

IS THE 'DESIRE' DESIRABLE?

- SWAMI SHUDDHABODHANANDA SARASWATI

WHAT IS A DESIRE?

Guru : A desire (*kaama*) is a craving, longing, or yearning for something that brings satisfaction, enjoyment or relief from sorrow, pain or suffering. It originates from the fundamental and universal urge of *sukha-praapti* (acquisition of joy) and *dukha-nivritti* (avoidance of sorrow) in all the living beings without an exception. It can come to an end only on gaining the infinite or limitless (*ananta*) happiness (*aananda*) totally free from even the least trace of sorrow. Then the pursuit of *sukhapraapti* and *dukhanivritti* stops. As a result there remains no cause that can prompt desires.

Disciple: Oh *guro!* Is it not a Utopia to think of a state or an entity having limitless happiness (*ananta aananda*) totally free from sorrows, leave alone gaining it?

Guru : Yes, at a cursory glance it appears so to those who have no exposure to the teachings of Upanishads or Vedanta which is the ultimate essence (*taatparya*) of the Vedas. But it is not so. Definitely there is such an unique entity. It is none other than the real nature of what all of us refer to as 'I' which is a non-changing, ever-experiencing and ever-knowing principle called *cit* (pure awareness principle) or *atma* identical with Brahman. It is all along changelessly available as 'I' in and through our ever-changing three states of consciousness (waking, dream and deep-sleep) and the three bodies (gross, subtle and causal). The scriptures provide the means to gain it.

Disciple: Oh, now I remember that *atmaavidya* or *Brahmaavidya* is being referred to. But it invariably repeats and asserts the necessity of what they call *vairagya* (dispassion) asking us to give up all desires. It seems to be totally unnatural. Is it not a 'non-thinking' to speak against the natural tendencies that are universal in nature?

Guru : Sonny, you should be extra cautious before passing on such remarks without proper investigation or taking into consideration as to who has emphasized the need of *vairagya* and why? It is *adhyaatmashastra* (spiritual lore) that has emphasized the need of *vairagya*. Its authorship is traced to *aadigurus*, Brahmaa, Vishnu, Maheshwara and galaxy

of *rishis* besides deities who were *jeevanmuktas*. They had nothing to gain from this world. They were full and all-accomplished. Their heart bleeds by seeing the suffering of others. If they say something, should we not investigate and try to understand why such an advice is given before passing on such hasty remarks?

IS THE 'DESIRE' DESIRABLE?

Disciple: It is true. But *guro!* Please tell me point-blank whether the desire is desirable or not?

Guru : The desire is both desirable and undesirable.

Disciple: How can that be an answer? Is it not ambiguous?

Guru : It depends on you. You first define whether you are a *bubhukshu* or a *mumukshu*.

Disciple: What does that mean?

Guru : *Bubhukshu* is the one for whom enjoying the sense-pleasures only by all means is the prime goal of life. But the *mumukshu* is a mature person who has discovered that even the best sense-pleasures etc. available here or hereafter in heavens cannot make anyone truly contented and totally free from sorrows so long as the inevitable death with transmigration continues.

Disciple: But what relevance this division of *bubhukshu* and *mumukshu* has got with having desires or not?

Guru : Desires appear to be desirable to *bubhukshus*. The scriptures even give to such immature people a long list of desirable things with the means to procure them, but of course strictly in accordance with *dharma*. Such a pursuit of permitted desires is allowed to those who are yet to develop a mature mind born of right evaluation of sense-objects. The life of *dharma* lived induces *viveka* in them by *duritakshaya* (ending of past sins). This leads to *vairagya* in due course. As a result they are no longer interested in the sense-pleasures. Having got convinced about the worthlessness, of the sense-pursuits they develop an intense yearning to get freed totally from sorrows and gain limitless happiness. They become *mumukshus*. Desires are no more desirable to them. On the contrary, they discover that desires obstruct their highest pursuit of gaining *atmajnana*.

