

Spirituality East to West Shift

People are already noticing that the spiritual traditions which for centuries belonged to the East - to China, India, Burma, the several Middle East countries – that interest which had aroused so much curiosity and study in those kingdoms is now shifting more and more to the West. This is especially true of what is happening in countries like the United States and other North American countries because you find lot of gurus, lot of swamis, spiritual teachers, spiritual masters now moving around in this Western part of the world rather than in the Eastern part of this world. There must be some reason why all this is happening. It is good to notice what is this change taking place in our Earth.

We find that the traditional source of spiritual knowledge upon which we bank so much has come from Asia, Far East, and the Middle East countries. They have produced all the well known famous mystics and masters, saints, sadhus, yogis, swamis, who have given to us the discourses on what they felt was the real nature of truth, the real cause of this universe, the real purpose of life. These people who walked upon the Earth and have been variously described as different Godmen or men who had had God-realization, as men of enlightenment, as men of truth - they came from that part of the Earth but they gave a global, a universal message. Their message has been very similar, although many of these people walked in different countries and spoke different languages. In essence, the message of these Godmen, Who came from the Eastern and Middle Eastern countries of this universe, of this world, was “The truth that you seek lies within you. It is not to be found outside. The God that you speak of also lies within you. The kingdom of God, as distinct from the kingdom of this world, also lies within you. Therefore, if you want to realize God, if you want to seek the truth, if you want to find the ultimate purpose of this drama of life, go within your own self. There is nothing to be found outside. It is all within the human being that the search should be conducted.”

This is, in essence, the teachings of the saints and mystics who have come from that part of the globe. Why did they teach there? Why were they born there? Is there any reasonable explanation why these people should have all come from that part of this Earth and not from the rest of the Earth which included such large continents like North and South America? It included such vast tracts of the Pacific Ocean. Why not from this area? Can we find a configuration of this universe, of this globe, of this, of what we might call this Earth, which could reveal why so many statements of truth were made from one part of this Earth? If we were to consider this Earth to be a personality like a human being, with a face and with a mouth to speak from, with eyes to see, and also a back to bear the burden of toil and agony, it would seem that all these centuries it was the part of Earth which now we call the Asia, Far East and Mid-East part of this globe which represented the face, the eyes, and the mouth of this universe, of this world. But the back of this world was what we now call North America, South America and this part of the globe.

This globe of ours, this Earth, this globe is like a personality. It is not only from this part of the world that all these mystics and saints came. You will notice if I draw my hand like this across the globe, it is a special stretch several thousand miles wide which stretches from the north of Japan, passes through most of China and India, Burma, goes down through, cuts through parts of Africa and to the South Pole. It is this particular belt that seems to have produced those people who have given the message of truth. It looks like this part of the globe was responsible for the statements, verbal statements made about truth which led to insight by people

into God-realization, into discovery of the purpose of life, into what all this drama was about. This seems to be a very significant feature. Historically speaking, these Saints and Mystics and Spokesmen have come from that area. They were born there. They taught there. And their message spread from there throughout the world. The founders of almost all the religions came from that area. It's a strange phenomenon. But it's historically correct. What are we noticing now?

Now we notice a new development taking place. We notice that the axis of the spirituality is shifting. And the same belt, which was on the globe on that part of the Earth, is shifting to the other side. And the same belt, with the same width, and the same stretch at the same angle now occupies on the other side of the globe the territory that would start from the Eastern part of North Canada, stretch through most of United States, especially in the Mid-West, go down through the Californian southern parts, into Mexico, touch parts of Latin America, go down to the Pacific Ocean, and to the South Pole. Now we find where the maximum activity of spiritual seeking is going on, we find it is in this very belt. What is happening? Could it be that the Earth, as a personality, is changing its position? And what it was facing is now backing up and where the back was, it is now facing? Could it be that the face of the Earth is shifting from Asia into America? If we were just to look at these historical facts, it looks that lot of things are happening. But if want to see some causes of how this happened, we would find that all these centuries these countries of Asia, Far East and the Middle East, they lived a simple life of simple values. Their life was of high thinking and simple living. And in that environment, they produced the people who became spokesmen of the truth that went beyond matter and material things. The great rat-race from material goods had not taken place for all these centuries in these countries when the truth was being spoken and people were advised to look for the truth within. What was happening in the West? They were busy trying to achieve the maximum they could through material advancement, through material technology, and to gain the affluence of the material world as quickly as possible. So while this game for gaining affluence was going on in the West, the simple-minded people of the East were speaking the simple truth about why we are here.

Things have changed. Today we find, in a country like United States, people have attained a level of affluence. They have seen what material goods mean. They have seen what prosperity, in material terms, brings to them. They have seen what technology can do for the life of a people. And having seen all that, they are not satisfied. They found that true happiness cannot be achieved only by getting creature comforts of technological advancement. They feel there is something missing. The sense of loneliness, which first prompted man to find if there was a real companion beyond the illusion of human company; that same sense of loneliness persists, even with all the affluence that you can acquire through material technology.

