

Freedom From Sadness¹

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THERE IS A TWOFOLD WORLD - ISVARA SRISTI AND JIVA SRISTI

One is the world as it is. The other is the world that we perceive. The creation as it is I hardly look at.

It takes simplicity to see things as they are. More often than not we all live in a world created by our own mind. There is a twofold world. One is the world as it is. The other is the world that we perceive. One's perception is always vitiated, conditioned, modified by one's own limited knowledge, by one's own likes and dislikes, by one's fears and anxieties, and by one's opinions and prejudices. Therefore, one hardly lives in the world as it is. If there is a flower I happen to see, I can look at it as the flower is, or I can look at it with a longing to have the flower. Or when I look at it, I may associate the flower with a certain event. Therefore, I do not see the flower as the flower is. This projection on my part definitely denies me from seeing the world as the world is.

In Vedanta we explain this twofold world as *Isvara sristi* and *jiva sristi*. *Sristi* means a creation. *Isvara sristi* is the Lord's creation of the world as it is, and *jiva sristi* is the creation as I look at it. The creation that I look at is mostly my own projection. The creation as it is I hardly look at. Whenever I look at the creation as it is, I am okay, even if it is something that is unpleasant. An unpleasant situation necessitates a certain action on my part. I should either withdraw from the unpleasant situation (that is an action), or I should tackle the unpleasant situation. It can cause some discomfort, but it need not cause sorrow.

IF YOU LOOK INTO THE NATURE OF SORROW IT IS NOT CAUSED BY THE WORLD NOR DOES THE SIMPLE PERSON CAUSE IT

The simple person, being simple not complex, is not a source of sorrow. The world itself is incapable of giving rise to sorrow.

The world can be uncomfortable. Nobody can feel comfortable when bitten by a thousand mosquitoes. The world that you live in can be uncomfortable, but that is purely an objective world, a world that you objectively appreciate as being uncomfortable.

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Sadness or sorrow we generally think is caused by an event, which is the world. We think it is caused by a situation, implying a person, which is the world. What is the world? Whatever you happen to confront, either sensorially or inferentially, is the world. There is no other world. And that world does not cause sorrow. It can present itself only in terms of comfortable or uncomfortable, desirable or undesirable. But the undesirability does not constitute sorrow.

We have to understand the nature of sorrow as something different from pain. A physical pain is definitely not comfortable. If you have a fracture or any physical problem, it is a painful thing; but the painful thing itself is not sorrow. When I say, "Freedom from sorrow," I do not mean freedom from pain; I do not mean freedom from an uncomfortable situation.

We cannot avoid uncomfortable situations in the world, and we cannot go about asking why. There may be reasons, but this is how it is. Now it is winter; now it is summer. We cannot go to the North Pole, Alaska, and then complain that it is all snow and very cold. That is how Alaska is. Unless you are an Eskimo, you cannot enjoy the snow there. If you have to be in Alaska, you had better have the attitude of an Eskimo. If you have the attitude of an Eskimo and also the capability to live in igloos and so on, perhaps then you will enjoy a life in the snow.

LIFE IS FRAUGHT WITH DESIRABLE AND UNDESIRABLE SITUATIONS - TO EXPLAIN IT SASTRICALLY EVERY HUMAN BEING IS A MIXTURE OF PUNYA AND PAPA

There are situations that are desirable and situations that are undesirable in daily life. When you say, "This is my karma," it is clear that it is *papa*. When you say, "This is my creation," it is clear that it is *punya*.

We cannot have a world that is always free from pain and undesirable situations. Life is fraught with desirable and undesirable situations. To explain it *sastrically*, every human being is a mixture of *punya* and *papa*. When you say, "This is my *karma*," it is clear that it is *papa*. When you say, "This is my creation," it is clear that it is *punya*.

There are situations that are desirable and situations that are undesirable in daily life. You can look at your life and say that the whole life was more or less okay. Then you can look at the different time periods in your life, and you can say these ten years were wonderful, and these eighteen years were very bad. Astrologers will say, "You now have a good period for the next fifteen or sixteen years." And then again he will tell, "But during these three years in between you have to be very careful." He can also tell, "This morning is good for you, but this evening is

not that great.” And during the morning also it can be said, “This hour is better for you than the next hour.” Every human being is a *misra*—*a mixture of punya and papa*. *Karma* consists of *punya and papa*—*comfortable and uncomfortable situations*.

