

PRANAVA-VĀDA
BY
GĀRGYĀYANA.

PREFACE

(by Gārgyāyana).

This preface is more in the nature of a table of contents than a *bhūmikā* proper, a 'ground-plan,' a foundation, an introduction showing the position of the subject-matter of the work among other subjects. The reason for this is that the work treats of the A U M, which (as has of course to be shown in the book) includes *everything*; and the *relative* words, ground-plan and super-structure, indicative of separate and mutually exclusive position are inappropriate in consequence; thus, the word 'ground-plan' would indicate something not included in, but outside of and leading up to the work.

I. The first section of the work deals with the synthesis and the analysis of the constituents of A U M. The A signifies *Ātmanā*, the Self, by opposition to the unity of which all the multitude of particulars is derived. For this very reason have we to begin with the *Ātmanā*. For, though it is true that the three constituents

of the AUM are in constant conjunction, and there cannot be any *order* of precedence and succedence between things thus constantly conjoined, still, the *description* of even such things belongs inevitably to the realm of the successive. And if we must begin with some one thing, and pass on in succession to talk of others, and cannot talk of all things at once, then the Self, the nearest to us, is naturally the most appropriate with which to make a commencement.

Having begun with the Self, we pass on to the Not-Self, indicated by the U, and then to the relation between them, the relation of Negation of one another, denoted by the M. The Necessity, the Energy, the principle of the successive conjunction and disjunction of the Self and the Not-Self in and by the Negation, is expressed by the symbolic letter I, which lies hidden in the other three, in coalescence with them, in universal world-fact as well as in the particular language of Samskr̥t according to the archaic rules of its grammar.¹

¹See *infra*, Section III, Ch. XVIII, for an explanation of this. It should be noted that the I mentioned here is not the English word I, meaning the Self, but the Samskr̥t letter, इ, in the same way as A, U, and M, are the Samskr̥t अ, उ, म, which in their coalescence make up the sacred sound ॐ, AUM, generally pronounced OM.

These four, A, U, M, and I, which together make up AUM, respectively correspond to cognition, desire, action, and the summation of them all. And because the first section of this work treats in a general way of these all-embracing facts, therefore it may be said to include in itself all the contents of the whole work.

Having given the general outlines of the nature of the three patent factors of the AUM, the first section goes on to lay down some wide-reaching principles.

The nature of the AUM is transcendental. It is comparable to the World-process with which, indeed, it is, in a certain sense, identical, because it transcends all limitations, and the *whole* of its contents and details is *endless*, and may not be encompassed by any finite individual. Gods upon gods, Mahā-Viṣṇu and ever higher and higher deities, comprehend only larger and larger masses of it in an endless seeking.

This illimitability of the succession of the World-process is but a reflexion, in the Many, of the unlimitedness, the transcendence of all limitations, of the One Self. And this illimitability appears and reappears in each atom, each one of the many, so that it is impossible to fix a first beginning and a last end for anything.

The Science of the AUM, the order of succession of its three factors, is coeval with the

World-process and comes down to us by a beginningless tradition. Mahā-Viṣṇu himself first learnt the A, and then the other letters, and then the words formed out of them, all preceded by the AUM. All the shāstras, sciences, begin with it. Hence the study of the AUM should precede every other study. And therein, again, precedence should be given to the study of the prakṛti, i. e. the original, simple, unmodified nature of the constituents, and sequence given to the study of their sandhi or coalescence. Hence this first section is named the *Sandhi-Prakṛti-Prakaraṇa*.

II. The principles, causes, or natural constitutions, which result in yoga or mutual relation, and the prakāra or manner of these conjunctions and interdependences, between all things, despite their vibhāga or separateness, are dealt with in the second section called the *Yoga-Prakāra-Prakaraṇa*. The order or succession which is implied in these relations, and the methods and laws which in turn are implied in the succession, are also dealt with. And cognition and desire are also treated of in connexion with them.

III. The third section, the *Kriyā-Prakaraṇa*, is the largest in the work. It covers three-fourths of the whole and is sub-divided into many parts and chapters. It deals with action,

which presupposes cognition and desire. And for this same reason, in this section, the whole circle of knowledge and all the shāstras or sciences are outlined. The seed and origin of all things whatsoever that are to be found in the World-process is traced back into the AUM, and shown as present in the interplay of the Self and the Not-Self, the Limited and the Unlimited; and, finally, the nature of action and reaction, actor, instrument, object, motive, etc., is explained.

