

When one forgets one's own real nature, the infinite Brahman, one deludes oneself to be the limited ego (jīva). This delusion gives birth to the concept 'I am' (aham-dhī). Then one starts considering oneself to be one's own body, mind and intellect. Naturally, conditioned thus by the body-mind-intellect, one comes to suffer limitations – bondages (bandha). In order to release oneself from it, one runs after the world of objects-emotions-thoughts; this exertion is sorrow (vyathā).

Then desires crop up and in order to fulfil the desires, we strive; the desiring produces more sorrow and sweating agony. When the desires are fulfilled, there are even more worries, the struggles required to preserve the objects gained permanently with us. But the finite worldly objects must definitely perish in time and, therefore, produce more agony. If our desires are not fulfilled, certainly we are unhappy; if we get them, we certainly want more. This is how the fall comes. For all this, the initial cause is the Self-forgetfulness – the non-apprehension of Reality. Therefore, do not forget It. Remember It constantly as you own Self.



विषयाभिमुखं दृष्ट्वा विद्वांसमपि विस्मृतिः ।
विक्षेपयति धीदोषैर्योषा जारमिव प्रियम् ॥ ३२३ ॥

viṣayābhimukhaṁ dr̥ṣṭvā vidvāṁsamapi viśmr̥tiḥ,
vikṣepayati dhīdoṣair̥yoṣā jāramiva priyam. (323)

323. *Finding even a wise man hankering after the sense objects, forgetfulness torments him through the evil propensities of the intellect, as a woman torments her doting paramour.*

The forgetfulness of the Divine within is natural to any ignorant, deluded man. But, how can a wise man forget his real nature? How is it that we can remember everything else so easily? Why is it so very difficult to remember Bhagavān? How is it that the Lord made us so?

The truth is that the Lord never makes you forget your real nature. When the mind is turned outward (viṣayābhi-mukham), then you forget your own divine nature and then you come to play the fool, a limited ego.

The Lord has created the sense organs turned ‘outward’ and, therefore, the foolish ones forget the divine presence of the Consciousness that shines from behind every sense, act and thought. The Self-existent (Brahman) created the senses with outgoing tendencies; therefore, man beholds the external universe and not the internal Self (Ātman). But some wise man with eyes averted (with his senses turned away) from sensual objects, desirous of immortality, sees the Ātman within.¹ They forget because of their complete identifications with their body vestures. The sense organs are turned outwards, and they come to gaze on and see only the objects of the world outside and never the Consciousness, which is behind the sense organs vitalising them all, always. Some wise, discriminative men wanting to realise that immutable eternal Reality, turn their attention away from OET and realise the infinitude in their own Self.

This idea of the Ṛṣi Kaṭha (Kaṭhaka) is expressed here by Śaṅkara. Even if a man, well versed in the book knowledge (vidvān), has his attention turned towards the sense objects, he will forget his divine real nature of Bliss. When he forgets his real nature, the imperfections of his intellect make him agitated. Vāsanās, desires, passions, jealousies, greeds are the ulcerations of the intellect, which then bleed out the pus and blood of sorrows. The poor fellow is led to disaster by the imperfections of his own intellect, just as a paramour tempts and spoils his beloved.

A paramour (jāra) is a ‘secret lover’. He uses his partner (priya) for his own satisfaction. When one is secretly in love but the beloved is beyond reach, the memory of the sweetheart haunts the jāra and makes him (or her) miserable.

¹ *Kaṭhopaniṣad*-2.4.1