

90. Know this gross body to be the 'shelter' for the individual to conduct all his dealings with the world outside just as a house is to a householder.

Man dwells in his house and goes out daily in the world to strive for his livelihood. After earning his means of existence, he returns home to enjoy what he has earned and to rest awhile. Rested and refreshed under the security of his house, he moves out again the following day, full of energy, to meet the challenges of a new day. In the same way, the ego moves out of the physical body to contact the sense objects and returns to it to savour its joys and sorrows.

The joy or sorrow resulting from conducive or unconducive environments is not felt outside ourselves. They are always felt within, though indeed the objects are always outside. Therefore, the mind has to go out to contact the objects, but having contacted them, it returns to the individual's own heart to experience the consequent joy and sorrow.

Thus the physical body is not only an instrument for experiencing the world outside but also it is a shelter for the experiencer to return to.



स्थूलस्य सम्भवजरामरणानि धर्माः
स्थौल्यादयो बहुविधाः शिशुताद्यवस्थाः ।
वर्णाश्रमादिनियमा बहुधाऽमयाः स्युः ।
पूजावमानबहुमानमुखा विशेषाः ॥ ९१ ॥

*sthūlasya sambhavajarāmaranāni dharmāḥ
sthaulyādayo bahuvidhāḥ śiśutādyavasthāḥ,
varṇāśramādiniyamā bahudhā'mayāḥ syuḥ,
pūjāvamānabahumānamukhā viśeṣāḥ. (91)*

91. Birth, decay and death are the essential properties of the gross body; fatness and so on, childhood and so on, are its different conditions: it

has rules of caste and orders of life; it is subject to a variety of diseases and it is this body that meets with different kinds of treatment such as worship, dishonour, honour and so on.

In order to make the student focus his entire attention on the physical body, the author enumerates the characteristics, the various conditions, the different rules of conduct and so on, of the gross body. Change is the characteristic of all things finite and the body has its essential property (dharma), of undergoing modifications such as birth, growth, decay, disease and death. It is again the nature of the body to express itself as stout, lean, tall or short. The human form goes through stages of growth such as childhood, youth and old age, when the body gathers to itself new dimensions and looks.

It is with reference to the physical body and its relations with the world around that the social codes of behaviour are prescribed and strictly followed in society. The various regulations of communal living and standards of behaviour laid down for the various orders of life (āśramas), are all prescribed for the discipline of the body and they have a sanction only with reference to the embodied. The body is the seat of the diseases. To the body, indeed, is all worship (pūjā) offered, all honour (māna) given, all dishonour (apamāna) shown.

These are all indicative strokes which bring the student's mind to focus upon the gross physical body which is the abode of the ego, the seat of all its experiences in the world.

