Pancha Bhuta - The Possibility of the Five Elements

Whether you want to know pleasure or you want to know bliss, for both your system has to become willing. If you want to know pleasure, your mind should come to a certain state of willingness and your physical body should be in a certain level of sensitivity. If you want to know the bliss of being one with something larger than yourself, once again your body has to cooperate. Whether it is the individual human body or the larger cosmic body, essentially, they are made of five elements - earth, water, fire, air and space. In this, the first four elements are the active participants - space is the catalytic force. It is in the lap of this boundless space that these four elements play the game. So, the pancha bhutas are the five elements of nature.

What you call "myself" is just a mischief of these five elements. If you can realize the full potential of this mechanism that you call a human being, or if you want to transcend this one and become one with the larger, cosmic mechanism - whether your desire is for the individual or for the universal - unless you have a certain amount of mastery over these five elements (knowingly or unknowingly, consciously or unconsciously), you can neither know the pleasure of the individual self nor the blissfulness of the cosmic being.

The fundamental sadhana in yoga to gain mastery over these five elements or to purify the elements in the system in such a way that they cooperate is referred to as bhuta shuddhi. If these five elements don't cooperate, you can struggle as much as you want, nothing happens. Only with their cooperation, from the basic aspects to the highest aspect, your life becomes a possibility. This human system is like a doorway. A door has two aspects to it - if you are always facing closed doors, for you doors mean that which stops you. If doors are opening up for you, then for you a door means a possibility of entering into something. In either case, it is the same door, which side of the door you are on decides everything about your life, even in terms of time and space.

Whether you experience this body as a great possibility or a great barrier simply depends on the extent these five elements are cooperating.

India is a land which has seen that kind of sadhana and that kind of focus, that kind of understanding and that kind of mastery for a very long time. For the five elements in nature, there are five temples; geographically, they are all within the Deccan Plateau - four in Tamil Nadu, one in Andhra Pradesh. These temples were created not for worship but for sadhana. People moved from one temple to the other to do sadhana on each of the five elements. At one temple, they did sadhana on earth; then, they went to the next temple to do sadhana in water, and so on. Now, this connection is not there anymore because the sadhana atmosphere has been taken away. This understanding and mastery is generally missing, but the temples still exist. Some of them have maintained that vibration and quality; some of them have become weak.

In Isha Yoga, every sadhana has something to do with organizing these five elements in such a way that you can reap the best out of the individual being and the cosmic nature because both are just a play of these five elements. Whether this individual physical body becomes a stepping stone for your ultimate possibility or a hurdle towards that essentially depends on how you are able to deal with these five elements. What you are right now is just a little bit of earth, water, air and temperature. All the ingredients are out there in the garden; it just takes a little divine touch to make these four things into a throbbing human being.

To sit here and know the water in your body, how it is; the air within you, how it is; the earth within you, how it is; the fire within you, how it is - if you are aware of this, suddenly you live your life with so much ease, people start thinking you are superhuman. But this is not about being superhuman - this is about realizing that being human is super. Being human is super if only you learn to use your humanity and this human mechanism as a possibility, not as a barrier.