
Sahaj Marg Study Group

Life and Liberation

Set 3, Handout 2 (From Principles of Sahaj Marg, Set 1, Pages 242-244)

All life is struggle. Wherever we look, we see life involved in this frantic struggle. The animals of the earth, the aquatic life in the rivers and oceans of this world, the birds of the air—all are undergoing this struggle, and man is no exception. Just take a fish out of water and see how frantically it struggles for life. Throw a land animal into water and see its frantic and untiring struggle **to get back into its own element for survival**. Thus each type of created life has its own native element in which alone it can live and function.

Man thinks he is in his element. And because he can fly and swim, he imagines he is in his element in all the elements. He imagines that just because he has discovered and perfected vehicles that can take him deep under water, and also high up into the atmosphere and into the near vacuums of space beyond, he has conquered the elements. Why then does he still struggle for existence? Why is he miserable? The poor think that once their poverty is eradicated they will be happy. But look at the rich and the affluent. They, too, are miserable. A stonecutter is able to sleep in a jolting lorry on a bed of crushed stones under the hot sun, but a rich man is unable to find sleep even on a comfortable cushioned bed, with his room air-conditioned for the very purpose of insuring restful sleep.

The rich imagine that power and position will give them satisfaction and a sense of well-being; but the higher they rise, the more enemies they create, and the effort merely to retain their position seems to need efforts far beyond their capacities. Stresses appear, leading to breakdown of the physical constitution, mental embitterment, emotional imbalance, etc. Sleep is the first thing they lose, then progressively, health, peace of mind, happiness—and if they do not check the all-round decline in time, life itself.

Perhaps they abandon the quest for wealth and power, and seek solace in intellectual pursuits or artistic pursuits, instead! It does not take them long to recognize that here, too, the happiness and peace of mind that they are searching for, eludes them. We thus find unhappiness, misery, and struggle to pervade all of human existence, and none born into this physical existence is free from it.

The animals, birds, and fishes struggle only for physical existence. We humans struggle physically, mentally, and emotionally as well; having come to this conclusion, we rest, embittered and cynical misanthropes. Had we gone one more step ahead in that reasoning, we would have stumbled upon the real answer. 'Spiritual' is the term missing in the sequence, 'physical, mental, and emotional.' The true fact is that the land, air and water, which we consider to be

our elements, and which we have conquered, are **not** our true elements. Hence, we are like fishes out of water.

There are certain varieties of fish that spend a fairly long time on land when they come out to spawn. Are they happy there just because they are able to live a little longer on land than other species of fish? No! They are constantly flipping and flopping about, anxious to get their job done and to get back into their true element. Whales live in the oceans, and dive to the farthest depths, but they have to surface once in a while to breathe, because they are mammals. So the ability to live in an alien element is at best a temporary ability. For permanent existence—and existence of well-being, of peace of mind, of harmony—one's own natural environment is essential.

And here we come to the crux of the matter. What is man's natural habitat? Where is it? The Master answers that our real home is **there** where we have come from; and all our struggles of this physical existence reflect our deep longing to get back there, where we truly belong. A fish out of water frantically struggles for very life. It does not know why it is doing this. It cannot know that it has to get back into water. But it struggles strenuously nevertheless. If it gets back, it swims away serenely, once again in harmony with its nature. Our struggles are like that. That is why all humans, without exception, struggle here in this life: the poor as much as the rich, the sick as well as the healthy, the powerless as well as the powerful, the ignorant as well as the learned; all struggle. It is a natural struggle to get back where we belong, and in this struggle we are as blind as the fish that knows not what it wants, but is pressed forward by its inner nature to struggle, and go on struggling, until it gets back to its element or dies in the process.

If we recognize the true nature of our struggles as the effort to get back to our original element—our real home as Babuji calls it, the spiritual abode of truth, bliss, and harmony—then our efforts begin to have a definite orientation. Our efforts, now geared to a definite goal, become purposeful. Forgotten are the merely human aspirations of health, wealth, power, and position. We recognize them as being temporary and ephemeral because our very existence here, being in an alien element, is temporary and ephemeral. That is, our efforts now take on the character of a guided approach to our goal of realizing (finding and establishing ourselves in) our true, original home.

This is the reason why abhyasis feel at home in spiritual gatherings. Wherever such gatherings are held, abhyasis say how like Basant Panchami the atmosphere has been. During those few days all worries evaporate, all problems disappear, and amazingly, even thoughts of 'home' are gone. When abhyasis wonder at this last phenomenon—that even the home and family are forgotten—the answer is, "How can one remember a home when one is in it?"

This is the liberation—however temporary it may be—that Master allows us to experience, which gives us peace, harmony, and well-being. All that we have to

do is make it permanent, and this is the spiritual pursuit in which we are all involved, and which, by Babuji's benevolent grace, all sincere practicants of Sahaj Marg will achieve.