

Śloka 24

अव्यक्तं व्यक्तिमापन्नं मन्यन्ते मामबुद्धयः ।
परं भावमजानन्तो ममाव्ययमनुत्तमम् ॥ २४ ॥

*avyaktam vyaktimāpannam manyante māmabuddhayaḥ
param bhāvamajānanto mamāvyayamanuttamam*

अव्यक्तम्	<i>avyaktam</i>	the unmanifested
व्यक्तिम्	<i>vyaktim</i>	to manifestation
आपन्नम्	<i>āpannam</i>	come to
मन्यन्ते	<i>manyante</i>	think
माम्	<i>mām</i>	Me
अबुद्धयः	<i>abuddhayaḥ</i>	the foolish, the ignorant
परम्	<i>param</i>	the highest, unsurpassable
भावम्	<i>bhāvam</i>	nature
अजानन्तः	<i>ajānantaḥ</i>	not knowing
मम	<i>mama</i>	My
अव्ययम्	<i>avyayam</i>	immutable
अनुत्तमम्	<i>anuttamam</i>	most excellent

VERSE 24

*How the Ignorant See the Self and Do Not Strive For
Self-realization*

24

The ignorant think of Me, the unmanifest, as having come to manifestation; not knowing My unsurpassable, immutable, and most excellent nature.

The preceding verse described those people who are limited to seeking worldly enjoyments. They remain engaged in worshipping different deities in order to fulfill their finite desires. Such people lack discrimination as to what is perishable and what is eternal; as a result of their worship, they achieve the limited objects they desire. But those who worship the eternal, infinite Self achieve eternal peace.

In this verse the Lord says that those ignorant people who only seek worldly enjoyments do not know the **unsurpassable, immutable**, and peerless nature of the Self. They think of the unmanifest as having come to manifestation (with a form).

In verses 4-5 the Lord described His two natures as: 1) the eight-fold *prakṛti* (five subtle elements, mind, intellect, and ego), which is the lower nature of the Self; and 2) the pure consciousness, *puruṣa*, which is the higher nature of the Self. The higher nature of the Self is the very life element by which the world is upheld. Verse 7 stated, "All this is strung on Me as clusters of gems on a string." Hence, the higher nature of the Self is the substratum of all creation.

The unmanifest (*avyakta*) is that which is not realized through the mind, intellect, or sense organs, whereas the manifest (*vyakta*) is that which is realized through them. The Self should be known as unmanifest since it is beyond the recognition of mind, intellect, and sense organs. However, it should also be known that the Self, while unmanifest, is the life-force behind the sense organs, mind, and intellect. It is the main principle by which they are able to function in their respective areas.

Those divine incarnations who have appeared in human form were completely established in the Self. However, those people who perceived them by the faculties of mind, intellect, and sense organs only perceived them as manifest human beings. The Self is beyond the capacities of mind, intellect, and sense organs, and forever remains in its eternal, infinite, and unmanifest state.

Śloka 25

नाहं प्रकाशः सर्वस्य योगमायासमावृतः ।

मूढोऽयं नाभिजानाति लोको मामजमव्ययम् ॥ २५ ॥

*nāham prakāśaḥ sarvasya yogamāyāsamāvṛtaḥ
mūḍho'yaṁ nābhijānāti loko māmajamavyayam*

न	<i>na</i>	not
अहम्	<i>aham</i>	I
प्रकाशः	<i>prakāśaḥ</i>	manifest
सर्वस्य	<i>sarvasya</i>	of all
योगमायासमावृतः	<i>yogamāyāsamāvṛtaḥ</i>	veiled by yoga māyā
मूढः	<i>mūḍhaḥ</i>	deluded
अयम्	<i>ayam</i>	this
न	<i>na</i>	not
अभिजानाति	<i>abhijānāti</i>	knows
लोकः	<i>lokaḥ</i>	world
माम्	<i>mām</i>	Me
अजम्	<i>ajam</i>	unborn
अव्ययम्	<i>avyayam</i>	imperishable

VERSE 25

What is the Cause of Ignorance, Which Veils the Truth?

25

Veiled by My yoga māyā (divine potency), I am not manifest to all. This deluded world does not know Me, the unborn and imperishable.

Yoga māyā, or divine potency, is comprised of the three *guṇas*, the cause of the whole creation. In an individual, *rajas guṇa* is responsible for agitation and all kinds of mental projections. *Tamas guṇa* is responsible for veiling the reality. Together *rajas* and *tamas guṇas* obstruct and distort the function of *sattva guṇa* (pure consciousness). As a result of the functioning of the three energies in this manner an individual gets confused and lives in a state of ignorance, called *avidyā*. In this state an individual is unable to experience the Self, which is the true nature of a being.

