

## **15. The World Is An Illusory Projection Of The Substratum Of Brahman**

*A zero will get its value only if it is placed after an integer, so also, a jiva will get some value only if it is placed in conjunction with Divinity. This is the simple truth. What other truth can I convey to you?*

*Paramatma* is one who is infinitesimally smaller than the smallest thing. *Paramatma* is one who is larger and bigger than the infinitely large things. *Paramatma* is the totality of all the small and all the big things in this world. It is not possible for anyone to describe or understand the fullness and the total aspect of the Lord. Four blind people, who wanted to know the form of an elephant, began touching each one of its organs and were thinking that the elephant has the same form as the particular organ which he has touched. Human beings are not able to understand and grasp the infinite aspect of the Lord. Each one of them gets only a limited experience of the Lord, and he think that God is limited to his experience only.

The leaders of various religions have been describing this totality of Divinity in an incomplete manner. The Charvakas have come to the conclusion that there is no strength at all in this aspect. The Jains and the Buddhists have not been able to grasp the really true form of this aspect. But Sankara has been describing this by words (*chinmatra*) indescribable, incomprehensive and so on. He has been establishing that the self-effulgent *Paramatma* is no other than the basic truth. He has been propagating that the illusion which

man often suffers from is not separate and distinct from, but is only a projection of, *Brahman*, the true substratum. He has been teaching that one should believe that whatever is present in all the living beings is simply *Brahman* and nothing else. The aspect of *Brahman* is something which is eternal, is unchanging and has not got any blemish in it at all. When we say that it is unchanging and eternal, we also imply that it has neither birth, nor an end. There is also an implication in its description that the qualities and the *gunas* of the aspect of *Brahman* cannot be described and understood. There is also another inner meaning in Sankara's description that *Paramatma* or *Brahman* is something which does not depend on anything else; it is perfectly and totally independent. It has no parallel and you cannot point at something else and say that *Brahman* is greater than this or equal to this. There is nothing equal to or greater than *Brahman*. This is the aspect of the *Paramatma*.

Just as it is quite common knowledge in the world that milk changes into curd easily, so also this indescribable *Sakthi*, or power of *Paramatma*, has changed itself and projected itself as creation. We should realise that the strength of *Paramatma*, which has changed as a result of *maya* and projected itself is material creation, is symbolised by Sita; and the divine strength of *Paramatma* is symbolised by Rama. The marriage between Rama and Sita is really the confluence of *Purusha* with *Prakruthi*. As was mentioned yesterday, since Vishwamithra understood very well the meaning of the *Turiya* state, he has also understood the symbolic meaning of creation, which is Sita, and he described Sita in this manner. The state of *Turiya* can be regarded by us as literally the form of *Atma*. If a piece of salt went into the ocean to find the ocean, it gets dissolved in the ocean and cannot come back in its original form. So also, we learn that the *jiva* which wants to learn the

nature of *Atma*, when it goes there, it will get completely merged in the *Atma* and cannot come back. Here, it has been established that the nature and meaning of Rama is the silent interval that exists between two primordial sounds of *Om*. The meaning and the aspect of Rama should also be recognised by us, and it conveys to us the kind of connection that should exist between one human being and another. Here we can take the example of Divinity, the *Brahman* which is a single entity and which has no parallel. Its manifestations are in the form of so many different human beings. If we take a piece of glass prism, we will notice that light appears through this prism as being made up of so many different colours. The seven colours that we see through the prism are not different and distinct. What basically exists is one single ray of light that is being broken into seven different colours because of the existence of the prism. It is not the natural form of the original ray of light. When we light the wick of an oil lamp and try to look at it from different angles, we can see that the light appears to us in a totally different form. All these different forms can be seen in the light of the wick. They are not different. They are coming from the same source. It is in this context that in *Vedantic* parlance, it is said that if you take out fullness from what is already complete and full, then what remains will also be full. Infinity, subtracted out of infinity, leaves infinity as the remainder.

There is a small example: we go to a shop and we wish to buy a kilo of jaggery. From the stock which the shopkeeper has, he will cut a small piece and will give it, after weighing a kilo. The sweetness in the kilogram of jaggery which you have purchased is in no way different from the sweetness in the same block. The difference is only in the measure. We bring it home, we make small pieces of this jaggery, we put it in water and make it into sweet juice and drink it. Even when small

pieces are made out of this kilo of jaggery and put into water, there is no change in the sweetness of jaggery. The big block, the kilo of jaggery, and a small piece of jaggery may differ in the quantity and measure but the taste has not changed. Thus the source is full, from that we have removed fullness, and we have experienced this fullness and what remains is also full. If you take fullness out of a full thing, what remains is also full. Thus the name of Rama demon-strates to us that man's aspects are all divine aspects. They are closely connected with the aspect of divinity.

