Bondage is an Inside Job

BY SADHGURU

Whether one knows anything else or not, one definitely knows that he or she does exist. That means there is a Self. So if there is a Self, it is only a question of realising it. If you ask, 'Can everybody climb Mount Everest?' The answer is - definitely not, because not everybody has the legs and the lungs to do it. But all of us have a Self, and realising it is an inward process. So it is definitely possible. What you can do on the outside depends on many things. When it comes to what is within you, it is just a question of your willingness. If you are interested in living your life with full depth and dimension, if you are interested in experiencing all the possibilities you carry within yourself, how can you live without self-realisation? Self-realisation is not some abstract dimension that is not relevant to people. Every human being should strive for it because the more you realise about yourself, the better you live.

When we say self-realisation, we are not talking about understanding your physiology or your psychology alone, we are talking about understanding the very fundamentals of who you are. When you look at yourself as a person, how did this person happen? This body, when it was born, it was so small. Now it has become so big - how? Was it created from inside or from outside? Definitely, from inside. So that which creates this body is within you; the very source of creation is within you. Without knowing that you do not know much about yourself. So when the very source of creation is within you, self-realisation means befriending the Creator within you. And if the Creator is your friend, what is the problem with life?

So how does one get there? If you want to go to a place where you have not been before in your life, you naturally seek a guide. A guru becomes relevant to you only when you have an aspiration to constantly enhance your life; when you want to touch dimensions within you which you yourself have not been able to touch.

When people hear the word 'guru,' they may have a lot of resistance, essentially because of a certain kind of mindset today, and also because of the misuse of the word. I would say a guru is like a roadmap. If you want to travel uncharted terrain do you want to go without a roadmap? You can. Maybe you will anyway reach there. But there are also chances that to reach a destination, which is right next to you, you may go around the world and come back, or you may never get there.

So when you want to walk uncharted terrain it is intelligent to choose a person who has already walked the terrain. A guru means just that. He has already walked the path so you are just seeking guidance; you are using him as a live roadmap. 'Can't I do it without a guru?' - Definitely you can, but what could be done in a short span of time, you may take lifetimes to do. So it is just simple sense which makes you seek a guide. When the guide is about the inner dimension, we call him guru because - 'gu' means darkness, 'ru' means dispeller. One who dispels the darkness is a guru.

Why a guru becomes very essential when it comes to inner dimensions is because your whole perception of life is through the five senses. If you look at these five sense organs you can clearly see that all of them are outward bound. But now you want to look inward. So what do you do? - Dissection and contemplation are not the answer. You need to look inward in a completely different way. Because you do not have this perception right now, because the inner dimension is not visible to you right now, because the inner perception is not yet turned on, you seek help. Let us say you have a very simple surgery to be done where even an aesthetic is not needed, do you take a knife and do it to yourself? You go to a surgeon, because you trust that he will do it better than you. With self-realisation, it is the same thing. And this is a much deeper surgery than your doctor does. Your doctor cuts only the physical body; but here, you have to cut through many layers of your own misunderstandings and misperceptions. If you are trapped in a prison and you want to get out, it is good to have outside help. This is just like this: because the bondage is an inside job, you need outside help for liberation. That is where a guru fits in.

(Sadhguru, a yogi, is a visionary, humanitarian and a prominent spiritual leader. An author, poet, and internationally-renowned speaker, Sadhguru's wit and piercing logic provoke and widen our perception of life. www.ishafoundation.org)