

# Brahman is the Two-Fold Cause for Creation <sup>1</sup>

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Bhagavadgītā Home Study: Chapter 7, Verses 4-5

## LORD Kṛṣṇa REVEALS HIMSELF AS THE TWO-FOLD CAUSE OF CREATION

There are two *prakṛtis*. The word *prakṛti* means that which has the essential capacity to create. *Prakṛti* is also called *kāraṇa*, the cause. Kṛṣṇa says, ‘I have two *prakṛtis*; one is *svarūpa-prakṛti*, and the other is *svabhāva-prakṛti*.

### *Svarūpa-prakṛti*

One *prakṛti* is the cause of everything; the truth of everything, without which nothing is possible. This is called *svarūpa* or *parā prakṛti*. *Svarūpa*, is that which makes something what it is. For example, ice is cold and that coldness is its *svarūpa*. You cannot remove it and still have ice. And here similarly, *ātmā* cannot give up its nature, consciousness. Consciousness is the *svarūpa* of *ātmā*; it is not a quality, an attribute of *ātmā*. There is no other person there for whom consciousness is an attribute. In fact that ‘I’ itself is in the form of a conscious being alone. Therefore, consciousness is the *svarūpa* of the *ātmā*. It is not an attribute of *ātmā*.

And if consciousness is the *svarūpa* of *ātmā*, there are a few other facts we recognize about consciousness. It is *satya*; it is *ananta*, etc. From the various stand-points of our knowledge about the world, we say this consciousness is *satya*. That means everything else is not *satya*; this consciousness alone is *satya*. It is not that we are refusing to accept another *satya*. There is only one *satya*; that is *ātmā*. Generally, we think that what exists is *satya*. Here, we take that existence itself to be consciousness. And because it is *satya* it is *ananta*, without limit. *Satyam jñānam anantaṁ brahma* is *ātmā*. This is the *prakṛti* of everything. Here you must understand *prakṛti* as the cause of everything, *sarvasya kāraṇam*. Therefore, it is called the *svarūpa-prakṛti*.

### *Svabhāva-prakṛti*

Then there is another *prakṛti* which we call *svabhāva-prakṛti* or *aparā prakṛti* consisting of the five elements, both subtle and gross. It is divided into cause, *kāraṇa*, and effect, *kārya*. Because the effect, *kārya* is not separate from the cause, the *kārya* is also called *prakṛti*. Therefore, we have the expression *kārya-prakṛti*. A physical body consisting of the five elements is also *kārya-prakṛti* as are the sense organs, the mind, and *prāṇas*. In other words, anything created, anything put together is a *kārya-prakṛti*.

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*Kārya* here is anything that is produced, anything put together. If we look at this *prakṛti*, this is also called *māyā*, *avyakta*, or *mūla-prakṛti*. This *prakṛti* is the *upādhi* from which the whole creation has come. And the *upādhi* is for *pa-ramātmā*. Therefore, *sat-cit-ānanda-ātmā* becomes the real cause, *svarūpa-prakṛti*, for this entire world and *māyā* is the *svabhāva-prakṛti* or *kārya-prakṛti*.

Now where does this *māyā* have its being? Is it in the product or in *Brahman*? It is in *Brahman*. It cannot be elsewhere because the product itself is *mithyā*. So, this *māyā* has its being in *Brahman* — *brahma-āśrayā hi māyā*. *Brahman* is *sat-yam jñānam anantam* which is *ātmā*. That *Brahman* is the *āśraya* for *māyā* and its products.

In this chapter, Lord *Kṛṣṇa* first talks about *kārya* or *aparā prakṛti*. Then he says there is another *prakṛti*, *parā prakṛti*, that is the real cause, without which there cannot be any creation. The real cause means that which supplies the existence, and without which there is no creation possible. He says, ‘The truth of the whole creation, the real cause, is my *svarūpa*. And you are that *svarūpa*. That is the real *prakṛti* and therefore, what you have to know is that real *prakṛti* which is *Īśvara* in reality. You have to know these two types of *prakṛtis*, and know that the *svarūpa* or *parā prakṛti* without which there is no creation at all, is yourself. I am you. In fact, I am the cause of everything and I am you.’ This means you are the cause of everything as *satyam jñānam anantaṁ brahma*.

Then next question you'll ask, will be, ‘How can I be the cause? How can I be *Īśvara*?’ If you say you are a *jīva*, you'll continue to be a *jīva*. You'll never become *Īśvara*. An individual is an individual; he is not going to become *Īśvara*.

And if you say, ‘I am *Īśvara*,’ then the problem is, where is this ‘I’ placed? That has to be understood. Therefore, in the verses that follow, *Kṛṣṇa* unfolds the two types of *prakṛti* to prove that *Īśvara* is everything and his *svarūpa* is you.

