Mystic Inspiration In World Religions
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Keshavadas, Sadguru Sant

Mysticism, like religion, sounds easy and simple, but is very complex. Most people think, when they hear the word religion, that it refers to rules, buildings and a group of worshipers who may or may not be accepting of strangers and other religions. But religion is not a dead building or a list of rules or a social or unsociable group of people. For religion to be a living force, it must bring reunion between the soul of an individual and the universal soul. This universal soul is known by many names - Allah, Buddha, Jehovah, Brahman, Krishna, Jesus and others. Many are the names, but the Truth is One.

Mysticism is the direct perception of this eternal truth. Mysticism arises when the veil which normally prevents us from seeing, hearing, knowing the sacred and holy is momentarily lifted. Hindus call this veil maya; Buddhists call it obscurations or kleshas; Christians call it "the stains of sin." Most people experience mystic moments in their lives. It may rise suddenly as a result of meditation, prayer or fasting, or in a moment when great pain or joy causes awareness of, and surrender to, something greater, higher than ourselves. It may happen spontaneously, unexpectedly, when the ordinary senses of sight and sound are suddenly overwhelmed by the beauty of nature, the sight of a loved one or the wonder of art or music. Wherever there is great love, great compassion, great virtue, wherever there is something that is rare to find, know that to be a partial manifestation of the immortal, all-beautiful, absolute wisdom of God.

When this happens, tears of bliss may form in the eyes, hair on the skin may rise, tingles of pleasure may move through the spine or caress the top of the head like a parent's loving hand upon a child. There may be great peace and stillness or sudden desire to dance with joy. Insight and wisdom may come, or the mind may fall still with perfection of silence. It seems as if the entire secrets of the universe are revealed or as if everything and everyone resides on Earth in perfect simplicity.

Sometimes a group of worshippers reject or even kill the mystic fire within themselves and push away individuals whose love of God is burning. Then, faith becomes a faith in buildings, tax shelters, rules based not on holy law but customs that cause separation, love based not on kindness but upon similarity in dress and language. Differences between self and other, religion and other religions are emphasized. The universal principles of all religions to love everyone and refrain from harming may be forgotten. But mystics speak the same words in different languages. All their body, mind and intellect basks in the sunshine of love divine, bathes in the ocean of bliss divine. That love is the luster in their eyes, the radiance in their faces. Mystic union or apprehension with the truth can be realized by following the paths and directions of those who have become fully perfected like Jesus or Krishna or Buddha. Ideally, religion should guide each Follower to that perfection, but often it does not.

The most spiritual among us often doubt or reject religion in all its forms because of a bad experience with one church, disappointment with one guru or the difference between what a group professes to believe and how it is practiced. Yet mystics need fellowship and guidance which can be found only among other spiritual people, and churches need the fire and love of mystics to keep the religion spiritual rather than architectural.

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