

Mysteries of the Soul

Spiritual text 2 - transcending dualities

Spiritual text: The Admonition of the Soul 3:1-13

The properties of the physical world are never constant, they are always in conflict with one other and are incompatible with each other. Therefore, be on your guard o soul, turn away from this appearance. You must no connect with these things.

You, o soul, are simple, they are multiple; you are consistent, they are in mutual conflict; you are devoid of guile, they are deceptive; you are truly existent, they have no true existence; you are a good thing lasting and stable, they are things falsely coloured, illusions, mutable and perishable. Shun them, then; be on your guard lest you be enslaved by them, and thus prevented from attaining to your appointed end. Abandon not, o soul, your essential nature, which is simple, true, and of high dignity; and trust not to these corporeal things, which are multiple, mutually repugnant, deceptive, base, and perfidious; lest you be led astray, and fall into destruction.

How long, o soul, will you continue to be vexed by unsatisfied desires, ceaselessly fleeing from each sensation to its contrary, now from heat to cold and now from cold to heat, now from hunger to saturation and now from saturation to hunger. As long as you are in want of these corporeal goods, you are vexed by unsatisfied desire for them; if you get possession of them, then, all the time that you have them, you are tormented by fear of losing them; and if they quit you, and you no longer have them, then you are freed from that fear, but the loss of them affects you with grief and sorrow.

So lay down, o soul, the cause of this pain and sadness. Do not regret to leave thus sadness, sorrow, fear and pain, caused by unsatisfied desires. Do not let it bother you any longer that you, satisfied in this way, become free of fear and happy. Lay aside then, o soul, the thing whereby you feel these pains and grief. Regret not that in doing so you are quitting griefs and cares, fear, and the pain of unsatisfied desire; and be not annoyed that you attain to satisfaction, freedom from fear, and joy.

For he who prefers unsatisfied desire to satisfaction, fear to absence of fear, and degradation to high dignity, is a fool; he who is a fool goes astray; and he who goes astray comes to destruction. Here below, o soul, is the physical world, the abode of unsatisfied desire, fear, degradation and sadness; there above is the world of the spirit, the abode of satisfaction, freedom from fear, high dignity, and joy.

You have seen both worlds, and had experience of both; now make your choice between them, in accordance with your experience. You can dwell in which of them you will; you will not be repelled or rejected from either. But it is impossible for a man to be at the same time vexed with unsatisfied want and fully satisfied, tormented by fear and free from fear, exalted and degraded, joyful and sorrowful. And therefore it is impossible for a man to combine love for this world with love for the other world. That cannot possibly be done.

You have grown forth, o soul, from a certain tree-trunk; and of that tree you are a branch. However far the branch may go forth from its trunk, there is still connection and contact between trunk and branch whereby every branch seeks nutriment from its trunk. If anything were interposed between the trunk and the branch it would cut off from the branch its supply of nutriment, and so the branch would forthwith wither and die.

Meditate on this, o soul, and be assured that you are destined to return to your creator, who is the trunk out of which you have grown. For that reason, rid yourself of the defilements and burdens of the physical world, by which you are hindered from returning to your own world above and to the trunk out of which you have grown.

If you wish to shun base and ignoble deeds fix your thought on the source whence they issue, and flee from it; that source is love of the things of this world. If you aim at doing noble and divine deeds, fix your thought on the root whence they spring, and plant that root in yourself and foster it; that root is contempt for the things of this world. And in so doing, let there be no false pretence. Take care that you be not, through excess of caution, led on to cowardice, lest you lose courage and the praise it wins, and undergo humiliation and the ignominy that goes with it.

All that is immaterial is true being, and all true being is immaterial. But the space of that which is immaterial always corresponds to the extent of the space of the matter that is assigned to it. Remove yourself, o soul, as far as possible from the dismemberment, but if you are led by the things themselves to the universal unity, accept this willingly, and acquiesce in it; by so doing, you will be relieved from the trouble of care and toil. Even so, in the darkness of the night, a man seeks light from a lamp, which gives him much trouble to keep alight; but when the sun has risen, he no longer needs the lamp, and is released from that trouble.

Beware of applying yourself to things that are low and unworthy, lest the habit of doing so be established in your mind, and you acquire a character repugnant to your proper nature, and, by desire and appetite for these things, be cheated out of your return to your true home. The revered and exalted maker of the universe is the highest of all things; apply yourself then to high things, and, by becoming like to the source of your being, draw nearer and nearer to him who created thee. And know that high things always join themselves to high things, and low things to low things.

You are in the world of things that come to be, and yet you seek to be at rest. But how can anything be at rest in the world of things that come to be? A boat, as long as it floats on the water, cannot be still or at rest; or if at any moment it is still, it is so only by chance, and forthwith the water begins again to shake and toss the things which float upon its surface.

Then only is the boat at rest, when it is taken out of the water, and drawn up on the land, which is the place of the boat's origin, and is on a par with the boat in density and weight; then, but not till then, is the boat truly at rest. And even so, the soul, as long as it is involved in the processes of the physical world, cannot be still, nor be at rest, nor get any respite; but if it returns to its source and root, then it is still and is at rest, and reposes from the misery and debasement of its wandering in a foreign land.