



Purushartha And Self-Control

Blessed Atman! Radiant souls eagerly yearning and longing for liberation from all limitations, all vexing bonds that hold you down to a gross earth consciousness, which is not your true state. You are all *mumukshus* longing for Liberation, engaged in yoga practices and spiritual living, who are lovers of God and righteousness.

The ancient, illumined seers and sages have declared that your supreme goal of life, the purpose of your existence is to obtain Liberation, *Moksha*. And to attain it, you have to do *purushartha*, you have to exert, you have to be up and doing, you have to make necessary effort. They have linked that supreme attainment, by which alone your life becomes fruitful and fulfilled, to exertion. You must exert, you must do *purushartha*. If exertion, *abhyasa*, *sadhana* are the means for attaining that supreme State, we must do the needful. The scriptures and the teachings of the saints and sages describe how you can do it through various methods and through combinations of all of them. But they all say that YOU must do it, you can attain It only by your exertion.

There is butter inside milk, but unless you put forth the necessary effort and churn it, the butter will never be obtained. It is only when you make necessary exertion that it comes out. That is the admonition. You must do *purushartha* and *abhyasa*; at the same time you must refrain from doing that which is inimical or adverse to the success of your activity. You cannot treat yourself for diabetes and at the same time go on stuffing yourself with sweets. That will nullify whatever effort you are doing on the positive side.

Some of our ancients, filled with a desire to become perfected divine beings, practised severe austerities. If such people could have a spiritual downfall when a temptation suddenly arose, then how do you expect people living lives of sense-satisfaction, desire-fulfilment, comfort and convenience, not to have a downfall? Simultaneous with one's effort and exertion, one's *purushartha*, *abhyasa* and *sadhana* for the attainment of Liberation, one should at the same time, also practise self-restraint, self-control and moderation. That is what the scriptures tell us. They speak of dos and don'ts. Patanjali starts with that. He gives us *yamas* and *niyamas*: *Ahimsa*, do not hurt anyone; *Brahmacharya*, do not indulge in gross lower propensities, rise high into *Sattva*; *Satyam*, speak the truth, do not speak falsehood.

May God Bless You All!

■ *Swami Chidananda*

"Be rooted in absolute truthfulness, even at the cost of your life, with absolute honesty and integrity: for Truth is God. One who is established in Truth can attain God"