

Chapter 5. Spiritual Wisdom and Devotion

Q. Swami, I have often heard people use the word *a-manaska*. What does it mean?

A. This entire creation, when it is realised as seen only by the eternal seer, the witness, simply disappears, as fog before the sun. That stage is known as *a-manaska*.

Q. What happens to the knowledge?

A. Even that disappears!

Q. This witness that you spoke of, where does it reside in the dream stage?

A. It is in the individual soul (*jiva*); it not only witnesses but also weaves and creates everything it sees.

Q. And during deep sleep?

A. It is in the full (the modification-less) reality.

Q. And, in the fourth stage (*thuriya*), the stage beyond deep sleep?

A. It is merged in the Changeless Entity (*Iswara-sthana*).

Q. What is meant by the term *parama-artha*?

A. *Parama-artha*, that is to say, beyond and above this world, which is limited by the body and senses.

Q. They talk also of *Parama-padha*. How will that be?

A. It will be devoid of name-form and deed-form.

Q. Swami! Does God transcend the universe, or is He immanent in the universe?

A. He fills the universe and is also beyond it, so there is no place outside Him. All places are inside Him; all names are His; no name is alien to Him.

Q. How is the Godhead who fills the universe to be referred to?

A. He can be called by many names: the Limitless Open, Supreme entity, the Highest Goal, the Bodyless, the Fullest Full, and also the Ungraspable-by-Word-or-Thought. He has many names. (He can be called *Parama-padha*, *Parama-artha*, *A-sarira*, *Pari-purna*, and also *Avaang-manogochara*.)

Q. Is this entity (*sat*) ancient or new?

A. Of course, it is ancient and not new.

Q. What is the ultimate goal of human life (*purusha-artha*)?

A. Why, freedom (*moksha*), of course.

Q. Swami, when talking of spiritual knowledge (*vidya*), I have heard people mention the four spiritual knowledges. What are they?

A. Metaphysics, the triple sacred science, vocational knowledge, and knowledge of administration of justice.

Q. These names are all new to me. What exactly is metaphysics?

A. The spiritual knowledge (*vidya*) by which one is able to discriminate between *Atma* and non-*Atma*.

Q. And the triple sacred science (*thrayee*)?

A. The spiritual knowledge by which one can attain heaven (*swarga*), through appropriate rituals and actions (*karma*).

Q. What does vocational knowledge teach?

A. Agriculture and other productive efforts.

Q. What is meant by administration of justice?

A. The rulers and guardians of society rule and guard according to this spiritual knowledge (*vidya*); it is essential for earning and enjoying riches and crops.

Q. Which of these plunge a person into a cycle of births?

A. All except the first, metaphysics.

Q. Mastery of the mind is held essential for spiritual victory. But to purge the mind of all evil, what virtues do we have to cultivate?

A. There are four chief virtues: comradeship, compassion, a kind of joy, and non-involvement (*maithri, karuna, muditha, upeksha*).

Q. Swami, I must trouble you to explain these also.

A. Comradeship and the company of the humble and the good, affection for the name and form of the Lord — these are included in *maithri*. Compassion is the kindness one feels toward the afflicted.

Q. What is the virtue that is a kind of joy?

A. That is the joy one feels when meeting people who are charitable, who serve others, who help those in distress, etc.

Q. Non-involvement?

A. Non-involvement is the feeling of unconcern toward the wicked; neither loving them nor hating them.

Q. Just like these four virtues, they also talk of four types of devotion. What are they, Swami?

A. My dear man, all the multifarious types can be included under four categories: the distressed, the desirer of wealth or power, the seeker of spiritual knowledge, and the wise one (*artha, artha-arthi, jijnasu, and jnani*).

The distressed is the person who is tormented by the agony of spiritual discontent and who prays to the Lord in distress.

Q. What does *artha-arthi* mean?

A. One who desires wealth or spiritual power (*artha*) and who worships God and prays to Him for that boon.

Q. *Jijnasu*, you said. Who are they?

A. Those who seek liberation steadily and strongly and who go in search of the Absolute.

Q. And the wise one?

A. One who has escaped from dual consciousness, who has known their identity with the basic truth of the universe.

Q. Tell us the names of some who have achieved fame through these types of devotion, Swami. Then it will become clearer to us.

A. Oh, there are plenty of names. Among the distressed devotees, I can tell you of Droupadi, Prahlada, and Sakkubai; among the seekers of wealth or power, Druva and Arjuna; among the seekers of spiritual wisdom, Udhava and Radha; and among the wise, Suka and Sanaka.