

[Behold the Old as New](#)

Category : [July/August/September 2005](#)

Published by Anonymous on Jul. 02, 2005

Behold the Old as New

Following the dharma passed on by our ancestors strengthens tradition and yields bliss

udayabhanu panickar

Mark Twain, the great American writer, once wrote, "India is the cradle of the human race, the mother of history, the grandmother of legend and the great grandmother of tradition. The most valuable and the most instructive materials in the history of mankind are treasured up in India only."

Hats off to Mr. Twain. He is correct. The treasure of India has no limits. It possesses everything man needs to know about God and the path to the realization of God. No other culture, country or collection of scriptures can claim to have such a vast reservoir of divine knowledge.

Our spiritual heritage cannot be contained in a single cult or a creed. It has never been asserted as a one dogma, nor is it viewed as a one path to salvation. It's not even a religion as such--nor is it just a way of life. It is the divine knowledge of the Absolute Truth, which--when learned and practiced--can lead us to the experience of the ultimate bliss. It is a continuously evolving and absorbing science--a flexible body of knowledge centered around the soul's quest for divine realization. And it makes provisions for all souls in this quest. Yet, it remains immeasurable as it safeguards the very purpose of all life everywhere and in all things. It is called Sanatana Dharma. The wise know it by no other name.

Human suffering began when the practice of dharma started to decline. If we do not personally enjoy peace, prosperity and happiness, which is a heritage made available to us by our ancestors, it is due to our neglect of dharma as revealed in tradition. Some abandon this tradition to seek an "Ultimate Truth " through the

hasty application of self-made methods erroneously assumed to provide quick and easy access to the goal.

Those with correct knowledge of the Absolute do not deviate from dharma as taught by our ancestors. The rich may lose their luxuries. Servants may become the served or vice versa. Death may occur at any time. Regardless of circumstances or consequences, the wise--those with knowledge of "the Absolute "--will always adhere to the wisdom laid down by the great masters who have passed before us.

British historian Arnold Joseph Toynbee once said: "At this supremely dangerous moment in human history, the only way to salvation is the ancient Indian way. Here we have the attitude and spirit that can make it possible for the human race to grow together into a single family."

This sentiment has never been as true as it is today. Man's deepest foundation for spiritual progress is his perception of oneness. The existence of this oneness is the truth that assures all of us the eventual attainment of God Realization. This truth was laid down millions of years ago by our ancestors in the land known today as India. From time to time it was shaken and distorted. Yet it never fell, for it was based upon something invincible. All of the many challenges simply reinforced it.

So, let us dive into that vast ocean of divine knowing provided for us by our ancestors. Let us fill our minds with this knowledge, so that we are inclined to perform dharma and make ourselves ready for that experience of the ultimate bliss. Let us learn from our predecessors what we may not live long enough to learn from ourselves through our own mistakes. May we not waste time seeking something new when that which we need already exists. Let us adopt those established traditions which have endured the test of time. And, finally, let us pass the light of the past to the future for the liberation of innumerable souls yet to come.