

8. All Creation And All Streams Of Life Ultimately Merge In Brahman

As the poison in the fangs of the snake does not affect the snake itself, the *maya* that is present in Brahman does not affect Brahman. It is only trying to come round into the world and cause an illusion in the world. Listen to this truth, students—boys and girls!

For the past six days, we have been trying to understand and recognise the aspect of Brahman. You have been told that Brahman is known by several names. Today, we will pick up one such name and acquaint ourselves with it. The name which we will take today is *Prathishta!*

The correct meaning of *Prathishta* is what we generally regard as the basis. Because nature appears to be the basis for all things that you see around us, nature has also got a name *Prathishta*. There is an authority from *Taitriya Bhashya* for such an interpretation. Because this name *Prathishta* signifies the basis for all creation and maintenance, such an interpretation gets support. For the rise and fall of a bird, it is its tail that is responsible. Just as the tail in this example is the basis for the rise and fall of the bird, there is a basis for everything in the creation. Brahman is this basis and it is known as *Prathishta*.

In this context, the basis for the world is the *Veda* and *Veda* is, therefore, the *Prathishta*. For *Veda*, Brahman is *Prathishta* or the basis. In other words, if we look at the basis and the thing that depends on the basis, we come to the conclusion that between the basis and what depends on the basis, that which is important is the basis or the *Prathishta*. Created matter which arises in one's mind from an illusion simply gets merged in what constitutes the basis.

For instance, by illusion, we imagine a snake when we see a rope. This created or illusory snake gets merged in the basis or the rope, once the illusion is removed. In

the same manner, this entire world which is the result of an illusion gets completely merged in the basis or the Brahman, once the illusion is removed.

There is a small example for this. With our eyes we look at several created things. Here we ask what is the basis and what is it that is supported? What is supported is the creation and the basis is the eye.

If there is no eye, we cannot look at this created world. Therefore, the created world is dependent, whereas the vision is the basis on which the created world depends. If we go deeper and enquire if the eye is the basis or the vision is the basis, we come to the conclusion that neither of them is really the basis. Behind both is the real basis and this is the mind.

If we merely open the eyes, it is not possible to recognise the things that we see with the eye. If the mind is not concentrated on this process and does not constitute the basis, we will not be able to recognise what we see.

If the mind is engrossed elsewhere and even if the eyes are open, it is not possible to recognise all the items that we see.

If the mind and the vision are directed at different places, it is not possible to recognise the true form of what one sees.

In this context, we say that what we see or what is being seen has the eye as its basis. Further, the mind is the basis for the eye.

In this chain, even as we recognise the mind as the basis, we note that there is still a further basis for the mind and that is one's intelligence.

When the intelligence takes the place of the basis, the mind becomes what is being seen. By going one more step, the intelligence itself becomes what is being seen and the Atma takes the place of the basis.

For the vision the basis is the eye and for one's eye the mind is the basis and in some circumstances the intelligence becomes the basis for the mind, and at a later stage the Atma becomes the basis for the intelligence. Atma is the final step and there is no possibility of having another basis for the Atma. Atma as the final step is Brahman itself. When we consider that for all creation *Prajapati* (Creator) is the basis, for *Prajapati* who represents all the material aspects of the world, Brahman becomes the basis. As the rays spread out from Brahman, we should recognise Brahman as the basis for everything.

In another example we can take the case of a river. If we examine what the basis is for the river, we conclude

that rain drops are the basis. There must be some other basis for these drops of rain. When we look for the basis of the rain, we come to the conclusion that the basis is cloud and for the clouds themselves, the basis is the water vapour. The origin for the water vapour is the ocean and that which connects this result of water vapour and the source, namely the ocean, is the Sun. Sun provides the connection between the ocean—the basis—and the resulting water vapour and water vapour in turn forms into clouds and the clouds are the basis for the drops of rain and the drops of rain in turn constitute the basis for the river which is the end.

Finally the created water vapour, clouds, rain, and the river, all go and merge in the original basis itself, namely the ocean. The statement "*Nadeenam Sagaro Gathi*" means that all the rivers go and merge in the ocean and in the same manner all the created things and all the streams of life go and merge with the source, namely Brahman.

