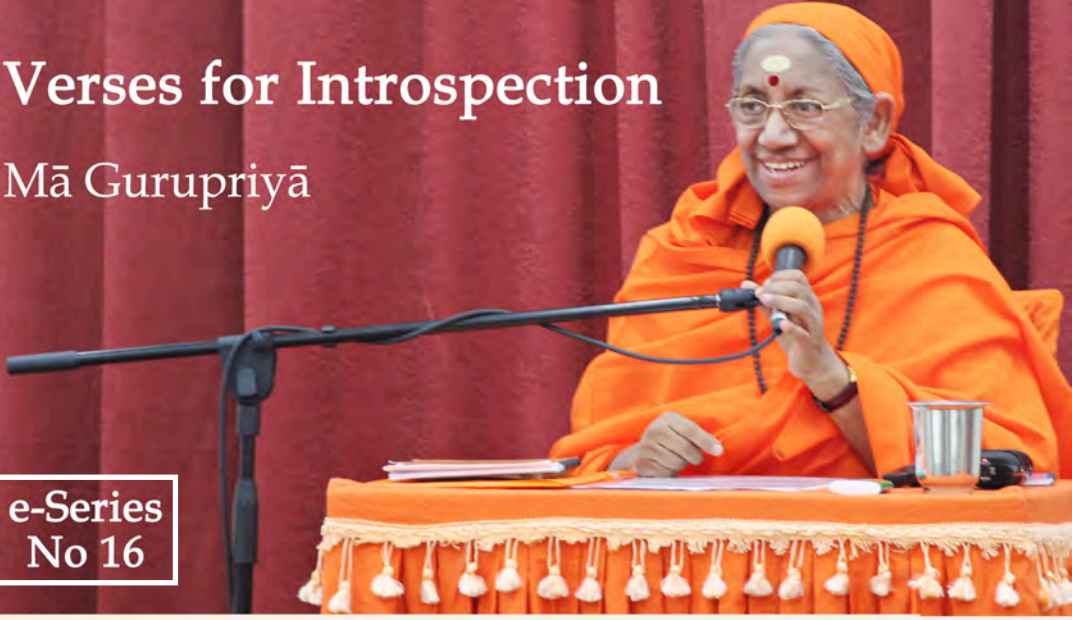


Verses for Introspection

Mā Gurupriyā

e-Series
No 16



Bondage and Liberation

बन्धो हि वासनाबन्धो मोक्षः स्यात् वासनाक्षयः ।
वासनां त्वं परित्यज्य मोक्षार्थित्वमपि त्यज ॥

bandho hi vāsanā-bandho
mokṣaḥ syāt vāsanā-kṣayaḥ ।
vāsanāṃ tvam parityajya
mokṣārthitvam-api tyaja ॥

laghu-yoga-vāsiṣṭha 4.5.20

Desires of the mind are the real bondage. Liberation indeed consists in the attenuation of desires. Having abandoned all desires, cast aside also the yearning for liberation.

Points for Introspection

Desires cause bondage. The mind always runs after objects of desire. Thoughts revolve around getting the desires fulfilled. Consequently, our mind becomes a victim of fear and anxiety. We are afraid of



Narayanashrama Tapovanam

not getting what we desire, or facing what we do not desire. When we find that desires are not fulfilled, we become disappointed, dissatisfied and aggrieved.

This fear and anxiety revolves around strong likes and dislikes. They make the mind constricted and centred on oneself. Consequently one feels bound, constricted and narrow.

Rarely, some seek liberation from this bondage and constrictions. Liberation is the state beyond likes and dislikes, attaining which one feels total freedom and supreme unending Bliss. In the state of liberation, the mind becomes space-like, impersonal and universal. This is the state where one realizes or identifies with the pure Self – ever-present, ever-free, and ever-blissful.

This Self does not get revealed to a seeker when the seeker's mind is impure with desires. These desires are the product of our mistaken identity with the body-mind-intelligence complex. We consider the unlimited Self to be limited by the body. The Self that is ever pure, gets veiled by the impurities of the mind – by its desires, by its likes and dislikes. In pure clean water, we can see our face clearly. The same face does not get revealed when the water becomes muddy. Similarly, when the mind is not totally clear of impurities, the Self is not revealed to the seeker.

Moksha or liberation from all bondages is had when the ever-present Self is realized. This happens when the mind transcends all likes and dislikes. So, to attain moksha or liberation one must sublimate or annihilate desires that generate agitations in the mind.

How to sublimate the desires? By applying viveka (discrimination) we should see that these worldly

desires born out of 'I'-ness and 'mine'-ness hinder our progress towards the supreme auspicious goal of realizing the Self. By repeated application of viveka, we have to get rid of worldly desires, and develop instead, the higher auspicious desire of realizing the Self, realizing which one attains supreme Bliss. This is termed as 'mokshārthitvam' or 'mumukshutvam' – i.e., desire to realize the Self or desire to attain liberation from all bondages.

When one has got rid of all worldly desires, his mind still remains bound by the desire for liberation. This final desire, although a higher and auspicious one, makes the mind of the seeker increasingly restless and agitated. Unfortunately, because of this strong desire to realize the Self, the seeker, rather than focusing on the Self focuses more on 'not having realized the Self'. The feeling of failure brings in agitation and disappointment.

That is why in this śloka, Sage Vasiṣṭha tells Sri Rama that having removed all worldly desires by cultivating desire for liberation, one must finally drop the desire for liberation also. That desire, though a higher one is still a desire and acts as an obstacle. When desire for liberation is also dropped, the mind becomes pure and transparent. In that mind alone, the Self, which is unconditioned and limitless, gets revealed without any attribute.

Chanting this śloka and ruminating on the meaning, we realize how desires hinder our spiritual progress towards the auspicious goal. Repeated chanting gives us a deep insight into what it means to be desireless.

Word Meaning

बन्धः (bandhaḥ) = bondage; हि (hi) = indeed; वासनाबन्धः (vāsanā-bandhaḥ) = the bondage by desires; मोक्षः (mokṣaḥ) = liberation; स्यात् (syāt) = is verily; वासनाक्षयः (vāsanākṣayaḥ) = attenuation of desires; वासनां (vāsanām) = desires, expectations; त्वं (tvam) = you; परित्यज्य (parityajya) = after abandoning; मोक्षार्थित्वं (mokṣārthitvam) = desire or wish for liberation; अपि (api) = also; त्यज (tyaja) = abandon, cast aside.

अन्वयः - (Prose order)

वासनाबन्धः बन्धः हि । वासनाक्षयः मोक्षः स्यात् । त्वं वासनां परित्यज्य मोक्षार्थित्वं अपि त्यज ॥

vāsanābandhaḥ bandhaḥ hi. vāsanākṣayaḥ mokṣaḥ syāt. tvam vāsanām parityajya mokṣārthitvam-api tyaja.