

Sounds of Love

In the Beginning Was the Word

“In the beginning was the Word. And the Word was with God. And the Word was God.” These are the opening verses of St. John's Gospel from the New Testament of the Bible. These are also almost identical words from the Rig Veda, the oldest book in Sanskrit available on this planet. These are also the words of most of the scriptures of different religions and spiritual disciplines around the world. What does it mean? How can Word be as real, as original as God? And be quoted as if it was in the beginning even before God and was God? What is the nature of that Word? Obviously, a Word that was in the beginning and was God and, therefore, was the Creator, could not be a written word; could not be a spoken word; could not be a word of any language as we know it.

The Word that was in the beginning; The Word that made all things; The Word that is responsible for entire creation must have been something much more than a word. It must be something that transcends the words that we know. It could not be any of the words that you and I can speak. It could not be a word written or spoken or communicated in any of the means that we know of. What is that Word? And have we had any access to that Word? Was that Word only in the beginning? Or is that Word there now also? In another discipline of one of the Eastern religions it says, “The Word that was there in the beginning made the beginning and is still there in the beginning, in the middle, and in the end, and will remain so forever,” which means that Word is not for some time. That Word is the Creator and was there from the beginning of time and will continue till the end of time. So that Word - that creative power, which is referred to by all these Masters and all those who founded religions, founded spiritual disciplines, who came and gave us the message of truth - that Word is something more than we can ordinarily comprehend.

Let us see what could be the possible connotation of a Word so powerful, so overwhelming, so prevailing that it survives everything. It survives even the beginning. Such a Word must be something more than anything that has been created which has a time sequence or a time frame or a beginning or a middle or an end. When we look at the world around us, we find everything in this world has a beginning, a middle, or an end. You look at all created things in matter and you can trace the history of that thing. You can trace the history of when that material thing came into being, what it was like. Even the great cosmic universes, even the great planets and planetary systems, they also have a beginning and we can trace the beginning now with our powerful systems of investigation into space and outer space.

But there is, there is something that seems to be continually going on, continuously going on that is not dependent upon creation. It seems the only thing that human beings can think of, be aware of, or understand as that which could have this continuity is consciousness – human consciousness; the consciousness of the self; the consciousness of the witness to creation; the consciousness of the witness to all that is happening; the consciousness to the witness to the beginnings, the middles, and ends. It seems that consciousness, or the experiencer of all created experience does not change and may not be having a beginning, may not have an end and may be a continuous process. There is nothing else that we know of. There is no material manifestation that has that continuity. There is no sensory experience known to human beings that has that continuity. There is no mental activity; there is not a single thought, small or large, which can qualify to be indefinite and permanent. The only thing which could really qualify to be there possibly in the beginning, and will end beyond the beginning and beyond the end is consciousness or the witness to the beginning and the

witness to the end. That means consciousness is the clue to finding out what could be the meaning of the Word.

If the word means consciousness, and if the Word refers to human consciousness, then human consciousness is a subject worth the most careful study because this could give us a clue to the beginning of everything. This could give us a clue to what could have been the origin of the entire creation. Let us examine what human consciousness stands for. Human consciousness is not merely the fact that we are conscious. It means that there is a potential for awareness available to us at all times through a conscious process. When we talk of a conscious process, we are, in fact, talking of not only what we are immediately aware of, we are talking of what we could be aware of; what we might have been aware of. Therefore, consciousness in this larger sense, would include not only the awareness that is imminently and immediately available to us, but would also include the awareness that we might have lost into memory or the awareness which we call is still to come in the future. Therefore, consciousness is not the present awareness, consciousness includes the sub-conscious, the hidden conscious, the super-conscious, the consciousness that we have shelved behind, the consciousness we are still to open. It includes all kinds of awarenesses whether available immediately or not. It means whatever can be potentially a source of awareness would be called consciousness.

