



Frère John Martin

FROM SINNERS TO THE DIVINE LIGHT

Swami Vivekananda once remarked to Christians : "You are obsessed with sin and Satan ; you should be obsessed with your divine nature"

His words remind us that religion is not meant to trap us in guilt, but to awaken us to the light or divine within. Christians tend to identify them as sinners. Christianity focuses on the sinfulness of human beings and invites them to repent. St. Paul is very strong on this. He says: Jesus died for us while we were still sinners. Jesus died for our sins. (Romans 5 : 6-8)

Jesus Christ did not come to call people 'sinners'. He said: I am the light of the world (Jn 9 :5). You are the light of the world, you are the salt of the earth. (Mt 5 :13-14). He invited people to discover their inner light, their true worth, their divine source. Jesus proclaimed: "The kingdom of God is at hand, repent", (Mk.1.14-15). This is not a distant hope but a present reality. It means that God is within you, eternity is with you. It also means that our true source is divine, eternal.

Repentance (metanoia) does not mean regret, feeling sorry or sinful—it is transcending one's identities of time and space and discovering one's eternal identity or divine identity. Here sin is not being aware of one's eternal identity, divine identity. There is sin but that is not our true identity. It is our ignorant identity.

The Upanishads emphasise on the divine source of human beings. The Upanishad Sages declare: aham brahma asmi- I am Brahman, I am eternal, I am infinite. Tatvam asi- you are that infinite, you are that eternal, you are divine. Ayam atma brahma, my atman is Brahman, divine. These statements echo the affirmations of Jesus Christ : I am the light of the world, you are the light of the world, the Father and I are one. Whatever Jesus Christ said of himself, he said as a possibility to everyone. But unfortunately Christian tradition has limited that possibility only to Jesus Christ and thus created spiritual hierarchy between Christ and Christians. This does not mean one becomes God or one is God. It means one's source is divine, one's foundation is divine. When one discovers one's divine source then one's identities of time and space become the vehicle of divine, vehicle of eternity. Time becomes the vehicle of eternity. Jesus Christ said: Time is fulfilled. Time has become the vehicle of eternity. He also said: the works which I do are not mine but the father who dwells in me does his works. This is the life of the kingdom of God to which Jesus Christ invited everyone.

So there is point when Swami Vivekananda said: Christianity is obsessed with sin and Satan but it should be obsessed with the divine source of humanity. Jesus Christ proclaimed the good news of human dignity that human beings are the light of the world and the salt of the earth. Their source is eternal and divine and invited them to discover it through repentance or rebirth. Christianity changed it into bad news saying that human beings are sinners

Yes, there is sin but it is not our essence but not being aware of one's divine source. So Christianity should change its focus from saying: you are sinners and need to repent but you are the light of the world and the salt of the earth, need to discover it, need to realise that truth.

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