

**I. Bhagavān is the shelter of His
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**THEME 2:
BHAGAVĀN'S
POTENCIES**

**II. Bhagavān has
both conscious
(*cit*) & inert (*acit*)
potencies, which
are inconceivable
and intrinsic:
LESSON 6, TEXTS
15-17**

**III. Bhagavān's external potency, *māyā*'s two divisions—
Jīva- & *guṇa-māyā*: LESSON 7, TEXT 18-23**

**I. Bhagavān is the shelter
of His mutually conflicting
potencies:**

LESSON 5, TEXT 12-14

The internal (*svarūpa-śakti*) & external (*māyā-śakti*) potencies of the Lord are diametrically opposed to each other, like light and dark (परस्परविरुद्धे), and yet perfectly supported by Bhagavān (TEXT 12)

- The inconceivable feature of the Absolute Truth (AT)
- Bhagavan's potencies are the source of dispute (विवाद) and consensus (संवाद) for speculative philosophers, each citing scripture and logic \Rightarrow The impersonalist and personalist

■ Jīva Gosvāmī cites 6.4.31
spoken by Dakṣa Mahārāja

यच्छक्त्यो वदतां वादिनां वै
विवादसंवादभ्रुवो भवन्ति ।
कुर्वन्ति चैषां मुहुरात्ममोहं
तस्मै नमोऽनन्तगुणाय भूम्ने ॥

“Let me offer my respectful obeisances unto the all-pervading Supreme Personality of Godhead, who possesses unlimited transcendental qualities. Acting from within the cores of the hearts of all philosophers, who propagate various views, He causes them to forget their own souls while sometimes agreeing and sometimes disagreeing among themselves. Thus He creates within this material world a situation in which they are unable to come to a conclusion. I offer my obeisances unto Him.”

Mutually opposing potencies supported by the Lord

External (*māyā-śakti*)

- Inflicts 3-fold miseries upon the living entities
- Causes bondage in material existence
- Even subdivisions (*sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*) function in mutual opposition

Internal (*svarūpa-śakti*)

- Dispels them
- Grants liberation
- Subdivisions \Rightarrow *sandhinī*-, *saṁvit*- and *hlādinī-śakti*
- Ghee lamp analogy \Rightarrow The flame consumes both the wick and ghee, but it also subsist on them

Jīva Gosvāmī cites more evidence in support of Bhagavān's mutually opposing potencies (13, 14)

- Text 13: Dhruva Mahārāja's prayers to the Lord (4.9.16), who is standing before him in His personal form, yet he refers to the Lord as Brahman ⇒ He is "bliss alone (*ānanda-mātra*), unlimited (*ananta*) and w/out transformation (*avikāra*).
- Brahman, by definition, is w/out qualities. So why is he addressing Him as Brahman with all these qualities, which is in itself self-contradictory?
Answer: The nature of Brahman is included in Bhagavān as well. The distinction lies in the vision of the transcendentalist
 - The Lord is the source of the cosmos (*Viśva-bhavam*), and yet He undergoes NO transformation.
 - He is unlimited and all-pervading, and yet He is a person.
 - All these contradictions are reconciled within the Supreme Person.

यस्मिन् विरुद्धगतयो अनिशं पतन्ति
विद्यादयो विविधशक्तय आनुपूर्व्यात् ।
तद्ब्रह्म विश्वभवमेकमनन्तमाद्य-
मानन्दमात्रमविकारमहं प्रपद्ये ॥१६॥

“My dear Lord, in Your impersonal manifestation of Brahman there are always two opposing elements, knowledge and ignorance. Your multi-energies are continually manifest, but the impersonal Brahman, which is undivided, original, changeless, unlimited and blissful, is the cause of the material manifestation. Because You are the same impersonal Brahman, I offer my respectful obeisances unto You.”

- *Jñānī* ⇒ Brahman; *Aṣṭāṅga-yogī* ⇒ *Viśva-bhavam*; Devotee ⇒ *ānanda-mātra*

- Jīva now quotes 4.17.33, where Maitreya Muni narrates to Vidura about Mother Earth, in the form of a cow, praying to King Prṛthu, who had chastised her for neglecting to provide the necessities of life (TEXT 14)

सर्गादि योऽस्यानुरुणद्धि शक्तिमि-
द्व्यक्रियाकारकचेतनात्मनिः ।
तस्मै समुन्नद्धनिरुद्धशक्तये
नमः परस्मै पुरुषाय वेधसे ॥

“My dear Lord, by Your own potencies You are the original cause of the material elements, as well as the performing instruments (the senses), the workers of the senses (the controlling demigods), the intelligence and the ego, as well as everything else. By Your energy You manifest this entire cosmic creation, maintain it and dissolve it.

