
Sahaj Marg Study Group

The Gift of Liberation

Set 5, Handout 8 (From 'My Master', pages 155 - 172)

The ultimate aim of *sadhana* under the Sahaj Marg system of raja yoga is rather loosely designated as being liberation or realisation. These two terms are generally used interchangeably, as if they were synonymous, and represented the same condition or state of Being. Those closer to Master, who have had more experience of Master's use of the terminology of his system, appreciate that there is not merely a difference between these two words, but the difference is indeed a large and significant one. Sometimes a third term is used, this being 'the perfect human condition' or the 'condition of the perfect human being.' Thus the goal is generally described in these terms, the exact term used depending on the person's degree of intimacy with Master, and his own growth and experience in the system.

As far as I have been able to understand this subject, it appears to me that liberation is a lesser order of attainment when compared to realisation. In Sahaj Marg terms liberation is indeed of a far higher level than the traditional religious emancipation labeled *mukti* or *moksha*, both of which generally refer to a state of salvation from which there is no return to the physical plane of existence. They, however, do not preclude rebirth in higher non-physical realms of existence, of which Master says there are many. So *mukti* and *moksha* are limited concepts, whereas the liberation of Sahaj Marg yoga offers a permanent release from the chain of births and deaths.

There is a more significant difference. Traditional religion seems to provide, by and large, for release only after death. This is called *videha mukti*, that is *mukti* after one has vacated the body. The *jivan mukta* state, that is the state of release in this life itself, while one is yet alive, is stated to be a very high order of *mukti*, possible only to a very few. Under Sahaj Marg the emphasis is on the attainment of liberation in this life itself, here and now, while one is living a normal life as a householder.

My Master effects the transformation of the abhyasi by using the Divine force and infinite power available to him. This power is used to awaken the dormant spiritual forces in the person of the abhyasi. By this process, coupled with the process of cleaning, this physical body is slowly transformed by breaking up every atom and reconstituting it until, finally, no tinge of materiality exists in it. For all practical purposes it is a physical, material body both in appearance and function, but in reality it is now a pure spiritual body. Such a pure body is said to be beyond the five *koshas* or sheaths. Such a body alone can be the body of a liberated soul. Persons who have attained this state under my Master's guidance are said to possess such bodies. Such a liberation, where a liberated soul

occupies a spiritualised, divinised body and continues to live out its allotted span of earthly existence, is what is offered by my Master. We don't have to wait for death to be liberated. This may have been necessary under other disciplines where the vehicle of the soul, the body, could not be purified and divinised to contain a liberated soul. But my Master is able to reconstitute the gross physical body by working on what, for the lack of a better expression, can be called the atomic level into a new spiritual body. This he does by the power of his transmission.

When I requested Master to give a short definition of liberation, Master said, "In one who has been liberated what is first broken is 'time'. Time is destroyed first." This is clear enough as far as it goes, implying that one who is liberated is no longer subject to the sway of time. For such a person all temporality ceases to exist, and one steps into eternity. I have long tried to understand this concept of eternity. The only clear understanding I have arrived at is that eternity does not mean unlimited extension in time. It seems to be of a different order of existence. My understanding today is no whit better than when I started meditation under my Master ten years ago. But on one occasion I had an experience of eternity which I can never forget. It was towards the end of 1968. I had gone to Shahjahanpur to be with Master for a couple of days while I was on tour in northern India. One morning Master gave me an individual sitting. I felt deeply absorbed, and lost to this world. Towards the end of the sitting, for a few minutes, I suddenly felt myself floating in an ocean of brilliance. Brilliance is perhaps not the right description. Luminescence would be more apt. All around me was nothing but sky - nothing but sky above me, below me and all around me. Perhaps I should call it space instead of sky. I was seated in the usual meditation posture, and I was floating serenely in that space which was a luminous soft blue in appearance. There was no one else, nothing else, in the whole universe but me. Not even Master! It was an ecstatic experience. Even when I became momentarily conscious during meditation the impression persisted that I was alone, absolutely and blissfully alone, in the whole immensity of space! After the sitting Master asked me how I felt. I described my experience to him. Master said, "You have been given a taste of Eternity. This generally comes at higher levels but you have been given it today."

