

Satasloki

Sloka 9

यत्प्रीत्या प्रीतिपात्रं तनुयुवतितनूजार्थमुख्यं स तस्मा-
त्प्रेयानात्माथ शोकास्पदमितरदतः प्रेय एतत्कथं स्यात्।
भार्याद्यं जीवितार्थी वितरति च वपुः स्वात्मनः श्रेय इच्छं-
स्तस्मादात्मानमेव प्रियमधिकमुपासीत विद्वान्न चान्यत्॥९

9. One's own body, wife, son, possessions and the like become dear only because of love of one's own self. It follows therefore that the self is what is loved more than any thing else. Every thing other than the self, such as wife, son and others, is the cause of sorrow. Therefore how can these be really objects of desire? A person who wants to save his own life when it is in danger (or who wants things to go his own way in life) may even be prepared to give up his wife, son and others (when they act in a way not to his liking). One who wants the highest attainment for himself, namely liberation, should abandon even (his attachment to) the body. The wise man should meditate on the self alone and not be attached to anything else.

Note. It is said in the Brihadaranyaka upanishad (2.4.5) that the husband is dear to the wife not for the sake of the husband, but for her own sake. The wife is dear to the husband not for the sake of the wife, but for his own sake. Everything is dear only for one's own sake. The idea is that the wife, son, wealth, etc are dear to a person only because he derives happiness from them. The self (the person himself) is thus the real object of love and not others. When the wife, son and others dear to a person do not act in the way he wants them to, they cease to be dear to him. Even the greatest miser will not hesitate to spend his money when that becomes necessary to save his own life from disease or danger. Attachment to wife, son and others is given up by a person when they become obstacles to the fulfillment of his own wishes. Even attachment to wealth makes way when one's own life is at stake. Attachment to the body however continues because everyone looks upon the body as himself. In order to realize the truth that he is the self or Atma which is different from the body he has to give up attachment to the body also. Attachment is the cause of all sorrow. Thus it is taught here that one should first give up attachment to wife, son, wealth and the like which are known to be external to oneself. Ultimately attachment to the body, which is looked upon, due to ignorance, as identical with oneself should also be given up by one who seeks liberation.

