

English

Satyam Shivam Sundaram

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Reality is a concept about which people hold diametrically opposite views. The east understands it in a totally different sense from the west. The divergence in the viewpoints leads to a divergence in evolution of life itself. That which is unreal and valueless to the Indian mind is reality to the westerner and has great importance to him. Superficial critics miss this vital difference in their respective viewpoints and interpret the institutions of the east in terms of the western concept and arrive at queer conclusions.

The westerner, with his materialistic outlook, accepts all things that can be perceived by the human sensory organs as real. To him, if they exist, they can be verified by his senses and so are real. The experience of the material world is through incidents: they are also real to him. He calls it 'scientific truth.'

That which is real to the westerner is considered by the Indian, with his spiritual outlook, as a gross and unintelligent view of things and events. To the Indian, this material world is a stream of life where everything is in a flux. Everything is changing faces every moment, so says Vedanta. So it concludes that things and events, which appear to be real to our gross senses, can never be real. It is merely an appearance, a mirage, or Maya. The power which drives the stream of life is the only imperishable element: it is the only reality - Bramhan. That power can never be perceived through senses nor is it conceivable by intellect. "How is it possible to know the knower?", says Yajnavalkya in the Brihadaranyaka. It is realizable only by the super mind, a mind that transcends intellect and views things from the higher angle of life eternal. To quote Satya Sai Baba, one of the best exponents of ancient Indian culture, "When the things are analysed and known, nothing is gained. For they belong to the realm of relatively real, not the absolutely real. They are Jagath, the moving, the changing, the transitory, the untrue. The Vedas, Sastras, and Puranas have not mentioned anything about the origin and dissolution of these, with any degree of certainty, because they are concerned more with the rescue of the 'I' that is entangled with them. Know yourself, know the world which is

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but a projection of the mind: that is the lesson conveyed."

Scientific reality relates to the human mind: there is no absolute truth for the materialistic westerner. His definition of good is relative; his sense of beauty is a personal one. The real, the good, and the graceful do not go hand in hand for him. What is real may be vicious and ugly and the beautiful may equally be something unreal and tragic.

The Indian spiritualist believes in absolute reality. Life stream is born out of creative urge of the Absolute and moves forward in a graceful manner to its ultimate goal. That which is good, is so in all its measures, is therefore blessed and graceful. The concepts of reality, of good and of graceful are coincidental and do not have an element of divergence, for the orient. That which is in rhythm with the flowering of eternal life is alone good and graceful. That which hinders or stagnates it, is doomed to ultimate disgrace and destruction in spite of its temporary achievement. The concepts of the evil and disgraceful are thus well defined and are absolutely precise. This idea forms the keystone of the Indian culture.

This explains why chronicles are rare in the long life of this nation.The ancient Indians were averse to adopting the erroneous measuring of life eternal on the achievement of the ruler of a nation. How very unintelligent is the criticism that the ancient Indians did not know the art of recording history!

This again explains why there is not a single tragedy in the works of ancient Indian literature which had touched the peak once. Indian Epics are abound in tragic situations and characters, such as Sita, Abhimanyu, etc. But the authors take pain to portray life as blissful.

Strangely enough some Macaulay boys have, of late, taken into their heads to dissect the Indian epics to find the historical truth behind them. They have brought in their westernized scholarship to bear on the question whether Ramayana is a fable or a historical reality and have enlightened the public about the truth they have discovered. Some have gone to the length of holding that Rama and Sita are brothers and sisters, who took to forest having incurred

their father's wrath for their illicit amorous desires. One would have dismissed these ravings as the idle idiosyncrasies, but their mischievous tendency of destroying the idols and ideals that have been shaping the Indian life for thousands of years should not be ignored. Rama represents the ideal ruler while Sita stands for the ideal Indian womanhood and Indian masses accept them at that, be it fiction or fact. The graceful narration of the epic has been good for our society. That is a fact. The labor of scientific minded scholars in dissecting it is futile except to tarnish the ideals as creations of fancy and to suggest that they are not worth aspiring for. One begins to suspect the motive behind theses revolutionary discoveries as sinister that loosen the corner stone of the edifice that is Indian life.

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