

# Man's Aspiration and His Quest

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What is the exact thing which man seeks and when will his seeking come to an end? This has been one of the major problems. When he seeks to find satisfaction or happiness in things of the world, he finds that such satisfactions have a transient nature and further that they do not satisfy one completely. They seem to lead one on to others than themselves. Material things, life and even rationality or mind of imagination do not seem to be completely satisfactory for they bear within themselves the possibility of their annulment. As the great logicians remarked all things seem to be riddled with contradiction or should we say be devilled by their own opposites. That is why it was seen that the Real permanent is not to be had in the world of matter or motion or life or mind. All things are carrying within themselves their certificates of death and disintegration, in whatever way those two may manifest themselves. To dismiss this as logical sophistication and assure ourselves that whether permanent or transient life must be for enjoyment or happiness is of course one way of escaping from the contemplation of the future. Opportunism has a great attraction to human minds, even though the best is sure to come to an end and the worst may take its place. The dialectical or polar tension is a fact that life and reason

demonstrate.

Thus man's yearning for that which can satisfy or help fulfilment is eternal. This yearning for that which can fulfil is usually called the quest for perfection but then this perfection is thought of as of the order of pattern of life or of mind or of man. Wherein lies man's perfection or that which more truly can be spoken of as the principle which makes one feel completely satisfied and for ever this is the question.

It is said that if one knows oneself that is the perfection. Self-realisation is said to be an all-solvent of the problem eternal unrest. This self-realisation is sought for introspectively in meditation or dhyana or Samadhi. It leads one on to something that transcends all thought and truth and even one's personality or ego. Some others take self realization to be the realization of the rational self which is in so far as it is rational, a universal self, or common self of all on the plane of reason. Some others take it to be self – realization in the community of human beings and institutions. Thus family, religions sects, or church or state is that which in objective reality forms the basic means for self-realization. One finds that the self thus socialised or communitised or stasised even when such socialisation or communitisation or statisation is

based on so called rational principles bedevils the whole process in the dialectical see-saw and precariously imperils the self that seeks its realisation, for every realization is followed by de-realization.

Man's self is not complete within itself so long as the self that knows and hugs to is made to be what it is, a social term or ego. No other ego however eminent can fully complete the search for the soul that is in unrest.

It is true that man is insufficient in himself, and feels himself to be insufficient in the world of matter and life and mind and in society. What then is the quest for It is a quest for that principle of completion or that which can complete the soul when it becomes attained. Who will remove this basic insufficiency in the individual? The very nissus at the heart of every individual is the need to attain sufficiency. This is the power behind the religious quest. It may be diverted to goals such as truth, consciousness or power or other men and things or beauty even and goodness, but the measures of their being the principle of sufficiency or completion are determined by their ability and capacity to do so.

The object of all religious endeavour or its ultimate endeavour is that principle that helps completion of oneself. That is it is that which fills a person completely occupying him in all his parts and grants a harmony of being which no other principle or principles or a whole

collection of them can fill. Thus the ultimate object of human quest and one may perhaps add of all that exists is the full or Purna; it does not imply that one knows or can know whether and how it is full in itself, but that it fills to the very brim every soul that aspires. In this sense then does the Veda use the name Purna to the Ultimate Deity: Purnam adah Purnam idam, where He is or God is that in full or becomes full. Therefore we have to recognise that the object of religious quest is that filling principle to the brim of being and thus quenches all search for anything else. This is the meaning of self-realization which is only to be had in the Godhead and not in one's own fragmentary or partial being or amsa. We have to find our amsi or that which completes and restores to wholeness our being.

Such a principle of Fullness or Purna as God is very satisfying as granting an explanation to the search interminable in the world of life and matter and mind and society and transcendence.

Having thus defined the call of religious quest as the call to discover that which can complete one's being and all wholly, it is our next business to consider whether the objects of religion offered to us by religions are such principles. Following the same method adopted earlier it can be shown that the representations of God for human worship and satisfaction are incapable of granting total satisfaction.

There are persons who would represent the Godhead in or by some symbolic object. Trees and animals and utensils of natural phenomena are worshipped as God. Though each one of them had perhaps saved or protected for a while from disaster or from some calamity there developed superstitions which have proved such religion to be inadequate to the reason and deeper intuitions. Nor have painting and idols as representative signs of numinous objects inclusive of wonder and awe helped to satisfy the human yearning for completion. An ancient maxim that men become what they worship has proved such inadequate objects to be not only the grave of all progress and attainment but led to deteriorating effects and regress.

Religious object by some has been stated to be the inner principle of man. The kingdom of God is said to be within. God is said to be installed in the hearts of all creatures. To discover him and live by his light and grace is said to be religion. It is clear that it does not provide for the problem of completeness – attainment as the Self to be known as also the Universal Self but also precariously solipsistic and dependent on the life of the body. The antaryami worship is very valuable and is the basic form for both ethics and religion, as the centre of conscience and inner voice. But the life of the body entails the concept of transcendence of the antaryamin in and through and inclusive of it.

The Religious Object is claimed to be the prophet, messiah, avatar or some leader who by his services to mankind has got apotheosized or lifted up to the status of the Godhead. Such men too however eminent proved unsatisfactory to the religious consciousness which got a temporary satisfaction but had to revise its notion of Godhead when such persons passed off leaving their footprints on the sands of time. Their immortality is a posthumous immortality, an immortality in the memory of a people or a nation or a cult.

Nor is the worship of the Gods or God who had made the creation as a whole and who runs the cosmic show sufficient and satisfying as it depends on the cosmic process. There is a beyond creation. Thus the concept of a Creator-sustainer, Redeemer God does not satisfy the inmost demand for an Ultimate God whose Being is greater than all the four forms that we have enumerated.

Therefore that the Ultimate Transcendent beyond all our conceptions and processes is the one all-satisfying principle, all filling principle or Person is known.

Hindu Spiritual thought has through all ways of knowing arrived at this Ultimate Being, beyond all perception, beyond all reasoning, beyond all minding and knowing and even intuiting - na caksur gacchati, na vag gacchati, na mano, na vidmo na vijanimo etad anusisyat - says the Kenopanisad.

The Ultimate supports and elevates the lower forms of conception of its existence or lower statuses of its own dynamic formulation to the mind of the souls.

Thus it gives a comprehensive formulation of Deity and man's ascent from the lowest to the Highest by sublimation and transformation of the lower to the integral Nature of the Ultimate.

Hinduism does not reject the lower for it answers to some fact of reality of the All existence. It in and through the lives of the souls threads them together as the One that appears as all these manifold forms and names and all.

Thus the One truth or Reality that embraces all is the Highest formulation of the Integral Hinduism.