

Definitions

Svāmī Sadānanda Dāsa

(Typewritten)

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Brahma = √br̥h = to be great and cause greatness; the great. In the original meaning of the word, *Brahma* means the Absolute or God. In the course of time a narrowing of meaning took place and Brahma became synonymous with God's formless and attributeless aspect (the "attributeless"). The form of God Himself is called *Bhagavān* (bhaga + van, having bhaga; bhaga = possession, share). Bhagavān is the one who is in the possession of the following six qualities to the greatest extent.

1. *Śrī*, beauty
2. *aiśvaryam*, majesty and mastership (√īś = to rule › īśvaram)
3. *yaśas*, glory, praise
4. *vīryam*, inner power
5. *jñānam*, knowledge, realisation
6. *vairāgyam*, impartiality and lack of interest (vi + √rañj = to be without colour).

Bhagavān's modes of being differ according to the predominance of one or more of these six qualities, i.e. all are present, but certain qualities prevail:

- 1 *śrī* = Kṛṣṇa
1 + 2 *śrī* + *aiśvaryam* = Rāma
2 *aiśvaryam* = Nārāyaṇa
4 + 5 *vīryam* + *jñānam* = Nṛsimha
5 + 6 *jñānam* + *vairāgyam* = Śiva

Śakti = the potency, ability or power ($\sqrt{\text{śak}} = \text{to be able} + \text{ti}$). Bhagavān is śaktimān (having śakti). The śakti is present in Brahma, in its non-original meaning, as well, but does not express itself. The [attributeless] Brahma and Bhagavān are *sat*, *cit* and *ānanda*.

Sat = the present participle of $\sqrt{\text{as}} = \text{to be}$; the being, existing.

Cit = root substantive of $\sqrt{\text{cit}} = \text{to think}$, be conscious.

Ānanda = reinforcing prefix *ā* + $\sqrt{\text{nand}} = \text{rejoice}$, i.e. joy, happiness.

The attributeless Brahma is *sat-cit-ānanda-mātra*, i.e. mere *sat-cit-ānanda*, being, knowledge (without subject-object relationship) and joy, whereas Bhagavān is *sat-cit-ānanda-maya*, *He* consists of *sat-cit-ānanda*, i.e. holds the abundant fullness of *sat-cit-ānanda*, and is able to convey these three qualities. *Sat*, *cit* and *ānanda* have the nature of śakti, owing to the śakti that He owns.

Sat = *svayam-siddha*, is being, rooted in itself, being, which does not need anyone or anything else beyond itself.

The śakti aspect of this *sat* is called *sandhinī-śakti*, or the potency to be, and to convey being, to give existence to others beyond itself.

The śakti aspect of *cit* is called *saṁvid-śakti* (*saṁvetti* = he knows, and *saṁvedayati* = conveys knowledge).

The śakti aspect of *ānanda* is called *hlādinī-śakti* (*hlādati* = he experiences joy and *hlādayati* = he makes others experience joy).

Bhagavān's śakti is in a threefold position:

1. If she is associated with Him in His complete fullness she is called *sva-rūpa-śakti* (own-nature-śakti). She comes from Him and works towards Him, thus she is called *ākaraṣaṇa-śakti* (prefix *ā* + $\sqrt{\text{kṛṣ}} = \text{attract powerfully}$). She is thus centripetal.
2. If the śakti comes from Him but repels from Him she is called *vikarṣana-śakti* (prefix *vi* + $\sqrt{\text{kṛṣ}} = \text{drive away, repel}$). She is thus centrifugal.

3. If she is in the position of transition between 1 and 2, she is called *taṭa-stha-śakti* (taṭa = shore or transition, stha = standing or being located).

Everything that has a direct connection with Bhagavān is formed by the first śakti. Bhagavān's Self-unfoldment is called *līlā* (motiveless play out of superabundance of joy). The first śakti is therefore also called *līlā-śakti*, and because she is connected with the inner nature of Bhagavān Himself, she is also called *antaraṅga-śakti* (antar = inner, aṅga = form).

The second śakti shapes everything that forms a contrast to Bhagavān's intrinsic nature, everything that is *a-sat or jaḍa* (inert) and *duḥkam* (suffering). Therefore she is also called *a-cit-śakti*. A particular aspect of Bhagavān, which is generally called *Viṣṇu*, unfolds His *līlā* within the sphere of this *a-cit-śakti* without being affected by her. This is why this second śakti is also called *bahir-aṅga-śakti* (bahir = outside, outer; aṅga = form), and Viṣṇu's *līlā*, which takes place within the world that consists of her, *bahir-aṅga-līlā*.

Because the infinite number of *ātmā*-s, who are infinitesimal units of *cit*, come from the third śakti, they are also called *jīva-śakti* (\sqrt{jiv} = to give life to), because the *ātmā* as *jīva* gives life to the inert (*jaḍa*) psychic and physical coverings, which consist of the material provided by the second śakti.

Another term for these three śakti-s is *māyā* ($\sqrt{mā} + yā$ = the one, through whom [everything] is shaped, formed; and also measured, estimated). Thus, the general meaning of the word *māyā* is form and potency, and it can be used for all three śakti-s. To make a distinction, the first śakti is called *yoga-māyā* (yoga from \sqrt{yuj} = to join, connect; thus, yoga is a way of bringing together). The second śakti is called *mahā-māyā* (the great *māyā*), and the third *jīva-māyā*. In philosophical texts, *māyā* usually means *mahāmāyā*, the second śakti.

Relatively seldom, the word *māyā* is also used for:

1. magic, power of illusion, *śabari*
2. disguise, *dambha*

3. grace, *kṛpā* or *anugraha*

The full unfoldment of reality requires all three śakti-s. Since eternity, all three are coexisting simultaneously. *Pūrṇam* is the fullness of reality. *Vastu* = a thing, *vāstava vastu* = the true thing or reality on the whole, which therefore consists of:

1. God
2. His contrast, the world
3. the ātmā-s or jīvā-s

The relation between the three śakti-s and Bhagavān, and between themselves, is called *acintya bheda-a-bheda* [inconceivable distinction and non-distinction]. This means that *mahā-māyā*, for example, can be subjected to changes without God Himself being affected.