It is only in this larger context, in this kind of a definition, that we can refer to consciousness as the Word that was there in the beginning. If we refer to immediate consciousness or awareness as the Word, then the definition of the Word becomes meaningless. Then there could have been no immediate awareness right in the beginning. This immediate awareness is only in that insignificant, non-timed moment called now. What we are aware of now is only in a timeless moment called now. Therefore, it could not be there in the beginning and could not be there beyond the end. So, consciousness, as a potential for awareness is the kind of consciousness that could be related to the Word that was there in the beginning.

Why have these Masters and Mystics and Saints referred to that power, or referred to consciousness as the Word? What is there in a word and in consciousness that is similar? Obviously, when we talk of the Word, we are talking of something that is audible. Otherwise, we could have used some other word. We could have said the power. There was a great power in the beginning. There was a great creative power in the beginning. But we have not found this mentioned in any of the languages, in any of the scriptures that we refer to. The constant reference to the Word, to Naad, or the Great Sound, to the Sound of the Music of the Spheres, to Shabd, to Naam, to Logos – all these references to something that is audible seem to suggest that the original power of consciousness they are referring to must be an audible power. And, indeed, the Saints and Mystics who personally, experientially investigated the nature of the Word and the nature of consciousness and the nature of creation as well as the nature of Creator, the beginning, they found that this consciousness which we are utilizing all the time to gather awareness is, indeed, an audible force, an audible power; that we can listen to it just like we can listen to other sounds. That was a great discovery. It was something so strange and so beautiful when it was found that there was the real source of all creation and that could be heard; could be heard by a human being. It looks so strange because what we hear normally has a beginning, a middle, and an end. We hear voices. We hear sounds. But here was a sound that could be heard, tapped into, and that sound would have no beginning, and no middle, and no end.

How is that possible? How can an individual human being with the individual ability to listen tap into and listen to something that has no beginning, no middle, and no end? What kind of experience could exist which one could listen into and say he caught into something that had no beginning? Obviously, if such an experience is external to the listener, that could not have this qualification of being beyond beginning and end. Therefore, no wonder it was found by actual meditational introspection, by meditational awareness of one's own self, that the

Word we are speaking of which has no beginning, and was the Creator in the beginning, that Word lies, not outside, but inside the self; that the self is not only the container of that Word, it is the expression of that Word.

Thus it was found out that what we call the self, or what looks like the investigating self, or the seeking self, is itself, the thought self, or the Word that was there in the beginning. This makes for a great philosophic statement, such as, "There is only one" "There is no other." We could not have said this if there was a seeker and a sought; if there was man and God; if there was a human being seeking his Creator; if there was a creation and a creator. We could not have said, "There is only one." But, when, in order to listen to the Word, the listener, which was the self tuned inwards to its' own self and found that the Word was itself, it could say, "There is only one." And thus the great Mystics and Saints propounded that, in truth, there is only one; that the oneness, alone, exists in reality. All else is illusion. All else is Maya. All else is duality created to experience that oneness; that the oneness alone was real. This was the great gift of consciousness, of the Word to itself, which now represents the consciousness or awareness of everyone of us, every human being.

As human beings, we can even now have access to our own infinite self. What is our infinite self? The Word. Human beings, with their listening capacity, the listening capacity which is in their consciousness, can even now tune in to their own real self, which is the Word, which is audible, to the listening self. The self is available for listening to the self. The self that listens is the human being. The self that is listened to is the Word and the Creator. This simple statement explains the whole path of spirituality. This simple statement explains where we move when we go towards our own self. This simple statement explains to us the exhortation of great Mystics and Saints and philosophers, "Know Thyself."

When we want to know our self, how do we know our self? We have to go within where the self is. We cannot look for self outside because self, by definition, is within oneself. Therefore, this was a good exhortation which philosophers and Mystics made to us and they said, "Go within your own self. Find your own self. Find the self." By saying that repeatedly and pushing our attention not outward toward material, sensory, or mental experience, but toward the self that lies within oneself, within one's consciousness, they were able to attach us to the real expression of the self which was audible and which is called the Word.

