

It Is a Moral Choice - II

We are often referred to as seekers. What is it that we are seeking? In the Vedic tradition we will normally say God or Self-realization or *mokṣa*. In the Buddhist tradition, it's *nirvāṇa*. In the Christian one, the Kingdom of God or Heaven. And the saints assure us no matter what the name, the goal is the same, the essence is the same.

Our seeking normally goes through certain stages. Usually the first stage is seeking something external to ourselves: "Realization is something that I am going to get. It is an attainment for me to achieve." Ultimately we begin to understand that as we are already That, it is something to be recognized. And, therefore, Ramaṇa Maharṣi said that sooner or later you have to find out who you are. You have to recognize what is already there. We have to distinguish between what is real and what is not real.

This search normally leads to more and more rarified stages of subjectivity until all the names and forms are eliminated completely in *nirvikalpa samādhi*. Then, by analysis, it is recognized that there is something totally unknowable that knows the experience of *nirvikalpa samādhi*. But then, we have understood something, but how does it affect our normal life?

If we haven't already done so, we still have to sublimate the names and forms and affirm the presence of that unknowable in all names and forms. We recognize that the essence of ourselves and all names and forms is totally unknowable. We accept the essence on faith. When we accept it on faith and are prepared to live by it, then gradually it reveals to our minds, it confirms in our minds, its reality. It in itself remains unknowable, but it confirms to us its reality.

However, strangely enough, this is not the end of the journey. What remains is what has always been with us, and we call it moral choice. All the way along in our spiritual life there is a moral choice to choose the higher rather than the lower. It always means a double sacrifice. We sacrifice the lower for the higher, but we also sacrifice what could be called the sensual for the spiritual, meaning something tangible for something less tangible.

That moral choice never leaves us because ultimately we have to settle for something we cannot grasp or control in any way. The choice becomes: Do we want to live for something we can never grasp or do we want to possess something, even if it is only knowledge? Thus till the very end this choice is being made until the final culmination where we want nothing and live for That alone.

Thus, the choice is always twofold: the higher instead of the lower, and from a sensual point of view, from an ego point of view, it always means that which is less interesting instead of that which is more interesting. But the true part of us knows that it is the right choice. And that brings its own satisfaction.