

16 FREEDOM AND MUKTI SALVATION

1. The mind cannot be easily conquered. Minds that rise into waves at the approach of every little thing, at the slightest provocation or danger, in what a state they must be! What to talk of greatness or spirituality, when these changes come over the mind? This unstable condition of the mind must be changed. We must ask ourselves how far we can be acted upon by the external world, and how far we can stand on our own feet in spite of all the forces outside us. When we have succeeded in preventing all the forces in the world from throwing us off our balance, then alone we have attained to freedom, and not before. That is salvation.

2. Everything that we perceive around us is struggling towards freedom, from the atom to the man, from insentient, lifeless particle of matter to the highest existence on earth, the human soul. The whole universe is in fact the result of this struggle for freedom.

3. All that we see in the universe has for its basis this one struggle towards freedom; it is under the impulse of this tendency that the saint prays and the robber robs. When the line of action is not a proper one we call it evil, and when the manifestation of it is proper and high we call it good. But the impulse is the same, the struggle towards freedom.

4. Freedom is the one goal of nature, sentient or insentient; and consciously or unconsciously everything is struggling towards that goal. The freedom which the saint seeks is very different from that which the robber seeks, the freedom loved by the saint leads him to the enjoyment of infinite, unspeakable bliss, while that on which the robber has set his heart only forges other bonds for his soul.

5. We say that it is freedom that we are to seek, and that that freedom is God. It is the same happiness as in everything else; but when man seeks it in something which is finite, he gets only a spark of it. The thief when he steals gets the same happiness as the man who finds it in God; but the thief gets only a spark with a mass of misery. The real happiness is God. Love is God, freedom is God; and everything that is bondage is not God.

6. Man has freedom already, but he will have to discover it. He has it but every moment he forgets it. That discovering, consciously or unconsciously, is the whole life of every one. But the difference between the sage and the ignorant man is that one does it consciously and the other unconsciously.

7. The idea of freedom is the only true idea of salvation-freedom from everything, the senses, whether of pleasure or pain, from good as well as evil. More than this even. We must be free from death; and to be free from death, we must be free from life. Life is but a dream of death. Where there is life, there will be death; so get away from life if you would be rid of death.

8. We are ever free if we would believe it, only have faith enough. You are the soul, free and eternal, ever free, ever blessed. Have faith enough and you will be free in a minute.

Everything in time, space, and causation is bound. The soul is beyond all time, all space, all causation. That which is bound is nature, not the soul. Therefore proclaim your freedom and be what you are-ever free, ever blessed.

9. To acquire freedom we have to go beyond the limitations of this universe; it cannot be found here. Perfect equilibrium, or what the Christians call the peace that passeth understanding, cannot be had in this universe, nor in heaven, nor in any place where our mind and thoughts can go, where the senses can feel, or which the imagination can conceive. No such place can give us the freedom, because all such places would be within our universe, and it is limited by space, time, and causation.

10. If we give up our attachment to this little universe of the senses or of the mind, we shall be free immediately. The only way to come out of bondage is to go beyond the limitations of law, to go beyond causation.

11. Blessedness, eternal peace arising from perfect freedom, is the highest conception of religion, underlying all the ideas of God in Vedanta-absolutely free Existence, not bound by anything, no change, no nature, nothing that can produce a change in Him. This same freedom is in you and in me and is the only real freedom.

12. Worship of God, worship of the holy ones, concentration and meditation and unselfish work, these are the ways of breaking away from Maya's net; but we must first have the strong desire to get free. The flash of light that will illumine the darkness for us is in us; it is the knowledge that is our nature there is no 'birthright', we were never born. All that we have to do is to drive away the clouds that cover it.

13. There is to be found in every religion the manifestation of this struggle towards freedom. It is the groundwork of all morality, of unselfishness, which means getting rid of the idea that men are the same as their little body. When we see a man doing good work, helping others, it means that he cannot be confined within the limited circle of "me and mine". There is no limit to this getting out of selfishness. All the great systems of ethics preach absolute unselfishness as the goal. Supposing this absolute unselfishness can be reached by a man, what becomes of him? He is no more the little Mr. So-and-so; he has acquired infinite expansion. That little personality which he had before is now lost to him for ever; he has become infinite, and the attainment of this infinite expansion is indeed the goal of all religions and of all moral and philosophical teachings.

