

Satsang with Sri Swami Vidadatmananda Saraswati
Arsha Vidya Gurukulam
Jivanmukti

Question

Is a *jivan mukta* free from all impulses such as greed, anger etc.?

Answer

A *jivan mukta* is one who is liberated while still in this human body. He is a free and wise person, and is indeed free from impulses such as greed and anger. These impulses are born of ignorance. Anger arises from frustration, when I do not get my way. I become intolerant of the one who does not conform to my expectations. Anger is the result of my frustration with myself; I feel helpless and that helplessness or frustration results in anger. There is an agenda, and when my expectation is not fulfilled I am unhappy and angry. A wise person has no personal agenda and is, therefore, free from expectations; there is no cause for anger or greed. Even if a wise person has an agenda it would be for the well being of others.

If the wise person experiences a bout of anger, it would be because of habitual nature, and will not last. Pujya Swamiji gives the example of a Tanjore doll, which is heavy and broad at its base. It may oscillate if you try to topple it, but will come back to its original position. Similarly, even if a wise person momentarily succumbs to a base impulse, he recovers from it promptly.

Liberation implies freedom from the bondage of greed, anger etc. The presence of anger indicates that I am controlled by my impulses and my free will is not available to me. Being liberated truly means being free from one's inner impulses and compulsions.

Question

Can an ordinary person become a *jivan mukta*?

Answer

An ordinary person can become a *jivan mukta*. It is not that a person is born to be a *jivan mukta*; rather, whoever is born can become a *jivan mukta*. It is not easy. It is the result of a great deal of effort. Anyone who makes the right effort can become a *jivan mukta*.

Question

If a liberated soul does not have any attributes, how can it experience bliss?

Answer

We should understand that Atman does not have attributes, regardless of whether it is liberated or not liberated. There is the Self, which is always liberated and always free from attributes. It is that attribute-less Self, which somehow identifies with this body and as though becomes possessed of attributes. A liberated person knows that he is attribute-less, despite 'possessing' these attributes. In fact, it is the ego that feeds *samsāra* and it is the ego that is liberated; it recognizes its true nature as being Brahman, and knows that it is ever liberated. For example, a golden ornament feels limited as long as it thinks that it is confined to a name and form; it feels different from other ornaments and even from gold itself. When the ornament comes to know that gold is its true nature, it is a 'liberated' ornament. It does not look at other ornaments as separate from it; it knows itself to be the self of all. It becomes aware that it is but gold in a particular form, whereas, formerly, it thought that it was restricted to its own form. Its form, however, remains the same. Similarly, a liberated person continues to have his gross and subtle bodies, and continues to interact with the world, and various experiences continue to take place at the level of his mind and personality. The wise person knows he is the witness of these experiences; he does not identify with any of them. It can be said that he does not label himself. For example, if a venture is successful, he does not call himself successful. He does not call himself a doer or an enjoyer¹.

¹ Transcribed and edited by Malini, Krishnakumar (KK) S. Davey, and Jayshree Ramakrishnan.