

Sri S. Rajagopalan

Learning to unlearn to unfold to flower from within

Looking at an object, coming in contact in perception, having the urge to find what it is – it is this fundamental question, which is the root cause for learning, which becomes objective knowledge. Knowledge is the process of knowing. Education is a logical process, moving from one stage to another in a logical sequence, order and discipline.

Looking at oneself (subject looking at subject – introversion) having the urge to find, who one is – gives birth to the metaphysical question: „who am I?“, the root cause for learning for subjective knowledge of the self. A sincere investigation journey with it leads to self realisation.

Learning in Yoga is for logical completion of every process in a state of fulfillment, not only in the movement, also in the path and in the person, who is the traveller. It is a process of perfection in all activities done in space and time, which gets dissolved into non spatial (infinite) and non temporal (timeless eternity) existence.

Once a person came to Raman Maharishi and told him: „I have come from far distance to learn – can you teach me?“ Ramana smiled and said:“ If you have come to learn, then look for another place, where they will teach you. You already know too much. That is your problem. If you learn more, there will only be more problems. Here I make people unlearn, unwind.“

Learning to use the body, the mind is the foundation for learning. The first step is to become aware of the basic needs of the body, like hunger, thirst, rest, activity, the senses and the perception of the senses etc. For this one should be very awake, attentive to one`s body. The cause for losing flexibility and becoming stiff is because of our negligence to become aware of our own body with its joints, muscles etc. Before one learns some techniques to do some movements or postures it is important to bring awareness to the body in such a way, that a friendly relationship is again established with the body. If not, one will use the body to achieve some results – in that process will only feed the wanting desires of the mind, like recognition, pride, authority, superiority, comparison etc.

The mind has basic needs. That need is to have something external to perceive, to identify, to relate to and to experience. For this the mind has to establish a conscious, friendly relationship to the object of perception. A hostile, unfriendly, critical relationship to the object of perception will only deprive the mind of learning to understand. That leads to ignorance and misunderstanding.

To learn, one needs to be in order with oneself. Tension, stress, restlessness are states of disorder. When there is disorder, the tendency is to seek pleasure and entertainment. If one is deprived of pleasure, there will be more tension, more restlessness – the cause of violent and destructive thoughts. Before one goes to any place for learning, one has the duty to put oneself in order. The teacher can only teach. The one who wants to learn must prepare oneself for learning, that is to be in order with oneself. To learn one should have the flame of attention, a total attention. Attention is subjective, that what happens in oneself. The mind which is searching to find fault, to criticize, which is restless, full of preconceived opinions, judgement, can never be attentive - as such can never learn, for it can never become aware of the teacher. Such a mind should never go to places, where there is teaching and learning, for it will only create negativity.

Since learning is to acquire knowledge, one should be sincere to expose oneself to right knowledge, for inner transformation, inner rehabilitation. For this one should learn to become aware of one`s inner structure, through which one gets exposed to one`s inner dignity. By experiencing this by direct perception, there is the experience of inner richness, peace, joyfulness and eternal soul, the timeless reality.

The teacher becomes one`s spiritual master, when learning is used for the inner transformation. At that moment the student of a teacher becomes the disciple of the spiritual master. The never ending greed for knowledge of techniques, methods, rules, for discipline, opinions, fame and glory has no meaning anymore.

In objective knowledge there is always conflict, difference of opinion, superiority, inferiority, comparison, right and wrong – endless duality. In this there is very little time for appreciation. What is the use of killing ourselves in the name of discipline?

One has the right to be proud of one's discipline in using an external instrument - be it a musical instrument like violin, flute, piano or some machine, like a computer etc. But can the same person be proud of their ignorance of not being able to use their own body, the mind with discipline, which is also an instrument? Can they become aware of their lack of discipline in relation to their own body and mind, which has made them lose the flexibility - the beauty of the body, the happiness of the mind - the beauty of the mind? To become aware of all this is part of learning. Awareness is the soul of learning. It gives courage to include and not to fight to exclude. And from the content of inclusion one should take, what one can use for inner transformation, the unfolding

Without inner transformation-flowering there is no meaning in learning and no meaning in life. The seed, which remains only as a seed, passing from one hand to another, from one generation to another generation (tradition) can unfold itself only, when it is planted to germinate, to grow to unfold, to flower. We can see the beauty - the meaning hidden in the seed.

Learning for knowledge, gathering information for knowledge, in the end only to remain as knowledge - has no meaning. It should unfold, flower in oneself to give the meaning of existence. That is Yoga learning. Let us try sincerely to transform the man in us to become human; the human into humanity, humanity into divinity and become part of eternity. The world is the expansion of our body. The universe is the expansion of our soul. One should learn to understand this to give the mind to expand in freedom to see clearly that the universal is the expansion of the individual.

John Bunyan in his book „The Pilgrim's Progress“ says: „even when you are sure that you are at the gate of heaven, you are likely to step into a hole and slip into it, which will lead to hell - at the very gate of heaven“ This hole to hell is our incapacity to overcome the human interpretation of the nature of God's existence. Whatever one finds around oneself, is one's own creation of heaven and hell. Let us learn to create heaven on earth.