

# The Journey of Consciousness

We are all basically consciousness. Our original nature is pure, unadulterated truth—consciousness—presence. These are all words describing the same quality. But initially consciousness had no identity, no sense of itself. It was pure, wide-open consciousness. It only began to experience itself when it descended out of its original quiescent condition into domains of greater and greater density of matter. Then it became identified with matter, forgot its original nature, and identified with each material form it merged with. At the culmination of this evolutionary process it became a human being who woke up in matter, matter waking up to itself. Consciousness believes it is its thoughts, its body, its feelings, its sensations, its story, and its beliefs. Over many lifetimes eventually this identification with matter gradually weakens until it begins to disengage. The Bhagavad Gita begins at this point. It maps the final stages of the spiritual journey where the human with self-awareness turns its attention inward to its source. But first we will set the stage for the Gita by creating an overall context.

## A Map of the Journey

Sat Shree has mapped the entire Journey of Consciousness that is based on his direct experience. It is like a story, a useful story, what you might call a theory of everything. We are all the byproducts of a purposeful evolutionary process. There are fundamental stages, forces, and mechanisms that define this journey and lie behind the veil of our ordinary consciousness. These cannot be seen because of a veil of ignorance that shrouds us all. Having correct information about these things can thin this veil and allow us to be collaborate in this miraculous revelation of the inherent possibility we all carry.

There are four stages in this Journey of Consciousness: the Descent into Creation, the Evolution, the Return Journey, and the Manifestation. In Sat Shree's cosmology there are four primal structures of the one Original Reality that together are the cause of existence and that hold things in place. They are Sat, Tat, Chit, and Ananda. These structures are the scaffolding by which the purpose can manifest itself into creation.

**Sat** is the Absolute. It is beyond all qualities. It cannot be described other than THAT which allows Existence. The nature of the Sat is that by itself it does nothing, ever. It is the foundation. It is the nothing for the everything, the light on the screen that allows the movie. It is like an explosion of consciousness that is about ready to happen. It is a huge potentiality. It is the Self-Existing Existence. Not separate from the Sat is the Asat, like the light and dark side of the moon. They are in fact the same thing. In the timeless now the Asat and the Sat opened and became as two. In the breach between the two came a tension in which all of existence came into being.

The Asat is the dark version of the Sat, the inherent potentiality of consciousness lost in matter, completely embedded in the densest, most inconscient, most unconscious condition of existence, and struggling to reemerge through evolution.

**Tat** is Creation. It holds the space for the manifestation of the infinite potentiality of the Sat. It is the domain of all Matter. It is Duality, Space and Time, Cause and Effect. It holds it all together, allowing what we know as manifest existence.

**Chit** is consciousness. It is the radiant manifestation of the Sat into the Tat. It is the Shakti, the animating force of Creation. When Chit becomes entangled with Tat it manifests all the living forms and is the evolutionary force that eventually allows matter to wake up and become an individual self-aware soul or being.

**Ananda** is the enchantment of Existence. It is the Chit (consciousness) which experiences the Ananda. Ananda isn't just bliss. It is every moment when the consciousness encounters something other than itself. It loves to know and experience and make sense of it. It wants to figure out how to stay in Ananda forever.

## The Stages of The Journey

There are four stages of the Journey of Consciousness. From the moment of its separation from the Sat, the Chit has been seeking a way back to its original state. But it has done so by looking outwardly for answers. It has no reference point, no basis for knowing where else to look. So it seeks to find its way in the outward domains of experience. This movement of seeking is the manifesting force of creation. This force wants to exist, to experience, and to know. Its purpose is *to be*; to learn, to evolve, and ultimately to *wake up* to its original nature.

The first stage of the journey is the Descent into Creation. The second stage is the Evolution, which develops more and more sophisticated vehicles for experience. The third stage is the Return Journey where the Chit returns to its source. In this stage the Chit turns inward and begins to experience the Sat directly. The last stage is the Manifestation, wherein the awakened Chit consciously descends into Creation to assist in the manifestation of the Original Intent.

### 1. Descent

In this first phase Consciousness expands, entangling itself with itself, creating what we call the states of consciousness—the domains of existence that eventually materialize in the physical world. These states range from subtle to gross. Those closer to the Sat are extremely subtle; those farther from the Sat take on density, shape, and form—the archetypes that in later stages form the physical creation as we know it.

### 2. Evolution

There are three stages of the evolutionary process: the formation of Matter, Life, and Mind. Each builds on the other. Together they form the basis of the Creation.

**Matter.** In the first stage, raw consciousness entangles itself, creating more and more density and eventually precipitating into subatomic particles, then atoms, and then more and more complex atomic structures, leading to the phenomena of compounds such as chemicals and minerals. This leads to the creation of the physical universe. Consciousness is in its raw primal condition an utterly unconscious condition.

**Life.** With Matter, consciousness now has the foundation for the next stage of evolution, the development of the living principle of existence. Consciousness now strives further, creating the early compounds of organic material. Creation bursts into innumerable forms, seeking to discover how to manifest the unlimited potentialities inherent in Sat. Increasingly complex life forms emerge, forming an enormous range of organic, plant, then animal life—each iteration becoming more sophisticated, building on previous experiments.

**Mind.** Mind developed as an inherent organizing principle imbedded in the Original Intent of the Sat to exist, to experience, to learn and finally to wake up. This Mind principle developed concurrently with the development of Matter and Life. In the process, primitive mind came into existence. Viruses, bacteria, DNA, amino acids, cells, and more all “held” this organizing principle we are calling Mind, allowing for the lessons of the exuberant experimentation of creation to be recorded and stored for future use.

