

Link:—In the preceding verse, the Lord declared, "Beings are deluded because knowledge is enveloped by ignorance." The Lord explains the glory of knowledge, in the next verse which is illumined, when ignorance is destroyed, through discrimination.

ज्ञानेन तु तदज्ञानं येषां नाशितमात्मनः ।
तेषामादित्यवज्ज्ञानं प्रकाशयति तत्परम् ॥ १६ ॥

jñānena tu tadajñānaṁ yeṣāṁ nāśitamātmanah
teṣāmādityavajjñānaṁ prakāśayati tatparam

But, to those whose ignorance is destroyed by knowledge (discrimination), such knowledge lights up the supreme self, like the sun. 16

Comment:—

'Jñānena tu tadajñānaṁ yeṣāṁ nāśitamātmanah'—The term 'Tu' (but), has been used to show that, in this verse there is description of something different, from the preceding verse.

Whatever, was called 'Ajñānena' in the preceding verse, has been called here 'tat ajñānam' (that ignorance).

Ignorance, consists in identifying the self with the body, while knowledge comprises in regarding these as two separate entities.

If we have an egoistic notion and a sense of mine with the body and the world—this is ignorance. The self, ever remains the same, while a sense of 'I' and the sense of 'mine', change. In the past, we were children and toys were very dear to us, but now we are young or old and regard, our wives, sons and riches etc., as ours. Thus, we see that the sense of 'I', and of 'mine', are undergoing change while the self, ever remains the same. That is knowledge, or discrimination.

The perception of the eternal in the transitory, of the pure in the impure, of pleasure in pain and of the self in the non-self is ignorance.

Thus a striver should realize this reality through discrimination, and renounce the sense of 'I' and that of 'mine'. This is called destruction of ignorance, by knowledge. A person, identifies the uniform self, with the kaleidoscopic world etc., because, he does not attach importance to discrimination. A striver, who having aroused this discrimination, renounces the sense of 'I' and that of 'mine' with the perishable world, his discrimination lights up the supreme self, i.e., he realizes God, who is Truth-Consciousness-Bliss consolidated.

'Teṣāmādityavajjñānaṁ prakāśayati tatparam'—When discrimination is fully aroused, a striver has no affinity, at all for the kaleidoscopic world. Then he realizes the self, and then the Supreme-Self is illumined i.e., the Self realizes Its identity with the Supreme-Self.

The word 'param', here as well as, in the fifty-ninth verse of the second chapter and the thirty-fourth verse of the thirteenth chapter, has been used for the Supreme (Supreme-Self or God).

The term 'prakāśayati', signifies that, as in the dark, objects are not seen, but these are noticed when the sun rises, so is the Supreme-Self, Who is ever-attained is not realized because of ignorance. As soon as ignorance is destroyed, the Supreme-Self, is realized.

Appendix—Ignorance is destroyed only by discrimination, not by effort—'yatanto'pyakṛtātmāno nainaṁ paśyantyacetasaḥ' (Gītā 15/11). The reason is that destruction of ignorance is not possible by the performance of action and by doing labour. By doing labour, affinity for the body persists because without having connection with the body, no labour is done. Secondly by making effort to wipe out ignorance, ignorance is strengthened, because an effort is made to wipe it out only when we accept its existence.

The opposite notion (ignorance) of naturalness in unnaturalness is self-made. By attaching importance to discrimination that ignorance is removed.

