

for those
who think

the spiritual scientist

Hotel or Hospital take your pick

"East is east and West is west, and the twain shall never meet," sang English poet Rudyard Kipling. What is it that is so different between the East and the West? Stated analogically, the modern Western worldview sees this world as a hotel, whereas the ancient Vedic worldview sees it as a hospital. In a hotel, we command; in a hospital, we cooperate. In a hotel, we expect enjoyment; in a hospital, we expect treatment.



HOTEL

Most modern people presume this world to be the arena for their planning, executing and enjoying.

But even a little experience of life can show that things don't always happen as we want them to. When faced with repeated obstacles or reversals, people become disheartened - all the more so when they are expecting to command and enjoy like in a hotel. This disappointment may aggravate into chronic depression and even suicidal thought, both of which are rampant in our society. Moreover the hotel worldview is quite dehumanizing. How many hotel-goers love and care for the waiters who are serving them? Similarly when people imagine that others exist only for "waiting" on them - facilitating their enjoyment, they become impatient, impersonal, insensitive and intolerant towards others. This selfish, enjoyment-centred worldview is at the root of deteriorating relationships and rupturing families. Worse still, the frustration resulting from such a worldview may escalate into anger and violence. Also in the hotel worldview, the final truth and end of life - death - defies explanation: if the world is a hotel, then why does death always spoil the party?



HOSPITAL

Let's consider the hospital worldview. The Vedic literature informs us that all

living beings in this world are like patients afflicted with amnesia. We have forgotten our spiritual glory as eternal beloved children of the supremely wealthy and loving Mother-Father and are misidentifying ourselves with our temporary material bodies and designations. The Supreme Being is the expert doctor, who is treating us

through a prudent blend of congenial stimuli and jolting shocks - all ultimately meant to awaken our spiritual memory and reinstate us in our divine glory. Shock treatment may appear undesirable to the uninformed patient, but the well-informed patient understands that it is not just desirable, but essential, for his ultimate well being. Similarly when we are spiritually well-informed, that is, when we see the Supreme as a doctor and not as a waiter, then we understand that reversals are a part of the divine shock treatment. Even if things are going "wrong" as per our short-term perception, they are still going "right" as per the long-term therapeutic plan. Thus the hospital worldview helps us make sense out of reversals and gives us hope, confidence and strength.

Indeed when we have the right worldview, even death fails to cause us fear, for it becomes another phase in a multi-life treatment plan. If our amnesia is cured, then death becomes a discharge from the hospital so that we can return to our original home in the spiritual world, the kingdom of God. If our treatment is not yet complete, death is like the transfer of the patient to another unit for faster and better treatment.

People all over the world who have been misled by the hospital worldview into having unrealistic expectations - and enduring the consequent unbearable frustrations - sorely need the balm of the hospital worldview. Lest we have second thoughts about this fundamental and indispensable paradigm shift, the exhortation of eminent British historian Dr Arnold Toynbee can prod us on, "It is already becoming clear that a chapter which had a Western beginning will have to have an Indian ending if it is not to end in the self-destruction of the human race. At this supremely dangerous moment in history, the only way of salvation for mankind is the Indian way."

