

*Link:—Now, the Lord dwells upon the marvellous nature of the soul.*

आश्चर्यवत्पश्यति कश्चिदेन-  
माश्चर्यवद्ब्रूदति तथैव चान्यः ।  
आश्चर्यवच्चैनमन्यः शृणोति  
श्रुत्वाप्येनं वेद न चैव कश्चित् ॥ २९ ॥

āścaryavatpaśyati kaścidenam-  
māścaryavadbrūdati tathaiva cānyaḥ  
āścaryavaccainamanyah śṛṇoti  
śrutvāpyenam veda na caiva kaścit

One perceives the soul as a wonder, some speak of it an amazement while others hear of it in wonderment; while none knows it even after hearing of it. 29

*Comment:—*

'Āścaryavatpaśyati kaścidenam'—The knowledge of the wondrous self is not achieved through the senses. The self can be known by the self itself, it is beyond the realm of senses. As 'I am'—this knowledge requires no proof, no instrument, it is self-evident. Its consciousness cannot be experienced as separate from 'I'. This is intuited by the person himself. This is not a subject of senses and intellect. Therefore, the knowledge of self is said to be a marvel.

The term 'paśyati' has two meanings—to see with eyes and to know the self by one's own self. Here it has been used in the sense of knowing the self by one's own self (Gītā 2/55; 6/20 etc.,).

When one sees with one's eyes, there are three things necessary—the onlooker, the object to be seen and sight i.e., the power to see. But while knowing the self these three are not necessary. 'I am'—this cannot be perceived by senses, mind and intellect, but by one's own self.

When we want to search for a thing in a dark room, we need

eye-sight as well as light. But if there is light-lamp, there is no need for another lamp to see the lamp which is lit. Similarly, there is no need for other means to perceive the self. The self has its own light by which it can be lit and known.

A body is of three kinds—physical (gross), subtle and causal. The body which is nourished by food and water for its growth, is physical (gross) body. This gross body is the object of senses. The subtle body consists of seventeen elements—five senses, five organs of action, five vital airs, mind and intellect. The subtle body can be perceived by intellect and not by senses. The latencies (vāsanās) form the causal body. If we reflect, on the three kinds of bodies, it is evident that the gross body is not the self, as it changes every moment and it is an object of knowledge. Similar, is the case with the subtle body. The causal body, is an evolute of nature. But the self is beyond nature, therefore the causal body, is also not the self. As far as, the knowledge of the self, is concerned, it is beyond them and this knowledge is marvellous. This is 'āścaryavatpaśyati.' When the soul ceases its identification with the body, it knows itself and therefore, it has been said that one perceives the soul as a wonder.

Here in this verse, as well as, in the third verse of the seventh chapter, Lord Kṛṣṇa has used the term 'Kaścit' i.e., 'Someone knows Me in reality.' It means, that it is very difficult to know the imperishable, but actually it is not so. The fact is, that it seems difficult, only because there are a few aspirants, who sincerely want to know the soul.

'Āścaryavadvadati tathaiva cānyaḥ'—Other persons speak of it as marvellous, because it is beyond the reach of words. Speech is illumined, by the self, then, how can it describe the illuminator? The great souls who speak of it, can just give a kind of hint to draw the attention of the listeners.

Here, the term 'Anyāḥ' has been used to emphasize the

fact, that only a few liberated souls who possess metaphysical knowledge, can explain it fully to an aspirant and enable him, to attain the imperishable. All do not possess the ability to remove his doubts and give satisfactory answers, to his arguments.

'Āścaryavaccainamanyaḥ śṛṇoti'—Other persons hear of it, as marvellous. Listening to scriptures and advice of other worlds, is quite different from voice of the soul. It means, that this soul is something marvellous and uncommon and is beyond the reach of senses, mind and intellect etc. It illuminates these.

Here, the term 'Anyah' has been used to explain the fact, that the person who hears is different, from the one who knows, and from other who is capable of explaining it to an aspirant in such a manner, that its full nature, is revealed to him.

'Śrutvāpyenaṁ veda na caiva kaścit'—There are some who do not know it, even on hearing. It means that, merely hearing, will not help one to know it. On hearing, when one gets established in one's own self, one will know one's own self\* by oneself.