SENSE-PURSUIT IS NOT WORTHWHILE

Disciple: Oh *guro!* I am still unable to understand the worthlessness of the sense-pursuits when the fulfilled desires give joy or relieve from sorrows.

Guru : This needs an unbiased investigation to discover what is really dear (*priya*) to us? What is the true source of everlasting happiness? What can be the entity wherein no sorrows are ever possible? Are you ready to embark upon such an enquiry?

Disciple: Yes, *guro!* Please guide me. Please have compassion on me.

Guru : First of all know a universal principle. Anything that is dear (*priya*) to us is necessarily the source of happiness (*aananda*). If it is more dear (*priya*) then it is the source of more happiness. If there is an entity which is the most dear, it should necessarily be the source of maximum or limitless happiness. Now consider the fact that the sense-objects (*vishayas*) are dear and desired for the sake of 'I' (*cit, atma*). Therefore 'I' is more dear (*priya*) than the *vishayas*.

Disciple: But the *vishayas* such as wife, husband, children, wealth, possessions, etc. are also dear.

Guru : The *vishayas* do appear so to begin with. But in the course of time they end in sorrows and therefore become disliked (*apriya*). That is what Bhagavan Krishna says that they are nectarine to begin with, but in the end like the poison they become the source of sorrow. In procuring sense-objects there is sorrow. In protecting them after getting also there is sorrow. When they get destroyed, there is nothing but sorrow. At times even for the sake of oneself, the *vishayas* are abandoned. That shows that oneself is more dear. A sense-object is dear (*priya*) so long it gives joy. Similarly an entity is disliked (*apriya*) so long it gives sorrow. No sense-object (*visaya*) can be permanently *priya* (pleasing, dear) or *apriya* (disliked). But 'I' (*cit, atma*) is always *priya* (pleasing, dear) and never *apriya* (disliked). It is universally observed that everyone without exception longs : ' May "I" live forever, may "I" never cease to exist!'. Even a person on the verge of suicide is not an exception to this. What he dislikes may be a particular condition of the body or the state of mind with some non-solvable problems according to him. If an infallible solution is offered, he will never commit suicide.

Thus 'I' (*cit, atma*) alone is the locus of limitless love (*parapremaaspada*). The obvious corollary is : 'I' is limitless happiness (*paraananda*). That 'I' is free from all *upadhis* in the form of threefold embodiment and perceptible (*drishya jagat*) which alone is the source of sorrow. The gross and the subtle bodies are the sources of sorrows. The causal body contains sorrow in a potential form. All these three with *jagat* are absent in 'I'. Therefore 'I' (*cit, atma*) is limitless happiness totally free from even the least trace of sorrow in contrast to the *vishayas* (sense-objects) which can give tinsels of transient happiness ever-mixed with sorrows.

THE TRIPLE CARDINAL TEST

What we have deduced so far is based on reasoning (*yukti*). The *sruti* (*Upanishads*) also declares that 'I' (*atma*) is *sat* (ever-existent principle), *cit* (fundamental knowledge principle) and *aananda* (happiness). The word *aananda* generally means *vishaya-sukha* (sense-pleasure). But here in the case of *atma*, such limitations are eliminated by juxtaposing 'aananda' with 'sat' (ever-existent principle) which shows it to be indestructible in nature. Such an entity has to be necessarily limitless (*ananta*). Thus *atma* is *ananta aananda*. *Chhandogyopanishad* (7-23) directly points out : 'That which is *bhoomaa* (limitless, *mahat, Brahman*) is itself *sukha* (happiness), there is no *sukha* (happiness) in the *alpa* (any limited entity, *saanta*). Further this is verified by *vidvadanubhava* (the *anubhava* of *jnanis* who have got *aparoksha Brahmajnana*). Thus the above fact is proved by the triple cardinal test accepted by Vedanta namely *sruti, yukti* and *anubhava*.