I asked Master how this state could be made permanent, my own as it were. Master laughed and said, "*Puja* is the only method. I mean meditation, as we are taught to do it. But I tell you one thing. In *puja* the head must bend in submission. If you are conscious that you are doing *puja* then that is not *puja*. I will tell you another thing. In *puja* we go to God to receive His Grace. God has everything. After all He is God! So He has everything. But what happens when we go to Him? We go with small bags. What can He fill inside such a small bag? Therefore we must become deserving vessels for His Grace. This is essential. And this is what we do by our practice of meditation and cleaning. We are transformed into vessels fit to receive His Grace when He wishes to pour it into us.

"There is another thing I will tell you. People talk of searching for God. This is not the right attitude, in my opinion. If you search for anything that thing will be hiding from you. If search is there then that thing for which you are searching will make the distance between you longer and longer. **When I know God is there, where is the question of search?** Really speaking searching for God means searching for yourself. That is, the idea of search is cut off. What is the use of wasting your whole life in searching? We must **do**, not search." Master let out a great laugh and continued, "You know your son is at home, but you go and search for him in the market! I will tell you one thing. Search in your house, your heart, and you will find Him!"

On one occasion when Master was present at Madras, I had an individual sitting with sister Kasturi. The sitting was very deep. I felt myself plunging deeper and deeper into a sort of non-conscious state. At the peak of this feeling I found myself in total darkness. There was a pinpoint of brilliance in front of me. I felt I was moving fast towards it. I looked back, and found a small aperture of light there too. By its reflection I could see I was moving fast on some sort of rails. I knew I was inside a long tunnel. I faced forwards again. I moved on rapidly, and suddenly found myself on my feet outside the tunnel, in brilliant sunlight. I found a very large crystal ball some distance away from me. I looked into it from where I was, and found the face and figure of my Master in it. As I walked towards it, and covered half the distance to it, I found the figure of my Master had changed into that of Lalaji, the Grand Master. I continued to walk towards it. As I came up to it, I found the figure had changed again. Lalaji had vanished, and what I found was my own face in it! I related this experience to Master immediately. Master was very pleased. He smiled and said, "This is a very good experience. People say lose yourself and find God, but in reality you lose yourself to find your Self. This is the truth, and I am happy you experienced it in your meditation. It is all Lalaji's Grace."

Later, the same evening, Master was alone for a brief period. He reverted to my experience and said, "Meditation is the only way. But it must be correctly done. Meditation really means that the mind may be accustomed to the Centre itself, instead of working elsewhere. At the human level the mind is wandering hither and thither, dragging us with it. It takes work from us! But by meditation we regulate it, and start taking work from it. I tell you an important thing. The mind is the instrument of realisation. It is also the instrument of our downfall. Now people talk of concentration. Concentration is the method of revelation. Meditation is the method of realisation. Concentration can reveal the nature of the object or thing concentrated upon, but it cannot lead to realisation. If you want to know the condition of an abhyasi just concentrate upon it, and the condition will come before you. Verify with the heart and it will give you the signal whether it is correct. But I am telling you a very important thing. Concentration can reveal everything but not God. If you concentrate upon God you cannot see Him because there is no thought! Only the Divine can see the Divine! Now people

want to reach their goal. But the main difficulty is that people turn their backs to the sun and then search for it. Who is to blame if they find only shadows and not the Reality? If you want to move towards the sun, close your eyes and then walk towards it. Walk in faith. Now the question comes, how to walk with closed eyes. You may stumble and fall. So you need someone's help to guide you. You need a Master who can walk to the sun with his eyes open, and who can take you safely with him to your goal."