भूमिरापोऽनलो वायु खं मनो बुद्धिरेव च

अहङ्कार इतीयं मे भिन्ना प्रकृतिरष्टधा

*bhūmirāpo'nalo vāyuh kham mano buddhireva ca*

*ahaṅkāra itīyaṁ me bhinnā prakṛtirasṭadhā*

Verse 4

भूमिः *bhūmiḥ* — earth; आपः *āpaḥ* — water; अनलः *analaḥ* — fire; वायुः *vāyuh* — air; खम् *kham* — space; मनः *manah* — mind; बुद्धिः *buddhiḥ* — intellect; अहङ्कारः *ahāṅkāraḥ* — एव च *eva ca* — and indeed the doership, the ‘I’-sense; इति — thus; इयम् मे प्रकृतिः *iyam me prakṛtiḥ* — this my *prakṛti*; अष्टधा *aṣṭadhā* — in an eight-fold way; भिन्ना *bhinnā* — is divided

Earth, water, fire, air, space, mind, intellect and indeed the sense of doership — thus this *prakṛti* of mine is divided in an eight-fold way.

The two-fold *prakṛti*, mentioned in the introduction to this chapter is the cause of this entire world. In this chapter they are called *parā* and *aparā prakṛtis*. *Parā*

*prakṛti* is the ultimate cause without which there is no effect possible. Then the immediate cause is called *aparā prakṛti*, in other words, *māyā* and all that is immediately born of *māyā*. Because subtle elements are the causes for the gross elements which come later, they are mentioned first here as *aparā prakṛti*.

*Iyam*, this entire world, is my *prakṛti*, *me prakṛti*, divided in an eight-fold way, *aṣṭadhā bhinnā*. *Aṣṭa* is eight; *aṣṭadhā* is eight-fold. Here he tells us what are the eight-fold subtle constituents beginning with the earth, *bhūmi*, as a *tanmātra*, a subtle element. *Tanmātra* means *tat mātra*, that alone is there. In grossification, each element combines with the other four elements. But in the subtle form, such a combination has not taken place; so, they are called *tanmātras*. Each element has its own *guṇa* which we experience sensorily. For instance the earth has its own *guṇa*, smell, and so, the smell-*tanmātra* is what is referred to here as *bhūmi*. Similarly, the taste, *rasa-tanmātra* is water, *āpaḥ*; form-*tanmātra* is fire, *agni*; touch-*tanmātra* is air, *vāyu*, sound-*tanmātra* is space, *kham*.

## ***Prakriyā* — A TEACHING MODEL**

Using a particular model like this to teach the nature of the creation is using a *sṛṣṭi-prakriyā*. A *prakriyā* is a particular discussion which is useful for understanding the vision. The intention of using any *prakriyā* is only to point out that there is nothing other than *param brahma*. So, the intention of a *prakriyā* dealing with creation, *sṛṣṭi*, is not to reveal the creation but to establish that there is nothing other than *Brahman*.

Like the *sṛṣṭi-prakriyā*, there are many other *prakriyās*, teaching models, such as *avasthā-traya-prakriyā*, an analysis of the three states of experience, *pañca-kośa-prakriyā*, an analysis of the five levels of one's experience of oneself, and *dṛk-dṛśya-prakriyā*, subject-object analysis to distinguish *ātmā* from *anātmā* and later prove that *anātmā* is not separate from *ātmā* because it is *mithyā*. The five elemental model of this universe is a part of the creation or cause-effect *prakriyā*, *sṛṣṭi-prakriyā* or *kāraṇa-kārya-prakriyā*. We find this *sṛṣṭi-prakriyā* in many *Upaniṣads*.

## ***Sṛṣṭi-prakriyā* — ANALYSIS OF CREATION IN *Chāndogyopaniṣad***

In the sixth chapter of *Chāndogyopaniṣad*, the sage *Uddālaka* tells his son, *Śvetaketu*, that before the creation of this world there was only one thing. It was *sat*, existence, *advitīya*, non-dual, and there was nothing except that. *Advitīya* because there was no other *sat-vastu* like itself nor was there any *vastu* unlike itself and in itself there were no parts. It was one, non-dual. Since there was no difference within itself nor was there any differentiating factor, it is a part-less whole.

Mentioning this *sat-vastu* in his opening statement, *Uddālaka* talks about the creation of the elemental world from this *sat-vastu*. He mentions only three elements, the elements which have form, *mūrta-bhūtas* — *agni* – fire, *āpaḥ* – water,

and *pr̥thivī* – earth. The two elements without a form, *ākāśa* and *vāyu*, are not mentioned. The purpose was only to show that having come from *sat-vastu*, they don't have a being of their own apart from the *sat-vastu*. In fact, the creation is non-separate from its cause like the pot is non-separate from the clay.

Finally he says, ‘O *Śvetaketu*, that *sat-vastu* is *ātmā*.’ Everything else is created. The body is created; the mind is created; the senses are created. But what is not created is *ātmā*. And that is *sat-vastu* which was existent even before creation. Even now it is *sat-vastu*, uncreated *ātmā*. And therefore, *tat tvam asi* — ‘you are that.’ From nine standpoints he points out that the *vastu* is always the same. Before and after the creation it is the same; that *ātma-vastu* did not undergo any change. Now, even though it is *upādāna-kāraṇa*, material cause, it is *upādāna-kāraṇa* in terms of *māyā*. Without undergoing any change itself, the *sat-vastu* manifests in the form of this world with the *śakti* of *māyā*. And the creation, being purely *nāma-rūpa*, is *mithyā*. The truth of the creation, the *sat-vastu* is you, *ātmā*. So, to create this vision that you are the *sat-vastu* and the world is non-separate from the *sat-vastu*, we have a *sṛṣṭi-prakriyā*.

