

Where is the question of forgiveness?

BLISS

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Every religion started as a spiritual possibility. Slowly, as the number of people increased and generations passed, it became increasingly organised and distorted. What used to be a spiritual process became a set of codes and modes to follow. A set of beliefs to believe in and slowly lost all its original significance. This is bound to happen to anything in the world.

To a large extent, today, most religions run on either guilt or fear or greed. Look at all the prayers on the planet. Dear God, give me this, give me that - which is greed; save me, protect me - which is fear; forgive me - which is guilt. We are constantly nurturing these emotions. Are they wonderful emotions? Most unpleasant, are they not? Guilt, fear and greed, all of them are most unpleasant within you. Nothing that comes out of this can be good.

If you take the major religions of the world - and make a list of all the things that they label as sin, you will see, just to be alive is a sin. Everything - to breathe and to exist is a sin. This distortion has been done because this is the only way to keep you going to these religious places. This is the only way to keep the organised stuff going. You must be afraid, then you will go; if you are greedy, you'll think if you go you'll get something, so you go. If you are feeling guilty about the very life process

that you are living, you will go for forgiveness.

When you're happy, when you love, when you're generous, when you're doing things, your life is beautiful.

You make the very process of living wrong, then you get forgiveness, you get deliverance, you go to heaven and what not. This is just a ploy, a simple way of controlling large masses of people.

When there is no right or wrong; no good or bad; no sin or virtue, where is the question of forgiveness? For example, are a terrorist's deeds good or bad? You may say bad. In the same situation, who is good and who is bad depends on which side of the border you are. Is India good or is Pakistan good? You are on this side of the border, so obviously Indians are good; Pakistanis are evils. If you were on the other side of the border, you would be arguing for the other side. It all depends on what you identify with. Accordingly, you have your

good and bad. You cannot think beyond that. Your thinking itself is limited to your identifications. The moment you identify something as right or wrong; good or bad, you are dividing the world. Once you divide it, where is the question of inclusion? Where is the question of freedom?

Do you know the story of Mary Magdalene? Mary Magdalene was a prostitute. She wanted to go and see Jesus. But a prostitute going and seeing Jesus was out of question. It was considered a sin and as punishment, she would be stoned to death.



They were kept outside the society. Even today, the situation remains the same. Yet, Mary wanted to see Jesus. She found a time when there were not too many people and approached him. She held him by his clothes because she didn't dare touch him. She said, "People say that you forgive everybody. Whatever your religion, is my business a sin? Can you forgive me also?" Jesus did not ask her to do penance for 12 years to get forgiveness, or any such thing. He did not even say I forgive you. He said, "You're already forgiven." Because the moment you become truly aware of your sins, you are forgiven. Once you create awareness, there is a separation between you and everything that was past. Only when you are not aware is the past is a reality. Once you are aware it is no more a reality, it evaporates.

So, when you meditate, when there is a distinction between you and your thought process, the only thing that connects you with the past is the thought process.

Once there is a separation between you and your thought process, there is a clear space between you and everything that is your 'karma', your past activity. This is freedom. Unless you are free from the modifications from your own mind there is no such thing as freedom. Yoga is described as 'chitha vruddhi nirodha', which means if you become free from the modifications of your own mind, you are liberated. Once you are above your own mind, your sufferings end and you become free.

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