

## THE ULTIMATE REALITY AND REALIZATION

चैतन्यमात्मा ।

Caitanyam Ātmā

of the nature of pure consciousness the individual Spirit in man who is generally referred to as the Monad in Western literature. The Sanskrit word Ātmā is used both for the Supreme Spirit which underlies, pervades and contains the whole universe within its infinite embrace as well as the individual Spirit which is essentially of the same nature as the Supreme Spirit, but is this unbounded, infinite Reality expressing itself through a point or centre.■

I-I. " The Monad or the individual Spirit who is the innermost Self of man is essentially of the nature of pure consciousness or the Reality in its outward turned aspect of Consciousness."

According to the highest doctrines of Occultism there is only one Ultimate Reality underlying both the manifest and unmanifest states of Being. This Reality is an Integrated State which is changeless, indivisible, without distinctions and utterly beyond human comprehension, though it can be known by direct perception by penetrating through and transcending all the levels of the mind in the realm of manifestation, thus enabling consciousness to become aware of its Real underlying nature in the realm of the unmanifest.

The individual Spirit, or Atma as it is referred to in this aphorism, is a centralized expression of this Reality through a point in which the Reality exists not only in its essential nature but contains the Whole in a potential form. It is this fact which accounts for the continuous and infinite expansion of consciousness in the individual Spirits and the simultaneous development of the corresponding powers as evolution proceeds and what is potential becomes active.

The different Monads or individual Spirits thus represent different expressions of the same Ultimate Reality which is whole, indivisible and integrated through different centres of consciousness, each Centre becoming gradually a separate expression of Divine Life and Consciousness, according to its individual uniqueness and playing its own distinct role in the drama of manifestation.

Although these centres of Divine Life and Consciousness called anu in Siva-Sūtras appear to be scattered far and wide in the realm of Time and Space when looked at from below through the instrumentality of the intellect, they are really concentric; rooted in the Mahābindu, the Great Centre through which a manifested universe always appears from the unmanifest and in which it continues to function during the period of manifestation.

So these centres are separate from each other and yet not separate. In the realm of manifestation they function separately through the agency of the mind principle and may be considered separate. In the realm of the unmanifest they are rooted in the One Reality and may be considered as non-separate. The mystery of this paradox can be resolved only by direct realization in Self-realization when the consciousness of the Monad becomes centred in its own individual centre as well as in the common Great Centre.

It has been pointed out in other contexts that Consciousness and Power, called Siva and Sakti in Sanskrit, are polar opposites, inseparable but having varying relative predominance under different conditions. But in the unmanifest, the Power aspect of the One Reality or Sakti is potential, merged in the Consciousness aspect or Siva and indistinguishable from it. It is only when manifestation takes place after a period of pralaya that Sakti separates from Siva, descends through the Mahābindu and creates the paraphernalia of manifestation through which the Consciousness of Siva can then function and express itself in an increasing measure as evolution proceeds. So, in the realm of manifestation, consciousness and power are always found together though in each organism one or the other predominates according to the stage of evolution and the circumstances prevailing in a particular sphere of expression.

It will be clear from what has been said above that the direct experience of the One Reality in its aspect of Pure Consciousness, without the various kinds of obscurations created by Sakti, is possible only when the consciousness of the individual Monad who is involved in manifestation, is able to extricate itself from the illusory paraphernalia created by Sakti and penetrating through its own Centre is able to emerge on the other side of the Point, as it were. It is then in the realm of Pure Consciousness and can have direct unobstructed perception of Pure Consciousness or the Siva State in which Sakti is present in a potential form.

It is this Point which centralizes and limits Pure Consciousness, brings into action the Mind principle and creates the individual mental worlds in which the Monad becomes imprisoned. And it is for this reason that it is necessary to penetrate through this Point to gain Self-realization.