Continuing the same subject, Master said, "The Master must be a capable guide, one who has himself traveled on this road and reached the destination. Otherwise the person cannot guide us. So we have to be careful in the choice of a guide. Such a person must himself have become merged in the Ultimate. Then only he can help us. A guru is for service of others, but nowadays it is difficult to find a person who is out to serve humanity. Rather they want service themselves. I will tell you an enjoyable story. A person went to a guru and prayed to be accepted as his disciple. The guru made a lot of conditions. He said the chela must wake up early in the morning and prepare the guru's breakfast. Then he must wash the guru's clothes, prepare lunch and have everything ready. In the afternoon when the guru rests he must massage his feet. It went on like this. The person listened patiently. When the guru finished, this person quietly said, 'please accept me as your guru!' Is it not an enjoyable story? There is no harm in a disciple offering personal service to the Master, but the Master must not demand it. When the disciple needs personal service the Master must be willing to offer it. That is real humility and surrender. One who has surrendered to the Ultimate must feel that he has surrendered to the whole of creation. That is the true state of surrender. Really speaking, merging starts from love, and surrender starts from love and dependency. Don't try for surrender, because when you try the self is there. The real way is to be dependent. Try to create total dependency. I am telling you one thing. Surrender is complete only when you feel yourself surrendered to every being even if it is a fool or an animal. A true state of surrender makes absorbency possible. When there is absorbency in the Divine then every cell of the body becomes energy, and then that becomes its own absolute, that is, it becomes Divine! Master prepares the field. The Divine does the work of transforming matter into energy, and energy into its absolute. You see the wonder of this work! It all comes when one attracts the gaze of the Master. What do we know of God? A direct approach to God is not possible. A guru of caliber alone can lead the abhyasi up to God.

"God is the subtlest Being, and you must try to become as subtle as possible. The more subtle you become the better, because by this method you come nearer to God. So please try to become more subtle. My problems are only so long as the abhyasi has not crossed the *pind pradesh* (heart region). All the work is only in this region. Also much time is taken in this region for the work. After crossing the heart region my work becomes easy. When the rings of splendour are crossed then I have nothing to do with the abhyasi. After that Nature takes up the work. Now you may ask, 'If Nature takes up the work after the rings of

splendour are crossed, why cannot Nature do the work in the lower regions too?' It is a small matter. Nature can doubtless do the work but some persons are 'permitted' to do this work, that is all. Such persons are the Masters of caliber, because when permission for the work is given, the powers necessary for it is also automatically given. This is the secret of Nature that when work is given the necessary power to do the work is also given."

On one occasion Shri Ishwar Sahai spoke about realisation. His idea appealed to me very much. He said, "What is realisation? Most people don't know what this means. Some persons think that when they have a feeling of peace, of *shanti*, that is realisation. Some people think that if by their practices they get some happiness, that is realisation. But all this is not correct. Realisation means to become all that God is, and to have all that He has, that is, to become Divinised. That is what realisation really means."

I have heard several persons speaking on this subject, but wishing to know from Master himself what realisation really means, I requested him to explain this. Master said, "Realisation is such a thing that if some one discovered its secret as to what it really is, then he will not want it. I am telling you one thing. When I was an abhyasi, I one day asked my Master Lalaji Maharaj, 'Sir, you have spent a lot of time and effort on me and, from my side, I have also put in considerable effort. Is it all only for this?' Lalaji answered, 'Yes, all this has been done only for this. But you seem to think little of this condition. May I ask you a question? Suppose I were to take away this condition from you for just 5 minutes, how will you feel?' I told my Master that rather than have this happen it would be preferable for me to die! Then Lalaji answered, 'See, realisation is such a condition which we may perhaps think of as valueless, but without it our very existence is impossible.' But," added Master, "I am not prepared to reveal its secret yet. But one thing I will tell you. If realisation can be explained, it will no longer be realisation. If God can be explained or defined He ceases to be God. Both these things can't be limited. I am giving you this hint! I will tell you one more thing. When a person has attained the state of realisation then self is gone. At that stage if you try to meditate, the self will not come to your mind at all."

