

17. Liberation from bondage

MANY a *saadhaka* (spiritual aspirant) has gone through long and arduous disciplines in order to win his dearest ambition of entering the kingdom where there is no bondage; he has recited the Name or meditated on the Form or denied the senses. There are others who have ventured with Reason as their sole guide, into the realms of the inner consciousness and discovered that liberation consists in realising the reality that is behind all the transient and manifold phenomena. But, the experiences of these heroic men and women are discarded as the vapourings of crazy individuals, by those who live on the flimsy surface of the first of the five sheaths of human personality, the *Annamaya kosha* (physical sheath). They identify the body as themselves and do not delve behind the falsehood into the realm of Truth.

Such cynics who condemn the *Vedhaanthic* approach to the problems of living are not rare even in the land that gave birth to *Vedhaantha!* The reason behind their attitude is---they do not grasp the fact that *Vedhaantha* reveals only the genuine history of each one of them. It but seeks to hold before every one the true picture of himself, devoid of deficiencies or exaggerations. *Moksha* (liberation) is no special and exclusive heaven into which one has to earn admission; it is not a special status or acquisition or possession. It is just the removal of the false notion that we are bound and limited by the body, the senses, the intellect, the mind, the ego and other fancies.

What exactly is the bond which one has to free himself from? The bonds have been forged by fear and anxiety, produced by desire which holds one in its grip. Fundamentally, fear arises because you feel there is before you, another, a second! If there is no second, whom can one fear? The first person is the seer, the I; the second is "all other beings and things," which are seen, observed, Nature.

Renunciation confers immortality

The objective world is the illusion caused by ignorance, which makes one ignore the One that is only apparent as Many. Ignorance causes the identification with the Mine. So, when some one attached to us dies, we feel broken-hearted, whereas, when some one who is not in the circle of kith or kin dies, we are not affected at all. It is the sense of I and Mine that causes grief and fear. That is why the *Upanishaths* proclaim that renunciation alone confers immortality, freedom, fulfilment.

The highest wisdom is the awareness of the unity, the One, which is all this. In fact, there is no two, there is only One *Brahman*. You realise this when you are in deep sleep, when all thought, feeling, emotion, passion, attachment, knowledge cease---only the I remaining, and the happiness of being only the I. But, the *Aanandha* is not known at the time of sleep! It is only after waking that you declare I enjoyed fine sleep. If only you were aware of the *Aanandha*, sleep will be *samaadhi*, for, it is *Aanandha* unalloyed. So also, in the waking stage, you have knowledge, but, no *Aanandha*.

If you can experience the knowledge of the waking stage and the *Aanandha* of the sleeping stage, both at the same time and to the full, that is *Moksha*. That is true liberation. Then you have consciousness, knowledge and bliss, unalloyed; you are *Sath-Chith-Aanandha* itself, pure and simple.

The fruit of the tree of love is *jnaana*

You must watch for the moment when the wakeful stage passes into the sleeping stage and concentrate on that moment purifying it of all the agitations and thought which mar the wisdom and the *Aanandha*. Of course it is difficult in the beginning! When you are at the wheel of your car, driving along, far into the night, there comes a fateful moment when you slip into sleep, from the awareness of awakening! There is nothing that you cannot gain by practice. You have learnt the highly complicated and strange skills of walking erect, of writing scripts and reading them and interpreting them, all by practice, haven't you? This is the way of acquiring and experiencing, the *jnaana* (spiritual wisdom) which alone can grant liberation from fear and grief.

From the seed of love, springs the sprout of devotion to the Lord. The devotee sees everything as the manifestation of the Glory of God, every act as His handiwork, every word as His voice; he offers every thought, word and deed inspired and prompted by Him to Him. Thus for Him, the world is but He, He is the world. There is no second. So, the fruit of the tree of love is *jnaana*. The sweetness in that fruit is *Aanandha* and the fruit contains once again the seed of love from which the sapling put forth its leaves. In the *vishwa-viraat-swaruupa* (Cosmic Form of God) which Krishna allowed Arjuna to witness, Arjuna found himself, as well as his brothers and cousins.

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What exactly is your duty? Let Me summarise it for you.

First, tend your parents with love and reverence and gratitude.

Second, Sathyam vadha, Dharmam chara. Speak the truth and act virtuously.

Third, whenever you have a few moments to spare, repeat the Name of the Lord, with the Form in your mind.

Fourth, never indulge in talking ill of others or try to discover faults in others.

And, finally, do not cause pain to others, in any form.

Sri Sathya Sai