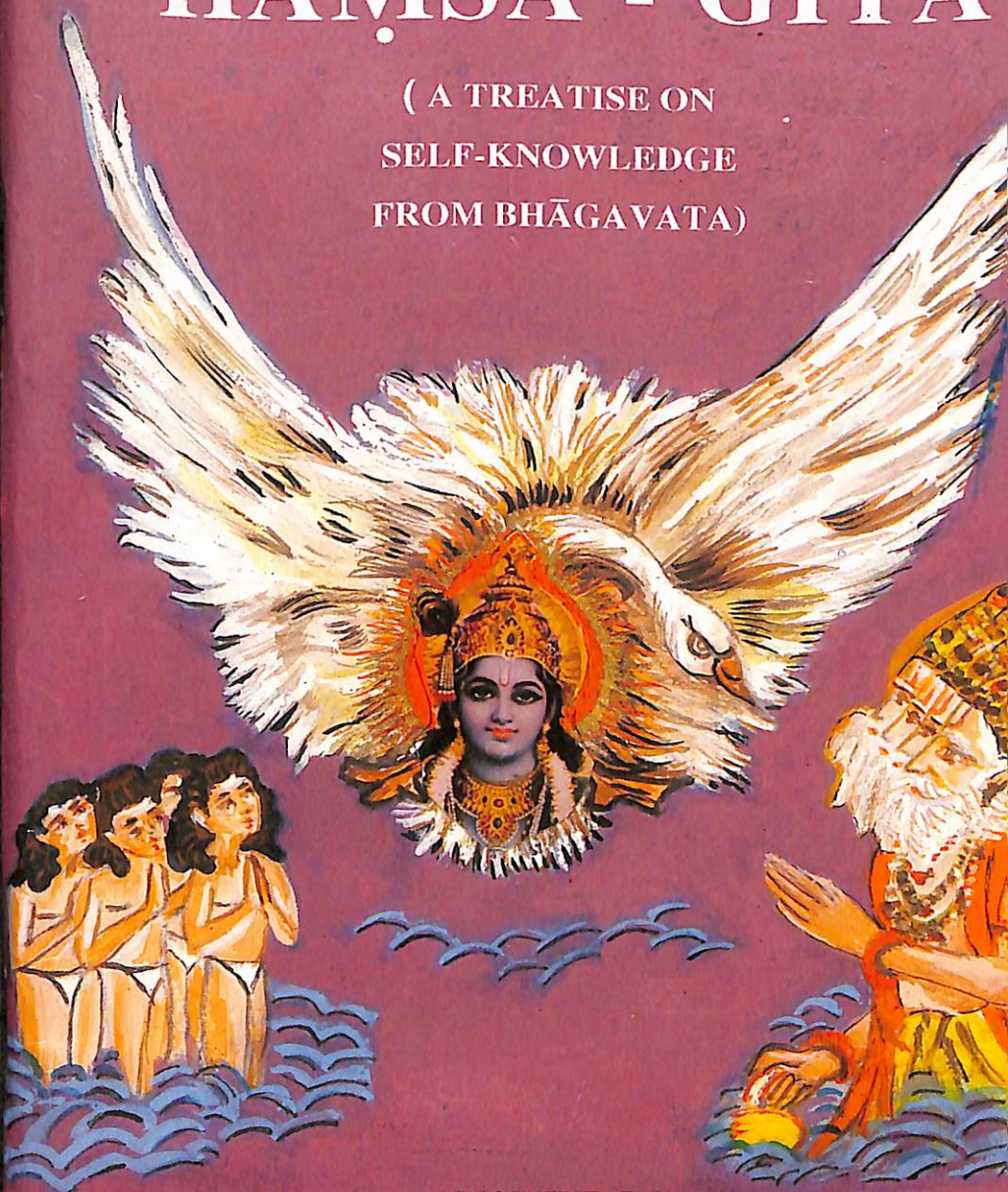


HAMSA - GĪTĀ

(A TREATISE ON
SELF-KNOWLEDGE
FROM BHĀGAVATA)



COMMENTARY
BY

SWAMI ŚUDDHABODHĀNANDA

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H A M S A G Ī T Ā

(A TREATISE ON SELF-KNOWLEDGE FROM BHĀGAVATA)

SWAMI
ŚUDDHABODHĀNANDA



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FOREWORD TO THE SECOND EDITION

We have great pleasure in presenting the second revised edition of this book. The transliteration of the original text and the meaning of Sanskrit words therein are given in this edition. To facilitate the correct pronunciation the diacritical marks for all the transliterated Sanskrit words and phrases have also been incorporated.

Since the publishing of the first edition of *Haṃsa-Gītā*, the following two commentaries by *Pūjya Swami Śuddhabodhānanda Saraswatiji* have been published:

- 1) VEDĀNTA PAÑCADAŚĪ, CHAPTER 1, TATTVA-VIVEKA
(DISCOVERING YOUR INNATE GREATNESS)
- 2) YOU ARE ABSOLUTE HAPPINESS, BRAHMĀNANDE
YOGĀNANDAḤ (VEDĀNTA PAÑCADAŚĪ, CHAPTER 11).

Topics like *vāsanākṣaya* and *samādhi* appearing in *Haṃsa-Gītā*, have been thoroughly analysed and discussed in very great detail in the above two books. A deeper insight into the other facets of Vedānta - some of which are elaborated for the first time in such commentaries in English - is as well the unique characteristic feature of these two books. We hope to publish a few more invaluable commentaries by *Pūjya Swamiji* in near future.

Mumbai.

February 17, 1996

Mahāśivarātri

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FOREWORD TO THE FIRST EDITION

To depend on sense objects for happiness is quite natural for anyone. But a mature person knowing fully well their ill effects wants to solve the basic problem of life to be independent of them. Yet the obsession about the sense objects, resulting in their grip over mind, is a vicious circle to tackle.

Haṃsa-Gītā which is a chapter from *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* provides THE solution. It is generally believed that *Bhāgavata* speaks of only devotion. That this is not true can be verified easily from this book. This most popular *purāṇa* also unfolds self-knowledge at many places.

Another controversy is that knowledge and devotion are divorced from each other. Votaries of each claim superiority of one over the other. They even quote scriptural passages to substantiate their stand. In fact a little inquiry should prove the hollowness of these arguments.

It is true that we do find in our scriptures many statements which seemingly speak of the superiority of one over the other. But one has to bear in mind the fact that both the words *jñāna* and *bhakti* are used with two distinct meanings which are determined by the context. *Jñāna* can mean either *aparokṣajñāna* or *parokṣajñāna*. Similarly *bhakti* is used as *parābhakti* (*sādhya bhakti*) or *aparābhakti* (*sādhana bhakti*). While the former in each refers to the goal, the latter represents the means. The ultimate Truth is one and the same, whether named as Brahman or *Bhagavān*. So *aparokṣajñāna* and *parābhakti* are the same, though the labels are different due to different starting points. *Parābhakti* is nothing short of *aparokṣajñāna*. They do not lend themselves for a comparison. However there can certainly be a comparison between the goal and the means.

In light of the foregoing, the statements in scriptures placing *bhakti* as superior to *jñāna* are to show that *parābhakti* is superior to *parokṣajñāna*. If *jñāna* is given a premium over *bhakti*, we should

understand that *aparokṣajñāna* is shown as superior to *aparābhakti*.

The problem of *saṃsāra* is the outcome of self-ignorance. Naturally *aparokṣajñāna* alone can be the remedy. Actually *aparābhakti* as an indispensable means to gain self-knowledge is highlighted in *Haṃsa-Gītā* by the Lord himself. At times *bhakti* is held in high esteem, only to impress upon the *mumukṣu* to take to it. This is an instance of *arthavāda* - praise in scriptural parlance.

This book has been prepared from the teaching of Swami Śuddhabodhānandaji during one of the *Sāadhanā* Camps at Rishikesh. We are thankful to those students of *Pūjya* Swamiji whose dedicated work has brought about the book in its final form.

We hope the readers will find the book very useful.

Bombay.

February 19, 1993

Mahāśivarātri

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Key to Transliteration & Pronunciation of Sanskrit Letters

अ	a (<u>but</u>)	ट	ṭ (<u>start</u>)*	}	tongue on upper palate
आ	ā (<u>master</u>)	ठ	ṭh (<u>anthill</u>)*		
इ	i (<u>it</u>)	ड	ḍ (<u>dart</u>)*		
ई	ī (<u>beet</u>)	ढ	ḍh (<u>godhead</u>)*		
उ	u (<u>put</u>)	ण	ṇ (<u>under</u>)*	}	tongue on teeth
ऊ	ū (<u>pool</u>)	त	t (<u>thirst</u>)		
ऋ	ṛ (<u>rhythm</u>)*	थ	th (<u>thumb</u>)		
ए	e (<u>play</u>)	द	d (<u>father</u>)*		
ऐ	ai (<u>high</u>)	ध	dh (<u>breathe here</u>)*	}	tongue on teeth
ओ	o (<u>toe</u>)	न	n (<u>numb</u>)*		
औ	au (<u>loud</u>)	प	p (<u>spin</u>)		
ँ	ṁ - Anusvāra	फ	ph (<u>loophole</u>)*		
	(nasalization of preceding vowel) written like the dot above अ in अंशः	ब	b (<u>bin</u>)		
:	ḥ - Visarga	भ	bh (<u>abhor</u>)*		
	(aspiration of preceding vowel) written like the two dots after श in अंशः	म	m (<u>much</u>)		
क	k (<u>skate</u>)	य	y (<u>young</u>)		
ख	kh (<u>blockhead</u>)*	र	r̄ (<u>drama</u>)		
ग	g (<u>gate</u>)	ल	l (<u>luck</u>)		
घ	gh (<u>log hut</u>)*	व	v (in-between <u>wile and vile</u>)		
ङ	ṅ (<u>sing</u>)	श	ś (<u>shove</u>)		
च	c (<u>chunk</u>)	ष	ṣ (<u>bushel</u>)		
छ	ch (<u>catch him</u>)*	स	s (<u>so</u>)		
ज	j (<u>John</u>)	ह	h (<u>hum</u>)		
झ	jh (<u>hedghehog</u>)*	क्ष	kṣa		
ञ	ñ (<u>bunch</u>)	ज्ञ	jña		

* There are no exact English equivalents for the letters listed with an asterisk.

INTRODUCTION

The existence of human beings as creatures full of limitations, sorrows, confusions, tensions and mortality, in spite of the best of accomplishments in life, is popularly known as *saṃsāra*. The same is due to the error of taking the other than oneself as "I". Vedānta which is a particular portion of *Śruti* (Vedas) inquires into this error and unfolds our real nature "I" called as *Ātmā*. To seek freedom from *saṃsāra*, viz. *mokṣa*, we have to set right the wrong notion about ourselves born of ignorance (*avidyā*). Any ignorance can be destroyed only by appropriate knowledge (*jñāna*). So self-knowledge (*ātmajñāna*) is the remedy for the malady of *saṃsāra*.

Knowledge can never be negated. If it is, it can only be erroneous knowledge. To an extent, in the objective field where the knowledge on a subject is based on total or partial perception, one can easily verify the exactness of that knowledge. But when the subject is totally non-perceptible, a special effort is needed to verify the validity of the knowledge. That is why our scriptures are very cautious while ascertaining the authenticity of self-knowledge.

The three touch-stones employed to test this are:

(i) *Śruti* - This serves as the means of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) with reference to those subjects which are beyond the scope of direct comprehension by human intellect (*apauruṣeya*).

(ii) *Yukti* - Whatever is told by *Śruti*, must be given to reasoning also. So, it is desirable to see the truth of *Śruti* statements in light of a supporting logic (*śrutisammata tarka*). At times *Śruti* herself gives the required logic.

(iii) *Anubhava* - Finally one has to discover the truth of the above two by one's own experience which corresponds to the immediate knowledge (*aparokṣajñāna*).

Śruti statements are very clear in declaring the nature of *Ātmā* to be indestructible, limitless *ānanda*. For instance, *Taittirīya Śruti* (Ch II - *Brahmānanda Vallī*) defines Brahman as “*satyam, jñānam, anantam*”, which itself is shown to be *Ātmā*. *Satyam* is that which does not change or modify and hence indestructible. To remove the possibility of such a *satyam* being inert, it is said to be *jñānam*. Here *jñānam* means the very knowledge principle (*jñapti*) - the pure awareness (*caitanya*). A thing that is *satyam* and *jñānam* may be sorrowful. To deny this, the word *anantam* (limitless) is placed along with *satyam* and *jñānam*. Any limitation spells sorrow. So, a thing which is free from the limitations of space, time and objectivity, besides being *satyam* and *jñānam* must necessarily be limitless *ānanda*. Thus the vision of *Śruti* is very clear that “I am immortal, limitless happiness”.

Taking at its face value, this does not sound to be reasonable since it directly contradicts the experience of all in general. This means either *Śruti* statement is wrong or what we take as “I” must be wrong. Knowing this fully well, *Śruti* herself gives at different places the logic to ascertain that *Ātmā* is limitless *ānanda*. Before probing into this reasoning, it is advisable to know what this *Ātmā* - “I” - is in contrast to what we erroneously take the “I” to be.

In the waking state we perceive objects through the five distinct senses in terms of sound, touch, form, taste and smell through hearing, touching, seeing, tasting and smelling. Though these sense objects are distinct from each other, the pure awareness because of which the hearer is aware of sound, is one and the same. It is this pure awareness which makes the toucher aware of touch, etc. So is the case in dream wherein the things experienced differ, but not the pure awareness. In deep sleep also the very same pure awareness makes us aware of the absence of everything. Thus the waker, dreamer, deep-sleeper, waking experiences, dream experiences and the deep-sleep experience may differ, and yet one and the same pure awareness distinct from all known things is common in all these. The very same pure awareness abides at all periods of time. This pure awareness, also called as *samvid* or *caitanya*, is “I” or *Ātmā*, and not whatever that is

known, including the gross body and the psyche with all their modifications.

That the nature of this pure awareness, "I", is limitless *ānanda* should be clear from the following logic furnished in *Varāha Upaniṣad* (2-7 to 9) :

"....Ahameva sukhaṃ nānyad. anyad cet naiva tat sukham. Amadārthaṃ na hi preyo madārthaṃ na svataḥ priyam. Parapremāspadatayā mā na bhūvamahaṃ, sadā bhūyāsamiti....."

I am indeed happiness and nothing else. Anything other than me is not happiness, because whatever that is not for my sake (not conducive to happiness, like snake, tiger etc.) is not dear to me and whatever for my sake, like wife, husband, children etc. is not dear to me on its own. I am the locus of supreme love as I never desire "not to be" but always desire "to be".

