

## Inquire, discriminate, detach

Every aspirant must enter onto the path of inquiry. Only then can the conviction dawn and grow that nature and all learning connected with nature are unreal; only then will these be given a relative, not an absolute value. They are, of course, to be learned and experienced as necessary for existence, as a kind of daily routine. However, they should not be mistaken to be the highest knowledge, the unchanging eternal truth. That mistake, if committed, leads to an agitated mind (*a-santhi*). Agitation produces worry and anxiety, which in turn destroy peace.

If you aspire to peace, equanimity, the basic thing is to have faith in the temporary nature of Nature and be engaged in the uninterrupted contemplation of the changeless Godhead.

Therefore, do not be bound by selfish attachments. Engage yourself in the discharge of your duties. Do not allow yourself to be gladdened by success or saddened by failure. Be ready to renounce all that is harmful. Then, through discrimination, you can beat the drum of victory! Great declarations like these reveal the highest truth and the glory of the Godhead.

If the two paths of spiritual wisdom (*jnana*) and devotion (*bhakti*) are compared, it can be said that the Lord's grace is won more easily by devotion than by the other path. In the discipline of devotion, there is the need to grasp the reality and its inner meaning fully and clearly. For this, the objective world is itself the proof and argument, the effort and means. To know this, spiritual inquiry has to be pursued; such an inquiry will grant unshakeable peace. Only inquiry can reveal the truth behind all the objective world. It is your experience, isn't it, that when you do some task carefully for a long time, correcting your mistakes as and when you discover them and avoiding their repetition while continuing with the task, you invariably achieve even more success than you hoped to get? What is wanted is just the unflagging desire to achieve victory. That will lead you to discover the means thereof, to develop earnestness and care in the pursuit of those means, and to get success. The wish must be strengthened by the will, and the will by the effort.

Well, take the example of people anxious to become stronger. If the wish is powerful, they will first learn the means of realizing this aim —the exercise, the diet, the disciplines, etc. Then, when they practise them, the will is changed to steadiness in effort. But one important thing must be noted. There are many who say that the absence of wish and will is best. This is not as good as having one wish above all others, or, rather, “one wish” and one alone, to the exclusion of all else. Even more superior is having steadiness of effort in realizing that one wish. For one can then promote not only one's own good but even the world's good. Let your wish and will and effort be directed to your own good; do not divert them to worldly pleasures, for that will cause harm and destroy peace.