Through Your energy alone everything is sometimes manifest and sometimes not manifest. You are therefore the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the cause of all causes. I offer my respectful obeisances unto You.”

**II. Bhagavān has both
conscious (*cit*) & inert (*acit*)
potencies, which are
inconceivable and intrinsic:**

LESSON 6, TEXTS 15-17

How is it possible that Bhagavān's potencies that act in opposition to one another, and yet coexist in harmony within Him? Doesn't this defy logic? (TEXT 15)

- YES, according to Jīva, this is because of its inconceivable nature and, as such, it cannot be understood by mere logic.
- Jīva cites 3.33.3 , where Devahūti speaks to her son, Kapiladeva, who she learns as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and two *Vedānta-sūtras* that also mentions the inconceivable nature of His potencies.



स एव विश्वस्य भवान् विश्वत्ते
शुणप्रवाहेण विभक्तवीर्यः ।
सर्गाद्यनीहोऽवितयाभिसन्धि-
रात्मेश्वरोऽतर्क्यसदस्यशक्तिः ॥ ३

“My dear Lord, although personally You have nothing to do, You have distributed Your energies in the interactions of the material modes of nature, and for that reason the creation, maintenance and dissolution of the cosmic manifestation take place. My dear Lord,

You are self-determined and are the Supreme Personality of Godhead for all living entities. For them You created this material manifestation, and although You are one, Your diverse energies can act multifariously. This is inconceivable to us.” [3.33.3]

- Devahūti was astonished to learn that her son was the Supreme Lord. She just couldn't comprehend how Bhagavān, who created Brahmā from His lotus navel and who is the source of the cosmos, could have been within her womb. Thus, based on her own personal experience, she declares that the Lord has thousands of inconceivable potencies [तासाम-अचिन्त्यत्वं-आह आत्म-ईश्वर-अतर्क्य-सहस्र-शक्ति (3.33.3)]
- How is it that Brahman, which is indivisible, can perform actions? This controversy is resolved by the two *Vedānta-sūtras*
 - Vedas declare Brahman to be free from such internal divisions
 - Brahman does indeed possess inconceivable potencies that act in opposition to one another.
 - The 2nd *sūtra* explains coexistence of such paradoxical potencies within the Lord.
- If *mantras* (sound vibrations) have inconceivable power to heal incurable diseases, then why not Bhagavān? “Because something is inexplicable or inconceivable does not mean it should be dismissed as impossible (BV).”

Bhagavān's energies are intrinsic (TEXT 16.1-4)

- In sharp contrast to the monist philosophy of Śaṅkarācārya, Jīva Gosvāmī very convincingly and lucidly elaborates the essential reality of Bhagavān
 - The fundamental characteristic of Bhagavān is that He is the Supreme Person with His variegated potencies that are **INHERENT** in Him.
 - They are not superimposed on Him as a result of *upādhi*, or limitation due to contact with the ignorance (*avidyā*) of Māyā.
 - These potencies can neither overpower Him nor can they act or exist independent of Him. Rather, they are subservient to Him.
 - Moreover, despite their paradoxical nature, His potencies coexist in Him, and function in perfect harmony with each other.

To prove the intrinsic and inconceivable
nature of these potencies in Bhagavān,
Jīva Gosvāmī cites verses spoken by
Pippalāyana to King Nimi (*SB* 11.3.37)
and Parāsara Muni to Maitreya
(*Viṣṇu-Purāṇa* 1.3.1-2)

सत्त्वं रजस्तम इति त्रिवृदेकमादौ सूत्रं महानहमिति प्रवदन्ति जीवम् ।
ज्ञानक्रियार्थफलरूपतयोरुशक्तिर्ब्रह्मैव भाति सदसच् च तयोः परं यत् ॥

