

ROLAND R. ROPERS

The Fullness of Eternal Life

Beyond the permanent change of Birth and Death
The Consciousness of Immortality
in the Realm of Nirvana where nothing dies

My talk at the University of Goa on 7th March 2016
ca. 200 students attending

BRAHMAN is the *Immortal Inner Source of our Being*.

(N.B. Not to be confused with the Indian God **BRAHMA**)

In Christian terminology: „*The Kingdom of GOD is within you!*“ (Luke 17, 21)

RITAVIDYA (the *Knowledge of the Cosmic Order*), This so far non existing Sanskrit word dawned on me at dawn on 5th March 2016 in Goa.



Goa – Arabian Sea

The Multitude of Waves and One Ocean

“Greater than all is Brahman, the Supreme, the Infinite. He dwells in the mystery of all beings according to their form and nature. Those who know Him who knows all, and in whose glory all things are, attain immortality. I know the Spirit, radiant like the sun beyond darkness. He who knows Him goes beyond death, for He is the only path to life immortal. His infinity is beyond what is great or small, and greater than Him there is nothing. Like a tree everlasting He stands in the centre of heaven, and His radiance illumines all creation. Those who know Him who is greater than all, beyond form and beyond pain, attain immortality. Concealed in the heart of all beings lies the Atman, the Spirit, the Self; smaller than the smallest atom, greater than the greatest spaces. I know that Spirit whose infinity is in all, who is ever one beyond time. I know the Spirit whom the lovers of Brahman call eternal, beyond the birth and rebirth of life.”

(Svetasvatara Upanishad)

The Spirit is the Source, the Ground of all Being

***“Everything comes from the Spirit
and reflects its Power of Light.
To recognize the dependence of all creatures
on the Inner Light and Power of the Spirit
is to partake of the Spirit's own
wisdom and immortality.
To refuse to recognize this dependence,
to seek to be autonomous and to
control the world is to take the path of death.”***

(Dom Bede Griffiths O.S.B., 1906 – 1993)

Ritavidya

Knowledge of the Cosmic Order

(Roland R. Ropers, Goa 5th March, 2016)

Last Curtain

„I know that the day will come when my sight of this earth shall be lost, and life will take its leave in silence, drawing the last curtain over my eyes. Yet stars will watch at night, and morning rise as before, and hours heave like sea waves casting up pleasures and pains. When I think of this end of my moments, the barrier of the moments breaks and I see by the light of death thy world with its careless treasures. Rare is its lowliest seat, rare is its meanest of lives. Things that I longed for in vain and things that I got - let them pass. Let me but truly possess the things that I ever spurned and overlooked“.

(Rabindranath Tagore, 1861 – 1941)

We are living in a transition period where everyone should be ready to wake up.

In a sense there are **two worlds**:

- One is the land of ever-changing phenomena, of birth and death, cause and effect: the world of duality, which many of us believe is our real home. It is not.
- Our native land is altogether beyond these: a world which is the very source of light and life, beyond all change and therefore beyond death. In this land there is only one inhabitant: the Self, the Atman, the Divine Source and Spirit.

From every age and tradition, we have personal testimony that there is some immensely far realm where death cannot reach. In more scientific language, there is a state of consciousness in which there is no identification with the physical body, no imprisonment in the mind or ego, but only life at its most abundance. Just as high mountains have a timber line above which no trees grow, the peak of consciousness has a nirvana line above which nothing dies. In this realm there is no distinction between mine and yours, his and hers. Everybody`s welfare is our welfare; everybody`s sorrow is our sorrow.

In entering this realm, we do not leave the physical world behind.

We are called to rediscover the deepest realm within ourselves which is our native state. **Dom Bede Griffiths** often recited his beloved passage from the *Chandogya-Upanishad*:

*„In the castle of Brahman is a secret dwelling,
the lotus of the heart.
Within this dwelling is a space,
and within that space is the fulfilment of our desires...
Never fear that old age will invade that castle;
never fear that this inner treasure of all reality
will wither and decay.
This knows no aging when the body ages;
this knows no dying when the bodies dies.“*

The land of the Eternal Life is not a visible locality only

We live in the state our mind is in, and as long as the thinking process is active, we may pass our visible lives without ever suspecting there is another realm. But when the mind is completely still, we see all life as whole. Our consciousness is utterly transformed. We are the same person, yet wholly changed; and similarly, the world we see is very different too.

Once we finally enter into the unitive state, our passport is good and valid in both worlds which are ultimately one.

We can learn to function freely in the world of duality, yet we never forget who we are and where we really live.

But the world of duality cannot issue a passport that will take us into what the Indian sage **Ramakrishna** (1836 – 1886) calls

„The land where there is no night.“

The senses can go part of the way with us, but they quickly pass out from lack of stimulation. The mind can go further, but it cannot live without change any more than a fish can live outside the water. As we get close to the frontier, it lies down and goes to sleep.

