Indian Culture is Spiritually Evolved

A spiritual process can take shape in any culture only after material needs are taken care of. It is natural for people to initially believe that if their food, housing, clothing and the little luxuries they are dreaming of are taken care of; everything will be okay. When all these things are taken care of and you realise that you are still not fulfilled as a human being, that is, when you naturally turn inward. If that has to happen, you need a social and cultural situation which is peaceful and well established for a long period of time. That is an advantage that only the Indian culture had in the past. All other cultures were in strife, warfare, and search of conquest most of the time. Because of this, there were no established societies. This culture had a long phase of established social and cultural situations where naturally, people looked beyond material comfort towards their inner well-being. Because of this, this culture evolved such a powerful spiritual process. There are a million different ways through which you can attain to your ultimate nature.

Every aspect of life from something as simple as breathing, eating, sitting, and standing was evolved as a spiritual practice in India. The ultimate nature of a human being, the nature that is beyond the physical has been explored so extensively. A lot of it is unfortunately being lost; we are unable to really preserve that. But still it is a live culture and it is interesting to see how in thousands of years old has been kept alive. Whether it is vibrating and resonating in common people’s lives or not is a questionable thing; but as a thread it has survived and still continues to exist.

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Someone who put it in very simple terms was Mark Twain. He was really intrigued by Indian mysticism and wanted to see it first hand, so he came to India. He had a good guide who took him to the right places. He spent a little over three months and when he was leaving he said, ‘Anything that can ever be done either by man or God has been done in this land.’ If you are willing to open your eyes and look into it, the variety of what has been done in terms of human consciousness has never happened anywhere else on the planet.

This is the only culture which does not have a religion as such. Religions have cropped up now only because of external influences. Otherwise as a culture, there is no religion in this land. We have something called Sanatan Dharm; that means ‘a universal religion.’ When we say universal religion, we are not talking about one religion for everybody. We are talking about all of us having our own religion. Hindu is a geographical identity; anybody who is born in the land of Indus or the civilisation that came from the banks of Indus is a Hindu. So you can worship a man and be a Hindu, you can worship a woman and be a Hindu, you can worship a snake or a cow or a monkey or a rock and be a Hindu. Or you can do no worship at all in your life and still be a Hindu. So it does not ascribe to any particular religious belief as such.

This is not a religion; this is just a possibility. Everybody can do whatever means most to them. Every individual can seek his own way. But the most important thing is, everybody should strive for his ultimate liberation.

The writer is a world-renowned spiritual leader.