

A HALF-YEARLY JOURNAL OF ADVAITA - VEDĀNTA

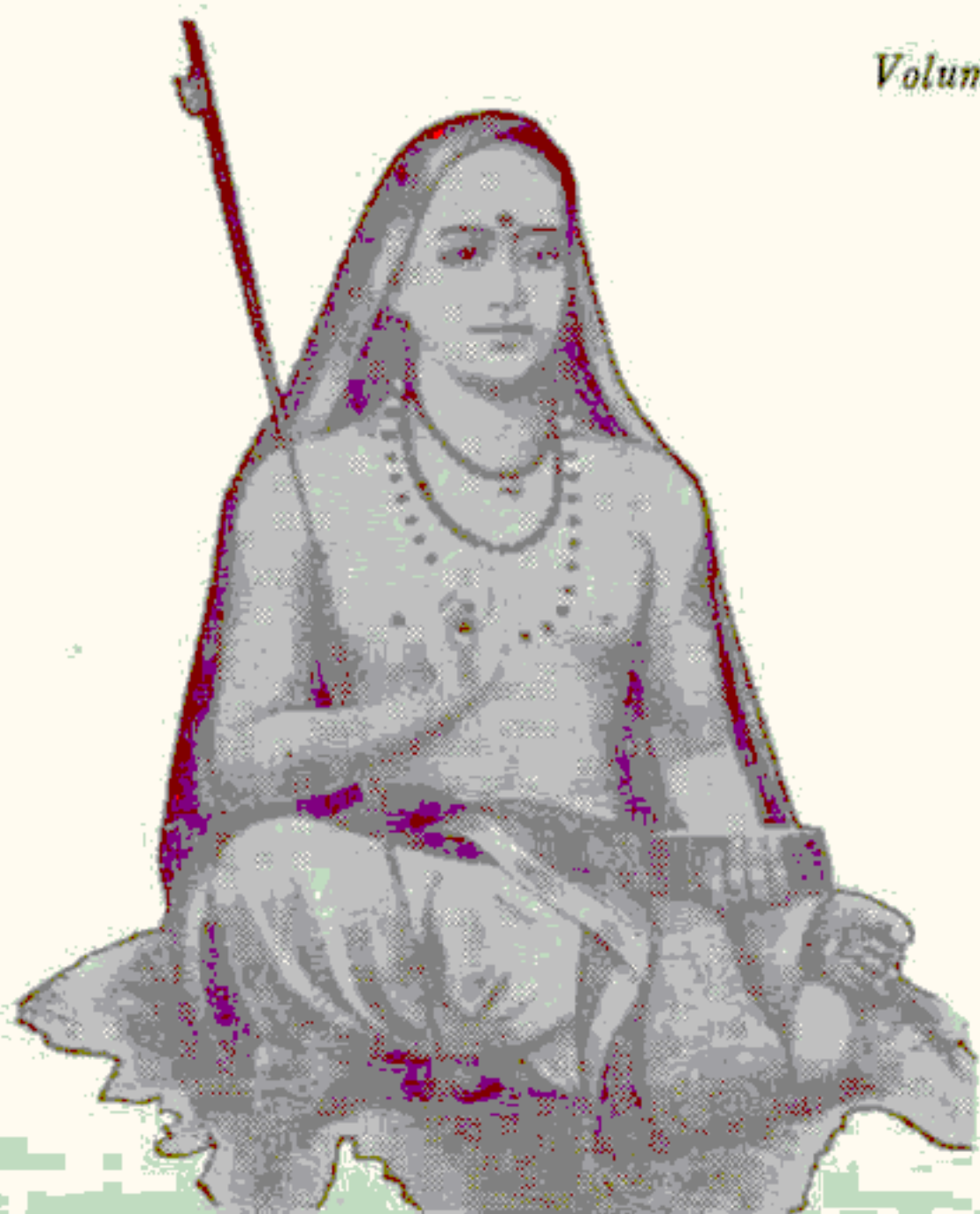
The VOICE of ŚĀṆKARA

śaṅkara-bhāratī

Chairman, Advisory Board
V. R. Kalvanayandera Sastri

Editor
N. C. Krishnan

Volume SEVENTEEN
Number ONE



January

1992

eṣā śaṅkara-bhāratī vijayate
nirvāṇa-sandāyini

victorious is the voice of śaṅkara,
leading, as it does, to liberation

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HOMAGE TO ŚAṆKARA

[148]

वाचोऽपि चित्तासहिता न हि यत्र गन्तुं
शक्यन्ति तद्विषयतां कथमेति वस्तु ।
त्यक्त्वा कृपां गुरुवरस्य हि चित्स्वरूप
श्रीशंकरार्यं मम देहि पदावलम्बम् ॥

*vāco'pi cittasahitā na hi yatra gantum
śaksyanti tadviṣayatām kathameti vastu
tyaktvā kṛpām guruvarasya hi citsvarūpa
śrīśaṅkarārya! mama dehi padāvalambam.*

Oh Śrī Śaṅkara! Oh Lord of the form of knowledge itself! without the grace (compassion) of the great Master, neither words even along with mind could be able to comprehend that supreme Self (Brahman), nor any object could obtain that Self. So, Oh Śaṅkara! prithee, kindly give me the support of your divine pair of feet.

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जाड्याम्बुधौ निरवधौ दृढमग्नमग्न-
 मत्यन्तविस्मृतचिदात्मसुखस्वरूपम् ।
 उद्धृत्य धीरशनया तरसा कृपाब्धे
 श्रीशंकरार्य मम देहि पदावलम्बम् ॥

*jādyāmbudhau niravadhau dṛḍhamagnamagnam-
 atyanta-vismṛta-cidātma-sukhasvarūpam
 uddhṛtya dhīraśanayā tarasā kṛpābdhe!
 śrīśaṅkarārya! mama dehi padāvalambam.*

Oh Śrī Śaṅkara! I request you to kindly lift up me at once using the rope of wisdom (by enlightening me to hold fast to the path of knowledge), me - (i) who am drowned fully in the unfathomable deep ocean of ignorance (*jādyā*), and (ii) who have forgotten altogether the Self that is itself knowledge and bliss; and thus, Oh Śrī Śaṅkara, offer me the support of your holy pair of feet.

Jagadguru Śrī Saccidānanda Śivābhinava Nṛsiṃhabhāratī
 in *Śrīśaṅkarācāryapadāvalambastava*

ŚRĪ ŚAṄKĀRA AND THE SIX SUB-FAITHS OF THEISTIC HINDUISM — II*

Jogadguru Śrī Candrasekharendra Sarasvatī

Śāktam: The Faith of Śakti

The Absolute is *pūrṇa*, full and limitless. The *prapañca* (universe) which is infinitely varied, is also limitless. Even if the limitless *prapañca* is taken away from the limitless Supreme, the limitless Supreme will remain intact. This truth is stated in an Upaniṣad *mantra*.

If 2 is divided by 2, the quotient is 1. With 2 as the dividend, if the divisor is progressively reduced as 1, or $\frac{1}{2}$ or $\frac{1}{4}$ etc., the quotient will be respectively 2 or 4 or 8, etc. Thus as the divisor becomes less and less, the quotient will become more and more. When the divisor is the least, that is infinitesimal, approximating to zero, the quotient will be infinity.

We multiply the quotient with the divisor and check up whether the resulting is equivalent to the divi-

*Courtesy : *Śaṅkara and Śaṅmata* — Souvenir published in connection with the Conference on “Śaṅkara and Śaṅmata” held in Madras from June 1-June 9, 1960.

dend. In this division of any number by zero the number that is dividend stands for the *prapañca* (the pluralistic universe of infinite variety), the divisor zero stands for *māyā* (or the creative power of the Absolute which causes this pluralistic appearance) and the quotient infinite, is the absolute Brahman. For the purpose of creating the *prapañca*, which is the dividend, Brahman, which is the quotient, multiples itself by *māyā*, which is the divisor. Even as 1 divided by zero, or 2 divided by zero, or 3 divided by zero, will give the same quotient, when the Infinite is multiplied by zero, it is indeterminate, and therefore, it can take the values, 1, 2, 3 etc., numbers connoting difference and therefore, standing for the plurality of the world. The *Upaniṣad* says that the one Absolute determined to become many, and for that purpose, it associated itself with *māyā*, and became many.

When any number is multiplied by zero the product is also zero. That is: the significance of the saying that the *prapañca* which is the product of Brahman and *māyā*, is also *māyā*.

The Divine Mother is the Creative Principle of the Universe, the *Māyā* or *Śakti* aspect of Brahman, which makes the Infinite One, appear as the Infinite Many. She presents the formless Supreme in finite forms. It is only by Her grace that one can transcend the *māyā* and obtain the advaitic realisation of the One without a second.

There are ten main *Upaniṣads* and one of them is *Kena Upaniṣad*. In this *Upaniṣad* a truth expounded by the *Vedas* is explained by means of a story. According to this story, the *devas* (celestial beings) once decided

to celebrate their victory over the *asuras* (demons). At this festival, all the *devas* were filled with a feeling of self-importance and pride in their own prowess. To cure them of their egoism, God appeared in the form of a *Yakṣa*, a bright apparition which touched the earth below and the heavens above. The identity of this phenomenon, the *devas* were unable to comprehend. Agni (Fire) was sent to find what it was. To a question from the *Yakṣa*, Agni said that he was *Jātavedas* having the power to reduce anything and everything to ashes. Thereupon the *Yakṣa* threw in front of Agni a blade of grass and asked him to consume it. Even though Agni concentrated all his powers, he was unable to burn it. He came back humbled. Similarly *Vāyu* or *Mātarisvā* also failed to move the blade of grass, even though he concentrated all his fury to blow it off. Finally *Indra*, the Lord of the *devas*, approached the *Yakṣa*. The apparition vanished and before the crest-fallen *Indra* stood the form of a damsel whose lustre illumined the entire place. She was no other than *Umā* or *Haimavatī*, the Divine Mother, from whom everyone and everything derive sustenance. This *Jyoti-svarūpa* informed *Indra* that the *Yakṣa*, who was present a while back was no other than the *Paramātmā*, the source of all energy and life, and that if the *devas* had succeeded in conquering the *asuras*, it was due to the grace of that *Paramātmā* who infused the *devas* with their respective powers. *Indra* became enlightened and he communicated this knowledge to the other *devas*. This knowledge destroyed the demon of egoism from their hearts, which then became pure.

Umā, the Divine Mother, is the personification of the Sound Manifestation of the Absolute which is

called *praṇava*, *Om*. She is brightness in light and fragrance in flowers. She has the illumination of a thousand suns and yet has the soothing coolness of a thousand moons. Along with Brahman, She is the supreme Self or Paramātma-svarūpa sung by the *Vedas*. Let us surrender ourselves at the Mother's feet which the *Vedas* praise, get purified of heart, and attain lasting bliss.

The Divine Mother is the soul of the *varṇa* or alphabet. The *Śāstras* (Scriptures) which are based on *śabda* (sound) are therefore forms of the Divine Mother or Paradevatā. *Śabda* gives rise to forms, visible shapes. It is observed that when particular musical notes are played near a pond, the resultant vibrations induce particles of light dust, floating on the water, to arrange themselves into specific shapes. The *śabda* and *rūpa* (sound and form) have close affinity. This also accounts for the sanctity of *mantras*, which are words and letters combined and arranged in specific forms. The repetition of a *mantra*, with devotion, earns for us the grace of the particular manifestation of God to whom that *mantra* is dedicated. The Divine Mother is the soul of all *mantras*.

The conception of Divinity as Mother is unique and inspiring. In human relationship the affection of a mother for her child is unsurpassed. Similarly, the depth of the Divine Mother's love for her devotees is unfathomable. The grace that flows from Her is spontaneous and irresistible. That is why the Divine Mother as Śrī Annapūrṇā is depicted as carrying a vessel containing rice mixed with milk in one hand and a ladle in the other. She is ready to distribute this food to those who pray for it. In the abundance of Her

mercy, She gives us not only food that sustains our body, but also *jñāna* (knowledge) that nourishes the soul. When Śrī Ādi Śaṅkara prayed to Mother Annapūrṇā to give him alms, he prayed not only for himself but for all mankind. We are all members of one family, being the children of the Divine Parents, Pārvatī and Parameśvara. It is our duty to love, help and serve one another.

In this world we, mortals, are so overwhelmed with *ajñāna* (ignorance) that though we know a thing to be wrong, we are helplessly impelled to do it. *Ajñāna* is a disease for which *jñāna* (enlightenment) is the only cure. The Divine Mother alone is capable to bestow this milk of *jñāna*, remove our ignorance, and satiate the hunger of our *ātman* (soul). Like a hungry child we must yearn for the grace of the Divine Mother, so that we can obtain from Her the milk of enlightenment.

If we think of Her, we will not only avoid doing wrong, but will also be fed by Her with the milk of *jñāna*. As a result, we will be endowed with the grace of Sarasvatī, the Goddess of Learning, and of Lakṣmī, the Goddess of Wealth. Not only that, physically we will be healthy and radiant with charm (*tejas*) that flows from health. We will also be blessed with long life.

Jñāna will sever attachment (*pāśa*) which binds the soul to this world. When the bond is severed, the liberated soul merges into the limitless and all-pervasive Bliss, and is no longer afflicted by fear, sorrow, or pain. Thus, the effect of worshipping the Divine Mother is the fulfilment of the purpose of life: the merger of the

individual soul with the Supreme Soul. This is the significance of the *phalaśruti* of the 100 verses of Śaṅkara's *Saundaryalaharī*.

In the *Mūka Pañcaśatī*, Śrī Kāmākṣī Kāmakoṭī, the Divine Mother is referred to as darkish blue in colour in the Stuti Śataka, and as saffron in colour in the Āryā Śataka. *Saundarya Laharī* describes Ambikā's colour as *aruṇa*, splendrous red of the rising sun. Why is the colour of the same Goddess described as dark-blue in one place, and red in another? According to *Mantra Śāstras*, Kāmesvara, who transcends the Trinity—Brahmā, Vishnu, and Śiva is actionless and unattached. Śrī Kāmesvari, His consort who is the Supreme Parāśakti, seated on the left of Śrī Kāmesvara, is described to be red in colour. The sameness of Pārvatī (Consort of Śiva), who is dark, and Parāśakti, (The Power of the Absolute) who is red, is indicated in the *Mūka Pañcasatī* by attributing both these colours to the Supreme Goddess.

Śrī Kāmesvara's form is like that of a pure colourless crystal which becomes invisible when immersed in water. He is thereby conceived as formless even though He has a form. Viṣṇu and Pārvatī, both dark-blue, are twin manifestations, as also Śiva and Sarasvatī; and Brahmā and Laksmī, both golden yellow. Daylight is colourless, and yet it contains all the primary colours. If one of the colours is separated from the colourless light, the rest of the colours reveal themselves. Red is the least disturbing colour as is evident from the fact that red light is used to develop photographic negatives. It is called infra-red as opposed to ultra-violet. Under the influence of red Parāśakti, the colourless Kāmesvara manifests himself as Brahmā,

Vishnu, Śiva and their respective consorts, Sarasvatī, Lakshmi, and Pārvatī and starts the activities of the world process.

In the *Saundaryalaharī*, Śrī Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda says that these three Divinities, Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Śiva, started their cosmic process when the supreme Śakti knitted Her brow for a fraction of a second. She stood beyond them all and Her red splendour stimulated them to perform their respective functions of creation, preservation and destruction, by Her very presence.

The lesson to be drawn from the foregoing is that the same Supreme Being appears in diverse forms as we conceive. It is to shower Its grace in the manner we invoke it. We do it by *mantra* and *japa* which are sound waves having the power to transform themselves into the forms whose *mantras* they are. If we continuously chant the *mantra* into which we are initiated, the Supreme Parāśakti will shower Her grace on us by taking the form signified by that *mantra*.

She is meditated in the moon which gives soothing light and also assuages heat. Thus She sheds her nectar rays all round. The Para Devatā whom we worship and the Full Moon we see in the sky are related in this life. It behoves us to constantly meditate on any chosen *mantra* on an Iṣṭa Devatā (Divinity of our choice) so that our soul may be enveloped by that Devatā, and our thoughts by that *mantra* even at the time when the soul departs from the body. That is the path shown to us by our sages.

In the *Kena Upaniṣad* of the *Sāma Veda* the Supreme Goddess Kāmakoṭī is described as the

daughter of the Himalayas. She is Umā shining with golden jewels; she is of the form of the mystic syllable-Oṃkāra, embodying its component syllables of A, U and M. She is the supreme spiritual Wisdom. When the gods were beset with the pride of victory in battle, She appeared and gave them the teaching of freedom from false pride and egotism. We shall first pray to Her for ridding ourselves of the sense of complacent egotism.

“What should be done in an emergency? The feet of our Mother Divine should be remembered” say those whose words we respect.

आपदि किं करणीयम् ? स्मृणीयं चरणयुगलमम्बायाः ।

She is that supreme Mother Goddess adored every where in our Bhāratavarṣa, as Tulajā Bhavānī in Mahārāshtra, as Kshīra Bhavānī in Kashmir, as Jvālāmukhī in the Punjab, as Ambāji in Gujarat, as Vindhyaavarṣiṇī in Uttara Pradesh, as Kālī in Bengal, as Kāmākhyā in Assam, as Cāmuṇḍī in Karnataka, as Kāmākshi in Kānchi and as Kanyā Kumāri in the Southern end of the country. Adored thus in hundreds of forms at the different centres in the land, She is ever vigilant protecting us, as Her own beloved children.

Among the many marks of those who have been blessed by the Goddess, is the mark of friendliness even to those who have evil designs on us, as also the mark of brotherly attitude towards all women. It is said in in Mūka's hymn to Goddess Kāmākṣī — “Those who have been blessed by the glance of the Goddess, take even the forest as a mansion, foe as friends and the lip of woman - a clod of earth:”.

शिव शिव पश्यन्ति समं
 श्रीकामाक्षीकटाक्षिताः पुरुषाः ।
 विपिनं भवनममित्रं मित्रं
 लोष्टं च युवतिबिम्बोष्ठम् ॥

The Divine Mother Śrī Kāmākṣī is depicted as holding the bow and the arrow. Kāmadeva the God of Love also bears them. But Śrī Kāmākṣī is controlling Kāma or lust with Her glance. Hence Kāmākṣī. She holds the sweet sugarcane bow representing the minds of human beings, and the five floral arrows representing the five senses through which the mind is influenced and is functioning.

If we surrender ourselves at the feet of the Divine Mother, She will help us to keep the mind and the senses under control and purify our heart, so that we may attain perfection.

Ambikā, the Mother Divine, is all important to me. I consider religion to be nothing but meditation upon Her lotus feet. In the presence of our human mother lust is quelled. Meditation upon the Divine Mother quells all evil propensities. It purifies us to perfection. Let us dedicate everyone of our thoughts, words and actions to Her.

Saivism: The Faith of Śiva

God is Omnipresent and All-pervasive. By the very nature of these qualities, He cannot have any form. He is, therefore, formless. But in order to bless us He assumes innumerable forms. The *Līṅga* form in which we worship Śiva is symbolic of both His form-

lessness and form. It is symbolic of form because it has a particular shape; it is symbolic of formlessness because it has neither head nor other limbs like other images. The very conception of a *Linga* denotes something which has neither a beginning nor an end. The literal meaning of *Linga* is 'symbol.'

If we go into the significance of the symbol of *Linga*, we will realise that it is intended to bring the Unknown within our mental comprehension. Īsvara assumes various forms in pursuance of His Divine Sport (*līlā*). This prime manifestation with something like a form of the formless Īsvara is known as the *Lingodbhavamūrti*.

A crystal *Linga* is believed to be superior to other *Lingas*, in all respects. This is because of the quality of the crystal itself, which has no colour of its own. A crystal reflects the colour of the object with which it comes into contact. The significance of this is that Īsvara becomes what an ardent devotee desires Him to be. He is the source of all colours and ultimately all colours merge in Him. He is the source of all life, and ultimately all life merges in him. Can there be any truth loftier than this?

When the static Īsvara decides to assume form, He becomes dynamic and manifests Himself in innumerable forms to fulfil His innumerable functions. One such form is Naṭarāja Śiva in cosmic dance.

Naṭarāja, through His cosmic dance, teaches us that the entire universe is not separate from Him and that everything that is happening in this universe is His divine sport. The raised and slightly inclined foot

of Naṭarāja is a reminder to us that it is only at His feet that we can find a sanctuary.

We speak of Śiva as He who burnt the God of Love (Kāma) by the look of his eyes and kicked to death the God of Death, Kāla.

Kāla and Kāma are responsible for our endless births and deaths. If we surrender our hearts to Śiva, the destroyer of Kāma and Kāla, we will become free from the promptings of the senses and when we are so free, there will be no more births; we will get merged with Īsvara. That is why our seers have asked us to worship Śiva, the Liberator from birth and death.