Therefore, we find that we may get up feeling well in the morning, but in the evening we may have a problem, a backache. Or we may go to bed feeling well (it was a wonderful day), and then in the morning we may get up with a catch in our back. Thus, the whole life is fraught with changing situations that are called *punya* and *papa* that were gathered in this life or in a previous life. If we overeat and get a stomachache, the pain is definitely a result of what we recently did and not due to our previous life.

Therefore, either due to the remote past or due to the immediate past, we encounter various comfortable or uncomfortable situations. Nobody can avoid this. Even kings had their headaches; and even ex-president Reagan, who held the highest office available in the world, as president of America, had to undergo surgery on his nose and had headaches and a variety of other problems. No one is spared.

IT IS WRONG THINKING THAT CAUSES COMPLEXITY AND MAKES ME MISS WHAT IS AND LIVE IN A WORLD OF MY OWN MAKING

The wrongly-edited world in my head causes me sorrow. I fashion out of this vast world a world of my own by a thought process. Thought by thought there is a buildup of sadness. The world is edited by my own fears and anxieties and projections. This edited world is the one in which we are all living.

Everybody has to undergo these vicissitudes, these shifting circumstances, these ups and downs that keep occurring in life, which are both desirable and undesirable. Unless we understand this, we are always going to smart. *This psychological smarting on our part is a refusal to accept situations as they are*. It is this refusal that is the cause for sorrow. In other words, it destroys the simple person that we are. There are a number of reasons why the simple person is inhibited and made into a complex person. It is due to a certain type of thinking, which can definitely be corrected. It is wrong thinking that causes complexity and makes me miss what is and live in a world of my own making, which I always complain about saying, “The world has caused me sorrow.”

In fact, it is not the world that is there that causes me sorrow. But it is a wrongly-edited world that is here in my head that causes me sorrow. The world is edited by my own fears and anxieties and projections. This edited world is the one in which we are all living.

Definitely, everyone lives in his own thought bubble. One good thing about this bubble is we can prick it. Each person fashions out of this vast world a world of his or her own making purely by a thought process, and this thought process makes you sad. Tell me, can anybody be sad without a process of thinking? You cannot say, "Thinking makes me sad." That is not true. Now you are thinking. Are you sad?

Thinking does not make one sad, but in sadness there is always thinking. You can never become sad suddenly. Sadness does not come like a lightening flash. It does not happen in a moment, in a trice. Thought by thought there is a buildup of sadness. There is a particular way of thinking that makes a person sad. You think yourself into sadness.

WE THINK THAT DEATH MEANS SADNESS - BUT DEATH IS AN EVENT - DEATH ITSELF IS NOT SADNESS - IF DEATH IS SADNESS BIRTH ALSO SHOULD BE SADNESS BECAUSE A MAN IS BORN TO DIE

When you hear the news, there is no sadness immediately. But death is something that leaves a permanent void, an emptiness, a vacancy. You are not going to see the person again in the same form.

Sadness does not happen like an event. Death happens. But sadness is something that comes as a consequence of thinking about death. Death is something that universally creates sadness. We generally offer our condolences to the bereaved. This we all accept.

We think that death means sadness, but death is an event. If death is sadness, birth also should be sadness because a man is born to die. Death itself is not sadness. When you hear the news, there is no sadness immediately. But death is something that leaves a permanent void, an emptiness, a vacancy. You are not going to see the person again in the same form.

Even though you may believe in the continuity of the departed soul or in the permanence of the soul or in the eternal nature of the soul, the soul is not going to appear in the same form as it was available in flesh and blood responding to your call, ready to fight with you. That person is no longer there in that particular form. Therefore, a void has been created in this world. A person who was so much alive and kicking is no longer available in that form. It is this void that no human being is able to accept.

WHAT REALLY BOTHERS A PERSON IS KNOWLEDGE OF ONE'S OMISSIONS AND COMMISSIONS

"Why did I do this?" "I was harsh on this person." "I should have perhaps obliged this person." "When he asked for this, I should have given it."

When I begin to see that in the entire future of my life I am not going to see the person again in the same form, there is a certain type of thinking. That thinking leaves me in a state of void—emptiness, helplessness and loneliness; and naturally, I begin to think about my omissions and commissions. “*Kim aham sadhu na akaravam; kim aham papam akaravam iti: Why did I not do those things that I should have done; why did I do those things which I should not have done?*” What really bothers a person is this knowledge of omissions and commissions: “I was harsh on this person.” “I should have perhaps obliged this person.” “When he asked for this, I should have given it.” “Why did I do this?” There is no human heart that is so hard that it will not melt in the face of the death of someone dear. Naturally, we begin to think of our omissions and commissions.

