

Part 20 (...Chapter VI continues) Seven States or Planes of Wisdom

Last time we discussed the fourth of the seven states or planes of wisdom: satvāpatti or natural turning away from sense pleasure and dwelling in truth. We also talked about four simple ways towards this: (1) do what should be done because it needs to be done and not for any other purpose, (2) refrain from doing what should not be done, knowing intuitively that it should not be done, (3) live a simple and natural life, and, (4) live in accordance with the teachings, engage yourself in appropriate activity and accept whatever happens naturally.

V. Asamśakti or natural and total non-attachment or freedom

Vāsiṣṭha's seven states or planes of wisdom is a virtual roadmap for the unraveling of conditioning and a simultaneous revealing one's true nature—if one practices sincerely. This practice is the holding on to principle in the heart and ensuring that the mind and body reflect them in full measure without compromise.

With full focus on the mind and way we feel about things, it may seem that the 'religious element' or the 'spiritual element' has not been addressed very much as perhaps one is accustomed to hearing about.

Conditioning and its deep roots in the heart and mind are all that keeps us from God or the realization of our true nature just as turbulent waters keep one from seeing the pond's depths. All else has value only if it leads one to tackle and wipeout conditioning—root and branch.

1. Total non-attachment or freedom and conviction in the nature of truth happen together.

It may surprise some to hear that non-attachment is also called 'freedom'. The very term 'non-attachment' may imply cold and perhaps even insensitive. A closer look will show that it is actually the opposite. Attachment is usually based on duality and usually favors a 'status quo' of some sort. Duality gives rise to the urge to unite in some way and the condition or status quo one expects seems to give durability to this unity as not only must is unity desired but it must last or endure.

This is because there is an underlying unity or oneness in which duality seems to appear. If there wasn't existing oneness – there could never be any feeling of unity by any means. The feeling of non-attachment is a shift from the outer jugglery of artificial unity to abide in the oneness that is the truth of things. Any sincere effort towards the realization of unity or oneness, requires

stepping back from the midst of outer arrangements or one will feel pulled in both directions and the force of the outer may feel stronger and formidable.

With sincerity and sustained unwavering practice while being free or relatively free of outer arrangements – one will gradually start to experience and abide in oneness. Freedom and conviction in the nature of truth are experienced proportionate to the degree there is outer non-attachment and sustained unrelenting practice – these happen together.

2. The state of non-attachment or freedom is asamśakti.

There is inner peace and joy, independent of external objects or internal mental states. As long as the feeling of ‘other’ – whether this be towards a person, condition or thing is in the mind – real peace is not possible. As long as one lives with personal interests first – the feeling of otherness strengthens.

When one lives a life based on oneness as the truth of things – the feeling of otherness thins out of the mind. As the feeling of otherness thins in one’s mind – attitudes such as likes and dislikes also thin away. One learns to do what needs to be done wholeheartedly – because it needs to be done and the feeling of non-attachment blossoms within.

When the feeling of non-attachment blossoms within, one experiences a sense of freedom. This freedom is freedom of being and this can only be experienced in letting go. One has tremendous clarity as in this inner freedom – one can do what is best in all conditions, all the time without being bound by ‘what’s in it for me’ and ‘my people’. All ties keep one from clear perception and doing what needs to be done because it needs to be done and wholeheartedly. This is why non-attachment or asamśakti is also called freedom.

In this inner freedom or asamśakti, the heart and mind soar high, free of the fetters of ‘me’ and mine’ and one stands with all things instead of outside them. There is a feeling of real inner expansion and this can only be had in letting go.

3. Perception of the world gives way to the feeling of being.

With inner expansion, the ties that bind are let go and the focus dwells on the inner expanded state or on the sense of being. This is a big shift from dwelling on the perception on the world comprised of many things which are all outside. As you rest in the sense of being, it begins to be experienced as more and more real and the world outside feels like an appearance of sorts.

Gradually, the perception of things outside feel even more of an appearance till even this recedes when all distinguishing characteristics disappear. In this feeling of oneness, one experiences peace and non-duality.

4. Though engaged in ‘worldly activities’, one is established in an inner vision of non-duality.

When one is very sincere and focussed in practice, external activity may need to be thinned out so all of one’s energy and awareness and flow uninterruptedly. Gradually, the feeling of oneness strengthens and then one is able to resume worldly activity without loss of this inner vision.

Then, though one seems to be engaged in outer activity, one’s vision is fully introverted. One is at peace, the mind unconditioned, and the practice of yoga continues steadily.

Summary

Today, we discussed the fifth of the seven states or planes of wisdom: asamśakti or natural and total non-attachment or freedom. Towards this, we discussed...

1. Total non-attachment or freedom and conviction in the nature of truth happen together.
2. The state of non-attachment or freedom is asamśakti.
3. Perception of the world gives way to the feeling of being.
4. Though engaged in ‘worldly activities’, one is established in an inner vision of non-duality.

Next time

We take up the sixth of the seven states or planes of wisdom: padārthābhavanī or natural cessation of objectivity.

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