

## *Advaita – the Ruse of Shiva*



Unlike many of the teachings that originated in India, Advaita follows the lineage of Shiva. There are many aspects of god in Hindu mythology, but Shiva is the only true god of enlightenment and transcendence. He has never incarnated on earth in any form, but has entered our dimension through his revelations, which have been spoken through channels such as the teachings of Adi Shankara, the Shiva Sutras and the Yoga Vasistha. Shiva's intention has always been to reveal the deepest dimension of enlightenment corresponding to humanity's spiritual evolution at a particular time. Truth is fathomlessly deep, ever steeped in the transcendence of the known. It has countless layers, and can never show its magnificence fully, because that fullness is itself a flowering of never-ending unfoldment. For this reason, truth is only shown to us in accordance with our capacity to receive it. Humanity is lowly evolved and still deeply rooted in its ape ancestry, so the amount of truth it can handle is extremely limited. The gentle truth of the meaning of existence needs to be revealed gradually and in small portions. Too much truth at once can be detrimental - it can destroy the vessel which is supposed to contain it.

Shiva is the ultimate teacher. His responsibility is to reveal reality to those souls who have the capacity to create a conscious relationship with their creator. But he also has to take into account our ability to grasp that reality. Truth is absolute, but it is also relative. It is our relationship with truth that is relative,

as it is defined by our level of evolution. Shiva has a complete understanding of human capability, and as such, he revealed only part of truth in the age of the Vedas and Upanishads, not the whole picture. At that time, there were very few conscious and spiritually mature seekers, and these few were only just beginning to open up to a singular dimension of awakening, one which was confined to the realization of impersonality. They were not yet ready to embrace the consciousness of higher individuality. Their contribution was, rather, to make the initial human attempts at laying the conceptual and experiential foundation of non-duality - the condition of non-separation from universal reality. However, even that realization of impersonal enlightenment was imperfect, as it can only become perfect through the knowingness of who actually attains non-duality – our individual self, the soul.

Having said this, the teaching of a separate soul and the concept of duality between the personal and universal is not entirely absent in Indian traditions. Non-duality is actually one of many streams of spirituality, and it is far from being the most influential. One of the great teachers who sought to find a balance between duality and non-duality was Ramanuja, who created the concept of qualified non-duality. From a certain standpoint, his teaching was conceptually more correct than the teaching of Shankara, because it affirmed the existence of soul and her unique identity within the state of unity with the supreme reality. However, the fact that he put concepts together in a more correct way does not mean that his understanding was deeper. The concept of 'atman' lacks even a basic understanding of what the soul actually is; atman is more the poetic idea of a finite entity given to us by birth, not dissimilar to the Christian concept of the soul. In truth, unless one goes through the complex process of soul-actualization, there is simply no soul to speak of – there is just ego.

So, even though Ramanuja and others spoke of the soul in positive terms, they did not know who the soul really is. They were not conscious of the basic fact that the soul has to come into existence through a long process of spiritual actualization in order to awaken to her relationship with the absolute reality. To perform bhakti (devotion) without having awakened one's soul is pointless. One first of all has to be devoted to the evolution of one's higher individuality, and only then can one express devotion to the supreme creator of all life.



Why did the revelation of Shiva not start with the soul, if she is closer to our personal existence? The answer is simple: there is no soul without transcendence. The soul comes into existence through the recognition and awakening of that aspect of our subjectivity which embodies the universal self – me. Our me has to surrender to the I am of the creator in order to give birth to her own higher self. Shiva did not mean to express non-duality as the absolute truth. He revealed it as the first level of truth, in order to test the capacity of humanity. The revelation of non-duality, of Advaita, was indeed Shiva's most elaborate ruse, his ultimate challenge and greatest lesson.

The teaching of Advaita, though conceptually flawed, pointed much more deeply than other traditions to the realization of the impersonal self. Most of the devotional teachings in ancient India were connected to the energy of Vishnu, 'the sustainer' of creation. However, since our dimension of creation is also the dimension of illusion, there is an aspect of the primordial energy of Vishnu which aims at maintaining the state of illusion. Shiva, on the other hand, is the uncompromising destroyer of illusion. His path is of the transcendence and dissolution of the false self. He is not interested in sustaining the status quo, but in our death and spiritual rebirth in truth.

His purpose in revealing the teaching of Advaita was to test whether humanity would get stuck in the first step of his teaching, without the discrimination and inspiration to seek their unique individual existence. Would humans agree to live in the constrictions of non-duality, or would they have enough integrity to recognize the deeper meaning of his revelation? What was Shiva's deeper revelation? To recognize from the core of our very existence and intelligence that, no matter how profound non-duality is, it is incomplete. It is as incomplete as a human body without a heart – it exists but it is not living.

Shiva said: "Now that I, the giver of creation and dissolution, have bestowed upon you the knowledge of non-duality, will you - or will you not - recognize the hidden, yet open, secret of higher duality? Will you be conscious, sensitive and lucid enough to acknowledge that something of tremendous value is missing from my original message? Something so precious that, in its absence, life is not worth living? If so, my beloveds in truth, will you then recognize that this secret is neither fully absent nor yet completely present within you? Will you identify that I have created each of you to be unique and to become, through your individualization, my inimitable reflection in the light of your me, quivering tenderly on the lotus flower of my creation? Those of you who have walked the path of impersonality have realized part of me; now go and realize your own soul. Only then can you really know me, for true



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knowledge is born out of the communion of knowing me and knowing yourself. It is for this purpose that, in the beginning of time, I gave you life. Your true self is the essence of divine individuality in the heart of my universal self. You are my child and I am your existence.”

Blessings,

Anadi

*For a full glossary of terminology please visit our website [www.anaditeaching.com/glossary](http://www.anaditeaching.com/glossary)*