In this way, Life evolved further, creating distinct independent species, each with an imperative to survive and succeed in fulfilling the unique opportunity it carried. Over time, Nature, as the expression of Chit, came closer to creating an organism capable of manifesting consciousness. This process completed itself in the human being—an independent, self-aware vehicle for consciousness. With us, Nature has created a vehicle that can fulfill the Original Intent.

### **3. Return Journey**

When Consciousness wakes up as a human being, a fundamental shift occurs in the Journey of Consciousness. Consciousness has fulfilled the Original Intent. It now has an enormous capacity to experience and to learn. It now exists as an awake self-aware individual with apparent free will and choice. All this arises due to the incredible sophistication and complexity of the human body. Chit—consciousness—has awakened as each one of us, but it is utterly identified with the human vehicle it occupies. Now it must dismantle its identification with the human form in which it woke up before it can begin the Return Journey. It does this by awakening to the soul within and undoing its identification with the personality, the body, and the life in which it awoke.

### **4. Manifestation**

In rare cases when an individual soul has completed the journey and merged with the Sat it returns to Creation to perform some mission. These souls are the great realized beings or avatars such as Christ, Buddha, Krishna, and Muhammad that came to serve mankind. These beings accelerate the evolutionary process for the whole creation. Many advanced souls also may reincarnate to do some specific work or fulfill some important function before they complete the

journey. These are the teachers, realized beings, saints, and gurus of the world.

## **The Gita's Map of Awakening**

This last leg of the Journey of Consciousness, the return journey, is where the Bhagavad Gita begins. The Bhagavad Gita describes the twists and turns of our return journey back to the original purity of what we are. It is a scripture based on revelations seen by ancient Indian rishis about the nature of reality. This return journey is a natural process, something we all go through whether we are aware of it or not. It has a beginning, a middle, and an end in the same way that a seed planted in the ground first has to emerge from the seed as a root, striving without knowing it is striving in the darkness and the mud, until it breaks through the surface and then experiences the dimension of air and sun and warmth and a whole new paradigm opens up. We are all in a maturation process. We are all seeds that have sent out shoots and have been growing over lifetimes, maturing and developing.

### **The Return Journey**

The Gita maps this last stage of the Journey of Consciousness. We are all consciousness. We are not who we think we are. We are not our story. We are not our memory. We are not our body. We are not our moods or feelings or thoughts. Those are only a byproduct of us as consciousness having gotten tangled up with matter. We are all born into life in the middle of things. We are born in the middle of family and culture and circumstance.

During the return journey, this entanglement of you as consciousness becomes disentangled over time and you recover what you always were. We quit struggling to be on the surface of life. We quit treading water. Finally exhausted, we start falling back into our original nature. But the ego fears this process; it keeps struggling because it only knows itself when it is on the surface. As it starts descending into the less known parts of itself it is afraid that it will die. So this journey can also be seen as a process of descending, of letting go, and falling back into our original condition. The return journey has a number of stages.

### **The Stages of the Bhagavad Gita**

The Gita describes each stage of the final leg of the spiritual journey toward awakening as a shift in perspective, a fundamental change in one's reality. This shift happens as we learn to respond effectively to the lessons life is continuously providing: to make the necessary sacrifices, to be determined, to move forward with

what we know to be true. In the process our conditioned inherited patterns are shed. These shifts are signs that we are tapping into the foundational source of being. The Universe is always working to manifest itself through each of us. It shows what needs to be seen and gives us the clarity and strength to meet the lessons as they arise.

The Gita describes the four stages of our return journey. Chapters 1 through 6 deal with the struggle of the individual identity separating itself from its own personal issues—a movement from the individual personal into the individual impersonal. It involves a stepping out of taking everything personally and stepping back and developing some ability to witness. These first six chapters take us to a state of the being or the Self—Self-realization. We engage in a process aimed at becoming stable in the knowing that we are not our thoughts, we are that which has thoughts; we are not our feelings, we are that which has feelings; we are not our body, we are that which has a body.

The second stage, described in Chapters 7 through 12, is when consciousness begins to merge with the universal principles of itself. We begin to experience more universal domains, more shared archetypal structures of the formation of consciousness of which as individuals we only have a piece. We move into the individual universal. We begin to have a greater sense that we are a reflection of the whole, a piece of the whole. Our anger, our fear, our need to be right, our hatred, our love is shared by everyone. As we merge into the universal principles, much bigger forces start working in our system. We eventually wake up to consciousness no longer as an individual but as consciousness that exists everywhere all at once. This is the state of Oneness.

Chapters 13 through 15 represent the third stage of the journey. At first there is a process of integration of the awakened individual with the universal states of being. One then becomes a channel and/or an instrument for the universe to manifest Itself both through us and as us. That point culminates in Chapter 15, called Purushottama Yoga, The Yoga of the Supreme Being. This state when consciousness merges with its origin is utterly indescribable. In this state, one becomes capable of shifting the collective consciousness from the inside out. Most souls end their journey there.

A few will come back into the world to manifest that complete integral wisdom into their personality, body, emotions, and mind. This is the final stage that the Gita points to in Chapters 16 through 18. These are the great teachers. They are shown the aspects of the collective unconsciousness that is obscured and which resists its evolutionary purpose. From that place of Absolute Truth they recover their ability over time to descend back into the world and act as a personal individual while concurrently remaining universal and impersonal. They integrate all the experiences and openings that have occurred in their consciousness, making it real, making it lived. And then their body becomes a portal for universal forces to work through their individual form.