as his fundamental being or Self. This Self is, therefore, different from ignorance in the sense that consciousness is not ignorance, but it does not mean that the Self is a witness of ignorance as real existence.

The Self neither dies, nor is born, nor has any modification. If it has these changes, they have to be experienced by some consciousness. And this ultimate experiencing consciousness, we term the Self. This Self is self-luminous, non-dual, self-conscious, independent and the sole Being.

The way we should live in our own personal and public life

Inasmuch as you are officers, you cannot have an isolated personal life, entirely; you are socially related. In fact, there is no such thing as an absolutely isolated life for any person; everybody is socially connected. You are a social entity. You belong to the world. You cannot say that you have absolutely no relationship with anybody. So, personal life is only a tentative definition of your nature. You have a relatively personal way of living,

but it is inwardly connected with various factors that are super-personal, impersonal, you may call them, social, national and international; it may even go further into the universal. You are not an individual as you may imagine yourself to be. There is an old saying of a poet: "No man is an island." An island is surrounded by the ocean and cut off from the main land from every side, but not so is a human being. He is not an island; he is not cut off from the main land of the cosmos like a piece of land in the ocean.

No man can be happy unless he discovers the sources of happiness. Happiness does not drop from the skies, suddenly. It is an expression of perfection. Wherever there is perfection, there is happiness. There is happiness in health, there is happiness in mental equilibrium, there is happiness in social solidarity, there is happiness in national security and so on and so forth. Wherever there is harmony among the constituents of a particular pattern of living, there is happiness. Happiness is only a name, a designation that we give to the perfection attained on account of a harmony brought about among the constituents of a particular setup. You are District Collectors, for example, and you have a jurisdiction over a particular district. The jurisdiction implies your relationship with the constituents of the district. The constituents need not necessarily be human beings; they can be even geographical conditions, and so on. It is a very complicated system. So, first of all, you have to be clear in your mind as to what sort of progress or perfection you are expected to introduce in the jurisdiction over which you have control. A District Collector is an all-in-all person. He has every kind of responsibility and is like a king without a crown on his head. He has a tremendous responsibility.

First of all, the District Collector must understand that people around him are like him. He is a representative of the people in the district, just as the President may be regarded as the representative of the whole country. You are a small President in your own district. Though it may be a smaller jurisdiction, your calibre and your responsibility are of a similar nature. What you have to understand is that people around you are not inferior to you in any way. They are also capable of being Collectors, perhaps, if the necessary circumstances and facilities are provided for them. They have aspirations like you; they have desires like you, they have weaknesses like you, and they would like to achieve what you would like to achieve. Only they are not provided with the same facilities as you have been provided with by circumstances of society, and they feel the pain of things as you feel, and what you wish they also wish. They are just like you in every respect. You are a human being, and they are human beings. But circumstances of the society have made you the head of a group of people, towards whom you have a responsibility, and not a right. You should not think that you have a right over people. You have a responsibility, and obligation; and wherever an obligation is properly fulfilled, a kind of right also automatically comes. You need not ask for rights, they will come automatically. You shall only be careful to see that you fulfil your duties and you should not pay too much attention to your requirements. You must always pay attention to your obligations.

So, in this effort of yours, in the fulfilment of your duties, you must consider also that you are a unit of the whole country. You have to work according to its constitution. I am driving at another point altogether which is different from the merely official responsibility of a person, as the ultimate aim of every organisation is security and happiness. You do not become officers merely because you want to become officers. That is not the purpose. The purpose is to achieve an end which is superior to

officership, to bring about perfection, security, happiness and prosperity, internally as well as externally.

Now, if we have a parochial outlook merely, that will defeat our purpose. Suppose a District Collector thinks: "I am concerned only with my district, the other districts may go to hell." If he starts thinking like that, you can foresee the consequences. The neighbour is connected with him in a very vital manner. It is true, in a very narrow sense, that you are concerned only with your district. But it is wholly untrue that you are concerned only with that and nothing else. Suppose the whole country is in sorrow and in a state of insecurity and everything is shaking at the bottom, what is the use of your efforts in one district merely? So you must have an eye to the larger dimension of your responsibility as a citizen of the whole nation also in addition to your responsibility as a Collector in a district. But, this, too, is not sufficient. You are in an international set-up. The country may be prosperous internally, but it may be threatened by outside dangers. So what will you do about that?