14. To be more free is the goal of all our efforts, for only in perfect freedom can there be perfection. This effort to attain freedom under- lies all forms of worship, whether we know it or not.

15. Freedom is the motive of the universe, freedom its goal. The laws of nature are the methods through which we are struggling to reach that freedom under the guidance of Mother. This universal struggle for freedom attains its highest expression in man in the conscious desire to be free. This freedom is attained by the threefold means of work, worship, and knowledge,

- (A) Work-constant, unceasing effort to help others and love others.
- (B) Worship--consists in prayer, praise and meditation.
- (C) Knowledge-that follows meditation.

16. We find by analysis on philosophic grounds that we are not free. But there will remain this factor, this consciousness that I am free. What we have to explain is, how that comes. We will find that we have these two impulsions in us. Our reason tells us that all our actions are caused, and at the same time, with every impulse we are asserting our freedom. The solution of the Vedanta is that there is freedom inside-that the soul is really free-but that the soul's actions are percolating through body and mind, which are not free.

17. All nature is bound by law, the law of its own action; and this law can never be broken. If you could break a law of nature, all nature would come to an end in an instant. There would be no more nature. He who attains freedom breaks the law of nature, and for him nature fades away and has no more power over him. Each one will break the law but once and for ever, and that will end his trouble with nature.

18. The whole object of their system is by constant struggle to become perfect, to become divine, to reach God and see God, and this reaching God, seeing God, becoming perfect even as the Father in heaven is perfect, constitutes the religion of the Hindus, And what becomes of a man when he attains perfection? He lives a life of bliss infinite. He enjoys infinite and perfect bliss having obtained the only thing in which man ought to have pleasure, namely God, and enjoys the bliss with God.

19. We must remember that our religion lays down distinctly and clearly, that every one who wants salvation must pass through the stage of Rishihood--must become a Mantra-drashta, must see God. That is salvation; that is the law laid down by our Scriptures.

20. Isolation of the soul from all objects, mental and physical, is the goal; when that is attained, the soul will find that it was alone all the time, and it required no one to make it happy. As long as we require someone else to make us happy we are slaves. When the purusha finds that It is free, and does not require anything to complete Itself, that this Nature is quite unnecessary, then freedom Kaivalya is attained.

21. The Vedanta teaches that Nirvana can be attained here and now, that we do not have to wait for death to reach it. Nirvana is the realisation of the Self; and after having once known that, if only for an instant, never again can one be deluded by the mirage of the personality. Having eyes, we must see the apparent, but all the time we know what it is; we have found out its true nature. It is the screen that hides the Self, which is unchanging. The screen opens, and we find the Self behind it. All change is in the screen. In the saint the screen is thin, and the reality can almost shine through. In the sinner the screen is thick, and we are liable to lose sight of the truth that the Atman is there, as well as behind the saint's screen. When the screen is wholly removed, we find it really never existed--that we were the Atman and nothing else, even the screen is forgotten.

22. It is not that when a man becomes free he will stop and become a dead lump, but he

will be more active than any other being, because every other being acts only under compulsion, he alone through freedom.

23. Ignorance is death, knowledge is life,

24. Liberation means entire freedom-freedom from the bondage of good, as well as from the bondage of evil. A golden chain is as much a chain as an iron one.

25. You must retain great strength in your mind and words. "I am low, I am low" repeating these ideas in the mind man belittles and degrades himself. Therefore the Shastras say, "He who thinks himself free, free he becomes; he who thinks himself bound, bound he remains" -this popular saying "As one thinks, so one becomes" is true. He alone who is always awake to the idea of freedom, becomes free; he who thinks he is bound, endures life after life in the state of bondage.

26. Salvation means knowing the truth. We do not become anything; we are what we are. Salvation [comes] by faith and not by work. It is a question of knowledge! You must know what you are, and it is done.