

intellectual Master, of great erudition and perfect scholarship can, now and then, tumble down into unseen potholes and suffer mental repercussions. So the warning given here by the benevolent Ācārya is of extreme service to initiates entering the portals of Vedānta.

Let not the new seekers enter with hasty enthusiasm into such jungles of noisy confusion. The chances are that their minds will get overburdened with contradictory assertions of the great champions of the different philosophical viewpoints and they will ultimately get lost in the blind alleys of wordy arguments. Therefore, a seeker should set about only after knowing the true nature of the Self, through the method of Ātma-vicāra, when he has fully acquired the necessary qualifications for it through upasānās and meditations.



अज्ञानसर्पदष्टस्य ब्रह्मज्ञानौषधं विना ।
किमु वेदैश्च शास्त्रैश्च किमु मन्त्रैः किमौषधैः ॥ ६१ ॥

*ajñānasarpadaṣṭasya brahmajñānauṣadham vinā,
kimu vedaiśca śāstraiśca kimu mantraiḥ kimauṣadhaiḥ. (61)*

61. For him who has been stung by the cobra of ignorance, the only remedy is the knowledge of Brahman. Of what use are the Vedas and the scriptures, mantras and medicines to such a victim of poison?

The Supreme, poisoned, as it were, by self-forgetfulness has come to suffer the burning agony of limitations and sorrows. It has forgotten its divine nature and identifying with the matter envelopments, its sobs at its mortality, its sorrows, its imperfections. To one who has realised these and has come to feel a choking impatience to be relieved from the tyranny of pain, nothing short of Self-rediscovery can be satisfying. A victim of the snakebite of ignorance can be relieved of his painful delirium only by Self-realisation. Only then, can he live as the Spirit, the Reality in every thing and being.

It is natural that when a person realises that he has been bitten by a cobra, he will have none of the ordinary prejudices of faith, creed, position, status, time, or place; any help that reaches him from any quarter, offered in any attitude will be most welcome. In that moment of dire sorrow, in the magnitude of his tragedy, he realises the urgency of the situation, and his only demand is for some antidote to the poison, which can restore him to natural health and vitality.

Similarly, no sooner a seeker realises that he has been bitten by ignorance, the most dangerous of all serpents in the wild jungles of uncultured and uncultivated hearts, then he will take the best from the śāstras and will try to imbibe immediately the specific cure for ignorance, the knowledge of the Real. To such a one, of what avail then are the slower though more comfortable means of study of the Vedas and śāstras, repetition of mantras and dizzy philosophical arguments?