There is a *śloka* on Śiva commencing with the words: 'Maulau Gaṅgā' — "Śrī Paramasiva carries on the top of His head the Gaṅgā and the moon. The water of the Gaṅgā is icy cold and the rays of the moon are also cool. On His hands and legs and around His neck are entwined snakes which are chill to the touch. On His left side, is Pārvatī, born of the snowcapped peaks of the Himalayas whose heart melts with motherly affection at the sufferings of humanity, who are all Her children. The compassionate impulses flowing constantly from the heart of Pārvatī add to the cool objects with which Paramasiva has enveloped Himself. As if all these cooling elements are not enough, *abhiṣeka* (ablution) is performed to Śiva with cold water and milk in the early hours of the cold *Mārgaśī* month. The time of the *abhiṣeka* is before dawn when dew falls like rain and plunges the world in the grip of a biting chillness. To crown all, His body is also smeared with cool sandal paste." Addressing Śiva under such a freezing condition, the devotee-poet asks, 'By what

powers are You able to endure the cold of such magnitude?' The devotee answers the query himself by saying: "You cannot know the reason, Oh Lord. I alone know it and it is this: You reside permanently in the innermost recess of my heart, which is white hot with anxieties and afflictions. To endure the scorching heat of my heart, You do require all these cooling aids."

Many people come to me everyday and pour into my ears heart-rending tales of their sorrows and afflictions. What solace can I offer to them except to tell them that their heart-aches will be assuaged if they perform *abhiṣeka* to Śrī Paramesvara with faith and devotion, doing daily worship to Him.

In the discharge of his function of destruction or dissolution, Śiva is popularly depicted as a terrible and cruel God. But far from being cruel, Śiva is really kind, merciful and auspicious or *śivam* as His very name connotes. This destruction or dissolution is effected through *pralaya* or deluge.

To give rest and peace to the tormented souls which have passed through several births and deaths in the course of a *kalpa* (aeon), Īsvara, in the abundance of His mercy, creates a deluge, which lasts for as many years as life existed in the universe between one deluge and another. During this period the souls rest in slumber unaffected by pain and sorrow. On the occasion of the next creation (*śṛṣṭi*), they are born again in accordance with their past deeds, *samskāras*. Thus when the great Vishnu devotee Ālvār called out to the Supreme as Mukkaṇṇappā (Oh, Three-eyed Father) the suffix 'appā', signifying paternal affection was applied to the three-eyed Śiva, to indicate His supreme

grace in helping created beings to be lulled into the slumber of *pralaya* to enjoy rest from their restless lives. It is the same Paramātmā that performs the triple functions of creation, conservation and dissolution.

Śiva saved the world from disaster by swallowing the poison generated when the Ocean of Milk was churned. In other words, He took upon Himself the sins of the world in order to save humanity. It is this function of God which Christians attribute to Christ, namely saving the sinners by vicariously suffering for them.

Dakṣiṇāmūrti: Śiva as Guru

Behold that wonder under the banyan tree: The disciples are aged; the Teacher (*Guru*) is a youth! What is more, the Teacher is teaching through silence and the disciples are cleared of all their doubts!

चित्रं वटतरोर्मूले वृद्धाः शिष्या गुरुर्युवा ।
गुरोस्तु मौनं व्याख्यानं शिष्यास्तु छिन्नसंशयाः ॥

This is the picture of Śrī Dakṣiṇāmūrti portrayed in the above verse. Dakṣiṇāmūrti is a youthful person, filled with peace and radiating peace, wearing a crescent moon on the matlock, and with four aged Ṛṣis, reduced to skin and bones by their penance, near His feet. He is the embodiment of the supreme Bliss that results from perfect peace. The luxuriant growth of the matlock indicates agelessness, and the crescent moon, progressively growing *jñāna* (wisdom). The youthful appearance is symbolic of the fullness of Īsvara. It is only when something is wanting that the mind gets agitated for acquiring that something and when the

mind gets agitated, the body ages. Dakṣiṇāmūrti represents the ultimate Reality, full with bliss, not limited by time, space or matter, and not bound by wants or desires. He is All and there is nothing above Him or below Him.

The Ṛṣis at the feet of Dakṣiṇāmūrti are persons in quest of the ultimate Reality. As a result of their penance or *tapas* for ages, they get the vision of this embodiment of peace and bliss. The peace radiating from Him pervades them and they also attain the supreme Bliss, the goal of their quest. Thus, this youthful Teacher, Dakṣiṇāmūrti, teaches by His very silence, and the aged Ṛṣis have no more doubts in their minds, because they have attained that state of bliss where there is no room for any doubt. Dakṣiṇāmūrti is depicted as showing the *mudrā* or sign of Oneness, by bringing the tip of the thumb (supreme Brahman) and the tip of the index finger (individual soul) of the right hand to meet. This *mudrā* of the hand is the automatic expression of the spirit which Dakṣiṇāmūrti symbolises.

ŚRUTI (THE VEDAS) AND SMṚTI (THE DHARMAŚĀSTRAS)*

Jagadguru Śrī Jayendra Sarasvatī

There are innumerable branches of the *Vedas*: अनन्ता वै वेदाः। For the convenience of all of us who are now living in the Kaliyuga, Veda Vyāsa had codified, towards the end of the Dvāparayuga, the different branches into four main *Vedas*, namely the *Ṛgveda*, the *Yajurveda*, the *Sāmaveda* and the *Atharvaveda*.

The *Ṛgveda* was sub-divided into 21 *śākhās* (branches), the *Yajurveda* into 101, the *Sāmaveda* into 1000 and the *Atharvaveda* into 9 branches. Unfortunately, many of them are extinct today, and hardly 10 *śākhās* of the *Vedas* only are known to exist today; that is: one *śākhā* in the *Ṛgveda*, namely the *Sakalaśākhā*; four *śākhās* in the *Yajurveda*, namely the *Taittirīya*, *Maitrāyaṇīya*, *Kāṇva*, and *Mādhyandina*; three *śākhās* in the *Sāmaveda*, namely the *Kauthuma*, *Jaiminīya*, and *Raṇāyaṇīya*; and two *śākhās* in the *Atharvaveda*, namely

* Courtesy : *Heritage of Bhāratavarṣa and Sanātana Dharma*, pp. 191-199, pub. : Oriental Cultural Educational Society, 20, I Canal Road, Gandhinagar Madras - 20, 1973.

the *Śaunaka* and the *Pippalāda*. Efforts are being made to arrest their decadence by holding *Veda Sadas* periodically under the auspices of certain organisations and institutions.

Each *Veda* contains three distinct portions, namely the *Samhitā* portion, the *Brāhmaṇa* portion and the *Upaniṣad* portion. The *Samhitā* portions deal with the different modes of Agni *Upāsana*, the different methods of performance of sacrifices, etc. They deal also with with the *mantras* to be recited on different occasions. The *Brāhmaṇa* portions expound in great detail the manner in which the rituals enumerated in the *Samhitās* are to be performed. The *Upaniṣads* deal with the omnipresence of God and the various methods of realising Him, including the different forms of worship of the supreme Power through idol-worship.

But, in spite of the codification done for our convenience by Veda Vyāsa, it is difficult for the people to follow the Vedic injunctions and do *karmas* in accordance with them. Further, it is also difficult for them to understand their meaning. Therefore, the *Dharma-sāstras* or *Smṛtis* have been written by great Maharṣis with a view to tell us clearly the purport of the *Vedas* and what actions or *karmas* we have to perform and at what times.

The word *Smṛti* means 'memory or recollection'. It means *aide memoire*. Normally, we are familiar only with the word *Apasmṛti* as a term of abuse. The word 'apasmṛti' means actually loss of memory or forgetfulness. It is not a disease as such, but it represents an acute stage of loss of memory.

The Smṛtis have been written by great Maharṣis like Manu, Yājñavalkya, Parāśara, etc. In fact, 18 of them are important and they were written by the following great sages:

- | | |
|-----------------|---------------|
| 1. मनुः | 10. बृहस्पतिः |
| 2. याज्ञवल्क्यः | 11. पराशरः |
| 3. अत्रिः | 12. व्यासः |
| 4. विष्णुः | 13. दक्षः |
| 5. हारीतः | 14. गौतमः |
| 6. उशनस् | 15. वसिष्ठः |
| 7. आंगिरस् | 16. नारदः |
| 8. यमः | 17. भृगुः |
| 9. कात्यायनः | 18. शंखः |

As a result of the special power acquired by the great Seers through their long and austere penance, they were able to capture the Vedic sounds and pass them on to us by word of mouth. It is said :

श्रुतिं पश्यन्ति मुनयः । संस्कारजन्यं ज्ञानं स्मृतिः ।

They recalled the injunctions and truths contained in the *Vedas* after understanding and experiencing them, and wrote them down in the form of *Smṛtis*. Therefore the *Smṛtis* are not the works written later on nor are they independent works by others.

The word *Smṛti* has got three things as its basis:

- (1) अनुभवः (2) स्मृतिः (3) अतीन्द्रियः

Anubhava is recollection of some past experience of ours, even in the absence of such experience now. *Atīndriya* is recollection of something that we had

experienced before, after we start experiencing it once again. *Smṛti* is knowledge born out of *saṁskāras*.

Sometimes, people come to me and ask me "Now that times are fast changing, should not our Śāstras also be changed in accordance with the needs of the times? You are a great Maṭhādhipati or Head of a great Math, and you are almost equal to a Maharṣi. Therefore, can you not change the *Dharma-śāstras* to suit the modern times?" I generally tell them "We have no right to change it. We believe in the *Smṛtis* not because they were the private opinions of the great sages, written for our convenience, but because they had only recorded their recollections of what they had heard and understood from the Vedic sounds. So, the Sages have only told us what was contained in the *Vedas* and nothing else. Since the *Vedas* have not been written by anybody and they are eternal and not subject to any change by anyone, the *Smṛtis* also cannot be changed by anyone."

In fact, *Smṛti* follows very closely the meaning of the *Vedas* and expounds nothing more than that. As Kālidāsa says in his *Raghuvamśa* (2.2):

तस्याः स्वरन्यासपवित्रपांसुं अपांसुलानां धुरि कीर्तनीया ।
मार्गं मनुष्येश्वरधर्मपत्नी श्रुतेरिवार्थं स्मृतिरन्वगच्छत् ॥

Sudakṣiṇā, Dilipa's wife, not only followed her husband's footsteps but also those of the divine cow Nandinī, in exactly the same way as *Smṛti* follows the meaning of the *Vedas*.

Even the *Vedas* and the *Smṛtis* themselves prescribe certain āpat-dharmas or dharmas to be followed in

emergencies. Various exceptions have been provided for by them to cover extraordinary or emergency cases. But one has no authority to change the *Smrtis* or *dharma-śāstras* as a whole for this purpose.

The *Smrtis* contain sentences or *vākyas* or *ślokas* which make things easily understandable to the common man. They also tell us what emergency *dharmas* we can practise and on what occasions. For instance, it is said :

सत्यं ब्रूयात् प्रियं ब्रूयात् न ब्रूयात् सत्यमप्रियम् ।
प्रियं च नानृतं ब्रूयात् एष धर्मः सनातनः ॥

(*Manu*, 4.138)

According to this, one should always speak truth which is pleasant, and no one should speak truth which is unpleasant. When it is unpleasant, it would be better to keep quiet. If we speak the truth, we must see that it benefits all. Otherwise, we should keep quiet. At times of difficulty, such exemptions have been permitted. But there is no authority for anyone to change the whole of the *Smrtis* or *Dharma-śāstras* for this purpose.

Since the *Smrtis* or *Dharma-śāstras* follow the *Vedas* only, there is only one basic *dharma* for us throughout, as there is just one religion which has come down to us throughout the ages.

The *Vedas* give us injunctions to do certain *karmas*. Some people will do it only when they are ordered. The *Vedas* are like a father who commands his sons to do this or that. Just like the father, they impose many

injunctions on us and command us to do certain *karmas*.

The *Smṛtis* are like a mother. They also tell us the same injunctions but in a more pleasing way without the element of rigidity as in the case of the father. They would say 'This is good for you; this is in your own interest; therefore, please do this action.'

The *Purāṇas* tell us things like a friend. They can be called *suhṛt-sammīta* (सुहृत्संमित) in that sense. A friend tells a person: 'This is best for you; this will bring honour to your family. Have you not heard the story of so-and-so?' and so on. And immediately the person responds to the entreaty and starts doing what he has been asked to do. The main *upadeśa* or injunction is the same, but the manner of its preaching and the emphasis vary as between the *Vedas*, the *Purāṇas* and the *Smṛtis*.

In fact, there is no matter which has not been dealt with in the *Smṛtis*. They describe the *karmas* of human beings which have been responsible for their present birth and present life, the *karmas* to be done by them from birth to death, the good qualities that they should cultivate and nurture, the bad things that they should eschew, the duties of the different individuals, the duties of the political State, the rules of commerce and trade and business and so on. Besides, they also describe the *karmas* to be performed on the death of a person, the position of the individual after death, the means to prevent rebirth and so on.

Besides the *Smṛtis*, the great sages have also laid down other codes of conduct similar to the *Smṛtis*, and

these are contained in the *Sūtra* literature. The important *sūtras* are: (1) the *Kalpasūtras* such as the *Āpastamba sūtras*, the *Āśvalāyanasūtras* etc. (2) The *Śrautasūtras*, and (3) The *Dharma-sūtras*.

The word 'Sūtra' means an aphorism, a statement or a phrase which indicates some truth in a nut-shell. सूत्रनात् इति सूत्रम् । The various *Sūtras* contain the essence of the *Vedas* only.

While the *Smṛtis* prescribe rules of conduct for various stages of life of an individual from his birth to death, such as for *Brahmacāris*, *Gṛhasthas*, *Vānaprasthas*, *Sannyāsis* and so on; the *Kalpa-sūtras* deal with the details of all the *karmas* with special reference to their observance and practice. The *Kalpa-sūtras* have also been regarded as one of the six *aṅgas* or limbs of the *Vedas*.

The *Gṛhya-sūtras* prescribe the duties to be performed by a *gṛhastha* or householder in his house. The *Śrauta-sūtras* deal with rituals and common functions to be performed for the welfare of the society as a whole at public places with the help of the people.

The *Dharma sūtras* describe the *karmas* to be performed by each individual according to his *varṇa* and *āśrama*. They explain the *ātma-guṇas* that an individual should possess, the dharmic actions that he should perform and the adharmic actions that he should eschew. They also lay down codes of conduct for individual as well as collective life.

The other important *sūtras* which deserve mention are: Patañjali's *Yoga-sūtras*, Gautama's *Nyaya-sūtras*, Kaṇāda's *Vaiśeṣika-sūtras*, Jaimini's *Mīmāṃsā-sūtras*

and finally the *Brahma-sūtras* by Vyāsa who is an avatāra of Nārāyaṇa and also the author of the 18 *Purāṇas*. Pāṇini's *Vyākaraṇa-sūtras* also deserve special mention.

The *Yoga-sūtras* of Patañjali relate to the science of individual health, the technique of *prāṇāyāma* or the control and prolongation of breath, the control of mind, and the development of concentration etc. ultimately leading to *samadhi*.

The *Nyāya-sūtras* lead to an awareness of the existence of the Supreme Power, after a detailed analysis of the world and its contents and utility, with the help of logic and inference and *yukti*. Kaṇāda, Akṣapāda, Udayaṇācārya and others have written works on Nyāya.

The *Mīmāṃsā-sūtras* analyse the content of the *Vedas* and establish their essence and aim. The *Brahma-sūtras* bring into focus and expound in a unified manner the diverse truths contained in the *Upaniṣads* about the true nature of the ultimate Reality.

Pāṇini's *Vyākaraṇa-sūtras* deal with the classification of sounds, their pronunciation, etc. and the rules regarding them with a view to preserving the purity of the language.

Besides the *Vedas* and their branches, there are also six *Vedāṅgas* which function like the body-guards of the Vedapuruṣa and which have preserved the pristine purity of the accent, pronunciation and contents of the *Vedas* and safeguarded them against any possible distortion owing to the passage of time. The six *Vedāṅgas*

are: *Śikṣā*, *Vyākaraṇam*, *Chandas*, *Niruktam*, *Jyotiṣam*, and *Kalpam*. *Śikṣā* and *Vyākaraṇam* play a great role in the preservation of the purity of the Vedic sounds. They deal with the classification of Vedic sounds, their origin, the method of pronouncing them, and point out also the good as well as bad effects that accrue to the individual who recites the *mantras* depending upon whether he pronounces them correctly or not.

Niruktam deals with the etymology of the Vedic words. It is something like a dictionary. This is said to be the ears of the *Veda-puruṣa*. It points out clearly the meaning of the different Vedic words which occur in the *Vedas* which may not be found in common parlance or which are found in different forms in daily usage or which occur with different meanings at different places in the *Vedas*. The most famous work on *Niruktam* is that by the great Sage Yāska.

Chandas deals with the metrical nature of the different Vedic *mantras* and this is said to be the very breath of the *Vedas*.

Jyotiṣam is said to be the eyes of the Vedapuruṣa. It deals with the influence of the various planets and stars on the life of human beings. The important *Jyotiṣa Samhitās* have been written by Varāhamihira, Garga Parāśara and Nārada, among others.

Jyotiṣam has three *skandhas*. The word *skandha* means a branch sprouting from the lowest part of the trunk of a tree. The three *skandhas* are: *Siddhānta-skandha*, *Horā-skandha*, and *Samhitā-skandha*.

In the *Siddhānta-skandha* we have our *Vyakta-gaṇita* as well as *Avyakta-gaṇita*. *Vyakta* means that which is

known and *Avyakta* means that which is not known. *Vyakta-gaṇita* is the ordinary arithmetic relating to figures which we deal with in our daily life. *Avyakta-gaṇita* deals with the mathematics of inferential numbers like a , x , etc. which now goes by the name of Algebra. *Kṣetra-gaṇita* and *Trikoṇamiti* (that is, geometry and trigonometry) are also parts of it. The *Sulbasūtras* which deal with the construction of sacrificial altars in various shapes contain many aspects of geometry and trigonometry. *Samikarāṇa* which deals with the solution of equations or the technique of finding unknowns from given knowns is also a part of the *Siddhānta-skandha*.

The *Samhitā-skandha* deals with topics like the flow of water, overground as well as underground, the method of preparing cosmetics, matters relating to architecture, details regarding omens and so on. In short, *Siddhānta skandha* deals with astronomy and movement of planets. *Horā-skandha* deals with the happiness and sorrows of the individual's life. The rest are contained in the *Samhitā-skandha*. *Jyotiṣam* also tells us the times at which the different *karmas* have to be performed.

As mentioned earlier, the *Kalpasūtras* deal with the *karmas* to be performed with special reference to their observance and practice, both for the individual as well as for the welfare of society. Many *Kalpasūtras* have been written. For the *Kṛṣṇa-Yajurveda*, Āpastamba, Bodhāyana, Vaikhānasa, Satyāśāḍa, Bhāradvāja and Agniveśa have written *Kalpasūtras*; for the *R̥gveda*, Āsvalāyana has written, and for the *Śukla-Yajur-veda*, Kātyāyana has written; and for the *Sāma-*

veda: Drāhyāyaṇa has written for the Gautama *sākhā*, and Jaimini for the Taḷavakāra *sākhā*.

Then, we have various *Āgama-sāstras* written by various great sages. The *Āgamas* are divided into four portions, namely चर्या (*caryā*), क्रिया (*kriyā*), योग (*yoga*) and ज्ञान (*jñāna*). The *caryā* portion explains the different modes in which an individual can worship God. The *kriyā* portion deals with the installation of idols in temples, their consecration, the methods of worship of deities, and so on. The *yoga* portion tells us how the individual soul should meditate on the ultimate Reality and get merged in the *Ātman*. The *jñāna* portion tells us the ultimate state that is attained as a result of such meditation. Thus, in short, the *Āgama-sāstras* tell us the various modes of *Upāsana* or worship. There are 28 Śaiva *Āgamas* known to exist. Among the Vaiṣṇava *Āgamas*, the *Pāñcarātra* and *Vaikhānasa Āgamas* are worthy of mention.

Since temples have played an important role in our collective life, and townships and villages have grown around them, various *Śilpa-sāstras* have also been written for our guidance. They contain various details in regard to temple architecture, town- and village-planning, house-building, characteristics of idols to be installed in temples, what types of stones or metals (and in what quantities) can be used for the idol, and for what size and so on.

Besides, there are also *Upavedas* for each *Veda*. For instance, the *Ṛgveda* has as its *Upaveda*, *Āyurveda* which deals with the science of health. The *Yajurveda* has as its *Upaveda*, *Dhanurveda* which deals with the

technique of *Dandopāya* and archery for kings. The *Sāmaveda* has as its Upaveda, *Gāndharvaveda* which deals with music and nṛtya or dancing. The *Atharvaveda* has as its Upaveda, *Arthaśāstra* which deals with the art of administration or rule of subjects by the king, including protection of weaker subjects.

Thus, in our religion, besides the *Vedas* and the *Upaniṣads*, we have the *Upavedas*, the *Purāṇas*, the *Smṛtis*, the *Itihāsas* and so many other religious works like the *Gītā* etc. to guide us in our daily life. The qualifications and capacities of the different people vary, and, therefore, there are so many works to guide us. But in other religions, there is just one book like the *Bible* or the *Koran* only. Thus, the Hindu religion with its rich and varied heritage has all advantages. It is up to everyone to follow the instructions given in the *Smṛtis*, practise the *dharmas* expounded by them and make his or her daily life better and better.