This deluded world does not know Me, the unborn and imperishable - The world functions by the energy of the three *guṇas*, and according to these energies, the world reality is colored. The reality of the Self remains obscure for those who view the world through the mind, intellect, and senses, which are evolutes of the three *guṇas*. However, those individuals who practice meditation regularly, observing austerities, and reflecting on the Self, get control over the mind. Such individuals are not affected by *rajas*, which causes agitation of the mind, and *tamas*, which veils the truth of the Self. By removing the twin impurities of mind, the agitation of *rajas* and the veiling effects of *tamas*, the ego stops longing for worldly objects and a state of quiescence is achieved. In that state a yogi achieves knowledge of the Self, which is unborn and imperishable.

It is like sunlight, which makes everything in the world visible, and is known as the eye of the world. Similarly the Self is considered the knower of everything. Without sunlight nothing can be seen, and without the Self nothing can be known.

Śloka 26

वेदाहं समतीतानि वर्तमानानि चार्जुन ।
भविष्याणि च भूतानि मां तु वेद न कश्चन ॥ २६ ॥

vedāham samatītāni vartamānāni cārjuna
bhaviṣyāṇi ca bhūtāni mām tu veda na kaścana

वेद	<i>veda</i>	know
अहम्	<i>aham</i>	I
समतीतानि	<i>samatītāni</i>	the past
वर्तमानानि	<i>vartamānāni</i>	the present
च	<i>ca</i>	and
अर्जुन	<i>arjuna</i>	O Arjuna
भविष्याणि	<i>bhaviṣyāṇi</i>	the future
च	<i>ca</i>	and
भूतानि	<i>bhūtani</i>	beings
माम्	<i>mām</i>	Me
तु	<i>tu</i>	verily
वेद	<i>veda</i>	knows
कश्चन	<i>kaścana</i>	anyone

VERSE 26

The Supreme Self Is Omniscient

26

I know, O Arjuna, the beings of the past, the present, and the future, but no one knows Me.

The Lord has two natures: 1) the higher nature, the Self, and 2) the lower nature, the eight-fold *prakṛti*. (Verses 4-5) Matter by its nature is insentient, so without the energy of the Self (the conscious principle), matter remains inert and cannot create, sustain, or annihilate the creation.

In all evolutes of matter, pure consciousness is the ultimate principle. It is like the sunlight that illuminates all the objects of the world. All modifications take place in nature. In all three states of creation: the past existence, the present existence, and the future existence that is yet to appear, the Self always remains in the present. It is the illuminator of the respective thoughts and ideas of the individual in the past, present, and future. The Self never goes from existence to nonexistence. That is how the Self becomes the knower of the past, present, and future.

The Self takes the label of “the knower” only when it functions with the evolutes of *prakṛti* (the mind, intellect, and ego). Otherwise the Self is only pure consciousness; it is the light by which everything is known.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who represents the Self, rightly tells His disciple Arjuna, that He is the knower of everything at all times. However, those deluded people, who dwell in their egocentric desires and who are limited in their knowledge to their mind-body complex, cannot see the omniscient supreme Self.

Śloka 27

इच्छाद्वेषसमुत्थेन द्वन्द्वमोहेन भारत ।
सर्वभूतानि सम्मोहं सर्गे यान्ति परंतप ॥ २७ ॥

*icchādveṣasamutthena dvandvamohena bhārata
sarvabhūtāni sammohaṁ sarge yānti paraṁtapa*

इच्छा द्वेष समुत्थेन

icchā dveṣa samutthena

arisen from desire
and aversion

द्वन्द्वमोहेन

dvandvamohena

by the delusion of
pairs of opposites

भारत

bhārata

O Bharat (Arjuna)

सर्वभूतानि

sarvabhūtāni

all beings

सम्मोहम्

sammohaṁ

to delusion

सर्गे

sarge

at birth

यान्ति

yānti

are subject

परंतप

paraṁtapa

O Paraṁtapa (Arjuna)

VERSE 27

Why the Omniscient Self Is Not Known to Humans

27

By the delusion of the pairs of opposites, arising from desire and aversion, O Bharata (Arjuna), all beings are subject to illusion at birth, O Parañtapa (scorcher of foes).

By the delusion of the pairs of opposites, arising from desire and aversion, the Self remains obscured. In the previous verse it was said that the Self is the eternal knower, but that the Self is not known by others. The question arises as to why the Self is not known by humans.

