

6. Atma And Brahman Are Identical With Each Other

Being the tiniest among the tiny particles, and being the biggest amongst the infinitely large things, and being present and recognised as a witness to all the living and the non-living things in the creation, Atma is identical with Brahman and Brahman is identical with Atma.

Pavitratma Swarupas:

You cannot ascribe a time for *Atma* to come or go and thus place limitations on it. It is permanently present everywhere, and it has neither good qualities nor bad qualities. It is present as the smallest thing in the small things and as the biggest thing in the infinitely large things.

Like the burning power of the fire and the shining strength of the sun, *Atma* is all-knowing. It has no sorrow, it has no attachment, it has no special feeling like any of the five senses which man experiences. It is present in all living things. It endows all living beings with an amount of wisdom called *pragnana*.

Atma is not visible from outside. *Atma* is neither visible nor invisible. It has no special form attached to itself. It is all-pervading. This cannot be something which is either seen or not seen, either experienced or not experienced. It is something which is neither manifested nor unmanifested. It is above all this and beyond all description or even comprehension.

Atma cannot be what we can hear with our ears; what we can feel with any of our sensory organs. These can only be a means or instruments, in a limited sense, for understanding the *Atma*.

As we can experience the presence of matter with our sensory organs, the body is experiencing all the creation around it with its senses. Like the lamp which helps one to find out things, functioning as an ancillary instrument, so also all the organs help the body to experience the surroundings.

It is not right to describe this body, which in that manner depends upon various ancillary instruments, as *Atma*. We now recognise that the mind, the intelligence, the body, the *chitta* and the *Antha Karana* are all distinct from the *Atma*. Intelligence has been given a special position, a position which is higher than those of the senses.

Here is something which can be called a clear piece of glass or stone. It is incapable of self-luminescence. Since it has no shining or effulgence of its own, it can shine only when it is close to light. In a similar manner, effulgence is natural to *Atma*, and when the intelligence is close to it, it acquires the capacity to shine; otherwise we see that intelligence has no shining in it.

Moon does not shine by itself. The rays of the sun fall on the moon and the moon shines by reflection. In the same manner, intelligence is not self-effulgent. As the knife can take sharpness with it, so also the knife of intelligence can take sharpness with it. Thus intelligence is also an instrument and the sharpness, which it gets, also goes with the instrument. In that context also, we cannot identify *Atma* with the body or the senses.

In order that we may discover and understand *Atma*, this container, the human body, can become instrumental and can be helpful.

We can control the desires, which arise out of the sensory organs which are present in the body, by exercising and disciplining the mind.

Prema Swarupas:

In the very first instance we should try to understand the nature and attitude of the mind. Many times, I have explained this to you. This is a door and there is a lock on the door. To open the lock on the door, we put the key inside the lock. If we turn the key towards the right, the lock opens. If we turn the key towards the left, the lock gets locked. In the same manner, our heart can be compared to a lock. Our mind is like the key. If we put the key of our mind in the lock of the heart and turn it towards *Paramatma*, we get detachment; if we turn it towards the world, we get attachment. We should, in that context, make an attempt to put the key of our mind in the lock of our heart and by using our intelligence turn the key towards *Paramatma*.

There is no doubt whatsoever that even by remaining a part and parcel of this creation, we can experience the divinity in our heart. And as we mentioned earlier, if we get a tree, the fruits from the tree are important. While the fruits on a tree are important, in order to get such fruits we have to protect the tree, the leaves and the branches. In a similar manner, the *Atma* is most important for us, but we have to protect the body and the sensory organs which help us to recognise the *Atma*. In this tree of creation, what is it that we are looking for? We are looking for the fruits of liberation or *moksha*. In this tree, as

well, there are so many branches and leaves in the form of our relations and attachments. The leaves which are the ideas are present in a large number on the tree. Our thoughts and our desires are like the flowers that blossom on the tree. On the same tree is also the fruit of liberation or *moksha*. If we really want to get this fruit of *moksha*, we can do so only if we protect the leaves and the branches as well. However, this is not enough.