THE SOURCE OF SENSE-PLEASURE

Just as the *sat* (existence) nature of *atma* is the basis of the 'existence' or 'is'ness in all entities that are there in the entire Creation and its *cit* (knowledge principle) nature is the basis of all varieties of specific knowledge, so is the *aananda* (happiness) aspect of *atma* the basis of all *vishayasukha* (sense-pleasures) enjoyed by all living beings. Happiness is not the intrinsic feature of *vishayas*. The happiness that we experience by sense-indulgence is borrowed from *atma / Brahman* which is the limitless happiness (*ananta aananda*). This fact can be verified from the Upanishads.

The *Taittiriyaopanishad* (2-8) and *Brihadaranyakopanishad* (4-3-33) contain an inquiry into the measure of *aananda* (happiness) enjoyed by beings in different species of embodiments. The enquiry starts with the happiness enjoyed by an ideal emperor as the basic unit, with a

hundred fold increase in each successively higher embodiment upto the highest embodiment, *Hiranyagarbha*. The counting stops there. The *aananda* (happiness) enjoyed in all those embodiments is akin to a drop in the ocean of happiness that is Brahman, (*Br. U.* 4-3-32) called *Brahmaananda*. Thus *Brahmaananda* is limitless (*aananda*) happiness and non-dual in nature which is self evident in *aparoksha Brahmajnana*.

A *mumukshu* is in for gaining limitless happiness totally free from sorrows. Therefore he wants to know his real nature by its *aparokshajnana* (direct knowledge). He is not interested in sense-pleasures. The *Vishayas* (sense-objects) are no more desirable to him, nay, the desires are the main obstructions in gaining *atmajnana*. Considering this, none other than *Bhagavan* Krishna himself comes down heavily on *kaama* (desire) along with anger and greed in his statements: 'The *kaama* is voracious, great sinner', 'eternal enemy of *jnanis*', 'kill the enemy called desire who is unassailable' (*B. G.* 3-32, 39, 43), 'a self-ruining gateway to hell' (*B.G.* 16-21). All Upanishads invariably highlight the role of *vairagya* more or less. Therefore the desire is not desirable to a *mumukshu*.

KAAMOSMI – I AM THE DESIRE

Disciple: Oh *guro!* I do understand what you have said so far. I have read how *Bhagavan* Krishna has criticized the desires to the point of condemnation. But here is a small doubt. What is wrong if we entertain desires until we gain *atmajnana*? Notwithstanding his criticism of desire, *Bhagavan* Krishna also has declared, 'Oh *Bharatarshbha* (*Arjuna*), I am desire' (*kaamosmi Bharatarshbha*) (*B.G.*7.11).

Guru : Sonny, I had cautioned you earlier. A hasty conclusions without the proper investigation and analysis (*mimamsa*) is not desirable. First of all keep in mind that *Bhagavan* Krishna has not said that he is any and every desire in general. He specifies the desire referred to as : 'In the case of living beings (*bhuteshu*) the desire (*kaamah*) that is unopposed to *dharma* (*Sastra*, scripture) (*dharmaaviruddha*)'. *Bhashyakara* explains this as the desires to appease the hunger and quench the thirst necessary to sustain the body. A thorough *mimamsa* (sacred inquiry, analysis) is indispensable in this context.

The first six chapters of *Bhagavadgita* describe the *nirupadhika atma*/Brahman with the means of gaining it. The next six chapters unfold the *saguna* Brahman called *Isvara*. That is why *Bhagavan* Krishna makes a declaration in the beginning of seventh chapter that he is going to impart that *jnana* (knowledge) with *vijnana* (*svaanubhava-*

