

Bliss, essential nature of man

We accept joys and sorrows as facts of worldly life yet we search for means to be free from our sorrow. But we do not realise that our true nature is blissful. Joy is the intrinsic nature of the Soul (Atman) and it is sorrow which is alien to it and comes from outside the Soul. So the main object of spiritual endeavour is to gain the knowledge of the soul as a result of which sufferings of the material world will not afflict us anymore and the inner joy expresses freely.

Self-knowledge and bliss are interdependent and are the two sides of the same coin – that is, the reality of our existence. Most of our problems arise due to the transient nature of the source of our happiness. Even the knowledge of a state in which it is possible to experience eternal joy gives a sense of peace within when one embarks on the spiritual quest.

It is essential to understand the difference between Self-knowledge which is eternal and objective knowledge which pertains to the material world which is not so. How do we acquire knowledge? The senses bring a lot of innumerable sensory data to the mind but they do not by themselves result in knowledge and it is the mind which provides us the knowledge.

When the Sun arises everyone wakes up and goes about their activities; so also, in the presence of the mind the sensations result in knowledge. Empirical knowledge lasts as long as the sense impressions stay in the mind or till the mind retains them in memory. So it cannot be eternal and does not pertain to the Self.

The knowledge of the soul is acquired when the mind is freed from the sense data. Meditation wherein the object is divine and not secular is one of the means to separate the mind from the external sense data. This separation lets the bliss shine in our heart and soul, because the very nature of the soul is bliss.

The common mistake one makes while undertaking spiritual quest is to seek the knowledge of the soul as any other secular knowledge since the familiar process of acquiring knowledge is related to objects in the world.

But spiritual knowledge is that of the soul, and it is not material.

Another mistake one makes is the fear that the acquisition of the knowledge of the soul and the resultant bliss would exterminate all our sense activities thereby losing all our life experience of the past and the future.

Meditate without fear and live the life of bliss – even if it be for few moments of our daily life.