

and no progress is ever lost either.
 Even a little of this discipline
 protects one from great danger,
 from great fear. [2.40]¹

This is a beautiful *shloka*, a great verse. It gives you such assurance, such support. The dharma of discipline redeems you.

Why is the yoga of discipline so essential for every seeker of the Truth? The very fact that you are a seeker means you want to know the Power behind the universe. You want to unearth the mysterious laws behind events. You want to understand the independent joy that you come across every now and then. Think of a time when, all of a sudden, you were happy. You didn't do anything to make yourself happy, but you were happy. This happiness is called *svayambhū*, spontaneous. It is self-born joy. As a seeker you want to know what causes this. There have been times in your life when you have had a glimpse of unconditional love. Without any cause, you experienced love for someone. Without any reason, suddenly you loved the entire universe. For a few seconds this state lasted, and then it disappeared. You want to know what this is; you want to become anchored in this pure state of love.

Your heart has a very deep yearning to find its true owner, its true Master. To discover the Master of your heart, to make it a reality is no small endeavor. Both the goal and the means of attaining it are very lofty. The path and the goal are not different. When you finally realize the Truth, the path and the goal are one and the same. Therefore, when you do sadhana, it should not be halfhearted; your full focus must be there. The path is as important as the goal. The process of sadhana is as significant as the goal.

The major difficulty resides in the inclination of the senses to look outside for their entertainment. There is also the natural law of gravity holding you down. Constantly, you are pulled down. You try to sit for meditation with an upright,

elongated spine, and before you know it, deflation occurs. And then you remember, "Oh, yes, elongate my spine." So once again you sit up straight, and then before you know it, gravity has pulled you down again.

There is another difficulty. Because of the outgoing tendencies of the senses and the downward pull of gravity, a seeker often finds himself in a quandary. What he is looking for is beyond the reach of the senses, yet he must master his senses to attain the Truth. Isn't this a paradox? What you want to know—the Truth, the light—is beyond the senses. In fact, all the scriptures say it is beyond the mind, beyond the intellect, beyond the five senses of perception, beyond everything. Nevertheless, you must use all your senses to know the Truth. It is a paradox.

A seeker is constantly struggling with this paradox. It is like this, but then it is like that. It is beyond the senses, but then, without the senses, how will you know it? Even if you find the Truth, you are not there to delight in that experience. You must lose yourself in the Truth to know the Truth, but then you have to be there to say, "I'm ecstatic. I've seen the face of God." How can you do that if you lose yourself completely? This is what a seeker constantly struggles with: "Am I there? Am I not there? Should I be there? Should I not be there? Is my ego in the way, or is my ego useful?"

A seeker must turn the senses around and redirect them toward his own heart. And that is about as easy as putting out a volcano with a bucket full of water. Impossible. Unthinkable. This is why it is such a heroic undertaking to turn the outgoing senses around so that they can make the inward journey. You need courage. This is why the Upanishads say that you have to be courageous to do sadhana. Only a courageous soul is able to pursue sadhana.

The very thing that is the source of distractions is the same thing that can take you to the goal. Take the example of a friend who seems to be undermining everything you do. Yet

this same friend, who seems to be such an obstacle in your life, could end up being the person who inspires you to see God. In that case, he would be a true friend.

How does one control a wild bull? Think of a really ferocious animal, crazy with rage, foaming at the mouth, and charging right at you with tremendous speed. The senses have the same wild fury, the same savage momentum. How can you bring them under your control and make them see the radiant Truth?

During Baba's time in Gurudev Siddha Peeth, some devotees gave him a young elephant. The elephant was called Swami Vijayananda, and as a teenager, he was wonderful. As the years went by, he grew bigger and bigger, and they had to keep building bigger sheds for him. During his mating season, he went completely mad. No matter how much his trainer tried to subdue him, it didn't work. The elephant wouldn't listen to anything. All the discipline of the entire year went down the drain. So that he wouldn't run amok in the village, the elephant had to be chained when he was in heat. But there was so much force in his passion that he would rub his legs against the chains and create huge wounds. The only person who could control him was Baba. However, Baba was traveling on his world tours, so he often wasn't there to control him. Vijayananda knew only one thing, and no one could change his mind.

Baba used to describe how animals were slaves to one particular sense pleasure or another, but human beings are addicted to all five sense pleasures. So as human beings, you have a very difficult task ahead of you. But you do have the chance to transcend the powerful senses and taste the nectar of the Self.

Discipline in listening. The *Rig Veda* says:

O Lord, may we ever hear auspicious words
with our ears. [1.89.8]²

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PUBLISHED BY SYDA FOUNDATION