THE FOUR INDISPENSABLE
QUALIFICATIONS

*(An extract from Sarva-vedānta-siddhānta-sāra-saṅgraha
of Śrī Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda)*

Free rendering by

Dr V. K. S. N. Raghavan

(Contd. from Vol. XVI, No. 1)

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
PHYSICS DEPARTMENT

REPORT ON THE PROGRESS OF THE WORK
DURING THE YEAR 1954

BY

DR. A. W. KLEIN

PHYSICS DEPARTMENT

मुमुक्षुत्वम्

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ब्रह्मात्मैकत्वविज्ञानाद्यद्विद्वान्मोक्तुमिच्छति ।
संसारपाशबन्धं तन्मुमुक्षुत्वं निगद्यते ॥

Mumukṣutva (To be desirous of *mokṣa*)

When a wise aspirant desires to free himself from the bondage of *samsāra* (cycle of birth and death) through the realisation of his oneness with Brahman, such a desire is called *mumukṣutva* (an earnest desire to get *mokṣa*).

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साधनानां तु सर्वेषां मुमुक्षा मूलकारणम् ।
अनिच्छोरप्रवृत्तस्य क श्रुतिः क नु तत्फलम् ॥

The prime cause of all *sādhanas* (practices of *yoga* in pursuit of *mokṣa*) is *mumukṣā* (ardent desire to get liberation). When one possesses neither desire nor endeavour, what is the use of Vedic injunction, and how could one gain the result of it (Vedic injunction)?

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तीव्रमध्यममन्दातिमन्दभेदाश्चतुर्विधाः ।
मुमुक्षा तत्प्रकारोऽपि कीर्त्यते श्रूयतां बुधैः ॥

तापैस्त्रिभिर्नित्यमनेकरूपैः संतप्यमानो क्षुभितान्तरात्मा ।
परिग्रहं सर्वमनर्थबुद्ध्या जहाति सा तीव्रतरा मुमुक्षा ॥

तापत्रयं तीव्रमवेक्ष्य वस्तु
 दृष्ट्वा कलत्रं तनयान्विहातुम् ।
 मध्ये द्वयोर्लोडनमात्मनो य-
 त्सैषा मता माध्यमिकी मुमुक्षा ॥

मोक्षस्य कालोऽस्ति किमद्य मे त्वरा
 भुक्त्वैव भोगान्कृतसर्वकार्यः ।
 मुक्त्यै यतिष्येऽहमथेति बुद्धि-
 रेषैव मन्दा कथिता मुमुक्षा ॥

मार्गे प्रयातुर्मणिलाभवन्मे
 लभेत मोक्षो यदि तर्हि धन्यः ।
 इत्याशया मूढधियां मतिर्या
 सैषातिमन्दाभिमता मुमुक्षा ॥

The wise classify four kinds of *mumukṣā* (the desire to get *mokṣa*) as extra-ordinary, middle type, dull and very dull. They are dealt with below in the same order.

The extra-ordinary type of desire to get *mokṣa* is found in one — (i) who is agitated thoroughly by the three kinds of miseries arising in varied forms, and so, (ii) who abandons everything in the world as futile altogether:

The middle type of *mumukṣutva* is found in one (i) who, having found the three kinds of miseries

(*ādhyātmika* — bodily, *ādhibhautika* — from other beings, and *ādhidāivika* — born of natural calamities) as unbearable, and hence, desires to renounce the worldly life of wife and children, and in this way, (ii) who arrives at a dilemma (wherein one has a mediate knowledge of Brahman).

The dull-type of *mumukṣā* is found in that aspirant who says, “There is still time for love of *mokṣa*; why should I be in a hurry now? Let me enjoy all worldly pleasures. Only after finishing all my mundane activities, will I try to get *mokṣa*.”

The *very-dull* type of desire to get *mokṣa* is found in him who thinks “Just as a fortunate passer-by stumbles at a very valuable precious gem by chance, even so I shall obtain *mokṣa* (liberation) and hence become blessed.”

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जन्मानेकसहस्रेषु तपसाराधितेश्वरः ।
 तेन निःशेषनिर्धूतहृदयस्थितकल्मषः ॥
 शास्त्रविद्गुणदोषज्ञो भोग्यमात्रे विनिस्पृहः ।
 नित्यानित्यपदार्थज्ञो मुक्तिकामो दृढव्रतः ॥
 निष्टप्तमग्निना पात्रमुद्वास्य त्वरया यथा ।
 जहाति गेहं तद्वच्च तीव्रमोक्षेच्छया द्विजः ॥
 स एव सद्यस्तरति संसृतिं गुर्वनुग्रहात् ।
 यस्तु तीव्रमुमुक्षुः स्यात्स जीवन्नेव मुच्यते ॥

He who has propitiated God through austere penance in several thousands of his birth, becomes

freed from all sins and blemishes that lay hidden in his heart; he knows the scriptures and gains the knowledge of good and bad; he is averse to worldly enjoyments; he knows the eternal and non-eternal things; and he is desirous of *mokṣa* and steadfast in austerities.

Just as a man throws away well-heated vessel hurriedly, even so a twice-born person abandons the home immediately, out of a well-developed desire for *mokṣa*. Such a person alone crosses the ocean of *samsāra*, through the unfailing grace of his *guru*. So, he who has the most firm desire for *mokṣa* gets liberation even while being alive.

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जन्मान्तरे मध्यमस्तु तदन्यस्तु युगान्तरे ।
चतुर्थः कल्पकोट्यां वा नैव बन्धाद्विमुच्यते ॥

When the desire for *mokṣa* is of the second order (middle grade) then the aspirant attains liberation in another birth; as the desire for *mokṣa* is of the third type, the aspirant gets liberated in another *yuga* (aeon); and, if the aspirant's desire for *mokṣa* is of the fourth (excessively dull) type, then the aspirant *either* gets liberated after innumerable *kalpas* (cycles of aeons) or never does he get liberated.

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नृजन्म जन्तोरतिदुर्लभं विदु-
स्ततोऽपि पुंस्त्वं च ततो विवेकः ।
लब्ध्वा तदेतत्त्रितयं महात्मा
यतेत मुक्त्यै सहसा विरक्तः ॥

It is recognized by the wise that human birth is a very rare opportunity for a creature; rarer still is to be born a man; more than that is to gain the knowledge of discrimination; that great man who gains these three should strive for *mokṣa* immediately as he becomes detached from worldly activities.

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पुत्रमित्रकलत्रादिसुखं जन्मनि जन्मनि ।
मर्त्यत्वं पुरुषत्वं च विवेकश्च न लभ्यते ॥

It is quite easy to get immersed in experiencing material pleasures of son, friend, wife, etc. But it is very hard: to get human birth, to be born as man, and to gain the knowledge of discrimination (*viveka*).

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लब्ध्वा सुदुर्लभतरं नरजन्म जन्तु-
स्तत्रापि पौरुषमतः सदसद्विवेकम् ।
संप्राप्य चैहिकसुखाभिरतो यदि स्या-
द्विक्तस्य जन्म कुमतेः पुरुषाधमस्य ॥

After gaining the very rare chance of human birth, and even born as a man, and further after gaining the knowledge of *sat* (real) and *asat* (unreal) — if one were to be attached to the ephemeral pleasures of this world, then *lie upon* the birth of such a foolish and lowliest creature.

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खादते मोदते नित्यं शुनकः सूकरः खरः ।
तेषामेषां विशेषः को वृत्तिर्येषां तु तैः समा ॥

Even the dog, pig, ass, etc. do experience happiness in eating, etc. Is there any difference between these animals and those people who merely fall a prey to such animal instincts?

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यावन्नाश्रयते रोगो यावन्नाक्रमते जरा ।
यावन्न धीर्विपर्येति यावन्मृत्युं न पश्यति ॥
तावदेव नरः स्वस्थः सारग्रहणतत्परः ।
विवेकी प्रयतेताशु भवबन्धविमुक्तये ॥

Inasmuch as one is not affected by disease, nor by old age, nor by any disorder of intellect, nor one comes across death — quickly should one, being healthy, intent on knowing what is the most essential aspect, and *vivekin* (knowing real and unreal thoroughly) strive immediately to get released from the bondage of *samsāra*.

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देवर्षिपितृमर्त्यर्णबन्धमुक्तास्तु कोटिशः ।
भवबन्धविमुक्तस्तु यः कश्चिद्ब्रह्मवित्तमः ॥

There are innumerable (crores and crores of) persons who have got liberated from the bondage of debt towards gods, sages, manes and mortals. But the most rare, indeed, is that one — Brahman-realised self — who gets released from the bondage of *samsāra*.

(to be continued)

ŚAṄKARA'S GREAT HYMN ON ŚIVA*

V. A. Devasenapati

Bhakti, says Śrī Śaṅkara, is the flow of the mind towards the lotus-feet of the Lord and the fixation of the mind therein. He compares the nature of the attachment obtaining in devotion between the devotee and the Lord to the attachment in the following cases: the seeds of the *aṅkola* tree and the tree itself to which they get back when they fall from it; the needle and the magnet; the chaste woman and her lord; the creeper and tree; and, the river and the sea. The intimacy of union witnessed in the analogues helps us to realise how intimate should be the union between the devotee and the Lord. Devotional songs are of great help to devotees endeavouring to have a close, relationship with the Lord. Not only has Śaṅkara given us a clear idea of the nature of true devotion but he has also given us devotional songs of great beauty and religious fervour. Among his numerous hymns on Śiva, the *Śivānandalahari* stands out as a work which appeals to those of advanced spirituality

*Courtesy : *Śaṅkara and Śaṅmata* — Souvenir published in connection with the Conference on "Śaṅkara and Śaṅmata" held in Madras from June 1-June 9, 1960.

as well as to those who have just begun their spiritual pilgrimage.

The second verse of the *Śivānandalaharī* may be paraphrased thus: 'Victory to the flood of Śiva-bliss (*Śivānandalaharī*), which flows from the river of Śiva's story (*carita*), removes the dust of sin runs through the channels of the intellect, destroys sorrow caused by *samsāra* and remains in the lake of the mind' *Śiva-Carita* is a narrative of Śiva's gracious acts. Śaṅkara teaches us that by listening to such a narrative, we not only get rid of our impurities but we are also made permanent recipients of His bliss. To meditate upon the Lord who is supreme purity is to shed our impurity and acquire His purity. Śaṅkara's concern is to enable us to train our minds on the right lines. He dwells in some hymns on the good tendencies of the mind, and in others, on its evil tendencies. This is to make us realise that we must endeavour to root out the evil tendencies and strengthen the good ones. Let us recall here some of the many sublime thoughts enshrined in Śaṅkara's *Śivānandalaharī*.

Death lies in wait for us. How shall we meet its challenge? It is by worshipping the lotus-feet of the Lord, not by mere book-learning or logic, that we overcome death. Śaṅkara asks, 'Whether it is a pot, or a lump of clay, or an atom, whether it is smoke, fire or mountain, whether it is cloth or thread — will enquiry along these lines serve as a remedy for gruesome death?' He tells us that such discussions result only in our throats getting dry. Hence it is wise to refrain from such useless pursuits and turn instead to worship of the Lord.

Worship must be such as to make us dedicate ourselves entirely to the Lord. Our mind, senses and body should be used wholly for this purpose. Our mind should abide at His lotus feet, our speech should be used in His praise, our hands raised in His worship, our ears in listening to His story, our intellect in meditation on Him, and our eyes in looking at His splendid form.

It is comparatively, easy to engage the body and the senses in worship but the mind refuses to come under control. As a seer who can judge the spiritual condition of devotees, Śaṅkara knows the difficulty which most of them feel in controlling their minds. It so happens that the more we try to control the mind, the more intractable it gets. Śaṅkara makes this difficulty an occasion for a humorous appeal to the Lord. What can the poor devotees do in this matter? Mind is beyond their control. But the Lord, if He so chooses, can assume control of the situation and to His own advantage too! Does He not go abegging with a skull in His hand? Let Him take with Him this monkey of a mind. 'It, ever roams about in the forest of delusion, dances on the breast-hills of young girls, leaps quickly in all directions from branch to branch of desires and is fickle.' It is, as if Śaṅkara makes us appeal to the Lord thus: 'We shall control our body and speech in worship. We shall leave the remaining third, *viz.*, *manas*, our mind to be controlled by You.' Indeed this is to make us realise that even the impulse to worship arises from His grace, when we are endowed with such a double-edged instrument as the mind.

Is the mind only like a monkey? No, it is also like an elephant. Who, then, but the Lord can tame it? 'Oh Lord Who destroyed the three cities, please bind this elephant to Your feet with the chain of devotion and pull it fast with the goad of courage and the machine of intelligence to prevent it from straying. This elephant is wild with passion and roams about in all directions, doing violent deeds. Seize it skilfully and lead it to the place of stability.'

What, if the Lord refuses to come to our aid, saying that He cannot interfere with the decrees of Brahmā, the Creator, imposed on men according to their past deeds? Can He not be thus indifferent? If He is not indifferent, is He powerless? No, how can it be so? Did He not, with the tip of His finger-nail sever one of the heads of Brahmā?

Let us try to please the Lord by using our mind in His service and thus place it under His control. How shall we use it? Śaṅkara tells us that the mind is not only like a monkey and an elephant. It is also like a horse. Here then is an attractive possibility. The Lord uses a bull for His rides. Will not a horse be a better mount? 'Oh Lord, riding about on a bull! mount my mind which is auspicious and capable of moving quickly and in different ways, which is fast in its movements and able to understand all signs, which is free from blemishes, and which possesses all stable characteristics.'

Changing the figure of speech, Śaṅkara likens the mind to a tent which the Lord can use as His residence. 'Enter, Oh Lord! with Your consort, this resplendent tent of my mind which has the will as the

supporting central pole and is fastened with the ropes of constant virtues, which could be shifted anywhere, is many-coloured, is adorned with the figures of lotuses and is moved daily on highways. May you be victorious!

Śaṅkara indicates other possibilities. In the manner of setting a thief to catch a thief, we can appeal to Śiva, the arch-thief to catch our mind which is a petty thief. 'In its efforts to secure wealth, this thief of a mind wanders widely and breaks into the houses of the rich. Please, Oh Lord, bring it under Your control and shower Your grace on me'

In this drama of the soul's salvation, if the soul changes its role constantly to escape Him, so can Lord, to catch and save it. The Lord is not only an arch-thief but He is also a great hunter. Let Him not wander over mountains in His search for wild game. Here in our minds, He can find all sorts of wild animals — jealousy, delusion, etc. Let Him satisfy His craving for hunting by entering the wild jungle of our minds.

As a hunter Śiva walks on the rough surface of mountains. Accustomed to the softness of the yogins, His tender feet may find walk on the mountain, rough going. Besides, His tender feet have also to perform the hard task of kicking the chest of Yama and destroying ignorance (*apasmāra*). 'Let Him, therefore, wear the jewelled foot-wear of my mind.' In another verse, Śaṅkara sings, 'Your feet are very tender. Please bring them before me, I shall bear them up with my hands.' Why does Śiva walk on the mountains? Śaṅkara finds a reason therefor. The Lord knows in

advance the birth of hard-hearted persons. To protect them, He has to enter their hearts and so He practises walking on mountains as a preparation for the subsequent encounter with hard-hearts. Thus comes about His walk on mountains.

Thus we see that Śaṅkara brings home to us in various ways the dual nature of the human mind. In some verses he describes its evil tendencies and prays (on our behalf) for their correction. In some others, he describes the good tendencies and prays to the Lord for their retention and use in the service of the Lord. Granting that there are evil tendencies in us, still the Lord should accept us. Does He not wear the crescent on His head? 'Inertness, animality, impurity and devious movements are not to be found in me. Even supposing that they are to be found, am I not fit to serve You as Your ornament? You wear the crescent on Your head!'

The allusion here is to the Lord wearing the moon in spite of all its defects. If He does not forgive and protect the poor ones, who else will? He is the Lord of souls. Hence He has to protect us by His overwhelming Grace. We are blind and revolve unwisely in the cycle of birth and deaths. 'To You who can be poorer in spirit than myself? To me, who can be more skilful in protecting than You? You are the greatest friend of the poor. Of the poor, I am the poorest. When such is our indissoluble relationship, You must forgive all my lapses and protect me. This, verily, is the way followed among kinsmen.'

What is it that we should want from the Lord? It is ceaseless devotion to Him. Here is a peculiar situa-

tion. When the sun shines, all darkness disappears. We see it clearly in the sky. The Lord is more luminous than crores of suns. Why, then, do we fail to see Him? It must be on account of the intensity of our ignorance. 'Please destroy this darkness completely and manifest Yourself directly to me' — sings Śaṅkara.

So long as we are in bondage, we go up and down in the scale of living beings. Even as human beings, we pass through several stages. What does it matter whether we are born as human beings, gods, mountains, as wild animals, as mosquitoes, cows, worms, birds, etc. If our hearts are given to Him and flooded with the bliss arising from the contemplation of His feet, nothing else matters. Likewise let us be in any stage of human life — that of a student, house-holder, monk, ascetic, etc. When our hearts are Yours, You become ours and You bear the burden of our life!

What has the Lord to give us? His food is poison, ornament serpent, clothing animal skin, and mount a big bull. But then what do we really need? We need devotion. Let Him then give us devotion. In a humorous vein Śaṅkara sings, 'I do not know how to churn the ocean to get poison or reach the nether world to get serpents, or go hunting to procure for You the hide of animals. How can I offer You the things which You like?' Again, the Lord is not pleased with obeisance, song, offering, meditation etc. Curiously He likes being hit with a bow, a club or a stone. Let Him tell us whether our offering should be along those lines! Here, Śaṅkara, is referring to the occurrences connected with the life of Arjuna, Māṅikā-vācakar and Śākkiya Nāyaṅār. They were all great

devotees of the Lord. Caring none of the precious things rated highly by the world, the Lord has yet at His command all these. Śaṅkara says, 'The goldern mountain (Meru) is in Your hands, the Lord of Wealth (Kubera) stays near you. Celestial trees are in Your household as also the celestial cow (Kāmadhenu) What can I give You! May my mind be dedicated to You!'

Lord Śiva drank poison to save the world from a deadly poison. He retained it in His throat so that it might not get in and destroy the worlds within Him. This act of great compassion has always stirred the hearts of His devotees to their profoundest depths. Śaṅkara sings, 'Oh Lord of Souls! is not this one supreme act of help sufficient to proclaim your compassion? To protect the beings, moving and stationary, within and outside, You placed the poison in Your throat. You neither swallowed it nor spat it out.' He asks the Lord in affectionate raillery, 'How did the flaming poison that frightened the gods appear to You? How did You bear it in Your hand? Was it *jambu* fruit or medicinal ball used by the *Siddhas*? You placed it in your throat. Was it a blue gem ornament?'

The Lord's compassion for us is boundless. What, then, should be the nature of our devotion to Him? It should be whole-hearted and complete. Is there an ideal devotee whose devotion will serve as a model for us? Yes, there is. He is Saint Kannappar, a wild hunter whose devotion to the Lord has been a source of inspiration to all subsequent generations. His worship was completely unconventional and as completely ideal. There was no trace at all of the sense

of 'I' and 'mine' in his worship. It was a complete 'sense of the presence of God' that possessed him in his worship. Śaṅkara sings: 'The hunter's foot-wear, worn out by use in forest paths, was placed between the eye-brows of the Lord of all souls; the water carried in his mouth became the sacred water for the bath of the conqueror of the three cities; meat already tasted by him became fresh food offering. What is impossible for devotion? The hunter became the greatest of devotees!'

Not only in his *Śivānandalaharī* but in his other hymns on Śiva also, Śaṅkara has given us invaluable help for eschewing the evil tendencies of our minds and strengthening the good ones in utter dedication to the Lord.

There will be no spiritual impoverishment so long as we follow Śaṅkara's lead in singing the praises of the Lord in utter devotion. Here is his assurance: 'Oh Lord of the Universe! with the ambrosial waters of the story of Sadāsiva, brought with the help of the intellect as water-wheel, speech as vessel, poesy as water-conduits, the crops of devotion in the fields of the heart become richly productive. How can there be (even) the fear of spiritual famine for me?'

THE PRIMACY OF THE WORD

R. Balasubramanian

Of the different *pramāṇas* which have been admitted as sources of knowledge, it is only through *śabda*, i.e. the *śruti* texts such as “*tat tvam asi*”, “*aham brahmāsmi*,” that we can know that the Self of the *jīva* is no other than Brahman, and not through *pramāṇas* such as perception. Suresvara adduces three reasons to show why the Self cannot be known through perception and other *pramāṇas*.

First of all, all the *pramāṇas* excepting *śabda* — perception (*pratyakṣa*), inference (*anumāna*), comparison (*upamāna*), postulation (*arthāpatti*) and non-cognition (*anupalabdhi*) — are not concerned with the non-dual Self.

Secondly, the sense organs such as the auditory sense, visual sense, etc. give us perceptual knowledge of the external, material objects such as sound, colour, etc. Each sense organ is derived from the *sattva* aspect of a material element (*bhūta*) — the auditory sense from ether (*ākāśa*), the tactile sense from air (*vāyu*), the visual sense from fire (*tejas*), the gustatory sense from water

(*jala*), and the olfactory sense from earth (*pr̥thivī*); and each is capable of perceiving the special quality of that element alone from which it is derived. That each sense organ which is material is capable of perceiving the quality of the material object can be stated in the form of an inferential argument. For example: the auditory sense is produced by the substance of the same class, whose special quality it perceives, because it is an external sense, like the visual sense, etc. (*śrotram svagrāhyajātiya-viśeṣaguṇavad-dravyurabdham, bāhyendriyatvāt, cakṣurādivat*). The same argument can be applied to other sense organs. *Śruti* also lends support to this view. The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* text¹ says:

As the ocean is the one goal of all sorts of water, as the skin is the one goal of all kinds of touch, as the nostrils are the one goal of all odours, as the tongue is the one goal of all savours, as the eye is the one goal of all colours, as the ear is the one goal of all sounds...

