

This subject in each one of us is a mere witness of the three states of Consciousness – the waking, dream and deep sleep states. In the waking state, it is 'I, the waker'; in dream, it is again 'I, the dreamer'; and when fast asleep too, it is 'I, the deep sleeper'. In these states of Consciousness, the 'I' remains a mere witness. It neither undergoes any changes characteristic of these states, nor does it have any share in them. This 'I-ness' gains vivid experiences of all the three different states. Let me give you an example to clarify the idea.

I, the individual, going to Surat, Ahmedabad and Bombay, gather to myself three different experiences through the three different places. Let us say, at Surat I was loved, at Ahmedabad I was honoured and at Bombay I was insulted. Surat is not Ahmedabad. Surat and Ahmedabad are not Bombay. I was not at Surat, Ahmedabad and Bombay at one and the same time. The experiences of three different places at the three different times are different, yet all these experiences are mine, because I was the common factor in all the three places and at all the three times. This is so in the waking, dream and deep sleep states also. The waker himself becomes the dreamer and the deep sleeper and gains the experience of the dream and the deep sleep. But during these changes in the states of Consciousness, he himself never undergoes any change, but remains as mere witness.

Ātman being the witness of the three states of Consciousness, It is, indeed, something other than the five sheaths – the food sheath, the vital air sheath, the mental sheath, the intellectual sheath and the bliss sheath. The Ātman is not identified with and, therefore, is never limited by, any of these sheaths. It is something other than them, knowing them and their individual involvements in the world around and within.



यो विजानाति सकलं जाग्रत्स्वप्नसुषुप्तिषु ।
बुद्धितद्वृत्तिसद्भावमभावमहमित्ययम् ॥ १२६ ॥