This is, then, a very obvious fact that all this affluence, material wealth, material advancement in the West has left people dissatisfied and they are now turning to those spiritual values which were first spoken of in the East. What is happening in the East, meanwhile? They have adopted the role of toiling, agonizingly, to make the maximum out of material goods that they can get to improve the creature comforts. So all this industrial revolution, which first came to the West, is now being transferred to the developing countries of the East and they are trying to adopt the values which the West is giving up. And their spiritual values of getting real peace of mind, getting real knowledge, getting real satisfaction, resolving the problem of unhappiness and loneliness - that has been taken over by the West. This shift in the spiritual axis of this Earth is so obvious that hardly anybody can fail to notice it. But I have, personally, a very strange experience about this shift.

When I was a child, I was initiated into a spiritual discipline by a Great Master in India. He was and is my spiritual teacher. He is known as the Great Master. And He made many statements about fifty years ago, which were of great significance and indicated the trend that spirituality will take in future years. I remember the

Great Master speaking to an American disciple of His, Dr. Julian Johnson, nearly half a century ago, and telling him, "Johnson, you have come from a great country, United States of America, and the spirituality you have come to the East to find will one day move over to your country. You are, in fact, taking away spirituality from the East to your own country, the West."

Hearing this statement of the Great Master, made to His American disciple, and, perhaps, the only American disciple at that time, I was greatly moved and touched. I did not know where America was. I did not know where Julian Johnson came from. But I was amazed at the kind of statement made by the Great Master that spirituality, itself, could shift to the West. On another occasion, the Great Master said, "That it is the affluence that will create the need for greater spirituality in the West. When people will find that the material rat-race does not solve their problems; when people will find that getting greater amount of technological skill, making more money out of it, improving the standard of living does not improve the standard of spiritual well-being, then they will turn to spirituality of the East." At that time, the spirituality of the East will start withering away because of the East trying to ape the technological methods of the West. So this shift is inevitable. This is a great prediction that I heard fifty years ago. I came to this country, United States, first time in the sixties to study at Harvard University as a student of economics and some other subjects; as a student of business management – very mundane, technological subjects in which this country and this part of the Earth were famous. And I was surprised to find already signs in the sixties of a great spiritual revolution going on here. And people trying to find the truth which, traditionally, has been sought for in the East.

That was a great experience for me - to find that people had already started on a spiritual pursuit about which the Great Master had spoken many decades earlier. I have visited this country several times and now for the last few years, I have come and decided to stay and work here. Mainly, with a view to see at close quarters what is going to happen during this spiritual shift. It is as if I have come to take a ringside seat before the action starts. Because it looks like the spiritual drama that we have witnessed for centuries in the East is now going to be enacted in the West. When I now look at the interest people have in spiritual truth, I am amazed. I can safely see the accuracy of that prediction that in this country, in this part of the Earth now, there will be a much greater awareness of what is going on, what is supposed to be going on, what's going to happen, what's the real purpose of life – all those old questions which the Eastern mystics talked about are now relevant questions over here. People are not merely interested in knowing what will happen to political parties; what will happen to the next generation; what will be the system of education. They are asking fundamental questions. Why are we here? What is the purpose of life? Are we here merely to eat, drink, grow up, marry, reproduce, leave the progeny, die? Is that the purpose of life? Or is there something more basic? Is there something a human being can do and ought to do during his lifetime which we cannot do at any other time? Is there a role for a human being to play in the spiritual world? These are questions being frequently asked. I am sometimes amazed at the number of people who tell me they intuitively feel that a stage is being set for them to play a role in the spiritual drama of the future.

There are many people who have talked about spiritual development in the West. There are many people who have foretold about the doom that Western society will face and the emergence of a new spiritual society in the West. I remember reading some old literature in Indian languages which refers to this kind of shift to lands which have been grabbing material wealth and power. Those lands will turn to spirituality when they will have created enough self-destruction by the very means of that material wealth. Some of the literature in the East speaks specifically of the weapons and arms that will be gathered through the affluence that the Western nations will make. And those very weapons and arms will lead to self-destruction to a level where they'll be left with nothing but to look for spiritual truth after that. More recently I saw some translations of Nostradamus' books – Nostradamus, as it's called here – in which he has made certain predictions of great destruction that

takes place on this globe. He talks of the new cities which are destroyed because of this power of destruction that we get through affluence. And then he speaks of a thousand years of spiritual peace and discovery.

