
'Illusion' and 'Interpretation of Reality': LITERATURE OF TOPIC

Time : 5:30 – 8:45 PM
Date : August 23, 2004
Venue : Jibanananda Sabhaghar, Kolkata
Speakers : Shovan Tarafdar, Anirban Das, Suman Mukhopadhyay, Nabarun Bhattacharya
Moderator : Moinak Biswas

■ ***Illusion***

We are *not* going to discuss anything about '*Maya*'. The world is what it is and you are what you are. Still, in our knowledge, we get errors. There are two sources of such errors, - (1) Our nervous system sometimes misreads what it is and (2) In spite of that the nervous system reads perfectly, we tend to know something what it is not. The first case requires some medicines, but there is no medicine in the market for the second one. The second case is the case of illusion. Our knowledge is built in two ways, - (1) Directly (Observation) and (2) Indirectly (through Media). Sometimes, when we directly observe things, we prefer to know it as what it is not. We want to make the reality as per our choice, not as per what it is. On the other hand, media provides us a set of knowledge that serves its objective of profit-maximization. It pays its intellectuals to make a world for us to generate money to them. Political Parties, Mafia, Private Investors, Private Company Owners and Media make no collaborative conspiracy, yet through media, they make us what they want us to be for sake of their own welfare. They have got their own equilibrium. What about we, the people? We 'independent' people take 'independent' decisions! Do we know how we unknowingly take the role of slaves by unknowingly destroying our ideas, our identities? We still have not got the Freedom. We are still slaves, in worse form, because now, we cannot identify ourselves as the slaves. We have become slaves by our illegitimate thoughts.

■ ***Interpretation of Reality***

Reality is interpreted in two ways, - (1) When we see something, the 'something' is interpreted by us by use of our existing set of knowledge, or in other words, by our present culture and (2) When we derive the reality from media, we interpret texts. But, when media carries texts to us, actually, behind the scene, a human being carries it and the human being has already interpreted the reality according to its own culture. So, in this case, we make an interpretation of the interpretation of the reality. In interpretation of reality, problem occurs both in realizing the reality and forming it into some communicable text. A text or language or simply the representation of the reality does not become something independent of the culture of the person representing or the interpreter. The text of representation or interpretation of reality depends up on the individual choice of the interpreter. This way, always, we tend to know the world as what it is not. We get the illusion.

■ ***The Problem***

Problem occurs when we think that there is no illusion. Taking the interpreted materials and/or our own interpretations as the truth, we design our actions. In this course of designing, we forget to take into account that the world also is what has not been captured into the text or what has been avoided to be captured into the text. Whether media lies or not, we always get a different world. When media lies, we get an unreal world to fit ourselves in. Sometimes, the interpreter consciously selects a text that carries the reality not actual, but which, if trusted by us, serves the interpreter at the cost of our own welfare. Had there been no illusion, we could have been some different human beings standing on the ground of reality.

■ ***The Three Seminars***

Paribartak Sanskritik Sangha, being a cultural organization and to work in the sector of culture, sets the definition of culture as "*A particular combination of an array of knowledge and degree of usage of science to use that knowledge*". The array of knowledge and degree of usage of science vary over different cultures. Degree of usage of science has been taken to be an important element in tracing of culture for that science is the only method recognizable in course of development and it helps to classify different cultures in the path of development. The last two seminars held by the Education Formation of the organization are – "*Politics of Knowledge*" (August 26, 2003) and "*Self & Other: Conditioning by Hegemony and Political Dicta*" (March 16, 2004) – both in the *Jibanananda Sabhaghar*. This Seminar is going to be last in the stream of discussions on "*Construction of Knowledge*".

■ ***Discussion in the Seminar***

1. Is Illusion inevitable?
2. Is there any technical way to interpret or represent reality through language to reduce/negate Illusion?
3. Can there be any person rational when illusion is looming large?
4. What are the factors within us driving us to misinterpret reality?
5. What are the factors in media winning our trust in spite of that they willingly sometimes misinterpret reality?
6. In what technical way our sense of aesthetics and our pattern of choice are being affected by Illusion?
7. How can we get rid of the problems due to Illusion?