I was once eager to know how the liberation of a soul can be done, or is done by Master. Master laughed. He said, "Is that all? Liberation is a small thing. I tell you every sincere abhyasi of this Mission will have it. But that is only the beginning of spirituality. Liberation may give some idea of freedom for which people crave. But what is freedom? I tell you one thing. The thieves are all put into jail and locked up. The warders who guard them are also inside the jail. But one thinks himself to be a prisoner while the other thinks he is free. Do you understand the difference? Really speaking both are in prison, but one feels free! So it is in the mind, this idea of freedom. But I tell you one thing, the warden has the idea of freedom but he is really in jail! So the real freedom is when there is freedom from freedom itself."

I requested Master to explain whether death could be considered a liberation in itself. Some people feel that this is so. Master replied, "Death does not solve the problems of life, but it creates intricacies for the next life. Death sends one to another state so that one may not feel the continuity of trouble. There must be some pause in between this life and the next life to come. Men are kept in dungeons. But if they are there for years in a gloomy dungeon they will require a change. So they are brought out to exercise once in a while before they go into it again. Death is like that. Really speaking only fools die, and not the saints. Saints are everlasting in their own regime. So, death is of value for the other troubled persons. For the saints it is an unrevealed object. Now I tell you something very important. Life in life should be our real object."

At one time I had written a letter to Master about this idea of freedom, saying I did not feel free at all, and requested clarification. Master replied to me thus: "Why do you care for liberation when you yourself liberate something for the good of others? What you have asked shows that there is liberty in you but the feeling of liberty is not there. I think you want to develop a feeling of that in yourself. That is, you want to see the eye from the eye!! Care not for what is happening! Await not for what is going to happen! In my opinion freedom is useless if it gives you the idea of freedom. Freedom and feeling cannot remain together. If freedom is there in its naked form the feeling will be away from it, and vice versa."

Some time after this, perhaps four or five months later, I had occasion to write to Master to put before him a peculiar condition of laziness which was developing in my self. I called it laziness in my letter, but it was really a deep-seated disinclination for activity of any sort. It was blissful in a way, but I wanted Master to clarify this condition. Because it pertains to the subject of realisation, I relate this matter here. Master wrote to me in reply, "At the point of realisation a man becomes generally lazy. He likes to live in a place where activity is not there. In such a case the person should be alert that the laziness does not become predominant and his work suffers because of it. **Laziness is the life of the Soul and activity is the life of the ego.** Both should be moderate." Some time later when I personally met Master I discussed this again. Master laughed and said, "Don't worry about it. It is a very good condition for which much prayer is necessary even by sages. I will tell you one thing. I am very lazy myself but I do a lot of work in that condition! I tell you there is activity in inactivity, and that is the highest type of work. Only a *sankalp* is necessary at the beginning that such and such a thing may be done, and it is done. Even the time can be set for it, that it should be completed in so many hours or days, and it will happen exactly like that. But will must be there, a firm unfailing will. By Lalaji's Grace all this is possible."

This 'quiet' or 'rest' of the contemplative mystic has been the wonder of the world. It is apparently contradictory that a person at rest works in a way in which the most active person cannot do so. Ruysbroeck has said, "The paradoxical quiet of the contemplative is but the outward stillness essential to inward work. God is

Eternal Rest! That which to us is action, to Him they declare, is rest." Evelyn Underhill says, "It remains a paradox of the mystics that the passivity at which they appear to aim is really a state of the most intense activity; more, that where it is wholly absent no great creative action can take place." One of the great mystics, Boehme, has written, "The passivity of contemplation, then, is a necessary preliminary of spiritual energy; an essential clearing of the ground. It withdraws the tide of consciousness from the shores of sense, and stops the wheel of imagination." Meister Eckhart, another great mystic, sums up the mystical view thus: "By cutting us off from the temporal plane, the lower kind of reality, contemplation gives the Eternal plane, and the powers which can communicate with that plane, their chance!"

