



28. Māyā – Pointed Out (108-110)

अव्यक्तनाम्नी परमेशशक्तिः अनाद्यविद्या त्रिगुणात्मिका परा ।
कार्यानुमेया सुधियैव माया यया जगत्सर्वमिदं प्रसूयते ॥ १०८ ॥

*avyaktanāmnī parameśaśaktih anādyavidyā triguṇātmikā parā,
kāryānumeyā sudhiyaiva māyā yayā jagatsarvamidaṁ prasūyate.* (108)

108. *Nescience (avidyā) or māyā is also called the ‘unmanifest’, and is the power of the Lord. It is without beginning, it comprises the three guṇas and is superior to their effects. It is to be inferred only by one who has a clear intellect, from the effects it produces. It is this avidyā which projects the entire universe.*

One of the powers of the omnipotent Lord Parameśvara is the power to delude Himself! This Power Divine is called the ‘unmanifest’ and is the causal body. The Lord can play through any of His powers – the power to discriminate (jñāna-śakti), the power to desire (icchā-śakti) or the power to strive (kriyā-śakti). All are His Powers Divine, this unmanifest power is otherwise called ‘nescience’ (avidyā). It is a solid mass of ignorance. In deep sleep, one experiences only one thing, ‘I don’t know’. ‘I don’t know’ is one’s nature in deep sleep. This substance of deep sleep falls under the influence of three guṇas – sattva, rajas and tamas.

Sattva, rajas and tamas are three ‘climatic’ conditions, as it were, under which thought functions. From these alone various manifestations arise. This māyā śakti consisting of the three guṇas is beyond sense perceptions (parā). Only its effects can be perceived, just as we do not know what electricity is, except through its manifestation. When a particular tendency manifests in an individual, then only can it be said that his vāsanās are of

a particular type. Hence, from the effects only, māyā śakti can be inferred by those who have the necessary subtle intellect.

This finite, mortal, ever-changing world that we see around us is born out of māyā alone. Due to the non-apprehension of Reality, man recognises the world of objects, emotions and thoughts. Through the body, mind and intellect he contacts the world and creates more and more vāsanās. These vāsanās make one act more and more and in the end, man becomes cocooned in them and gains permanently for himself the sense of a separate individuality, the jīva-bhāva. All these are created by this avidyā, this non-apprehension of Reality.

Avidyā is the vāsanās in the microcosm. The avidyā of all individuals put together is its macrocosmic form and is called ‘māyā’. This is the vehicle of the Supreme when He functions as Īsvara. When the Supreme functions through the vāsanās or avidyā (macrocosmic māyā), It becomes the jīva – the individual ego. When the Supreme functions through macrocosmic avidyā (māyā), He is Īsvara.

Each individual creates his own world around himself due to his ignorance (avidyā), through his mind. The sum of each one’s world put together is the total world which we call the universe, the jagat. Therefore, the total world, the universe is created by the total mind when expressing through the total vāsanās, otherwise called māyā. Thus the Supreme functioning through total avidyā is God, Īsvara, and the Supreme expressing through the total mind is the Creator (Brahmā) who creates the universe.

From the above, it becomes clear that the question, ‘Is there a God?’ is as foolish as one asking, ‘Have I a father?’ The very fact that you exist is enough proof that you must have had a father. Without a father, you cannot be, even if that father be unknown. Without a cause an effect can never arise.

