

THE PROCESS OF SELF DISCOVERY HAS NOW BEEN TECHNOLOGICALLY OUTSOURCED

At the very outset, let us consider a question. Has the life reduced to an examination of multiple-choice questions? To know what you think about a given subject, a social media platform gives you choices and you tick an option. First, washing machines, workout equipment, microwave oven and other modern household appliances stole away our physical activities, a fact that is definitely responsible for many medical complications. Even if that was alright modern technology has of late, started to rule our minds. Life automation devices like Alexa, treadmill, online study applications, remote meeting software, health-band and things like that are gradually hijacking our body as well as **psyche** in the name of comfort and advancement.

What we often tend to forget is the fact that **mind comes before the body**. Nonetheless, we have compromised everything for physical coziness. Now, technology is heading towards our spirit. Perhaps the day is not far when we shall get four choices as to how to pray to the Almighty. Whether we will go on surrendering like this, is fortunately still a choice.

Let us explore what led to where we are and how to look for ways out of this before our very soul becomes a slave to technology. Will stepping back help us? Should we chalk out full-fledged plans to get rid of the technological involvement in some walks of life?

What is self-discovery? When one thinks about one's own existence, strengths and weaknesses, they are on the path of self-discovery. From the days of the Gurukul system, there has been a tradition in Indian education system to impart to students both physical and spiritual training. Conquering one's mind and being able to control one's actions ethically and reasonably is what we name as self-discovery. Without an iota of doubt, the introspection and self-improvement yielded to the machine pressure because we were infected with an idea that devices and applications were **more capable** than the human brain. Secondly, we pretend to be **busy**. We have no time for spiritual matters let aside self-discovery. Lastly, the ever-increasing competition to outdo one another, has led to an unprecedented **noise** level. No, not the acoustic noise. What we are discussing is the rising distraction level. Technology convergence, abundance of products in the market, things like e-commerce and latest artificial intelligence launches have all created a multidimensional space where thoughts and contemplation are looking quite less glamorous.

Now, let us move on to how and where we should put a fight against the technological invasion. To fight the enemy tactically, **the point of its entry** must be identified accurately. Because, even if we stop its onward march without covering the entry points, it will keep attacking us. The most vital entry point is the **infancy**. The way parents are proud of their kids' involvement with mobile phones and schools are busy showing off their modern approach by virtue of smart classes, it seems the space for thought processes, handicraft, ethics-building etc. is getting reduced at a fast rate. Montessori reports say that children are inclined towards activities carried out by their parents and they tend to copy these activities. This is an obvious point to fight the problem. The lesson is, mentors need not participate much in mobile phones, laptops, IOT devices and other gadgets while kids are around. Another entry point of the menace is the **office**. In spite of focusing only on automation, the offices and work places will do well to care more about the **work-life balance**. Why not stop pressurizing the workers? Should the offices work on improving the spiritual life of the work force? These are the questions worth considering.

It is very important to discuss what does the outsourcing of self-discovery mean in Indian and the international context. The great Indian saint Swami Vivekananda said,

“All knowledge that the world has ever received comes from the mind; the infinite library of the universe is in our mind.”

The more deeply one understands the meaning of this quote, the clearer becomes the fact that the mind is the ultimate source of satisfaction. Self-discovery in true sense is the way to reformation and purification of the soul. Dharma or the religion has always preached that introspection is the ultimate way of learning and living an ethical life. When Lord Buddha resorted to the shade of the Bodhi-Vriksha and adopted a state of deep concentration, then only was he able to attain wisdom. Did he need any external object to reach that level of focus? This amply proves that we do not need technology to think deep, to contemplate our actions and to make the world around us better.

All this dependence on technology has occurred because of one simple reason. That of not paying importance to our **spiritual life**. When a kid returns from school, parents jump to ask how much he scored in the class test. However, they attach little importance to asking him some questions on his moral upliftment or more simply, suggesting some ways to help his friends or telling him the importance of respecting his teachers. We discuss the new features in a mobile phone variant or the launch of a new luxury car model more than self-improving our own deeds that we perform every second and which should have been far more important to us. So, why should one be shocked if it is said that technological advancements have expanded their span to the spiritual life? Even today's online classes have lite and premium versions. Those who can afford proximity to latest technology are better placed to learn, though may be, they are learning everything quite mechanically. Are we going to make a head start before we are faced with the lite and pro versions of our teachers, mentors, preachers, the very thought processes and in fact everything for that matter. Imagine a day when the priest informs you that you are not entitled to worship the Almighty as He belongs to a premium version.

We must keep reminding ourselves that when we are to set out for a journey to the self, no external means will be as effective as our heart and mind. It is a matter with us only how deep we shall let the technology penetrate into our lives. It has eye-catching gadgets, automatic appliances and breathtaking software applications. It lures us at every step of life. However, alongside it intoxicates us into slipping in comfort zone. When a machine does it all for you, why should you bother to do it manually? This addiction spoon-feeds your brain, which forgets to think by itself. This is exactly the point where your self-discovery process surrenders to the might of the machine. When shall we become aware that technology is defeating us every moment in this ongoing battle?

The crux of the matter is that technology must **cease to touch our divine life**. We have instigated it to dare influence our minds and we only can stop it. Once we lose our spirit to technology, we will be slaves of our own creations. Better late than never.