In life any object, being or event that is not a source of joy cannot be dear or pleasing to us. Whatever that is the source of joy is no doubt dear, but not for the sake of that very object, being or event, because the moment it ceases to give joy, we are no longer interested in it. If it were not so, whatever that is dear to us must be always so, whether it gives joy or not. That means what I hold dear is myself and not anything other than me. Whatever other that is dear to me is for my sake and not for its sake. So I am the locus of total love. It needs an impartial objective vision to appreciate this fact in life since we generally mistake ourselves to be in love with this and that.

In the *Maitreyī Brāhmaṇa* of *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (2-4-5 and 4-5-6) the great sage Yājñavalkya has explained this basic fact of life to his own dear wife in very clear words. He said "O, dear Maitreyi, verily the husband is dear to the wife not for the sake of the husband, but it is for her own sake that he is dear. The wife is dear to the husband not for the sake of the wife, but it is for his own sake that she is dear. Sons are dear to parents not for the sake of sons, but it is for the sake of parents that they are dear. The wealth is dear not for the sake of wealth, but it is for one's own sake that it is dear. The animals are dear not for the sake of animals, but it is for one's own sake that they are dear. The brahmin is dear not for the sake of the brahmin, but it is for one's own

sake that he is dear. The *kṣatriya* is dear not for the sake of the *kṣatriya*, but it is for one's own sake that he is dear. The heavenly abodes are dear not for their sake, but it is for one's own sake that they are dear. Vedas are dear not for the sake of Vedas, but it is for one's own sake that they are dear. The five elements - earth etc. - are dear not for their sake, but it is for one's own sake that they are dear. Verily all is dear not for the sake of all, but for one's own sake that all is dear (*ātmanastu kāmāya sarvaṃ priyaṃ bhavati*)."

A simple example can explain this fact. A child is dear to its father. He fondles the child and kisses it. The harsh moustaches and beard of the father create discomfort in the child and it cries. Yet the father derives pleasure from the same, may be within the permissible limits of the child's tolerance. So the child is dear for the father's sake and not for the sake of the child.

Not only am I the locus of total love, but I am also never the object of dislike (*kadāchit na aham apriyaḥ*). At times in life it appears as though we hate ourselves. If we analyse such moments, it will be found that actually what is disliked is one's body, mental state, some problem or confusion etc. connected to the embodiments, all of which are mistakenly taken as the hatred of "I" - *Ātmā*. Even a person likely to commit suicide will never think of doing so, if a complete solution to his or her problem is offered. Thus, "I" can never be the object of dislike, but is always the locus of limitless love.

We can divide the entire world into the following four categories from the standpoint of our love towards the same:

- (i) "I" (*Ātmā*) - the locus of limitless love.
- (ii) Desirable - wife, husband, children, wealth etc.
- (iii) Undesirable - snake, tiger etc.
- (iv) Neutral - a blade of grass, a clod of earth, etc.

While "I" always remains the locus of total love, the other three may vary at different times. For example, a tiger is undesirable when confronted with, being a source of fear. It is neutral when it is far and walks away. The very same tiger can be desirable when tamed and trained properly, being a source of entertainment. A son who is desirable can turn out to be undesirable when he behaves contrary to the wishes of the parents.

It should now be very clear that "I" - *Ātmā* - is *parapremāspada* (the locus of limitless love). Any locus of love is a source of happiness. Therefore the corollary is that the locus of limitless love, viz. "I" - *Ātmā* - must be limitless happiness (*parānanda*) and it cannot be otherwise.

The great *Vedāntic* masters like Vidyāraṇya Muni and Lakṣmīdhara Kavi also have elaborated the above logic given by *Śruti* in their treatises like *Pañcadaśī* and *Advaita Makaranda*. The following stanza from *Pañcadaśī* (Ch I, st.8) highlights the same:

"Iyam (saṃvid) Ātmā. Parānandaḥ parapremāspadaḥ yataḥ. Mā na bhūvaṃ hi bhūyaṣaṃ iti prema ātmani ikṣyate".

This pure awareness is *Ātmā*. It is the limitless happiness (*parānanda*) because "I" is the locus of supreme love (*parapremāspada*). How come "I" is *parapremāspada*? Because of the love for "I", *Ātmā* is universally experienced as - "May I never cease to exist (may I never die); on the contrary may I always be (live)."

As per *Śruti* and *yukti* it is established that "I" - *Ātmā* - is limitless *ānanda*.

Moreover, being *satyam* and *anantam*, pure awareness is free from change or death. The body dies, but not awareness - *Ātmā*.

The final question is - "Has anyone discovered what is *Ātmā*?". Yes, in the *Upaniṣads* we can get many examples of the seekers who have discovered the truth of the same. Even otherwise many instances of *vidvadanubhava* (experience of great masters) are available. So, everyone can discover the same, provided one has the requisite prepared frame of mind.

To quote *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (Ch III - *Bhṛgu Vallī*), we find Bhṛgu who discovered Brahman as *ānanda* (*ānando brahmeti vyajānāt*). One may wonder that Brahman may be *ānanda*, but what about *Ātmā*? Here we have to revert to the definition of Brahman given in its earlier Chapter, viz. "*satyam jñānam anantaṃ brahmā*". The word *jñānam* in this context means pure awareness which is nothing but "I" - *Ātmā*. So, *Ātmā* and Brahman are one, which is *ānanda*, and that was the discovery of Bhṛgu.

Thus *Śruti*, *yukti* and *anubhava* together reveal that "I" - *Ātmā* - is immortal, limitless happiness. In other words *Ātmā* is *sat* (indestructible existence), *cit* (knowledge principle), *ānanda*. *Smṛtis* like *purāṇas*, *Rāmāyaṇa*, *Mahābhārata* etc. which have their basis in *Śruti*, also reveal the same truth at different places.

This being so, can there be a greater mistake on our part if we do not inquire to discover this truth, as prescribed by our scriptures?

As already seen the ignorance of one's real nature is to be destroyed by self-knowledge to free oneself from *saṃsāra*. This however does not mean that on account of ignorance, "I", who is, in reality, free from *saṃsāra*, has modified to be a *saṃsārī*. Ignorance of myself does not change me actually to a *saṃsārī*, though, experientially, I may seem to be a *saṃsārī*. Similarly, self-knowledge does not change me, the *saṃsārī* into an *Ātmā* free from *saṃsāra*. What happens is, I mistake myself to be a *saṃsārī* and all the characteristics of *antaḥkaraṇa* are superimposed on *Ātmā*. In *ātmajñāna*, what is superimposed gets negated, and *Ātmā*, that in its native glory is *saccidānanda*, is revealed.

In the state of ignorance I do not know my real nature, whereas in the state of knowledge I know. When ignorance is destroyed the superimposition on *Ātmā* is destroyed and my real nature is revealed to me. My real nature is at all times *saccidānanda* free from *saṃsāra*. In the state of ignorance I have not created a *saṃsārī* *Ātmā* called *jīva*. Nor do I create another *Ātmā* free from *saṃsāra*. There is never *saṃsāra* for *Ātmā*, but not knowing this I take myself to be the bound *saṃsārī*. Through knowledge, ignorance is destroyed and the truth, that I am ever free from *saṃsāra*, is revealed to me.

To take an example, when clouds gather in the sky, the self-luminous sun is said to be covered by the clouds. When the wind blows and the clouds move away, we say "the sun is again shining". But from the standpoint of the sun there is neither covering nor uncovering. It is always luminous. In fact what is covered or uncovered is our sight. Similarly I take myself to be bound (*baddhā*) due to ignorance, and liberated (*mukta*) in the wake of knowledge, but both are the states of mind and not that of *Ātmā*.

CONTEXT OF HAṂSA-GĪTĀ

Haṁsa-Gītā is the thirteenth chapter in the eleventh section (*skandha*) of *Bhāgavata Purāna*. The subject matter of the eleventh *skandha* of *Bhāgavata* is predominantly Vedānta. Chapters 6 to 24 of the same constitute the advice given by Lord Kṛṣṇa to Uddhava. Like Arjuna, Uddhava was a close friend of Lord Kṛṣṇa. He was more in proximity to the Lord than was Arjuna. Before leaving his embodiment, Kṛṣṇa gave this advice to Uddhava which is famous as "Uddhava-Gītā."

Haṁsa-Gītā is so called because it mainly contains the narration of self-unfoldment (*ātmajñāna*) as taught by the Lord to the sages Sanatsumāra etc. in the form of a "Haṁsa" (a celestial swan). The twelfth chapter, which precedes this, deals with the glory of *satsaṅga* (company of the good), *kartā* (the doer of action) and *karmatyāga* (renunciation of action). Finally it concludes exhorting the *mumukṣu* to destroy the very locus of *jīva* (*jīvāśaya*) by the axe of self-knowledge (*ātmavidyā*) and then give up the very means by which it is destroyed. Here the *jīvāśaya* means the subtle body (*liṅga śarīra*) or more precisely it refers to *antaḥkaraṇa* which consists of *mana* (mind), *buddhi* (intellect), *ahaṅkāra* (erroneous I-notion) and *citta* (faculty of recollection). The bondage or *samsāra* is due to superimposition of characteristics of *antaḥkaraṇa* on *Ātmā* which has to be destroyed by the appreciation of *Ātmā* and thereby the destruction of the effects of *avidyā*. This is termed here as the destruction of *jīvāśaya*. The appreciation of *Ātmā* can only be in terms of a peculiar *vṛtti* (a *jñānavṛtti*) called as the axe - the means - of destroying the *jīvāśaya*. In the process, we have to settle down to life's routine, retaining at the same time, the real nature of our *Ātmā*, totally free from ignorance and its effects.

Envisaging a difficulty in Uddhava's mind, Lord Kṛṣṇa clarifies further in the thirteenth chapter. The destruction of *jīvāśaya* or *antaḥkaraṇa* recommended earlier is very difficult if one considers its texture. The

antaḥkaraṇa undergoes three dispositions, viz. *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. These are called *guṇas* because like ropes these bind the individual to *saṃsāra*, the life of limitations and sorrows, without allowing one to appreciate one's real nature. *Sattva* bestows knowledge, clarity of thinking, freedom from afflictions, composure of mind and joy. *Rajoguṇa* prompts the individual to be passionate, greedy, agitated and hyperactive. *Tamoguṇa* drags one into sleep, laziness, indifference and erroneous notion about everything. These three *guṇas* obstruct the knowledge of oneself. The sum total of all our experiences, good or bad, called *saṃsāra* is the product of these alone. They being the very constituting factors in everyone's personality, to get rid of them seems to be just impossible. So Uddhava is at a loss to find any means to encounter these three *guṇas*. Sensing this difficulty Lord Kṛṣṇa offers the solution by which we can redeem ourselves from these three *guṇas* and in the process can get absorbed in the knowledge of our own real nature. This forms the content of the next chapter entitled "Haṃsa-Gītā".

HAMSA - GĪTĀ

OVERCOME THE *GUṆAS* TO GET SELF-KNOWLEDGE

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।

सत्त्वं रजस्तम इति गुणा बुद्धेर्न चात्मनः ।

सत्त्वेनान्यतमौ हन्यात्सत्त्वं सत्त्वेन चैव हि ॥१॥

Śrī Bhagavān uvāca

sattvaṃ rajastama iti guṇā buddher na cātmanah

sattvenānyatamau hanyāt sattvaṃ sattvena caiva hi - (1)

श्रीभगवान् - The Lord उवाच - said.

सत्त्वं - *sattva* रजः - *rajas* तमः - *tamas* इति - these गुणाः - dispositions बुद्धेः - of *antahkaraṇa* (सन्ति - are) च - but आत्मनः - of *Ātmā* न - not सत्त्वेन - by *sattva* अन्यतमौ - the other two हन्यात् - should be destroyed सत्त्वं - *sattva* च - and सत्त्वेन - by *sattva* एव - alone हि - indeed (हन्यात् - should be destroyed). - (1)

The Lord said:

1. *Sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* are the dispositions of *antahkaraṇa*, but not (the characteristics) of *Ātmā* (pure awareness). The last two, viz. *rajas* and *tamas*, should be overcome by *sattva*, and *sattva* by *sattva* only.

The nature of three *guṇas* as the dispositions of *antahkaraṇa* was seen earlier. These are also the constituents of *prakṛti* or *māyā* which depends on Brahman and serves as the material cause for the entire Creation. In this sense, in the entire Creation, *sattva* accounts for the knowledge aspect, *rajas* the action, and *tamas* the inert matter. It is a well-recognized fact that any Creation has got its basis in these three factors. These *guṇas* also being the varying dispositions of our *antahkaraṇa*, all of

our experiences are caused by these alone. Thus both the Creation and all experiences are the products of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. For example, our gross physical and the subtle bodies are made of five elements which in turn are the effects of *triguṇātmikā prakṛti* (*prakṛti* of the nature of three *guṇas*). All objects in the world are also made of five elements and hence the effect of the three *guṇas*. So, when we interact with the world either in terms of actions or experiences, it is only an interaction of *guṇas* with *guṇas* (*guṇāḥ guṇeṣu vartante - Bhagavad-gītā 3 - 28*). The pure awareness - Ātmā - does not do anything.

This is revealed by the Lord in the statement that *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* are the dispositions of *buddhi* - the *antaḥkaraṇa* - but not the characteristics of *Ātmā*. Here the word *buddhi* indicates *prakṛti* and not mere *antaḥkaraṇa*.

The denial of *guṇas* as the characteristics of *Ātmā* is nothing but the negation of *samsāra* in *Ātmā*, because the latter is the ramification of *guṇas* alone. Only in the realm of ignorance due to mutual superimposition or false attribution can one mistake *Ātmā* to be a *samsārī*. Self-knowledge destroys this error by making us appreciate our real nature to be ever free from *samsāra*.

To begin with, *sattva* has to be developed to overcome these *guṇas*. The growth of *sattva* overcomes *rajas* and *tamas*. Thereafter in the wake of knowledge *sattva* has to be subdued by the same *guṇa*. In the final state of absorption in our real nature, even *sattvagūṇa* is an obstruction. The role of *sattva* can be compared to that of a needle used to remove a splinter from the foot. Though the needle is also pricked in the foot, it has to be given up after the extraction of the splinter.

