

191. Even though the supreme Self is by nature perfect and ever unchanging, due to its relationship with the superimpositions, it assumes the characteristics of these superimpositions and seems to act just as the equipments do; like the changeless fire assuming the forms of the iron pieces which it turns red hot.

The supreme Reality, due to Its identification with the conditionings (upādhis), behaves in accordance with the dharmas of the conditionings. Life, when it functions through the body, assumes the qualities of the body.

A clean glass near a blue cloth appears blue. If the cloth is red, the glass appears red. As the colour of the cloth, so appears the colour of the glass. The glass has no colour of its own, it borrows the colour of its environments. In the same way, the Ātman functioning through the upādhis acquires the properties of the upādhis for the time being.

In this verse, to indicate the same idea, another example is given. Fire has neither shape nor form – spherical heat, cubical heat, cylindrical heat, rectangular heat and so on, are not possible. Nor has the heat any weight – ten-ounce heat, one-pound heat and five-pound heat too, are impossible but when iron pieces are put in the fire, the fire assumes their shapes and weights. These are not the properties of the fire, but because of the shapes and weight of the iron pieces, the fire is said to have shape and weight.

Paramātman is ever the same (sadā-eka-rūpah). It is the nature of Existence. It is pure ‘Is-ness’, the ‘suchness’ in such-and-such a thing. If that ‘Is-ness’ is removed from it, the thing will not have existence. Existence alone is Its nature, there is no being or non-being in It. Nothing has even emerged out of It. In Its pure Existence state, It is not even Consciousness.¹ It becomes Consciousness only when it is illuminating objects, It

¹ *nāntah prajñam* – It is not that which is conscious of the inner world

– *Māṇḍukya-upaniṣad*-1.7

cannot be said to ‘be’ anything. It is of the nature of Existence, no other description is possible, and you are ‘That’. Even now you are ‘That’. Nobody can say, ‘I have no existence’. ‘I exist’, ‘I am’ is the universal experience of all. That ‘am-ness’ is the Truth.

It is of one nature because It transcends all nature. As Consciousness, you cannot use any other definition. It is indescribable. All descriptions only detail the qualities of the things described, qualities are not there in the Infinite. The moment properties are seen, it becomes finite. The properties are, what you see, hear, smell, taste, touch, feel and think. It is beyond all properties or characteristic features. To understand that I am Consciousness, and that I have nothing to do with the BMI, is the realisation of the highest state of spiritual perfection.