In the course of the commentary on this text, Śaṅkara says: "The *śruti* considers the organs to be of the same category as the objects, not of a different category. The organs are but modes of the objects in order to perceive them as light, which is but a mode of colour, is an instrument for revealing all colours."

Thirdly, the Self is altogether different from objects of knowledge such as sound, colour, etc. which are perceived by the senses; and so it cannot be known by the senses. Since the senses themselves are known through the Self, the latter can never be known by them.

What holds good for perception also holds good for other *pramāṇas* whose work is restricted to revealing empirical things. The Self which is devoid of qualities and which has no second to it neither possesses nor is related to any quality or mark through which it can be inferred in the same way as fire is inferred from smoke, which serves as the *liṅga* with which it is related, on the basis of *vyūptijñāna* and *pakṣa-dharmatā-jñāna*. So inference is of no avail for getting the knowledge of the Self. Neither *upamāna* nor *arthāpatti* will be of use for getting the knowledge of the non-dual Self, for each of them functions on the basis of quality. *Upamāna* gives us knowledge of similarity as in the case of our comparing a cow with a *gavaya* before arriving at the judgement, "The cow at home is like the *gavaya* which I see now." Since there is no second to Brahman for the purpose of comparison, *upamāna* is of no use in this case. In *arthāpatti* we proceed from the knowledge of what is to be made intelligible (*upapādya*) to that which makes it intelligible (*upapādaka*); e.g. in order to account for the fatness of a person who does not eat by day we postulate his eating at night. Since *arthāpatti* functions presupposing difference, it cannot be relied on for getting the knowledge of the non-dual Self. Also, we have to rule out *anupalabdhi* which is the *pramāṇa* for getting the knowledge of the non-existence (*abhāva*) of something. The Self is not a negative entity; and so it cannot be known through *anupalabdhi*. The only *pramāṇa* through which it can be known is *śabda*, i.e. *śruti* texts such as "tat tvam asi."

One can know the Self only if one understands the meaning of the sentence, "tat tvam asi," and to get

at the non-relational, non-sentential sense of this text, one must understand the meaning of the words "*tvam*" (you) and "*tat*" (that). One who is ignorant of the meaning of "*tvam*" and "*tat*" cannot construe the meaning which this sentence intends to convey.

It is desirable to proceed from words we are familiar with (*prasiddha*) to unfamiliar words (*aprasiddha*). First, we have to understand the meanings of words such as "*tvam*" (you) and "*aham*" (I) known to us in our every-day usage; and thereafter we have to ascertain the meanings of words like "*tat*", "*brahma*", "*sat*", etc. This procedure will help us to construe the meaning of *śruti* texts, like "*tat tvam asi*," "*aham brahmāsmi*." That is why Śaṅkara says: "The understanding of the meaning of the sentence becomes possible after it has been ascertained by the method of *anvaya vyatireka* — which word should be construed first and which word next."²

*"idaṁ pūrvamidam paścāt padam vākyam bhavediti
anvayavyatirekābhyāṁ tato vākyārthabodhanam"*

So one should first of all understand the meaning of *tvam* for construing the meaning of the sentence sense.

Though in a sense we know the meaning of the words, "*tvam*" and "*aham*", there is difficulty in comprehending the meaning intended to be conveyed by them. When someone says using the first person singular, "I am stout," "I am blind," "I am happy," does the word "I" refer to the body or the sense-organ or the mind? Or does it refer to the Self? When we are told that the implied meaning of this word is the Self which is of the nature of knowledge, which is not the agent or the enjoyer, we find it difficult to accept this meaning as it goes contrary to the

evidence of perception and other *pramāṇas*. In construing the meaning of this word and thereafter the meaning of the sentence as a whole, one should know by distinguishing the Self from the not-Self that the identity of *jīva* and Brahman (*jīva-brahma-aikya*) which is the purport of the sentence cannot be disproved by *pramāṇas* such as perception, since these *pramāṇas* have nothing to do with the Self. So long as the meaning of the word "*tvam*" as well as that of "*tat*" is not known one cannot understand the purport of the sentence, "*tat tvam asi.*"

Two possible objections have to be considered here. One may raise an objection that the knowledge conveyed by the *Vedānta* text cannot be accepted as valid, since it cannot be confirmed or supported by another *pramāṇa* such as perception for the simple reason that the Self, according to the Advaitin, is not the subject-matter of any of these *pramāṇas*. Suresvara refutes this objection by taking his stand on the theory of intrinsic validity of knowledge (*svataḥ-pramāṇya-vāda*). Every *pramāṇa* functions and does its work on its own. This is as much true with regard to *śabda* as it is with regard to *pratyakṣa* or *anumāna*. A *pramāṇa* not only produces knowledge, but also guarantees its validity; and the validity of knowledge is known as soon as it arises inasmuch as it is revelatory of objects. It means that knowledge which arises from a *pramāṇa* is intrinsically valid both in respect of its origin (*utpatti*) and ascertainment (*jñapti*). Also, the principle of coherence (*saṁvāda*) should not be followed for the purpose of deciding the validity of knowledge. If we accept one knowledge as valid on the ground that it coheres with another knowledge, the latter too, if it is to be accepted as valid, must cohere with some other

knowledge which again should cohere with something else; and this will lead to infinite regress (*anavasthā*). It means that the validity of knowledge conveyed by any *pramāṇa* cannot and should not be decided in terms of its coherence with the evidence of another *pramāṇa* (*pramāṇāntara-samvāda*). If so, the question of confirmation or support of the knowledge produced by the *vedānta-vākya* (= *śabda*) by another *pramāṇa* does not arise.

The second objection is formulated on the basis of *pramāṇa-virodha*. According to this objection, what the *śruti* text conveys cannot be accepted as valid not because of want of coherence, but because of conflict with the evidence of another *pramāṇa*. Since I know myself to be a limited, mortal being, so the argument goes, I cannot be identical with the infinite, eternal, Brahman. So the opponent's contention is that since Brahman-Ātman identity taught by *śruti* is opposed to the evidence of perception, it cannot be accepted as valid. This objection, says Suresvara, is wrong, for what is taught by *śruti* is not in conflict with perception. Suresvara clarifies the position by elucidating the meaning of "I" in the sentence, "I am Brahman." Since the sentence identifies "I" with Brahman, we have to find out whether the term "I" refers to the body, or the sense-organ, or the mind, or the Self. Suresvara examines one by one all the four possibilities to remove the objection of *pramāṇa-virodha*.'

Sometimes we identify ourselves with the body and speak of it as when we say "I am a man" (*aham manuṣyaḥ*). So the body is *ahamgrāhya*. The *śruti* text identifies "I" with Brahman. But since the material body cannot be identified with Brahman, the word

“*aham*” in the scriptural text cannot *prima facie* refer to the body. If this identification were conveyed, one would be justified in saying that it is disproved by perception. The text, however, does not convey the identification of the material body with Brahman. Again, no one identifies the “I” with any of the sense-organs which are instruments. For example, no one says, “I am the visual sense” But everyone says, “I see with my eye, I hear with my ears...” (*cakṣusā paśyāmi, śrotreṇa śṛṇomi...*). Since there is no *aham-pratyaya* in the sense-organ, the question of identification of the sense-organ with Brahman is ruled out. Moreover, pleasure and pain are but states of the mind which is the internal organ. When someone says, “I am happy,” “I am miserable,” the “I” which experiences happiness or sorrow is the mind which carries the reflection of the Self. Since the text does not identify the mind, which is referred to by the word “I” in all these cases of the experience of pleasure and pain, with Brahman, there is no conflict with perception. And lastly, the implied meaning (*lakṣyārtha*) of “I” is the inward Self which is consciousness; and it is this Self which is said to be identical with Brahman by the text. What is true of the word “I” is also true of the word “you” (*tvam*). So the words “I” (*aham*) and “you” (*tvam*) in the *śruti* texts imply the Self which is no other than Brahman. When the meaning intended to be conveyed by the text is construed in the sense of identity of the Self and Brahman, there cannot be any conflict with the evidence of perception.

To sum up: the words “*aham*” and “*tvam*” may be understood in the primary sense (*vācyārtha*) or in the secondary sense (*lakṣyārtha*). Since the *śruti* text does

not purport to convey that the body, or the sense-organ, or the mind, which is the *vācyārtha* of "aham" or "tvam", is identical with Brahman, there is no conflict with perceptual evidence. Since the inward Self is the *lakṣyārtha* of these words, the notion of identity of the Self and Brahman, which is intended to be conveyed by these texts through the secondary sense, does not come into conflict with the evidence of perception and other *pramāṇas* which have a totally different subject-matter.

The objection against *śruti* can be stated differently. Objects which a person cognizes, pursues, and attains in the waking state cease to exist in the dream state. It also works out the other way. Also, whatever is apprehended and appropriated in the waking and dream states ceases to exist in deep sleep as the internal organ responsible for every kind of activity — cognitive, affective, and conative — ceases to function at that time. But the Self which is a witness to the appearance and disappearance, acceptance and rejection, of objects remains constant, unaffected by them in the same way as the sun responsible for what we call the day and the night remains the same all the time unaffected by the alteration of both day and night. Since the Self can be inferred from the triple factors of cognizer, cognition, and cognitum as a witness to them, there is, the critic argues, no need for *śruti*; consequently there arises the defect of the *śruti* text becoming *nirviṣaya*. Suresvara rejects this argument on the ground that inference by its very nature can give us only mediate knowledge (*parokṣa-jñāna*) as it functions through the mediation of *liṅga* or *hetu* which is the reason for inferring something. However,

we require immediate knowledge (*aparokṣa-jñāna*) of the Self; and this can be obtained only through the *śruti* text and not through inference.

The critic argues against *śruti* in some other way. It cannot be said that *śruti* is needed for getting the immediate knowledge of the Self, for the Self which is direct and immediate is already in relation with the not-Self as the witness to it; and by this witness-witnessed relation (*sākṣi-sākṣya-sambandha*) between them, the Self which is direct and immediate can be inferred. So the *śruti* text, the critic concludes, is not required for getting the immediate knowledge of the Self.

This objection, too, like the previous one, is untenable. According to Suresvara, one could at the most infer that there must be the Seer-Self from objects that are seen. However, it does not follow from this that there is immediate apprehension of the Self. To infer the Self on the basis of its relation with a *hetu* is not to directly perceive it, just as to infer fire from smoke is not to directly perceive it. Some elucidation will be helpful in this connection. Though the Self by its very nature is non-relational, we view it as relational for epistemological analysis from the *vyāvahārika* standpoint. The Self has two aspects, relational and non-relational, of which the first is *adventitious* while the second is *essential*, to it. We know that fire can be inferred from smoke because of the relation between them. Just as fire is relational, even so the Self which is to be inferred must be relational. What is non-relational can never be an object of inference. So, if a person does not know that the Self exists, then his ignorance about the existence of the Self can be

removed by means of knowledge and the inferential knowledge of the Self is only *mediate* knowledge. The relational aspect of the Self, called *sādhāraṇasvabhāva*, though adventitious, is helpful to infer its existence. But the direct perception of it will be possible only if one knows it as non-relational, as neither existent nor non-existent, as something which transcends the three states (*avasthātrayātīta*), which is its *asādhāraṇasvabhāva*. And for this direct perception of the Self *śruti* is needed.

Once again there is the objection that there is no need for *śruti* since the Self, the non-dual reality, which the *śruti* text signifies, is accessible to everyone, whether ignorant or learned in the state of sleep. This objection, argues Suresvara, is untenable. First of all, though it is true that the Self to which one has access in sleep is free from distinctions arising from the *upādhis* such as the body, the senses, and the mind, which are all products of *ajñāna*, it is not left alone as it is associated with *ajñāna* which is the *kīraṇopādhi* at that time. In other words, the Self one attains in sleep is not totally *nirvikalpaka*, whereas the Self which is the import of the *śruti* text is absolutely *nirvikalpaka*. So, there is the need for the *śruti* text. Secondly, if everyone realizes the non-dual Self in the state of sleep without the help of the *śruti* text, then it follows that everyone automatically gets liberated in the state of sleep itself. This, however, is absurd for two reasons. If a person attains liberation in sleep itself, then he should not get up from sleep and return to the waking state and transact business as before. Moreover, since liberation is a permanent condition, it is absurd to say that a person, having attained liberation, returns to

the worldly life. This is the *reductio ad absurdum* of the opponent's contention that the highest reality free from all distinctions is attained by all in the state of sleep without the help of the *śravaṇa-manana-nididhyāsana* discipline. It should, therefore, be said that there is *ajñāna* in the state of sleep and that its existence is revealed by the Witness-Self (*sākṣi-vedya*).

Why is it, it may be asked, that *ajñāna* which is *sākṣi-vedya* is not directly known in deep sleep, even though subjective states such as desire and aversion as well as *ajñāna* are directly known in the waking state? For example, we do say in our waking state: "I like this object," "I dislike this object" "I am ignorant of that object," and so on. It means that we directly know in the waking state our desires, aversion, and ignorance which are *sākṣi-vedya*: even so, the critic argues, *ajñāna* which is supposed to exist in the state of sleep should have been directly seen then itself.

This argument has no force. One does not have direct perception of *ajñāna* in deep sleep in the *tripuṭī* form such as "I am ignorant of Brahman," because the internal organ, which is the manifest of it (*abhivyañjakam antaḥkaraṇam*), does not function in the state of sleep. If we have *tripuṭī* or *viśiṣṭa jñāna* in dream and waking states, it is because of the functioning of the internal organ in these states. Suresvara drives home this point by citing the case of the "I". Though the "I" is present and is revealed by the Witness-consciousness in the waking state, it is not clearly noticed in the absence of the modes of the mind. On the contrary one knows the "I" explicitly only when there is *tripuṭī-jñāna* such as "I know this pot," which presupposes the functioning of the internal organ

manifesting *viśiṣṭa-vṛtti*. The same holds good in the case of *ajñāna*. Since the internal organ does not function in sleep, there is no *viśiṣṭa-vṛtti* such as "I do not know Brahman" at that time; consequently there is no direct perception (*avyavahitam pratyakṣam*) of *ajñāna* then.

The Buddhists argue that there is reason for not accepting *śruti* as a *pramāṇa*. A secular sentence accepted as a *pramāṇa* conveys some information by depending on some other *pramāṇa*. For example, when the sentence, "There are fruits in the trees on the bank of the river," uttered by a trustworthy person is accepted as a *pramāṇa*, it is well-known that what it conveys has been obtained by the speaker through the help of perception. This, however, is not possible in the case of *śruti* which is *apauruṣeya*. The Buddhists, therefore, maintain that *śruti* cannot be accepted as a *pramāṇa*.

With the view to set aside the above argument, Suresvara enumerates four reasons on the basis of which alone what is claimed to be a *pramāṇa* can be questioned.³ First of all, if a sentence conveys what is already known through another source, then it will cease to be a *pramāṇa*. For example, one may question the authority of a secular sentence like "There are fruits (in the trees) on the bank of the river" (*nadyāstīre phalāni santi*) on the ground that it restates what is already conveyed by another *pramāṇa*. Or, one may argue that an eulogistic corroborative statement (*praśamsārthavāda*) like "The wind is, indeed, a very swift deity" (*vāyurvai kṣepiṣṭhā devatā*) which does not have any independent validity, becomes meaningful by praising what is already enjoined. Secondly, if a sen-

tence conveys what is contradicted by another *pramāṇa*, then it can be set aside, or its meaning has to be construed in a different way to overcome the contradiction with another *pramāṇa*. Consider the case of *guṇavāda*, which is a kind of *arthavāda*. A *guṇavāda* is a sentence which conveys what is contradicted by another *pramāṇa*, e.g. there is the statement, “*ādityo yūpaḥ*,” which means that the sacrificial post is the sun. What is conveyed by this sentence cannot be accepted literally as it is contradicted by perception. For the purpose of overcoming this conflict, its meaning is construed in a secondary sense. Thirdly, if a sentence, e.g. “The object is either a post or a man” (*sthāṇurvā puruṣo vā*), conveys some information in a doubtful way, it cannot be accepted as a *pramāṇa*. Finally, if it does not convey anything at all, it cannot be *pramāṇa*. Suresvara holds that the authority of *śruti* as a *pramāṇa* cannot be questioned for any of these reasons.

The *śruti* text about the Self is not of the nature of a restatement (*anuvāda*) like “Fire is the antidote for cold” (*agnirhimasya bheṣajam*), or “The wind is, indeed, a very swift deity.” It says that the inward Self is free from suffering — an information which cannot be known through any other *pramāṇa*. Since the subject-matter of the Upaniṣadic text is outside the scope of other *pramāṇas*, there cannot be any conflict between *śruti* and other words; the Upaniṣadic text does not face the problem of contradiction by another *pramāṇa* like the sentence, “The sacrificial post is the sun.”

Doubt may arise because of *pramāṇa* or *prameya*. Suresvara argues that the nature of *śruti* is such that it cannot be a source of doubt. The self-luminous Self

which is free from qualities and relations is always immediate. So Suresvara says that considering the nature of the Self also there is no scope for doubt.

It is well-known that a blockhead does not understand even a simple thing, fit enough for easy understanding. It means that the fault is in the person and not in the object. There is the general principle that the *Veda* is the source of knowledge to one who is the eligible person (*adhikāriṇaḥ pramiti-janako vedah*). If a person does not understand the Self even after hearing the *śruti* text, it only means that he is not the scripture-stipulated eligible person. In the words of Suresvara: "How can scripture teach one, a clod of clay in the human form, who is not at all capable of understanding the subject, though it is fit enough for easy comprehension?"

NOTES

1. 2.4.11.
2. *Upadeśa-sāhasrī*, 18.177.
3. See his *Naiṣkarmyasiddhi*, 2.5.
4. *Ibid.*, 3.58 and the *sambandhokti* thereto.
5. *Ibid.*, *sambandhokti* to 3.35.
6. *Ibid.*, 3.35.
7. *Ibid.*, 3.36-37.
8. *Ibid.*, 3.38.

THE NOTION OF REALITY IN ADVAITA

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Advaita enjoys a unique and significant position in the history of Indian philosophical thought. There are scores of interpretations and discussions on the cardinal doctrines of Advaita. In spite of the vast existing literature on Advaita, which can very well quench the inquisitive thirst of anyone interested in the solutions to the fundamental problems related to epistemology, logic, and metaphysics, a fresh or renewed inquiry into the very foundations of Advaita for a better insight is always a worthy endeavour. Advaita provides an opportunity for a systematic mental exercise which, in turn, paves the way for a genuine understanding of the subject in question. While appreciating the alacritous and perspicacious mind of Śaṅkara, the chief exponent of Advaita, Radhakrishnan writes as follows:

It is impossible to read Śaṅkara's writings, packed as they are with serious and subtle-thinking, without being conscious that one is in contact with a mind of a very fine penetration and profound

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spirituality ... His philosophy stands forth complete needing neither a before nor an after ... Whether we agree or differ, the penetrating light of his mind never leaves us where we were.'

As aptly expressed by Radhakrishnan, the credit goes to Śaṅkara for not only elucidating the philosophy of Advaita, but also for providing a method of dialectic which drives home every argument of an Advaitin as regards the notion of reality without giving any room for dogmatism.

Every inquiry into metaphysical presuppositions in Indian thought must necessarily be preceded by an epistemological inquiry. Disregarding this basic norm, and treating metaphysical and epistemological issues as two distinct water-tight compartments result in the misinterpretation of the entire system. This is equally applicable to Advaita. Any philosophical riddle that can be resolved with utmost ease may become abstruse when one is not circumspect enough in discerning the context in which it actually occurs. This is primarily the reason why the notion of reality in Advaita, even to-day, appears to be confusing to many. The lack of proper understanding of the key concepts that are used in various contexts, mixing up of these concepts irrespective of their contextual occurrence, and ignoring the nuances of these concepts, lead one to a blind alley. Keeping this in view, I have made an attempt to clarify certain doubts that constantly plague one's mind while trying to understand the notion of reality in Advaita.

What Does 'Real' Mean?

Before preparing for any meaningful discussion on the notion of reality in Advaita as expounded by Śaṅ-

kara, it is customary on our part to explain the meaning of the term 'real'. Generally it is agreed that an object is real in so far as it is given in one's experience. In this sense of the term 'real', dream objects such as 'dream lion', the objects of erroneous perception such as 'rope-snake', and the objects of normal waking experience such as 'table', 'tree', etc., are considered to be real as they are all given in one's experience. Thus all of them, it appears, share the same ontological status so far as the above said criterion of the 'real' is concerned. For the sake of convenience, hereafter, I propose to call dream objects (e.g. dream lion) and objects of erroneous perception (e.g. rope-snake) illusory objects (*prātibhāsika*), and I propose to call the objects of normal waking experience (e.g. table, tree, etc.), empirical objects (*vyāvahārika*). It is a fact that we are normally guided by our day-to-day experience as regards the character of various objects. The day-to-day experience suggests to us that there is some distinction between illusory objects and empirical objects. It is evident from our experience that an illusory object is experienced by one individual at one-point-of-time. It vanishes once the experience in which it is presented ceases. It is, therefore, an object of one's private experience. It exists, that is to say, at one-point-of-time (*citta-kāla*). In addition to that it may not conform to the principles of space and time. An empirical object has not only public accessibility, but also is relatively more enduring (*dvaya-kāla*). And it conforms to the principles of space and time.² In the light of the above distinction between illusory objects and empirical objects, we can say that the term 'real' is not used univocally, but equivocally. This equivocality leads to a paradox, namely, that, on the one hand,

it is admitted that both illusory and empirical objects have the same ontological status, and that, on the other hand, illusory objects differ from empirical objects in their character. - This necessarily calls for an alternative criterion of the 'real' which can take care of this paradox. The best way to avoid this paradox is to define 'real' (*sat*) as something that remains unsublated or uncontradicted by any experience. On the contrary, what is 'unreal' (*asat*) is that which is never experienced by any person at any point of time. These criteria of real and unreal serve as a necessary backdrop in analysing the notion of reality in Advaita.

