

Sat Chit Anand

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Stages of Spiritual Evolution

Spiritual evolution is the journey from unconscious unity (represented by Adam and Eve) to conscious unity (represented by Jesus): *I and my Father are one*. Jesus died for humanity to open up higher spiritual evolution and growing to higher Christ consciousness and divine relationship with God. Whenever we refuse to grow, we are crucifying the Truth. There are 4 levels of spiritual growth: from individual > to collective > to universal > to Divine.

In the beginning, man lived in unconscious unity with God in the Garden of Eden. There was an experience of unconscious mutual indwelling: God lived in them and they lived in God. Adam and Eve were innocent and walked naked with God in the coolness of the evening breeze. But there was no awareness or consciousness of this unity. At the deepest level, Adam and Eve were already like God, having been created in his image and likeness, but it was an unconscious original innocence and purity.

Adam and Eve had no free will. They obeyed God who was a God of authority. The God of authority says do this and don't do that; this is right and that is wrong. Authority is imposed from the outside. There was obedience to the will of God and harmony resulted. But then Adam and Eve rebelled against the God of authority and ate the apple. They rejected authority, even the authority of God, and rebelled against it. What they did was necessary to start the journey of spiritual evolution. Becoming an individual is a necessary step in the process.

Free will belongs to the evolutionary process of consciousness. We are not created with free will. We have to grow into it. Then we have to surrender it – *Thy will be done*, when God is acting in and through us – in order to be really free. We have to learn God's plan of salvation, which involves doing Thy will as opposed to doing my will; living the life of spirit as opposed to following the dictates and demands of ego. Disobedience (my will be done) takes us away from God as with the first Adam and Eve; and obedience (Thy will be done) brings us back to God as with the second Adam and Eve (Jesus and Mary).

With the fall of man, we lost our original purity and godliness as we fell into our lower natures. The fall was necessary from an evolutionary point of view. It is a fall in that man becomes self-centered. But it is a growth in that it is necessary for evolution. We have to grow back into that state of purity and oneness. But we do so through our free choice, for love has no value unless it is freely given, and God wants us to re-unite with him in love and freedom. Mary and Jesus are the new Adam and Eve, and they were needed to give birth to the new man that is God-centered and lives in Christ consciousness, aware of our unity with the Divine; and the new earth where we can enjoy the Kingdom of God in our midst once again.

Based on teachings by Br Martin at Saccidananda Ashram, South India, Dec 2010 / Jan 2011

To be continued next week: from individual > to collective > to universal > to Divine.

OM SHANTI, LOVE LEELA

Gentle Mindful Hatha Yoga

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Door sticker on Br Martin's office at Saccidananda Ashram, South India

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