

Kaivalyopaniṣad
Swami Viditatmananda Saraswati's transcribed talk

This is the eleventh part of the serial article, continuation from March 2022 newsletter.

***Bhakti*, the commitment to knowledge**

The second quality necessary to gain the knowledge is *bhakti*. It means having *tatparatā*, commitment. Actually, *śraddhā* leads to *tatparatā* in that we begin to wholeheartedly apply ourselves to the pursuit of knowledge. At any moment we are devoted to that which at that moment is most important to us. Therefore, as we discussed earlier, when we discover a value for this knowledge upon recognizing that every sorrow and every problem is a result of our own ignorance, our commitment to the pursuit of the knowledge becomes natural and abiding.

It should become clear that ignorance and its consequent misconceptions are the only reasons for all sorrow. “But Swamiji, how can you say that? Look at this person. See how he behaves? How can I not be upset by that behavior? Is it right to say that my ignorance is the cause of my getting upset?” Well, the world is what it is, and one cannot become sad or unhappy unless one cooperates with the world. Whenever we feel sad, we can ask ourselves in what way we may be cooperating, even given that the other person did what he did. “But Swamiji, what about his hurting words and insulting behavior?” Now the question is whether or not we should internalize that or identify with that. Someone may say, “You are stupid.” As long as we leave it where it is, as long as we do not identify with his opinion, it will not bother us. Yet what is it that really happens when a person tells us that we are stupid? When that is said, a chord within us is touched because a part of us feels that we are stupid. In short, people are able to push buttons and provoke those aspects in us that we are ourselves not willing to confront. This should become very clear to the students of Vedānta.

Most battles are won when it becomes clear that the only problem in life that causes unhappiness and sorrow is ignorance. There is no other cause. It is igno-

rance that causes identification with the body that one is not, and, therefore, we take ourselves to be mortal and fear death. Ignorance causes identification with the mind, and, therefore we suffer from the sense of smallness. Like a wave suffering from a sense of distance from all other waves and water and feeling isolated, we feel a sense of separation and isolation from the world. Even though this is not the reality about us, this happens because we take this body-mind complex to be ourselves: We take ourselves to be doers, we take ourselves to be experiencers, and we take ourselves to be subject to birth and death. All of these are wrong notions, which will go only in the wake of the knowledge of the true nature of oneself. Our unhappiness is the result of our individual notions, complexes, and self judgments, all of which are entirely born of ignorance.

The world acts as a trigger in pushing the 'trigger buttons' in each of us, provoking us and causing various complexes to surface. I would even say that the world is doing us a favor in putting us in situations where we are required to confront the real issues and see the truth about ourselves. Whenever we see ourselves as limited, we become unhappy; therefore, the only cause of unhappiness is that we look upon ourselves as limited, inadequate, wanting or desiring beings. All that the world can do is push the trigger-buttons and bring to the surface the wanting, desiring, inadequate, and lacking being. It is the lack of discrimination that makes us attribute any unhappiness to some situation or person, who pushed the trigger buttons. When the true cause of unhappiness becomes clear, *vairāgya* or objectivity arises; then we don't blame anybody.

To be continued...

“There are two types of problems in life; one is a problem for which the solution lies outside the problem; the other is a problem for which the solution is within the very problem. If the solution is contained in the problem and it is still a “problem,” the problem is purely due to ignorance. The problem is caused by the ignorance of a fact and therefore we have a problem instead of a fact. The knowledge of the fact alone solves such a problem.”

- Swami Dayananda Saraswati