Legacy of the Upaniṣadic Texts

Adhering to the teachings of the sacred Upaniṣadic texts, Śaṅkara envisages that the ultimate reality, which is called Brahman or Ātman is one. The following statements belonging to different Upaniṣadic texts clearly bring out the oneness of reality and the identity of Ātman with Brahman. They are as follows: "All this is Ātman."¹ This view is substantiated in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* where it is mentioned, "Ātman being known ... everything is known."² Thus, if one comes to realise what Ātman is, then one knows everything. In other words, there is no other reality excepting Ātman. As regards the nature of the ultimate reality, the *Upaniṣad* says, "There was only being at the beginning; it was only one, without a second."³ And in the same *Upaniṣad* it is also mentioned, "All this is Brahman."⁴ When the *Upaniṣads* say that everything is Ātman, and also that everything is Brahman, what they mean is that the Ātman is Brahman as conveyed by another text, "This Self is Brahman."⁵ But how does one come to know this eternal truth? An ordinary

person who lives amidst the things of transient nature takes it for granted that the world of ordinary experience is real, and that there is nothing other than this empirical world (*vyāvahārika*). As long as this belief rules one's reason, one is in the state of ignorance (*avidyā*). The greatness of Śaṅkara lies in his application of the logic of dialectic in a more dispassionate way to dispel this belief in the 'real' nature of the empirical world. This is all the more important for Śaṅkara as he must adhere to the teachings of the sacred Upaniṣadic texts. Thus, the eternal truth that Brahman alone is real conveyed by *śruti*, which is infallible, must be proved within the parametres of reason and experience. This clearly vindicates that Śaṅkara was against all kinds of bigotry.

Rejection of Sāṅkhya and Vaiśeṣika Theories of the Origin of the World

As a first step, in order to vindicate his point, namely, that there is no other reality apart from Brahman-Ātman, Śaṅkara questions the logical tenability of the theories of the origin of the world advocated by Sāṅkhya and Vaiśeṣika. His main contention is to show that these two systems, though they accept the authority of the *Veda*, deviated from the principal teachings of the *Upaniṣads* while interpreting the origin of the world. This does not mean that Śaṅkara blindly argues in favour of the teachings of the *Upaniṣads*. He tries to show the logical inconsistencies involved in those systems within the framework of their own assumptions. In fact, Śaṅkara considers Sāṅkhya a 'principal opponent' (*pradhānamalla*). Let us discuss the Sāṅkhya and Vaiśeṣika theories of the origin of the world in some detail.

Sāṅkhya admits the primal matter (*prakṛti*) and the self (*puruṣa*) as two independent realities. The primal matter, which is also known as *pradhāna*, is constituted by three *guṇas* (*triguṇātma*) known as *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. *Sattva-guṇa* represents light or knowledge, while *rajas* and *tamas* represent activity and dullness respectively. The primal matter (*prakṛti*) "is said to be the unity of the *guṇas* held in a state of equilibrium (*sāmyāvasthā*)."⁸ The self (*puruṣa*) is nothing but pure consciousness (*suddhacaitanya*). Consciousness, that is to say, is not its quality but its very essence. The self (*puruṣa*), holds Sāṅkhya, is immutable and also free from all activities.⁹ Sāṅkhya believes that the proximity of the self to the primal matter is responsible for the evolution of the latter. Śaṅkara questions the Sāṅkhya explanation of the origin of the world from the primal matter (*prakṛti*). The relation between the primal matter and the self is not a union (*sainyoga*), but only mere proximity (*sannidhi-mātra*). This being the case, contests Śaṅkara, how does the world evolve without the intervention of a conscious agent? The primal matter, being unintelligent (*jada*), cannot be the cause of this world. Thus the explanation of Sāṅkhya with regard to the origin of the world is not a satisfactory one.¹⁰

Almost on similar grounds Śaṅkara disqualifies the Vaiśeṣika atomic theory which attempts to provide an explanation of the origin of the world. According to the Vaiśeṣika atomic theory, the world is a resultant effect of the combination of various non-conscious atoms. However, Vaiśeṣika admits the law of unseen potency (*adr̥ṣṭa*) that regulates the movement of atoms. But this law is not guided by any conscious agent.

Moreover, Vaiśeṣika does not explain why and how unconscious atoms first begin to move and then join to produce the world. If the atoms are always in motion, if they always join together by their very nature, then it is not possible to explain either the beginning of the world or its dissolution. Hence the explanation provided by Vaiśeṣika is not convincing."

What is to be noticed here is that both the above discussed systems strongly advocate that the changes that take place in the world of ordinary empirical experiences are real, and are caused. This necessitated Śaṅkara to inquire into the nature of cause-effect relation.

Causation

As regards the cause-effect relation there are two prominent theories of causation. They are: *satkārya-vāda* and *asatkārya-vāda*. According to *satkārya-vāda*, the effect pre-exists in the cause. In opposition to this view, *asatkārya-vādins* hold that the effect is totally a new creation; hence it does not pre-exist in the cause. Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika and some Mīmāṃsā philosophers advocate *asatkārya-vāda*, while Sāṅkhya and some Mīmāṃsā philosophers uphold *satkārya-vāda*. Śaṅkara is critical of both the theories as they are logically ill-founded. According to Śaṅkara, there are no valid grounds to show that an effect is different from its material cause. For example, the objects made out of wood are not different from wood. Similarly, the things made out of silver are not different from silver. They cannot exist independent of the material substances from which they are made of. Therefore, it is incorrect on the part of the advocates of *asatkārya-vāda*

to say that an effect is something different from its cause. It is also argued that it is logically impossible to conceive of something new coming into existence.¹²

Sāṅkhya criticizes the position of *asatkārya-vādin*s on the ground that if something new comes into existence in the form of an effect, then it amounts to saying that a non-existent entity can be produced out of something existent. For instance, why not anyone produce from the sand, oil which is non-existent therein? However, Śaṅkara holds, the position of Sāṅkhya, which subscribes to *satkārya-vāda*, is equally untenable for the following reasons. If the effect pre-exists in the cause, then how can there be a genuine change of the material cause into an effect? If the effect pre-exists in the cause, then it is logically impossible for the material cause to become the effect because there is no difference between the cause and the effect in this particular case. But a *satkārya-vādin* may defend his position by arguing that even though the matter does not come into existence in the form of an effect, the form comes. Thus a new form is created. This argument of *satkārya-vādin* boils down to *asatkārya-vāda*, for he is prepared to admit the effect as something new. In this way, a *satkārya-vādin* contradicts his own position.¹³

The doctrine of *satkārya-vāda*, viz., that the change in form is considered to be a real change (*pariṇāma*), has become a target of Śaṅkara's criticism. Śaṅkara asks: can the change in form be considered a real change? Though it is true that changes in form are perceived, argues Śaṅkara, these changes are not considered to be real as the form does not have any reality

of its own apart from its material cause. If a change in form is regarded as a real change, then a person can have many realities as he keeps on changing his postures frequently. But it is not the case. Our experience tells us that the person is one and the same though there is a change in his postures." Another important feature that underscores the view is that if substances are different from their forms, then how can we relate qualities or forms to the substances? Either we must admit formless substances or a third reality that can connect forms with substances. But to connect that reality with the other two, we may require another reality. Thus it leads to an infinite regress (*anavasthā*).¹⁵

If the view that the form has no independent existence apart from its substance is admitted, then the change in mere form is not real. This paves the way for Śaṅkara's ingenious doctrine of apparent change (*vivarta-vāda*). For example, when one perceives a rope as a snake, it is not that rope has really transformed into a snake. Remaining as a rope, it only appears as a snake. Likewise we may perceive many other illusory objects which appear to be real. But their existence is only phenomenal. This is the vital point on which Śaṅkara's notion of reality is based.

Levels of Reality

Considering the fact that no changes are real, Śaṅkara admits, as discussed elsewhere, that we perceive changes in form. Since these changes in form cannot be accepted as real, they are regarded as illusory (*mithyā*). Now the question that arises is: what is the status of such objects? Are they real or unreal? According to Śaṅkara, the illusory objects

such as 'rope-snake' cannot be real (*sat*), because to be real is not to be sublated (*bādhita*). But these illusory objects suffer sublation. At the same time we cannot say that they are unreal (*asat*) for they are given in one's experience at a particular point of time. Then, what are they? Śaṅkara's answer to this question is that they are neither real nor unreal, that they are indeterminable as real or unreal (*sadasaddvābhyām-anirvacanīya*).¹⁴ For instance, what is unreal (*asat*) is that which cannot be cognized by anyone at any time. For example, none could ever perceive a 'hare's horn', a 'sky-flower', etc. If Śaṅkara could show that the objects of empirical reality (*vyāvahārika*) are like the objects of illusory experience (*prātibhāsika*), then it is possible to show that the existence of Brahman alone is real (*sat*).

Śaṅkara maintains that, just as the objects of illusory experience (*prātibhāsika*) exist so long as they are not sublated (*abādhita*) by subsequent cognition, the objects of empirical reality (*vyāvahārika*) do exist so long as they are not sublated by Brahman-realisation. Thus, if we draw an analogy between the illusory objects such as 'rope-snake', and the objects of empirical reality such as 'table', 'tree' etc., then the objects of empirical reality may also turn out to be unreal (*asat*) when compared or viewed from the experience of a higher reality. Since the illusory experience such as 'rope-snake' is sublated by the subsequent experience, the content of such an experience is not real. Similarly, ordinary waking experiences concerning the empirical reality are sublated by Brahman-realisation. Brahman, being absolutely real (*pāramārthika*), has higher ontological status. Since Brahman-realisation does not at any time suffer sublation, such

an experience is absolutely real, and the content of such an experience is also real (*sat*). *Śruti* as a *pramāṇa* reveals this truth. Since there is no *pramāṇa* that can contradict whatever is revealed by *śruti* as a *pramāṇa*, it is accepted without any hesitation that Brahman alone is real. At this stage one concludes that nothing but Brahman exists.

Nature of Reality

Śaṅkara with his ingenious technique of the logic of dialectic could vindicate that the supreme reality, Brahman, alone is real. The essential nature (*svarūpalakṣaṇa*) of Brahman is pure Being (*sat*), pure Consciousness (*cit*) and pure Bliss (*ānanda*). The essential nature of Brahman is such that it is free from all attributes. Thus its nature is devoid of attributes (*nirguṇa*). Terms such as 'consciousness', 'bliss', etc., are used in the defining sense, but not in the qualifying sense to distinguish Brahman, the supreme reality, from everything else.¹⁷ In other words, Brahman is trans-empirical, trans-relational, and also trans-linguistic. Hence one cannot describe it positively. Not only that it is indescribable, but also unknowable. If it is conceived as an object of knowledge, then it logically follows that it is related to a subject, and therefore becomes determinate.¹⁸ When the *Upaniṣads* describe Brahman as indescribable and unknowable, what they mean by this is that Brahman cannot be described positively, but only negatively, that it cannot be known as such-and-such positively, but only negatively as what it is not. This method is called *neti-neti* method. This does not mean that the indeterminate Brahman (*nirguṇa-Brahman*) is empty. Śaṅkara observes that though it may appear to be empty to the dull-witted

(*manda-buddhi*), it is not. Brahman which is the ground of everything cannot be empty or void. Negation is only a way to affirmation. When it is said that it cannot be known objectively, what is meant is that it cannot be known in the sense in which empirical objects are known. On the contrary, it has to be realised as the very Self (*Ātman*) of the knower. The Self (*Ātman*) by its very nature is self-luminous (*sva-prakāśa*). While it reveals everything else, it itself is not revealed by anything. Just as the sun can be seen when the clouds which conceal it go away, even so the Self, which is no other than Brahman, can be realised, when ignorance (*avidyā*) which conceals it, gets removed.

To sum up: Śaṅkara as a chief exponent of Advaita proved beyond doubt that Brahman alone is real (*sat*) in the sense that it remains unsublated all the time. When Śaṅkara holds the view that Brahman alone is real, it is often misunderstood that Śaṅkara denies the existence of the world of ordinary empirical experience (*vyāvahārika*). As a matter of fact, Śaṅkara extends the nature of reality to the objects existing in dreams and ordinary waking experience. The dream objects exist till the onset of waking experience, and are 'real' to one who experiences them. The empirical world (*vyāvahārika*) exists for a person till the attainment of Brahman-realisation, and is 'real' till Brahman-realisation. However, to the knower of Brahman, the world as the world is no more. But to one who is ignorant of Brahman the pluralistic universe with all kinds of distinctions does exist. This foundational or basic idea of the distinction between absolute reality (*pāramārthika*) and empirical reality (*vyāvahārika*)

should be borne in mind to understand the metaphysics of Advaita. In this context, let me quote a well-known text from the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* that reads as follows:

When there is quality as it were, then one sees the other, one smells the other, one tastes the other... one knows the other. But when everything has become just one's own Self, by what and whom should one smell... by what and whom should one know?¹⁸

Thus, when the truth of oneness is realized, all distinctions such as the distinction between knower and known, the distinction between substance and attributes, and the distinction between whole and parts, no more exist as the non-dual Self (*Ātman*), which is nothing but Brahman, is the only reality, and the knower of the Self remains as the Self. To realize this eternal truth, namely, that there is something supreme and absolute beyond this empirical realm is to add a very important and most significant dimension to our notion of reality. It is only from this higher plane of the absolute (*pāramārthika*) that the empirical reality (*vyāvahārika*) is said to be illusory (*mithyā*).

NOTES

I am greatly indebted to Professor R. Balasubramanian who introduced me to Indian Philosophy in a novel way. But for him I would not have ventured to write this paper on Advaita. Also, I sincerely thank Professor Kutumba Sastry who clarified my doubts concerning the subject while preparing this paper.

1. S. Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. II (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 446.

2. For details see R. Balasubramanian, *Advaita Vedānta* (Madras: Madras University Philosophical Series, No. 23, 1976), pp. 90-91.

3. *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, VII, xxv, 2.

4. *Bṛhadāranyaka Upaniṣad*, IV, v, 6.

5. *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, VI, ii, 1.

6. *Ibid.*, III, xiv, 1.

7. *Bṛhadāranyaka Upaniṣad*, II, v, 19.

8. S. C. Chatterjee and D. M. Dutta, *An Introduction to Indian Philosophy*, 8th reprint (Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1984), p. 260.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 265.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 363.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 364.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 376.

13. *Ibid.*

14. *Ibid.*, p. 377.

15. *Ibid.*

16. R. Balasubramanian, "Advaita: An Overview" in *Perspectives of Theism and Absolutism in Indian Philosophy* (Madras: Ramakrishna Mission Vivekananda College, 1978), p. 59.

17. R. Balasubramanian, *Advaita Vedānta*, pp. 101-102.

18. M. Hiriyanna, *Outlines of Indian Philosophy* (New Dethi: Blackie and Son (India) Ltd, 1979), p. 374.

19. *Bṛhadāranyaka Upaniṣad*, IV, v, 15.

ON TĀTPARYA LĪNGAS

*Kutumba Sastry**

Tātparya which can be translated as purport or intention is one of the main problems with which both the Mīmāṃsakas and the Vedāntins are concerned. The simplest possible definition of *tātparya* accepted by the Naiyāyikas is "the intention of the speaker."¹ However, the Mīmāṃsakas and the Vedāntins define *tātparya* as an inherent power every sentence or word possesses to generate knowledge.² The meaning which a word or a sentence ultimately intends to convey is called *tātparyārtha* in its etymological sense.³

What is the criterion by which we know the intended meaning of a sentence or a passage? In the case of Vedic passages this question gains more importance because no author is accepted for the *Vedas*. Added to this, there are other difficulties in respect of Vedic passages. First of all, there is no live context. Secondly, there are mutually contradictory passages. Thirdly, no passage can be treated as invalid. Lastly,

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there is an imperative on the interpreter of the *Vedas* to evolve a central theme of teaching of Vedic passages so as to satisfy all the passages to fit into that without contradiction.

For example, in the case of the *Upaniṣads* some passages are favourable for an Advaitic interpretation, and some others for a Dvaitic interpretation. Hence, it becomes necessary to treat some passages as stronger (*prabala*) than others, and the meaning of sentences other than strong ones is explained in such a way that it complements the meaning of strong passage rather than contradicts it. It is to decide the strength and weakness (*prabala-daurbalya*) of Vedic passages that the concept of *tātparya* is introduced. The passage which enjoys the support of *tātparya* is treated as valid in its meaning (*svārthe pramāṇam*) and stronger than the other passages which do not enjoy the support of *tātparya*. The latter are not taken to be valid in their meaning, and hence are taken to convey a secondary meaning so that they fall in line with the passages which enjoy the support of *tātparya*. Hence, the notion of "*tātparya*" has gained unparalleled importance in explaining the teachings of the *Upaniṣads*. This situation has demanded an inquiry into the factors which determine the *tātparya*.

In the following sections, I will discuss the six determinants of *tātparya* (*tātparya-liṅgas*), their definitions, the way in which they determine the *tātparya*, and the new light that has been thrown on it by Madhusūdana Sarasvatī and Brahmānanda Sarasvatī in understanding these six determinants.

II

The six determinants of *tātparya* are:

1. *upakrama* and *upasaṁhāra*, 2. *abhyāsa*, 3. *apūrvatā*,
4. *phalaṁ*, 5. *arthavāda*, 6. *upapatti*.⁴

1. *Upakrama* and *upasaṁhāra* are defined as harmony of the initial and concluding passages.⁵ If an idea or a proposition is mentioned both in the beginning and in the end of a chapter, it is the purport of the total chapter, even though there may be a number of other ideas expressed in the body of the chapter.⁶ If such an idea or proposition occurring in the beginning and at the end of a passage does not determine the *tātparya* of that total passage in it, such an exercise would have no other purpose to serve and would become futile.

Brahmānanda Sarasvatī makes an interesting observation here saying that this harmony of the initial and concluding passages acts sometimes⁷ as a factor to deny the doubt that such a thing is a re-statement (*anuvāda*) and not an injunction (*vidhi*).⁸ Hence, the *upakrama* and *upasaṁhāra* serve a double purpose — to fix the purport of a passage and to dispel any possible doubt that such a statement is of the nature of a re-statement. These two functions are mutually complementary to each other as, according to the Mīmāṃsakas the *tātparya* of a passage can be fixed only in respect of that passage which is enjoined, but not in respect of that passage which is re-stated. In fact a Vedic statement is valid only in so far as it is enjoined, but not if it is a re-statement. When the validity of a re-statement is itself questioned, the question of its purport does not arise,

2. *Abhyāsa* is defined as repetition of an idea or sentence. Such repetition brings out the purport of that total passage in the idea or meaning conveyed by such repetitive sentences. Repetition establishes concern (*ādara*) in the thought conveyed by it. Even in our present day conversation, we do not repeat a sentence or an expression unless we wish to show our concern (*ādara*) to such an expression. Likewise, we use repetitive expressions only to show our strong desire to convey it. Hence, repetition plays a prominent role in bringing out the purport of a passage.

Brahmānanda Sarasvatī makes two observations regarding *abhyāsa*. First of all, *ādara* which is conveyed by *abhyāsa* can be nothing but a sense of commendation (*prāśastya*). The fifth determinant, *arthavāda*, also conveys commendation (*prāśastya*) idea. Then, what is the difference between *abhyāsa* and *arthavāda*? Brahmānanda Sarasvatī tries to answer this question by showing a subtle difference between the two commendations conveyed by *abhyāsa* and *arthavāda*. The *prāśastya* conveyed by *arthavāda* is of the nature of not being producer of immensely undesired.' The *prāśastya* conveyed by *abhyāsa* is of the nature of being greater than other things.' Hence, he says that there is no identity in the result produced by *arthavāda* and *abhyāsa*.

Secondly, there is yet another *abhyāsa* accepted by the Mīmāṃsakas as one of the six criteria to establish difference between rites (*karmabheda*). In the context of the main ritual, *darśapūrṇamāśa*, we find six sentences in which the word 'yajati' is repeated, viz., "samidho yajati", "tanūnapātāṃ yajati," etc. Here the repetition of the word "yajati" establishes the diffe-

rence between *samidh* and *tanūnapāt* rituals instead of fixing *tātparya* for any single ritual. The reason given for this is that if all these six rituals are considered to be the ancilliarics to the main ritual *darśapūrṇamāsa*, then the repetition of the word “*yajati*” becomes purposeless, because *darśapūrṇamāsa* is already enjoined by some other sentence, and there can be no second injunction of a ritual which has already been enjoined. Hence, it is decided that the six independent rituals are enjoined by these sentences. It means that the *abhyāsa* in the case of *karmabheda* has to be contrasted with the *abhyāsa* as one of the determinants of *tātparya*.

