

### **34. Discrimination and detachment**

DISCRIMINATION and detachment are the first and the second steps that man has to take in order to reach the eternal *Aathmic* (spiritual) truth. The mind can be steadied only by the mastery of desire, the quality of unwavering detachment. Once the mind is still, peace reigns and bliss prevails. Detachment or the giving up of the tendency to pursue whatever attracts the mind, is often misconstrued as asceticism which renounces social and family life and escapes into the loneliness of the forest. But, it involves, more than anything else, awareness of the basic blemish in all material things. Without this inquiry and this discovery all claims for detachment or renunciation are slippery. No one can have real detachment in their absence. The sense of dislike that results from 'the recognition of the temporariness and triviality of pleasure is best called 'practical detachment.'

Detachment from the objective world that springs from the realisation of the Divine that is one's core can alone be the unshakable victory. Imagine the senses running after joy derivable from the outer world and the person giving up a few gains. This cannot be recognised as *vairaagya* (detachment). The longing for the experience of sound, touch, sight, taste and smell for which the senses strive has to be turned inwards. Along with this, the innate fault inherent in every object has to be recognised and remembered.

#### **Pleasures that entice man are momentary**

The giving up of external struggle is not enough, nor is it a great achievement. The real struggle is internal---the withdrawal of the extrovert senses into the mind and making them ineffective through the exercise of the intellect or discrimination. Investigate each material object that entices the senses by beauty, fragrance, sweetness and softness. Realise that these are all momentary, depending on your mental condition, physical health and emotional balance. Man is enamoured of flitting phenomena; he accepts them as valid and valuable. He is entangled in these unrealities and he strays far away from the path of liberation. Really this is not man's goal.

When we are drawn towards some source of pleasure, we have to examine it carefully and analyse the pleasure that it promises to give. Imagine that you have longed to eat a particular sweet dish. You have cooked and served on your plate. You are anticipating all the while the relish it can confer. But while about to place it on the tongue, the cook rushes in and informs you that a lizard had fallen into the vessel in which it was cooked, and so, your favourite dish was fouled and poisoned. This creates disgust and your attachment disappears.

#### **Every source of pleasure has its limitations**

So too, when you examine the quality of the pleasure you hope to derive or the fame you toil to earn, you will certainly blame-yourselves for being so serious about them. It may be asked: We build a house for us to live in; is that not a source of joy? We listen to fine music; is that not a source of joy? Does it not fill the heart with tenderness? In the same manner, are not these worldly pleasures real? Consider for a moment, whether even fine music will give uniform joy, if listened to, continuously, for hours! Even the heavenly musicians, Naaradha and Thumburu, will tire a listener if they hold forth for too long, however mellifluent their voice. Sweetness too is bound to be disgusting after some mouthfuls. After the limit is reached, every additional mouthful gives less and less pleasure, until disgust intervenes.

The classical poet-philosopher Bharthrihari asks, "How can medicine, resorted to for the sake of curing an illness, be deemed a luxury, a desirable pleasure?" Hunger is a disease. Food is the medicine that cures the disease. That is the plain fact but no one recognises it and behaves accordingly! They have made it a costly ritual, 'a futile feast, a fertile source of further diseases! For, they cater to the whims and fancies of the tongue and behave like slaves of the senses.

The king was hunting in the depths of a forest from dawn until early afternoon. He was afflicted by intense thirst. At last, he found a hermitage where he took refuge. The inmates gave him cool clear water to drink. That was the medicine which he needed most. It made him fresh and fine. If the drink intoxicates him, robs him of reason and degrades his personality it causes many other diseases. Discrimination will reveal the dangers lurking in becoming a bond-slave of the senses.

### **Born as humans, men grow as beasts**

Born as humans, bred among humans and by humans, men grow as wild beasts. Talking of peace among men and nations, they prepare for war and revel in battles. Though human in outer form, they relish demonic hatred in their hearts. Such hypocrites do not deserve your trust. Their speech is sweet, but their hearts are bitter. They declare something as their goal, but they persist in proceeding in the opposite direction.

God has endowed man with intelligence and the faculty of discrimination, so that he can save himself from this falsehood, and visualise the Divine. But instead of *dheva* (God) being the target of activity, *dheha* (the body) has monopolised the attention of man. Instead of understanding oneself through the proper use of this endowment, each one is engrossed in misunderstanding others through the perverted use of intelligence and discriminative skills.

The mirror gifted to you with the injunction, 'Son! Use this to see thyself' is being held only before others. *Buddhi* (intellect) is best used as an instrument for self-realisation. It is nearest to the *Aathma* in man, but when it is ever busy seeking faults in others, it gets polluted in the process and loses the power of reflecting the majesty, the splendour and the glory of the *Aathman* which can illumine it. Now, the advantage of the adjacence is lost and *Buddhi* strays far into the world in search of objective pleasure, and sensory satisfactions.

If the *summum bonum* of living is the satisfaction of the senses, the birds and beasts with far less intelligence and much poorer discrimination are equally successful as man, if not more. No! Human intelligence has a nobler and higher purpose--the realisation of the eternal truth, behind all these apparent formations and transformations. The saintly guides of mankind have stressed the special excellence of man's *buddhi*. They have said that along with humans, all other living beings have the need for food, the yearning for sleep, the protective impulse of fear and the instinctive urge of sex. But, they point out to the unique gift that man treasures, *Jnaana* (integral wisdom). They declare that the person who does not *seek jnaana* but live as the senses direct, is, in truth a veritable beast.

