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**SELF-REALIZATION: A JOURNEY FROM THE
OUTER TO THE INNER**

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Self-Realization: A Journey from the Outer To the Inner

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Abstract – The truth is one but it is explained by great saints in different languages and in different ways. We can practically experience this change in our life. How can we experience this one Truth? The point is, we are living in an ever-changing world. That potential is due to the spirit force. To understand spirituality, first one must begin to understand the self. To be spiritual is not to change, to be spiritual is to enhance your being, so that in our lives we can essentially be good human beings. When we receive the teachings of spiritual meditation one realizes how to find the centre of his existence and through realizing his true self or his true nature, one realizes the essential element of the cosmic spirit which is a part of him. That is what we must strive for, to elevate the spirit to such a level of existence. If we are stuck in traffic, no matter how beautiful the day was when we left home for work, that beautiful day will turn into a bad day if we are stuck for more than an hour or two. If all of us make it a goal in life to change and to be spiritual people, then changing the world is not a very difficult task.

Keywords:- Truth, Mind, Sages, Self-Realization, Spirituality, Knowledge, Aparā Vidya, Para Vidya, Change, Compassion

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INTRODUCTION

The truth is one but it is explained by great saints in different languages and in different ways. But how can that Truth be one? We live in an ever-changing world. The world around us is in constant flux. We can practically experience this change in our life. Our mental process is changing, every day we perceive new things. Every day the bank of knowledge in ourselves expands. Our body is changing. Every day physically we are growing older; there are physical changes in us, so how come our sages said truth is one? How can we experience this one Truth?

The point is, we are living in an ever-changing world. The world has a living core around which it is revolving which brings about the changes, but that core is unchangeable, that is the force of the spirit which is constant. Change is happening around a formless energy which is not changing. Our bodies are changing, we are evolving, we are grow old. The question is, how did the body get the potential to change? That potential is due to the spirit force. If that spirit is taken away will we age, will we grow old, will we experience change, will we experience knowledge? If that constant force is removed from us then our existence comes to an end. That is why our sages said that changes in the world are happening around a force which in itself is constant. If we observe our solar system, Earth and other planets are revolving but they are revolving around the sun which is itself stationary.

Similarly, the wheels of a cart are revolving but the axle which holds the wheel together does not revolve, it is stationary.

UNCHANGING TRUTH

Our sages realized that there is a Truth which itself is constant, which does not change, which brings about the changes all around us, but itself does not change. That is the energy which is termed as Truth. That force, which we should realize, is within us. But how can we realize that truth, how can we manifest that Truth? It can only happen through the process of self-realization and self-awareness. Until we are aware of what we want and what our basic desire is, we will not be able to get self-realization in our life.

HEADING TOWARDS SELF REALIZATION

To understand spirituality, first one must begin to understand the self. A human being or human individual is comprised of three forces. The first force is the mind, then comes the body or the form that each and every one of us has. And the third and most essential part of what makes us alive, what makes us exist in this world, is the spirit which, when in the body, is called soul. And throughout one's life one does many things to increase or to help his mind, one does a lot of things to help his body so the body and mind both can be strong and healthy. But an individual always neglects the most essential part of

his being which is the spirit. Our ancestors, our sages, the great souls who live in the past have again and again emphasized the importance of the spirit, because it is the essential pivotal force of our existence. If this body does not possess what we call the soul then there is no mind and there is no existence of the being. So spirituality essentially teaches us the importance of the spirit and why it is important for a person to realize it.

To understand spiritual knowledge, one must first close his ears because here the ears cannot help us. One must open his heart to spiritual knowledge because it is through the heart and the workings of the heart that one can understand spirituality. Many people are afraid of accepting spirituality in their lives sometimes we fear what spirituality will do to us but this fear is because of an ignorant mind that we all have.

SPIRITUAL TRUTHS BEYOND THE BOUNDRIES OF KNOWLEDGE OF INSTITUTIONAL

To be spiritual is not to change, to be spiritual is to enhance your being, so that in our lives we can essentially be good human beings. We have great educational institutions, there are great medical colleges, engineering colleges, institutions where a person can become very learned. These educational institutions can guarantee a person will become a doctor or an engineer or a lawyer, but they do not guarantee that the doctor will be a good human being and that the lawyer will fight for human justice rather than for his own greed. So it is important to see how a person can be a good human being and that is what spiritual knowledge teaches us.

Spiritual knowledge is the very ancient science of improving oneself, of removing what essentially is the negativity from within us, because since we are born till the day we die, life is a very big lesson and it's a lesson of experiences that we learn. And in these experiences of life, we learn good things and bad things, hence negativity also becomes a part of human nature and it is due to this human negativity that what we know as suffering today exists. All of us are here today because in some way or the other we have suffered a great deal in life and that suffering has brought us to this place where we can find a way to remove this suffering.