When the person was alive, we criticized the person so much. I learned this when I was a young boy in the village. We had a *sastri* in the village who was a simple person. Really, he was a *papam sadhu, a simpleton*. People did not understand him. In those days trains were introduced, and he loved to ride on those trains. He would go to Kumbakonam and ask the stationmaster: “When is the next train?” The stationmaster would say, “Four o’clock.” “Where does it go?” “It goes to Madura, Trichi,” whatever. And he would say, “Give me a ticket.” He didn’t care where it went. He just wanted to travel on the train. He would get on and sit in a corner seat facing the opposite direction of the way the train traveled and put his head out the window.

In those days the trains did not have bars on the windows. He would untie the knot that held his tuft of hair and let his hair fly in the wind as the train moved along. He was ecstatic. What opinion would these calculating, scheming, village-wise people have? These village-wise people are not ordinary people, I tell you. These village-wise people who can read the other’s cards by their face, what would they think of him? They would definitely think of him as *papam-a simpleton*. Not only they thought of him like that, but also they talked so much about him that we all as children thought of him the same way. We used to play pranks on him. In the night he would be lying down sleeping, and we would tie the fellow’s hair to the rafter with a rope. In the morning getting up, he would find it was a problem. All kinds of things we used to do.

DEATH SEEMS TO BE A GREAT HEALER OF ALL WOUNDS AND SEEMS TO MAKE US WISER – DEATH MAKES US SEE THINGS MORE CLEARLY

As long as the man was alive, everybody called him names. After death he was praised. If death has to come to make us understand a person, when are we going to understand him?

Then this man passed away. On the thirteenth day a *pandatji* read about his life and praised him. He told what a simple man he was. He never abused anybody's goodness. He was someone who could pick up happiness from small things. He was a man who never told a lie; he did not cheat anybody; he did not deceive anybody. He was a man who knew the Vedas very well and who lived a clean, simple life. And he passed away. Alas! As long as the man was alive, everybody called him names and called him a *sadhu papam*. We all played pranks on him.

When the *panditji* was praising him, I thought, "My God! Death seems to be a great healer of all wounds and seems to make us wiser; makes us see things more clearly. My God! If death has to come to make us understand a person, when are we going to understand him?" Look at this situation: Unless the man dies, I cannot understand him. In our thinking, there is something drastically wrong.

Unless we understand the silliness of our thinking, I do not think that anybody can properly live his or her life. We only drag our lives. So "*Kim aham papam akaravam; kim aham sadhu na akaravam: Why did I not do the right thing? Why did I do the wrong thing?*" This kind of thinking happens, and this thinking slowly leaves us in a helpless situation. We are sad. Nobody becomes sad without thinking. It is the thinking that makes us sad. Therefore, one fellow said: "Knock off thinking!" That is what the doctors do. When we go to a doctor when we are sad or bereaved, he will treat us with tranquilizers or some sedatives so that thinking does not take place. Maybe that is the only way. Either we should knock off our thinking by getting into a state of semi-coma, or we should change our thinking. We can choose between the two. We can live like a zombie always under the spell of some drugs, or we can change our thinking and get rid of sorrow.

PLEASE UNDERSTAND THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PAIN AND SORROW, PAIN IS PART OF THE CREATION BUT ONE THINKS ONE'S WAY INTO ACCOMPLISHING SADNESS

Pain is a part of the creation, but sorrow is caused by a particular way of thinking. We can change our thinking and get rid of sorrow. Nobody wants to be sad; one thinks one's way into accomplishing that state.

Please understand the difference between pain and sorrow. Pain is there; it is a part of the creation. When I pinch you, definitely there is pain. That is *Isvara srusti*. If you pinch Swamiji, Swamiji will also have pain. Do not think that swamis have no pain. Swamis also have pain.

A Swami had a heart attack, and one gentleman came and asked me: "Why did a swami have a heart attack?" That is because swamis have hearts. There is no other reason. There is no

heartless swami. In fact, swamis have more heart. I say a swami has a heart attack because he has a heart. Suppose I ask you to go on opening and closing your fingers for one hour, clasping and opening, clasping and opening, after five minutes you will be tired and you will look for something else to do.

Here is a heart that has been working for the whole lifetime (forty or fifty years) with no rest whatsoever. We can take some sedatives and put the mind to rest; we can fast the system for thirty days; we can rest the body on a cot; we can rest every organ in the body; but the heart cannot rest; and we do not want it to rest also. Suppose it takes a little rest, lub and after half a minute dub. Lub-----dub, lub, dub, lub, dub. Sometimes it misses a beat also, lub---lub. Even good musicians and dancers miss a beat sometimes. Here also the heart goes lub, dub, lub, dub, lub---lub, dub. What is the big deal? It is very natural if it misses now and then.