While having the desire to reach the fruit which is visible on the tree, what we have to do is to take care of the invisible roots of the tree and we have to water these invisible roots. These roots, which are invisible, can be compared with our faith and our belief in the *Atma*. On the roots of faith in this *Atma* is based the entire tree with all its leaves and branches. It is only when we undertake to water the roots and protect the tree, will we be able to get the fruit of *moksha*.

The sweet *rasa*, or the juice that can be extracted out of the fruit of *moksha*, is our character. If this juice of character and the faith, which is the root of the tree, are not present, then the tree becomes useless. Young people, if this faith does not exist in the form of roots, if the character does not exist in the form of juice, then it is no longer a tree; it is as bad as firewood. The first thing we must do is to promote our faith in *Atma*, faith in one's own self, and then we must try and reach the fruit of liberation.

Lakshmana, Bharatha and Satrughna regarded this as important. Faith in *Atma* is identical with faith in Rama, and is identical with faith in *Brahman*.

In the story of *Ramayana*, just as Lakshmana was closely following Rama, so also Satrughna was closely

following Bharatha. Such was the inseparable connection that existed between Bharatha and Satrughna. If Rama was not present, Lakshmana would not be happy at all. In the same manner, if Bharatha was not present for a moment, Satrughna would be in great sorrow.

Like Lakshmana, Satrughna was also easily excited. When Satrughna saw Manthara, his anger was so much that he caught hold of her hair and pulled her towards Bharatha. Satrughna was prepared to kill Manthara. On that occasion, Bharatha advised Satrughna that if he wants to get the grace of Rama, he should refrain from doing such harsh things. Bharatha said: "Could I not have punished my mother for her guilt? But if Rama comes to know that we have been cruel to our own mothers, he would send us away and would not show grace to us."

We should see here that Bharatha and Satrughna were prepared to cause hurt and harm to their own mothers, but they were not prepared to displease Rama by their acts.

Bharatha and Satrughna were always following Rama because Rama was the embodiment of *dharma* and they were always wanting to please Him and earn His grace. Rama, Lakshmana, Bharatha and Satrughna were the embodiments of the four great qualities of *sathya*, *dharma*, *shanthi* and *prema*.

In order to experience *prema*, man goes about searching for several methods. If we really want to experience *prema* we have got to understand what peace or *shanthi* means. If we want to follow the path of peace, we will have to accept the path of *dharma*. If we want to follow the path of *dharma*, we will have to accept the path of truth. Here is a small example. Let us take *prema* as the shining light. If we want to

experience this shining light, we should have a bulb. If we want the bulb to glow and experience the shining light, we should have a connection to the bulb. By just a connection of wire to the bulb, the bulb is not going to glow. In that wire, we should have an electric current. Here we see that the electric current can be compared to the truth, the wire can be compared to *dharma* while the bulb can be compared to *shanthi* or peace. If we have all these three things, then only we will get *prema*, the light. We may have a good new bulb, we may have a wire, are we going to get light out of that? Unless there is current inside the wire, we cannot get the bulb to glow.

That is how Bharatha and Satrughna were following Rama and Lakshmana and were demonstrating their ideals in life to the people. In this manner, when Rama became the King and when Bharatha was the Prince and while the kingdom was being happily ruled and after all the *rakshasas* in Lanka were destroyed, a very powerful son of Ravana by name Lavanasura was still alive. Lavanasura was the eldest son of Ravana. He had the grace of Shiva. He had acquired the *Trisula* from Shiva. Depending upon the power of his *Trisula*, Lavanasura was giving a lot of trouble to the *rishis* and other good people.

The *rishis* could no longer bear the atrocities committed by Lavanasura, and they came running to Rama and begged Him to protect them and kill Lavan-asura. Rama knew that this kind of prayer from *rishis* would come. He looked at Satrughna who willingly accepted to go and destroy the enemies. Satrughna was a very strong person and had many good qualities. Devotion and faith were his strong points, but unfortunately, in *Ramayana*, Satrughna's qualities were not described to the people in a prominent manner. As soon as this was known to Satrughna, he went and touched the feet of Rama. He told Rama that by His grace, he could undertake the

task and destroy the enemies. Rama knew very well that Satrughna was a powerful person and so he smilingly blessed Satrughna. Not only this, Rama explained to Satrughna the secret of the weapon, *Trisula*.

