

vivekac`y~maõĩ

What is bondage?

Verse 139

Beginning with shloka 127, in 11 shlokas the answer to the question "What is the ParamAtman?" was given. Now the guru proceeds to tell the shiSyas in the next two shlokas the answer to the first question: "what is bondage?"

atrAnAtmanyahamiti matir bandha eSo'sya pumsah
prApto'jnAnAjjananamaraNakleshasampAtahetuh|
YenaivAyam vapuridamasat satyamityAtmabuddhyA
puSyatyukSatyavati viSayais tantubhih koshakrdvat||

The belief that the anAtman is the Atman is man's bondage. This belief arises from avidyA. It is the cause of the congeries of grieves like birth, death etc. By it, thinking this unreal body to be real like the Atman, one nourishes it, bathes it, and protects it by sense-objects and gets bound by them like the silkworm by its threads.

As explained earlier, the PramAtman is the essential nature of the jiva. Yet, by reason of the beginningless avidya to which he is Subject, man thinks of the body etc., as "I", i.e., he says: 'I am a man; I am subject to hunger and thirst; I desire, I act, I eat etc. This thought of his Atman as all this is itself bondage. The cause of this is to be traced to ajnana. All illusory experience is due to a defect (doSa). As bhrama common to all is productive of defect, the wrong impression of the atman as the body etc. is to be traced to ajnAna of one's real nature, atra: in the visible body etc., which are the anAtman. The bhrama of the unseen atman in the visible body etc., is a dosa. (ajnAna is of two kinds: mUIAjnAna and tUIAjnAna. The former is the primordial cosmic ajnAna to which all people are subject. The latter is the ajnAna of each particular individual on every occasion. According to the Samkhya and other views, the mUIAjnAna is not accepted. In that case the question of bondage and liberation will not arise; for, bondage is the result of ajnAna; when ajnAna is destroyed by jnAna, its effect, bondage also will be destroyed. Otherwise, i.e., if the mUIAjnAna is not accepted, bondage will be real and it cannot be said to be capable of destruction. In the absence of doSa, bhrama cannot arise.

The effects of bondage are enumerated: janana-maraNa-klesha-sampAta-hetuh: the cause of being engulfed in the throes of birth, death and grief. The throes include hunger, thirst etc., or it may be taken to mean birth and death and the klesha (woes).

SampAtAhetuh:sampAtAh: sammagnatvam: being completely immersed.

The list refers to egotism, desire, hatred and attachment. What is stated earlier as anAtmanyahamiti matir bandhah, that the belief that the anAtman is the atman is the first cause of grief due to avidyA has been stated already. (These are the pancakleshas; avidyA, asmitA, rAga, dveSa, abhinivesha: nescience, egotism, desire, hatred, and attachment). The Yoga Sutra says: anityAshuciduhkhAnAtmasu nityashucisukhAtmatvakhyAtir avidyA: "The mistaken perception of the Atman which is eternal, pure and blissful in what is transient, impure and subject to grief, is avidya." Due to being inclined to the gross body, birth and death arise; due to attachment to Anandamayakosha etc., arise desire, aversion and attachment. Thus the first klesha, namely the resultant avidya is the cause of all kinds of misery.

Yenaiva: by which alone i.e., by the wrong perception of the Atman in the anAtman; by the

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bondage resulting therefrom man thinks this unreal body as the Atman and gets attached to it.

ViSayaih: the sense objects appear pleasant though really they are forms of bondage. By their relish, they make for nourishment, growth and protection. An appropriate example is given. The silkworm spins a web out of the threads manufactured by its saliva. It thinks that it is protected by those threads. Caught up **in** them, it is not able to move out of them and ultimately dies. So too the jiva thinking that its body is the Atman. Nourished by the sense-objects, caught by them, it is subject to various kinds of griefs like birth, death, etc. Vide the shloka:

koshakrimis tantubhirAtmadeham AveSTya caveSTya ca gupticchan| svayam vinirgantumasAkta
eva san tatastadantarmriyate ca lagnah||

avanam: means rakSaNam: safeguarding what exists. PoSaNam is making it grow.

Verse 140

Superimposition cannot arise if one understands the difference between the basis (adhithana) and what is super-imposed (the aropya). That adhyAsa is the essential cause for bondage is explained with an example by referring to ajnAna which is the prime cause operating through avidyA and making for bondage.

atasmin tadbuddhihi prabhavati vimUDhasya tamasA
vivekAbhAvAdvai sphurati bhujage rajjudhiSanA|
tato'narthavrAto nipatati samAdAturadhikah
tato yo'sadgrahah sa hi bhavati bandhah shrNu sakhe||

By (ajnAna which is of the nature of tamasa) an indiscriminating man mistakes what is not a thing as that thing. This is due to lack of discrimination. This is like thinking a serpent to be a rope. Then great calamities befall one subject to it. Hence, listen, my friend! Taking unreal things to be real is what constitutes bondage.