

## Chapter IX. The Supreme Soul

**S**WAMI: O, you have come! Well. What is the news?

**Devotee:** What other news do we have except yours? I heard that Your Kerala tour was most pleasant and wonderful. I am sad that I was not destined to join.

**Swami:** Why are you sad for it? Listen to the account and be happy, that is all. Have the confidence and the hope that when such an opportunity next presents itself, you may be able to join. Don't brood over the past.

**Devotee:** What is the use of confidence and hope when one is not destined? Hope will cause only greater disappointment.

**Swami:** Has destiny a shape and a personality so that you can recognise it even before it shows itself? You should not hang on its favour, talking all the time of destiny, destiny, ... How can that destiny itself fructify without your will and wish, taking practical form, as action? Whatever be the destiny, it is essential to continue acting. Action (*karma*) has to be done, even to attain one's destiny.

**Devotee:** If one is destined, everything will come of itself, right?

**Swami:** That is a big mistake. If you sit quietly with the fruit in your hand, hoping that its juice will reach the mouth, how can you take it? It is sheer stupidity to complain that destiny denied you the juice, without squeezing and swallowing the fruit. Destiny gave the fruit into your hand; action (*karma*) alone can make you enjoy it. Action is the duty; destiny, the result. Result cannot emerge without action.

**Devotee:** So, Swami, we should not sit with folded hands, placing all burdens on destiny?

**Swami:** Listen. Never underestimate your powers. Engage yourselves in action commensurate with that power. For the rest, talk of destiny to your heart's content. It is wrong to desist from the appropriate action, placing reliance on destiny. If you do so, even destiny will slip out of your hands. Whoever one may be, one must engage oneself in action.

**Devotee:** Yes, yes, Swami. In the *Gita*, Krishna tells Arjuna, "Even I do action (*karma*); the universe can't go on if I desist from action." So, if one withdraws from it, how can one realise the result? I believe now that action is the hallmark of men.

**Swami:** And of women too. It is the hallmark of nature (*prakriti*). All beings, men or women, trees or animals, worms, insects—all have to do action; everything in the universe is bound by this law. There is no escaping this obligation. Action is the characteristic of nature. Do not refer to it as the hallmark of men. The Supreme *Atma* (*Param-atma*) is the one and only Soul (*Purusha*). Nature (*prakriti*) is all divine energy (*sakthi*), feminine. You are all not men (*purushas*), remember.

**Devotee:** But Swami, there is that distinction in nature; how is it correct to say that all are feminine?

**Swami:** You may imagine it to be so, guided by your natural reason, but the reality is not that. All this is just secular experience—temporal, temporary. These are not the basic truth. This is simply play-acting; mere impersonation. In some plays, men take the role of women, and sometimes women enact the role of men. Are they therefore men? In the drama nature (*prakriti*), all the actors are feminine, though there may be men roles too.

The genuine Supreme Soul (*Purusha*) is only one, that is Siva, the *Atma*. The *Atma* is immanent in everyone, but for this reason alone, all cannot be deemed masculine. The nature theatre is like a girls' school where all the roles of the play are taken up by girls. Divine energy (*sakthi*), which is feminine, puts on all these parts. But don't take the drama as real, my dear fellow.

**Devotee:** Swami, even after hearing all this, the nature of the world remains an enigma to me. When one side is seen, it strikes me as real; when the other side is presented, it strikes me as unreal. Nothing is definite.

**Swami:** That is exactly the nature of the mixture of truth and falsehood (*mithya*). It means that the world is neither truth nor untruth (*sathya* nor *a-sathya*); it is real as well as unreal. You are born in truth-untruth (*mithya*). You are enmeshed in it, so you can't distinguish this from that, the truth from the untruth.

**Devotee:** Then setting aside this discussion of truth-untruth, tell me something, Swami, about that Truth (*sathya*), that Supreme Soul (*Purusha*), whoever He is.

**Swami:** The Supreme Soul has neither birth nor death; He undergoes no change. He is the embodiment of consciousness (*chith-swarupa*), the embodiment of spiritual wisdom (*jnana-swarupa*). Codes of social conduct (*dharma*) are not of His nature, so He is not the embodiment of *dharma* (*dharma-swarupa*). The wisdom that is His nature does not change; it is not corrected or supplemented from time to time; it is eternal wisdom. Light is its nature, so it does not admit of a dot of darkness. The sun does not have effulgence added to it from the world it illumines; it emits splendour whether or not there are worlds.

The Supreme Soul (*Purusha*) is self-luminous. He is always the object of knowledge; He cognises all activities or mutations of the consciousness (*chittha*). He is modificationless, unevolved. The consciousness changes and evolves; it changes and evolves. The Supreme Soul is sentience itself; He is not affected by apprehension or non-apprehension. No activity can affect Him. Even when unmanifested, effulgence is His nature.

