

## THE PARADOX OF LIBERATION

What the wise teachers have taught is a subtle teaching which requires subtle understanding. We are told we need to find liberation, the freedom of our soul, but to find this freedom we have to be bound in certain ways, we have to be bound to find our freedom. This world is a difficult place where we have so many trials, so many problems, yet here we are looking for the liberation of our soul while we live in this world. We encounter people who treat us unkindly, who treat us unfairly, who mock or deride us, who cause us difficulty, and still we are bound to forgive them, to find that liberation we are bound to forgive them. If we cannot understand this forgiveness, if we do not realize how we are bound to be forgiving, liberation cannot be ours.

We have duties in this world which means we have to find jobs, we need to be successful in the world, nevertheless when we are successful we make enemies, people are jealous of our success, but we are bound to our duty and bound to liberation, we have to do both. Sometimes if we are kind, generous and good to people, we are accused of acting with ulterior motives, people say there must be a reason why we are kind, generous and good, they do not understand that searching for liberation means we are bound to be kind, good and generous. And sometimes when we are honest and sincere in our dealings with people, they might think they can cheat us, in fact, they might, yet we are bound to be honest and sincere whether people treat us correctly or not, whether they cheat us or not.

The world is full of paradox; we feel inclined to react as others react to us, while we are bound to behave in the specific ways we understand to be our duty. If we are truly

looking for liberation we have to understand the rules of this path, we have to understand how narrow this path we have to walk is, and not stray from it. Those who interfere with our state of being as we try to do what we are supposed to do is not what this is about, this is not about ourself and others, it is only about ourself and Him. When we shift our focus to them, no matter who or what they are, our liberation is interrupted, eternally interrupted.

In our understanding of this we still have to do all that we need to do, and do it correctly, within the bounds of the permissible. Without the appropriate foundation there is no liberation, without the understanding of right and wrong, the adherence to what is permissible, liberation is unattainable. Things in this world are confusing and subtle. The world tells us if we can do anything we want, we are free. Now we live here in Philadelphia, a rather free place, we are free to run amuck, free to engage in almost any activity we can think of as long as it is within the bounds of what is permitted by law, or if a policeman doesn't catch us, but does doing any of this or even running amuck give us freedom? What is freedom, what does our sense of freedom mean, what does it feel like, what does it really come from?

Philosophers talk of different kinds of utopia, they write about freedom in the world, peace in the world. One of the great lies was communism, the promise of freedom through economic equality, we would have our utopia in economic equality. What kind of freedom is it if we cannot say what we think, if we cannot work where we want, if the government does not allow us our relationship with God? When we cannot put our relationship with God into practice, when we do not have a relationship with God, is that any kind of freedom or is it merely being bound to the hypnotizing attractions of the

world? We should be able to understand the subtle difference, understand what it is like to be hypnotized, to be asleep, to fall off the true path believing we are free. We should know whether we are actively engaged in our liberation or in our destruction, and recognize the difference.

This is not something which happens on the outside, this doesn't happen between someone else and us, it happens entirely within our own state of being. Teachers of truth and wisdom talk about it as the ability to remove oneself from the lights, the fascination, the magnetic, hypnotic attractions of the world, and go to that inner world of peace where God exists. If God does not exist within, in our own heart, He does not exist for us; He might exist for others, but He does not exist for us. We must establish that relationship between God and ourselves, it is the point of being here, the point of our coming here, the point of our life, the only peace we can know, the eternal peace which comes from an actual relationship with our Creator.

The world is not a monument to our existence, it is not the end of everything, it is only one phase of existence. We believe there is more than one world, there is the world of souls, there is this world and the next. When we lose sight of the transitory nature of this world and put all our attention on a passing state, we have lost sight of our complete itinerary. If our itinerary includes going to Florida and to Sweden, we should bring both light clothing and clothes for cold weather too; if we forget one part of our itinerary and end up in Sweden with nothing but shorts and a tee shirt, we are in trouble. Since our travels consist of more than this world, if we prepare for this world alone we have made a fundamental mistake about existence—we are not prepared for the rest of the trip. We

need to understand this other portion of our being, of our existence, and the journey we have to prepare for.

When we are given a blessing by an illumined being, what is the blessing? The blessing given is in terms of provision for us in this world and in the next world, sustenance in this world and liberation in the next. We should understand how to sustain ourself in this world, fulfilling all the duties we have in the appropriate way, attentively, bound to them as if they were real. We should also understand the obligation to our soul, the obligation to our Creator because the journey, the itinerary continues, we have to be ready for the next world.

Things which keep us tied to this world, which are monumental in this world, are of little significance in the next, nevertheless the things God binds us to in this world are monumental in the next. The ability to be calm, to be forgiving, to love others even when they do not love us, this is not about our relationship with them, it is about our relationship with God who loves everyone, who is patient enough to wait for them to love Him, He has all the time there is. We are part of His creation, we are part of His plan, we are part of Him, and we should act as He does within the confines of this ephemeral situation. The truly wise teachers give examples of the next world, examples of the qualities which transcend this transitional state, examples of what continues beyond here, what takes us to the next step on this trip we call our life. They tell us there is no need to fight, if we know what to do we can proceed, if not, they can direct us the right way.

We need discipline in our lives, we need to correct ourself, take hold of our own existence. We are no longer babies, we are mature now and maturity entails responsibilities, responsibilities to others, to ourself. The exercise of these responsibilities

is a display of our maturity. Self-absorption, egoism, pursuing titles and status are a display of our immaturity, it is giving credence to this world as if it were permanent, not temporary.

These teachers are travelers, they do not stay in one place very long, they are hard to hold onto. If we want to travel with them we have to ask for help. If we ask them the way they are ready to show us, but first we need to empty ourself of everything we have established so far, we have to give up the beliefs of this world. Understand that we have swallowed such a quantity of beliefs we do not even recognize them—they are so entangled with our inner self we cannot separate them. Once we believed so strongly in this world; now slowly we begin to taste the lies of the world. There is still a lot of cleaning to do, this is our work, the washing, cleaning, the purification we are bound to. We are bound to purification, to acts which purify us. We have to wash and scrub correctly to be clean.

When we polish others we also polish ourself. Understand that when we forgive each other we are forgiven, when we give we are given, when we love we are loved. We create our own dynamic through this dynamic with others, something we must work on with great gentleness, kindness and love, binding ourself to it, not wavering from it. This is the reason we are given a community, all the difficult people give us an opportunity to practice.

If we want to ascend to the next step on this path we need to be in the appropriate state for admission. We have heard these illumined teachers talk about their insignificance, describing themselves as tiny as an ant, and we understand this means they can go into places others cannot. Only the finest particles can pass through a filter,

we should become these finest particles, clarify ourself to be such fine particles. God's love helps us do this work; the more we are committed to this love, the less we worry about the people and things of the world the more significant are the changes which occur. We no longer need the things we used to need, we are no longer bound to the world in the same way because we are bound to Him. The more we are bound to Him the greater our liberation.

May each of us understand this and choose to be bound to Him. May He grant us the glory, the love, the kindness and grace which are His to grant, the compassion, mercy and loving kindness which are His to give, the balm which soothes our hearts, our state of being. May we do His work in a state which is compassionate, merciful, kind and loving enough to represent Him.