

vanish only when we are convinced that we are human beings and not worms. No matter how many times a psychiatrist tells us that we are not worms, it will not help us if we do not realise that we are human beings.

Similarly, however much the Teacher may tell us that we are the Paramātman, we may read and study books like the *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi*, we may attend satsaṅgas and discuss in study groups, but deep down in ourselves we are convinced that we are this body only. Why? Because of the avidyā, the non-apprehension of our real, divine spiritual nature.

The silkworm spins fine threads from its own saliva and weaves a cocoon around itself. The cocoon becomes stronger and stronger until, at last, the worm gets entangled in it and cannot come out. Similarly, once the misunderstanding that 'I am the body' has arisen, this false notion makes endless demands for the preservation of the body. These demands multiply and they become so strong that the individual gets gagged and bound by them.

Under the circumstances, your personality becomes conditioned by these endless demands and your essential vitalities, capacities, and intelligence fail to bloom and express themselves as they get shackled and conditioned at all times by your past which you have woven into inescapable patterns around yourself. All these arose from one and the same springboard, you forgot yourself. You lived all along misunderstanding yourself to be the matter equipment of BMI, the not-Self (anātman). In this condition, you come to experience sufferings, this is called 'bondage' (*samsāra-duḥkham*).



अतस्मिंस्तद्विद्धिः प्रभवति विमूढस्य तमसा  
विवेकाभावादौ स्फुरति भुजगे रञ्जुधिषणा ।  
ततोऽनर्थव्रातो निपतति समादातुरधिकः  
ततो योऽसद्ग्राहः स हि भवति बन्धः शृणु सखे ॥ १३८ ॥