samyuktam, endowed with one's experience) in such a manner that *Bhagavat-tattva* (divinity principle) can be known in its entirety (*samagram*). *Bhashyakara* explains the word *samagram* (entirely) as, 'endowed with the features such as glory, strength, power, overlordship etc.'. That means the knowledge of *Bhagavan* is complete when known in its *nirguna* and *saguna* form. This meaning gets corroborated by *Bhagavan* Krishna's statement : knows me (*maam abhijanati*) *yaavaan* (of what magnitude) *yah cha tattvataha* (of what nature in reality) *asmi* (I am) (B.G. 18-55). *Bhashyakara* explains *yaavaan* as the magnitude in terms of different glories born of *upadhi* (*upadhikrita-vistarabheda*) whereas *yah* as the *nirupadhika* nature (*vidhvasta-sarva-upadhibheda*). Thus to glorify *Ishvara*, some of his glories are given in the verses 8 to 12 of seventh chapter of *Bhagavadgita*. *Bhashyakara* explains as a sample the first glory namely 'I am in the *rasa* (essence, pith) in the water' as 'in me (*Ishvara*) who is the very *rasa* (essence) the water is centred'. It is worth noting what *Bhagavan* says in the same verse as that of *kaamosmi*: 'I am the *bala* (strength) devoid of *kaama* (hankering for sense-objects) and *raga* (love for sense-objects gained) in the *balavaan* (strong)'. The *Bhashya* clarifies that the *bala* (strength) referred to is the one that sustains the body etc. and not the one that is the cause of hankering for sense-objects and the love for them. In the light of all these explanations the statement of *Bhagavan*, 'I am the desire unopposed to *dharma*' should be understood. The word *kaama* here does not mean all desires. Only the good things are pointed out as the glories of *Bhagavan*.

In fact, it should be known for certain that everything whether in the category of *dharma* or *adharma*, good or bad, right or wrong is nothing but the manifestation of *Ishvara* only in the sense that the entire *jagat* is superimposed on Brahman as its basis (*adhithana*). It has no independent existence. Only the glories are described here.

Disciple: Then revered *guro*! Why does the *Shastra* make the difference of '*dharma*, *adharma*' or 'good, bad' etc. when everything is *Ishvara*?

Guru : The *shastra* has a point. It wants all to avoid *adharma*, bad and wrong things or pursuits and take to *dharma*, good etc. in the beginning to prepare the mind to know *Ishvara* or *atma*/ Brahman. Finally *nirupadhika atma*/Brahman free from both alone has to be known which is beyond the realm of both *dharma* and *adharma* etc.

Truly speaking the referred statement by *Bhagavan* **does not** mean, '**I am the desire** unopposed to *dharma*'. Actually it means, '**I (*Ishvara*) is the one to whom the**

desires unopposed to *dharmā* belong’. It should be taken as an attributive compound (*Bahuvrihi samaasa*).

Disciple: How can that be so *guro*? Even a child who knows the Samskrit language will tell the meaning of that statement by *Bhagavan* as ‘I am such and such desires’. What is the *pramana* that it is an attributive compound? *Bhashya* on that verse has not said anything like that.

Guru : Look, I have already cautioned you that a proper investigation is indispensable if a statement coming from an authentic source such as *Bhagavan* Krishna is either not clear or is seemingly ambiguous. When *Bhagavan* has described the *kaama* (desire) as an unassailable eternal enemy of *jnanis* and a self-ruining gateway to hell, can the desire be his nature only because the phrase ‘I am desire’ is used? This needs a thorough investigation. It is true that the *Bhashya* of that verse is silent on this matter. You may ask, ‘where to look for help?’. Please know for certain that *Bhashyakara* himself has come to our rescue elsewhere in a similar context. In the *Chhandogyaopanishad* as a part of *Shandilyavidya*, the *upasana* of Brahman in its *saguna* form is enjoined. Therein some of the attributes (*gunas*) suggested in the case of *saguna* Brahman are: *sarvakarmaa*, *sarva-kaamah*, *sarva-gandhah*, *sarva-rasah*, etc.