### ***Avasthā-traya-prakriyā* — ANALYSIS OF THE THREE STATES OF EXPERIENCE IN *Māṇḍūkyaopaniṣad***

Similarly, we find the *avasthā-traya-prakriyā* in *Māṇḍūkyaopaniṣad*. The first verse says all that is, all that was, and all that will be is but *om-kāra*. Each individual letter of *Om* was made to stand for something. *A-kāra* represents waking, the waker and the waking world. *u-kāra*, the dreamer and the dream world, *ma-kāra* the sleeper and the sleep experience. All three of them are shown to be non-separate from the same *ātmā*, which itself is neither the waker consciousness, nor is it dreamer consciousness, or sleeper consciousness. And it is not the consciousness in between waking and dream consciousness nor is it all consciousness, or unconsciousness. Naturally what remains after negating all this is consciousness as such. All other things qualify that consciousness. And this is the nature of yourself; that is called *caturtha*. It is neither waker, dreamer, nor sleeper. Therefore, *caturthaṃ manyante sa ātmā sa vijñeyah*<sup>2</sup> — what is looked upon as *caturtha*, the fourth, that is the real *ātmā*. It is all three and is itself independent of all three. It doesn't undergo any change and is the *ātmā* in all three states. That has got to be known. This is the *avasthā-traya-prakriyā* discussed in the *Māṇḍūkyaopaniṣad*, which is discussed in other *Upaniṣads* as well.

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<sup>2</sup> *Māṇḍūkyaopaniṣad* – 7

## ***Pañcakośa-prakriyā*** — ANALYSIS OF THE FIVE LEVELS OF EXPERIENCE OF ONESELF IN *Taittirīyopaniṣad*

In *Taittirīyopaniṣad* there is a *pañcakośa-prakriyā*. It begins with the physical body, *anna-rasa-maya*, which is like a cover, *kośa*, because everyone mistakes it for *ātmā*. It is born out of the essence of the food that is eaten, *anna-rasa*. The assimilated form of food is *anna-rasa-maya*. The affix *mayaḥ* means modification, *vikāra*, so, *anna-rasa-maya* is a modification of the essence of food. We generally conclude that the body is *ātmā*. Therefore, *śruti* points out that there is another *ātmā* which is more interior, subtler. This is *prāṇa*. *Śruti* then describes the physiological function, *prāṇa-maya*. If you think this is *ātmā*, *śruti* leads you further to another *ātmā*, *mano-maya* and from *mano-maya* to *vijñāna-maya*, the doer, then from *vijñāna-maya* to *ānandamaya*.

*Sukha*, happiness is also experienced in different degrees because of shades of difference in *vṛttis*. So, within that *ānandamaya*, *priya* is the first stage of happiness. Something that is pleasing or desirable to you is sighted; that is *priya*. Then what is desired is possessed by you; this is *moda*. The third stage in which it is experienced by you is called *pramoda*. These are degrees of *ānanda*, all of which are particular modes of thought, *vṛtti-viśeṣas*. But in all the three, *priya*, *moda*, and *pramoda*, what is present is *ānanda*. And that *ānanda* is myself. That is *Brahman*.

## ***Tanmātra-prakriyā***— A TYPE OF *sṛṣṭi-prakriyā*

Here, *Kṛṣṇa* uses the *tanmātra-prakriyā*. *Tanmātra*, as we have seen, means the five subtle elements. These five subtle elements undergo a process of grossification whereby each element shares half of itself with the other four. Therefore, each gross element is five-fold and has one eighth of each of the other elements. For example, *sthūla-ākāśa* is one half *sūkṣma-ākāśa*, one eighth *sūkṣma-vāyu*, one eighth *sūkṣma-agni*, one eighth *sūkṣma-āpaḥ* and one eighth *sūkṣma-prṥthivī*. Thus every gross element is five-fold and because it is formed of these five-fold elements, the world itself is called *prapañca*, five-fold, in Sanskrit. This *prapañca* was originally *tanmātra*. Only that alone, *tat-mātra*, was there. In other words, in *ākāśa*, *ākāśa* alone was there; in *vāyu*, *vāyu* alone; in *agni*, *agni* alone; in *āpaḥ*, *āpaḥ* alone; in *prṥthivī*, *prṥthivī* alone. In the *sūkṣma* form they don't have these five-fold combinations, therefore, they are called *tanmātras*.

These *tanmātras*, *ākāśa*, *vāyu*, *agni*, *āpaḥ*, *prṥthivī*, have been listed in the reverse order in this verse. If they are listed as space, air, fire, water, earth, it is in the order in which they were created, *sṛṣṭi-krama*. But because *Arjuna* is now looking at the already created, the *sṛṣṭi* that is there, the elements are listed beginning with *bhūmi*. These five elements have many synonyms.