Consider this proposition that there is experience around us. We open our eyes and we have the experience of seeing. We open our ears and we have experience of hearing. We use the other sensory systems – taste, touch, and smell – and we have those experiences of the senses. These are all experiences. Therefore, the whole world comes to be known to us through these experiences. What about the experiencer? The one who is experiencing all these different experiences of the senses? Where is the experiencer? Obviously, the experiencer is at the receiving end of experience and if we carefully watch how we individual human beings, in this human body, using a human head and the different sources of perception attached to them, when we perceive things, when we receive the knowledge and experience of things that are created as experience, the actual experience is taking place inside in our consciousness where we become aware of that experience. And, therefore, the experiencer, or the actual receiver of experience remains hidden inside. If we are in this body, it is hidden in this body. If we go to sleep and have a dream and we have a dream body, it is in that dream body. If we fly in fantasy in the astral world and we have another kind of body, it is in the middle of that body. If we fly like a particle, it is in the middle of the center of that particle. So whatever form we take, it appears the experiencer of any kind of experience lies in the center of the form in which that consciousness is operating. That's a great clue to discovering the self. That is a great clue and direction to find out where we can discover the self – within, inside, irrespective of form. Whatever form we have, we have to look inside and find the experiencer, which is consciousness.

Consciousness of the self, then, can be discovered by moving towards the self. But it is easy to move towards other creation, to other perceptions. Because they're outside we can direct our consciousness to those experiences, to those things outside by virtue of our attention. We can put our attention on something and that something becomes experience for us. How can we experience our own self? Other things can be seen, can be experienced through sensory perceptions while we are sitting as a human being. What kind of perception can we use to experience the one that is receiving perception; not that which is being received as perception? How can we go to our own self, which is the experiencing end. What would be the manifest form of that form, of that real self, which we call consciousness, or the Word? There the answer comes. That self, which experiences, which is real, which is consciousness, which is soul, which is infinite, which does not die, which does not have birth or death, which is not associated with the birth and death of this body, which continues even beyond this body, which was there even beyond this body – that self, which is consciousness, also has a manifest form, to which we can put our attention. And that manifest form is the form of the Word, which is audible. That makes it simple. Even for human beings, caught in the trap of Maya or illusion, caught in this world of creation and outward tendencies of attention – even here one can withdraw ones' attention and get an experience of ones' own self because that is subject to a sensory perception – that of listening, of hearing. If we can listen to our own self, obviously the attention withdraws to our own self. And this audible nature of our own self, the audible nature of the soul or the spirit, which is infinite makes it possible to discover ones' self. If there was no manifest form of ones' own self, one could never find ones' self. Then one would constantly associate the self with different kinds of experiences – either near or far, either introspected or extrospected, either seen in the space outside or seen in the time of memory behind. But we could not have gone to the experiencer of those different experiences. But by making the experiencer himself, the self himself audible, it became possible to find the cause, to find the origin of all experience. That is why it is said, “In the beginning was the Word. And the Word was with God. And the Word was God. And all things were made by Him.” This Word which we are referring to, which is the real nature of the self, has been not only likened to God, it is God. Why don't we see it? If the implication is that this Word is our own consciousness, and our own consciousness is inside us, which means God is inside us, why don't we go inside and see? It should be simple. If everybody found out the spiritual message that God is your own self and lies within your own self, and is audible, and you can listen to God inside, people should run inside and listen to God. Why don't they do it?

