

clouds together, the ever brilliant sun is not seen. When the mind brings the storms of its agitations into the bosom, the resplendent Ātman is not readily recognised. When the agitations are reduced and the same mind is turned towards subjective realisation, all the sense of limitation and bondage end.

Śaṅkara leaves nothing unsaid, which might create doubts in the immature mind of the beginner in the study of Vedānta. How the mind causes bondages and how the same mind brings about Liberation is explained in the following verse –



देहादिसर्वविषये परिकल्प्य रागं  
बध्नाति तेन पुरुषं पशुवद्गुणेन ।  
वैरस्यमत्र विषवत्सुविधाय पश्चाद्  
एनं विमोचयति तन्मन एव बन्धात् ॥ १७३ ॥

*dehādisarvaviṣaye parikalpya rāgaṁ  
badhnāti tena puruṣaṁ paśuvadguṇena,  
vairasyamatra viṣavatsuvīdhāya paścād  
enaṁ vimocayati tanmana eva bandhāt. (173)*

173. The mind causes man's attachment for the body and the sense objects. These attachments bind him like an animal that is bound by ropes. Thereafter, the same mind creates distaste for the very same sense objects as though they were poison and liberates man from his bondage.

From the standpoint of the mind, the body, the sense organs and the objects of the world are all 'objects'. Not only does the mind project all these, but also having projected them, it creates an attachment in man for these 'objects'. By this attachment, he gets bound and becomes limited and sorrowful. Thus the Ātman, the Self, apparently tied down is the jīva, the individuality. Its freedom all gone, It lives as an abject slave of the mind.

On account of the attachment for objects thus created, the individual gets bound like cattle with a rope. The properties of sattva, rajas and tamas bind the individual<sup>1</sup>.

Though the infinite heavens invite the bird to fly free and enjoy, it does not leave the mirror in the veranda, because of the attachment it has created for its own reflection in the mirror. Nobody wants to leave the object of his attachment and liking.

When an animal is tied down with a rope, it has a limited freedom commensurate with the length of the rope. Similarly, when the infinite Consciousness is (apparently) bound by the guṇa, It seems to have lost Its omnipotency and omniscieny and becomes limited jīva, but this individuality also has a limited freedom ordered by the proportion of its guṇas (modes). These attachment and bondage are created by the mind alone. The same mind is useful to liberate the jīva from this bondage, that it may revert to its original nature, the pristine glory of divine omniscieny and omnipotency.

After being bound to the world of objects, Liberation comes to man only when he gets rid of his meaningless fascination for the sense objects. Freedom lies in not depending upon the sense objects, for one's inner happiness. This dependency can be overcome only when there is a total dispassion (vairāgya) for the sense objects. Dispassion for a thing will develop only when one finds that the object no more gives one any joy. If the idea that the joy content is not in the object outside is firmly established in one's understanding, then one is immediately released from all one's personality bondages. This dispassion (vairāgya)<sup>2</sup> is brought about by the mind alone.

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<sup>1</sup> again a pun on the Sanskrit term 'guṇa' which means both, the modes of the mind as well as a 'rope'. The cattle with rope (guṇa) and man with his moods (guṇas) are tied down.

<sup>2</sup> rāga – desire; vairāgya – state of desirelessness; vairasya – tastelessness for the pleasures of sense indulgence.