The greatest clue to this mystery is however given by Master himself in his principle of invertendo. Simply put, anything which appears as it does at a lower level appears as its opposite in the higher manifestation. Therefore what appears as action at the normal level appears as inaction at the higher level! I believe this to be the clearest and simplest explanation of this cosmic law which Master has enunciated for us.

A great secret which Master teaches for our quick progress to our goal is that we should destroy our own small creation, which keeps us so tied down to it and to this world. "Destroy your own creation, and God comes! For everything there is a base. If you destroy this base then the Divine comes." This great secret was revealed to me when I referred to him a somewhat vivid dream I had. I dreamt that I was seated near my Master. Suddenly two eggs, or egg-like objects, fell out of my mouth and two snakes came out of them. They were long black snakes. Master said, "Don't allow them to get back inside you. This is your work. In this I can do nothing." I immediately made a strong will, transmitted, and cut the snakes into pieces and threw them away. Interpreting this Master wrote to me, "This is a very good dream, and a revealing one. One is a real egg, and its destruction indicates that the possibility of a next life for you is now destroyed. The other egg indicates your own creation, and its destruction shows that this creation of yours, too, has been destroyed. Really it is a very good dream." And then he concluded with that significant advice, "Destroy your own creation - God comes! For everything there is a base. If you destroy the base then the Divine comes!"

I have called liberation a 'gift'. It is a gift of the Master. Master once told me that the moment most appropriate, or easy, for liberation is the moment of death. He said, "At the moment of death it is very easy to liberate anybody. I just take him and put him up there." He raised his hand, pointing from a low level to a high level, as if removing a bottle from a lower shelf and putting it on a higher shelf!! "Later on it becomes difficult. The soul must not have taken rebirth. Suppose it has taken rebirth and I liberate it, the person it has been reborn as will die! You see this difficulty! And if it has taken several rebirths then nothing can be done. So I say try for it in this life itself. Who is to say whether the Master can be free to

serve you at the exact moment of your death? So try for it now. I tell you one thing. **Heart is heart if it is diverted to God. Soul is soul if it jumps into the ultimate Reality.** We have to try to reach the changeless state. When we have a goal like that then changes are necessary. Changes develop power for the Ultimate growth. There are many intelligent persons, but they don't try to achieve that which is most important. Such people are not really intelligent. You know my definition of intelligence. **Intelligence is that which is inwardly tangible. I call him an intellectual who is inwardly talented - and when talent makes an inward search.** Such a man is intelligent, really speaking!"

Master's generosity is so extreme that it can be classed as nothing but Divine. The Mission is full of abhyasis who, by Master's Grace, have achieved the point of liberation, and are continuing with their further development under his Divine guidance. This we can consider a guru's service due to the abhyasi. But what about cases where Master has liberated souls on other considerations than that of abhyas under him? Such cases reveal his extreme generosity to those who have come under his protection. But having said all this, liberation yet remains a lower order of attainment within the total scope of possibilities available under the Sahaj Marg yogic system. I quote Master once again to support this view. "The goal of human life at its lowest is liberation, and this is thought to be all and enough. But the happier man is he who steps further into the realm of God. In my opinion liberation is a very narrow view of the Reality because we have to travel on and on to reach the Ultimate destination of man. When the charm of liberation is there we forget the next and real step, and that is a common error in human beings. It is also the fault of the Master if he does not encourage his disciples to go to the Highest, which we call *laya avastha* or absorption in Brahman. When a man gets into the central region and crosses the seven rings of splendour he enters into the stateless state. Then he goes further on. At this stage divine wisdom dawns followed, finally, by the vision of the Absolute. But the journey does not end here, because the turn of *laya avastha* now comes. What I have now written is the work of God. Only He can do it. Although it is the end of all our activities still there is something there. This I have referred to as 'swimming in the Infinite'. When the *laya avastha* in Brahman commences there is a very fast rotation below the navel, and there control is needed. This is the work of the Master. Then the same rotary movement travels above and reaches, by stages, the occipital prominence. Now the progress is complete! Sometimes a little force continues in the brain, but this diminishes gradually. Now we have attained a condition which is hardly ever bestowed upon human beings. It is bestowed on him alone who is dead to the world and alive solely to God alone. In other words such a one becomes a 'living dead.' No amount of *bhakti* or *tapas* can bring about such a result. The only way is to attach ourselves to a Master who has got this stateless state, divorcing every other worship except that of God-Absolute in right form."