Apara vidya and para vidya which essentially means that apara vidya is the knowledge that we perceive of this world, we can read a lot of books and gain a lot of knowledge about a lot of things. But our sages said that para vidya is the knowledge that is held and retained by the spirit. And since spirit in one form exists in all of us that knowledge of spirit is inherent in all of us. It is a part of all of us but because of experiences in this world, some of which are good some of which are bad, some of which are negative in nature, we forget this para vidya or the knowledge of

the spirit. But through meditation, through spiritual knowledge, one can have access to the knowledge which is inside in the form of para vidya. And what we must realize is that, in order to be good human beings, one must elevate the spirit and elevation can only come through spiritual knowledge. So spiritual knowledge does not mean that one has to change his religion. It does not mean that one has to accept a new religion. It basically means that we understand ourselves in more depth and we understand our own religion in its entirety-not with discrimination, not with religious prejudice but as one of the spirits and one in unity. And that comes through what we call spiritual meditation and practice.

COSMIC SPIRITS

When we receive the teachings of spiritual meditation one realizes how to find the centre of his existence and through realizing his true self or his true nature, one realizes the essential element of the cosmic spirit which is a part of him. And that cosmic spirit our masters, our great souls, termed 'God' 'Allah', 'Bhagwan' or 'Isht' or 'Wahe Guru'. They are just different names which humanity has adopted but the essential nature of that cosmic spirit or that cosmic force resides in all of us. To have access to that force is possible for each and every one of us if we are given the correct guidance and the correct techniques of spiritual enlightenment. You may have a computer at home and the moment you connect that computer to the internet or to a server which has all the information of mankind stored in it, your personal computer becomes a doorway to infinite information and through your computer you can travel the world, you can get information about everything in this world and you can say that your computer becomes a supercomputer. But if the connection is not established or if the connection breaks then what happens? Your personal computer does not have the power to show you or give you access to that information which is present in the servers or on the internet. So being connected is very important. In the same way, the individual spirit which is present in each and every one of us can make a connection with that cosmic spirit and become one in essence with that cosmic spirit. And what that essentially means is that our heart will be filled with light, that there will be no darkness in the self, because the self has removed all negativity and become a part of the cosmic spirit. That is the true meaning of salvation, 'nirvana' and 'moksh', which essentially means that the self dissolves in the cosmic self which leads to the ending of all suffering.

NECESSARY FOUNDATIONS FOR SPIRITUAL SELF

That is what we must strive for, to elevate the spirit to such a level of existence that it becomes a part of that cosmic spirit and once that connection is established through spiritual meditation we will realize that our heart will be filled with God's compassion, love and grace. But first and foremost to be a spiritual self,

there are certain foundations necessary. The strong foundations, our sages say, are that one must be generous like the ocean, compassionate like the sun and humble like the earth. So humility, generosity, love and compassion must first and foremost exist in our heart because if these things are not here and if we are full of pride, arrogance, hatred, anger and attachment then we cannot be spiritualized souls. These aspects of human nature exist in all of us, and they exist because the mind itself is subtle. In a moment the mind can become a saint, it can be the source of great inspiration and great thought, then in the next moment the mind can fill our heart with joy but the next moment the mind can be filled with sorrow, and this happens because of the external influence of the world around us. And then the mind is easily influenced by the external world that we live in.

EXTERNAL FORCES ERODING THE HAPPINESS

If we are stuck in traffic, no matter how beautiful the day was when we left home for work, that beautiful day will turn into a bad day if we are stuck for more than an hour or two. And if we are going home from work and get stuck in traffic for long time, we might get very irritated, we might be easily annoyed, because we have let that external world enter the world which is inside. These are all practical examples of life that we all experience, of how anger removes the power of reasoning from us, or how when we were angry we said things and did things that we did not want to do, causing suffering to another soul. When we were no longer angry, when the anger was taken away from us, then we might have apologized and said, 'I am very sorry I said those things'. But the moment we were angry, we lost all self-control. So our sages said that negativity causes us to lose control of our individuality. It is important for a person to realize the self is not something to lose control of but to be controlled, we must be in control of every moment, of every thought, of every action. And this is possible when we get spiritual knowledge and gain spiritual merit and it is possible when we remove the negativity which we see existing in the outside world from within ourselves. Because spiritual masters say if we want to bring about change in this world, if we want to remove suffering from this world, if we want to remove violence from this world, if we want to remove injustice from this world, one does not need to change the sky or the earth, one just needs to change the human heart.

CHANGE UNDER THE TUTELAGE OF THE MASTERS

If all of us make it a goal in life to change and to be spiritual people, then changing the world is not a very difficult task. The difficult task is to change oneself, it is to change one's own heart. But this change is possible in each and every one of our lives and that is

why masters come again and again to give us their teachings, to give us their message. Because through their lives we get inspiration, we get determination and we see how it is possible to change, because many of us will think that to become spiritual is not possible in this life. This feeling itself is because of the ignorant mind, because of the ego. But change in each and every one's heart is possible. So to understand spiritual knowledge in its entirety one must first accept it with an open heart, one must practice spiritual meditation with dedication and devotion and gain experience in the spiritual world. Because our masters again and again emphasized that experience is very important. Until we have a spiritual experience in our lives, even if we listen to the teachings or the messages of the masters, they remain just words and words are something that the mind easily forgets. It is very easy to forget what I am saying even as you walk out the door. But if we gain spiritual knowledge the experience stays with us for eternity, no one can take that away from us and that is why it is important to gain spiritual experience.

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