

FULL CIRCLE OR HALF CIRCLE?

Dou have joined the Study Class at Dharmakshetra, and are engaged in poring over all types of books and gathering information and instruction. But, what have you gained? Knowledge about what this author says or that sage teaches is not what your Study Circle must aim to acquire. Not information, but transformation; not instruction, but construction should be the aim. Theoretical knowledge is a burden, unless it is practised, when it can be lightened into Wisdom, and assimilated into daily, life. Knowledge that does not give harmony and wholeness to the process of living is not worth acquiring. Every activity must be rendered valid and worthwhile by its contribution to the discovery of Truth, both of the Self and of Nature. Of what use is it to know everything about nature, if you do not know anything of the Self? Nature is only a projection of the Self, and so, unless the Self is known, knowledge of Nature is either distorted or deceptive. The Self is *Atma*, of which the entire Creation is composed and so, knowledge of the Self alone can quench the thirst of man.

You Are The Infinite Universal Absolute

You tell Me that you have read the *Bhagavata Vahini* and all other *Vahinis* that I have written for you. Good. But, let Me ask you, have you put at least a single direction given in them into daily practice? Question yourself calmly and decide to benefit by practising the processes mentioned in them. This is the proper plan of study-reading, reflection and regular application in life. Study is Work. Inquiry into the value and applicability of what is studied is Worship; the experience of the validity and value of the practice is Wisdom. You must first learn about '*what others think you are*'. They deal with you as a body, with a specific name and an identifiable form. Then, you must learn about '*what you think you are*'. You are aware of your mind and its monkey tricks, its prejudices and preferences, its passions and pursuits. You are aware of your individual consciousness, of your version of '*me*' and '*mine*'. Learn about the mind as an instrument, which can harm you if used unwisely or help you, if used wisely. You have to learn about yet another '*you!*' The YOU '*you really are*'. For, you are neither the body, nor the mind. You are the embodiment of Purity, Power, Love, Bliss. The miserable little prison named '*Individuality*' has to be denied. You are free, but, you fancy you are bound and mope in the cell you imagine is limiting you. See the Truth that will set you free. It is within you, feel it. Feel it. You are not the body, the mind, the intellect, the brain, the heart, the denotable diminutive ego. You are the Infinite Universal Absolute. You have to get yourselves established firmly, unshakeably in this awareness. *Paramahamsas* (ascetics of the highest order) have that awareness. Every one of you can attain that state; it is your destiny, your duty to yourself. Merely finishing the study of book after book serves no purpose. Practising one line from any one book is enough to save you from aeons of darkness, of ignorance, and of yearning for Light.

External And Internal *Sadhanas* Are Both Essential

Mere gymnastics will not do. The Bhagavad Gita can be used as a *Bhagavata Duta* (Messenger from God) if only you welcome It into your heart. Once a famous *Pandit* was expounding the Bhagavad Gita before a massive gathering. He gave an elaborate explanation of the *Shloka* (verse) recounting the Glory of the Lord, through the media of different epithets. The Lord, he said, is *Kavi* (He knows the past, the present and the future), *Puraana* (the Ageless One, the effulgent light and life-spirit in all beings), *Anushaasita* (He who lays down the Law which regulate the Mind and lead it on to its source and sustenance, the Universal Spirit). The audience was amazed at his encyclopaedic scholarship; but, that was all. He had no experience of the God whom he was delineating in such attractive colours. He had only learnt it from books, parrot-like from teachers. You must be guarded against pride that infects the scholar who has mastered a certain number of ancient texts. Do not judge others as inferior, because they do not participate in Bhajans (group devotional singing), *Nagarsankirtans* (public devotional singing by moving groups), or your type of Study Circles. You can be very wrong, if you estimate a person's spiritual development, by mere externals. Inner purity cannot express itself through pompous show. Only He who sees into every heart can know who resides therein: Rama or *Kama* (God or selfish desire). Of course, disciplines like Bhajan, *Nagarsankirtan* and *Japa* (silent repetition of God's name) are needed for cleansing the mind; to cure the terrible malady of birth and death, the external medication of these *Sadhanas* (spiritual practices) and internal medication of *Dhyana* and *Sheela* (meditation and virtuous conduct) are both essential. External discipline is *Dharma Vidya* (the acquisition of righteousness as a way of living); internal discipline is *Brahma Vidya* (the acquisition of spiritual experience as a perpetual treasure). That is why the *Vedas* command "*Satyam Vada, Dharmam Chara*"—"Always speak Truth. Always do Right." This is the way to God.

Have The Goal Of Putting Into Practice What You Read

Each one of you is a pilgrim on that road proceeding at your own pace, according to your qualification and the stage reached by its means. The advice that appeals to one of you or applies to one of you might not be appropriate to another, who has travelled less distance or reached a more advanced state. When I tell one person to follow one line of *Sadhana* (spiritual discipline), it is specifically for his benefit; do not take it as prescription for your benefit also, saying, "*Swami told him thus; let me also adopt it.*" Each has a different make-up-mental, physical and spiritual. The doctor directs one patient to drink curds and prohibits another from drinking it. When a man is obese, he advises certain types of food; when he is lean, he advises other types. When doctors who treat diseases of the body have to prescribe different remedies, how much more specific and personal must be the remedies for the

complex and varied conditions of mental situations and spiritual yearnings and aspirations? Unless you make earnest inquiry, you cannot discover the remedy applicable to your temperament and its problems. Study with faith and devotion. Delve into the significance and the meaning of what you read; and, always have before you the goal of putting what you read into practice. Unless you do so, the Study Circle will remain a half-circle for ever; it cannot be a full circle. And, pay attention to one other point also. Do not confine your studies to this Circle and these Books. The whole Universe is University for you. You can imbibe wisdom from the sky, the clouds, the mountains, the rivers, the daily phenomena of sunrise and sunset, the seasons, birds, trees, flowers, the insects—in fact, all beings and things in Nature. Approach these teachers, with awe, reverence and humility; they will respond with their lessons. Do not worry that you have no mastery of Sanskrit; *Samskar* (purificatory act) is enough equipment, for the University that lies around you. Sanskrit is the language of the ancient Scriptures and of Classical Literature; *Samskar* is the Language of the Heart, the refined medium of fruitful communion with Nature, in all the manifold outpourings of Divinity.

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