The *Ramayana* has been establishing that all living beings have their origin in God. The *Upanishads* have taught us the same thing by saying that Easwara is the source of every being. By taking these examples from the *Ramayana*, Vishwamithra tells us that Sita should be regarded as the symbol of creation and Rama should be regarded as Divinity, or the *Atma*, and the marriage between Rama and Sita is the confluence between Divinity on one hand and the essence of human beings on the other. Vishwamithra also showed us that sorrows and pleasures are simply the results of union or the breaking up of such unions. The *Ramayana* has also taught us that the spirit of *Atma* is contained in understanding truly the result of coming together or being separated. Here when Vishwamithra was taking Rama and Lakshmana for the purpose of killing Tataki, halfway in their journey they heard a big noise. Rama and Lakshmana asked Vishwamithra how, in a forest, where there were not many people, such a big noise had come. Vishwa-mithra told them that amongst the Himalayas there is a particular mountain called the Kailasha and on that mountain of Kailasha there is a lake by name Manasarovar. The river Sarayu flows out of the lake Manasarovar. An ancient king who belonged to the Dynasty of Rama was responsible for bringing this river down to the plains, and his

name was Bhagi-ratha. Vishwamithra stated that Bhagiratha brought down the river Ganges as well and the Sarayu was joining the river Ganges, and therefore, the noise was so loud. Vishwamithra had implied a good spiritual inner meaning for his statement. He regarded the word '*Kailasha*' as symbolic of a pure mind. Our mind has been compared to the lake Manasarovar. The outflow of several ideas from the pure and clean mind had been compared with the outflow of the river Sarayu from lake Manasarovar. He imagined that these ideas are springing as if they had pure white foam in them. When these sacred ideas are emanating from Manasarovar in the form of river Sarayu and when they are touched by the rays of sun, they produce a sound, the primordial sound, *OM*. This sacred sound *Om*, or the *pranava*, is emanating from the heart of every individual. Vishwamithra explained that this is the origin of the noise. You can hear this sound of *pranava* only in a place which is pure. For this reason, the *rishis* of those days used to leave the cities and towns and go to the forest which was pure and silent, for the sake of hearing this primordial sound of *Om*. Truly, the sound that is contained in silence is to be identified with God.

After walking some distance, they also heard a sound which was not very pleasant; that was causing some fear also. Rama asked Vishwamithra what that fearful sound was? Vishwamithra told Rama that the fearful sound was made by Tataki, a *rakshasi* who was causing havoc and trouble to all *rishis* in the forest. He also explained that Rama was brought there to kill Tataki. She was called a *yakshini*. Since Rama knew all the *dharmas* and all the secrets of things, he asked Vishwamithra, how a *yakshini*, which cannot exercise its own will, could cause such harm and suggested that Tataki is only a *yakshasi*.

Vishwamithra gave an interesting story in this context. He described the story of Suketa who was a *yaksha*, who was praying to the Lord because he had no children. As a result of this, he was blessed with a very strong daughter by name Tataki, the *rakshasi*. This Tataki married a person by name Sangalu, and after the marriage she had two sons by name Subahu and Maricha. After some years, the husband died. Unable to bear the death of her husband, Sangalu, she became very much excited; and in great passion she developed anger; and with the help of her two sons, she has been all the time giving pain and trouble to the *rishis*. Realising this anger and bad conduct on the part of this woman, Agasthya cursed her and said that she will thereafter conduct herself as a *rakshasi*.

Vishwamithra narrated this story and said that originally she was a *yakshini*; but as a result of the curse of Agasthya, she became a *rakshasi*. Now she can exercise her will over human beings. After telling Rama about this power of the *yakshini*, he took Him to Mithilapura. Vishwamithra had also been establishing the truth that is contained in the statement that sin is not something distinct and unconnected with one's actions. Sin arises only from the kind of work and action that you do. God is not found elsewhere. God can be found only by the good deeds and good actions that you do. When we talk of *rakshasas* and wicked people, they are not to be found elsewhere as separate entities; they are living in our own hearts and arise from our own actions. It is in this context that the *devatas* described Ravana as having ten heads, symbolic of anger and sin, and removal of anger and sin means removal of Ravana or demoniac qualities. Here we can interpret this by saying that wickedness and anger in the form of Ravana will be present in us unless we take care. Sita's aspect is symbolic *vignana* and *pragnana* or knowledge and wisdom. She is the embodiment of *Sakthi*. Vishwamithra, who

realised and recognised this sacred aspect of Sita, was wanting Rama, the Divinity, to secure this aspect of Sita. The story of *Ramayana* teaches us the confluence or the coming together of these two divine aspects. Such a confluence is for the prosperity of the world.

