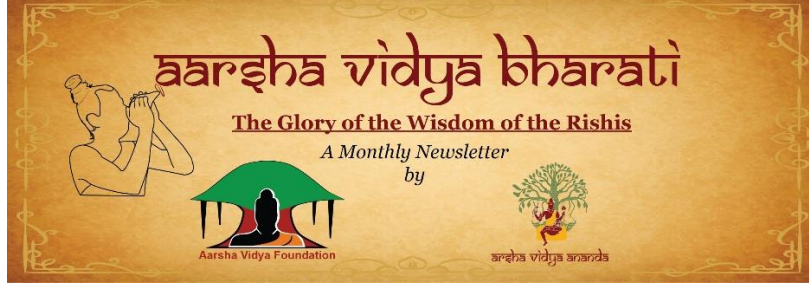

Aarsha Vidya Bharati - July 2021

A monthly newsletter that will bring you more happiness, more wisdom and more freedom



This is one of many articles from our monthly newsletter. Access the [July 2021 issue](#) or read any of the [articles](#).

Wisdom from Vivekachudamani

By Sundara Raghavan, Mumbai

दुर्लभं त्रयमेवैतद्देवानुग्रहहेतुकम् ।
मनुष्यत्वं मुमुक्षुत्वं महापुरुषशंश्रयः ॥

In a frequently quoted verse from *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi*, *Bhagavān Ādi Śaṅkara* states: “Three rare things that can happen only due to the Lord’s grace are - Gaining a human birth, an intense desire for liberation and the blessings of a Guru”.

Among millions of species, the human being is unique. While the other species are programmed to act, only humans have been given free will. Having taken such a birth, which is rare, human beings spend bulk of their time in actions aimed at addressing their insecurities and wants. These two pursuits *Artha* and *Kāma*, and actions born of these pursuits emanate from a sense of inadequacy. People work towards gaining wealth, power, progeny etc. with an erroneous belief that the more we have of these, insecurity and inadequacy can be taken care of. However, insecurity is not completely eliminated.

An [article](#) reveals that even people with fortunes in excess of \$25 million have a litany of anxieties and worries and they believe they require on average one-quarter more wealth than they currently possess! Indeed, there are somethings money (or credit cards) can’t buy.

Infact, all actions seeking security are prompted out of a seeking to be free of insecurities. *Mokṣa*, the real end of human pursuits, is the freedom from one’s sense of inadequacy and limitation. The intense desire to gain this freedom is the *Mumukṣutvam* mentioned in the verse.

Mokṣa is not an object or a place outside of oneself. It is the solution to the problem of not knowing that I am not insecure. The solution is in the form of knowledge. Gaining any knowledge requires a means of knowledge (in this case, Vedanta). A

Guru (*Mahāpuruṣa*), who is well versed in the *śāstras* and rooted in this knowledge is competent to unfold the words of Vedanta and dispel the ignorance to a committed student. In fact, when a committed student meets a competent guru, *mokṣa* is inevitable.

Looking back at my own experience, I recognize the importance of God's grace in going to a Guru. I used to visit a restaurant called "Mani's café" in Matunga, Mumbai every Sunday for breakfast during 2003/04. Sitting there, I would see our Swamiji entering the restaurant with a few of his students almost every Sunday. I used to think that it is good that a Swamiji mingles well with normal persons, which was not consistent with my mental model of saffron clad monks. With that thought, I would pay up my bill and move on. This went on for several weeks. Even though I was aware that a few Gurus like him teach some texts like *Bhagavad Gītā* and I was curious to learn about religion, God etc., I did not take the simple step of asking if I could join his class. It was not until 5 years later that I came across the details of the same Swamiji's classes while attending Pujya Swami Dayanandaji's lecture series and I decided to make use of the opportunity. So, only when God's grace was added, my dormant interest was kindled and given a direction.

Even though, *Bhagavān Ādi Śaṅkara* puts *Mumukṣutvam* ahead of a Guru's blessings, it could be the other way also, like in my case. It was my teacher who showed that my interest to know more about religion or God was nothing but a manifestation of an unfulfilled desire to be free (*Mumukṣutvam*) - which is an important qualification for a student of Vedanta.