

The Ancient Wisdom, *The Path of Discipleship*, and *In the Outer Court* were important starting points for the following investigation into the possible sources of the elements and structures, both Theosophical and Indian, that crystallized in Annie Besant's early Theosophy. These three works provide an exhaustive account of Besant's concept of the "Quickening of Evolution" and the stages of initiation. The three books have been read closely, with particular attention paid to all references to and quotations from other works. In total, some fifty references to other Theosophical books can be found in these three texts, for the most part to the writing of Blavatsky. Ten of these are references to or direct quotes from the first volume of *The Secret Doctrine*, accompanied by a single quote from the second volume and about five references to the third. The third volume of *The Secret Doctrine* was edited by Besant. Further research may well reveal that much of the content of the third volume of *The Secret Doctrine* was in fact written by Besant herself, although any such supposition must remain speculative for now. In addition to Besant's references to *The Secret Doctrine*, about seven references to and quotes from *The Voice of the Silence* appear in our three texts. There are also a number of references to Alfred Percy Sinnett's works (one to *The Occult World* and three to *The System to Which we Belong*), three references to works by Charles Webster Leadbeater, three to George Robert Stow Mead, and six references to other Theosophists, among them T. Subba Row and Mohini Mohun Chatterji.

Alongside this seemingly large number of references to Theosophical writings stand more than a hundred references to non-Theosophical texts. These references can be categorized into five groups: those to 1) Indian religions, 2) other Asian religions, mainly to the Chinese and Zoroastrian religious traditions, 3) Judeo-Christian tradition, 4) European Philosophy, mainly Neoplatonists, and 5) European science. References to South Asian scriptures are by far the largest group, with more than sixty references to Indian scriptures, especially to the *Upaniṣads* and the *Bhagavadgītā*.

During my research into Annie Besant's early Theosophical thought, a close examination of all the references to and quotations from other works has led me to conclude that the South Asian scriptures and Blavatsky's *The Voice of the Silence* were the major sources for elements and structures that were de- and recontextualized, as well as translated into, her concept of the "Quickening of Evolution." Analyzing these references in relation to Indian Theosophists such as Rama Misra Shastree, Manilal Dvivedi, and T. Subba Row will show that Dvivedi played a crucial role in the formation of the Theosophical conception of initiation, especially as it appears in the oeuvres of Blavatsky and Besant. Furthermore, consideration of the *Sanātana Dharma Text Books* also helps to cast light on the importance of the references to the Indian scriptures. These works provide points of reference for

the encounters within the Indian Middle Class and the subsequent movements of elements and structures in multifaceted hybridization processes, some of which will be analyzed in more detail below.¹ The references mentioned, as well as the elements and structures which resurface in Annie Besant’s early Theosophy and in the *Sanâtana Dharma Text Books*, can be understood as traces of hybridizations. In this section I will follow these traces.

¹ This does not mean that the other references are irrelevant and that there are no influences from Christianity, Kabbalah, Western Science, etc., in Besant’s writings, but to discuss these influences in more depth would require a separate monograph. For the time being, a proper treatment of this topic must, thus, remain a research desideratum. What I attempt to do here is to map out the hybridization processes involved in the formation of the concept of initiation as it appears in Annie Besant’s writings.