



46. What is Ātman? – Disciple (212)

शिष्य उवाच

मिथ्यात्वेन निषिद्धेषु कोशेष्वेतेषु पञ्चसु ।
सर्वभावं विना किञ्चिन्न पश्याम्यत्र हे गुरो ।
विज्ञेयं किमु वस्त्वस्ति स्वमात्मनात्र विपश्चिता ॥ २१२ ॥

śiṣya uvāca

*mīthyātvena niṣiddheṣu kośeṣveteṣu pañcasu,
sarvabhāvaṁ vinā kiñcinna paśyāmyatra he guro,
vijñeyam̄ kimu vastvasti svamātmanātra vipaścītā.* (212)

212. *The śiṣya asked, “After negating these five sheaths as unreal, I find nothing but an absence of everything, O revered Teacher! By which entity then, should the wise man, realise his oneness with the Ātman?”*

“On the basis that all the five sheaths are delusions, when I negate them, I find a state of sheer non-entity, a total absence of everything, an empty void,” cries out the disciple.

This is the despair of the intellect when spiritual ideas are merely thought of by it. This is where the nihilists among the Buddhists reached and cried out that their experience of total annihilation and complete negation of everything is the Reality. They insisted that pure non-existence is the ultimate Truth.

And yet, in the above verse, the Teacher said, “What remains is to be known by the wise man”. The disciple questions here, “O Guru! When there is a total negation of everything, then, at the end I find only a void remaining. I find naught therein. What then is to be known by the wise man?”

The Buddhist ideology is being taken up here in the form of a question from the disciple. The Teacher answers in the following verses.