In connexion with the element of knowledge or cognition involved in action, there are described herein the successive evolution, from the AUM, of the *Gāyatrī* and the *Mahā-vākyas*, the *Veḍas*, the *Aṅgas*, the *Upāṅgas*, etc. Then follow considerations as to volition, i. e., desire in action, active desire. Then numbers are spoken of as lying at the root of manifest action proper, the creation of the worlds. Afterwards, the seven root-elements, their qualities and activities, and their dissolution and repeated formation are mentioned.

IV. The section following the above, called the *Sṛṣṭy-aikaśeshika-Prakaraṇa*, very briefly mentions the broad outlines of the evolution of our own particular world-system, our brahmanḍa, in the mineral, the vegetable, the animal with their chitrās (pictures, shadows,

or astral duplicates), the *chandrātmā*¹ (lunar?) and two other intervening kingdoms, and finally the human kingdom. It touches upon the constitution of the human organism also. The subtler or elemental evolutions preceding the mineral are only passingly alluded to.

V. The fifth section is entitled the *Manṭavy-Āmanṭavya-Prakarana*, the thinkable and the unthinkable, or the believable and the unbelievable. It discusses the nature of existence and non-existence, transcendence (of the experiential or empirical, the concrete, the limited, the particular and successive), and non-transcendence, necessity and non-necessity, *i. e.*, chance or accidentality or contingency, etc., and explains what to believe and do, and also how (from the standpoint of the whole) there is nothing unbelievable or undoable. It points out how everything whatsoever has its own proper place in the Universal Nature of Brahman, the Absolute, and how separateness is included in the Non-separate.

¹ The theosophical books give seven kingdoms in the chain of globes in which our earth forms one; three elemental kingdoms—in which matter is being shaped into the requisite density and acquires the necessary attributes for the visible kingdoms—one mineral kingdom, one vegetable, one animal, one human. It is not clear what is meant by the

VI. In the last section the oneness of all things is shown. All acts and facts are synthesised in the One. *Mokṣha*, liberation, is explained as being the abolition and Negation of all the 'particulars' of the World-process in the fullness, the allness and the unity of the Self. The *mukṭa*, the liberated, the emancipated, realises the mutual abolition of all things by each other in pairs.

VII. The whole of the work may be regarded as the completing seventh which sums up all the six sections.

The immediate occasion for the composition of the work of which the contents have been indicated above may now be noted.

The Science of the *Praṇava* is necessary at the very outset of all study, because only by means of it are the reconciliation and synthesis of all sciences possible. Without the help of this supreme and all comprehensive science, the various sciences, which are but parts of it, appear as disjointed, separate, independent and even mutually contradictory, as is shown in the *Nyāya* system of philosophy. For *Chandrātmā* and two other kingdoms, between the animal and the human; allusion may possibly be made here to the Lunar Piṭṛs, who gave their *chhāyās* as model for the human form, since they may be said to intervene, in a sense, between the animal and the human kingdoms. (A. B.)

this reason larger and smaller works on the Science of the AUM have been written and used in all times, according to the needs and capacities of the races concerned, and the special requirements of each cycle. *Praᅇava-vivēchinī*, *Praᅇava-prabhā*, and *Praᅇava-praᅇī-pīkā* are previous works on the same subject, of very small extent and fit for the study of children. There is the great *Praᅇavārᅇava*¹ also on the other hand. The present work named *Praᅇava-vāᅇa*, has an extent of sixteen thousand shloka-measures,² and has been written in order to convey to youthful students some general knowledge of the science so far as I myself have been able feebly to gather it from ancient works.

I pray that the many shortcomings of the work be forgiven and I earnestly exhort all to study this illuminating science, in some way or other, as it is the very root of the knowledge contained in the *Veᅇas* with their *Āᅇgas* and *Upāᅇgas* and is the only means of realising the true Unity of all things and beings.

¹Said by Pt. ᅇhanarāja to be the work of Shiva himself and to extend over two hundred thousand shloka-measures.

²A 'shloka-measure' technically means thirty-two syllables; four quarters, of eight syllables each, make up one shloka in the anushtup metre, which is the most common in Samskrᅇ literature.