He told Satrughna that the *Trisula* was present in the house of this *rakshasa*. Every morning this *rakshasa* goes to the forest to gather food which primarily consisted of meat. Rama advised that the *rakshasa* must be killed before he returns home and begins to eat his meal. In this manner, having obeyed Rama's orders and having secured the blessings of Rama, Satrughna started. Overnight he rested in Valmiki's *Ashram*. It may be regarded as his special fortune that in Valmiki's *Ashram*, Sita had just at that time given birth to Lava and Kusha.

Satrughna saw Sita and the two children. But in his mind, he thought that this news should not be conveyed to Rama as he felt that it was not proper and kept it a secret. As soon as he left, he thought of Sita and Rama in his own mind and went to face Lavan-asura, the *rakshasa*. In the forest; he fought Lavan-asura and destroyed him.

After destroying Lavanasura, he returned to Rama, touched his feet, and expressed his desire to spend the rest of his life at the feet of Rama. Rama did not agree to that. Rama said that he should become the king of the area that Lavanasura was ruling earlier.

For twelve years he ruled over the kingdom of Lavanasura in a manner that was giving great happiness to the people, the *rishis* and other inhabitants. Satrughna was unable to bear the separation from Rama for a longer period, and he was returning to Ayodhya.

Thus, while returning to Ayodhya, he again spent one night in the *ashram* of Valmiki. By this time, Lava and Kusha were twelve years old and Valmiki made these two boys, Lava and Kusha, sing the *Ramayana* in a most attractive manner. When Satrughna was listening to the songs recited by the two children, he forgot himself in that happiness. He was in such an ecstasy that he looked at Lava and Kusha with great pleasure. He could not believe that he was Satrughna. He behaved as if he was not connected with them and returned to Ayodhya.

After returning to Ayodhya he described to Rama the great peace that he experienced in Valmiki's *Ashram*. In spite of the fact that Rama was in a human form, He was all-knowing. He knew everything. He also enjoyed and experienced the narration of Satrughna. But he told Satrughna that he should not speak about this secret in Ayodhya just at that moment.

Every act of an *Avathar* has to be taken into consideration in the context of the situation and the time and the happenings at the time in which the *Avathar* lives.

All the *rishis* knew that Rama was an *Avathar* of God; but in order that the story of *Ramayana* may progress, they did not give this secret out to others. Vishwamithra knew very well that Rama was an *Avathar*. Bharadwaja and Vasishta also knew very well that Rama was an *Avathar*. But if they gave out the truth, then the main purpose for which Rama had become an *Avathar* would not be achieved. In the same manner, it is not possible for any *Avathar* to proclaim to the world that the *Avathar* is come, and, if so, for what purpose. That is the *maya* of God.

Yasoda, the mother, even after she had the vision of all creation in the open mouth of Lord Krishna, yet on account of *maya* she forgot the divine vision and she began to think that she was the mother and that Krishna was her son. In the same manner, Vasishtha, Vishwamithra and all other *rishis* kept the secret of Rama. But when they were alone and when they got together, they were singing the glory of Rama amongst themselves. When the *rishis* were sitting alone, amongst themselves they used to describe the qualities of the Lord and they said, “Can we understand you, Oh Lord? Can we explain what you are, Oh Lord? You are smaller than the smallest thing, you are larger than the largest thing, you are present in all the 84 lakhs of different living *jivas*. How can we understand you and explain to others what you are?”

Man is steeped in *maya* in this manner and he cannot free himself from *maya*. He forgets his origin and he does not understand *Brahman*. However, if this situation does not exist, there is no reason why *Paramatma* should come as an *Avathar* at all. What exists as a reality is only one, but what we see is mani-fold. This one thing appears to us as if it is many. What is real is the *Param Jyothi*. This *Param Jyothi* is the *Atma Jyothi*. There is a small illustration for this.

