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The Nature Of Prakruthi

Just as water is needed to make a pot out of dry mud, the combination of Siva and Sakthi is necessary for the creation to come into being.

Embodiments of the Divine Atma!

Purusha and *prakruthi* are the two eternal entities involved in creation. *Purusha*, the masculine entity, is imperishable and permanent; *prakruthi*, the feminine entity, is perishable and impermanent. While *Purusha* is the eternal reality of Divinity or the Cosmic Witness, *prakruthi* or primal matter, is given a motherly connotation. Thus Prakruthi is also referred to as *Bhu Matha* (mother earth), *Loka Matha* (mother of the world), *Jagan Matha* (mother of creation), and *Vishwa Matha* (mother of the universe). Likewise, *Prana Natha* (Lord of life), *Loka Natha* (Lord

of the world), *Jagan Natha* (Lord of the creation), and *Vishwa Natha* (Lord of the universe) are the various names given to the masculine entity—*Purusha*.

In order to understand *prakruthi*, we must know the essence of femininity. *Stri* in Sanskrit means woman. This word *stri* consists of “*Sa*” which stands for *sathwa guna* (purity); “*ta*” which stands for *thamo guna* (inertia) and “*ra*” which stands for *rajo guna* (activity). The essence of femininity, thus, is the conglomeration of these three *gunas*: the *sathwic*, the *rajasic*, and the *thamasic*.

Politeness, humility and forbearance are *sathwic* qualities; shyness, fear, and indolence are *thamasic* qualities; and aggressiveness, wilfulness, and envy are *rajasic* qualities. Generally, *sathwic* and *thamasic* qualities are found to be predominant in women.

Abala or lack of strength is believed to characterise women. They are considered to be timid and capable of performing only the household chores. They are disqualified from performing *yajnas* and *yagas* except when they do so along with their husbands.

However, the converse is also true. For instance, a householder in the *grihasthashrama* (period of domestic life) who is supposed to perform several *yajnas* and *yagas* cannot do so in the absence of his wife. Rama, in the absence of Sita, had to make a golden idol of the latter, as her substitute, when he undertook the

performance of the *sswamedha yaga*. Similarly, Sathya Harischandra was permitted to gift away his kingdom to Viswamitra only when the former's consort, Chandramati, was physically present by his side. Thus, the characteristic of weakness (*abala*) attributed to women is equally applicable in the case of men. Men and women are both the conglomeration of their *gunas*—*sathwa*, *rajas* and *thamas*—and are subject to the universal laws of *prakruthi* (nature). Viewed from the point of view of creation, both are essentially feminine in their attributes. All creatures suffer from some weakness or the other. When in distress, both men and women cry. Joy and sorrow are common to both. It is improper then to say that women are weak and men are strong.

Moreover, history is replete with instances when women have proved their heroism and valour. Anasuya made Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara little babes and lulled them to sleep in a cradle. Sumati caused the sun not to rise in order to ward off the curse on her husband that he would die at daybreak. Savitri vanquished Yama, the Lord of death and resurrected her dead husband Sathyavan. Madalasa proved her spiritual status and intellectual genius by imparting spiritual knowledge to her sons; and Sulabha defeated Yajnavalkya in philosophical disputation. How then can we call women *abalas* or weak beings? In fact, the *Upanishads*, the *Ramayana*, and the *Mahabharatha* have portrayed

women as *sabalas* or those endowed with strength and courage.

The world is a stage in which every individual is an actor. However, the forms and names of the actors change according to the environment, conditions and circumstances. The *Bhagavad Gita* proclaims that the divine essence of the *Atma* is the same, although forms and names may vary.

“*Ekam Sath viprah bahudhavadanti*”—the One becomes the many. Unity ramifies itself into diversity. The vessel containing water may be made of brass, copper, silver, gold or any other metal, but the sun's reflection is seen in the water with equal brilliance. Similarly, the same divinity is embodied in all creatures.

Prakruthi or nature is the vestment of *Purusha*, the primary principle. The bounties of nature should be enjoyed only with the benediction of *Paramatma*. The miserable fate of Ravana who carried Sita away to the extreme displeasure of Rama, is well known. People with limitless desires cannot recognise the essence of the *Atma*. Man can gain an insight into the nature of the *Atma* only when he burns his desires in the fire of wisdom.

There are four *Ashramas* or periods in life—*brahmacharya* (life as a celibate), *grihastha* (life as a householder), *vanaprastha* (life as a recluse), and *sanyasa* (life as an ascetic). There are also four goals in

life—*dharma* (righteous living), *artha* (material well-being), *kama* (achievement of desires), and *moksha* (ultimate liberation). These four can be grouped in pairs. While *artha* and *kama* thrive in modern times, *dharma* and *moksha* have almost disappeared. Modern man craves for wealth and sensual pleasures and neglects righteousness and salvation. Since *dharma* and *moksha* are like the feet and the head of a body, man today seems to be existing without these two essential organs. These four values of life should instead be grouped as *dharma-artha* and *kama-moksha*. In other words, wealth should be acquired for the sake of righteous living, and man should aspire only for liberation. Only such a judicious combination of these four goals shall enable man to find fulfilment in life.

In *grihasthasrama*, the householder is engaged in the pursuit of wealth and fame. In this stage of domestic life, the lady of the house should play the role of the “Goddess of Wealth” by being the custodian of her husband’s earnings, and as women are acknowledged to do, spend the money judiciously and wisely.

People who look down upon women and hold them in contempt fail to appreciate their nobility. “Men might have learnt much and seen much, yet they are the servants of their wives”, said Thyagaraja. Vice-chancellors who control thousands of students and police officials who protect the public are often found being afraid of their wives at home! Every individual

has to submit to *prakruthi*, the feminine aspect of the universe. *Sakthi* is the essence of feminine energy, which man cannot afford to ignore. The *Bhagavad Gita* has repeatedly stressed the element of femininity in the universe.

“*Sarvajiva namaskaram Kesavam pratigacchathi*”—obeisance to all creatures is obeisance to God. “*Sarvajiva tiraskaram Kesavam pratigacchathi*”—contempt of all creatures is contempt of God. Our scriptures repeatedly affirm that God dwells in every being and that He can be realised here and now. He is within the reach of all. *Prakruthi* is like a *kshetra* or field and *Paramatma* is the *kshetrajna* or the Lord of the field. *Kshetrajna* contains in Himself the *kshetra*. If from the word *kshetrajna* we remove the word *kshetra*, the syllable *jna* remains. *Jna* stands for *jnana* or wisdom. Thus, a person who is a part of *prakruthi* becomes its master by acquiring *jnana* and cognises the eternal reality of the *Purusha*. He realises that the universe is a combination of the *kshara* (destructible) and the *Akshara* (indestructible). He sees the indestructible as immanent even in the destructible world. He develops *ananya bhakthi* or one-pointed devotion. He transcends the man-made barriers of caste, creed and religion. He becomes dear to God.