



The Process of Vichara

You are surrounded by external objects, and each external object has got its own attraction for your mind due to long association. This attraction starts pulling you out. The fascination of *nama-rupa* to the *chitta* is part of the function of *Prakriti, Maya*. And *Maya* is full of power of tremendous attraction to delude the *jiva*.

In the Katha Upanishad, this deplorable state of man is clearly mentioned. *Yama* tries to make *Nachiketa* understand that *Brahmaa*, the Creator, made the mind outgoing by its very innate tendencies, because of *rajoguna*. Therefore the *jivatma* beholds only the outer universe and not the inner self. And beholding only the outer universe, the *jivatma* is subject to change, decay, modification and destruction. He finds no happiness. Once a person recognises the cause of one's suffering and weeping, of disappointment and frustration, he is disillusioned, and makes up his mind. He says: "No, no. Happiness does not lie outside. I have made a great blunder. I shall reverse this state of affairs." Thus making a *sankalpa* and determination, he tries to reverse this process by making the mind to go inward by closing the doors of senses, and he aspires to find true happiness. Real happiness is found in the *Atman* and not in the outer world of change, modification and decay. This is *vichara* – the process of philosophical enquiry. He turns the gaze inward. This is *pratyahara* – turning away the gaze from the external and directing it towards the inner self.

You have to make the process of philosophical enquiry constantly active. You must reason thus: "This object is attracting me, my mind is being pulled towards it. Is it going to bring my welfare? Is it going to be conducive to my peace of mind? Will I get real happiness out of it?" If you make this right enquiry into the real nature of the so-called sensual enjoyment, it will tell you that this is not enjoyment, but this is suffering. If you go towards enjoyment, you become enslaved by it, addicted by it. If you do not find it, you suffer. Lord Krishna Himself says, "*Ye Hi Samsparsha-Ja Bhoga Duhkha-Yonaya Eva Te* – What you think to be enjoyment is actually suffering." [Gita 5.22] Misery is mistaken for happiness, pain is mistaken for pleasure. By satisfying your desire, you intensify it, and it becomes a source of great agitation and mental restlessness. "*Ashantasya Kutah Sukham* – To the man who has no peace, how can there be happiness?" [Gita 2.66] Repent, open your eyes, and try to correct yourself. Be wise. Awake, arise.

May God Bless You All!

■ *Swami Chidananda*