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MĀYĀ'S RELATION TO THE
JĪVA & PARAMĀTMĀ

LESSON 18, TEXTS 82-92: MĀYĀ'S RELATION TO THE JĪVA & PARAMĀTMĀ

- Thematic discussion point of this section is the Jīva's bondage and release from Māyā. Furthermore, the universe is not a creation of the Jīva's ignorance, as per the Māyāvāda doctrine. Rather, it is a manifestation of the extrinsic potency of Paramātmā.
- There is no necessity for the Jīva's enlightenment by its release from Māyā. What is required of the Jīva is that he must give up his identification with the universe as an object of separate enjoyment. This is possible by understanding the misidentification between the ātmā and the phenomenal "I"-consciousness, or ahaṅkāra, which is a product of Māyā.

TEXTS 82-84: THE JĪVA IS COVERED BY MĀYĀ, BUT REALIZATION OF PARAMĀTMĀ ALONE CAN LIBERATE THE JĪVA, AND THAT IS THE ULTIMATE DISSOLUTION

- Vidura asks Maitreya Muni about how the bondage of the Jīva can be possible at all, when the latter is superior to Māyā. Śuka instructs:

यथा धनोऽर्कप्रभवोऽर्कदर्शितो ह्यर्काशभूतस्य च चक्षुषस्तमः।

एवं त्वहं ब्रह्मगुणस्तदीक्षितो ब्रह्मांशकस्यात्मन आत्मबन्धनः॥

- “Just as a dense cloud, though generated by the heat of the sun and made visible by the light of the sun, obstructs the eye—which is a part of the sun—from beholding the sun, so the ego, which is an attribute of Brahman [ब्रह्मगुण] and illumined by it [तद-ईक्षितो], obstructs the individual ātmā—which is an integral part of Brahman—from realizing Brahman.” [12.4.32]

- The sun can perform contrary functions—both revealing and covering. Clouds are produced by the heat of the sun, and they cover the vision of our eyes, which are also the energy of the sun. The clouds covers the object, whereas sunlight reveals it, although both are the energies of the same sun.
- When, however, the clouds are dispersed by the wind, the sun is then directly revealed. Similarly, when one gives up identification with phenomenal “I”-consciousness, which is rooted in our separate desire for enjoyment, and embraces one’s true self-identity as a servant of Paramātmā, immediate awareness of Paramātmā comes to light.

- JīvaG continues to refute vivarta-vāda by referring to Śuka, who explains further with the same analogy that the removal of such misidentification does not happen automatically or by one's own effort, but only by inquiry into Paramātmā and thru His influence:

धनो यदार्कप्रभवो विदिर्यते चक्षुः स्वरूपं रविमीक्षते तदा।

यदा ह्यहङ्कार उपाधिरात्मनो जिज्ञासया नश्यति तर्ह्यनुस्मरेत्॥

- “As soon as the cloud generated by the sun is scattered, the eye sees both its own nature as well as the sun. Similarly, when the self's adjunct [उपाधि] of phenomenal “I”-consciousness [अहङ्कार] is destroyed [नश्यति] by inquiry [जिज्ञासया] into Paramātmā, the self becomes fixed in remembrance [तर्ह्यनुस्मरेत्; of its own essential nature and of Paramātmā].” [12.4.33]
- In our conditioned state, we have no power to free ourselves, even upon being enlightened because knowledge is also part of Māyā, namely the sattva-guṇa. The problem is with the level of अहङ्कार, which is above the mind and intelligence.

- Śuka concludes his instructions:

यदैवमेतेन विवेकहेतिना मायामयाहङ्करणात्मबन्धनम्।

छित्वाच्युतात्मानुभवोऽवतिष्ठते तमाहुरात्यन्तिकमङ्गः सम्प्लवम्॥

- “When in this manner, the bondage of the self, brought about by the phenomenal ego that is a product of Māyā, has been cut with this sword of discrimination, and one becomes situated in immediate realization of the infallible Paramātmā, that state, O dear King, is called ultimate dissolution.”
- The pronoun, etena (by this) refers to the weapon of discrimination [between the intrinsic “I”-consciousness and the phenomenal अहङ्कार].
- मायामय [a product of Māyā] is an adjective of the phenomenal “I”-consciousness, अहङ्कार, used to differentiate it from the intrinsic “I”-consciousness that is part of the Jīva’s own true nature.
- The verb अवतिष्ठते means that one becomes situated in one’s own intrinsic identity.

TEXTS 85-89: HOW CAN THE NIRGUṆA PARAMĀTMĀ ASSOCIATE WITH THE GUṆAS? HOW CAN THE JĪVA BE DELUDED? WHY IS PARAMĀTMĀ NOT INFLUENCED BY MĀYĀ?

