

# **The Conquest of Mind and Senses**

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When a man who has understood the Truth intellectually is struggling to realize it, even his senses sometimes become so unruly that they run away with him and drag him down to the material universe. So it should be our duty to learn to rule them. What are these senses? They are nothing in themselves; it is we who have given them these powers, but they have had them for ages, so they take them as their own. Now when we would conquer them, they rise up and make us slaves.

This, however, is really the fault of man himself. When he is able to understand clearly that the senses are the cause of his misery, of all his unhappiness, then he can very easily put them down. But that realization does not come without struggle. Man continues to linger here expecting something good, something great from this world, and so long as he thinks in this way, he will not realize that through the senses no true happiness can come. He must first learn to discriminate the real from the unreal, good from bad, and then take only the good. Thus he will gradually rise above the senses.

When you can bring your senses under control, they can be made to lead you to God. These very energies which have led you away from the Lord, may now take you to Him. But the senses are very delusive. Even the highest man is sometimes dragged down by them to the lowest plane of sensuality. For this reason you must wage an incessant war against them. There is no other way. For the man who wants to realize the Truth, the first duty should be to put down the senses, and fixing his mind on the Lord, to regard Him as the highest.

“Fixing his mind on Me, regarding Me as the highest, one should remain steady controlling all his senses.” (Gita: II, 61.) Here Krishna gives a very fine method of concentration; the best that can be given. In one word he tells you how to attain concentration - regard God as the highest. Why do you turn to the senses? Because you want to go where you will always be happy, and you think that your senses will lead you there. You imagine that one place or one thing will make you happier, and you start out at once to go to it. When this idea comes and you run towards the object of your desire, nothing then can check you. Why? Because you regard that to be the highest and the senses, you believe,

will help you get it. The senses, however, merely obey you. They are not to blame. You yourself are at fault. Krishna now comes and says: "My dear friend, you have seen all these things in the universe, and the universe is a place of infinite variety. Of all that is to be found here, the highest and most desirable thing is the Lord." When you can understand this very clearly by means of comparison, that He is the highest and best, at that moment all your sense energies will rush towards Him.

The mind always aspires after the biggest, the highest, the greatest. If you put down a ten-rupee note, and besides it a hundred-rupee note, it will take the hundred rupees. If beside the hundred-rupee note you place a thousand-rupee note, it will take the thousand rupees. If some one tells you that great wealth is to be found in a certain place, at once you will give up your present modest income and run there. In the same way, when you realize that nothing is so beautiful as God, nothing is so great as God, nothing is so good or kind as God; when you grasp this as you do the value of the thousand rupees, over the ten and hundred rupees, you will rush towards God. Then you will say: "Do I desire wisdom? God is my wisdom. Do I want wealth? God is my wealth. Do I want learning? God is my learning. Do I seek a home where I shall be at rest? Then God shall be my home, my place of rest."

The moment you feel this in your heart of hearts, then even if you are a little child like Dhruva, you will be able to do great things. Because his mother told him that God was in the jungle, he entered into it without doubt or fear, for a little child never doubts his mother's word. When he saw the lions and tigers, he was not afraid. He only thought that God was playing with him by coming in such strange forms, so he began to talk to them and because he was not afraid, they did not harm him. So it is with you. If you understand clearly that the Lord is the highest, then nothing will frighten or discourage you, all your senses will run in the direction of the Supreme and both your mind and your senses will help you reach Him.

Where is God? He is where the world is not. When after studying the universe you realize that it has come out of a great universal Poet, our idea of an all-wise Being, then you think, "I must go to Him and get a little of that wisdom."

And to go to Him you must go away from the universe. Whether He is extra-cosmic or intra-cosmic it makes no difference, for in either case you will have to go out of the universe. You cannot take two things. You must take the one or the other. If you wish to go to God, you will have to turn your back on the world.