This frontier is a chasm, an abyss. When we look across, we see on the other side no change, no separateness, no time, no cause and effect.

The intellect gets terrified and runs. But the ego stays to fight. But by the time we get to the frontier it is out in the open, fighting for its very life. In this fight, the **Bhagavad Gita** says, we have only one ally, the will. And we have only one enemy, self-will. The whole of **Sadhana**, the path to **Self-Realization** is one long struggle to unify our desires until the will becomes unbreakable, for a will that is unbreakable is our bridge from separateness into the unitive state.

Once the bridge is crossed, the mystics say, the individual will is lost in the cosmic will.

In every human being this chasm, this split in consciousness is present. It shows itself in vacillation, in a divided will and in the multiplicity of desires, in the inability to maintain concentration on a problem or loyalty in a relationship. Everywhere it means conflict: between two desires, between two people, between a hope and a contrary fear, but always at bottom between two warring parts of our own mind.

We can talk about this division in consciousness in all sorts of ways. If you like a horizontal picture, it is a tug-of-war between the selfless in us and the selfish. Again, we can call it a struggle between two selves: a higher, permanent Self and a lower, impermanent ego.

In terms of physics, it is the war between light and darkness; in terms of meta-physics, it is wisdom versus ignorance.

(Sanskrit: **Vidya** vs. **Avidya**)

Whatever the language, unifying this split is a spiritual challenge.

Only towards the end of this great conflict, when we reach the human context, do we even begin to fight back. That is the beginning of **Sadhana**.

Here we are coming slowly to what traditional religious language calls **grace**.

Grace is real, but it is not outside us.

It can be described as a tremendous force in the depths of consciousness which, when we are ready for it, begins to reshape our lives. The word "**grace**" derives from the Latin: "**gratia**" (joy, gratefulness), engl.: "**gratis**" (free of charge).

The Benedictine monk and mystic **David Steindl-Rast**, who will celebrate his 90th birthday on 12th July 2016 has successfully established the spiritual network: www.gratefulness.org

Thousands of people in more than 200 countries are regularly visiting this inspiring web-page.

Bliss (Sanskrit: **Anananda**) is the peak-experience of inner liberation and joy.

This can happen very quietly. For some quite sensitive people, there simply comes a time when they are ready to receive instruction into a higher mode of

living. This development does not depend upon education, sex, social standing, race, or anything external characteristic. All of us have a little window into deeper consciousness, and before that window opens driving questions are of no more than intellectual interest. When the window opens, they suddenly become personal, literally matters of life.

Such awakening occurs in a time of crisis.

To the majority of human beings, living on the surface of existence, the storms of life are turbulent but superficial. They do throw us into turmoil, but afterwards we continue in the same old direction: tragedy may strike, but we do not learn from it. But there is a rare kind of human being who responds differently. Because their awareness goes deep, a personal crisis can shake the consciousness of such people to the very depths. The turmoil can bring great suffering, physically, emotionally, and spiritually. But after the storm subsides, they have reversed the direction of their lives.

The desire to change the direction of life is one of the surest signs of grace. For a while you may not know the direction in which to go. But you will know without doubt that the direction you have been going in is wrong, and you will look eagerly all around for someone who can throw light on where to turn.

If your *Sadhana* is sincere, there comes a stage when you can trade your bucket for a *Persian wheel*. A Persian wheel has several buckets affixed around it, and as it turns, water is continually drawn up and emptied into an irrigation canal. You have been doing all you can, so the Self has begun to take you seriously; now it begins to work along with you at a deeper level of consciousness.

Finally, at the very end of *Sadhana*, grace comes like a steady rain. You no longer have to carry water consciously now; it is present in a continuous stream, and you have only to direct the channels through which it flows.

Dedication is tested often on the spiritual path, and not to see external results for a long, long time seems to be the story of almost every spiritual aspirant. Actually, though we do not see it, changes are taking place deep within us from the time we learn to meditate. And one day, if we go on watering and weeding faithfully, we will go out confidently expecting to see no results as usual and there will be a little tendril poking up from the ground. Then we know that our work is bearing fruit.

When all desires are pulling in the same direction, the will is unified from top to bottom. That is as far as human effort can reach; we are ready for the climax of *Sadhana*. In *Sadhana* success goes to those who learn to train twenty-four hours a day.

Sharp like a razor`s edge is the path

If you have seen a straight razor, you know why using one requires continuous concentration. If you let your mind wander, you may end up in intensive care. This kind of skill is not learned from a book; you ask someone with experience. How much more necessary is a good teacher on the spiritual path – someone you can trust completely, who knows every foot of the path and can show you how to guard yourself against every danger.

In the final stages of contemplation I do not think that any human being can make progress without loving, experienced and utterly dedicated guidance. When awareness is deep, just when we are getting confident about our progress, we are really put to test. Circumstances develop in such a way that we have to give up some intense personal attachment. And there is no other way. When we have gone as far as we can on a particular level of consciousness, we simply have to let go and jump.