The inner meaning of this is to recognise that Brahman is in the place of *Prathishta* and that Brahman is the basis of all creation. Understanding this inner significance, we must recognise that all aspects of our life have Brahman as the source. In this, we have to

recognise that truth alone establishes the basis of everything. That is why in *Rig Veda* it is said, “*Tasmat Paramam Vadanti.*” This is an answer provided to a question asked by Aruni when he wanted to know from his *Guru* the path that he must adopt to know the Brahman. It has also been said that in a manner of speaking, truth constitutes the basis for all things. It is in this context that Brahman itself was described as *Sathyam Jnanam Anantam*. In this, we must examine the meaning of the word *sathya* or truth. Does this relate to saying that what you have seen is as you have seen it or saying that what you have experienced is as you have experienced it or saying that what you have heard is as you heard it? This is not the real meaning. Truth is something which is beyond time and is unchangeable. It has for its basis Brahman itself. That is why in this world they have described truth as being one and not two. That is why they have described Brahman as “*Ekam Eva Adviteyam Brahma,*” i.e., Brahman is one and only one without a second. Our primary duty is to understand and recognise the unchanging truth.

We have learnt yesterday that wherever the word *Swa* occurs, it pertains to the heart or the Atma or the place of Brahman himself. This establishes that any work

or any sentence that comes from the depth of your heart is a form of truth. Therefore, when we take the sacred place where Brahman resides as the basis, then every word that we utter becomes a true word of Brahman. This *Swasthana*, the place which is the source of Brahman, will give only words of truth. For illustrating this, a very good example has been provided in the *Ramayana*. Ravana recognised and understood that taking away Sita was wrong and in spite of knowing that he was doing wrong, he did the wrong thing. Since he committed the sin knowingly, he was put to a great many difficulties later on.

If there is a person who has recognised and understood the truth and yet adopts a bad path contrary to the dictates of his own heart, then the fact that he has taken to a wrong act must be due to qualities like anger or jealousy. Such qualities must have prompted him to do the wrong act. One night, Vibheeshana, brother of Ravana, went to Ravana to tell him that what Ravana did was wrong. Vibheeshana held his brother's hands in great endearment and said that the sin which Ravana had committed had brought distress to all the citizens of Lanka. He said that because of Ravana's sin, there were snakes and cobras moving freely in every house where

there should have been only recitation of the *Vedas*. In the temples where Shiva should have been worshipped, there were all kinds of insects and bad omens were seen because of the sin committed by Ravana. That there were insects in the food offered to God and that in places where Shiva was worshipped, there were snakes were all consequences of the fact that Ravana, though well versed in all the *Vedas* and knowing what was righteous conduct, still committed sin.

It is only when an attempt is made to refrain from committing a sin that we do justice to human life. Even if a single individual commits the wrong, its consequence spreads to his entire household and to his family. If the King of a land commits a sin, then the entire land becomes a sinful land. This is why we say “*Yatha Raja thatha praja*”. The happiness and joy of the people depend on the happiness and prosperity of the king. The country’s welfare and prosperity depends on the rulers of the country. If our country, which is known for its immortal spirit and which is the embodiment of the spirit of Brahman and of all that is good, has today fallen to a desperate and frustrated level, there is no doubt that our rulers are responsible for this. If you young people are desirous of rectifying this deplorable situation into which

our country has fallen, you must be able to cultivate good thoughts, do good deeds and have a strong determination to remove the evil in our country. Recognising the importance of truth, righteousness and morality and still not being able to put those values into practice is the greatest sin.

Once, Adi Sankaracharya went to Benares and prayed there to Lord Viswanath specifically for three of his sins to be pardoned. The disciples who followed Sankaracharya were surprised and were wondering what those three sins were for which he was seeking pardon. Sankaracharya then explained that the first sin was that knowing fully well that the Lord is omnipresent and all powerful, he had undertaken the journey all the way to Benares to have the Lord’s *darshan* as if the Lord was present only in Benares. This, according to him, was the first sin. The significance of this is that his practice was contrary to what he already knew.