The seed in the soil grows into a tree, and the tree is the manifested form of the seed. This change from seed to tree and tree to seed shows that the power (*sakthi*) in the seed has activity. This is change. But the Supreme Soul (*Purusha*) is unchanging, unaffected; He is the See-er. He is completely apart from nature (*prakriti*). No deed can diminish His glory or exhaust His personality.

**Devotee:** Then which is nature (*prakriti*)? Who is Supreme Soul (*Purusha*)?

**Swami:** The principle behind the Seen is nature; the principle behind the see-er is the Supreme Soul. The root cause has no root, it is said; Causeless, both nature and Supreme Soul have no beginning.

**Devotee:** Then this objective world (*samsara*) should also be beginningless, shouldn't it, Swami? It resulted from the union of the two.

**Swami:** That union is the result of delusion; prompted by delusion, it produces delusion again. That is the law of the seed and the tree.

**Devotee:** Union means what, Swami? What is the condition?

**Swami:** Union is the reflection of the Supreme Soul (*Purusha*) in the three qualities (*gunas*), which evolve from nature (*prakriti*). Here is an example. The Sun is not water, and water is not Sun. Still, by their juxtaposition, reflection is produced. The image has the characteristic neither of the Sun nor of water. Nor can it be said that it is devoid of these. When the water is agitated, the image also gets agitated. The image also shines a little. Again, the magnet is distinct from the iron, but when the two are brought near, the magnet affects the iron and makes it

similar to itself. This is the relationship called union (*samyoga*).

**Devotee:** Of these, which is the real Supreme Soul and which is the active Supreme Soul? Please tell me.

**Swami:** Didn't I speak of the Sun and the image? The image-soul (image-*Purusha*) is the doer, the enjoyer, the experiencer. The original, the Supreme Person is unaffected. He is the non-doer, the non-experiencer. Therefore, the image-soul is known as the changing-soul or the acceptor. The Supreme Person is the True, the Eternal, the Real, the embodiment of *Atma* (*Atmaswarupa*). The Acceptor is the knower and, by the act of knowing, has undergone modification.

**Devotee:** Right, Swami. Wonderful. How many books one should have conned in order to know all this! And, even then, to grasp the meaning is so hard. I have now known that the Supreme Soul (*Purusha*) is not in the world, that all this is merely a drama, the highest *Atma* (*Param-atma*) being the One Supreme Soul. To attain Him, everything in nature (*prakriti*) is striving; this is probably what is spoken of as Siva-Sakthi. Fine, Fine.

**Swami:** You are right. It is also referred to as soul-*Brahma* (*jiva-Brahma*) union. Everyone must strive for this union. The soul can't exist alone; spiritual exercise for liberation has to be done, willy-nilly, by every living thing. Without it, there can be no peace.

**Devotee:** What does *moksha* mean exactly, Swami? And what is *mukthi*?

**Swami:** Both mean the same. That which is burdened with the mind (*manas*) is the soul (*jivi*); when the mind and the name and body from out of which it spins its substance are destroyed, then the soul attains liberation (*moksha*). Then it becomes one with *Brahman*; that is liberation. When the Ganga or the Godavari rivers reach the sea, their separate names, forms, tastes, and limits all disappear and they acquire the name, form, taste, and limit of the sea itself.

Until a soul (*jiva*) attains the end of the mind, it bears the name, body, and taste of delusion, my-ness, and I-ness. When the soul nears the sea, these characteristics begin to disappear slowly; when the qualities (*gunas*) as well as the mutations of the mind are destroyed, then one can say that union has been accomplished with *Brahman*. How can the Ganga that has merged with the ocean be sweet? If it is said that one has merged in *Brahman*, one should have neither the three qualities nor any taste of mind. Such full union is known as ... liberation.

**Devotee:** O, how grand, Swami. Bless everyone to attain that union; then the world will really be happy.

**Swami:** What? Such blessing would go against the freedom with which you are endowed. Take up the spiritual exercise prescribed for winning that blessing and gain the blessing by effort—that is the way. It is not something that is given away. You do not pray to the Sun to make the rays fall on you, do you? Shining is His nature; He is doing it always. Remove the obstacles between you and the sun and the rays are on you. So too, when you keep the obstacles of delusion, my-ness, and I-ness between you and the rays of grace, what is the use of complaining that they don't fall on you? What can the rays do?

**Devotee:** That is as good as saying that we must remove all traces of I-ness and my-ness from our minds.

**Swami:** Why do you say, "As good as saying?" I say it emphatically, over and over again. If you seek the rays of grace, try to remove the obstacles. Remember, even if you don't strive for it now, you will feel the urge sometime later. You can't escape that urge. It has to happen some day, this shuffling off the coils of delusion. Why postpone the day of joy, the day of liberation? Strive for this from this very day, nay, this very minute.

You may leave now, my boy. But come again.

I must tell you one more thing. Don't go to extremes; be steady; be patient.