How to overcome the *guṇas* is further explained:

सत्त्वाद्धर्मो भवेद्वृद्धात्पुंसो मद्भक्तिलक्षणः ।
सात्त्विकोपासया सत्त्वं ततो धर्मः प्रवर्तते ॥२॥

sattvāddharmo bhavedvṛddhāt puṃso madbhaktilakṣaṇaḥ
sāttvikopāsayā sattvaṃ tato dharmāḥ pravartate - (2)

वृद्धात् सत्त्वात् - through developed *sattva* पुंसः - of a person
मद्भक्तिलक्षणः - characterised by devotion to me (*Īśvara*) धर्मः - righteous
disposition भवेत् - is born सात्त्विकोपासया - by resorting to *sāttvic* things
सत्त्वं - *sattvaguṇa* प्रवर्तते - thrives ततः - thereby धर्मः - devotion to
Īśvara (प्रवर्तते - is produced). - (2)

2. Through developed *sattva* a person attains the righteous disposition characterised by devotion to Me (*Īśvara*). By resorting to *sāttvic* things *sattvaguṇa* thrives. Thereby devotion to *Īśvara* is produced.

While the word *dharma* has many meanings, here it is used in the sense of righteous disposition that is conducive to the pursuit of gaining self-knowledge. The disposition which is opposed to such pursuit is *adharma*.

Our *antaḥkaraṇa* is a mixture of these three *guṇas*. When a given *guṇa* is predominant, the other two get subdued. *Sattva* is a necessary means to gaining the knowledge of oneself, whereas *rajas* and *tamas* pose as positive obstructions. It also counteracts the adverse effects of the other two dispositions. Highly developed *sattva* produces devotion to the Lord which is an indispensable means (*antarāṅga sādhanā*).

To develop *sattva* one has to take to *sāttvic* things like valid scriptures etc. which will be explained in stanzas four to six.

The root cause of *saṃsāra* is the ignorance of oneself and the consequent error. So, to destroy the ignorance an inquiry in line with *Śruti* has to be conducted. This needs a prepared mind. All the means (*sādhanās*) which help to accomplish the same are grouped as *yoga*. A mind so prepared alone can succeed in gaining the knowledge. Keeping this in view Vedānta essentially consists of two parts - viz. *yoga* and *Brahmavidyā*.

Haṃsa-Gītā treats of both these aspects, but deals with *yoga* at a greater length. Devotion to *Īśvara* can guarantee a ready mind to know oneself. Devotion is a means to the end, the freedom from *saṃsāra*. It clears off so many obstructions in the pursuit of knowledge, and in the end one discovers that oneself is not different from *Īśvara*. Those who

dismiss *Īśvara* before attaining this knowledge are only denying themselves a very practical and indispensable means of progress. Though ultimately *jīva* (the *saṃsāri* me) and *Īśvara* are discovered, in essence, to be one and the same pure awareness (*Ātmā*, Brahman) in the initial stages devotion plays a very effective role. Hence the Lord emphasises the need of *madbhakti* - devotion to *Īśvara*.

How does devotion help to get free from all *guṇas*?

The Lord answers:

धर्मो रजस्तमो हन्यात्सत्त्ववृद्धिरनुत्तमः ।
आशु नश्यति तन्मूलो ह्यधर्म उभये हते ॥३॥

dharmo rajastamo hanyāt sattvavṛddhīranuttamaḥ
āśu naśyati tanmūlo hyadharm ubhaye hate - (3)

अनुत्तमः - unsurpassed धर्मः - righteous disposition सत्त्ववृद्धिः - which has developed *sattva* as its cause रजः - *rajas* तमः - *tamas* हन्यात् - subdues उभये हते - when both are subdued तन्मूलः - the one who has both of them as its root cause अधर्मः - the obstructive disposition आशु - immediately हि - indeed नश्यति - gets destroyed. - (3)

3. The unsurpassed righteous disposition (i.e. devotion) which has the developed *sattva* as its cause, subdues *rajas* and *tamas*. When both of these are subdued, the obstructive disposition which is their effect is immediately destroyed.

The word *dharma* refers to devotion as previously told. It is the product of highly developed *sattva* and so destroys both *rajas* and *tamas*. The disposition which is opposed to the pursuit of gaining *ātmajñāna*, called here as *adharmā*, is the direct effect of these two *guṇas*. Naturally the moment these two causes are destroyed, *adharmā* also is bound to get destroyed. The nullification of the adverse obstructive disposition leads to self-knowledge whereby *sattva* also can be finally overcome. Thus devotion helps to get free from all *guṇas*.

Resorting to *sāttvic* things to develop *sattva*, was recommended

earlier. Now, to show the means that enrich *sattva*, first of all the causes in general which produce the three *guṇas* are told.

आगमोऽपः प्रजा देशः कालः कर्म च जन्म च ।
ध्यानं मन्त्रोऽथ संस्कारो दशैते गुणहेतवः ॥४॥

*āgamopah prajā deśaḥ kālaḥ karma ca janma ca
dhyānaṃ manthrotha saṃskāro daśaite guṇahetavaḥ - (4)*

आगमः - scripture अपः (i.e. आपः) - water प्रजा - people देशः - place कालः - time कर्म - action जन्म - birth ध्यानं - meditation च - and मन्त्रः - *mantra* अथ - so also संस्कारः - purificatory rite एते - these दश - ten गुणहेतवः - (are) the causes of dispositions. - (4)

4. These ten, viz. scripture, water, people, place, time, action, birth, meditation, *mantra* and purificatory rite, are the causes of dispositions.

Each of these can be of three different types which nourish the three *guṇas*. Here "people" indicates the company that one keeps and "birth" accounts for initiations. The norms to judge the actual nature of these ten are given in the next stanza.

The criteria to determine which are *sāttvic* etc. are given as under:

तत्तत्सात्त्विकमेवैषां यद्यद्वृद्धाः प्रचक्षते ।
निन्दन्ति तामसं यत्तद्राजसं तदुपेक्षितम् ॥५॥

*tat tat sāttvikamevaiṣāṃ yad yad vṛddhāḥ pracakṣate
nindanti tāmasaṃ yat tad rājasaṃ tadupekṣitam - (5)*

एषां - of these यद् यद् - whatever वृद्धाः - the experts in scriptures प्रचक्षते - praise तत् तत् - all those सात्त्विकम् - (are) *sāttvic* एव - alone यत् - which निन्दन्ति - they condemn तत् - that तामसं - (is) *tāmasic* (यत् - which) उपेक्षितम् - (is) disregarded तत् - that राजसं - (is) *rājasic*. - (5)

5. Of these, those alone are *sāttvic* which the experts in scriptures praise. Those which they condemn are *tāmasic*, and those about which they are indifferent are *rājasic* in nature.

Among the ten means told earlier, those which are praised and recommended by experts who are well versed in scriptures are to be determined as *sāttvic* in nature and conducive to develop *sattvagūṇa*. Whatever these learned masters criticise and condemn should be taken as *tāmasic* in nature, as they promote *tamogūṇa*. Whatever means towards which these wise men are indifferent, are *rājasic* in nature because *rajogūṇa* thrives if one resorts to those means.

By these parameters we can discern the three categories in each of the ten means which help to cultivate the three different *gūṇas*. The classification is as follows:

i) **Scripture** (*āgama*).

a) *Sāttvic*: The scriptures which make one discover the real nature of oneself, the world, and *Īśvara* - the Creator of the entire Creation. Vedānta which is also called as *nivṛtti śāstra* can be cited as an example. Those scriptures which discuss and offer the means to prepare the mind to gain such knowledge are also *sāttvic* in nature.

b) *Rājasic*: The portion of Vedas which deal with the means to accomplish different goals in the realm of cause and effect, viz. the *karmakāṇḍa* or *pravṛtti śāstra*. Though these produce temporary joy to begin with, they finally result in sorrow and an ever-restless state of mind.

c) *Tāmasic*: Pseudo scriptures, heretic in nature, called as *pākhaṇḍa śāstra*. Being detrimental, these are positively forbidden.

ii) **Water** (*āpah*).

a) *Sāttvic*: Water of holy rivers etc. and sanctified water from the feet of the Lord.

b) *Rājasic*: Perfumes.

c) *Tāmasic*: Liquor.

iii) **People** (*prajā*) - the company that one keeps.

a) *Sāttvic*: Company of holy people, devotees and the good who conduct themselves as per the norms of the scripture. It is well known that a person can be judged by the company he keeps.

b) *Rājasic*: Company of people who are totally materialistic and engrossed in the worldly things alone.

c) *Tāmasic*: Company of the wicked who violate the conduct enjoined by the scriptures.

iv) **Place.**

a) *Sāttvic*: Solitary places, temples and holy river banks, etc. Solitude is conducive to take to inquiry about oneself and contemplation.

b) *Rājasic*: Market place.

c) *Tāmasic*: Gambling den etc.

v) **Time.**

a) *Sāttvic*: Early morning and also any time that is spent in the company of the good and in remembrance of the Lord.

b) *Rājasic*: Time after the sunrise or the time spent in worldly talk.

c) *Tāmasic*: Night or the time spent in gossiping and speaking ill of others.

vi) **Action** (*karma*).

a) *Sāttvic*: *Nitya naimittika karma* (daily and occasional duties) performed in dedication to *Īśvara* to get purity of *antaḥkaraṇa*.

b) *Rājasic*: Actions prompted by the fulfilment of desires (*kāmya karma*).

c) *Tāmasic*: *Karma* to bring harm to others or destroy them which are prohibited by the scriptures.

vii) **Birth** (*janma*).

The word *janma* here means initiation (*dīkshā*). The four accomplishments in life (*puruṣārthas*) are *dharma* (earning *puṇya*), *artha* (security), *kāma* (fulfilment of legitimate desires) and *mokṣa* (liberation

from *saṃsāra*). That which can accomplish *puruṣārthas* and finally destroy *avidyā* totally, leading to *mokṣa*, is called *dīkshā*. For example *upanayana* ceremony is a *dīkshā* wherein a student is initiated into *Gāyatrī mantra*. The same is meant for developing the intelligence and maturity of mind. Such a mind helps the person to get self-knowledge later.

- a) *Sāttvic*: Initiations which are aimed at developing devotion and finally are helpful to gain self-knowledge.
- b) *Rājasic*: Initiations to invoke power, name and fame.
- c) *Tāmasic*: Initiations designed to gain low ends.

viii) **Meditation** (*dhyāna*).

Dhyāna in general means giving a particular preoccupation to the mind to the exclusion of other thoughts.

- a) *Sāttvic*: Meditation on *Īśvara*.
- b) *Rājasic*: Mind constantly engrossed in wealth, power, lust.
- c) *Tāmasic*: Always thinking of enemy or of mean things.

ix) **Mantra** (Incantation).

- a) *Sāttvic*: *Pranava* (AUM), *Gāyatrī*, meant for higher pursuits in life.
- b) *Rājasic*: Those which are aimed at the fulfilment of personal desires (*kāmya mantra*).
- c) *Tāmasic*: *Mantras* having low ends in view.

x) **Purificatory rite** (*saṃskāra*).

- a) *Sāttvic*: Those which purify the *antaḥkaraṇa* whereby the mind is capable of getting absorbed in remembering the Lord or taking to contemplation of *Ātmā*.
- b) *Rājasic*: Those which purify the body.
- c) *Tāmasic*: Those which cleanse the house etc.

Lord Kṛṣṇa exhorts the *mumukṣu* to take to *sāttvic* things among these ten to develop *sattvaguna*, if one is very keen to get freed from *saṃsāra*:

सात्त्विकान्येव सेवेत पुमान् सत्त्वविवृद्धये ।
ततो धर्मस्ततो ज्ञानं यावत्स्मृतिरपोहनम् ॥६॥

sāttvikānyeva seveta pumān sattvavivṛddhaye
tato dharmastato jñānaṃ yāvatsmṛtirapohanam - (6)

पुमान् - a person (i.e. *mumukṣu*) सत्त्वविवृद्धये - to develop *sattva*
सात्त्विकानि एव - *sāttvic* means alone सेवेत - should pursue ततः -
thereby धर्मः - devotion (grows) ततः - thereby यावत् - up to स्मृतिः
- the discovery that I am Brahman (यावत् च - and till) अपोहनम् - total
destruction of identity with the embodiment ज्ञानं - knowledge (भवति -
takes place). - (6)

6. To develop *sattva* the *mumukṣu* should follow *sāttvic* means alone. Thereby devotion grows, which results into knowledge up to the discovery that I am Brahman and the total destruction of identity with the embodiment.

As already seen *sāttvic* scriptures etc. are to be followed to develop *sattva*. Such disposition in turn gives rise to devotion.

Here, one may doubt the role of *sāttvic* disposition and devotion. After all, the problem of bondage - *saṃsāra* - can be solved through inquiry in line with Vedānta to gain self-knowledge. Then why strive for *sattva* and devotion?

The answer is that self-knowledge cannot be gained by a person who lacks *sattva* and devotion. Self-knowledge is not just picking up some information from Vedānta. The *mumukṣu* must be able to appreciate for oneself the real nature of "I" (*Ātmā*) which is limitless happiness, peace. Without the ready frame of mind, the inquiry does not yield the expected result. So both the above dispositions are indispensable.

Thus devotion coupled with *śravaṇa* - inquiry into oneself - leads to self-knowledge. The knowledge is characterised by *smṛti* which in this context means the appreciation of oneself as Brahman. *Apohanam* is either total destruction of bodily identification or total overcoming of three *guṇas* which make our embodiments. As a result one fully

overcomes the three *guṇas*. The one who has accomplished this can no more have any rebirths.

Any knowledge including self-knowledge is manifest in terms of a thought which is an effect of *antaḥkaraṇa*. The *antaḥkaraṇa* and its receptacle, the gross body, are both the products of the same three *guṇas*. How can self-knowledge born in an embodiment destroy its very cause - the *guṇas* - and the embodiment, never to get reborn? This is clarified with an illustration in the next verse:

वेणुसंघर्षजो वह्निर्दग्ध्वा शाम्यति तद्वनम् ।
एवं गुणव्यत्ययजो देहः शाम्यति तत्क्रियः ॥७॥

veṇusaṅgharṣajo vahnirdagdhvā śāmyati tadvanam
evaṃ guṇavyatyayajo dehaḥ śāmyati tatkriyaḥ - (7)

वेणुसंघर्षजः वह्निः - the fire born of friction among the bamboos तद्वनम् - its forest दग्ध्वा - having burnt शाम्यति - gets extinguished एवं - similarly गुणव्यत्ययजः देहः - the body born of intermixture of the *guṇas* तत्क्रियः - (and) having the function like fire शाम्यति - is destroyed. - (7)

7. The fire born of friction among the bamboos, having burnt its forest gets extinguished. Similarly the body born of intermixture of the *guṇas* and having the function like fire, is destroyed.

