

Paramatma

In Vedic theology, there is a principle known as Paramatma (*para-mat-ma*). Paramatma is described as the Supreme Soul or Spirit and is also known as Supersoul, Oversoul, or Absolute Atman. Paramatma is one of the aspects of Brahman, the Absolute Truth.

The Vedas, like the Mundaka Upanishad, as well as the Svetasvatara Upanishad compare the soul and Paramatma to two friendly birds sitting on the same tree. One of the birds (the individual soul) is eating the fruit of the tree, and the other bird (God or Krishna) is simply watching His friend. Of these two birds, although they are the same in quality, one is captivated by the fruits of material life, while the other is simply witnessing the activities of His friend. Although they are friends, one is still the supreme lord and the other is the servant. Forgetfulness of this relationship by the individual soul is the cause of one's misery. The jiva soul is struggling very hard on the tree of existence, but as soon as he agrees to accept the other bird as the supreme spiritual master, as Arjuna agreed to do by voluntarily surrendering to Krishna for instruction, the subordinate bird immediately becomes free from all lamentations.

"Although the two birds are in the same tree, the eating bird is fully engrossed with anxiety and moroseness as the enjoyer of the fruits of the tree (karmic actions, both good and bad). But if in some way or other he turns his face to his friend who is the Lord and knows His glories--at once the suffering bird becomes free from all anxieties."

- Bhagavad Gita As It Is, text 2:22, purport



"The Lord is the constant companion of the living entity as Paramatma or the Supersoul, and therefore He can understand the desires of the individual soul, as one can smell the flavor of a flower by being near it." - Bhagavad-gita As It Is, text 5:15, purport

Paramatma transcends the modes of material nature (gunas) and is beyond ignorance, devoid of all material attributes (upadhi) and contamination, and is always objective. In Vaishnava texts, Paramatma is described as four-armed Lord Vishnu residing in the hearts of all beings and in every atom of matter. Therefore, Paramatma is both part of an individual and part of the macrocosm. Those who pray or meditate within on the

localized Supersoul are also indirectly Krishna (God) conscious, because Supersoul is the all-pervading partial expansion of Krishna.



Depiction of Paramatma



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