The *saguna-brahma* (*Isvara*) is called ‘*sarvakarmaa*’ because the entire (*sarva*) Creation (*vishva*) is Created by him. Thus the one whose Creation (*karma*) is the entire *jagat* is ‘*sarvakarmaa*’. Further the word ‘*sarvakaamah*’ is defined as ‘the one to whom all (*sarva*) harmless (*dosharahitaah*, i.e. non-binding) desires (*kaamas*) belong’. To corroborate this *bhashyaakara* quotes the statement of *Bhagavan*: ‘*dharmāviruddho bhooteshu kaamosmi*’ (B.G. 7-11). A contrary proposition (*purvapaksha*) objects the attributive compound employed to resolve the word ‘*sarvakaamah*’. It says attributive compound is not applicable here because *Bhagavan* has told ‘I am *kaama*’ in the *Gita*. *Bhashyakara* refutes this stand by pointing out that a desire needs to be produced like a sound. If the desire is equated to *Isvar* because of the statement, ‘*I am kaama*’, then *Isvara* will be dependent on some other entity to come into existence as an effect (*karya*). *Isvar* will no longer be *anaadi* (uncaused). Therefore just as the attributive compound is applicable in the case of ‘*sarvakaama*’ here in this *sruti*, similarly the *Gita* statement also should be interpreted. (*Ch. U. Bh.* 3-14-2). Desires being the products of *avidya* are invariably binding in nature. And yet, those which are on account of

sustaining the body cannot bind. Therefore *Bhagavan* counts them in the category of glories. Is it clear to you?

‘SARVAM BRAHMA’ IS AN EQUATION FOR ‘PRAPANCHA PRAVILAAPANA’

Disciple: Yes *guro*, but if I am not impertinent, may I ask another question?

Guru : Go ahead.

Disciple: It is true that the desire is a produced entity whereas *saguna-brahma* or *Isvara* is the Creator. Therefore we are told that *Bhagavan*’s statement ‘I am *kaama*’ does not mean an equation in the form of ‘*Isvara* is equal to *kaama*’. But the *sruti* itself tells us in the form of an equation: ‘*Sarvam Brahman*’ (Everything is Brahman). Is there not a contradiction?

Guru : My dear, both these statements are from two different standpoints. The statement from the *Gita* takes for granted the *Isvara*, *jagat* and everything that is there in it at the level of *vyavahara* to describe *Isvara*’s glories which are useful to *mumukshus* and devotees in their *saadhanaa*. But the *sruti* declarations such as *sarvam Brahma*’ is only to reveal the immanent (*sarvavyapi*) nature of Brahman as the basis (*adhithana*) of the entire *adhyasta jagat*. The *jagat* has no independent existence apart from Brahman. Such *sruti* statements do not intend to confer the status of *nirvikari* (changeless) Brahman on the *vikari* (ever-changing) *jagat*. The *samanadhikaranya* (juxtaposition) ‘*sarvam Brahma*’ is used only for the sake of dissolving Creation (*prapancha-pravilapanartham*) (*Br.Su.bh.1-3-1*). The principle is: though the *jagat* is non-different (*ananya*) from Brahman on account of the cause-effect relation between the two, the true nature of *jagat* is Brahman but the true nature of Brahman is not *jagat* (*Br.Su.bh.2-1-9*). Thus the equation ‘*Sarvam Brahma*’ holds good but not ‘*Isvara is kaama*’. It is just like the nature of the mistaken silver (*rajata*) in the place of sea-shell (*shukti*) is the shell, but the nature of shell is not the silver.

Oh disciple, are you convinced by now that desires are not desirable for a *mumukshu*?

Disciple: Yes *guro*, but I find that it is very difficult to control desires because senses (*indriyas*) run to the sense-objects forcefully.