In a bamboo forest even two dry bamboos continuously rubbing against each other ignite fire by mere friction. This fire, which is born of bamboos ultimately destroys the entire forest which is its cause and thereafter, itself gets extinguished. Similarly, knowledge born of *guṇas* and their effect, the embodiment, ultimately eliminates both. Finally the particular thought (*vṛtti*) in the *antaḥkaraṇa* which had revealed self-knowledge, itself gets eliminated. What remains is pure *caitanya* - *Ātmā* - free from entire superimposition of *saṃsāra*. *Bhagavadgītā* (Ch. 4-37) also declares the same truth, "Just as a conflagration reduces the woods to ashes, so does the fire of self-knowledge reduce the entire *karmaphalas* (results of action)."

Obviously for want of cause of future births, such a wise man gets freed from embodiment.

Thus knowledge confers freedom, or else one has to continue in the bondage of *samsāra*. *Kenopaniṣad* (2-5), out of concern for humanity, impresses upon everyone the indispensability of gaining this knowledge in its famous declaration in the following words - "If Brahman is known in this human birth, then there is purposefulness of life or the highest is gained. If not known, then the destruction is unending."

WHY DO PEOPLE SEEK MISERY?

In spite of such promising result, why do people continue to indulge in sense objects which are the wombs of sorrow instead of taking to this knowledge? Uddhava asks this question:

उद्धव उवाच ।

विदन्ति मर्त्याः प्रायेण विषयान्यदमापदाम् ।

तथापि भुञ्जते कृष्ण तत्कथं श्वखराजवत् ॥८॥

Uddhava uvāca

vidanti martyāḥ prāyeṇa viṣayānpadamāpadām

tathāpi bhujjate kṛṣṇa tatkatham śvakharājavat - (8)

उद्धवः - Uddhava उवाच - said.

कृष्ण - O Kṛṣṇa मर्त्याः - people विषयान् - sense objects आपदाम् पदम्
- abode of distress (इति - thus) प्रायेण - generally विदन्ति - know तथापि
- even then श्वखराजवत् - like a dog, a donkey or a ram तत् - that
(i.e . sense objects) कथं - how भुञ्जते - they carnally enjoy ? - (8)

Uddhava said:

8. O Kṛṣṇa, human beings generally know sense objects to be the abode of distress. Even then, why, like a dog, a donkey or a ram, do they carnally enjoy sense objects?

In general all know the ill effects of sense indulgence. No doubt they do give some joy to begin with, only to end in sorrow. Yet everyone runs after sense objects. Uddhava gives three examples to this effect. A

dog continues to court the bitch in spite of her threatening. An ass runs after the she-ass even though the latter goes on kicking. So is a ram which shamelessly runs after a goat even while they are being taken to a slaughterhouse.

It is true that animals are guided by instincts, but why should the human being blessed with the faculty of discrimination get fully engrossed in sense indulgence?

WRONG IDENTIFICATION IS THE CAUSE

The answer follows:

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।

अहमित्यन्यथाबुद्धिः प्रमत्तस्य यथा हृदि ।

उत्सर्पति रजो घोरं ततो वैकारिकं मनः ॥९॥

Śrī Bhagavānuvāca -

ahamityanyathābuddhiḥ pramattasya yathā hṛdi

utsarpati rajo ghoram tato vaikārikam manaḥ - (9)

श्री भगवान् - the Lord उवाच - replied.

प्रमत्तस्य - of a person who lacks discrimination हृदि - in the *antaḥkaraṇa* अहं इति - as "I" अन्यथाबुद्धिः - mistaken notion यथा (i.e. यथावत्) - duly उत्सर्पति - rises up ततः - then वैकारिकं - (that) which is changeable मनः (प्रति) - (with respect to) mind घोरं - awful रजः - *rajas* उत्सर्पति - spreads. - (9)

The Lord replied:

9. In the *antaḥkaraṇa* of a person who lacks discrimination, duly rises up the mistaken notion of "I" (i.e. *ahaṅkāra*). Then awful *rajas* overpowers the mind which is changeable.

Due to self-ignorance and the consequent lack of discrimination *ahaṅkāra* - the wrong notion that "I am the embodiment" - is born in the *antaḥkaraṇa*. Once the body is taken as "I" the bodily

demands are taken as my demands. Possessed by this urge, one is ready to do anything to fulfil the desires.

The process involved therein is further elaborated. The mind gripped by *ahaṅkāra* is overpowered by the awful *rajoḡuṇa*. Though originally made up of *sāttvic* aspects of five elements, the mind, or more precisely the entire *antaḥkaraṇa*, is subject to modification. *Vaikārikam* also connotes *sattva*, besides changeable.

The next stages in this process are described in the forthcoming two stanzas:

रजोयुक्तस्य मनसः संकल्पः सविकल्पकः ।

ततः कामो गुणध्यानाद्दुःसहः स्याद्धि दुर्मतेः ॥१०॥

rajoyuktasya manasaḥ saṅkalpaḥ savikalpakāḥ

tataḥ kāmo guṇadhyanād duḥsahaḥ syāddhi durmateḥ - (10)

रजोयुक्तस्य मनसः - of a mind possessed by *rajas* सविकल्पकः - attributing a distinction to a given thing संकल्पः - a volition (स्यात् - is born) ततः - afterwards गुणध्यानात् - due to brooding over its fascinating features दुर्मतेः - to the foolish person हि - indeed दुःसहः - irresistible कामः - desire स्यात् - is born. - (10)

10. In the mind possessed by *rajas*, a volition attributing a distinction to a given thing is born. Afterwards due to brooding over its fascinating features, the foolish person develops an irresistible desire (for it).

The mind under the spell of *rajas* conceives different objects, beings and events as worthy of enjoyment. Thereafter it dwells on the pleasing aspects, present or imagined in those, totally ignoring the accompanying sorrows and calamities. This is a false attribution (*śobhanādhyāsa*) which produces an irresistible desire in the bosom for that object etc. Lord Kṛṣṇa describes such a person as foolish because of his or her suicidal indifference towards the future tragedy that is awaiting.

करोति कामवशागः कर्माण्यविजितेन्द्रियः ।

दुःखोदकर्त्ता संपश्यन् रजोवेगविमोहितः ॥११॥

*karoti kāmavaśagaḥ karmānyavijitendriyaḥ
duḥkḥodarkāṇi sampāśyan rajovegavimohitaḥ - (11)*

रजोवेगविमोहितः - tempted by the force of *rajas* कामवशागः - the one under the sway of desires अविजितेन्द्रियः - the slave of senses दुःखोदकर्त्ता - those which result in sorrow संपश्यन् - knowing fully well कर्माणि - actions करोति - does. - (11)

11. Being tempted by the force of *rajas*, under the sway of desires, the slave of senses does the actions even while knowing fully well their end to be sorrow.

A person under the powerful influence of *rajas* loses the sense of discrimination and considers sense indulgence alone as the prime purpose of life. Thereby the mastery over the senses is lost. Blinded by the desires, this slave of senses works for fulfilment of the same, knowing fully well the dire consequence of misery that is in store.

This leads to a doubt that the violent *rajas* is unassailable and so it is just impossible to end the misery of *saṃsāra*. The Lord dispels this doubt:

THE MODE TO COUNTERACT *RAJAS*

रजस्तमोभ्यां यदपि विद्वान्विक्षिप्तधीः पुनः ।

अतन्द्रितो मनो युञ्जन्दोषदृष्टिर्न सज्जते ॥१२॥

*rajastamobhyāṃ yadapi vidvān vikṣiptadhīḥ punaḥ
atandrito mano yuñjan doṣadrṣṭirna sajjate - (12)*

यदपि - even though रजस्तमोभ्यां - by *rajas* and *tamas* विक्षिप्तधीः - obsessed पुनः - nevertheless विद्वान् - a discriminating person दोषदृष्टिः - the one who appreciates the defects of sense objects अतन्द्रितः -

industriously मनः युञ्जन् - controlling the mind (or making the mind get absorbed in the true nature of oneself) न सज्जते - does not get attached to them. - (12)

12. Even though obsessed by *rajas* and *tamas*, nevertheless a discriminating person appreciating the defects of sense objects industriously controls the mind (or makes the mind get absorbed in the true nature of oneself and thereby) is not attached to them.

Left to oneself, of course the individual is tossed hither and thither by the onslaught of *rajas*, but the intelligent person has to press the faculty of discrimination into function. It is the false evaluation of sense objects that makes everyone blind to the adverse effects of sense indulgence. If sense objects are viewed in their right perspective, they can no longer fascinate us. Fortified by such dispassion (*vairāgya*), the *mumukṣu* has to strive to master the mind without giving any room for sloth. As a result, obviously one is not attached to sense objects any further.

In the sixth stanza, it was shown that the developed *sattva* leads to self-knowledge through inquiry. In that context the phrase *mano yuñjan* here cannot be restricted to mean the mastery over the mind alone, but it also speaks of the absorption of the mind in self-knowledge. Without the abidance of the mind in the knowledge, it is not possible to totally get rid of the value for sense objects. At least the habitual values still persist, freedom from which can be obtained only after one gains the steadfastness in the appreciation of one's real nature.

Bhagavadgītā (Ch. 2-59) also affirms the same in its statement *rasopyasya paraṃ dr̥ṣṭvā nivartate* - the taste for sense objects also ceases on gaining self-knowledge. While commenting on this, even Ācārya Śāṅkara exhorts the *mumukṣu* to strive for steadfastness (*sthairyam*) in this knowledge.

Further means are given to those who are unable to attain the absorption of the mind as told above even after seeing the defective nature of sense objects:

अप्रमत्तोऽनुयुञ्जीत मनो मय्यर्पयन् शनैः ।

अनिर्विण्णो यथाकालं जितश्वासो जितासनः ॥१३॥

*apramattonuyuñjīta mano mayyarpayan śanaih
anirviṅṇo yathākālaṃ jitaśvāso jītāsanaḥ - (13)*

अप्रमत्तः - (being) vigilant अनिर्विण्णः - free from despair जितासनः - (having) mastered the posture यथाकालं - at appropriate time जितश्वासः - (having) controlled the breath मनः - mind मय्यर्पयन् - fixing on Me (the Lord) शनैः - slowly अनुयुञ्जीत - one should make it absorbed. - (13)

13. Being vigilant and free from despair, having controlled the posture and breath at appropriate time, fixing the mind on Me, the Lord, one should slowly make it absorbed.

The following measures can help to accelerate the pursuit by overcoming the obstructions:

i) Vigilance:

Going astray from the enjoined path is quite possible unless one is watchful all the time. Besides this there are natural obstructions like sleep or agitation of the mind in the seat of contemplation. Wake up the mind that sleeps and employ it to dwell on oneself. When the mind gets distracted due to the impressions of earlier sense pursuits, the same should be withdrawn from these distractions repeatedly.

ii) Freedom from despair:

For want of progress or due to encounter with the obstructions, the mind is prone to get despaired. With firm *śraddhā* (faith) and devotion to *Īśvara*, no room for despair should be given. The *purānic* story of a tiny bird called *tittibha* is a good example often quoted in this respect. The bird ventured on drying up the ocean to take revenge, without any despair. Seeing its determination Sage Nārada and Garuḍa, the King of birds, came to its help. Such must be the perseverance.

iii) Control of posture and breath:

The perfection in bodily posture and *prāṇāyāma* indicate the *Aṣṭāṅga Yoga* which is a technique accepted by Vedānta to train the mind. It is

also described as *Citta-cikitsaka śāstra* - a scripture dealing with the therapy of the mind. *Yathākālam* - at appropriate time - refers to the practice of same thrice a day.

With the help of these means, the mind has to be fixed on *Īśvara* whose nature is limitless *ānanda*, but slowly and not rashly. It is better to remember that haste is waste. This word *śanaiḥ* reminds us of the same used by Lord Kṛṣṇa in *Bhagavadgītā* in a similar context.

Perhaps Uddhava thinks it to be impossible to disassociate the mind from sense objects to take to contemplation of *Īśvara* as it is already obsessed by their glamour. So, to instil confidence in him, the Lord narrates a historic event:

एतावान्योग आदिष्टो मच्छिष्यैः सनकादिभिः ।
सर्वतो मन आकृष्य मय्यद्धावेश्यते यथा ॥१४॥

etāvān yoga ādiṣṭo macchiṣyaiḥ sanakādibhiḥ
sarvato mana ākrīṣya mayyaddhāveśyate yathā - (14)

यथा - duly सर्वतः - from everything मनः - mind आकृष्य - having withdrawn मयि - in Me (*Īśvara*) अद्धा - certainly आवेश्यते - is absorbed एतावान् - of this nature योगः - *yoga* मच्छिष्यैः - by My disciples सनकादिभिः - Sanaka etc. आदिष्टः - was taught. - (14)

14. This *yoga* (wherein) the mind being duly withdrawn from everything, is certainly absorbed in Me (*Īśvara*), was taught by My disciples Sanaka etc.

In other words this *yoga* was taught by *Īśvara* long back in the past and has been tested by the teacher-taught lineage. So its efficacy cannot be questioned.

UDDHAVA WANTS TO KNOW MORE

Sanaka etc. referred to as disciples are ancient sages. How can it be reconciled that Kṛṣṇa taught them this *yoga*? Or Uddhava, who knows that Kṛṣṇa is an incarnation (*avatāra*) of *Īśvara*, is eager to know more

about this teaching. So he requests:

उद्धव उवाच ।

यदा त्वं सनकादिभ्यो येन रूपेण केशव ।

योगमादिष्टवानेतद्रूपमिच्छामि वेदितुम् ॥१५॥

Uddhava uvāca -

yadā tvaṃ sankādibhyo yena rūpeṇa keśava

yogamādiṣṭavānetad rūpamicchāmi veditum - (15)

उद्धवः - Uddhava उवाच - asked.

केशव - O Keśava त्वं - you सनकादिभ्यः - to Sanaka and others यदा
- when येन रूपेण - (and) in which form योगम् - (this) *yoga* आदिष्टवान् - did teach
एतद् - this रूपम् - form वेदितुम् - to know इच्छामि - I wish. - (15)

Uddhava said:

15. O Keśava, I wish to know when and in which form did you teach
this *yoga* to Sanaka and others.

PRELUDE TO ACTUAL HAṂSA-GĪTĀ

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।

पुत्रा हिरण्यगर्भस्य मानसाः सनकादयः ।

पप्रच्छुः पितरं सूक्ष्मां योगस्यैकान्तिकीं गतिम् ॥१६॥

Śrī Bhagavānuvāca -

putrā hiraṇyagarbhasya mānasāḥ sanakādayaḥ

papracchuḥ pitaraṃ sūkṣmāṃ yogasyaikāntikīṃ gatim - (16)

श्रीभगवान् - The Lord उवाच - replied.