Here *pr̥thivī*, the earth, is called *bhūmi*; *agni*, the fire, is called *anala*<sup>3</sup>; *ākāśa* is called *kham*. All the five of these elements are to be understood here as subtle, i.e., *sūkṣma*, because they are mentioned as the cause here.

Then *manas*, *buddhi*, *ahaṅkāra* are also added to these elements. Since they are all products, they have to be looked at from the causal level. The five subtle elements with these three are the eight-fold cause for this entire *jagat*.

The cause of the mind is *ahaṅkāra*. So, in this verse, the word *manas* stands for *ahaṅkāra*; the word *buddhi* stands for *mahat-tattva*; the word *ahaṅkāra* stands for the unmanifest, *avyakta*. *Kṛṣṇa* wants to point out all the causes and he arranges them in the order that is generally discussed elsewhere. *Ahaṅkāra* is mentioned last because *avyakta*, the unmanifest is the primary cause with reference to the creation.

It is *upādāna-kāraṇa*, the material cause for the creation. While *Brahman* does not undergo any change, the *upādāna-kāraṇa* undergoes all the change and is therefore, looked at as *pariṇāmi*, that which undergoes modification.

Then there is a new problem. If you say *Brahman* is the cause, then *Brahman* must undergo some change in order to become the creation. Yes. As *pariṇāmi-kāraṇa* it does and that change takes place only in the *māyā-upādhi*. Only from the standpoint of *māyā* is it *pariṇāmi-kāraṇa*; from the standpoint of itself it is *vivarta-upādāna-kāraṇa*; It doesn't undergo any change. The material cause itself is analyzed as a cause that undergoes change and as that which doesn't undergo any change. *Satyam jñānam anantaṁ brahma* cannot undergo change. The *avyakta*, the *māyā*, alone undergoes changes.

Lord *Kṛṣṇa* says that, this *māyā-śakti* itself has become this eight-fold cause for the entire creation. So, in an eight-fold way this *māyā-śakti*, which is non-separate from Me, is the cause for everything. *Māyā* is not a parallel reality; it is the Lord's own *śakti*. And in an eight-fold way, it becomes the *prakṛti* for the creation. This is called *aparā prakṛti*. The other *prakṛti*, *parā prakṛti*, is the *svarūpa*, the *svarūpa* of *ātmā*.

अपरेयमितस्त्वन्यां प्रकृतिं विद्धि मे पराम्

जीवभूतां महाबाहो ययेदं धार्यते जगत्

apareyamitastvanyāṁ prakṛtiṁ viddhi me parām

jīvabhūtāṁ mahābāho yayedam dhāryate jagat

Verse 5

महाबाहो *mahābāho* — O Mighty armed! (*Arjuna*); इयम् अपरा *iyam aparā* — this (*prakṛti*) (is) lower; तु *tu* — whereas; इतः अन्याम् *itaḥ anyām* — the one that is other than this; मे पराम् प्रकृतिम् *me parām prakṛtim* — my higher *prakṛti* (my very nature); जीवभूतां *jīva-bhūtām* — that which is the essential nature of the individual; विद्धि *vid-dhi* — please understand; यया *yayā* — by which;

<sup>3</sup> *Alaṁ na vidyate yasya* — the one who never says enough (in terms of fuel)

इदम् जगत् *idam jagat* — this world; इदम् जगत् *idam jagat* — this world; धार्यते *dhāryate* — is sustained

O Mighty armed, (*Arjuna*), this is (my) lower (*prakṛti*). Whereas, please understand the one other than this, my higher *prakṛti* (my very nature), which is the essential nature of the individual, by which this world is sustained.

## WHAT HAS BEEN DESCRIBED SO FAR IS *aparā* (*svabhāva*) *prakṛti*

*Iyam*, this *aparā prakṛti* is the *prakṛti* which is the cause for everything created. This should not be taken as myself. It is *aparā prakṛti*, a lower *prakṛti*. Therefore, Śaṅkara says, it is indeed *anarthaka*, something that brings about the undesirable. This is the *prakṛti* that creates all the problems. It is the one that causes you *duḥkha* by giving you a *jīva-śarīra*, etc. Out of this *prakṛti*, your body, mind, and senses are produced. And because of this alone, you have all the *duḥkha* associated with them in the form of all their limitations. All these are caused by this *aparā prakṛti*. Its very form is the bondage of *saṃsāra*. For this reason it is the lower *prakṛti*.

## MY REAL NATURE — *parā prakṛti*

Then what is the higher *prakṛti*? *Tu*, whereas, *itah anyām* – other than this, *me parāṃ prakṛtiṃ viddhi* – please understand my higher *prakṛti*. Other than this, please understand the *svarūpa* of myself, my very nature as the *parā prakṛti*. This *parā prakṛti*, Śaṅkara says, is *viśuddha*, pure, not touched by anything. *Parā* means *utkr̥ṣṭā*, the most exalted *prakṛti*. With reference to the other one, it is *utkr̥ṣṭā*, because if you know this *prakṛti*, you are liberated. The other *prakṛti* will bind you.