They have no habit of going inside. The habit of attention is always to flow outside. From the time we are born in this body and grow up like little children, to the time of our death, the whole time is spent in developing a habit of throwing our attention outside. Look at the little babies when they are born. How sweet they look. What beauty there is in their face, in their eyes, as if they are communicating with something within. They have nothing to communicate outside, so the smile even with their eyes closed, is beautiful. How do we bring the babies out into this world and let them grow up? We use rattles. We use bells. We use various kinds of external stimuli to draw the attention of the babies out and ultimately we make funny sounds – bah, bah, bah – ourselves to let the babies come and be a part of this world. After a while, those little human beings, which have just entered this creation of physical world, they begin to develop the habit of always putting their attention outside. The rest of their lives we teach them how to use mind, how to use senses, how to use the external utilization of attention. We never teach them that you could still withdraw your attention and see the origin, see yourself. This training is no longer given. Therefore, the habit comes into all of us always to put our attention outside. That is why somebody comes and says, “This body is the real temple of the living God. This body is the real church. Go within. We listen to it but we don't go within because our mind, our attention has not been habituated to do that.

On the other hand, the real secret of self knowledge, the real secret of finding ones' self and therefore, God, is to put the attention within and not out. It is to reverse the habit that we have formed over our entire life. If we

can reverse that habit and put our attention within, we can have access to our real self, which is God. Till we have access to that real self, what do we consider? We consider that what is going out of us is our real self. Therefore, we begin to identify ourselves with the outflow of attention rather than the origin of consciousness. The outflow of attention is taking place through these three wonderful screens placed one after the other. When consciousness moves out, the first screen it faces is mind. Every conscious attention that we give to anything outside passes through mind. What does the mind do? It gives it a framework of beginning, middle, and end. It gives it a framework of space. It gives it a framework of cause and effect. It puts every attention we put on anything outside into the space/time/causation framework. And therefore, it serves to create a finite world and a finite experience for everything on which we put attention. That's not all. After it passes through the first filter, the first screen of the mind, the same attention then passes through the second screen of sensory perceptions. So the attention doesn't go just as attention of consciousness, it goes either as seeing or hearing or touching or tasting or smelling. Therefore, the attention is going to pick up experience only confined to these five sense perceptions. These five sense perceptions tied up with the time, space, and framework of causation – these tie down the experience into a very limited way. Then this is not all. The third screen attention passes through is the physical body, so that we associate the different parts of the physical body with the flow of attention. We say, “We have physical eyes. Therefore, we can see. We have physical ears. Therefore, we can hear. We have physical senses of touch, taste, and smell. Therefore, we can have these senses.” These three screens make the flow of attention outward into a very limited experience which we call the physical experience of this universe.

This physical experience of the universe makes the universe very limited for us. Because we do not know if consciousness or our real self had a larger dimension than what we are experiencing. Therefore, the dimension of our own ability to experience gets limited to what we can have through the five senses through the body, through the mind. This is, in a sense, a very cruel joke upon consciousness. That consciousness, which is the originator and the creator of all things; which houses God within itself; which houses the Creator, itself, within itself. That consciousness is being projected through these screens, gets encapsulated into a very small frame and then begins to think, 'That's it. That's me. That's the self.' And, therefore, the self becomes nothing but the limited consciousness which is trapped by the mind, trapped by the senses, and then trapped by the body. So, what people begin to call themselves is not really their self. They begin to call themselves what they are identifying themselves with. And they identify themselves with the limited receptacle into which this experience is flowing. And, therefore, they are merely confining themselves to a small shell and that shell they call the self. Having called their own little shell the self, they have to look for a larger shell. They have to look for something that is beyond that. And they say, “There must be something larger than ourselves which we must call God.” And they begin a search for God. But since the attention is directed outward in that little shell, the same consciousness begins to look for the reality outside and goes from here to there, in illusion and delusion, in superstition. It goes all over and doesn't find the reality till the message comes home to us that this is not the reality. The reality is the Word, the unlimited consciousness within ourselves, which is called God. Only by withdrawing attention do we find the truth of the statement, “In the beginning was the Word. And the Word was with God. And the Word was God, and made all things, and is accessible to us within ourselves even now.” Thank you.

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