Liberation is a mere gift, and a cheap one at that, as Master himself asserts. When we ask for this we are merely beggars, though begging for a higher thing

than material benefits. The essence of Sahaj Marg teaching is that we should seek Master for himself alone, not for what he can give us. We should ask for nothing **from** him, we should ask him to give us himself. For such an aspirant a Master longingly waits, hoping against hope that such a one will come. As Master once told me, with near grief in his voice, "It is not as difficult to find a true Master as it is to find a true disciple. This is a very rare thing."

Several years ago, when I was at Tirupathi for the dedication of the Mission's ashram building constructed there, I heard a beautiful and moving story concerning Sister Kasturi. On one of her early visits to Tirupathi with Master, some one had offered to take her to Tirumalai and show her the famous temple to which pilgrims from all over the country flock in thousands all around the year. Sister Kasturi is reported to have smiled quietly, pointed to Master, and said, "When I am with the Creator Himself, what need is there for me to look at His creation?"

The immortal cry of that great Sufi mystic, Rabia, is very revelant here.

*"O God! Whatever share of this world
Thou hast allotted to me,
bestow it on Thine enemies.
and whatever share of the next world
Thou hast allotted to me,
bestow it on Thy friends.
Thou art enough for me."*

*"O God! If I worship Thee in fear of Hell,
burn me in Hell;
and if I worship Thee in hope of Paradise,
exclude me from Paradise;
but if I worship Thee for Thine own sake
withhold not Thine Everlasting Beauty!"*

That we get God through the guru alone is the greatest single truth that Hinduism has stated again and again. The guru is God, says this profoundest of religions. We have to realise the truth of this in our lives.

I had an individual sitting with Sister Kasturi towards the end of 1972, if I remember right. The sitting started off with an obstruction in my experience. I felt that there was a road-roller blocking my path. After some time I overcame this and went on. I found a huge personality seated Buddha-like right in my way. He was golden in colour, and magnificent in appearance. His face was full of an unearthly beauty, and was tinged with the golden glow of the sun. It was Lalaji, the Grand Master. I then seemed to fall forward, and to fall right into him. The sitting ended at this stage.

I related this to Sister Kasturi. She said, "Yes, there was the initial obstruction. I saw it like a hand-cart lying across your path. Your experience of Lalaji is correct. What a wonderful way ours is! Brother, a great secret has been revealed to you today. **When one starts achieving laya with our Master, he is also**

automatically achieving laya with Lalaji. This is the most important secret revealed in this experience." Later I thought over this and it flashed into my mind as a revelation that this would then mean our automatically achieving *laya* in Brahman because the Master and Grand Master have both attained *laya avastha* with Brahman. This experience was given to me by Master's Grace to prove to me, in my own conscious experience, that *laya* with the Master is nothing but *laya* with Brahman! Of God we know nothing. We know not how or where to seek Him. But the guru is one who is sent to us precisely to teach us how, through him, to find and merge with Him!

In the immortal words of St. Augustine:

*"Man is what he loves.
If he loves a stone he is a stone;
If he loves a man he is a man;
If he loves God - I dare not say more,
for if I said
that he would then be God,
ye might stone me!"*

I close this work with a prayer by Blake, a great Western mystic.

*"Oh Saviour! Pour upon me
Thy Spirit of meekness and love.
Annihilate the selfhood in me.
Be Thou all my Life."*

May Master give us of his own Divine Wisdom, enabling us to seek **That** which alone we should seek, and find **Him** alone whom we must find.