

Indra's Rule of an Atomic World

(*Yoga Vasishtha*, Book VI, Part 2, Chapters 13-14)

Once upon a time it came to pass that this world grew up as a small fruit on a branch of the great tree of a kalpa age. The fruit was made up of the three compartments of earth, sky and infernal regions which contained the gods and demigods of heaven, the hills and living creatures on earth, the marshy lands below, and troops of gnats and flies. This world was a wonderful production of consciousness, full with the juice of desire like handsome full-blown buds. It was scented with all kinds of fragrances and varieties of flavors that were sweet to taste, all tempting to the mind.

This tree grew upon the tree Brahman, the Supreme Soul. It was covered by millions of creepers and orchids. Egoism was the stalk of this fruit that appeared so beautiful. It was encompassed by artery nerves called oceans and seas whose light is the principal door of liberation. It secreted the starry heaven above and the moist earth below. It ripened at the end of the kalpa age when it became the food of black crows and cuckoos. In the end, it was absorbed into the indifferent Brahman.

At one time the great Indra, the lord of the gods, lived in that fruit, just like a big mosquito lives in an empty pot as the great leader of its company of small gnats. But this great lord was weakened in his military strength and valor by his study and his teacher's lectures on spiritualism, which made him a spiritually minded person and a seer in all past and future matters.

It happened once upon a time, when the valiant god Narayana and his heavenly host were resting and their leader Indra was weakened in arms, that the demon asuras rose in open rebellion against the gods. Then Indra arose with his flashing arms and fire and fought for a long time with the strong asuras. At last Indra was defeated by superior strength and fled from the field. He ran in all ten directions, pursued by the enemy wherever he fled. He could find no place to rest, just as a sinner has no resting place in the next world.

Then, as the enemy asuras lost sight of Indra for a moment, he made use of that opportunity. In his mind, Indra compressed the thought of his huge body and become a minute form in appearance. Through his consciousness of his personal minuteness, he entered the womb of an atom which was glittering amidst the expanse of solar rays, like a bee entering a lotus bud. He immediately rested in that state and his hope of final bliss in the next. He utterly forgot the warfare and attained the ultimate bliss of nirvana.

In that minute form inside an atom, and in his imagination, Indra conceived of his royal palace. He sat in a lotus posture as if resting on his own bed. Then Indra, seated in that palace, conceived of an imaginary city containing a grand building in the middle, its walls studded with gems, pearls and coral. From within the city, Indra saw a large country all around containing many hills, villages, and forests with vast pastures for cattle and numerous human dwellings. Then Indra felt a desire to enjoy that country he had formed in his imagination, with all its lands and hills and seas. Afterwards Indra conceived a desire to possess the three worlds, together with all the earth and ocean, sky and infernal regions, the heavens, planetary spheres above and mountain

ranges below. Thus did Indra remain there as lord of the gods in possession of all abundance for his enjoyment.

Afterwards, a son was born to him named Kunda, who was of great strength and valor. Then at the end of his lifetime, this Indra of unblemished reputation left his mortal body and became extinct in nirvana, like a lamp extinguished for lack of oil. Kunda reigned over the three worlds. Then, having given birth to a boy, he departed to his ultimate state of bliss after the end of his life term. That son also ruled in his time, then departed at the end of his lifetime to the holy state of supreme bliss. He also left a son after him. In this manner a thousand generations of descendants of the first Indra have reigned and passed away in their time. There is still a prince named Ansaka reigning over the land of this lord of the gods.

Generations of the lord of immortals still hold sovereignty over the imaginary world of Indra in that sacred particle of sunbeam in empty air. Over this long course of time, that atomic particle is continually decaying and wasting.

There was a prince born of the race of that Indra who also became lord of the gods. This prince Indra was endowed with prosperity and all good qualities and devoted to divine knowledge. This prince received his divine knowledge from the oral instructions of Sage Brihaspati, the guru of the gods. Knowing the knowable One, the prince persisted in the course of knowledge as he was taught. Being Indra, the sovereign lord of the gods, this prince reigned over all three worlds. He fought against demigods and conquered all his foes. He made a hundred sacrifices and his enlightened mind overcame the darkness of ignorance.

He remained long in meditation, his mind fixed in the central channel within his subtle body, the *sushumna nadi* that resembles the thread of a stalk of the lotus. He continued to meditate on hundreds of matters.

Once this Indra had a desire to see the essence of Brahman by the power of his understanding in meditation. He sat in quiet seclusion and in the silent meditation of his tranquil mind, he saw the disappearance of the chain of causes all about and inside himself. He saw the omnipotent Brahman extended in and about all things, present in all times and places and existing as all in all. His hands stretch to all sides and his feet reach the ends of the worlds. His face and eyes are on all sides and his head pierces the spheres. His ears are set in all places and he endures by encompassing all things everywhere. He is devoid of all organs of sense, yet possessed of the powers of all senses in himself. He is the support of all. Being destitute of qualities, he is the source and receptacle of all quality. Unmoved and unmoving by himself, he is moving in and out of all things, as well as moving them all both internally and externally. He is unknowable owing to his minuteness and appears to be at a distance though he is so near us.

Brahman is like the one sun and moon in the whole universe, and the same land in all the earth. He is the one universal ocean on the globe and the one Mount Meru all about. He is the core and gravity of all objects and he is the one emptiness everywhere. He is the wide world and the great cosmos that is common to all. He is the liberated soul of all and the primary consciousness in every place. He is every object everywhere and beside all things in all places. He is in all pots and huts and in all trees and their coatings. He moves carts and carriages and enlivens all men and other animals.

He is in all the various customs and manners of men and in all the many modes of their thinking. He resides equally in the parts of an atom as in the stupendous frame of the triple world. He resides as pungency in the heart of pepper and as the empty space in the sky. The three worlds, whether real or mere unrealities, exist in his consciousness.

Indra saw the Lord Brahman in this manner. Then being liberated from his animal state by the help of his pure understanding, Indra remained in the same state of meditation. In his abstract thought, the magnanimous god saw all things united in his meditative mind. He saw this creation in the same form as it appears to us. Then he wandered in his mind all over this creation, believing himself to be the lord of all that he saw. The prince became the god Indra and reigned over the three worlds and their many colorful spectacles.

To this day the same Indra who descended from the family of Indras is still holding his reign as lord of the gods. Then he perceived in his mind, by virtue of his former habit of thinking, the seed of his memory sprouting forth during the reign of the former Indra in the heart of an atom. So have thousands of other Indras gone by, and are going on still in their fancied realm in the empty sky, all in the same manner and mode as observed by their predecessors.

So runs the course of nature in ceaseless succession, like the current of a river running onward to the sea. So do men, whether or not acquainted with divine knowledge, flow on as streams to the abyss of eternity. Such is the lengthening delusion of the world which appears to be true but vanishes to nothing at the appearance of the light of truth. From whatever cause, and in whatever place or time, and in whatever manner this delusion is seen to have sprung, it is made to disappear by knowledge of it.

Only egoism produces the wonderful appearance of delusion, like clouds cause rain. Ego spreads itself as a mist, but disappears immediately at the sight of light. He is freed from all appearances and is settled in the One Consciousness who has rid himself of any belief in the sight of the world and has attained knowledge of the self-reflecting soul, and who has placed his belief in empty air devoid of all properties and beyond all categories.