

CHAPTER VI

OBSTACLES TO MOKSHA

- Q. Even those who proceed along the path of spiritual progress towards the goal of Moksha have, it seems, big obstacles, Swami.
- A. Yes, the past, the present and the future obstacles.
- Q. What are they? What is the obstacle from the past?
- A. Recollecting and remembering the past and getting affected by it.
- Q. And the obstacle from the present?
- A. That itself operates in four ways! *Vishaya Aasakthi*, (attending more to the peculiarities of textual criticism than the sense of the teaching), *Prajnaamandyam* (dullness of the intellect which prevents one from

grasping the words of the elders and of the wise), *Kutharka* (crookedness) and *Viprayayaduraagraha* (justifying one's own statement as correct, through an exaggerated conceit).

- Q. What is the nature of the obstacle from the future?
- A. The future creates obstacles since you anticipate troubles and worry about them even before they come.
- Q. I have heard people speak of four types of beings, but I am not quite clear what they are.
- A. *Andaja*, *Swedaja*, *Udbija* and *Jarayuja*.
- Q. What do these words mean?
- A. *Andaja* means egg-born; *Swedaja*, sweat-born; *Udbija*, earth-born and *Jarayuja*, mammals. Birds are good examples of the first group; lice, etc. of the second; ants, plants and trees of the third; and men, cattle, etc. of the fourth.
- Q. Well, Swami! Among these who are theists and who adore God, are there special types?
- A. Of course! There are four types among them too.
- Q. Their names?
- A. *Dwijas*, *Munis*, *Alpabuddhis* and *Vidithatmas*: the Twice-born, and Ascetics, the Dull-witted, and the

Knowers of the Atma.

- Q. Why are they called so? What is the special feature of each type?
- A. The twice-born recognise God as in the Fire they revere, and with that conviction they worship Him.
- Q. The Munis?
- A. They recognise God in their hearts.
- Q. What about the Dull-witted?
- A. They require images, pictures or some other visible representation of His Beauty and Glory. They worship such.
- Q. And the knowers of the Atma?
- A. They recognise God as immanent in the Universe and see only Him wherever they turn.
- Q. May I ask who among these are the greatest?
- A. Each is great in the stage he may have reached; but naturally, those who can experience the Lord everywhere at all times are the greatest.
- Q. Swami! What are the traits of character that we have to avoid, that is to say, which are the obstacles in the path of one who seeks Liberation from the cycle of Birth and Death?

- A. The six, the *Arishadvarga*: Kama, Krodha, Lobha, Moha, Mada and Maathsarya; these are to be avoided.
- Q. What exactly is Kama?
- A. Desire for riches, property, honour, status, fame, children; why list the lot? Attachment to all things of this sensory world, this false, temporary, impure world.
- Q. Krodha?
- A. Yearning to harm others and causing ruin to them.
- Q. And Lobha?
- A. Determination that no one else should partake of even a small fraction of what one has earned or what one has; also, that even in times of distress, one's possessions should not be diminished by use.
- Q. What is the meaning of Moha?
- A. The delusion that some people are nearer to one than others and the desire to please them more than others, leading to exertions for earning and accumulating for their sake.
- Q. Mada?
- A. Mada means the swagger that develops when one feels that he has either scholarship or strength or riches or fame, more than others. Even when one has not got these, Mada makes men move about without reverence

- for elders and consideration for others' feelings and craving only for one's own comfort and security. Mada is extreme egoism.
- Q. The last that you mentioned is Maathsarya. What does that mean, Swami?
- A. When others are as happy as yourself, Maathsarya makes one miserable; one cannot tolerate it.
- Q. There are certain other traits too called *Dambha* and *Darpa*. What do they indicate?
- A. *Dambha* prompts people to do *Yaga* (sacrifices) and *Yajna*, to give away vast sums in charity, in order to win the applause of the world. *Darpa* is the pride that haunts man when he is rich and happy.
- Q. What is the meaning of *Eershya*?
- A. The desire that others should get the grief, the misery and the worry, which one is suffering from.
- Q. So, it is different from *Asuya*?
- A. Yes. *Asuya* means thinking always of doing evil to others; the preparedness to put up with any trouble in order to satisfy this desire to harm others. All these are called Inner Foes. So long as man is caught in this net of delusion spread by these Foes, the yearning for liberation will not dawn in his mind.