Perhaps you have no jurisdiction as wide as this: but little drops make the whole ocean. If everyone thinks that he is not concerned, well, then everything is doomed to chaos. As drops make the ocean, so individuals make the society. Each person is a unit of responsibility in the whole country. He may not be an officer in the technical sense, but he is a centre of responsibility. Every citizen has a responsibility for the whole nation. The democratic system is nothing but a system of each one being responsible for everything. That is called democracy. But people think: "It is the government's concern, what is my responsibility for it?" If you think like that, it is a defeat of the purpose of democracy. There is a danger in the understanding of the subtlety behind the democratic administration. People do not understand what it actually means. Sometimes it appears that everyone's responsibility is no one's responsibility. It may look like that. If everybody is concerned with a matter, it means no one is concerned. Suppose a government's water scheme is flowing through the road and the tap is open. Will an individual be concerned with the wastage of water or not? If he thinks: "It is the government's water that is flowing, I am not going to be the loser, let the water flow!" then he is untrue to his citizenship in the country. He thinks that the government is outside him. He is a very foolish man indeed. The government is not outside the constituents of the nation. What is a government? It is only an ideological force that the entire setup of citizens has created for its own good. The government is not outside you and you cannot see it anywhere else. If you go on looking around, where is the government? You cannot see it. It is only in the minds of the people. It is a power that you have created by thought. So, ultimately, the government is in the minds of the people, it is not physically visible. You go anywhere throughout the length and breadth of India, but you will not see the government; yet it is present everywhere. It is like God existing. God is everywhere, and yet nowhere. So, this is an analogy to explain to you that every citizen is a small unit of responsibility, and government is nothing but a name for the total responsibility of the entire nation; and what is totality if the individuals are not there! If the part is absent, the whole cannot be there. So, there can be no government if each individual is irresponsible. So, this is the philosophical background, we may say, behind the governmental system, democracy and life as a citizen.

Ultimately, perfection, security, prosperity and happiness will be ensured to us only if we are in harmony with the forces that govern life. These forces, which are not merely

social, are the determining factors of human happiness, for man is not merely a social unit. When you are at home, you have a personality of your own. When you go to bed and sleep, you do not sleep as a collector sleeping. You have got an individuality and a personal status of your own. You forget all your associations and you begin to realise yourself as an independent person, a unit of reality and that has some relationship with similar such units constituting the whole world. So, the inner essence of man has also to be attuned to the inner essences of all people. We are not merely political people like the M.L.As., M.L.Cs., etc.; we are not merely social units, we are also physical bodies, we are minds, we are intellects, we are also spirits, and all these have to be set in tune. So there is a necessity to bring about a vertical as well as a horizontal harmony. Horizontal harmony may be said to be harmony in family, harmony in society, harmony in the community, harmony in the nation, harmony in the international set-up. This is a kind of horizontal harmony. But vertically, there has to be harmony in the physical body, harmony in the vital breath, harmony in the mind, harmony in the intellect, harmony in the Spirit.

If the internal harmony is not there, the external harmony will not work. Suppose a man is mad, is out of his brain and his physical health is breaking and his consciousness is aberrant, what is the use of his social association? Individuals should be healthy in order that the group may be healthy. The group is nothing but a totality of individuals and so no international organisation can succeed, not even the UNO, if the individuals are not complete in themselves. They must be perfect individuals, representatives of total responsibility. We are citizens, not merely of India, but of the whole cosmos. We belong to an international set-up, no doubt, but also we belong to a universal set-up-God's creation. So you are a child of God, a citizen of the universe, and so if you are not in harmony with the natural forces and the divine laws operating, you will be overcome in the end. You may be apparently successful in your efforts in the beginning, but finally it will collapse as did the Roman Empire. The Roman Empire was politically very strong, perhaps it was an ideal Empire manifesting tremendous organising capacity, but it lacked the spiritual note! The soul was absent while the body was perfectly healthy. It appeared to be healthy. Suppose you take away the soul of a man and the whole skeleton is left, what happens? It falls down. The Roman Empire did not fall on account of the invasion of the Huns, as historians tell you. Even microbes cannot attack you if your body is perfectly in balance. Even tubercular germs cannot enter your body, if your body is perfectly maintained. But if you are susceptible to invasion, they attack you. The susceptibility to invasion of any kind should be avoided. People make themselves vulnerable on account of certain inner lacunae.

Together with the strength of the defence forces of the country, there must also be the strength of internal maintenance and security, by which I do not mean merely economic security, but also intellectual, moral, ethical and spiritual acumen, and you are representatives of that aim and ideal. By God's grace you have been placed in such a position that you can instruct people, and so you must be very friendly with people. I began by saying you are human beings like anybody else. So when you are the heads of an organisation or of a jurisdiction, you have to behave as a father behaves in a family. The Collector is the father of the District. And how does the father behave with the members of the family? Great responsibility, and yet great affection. He is strict in the administration of system and discipline, but very affectionate like a mother, a parent like father and mother combined. So this is the way in which we have to envisage things

in general, spiritually enlightened within, cosmically harmonious in our thoughts, and politically responsible as units of governmental organisation. This is only a short outline that I have given to you. You can go on enlarging upon it for a lifetime. I pray with an invocation to the Almighty that your adventure in life in every respect may be a total success. May God bless you!