

37. Atma is the Universal Cause and Seer

The *Atma* is present everywhere and is in everything. It is unaffected. It is omnipresent, like ether (*akasa*). It is even beyond the ether —It is the ether in the universal consciousness (*chit*), so It is referred to as “beyond (*param*)”. It is described in the oral texts (*sruthis*) as “This Supreme Lord is unattached (*asangohyayam purushah*)”.

The *Atma* is unaffected and untouched by anything; it is beyond everything and devoid of agitation or activity. Don’t doubt whether it is unlimited or not. It is beyond the three limitations of space, time, and causation. You can’t state that the *Atma* is in only one place and not in another. It is not limited by space. You can’t state that it exists at one time and not at another. It is not limited by time. *Atma* is everything; there is nothing that is not *Atma*. *Atma* is All, so it has no limitation of name or form like material objects (*vasthus*) have. *Atma* is full and free. Knowing this is the highest truth, the fullest knowledge (*jnana*).

A doubt may be raised here: If the *Atma* is immanent in everything, like the ether, isn’t it a transformation (*vikara*), a change? No. Existing, emanating, growing, changing, declining, dying —these are the six transformations. But the *Atma* is the universal, eternal witness, cognising ether and the other elements, so it has no modifications at all. It is changeless (*nir-vikara*).

Saying that the *Atma* is changeless means that some other things have modification (*vikara*). So, the question may be asked how the word nondualism (*a-dwaitha*) can be used. Now, some things have modification and some don’t. But when there is nothing besides *Atma*, it is wrong to speak of a two-fold entity —it is not two, it is one! There is no doubt possible of this; it cannot arise. How can it be said that there is nothing outside the *Atma*? For this reason: the *Atma* is the cause of all this, and there can be no distinction between cause and effect. The cause cannot be without the effect, and the effect cannot be without the cause.

Some might be suffering under the doubt: How can the *Atma* be the Universal Cause? The *Atma* is the Universal Cause because it is the Universal See-er. The see-er is the cause of all the delusion of this world. The see-er creates silver in the mother of pearl, as well as the varied scenes of the dream world. So too, for the multiplicity of things experienced during the waking stage, the *Atma*, who is the see-er, is the instrument, right?