Guru : You are right. There is a reason for that. The bodies of all *jivas* are meant in general to undergo the *bhoga* (enjoyment and suffering) according to one's *karmaphalas*. It requires the contact of *indriyas* with the external *vishayas*. Therefore *Isvara* has created *indriyas* extrovert (*paraanchi*) by their nature. But sensing the danger of *jivas* being immersed in *samsara* for ever, *Isvara* has provided a provision of withdrawing the mind and the *indriyas* from the sense-objects and make them introvert by *viveka* and *vairagya* to gain the *atmajnana* (*Kathopanishad*, 2-1-1). Therefore a *mumukshu* has to take a right about-turn from extrovertedness to develop *vairagya*. But *vairagya* is possible only when the *viveka* is highly mature. *Viveka* dawns only when *durita-kshaya* (ending of past sins) takes place. It depends on discharging one's duties in dedication to *Isvara* as enjoined by the scriptures. This shows that gaining *atmajnana* is certainly difficult. It is not that easy as picking up informations from Vedantic texts and parroting them. It needs perseverance with perfect eligibility until the *aparoksha Brahmajnana* is gained.

Disciple: Revered *guro*. One main question still lingers. How does desire or extrovertedness obstruct the pursuit of gaining *atmajnana* because of which *Bhagavan* Krishna totally condemns it?

NATURE OF ATMAJNANA AND ITS PREREQUISITE

Guru : This question originates from the non-understanding of the exact nature of *atmajnana* , how can it be gained, and what is its most essential prerequisite. In the case of *pratyaksha* (direct perceptual knowledge) and *atmajnana* / *Brahmajnana*, an *antahkarana-vritti* (thought) totally conforming to the entity to be known which can serve as its replica is indispensable. Such a *vritti* with respect to *vishayas* is called *vishayakara-vritti* (*vritti* having the form of sense-object) or in general *tattadakara-vritti* (*vritti* having the form of the entity to be known).

In the case of *atmajnana* / *Brahmajnana* such *vritti* is called *atmakara* or *Brahmakara* or *akhandakara*. *Atma* / *Brahman* has no *akara* (form), but its nature is *atyanta* (completely) *nirmala* (pure-free from all the *drishya jagat* that is *adhyasta* / superimposed on it), *svaccha* (clear – completely unconnected to the virtues and vices of all *drishyas* illumined by it) and *sukshma* (subtle / *nirguna* / free from all attributes). But *Isvara* has created the *buddhi* (*antahkarana*) capable of assuming the exact nature of *atma-chaitanya* free from all that is superimposed on it. This needs an *antahkarana*

which is totally introvert and not at all extrovert or preoccupied in the *drishyas* on account of desires, sense-objects and *karmas* thereof. In short without such *vritti* the *avidya* of *atma* and its effect the *jagat* cannot be ended. Thus, knowing *atma* is to end the *adhyasa* of ignorance (*avidya*) with its effect the *drishya jagat* (*Bhashya, B.G. 18-50 and Br. U. 1-4-10*). The following quotes will corroborate this fact.

If an individual gains *tattvajnana* (*atmajnana*), then itself his desires cease. *Tattvajnana* and desires cannot co-exist like 'light and darkness'. (*Yogavaasishtha, Ni.U. 37-30*).

Sureshvaracharya highlights the above fact in *Panchikarana-vartika*: ' A *jnani* whose mind is absorbed steadfastly in *atma* does not perceive the *drishya-jagat* '.

Sage Ashtavakra warns : 'Oh Son! You may learn or even teach different *shaastras* many a times. Nevertheless, your mind will not get absorbed in *atma* unless you withdraw from all *drishyas*'. (*Ashtavakra-gita 16-1*).

Mumukshus should know very clearly why the mind or *antahkarana* totally free from the experiences of *drishyas* or preoccupation in them alone can know *atma*. Consider an example. Suppose there is a person who does not know that the sugar is sweet. He is given a pinch of sugar. But to know it, he has to be aware of that sweetness exactly as it is through a *vritti* corresponding to sweetness for which he has to taste it. If he is aware of its sweetness because of tasting and yet knows not that it is sugar, it needs to be introduced by a person who knows the sugar, by saying: 'what you have tasted now is sugar'. Thereby he gains its knowledge. The same is the case with the knowledge of *atma* ('I') which is *aparoksha* (*svaprakasha, svayamjyoti, self-evident*).