## MY REAL NATURE IS YOU

Here, *Kṛṣṇa*, speaking as *Īśvara* says please understand my real nature and that is *jīvabhūta* – in the form of the *jīva*. And that is you. In this *prakṛti*, *ātmā* always remains the same. That *ātmā*, *sat-cit-ātmā* is the *kṣetrajñā*, the one who knows the entire *kṣetra*. The *kṣetra* is the mind, intellect, doership, memory, body, senses, sensory world, etc. The *ātmā* that illumines all of them is called *kṣetrajñā*. That is the real meaning of the word *jīva*, the one who is in every *kṣetra*. Later *Kṛṣṇa* is going to say that in every body-mind-sense-complex, *sarva-kṣetreṣu*, the one who remains there is *ātmā*, *kṣetrajñā* <sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> Bhagavad Gītā – 13-2

## ***Bhagavadgītā* Home Study: Chapter 7, Verse 6**

In previous verses, Lord unfolded both his *parā prakṛti*, consisting of the five elements, etc, and *parā prakṛti*, which is other than this — *itaḥ anyāṃ parāṃ prakṛtiṃ viddhi*. Although both must be understood, Kṛṣṇa is going to say, this (*parā prakṛti*) is the real *prakṛti*. This is my real nature, the cause for everything, and therefore, it is called *prakṛti*. It is this *prakṛti* from which everything has come, which remains always the same, which is indeed the *jīva*, the *ātmā*. Therefore, understand that *prakṛti* to be *parā*, *utkr̥ṣṭā*. The other one is *aparā prakṛti*, the five elements, etc. Having set this up, he's now going to reveal that there is nothing other than this *parā prakṛti*.

एतद्योनीनि भूतानि सर्वाणीत्युपधारय

अहं कृत्स्नस्य जगत प्रभव प्रलयस्तथा

*etadyonīni bhūtāni sarvāṇītyupadhāraya*

*aham kṛtsnasya jagataḥ prabhavaḥ pralayaastathā*

Verse 6

सर्वाणि भूतानि *sarvāṇi bhūtāni* — all beings and elements; एतद्-योनीनि *etad-yonīni* — are those that have these (the two *prakṛtis*) as their causes; इति उपधारय *iti upadhāraya* — thus please understand; अहम् *aham* — I ; कृत्स्नस्य जगतः *kṛtsnasya jagataḥ* — of this entire world; प्रभवः *prabhavaḥ* — am the cause; तथा *tathā* — so too; प्रलयः *pralayaḥ* — (I am) the source into which everything resolves

Please understand that all beings and elements have their cause in this two-fold *prakṛti*. (Therefore,) I am the one from whom this entire world comes; so too, I am the one into whom everything resolves.

### **EVERYTHING HAS ITS BEING IN THIS TWO-FOLD *prakṛti***

*Etad* means this two-fold *prakṛti*. It includes all beings beginning from *Brahmāji* right down to a worm. In other words, all living beings, from A to Z, and all non-living things also, from the space to the earth. All of them are included. Nothing is left out. Everything known and unknown, everything that may be there in the cosmos, and whatever is there sustaining it, all the forces, all the laws, all the phenomena, then varieties of lower *lokas* like *atala*, etc., and all the beings therein, and all the higher *lokas* with their celestials — *yakṣas*, *gandharvas*, etc., *devas* — *Indra*, right up to *Brahmāji*. With that everything is covered — all fourteen *lokas*, seven up and seven below. All this together is called one *brahmāṇḍa*. That *brahmāṇḍa* and everything that is there in it is *sarvāṇi bhūtāni*. *Etad*, this is the two-fold *prakṛti*. One is *ātmā*, *sat-cit-ānanda-ātmā*, *kṣetrajñā-svarūpa-ātmā*, the *parā prakṛti* of *Īśvara*. The other is the *māyā-upādhi* and because of that all the elements, etc., is the *aparā prakṛti*. Kṛṣṇa says, please understand this — *upadhāraya*.



So, *etat-yonīni* means those that have these (the two *prakṛtis*) as their causes. *Yoni* means cause. These two *prakṛtis* are the cause for everything in this *jagat*. Therefore, all the things in this *jagat* are called *etat-yonīni* <sup>5</sup>. The *aparā prakṛti* is everything that is there and *parā prakṛti* is the real cause, *satyaṃ jñānam anantaṃ brahma*. That alone is the cause for everything. Please understand that *prakṛti*. It is *jīva*, in the form of *jīva*, *ātmā*, *pratyagātmā*. That is the real *svarūpa*, the real cause for everything. All the *bhūtāni*, space, air, mind and so on, have their being only in this, in *paramātmā*. All beings have their basis only in the *sat-cit-ātmā*. Therefore, *etat-yonīni sarvāṇi bhūtāni iti upadhāraya* — please ascertain, come to understand that all the things in this *jagat* have these two *prakṛtis* as their cause.