All the great and divine ideas that are contained within us feel exhilarated when we look at the coming together of these two aspects. All the good qualities that are contained in Sita were being described in terms of beautiful gems, diamonds, pearls and flowers. Everyone was anxious to go and see the marriage of Rama and Sita. They believed that Rama will look after people with greater joy and bliss and will give them all kinds of weapons and strength during the marriage. When we see the meaning of the words that have been used on that occasion, we realise that creation, with all its beauty, with all its attractiveness is in the form of Sita, who is born out of the earth. This beauty of creation is being described by Vishwamithra in this story. The marriage ceremony of Rama should not be regarded by us as a simple marriage where Rama married Sita on his own; but we should regard it as a confluence of all the noble qualities that are born with us, with the divine spirit of *Atma* which is Rama. We call this moment an auspicious moment, and that is the moment where the aspect of *jiva* is brought together with the aspect of *Paramatma*. When our mind can get fixed on God, that is also referred to as an auspicious moment. Many people ask the question, why is it, Swami, that my mind is not getting fixed on Divinity? When we look at it from another angle, say we want to get a girl married to a boy, we talk of issuing an invitation which is called a *Lagna Patrika*. The word *lagna* truly means confluence, the coming together of the *jivatma* and *Paramatma*.

On the night when that *lagna*, that confluence, took place between the *jivatma* and *Paramatma*, Vishwamithra disappeared from the scene. Till that merger took place, Vishwamithra was keeping the divine aspect of Rama a secret. Not only Vishwa-mithra, but also all the *rishis* kept it a secret because they wanted the destruction of Ravana to come about with certainty.

If, even before the marriage of Sita and before the destruction of Ravana, they told everyone that Rama was an incarnation of God, marriage of Sita would not have taken place; Sita would not have been stolen and the death of Ravana would not have come about. This is the reason why from the very birth of Rama, He was conducting Himself and appearing to people as if He was an ordinary person. At no place, at no moment and in no circumstances did Rama proclaim that He was God in human form. The secret of Divinity is always like this and is hidden until the task, which God undertakes, is completed successfully. When the time comes, when the appropriate situation arises, then the divine strength will also become apparent to the world. Rama and Lakshmana were accompanying Vishwamithra and they came to Mithilapura.

King Janaka knew the greatness of Vishwa-mithra, and he realised that Vishwamithra brought some princes for the sake of handling the *Shiva Dhanu*, and he gave them a very good reception. Rama was giving the impression that He was an ordinary human being because He came walking from a long distance.

In Mithilapura, He was sitting alone in a room and was trying to press His feet and relieve the pain due to walking. The doors of the room were nearly closed, but there was a small opening. Narada, who knew all the time what was



happening, came there and looked through the opening in the door and found that Rama was pressing His own feet. He loudly exclaimed, “Oh *Paramatma*, what has happened? Why are You pressing Your own feet!”

Vishwamithra appeared on the scene immediately and told Narada that this secret of the incarnation of Rama must be kept carefully. He requested Narada not to bring about a catastrophe by announcing it openly. Vishwamithra said that if this is done, then the marriage of Sita will not take place and the destruction of Ravana will not come about. All the *rishis*, who were really liberated people, had no selfish motives. This kind of conduct on their part was intended to give happiness and prosperity to the people.

### **Students!**

To regard the qualities of the *rishis* as being cheap is due to our own ignorance. Because we are unable to understand the inner meaning of what they have left for us and are unable to recognise their greatness, we are thinking that these people were ordinary people. When we look at great people from our own inferior position, we think that their *dhyana* and their achievements are very small. This is so, only because of your inability to grasp the greatness in them. The divine aspect is present in all human beings. If you regard the little spark which is in you as very great and are conceited about it, you must also feel how great the same spark, which is present in everyone like you, can be. You may feel that you are a very big person. But this is looking at it from your own position. When you look at the ocean from your own position, it looks like a big thing. But when you raise your own position higher and higher, then look at the ocean, then you think the ocean is also small. Only when you yourself can rise to a

higher position, will you realise that all the living things in the world are very small.

It is in this context that Vishwamithra was teaching the people the great truth—*Brahma sathyam, jagat mithya*. The one and only truth is *Brahman*. Because it is being projected as this material creation, we see by illusion the world around us. Without milk, you do not get curds. Without curds, you do not get butter. Without *Brahman*, you do not get the projected world.