



“ Vedanta as a Way of Literary Interpretation

Professor Sukhbir Singh

Former Professor Emeritus,

Dept. Of English, Osmania University, Hyderabad

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Abstract

Religions are the mothers of all arts, literature, music, and architecture, etc. Religions are the sum, substance, and seed of all holistic disciplines in the universe. Certain aspects of most religions are common and they relate to each other in several mutually beneficial ways. Their relatedness generates the ambience of a unique harmony that all religions are One Religion and peoples are One World. The western literary theories and critical disciplines have examined literary works within a narrow canvass of abstract ideologies, excluding in the process their moral and spiritual aspects. For that reason, their interpretations most of the time turn out to be abstract and even atheistic. Literature is an image of life—an improved image, if not ideal. It does not show us what the world is but what the world ought to be. So, while reading a literary text, we need to think beyond our thoughts and see beyond the seen. Only then literature will have morally beneficial effects on the readers' mind. To excavate from the hidden treasures of the literary texts such glowing gems as would illumine the inner human self, one need to study them in the light of the spiritual disciplines of abiding universal validity. Advaitvedanta is one such aspect of Hinduism which enjoys an uncontested universal acceptance. It is the warp and woof of all religions and its tenets as championed by Sankracharya, Ramakrishna, and Vivekananda remain universally relevant and inspire people to cherish the idea of one Religion, one God, and one World. This lecture would show how the interpretation of a western text in the light of the eastern Advaita philosophy can furnish astonishing results by shedding light on its much obscure but most essential thematic aspects.

Brief Bio:

Professor Sukhbir Singh is an eminent scholar and teacher of English, American, Indian, and Comparative literatures. He retired from Osmania University, Hyderabad (India) after serving for more than three decades. He holds a Ph.D. from the Central University of Hyderabad and an M.A. from the Panjab University, Chandigarh. Prof. Singh is one of the most accomplished professors of English and Comparative Literatures today in India. He was awarded a Major and Minor Research Project on “Philosophy of Yoga in Contemporary American Fiction” by the UGC, Senior Fulbright Visiting Fellowship at the prestigious Divinity School of the University of Chicago, IL. by the United States Educational Foundation in India, and Pierce Loughran Visiting Scholarship by the W.B. Yeats Society of Ireland. He has published books and about a hundred research papers in some of the most prestigious Asian, European, and American journals. He is currently on the International Board of editors for the Anthology of American Literature for the Asian Students funded by the Luce Foundation in the U.S (Gen. Editor Paul Lauter of the Trinity College, Hartford). Prof. Singh was until recently Professor Emeritus at the Dept. Of English, Osmania University, Hyderabad, Guest Faculty at the Hyderabad Central University, and Ombudsman at the NALSAR University of Law, Hyderabad.

Prof. Singh's papers on “Philosophy of Yoga” have appeared from Princeton, Georgia, Penn State, and Cambridge, etc.