

Verses for Introspection

Mā Gurupriyā

e-Series
No 10



Inadvertence – the cause of Calamitous Downfall

लक्ष्यच्युतं चेद्यदि चित्तमीषद्-
बहिर्मुखं सन्निपतेत्ततस्ततः ।
प्रमादतः प्रच्युतकेलिकन्दुकः
सोपानपंक्तौ पतितो यथा तथा ॥

lakṣyacyutaṃ ced-yadi cittam-īṣad-
bahirmukhaṃ sannipatet-tatastataḥ ।
pramādataḥ pracyuta-kelikandukaḥ
sopānapaṅktau patito yathā tathā ॥

Vivekacūḍāmaṇi 325

If the mind, which is outgoing by nature, strays away from the ideal (within) even slightly, it goes from object to object uncontrolled, like a ball dropped inadvertently on the staircase going down from one step to another.



Narayanaashrama Tapovanam

Points for Introspection

What is the supreme aim in human life? It is to realize one's own Self, and to understand Its identity with Brahman, the Ultimate Truth. To go beyond happiness and unhappiness, and enjoy supreme bliss in this life itself, the seeker must have the goal of realizing the Self. One may be active in the world, discharge his duties with sincerity and dedication, but he should always remember that the supreme purpose of human life is to know the Self; it is not to acquire material wealth or increase one's possessions. Throughout the day, in thoughts, words and actions, the seeker must remain focused on the Self – the Eternal Presence. During the wakeful hours, through all his activities the seeker should strengthen this knowledge and experience. He should not allow distractional thoughts, which take the mind away from the eternal Self. It is very natural that the mind, which is restless, will bring about worldly thoughts. But a true seeker should be ever vigilant not to go behind those thoughts. That is why he should keep the spiritual aim constantly burning in his mind.

Whenever the mind shifts from the aim and goes to worldly matters, the seeker should bring back the mind to rumination of the Self. If the mind is allowed to stray away from the aim even for a moment, then it will go from one worldly thought to another, and ultimately will be completely distracted and trapped by various desires.

In this śloka, the example given is that of a ball. Imagine a boy, standing at the top of a staircase, holding his cherished ball securely. If by carelessness the grip is loosened, the ball will fall from the hand. Once it falls on one step, it will keep dropping down from one step to another, and finally may even go out of sight.

The mind also is like that. The seeker's mind should constantly hold on to the goal, the Self. If by inattention, the mind indulges in some desires even for a moment, it strays away from the Self, and goes from one worldly thought to another, getting scattered in the process. So, a seeker must be ever vigilant, not to allow the mind to lose the intensity of seeking and fall from the goal.

This śloka when chanted repeatedly brings to focus how intense, sincere and vigilant a seeker should be in his seeking.

Word Meaning

लक्ष्यच्युतं (lakṣyacyutaṃ) = deviated from the goal (of Truth); चेत् यदि (cet yadi) = if it happens; चित्तं (cittaṃ) = mind; ईषत् (īṣat) = slightly, a little; बहिर्मुखं (bahirmukhaṃ) = outgoing; सन्नपतेत् (sannipatet) = surely falls; ततस्ततः (tatastataḥ) = hither and thither; प्रमादतः (pramādataḥ) = out of inattention; प्रच्युत-केलि-कन्दुकः (pracyuta-kelikandukaḥ) = fallen play-ball; सोपानपङ्क्तौ (sopāna-paṅktau) = on the staircase; पतितः (patitaḥ) = fallen; यथा (yathā) = as; तथा (tathā) = in the same manner.

अन्वयः - (Prose order)

यथा सोपानपङ्क्तौ प्रमादतः पतितः प्रच्युत-केलि-कन्दुकः (ततः ततः सन्निपतेत्), तथा चित्तं बहिर्मुखं (भूत्वा) यदि ईषत् लक्ष्यच्युतं चेत् ततः ततः सन्निपतेत्।

yathā sopāna-panktau pramādataḥ patitaḥ pracyuta-keli-kandukaḥ (tataḥ tataḥ sannipatet) tathā cittaṁ bahir-mukhaṁ (bhūtvā) yadi īṣat lakṣya-cyutaṁ cet tataḥ tataḥ sannipatet.