

4. Eliminate egotism and desire and gain liberation by conquest of the mind

When the Sun rises, darkness, as well as the troubles arising from it, disappear. Similarly, for those who have realised the *Atma*, there is no more bondage and no more sorrow that arises from bondage. Delusion comes only to those who forget their bearings, and egotism is the greatest factor in making people forget their very basic truth. Once egotism enters people, they slip from the ideal and precipitate themselves from the top of the stairs, in quick falls from step to step, down to the very bottom floor.

Egotism breeds schisms, hatreds, and attachments. Through attachments and affection, and even envy and hatred, one plunges into activity and gets immersed in the world. This leads to embodiment in the physical frame and further egotism. In order to become free from the twin pulls of pleasure and pain, one must rid oneself of the body-consciousness and keep clear of self-centred actions. This again involves the absence of attachment and hatred. Desire is enemy number one of liberation (*moksha*). Desire binds one to the wheel of birth and death; it brings about endless worry and tribulations.

Through inquiry on these lines, knowledge is rendered clearer and brighter and liberation is achieved. *Moksha* is only another word for independence—for not depending on any outside thing or person.

If nicely controlled and trained, the mind can lead one on to *moksha*. It must be saturated with the thought of God; that will help the inquiry into the nature of Reality. The consciousness of the ego itself will fade away when the mind is free from pulls and when it is rendered pure. Not to be affected in any way by the world—that is the path to self-realisation; self-realisation cannot be obtained in Heaven (*Swarga*) or on Mount Kailas.

The flame of desire cannot be put out without the conquest of the mind. The mind cannot be overcome without stamping out the flames of desire. The mind is the seed; desire, the tree. Only knowledge of self-realisation (*Atma-jnana*) can uproot that tree. So, these three are interdependent: mind, desire, and knowledge of *Atma*.