Brahmānanda Sarasvatī draws a distinction between these two *abhyāsas* by saying that, if it is a case of *abhyāsa* of the nature of enjoining a hitherto unaccomplished action, it indicates *karmabheda*; but in the case of *abhyāsa* of a fact already accomplished (*siddhārthaviṣayakam*), it determines *tātparya* of that total passage.

3. *Apūrvatā* is defined as novelty of what is taught. Within a sentence or a group of sentences two types of objects will be presented to our cognition. They are: the objects which are already known and those which are not known. It is more or less impossible to present the second type of objects independently without presenting the first type. Since objects are both known and unknown, a sentence will have purport only in conveying the hitherto unknown object, as the intention of using a sentence is not to convey the meaning which is already known. For example, in a research paper, a scholar reviews the available literature in order to arrive at a new conclusion. In such cases, the new information given to us

for the first time will be considered to be the purport of the paper.

4. *Phalam* is fruitfulness. The meaning conveyed by a passage, when known, should be fruitful. So the fruitfulness of the meaning conveyed by a passage is a determinant of the purport of the passage.

5. *Arthavāda* is defined as eulogy or condemnation. Eulogy found in a passage about a thing which is presented by an earlier passage helps in fixing the purport or the intention of the total passage on the basis of the thing that is eulogised. In contrast to this, condemnation found in a passage about a thing presented by an earlier passage, establishes the fact that what was conveyed by the first passage is not its import.

6. *Upapatti* is defined as consistency in the light of reasoning. It is further defined by Brahmānanda Sarasvatī as uncontradictedness of the subject, taught by a passage, by any other valid means of knowledge. It need not be emphasised that the meaning conveyed by a passage cannot be purportful if such a meaning happens to be contradicted by another valid means of knowledge.

Now, the role that these six determinants play in conveying the *tātparya* of a passage is important. However, it is to be examined whether these six determinants alone are sufficient to bring out the *tātparya*, or whether a few more determinants are needed. We do not want to take up that issue at present.

III

Madhusūdana Sarasvatī in his *Advaitasiddhi* makes yet another important observation regarding these *tātparyaliṅgas*. He classifies them into two groups on two grounds — on the basis of the word (*śabda*) and on that of the meaning (*artha*). The first group of three *liṅgas* can be decided by the mere word or proposition itself, whereas the second group can be decided only by considering the meaning of the word or the proposition. The harmony between the beginning and the end of a passage, repetition, and eulogy or condemnation are on the basis of the word (*śabdaniṣṭha*).

The other three, *viz.*, novelty, uncontradictedness, and fruitfulness are on the basis of the sense (*arthaniṣṭha*). This classification is self-explanatory.

Madhusūdana Sarasvatī also says that the latter three, *i.e.*, novelty, uncontradictedness, and fruitfulness, do, indeed, establish validity (*prāmānya*) of a passage and by doing so, also determine the purport of the passage. Here it may be noted that the validity is the pervasive entity, while the *tātparya* is the pervaded entity as the former is concerned with all the six varieties of valid knowledge, while the latter is concerned with verbal testimony alone. Needless to say, a passage will have purport only when it is first of all valid.

The introduction of novelty into the definition of validity of means of knowledge is intended to eliminate validity of re-statements as regards their meaning. Fruitfulness is introduced into the definition of validity to eliminate validity to such sentences whose meaning, having been known, does not serve any pur-

pose. For example, the sentence, “*uttānā vai devagavā vahanti*,” which means that the heavenly animals walk upside down, does not serve any purpose after its meaning being known. Uncontradictedness is introduced into the definition of validity to eliminate validity to such sentences as “*grāvāṇaḥ plavante*” which means ‘stones are flying’. The knowledge obtained through this sentence is contradicted by the valid perception and hence the sentence is treated to be invalid.

The definition of validity of knowledge, according to Mīmāṃsakas and the Vedāntins, consists only in novelty and uncontradictedness.¹⁰ However, Madhusūdana Sarasvatī adds fruitfulness in addition to novelty and uncontradictedness. The introduction of fruitfulness into the definition of validity of knowledge leads to a contingency that sentences like “*uttānā vai devagavāḥ*” need not be studied (made *adhyayana*) as they are not valid. Hence it is argued that the factor fruitfulness should not be included in the definition of valid knowledge.

Replying to this, Brahmānanda Sarasvatī observes that every valid knowledge possesses fruitfulness in so far as it makes a person do or abstain from doing any action, thus further making the person to derive his desired results. A person does not act unless such action serves some purpose to him.¹¹ Hence every sentence which makes a person act will be fruitful in this sense. Brahmānanda Sarasvatī further supports his position by quoting the authority of the *Mīmāṃsā-sūtra*, 1.1.5, “*autpattikastu, ...*”¹² Unlike others who take the two words “*anupalabdhe arthe*” together for constructing the meaning, he takes them separately in the sense of “that which is unknown” and “that which is

fruitful" respectively. Interestingly, Brahmānanda Sarasvatī splits a part of the *sūtra*, 'avyatirekaścārthe anupalabdhe' into three components viz. *avyatirekaḥ*, *arthe* and *anupalabdhe* as against splitting it into two by other commentators as "avyatirekaḥ" and "arthe anupalabdhe." The word "avyatirekaḥ" is generally explained as uncontradictedness and *anupalabdhe* as not given to understand earlier by any other valid means of knowledge. The word *arthe* is explained as "saprayojane" i.e. possessing fruitfulness.

Brahmānanda Sarasvatī's explanation of this *sūtra* as revealing all the three factors of valid means of knowledge is unique and significant. Most of the commentaries including the *Slokaṽrttika* on the above *sūtra*, explain the word "arthe" as the substantive (*viśeṣya*) of which "anupalabdhe" is the adjective. Thus, they take into consideration only two characteristics of the definition of valid means of knowledge," whereas Brahmānandha Sarasvatī notices all the three characteristics of the definition of validity in this *sūtra* itself.

IV

Usually when more than one factor is shown as a cause of an effect, two types of explanation are possible. According to one view, all the factors put together become a single cause of an effect. For example, stick, wheel and potter, put together are the cause of a pot. There is another view according to which each factor stands to be an independent cause of the effect. For example; grass (*trṇa*), churning wood (*araṇi*), and firestone (*maṇi*) are considered each one of them to be the causes of fire. In the present case it is to be decided whether all the six determinants put together

determine the *tātparya*, or every determinant can independently determine the *tātparya*. It appears neither of the above two views suits in the present case.

If we follow the classification of *Madhusūdana Sarasvatī*, novelty, uncontradictedness, and fruitfulness, all put together constitute the validity of knowledge. Unless a passage is valid in itself, the question of *tātparya* for such a passage does not arise. Hence, in the first place, a passage should possess all the three above determinants put together in it in order to make it a valid means of knowledge. In the second place, either one, or two, or all the three of the other determinants such as harmony between the beginning and end, repetition, and commendation or condemnation, determine the *tātparya*. Hence, the determination of *tātparya* is in two stages.

Strictly speaking, we can conclude that the *tātparya-liṅgas* are only three in number as against the six enumerated in the *kārikā* quoted elsewhere. The other three are only the determinants of validity of means of knowledge.

V

The sixth chapter of the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* is the fittest example usually shown as all the six determinants are conspicuously distinct in it. The very first sentence of the second *khaṇḍa* of this chapter — which consists in all sixteen *khaṇḍas* — states that prior to the creation of name and form, *Sat* (Being) alone existed without a second.¹⁴ The very last sentence of the sixth chapter refers again to the *Sat* and also tells *Śvetaketu* that *Sat* is nothing but the very

essential Self of him. It also makes him understand that the world outside is also nothing other than *Sat* in its essential nature.¹⁵ This reference of the same subject at the beginning and at the end of the chapter satisfies the first determinant *viz.* harmony between *upakrama* and *upasamhāra*.

The nine-time repetition (*abhyāsa*) of the *mahāvākya* "*tat tvam asi*" is conspicuous at the end of the each *khaṇḍa* starting from the eighth *khaṇḍa*. This repetition establishes the identity of Self and Brahman as the import of the sixth chapter.

Creation of *tejas* (fire), *ap* (water), and *anna* (earth) referred to in the second *khaṇḍa*, existence of these three elements in *Sat* referred to in the eighth *khaṇḍa*, dissolution of these elements in *Sat* mentioned in the eighth *khaṇḍa*, the entering of *Sat* into these elements mentioned in the third *khaṇḍa* and controlling of all these elements by *Sat* mentioned again in the eighth *khaṇḍa* are five *arthavādas* which signify *jīva-brahma-aiḱya* of the sixth chapter.

Apūrvatā is obvious as the identity between the Self and Brahman is not a matter that can be known by any means of knowledge other than the *mahāvākya*.

Phalam of the knowledge of the said identity is release (*mokṣa*) and destruction of *ajñāna* as stated by the following text, "He knows who has a preceptor for him; there is delay only so long as he is not freed from the body, and then he becomes one with Brahman."¹⁶

The arguments and analogies expounded from the eighth to sixteenth *khaṇḍas* set forth the *upapatti* for the said identity.

Thus, on the basis of these determinants of *tāt-parya*, we conclude that the ideality of the self and Brahman is the purport intended to be conveyed by the sixth chapter of the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*.

NOTES

1. “वक्तुच्छिञ्च तु तात्पर्यम्”

Viśvanātha, *Bhāṣāpariccheda*, IV-84 Chowkhamba, Varanasi, 1982; p. 421.

2. “तत्प्रतीतिजननयोग्यत्वम्”

Dharmarāja, *Vedāntaparibhāṣā*, Ed. S. S. Suryanarayana Sastri, Adyar, 1984; p. 81.

3. “तदेव परं साध्यं प्रतिपाद्यं प्रयोजनम् उद्देशो वा यस्य सः तत्परः, तस्य भावः तात्पर्यम् ।”

Udayana, *Nyāyakusumāñjali*, Varanaseeya Samskrita Visvavidyalaya, Varanasi, 1973; p. 695.

4. “उपक्रमोपसंहारौ अभ्यासोऽपूर्वता फलम् ।
अर्थवादोपपत्ती च लिङ्गं तात्पर्यनिर्णये ॥”

5. Dharmarāja, *op. cit.*, p. 203.

6. “तत्र आद्यस्य एकार्थतात्पर्यनिर्णायकत्वेन लिङ्गत्वम् ।
विषयत्वेन संदिग्धानां बहूनां मध्ये यस्मिन् अर्थे आद्यन्त-
भागयोः पर्यवसानं तस्मिन्नेव तात्पर्यनिर्णयात् । अन्यथा
तस्य वैयर्थ्यात् ।”

Brahmānanda Sarasvatī, *Laghu Candirka*, Nirnayasagar Press, Bombay, p. 425.

7. “ क्वचित् च अनुवादत्वादिशङ्कापसारकतयापि तस्य लिङ्गत्वम् । यदि हि तस्मिन्नर्थे वाक्यमनुवादः स्यात् तदा उक्तपर्यवसानं व्यर्थं स्यात् इति युक्तेः । ”

Ibid., p. 425.

8. “ बलवदनिष्टाजनकत्वरूपम् । ”

Ibid., p. 425.

9. “ अर्थान्तरात् उत्कृष्टत्वरूपम् । ”

Ibid., p. 425.

10. “ अनधिगताबाधितार्थविषयकज्ञानत्वं प्रमात्मम् । ”

Dharmarāja, op. cit., Chapter I.

11. “ प्रयोजनमनुद्दिश्य न मन्दोऽपि प्रवर्तते । ”

12. “ औत्पत्तिकस्तु शब्दस्य अर्थेन सम्बन्धः, तस्य ज्ञान-
मुपदेशः, अव्यतिरेकश्चार्थे अनुपलब्धे प्रमाणम्,
बादरायणस्य अनपेक्षत्वात् ॥ ”

Jaimini, Mīmāṃsā Darśana, 1.1.5.

13. Brahmānanda Sarasvati claims that the explanation of *sūtra* 1.1.5, as offered by him, possesses the support of *vārtika*.

14. “ सदेव सोम्येदमग्र आसीत् एकमेवाद्वितीयम् । ”

15. “ ऐतदात्म्यमिदं सर्वं तत्सत्यं स आत्मा तत्त्वमसि श्वेतकेतो । ”

16. “ तस्य तावदेव चिरं यावत् न विमोक्ष्ये अथ सम्पत्स्ये । ”

Chāndogya Upaniṣad, 6.14.2.

VĀCASPATIMIŚRA'S INTERPRETATION OF THE SŪTRA 'TAT TU SAMANVAYĀT'

*S. Ranganath**

Śaṅkara builds up the background for the *sūtra* "tat tu samanvayāt". It shows the purpose with which the *sūtra* has been framed by Śrī Bādarāyaṇa. It is said in the *sūtra*, "śāstrayonitvīt" that *śāstra* is the authority to know about Brahman.

Opponent's View

This point is contested by the opponents from the point of view of a Pūrva-mīmāṃsā maxim,

"āmnāyasya kriyārthatvād-ānarthakyam-atadarthānām."

Since, *śāstra* is for the purpose of ritual, whatever that does not have the purpose is meaningless. Through this maxim it is established that the *Veda* is for the purpose or ritual only. In view of this, the Vedānta texts should be considered as meaningless because they are not for the purpose of ritual. Otherwise,

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they should be considered as subsidiary to the injunction of rituals with the purpose of making known the agent, deity, etc. of the ritual, or they may serve the purpose of prescribing other duties such as contemplation, etc. But in the case of an already existing thing, none of these alternatives can be thought of. An already existent object is known through *pratyakṣa*, etc. Further, no human goal is achieved by speaking about an already existent object as there is nothing to be rejected or accepted in that case. It is for this reason that statements like "so'rodīt" is shown to have some purpose of either praise or condemnation of the different accessories of the rites. On the ground that they are in conformity with the scriptural injunctions, the *mantras* like 'Īśvara' etc. are clearly and inseparably related with the ritual mentioning as they do the instruments therefor. The substance of the argument is that:

"*na kvacidapī veda-vākyānām vidhi-saṁsparśam-antareṇa arthavattā dṛṣṭā, upapannā vā.*"

That is: the Vedic statements have no purposefulness without association with an injunction. In the case of an already existing thing, there cannot be any injunction because injunction has got reference only with regard to a ritual. In other words, *vidhi* has its relevance only with reference to a *sādhyavastu*, but not with reference to a *siddhavastu*. Therefore, it is inevitable that the Vedānta texts should be taken as subsidiaries to the rituals through the manifestation of the nature of the agent, deity, etc. required by the ritual. If such a conclusion cannot be accepted on the ground that context is different, they may be taken as serving the purpose of *upāsana*, etc. evident from

these very statements. Therefore, the conclusion drawn under "*śāstra-yonitvāt*" is not acceptable. This is the view of the opponents.

The Siddhāntin's View

With the above view in mind Śrī Bādarāyaṇa has given the *sūtra* "*tat tu samanvayāt.*" This *sūtra* has three words, "*tat, tu* and *samanvayāt.*" Obviously the term *tu* is intended to reject the *pūrvapakṣa* view. The term *tat* refers to Brahman as the omniscient cause of the creation, maintenance and dissolution of the universe on the basis of the Vedānta texts. In other words, the conclusion drawn under the *sūtra* "*śāstra-yonitvāt*" viz., that Brahman who is *sarvajña*, etc. is understood from the Vedānta texts only. How Brahman is understood from the Vedānta texts? The answer is "*samanvayāt*" i.e., through the harmony of the Vedānta texts. It means that all the statements in the *Upaniṣads* are uniformly co-ordinated as conveying the teaching and the purport pertaining to Brahman.

"sadeva somya idam-agra āsīt."

Such is Brahman without anything earlier and anything later; Brahman alone is the immortal at the head of all.

Thus, the Vedānta texts reveal the nature of Brahman as one and only one. When through *samanvaya* the meaning of the Vedānta statements as referring to Brahman is once determined, it is not proper to think of any other meaning. It would amount to the attainment of what is called *śrutahāni* and assuming what is not stated. This is a case of double discre-

pancy. What is meant by the statement is not only abandoned but also what is not meant is assumed. It cannot be argued that the purpose of these statements is also to teach the nature of the agent, deity, etc. of the ritual, because the Vedānta itself is against such a way of thinking.

"tat kena kam paśyet."

(Then by what and whom can one see.) In the case of Brahman who is one and only one, there is no agent, no means, to perceive it. This Vedānta statement refutes all action, causal condition and result. Therefore, the Vedānta statements with Brahman as their purport cannot be regarded as *kriyāvidhiśeṣa*, etc. *i e.*, subsidiary to the injunctions of the ritual. Further Śaṅkara argues that Brahman, though of the nature of an already existent object, is not the content of perception, etc., because Brahman is the Self as stated in the text "*tat tvam asi*" and as such it cannot be understood except by the sacred teaching. The Vedānta statements which teach Brahman cannot be denied of their authoritativeness. On this ground it cannot be argued that Brahman is intimated by the sacred teaching only; for, the content of the injunction, etc. are for a person who desires heaven and for him Agnihotra etc. are enjoined as the means. But the knowledge of Brahman is meant for a person who desires immortality.

Vācaspatimiśra's Elucidation

Following these lines of argument Vācaspati Miśra contributes his elucidations with striking illustrations on certain important points. For instance, as regards the point that all Vedānta statements run

together as having for their purport the teaching of the sense of Brahman, Vācaspati Misra adds that the authorities on verbal testimony consider that with which a statement begins and that with which it ends form the meaning of the statement.

“ayena hi vāk्यarthena upakramate, yena ca upasamhriyate sa eva vāk्यārtha iti śābdāḥ.”

For instance, in respect of the text about *upāṁśu* sacrifice, it is acknowledged to be an injunction on the *upāṁśu* sacrifice. On the strength of the syntactical unity with the injunction about the *upāṁśu* sacrifice. This injunction is perceived by the statement of the defect of apathy caused by the continuous offering of *puroḍāśa* and it is followed by the concluding part stating that the *upāṁśu* sacrifice is the means of removing that defect. After presenting this illustration from the Pūrva-Mīmāṁsā point of view Vācaspati Misra shows the application of the principle of deciding the purport to the case of Vedānta texts. Here the statement *“sadeva somya idam-agra āsīt”* commences with a view to introducing Brahman, and the text *“tat tvam asi”* concludes that Brahman is the Self. Hence, the whole text has Brahman alone for the purport. The same principle could be applied to other texts of Vedānta and it may be shown that Brahman is that purport through the consideration of what goes before and what follows later.

Secondly, as regards the point that Brahman cannot be the content of *prataakṣa*, etc., Vācaspati Misra elucidates the intention of the Bhāṣyakāra. The *purvapakṣin* argues that Vedānta statements speaking of an existent thing (*pariniṣṭhitavastu*) like Brahman should

depend upon other *pramāṇas* for their validity. Here, Vācaspati Miśra holds that the *purva-pakṣa* view depends upon the analogy of human statements. It is on the analogy of human statements referring to existent things that the dependance of the Vedānta texts on the other *pramāṇas* is suspected. Here, Vācaspati Miśra asks a question, "Is the dependance of human statements because of their being human?" If it is said that the dependance is because of the reference to existent things, then it would result in the non-authoritativeness of even perception, etc. for they are mutually dependent. Since, perception etc. refers to existent things only they must be dependent on each other. If it is contended that the human statements are dependent because they issue from the human intellect, the analogy cannot apply to Vedānta texts which are not at all *pauruṣeya*; and hence, although they refer to existent things, one cannot attribute non-authoritativeness to them as one can do in the case of the *pramāṇas* like perception, etc.

Further, it is possible to anticipate the objection that, in the case of an existent thing like Brahman, the Vedānta statements which speak of Brahman should be regarded as *pauruṣeya*. The inference as to the human origin of the *Vedas* can arise through the probans in the form of *vākyatva*. Hence, dependence is unavoidable on the ground of *pauruṣeyatva*, if not on the ground of referring to an existent thing. The case of *vidhi-vākyas* is different. The *kārya* in the form of *apūrva* is not known through other means of knowledge. If *vedānta-vākyas* are also taken as part of *kriyā-vidhi*, their authoritativeness can be established on the ground that they are also *apauruṣeya*. At this

point, Vācaspati Misra argues against this contention of the *pūrvapakṣa*. He puts a question against the *pūrvapakṣin*. What is it that the *pūrvapakṣin* means by *kārya* which cannot be known by man. If he says that it is *apūrva*, then Vācaspati asks as to "How does it come to be the significance of the imperative suffix?" The *apūrva* is trans-experiential (*alaukika*). Hence, there is no knowledge of the relation of the word to that. It is only in conformity with ordinary language that only acts, in our experience, are understood from the imperative suffix, etc. Hence on the ground that *apūrva* is the *kārya*, the *apauruṣeyatva* of the *vidhi-vākyas* cannot be established. This is only by way of showing the futility of the arguments levelled by the *pūrvapakṣin* who holds the *pauruṣeyatva* of the *vedānta-vākyas*. What the Naiyāyika argues with the *vākyatva* as the probans applies to the entire *Veda*. If the *pūrvapakṣin* (a Mīmāṃsaka) urges it against the *vedānta-vākyas*, the Vedāntins can as well direct it against the *kriyārthaka-vākyas* of the *Veda* with which the Mīmāṃsaka is concerned.

