

31. Calm the mind by steady, continuous discipline

The mind pursues only exterior objects either because of the pull of the senses or because of the delusion caused by superimposing the characteristics of permanence, etc., on the external world. So the mind has to be brought back to travel to the correct goal again and again.

At first the job is hard. Still, by proper training, all the agitations can be calmed by the prayerful repetition of *Om*. The training consists of controlling the mind by good counsel, superior attractions, withdrawal from sensory objects, ability to bear the ups and downs of fortune, steadfastness or faith, and poise or equanimity (*sama, dama, uparathi, thithiksha, sraddha, and sama-dhana*).

If, at first, the recalcitrant mind is shown the sweetness of devotional singing (*bhajan*), the efficacy of prayer, and the calming effects of meditation, then it can be slowly turned toward meditation of Brahman. It must also be led on by the cultivation of good habits, good company, and good deeds. Meditation will, as it proceeds further and further, give rise to greater and greater keenness. Thus, the mind has to be caged in the cave of the heart. The final result of this discipline is no less than undisturbed, undifferentiated equanimity (*nir-vikalpa-samadhi*).

This *samadhi* is, really speaking, knowledge of Brahman itself, the wisdom (*jnana*) that grants release, or *moksha*. The discipline for this consists of three exercises: the giving up of craving, the elimination of mind, and the understanding of the Reality. These three have to be cultivated uniformly and with equal ardour. Otherwise, success cannot be ensured; no one of them is enough. The instincts and impulses (*vasanas*) are too strong to yield easily; they make the senses active and greedy and bind the person tighter and tighter. So that the mind won't achieve mastery, attention has to be paid to the sublimation and subjugation of the senses and the promptings behind them, to the development of self-abnegation, and the relentless pursuit of reason and discrimination. When the mind is won, the dawn of wisdom (*jnana*) is heralded.

The aspirant (*sadhaka*) has to be ever-vigilant, for the senses might recoil any moment, especially when the *yogi* mixes with the world and worldly. The basic truth must be kept constantly before the mind's eye. Wants shouldn't be multiplied. Time shouldn't be frittered away, no, not even a minute. The craving for one pleasant thing will give rise to another craving for a still more pleasant thing. Cut at the very root of desire itself and become master of yourself. The renouncing of desire will take you fast to the pinnacle of spiritual wisdom.

Liberated people (*janis*) will be unaffected by joy or sorrow, for how can events produce reactions in them who have wiped out their minds? It is the mind that makes one "feel"; when one has taken a drug that deadens the consciousness, one feels no pain or even joy, for the body is then separated from the mind. So too, when it dawns, spiritual wisdom separates the mind and keeps it aloof from all contact.

By special discipline, the turbulence of the mind can be calmed. As a result of this, it becomes possible to taste the bliss of the *Atma*, free from its pulls. The mind attracts people outward and offers only external objective joy, but wise ones know these joys to be fleeting. The *Atma* is enough for them to fulfil all their desires for hap-

piness, complete and permanent. So, they will have no need for the external world.