

PLEASE, TELL ME ABOUT GOD!

Intent of the Story.

- ✓ *To encourage people to search for truth, for meaning and for God.*
- ✓ *To realize that to know about God is not the same that to know Him.*
- ✓ *To know God is continuous personal and arduous journey.*
- ✓ *We know about God with the mind, we grasp Him only with the hart.*

The Story

Mr. Quest was a restless man, plagued with doubts, forever in search of the truth. God, Man, Religion, Human Society, Good and Evil, Life and Death were the things that really mattered in his life.

In his ceaseless quest, he visited every library in town. He read every available book. No Encyclopedias, doctoral theses or scholarly articles enlightened him in the way he wanted. In fact, nothing could satisfy his craving for the truth.

He kept telling himself: "I kept searching and searching and still I don't feel satisfied. One thing I know for certain; all that scholarly stuff I read is dry, it does not quench my heart's desire."

In his undaunted quest, he stopped reading books and began attending Seminars, Workshops, and most up-to-date Courses on theology, philosophy, anthropology and what not, always entertaining the hope that one day his search would satisfy him.

Yet, all the scholarly lectures of the most eminent professors left him just where he was. In disenchantment, he used to say to himself: "What's the use of attending all these lectures and seminars, they don't satisfy my heart; these big professors talk and talk and talk; they mouth only beautiful ideas, big thoughts in the air, all up there. I long for the kind of knowledge that would satisfy and fill my hungry heart."

Fortunately, one day he came across an advert announcing a symposium of holy men: Gurus, Priests and Sadhus to exchange views and ideas about God and Man, Religion and Salvation, Good and Evil. Mr. Quest exclaimed: "Ah, ah! That's something I've been waiting for so long; I must attend that symposium at any cost. I got to ask these holy men the questions that will clear up all my doubts and anxieties. I'll surely attend that symposium"

Indeed, it was a large and imposing gathering. There were here, holy men of all religions, Sadhus and Priests, Religious and Sanyasis, Bishops and Gurus, Mullas and Monks.

Mr. Quest approached some of those reverend and holy men, and humbly addressed them in this manner: "Reverend and Holy Men, for many years I am in search of God. Ever since my youth I have been longing for him. My mind is clouded with doubts. I am confused and mixed up, please, tell me about God. I beg you."

The Holy Men began talking slowly, solemnly and emphatically. When they finished their discourses, Mr. Quest saw the heads of the Holy Men opening up like tape recorder. In a shock he said: "What? What's this I see? Tapes? Am I dreaming? Tapes inside the Holy men's heads? Let me see these tapes "Mr. Quest removed the tapes from inside the heads of the Holy Men and read the titles stuck on them. In utter disappointment, he bewailed: "Oh, no! Is this all you have to say? Is this all you hold, in your heads? No! No! This is not what I wanted, not what I search for!"

This stuff of yours, I read long from many learned books. Too bad! I heard this entire drab long ago from big professors and lecturers. There is nothing satisfying in your answers. Stop giving me bookish replies and scholarly explanations. Please, tell me something about God, about Religion, about Man. Something that is alive, something that you have experienced, not what others have said, nor what you have read time and again."

There was a long silence. Then, Mr. Quest entreated them again: "I beg of you, Holy Men, for God's sake. Answer me. Please tell me!" There was a long, very long silence. In desperation Mr. Quest cried aloud: "Am I to take your silence for an answer? Please tell me. I beseech you. Pleeeeeease"

Only the echoes of the last words of Mr. Quest could be heard. After a long pause the sound of tapes being ejected was finally heard again. Mr. Quest took the tapes out of the Heads Holy and Learned Men, and avidly examined them ...

In frustration, Mr. Quest cried out: "Oh! only empty tapes this time! There is nothing written in them! Nothing at all, as an answer to my queries! Woe to me! Not even these Holy Men could help me in my search. **Shall I have to make it alone???**

Questions for reflection and discussion.

Reflect on the questions below. Ideally, put your reflections on paper.

1. What was Mr. Quest longing for? What was his quest?
2. Why all the books he read about God, and the lectures he heard did not satisfy him?
3. What M. Quest expected to learn from those "professional holy" men? Instead what did he get?
4. What was the mistake of Mr. Quest did? Why was he so disappointed?
5. Explain the difference between "Intellectual" and "experiential" knowledge? Point out their differences
6. How can we acquire true and good intellectual knowledge of God and of divine realities? Who can help us in our search?
7. How can we acquire experiential knowledge of God and of divine realities? Can others assist us and help us to get a God's experience? How
8. What is it signified – in the story - by the first set of tapes found in the holy persons' heads?
9. What do the empty tapes signify?
10. What's the difference between a genuine mystic and a learned theologian?

11. In the Gospel we read that Jesus contrary to the Scribes and Pharisees *-the authorized teachers of the Jewish religion -* was teaching with authority. On which authority were the Scribes and Pharisee teaching and on what authority did Jesus teach?
12. Explain the sentence: "Of God and of divine things, we really know only what we have experienced."

Group Work – Sharing and Discussion

- Participants will share their reflections with the group members.
- The Moderator will initiate a discussion on the matter shared.
- Encourage discussion and interaction.

Teaching and Input

Ideas Helpful to the Moderator

- There are two types of knowledge: one is "experiential" the other abstract, notional, intellectual. The former involves the heart, the later the intellect or mind.
- Notional and abstract ideologies, theories, and other systems of thought do not satisfy the deepest aspirations and longings of man's heart
- Most of the knowledge we have of God, of good and evil, of the meaning of life and death, and transcendental realities is notional.
- Most of the things we know and hear and say about God are stereotypes.
- God cannot be apprehended by the mind if our hearts are left out.
- One thing is to know about God, and quite another is to know Him!
- God cannot be fitted into any neat concept or into any man-made system of thought
- Mystics, no academic theologians or theoretical thinkers, can speak authoritatively of God
- Most Professional Theologians, Gurus, Rabbis, Pundits and Priests they just keep passing on to their disciples the concepts they heard, read or studied about God, not their own "personal God experience".
- Right from the moment of birth the cultural and religious environment we live in. keeps interjecting some prerecorded tapes into our minds about God, morality and truth
- Most of us do not examine them, nor do we challenge them as Mr. Quest did. We ought to challenge them.
- The "search for God" and truth is a "personal" adventure. It cannot be done by proxy as Mr. Quest expected.
- He expected others to give him an experience of God. A personal experience cannot be passing to others. It has to be had!
- Our search for God should be relentless. We shall never know God enough.