Thirdly, as regards the point that Brahman is directly realised through *vedānta-vākyas* without depending upon any action on the part of a person, Vācaspati gives a fine elucidation. What is desired by man is of two kinds:

(i) Something un-attained (*aprāpta*), for instance a village, etc.

(ii) Something though attained is understood to be un-attained under the influence of delusion. (*prāptam-aprāptam-iti avagatam*), as for instance the necklace round one's own neck.

Similarly, what would be abandoned by man is also twofold:

(i) Something which is not got rid of but desired to be got rid of (*ahīnam jihāsitam*), for instance, the snake encircling one's feet.

(ii) Something which is already got rid of, but desired to be got rid of, for instance, the snake superimposed on the anklet adorning one's feet.

Take the instance of *aprāpta-prāpti* and *atyaktyāga*. These two depend upon the observance of external means. Here, subsequent to the true knowledge of these means, there is the need for their observance. Knowledge alone cannot attain what is not attained and remove what is removed. Even a thousand rope cognitions cannot alter the character of the really present snake. In the case of "*prāptam-aprāptam iti avagatam*" it is possible to attain as it were or abandon as it were by the mere infusion of truth, without dependence on any external observances. This is because they exist by the superimposition alone, and intuition of the truth plucks out the superimposed by the root and destroys it. Thus the superimposition of *jīvatva*, etc. on Brahman due to *avidyā* is removed by the true knowledge of the Vedānta text, '*Tat-tvam-asi.*' On the removal of that, the blissful nature of Brahman though eternally attained becomes attained as it were; and grief, misery, etc. though eternally abandoned becomes abandoned as it were. Thus, the statement of the Bhāṣyakāra (Śrī Śaṅkara), namely,

"heyopādeya-śūnya-brahmatvāvagamādeva sarva-kleśa-prahāṇāt puruṣārtha-siddheḥ."

can be clearly understood in the light of what Vācaspati has given as an elucidation.

Further, as regards the point made by the Bhāṣyakāra that the Vedic statements other than those that inculcate the knowledge of the Self, are not authoritative except in association with the injunction, Vācaspati gives two examples of such Vedic statements to elucidate the point, viz. "so'rodit" and "barhiṣi rajatām na deyam." The first statement is an *arthavāda*, the knowledge of which alone does not lead to the *puruṣārtha*. The Vedānta statements on the other hand, when properly realised directly lead to the *puruṣārtha*. The second statement, namely "barhiṣi rajatām na deyam" is a *niṣedhavidhi* which has a double capacity, (i) in respect of the prohibition of silver, and (ii) in respect of the censure. Even this is not directly conducive to the *puruṣārtha* without the mediation of human action. But, the case of Vedānta statements is different, because the very understanding of their sense leads to the supreme human goal without depending on anything else. With this, Vācaspati supports the view of the Bhāṣyakāra that the Vedānta statements are authoritative without being associated with any injunction.

The Pūrvapakṣin's (Objector's) View

It is to be noted again that Vācaspati Misra's elucidation is necessary to understand the *pūrvapakṣa* view that Brahman is enunciated by the *śāstra* only as the content of the injunction of contemplation. Here he cites a stanza presenting the arguments in support of the *pūrvapakṣa* view, viz.,

*ajñātasāṅgatitvena śāstratvenārthavattayā
mananādi-pratītyā ca kāryārthaḥ brahmaniścayaḥ.*⁷

First, the *pūrvapakṣa* view is that the Vedānta statements cannot have the existent Brahman for their purport, because their relation to the signified is not known (*ajñātasāṅgatitvena*). The relation is known only when they declare something which is the cause engaging in or desisting from activity.

Secondly, words do not have an existent thing as their purport because they belong to the *Veda*. It is only those combinations of words which have the engaging in or desisting from activity as their purport, that deserve to be called *śāstra*. Therefore, the contention that the Vedānta statements have the nature of Brahman for their purport is rejected by their well-known character of being the *śāstra*.

Thirdly, we cannot find any purposefulness of the Vedānta statements if they are taken as teaching the nature of Brahman, just as from the ascertainment of the true sense of "*rajjuriyam na bhujāṅgaḥ*" wherein there is the cessation of fear, trembling, etc. Similarly, from the understanding of the sense of "*tat-tvam-asi*" there is the cessation of the attributes of transmigration but not of transmigration itself, because transmigration continues even for the person who has understood the sense of "*tat-tvam-asi*."

Fourthly, it may be asked as to what is the purpose of declaring *manana*, etc. in addition to *śravaṇa*. This question arises if one argues that there is the cessation of the attributes of transmigration of a person who has heard of Brahman. These are the arguments

contained in the *pūrvapakṣa* to establish that the *vedānta-vākyas* are not authoritative if they are merely directed at conveying the nature of the existent Brahman.

The Siddhāntin's (Advaitin's) View

With the above elucidation of the *pūrvapakṣa* view, Vācaspati Miśra prepares the mind of the readers to understand the reply given by the Bhāṣyākāra (Śrī Śaṅkara) to the above apparantly strong *pūrvapakṣa* view. The reply is on the ground of the difference in nature between *karma* and Brahman in respect of their knowledge and fruit. On this ground it is shown that the teaching of Brahman as subsidiary to what is to be done does not stand to reason. If it were subsidiary to what is to be done, then the result would be that the final release is only an excellent stage among the graded non-external fruits of rituals. But, on the other hand, final release is acknowledged to be eternal by all who uphold the doctrine of final release.

Vācaspati Miśra supports all the arguments of the Bhāṣyākāra in this respect by elucidating the points with suitable examples. For instance, he cites the following example. Because of the likeness of the mind, through the infinity of its modifications to the *Viśvedevas*, the latter are imagined in the mind. The mind which is the support is ignored (as if it were not cognised), and the *Viśvedevas* alone are primarily contemplated resulting in the attainment of infinite worlds. Similarly, because of likeness in the *cidrūpa*, the nature of Brahman is imagined in the *jīva*. The *jīva* which is the support is ignored as if it were not cognised,

and Brahman is contemplated principally leading to the fruit of *amṛtatva* (immortality). With such illustrations Vācaspati Miśra elucidated the points made by the Bhāṣyakāra in support of the *sūtra* "*tat tu samanvayāt*" wherein we can find Vācaspati Miśra's critical acumen and clarity in thought.

NOTES

1. Quoted in *Brahmasūtra Śaṅkarabhāṣya*, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1983, p. 68.
2. *Ibid.* *Bhāmatī*, p. 66.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 62.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 63.
5. *Ibid.* *Bhāmatī*, p. 62.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 64.
7. *Ibid.* *Bhāmatī*, p. 66.

ON THE GROUND 'AMŚITVA' OF THE MITHYĀTVĀNUMĀNA*

S. Revathy**

The formulation of Advaita in close alliance with the doctrine of *māyā* or *avidyā* has paved the way for viewing the world as *mithyā* or indeterminable. In order to arrive at a clear understanding of the concept of *mithyātva*, it is necessary to be precise about the concepts of *sat* and *asat*. *Sat* is that which never undergoes sublation at any point of time — past, present and future. *Asat* is that which never comes within the range of perceptual cognition. Square circle or the flower sprung from the sky comes under the latter category. The world is stated, in the *Upaniṣads*, to be removable by the knowledge of Brahman. Hence it is not *sat*. It is given in perceptual cognition and in this sense it is not *asat*. It cannot be *sat* and *asat*, as such a position would violate the law of contradiction. Hence it is

* This paper is based upon a study of the 'Amśitva-nirukti' section of the *Advaita-siddhi*.

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viewed as *anirvacanīya* or indeterminable either as *sat* (real) or *asat* (an absolute nothing). It is *mithyā*.

Citsukha in his *Tattvapradīpikā* has proved the *mithyātva* of the world on the ground that it is an *amśin*. The inferential argument is as follows:

The cloth standing for the whole world is the counter-positive of its absolute non-existence in its cause — the threads;

It is because it is an *amśin*, like another cloth.

‘अयं पटः एतत्तन्तुनिष्ठात्यन्ताभावप्रतियोगी , अंशित्वात् , इतरांशिवत् ’

The term *amśitva* means the state of being an *avayavin* or an effect. This ground exists in a cloth other than the present one. That cloth does not exist in the threads which constitute the cause of the present cloth. In other words, the other cloth is the counter-positive of its absence in the threads — the cause of the present cloth. From this we can deduce an invariable relation of the form ‘wherever there is *amśitva*, there is the state of being a counter-positive of the absence existing in the present threads.’

‘यत्र यत्र अंशित्वं तत्र एतत्तन्तुनिष्ठात्यन्ताभावप्रतियोगित्वम् ’

The term ‘*etat-tantu*’ means the threads which serve as the cause of the present cloth. The absolute non-existence that is present therein is the absolute non-existence of another cloth. This ‘another cloth’ is thus the counter-positive of the absolute non-existence. It comes to this: just as another cloth, on the ground of

its being an *aṁśin*, is the counter-positive of its absence in the threads that serve as the cause of the present cloth, in the same way, the present cloth also, on the ground of its being an *aṁśin* is the counter-positive of its absence in the threads which serve as its cause. To explain: the present cloth is not present in the threads in which it appears. This is precisely the criterion of *mithyātvā*. In this way, pot and other objects are to be taken as *pakṣa* of the inferential argument and are to be viewed as *mithyā*.

Śrī Vyāsatīrtha in his work *Nyāyāmṛta* has pointed out several objections to the above inferential argument. Śrī Madhusūdana Sarasvatī in his *magnum opus* — the *Advaita Siddhi* critically examines those objections, finally rejects them and proves the soundness of the above inferential argument. We shall set forth the criticisms of Śrī Vyāsatīrtha and Śrī Madhusūdana's answers to them.

First Objection

According to the Advaita, there is no difference between the cause and the effect. The effect is admitted to be an unreal change of the consciousness conditioned by the so-called cause. And there is the relation of superimposed identity between the two. There cannot be any relation of the substratum and the one that is present therein (*āśraya-āśrayi-bhāva*) between entities that are one and the same. Viewed in this light, the cloth cannot be present in the threads. In other words, the absence of the cloth in the threads is known even prior to the functioning of this inferential argument. The latter would thus seek to prove what has already been known and hence there is the defect of *siddha-sādhana*.

Assuming for the sake of argument that the cloth is proved to be the counter-positive of its absence in the threads, that is, its cause, it does not necessarily mean that it is *mithyā*. An object like space does not exist in any substratum. Hence it is absent in the present threads too. It is the counter-positive of its absence in the threads — not because it is *mithyā* but because it has no substratum whatsoever. In the same way, an object like pot which is present on the floor and not in the threads is the counter-positive of its absence in the threads. It is so not because it is *mithyā* but because it exists elsewhere. The matter that is of profound importance here is that the state of being a counter-positive of the absence in a substratum need not necessarily point out the *mithyātva* of the object concerned. It may be due to the substratumless nature of the object or the presence of that object in a different substratum. It comes to this: the inferential argument would end in giving rise to the inferential cognition that an object is without any substratum or it has a different substratum. Either of the two is not the factor that is sought to be proved. Hence there is the fallacy of *arthāntara* or something that is not desired to be known.

Reply to the First Objection

The relation of cause and effect would not hold good if there is absolute identity between the cause and the effect. Hence it is admitted that there is an amount of difference between the two. The cloth, therefore, can be viewed as existing in the threads and the inferential argument seeks to prove its absence therein suggesting that the cloth is *mithyā*. Hence there is not the fallacy of *siddhasādhana* as pointed out by Śrī Vyāsa-

tīrtha. Further, since this cloth has a substratum namely, the threads, the inferential argument would not end in giving rise to the inferential cognition that the cloth has no substratum, and hence it is absent in the threads.

It might be said that the *sādhya*, namely, the state of cloth being the counter-positive of the non-existence in the threads may suggest that the cloth is present elsewhere. It is not so. The *pakṣa*, namely, the cloth is qualified by the attribute 'the state of being present only in these threads'. The inferential argument would, therefore, be:

एतत्तन्तुमात्राश्रितः पटः एतत्तन्तुनिष्ठात्यन्ताभावप्रतियोगी,
अंशित्वात् ।

If the cloth were present elsewhere, then it cannot serve as the *pakṣa*. Hence the *sādhya* would end in showing that the cloth is *mithyā* and not as one that exists elsewhere. Hence the fallacy of *arthantara* as pointed out by Śrī Vyāsātīrtha does not hold good.

Second Objection

The absence of cloth in the threads which is sought to be proved by the present inferential argument may be absolutely real or apparently real or empirically real. If it were absolutely real, then there will be two real entities, one Brahman and the other, the absolute non-existence. This would be against the spirit of Advaita that there is only one real entity, namely, Brahman. If it were apparently real, then such a reality is admitted even by the Dvaitins. The latter hold that there can be erroneous cognition of

the absence of cloth in the threads. Hence if such reality is sought to be proved by the present inferential argument, then it seeks to prove what has already been accepted, thus leading to the fallacy of *siddha-sādhana*. If it were held that the absence of cloth in the threads is empirically real, then since empirical reality is that which is sublatale by the true knowledge of Brahman, absence of cloth also must be held to be removable by the knowledge of Brahman. In that case, cloth which is the counter-positive of the absence would be real. Thus the inferential argument instead of proving the cloth to be *mithyā* would end in proving it to be real, which, however, is not desired. Thus there would be the fallacy of *arthāntara*.

Reply to the Second Objection

When it is said that there is absence of cloth in the threads, what is meant is that there is absence of cloth in the consciousness conditioned by the threads. This is the basic position of Advaita. The absence of cloth is reduced to its substratum and hence it is absolutely real. Since it does not exist over and above the consciousness — the only reality, there is no possibility of the fundamental position of Advaita that there is only one reality being contradicted.

It might be argued that if the absence of cloth is absolutely real, then its counter-positive, namely, cloth also should be so. But this is not correct. The absence of silver is real by being identical with the consciousness conditioned by shell; yet its counter-positive, namely, silver is not real. Hence the invariable concomitance 'wherever there is the state of being the counter-positive of the absolutely real non-existence,

there is absolute reality’ lacks correspondence in the case of shell-silver.

Third Objection

The *sādhya* in the above inferential argument should not be construed as resulting in *mithyātva*. It could very well hold good by suggesting that the cloth is an *avyāpyavṛttipadārtha*. It is thus: this cloth is the counter-positive of the absence present in the threads not because it is *mithyā* but because it is an *avyāpyavṛttipadārtha*. It is similar to *kapisamyoga* or contact of monkey with the tree. The latter is the counter-positive of its absence in the tree because it is an *avyāpyavṛttipadārtha* and not because it is *mithyā*. In the same way, the cloth is real; and, yet since it is an *avyāpyavṛttipadārtha* it is the counter-positive of its absence in the threads. The result of this argument is that the inferential argument instead of proving the cloth to be *mithyā* proves it to be an *avyāpyavṛttipadārtha* which is not the factor that is sought after. Thus there is the fallacy of *arthāntara*.

Reply to the Third Objection

There is no factor known as *avyāpyavṛttipadārtha*. If an object exists somewhere then it exists there by pervading its substratum. Wherein the contact of monkey exists, there its absence does not exist. The substratum of the contact of monkey is not the tree but the part of the tree which is the top portion. There its absence does not exist. Hence *avyāpyavṛttitva* which is presence of an object in the substratum of its absence cannot be had in the case of contact of monkey too. The cognition that there is the contact of monkey on the top of the tree, and not in the trunk of the tree com-

prehends the contact and its absence in different substrata and not in one and the same substratum. So the argument — that the cloth too is an *avyāpyavṛtti-padārtha* like the contact of monkey and the inferential argument proves the cloth to be an *avyāpyavṛtti-padārtha* — is not sound.

Fourth Objection

It is decided that this cloth does not exist through the relation of *samavāya* in the threads other than the present ones. Otherwise it cannot be viewed as an *amśin*. It is an invariable rule that an object, in order that it may be *amśin*, must be present through the relation of inherence in some substratum. Thus the present cloth, in order that it may be viewed as an *amśin*, must be present through the relation of inherence in the threads. In that case its absence cannot be predicated of in the threads. The result is that the ground of inference, namely, *amśitva* is totally contradictory to the *sādhya* — the state of being counter-positive of the absence in the threads.

Reply to the Fourth Objection

According to Vyāsātīrtha, the cloth would be inherently related to the threads, only when it is *not* the counter-positive of the absence in the threads. It is not so; knowability or *prameyatva* is a *kevalānvayi-padārtha*. It is not the counter-positive of the absence in the threads. And so it might have to be viewed as one inherently related to the threads while it is not so. Hence the criterion of relation to the threads through inherence is the counter-positive of antecedent negation of the cloth to the threads and not absolute negation of it. The state of being counter-positive of

antecedent negation is not contradictory to the state of being a counter-positive of the absolute non-existence. Hence the cloth is an *amśin* by being related through inherence to the threads. And in the latter its absence is sought to be proved by the present inferential argument.

Fifth Objection

Tois inferential argument —

अयं पटः एतत्तन्तुनिष्ठात्यन्ताभावप्रतियोगी अंशित्वात् ।

is counter-balanced by another inferential argument,

अयं पटः एतत्तन्तुनिष्ठात्यन्ताभावाप्रतियोगी एतत्तन्त्वारब्धत्वात् ।

This means that this cloth is not the counter-positive of the absence present in the threads because it is produced from out of these threads. Thus we have a ground which proves the absence of the *sādhya* that is sought to be proved by the first inferential argument. The fallacy involved here is *satpratipakṣa*. The first inferential argument will not prove the *mithyātva*.

Reply to the Fifth Objection

The inferential argument advanced by Śrī Vyāsātīrtha is of *kevalavyatirekī* type. The *vyāpti*, therefore, is as follows:

Where there is the state of being a counter-positive of the absence in the present threads as in another cloth, there is the absence of not being produced by the present threads.

यत्र एतत्तन्तुनिष्ठात्यन्ताभावाप्रतियोगित्वाभावः तत्र एतत्तन्त्वारब्धत्वाभावः ।

Śrī Madhusūdana Sarasvatī argues that this *vyāpti* is vitiated by the *upādhi*, namely, *etanniṣṭhāprāgabhāvāpratiyogitvam*. To explain this: this characteristic is the *vyāpaka* of the *vyāpaka* and an *avyāpaka* of the *vyāpka*. *etat-tantvārabdhatvābhāva*, is the *vyāpaka*. It exists in another cloth. Therein this characteristic — *etanniṣṭhāprāgabhāvāpratiyogitva* is present. That is, another cloth is not the counter-positive of the antecedent negation existing in the present threads. In the same way, the *vyāpka* is *etanniṣṭhātyantābhāvāpratiyogī*. It exists in the present cloth. And the present cloth is the counter-positive of the antecedent negation existing in the threads.

यत्र यत्र एतत्तन्त्वारब्धत्वाभावः पटान्तरेषु तत्र एतत्तन्तुनिष्ठः
एतत्पटप्रागभावः तदप्रतियोगित्वस्य सत्त्वात् ।

एवं व्याप्यः एतत्तन्तुनिष्ठात्यन्ताभावप्रतियोगित्वं तदव्याप
कत्वं च एतत्तन्तुनिष्ठप्रागभावाप्रतियोगित्वे वर्तते ।

Since the inferential argument advanced by the *pūrvapakṣin* is vitiated by the *upādhi*, the inferential argument advanced by the *siddhāntin* is a valid one. And the world is *mithyā*. It is not *asat*. Hence the sacred and secular activities can go on undisturbed till there arises the knowledge of Brahman. *Samsāra* although *mithyā*, is a succession of spiritual opportunities.