हिरण्यगर्भस्य - of *Hiraṇyagarbha* मानसाः पुत्राः - sons born from the mind (i.e. by volition) सनकादयः - Sanaka etc. पितरं - to (their) father योगस्य - of *yoga* सूक्ष्मां - which is difficult to accomplish एकान्तिकीं - definite गतिम् - nature पप्रच्छुः - asked. - (16)

The Lord said:

16. Sanaka etc., the sons born from the mind of *Hiraṇyagarbha* - *Brahmā* - asked their father the definite nature of *yoga* which is difficult to accomplish.

The four sages Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanātana and Sanatkumāra or called Sanatsujāta were born from mere mental resolve of *Brahmā*, also called as *Hiraṇyagarbha*. The reader is advised here to note the distinction between Brahman and *Brahmā*. While the former means the limitless pure awareness principle, the latter is one of the Trinity who in Vedic parlance is called *Hiraṇyagarbha* - the presiding deity of macrocosmic subtle bodies.

Gati also connotes path or final result. Here the adjective *sūkṣmā* is used to show that either the path or the result of *yoga* is difficult to

accomplish, as only a particular type of disposition is warranted to succeed.

SAGES' PROBLEM

सनकादय ऊचुः ।

गुणोष्वाविशते चेतो गुणाश्चेतसि च प्रभो ।

कथमन्योन्यसंत्यागो मुमुक्षोरतितितीर्षोः ॥१७॥

Sanakādaya ūcuḥ -

guṇeṣvāviśate ceto guṇāścetasi ca prabho

kathamanyonyasantyāgo mumukṣoratititīrṣoḥ - (17)

सनकादयः - Sanaka and others ऊचुः - asked.

प्रभो - O Master चेतः - mind गुणेषु - to sense objects आविशते - approaches (i.e. pursues) गुणाः - sense objects च - and चेतसि (आविशन्ति) - take possession of the mind अतितितीर्षोः - to the one who wants to overcome (them) मुमुक्षोः - to a *mumukṣu* कथम् - how अन्योन्य - mutual संत्यागः - avoidance (is possible)? - (17)

Sanaka and others asked:

17. O Master, the mind pursues sense objects and sense objects take possession of the mind. How can a *mumukṣu* who wants to overcome them, shun their mutual interaction?

The mind prompted by the false attribution of pleasing disposition on sense objects, naturally indulges in them seeking joy. The sense indulgence produces *saṃskāras* (impressions) about sense objects which in turn grip the mind. Each deriving sustenance from the other, both of these form a vicious circle only to deter the *mumukṣu* from sustained efforts. Withdrawal of the mind from sense objects is a must either to inquire about oneself or to fix the mind in contemplation of *Īśvara*. So a *mumukṣu* has to grow out of the slavish dependence on sense objects. To accomplish this how can one shun the mutual interaction between the mind and sense objects?

Brahmā fails to discern the question:

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।

एवं पृष्टो महादेवः स्वयंभूर्भूतभावनः ।

ध्यायमानः प्रश्नबीजं नाभ्यपद्यत कर्मधीः ॥१८॥

Śrī Bhagavān uvāca -

evaṃ pṛṣṭo mahādevaḥ svayaṃbhūrbhūtabhāvanaḥ

dhyāyamānaḥ praśnabījaṃ nābhyapadyata karmadhīḥ - (18)

श्रीभगवान् - The Lord उवाच - said.

महादेवः - the great Master स्वयंभूः - *Brahmā* भूतभावनः - the Creator कर्मधीः - the one who is totally engrossed in the duty of the Creation एवं - thus पृष्टः - asked ध्यायमानः (अपि) - in spite of pondering प्रश्नबीजं - diagnosis of the question न अभ्यपद्यत - did not conceive. - (18)

The Lord said:

18. The great Master *Brahmā*, the Creator, thus asked, could not diagnose the question in spite of pondering, being totally engrossed in the duty of the Creation.

It seems strange that *Brahmā*, even though so great, could not answer due to his inability to detect the very reason that prompted the question from his sons. The epithet *karmadhīḥ* amply describes his predicament. Being completely engrossed, as a presiding deity, in the execution of the Creation he was unable to think properly. So he failed to answer.

Brahmā invokes *Īśvara*:

स मामचिन्तयद्देवः प्रश्नपारतितीर्षया ।

तस्याहं हंसरूपेण सकाशमगमं तदा ॥१९॥

sa māmacintayaddevaḥ praśnapāratitīrṣayā

tasyāhaṃ haṃsarūpeṇa sakāśamagaṃ tadā - (19)

सः देवः - that deity प्रश्नपारुतितीर्षया - with a desire to answer the question
माम् - Me अचिन्तयत् - invoked तदा - then अहं - I हंसरूपेण - in the form of a swan
तस्य सकाशम् - near him अगमं - went. - (19)

19. The Deity invoked Me in order to answer the question. Then I went near him in the form of a swan.

दृष्ट्वा मां त उपव्रज्य कृत्वा पादाभिवन्दनम् ।
ब्रह्माणमग्रतः कृत्वा पप्रच्छुः को भवानिति ॥२०॥

*dr̥ṣṭvā māṃ ta upavrajya kṛtvā pādābhivandanam
brahmāṇamagrataḥ kṛtvā papracchuḥ ko bhavāniti - (20)*

ते - they मां - Me दृष्ट्वा - having seen उपव्रज्य - having approached
पादाभिवन्दनम् कृत्वा - having saluted touching My feet ब्रह्माणम् - *Brahmā* अग्रतः
कृत्वा - having made (their) leader पप्रच्छुः - they asked कः भवान् इति - "Who
are you ?" - (20)

20. Seeing Me, they came forward. Having saluted touching My feet, making *Brahmā* their leader, they asked Me, "Who are you?"

That the Lord commands respect irrespective of the form that is assumed, is obvious from the fact that *Brahmā* and other sages spontaneously offered their obeisance.

इत्यहं मुनिभिः पृष्टस्तत्त्वजिज्ञासुभिस्तदा ।
यदवोचमहं तेभ्यस्तदुद्धव निबोध मे ॥२१॥

*ityahaṃ munibhiḥ pṛṣṭastatvajjñāsuhistadā
yadvocamaḥaṃ tebhyastaduddhava nibodha me - (21)*

इति - thus अहं - I तत्त्वजिज्ञासुभिः - by those who were desirous of knowing
the ultimate truth मुनिभिः - by the sages पृष्टः - was questioned तदा - then अहं
- I तेभ्यः - to them यद् - what अवोचम् - answered तद् - that उद्धव - O Uddhava
मे - from Me निबोध - please listen. - (21)

21. Thus I was questioned by the sages desirous of knowing the ultimate Truth. Listen from Me, O Uddhava, what I answered then to them who were eager to know the Truth.

ACTUAL HAṂSA-GĪTĀ TEACHING

In the appreciation of *Ātmā* - "I" - who is limitless *ānanda* and distinct from the embodiment, sense objects are totally impotent to attract the mind. Naturally, this snaps off the nexus between the mind and sense objects wherein lies the answer to the question asked by the sages to *Brahmā*. To reveal the same, with the pretext of dismissing the inquiry, viz. "Who are you?", the Lord discriminates between *Ātmā* and *anātmā* ("I" and that which is not "I") in the next three stanzas:

UNFOLDMENT OF *ĀTMĀ* IN GENERAL

वस्तुनो यद्यनानात्वमात्मनः प्रश्न ईदृशः ।

कथं घटेत वो विप्रा वक्तुर्वा मे क आश्रयः ॥२२॥

vastuno yadyanānātvamātmanah praśna īdṛśaḥ
kathaṃ ghateta vo viprā vakturvā me ka āśrayaḥ - (22)

विप्राः - O sages यदि - when आत्मनः वस्तुनः - for the reality that is *Ātmā*
अनानात्वम् - (there is the) status of being one without a second वः - of yours
ईदृशः - such प्रश्नः - question कथं घटेत - how is it possible? मे वक्तुः - for Me
the speaker कः - what वा - also आश्रयः - (is the) basis? - (22)

22. O sages, when the nature of *Ātmā* is one without a second, how can such a question of yours be possible? What possibly (also) is the basis for Me, the speaker?

Does the question - "Who are you?" - pertain to *Ātmā* or to the embodiment which is an assemblage of five elements? In either case the question is untenable.

This stanza shows that the question cannot have any reference to *Ātmā*. The nature of *Ātmā* is limitless, changeless and hence indestructible pure knowledge principle. In its absolute nature there cannot exist anything other than itself. So, being totally free from plurality, *Ātmā* or Brahman is said as *ekam eva advitīyam* (One alone

without a second). In contrast to this the question "who are you?", presupposes the ascertainment of one from many. Evidently the question has no reference to *Ātmā*.

There is also another inherent flaw. The speaker who is to answer should have a basis to differentiate the subject of answer, for words can operate only in the realm of species (*jāti*), attribute (*guṇa*), action (*kriyā*) and relation (*saṃbandha*). *Ātmā* being devoid of all these, words are incapable of providing the answer, if the question is directed towards *Ātmā*. In view of this also the question cannot pertain to *Ātmā*.

That, even if the question is related to the embodiment it is incongruous, will be seen from the following:

पञ्चात्मकेषु भूतेषु समानेषु च वस्तुतः ।
को भवानिति वः प्रश्नो वाचारम्भो ह्यनर्थकः ॥२३॥

*pañcātmakeṣu bhūteṣu samāneṣu ca vastutaḥ
ko bhavāniti vaḥ praśno vācārambho hyanarthakaḥ - (23)*

वस्तुतः - in reality पञ्चात्मकेषु भूतेषु - when all embodiments are produced from five elements समानेषु च - and (who) have the same origin को भवान् इति - "Who are you?" वः - your प्रश्नः - question हि - indeed अनर्थकः - (is) a meaningless वाचारम्भः - exercise in speech. - (23)

23. When in reality, all embodiments are produced from five elements having the same origin, your question - "who are you?" - is indeed a meaningless exercise in speech.

The sages perhaps can argue that their question is about the swan which they are seeing. Even then, a little further analysis can expose its futility.

All bodies in the entire Creation, whether gross or subtle, are produced from five elements, viz. space, air, fire, water and earth. Their cause again, is *māyā*, the creative power of the Lord. But *māyā* has no independent existence apart from Brahman. So, from the angle of cause, all embodiments are essentially the same without any distinction. The variety of names and forms is only a superficial

appearance. For example, all golden ornaments are essentially gold. All the pots, pitchers etc. made of mud are nothing but mud only. Names and forms are irrelevant if one cares for the essential stuff.

Chāndogya Upaniṣad (6-1-4) declares this truth with the illustration of mud and its effect, pots etc., when it says: "The effect (modification) is only a name dependent on speech, but not an independently existing thing. Mud alone is the real thing." This fact also leaves no scope for differentiation regarding the embodiments.

Thus in either case the question "who are you?", is incongruous.

The entire world including all the embodiments as the product of five elements can be easily understood. But, how are we to know that Brahman, the ultimate cause of five elements, is non-dual? The Lord in the form of a swan suggests the means:

मनसा वचसा दृष्ट्या गृह्यतेऽन्यैरपीन्द्रियैः ।

अहमेव न मत्तोऽन्यदिति बुध्यध्वमञ्जसा ॥२४॥

manasā vacasā dr̥ṣṭyā gr̥hyatēnyairapīndriyaiḥ
ahameva na mattonyaditi budhyadhvamāñjasā - (24)

मनसा - by the mind वचसा - by speech दृष्ट्या - by sight अन्यैः इन्द्रियैः - by other senses अपि - also (यत् - whatever) गृह्यते - is cognised (तत् - that) अहम् - (is) Me एव - only मत्तः अन्यत् - other than Me न - not इति - thus अञ्जसा - correctly बुध्यध्वम् - please know. - (24)

24. Please know this correctly by due inquiry that whatever is cognised by the mind, speech, sight and also by other senses is Me only and nothing else other than Me.

Everything that is experienced is the Lord alone. The means to understand the truth of this statement is indicated in the word *añjasā* which in this context means directly and thereby connotes self-inquiry. Inquiry as guided by *Upaniṣads* is the direct means to know the real nature of *jīva*, *jagat* and *Īśvara*.

For instance, consider the sun that you see yonder. You perceive it with the eyes. The sight produces a thought corresponding to the seen sun. But all thoughts being the modifications of inert *antaḥkaraṇa* can be known only when they are illumined by *caitanya* - pure awareness - which itself is *Ātmā* - Brahman. So, in the presence of pure awareness, sun thought is known leading to its perception. This applies to the experience of the entire world.

Upaniṣads proclaim: "*Tameva bhāntam anubhāti sarvam*" "When Brahman shines as knowledge principle, everything is known" (*Kaṭha* 2-2-15; *Muṇḍaka* 2-2-10; *Śvetāśvatara* 6-14).

That means the world made of five elements not only depends on Brahman, but also has no independent existence apart from it. Worlds may come and go, yet Brahman always is. So, Brahman is *satyam*; *jagat* is *mithyā* (false). Again, Brahman is called as *Īśvara* with reference to the world. The foregoing discussion should amply reveal that the entire Creation is the Lord and Lord alone.

Thus, with the pretext of dismissing the question, the discrimination between *Ātmā* and *anātmā* in general was hinted. By the way, there is also an answer to "who are you" implied in these three stanzas. The Lord intends to reply - "I am the *Ātmā* of all (*sarvātmakaḥ*), I am everything (*sarvoḥam*)".

The present stanza echoes many Vedic passages like:

"*Puruṣa evedam sarvam*" - All this is *Puruṣa*, Lord, alone (*Puruṣa Sūktam*). "*Yacca kiñcijjagatsarvaṃ dṛśyate śrūyatepi vā, antarbahiṣca tatsarvaṃ vyāpya Nārāyaṇassthitaḥ*" - Lord *Nārāyaṇa* permeates in and through all that is seen and heard in this Creation (*Nārāyaṇa Sūktam*).

SOLUTION TO SAGES' PROBLEM

Having unfolded *Ātmā* in general, the Lord now answers the original question asked by the sages which even *Brahmā* was unable to reply. At the outset, let us bear in mind that Sanaka and others have a high degree of *vairāgya*. Yet their problem is the habitual taste for sense objects that persists besides the vicious circle between the mind and sense objects.

Human *antaḥkaraṇa* is interwoven with sense objects and is also subject to various modifications. The said problem can be irreparable provided the *antaḥkaraṇa* is the real nature of *jīva* - the individual. But in reality everyone is Brahman alone. Only due to false attribution does one get hooked to the vagaries of the mind. Having developed *vairāgya*, by self-knowledge, if erroneous identification with the embodiment is destroyed, the problem is resolved for ever.