“Originally one, the Absolute, Brahman, comes to be known as threefold, manifesting itself as the three modes of material nature — goodness, passion and ignorance. Brahman further expands its potency, and thus the power to act and the power of consciousness become manifest, along with the false ego, which covers the identity of the conditioned living being. Thus, by the expansion of the multi-potencies of the Absolute, the demigods, as the embodiment of knowledge, become manifest, along with the material senses, their objects, and the results of material activity, namely happiness and distress. In this way the manifestation of the material world takes place as the subtle cause and as the material effect visible in the appearance of gross material objects. Brahman, which is the source of all subtle and gross manifestations, is simultaneously transcendental to them, being absolute.” (SB 11.3.37)

- Brahman alone exists, inherently self-endowed with great potency, *uru-śakti*, which means that it encompasses variegated potencies within its essential nature.
- In what form do all these manifestations of Brahman exist? The sage Pippalāyana responds, “in the form of cognition, actions, objects, and consequences” (*jñāna-kriyā-artha-phala-rupatayā*).
- *Jñāna-śakti* \Rightarrow *mahat-tattva* (the cosmic intellect); *kriyā-śakti* \Rightarrow *sūtra* (primordial nature when it first becomes active); *artha* (objects) \Rightarrow *tan-mātras* (the subtle and gross material elements)
- Brahman \Rightarrow 3-fold (*trivṛt*) *guṇas* of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* \Rightarrow *sūtra* & *matat-tattva* \Rightarrow false ego (bodily conception of life as “I & me” principle) in three *guṇas*

- *SB 11-3.37* further explains how this cosmic manifestation proceeds from Bhagavān. Before creations, only He existed and only He will exist after the dissolution
 - *Aham sarvasya prabhavo... & aham evāsam evāgre...*
 - The principle implication that Jīva draws from this verse is that potencies are inherent or intrinsic, significantly in Brahman rather than Bhagavān. ∴ His potencies must originate in Him
 - Since He alone existed before cosmic manifestation, it is understood that His abode and associates were with Him, as they are manifestation of His internal potency.

निर्गुणस्याप्रमेयस्य शुद्धस्याप्यमलात्मनः ।
कथं सर्गादिकर्तृत्वं ब्रह्मणोऽभ्युपगम्यते ॥ ७८ ॥

Maitreya Muni inquired:

Brahman is free of material qualities, immeasurable, completely pure and spotless in essence. How then can we attribute to it the agency behind creation, maintenance and dissolution of the world? (VP 1.3.1)⁸

Śrī Parāśara replied:

शक्तयः सर्वभावानामचिन्त्यज्ञानगोचराः ।
यतोऽतो ब्रह्मणस्तास्तु सर्गाद्या भावशक्तयः
भवन्ति तपसां श्रेष्ठ पावकस्य यथोष्णता ॥

“O best of the ascetics, the energies of all existent objects are inconceivable but perceptible by intuitive knowledge, just like heat in fire. Similarly, know that Brahman’s energies, such as its creative power, are inconceivable and beyond human intelligence.”

- In his response, Parāsara Muni begins by establishing that Brahman has inconceivable potencies from which form, variety and action manifest, which are transcendental, eternal and unlimited; albeit, that is well beyond our experience.
- Śrīdhara Svāmī's comments:
 - *Nirguṇasya* = no material qualities; *aprameyasya* = not limited by space and time constraints; *śuddhasya* = w/out a body; *amalātmā* = free from any effects of pious or impious acts, or impurities like attachment and repulsion ⇒ How could Brahman with this description be the agent behind the creation of the universe?

- Parāśara Muni clarifies the doubt
 - The energies of the existential objects (*śaktyaḥ sarva-bhāvānām*), such as gems or *mantras*, are inconceivable but perceptible (*acintya-jñāna-gocarāḥ*) \Rightarrow the most crucial aspect of the understanding of the Absolute as Personal God.
 - It was Jīva who first coined the phrase “*acintya-bheda-abheda*, or inconceivable simultaneous oneness and different,” the doctrine of Caitanya Mahāprabhu.
- Śrīdhara Svāmī’s two definitions of “*acintya-jñāna-gocarāḥ*, or inconceivable but perceptible”
 - i. *acintya-jñāna* = knowledge beyond logic (energy as an example).
 - ii. Based on our inability to comprehend how energy is related to its energetic source, whether as one with, or different from it. Yet, energy is accepted on the authority of presumption (*arthāpatti*), which means we assume a cause by seeing its effect.