## I AM THE CAUSE FOR THE PROJECTION AND RESOLUTION OF CREATION

The Lord says, '*ahaṃ kṛtsnasya jagataḥ prabhavaḥ* — I am the cause for the projection of this entire world.' Which 'I'? This 'I' — the one who has the two-fold *prakṛti*. The one that is in the form of this entire *jagat* — *aparā prakṛti* and the other one which is the real 'I' — *satyaṃ jñānam anantaṃ brahma*, the *parā prakṛti*. And therefore, I am indeed the cause for the entire creation. Not only that. I am also the one into which this entire creation resolves — *pralayaḥ tathā*. *Tathā* — so too, *kṛtsnasya jagataḥ pralayaḥ* — I am the source into which everything resolves. I am the one from whom everything comes. I am the one into whom everything goes back. Therefore, there is nothing other than myself. When the creation is there, it is me because from me it has come. As I told you, this *aparā prakṛti* which is the *pariṇāmi-upādāna-kāraṇa* is also nothing but me alone.

*Bhagavān* has already said that all the five elements, etc., are not other than Myself; but as *sat-cit-ātmā*, as the *kṣetrajña*, I have undergone no change whatsoever to become all this. So, now, when he says here, 'I am the one who is the *jīva*, *kṣetrajña*, and I am the one from whom the entire world has come, and unto whom it returns,' in effect he is saying, 'like me, you are also the cause of this entire world.' From the standpoint of *paramātmā*, you are the one who is *parā prakṛti*, the cause for everything.

Then what is *Īśvara*? If you look at the *jagat* as an individual, then naturally you have a physical body, mind, and senses. The world is there. For all this you require a cause which is what we call *māyā-upādhi*. *Satyaṃ jñānam anantaṃ brahma* with *māyā* in the form of this entire world is *Parameśvara*.

From the standpoint of *parā prakṛti*, all that is there is one, without which there is no *jagat* at all. It alone gives *sattā*, existence, to every aspect of the creation and it also gives *sphūrati*, that by which you come to know each and every thing. *Sattā* — *sat* and *sphūrati* — *cit*, by which this entire *jagat* is sustained, is *ātmā*. That is *parā prakṛti*.

<sup>5</sup> *ete yonī yeṣāṃ te — etadyonīni*.

## DEFINITION OF THE CAUSE - THE MAKER AND THE MATERIAL

In the previous verse, *Kṛṣṇa* said, ‘I am the cause of the entire creation and also its point of dissolution.’ When the Lord says he is the cause, how does he mean this? As a conscious being, the *nimitta-kāraṇa*, he is the cause in a three-fold way — as the creator, as the one into whom everything dissolves, and as the one who sustains everything.

*Taittirīyopaniṣad* also says the cause is the one from whom, *yataḥ*, all these beings come, by whom, *yena*, they are sustained and into whom, *yat—yasmin*, they resolve<sup>6</sup>. This is the definition of the cause. The word *yataḥ* represents the fifth case used in the sense of that from which something is born. This indicates the *upādāna-kāraṇa*, the material cause. Then he says *yena*, by whom they are sustained, then *yasmin*, unto whom they go back — *yatprayantyaabhisaṃviśanti*<sup>7</sup>. Apart from this pronoun, *yat*, there is no mention of any other cause. From this we understand that this *kāraṇa*, the cause is both *nimitta-kāraṇa* and *upādāna-kāraṇa*.

Earlier in the *Taittirīyopaniṣad*, it is said, ‘*so’kāmaya* — He desired.’ This clearly indicates the *nimitta-kāraṇa*. The one referred to later by the pronoun, *yat*, from which everything has come, *upādāna-kāraṇa*, is the same one who desired to become many and then created everything, *nimitta-kāraṇa*. From this it is clear here it means that according to the *śruti*, the cause for this world is *Parameśvara* — both in the sense of the maker and the material.

## NATURE OF THE CAUSE DEFINED

When the *śāstra* analyses the cause, it unfolds what we call the *svarūpa*, the nature of that very cause. For that it has a different definition altogether — *satyaṃ juṣṭam anantaṃ brahma*. You'll find that none of these words, even though they are defining words, has a particular quality. In fact, these words negate all qualities. Therefore, *Brahman*, the cause, is revealed as *nirviśeṣa* – free from attributes, by words which negate all the attributes we know. Thus, the cause is presented as *nir-vikalpa* – free from any form of duality.

The definition is that it is *satya*. And it is *anantaṃ satyam*. Therefore, it is not existent, as we usually understand — that is its existence is not in terms of time. Similarly *jñāna* is not the knowledge of any given thing. It is *anantaṃ jñānam*, unlimited *jñāna*, that is limitless consciousness. This definition, *satyaṃ jñānam anantaṃ brahma*, is *svarūpa-lakṣaṇa*.