It is very revealing to see how we work ourselves into a state that we do not want to have. What I do not want to have I work myself into. Nobody wants to be sad; one thinks one's way into accomplishing that state. It looks as though *Bhagavan* is giving us sadness because we are helpless. We look at the Lord as the one who is *shoka karanam* [the cause of sorrow], or we look at the world as *shoka karanam*. If you appreciate something more than the world (the Lord), then the Lord becomes *shoka karanam*. In fact, the Lord is not *shoka karanam*, and the mind is not *shoka karanam*; but a particular way of thinking is *shoka karanam*.

THERE ARE MANY WAYS OF THINKING WHICH LEAD TO SADNESS ONE OF THEM IS REFUSAL TO ACCEPT A FACT

We work up to sadness. If I see a person behaving in a particular manner and a certain type of thinking is born, that thinking is due to my refusal to accept the person as the person is.

There are many ways of thinking which lead to sadness. One of them is refusal to accept a fact. We do not accept facts. We work up to sadness. Suppose someone is not behaving as the person should, according to you; but in fact, the other person thinks the same way about you. People do not understand this. You think the other fellow is bad; but if you consult him, he has a list of complaints about you. Both people go to the same court, and both people are convinced that they are right. "I am right! I have not done anything wrong." And the other fellow says, "I am right! I have not done anything wrong."

It is clear that there are two perceptions. That means both people fail to see the facts. Like it takes two hands to clap, there are two perceptions. Both of them are projections, more

often than not, unless someone is dishonest or something. Both people do not face facts. Thus, if I see a person behaving in a particular manner and a certain type of thinking is born, that thinking is due to my refusal to accept the person as the person is.

WE DO NOT ACCEPT THINGS AS THEY ARE – WE WANT TO CHANGE THEM

A woman was complaining of thirst on the train. Even after quenching her thirst, she continued to complain about having been ‘so thirsty’.

Similarly, with regard to other situations, we do not even accept the lines on our palms. I saw one fellow who was traveling on the plane next to me stretching his line of destiny with an ink pen. This fellow might have read some palmistry book or something. However, the fact that he was traveling on an airplane means that the fellow was okay. But he wanted his line of destiny to be stretched, which means that he did not accept the lines on his palms. He wanted to change them. We do not accept things as they are.

A woman was traveling on a train with her husband. The train was traveling through a desert, and she was thirsty. There was no water available, and the station was far away. She was complaining: “I am so thirsty, I am so thirsty, I am so thirsty,” and her husband said: “Come on, wait! Let the train come to the station, and then we will find water. Do not worry, at least I will get you some Limeca.” But the woman repeated: “I am so thirsty, I am so thirsty, I am so thirsty.” Then the station came, and she quenched her thirst, and she even got an extra bottle of water to take along on the train with her to avoid a similar situation. As soon as the train started, she began telling, “I was so thirsty, I was so thirsty, I was so thirsty.”

IF WE KNOW HOW TO PUT A PERIOD IN OUR THINKING, WE ARE ACCEPTING A FACT

Any fact that we face is *Isvara sristi*; it is *Bhagavan’s creation*. When we accept a fact, we can perhaps avoid sorrow. When we accept a fact, we can act. When we do not accept a fact, then the whole thinking process becomes a reaction.

What does this mean? This is a very important thing to know. This particular story definitely reveals something. “I am thirsty.” *Period, full stop!* “Yes, you are thirsty.” “I want water.” “Yes, you want water.” “But I do not have water here.” “Yes, you do not have water here.” “When will the water come?” “When the next station comes, then perhaps we will get some water.” “Suppose there is no water there?” “Well, we will go to the next station.” “If no water is there, we will die without drinking water; then what will happen?” “Oh, you will go to heaven.” “Suppose I do not go to heaven?” “You will go to hell.” “Hell will be very hot.”

Understand this: “I am thirsty” is a fact. It is *Isvara srusti*; it is *Bhagavan’s* creation; or you can call it nature’s creation.

That we have thirst is *Isvara srusti*; that the water or something equivalent to it will quench the thirst is again *Isvara srusti*; that we do not have water here is again *Isvara srusti*. That is a fact. Any fact that we face is *Isvara srusti*. When we accept a fact, we can perhaps avoid sorrow. When the person has already quenched the thirst, and the situation for complaint is no longer there, but still there is complaining, that is refusal to accept a fact.

