

9. The Primal Cause

LIVING implies the operation in the individual of the life principle that activates all beings. The attributeless Divine assumes certain qualities as Its nature and becomes *saguna*. The individual thus formed seeks to know and experience the variety of names and forms that are exposed to Its senses of perception and its mind. This is, in short, the process of living, the project of "knowing", of expanding one's awareness. The process has a beginning and an end, it involves success and failure, good and evil.

"I am *Jivi*, a live individual", "I am a spark of Consciousness", "I am embodied *Atma*"--declarations such as these do not reveal a knowledge of the life-principle. The *Jivi* is Divine Consciousness, installed in a chariot. It is not a bundle of inert stuff moulded into a form and labelled with a name. There is only One all-pervading Consciousness but man experiences It in fragments and, mistaking It as Many, he gropes in the confusion caused by his own ignorance.

Many scriptures instruct men the truth that God dwells in his body along with the *Jivi*, God inducing him to aspire for the heights and the self advising him to be content with the low. The *Jivi* has faith in the reality of the world and of itself. The Divine Principle, on the other hand, asserts that It is present, both close to man as well as far from him. The fact is, people feel It is far, because they are not aware of Its being near, nay, in their own hearts. The Truth that the scriptures teach is, that God is everywhere, near and far, above and below, inside and outside. God is One, indivisible, omnipresent.

Four categories of wakefulness

In order to awaken to this truth, one has to attain higher levels of wakefulness. Indeed, there are four such levels. The first is, the apparently wakeful attentiveness with which we move about and busy ourselves everyday. We are very much like others, alert and aware, when thus awake. But, Vedanta reveals four categories of wakefulness: the fully awake, the wakefulness of mind only--as while dreaming, the wakefulness of the self alone--as in deep sleep, and the illumination of the self awakening into the Over-self. These are named *Sthoola Sookshma*, *Kaarana* and *Mahakaarana* (The Gross, the Subtle, the Causal and the Super-cause).

The gross body that is activated in the waking stage is the composite of many items--the five senses of perception, the five senses of action, the five inner instruments, the five elements in creation, the five vital airs and the self--26 in all. This is the *Jagrath* stage, wakefulness. The subtle body that dreams has only five vital airs, the five senses of perception, and five fundamental elements--fifteen items in all as the *Sookshma* (the subtle), the *Yaathana* vehicle which according to Vedanta, undergoes the consequences of good deeds and bad.

Brahman eludes all the three bodies

Kaarana (Causal) body is the third. It possesses only one nature, namely, *Prajna* (consciousness), pure and unmixed with the subjective and objective worlds. Since the *Sthoola* (gross) body is fully invoked with the objective world, the *Viswa* it is called *Viswa*; the *sookshma* body or the dream body is illumined by the mind and the *Tejas* (inner light) and so it is called *Tejas*; the body in the deep sleep stage, when it is latent in the cause, subsumed in the Consciousness, is called *Prajna*. The truth, namely, Brahman, eludes all these three bodies. They are all invoked in *bhrama* (illusion), not in Brahman, the Absolute. What appears true in the dream is falsified when one awakes; what one experiences while awake is distorted and devalued

in dreams; sleep wipes out of memory both the dream-world and the wakefulness-world. The awareness that survives these three passing stages is the *Maha Kaarana*, the Super conscious.

The Super or Supreme Consciousness is the Thought that became all this--the *Hiranyagarbha* the Golden Womb, the primal urge, the first concretisation, Easwara. When Being "thought," it became the Many, or rather, it put on the appearance of Many. The *Maha Kaarana*, is *beyond* Consciousness; the *Sthoola*, *Sookshma* and the *Kaarana* bodies into which it proliferated are *beneath* Consciousness. The former is true knowledge (*eruka* in Telugu). The latter is illusory experience (*marupu* in Telugu). God is the Lord of *eruka*, the *Jivi* is the slave of *marupu* (forgetting).

The One appears to the split vision as two

The Maha Kaarana the Cosmic Consciousness, is often denoted as "*Param*" (beyond), in Vedanta; since the concept is obviously contentless, it does not arise and fade; nor does it originate and disappear. It has no name and form, for it cannot be defined or limited or identified as separate. It is understood as *Brah-man*--the unmoving, immovable Totality (*Poorna*), the Eternal, the True, the Pure, the Attributeless. Just as the unmoving road enables the car to move along it, the Brahma principle is the basis for the existence and activities of *Jivi*.

In fact, there is only One. The One appears to the split vision as two. Look outward! It is *Jivi*. Look inward, it is God. The outer vision makes you forget; the inner makes you remember. When man seeks to rise to the divinity which is his reality, he is remembering, struggling to know and experience. When he grovels in the lower levels of consciousness and is entangled in disease, he is caught in the coils of forgetfulness. Removing selfish desires and expanding one's urge to love and serve are the most effective means to succeed in merging with Supreme Consciousness, the Primal Cause, the Cosmic Thought, the *Maha Kaarana*.

Discourse at Prashaanthi Nilayam, on 22-3-1985.