These senses when outgoing, lead you to creation, but you wish to go to God, therefore you must indraw your senses. They must be controlled and turned in the opposite direction. He is seated in the heart, so all your sense energies, all your mental energies must converge on that one point and take you there. But this can only be done when you realize that He is the best, the highest in the whole universe. "Thou art

my Father, Thou art my Mother; Thou art my Friend, Thou art my Companion; Thou art my learning; Thou art my wealth; Thou art my all in all, my one Lord.”

God's Egotism, God's Spirit, God's Self are one and the same; for they are all infinite and there cannot be two infinities. Our Self and our ego are diametrically opposed because one is infinite and the other is finite. For this reason God is called the Supreme Self. If you would control your senses and your mind, you must look upon Him as this Supreme Self and love Him with all your heart and soul. The perverse tendency of the senses will be controlled at that moment and instead of leading you to the outside creation and to death, they will lead you inward to God. So you see that when you regard God as the highest, you can easily learn to control the senses; when you have controlled your senses, you know who you are; and when you know who you are, you realize that the universe rests in you, that it has no basis except in you and that you are beyond birth and death.

How does attachment come? How do the senses become outgoing? That man who makes much of sensual enjoyment, who thinks that out of sounds, forms and touches alone enjoyment can come naturally becomes attached to these. A man thinks, “I want to be happy only in this world; nowhere else can I be happy.” Out of this belief attachment for the world springs up. So long as these feelings hold him, he will be tied to the world by a strong cord of attachment and he will not be able to get away from it. As a result of this attachment desires come into existence. Then when something appears in the way and prevents the fulfilling of these desires, he grows angry. When a man becomes angry, he loses the power of discrimination between right and wrong, and his egotism may increase so much that he thinks nothing of insulting his superiors or even the Guru to whom he owes so much. Thus egotism, which is such a puny thing, under the influence of anger becomes so greatly inflated. There is no worse delusion than this. At that time a man perpetrates the worst kind of evil without any compunction whatever. Then, when that unnatural condition leaves him, he himself will have to repent. So man is the cause of his own death. But since this destruction comes through attachment, we should give it up.

How are we to do this? We should neither like nor dislike anything. When the senses have been freed from liking and disliking, then with their help, if man enjoys the world they will never bring evil to him. Rather he will have a certain power, a certain satisfaction in his mind. He who has been able to bring his mind under his control by the above method, such a man will be able to realize within himself perfect peace and contentment. And what will be the result of that peace and contentment? In that contented condition he will never commit a blunder. When the mind is restless it cannot think properly and man commits all sorts of mistakes. But not so the other man. His intellectual faculties are very

clear; he sees all, he knows the true nature of things, what he should leave and what he should accept, and he realizes the Truth.

This can be done only if we can free the senses from undue likings and dislikings. It is because control of the mind and of the senses will bring us peace and contentment, and through these we shall attain to the realization of the Truth, that Sri Krishna tells us in the Gita, that our discriminative faculty must be clear. We commit blunders, and mistake one thing for another because our intellect is confused, the mind is covered with dross. If a man wishes to achieve success in any walk of life, his intellectual faculties must be clear. A man who has no control over his body, no control over his mind, such a man is very dull, his intellectual faculties are clouded and he confuses everything, taking a friend for a foe, the wrong for right. He cannot think relevantly on any one subject for a minute. How can such a dull, uncontrolled man be peaceful? How can such a restless mind be happy?

Whenever you fully enjoy any sort of pleasure, even sensual pleasure, for the time being restlessness leaves the mind and you are happy. So long as the mind is restless, it is unhappy. When there is rest, there is happiness. We must not let the mind and senses rule over us. We must rule over them. Otherwise we can never be happy, and we shall make all those about us unhappy too. Just as the pilot who is at the mercy of the wind is lost, so the man who is at the mercy of the senses is lost. The senses steal away all peace from a man, as the wind steals away the boat from the shore and sinks it in mid-ocean.

The more you can take your mind and senses away from the world and fix them on God, the more will you find peace and happiness. And this can most easily be done by realizing through discrimination and experience that God is the highest and most desirable thing in this universe.