

Chapter 8. Yoga and Freedom

Q. We commit many sins and do many meritorious deeds with this body and mind, Swami! They bring about grief or joy. This “I” of which you are speaking, is it “I” the doer, the consumer of the grief or joy?

A. Not for a moment. The one who does is the doer; doing is a modification. Doing produces a modification, doesn’t it? So, one appears as if one is modifying. But the “I” is modificationless. It is the fixed; so it is not affected at all. Doer-ism is the quality of the inner psychosomatic instruments (*anthah-karana*). Thus, the “I” takes on the appearance of the doer and the gainer of the fruits of the deed.

Q. If so, how can we know about entry into this world and exit from this world into another?

A. The inner instrument, the subtle body (*linga-deha*), moves from this world to another, from one birth to another, according to the accumulated merit. It is the limited subtle body that has entries and exits. You, who are like the sky, omnipresent and unaffected, have no arrival into this world or departure to another. You are not of that nature.

Q. Then what is the means of gaining freedom (*moksha*)?

A. Spiritual knowledge (*vijnana*) is the means.

Q. Some great people say that *yoga* is the means. Is that true?

A. That is also true. There can be two roads to a place, can’t there?

Q. Which is the better road?

A. Both are good and important. Both take you to the same goal; you just can’t travel on both at the same time. People can choose the road that suits their inner promptings and do the spiritual disciplines of that path. Both release spiritual seekers from bondage.

Q. Swami! Is spiritual wisdom (*jnana*) acquired by *yoga* or is *yoga* acquired by spiritual wisdom?

A. *Yoga* gives spiritual wisdom, which confers freedom (*moksha*) easily. This is the correct position.

Q. What is the effect of *yoga*? How does it benefit?

A. *Yoga* is like fire, which is why the phrase “fire of *yoga* (*yoga-agni*)” is used. It burns away all sins, so the inner instrument (*anthah-karana*) is rendered pure. When that happens, spiritual wisdom is born there. The splendour of that spiritual wisdom dispels the darkness of ignorance and delusion; that is the liberation.

Q. Does *yoga* have so much potentiality?

A. Why ask if it has? It has. However learned people are, however great the detachment, however deep the wisdom, unless they conquer the senses they cannot qualify for liberation (*moksha*). Without *yoga*, all these cannot rid themselves of sin. Unless they clear themselves of sin, their inner instrument doesn’t become pure. Without a pure inner instrument, spiritual wisdom (*jnana*) cannot be acquired, and without spiritual wisdom, there can be no liberation. So, *yoga* is the very foundation.

Q. This is rather hard to follow, Swami! Give me some illustration to make it simpler, even for the unlearned.

A. When a storm is blowing, can anyone light a lamp? So too, when sensual desires are blowing strong, the wisdom-lamp can’t burn; it will go out soon, even if it is lit.

Q. What are the gains from *yoga*?

A. It destroys all impulses and urges toward the sensual world. It puts down the mind and its agitations.