<sup>6</sup> यतो वा इमानि भूतानि जायन्ते । येन जातानि जीवन्ति । यत्प्रयन्त्यभिसंविशन्ति ।

*yato vā imāni bhūtāni jāyante, yena jātāni jīvanti, yatprayantyaabhisaṃviśanti.*  
(*Taittirīyopaniṣad* – 3-1)

<sup>7</sup> In this the word *yat* is equal to *yasmin* when the compound is resolved

## THE TWO TYPES OF *lakṣaṇa*

### *Svarūpa-lakṣaṇa*

There are two types of *lakṣaṇas*, *svārūpa-lakṣaṇa* and *taṭastha-lakṣaṇa*. *Svarūpa-lakṣaṇa* reveals the essential nature of something. For example, if you describe water as H<sub>2</sub>O, this is *svārūpa-lakṣaṇa*. Water is nothing but these atoms so if you describe water as H<sub>2</sub>O, you are explaining the *svārūpa* of water. Here, the definition of *Brahman* as *satyaṃ jñānam anantaṃ brahma*, reveals the nature of *Brahman*, the *vastu*. It negates all attributes and then points out by implication that the *vastu* is the existence of anything that is existent and is the content of any form of knowledge.

### *Taṭastha-lakṣaṇa*

Then, if, for example, you want to indicate a certain house and do so by saying it is the house on which the crow is sitting, that is *taṭastha-lakṣaṇa*. The crow is not a part of the house even though it helps you recognize the house. The next time you have to identify that house you need not wait for the crow to come and sit on it. Once you recognize the house, the crow is not a part of the understanding of the house. That is called *taṭastha-lakṣaṇa*.

Whenever creation is discussed in the *śāstra*, *Brahman* is presented as the cause from which everything has come, by which everything is sustained and into which everything resolves. Therefore, everything is *Brahman*. This is *taṭastha-lakṣaṇa*.

It is important to understand that *Brahman* itself has not undergone any change whatsoever to be this world. Because the world is *mithyā*. Anything you analyze reveals itself to be only a name and form which is reducible to another name and form which again has its being in something else.

## SATYA MUST BE UNDERSTOOD TO UNDERSTAND *mithyā*

A Buddhist will claim that, if you continue analyzing like this, you will end up in non-existence. The conclusion will be that the world has its cause in the non-existent and the discovery that I am that non-existent is *nirvāṇa*. *Nirvāṇa* means extinguishing everything. This is the Buddhistic approach.

But we do not mean that. The discovery here is that, I am the only *satya*, the only reality. Even though the Buddhistic analysis of *mithyā* looks the same, it is not; because *mithyā* is truly *mithyā* only when *satya* is appreciated. Otherwise *mithyā* becomes *satya*, a reality. *Mithyā* is defined as anything that has no independent existence, no basis of its own. So, by the very definition there is no such thing as *mithyā* without *satya*. Even though one may say the world is *mithyā*, he cannot appreciate it as such unless he appreciates *satya*. When the clay is appreci-

ated as the truth of the pot, the pot is appreciated as *mithyā*. So, only in the wake of the appreciation of *satya* does *mithyā* become clear.

## TWO TYPES OF MATERIAL CAUSE — *vivarta-upādāna-kāraṇa* AND *pariṇāmi-upādāna-kāraṇa*

*Satyaṃ jñānam anantaṃ brahma* is the *svarūpa* of *ātmā* and at the same time is the cause of everything. A question now arises whether as the cause of everything it undergoes any type of change in becoming the world? Further, does it have any other material apart from itself with which it creates the world? The *śāstra* makes it very clear that *Brahman* is *satya* and the *jagat*, the world is *mithyā*. This being so, the world is non-separate from *Brahman* and so *Brahman* is the material cause. Here a problem arises. *Īśvara*, *Brahman* with reference to the creation, is both *nimitta-kāraṇa*, the efficient cause and *upādāna-kāraṇa*, the material cause. We can understand, that there is an *Īśvara* who is all-knowing and so on, who is the efficient cause. But how can he be the material cause? Any material cause undergoes a change to become the effect. If the Lord himself is the material cause then he too must undergo a total change to become space, air and so on.

### *vivarta-upādāna-kāraṇa*

Here we have to make a very careful note. When we say *Brahman* is the *upādāna-kāraṇa* of this *jagat*, we mean it as *vivarta-upādāna-kāraṇa*. This is one particular word I have not unfolded so far. *Vivarta-upādāna-kāraṇa* is different from simple *upādāna-kāraṇa*. *Upādāna* is the material and as a material, generally we would expect that it undergoes a change to become the effect. This is what we commonly understand as *upādāna-kāraṇa*. This is called *pariṇāmi-upādāna-kāraṇa*. It undergoes a change. The example generally given to illustrate this is of the milk turning into yoghurt. Milk was sweet and liquid; now it is sour and semi-solid. It has undergone some change. No doubt milk is the *upādāna-kāraṇa* for the yoghurt, but the yoghurt is definitely not in the form of milk. The milk, which is the *upādāna-kāraṇa* has undergone a change to become yoghurt.

Similarly if the Lord, is understood to be the *upādāna-kāraṇa*, one may think that perhaps he also undergoes some change to become this *jagat*! — that is perhaps as *pariṇāmi-upādāna-kāraṇa*, he has indeed become the world, and as the material cause, must have undergone a change. If he has undergone a change, he is no longer in his original form. Therefore, all that is here now is the world. Where is the Lord? There is no Lord at all! This is an argument raised by some people to negate the Lord being the *upādāna-kāraṇa*.