- Paramātmā enacts the work of creation, and so on, of the universe thru His natural Māyā potency, and only the Jīva is deluded by it. The doubt in this regard is removed in 8 verses containing Vidura's Qs and Maitreya's answers to them [3.7.2-11]

ब्रह्मन् कथं भगवतश्चिन्मात्रस्याविकारिणः ।
लीलया चापि युज्येरन् निर्गुणस्य गुणाः क्रियाः ॥

- [Vidura asked:] “O Brāhmaṇa, how can Bhagavān, who is conscious alone (चिन-मात्रस्य), immutable (अविकारिणः), and free of the guṇas (निर्गुणस्य) become involved with the guṇas & functions of prakṛti, even as a matter of cosmic play (लीलया).” [3.7.2]

- How then could the material mode of goodness be attributed to Him, who is devoid of any transformation [अविकारिणः]? How could sustenance of the universe thru sattva be linked to Him, even as a matter of His cosmic pastimes [लीलया चापि]?
- While Vidura stipulates that Paramātmā, whose essential nature is that of consciousness alone [चिन-मात्रस्य meaning the Lord has absolutely no material modes inherent in Him] is Bhagavān (possessor of 6 kinds of unlimited opulences), his question remains as to how come the Lord accepts material qualities (sattva). And how can a conscious living entity come under the control of His Māyā potency consisting of the 3 modes of nature?
- On the basis of SB, JīvaG refutes Māyāvāda explanation that the universe is illusory nature, and thus Brahman remains unaffected by prakṛti.

- Līlā cannot be the cause behind creation [Text 86]:

क्रिडायामुद्यमोऽर्भस्य कामश्चिक्रीडिषान्यतः ।

स्वतस्त्वृप्तस्य च कथं निवृत्तस्य सदान्यतः ॥

- “A child is impelled [उद्यम] to play out of his own desire or due to another child’s wish to play. But how can this be so for Bhagavān who is fully satisfied in His own self and ever detached from any other thing?” [3.7.3]

- So his question is how then can the desire to play arise in Him prompted from something other, i.e., from some external cause, such as the Jīva or the universe.

अस्माक्षीद् भगवान् विश्वमं गुणमय्यात्ममायया ।

तथा संस्थापयत्येतद् भूयः प्रत्यपिधास्यति ॥

- “Thru His own Māyā, consisting of the three modes, Bhagavān created the universe. Thru her, He regulates it [संस्थापयति] and shall cover it up once again [प्रति-अपिधास्यति, meaning dissolution in reverse order—the gross elements are reabsorbed one by one into subtle].” [3.7.4; Text 87]

■ How can the Jīva be deluded by Māyā? [Text 88]

देशतः कालतो योऽसाववस्थातः स्वतोऽन्यतः।

अविलुप्तावबोधात्मा स युज्येताजया कथम्॥

- “How can that one [असाव, the ātmā or Jīva], whose consciousness is never obscured by space, time, or circumstance—either by itself or thru any other cause—be associated with the unborn [अजया—Māyā]?” [3.7.5]

■ Why is Paramātmā not influenced by Māyā? [Text 89]

भगवान् एक एवैष सर्वक्षेत्रेष्वस्थितः।

अमुष्य दुर्भगत्वं वा क्लेशो वा कर्मभिः कुतः॥

- “This Bhagavān, who is one alone, exists everywhere. How then can that one [the Jīva] experience misfortune and distress as a consequence of conditioned action [कर्म]?” [3.7.6]
- Why do these not also affect Paramātmā, who reside alongside the Jīva?

■ Pertinent questions:

1. How can Bhagavān, who is transcendental to material nature and fully content within Himself, become involved in activities related to material nature? If He were to play, how could He do so with the material energy?
2. How can the conscious Jīva come under the illusory influence of Māyā's 3 modes?
3. Both the ātmā and Paramātmā reside in the same body, so why is it that only the individual ātmā suffers and enjoys the outcome of karma. What makes Paramātmā immune to such experience?

■ Maitreya Muni will now answer all these questions [Texts 90-92]

- **Māyā conditions the Jīva by her inconceivable potency**
[Text 90]

सेयं भगवतो माया यन् नयेन विरुध्यते।
ईश्वरस्य विमुक्तस्य कार्पण्यमुत् बन्धनम्॥

- “Such is Bhagavān’s external potency [माया], which contradicts all logic, for [due to its influence] the Jīva, who by nature is ruler and liberated, experiences impoverishment and bondage. [3.7.9]”
- Just as Bhagavān’s svarūpa-śakti is acintya, so is that of Māyā.
- However, **भगवतो माया** implies that Bhagavān owns Māyā. Also, it means she is controlled by the Lord. She is not allowed as part of His svarūpa.

- The conscious Jīva's coming under the sway of Māyā is due to her trans-rational power.
- Why is the Jīva referred to as ईश्वर, ruler? This is because it has the potential to regain what is lost at present because of association with Māyā. The Jīva is also called विमुक्त (liberated) because its bondage is not real!
- Māyā has two divisions, called Jīva-māyā, which conceals the its knowledge, & guṇa-māyā, which presents the objects of enjoyment.
- **The Jīva's bondage is not real [Text 91]**
यदर्थेन विनामुष्य पुंस आत्मविपर्यः।
प्रतीयत उपद्रष्टुः स्वशिरश्छेदनादिकः॥

- “[It is because of this Māyā] that self assumes a positionality that is contrary to its inherent nature, just as it appears to a witness of the dream state that he has beheaded and other similar contradictions, even though such dream cognitions are w/out reality.” [3.7.10]
- It is not possible for the Jīva to lose its inherent nature, which is consciousness and self-awareness, and becomes bound by the modes of material nature. However, it is possible just as in a dream state there is no reality. It is the very nature of avidyā to keep the Jīva in darkness about reality.