Atma is simultaneously *anubhava-svarupa* (self-experiencing principle), *jnapti-svarupa* (self-knowing principle) and *cit-svarupa* (self-awareness principle). These are not three distinct natures of *atma* but one and the same nature, expressed differently. We are experiencing or are aware of *atma* moment by moment as 'I', but erroneously. We do not know it exactly in its true nature of being totally free from all the features of *adhyasta* (superimposed) *drishyas* which comprise the calamitous *samsara*. Vedanta describes the means by which all the *adhyasta drishyas* on 'I' (*atma*) can be ended wherein the seeker becomes aware of *atma* exactly what it is in its real nature free form

sukha-dukkhatmaka samsara. This is called *shodhita (nirupadhika) tvam pada* (the 'you' in '*tat tvam asi*' 'you are Brahman/*tat*'). Let us remember that in the state of ignorance, *atma* ('I') is available as *anubhava-svarupa* with *upadhis* i.e. it is *sopadhika anubhava-svarupa*. But when *atma* is made *shodhita (nirupadhika) tvam pada* by ending the *adhyasta drashyas*, it remains as *nirupadhika anubhava-svarupa*. Its nature of being self-experiencing principle (*anubhava-svarupa*) does not become extinct in any state of *antahkarana*. *Atma* does not cease to be *anubhava* (experience) by itself in any state whether it is *sopadhika* (with *upadhis*) or *nirupadhika* (free from *upadhis*). The accomplishment of *shodhita tvam pada* wherein one is aware of one's *nirupadhika* nature is the first step in gaining *Brahmajnana* because that itself is Brahman. *Shodhita tvam* itself as *Brahman* is indicated by the *pramana* such as '*tat tvam asi*' *mahavakya*. Then what remains is described synonymously by the phrases such as *anubhava-svarupa*, *jnapti-svarupa* or *cit-svarupa* (self-evident) *atma* identical with *Brahman*. That is *aparoksha atmajnana*, that is *aparoksha Bhrahmajnana* which is self-experiencing without *triputi*. Anything short of it is only *paroksha-jnana*, which cannot end ignorance or liberate. It is incapable of ending the pursuit of *sukha-prapti* and *dukha-nivritti* which is the *sine qua non* of *samsara*. *Bhashyakara* points out in *adhyasabhashya* that the actions of a *paroksha-jnani* is similar to that of cattle etc. (*pashu aadibhihi avisheshaat*).

The *mumukshus* must bear in mind that *mahavakya pramana* such as '*tat tvam asi*' will not operate unless one is directly (*aparokshatayaa*) aware of or experiences *shodhita tvam* as (*nirupadhika I / atma*) or what is called *nirupadhika anubhava-svarupa atma* free from the features of *samsara* in contrast to the *sopadhika anubhava-svarupa atma* experienced with all *samsara* comprising *sukha dukha* (joys and sorrows) in the state of ignorance. To say that such experience of *shodhita (nirupadhika) tvam pada* is not necessary because *atma* is *anubhava-svarupa* does not end the problem of sorrowful *samsara*. The *anubhava-svarupa atma* alone brings invariably the calamitous *samsara* presented to us by inert *antahkarana-vrittis* (called *avidya-pratyayas*) in the ambit of our experience. The *samsara*, bondage, transmigration etc. are exclusively our problems and not that of *atma*. *Atma* has none of them nor *moksha*. It is always in its *Paramaananda svarupa* whether *mithya* Creation is present or absent. Even attaching a label that the *samsara* is '*mithya*' (false) because the *sruti-pramana* says so is not a solution. It does not end the *samsara*. If *adhyasta samsara* is *anubhava-siddha* for the *jiva*, its absence also in the self-evident *atma* should be equally *annubhava-siddha*. That is precisely what the *sodhita-tvam pada* accomplishes. It reveals to us directly (*aparokshataya*) the *nirupadhika anubhava-svarupa atma* free from even the *triputi*. The

