

Relating to Īśvara: Being Objective **Swami Dayananda Saraswati¹**

The word God is not used here because it is an abused word. The word Īśvara is used because it is not yet abused. It has not even been understood yet. It is a Sanskrit word, used by the Upanishads.

There are lots of things in this world that attract us. Some of them are very fascinating: a sunrise at the seashore, a beautiful painting or a beautiful sculpture, a neat person. All of these things are fascinating, but I would say the most fascinating thing is clarity. Clarity implies absence of confusion. A cow has clarity in that it is not subject to confusion, there is no element of subjectivity on the part of the cow while relating to situations. On the other hand, as human beings, every one of us has our likes and dislikes. We have judgments about others and also about ourselves. A cow does not have any opinion about itself. It does not have confusion about whether it should eat grass or not. A cow is programmed and so it knows what it has to eat. If there is a piece of meat and also a piece of bread, without hesitation a cow will consume only the bread. However, when a Hindu boy is going to the U.S.A. he is advised by his parents, (especially by his mother), “Ye! You are going to the U.S.A. Don’t eat meat. I have been told people eat lots of things there. Remember, we have been vegetarians for generations”. So he is told not to eat meat while in the U.S.A. The son, if he is an honest person will say, “Ma, I will try. I will try my best”. He will have to try his best because he knows he has got choice!

American or Indian, a cow universally eats the same food because it doesn’t have a faculty of choice. The capacity to choose in humans is

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accompanied by the capacity of self-consciousness. Humans are also conscious of themselves as individuals. It is not an ordinary thing to be conscious of the world and, at the same time, be conscious of your self. You read these words and are conscious of your being a reader. This is something special. Self-consciousness empowers you as a human being, to make judgments, not only about situations, but also about yourself. These judgments yield likes and dislikes with respect to everything. Thus, you find having self-consciousness and a faculty of choice bring about a lot of subjectivity in how you look at things. Subjectivity leads to confusion. There is almost always certain confusion about your self. This confusion is projected upon others and upon situations, creating even greater confusion. In this way, your subjectivity stands between you and the actual world before you. Therefore, in Hindu scripture there is a long discussion about differentiating between what is really there and what we see. What is *Īśvara sṛṣṭi* (Creation of the Lord), and what is *jīva sṛṣṭi* (creation of the individual). All that is in this creation is not created by you. So let us say that all that is given to you is *Īśvara's sṛṣṭi*.

What is Given?

The sun is given, the moon is given, Jupiter is given, and Mars is given. The galaxy that is called the Milky Way also is given. The seas, the mountains, all of them are given. The poles in the north and the south are also given. The weak and strong forces are given. Parents are given to you and you are given to them. The place of birth is given. You can't alter that fact. The capacity to create and to act is also given. Since all of these are given, you are a part of scheme of things which is available for appreciation. Appreciation is possible only through a body-mind-sense complex. This

body-mind-sense complex is also given to you. Because you are a self-conscious person, you look upon yourself as an individual and through this given body-mind-sense complex, you slip into a slot within the scheme of things. In the scheme of your own slot you relate to the world as it is available, just like the cow.

Finding one's "Slot" in This Given Scheme of Things

A cow also falls into a slot through which it relates to the scheme of things. There is a slot given even to a cow. The cow is given a body. It has got a certain disposition. It is programmed to respond in a given manner. A cow always behaves in the manner it has been given. It settles into a slot. A mango tree is also in its own slot. It remains in its own place. Living in its own slot it gives mangoes. If it is supposed to give Rajapuri mangoes it gives only that, not Alphonso; it does not wish for a change. Much less is an apple tree going to give you a mango fruit. Even a bird is predictable in its flight pattern and habits. In contrast, human beings are predictable for being unpredictable! Because we are given self-consciousness and a faculty of choice, we have great difficulty in finding our slots. How you are going to behave in any given situation, we have no idea at all. The music that you appreciate today, you may not appreciate tomorrow. What you appreciate today, you may not like tomorrow. You may not be in the right mood. You may love music, but not at this time. You may like a person, but not right now. Therefore, the human being is someone who seems to have a lot of subjectivity. He or she doesn't get into his or her own slot. You are always probing to find your way into your slot. Is this called living? It is a struggle in living. This probing is not really probing. It is more like groping, groping to figure out your slot in the scheme of things. Generally we try to

