

**STUDIES IN THE
BHAGAVAD GĪTĀ. PART
III. THE PATH OF
INITIATION; PP. 8-136**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649029914

Studies in the Bhagavad Gītā. Part III. The Path of Initiation; pp. 8-136 by Anonymous

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STUDIES IN THE
BHAGAVAD GÎTÂ:

By
THE DREAMER.

Third Series.

THE PATH OF INITIATION.

LONDON:
THE THEOSOPHICAL PUBLISHING SOCIETY.

CITY AGENTS:
PERCY LUND, HUMPHRIES & Co., LTD.,
3, AMEN CORNER, E.C.

NEW YORK: JOHN LANE.

CHICAGO: THE THEOSOPHICAL BOOK CONCERN.

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1904.

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P. M. Byrse, June 1917. \$1.00

Turning to the *Srimad-Bhagavad* we read* " Before the creation, the Maya of the Self being indrawn, this manifested universe was then of the *nature* of the Self, then there was *no one* to see nor *anything* to be seen. The Self only was there; but though the Seer of things, yet there being then nothing to see. It thought as if It existed *not*; yet being conscious, It could not think that It existed *not absolutely*. . . . The *Sakti* of Ishvara having the qualities both of cause and effect, and linking Ishvara, the Seer, to His field, is called Maya. . . . After this Maya is acted upon by Kala (time), also the energy of Ishvara, and made objective unto Himself, then there is a reflection from Ishvara on it producing the Cosmic principle known as *Mahat*. . . . This *Mahat*, being transformed by the action of the Self, evolves out of it *Ahamkara*, which manifests and is the substratum of the Actor, the Action, and the Effect. . . . The Tamasic modifications of this Ahamkara produce successively the *Tanmatras* and the *Bhutas*; from the Rajasic modifications of the same, evolve the organs, and from the Sattvic come out the powers known as the Mind and the Intellect!" The above gives in an abridged form the stages of the involution of the Self, whereby through successive limitations and inhibitions of Its powers, the principles in Man and Cosmos arise. The state of consciousness, viewing the whole problem from within rather than from without, manifested in the state described, when Maya was not, because of the absence of the principle of relation of the Self to Its field, is what is known in Theosophical literature as Parabrahman, the Brahman unrelated to anything, the Brahman outside manifestation, the "Eternal Parent" of the "Secret Doctrine."

* Cf., III, v. 24, & seq.

Indrawing Its life within Itself, It exists, the One Rootless Root, the One Sat (Reality), yet called sometimes the Asat, the Non-existence, because transcending all finite limited existence. "Time there was not, for everything was indrawn into the bosom of Eternal Duration. Naught was."

The next stage in manifestation is characterised by the action of Time synthesising the residual traces of the Divine Memory, the Divine Ideation, and holding them up, as it were, before the Divine gaze. So we read in the "Secret Doctrine," how at the close of the Seven Eternities in which the Self remained in the apparent non-being of inwardness and non-manifestation, the hour struck. The seeds or residual traces of Divine ideation and memory thus rendered objective as the thin veil of the abstract memory of the Divine, manifest now as the field of consciousness and ideation, known as the *Chitta*. Let us take an analogy on the lower plane consciousness to understand dimly what takes place in the Cosmic planes. While we are in deep sleep, the resisting principle of consciousness being indrawn by the Ego, we feel as if we exist not, and yet, at the same time, we cannot say we do not exist. As a matter of fact, the Ego exists and is conscious, but there being nothing to limit and measure its existence and consciousness, to the concrete memory this state appears as one of darkness and non-being. Let us conceive that we are suddenly roused from this state. What takes place? The Ego unable, by the very suddenness of the shock which brings it down to the physical, to adjust itself to the new state of things, cannot define itself. It may see the physical surroundings, the panorama of memory may flit before its eyes, yet it is unable to predicate any of these changes to itself, and hence,

though fully conscious on its own plane, though knowing itself as the "I," it is incapable of further definition, of further limitation. It knows the memory pictures, it sees them with accuracy, it exists in fact as their substratum, yet it is not defined and limited by anything. In the Cosmic plane, this state of the Self is technically known as the Vāsudeva principle, of which the Gītā speaks as *enveloping everything and as being everything. In human evolution, this stage corresponds to the Monad in the †Anupādaka plane, all-conscious in its own nature, but unconscious like a child as to its bearings. The characteristic of consciousness at this stage is graphically described in the Srimad-Bhagavad thus:—

‡ "This Mahat contains in Itself the possibility of infinite manifestation of the universe, and is constant, being above the effects of *Laya* (dissolution and nescience), and *Vikshepa* (refraction and outwardness). It is that which manifests in a subtle form the universe that is to be, and with Its own splendour drives away the non-being of Pralaya. . . . In its material side, as the field of abstract memory, as the Chitta, It has the quality of reflecting the image of the Self." It is in short that stage of the "I" where It is not limited and individualised, and in which the relics of consciousness and memory are held together, without defining or circumscribing the I-notion. It is the Self, the Logos, which though enveloped and circumscribed by the thin tenuous veil of abstract memory, is yet not limited by it. It is the Self which, emerging from Its higher state of apparent non-being, the Parabrahmic state, manifests the circumscribing circle, within which a universe is going to

* Op. cit VII., 19.

† Mrs. Besant's "Evolution of consciousness"—Theosophical Review, Vol. XXX., page 534.

‡ Srimad-Bhagavad, III., xxvi., 15 to 21.

be evolved, a universe as yet without Name and Form and existing merely as Its ideation and memory. It is the centre, if It can at all be called a centre, which holds and sustains this archetypal universe. Its life is to be the life of the universe, and Its concrete modifications are the future individuals that will come into existence. It is really the centre, which is also the circumference, and which is equally reflected in every part of the circumference, and yet not limited to any. Just as the concrete physical memory can remain in the field of consciousness of the Yogis, who have realised the Higher Self, without limiting their consciousness, and yet sustained by their life, so in the Turiya Ishvara, can remain in abstract form the seeds of innumerable universes, with their rich potentialities of concrete being and manifestation. The memory is in Him, but He is *not* in it. He, the Self as Vāsudeva, sustains this potentiality of infinite manifestation within a fragment of His infinite Being, and so the Gītā says* "I sustain this manifold universe in only a portion of Myself."

The next manifestation of the Self is seen in the principle of Ahankāra—the manifestation known as the first Logos, the *Saṅkarshana* principle of the Vaishnava cosmogony. It is the *same* Self, continuous with the Vāsudeva principle, but tending more towards determination. This Self is called the Kāraṇa Ishvara, the Causal Ishvara, the Ishvara as the cause and therefore contrasted off from the effect. More defined and concrete, It is, for the self-same cause, more limited—the real Centre from which proceed the centres of consciousnesses of the lower planes. It is analogous to the concrete I-notion of a plane, the One Centre of all manifestations, the Centre of the Circle, which manifesting Itself,

* *Op. cit.* X., 42.