

That pure spiritual experience is indicated here as sarvātma-bhāva, the vision of the ‘universe as the Self’.



दृश्यस्याग्रहणं कथं नु घटते देहात्मना तिष्ठतो
बाह्यार्थानुभवप्रसक्तमनसस्तत्क्रियां कुर्वतः ।
सन्यस्ताखिलधर्मकर्मविषयैर्निर्त्यात्मनिष्ठापैः
तत्त्वज्ञैः करणीयमात्मनि सदानन्देच्छुभिर्यततः ॥ ३४१ ॥

*drśyasyāgrahaṇam katham nu ghaṭate dehātmanā tiṣṭhato
bāhyārthānubhavaprasaktamanasastattatkriyāṁ kurvataḥ,
sannyastākhiladharmakarmaviṣayairnityātmanīṣṭhāparaiḥ
tattvajñaiḥ karaṇīyamātmani sadānandecchubhiryatnataḥ. (341)*

341. How is the exclusion of the objective world possible for him who lives identified with the body, whose mind is attached to the perception of external objects, and who performs various acts for that end? This exclusion should be carefully practised by sages who have renounced all kinds of duties and actions and objects, who are passionately devoted to the eternal Ātman and who wish to possess undying Bliss Absolute.

In order to attain total Liberation, perception of the world of plurality has to cease. How can this be brought about? How the non-perception of the world of objects is possible under certain conditions and how the same, under a different set of unfavourable conditions, is rendered impossible, are discussed in this verse.

First Śaṅkara discusses how and why it is not possible for the many to gain this state of perfect vision of oneness.

The state of not perceiving the delusory world of objects-emotions-thoughts (drśyasya agrahaṇam) is not possible for an individual who has the idea ‘I am the body’. Looking through the body, objects must be perceived. Where can they go? To a dreamer the dream is inescapable all along his dream state; to the ego, the world of objects is inescapable as long as he has the idea ‘body am I’.

The body, mind and intellect equipments cannot realise the One. To a person of body sense (*dehātma-bhāva*) how can there be the experience of ‘the one Self in all’ (*Paramātma-bhāva*)? How can he gain the concept of the oneness of the infinite Reality? The non-apprehension (*agrahaṇam*) of all misapprehensions cannot be, to an individual who is identified with and looking through the equipments. The state of objectless awareness cannot be experienced by an individual who is turned outward.

Not only is he identified with his physical body, but his mind is constantly contemplating upon the sensuous objects of the world outside. It is always engaged in the unholy experience of the plurality of worldly objects. Therefore, his actions get ordered by his own sensuous thoughts.

An individual, who is thus constantly associated with his body and so fully engaged and preoccupied with his sensuous thoughts that his hands and legs constantly sweat to fulfil his endless desires and accomplish his impossible thoughts, how can he ever have the non-apprehension (*agrahaṇa*) of the world of objects? He is at all times turned towards them. He is deliberately nourishing delusory fancies. He insists on recognising the world of plurality, which he hugs on to as his life’s greatest fulfilment.

In utter love where the *sādhaka* merges into the infinite Lord, there ends all his responsibilities to duties, to activities, and to objects and there he comes to that Experience Supreme.

The attachments to ones duties (*dharma*) to worldly activities (*karma*) and to the sensuous objects (*viṣaya*) have all to be renounced, and in their place we must cultivate the attachment to and contemplation upon the Self. When we are striving in meditation to propel ourselves and land into the higher Consciousness, then all the ego prompted secular and sacred activities of the lower planes must stop.

Whatever activities I might have done in my dream, however sacred and auspicious they might have been, the moment I wake