The rest of the chapter is devoted to this teaching.

गुणेष्वविशते चेतो गुणाश्चेतसि च प्रजाः ।
जीवस्य देह उभयं गुणाश्चेतो मदात्मनः ॥२५॥

guṇeṣvāviśate ceto guṇāścetasi ca prajāḥ
jīvasya deha ubhayaṃ guṇāśceto madātmanaḥ - (25)

प्रजाः - dear children चेतः- mind गुणेषु - to sense objects आविशते - goes (i.e. pursues) गुणाः - sense objects च - and चेतसि (आविशन्ति) - take possession of the mind उभयं - both गुणाः - sense objects चेतः - (and) mind मदात्मनः जीवस्य - of *jīva* whose real nature is Me (Brahman) देहः - body (i.e. *upādhi*). - (25)

25. Dear children, (it is true that) the mind pursues sense objects and sense objects take possession of the mind. (But) both sense objects and the mind form the *upādhi* (*deha*) of *jīva* whose real nature is Me (Brahman).

Certainly the interaction between the mind and sense objects is accepted. Even then, both of them serve as *upādhi* of *jīva* and are not its real nature.

An *upādhi* is that which falsely attributes its characteristics to a nearby thing. A red flower in the proximity of a crystal is said as the *upādhi* of the latter. Though the crystal is always colourless, temporarily it appears to assume the red colour without any intrinsic change in it.

Similarly pure awareness (Brahman) which is the real nature of the individual is ever free from its *upādhi* - gross and subtle bodies. Only due to error the adverse effects of embodiment are mistaken as that of *Ātmā*.

The solution lies in being steadfast in self-knowledge which is free from *upādhi*.

**गुणेषु चाविशच्चित्तमभीक्षणं गुणसेवया ।
गुणाश्च चित्तप्रभवा मद्रूप उभयं त्यजेत् ॥ २६ ॥**

*guṇeṣu cāvīśaccittamabhikṣaṇaṃ guṇasevayā
guṇāśca cīttaprabhavā madrūpa ubhayaṃ tyajet - (26)*

(यत्) चित्तं - the mind (which) अभीक्षणं - repeatedly गुणसेवया - by brooding over the sense objects गुणेषु - to sense objects आविशत् - that which goes च - and चित्तप्रभवाः - born in the mind (as impressions) गुणाः - sense objects उभयं - both मद्रूपः (सन्) - being steadfast in Me - Brahman त्यजेत् - should give up. - (26)

26. Being steadfast in Me (Brahman) one should give up both the mind that hankers after sense objects due to repeated brooding over them and the sense objects born in the mind (as impressions), that take hold of the mind.

The mind hankers for sense objects after its repeated dwelling on their assumed pleasing disposition. When these desires culminate in sense gratification the resultant *saṃskāras* grip the mind. This is described in the stanza as entry of *guṇas* into the mind or their birth in it.

Brahman being free from *antaḥkaraṇa* and these modifications, the *mumukṣu* should shun these by being absorbed in one's real nature which itself is limitless *ānanda*. In the appreciation of oneself that is full, sense objects lose their charm and the mind sheds its obsession.

If our real nature (Brahman) is free from *upādhi*, it should be *kūṭastha*, i.e. the same all the time without any changes. This is in direct contrast to our experiences of waking, dream and deep sleep wherein no two states are similar. Then how can it be *kūṭastha*? The answer follows:

जाग्रत्स्वप्नः सुषुप्तं च गुणतो बुद्धिवृत्तयः ।

तासां विलक्षणो जीवः साक्षित्वेन विनिश्चितः ॥२७॥

jāgrat svapna susuptam ca guṇato buddhivṛttayaḥ
tāsāṃ vilakṣaṇo jīvaḥ sāksitvena viniścitaḥ - (27)

जाग्रत् - waking स्वप्नः - dream सुषुप्तं - deep sleep च - and गुणतः - on account of three *guṇas* बुद्धिवृत्तयः - (are) states of *antaḥkaraṇa* जीवः - *Ātmā* तासां विलक्षणः - (is) different from them साक्षित्वेन - as *sākṣi* (their direct illuminator) विनिश्चितः - is ascertained. - (27)

27. Waking, dream and deep sleep are the three states (*vṛttayaḥ*) of *antaḥkaraṇa* due to three *guṇas*. *Ātmā* is different from them (and) is ascertained to be their direct illuminator.

The three states are not the nature of *Ātmā*, but belong to *antaḥkaraṇa*. *Sattva* gives rise to waking, *rajas* to dream, and *tamas* to sleep, whereas pure awareness is ever present in all. This is told by Lord Kṛṣṇa himself in a subsequent chapter (*Bhāgavata* 11-25-20).

Ātmā, the illuminator of the three states, should necessarily be distinct from them. The one who illuminates independently is *sākṣi*.

Rightly *Ātmā* is so, being the very knowledge principle.

The fact that *Ātmā* - "I" - is free from *saṃsāra* also should be clear from this stanza. All our experiences, whether good, bad or otherwise in these three states clubbed together, are termed as *saṃsāra*. Since they belong to *antaḥkaraṇa*, *Ātmā* is essentially free from them. Due to ignorance and consequent error alone we suffer.

If *Ātmā* is free from the three states, then how do we explain the experiences of bondage like "I am awake", "I am sorrowful" etc.? They can only be the projections of the intellect. So the bondage has to be destroyed in the manner that is being shown by the Lord now:

यर्हि संसृतिबन्धोऽयमात्मनो गुणवृत्तिदः ।
मयि तुर्ये स्थितो जह्यात्यागस्तद्गुणचेतसाम् ॥२८॥

yarhi saṃsṛtibandhoyamātmano guṇavṛttidaḥ
mayi turye sthito jahyātyāgastadguṇacetasām - (28)

यर्हि - since आत्मनः - of *Ātmā* अयम् - this संसृतिबन्धः - bondage produced by intellect गुणवृत्तिदः - the one which projects erroneous notions तुर्ये मयि - in Me (Brahman) स्थितः (सन्) - abiding जह्यात् - should be given up तत् (i.e. तदा) - then गुणचेतसाम् - of the sense objects and the mind त्यागः (भवति) - giving up (takes place). - (28)

28. Since this bondage of *Ātmā* produced by intellect, projects erroneous notions, one should give it up by abidance in Me (Brahman). Then the sense objects and the mind are given up.

Here the word *saṃsṛti* can mean either "transmigration" or "that which causes *saṃsāra*, viz. intellect or *antaḥkaraṇa*". Accordingly, the phrase *saṃsṛtibandhaḥ* means, either "the bondage of the nature of transmigration", or "the bondage produced by intellect". In the context of the three states, the latter meaning is preferred.

Though bondage is due to ignorance, for practical purposes it is experienced at the level of *antaḥkaraṇa* wherein the intellect mistakes the *anātmā* as *Ātmā*. This notion falsely attributes to *Ātmā* the three states

which include all our experiences termed as *saṃsāra*.

The bondage has to be destroyed by firm abidance in the Lord who is described as *turyam*. Literally the word means "the fourth". With respect to waking, dream and deep sleep pure awareness (*Ātmā*), totally free from the earlier three, is said to be the fourth state. It should not be misconstrued as unrelated to waking etc. Actually *turyam* (pure *caitanya*) is in and through the three states and also independent of them, for, without it nothing can be experienced.

When the mind gets absorbed in *Ātmā* (the Lord), the mutual interaction between sense objects and mind gets totally abandoned. There lies the solution to the problem posed by the sages.

How exactly does the intellect produce bondage? How can it be destroyed? These questions are answered by the Lord himself:

अहंकारकृतं बन्धमात्मनोऽर्थविपर्ययम् ।
विद्वान्निर्विद्य संसारचिन्तां तुर्ये स्थितस्त्यजेत् ॥२९॥

ahaṅkārakṛtaṃ bandhamātmanorṭhaviṣāyayam
vidvān nirvidya saṃsāracintāṃ turye sthitastyajet - (29)

अहंकारकृतं - created by erroneous "I" notion (*ahaṅkāra*) आत्मनः - of oneself बन्धं - bondage अर्थविपर्ययम् - (disastrous because it) presents *Ātmā* in contrariety to its true nature (इति) विद्वान् - knowing (thus) निर्विद्य - being indifferent to sense objects तुर्ये स्थितः - abiding in *Ātmā* संसारचिन्तां - identification with *antaḥkaraṇa* त्यजेत् - should give up. - (29)

29. Knowing the bondage of oneself created by erroneous "I" notion (*ahaṅkāra*) to be disastrous, because it presents *Ātmā* in contrariety to its true nature, being indifferent to sense objects, one should give up the identification with *antaḥkaraṇa* by abiding in *Ātmā*.

All our experiences are in the realm of thoughts which need to be illumined by *caitanya*. Joyous, sorrowful or indifferent experiences pass through, in the presence of ever-existent Me, pure awareness. When I experience happiness or sorrow, it should be clear that the

experienced happiness or sorrow is different from me. In contrast to this if I take myself to be happy or sorrowful, the attributes of thoughts are taken as my nature due to mistaken identity. Such wrong identification with gross, subtle and causal bodies with their modifications is called *ahaṅkāra* which ramifies *saṃsāra*. It presents *Ātmā* - the *sat, cit, ānanda* - contrarily as mortal, ignorant and sorrowful. That is why *ahaṅkāra* is referred to as disastrous by the Lord.

Having known this, the *mumuksū* should develop *vairāgya* and finally get rid of *ahaṅkāra* referred to here as *saṃsāracintā*. The cause of *saṃsāra*, the intellect, is also called as *saṃsāra* and the identification with it is the *cintā*. *Saṃsāracintā* also implies constant thinking of sense pleasure. Wrong identification with the embodiment goads the individual into sense gratification to which there is no end.

Ahaṅkāra being the effect of self-ignorance, abidance in the knowledge of *Ātmā* alone can destroy it. Hence give it up by abidance in *turya* - Brahman, otherwise known as *Īśvara* with respect to the Creation.

LIFE WITHOUT SELF-KNOWLEDGE IS A WASTE

The Lord now shows the futility of all other pursuits in this pluralistic world if the right knowledge is absent.

यावन्नानार्थधीः पुंसो न निवर्तेत युक्तिभिः ।
जागर्त्यपि स्वपन्नज्ञः स्वप्ने जागरणं यथा ॥३०॥

*yāvannānārthadhīḥ puṁso na nivarteta yuktibhiḥ
jāgartyaḥ svapannajñāḥ svapne jāgaraṇaṁ yathā - (30)*

यावत् - till पुंसः - of an individual नानार्थधीः - notion of plurality युक्तिभिः
- by scriptural teaching न निवर्तेत - is not removed जागर्ति अपि - though
awake स्वप्न्; one is dreaming अज्ञः - (for) he is ignorant यथा - like स्वप्ने
- in the dream जागरणं - being awake. - (30)

30. Till the individual's notion of plurality is not removed by scriptural teaching, one is dreaming though awake, for he is ignorant. It is like being awake in the dream.

Ahankāra - the notion of I-ness in the embodiment - isolates the individual as different from rest of the world. It also produces the pluralistic notion (*nānārthadhīḥ*) according to likes, dislikes and value structure. *Nānārthadhīḥ* as well means the notion of "I" ness in many things like body etc. This can be destroyed by inquiry and proper ascertainment of *jīva*, *jagat* and *Īśvara* as guided by Vedānta. Through the appreciation of non-dual Brahman alone the apparent plurality can disappear.

So long as one does not attain this knowledge, all the pursuits of *karmas* and *upāsanaḥ* even though as per scriptures, are futile. All

such efforts of the ignorant person are only in the realm of false creation. Therefore, they cannot make him discover the real. The illustration of waker in the dream drives home the point. Whatever the dreamer may do playing the role of waker in the dream, it cannot produce any concrete result. Similarly one who takes to scriptural activities is described as awake because of adherence to the norms contained therein. Yet the results produced are fleeting like those in the dream.

This leads to a pertinent doubt. We find in the Vedas different means in terms of *karmas* and *upāsanaś* enjoined upon to accomplish diverse ends by all belonging to distinct *varṇas* and *āśramas*. In short Vedas which are the means of knowledge accept the world of plurality. Then how can the plurality be false and thereby be dismissed? The next stanza clarifies this doubt.

असत्त्वादात्मनोऽन्येषां भावानां तत्कृता भिदा ।
गतयो हेतवश्चास्य मृषा स्वप्नदृशो यथा ॥ ३१ ॥

asattvādātmanonyeṣāṃ bhāvānāṃ tatkr̥tā bhidā
gatayo hetavaścāsyā mṛṣā svapnadṛśo yathā - (31)

आत्मनः - अन्येषां - of those other than *Ātmā* भावानां - of embodiments and things असत्त्वात् - because of apparent nature तत्कृता - effected by them भिदा - diversity अस्य - of *jīva* च - and गतयः - results like heavens हेतवः - the causes like *karmas* मृषा (सन्ति) - (are) false यथा - like स्वप्नदृशः - dreamer's (vision). - (31)

31. The nature of all embodiments and things distinct from *Ātmā* being apparent, the diversity effected by them, the results like heavens, the *karmas*, the transmigration of *jīva*, are all false like the dreamer's vision.

Earlier while discussing stanza 24, we had seen that Brahman alone is the ultimate reality and rest of the entire superimposed Creation is false. Naturally human, heavenly and animal embodiments etc. along with sense objects are false. So are the differences of *varṇas* - *brāhmaṇa*, *kṣatriya*, *vaiśya*, *śūdra* - and the *āśramas* - *brahmacharya*, *gṛhastha*, *vānaprastha*, *sannyāsa*. The different results like heaven told by

Vedas, their means (*karmas* and *upāsānās*) and the transmigration of *jīvas* are also equally false. This being the truth, the false notion of plurality (*nānārthadhīh*) can certainly be dismissed in the wake of the clear knowledge of Brahman.

Then why at all do the Vedas speak of the means and the ends (*sādhana, sadhya*) that can be relevant only in a pluralistic world? The answer can be found by understanding the intention of *Śruti* in doing so. The knowledge of non-dual Brahman can be acquired only by a well-prepared mind. To purify the mind *karmas* with the attitude of *karmayoga* are indispensable. In view of this, *Śruti* advises do's and don'ts presuming ignorance and the consequent plurality.