It is obvious to me that there is a great spiritual shift taking place. And the body of this Earth, which stood with its face on Asia, and the back on the Americas has today decided to revolve within the Earth and the face is turning towards the Americas and the back towards the Asian sub-continent. This I find from all the evidence and testimony we have of the recent trends in what are the goals of various countries; what are the goals of the people of those countries. You'll find more and more spiritual goals being set for themselves by countries in the American continents. And more and more of industrial and technological and material goals being set for themselves by those in the Asian continent. So these are things which one can see. So the shift in the spiritual axis is obvious. Why is there an axis? Why do we call it an axis? Because it covers several countries where tradition and teaching merged; where it traveled from one place to another. Look at the tradition of Buddhism. Buddha was born in India. His teachings traveled to China and Japan. Today the teachings are still in Japan and China. They are much less in India where Buddha was born. They traveled to many other parts. Most of this tradition and teaching traveled in that axis. And it looks like when the Western world is picking up the same tradition, it is also traveling in an axis in different places and cities, more or less situated in the same way on the Western side of the globe.

So this a real shift of spiritual axis which we'll be witnessing. And I think those who are now anticipating and sitting on the edge of the Western hemisphere, looking for what is going to happen next, will witness a great spiritual drama. What is a spiritual drama? It is nothing but the appearance of men who can walk like human beings upon this Earth and carry with them the torch of light and knowledge; Who are enlightened Themselves and can make others enlightened by coming into contact with Them. The presence of such People makes the teachings of spirituality real and meaningful. When these People have walked upon this Earth, They have always carried the teachings with Them. The teachings have been in Their personalities; in Their company; in what They spoke; in what people understood when they were with Them. The teachings were not a set of rules of philosophy or rules of conduct. Their teachings were meant for all people, whatever rules they followed. Therefore, these teachings of these Sons of God, these Masters, these Enlightened Ones, were the same. And they were very similar even in the expression in language.

I have sometimes read some of these teachings as recorded by people, mostly much later after these Masters and Mystics have left the human body on this Earth. But I am amazed to find some similarities in Their teachings. For example, I have seen that They all speak about the light and sound within the human body, which is the clue to getting higher knowledge of one's own self. They all speak about the word as the creative power; an audible word, which is the creative power. St. John's gospel starts with the same statement, "In the beginning was the Word. And the Word was with God. And the Word was God. All things were made by Him. And nothing was made that was not made by that Word." We go to much older traditions of the East, of Sanskrit, of the Vedas, the oldest recorded works that we have in this world, and they speak of the sound that was the basis of all creation - the Nad, the Nad being used as the word for the sound, the Great Word - the Great Word Which created everything. In a much later tradition of Islam, they speak of the Kalma, the Word that created everything and is the clue to God-realization, to going back to the Source.

As we study all these traditions, we find they're all referring to some audible life stream, some audible power that created this universe. The fact that the teachings are so similar makes us have a sense of security that the teachings are real. Because different cults come, different people with their dogmas and philosophies come, different religions come, different codes of conduct come, they are not so convincing because of their differences. But when these real spiritual Teachers come, and They give us the same message, it carries

conviction. Because whatever language They speak, They are saying the same truth. Similarly, They have spoken about light. They've all spoken about light. "If thy eye be single, thy whole body shall be filled with light." Similar statements exist in all the scriptures that I've come to know of. What is this light within that one can see? This light and sound, this drama of creation from consciousness within has been highlighted by all spiritual traditions.

Only when these Masters and Mystics have left the Universe, left Their bodies, left Their messages, we, unaware of the depth of Their meaning, try to classify Them, try to separate Them. We used our mind and intellect in order to make religions out of Their teachings. None of These God-men, none of These Masters, none of These Sons of God ever came to set up a religion. None of Them has ever come and claimed that He is here to set up a religion. They have come to give simple spiritual teaching. And we have converted them into religions. In our ignorance we have made them into ritual, dogma, and ceremony. Their teaching was not that. This ritual, ceremony, and dogma have pervaded throughout the world wherever people use their minds to learn anything. But where people use their spirit and soul to get at the truth, they found the spirituality which was beyond religions, dogma, bias, ritual, ceremony, and external austerities.

We can easily see this happening now. We see that people who are really interested in spirituality are rising above these dogmas, above these prejudices, above these closed, conditioned minds. They are looking for a real truth. They want to find out what is the truth that transcends the division between man and man. They don't want to find the truth which divides us. There is no truth that divides us. It is only falsehood; it's the non-acceptance of truth that divides us. When we find out the truth about ourselves, it always unites us and shows us that the human spirit has always been one. The shifting of the spiritual axis is bringing home to people the unity of man, not the diversity of man, not the differences amongst men.

Mind is a powerful instrument in human consciousness to divide man from man. Mind is a powerful instrument because it has always used analysis and division as a method. It's the human spirit, the soul, that has united man and put him at peace with himself and with the rest of the world. The spiritual transformation of this globe ensures that what the West was missing so far – the peace upon this Earth, the unity of man – is going to come in the coming centuries. I think it's a great drama and I share this hope and thought with all those who also see this drama that we will see a wonderful future in the Western world from now on.

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