

17. Atma is immanent nonchanging Unity beyond time and space

Realised souls (*jnanis*) will feel that the *Atma* immanent in everyone is their own *Atma*. They will be happy that they are themselves all this; they will see no distinction between one person and the next, for they can experience only unity, not diversity. The physical differences of colour, caste, and creed, which adhere only to the body, are marks of only the external body.

The *Atma* has no parts (is *nish-kala*); It is without blemish (*nir-mala*), unaffected by desire, anger, greed, affection, pride, and envy; It is without activity (*nish-kriya*); It is creation (*prakriti*), which undergoes all these modifications, or at least gives the impression that it is so modified. The Supreme Spirit (*Purusha*) is but the eternal Witness, the Ever Modification-less.

Of what can you say, “This is truth?” Only of that which persists in the past, present, and future, which has neither beginning nor end, which neither changes nor moves, which has uniform form, a unified experience-giving property. Well, consider the body, the senses, the mind, the life-force, and all such. They move and change; they begin and end; they are inert (*jada*). They have three qualities (*gunas*): sloth (*thamas*), activity (*rajas*), and purity (*sathwa*). They are without basic reality. They cause the delusion of reality. They have only relative value; they have no absolute value. They shine only out of borrowed light.

Absolute truth is beyond the reach of time and space; it is indivisible (*a-parichchinna*). It does not begin; it is always and ever existent. It is the basis, the fundamental, the self-revealing. Knowing It, experiencing It, is experiential wisdom (*jnana*). It cannot be marked out as such and such and explained by some characteristics (it is *a-nir-desya*). How can something that is above and beyond the intellect and the mind be described through mere words?

It is also termed “invisible to the eye (*a-drisya*)”, the eye being the optical apparatus that undergoes change and that is very limited in its capacity. Brahman can never be grasped by anything elemental or physical. Through Brahman, the eye is able to see, so how can the eye perceive Brahman itself? The mind is bound by the limitations of time, space, and causation. How can the Supreme Self (*Paramatma*), who is superior to these and unaffected by them, be limited by them?

The terms *a-mala*, *nir-mala*, and *vi-mala* applied to the Supreme Self connote the same meaning: *a-mala* implies absence of impurity; *nir-mala*, without impurity; and *vi-mala*, having all impurity destroyed. So too, the terms *a-chinthya* (incapable of being conceived) and *a-vyavaahaarya* (without any activity) applied to Brahman for activity or work imply the existence of another or others, whereas It is unique and unaware of any move toward or away from another.

Know that creation (*jagath*) is the form (*swarupa*) of the secondary one (*Virat-purusha*), who arose from Brahma, the form imposed by illusion (*maya*) on the super-soul. Brahman is that which has become or appears to have become all this, the Inner Motive Force (*Antar-yamin*). In the without-quality (*nir-guna*) aspect, it is the primal cause, the cosmic womb (*Hiranyagarbha*), of which creation is the manifestation. Grasping this secret of the universe and its origin and existence—that is experiential spiritual wisdom (*jnana*).