

Conquest of Mind.

By SWAMI SIVANANDA.

That form which the Infinite, all-pervading Ātmā has assumed through Its power of imagination is called mind. Mind creates and destroys. It creates the whole universe by its power of imagination. The chief characteristic of the mind is imagination. It is the creator and enjoyer of all happiness and miseries. It is the cause of bondage and liberation. Mind is all. It is everything. It is your truest friend and worst enemy too. The lower mind is your enemy. It causes various sorts of attachment. It is filled with various base desires and appetites. The highest mind is a rare friend and benefactor because it imparts true counsels in the way of obtaining the supreme goal of life. The higher mind becomes your guiding Guru. Hear its sweet, small voice and follow its instructions. The voice of the pure mind is the voice of God. It is an infallible voice. In the *Gītā* you will find "A man should uplift himself by his own self, so let him not weaken the self. For this self is the friend of oneself and this self is the enemy of oneself. The self (the active part of our nature) is the friend of the self, for him who has conquered Self; the self is inimical, (and behaves) like (an external) foe for him who has not conquered the self" (VI. 5-6). There is no other vessel on this earth to cross the ocean of Saṃsāra

than the mastery over the lower instinctive mind.

This world is a very big wheel. It is revolving unceasingly. The mind is the nave of this wheel. Those who are egoistic, proud, passionate and greedy are caught up in this wheel. If you can stop the mind from moving, the world wheel will come to a standstill and you will be freed from the round of births and deaths. If you wish to stop the mind from moving, you will have to annihilate egoism, pride, desire and greed.

It is the mind that is the root of the tree of Saṃsāra with its thousand offshoots, branches, leaves and fruits. If you annihilate Sankalpas or thoughts, you can destroy the tree of Saṃsāra at once. Destroy the Sankalpa as soon as it arises. The root will dry up through the annihilation of Sankalpa and the tree of Saṃsāra will wither away soon. This demands considerable patience and perseverance. No pains, no gains. You will be bathed in an ocean of Bliss when all Sankalpas are extirpated. This state is indescribable. You will have to feel it yourself.

Mind and Prāṇa are interdependent. Prāṇa is the overcoat or vehicle of mind. Wherever there is Prāṇa, there is mind and *vice versa*. If you think deeply on any subject, the breathing becomes slow. When one

suffers from asphyxia, the functioning of the mind comes automatically to a standstill. Mind is the rider, Prāṇa is the horse and the body is the chariot. Prāṇa vibrates and mind is set in motion. Mind thinks when Prāṇa moves. If Prāṇa departs from the body, all functions of the body will stop. The body will remain like a log of wood. Separation of Prāṇa from the physical body is called death in common parlance. Control of Prāṇa leads to control of mind and *vice versa*.

The vibrations of Prāṇa and Vāsanā are the two seeds for the tree of mind. Should either of them perish, both die soon. Prāṇa vibrates and the mind is set in motion. If you control the Prāṇa through regular practice of Prāṇāyāma the mind-bird will be caught up easily. Through discrimination, Vichāra and Mithyā-dṛṣṭi you can destroy all Vāsanās.

You should not try to control the mind through violence. You will not succeed if you do so. You will have to adopt the approved or prescribed means, such as association with the wise, Vichāra, renunciation of Vāsanās, Prāṇāyāma, etc. If you attempt to control the mind through force, it is like trying to bind a furious elephant with a thin twine of a plantain fibre. Just as the goad is the effective instrument to control the furious elephant, so also Vichāra is the effective means to control the mind.

You should first conquer the mind through Vichāra or enquiry of "Who

am I?" So long as the mind is not destroyed, the Vāsanās will attack you again and again and you will have no peace of mind. When the mind does not think of any object, when the mind is completely destitute of all Vāsanās, you will attain the state of mindlessness and you will enjoy indescribable peace. So long as you do not attain Self-realization, so long as you have not controlled the mind, you should follow implicitly the teachings of your Guru and the scriptures.

You will have to coax the mind in the beginning just as you coax the children. Mind is also like an ignorant child. Speak to the mind, "O Mind! why do you run after false, worthless, perishable, beautiful objects? You will undergo countless sufferings. Look at Lord Kṛṣṇa, the beauty of beauties. You will get everlasting happiness. Why do you run to hear worldly love-songs? Hear the *Bhajana* of the Lord. Hear the soul-stirring *Sankīrtana*. You will be elevated." The mind will gradually leave off its old vicious habits and get itself fixed at the lotus feet of the Lord. When it is freed from Rajas and Tamas it will guide you, it will be your Guru.

O restless mind! O truant! O care-worn Chitta! why do you wander about in vain after sensual objects? Are you not tired of them? Remember, this world, this body, and life are as evanescent and unsteady as a bubble. This world is full of miseries, untruth, deceit, hatred and diseases. You cannot enjoy an iota of happiness here. Be

sure of this. Open your eyes now. Take refuge at the lotus feet of Hari and rest in peace. Enjoy the wealth of the three worlds. Drink the nectar of Devotion and become Immortal.

The surface of the lake is compared to the conscious mind. The bottom of the lake is compared to the sub-conscious mind. The objects that come from the bottom of the lake to its surface are compared to the images that come to the surface of the conscious mind from the sub-conscious mind. The Vikṣepa Śakti that disturbs the mind is compared to the wind that disturbs the water of the lake. During the waking state the Vikṣepa Śakti, the Sankalpas of the individual and the senses disturb the mind. In deep sleep the mind is at perfect rest.

Mind is the commander-in-chief. The senses are the soldiers. The senses cannot do anything without the co-operation of the mind. The senses cannot perform anything independently. They can operate only in company with the mind. If you can disconnect the mind from the senses, there will be abstraction of the senses automatically.

When the mind is Sattvic you can get glimpses, flashes of intuition. You will compose poems. You will understand the significance of the Upaniṣads beautifully. But this stage will not last long in neophytes. Tamas and Rajas will try to enter the mental factory. In the beginning the stage of progress may be like the frog's, never steady and

continuous. You may think that you have almost reached the goal, and experience for the next 15 or 20 days nothing but disappointment. It will be a jump from position to position, but not a continuous development. Have sustained, intense Vairāgya and do intense Sādhanā. Be under the direct guidance and close contact of your Guru for some years. You will have steady and continuous progress.

When you feel extremely drowsy at night, when you wish to retire to bed, you will not like to eat even if very delicious articles of food are offered to you at that moment. You will not like to attend any musical performance. What you will desire is peaceful rest. This clearly proves that the mind wants rest but not objects. Worldly people do not know where and how to find this rest. They try to get it from external objects. But they hopelessly fail at every step. Eternal rest or perennial peace can be had within one's own Self only through Self-realization.

The mind whirls like an intoxicated bee. Separate the Indriyas from the objects. Get rid of all attractions. Control the Prāṇa. Close the avenues of the body. Just as you can capture an elephant, so also you can capture the mind. Just as the soldier kills with his sword his foes who rise against him again and again, so also kill all thoughts of objects as they arise again and again. When all Vṛttis die you will get the stage of mental darkness. Remove this darkness through discrimination. Then you will get radiant light. Get over

this stage. You will have to pass a region of void. Then you will have to transcend sleep and Moha. Finally you will enter into Nirvikalpa Samādhi.

Taste the immortal sweetness of the beautiful life in the Self within by annihilating the mind. Live in Ātmā and attain the blessed Immortal

State. Meditate and reach the deeper depths of eternal life, the higher heights of divine glory and eventually attain the full glory of union with the Supreme Self. Now your long wearisome journey terminates. You have reached your destination, your sweet original home of everlasting Peace, the Parama Dhāma.
