



The Truth and Illusion of Spiritual Concepts

Many times we come across seekers who like to say that words are useless to describe their spiritual experience and that, anyway, describing that experience in words would involve using the mind. They therefore imply that the mind and reality are incompatible. This is one of so many clichés circulating in the spiritual world, which is indeed very harmful, as well as highly unintelligent, since to even negate the importance of concepts, one has to apply concepts.

It is a common idea that words are limited or even useless to convey the spiritual truth. However, there is nothing wrong with words and what they can communicate. The problem is not so much the limitation of language but our inability to understand the meaning behind words and to use words in such a way that their connotation can reach our intelligence and produce clarity. Spiritual reality is indeed profound and subtle, but it is also quite simple. Using ordinary words in a skillful way is sufficient to communicate the higher truth as long as those words fall on the ground of a mature intelligence and as long as the teacher can create a bridge to experiential reality. The function of a teaching is not only to transmit an inner realization but also the understanding of that realization and of the nature of the path by applying conceptual vision of a higher degree. The responsibility of a teacher is to educate the intelligence of a seeker so that it can be aligned with his or her evolution and self-actualization.

We need to be aware that concepts have meanings relative to the intelligence and maturity of the one using them or relating to them. We may ask: How much do words condition our experience of reality, or how much are we limited in expressing that experience by needing to fit it into our limited vocabulary? How much do our concepts influence our inner realization?

Since realization without understanding has no meaning, our conceptual tools are in direct relationship with the depth of our spiritual awakening. Concepts both help us to reach our spiritual goals and add another level of illumination, the quality of intelligence, to our awakened sense of self. This is because a truly awakened state is indivisible from understanding, which illuminates the otherwise static condition of the state with higher recognition. However, only concepts that are aligned with our natural evolution are helping our path, serving as guiding points of reference in respect to the unfoldment of our inner truth. Other concepts or false understanding of certain concepts will either block our evolution or divert it in the wrong direction. For that reason, it is of the essence to make a great effort to bring a higher level of clarity into our conceptual understanding.

Words are meant to point to reality and to illuminate that reality with understanding. But some of them are not pointing to the beyond of themselves; some of them create a certain mental reality of their own, superimposing an artificial meaning upon the spiritual dimension. They create a virtual world of the mind, existing parallel to the real world while having no connection to it of any sort. It is similar to someone who is autistic and cannot get out of himself or is unable to distinguish his entirely subjective interpretation of things from what is objectively out there. To be autistic is not to be able to create a bridge. A mind which is disconnected from non-conceptual reality, a mind that cannot experience, feel, and relate to what is out there beyond thinking, which cannot get out of itself, is impotent to understand – it is autistic. Those who are involved in any way in expressing the spiritual truth whether in writing or teaching – assuming they have enough connection to their true self – must make an effort to strip spiritual terms that have been used for centuries from their superficiality and generalization in order to align them with correct and precise understanding. These teachers need to start thinking critically and not just repeat words like parrots do. Because of this lack of discrimination and unconscious repetition, most spiritual terms are empty of true meaning. Even a parrot can be taught to say ‘consciousness’. But other than making a sound, it does not actually say anything.

The problem is that none of the existing teachings offers a precise description of the awakened states. The inevitable outcome of this is that their followers can interpret these superficial descriptions as they please. These descriptions lack precision and discrimination between various possibilities in our inner evolution. A correct description of an awakened state is not only a conceptual, abstract picture of a state, but an energetic transmission of understanding which should bring a mature seeker to the verge of the experience itself. And if the experience is already present, it should allow him or her to develop the correct relationship with that which has been awakened. The utter lack of accuracy in the descriptions of these awakened states is detrimental to the evolution of seekers into their true self.

Some people can listen to Krishnamurti and think that they know what he is talking about. Some may be content with the Advaita concept that everything is consciousness, or with Dzogchen’s description of bare awareness as the nature of reality, or with Zen terms like one-mind, clear mind, or no-mind. The problem with these terms is not that they are incorrect, for they are beautiful terms, but that they are not precise and can just be too easily misinterpreted. What makes them correct or incorrect is in what kind of higher context they are perceived. Unless we have the whole picture, we will absolutize fragments of awakening as the ultimate reality. Our conceptual tools need to be refined so that they can reflect in our pure intelligence the subtle nature of reality and our evolution.

One can be in the state of being and think that it is consciousness; one can be in awareness and think that it is no-mind; one can be in consciousness and think that it is the absolute; one can be in the absolute and think that it is consciousness; one can even



awaken the heart and think that it is consciousness; one can awaken consciousness and still have no clue who one is, unable to separate the individual and impersonal dimensions of this realization. These are examples of lack of discrimination caused by the refusal to begin to use our intelligence and question things so that clarity can be born. To cut through all this nonsense, we must have passion for understanding and total honesty.

People are hiding their ignorance in concepts, using them as a substitute for understanding, feeling too insecure and lazy to question their reality. All these clichés, words upon words that we constantly hear, illude seekers and teachers into believing that they understand something, while it is really just the mind talking to itself. This is what philosophy is: the mind talking to itself. Spiritual understanding is beyond philosophy, for its source is non-conceptual. The mind is still being used, but it serves something higher than itself: contemplating the true nature of things from the place of complete silence of thoughts. Locked in the mind, not only do false, superficial, shallow, and imprecise concepts not serve as an aid to produce true understanding, they prevent the very possibility for that understanding to happen. They cover the truth instead of revealing it.

Blessings,

Anadi

For a glossary of the terminology used in this teaching and for further resources, you may visit our website www.anaditeaching.com

