



36. What is Bondage – The Reply (137-142)

अत्रानात्मन्यहमिति मतिर्बन्ध एषोऽस्य पुंसः
प्राप्तोऽज्ञानाज्जननमरणक्षेशसम्पातहेतुः ।
येनैवायं वपुरिदमसत्सत्यमित्यात्मबुद्ध्या
पुष्यत्युक्षत्यवर्ति विषयैस्तन्तुभिः कोशकृद्धत् ॥ १३७ ॥

*atrānātmanyahamiti matirbandha eso'sya pumsaḥ
prāpto'jñānājjananamaranakleśasampātahetuḥ,
yenaivāyam vapuridamasatsatyamityātmabuddhyā
puṣyatyuksatyavati viṣayaistantubhiḥ kośakṛdvat.* (137)

137. Due to his ignorance, man identifies the Self with not-Self. This is the bondage of man and brings in its wake, the miseries of birth and death. Through this, he considers his perishable body as real. He identifies himself with it and nourishes, bathes and preserves it with the help of sense objects. Thereby, he becomes bound like the silkworm in its cocoon woven by its own threads.

I am what I am, a confused, confounded entity. At one moment I am a sweet little thing, at another a terrible monster because of the variety of gratifications of my physical demands of lusts, mental demands for emotional satisfactions and because of my perturbed intellect, tossed by its endless mischievous thoughts. Somehow, I am aware of all these. Yet I cannot get out of it. Why this helpless bondage? All these pernicious sorrows arise because I, the Ātman, misunderstand myself to be the not-Self (anātman).

Suppose in a drunken mood, you misunderstand yourself to be your own shadow. Terrible suffering must then start for you. You find that you are lying down on the road, and the traffic is