

his standpoint he is not the body, just as from the sun's standpoint no shadow can ever fall upon it. We have no knowledge of the Self because of our mental agitations (the shadow of the moon).¹



अहिनिल्वयनीवायं मुक्तदेहस्तु तिष्ठति ।
इतस्ततश्चाल्यमानो यत्किञ्चित्प्राणवायुना ॥ ५५० ॥

*ahinirloayanīvāyaṁ muktadehastu tiṣṭhati,
itastataścālyamāno yatkiñcitprāṇavāyunā. (550)*

550. *The body of the Liberated man remains like the slough of the snake. Here and there, it is moved about by the force of prāṇa, the way it pleases.*

When a serpent becomes old, its skin is slowly sloughed off. At that time the serpent lies in a motionless condition. It does not move about or eat anything. When the skin dries up completely, the snake moves out through the slough and becomes rejuvenated. The slough left behind is exactly like the snake. It is of the same pattern, length and design. But the snake has no connection with the slough. Whatever might happen to the slough, it does not affect the snake. It is its own slough, yet it has no identification with it.

Similar is the relationship of the Man of Realisation with his body. Having awakened to the higher plane of Consciousness, he leaves his identification with his body. He has nothing to do with its destinies. The body moves about as long as the prāṇa functions through it.

He is not responsible for the merits and demerits acquired by the body. By the grace of life and the dictates of prārabdha, it moves up and down. He does not care a hoot whether the slough (body), is preserved or destroyed, consecrated, adored or insulted. It matters not to him.



¹ The moon is the presiding deity of the mind.