- **The Jīva's apparent bondage [Text 92]**

यथा जले चन्द्रमसः कम्पादिस्तत्कृतो गुणः।
दृश्यतेऽसन्नपि द्रष्टुरात्मनोऽनात्मनो गुणः॥

- “Just as the shimmering of the moon observed in water comes about due to the attributes of the water, so the attributes of the non-self [i.e., the body] seem to belong to the self, the witness, although they do not [factually] exist in it.” [3.7.11]
- JīvaG explains how it is that Māyā is able to influence the Jīva but not Bhagavān because the Lord has His intrinsic potency, which is beyond logic and supremely powerful, and so He cannot be subdued by the external potency, Māyā, even though she too is powerful and inconceivable, being His potency.

QUIZ: QUESTIONS/ANSWERS

- 1. How the bondage of the Jiva can be possible at all, when the latter is superior to Paramatma's extrinsic potency, Maya?**
 - It is because of the trans-rational (beyond human logic and reasoning) power of Maya that the Jiva becomes infatuated with her creation.
- 2. Because Bhagavan is fully satisfied in Himself (atmarama), what could possibly impel Him to create the cosmos in the first place?**
 - This is simply out of love for those of His devotees who could not attain perfection of their devotional service unto Him in the previous cycle and who are still lying dormant within Paramatma. So His true intent behind creation is simply to provide yet another opportunity for them to complete the course of their devotion.

3. It is the Vivartavadi contention that the Jiva's bondage is due to his ignorance; upon being enlightened of Brahman realization by the study of Vedanta and practice of meditation, austerities and penance, his illusory perception of the material world would be dissipated. However, JivaG shows that there is no necessity for such an occurrence. What is then actually needed? Explain the analogy offered in this context.

- No one can become liberated by his own endeavor. Only those who take shelter of Him can transcend His formidable Maya [Bg 7.4]. If the vision of the sun is covered with dense cloud, which is the result of the sun's own heat potency, the eyes have no power to dispel it. The sun alone can dispel the cloud. Once the cloud is dispersed and there is light, the eyes can function. Similarly, in our conditioned state, we have no power to become released from our own conditioning. Even when situated in

- Knowledge, we cannot become free, because knowledge too is a part of Maya, the mode of goodness.
- Even if one realizes that he is not the body and thus become jivan-mukta, we cannot attain freedom from ahankara-tattva, the undesirable “I”-consciousness, which remains within Maya’s domain. It is the real “I”-consciousness of the pure spirit soul that is needed.

4. How can the nirguna Paramatma associate with the gunas?

- **By the Maya that is under His shelter and which consist of the 3 modes of material nature, Paramatma regulates it** and causes the universe to become unmanifest in the reverse order [3.7.4]. He is exclusively all-consciousness [cin-matrasya], immutable and remains untouched by the gunas [3.7.2]. Even His cosmic pastimes cannot be the cause behind creation. His svarupa-Shakti is inconceivable and trans-rational. Maya is a reflection of the Lord, and thus cannot touch Him, but reflection can influence others.

5. How can the Jiva be deluded?

- It is thru Maya's two divisions, called jiva-maya and guna-maya. The first one conceals the true knowledge of the Jiva, and the second one presents the objects of material enjoyment. Even though the Jiva too is constitutively cin-matrasya, he belongs to Bhagavan's marginal potency, meaning he oscillates between the Lord's internal and external potencies. When he voluntarily turned himself away from the Lord (because of the misuse of his free will due to strong material desires independent from Bhagavan), the Jiva comes under the spell of Maya.

6. Why is Paramatma not influenced by Maya?

- If the light of the sun reflects into a person's eyes, it covers his vision and simultaneously presents a polychromatic display. But the reflection cannot influence the sun. Similarly, Maya can influence the Jiva but not Paramatma. He owns and controls Maya.

7. How does Maitreya Muni explain that the Jiva's bondage is not real; rather, it is apparent?

- “Because of Maya, the Jiva's loss of knowledge and bliss makes its appearance w/out cause or purpose. It is similar to the seer of a dream experiencing his head being cut off, which is impossible [3.7.10].
- It is not possible for the Jiva to lose his inherent nature, which is consciousness and self-awareness, and become bound by the 3 modes of material nature. Yet, by the inconceivable power of Maya, it does appear to be the case. She makes us see things that are other than the reality. The Jiva appears to be bound, though in fact, he is ever free. It is the very nature of Maya's avidya potency to keep the Jiva in perpetual darkness about reality.
- Maitreya Muni cites another analogy that of the shimmering of the moon observed in water. Similarly, the attributes of the nons-self [the body], seem to belong to the self, the witness, although they do not factually exist in it [3.7.11].