The impulse of desire toward an object of the senses creates attachment to the object. When desire is obstructed and remains unfulfilled, it gives rise to pain, and then the desire expresses itself as aversion. All pairs of opposites such as success and failure, praise and censure, honor and dishonor, joy and grief, and pleasure and pain are based on these two impulses. The ego, which is the experiencer of the pairs of opposites, becomes very involved with the mind and intellect in seeking what it likes, and avoiding what it does not like. This preoccupation of the mind, intellect, and ego with worldly objects creates a state of confusion, and for that reason desire and aversion are called delusion. This confusion caused by the disturbances of the thoughts in the mind and intellect goes on multiplying in everyday life, and as a result it creates agitation and veils the truth (the Self).

all beings are subject to illusion at birth - This means that the impressions of actions in past births, called *samskāras*, are the cause of rebirth, and those start germinating at birth. The desire to live is in every being and it creates an illusory reality in every person. That ignorance is passed on from birth to birth in *samskāra* form.

The Lord says, "O Arjuna, all individuals are born with this desire for worldly objects." Therefore, the only way to attain peace and tranquillity is to control the agitation of the mind by spiritual practices. When tranquillity of the mind is attained, then one can attain Self-realization.

Śloka 28

येषां त्वन्तगतं पापं जनानां पुण्यकर्मणाम् ।
ते द्वन्द्वमोहनिर्मुक्ता भजन्ते मां दृढव्रताः ॥ २८ ॥

yeṣām tvantagatam pāpam janānām puṇyakarmaṇām
te dvandvamohanirmuktā bhajante mām dṛḍhavratāḥ

येषाम्	<i>yeṣām</i>	of whom
तु	<i>tu</i>	but
अन्तगतम्	<i>antagatam</i>	is at an end
पापम्	<i>pāpam</i>	sin
जनानाम्	<i>janānām</i>	of men
पुण्यकर्मणाम्	<i>puṇyakarmaṇām</i>	of men of virtuous deeds
ते	<i>te</i>	they
द्वन्द्व मोह निर्मुक्ताः	<i>dvandva moha nirmuktāḥ</i>	freed from the delusion of the pairs of opposites
भजन्ते	<i>bhajante</i>	worship
माम्	<i>mām</i>	Me
दृढ व्रताः	<i>dṛḍha vratāḥ</i>	men of steadfast vows

VERSE 28

What Are the Qualities of Those Who Are Seeking for Self-Realization?

28

But those people of virtuous deeds, whose sins have come to an end, who are freed from the delusion of the pairs of opposites, worship Me with a firm resolve.

The previous verse said that due to the pairs of opposites arising from desire and aversion, the Self remains obscured and humans are unable to know the Self. In this verse the qualifications of those who are seeking Self-realization are given.

people of virtuous deeds - This refers to those people who are honest and compassionate; who are engaged in selfless service; who have removed evil tendencies such as anger, hate, and jealousy; who have removed actions prompted by evil thoughts; and who have, as a result, achieved purity of the mind.

whose sins have come to an end - Sins are those actions that obstruct the path of Self-realization by creating agitation in the mind and veiling the truth. It is egocentric desires that create craving for objects of the senses in the outer world and lead to sinful actions. Those desires create a deep memory of sensual pleasure and as a result a person lives a worldly life dwelling on passionate thoughts. Those thoughts create similar passionate actions and those actions create a similar memory (desire). Hence the cycle of desire-thought-action goes on and on, and a person is buried deeply in a deluded life.

Virtuous actions are the opposite of sinful actions. Therefore, to get out of the cycle of desire-thought-action, which is called sin, a seeker of the truth should cultivate a virtuous nature by worship and devotion to God in thoughts and actions.

who are freed from the delusion of the pairs of opposites - A person is said to be free from the delusion of the pairs of opposites if that person never loses the balance of mind in good and bad circumstances, and is never affected by feelings of joy and sorrow, or pleasure and pain.

worship Me with a firm resolve - When the mind is completely free from all negative thoughts and actions (sins), and is free from the delusion of the pairs of opposites, then it can meditate on the Self with a concentrated focus and a firm resolve.

Śloka 29

जरामरणमोक्षाय मामाश्रित्य यतन्ति ये ।
ते ब्रह्म तद्विदुः कृत्स्नमध्यात्मं कर्म चाखिलम् ॥ २९ ॥

jarāmaraṇamokṣāya māmāśritya yatanti ye
te brahma tadviduḥ kṛtsnamadhyātmam karma cākhilam

जरा मरण मोक्षाय

jarā maraṇa mokṣāya

for liberation from
old age and death

माम्

mām

Me

आश्रित्य

āśritya

having taken refuge
in

यतन्ति

yatanti

strive

ये

ye

who

ते

te

they

ब्रह्म

brahma

Brahma

तत्

tat

that

विदुः

viduḥ

know

कृत्स्नम्

kṛtsnam

the whole

अध्यात्मम्

adhyātmam

knowledge of the Self

कर्म

karma

action

च

ca

and

अखिलम्

akhilam

whole