

The wife is dear to a man not for the sake of the wife, but for the sake of the Self.¹ Man loves himself only. His attitude universally is, ‘So long as you contribute to my happiness, I love you.’ When a father chides his son and asks him to get out of his house, he only means to say, ‘You are bringing more sorrow to me. Therefore, I do not want you in the house.’

The Ātman, at all times, is indeed blissful (sadānanda), never is there any sorrow in the Self. When I have a vāsanā for smoking, the agitations created in my mind due to that vāsanā are temporarily quietened by smoking and, therefore, I say, ‘I feel happy when I smoke.’ I foolishly consider that the happiness is in the cigarette and I run after such objects of pleasure in order to repeat the experience of happiness. A dog gnawing at a bone enjoys it more and more, not because there is any meat on it. It is because the sharp ends of the bone scratching its lips, tongue and inner mouth, draw out its own blood. The dog sucks it and feels that the enjoyment is in the bone. Thereafter, its mouth gets lacerated and it cannot eat for days together. Again, a camel often runs after a kind of thorny grass. The sharp grass cuts the mouth of the camel and it enjoys its own blood. The result is that its mouth gets scratched and it cannot eat for months afterwards. That is why the drivers prevent their camels from running after this particular kind of desert grass.

Similarly, the human mind runs after sense objects like the dog after the dry bone. In fact, the joy content is not in the object. It is the Consciousness, the Ātman, the pure bliss of the Self, arising in us when the object is acquired and the mental agitation for that object ceases. You may consider a thing to be pleasant but if it does not bring me an expansion of myself, I would not consider it so.

This great joy of the Self is not readily available because of mental agitations at all times. These become, as it were, a wall between the happiness which is inherent in the Self, and the world

¹ Brhadāraṇyaka-upaniṣad – 2.4.5