When we accept a fact, we can act. When we do not accept a fact, we react. Then the whole thinking process becomes a reaction. If it is a reaction, what control do we have over that? We do not have any control over that because it is a happening.

A REACTION IS A HAPPENING – IT IS NOT WILL BASED

It is not born of our approval and signature. When I do not accept a fact, there is a certain type of thinking, and that thinking is a reaction.

A reaction is born because our will has already been taken care of. It is like when an electrical transformer gets tripped—a mechanical part is released. Here also there is a tripping of our will. The will is already tripped for the reaction has already started.

A machine is called a machine because its performance is purely mechanical. If it is set to perform like a piston with so many strokes, that many strokes will be there. Similarly, if a motor has a certain RPM—so many revolutions per minute—that many revolutions will be there because it is set that way. If the motor has a will of its own and you buy this motor, you have had it. This will-based motor will not have the same revolutions all the way. Now there will be a hundred revolutions, if it is supposed to do a hundred, and now fifty and now forty, and in between it will want coffee. A will-based motor is not a machine. It is no longer mechanical.

We are not totally programmed. If we were programmed, we would not require all this talking. That is why there are no swamis among the cows and buffaloes. They are programmed to behave. That is *Isvara srusti*. It is not their will. The Blue Cross people, who have an animal park, want to make cats and dogs vegetarians. That is interference. Those animals are carnivorous. In your own house if there is a cat or dog, that would be okay. But this is an animal park. They say you should not feed these animals with non-vegetarian stuff. Carnivores are carnivores! Let them be carnivorous. Let us not interfere with them. You decide about yourself. Do we want to be carnivorous, or do we want to be herbivorous? We can decide! I am told that

we are evolutes of monkeys; monkeys are vegetarians even today; and, if we are evolutes of monkeys, we should be even better vegetarians.

The animals behave as they are programmed to behave. We are not totally programmed. We have to perform actions using our will. Every action is born of us. It has to have our stamp of approval. And maybe our stamp is an ignorant stamp, or maybe it is an innocent stamp. Or it can be an informed stamp. If it is an ignorant stamp, definitely I can change when I am informed.

People repeat the same mistakes. Do you know why? If they perform an action consciously, they can change. But things happen to them. It seems that their wisdom is all in one corner, and the happening is entirely different. A reaction is totally mechanical.

THE PARTICULAR WAY OF THINKING WHICH BUILDS UP SADNESS AND SORROW IN US IS A HAPPENING - A REACTION

Any sad situation, whether frustration or despair, which you do not want to have, is definitely a reaction. It does not have our approval. It takes us along with it. Without our being there, there cannot be sadness. I become the very thought, and one thought leads to another. I work myself up to a situation of sad thinking; and, therefore, I become sad.

The *I* is very much in the midst of the whole thing. Our will is the *I*. That *viveka* (*what is to be done and what is not to be done*) is not there. I know that I do not want to be sad. But then that wise *I* is taken care of, and I think myself into sadness.

When I do not accept a fact, there is a certain type of thinking, and that thinking is a reaction. It is not an action. Thinking can be a conscious affair, or it can be mechanical. Any sad situation, whether it is frustration or despair or sorrow (all of these are sorrow), or whatever the situation is which you do not want to have, it is definitely a reaction. It is a happening. It is a particular way of thinking.

YOU NEED NOT STOP MECHANICAL THINKING – WHEN YOU SAY, “MY MIND HAS BEEN THINKING MECHANICALLY,” YOU HAVE ALREADY BECOME FREE FROM BEING MECHANICAL

I am not telling you that you should stop mechanical thinking. I am asking you, “Are you aware that the thinking is mechanical?” If you are aware that the thinking has been mechanical, are you mechanical?

Then how are we going to stop this mechanical thinking which is a happening? Well, you need not stop mechanical thinking. You only have to know that this thinking is mechanical. Please understand me well. I do not want you to stop mechanical thinking. Otherwise, you will have new problems. You will say, “Swamiji, I have a lot of mechanical thinking.” It will be a

new complex contributed by the Swami. You have enough problems. I do not want to contribute to your complexes a new basis for self-criticism.

I am not telling you that you should stop mechanical thinking. I am asking you: “Are you aware that the thinking is mechanical?” If you are aware that the thinking has been mechanical, are you mechanical? If a machine is revolving a hundred times per minute and suppose the motor knows “I am revolving a hundred times per minute,” then it is no longer a machine. Thus, when you say, “My mind has been thinking mechanically,” you have already become free from being mechanical.