Now a question arises, that an aspirant on hearing the words of scriptures and a preceptor, gets knowledge, why has it been said then, that there are some who do not know it, even on hearing of it? The answer is, that it is the aspirant himself, who by having faith in the words of scriptures and preceptor, gains knowledge. Otherwise there have been several incarnations of God, and there also have been liberated souls, who held discourses on metaphysics, and by hearing their discourses the people should have gained metaphysical knowledge. But, actually it has not happened. Their discourses, can be helpful to a striver having faith, but he, will also have to get himself established in his own self. This expression does not mean to convey, that knowledge of the self is impossible; it rather conveys that it is beyond the senses. However hard efforts by a man may make him to know

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\* This fact has been pointed out in the Gītā several times—(2/55; 3/17; 6/20; 15/11).

it, ultimately he will have to know himself, by his own self.

What is knowing of the self, by the self? There is a difference between doing, perceiving and knowing. Doing involves organs of action, perceiving involves senses, while knowing is done by the self Itself.

The senses actually do not know; rather they only perceive which is useful in daily activity.

This knowledge, of knowing oneself by one's ownself, is of two kinds—'I am different from the body and the world;' and secondly, 'I have identity with God.' In other words, it can be said, 'I have no affinity with the kaleidoscopic, perishable world, while I have constant affinity with unchangeable, imperishable God.' After possessing this kind of knowledge, one can know the soul in reality. This knowledge, is beyond the reach of speech and intellect.

**Appendix—**The self cannot be known merely by hearing viz., by practice but can be known by having inquisition, by hearing from enlightened and experienced exalted souls—'yatatāmapī siddhānām kaścīnmām veti tattvataḥ' (Gītā 7/3). 'Āścaryavadvadati tathaiva cānyaḥ'—it means that out of the enlightened exalted souls, only someone can explain its true nature to others. All the enlightened souls can't explain it.

As in the world a couple doesn't get married merely by hearing but the man and the woman accept each other as wife and husband and then they are married. Similarly no one can know God merely by hearing but after hearing, when he accepts Him himself and gets established in Him, then he will know Him by his own self. Therefore by hearing a man can learn the facts pertaining to knowledge, can narrate them to others, can write them, can lecture on them, can discuss them but can't realize the self or God.

One can't know God merely by hearing but can know Him by worshipping Him after hearing from others—'śrutvānyebhya

upāsate' (Gītā 13/25). If the person, who describes the Supreme Soul, is a God-realized soul and the listener (striver) has esteemed faith and inquisition, there can be immediate Self-realization.



*Link:—The next, is the concluding verse, about discrimination between the body and the soul.*

देही नित्यमवध्योऽयं देहे सर्वस्य भारत ।  
तस्मात्सर्वाणि भूतानि न त्वं शोचितुमर्हसि ॥ ३० ॥

dehī nityamavadhyo'yaṁ dehe sarvasya bhārata  
tasmātsarvāṇi bhūtāni na tvaṁ śocitumarhasi

O Bhārata, this soul residing in the bodies of all, can never be slain. Therefore, you should not grieve, for any being. 30

*Comment:—*

'Dehī nityamavadhyo'yaṁ dehe sarvasya bhārata'—The soul, residing in bodies of men, gods, animals, birds, insects etc., cannot be slain i.e., it is imperishable.

The term 'Avadhyah', has two meanings—(i) It should not be slain, (ii) It cannot be slain. For example, a cow should not be killed, because it is a deadly sin to kill a cow. But in case of the soul, it does not mean that it should not be slain, but it means that the soul cannot be slain in anyway by anyone. It has also been mentioned in 2/17, that none can bring about the destruction of the indestructible substance.

'Tasmātsarvāṇi bhūtāni na tvaṁ śocitumarhasi'—Therefore, you should not grieve for all beings because the soul is indestructible, while the perishable body cannot remain the same even for a moment.

Here, 'Sarvāṇi bhūtāni', plural number has been used to emphasize the fact that, one should not grieve, for any living being.

The body is perishable, because its nature is such. It is