THE SOLUTION CONTINUES

"Yuktibhiḥ" - "by scriptural teaching"- told in stanza 30 is now explained:

यो जागरे बहिरनुक्षणधर्मिणोऽर्थान्
भुङ्क्ते समस्तकरणैर्हृदि तत्सदृक्षान् ।
स्वप्ने सुषुप्ते उपसंहरते स एकः
स्मृत्यन्वयात्त्रिगुणवृत्तिदृग्निद्रियेशः ॥३२॥

*yo jāgare bahiranukṣaṇadharmiṇorthān
bhukṅkte samastakaraṇairhṛdi tatsadrkṣān
svapne suṣupta upasaṃharate sa ekaḥ
smṛtyanvayātriguṇavṛttidṛgindriyeśaḥ - (32)*

यः - who जागरे - during the waking state अनुक्षणधर्मिणः - ever changing बहिः अर्थान् - external sense objects समस्तकरणैः - through all senses भुङ्क्ते - experiences स्वप्ने - in dream हृदि - in the *antaḥkaraṇa* तत्सदृक्षान् - similar to those (sense objects in the waking) (भुङ्क्ते - experiences) सुषुप्ते - in deep sleep उपसंहरते - withdraws (them) सः - that one त्रिगुणवृत्तिदृक् - the illuminator of three states of consciousness इन्द्रियेशः - master of senses स्मृत्यन्वयात् - because of relation (to three states of consciousness) through recollection एकः - (is) one and the same. - (32)

32. The one, who during the waking state, experiences through all senses the ever changing external sense objects; who in dream, undergoes experiences in the *antaḥkaraṇa*, similar to those in the waking, (and) withdraws them all in deep sleep; who is the illuminator of three states and master of senses, is one and the same, because of relation (to three states) through recollection.

Experiencing sense objects through sense organs, organs of action and *antaḥkaraṇa* is waking state. Since all that one experiences change moment by moment, they are described as *anukṣaṇadharmī*. They are external because of their existence outside the limits of the body.

Based on the impressions of waking experiences, dream is the state wherein the senses are withdrawn from the external sense objects and similar experiences as those in the waking are undergone exclusively in terms of projections of *antaḥkaraṇa*. Total withdrawal from senses, *antaḥkaraṇa* and all the experiences of waking and dream states, leading to abidance in the cause of both (the ignorance) is deep sleep.

The one who is the illuminator of these three states and is considered as their experiencer due to wrong identification with the entire embodiment is *Ātmā*.

A superficial observer may conclude that sense organs and organs of action experience the waking state; the mind, the dream; and the causal form of *antaḥkaraṇa*, the sleep. How can *Ātmā* be the illuminator? Yes, it is true that these *upādhis* do have a function in the three states of experience. Yet, these by themselves being inert, can function only when illumined by the knowledge principle - *Ātmā*. So *Ātmā* is the master of these *upādhis* (*indriyeśah*). That is why *Kenopaniṣad* (1-2) describes it as - "Ear of ear, Mind of mind, Speech of speech, *Prāṇa* of *prāṇa* and Eye of eye".

Another question can also be asked. Is it not that the three entities, viz. waker (*viśva*), dreamer (*taijasa*) and deep sleeper (*prājña*), are the masters of these *upādhis*? How can that status be attributed to *Ātmā*?

The three said entities have no independent existence apart from *Ātmā* and it can be verified by faculty of recollection. Our universal experience deduces that "I who slept and dreamt thereafter am the one who is awake now". So one and the same *Ātmā* plays three roles with respect to gross, subtle and causal *upādhis*. Similarly *Ātmā* is same in childhood, youth, old age and all different states. They belong to *upādhis* and not to *Ātmā*.

With the above method of inquiry, proceed ahead as under:

एवं विमृश्य गुणतो मनसस्त्रयवस्था
मन्मायया मयि कृता इति निश्चितार्थाः ।
संछिद्य हार्दमनुमानसदुक्तितीक्ष्ण-
ज्ञानासिना भजत माऽखिलसंशयाधिम् ॥ ३३ ॥

*evaṃ vimṛśya guṇato manasastryavasthā
manmāyayā mayi kṛtā iti niścītārthāḥ
saṃchidyā hārdamanumānasaduktitīkṣṇa-
jñānāsina bhajata māḥkhilasamśayādhim - (33)*

एवम् - thus विमृश्य - having deliberated गुणतः - due to *guṇas* मनसः
त्रयवस्थाः - the three states of *antaḥkaraṇa* (i.e. the three states of conscious-
ness) मन्मायया - by self-ignorance मयि - in Me कृताः - are seemingly
projected इति - thus निश्चितार्थाः (सन्) - having ascertained the real nature
of *Ātmā* अखिलसंशयाधिम् - the receptacle of all doubts viz. *ahaṅkāra*
अनुमानसदुक्तितीक्ष्णज्ञानासिना - by the sword of knowledge sharpened by
reasoning, the advice of great masters and *Śruti* संछिद्य - having destroyed
हार्दम् - who abides in all *antaḥkaraṇas* मा - Me भजत - contemplate. - (33)

33. Thus having deliberated that the three states due to *guṇas* are
seemingly projected in Me by self-ignorance, (and thereby yourself)
having ascertained the real nature of *Ātmā*, having destroyed *ahaṅkāra*,
the receptacle of all doubts, by the sword of knowledge sharpened
by reasoning, the advice of great masters and *Śruti*, contemplate on Me
who abides in all *antaḥkaraṇas*.

Waking, dream and deep sleep are the three states of
antaḥkaraṇa produced by the three *guṇas*. But they are falsely projected
on *Ātmā* due to self-ignorance referred to in the stanza as *manmāyā*.
Actually *Ātmā* is free from them and so is free from *saṃsāra*. Thus one
should ascertain the knowledge of oneself.

This knowledge which destroys *saṃsāra* is compared to a sword. Just as a sword is always kept sharp to be effective, this knowledge also should be kept trim by removal of doubts and vagueness leading to its clarity. The same has to be accomplished by *anumāna* (reasoning) and *sadukti* (the teaching of great masters in accordance with *Śruti*). With such a sharp sword of knowledge the *ahaṅkāra* has to be destroyed. It is the receptacle of doubts like, "Is *Ātmā* same as body or different?", "If different, is it same in all or varied?", "Is *Ātmā saṃsārī* or not?", "Is it same as *Īśvara* or different?", etc.

Having destroyed the *ahaṅkāra*, the *mumukṣu* should contemplate on the Lord (Brahman) who is *hārdam*, i.e. abides in all *antaḥkaraṇas*. The contemplation must finally culminate in the absorption in Brahman.

The phrase *akhilasamśayādhim* can also mean "destroyer of all doubts" since the word *ādhi* permits the meaning "destroyer" as against "the receptacle" taken earlier. With this meaning it will be an adjective to *mā* - Me, the Lord. *Muṇḍakopaniṣad* (2-2-8) also points out - "*chidyante sarva samśayāḥ....tasmin dṛṣṭe parāvare*" - "all doubts get destroyed in the knowledge of Brahman". In this case the word *hārdam* (the one belonging to *antaḥkaraṇa*) will have to be taken as *ahaṅkāra* in relation to *saṃchidya*.

THE WORLD IS FALSE

The *anumāna* and *sadukti* previously mentioned are elaborated in the next four stanzas:

ईक्षेत विभ्रममिदं मनसो विलासं
दृष्टं विनष्टमतिलोलमलातचक्रम् ।
विज्ञानमेकमुरुधेव विभाति माया
स्वप्नस्त्रिधा गुणविसर्गकृतो विकल्पः ॥३४॥

*īkṣeta vibhramamidaṃ manaso vilāsaṃ
dr̥ṣṭaṃ vinaṣṭamatilolamalātacakraṃ
vijñānamekamurudheva vibhāti māyā
svapnastridhā guṇavisargakṛto vikalpaḥ - (34)*

ईदं - this (world) विभ्रमम् - illusion ईक्षेत - (thus) one should look upon
मनसः - of the mind विलासं - a projection दृष्टं - seen विनष्टं - (but) destroyed
(यथा) स्वप्नः - (like) a dream अतिलोलम् - very fickle अलातचक्रम् - the circle
of a firebrand एकम् - one विज्ञानम् - Brahman (knowledge principle) उरुधा
- manifold इव - as विभाति - appears गुणविसर्गकृतः - created by modifications
of the three *guṇas* त्रिधा - threefold विकल्पः - division माया - (is) false. - (34)

34. One should look upon this world as an illusion, (because) it is a projection of the mind and momentary (in nature) like a dream and very fickle like the circle of a firebrand. One knowledge principle (Brahman) appears as manifold. The threefold division created by modifications of the three *guṇas* is false.

Steadfastness in the knowledge of non-dual Brahman is possible, provided the false nature of the entire universe also is

ascertained. Otherwise the perceptible world is bound to create innumerable doubts. So the reasonings are given to show the illusory nature of the world.

It is a projection of our mind like a dream. When the mind is functioning as in the case of waking, the world is. During sleep it is no more, in the absence of the mind. The dream is experienced but disappears within a trice. So is the world, though experienced, subject to destruction.

It is also like a circle created by a fast revolving firebrand which is ever changing.

Some may doubt that any illusion is centered on something. How can the Creation be an illusion without a base? Yes, it is true that an illusion can subsist only on something that is concrete. The basis for the Creation is *vijñānam* - Brahman - the pure knowledge principle. *Śruti* declares: "*Vijñānam ānandaṃ Brahma*" - Brahman is knowledge principle and *ānandā* (*Bṛhadāranyaka Upaniṣad*, 3-9-28). Brahman alone appears as manifold Creation. This Creation should necessarily be false since the former is changeless and indestructible. In the case of the firebrand the glowing tip is the basis, whereas all the patterns are false. Similarly *vijñānam* provides the basis for the patterns of Creation. So the threefold division of waking, dream and deep sleep due to modifications of *guṇas* which comprises the entire *saṃsāra* is false, for it is merely a projection of the equally false ignorance.

DELUSION DOES NOT RETURN

The advice (*sadukti*) continues:

दृष्टिं ततः प्रतिनिवर्त्य निवृत्ततृष्णा-
स्तूष्णीं भवेन्नजसुखानुभवो निरीहः ।
संदृश्यते क्व च यदीदमवस्तुबुद्ध्या
त्यक्तं भ्रमाय न भवेत्स्मृतिरानिपातात् ॥३५॥

*dr̥ṣṭim tataḥ pratinivartya nivṛttatr̥ṣṇa-
stūṣṇīm bhavennijasukhānubhavo nirīhaḥ
sandṛśyate kva ca yadīdamavastubuddhyā
tyaktam bhramāya na bhavet smṛtirānipātāt - (35)*

निवृत्ततृष्णाः - desireless तूष्णीं - quiet निरीहः (सन्) - being free from actions ततः - from that (manifest world) दृष्टिं - attention प्रतिनिवर्त्य - having withdrawn निजसुखानुभवः - absorbed in the experience of one's real nature that is *ānanda* भवेत् - one should become यदि - if क्व च - somewhere इदम् - this (duality) संदृश्यते - is cognised (तथा अपि - even then) अवस्तुबुद्ध्या - by the understanding of its false nature त्यक्तं - discarded भ्रमाय न भवेत् - cannot lead to error आनिपातात् - till death स्मृतिः - memory भवेत् - it becomes. - (35)

35. Being desireless, quiet and free from actions, having withdrawn the attention from the manifest world, one should get absorbed in the experience of one's real nature that is *ānanda*. If somewhere the duality is cognised, even then the same which was discarded (earlier) as false cannot lead to error, but remains as memory till death.

The self-ignorance results in the identification with embodiment and thereby we get totally preoccupied with the world. Since the entire *jagat* is falsely superimposed on *Ātmā*, if we are to own up our real nature, this trend has to be reversed. So with proper *vairāgya* and due inquiry one should free oneself from the engrossment in the world and get rid of erroneous identification with the *upādhis*. Thereafter by repeated contemplation of our real nature, one must get absorbed in the limitless *ānanda* that in reality is "I".

To be steadfast in this absorption the following three means to have the readiness, are indispensable:

i) *Nivṛttatṛṣṇaḥ bhavet*: One should be totally free from hankering for sense objects. So long as desires are there in the bosom, the mind is bound to get distracted disqualifying it from taking to contemplation.

ii) *Tūṣṇīm bhavet*: Be quiet and composed. Let the mind be withdrawn from its mischievous pranks even by habit. A restless mind is unable to appreciate *Ātmā*.

iii) *Nirīhaḥ bhavet*: Be free from actions. Preoccupation in actions denies the leisure required to contemplate; besides it is a symptom of desires. Of course this advice is meant for a *jñānī* - a wise man - and not a novice for whom actions are unavoidable to achieve the ready frame of mind.

Though the advice to get rid of bodily identification and get absorbed in oneself is appropriate, the notion of I-ness in the body is very deeply rooted. So, one may doubt that even after the initial successful attempts for a period of time, if *ahaṅkāra* revives, *saṃsāra* may continue again. The Lord resolves this doubt.

If at any time like bathing, clothing, eating etc. which are the bare minimum activities required for the upkeep of body, the notion of I-ness is seen and the duality is cognised, the same cannot bind the individual again. Since in the wake of knowledge, the fallacies of *ahaṅkāra* and consequent duality are exposed, these are already discarded as apparent. So, they cannot bind the *jñānī* to *saṃsāra*. No doubt due to past impressions, their memory will linger till death.

A *jīvanmukta* - a liberated one even while living - during transactions with the world may refer to the body as I, but such *ahānkāra* is like a burnt rope that cannot bind or the roasted seeds that will not germinate. Though it resembles the *ahānkāra*, it is *bādhita* - a negated one - unlike the earlier one which was taken as true. To such a person the *jagat* also when perceived is merely a false appearance.

How a *jīvanmukta* looks upon one's body is further shown:

देहं च नश्वरमवस्थितमुत्थितं वा
सिद्धो न पश्यति यतोऽध्यगमत्स्वरूपम् ।
दैवादपेतमुत दैवशादुपेतं
वासो यथा परिकृतं मदिरामदान्धः ॥३६॥

dehaṃ ca naśvaramavasthitamutthitaṃ vā
siddho na paśyati yatodhyagamatsvarūpam
daiivādapetamuta daivavaśādupetaṃ
vāso yathā parikṛtaṃ madirāmadāndhaḥ - (36)

यथा - like मदिरामदान्धः - a dead drunk person (unaware of) परिकृतं - worn वासः - cloth सिद्धः - the one who is steadfast in self-knowledge दैवात् /दैवशात् - by *prārabdha karma* उत्थितम् - got up from a seat अवस्थितम् - standing still वा - or अपेतम् - gone away उत - or उपेतं - come near नश्वरं च - and transient देहं - body न पश्यति - does not identify with (or is indifferent to it) यतः - because स्वरूपम् - one's real nature अध्यगमत् - such person knows. - (36)

36. Like a dead drunk who is unaware of the cloth that is worn, the one who is steadfast in self-knowledge does not identify with (or is indifferent towards) the transient body, got up from a seat or standing still, gone away or come near by *prārabdha karma*, because such person knows one's real nature.