This is too simplistic! The Lord, no doubt, is the material cause, *upādāna-kāraṇa*. But he is not the *pariṇāmi-upādāna-kāraṇa*. He is the *vivarta-upādāna-kāraṇa*. That is, without undergoing any change he is the *upādāna-kāraṇa*. This kind of *upādāna-kāraṇa* is called *vivarta-upādāna-kāraṇa*.



The definition of *vivarta* is, *sva-svarūpa-aparityāgena-rūpa-antara-āpattiḥ* — assuming another form without giving up one's own nature. An example is your own dream world. There you are the *nimitta-kāraṇa*; and you are the *upādāna-kāraṇa*. Without undergoing any intrinsic change, without giving up its *svarūpa*, *ātmā* has become the world in the dream. There is the subject; there is an object; there is an action. All the *kāraṇas* are involved. A *kāraṇa* is anything connected to an action. Relationships are also included like, this is my house, this is my son etc. All these take place there without bringing about any intrinsic change in the *ātmā*. *Ātmā*, pure consciousness, alone is in the form of this dream. As in the dream, so it is in this waking state.

When we say the Lord is the *upādāna-kāraṇa* for the creation, we mean it as *vivarta-upādāna-kāraṇa*. It is like the rope which, without undergoing any change, becomes the basis for the snake that is seen. Rope is *vivarta-upādāna-kāraṇa* for the snake.

### ***pariṇāmi-upādāna-kāraṇa***

Since *Brahman* itself cannot undergo any change in order to be the cause of this creation it must have some *upādhi* which is as good as the creation. If the creation is *mithyā*, there must be an *upādhi* which is equally *mithyā*. That *upādhi*, we call *māyā*, the *upādhi* for *Brahman* to be *Īśvara*, the creator. We can now say, from this standpoint, that *Īśvara* has undergone a change to become this *jagat*. From the standpoint of *māyā-upādhi* we call *Īśvara* the *pariṇāmi-upādāna-kāraṇa*.

When we look at *Īśvara*, *Brahman*, as the cause of everything, we look at it as the *vivarta-upādāna-kāraṇa*. That *Īśvara* you are. When I say that you are that *Īśvara*, I mean *Īśvara* as *vivarta-upādāna-kāraṇa*. When we talk about the world as non-separate from *Īśvara* it is *Īśvara* that has become space, air and so on. Here we look at *Īśvara* from the standpoint of the *māyā-upādhi* which has undergone all the changes. When we say *Brahman*, besides being the *nimitta-kāraṇa*, the efficient cause, he is *upādāna-kāraṇa*, the material cause, what we mean is that, *Brahman* is the *vivarta-upādāna-kāraṇa*. And because of this *vivarta-upādāna-kāraṇatva* alone, it is possible to appreciate *ātmā* as *sat-cit-ānandaṃ brahma*.

One high school teacher once told me that *Śaṅkara* has said that God became the world. In the beginning there was God and then he created the world out of himself. So, God became the world. And now there is no God. It is exactly like making *idli* out of rice. The rice is gone; only *idli* is there. Later, I repeated this as *Śaṅkara's* philosophy to someone and he laughed so hard that I knew that there was some mistake in what I had said. But I didn't know what the mistake was and he didn't correct me either.

It is obvious. The mistake is that God is taken as *pariṇāmi-upādāna-kāraṇa*, a material cause that undergoes a change. We require the technical term, '*vivarta*,' to understand this. Once we say *Brahman* is *vivarta-upādāna-kāraṇa*, *Brahman* re-



mains as *Brahman*. That alone will work. *Satyaṃ jñanam anantaṃ brahma* always remains the same. Its *svarūpa* being what it is, it cannot undergo any change.

To understand the non-dual nature of *Brahman*, that there is nothing beyond *Brahman* and that the creation is not different from *Brahman*, this *kāraṇa-kārya-vāda*, discussion of cause-effect is the set-up. Through this, one understands that all that is here is *Brahman* and I am none other than that *Brahman*.

*Om Tat Sat*

### **Acharya Vandanam Committee**

#### **Commemorating Pujya Swami Dayananda Saraswati's 90<sup>th</sup> Jayanti**

Namaste and greetings from the Acharya Vandanam committee

It is with regret that we share with you our decision to postpone the Acharya Vandanam event, originally scheduled to be held on August 9 2020, to 2021. The decision was made in light of the covid-19 viral pandemic, which has caused many countries to put in place travel restrictions and domestic lockdowns.

We pray that the spread of the covid-19 virus be curbed soon, and that all those affected by it make a full recovery at the earliest'

However, given the lack of clarity on when the spread of the virus might abate, when we might resume travel and life on a normal basis, we feel it is best that we all follow the guideline of social distancing and avoid occasions that involve large gatherings for the rest of this year.

As of now, we are planning to hold the event in 2021, during Pujya Swami Dayananda Saraswati's next Jayanti. More details of the same will be shared at a subsequent date.

We thank you for contributing towards Acharya Vandanam, and assure you that all contributions received will be kept in a separate account, and will be utilized for the sole purpose planning and running of the event.

We thank you for your support and understanding

Warm regards,

Acharya Vandanam Committee