- The Absolute is that all-inclusive Reality in which all contradictions and opposing potentialities exist in perfect harmony \Rightarrow Qualities of both form and formless inherently coexist in the AT, even though it is inconceivable to our own experience in the material world.
- Next, Parāśara Muni establishes that these potencies naturally belong to Brahman (or Bhagavān)
 - His energies do not deteriorate or dissipation like heat
 - “Material nature, which is one of My energies, is working under My direction, O son of Kunti, producing all moving and non-moving beings...”

Jīva's own analysis on those verses and commentary from both viewpoints...

Positive

1. **Proposition:** Brahman possesses natural potency
2. **Reason:** Because it is a reality
3. **Universal proposition:** Every real object, such as fire, possesses potency
4. **Application:** Brahman is a real entity
5. **Conclusion:** Therefore, it has natural potency

Negative

1. **Proposition:** Brahman is not devoid of natural potency
2. **Reason:** Because it is not an unreal entity
3. **Universal proposition:** Only unreal entities, like the horns of a rabbit, do not have natural potency
4. **Application:** Brahman is not an unreal entity
5. **Conclusion:** Therefore, it is not devoid of natural potency

■ Jīva establishes the following conclusive points:

1. Bhagavān is a person.
2. He is naturally endowed with energy.
3. Inconceivably, His energies are simultaneously one with, and different from Him.
4. His energies cannot be subdued by anything or anyone.
5. He creates, maintains and destroys the cosmos, but is never influenced by it.
6. His energy manifests as internal, intermediary, and external.
7. Potency and potent are simultaneously inconceivably one & distinct.
8. The various energies of the Lord work in their respective domains and do not have any negative influence on Him.
9. When the intermediary energy is not in contact with the internal potency, it is covered by the external potency.
10. The external energy brings forth matter, which is inert and mutable.

Bhagavān has both conscious (*cit*) and inert (*acit*) potencies (TEXT 17)

- Jīva Gosvāmī now explains that Brahman's three natural, intrinsic potencies fall into two categories as follows:
 - Internal, or *svarūpa-śakti*
 - Intermediary, or *taṭastha-śakti* (the *jīvātmās*)
 - External, or *māyā-śakti* \Rightarrow *acit*, or inert
- } cit, or
conscious
- This clearly opposes the theory that the AT is the formless, impotent, indistinguishable, all-pervading Brahman.
 - Rather, Brahman is the particular realization of Bhagavān in which one does not distinctively perceive His energies.

- Jīva quotes, rather interestingly, the demon Hiranyakaśipu, as evidence that the Lord has both conscious and inert potencies
 - The demon, eulogizing Brahmā as the supreme controller, spoke in this way: “[I offer my obeisances] to the Lord who has conscious and inert potencies.” (7.3.34)
- Significantly, Jīva also makes a point that a conscious entity can only emanate from, and be supported by, another conscious entity. Consciousness ≠ combination of inert material elements.
- To study Bhagavān’s internal, *svarūpa-śakti*, of which we cannot have any kind of comprehension by our sense perception, Jīva first gives a description of the external energy as a basis for comparison.

- Jīva cites two verses from *Viṣṇu-Purāṇa* that name the two energies, internal and external, as *parā-śakti* (infinite or superior), and *aparā-śakti* (finite or inferior), respectively. Prahlāda Mahārāja happens to be the speaker of these verses.

सर्वभूतेषु सर्वात्मन् या शक्तिरपरा तव ।
गुणाश्रया नमस्तस्यै शाश्वतायै सुरेश्वर ॥ ८५ ॥
यातीतगोचरा वाचां मनसां चाविशेषणा ।
ज्ञानिज्ञानपरिच्छेद्या वन्दे तामीश्वरीं पराम् ॥ ८६ ॥ इति ।

O Supreme Self of all selves! O controller of the gods! I bow down to Your eternal inferior potency, the support of the three *guṇas*, which exists in all beings. I further worship Your all powerful infinite potency, which is a goddess beyond the reach of word, mind and sense objects, devoid of distinguishing characteristics, and which illuminates the wisdom of the wise. (VP 1.19.76–77)³

- The material energy (*māyā*) is also eternal, *śāsvata*.

- *Māyā* cannot directly associate with, or influence the Lord, nor His internal, *svarūpa-śakti*