Here *siddhaḥ* means a *jīvanmukta* who is totally free from bodily identification. So, being indifferent towards body or its activities, if any,

is quite natural to him. The illustration of a dead drunk man who is not at all aware of the clothes worn or the manner in which they lie upon, makes the point very clear.

A *jīvanmukta* being full, has no *puruṣārtha* - accomplishments to be attained. In the absence of the will to accomplish anything for oneself to be happier, the actions of such great masters are completely guided by *prārabdha* - the result of past actions which have given birth to their present embodiments. They are like dry leaves which do not have their own volition, but get drifted by the wind.

Yataḥ svarūpaṃ adhyagamat : The phrase has two meanings.

(i) As "because (*yataḥ*) one knows the real nature", it gives the reason for being indifferent towards the body.

(ii) If it means, "that (body) by which (*yataḥ* in the sense of *yena*) one knows the real nature", then it serves as an adjective to the body (*deham*) towards which one is indifferent.

We know that the body is prone to die in spite of our efforts to protect it. Then, will not the body of a *jīvanmukta* wither away soon, if uncared for? No, it has the momentum of *prārabdha karma* to continue:

देहोऽपि दैववशगः खलु कर्म यावत्
स्वारम्भकं प्रतिसमीक्षत एव सासुः ।
तं सप्रपञ्चमधिरूढसमाधियोगः
स्वाप्नं पुनर्न भजते प्रतिबुद्धवस्तुः ॥३७॥

*dehopi daivavaśagaḥ khalu karma yāvat
svārambhakaṃ pratisamīkṣata eva sāsuḥ
taṃ saprapañcamadhirūḍhasamādhīyogaḥ
svāpnaṃ punarna bhajate pratibuddhavastuḥ - (37)*

खलु - certainly दैववशगः - governed by *prārabdha karma* देहः - body अपि - also यावत् - till स्वारम्भकं - its cause कर्म (अस्ति तावत्) - result of actions lasts सासुः - along with vital air and senses प्रतिसमीक्षते - survives एव - indeed

प्रतिबुद्धवस्तुः - the person who has gained the knowledge of *Ātmā* (Brahman) अधिरूढसमाधियोगः - who has attained complete absorption in *Ātmā* स्वप्नं - the dream-like तम् - that (body) सप्रपञ्चम् - with all the things connected to it पुनः - again न भजते - does not resort to. - (37)

37. Certainly the body also, governed by *prārabdha* survives along with vital air and senses till the result of actions which has produced it lasts. The person who has gained the knowledge of *Ātmā* - Brahman - and has attained complete absorption in it, again does not resort to the dream-like body with all connected to it.

The tenure of an embodiment is governed by *prārabdha karma*. Unless the same is exhausted, the body does not fall off.

When you switch off the fan it does not come to a complete halt immediately but continues to rotate. The duration of rotation depends on factors like the speed before switching off and the lubrication in it. In the same way, even after gaining knowledge, this body does not cease, but continues to live depending on how much *prārabdha karma* is there. *Chāndogyopaniṣad* (6-14-2) points out: "The delay for the *jñāni* to be totally one with Brahman is only till death".

That even though the body continues, the *jīvanmukta* has no attachment to it or to the sense objects, is further highlighted in the second half of this stanza.

The one who has *aparokṣajñāna* and also has gained total absorption in it, no longer resorts to the body and all those activities which are related to it. The repeated *nididhyāsanam* - contemplation leading to the absorption called as *samādhi* - destroys even the habitual identification with the body. So, from the vision of such an accomplished person the body and the entire world are similar to a dream.

TESTIMONY OF THIS TEACHING

The *Haṃsa* reveals its identity to instil *śraddhā* towards the teaching that was conferred in response to a seemingly simple question - "who are you?"

मयैतदुक्तं वो विप्रा गुह्यं यत्सांख्ययोगयोः ।
जानीतमागतं यज्ञं युष्मद्धर्मविवक्षया ॥३८॥

mayaitaduktaṃ vo viprā guhyaṃ yatsāṅkhyayogayoḥ
jānītamāgataṃ yajñaṃ yuṣmadharmavivakṣayā - (38)

विप्राः - O sages मया - by Me एतद् - this यत् - which सांख्ययोगयोः - of *ātmajñāna* (self-knowledge) and *yoga* गुह्यं - (is) the secret वः - to you उक्तं - is taught युष्मद्धर्मविवक्षया - to teach you the ultimate good (मां - Me) यज्ञं - *Īśvara* आगतं - who has come (इति) जानीत - (thus) please know. - (38)

38. O sages, I have taught you the secret of *ātmajñāna* (*sāṅkhya*) and *yoga*. Please know me to be *Īśvara* who has come to teach you the ultimate good.

Sāṅkhya is that scripture which unfolds the real nature of *jīva*, *jagat* and *Īśvara*, viz. Brahman, whereas *yoga* furnishes the means to gain its knowledge.

According to *Śruti* statement, "yajño vai Viṣṇuḥ" *yajña* means *Viṣṇu*, the all-pervasive *Īśvara*. The Lord had descended in the form of a celestial swan to confer upon the sages the knowledge of Brahman. *Dharma* was seen earlier as righteous disposition that is conducive to the pursuit of gaining self-knowledge. It also means *Upaniṣad* which unfolds Brahman. The great epic *Mahābhārata* refers to the teachings of self-knowledge as *mokṣadharmā*.

The glory of *Īśvara* is now described.

अहं योगस्य सांख्यस्य सत्यस्यर्तस्य तेजसः ।
परायणं द्विजश्रेष्ठाः श्रियः कीर्तेर्दमस्य च ॥३९॥

*aham yogasya sāṅkhyasya satyasyartasya tejasah
parāyaṇam dvijaśreṣṭhāḥ śriyaḥ kīrterdamasya ca - (39)*

द्विजश्रेष्ठाः - O exalted sages अहं - I योगस्य - of *yoga* सांख्यस्य - of self-knowledge ऋतस्य - of ascertained knowledge about the duty as per scriptures सत्यस्य - of the practice of *ṛtam* तेजसः - of superhuman power श्रियः - of wealth कीर्तेः - of fame दमस्य - of mastery over the senses च - and परायणं (अस्मि) - (am) the final resort. - (39)

39. O exalted sages, I am the final resort of *yoga*, self-knowledge, ascertained knowledge about the duty as per scriptures, of the practice of *ṛtam*, superhuman power, wealth, fame and mastery over the senses.

Ṛtam here refers to the ascertained knowledge about things to be done as per scriptures and *satyam* is its practice.

Īśvara is the abode of all glories, the ultimate goal of all scriptural means and the overlord of the entire Creation.

The glory of the Lord is continued.

मां भजन्ति गुणाः सर्वे निर्गुणं निरपेक्षकम् ।
सुहृदं प्रियमात्मानं साम्यासङ्गादयोऽगुणाः ॥४०॥

*māṃ bhajanti guṇāḥ sarve nirguṇam nirapekṣakaṃ
suhṛdam priyamātmānaṃ sāmyāsaṅgādayoḥ aguṇāḥ - (40)*

निर्गुणं - the one who is free from all *guṇas* (with their effects) निरपेक्षकम् - who exists independent of everything सुहृदं - the helpful one without expecting anything in return प्रियम् - dear आत्मानम् - the *Ātmā* - "I" - in all मां- Me सर्वे -all गुणाः - *guṇas* with their product, the Creation साम्यासङ्गादयः - the vision of oneness, detachment etc. अगुणाः - which are non-binding भजन्ति - resort to. - (40)

40. All *guṇas* with their product, the Creation and the vision of oneness, detachment (*asaṅga*) etc. which are non-binding, resort to Me who is free from all *guṇas* (with their effects), exists independent of everything, is the helpful without expecting anything in return, is dear, and is the *Ātmā* in all.

The entire Creation with its all modifications is produced from the three *guṇas* which have no existence apart from Brahman. When the Lord says “*sarve guṇāḥ*”, He obviously includes the world.

Guṇas do bind all the individuals, but some of the effects of *sattva* have in themselves an inherent capacity to release us from such bondage. *Sāmya* and *asaṅga* are two such effects. *Sāmya* can either mean the vision that appreciates One Brahman in and through the Creation or that state of composed mind wherein a *karmayogī* does not react to success or failure while discharging the duties in dedication to *Īśvara*. *Asaṅga* is absence of attachments to sense objects based on right evaluation of the world. These two and similar other dispositions do not bind and so are described as *aguṇāḥ*. By the by, the word *guṇa* also means a rope or that which binds. Accordingly *aguṇāḥ* indicate those which do not bind, even though they are basically the dispositions of *antaḥkaraṇa*.

Thus both *guṇas* which bind, and non-binding *sāmya* etc., abide in non-dual Brahman which itself is *nirguṇa*, free from all *guṇas*. *Nirguṇa* Brahman is necessarily free from *jagat*. The world depends on Brahman whereas Brahman is independent of the world. Therefore Brahman is said to be *nirapekṣakam* - that which exists independent of everything. This relation is possible only when Brahman is real - *satyam* - and the *jagat* is false - *mithyā*. For example, in the case of a rope mistaken as snake, the snake depends on the rope whereas the rope is independent.

The Lord who in reality is free from the world is further described as *suḥṛt* in the realm of *jagat*. A *suḥṛt* need not necessarily be a friend, but is one who helps, only because the other is in need even if the person is unknown, and that also, without expecting anything in return. *Īśvara* also helps all by lending the existence (*sat*), the knowledge (*cit*) and happiness (*ānanda*) in them irrespective of the types of living beings.

But where can we find Him? Well, He is the very "I" (*Ātmā*) in all. If we do not recognize Him, it is only an exhibition of our ignorance. Denial of *Īśvara* is nothing short of denial of oneself! Being the "I" in all, *Īśvara* is the most dear - *priya* - because oneself is the locus of maximum love. If anything else is dear, it is for one's own sake.

THANKS-GIVING

The sages and *Brahmā* pay their respects to the Lord:

इति मे छिन्नसंदेहा मुनयः सनकादयः ।
सभाजयित्वा परया भक्त्याऽगुणत संस्तवैः ॥४१॥

*iti me chinnsandehā munayaḥ sanakādayaḥ
sabhājayitvā parayā bhaktyāḥgrṇata samstavaiḥ - (41)*

सनकादयः - Sanaka etc. मुनयः - the sages इति - in this manner मे (i.e. मया) - by me छिन्नसंदेहाः - whose doubt was dispelled परया भक्त्या - with exalted devotion सभाजयित्वा - having worshipped (Me) संस्तवैः - with hymns अगुणत - praised. - (41)

41. The sages Sanaka etc. whose doubt was dispelled in this manner by Me, having worshipped Me with exalted devotion, praised with hymns.

The doubt about the mutual interaction between the mind and sense objects which *Brahmā* himself could not answer, was resolved by the Lord having manifested in the form of a celestial swan.

PARTING

The Lord returns:

तैरहं पूजितः सम्यक् संस्तुतः परमर्षिभिः ।
प्रत्येयाय स्वकं धाम पश्यतः परमेष्ठिनः ॥४२॥

*tairahaṃ pūjitaḥ sanyak saṃstutaḥ paramarṣibhiḥ
pratyeyāya svakaṃ dhāma paśyataḥ parameṣṭhinaḥ - (42)*

तैः परमर्षिभिः - by those great sages पूजितः - worshipped सम्यक् - highly
संस्तुतः - praised अहं - I परमेष्ठिनः पश्यतः - while *Brahmā* looked on स्वकं -
My धाम - abode प्रत्येयाय - returned. - (42)

42. (Thus) worshipped and highly praised by those great sages,
I returned to My abode, while *Brahmā* looked on.

Having accepted the adoration offered by them, the Lord
withdrew from the temporary manifestation as the *Haṃsa*.

THE GIST

Samsāra being the product of the three *guṇas*, belongs to *antaḥkaraṇa* and not to *Ātmā*. So a *mumukṣu* who wants to free oneself should develop *sattva* and thereby overpower *rajas* and *tamas*. *Sattva* leads to devotion to the Lord which is an indispensable means to gaining self-knowledge. Finally *sattva* has to be overcome by *sattva* alone.

To develop *sattva* one has to take to different means such as scriptures, company of the good, meditation, etc. which are recommended by great persons who are past masters in scriptures. These have to be resorted to, until *aparokṣajñāna* and further absorption in it are gained.

During the pursuit, the destruction of mutual interaction between the mind and sense objects becomes a formidable task in spite of initial *viveka* and *vairāgya*. The Lord in the form of a *Haṃsa* provides the solution.

The problem of the mind and sense objects can finally be resolved only through the total abidance in self-knowledge. From the absolute standpoint, there is only the non-dual *Ātmā*-Brahman. The *jagat* has no existence apart from it. The entire Creation including the mind along with sense objects is an *upādhi* to Brahman. Therefore being steadfast in this knowledge, one should shun the mind as well as the sense objects.

Samsāra is experienced in terms of waking, dream and deep sleep states at the level of *antaḥkaraṇa*, whereas *Ātmā* is the illuminator of all these. Based on our recollection we can verify that the same "I" - *Ātmā* - who is the master of all senses and *antaḥkaraṇa*, seemingly undergoes all these experiences due to *upādhis*. The firm abidance in this knowledge alone is the remedy to free oneself from *samsāra* and so everyone must take to it. The lives of those who are engrossed in the

pluralistic world is in vain indeed in spite of their adherence to righteousness as per scriptures.

The Creation is an illusion because it is momentary and a projection of the mind like a dream. So a *jīvanmukta* who is steadfast in this knowledge neither identifies with the embodiment or sense objects nor hankers after them. Such accomplished persons who have self-knowledge and absorption of mind in it are indifferent towards them. Their bodies continue to live till the momentum of *prārabdha karma* is over.

The celestial swan being none other than *Īśvara*, this teaching should be imbibed with due *śraddhā*. The Lord is the abode of all glories and the entire Creation, but in reality He is free from them all and exists independently as the limitless indestructible knowledge principle which is *ānanda*. Undoubtedly that is our real nature which we have to discover, more so because human embodiment alone is especially designed for this purpose. Yet, if we do not accomplish this goal, we will be failing in our duty towards ourselves.

OM TAT SAT

ॐ ॐ

Other commentaries by the author:

1) Vedānta Pañcadaśī Chapter I - Tattva-viveka (Discovery of your innate greatness)

2) You are Absolute Happiness - Brahmānade Yogānadaḥ Vedānta Pañcadaśī Chapter XI



**SRI VISWESWAR TRUST
M U M B A I**

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