We have a candle light here. We cover this candle light with a pot which has ten holes in it. On this we also put a thick Turkish towel. In that situation, the light that is inside the pot is not seen at all from outside. But if, slowly, we take off the towel with which we have covered the pot, uncovering each hole one by one, then we can see one light, another light, as the holes come out one by one. But if we remove the towel completely and throw it away, we look at ten different holes, and ten different candle lights. In spite of the fact that we can see ten different lights, if at that time we break the pot and

throw it away, then we realise that all these ten lights are only from one single candle. Earlier we did not see any light, but once when the cover on the pot has been removed, we have seen ten lights. If the pot is broken, then we again see one light. This is the basis of your life. There is inside, as we all can see, the *Jivan Jyothi* or *Param Jyothi*. The *Jivan Jyothi* has been covered by the human body with ten holes in it. We have put the thick cover of worldly desires on it. If the desires of the human body should be broken, then we will have the vision of the one *Jyothi*, i.e., *Atma Jyothi*. That has also been called the *Adwaita Jyothi*. This *Adwaita Jyothi* is the *Jyothi* of the *Atma*. *Atma* is the embodiment of bliss. You can only experience the embodiment of bliss, and it is not possible to exhibit it in any other manner.

Many people have tried their best to find whether this *Atma* exists. If it exists, where could it be found? Since time immemorial, it has been the attempt to find out one's *Atma* and to know what *Atma* is and where it is? What is the evidence for us to accept the existence of the *Atma*?

To establish the existence of the *Atma*, we cannot take even the *Vedas* as the *pramana*. The *Vedas* have only dealt with people in certain aspects relating to the world, and have explained what they should do in this world through various *karmas*. This is the subject matter of the *Vedas*. It has not been possible for the *Vedas* to establish the nature of the *Atma*.

Here is a small story. In *Ramayana*, Sita, Rama and Lakshmana went to the *ashram* of Bharadwaja. In that *ashram*, following the ancient practice, the women, the *rishipatnis*, were sitting on one side; the men, the *rishis*, were sitting on the other side. Unlike the manner in which people sit together nowadays, when Sita, Rama and Lakshmana entered the

ashram, Sita went and joined the women and Rama and Lakshmana went and joined the *rishis*. As Rama and Lakshmana lived in the forest, they were wearing clothes suitable to life in a forest; and their shining faces were similar to those of the *rishis*. The situation was such that they were not able to make out who was Rama and who was Lakshmana. On the other hand, Sita could be recognised easily. Sita was alone and the *rishipatnis* recognised her and began talking to her. They were asking questions about her life in the forest. The men, on the other hand, went on explaining the *Vedas* and the discussions centred round the *Vedas*.

On the other hand, the women began asking questions and whispering. They came to Sita and asked her, "Has your husband also come with you?" Sita replied, "Yes, I cannot come alone, I cannot live without Him. He has come along with me and He is sitting along with the *rishis*." The second question which was asked of Sita was, "Who is your husband? Can you find him out among so many of the *rishis*?" Sita was a very noble and modest woman, and could not stand up in the midst of all those present and point to her husband and say who her husband was. She simply bowed her head down and kept quiet. Even then the women did not keep quiet. They began asking more questions such as: is that man, wearing such and such clothes, your husband? Is that man, who is having a peculiar hair style, your husband? The women started pointing at several of them and asking Sita if any one of them was her husband. But whenever a wrong person was shown, she would reply in the negative. Locating *Atma* should proceed in this manner.

Today, many young people may have the ambition that they should get a wife like Sita. A young man, who wants to have a wife like Sita, should make an attempt to be like Rama.

If he behaves like Ravana, he will not deserve a wife like Sita. If a girl wants to have a husband like Rama, she should endeavour to be like Sita. If she is like Surpanakha, how is she going to deserve a Rama? So, in every family, the husband should be like Rama and the wife should be like Sita. If one will assist the other, at times of difficulties as well as at times of pleasure, like Rama and Sita, they will be happy indeed.