sruti provides the means to gain it. That is why *bhashyakara* emphasizes that to gain the knowledge, 'I am Brahman' (*Aham Brahma asmi*) the entire *adhyasa* beginning from self-ignorance onwards has to be ended (*Br. U. bh. 1-4-10, B.G. bh. 18-50*). Vedanta is not a lip-service or some psychological consolation. *Sutrashashya* makes it very clear when it describes the finale of *Brahmajnana* in its statement: '*Anubhavaavasaanatvaat Brahmajnanasya – अनुभाववसानत्वात् ब्रह्मज्ञानस्य* (*Br.Su. Bh. 1-1-2*). That is where the role of *sadhana-catushtaya, suddha-antahkarana, citta naishchalya, sarvakarma sannyasa* etc. to be eligible to gain *atmajnana* becomes meaningful. This should make it clear that the Vedantic pursuit is not an academic study. Moreover without the *aparoksha anubhava* of *shodhita (nirupadhika) tvam* (you) i.e. 'I' in its true nature, the *mahavakya* will be akin to introducing a person to a schizophrenic whose basic perception of the person being introduced is already distorted. The equation of the *mahavakya* points out that *tat* and *tvam* are identical. This will hold good only if there is awareness of *tvam* (you, i.e. 'I') exactly in its true nature totally free from the features of *samsara* including all the *upadhis*. The *tvam* (you i.e. 'I') as experienced now as *samsari* identified with *upadhis* cannot by itself be the *nirupadhika tat pada* – Brahman. In the absence of *shodhita tvam* the *sruti-pramana* will fail to produce *atmajnana*.

An extrovert (*bahirmukha*) mind cannot accomplish *shodhita (nirupadhika) tvam pada*. Therefore a totally introvert (*antarmukha*) pure mind is indispensable. This requires a total abstinence from desires, *vishayaasakti* (love for sense-objects), *karmas*, sense-indulgence or anything else that demands the mental pre-occupation. That is why Vedanta insists on the eligibility in terms of *sadhana-catushtaya, shuddha antahkarana, citta naishchalya, amaanitva* etc. The *Mundakopanishad* (3-2-4) clearly declares that *atma* cannot be gained by *tapas* (knowledge) that is *alinga* (devoid of *sannyasa*). The eligibility to take to *sannyasa* and the conduct of *sannyasis* as envisaged by the *sruti* are such that by strict adherence to them a *sannyasi* alone can command a totally introvert mind necessary to gain *atmajnana* and *nishtha* (steadfastness) therein. Perfect *vairagya*, no *vishayaasakti*, total freedom from *karmas*, no possessions (*aparigraha*), having well developed *antahkarana-shuddhi, shama, dama* etc., living in solitary place, total *shraddha* in *Ishvara* for the sustenance of his body, no talk of worldly things or *anatma* (*Mu.U.2-2-5*), and strict adherence to the conduct of *Sannyasis* make him totally introvert. By the mention of *sannyasa (alinga)*, the *sruti* does not mean just the external marks. There must be total commitment to gain *atmajnana*. It cannot be a part-time pursuit. *Mundaka sruti* expresses this fact in its statement : 'The person who longs for (*vrunute*) gaining

atma by all means, to him alone *atma* reveals (*vivrunute*) its true nature' (*Mu.U.* 3-2-3). It is well-known that desires invariably prompt the extrovertedness of the mind. Therefore desires cannot co-exist with the introvert mind which is so indispensable to gain *atmajnana* and *nishtha* in it. Desires and introvert mind are like light and darkness.

Oh disciple, is it clear to you by now as to how desire obstructs the pursuit of gaining *atmajnana* and why *Bhagavan* condemns it so vehemently?

Disciple: Yes, revered *guro*. Now I can see very clearly why the desire is not desirable to a *mumukshu*.

Om Namo Gurubhyah.