His second sin was that after recognising the Lord as one whose glory cannot be described, or as one whose infinite nature cannot be described in mere words, he had attempted to describe him in a string of words and thus had ignored what he already knew about the Lord.

His third sin was that having recognised that the human body itself is the temple of the Lord and having recognised that it is made of five perishable elements, he had not put this knowledge into practice. The *jiva*, that lives in the body, is indestructible and if studied carefully, we come to the conclusion that the one who resides in the body has no birth and death and neither attachment nor detachment. He realised that the almighty is residing in him as the Atma and yet he undertook the long journey to get the *darshan* of the almighty in a place outside to his body. This was his third sin. Knowing that the Lord is in him, he has committed the sin of undertaking the journey to see the Lord.

If we examine the matter in this way, we will realise what actually sin is. When we think of what sin is, we ask the Lord, “I have not killed anyone. I have not hurt anyone and yet why do I get this punishment.” Sin does not consist of these things only. Sin is not a separate entity. All the sins and all the good deeds are contained in your own actions and in what you do and are not external to you. Atma takes the form of Brahman and adopts the human body as his chariot and moves about the world. Therefore, the world is Brahman; the market is Brahman; the body is Brahman; Brahman is Brahman;

and everything is Brahman. Sankaracharya has demonstrated that everyone is Brahma. Everyone is the same and should not be treated as being different from any other. It is in this context that Sankara advocated the *Adwaita* or non-dual philosophy. Sankaracharya is a great individual who handed to the world the non-dual philosophy. His is not merely knowledge by learning, but by experiencing it himself.

When the individuals who are accustomed to the righteous path take to the wrong path, then everything that comes one's way is also distorted and crooked. There is a small example for this. A shepherd was once looking after his goats and sheep and found a nice shining jewel in the open fields. He thought that if this precious stone was tied round the neck of one of his black sheep, it will shine even more brightly. He tied it round the neck of one of his black sheep after putting a small hole in the stone. His sheep were very endearing to him and all his *prema* and affection were being showered on those sheep. He never bothered about the value of this stone and whatever precious thing he got he used it for adorning the sheep that were very dear to him. One day he put the goats and sheep to rest under a big tree. On that day, a businessman also came to rest under the same

tree. During this period of rest, the merchant, who deals in precious stones was attracted by the shining stone and he realised that it was worth several lakhs of rupees. He approached the shepherd and offered fifty rupees for the precious stone. The shepherd then thought that fifty rupees would enable him to adorn fifty of his goats and so he gave the valuable stone to the merchant. While the merchant was gloating over his acquisition, the stone broke into a thousand pieces and the merchant heard an unseen voice emanating from the stone to say, “You know that I am very valuable and yet you paid the shepherd a very small sum of money for me and therefore with a broken heart, I have broken into a thousand pieces”. Here we see the moral in this story. The individual who knew the truth and the correct value of this stone did not follow the correct path and wanted to acquire the stone cheaply. In those days, truth was so important and powerful that it got angry and the stone broke into a thousand parts.

Divyatma Swarupas!

Once you have recognised truth, you must always follow the path dictated by the truth. It is the aspect of Brahman which teaches us the nature of truth. We should understand that Brahman stands as the basis for all that

you see in this world. It is possible that we commit some wrong, but we must not commit it after realising it is wrong. It is inescapable that you will have to suffer the consequences of all that you do. Even when Vibheeshana explained the truth to Ravana, he could not recognise the truth because he was steeped in lust. This was responsible for his losing his kingdom and his getting into a lot of trouble. Ravana knew all the four *Vedas* and all the *Sastras* and did penance for hundreds of years to get the vision of Brahman. Yet his knowledge did not get him out of his difficulties. He was also acquainted with several branches of material learning and could even travel in the air. There is evidence for this in the *Ramayana*. In spite of all this knowledge, Ravana ran into difficulties because of one bad quality, namely lust. It does not matter how many branches of *Vedas* one knows, but all this is useless if you do not put the knowledge into practice. If you understand the omnipresent nature of Brahman, you would have understood all the *Vedas*, as that is the essence of all the *Vedas*. I am hoping that from today you will acquire the strength and determination to put into practice what you learn during your stay here.