Just observe the skill of circus trapeze artists. They would take a swing or two to get momentum; then, at just the right moment, they would let go and sail through the air to catch hold of another trapeze several meters away. That is very much like changing levels in consciousness. Our first idea is usually to keep a tight grip on one trapeze and still try to jump; all we get for it is whiplash.

While we are on the first trapeze, this is a terrifying prospect. We have something in our hands; if we let go, we think we are losing something.

Consciousness in an unbroken channel

All we are letting go of is insecurity, self-will, some tenacious attachments that kept us from making progress. But it is terribly distressing. Physical and emotional suffering is bad enough, but this is worse. The only comparison I can think of is that it is like a welding torch burning away in consciousness; but there are no goggles you can put on, because this torch is not outside. And it bursts in your awareness at the most unexpected hours. When you are asleep you may suddenly wake up with this torch burning away, and the only help available is your prayer or your individual **Mantram**. It hurts so much that the very thought of the next application of that torch turns your will to jelly. Yet all your desires are unified now, and there is a little part of you that says timorously, in fear and trembling: „***I think I can stand one more attack.***“ This happens over and over, until suddenly you move into a deeper level of consciousness. You have burned out a number of selfish attachments which were holding you back, and now that they are gone, you begin to understand.

Whether romantic or spiritual, love does not barter. Just as in love, one cannot set conditions in *Sadhana*. Otherwise these experiences cannot come; your heart is still pulling in different directions.

In the last stage of *Sadhana*, we are trying to keep consciousness in a continuous, unbroken channel. Awareness must become one smooth-flowing stream from morning to night and through the night until morning again. In a sense, it is like taking two ends of consciousness and trying to bring them together into a closed circle, so that there is no leakage of *Prana* at all.

Words cannot describe the deepest experiences. They are so far beyond the realm of everyday thought and sensation that in both East and West, aspirants fall back here on poetry and the language of a lover to his or her Beloved.

In these last stages, the **Sufis** say, all veils but one have fallen from the object of our desire. We can make out the eyes of the Beloved, the hair, the smile, but nothing clearly, and all other desires are consumed in the overwhelming longing to tear that last veil aside. Every day there is this delightful pain of separation, this impatient patience. You expect the veil to fall that very evening, yet you are prepared to wait another day more. Mystics everywhere speak this way, and scholars just throw up their hands and leave. They want rational talk and all they get is contradiction. It is not that mystics are inadequate when it comes to logic; the inadequacy is in language. Give them a language that embraces opposites, that transcends the senses; then they will express all this. Otherwise words have to fail.

All sorts of signs come now that the end of one's years of searching is very near. It is like waiting for the curtain to go up on a play for which you have been waiting a hundred years. You are seated in the front row, the theatre is full: now the lights are dimmed and everyone falls still in breathless anticipation. Behind the curtain you can see tantalizing glimpses: props being adjusted, the last-minute movements of stagehands, a ripple of the heavy draperies as someone brushes by. Every morning in contemplation, every evening as you fall asleep, it is as if the whole universe is waiting for the play to begin at last.

And finally, just when you do not expect it, the curtain rises and you are lifted out of time and space into the unitive state, beyond change, beyond birth and death.

Christians, generally speaking, are completely ignorant of the powers of the unconscious. Our belief system is on the conscious level which we have

developed quite marvelously. But beyond the conscious are all these powers of the unconscious where we are **One with Nature**, with the dynamic forces in the unconscious which are tremendously powerful but which can be controlled, and you can learn to control them, in nature and in your own being.

In India we talk about **Jivanmukta**: the person liberated while still alive. The ultimate state is the Primordial State, existing from the beginning, hidden beyond your body, senses, your feelings and all your limitations.

In the Hindu tradition we speak of **Saccidananda**: being in full consciousness and absolute bliss. That is the goal for all Hindus. In this state you do not leave the world behind. In the deeper traditions of Buddhism and Hinduism you have to integrate all the other levels of reality in the Supreme. The physical, the psyche, with all aspects have to be integrated in the **Supreme Wisdom**. This is **Jnana** – the root **jna** being the same as the English **know** – the **divine knowledge**. In India we speak of **jnana**, in Buddhism of **prajna** and in Greek of **gnosis**, the **Divine Knowledge**. You share the divine knowledge and you have the experience of the **Infinite Transcendent One**.

When you have reached that state you have integrated your whole being, the being of nature around you, the being of your body, of your psyche and all its capacities. They are all gathered into unity in the one Supreme Reality. And that is the goal: to reach that total oneness.

Lead us to Immortality

Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 1.3.28

Lead us from the Unreal to the Real

Lead us from Darkness to Light

Lead us from Death to Immortality

Let there be Peace, Peace, Peace.

Goa/INDIA, 7th March 2016