### **Avoiding duty to *Aathma* is sheer cowardice**

When man is entangled until the moment of death in stilling the clamour of the senses and catering to the needs of this illusory world, how can he thrill with ecstasy of the awareness of his own *Aathmic* core? From the monarch in the palace to the beggar in the streets, all are caught up in the game of extracting pleasure from the outer world. The illiterate man and the scholar are equally busy in the pursuit of this mirage. So, what are we to say of the superior capacities of

scholarship? Earning money, guarding the earned money, increasing it by the surest and the safest methods--thus the struggle goes on---plus, plus, plus! The bondage to worldly things tightens faster and faster. No one pauses to enquire how deep and how real is the joy that these earnings can give. And what of the 'fashions' that he enslaves himself to? They justify these aberrations as 'social obligation' and 'duty.'

But, have people no duty towards the *Aathma*? Have they no obligation to recognise the *Aathma*? Should they not bind themselves fast to the *Aathma* which is the Reality? It is sheer cowardice to avoid this duty, to ignore this obligation, and to escape from this bondage. Of course, you have to live on the earth and understand it. You have to study the Universe and derive joy therefrom. But, to believe that it is the be-all and end-all of life is a sign of insanity.

### **Avoid evil thoughts and evil habits**

You have been attending such discourses since years and undergoing these journeys to Swaami's Presence often and often. And you have listened to the lessons I am giving. Let Me ask you--- what is the gain you have garnered? How near are you to the goal? Which obstacle have you overcome? If you have not reached the higher stage, what have you profited from the *saadhana*? How can you justify the label, 'devotee' which you have adopted for yourselves?

No. You must progress towards the goal step by step; you have to uproot evil thoughts, evil habits and evil designs from within you. Repeating 'God!' 'God' 'God,' you are now only straying away into ungodly realms.

Analyse every object and discover the cheapness and hollowness of each. Then, genuine *vairagya* (detachment) will be planted in your heart. So, utilise the priceless weapon, the perfect mirror, that God has given you---the *buddhi* (intellect), for the journey to God. An old adage announces that "*Buddhi* is shaped by one's actions"---*Buddhih karma anusaarinee*. But this is not quite correct. The mind prompts the sense for action. It has the *buddhi* on one side and the senses on the other and is drawn by both into action. When the *manas* (mind) leans towards the senses, and activates them, bondage results; if it leans towards the intelligence (which is illumined by the *Aathma*), liberation results. Sometimes, the *buddhi* is enticed by the fake delight that the mind revels in, through the senses. *Saadhana* has to be used at this moment to turn it away from serfdom to the mind. It must be restored to its status of regulator and controller of the vagaries of the mind.

### ***Man is riding two horses, World and God***

This flower is beautiful; it gives exciting, enchanting fragrance, declare the eye and the nose. The wise man will not be content with the sense-impression. He resorts to *buddhi* and wants it discover---how long? how much? The answer is---until nightfall, till the new day dawns. Therefore he concludes true beauty, true fragrance can be derived only from God, not from created things and components, not from the moving and changing, the emerging and merging, the appearing, attracting and disappearing entities of the world.

What, then, is Truth---the witness of all these processes and changes, the See-er of all that is seen, the ONE that has no second, unaffected by time and space. Man is now riding two horses--the world and God, the Universal and the Particular, the Absolute and the Relative, the Eternal and the Time-bound, the Reality and the Appearance. He is therefore riding for a fall.

*Saadhana* alone can help man to choose the right path and pursue it relentlessly. Every religion in every era and clime emphasises the ONE and marks out the path to reach it. They warn us against too much attachment to the world, which is basically poisonous.

You may drink it with delight but that will not mitigate its evil effects. You may drink the *Aathmic* Ambrosia weeping and wailing but it will confer immortality nevertheless! So keep away from worldly enticements and turn your eye inwards to visualise the *Aathma*.

### **Detachment alone can make the path clean**

The *Anthah-karana* (inner consciousness) has four instruments that prompt man. Of these, *buddhi* is two-faced; it draws light from the *Aathma* to which it is closest; it illumines with that light, the mind and the senses. It regulates the passions and emotions, the impulses and instinctive reactions. Some perverse minds confront with questions, like, "Is it not ensuring the safety and happiness of our wives and children our duty? How can you declare that it is not desirable? Yes. But remember the prime purpose of the education, you earn in this life, is to concentrate on your *Aathmic* Truth. Do not be diverted from this fundamental duty. Other activities must smoothen and straighten this path. They must be contributory *saadhanas* (spiritual disciplines) for this basic purpose of man.

*Saadhakas* (Spiritual aspirants)! Embodiments of Love! Yearn always to be as close to your Divine Core as possible. You need not desert your family and run away into loneliness. You have only to keep in mind the comparative triviality of the world. Death stalks every living being; disintegration waits on all created things. From a world so transient, so uncertain and unstable, one has to win the goal of eternal peace and eternal bliss. The eternal *Aathma* is associated with the ephemeral body! Discrimination alone can make this plain. Detachment alone can make the road clear.

*Dhashara Discourse, 26-9-1979*

*Dharma guards those that guard dharma. Dharma means certain" obligations and duties and regulations over actions, words and behaviour."*

*Elders have certain obligations towards younger people as young men have towards elders; neighbours have mutual duties and rights. Even war has to be carried on, under some rules of decency and humanity.*

*The mighty should not grab the possessions of the weak; the pledged word has to be honoured. If India sticks to these principles of dharma, that dharma alone will serve as effective armour against all the foes.*

*Sri Sathya Sai*