***Namaste***

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**ON THE OCCASION OF RISHI BODH USTAV**

**Doubts are a ladder to Enlightenment.**

We are frequently visited by different religious Gurus, Acharyias, Swamis and false Godmen and women who try to impress us with their own religious doctrine. While glorifying their own doctrine they condemn and despise other’s true doctrine. This results in doubts of all sorts in our minds and what and whom to accept and what to reject.

Doubt can be a doorway to spirituality. Each human being starts his journey with faith. As an Arya Samjist we are all well aware about the doubt that changed Mool Shankar in to a great Sage, Nation Builder, Reformer and Greatest Vedic Scholar of all times who later came to know as ***Maharishi Swami Dayanand Sarswati.*** and established the Society of Nobles known as ARYA SAMAJ. While staying awake in a Shiva Temple on the night of Shivratri one of the most important day of Hindus, while others had gone to sleep, he sees a mouse moving freely on the idol (Moorti) of Lord Shiva and eating the Prasad offered by the devotees. A doubt rose in Mool Shankar’s mind ***“If Lord Shiva could not protect himself from this small mouse how could he be the protector and sustainer of entire Universe”.*** This incident created a doubt in his mind that this Idol cannot be the true Shiva. So he set out to search the true Shiva which eventually took him to investigate Vedas which people had forgotten. So BACK TO VEDAS became his carion call.

Doubts and faith are the real perspective of religion. Faith begins where the doubt ends. But, to have faith without a spark of doubt leads to blind faith and is often a source of misery and exploitation as the history of mankind  has indicated.

It is always good that we have all have doubts. To follow the sermons and teachings blindly without exercising doubts can be very harmful. We should not be led by the authority of any religious texts, as no religious text is infallible and likewise the aura around the preacher should not make you accept him or his teachings, without critically examining what he teaches, how he teaches and his source of such teachings. We should not get influenced by his appearances; popularity and standing in the religious circle or take delight in his speculative opinions. Don’t let the noise and opinions or visions of other drown out your inner voice and most important have the courage to follow your own heart, intuition and intellect. When you are convinced that certain things are wholesome for you and have the potential to make your life happier and better accept them. Similarly when you know for yourself that certain things are not good and will not make your life better then do not lose any time to reject it.

You should look at every scripture, teachings, conventions and rituals in the way as it was looked at by real scholars. Don’t follow blindly what you are taught by some of these Acharyas who have just come out of some Gurkuls or Ashrams. They themselves have very limited intellect and knowledge for them it is a profession which is fueled by greed to make fast buck or two.

Kewal Ahluwalia.

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