

Whose Wealth Is It Anyway?

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Swamiji, I have been travelling around the deserts of Rajasthan, countless alleys and mediaeval stone forts, witnessing the endless chatter of the mind. If only we could grab the space between thoughts, we would have it in the blink of an eye.

I was reading some commentaries on various *Upanishads* by, unusually, a Muslim mystic who spent years with his master in the Himalayas, when this stopped my mind.

Ishavasyaa Upanishad

Shloka 1:

*ishavasyam idam sarvam yat kincha jajagatyam jagat
tena tyektena bhunjitha ma gridhah kasya svid dhanam*

Isha: “that Supreme Lord – that Supreme Being,” *Isvara*

vasyam: “pervades”

idam: “here”

sarvam: “everything”

The *Upanishad* does not say *ishavasyam sarvam* – it adds a words “*idam – ishavasyam idam sarvam*” – which means “It pervades everything, here and now.”

There is the usual blame laid at the door of *Upanishadic* teaching that it is an otherworldly teaching, something to take up after one becomes old or maybe in the next birth. This is not true. *Ishavasyam idam sarvam* – “that Supreme Being pervades everything” – here and now!

Yat kincha jagatyam jagat – “It pervades all that moves and also all that does not move” – which means not only living beings but also non-living things. Now, this distinction of that which moves and that which does not move is a very relative distinction because from the point of view of the physicist, there is nothing that does not move. A piece of stone or a piece of metal does not move for us, because we see it as static. We do not see what is happening inside, but from the point of view of physics – quantum physics – everything is in constant motion. There is nothing that stops. So that Supreme Being pervades everything here, that which appears to move and also that which does not appear to move.

Then the *rishi* says, if the Supreme Being pervades that which moves and that which does not move, “whose wealth is all this anyway?” *Ma gridhah kasya svid dhanam*, which means, “Who does all this belong to?” You? Me? To whom does the cosmos belong? If the Supreme Being pervades everything, then what property belongs to whom?

Therefore he says *tena tyaktena bhunjita* – “Therefore let go, and rejoice!” Now this is, on the face of it, a contradictory statement. Normally rejoicing is linked with having more and more.

One needs to acquire more things in order to rejoice, is it not so? But here is a contradictory

statement which says, “Let go and rejoice.” It can only be understood by someone who has given up something and found the relief, the joy in doing so! Otherwise, this cannot be understood.

The *Upanishad* says that “letting go” can be done when it is understood that the Supreme Being pervades everything. If it pervades everything, then the human being becomes self-sufficient. There is nothing which needs to be added to the human being from outside. The rejoicing is in the understanding that your very self is not different from that *Isha*, that Supreme Being. *Tena tyaktena bhunjita*, therefore let go and rejoice. Don’t get caught up in this circus. Let go and enjoy yourself – *ma gridhah kasya svid dhanam* – whose wealth is this anyway?