find our slot in terms of professional inclinations and so on. “Should I become a doctor, lawyer or engineer?” Choice. “Should I get married or not?” Choice. “Should I buy car or not?” Choice. However, we also wish for that which we can’t have. “I already have a car but I want a Mercedes, and I also don’t want to empty my bank account!” Impossible! “I don’t want to be lonely so I should get married, but I also don’t want to give up my time”. Again, impossible! Therefore one has a problem! What is the slot for such persons? When you are still groping to find your slot in the scheme of things, where is your slot? Your slot is there where you can relax, just as after a long journey you reach a destination and can finally rest. Then you say, “I have arrived”. The meaning is that now you can relax, you are at rest. You can relax now because you are in your slot. It is like a ball rolling on a game board. It keeps moving until it finds its slot. Then it is so snug that it just fits in its own space. Similarly, each one of you is groping to find a place in the scheme of things where you can feel absolutely at home. Ultimately, one should feel at home in any spot within the entire universe, but this requires a great deal of understanding. It shouldn’t be only at a particular place or time that you feel relaxed, because you can’t be at the same place all the time. Once you achieve a slot, you must feel the same whether you are in India, America, or elsewhere. Wherever I go I should find myself in touch with the whole. This is the thing that everybody is searching for. Finding this exact slot is the struggle in life. Years may pass and even at the age of ninety people tell me, “Swamiji, I have done everything but, *sānti nahi hai!* (I don’t have peace)”. Even ninety years doesn’t seem to be long enough for finding your slot. The struggle of finding a slot is possible only when you have less subjectivity. A cow enjoys its slot. The mango tree enjoys its slot. Even amoebas enjoy a slot.

When they are in your stomach they have reached exactly to the place where they have to go! For you, finding a slot is difficult because you are not an entirely objective person.

***Jīva sṛṣṭi* is Subjective**

You have an opinion about yourself. That opinion is purely subjective. It has nothing to do with objectivity. You are aware that you have been given your physical body, your mind, your senses, your memory, your parentage, and your race, but you still have opinions about all of these things. Therefore, there is some objectivity, and there is subjectivity also. What is that subjectivity? You have a body, but you don't like the color of your body. You do like the height of the body, but you don't like the weight of the body. You don't like the shape of the nose of the body. Eyebrows? You don't like. What does it mean? You are not totally objective. You are subjective. This subjectivity is *jīva sṛṣṭi*, the individual's creation. Nobody likes baldness, but the advantages of baldness you don't appreciate at all. Baldness means you need not buy shampoo. One item less for you to buy! No dandruff but you still don't like baldness. That means you have lot of subjectivity. Baldness is objective if you accept it. If you don't like it, that is subjective. So in objectivity, of course, there is no problem. There is just simple appreciation. You can discover your slot only when your subjectivity is minimum. Finding one's slot is the problem. So being what you are, you cannot solve the problem. Because what is it that you are? You are your own likes and dislikes, your own conditioning, whatever that is. This is exactly what you are. Therefore, you have to start seeing yourself differently. You have to look at yourself in relation to the larger scheme of

things. If you can do this, then you can get out of this particular way of looking at yourself that is based on your subjectivity.

Objectivity is looking at Īśvara *śṛṣṭi*

When you become more objective you look at the world without all of your projections. A green valley, a flock of flying birds, or the roaring ocean do not evoke any subjectivity or confusion in you. They seem to evoke only an appreciation person, a non-judgmental person. The entire world is to be appreciated by you in this same way. Appreciating the world as it is without all of your subjective projections is to have an awareness of Īśvara. Awareness of Īśvara is not simply thinking of Krishna. It is not simply thinking of the idol in the morning and then putting him in the cradle and rocking him to sleep at night. If you forget Krishna the next morning, you might say Krishna is angry at me. You are just putting your own projections on Krishna. Poor Krishna. When you reduce your subjectivity you can really appreciate Krishna. To appreciate Īśvara is to appreciate all that is given to you. It is to embrace Īśvara *śṛṣṭi* and put all of your subjective notions aside. Then there will be an objective you who can enjoy whatever parentage you have been given, who can enjoy any age with its physical abilities or disabilities, who can enjoy all given qualifications. This reduction of subjectivity is what we call relating to Īśvara. Relating to Īśvara does not mean you only offer your worship, etc. It means that you live your whole life with an awareness of Īśvara. Awareness of Īśvara implies acceptance of all that has been given to you. For the one who understands this, finding a slot is simple. One recognizes that one has been given a slot and then works within that slot to make a contribution to this Īśvara *śṛṣṭi*. This is clarity. This is relating to Īśvara.