

सन्नाप्यसन्नाप्युभयात्मिका नो भिन्नाप्यभिन्नाप्युभयात्मिका नो ।  
साङ्गाप्यनङ्गा ह्युभयात्मिका नो महाद्वृताऽनिर्वचनीयरूपा ॥ १०९ ॥

*sannāpyasannāpyubhayātmikā no bhinnāpyabhinnāpyubhayātmikā no,  
sāṅgāpyanaṅgā hyubhayātmikā no mahādbhutā'nirvacanīyarūpā.* (109)

109. *If (māyā) is neither existent nor non-existent, nor both; neither same nor different nor both; neither made up of parts nor whole nor both. Most wonderful it is and beyond description in words.*

This avidyā cannot be said to have a separate existence from Brahman. Nor can it be said that it exists not, because we are both enjoying and suffering it. It cannot also be said that it 'exists as well as does not exist', because a non-existent thing can never become existent nor can an existent thing express as non-existent. We cannot say that the ghost in the post 'exists' nor can we say, 'It exists not', because we sweat and perspire when we see it. To say that it 'exists' as well as 'exists not', is a clumsy contradiction in terms.

Also, it cannot be said that this great māyā exists and is other than Brahman, because Brahman is one without a second. To say that this māyā is 'with the Lord' as well as 'without the Lord', is again a contradiction in terms. We cannot say that the ghost came from the post at any time. Neither can we say, 'It is with parts and without parts' because it is again a contradiction that cancels itself and becomes utterly meaningless, for ignorance can never be known.

Then what is this avidyā?

All that we can say about it is that it is a 'great wonder!' It can only be said to be indescribable (*anirvacanīya*). There is wonder when the intellect is not able to comprehend a thing. Anything that I see and my intellect cannot explain, I say is a 'wonder'. The more I think about this avidyā, the more my intellect fails because this avidyā is the very cause for the intellect. The intellect cannot comprehend its own cause because it is the child born out of māyā and a child cannot go back to look for the womb.

This māyā when it manifests, becomes the intellect. Therefore, the intellect cannot comprehend the unmanifest which is its own cause, the effect cannot, by itself, comprehend its own cause. Māyā is also called a ‘delusion’, and a delusion can never be explained. There cannot be a biography of the ghost I saw on the post, nor can I grow rich by extracting the ‘silver’ from the mother-of-pearl. This māyā-śakti, we can only say, is an indescribable, mighty, inscrutable power of the Lord. Strange, for by his own inscrutable power a person deludes himself and says, ‘Tell me, tell me, what is this power? Where is it?’

A Brāhmaṇa boy, one day, went to meet his friends in a students’ hostel. That being the festival day of Holi, the boy’s friends were preparing ṭhaṇḍāī – a cool drink in which a bit of opium is also added. In order to tease him they gave him a strong dose of the opium drink. The boy not being used to it, gulped it down somehow, unable to refuse his friend’s offer. As the opium started having effect on him, he thought of going home. He felt that he could not go alone, so he started shouting, “Take me home! Take me home!” Now he was under the full influence of the intoxicant, and he shouted even more loudly. ‘Take me home! Take me home!’

Then one of his friends took pity on him. He led him home and made him lie down on his bed. Not realising where he was, the boy continued shouting, “Take me home!” Hearing his meaningless shouts, his parents rushed to his bedside. They tried to tell him that he was already at home but the boy would not stop his babbling. Suspecting some mischief, the father questioned his friend and found out that he was under the intoxicating influence of opium. He then fetched some buttermilk which is an antidote and made him drink it. When he had drunk the buttermilk, the boy, in time, started coming to his senses but he continued shouting, “Take me home!” After some time, he became fully conscious that he was reclining in his own bed, shouting, “Take me home!” In a flash, he realised how foolish he was, that there was no need for him to shout, for he was already home. So he stopped shouting and thereafter, slept peacefully.