

Liberation Is From I and Mine

The scriptures declare that mind is the cause of both bondage and liberation in the human being. In what way is it the cause of bondage, and how does it bring about liberation? The great sage Vyāsa said, “Bondage is I and mine. Liberation is not I and not mine” Another way of expressing it is that liberation is a transformation of the mind from being self-centered to being God-centered.

That doesn't mean having God as an object of our mind. Our normal way of understanding this transformation is that the self or the ego now being the object of our mind, we're going to change that object into God. But Vyāsa's description is much better. It is a negation of the I, a negation of the object. It is a transformation from I and mine to an absence of I and mine. It's a transformation from an identification or a feeling of separateness to an absence of an identification or feeling of separateness. When all is one there is no sense of identification. Everything is our own Self. When everything is our own Self we want nothing, have nothing and are no one. But we very much are.

It is in this light that we can see the way our mind normally functions. Our goal is God-realization. Our mind doesn't normally see it as an absence of I and mine, but as something that the ego is going to achieve. We may say that our goal is heaven. Again self-centered. We may say that our goal is to have a better birth—self-centered. Our goal is God-realization—self-centered. Our real goal is to leave all self-centeredness behind, so that the idea of I and mine cannot enter the mind at all.

To do this we must engage not only our intellect, but our feelings and our will. The intellect has to keep reminding the mind that the goal is an absence of self-centeredness. The feelings need to have a feeling of oneness with all things instead of a feeling of separation. And the will has to be determined to bring about this transformation. Liberation is all in the mind. It is to be liberated from I and mine.