न कर्मणां फलं मोक्षः

भाष्यभावज्ञः ब्रह्मश्री बरहृर् कल्याणसुन्दरशास्त्री

प्रथमं तावत् कर्मणैव मोक्षः सिद्धयतीत्यैकमविकवादमवलम्ब्य आक्षेपः क्रियते। कर्म हि विहितं प्रतिषिद्धञ्चेति द्विविधम्। तत्र पुरुषप्रवृत्तिमधिकृत्य यद्वेदेन विधीयते तद्विहितम्। वेदेनैव यत्प्रतिषिध्यते तत्प्रतिषिद्धम्। स्वभावसिद्धरागद्वेषादिवशादनुष्ठीयमानास्तु चेष्टारूपाः क्रिया न कर्माणीत्युच्यन्ते। प्रवृत्तिनिवृत्त्यर्थं वेदोक्ता एव क्रियाः कर्माणीत्युच्यन्ते, न तूदासीनक्रियाः सर्वा अपि। वेदेनानिषिद्धमविहितं च सदरागद्वेषतःकृतं गमनागमनशौचादि स्वाभाविकं सर्वप्राणिसाधारणं कर्म उदासीनमिति कथ्यते। तस्माद्द्विप्रकाराण्येव कर्माणि। न ततोऽधिकानि ॥

तत्र विहितं कर्म चतुर्विधम्। (1) नित्यं (2) नैमित्तिकं (3) काम्यं (4) प्रायश्चित्तं चेति। तत्र पापपरिहारार्थं विहितं कर्म प्रायश्चित्तमित्युच्यते। यथा प्रमादात्कश्चन सन्यासी द्रव्यार्जनेन पापं करोति, यदि स तत्पापक्षयार्थमर्जितं धनं सर्वं दूरतस्त्यक्त्वा त्रिरात्रं यदुपवसति, तत्तस्य पापस्य प्रायश्चित्तं भवति। अवश्यानुष्ठेय-कर्मणो विस्मरणं, सत्यामपीच्छायामननुष्ठानं वा प्रमादः। फलार्थं विहितं कर्म काम्यम्। यथा वृष्टिकामेन क्रियमाणकारीर्यादियागः, स्वर्गार्थिना क्रियमाणाग्निहोत्रज्योतिष्टोमादिकं च काम्यं कर्म।

यस्याननुष्ठानात्प्रत्यवायः श्रूयते, अनुष्ठानाच्च पुण्यापुण्यफलाभावः, यच्च न नित्यमेव विहितं, किन्तु यत्किञ्चिन्निमित्तमधिकृत्यैव विधीयते तत्कर्म नैमित्तिकम् । यथा सूर्योपरागादिनिमित्ते कियमाणश्चाङ्ग-स्नानादिकं, वयोवृद्धजातिवृद्धाश्रमवृद्धविद्यावृद्धधर्मवृद्धज्ञानवृद्धादीना-मागमनेऽवश्यकर्तव्यप्रत्युत्थानादिकं च कर्म नैमित्तिकम् । अत्र विद्याशब्देन शास्त्रजन्यपरोक्षज्ञानं ज्ञानशब्देनापरोक्षज्ञानञ्च ग्राह्यम् । पूर्वोक्तेषु यथाक्रममुत्तरोत्तरो वरिष्ठः । यस्याननुष्ठानात्प्रत्यवायो भवति, अनुष्ठानाच्च न सुकृतं भवति, यच्च नित्यतया विहितम्, तन्नित्यं कर्म । यथा स्नानसन्ध्याग्निहोत्रादिकम् । इत्थं चतुर्विधानि विहित-कर्माणि । निषिद्धेन सह पञ्चविधानि कर्माणि भवन्ति ॥

तेषु च मुमुक्षुणा नित्यनैमित्तिककर्माणि कर्तव्यानि — मुमुक्षुणा काम्यनिषिद्धानि कर्माणि सर्वथा नानुष्ठेयानि; काम्यकर्मणां देवा-द्युत्तमजन्महेतुत्वात्, निषिद्धानां कर्मणां कृमिकीटस्थावरादिनीच-जन्महेतुत्वाच्च । तस्मान्मुमुक्षुस्तानि काम्यनिषिद्धानि कर्माणि वर्जयित्वा सदा नित्यान्यनुतिष्ठेत्, सति च निमित्ते नैमित्तिकान्यपि । अन्यथा नित्यनैमित्तिकाननुष्ठायी प्रत्यवेयात्, प्रत्यवायेन तिर्यगादिनीचयोनिं च प्राप्नुयात् । तस्मात् पापपरिहाराय नित्य-नैमित्तिकानि कर्माण्यवश्यमनुष्ठेयान्येव । नित्यनैमित्तिककर्मणां तद-ननुष्ठानप्रयुक्तप्रत्यवायपरिहार एव फलम्, न तु फलान्तरमस्ति । तस्मादवश्यं नित्यनैमित्तिककर्माणि कुर्यादेव मुमुक्षुः ॥

यः प्रमादात्पापं कर्म कदाचित्सकृत्प्रसङ्गात्समाचरेत् तद्दोष-परिहाराय तदुक्तप्रायश्चित्तं तेनानुष्ठेयम् । इह जन्मनि निषिद्धाचरण-संभवेऽपि जन्मान्तरार्जितपापपरिहाराय साधारणप्रायश्चित्तमवश्यं सर्वैरनुष्ठेयम् । प्रायश्चित्तं च द्विविधं साधारणमसाधारणञ्चेति । अस्य पापस्येदं प्रायश्चित्तमिति शास्त्रविहितं यत्तदसाधारणं, यथा पूर्वोक्तोपवासादि । सर्वपापक्षयाय शास्त्रविहितं प्रायश्चित्तं साधारणं, यथा गङ्गादिपुण्यतीर्थस्नानेश्वरनामोच्चारणपञ्चाक्षरादिजपोपवासादि । एवं शास्त्रेणैव द्विविधमपि प्रायश्चित्तं विहितम् । तत्र चेह जन्मनि

बुद्धिपूर्वकृतपापपरिहाराय शास्त्रोक्तासाधारणप्रायश्चित्तं कार्यम् ।
इह जन्मनि जन्मान्तरे वाऽनुष्ठितस्याज्ञातस्य सर्वस्य पापस्य
परिहारार्थं शास्त्रविहितसाधारणप्रायश्चित्तमनुष्ठेयम् । असाधारण-
प्रायश्चित्तस्य ह्ययं स्वभावः — यत्पापनिवृत्तये यत् प्रायश्चित्तत्वेन
विहितं तेन तत्पापमवश्यं निवर्तते , तद्भिन्नपापनिर्हरणे तदस-
मर्थमिति । इदमित्थमेवेति जन्मान्तरानुष्ठितपापापरिज्ञानात्तन्निवृत्तये
साधारणप्रायश्चित्तमेवानुष्ठेयम् ॥

साधारणप्रायश्चित्तस्य द्विविधं फलम् — साधारणप्रायश्चित्तेन
सर्वाण्यपि पापानि निवर्तन्ते । गङ्गास्नानादिसाधारणप्रायश्चित्तानि
न केवलं प्रायश्चित्तत्वेन भवन्ति , किन्तु काम्यानि भवन्ति कामिनां,
प्रायश्चित्तरूपाणि च भवन्ति पापक्षये । गङ्गास्नानेश्वरनामोच्चारणादीनि
उत्तमदेवादिलोकप्राप्तिहेतुत्वेन शास्त्रविहितत्वात् काम्यानि , पाप-
परिहाराय विहितत्वात् प्रायश्चित्तरूपाण्यपि । यथाऽश्वमेधकतुब्रह्म-
हत्यादिपापं निवर्तयति , स्वर्गादिकाम्यफलं च प्रयच्छतीत्युभयात्मकः,
एवं गङ्गास्नानेश्वरनामोच्चारणादीन्यपि पापपरिहारहेतुत्वात् प्राय-
श्चित्तात्मकानि , उत्तमलोकाप्तिहेतुत्वाच्च काम्यानीत्युच्यन्ते । गङ्गा-
स्नानादिकं कामिनां पापपरिहारद्वारोत्तमलोकश्च प्रयच्छति । उत्तमलोक-
प्राप्तिमनिच्छतो मुमुक्षोस्तु पापपरिहारमात्रं करोति । तस्मात्सकामेन
कृतगङ्गास्नानादि प्रायश्चित्तरूपं काम्यं च भवति , मुमुक्षुणा कृतं
तु केवलप्रायश्चित्तरूपम् । यथा वेदान्तिनां मते सर्वाण्यपि कर्माणि
सकामस्य संसारकारणानि , निष्कामस्यान्तःकरणशुद्धिद्वारा मोक्ष-
कारणानि च भवन्ति ; तथा गङ्गास्नानेश्वरनामोच्चारणादिकं कर्म
सकामस्य काम्यं प्रायश्चित्तरूपं च भवति , निष्कामस्य तु मुमुक्षोः
केवलप्रायश्चित्तरूपम् । तस्मान्मुमुक्षुणा साधारणप्रायश्चित्तमनुष्ठेयम् ।
इत्थमेव जन्मान्तरसञ्चितं सर्वमपि पापं ज्ञानं विनैव नश्यति ॥

किञ्च सञ्चितानि मुमुक्षोर्जन्मान्तरानुष्ठितानि काम्यकर्माणि
बन्ध्यावत् फलं न प्रसुवते । यथा वेदान्तसिद्धान्ते कर्मानुष्ठानकाले
सत्यामेव फलेच्छायां तत्कर्म स्वर्गादिलोकप्राप्तिहेतुर्भवति , फले-

च्छाऽभावे तु स्वर्गादिफलप्राप्तिहेतुर्न भवति ; तथैकभक्तिकवादेऽपि कर्मणः सिद्धयन्तरमपि पुरुषेच्छैव फलहेतुः । यद्यपि जन्मान्तरे फलेच्छया काम्यं कर्मानुष्ठितं , तथापीदानीं तस्यैव पुरुषस्य मुमुक्षुत्वेन फलेच्छानिवृत्तौ तदीयसञ्चितं काम्यं न फलहेतुर्भवति । यथा कश्चन दरिद्रः कश्चन धनवन्तं धनेच्छया आराधयति , पश्चात्कतिपयकालानन्तरं येन केनचिद्धेतुना भाग्योदये धनेच्छा तस्य व्यपगच्छति , तदानीं न तस्य धनिकाद्धनप्राप्तिरूपमाराधनफलं जायते ; तथा जन्मान्तरीयकर्मभ्यः काम्येभ्यः फलेच्छाधिरहात् मुमुक्षोर्न फलं जायते । तस्मात् केवलकर्मणा मोक्षो जायेतैव ॥

वर्तमानजन्मनि काम्यनिषिद्धकर्मानुष्ठानादूर्ध्वाधोलोकप्राप्तिर्न सम्भवति । जन्मान्तरीयाणां प्रारब्धफलानां निषिद्धकाम्यकर्मणां भोगेनैव क्षयः । नित्यनैमित्तिककर्मानुष्ठानजन्यप्रत्यवायरूपपापं तदनुष्ठानेन मुमुक्षोर्न जायते । जन्मान्तरसञ्चितनिषिद्धकर्माणि साधारणप्रायश्चित्तेन निवर्तन्ते । जन्मान्तरसञ्चितकाम्यकर्माणि तु मुमुक्षोरिच्छाऽभावादेव फलं न प्रयच्छन्ति । तस्मान्मुमुक्षुणा नित्यनैमित्तिकसाधारणप्रायश्चित्तरूपाणि कर्माण्यनुष्ठेयानि । वर्तमानजन्मनि बुद्धिपूर्वमाचरितपापकर्मक्षयार्थमसाधारणप्रायश्चित्तमप्यनुष्ठेयमेव ॥

अथवा मुमुक्षुणा नित्यनैमित्तिककर्ममात्रमनुष्ठेयम् , प्रायश्चित्तरूपं कर्म त्यक्तं शक्यते । तथा हि , (1) मुमुक्षोः सञ्चितनिषिद्धकाम्यकर्माणि निष्फलानि भवन्ति । यथा वेदान्तिनां मते ज्ञानिनः सञ्चितकर्माणि नश्यन्तीत्युच्यते , तथैतन्मतेऽपि निषिद्धानि काम्यानि च वर्जयित्वा नित्यनैमित्तिकान्यनुतिष्ठतोऽस्य मुमुक्षोः सञ्चितानि सकलान्यपि कर्माणि क्षीयन्ते । (2) अथवा सञ्चितानि काम्यनिषिद्धानि कर्माणि सकलान्यपि सम्भूयैकमेवान्यज्जन्म प्रयच्छेत्पुंमुक्षोः । अतो मुमुक्षुणा वर्तमानजन्मनोऽन्यदेकमेव जन्म प्रतिपत्तव्यं भवेत् । अन्यथा “ अवश्यमनुभोक्तव्यं कृतं कर्म शुभाशुभम् । ” “ नाशुक्तं क्षीयते कर्म कल्पकोटिशतैरपि । ” इत्यादिशास्त्रविरोधप्रसंगात् ।

(3) अथवा अनेकपरस्परविलक्षणजन्मप्रयोजकानेककर्मणां फलमेकस्मिन्जन्मन्यसंभावितमिति, योगी कायव्यूहेनेव, मुमुक्षुरपि भाविजन्मन्येकस्मिन्नेव सकलसञ्चितकर्मभिर्युगपदारब्धानन्तशरीरैर्जन्मान्तरसञ्चिताशेषकर्मणां फलमनुभवितुं शक्नुयात् । (4) अथवा यद्यनेकजन्मार्जितसुकृतकर्मफलं सुखरूपं युगपदेकजन्मन्युपभुज्येत, तर्हि दुष्कृतकर्मफलं दुःखमपि भाविजन्मनि भोक्तव्यं भवेत् । अतः नित्यनैमित्तिकानुष्ठानजनितक्लेश एव जन्मान्तरसञ्चितनिषिद्धकर्मणां फलं भवति । अतो न जन्मान्तरसञ्चितनिषिद्धं कर्म पुनर्जन्महेतुर्भवति । सञ्चितकाम्यकर्म निखिलमपि भाव्येकस्मिन्नेव जन्मनि नानाशरीरारम्भद्वारा स्वफलं सर्वं दास्यति । तज्जन्मनि मुमुक्षोः क्लेशलेशोऽपि न भवेत्, तस्य जन्मनः पुण्यफलत्वात्सुखमेव जायेत; यतो जन्मान्तरसञ्चितेन निखिलेन विहितेन कर्मणा तज्जन्म लब्धम् । सञ्चितं सर्वमपि निषिद्धं कर्म नित्यनैमित्तिकानुष्ठानजनितक्लेशेनैव प्रकृते जन्मन्येकस्मिन्नेव नश्यति । इत्थं विनैव प्रायश्चित्तं नित्यनैमित्तिककर्माणि मोक्षं प्रदास्यन्ति । तस्मात् सदा नित्यकर्माणि, निमित्ते सति नैमित्तिकानि चावश्यमनुष्ठेयान्येव । शास्त्रीयप्रसिद्ध्या त्वस्य मतस्यैकभक्तिकवाद इति व्यपदेशः । एवं कर्मणैव बन्धनिवृत्तिरूपमोक्षसिद्धेस्तत्सिद्धयर्थं न ज्ञानापेक्षा । यद्येन जायते नान्येन, तत्तस्य फलमित्युच्यते । यथा रूपज्ञानं नेत्रं विना नान्येन केनचिदपि जायते; तस्माद्रूपज्ञानं नेत्रस्यैव प्रातिस्विकं फलम् । बन्धनिवृत्तिस्तु ज्ञानमन्तरा कर्मणैव जायेतेति न ज्ञानप्रयोजनम् ॥

OBEISANCE TO THE TEACHER OF TEACHERS

वेदान्तोदरवर्ति भास्वदमलं ध्वान्तच्छिदस्मद्धियो
 दिव्यं ज्ञानमतीन्द्रियेऽपि विषये व्याहन्यते न क्वचित् ।
 यो नो ज्ञानशलाकयैव निखिलं संसारबीजं तमः
 प्रोत्सार्याविरकार्शीद् गुरुगुरुः पूज्याय तस्मै नमः ॥

I offer obeisance to the revered Teacher of teachers who, by the stick of reasoning alone, removed the ignorance which is the seed of the entire transmigratory existence and who revealed to us the knowledge, bright and pure, which abides in the interior of the *Vedānta*, which destroys the darkness in our intellect, which is self-luminous, and which is nowhere sublated in as much as it reveals the super-sensible reality.

Sureśvara, *Naiṣkarmyasiddhi*, IV, 77.

LIBERATION IS NOT THE RESULT OF KARMA*

*Bhāṣyabhāvajña Brahma
Śrī V. R. Kalyāṇasundara Śāstrī*

First of all, the objection that liberation takes place through *karma* alone is raised by following “*aika-bhavika-vāda*”. *Karma*, indeed, is of two kinds — prescribed and prohibited. Of these two, the prescribed *karma* is that which is enjoined on a person eligible for doing it. What is prohibited by the *Veda* itself is called prohibited *karma*. Actions which are performed under the impulsion of desire and aversion, which are natural, are not called *karmas*. Only those actions which are performed, or which are abstained from, as directed by the *Veda*, are called *karmas*, but not those actions which are performed indifferently. Actions such as going, coming, cleansing, which are natural and common to all beings, which are not prescribed/prohibited by the *Veda*, and which are not impelled by desire and aversion are called indifferent (*udāsīnam*). So, there are two kinds of *karma* alone, and not more.

* English rendering: Dr. R. Balasubramanian

The prescribed *karma* is of four kinds — (1) daily, (2) occasioned, (3) desire-prompted, and (4) expiatory. Of these, an expiatory *karma* is one which is enjoined for the sake of the removal of sin. If a renunciant, due to carelessness, commits sin through the acquisition of wealth, then he fasts for three nights after giving up the entire wealth acquired by him for the purpose of destroying the sin; such an act is expiatory of the sin. Carelessness is forgetting an act which should be done, or non-performance of an act in spite of the desire to do. A desire-prompted *karma* is one which is prescribed for the attainment of a (desired) fruit; *e.g.*, a sacrifice which is performed desiring rain; or, *agnihotra*, *jyotiṣ-ṭoma*, etc., which are performed by one who desires heaven, etc., are desire-prompted *karma*. An occasioned *karma* is one which is not to be done daily, but which is prescribed in connection with a special occasion the non-performance of which will result in sin and the performance of which will produce neither merit nor demerit; *e.g.* performance of *śrāddha*, bathing, etc., on the occasion of the solar eclipse, etc.; and also the act of rising from one's seat, etc., which has to be done on the occasion of the visit of a person who is senior in age, caste, stage of life, (scriptural) knowledge, goodness, wisdom, etc. are cases of occasioned *karma*. Here, the word "*vidyā*" means mediate knowledge generated by scripture; the word "*jñāna*" means immediate knowledge (wisdom). In the list given above, the succeeding item is superior to the preceding one in the respective order. A daily *karma* is one which is prescribed for daily performance; while its non-performance will lead to sin, its performance will not produce any merit; *e.g.* taking bath, performing prayers during *sandhyā*, performing *agnihotra*, etc. Thus, there are four kinds of

prescribed *karma*. Along with prohibited *karma*, there will be five kinds of *karma*.

Of these, daily and occasioned *karmas* have to be performed by the seeker after liberation. But desire-prompted and prohibited *karmas* should not at all be performed by him, since desire-prompted *karmas* lead to superior birth like that of gods and since prohibited *karmas* are the cause of lower births like those of worm, insect, stationary object, etc. So, a seeker after liberation should always perform the daily *karmas* and also occasioned *karmas* as occasions demand, avoiding both desire-prompted and prohibited *karmas*. Otherwise, sin will arise as a result of not performing daily and occasioned *karmas*; and because of sin lower births of animal, etc. will take place. So, for avoiding sin, daily and occasioned *karmas* have to be performed. The fruit of daily and occasioned *karmas* is only the avoidance of sin, which is bound to arise following their non-performance; there is no other fruit for them. So, a seeker after liberation should certainly perform daily and occasioned *karmas*.

If a person, due to carelessness, commits a sin on some occasion, he has to perform the prescribed expiatory *karma* in order to remove the sin. Even though prohibited acts have not been performed in this life, everyone should certainly perform ordinary expiatory *karma* for removing the sin which has accrued in the earlier life. Expiatory *karma* is of two kinds — ordinary and extra-ordinary. A specific expiation which is prescribed by scripture or a specific sin is said to be extra-ordinary expiatory *karma*, like fasting, etc., mentioned earlier. The expiation prescribed for all sins is ordinary expiatory *karma*, like bathing in the holy

waters of the *Gaṅgā*, etc., uttering the name of the Lord, the recitation of *pañcākṣara*, etc., fasting, etc. Thus, both the kinds of expiation are prescribed by scripture alone. In this context, this has to be stated. In order to remove the sin knowingly committed in this life, one should do the extra-ordinary expiatory *karma* as prescribed by scripture. On the contrary, in order to remove all sins unknowingly committed in this life or earlier, one should perform the ordinary expiatory *karma* as prescribed by scripture. This, indeed, is the nature of the extra-ordinary expiatory *karma*: that *karma* which is prescribed for expiation of a particular sin certainly removes that sin; but it is not competent to remove any other sin. Since one does not know how a particular sin was committed in an earlier life, one should observe the ordinary expiatory *karma* for removing it.

The fruit of ordinary expiatory *karma* is of two kinds. All sins get removed through ordinary expiatory *karma*. The ordinary expiatory *karmas* such as bathing in the *Gaṅgā* are not just expiatory alone. On the contrary, they become desire-prompted *karma* in the case of those who have such a desire and also expiatory for removing sin; since bathing in the *Gaṅgā*, uttering the name of the Lord, etc., are prescribed by scripture as the means of attaining superior worlds of gods, etc., they are desire-prompted *karmas*, and since they are prescribed for removing sin, they are also expiatory *karmas*. Just as the performance of horse sacrifice removes the sin of killing a Brahmin, etc. and also gives the fruit of heaven, etc. which are desired; and so it is of dual nature. In the same way, bathing in the *Gaṅgā*, uttering the name of the Lord, etc., are expiatory,

because they remove sin, and also desire-prompted since they are the means of attaining higher worlds; and they are of dual nature. Bathing in the *Gaṅgā*, by removing the sin of the people also gives fruit of higher world for those who have the desire therefor. But in the case of a seeker after liberation who is not desirous of attaining higher world, it does the work of removing sin alone. So, the act of bathing in the *Gaṅgā* done along with the desire therefor, etc. are both expiatory and desire-prompted; but when they are done by a seeker after liberation, they are only expiatory. Just as all the *karmas*, according to the philosophy of the Vedāntins, are the cause of bondage for one who does them with desire, but for one who is free from desire, they are the means to liberation through the purification of the mind; even so the acts of bathing in the *Gaṅgā*, uttering the name of the Lord, etc., become expiatory and also desire-prompted for one who does them with desire; but for a seeker after liberation who is without desire, they are only expiatory. So, ordinary expiatory *karmas* have to be done by a seeker after liberation. Thus, all sins accumulated and stored in the earlier lives get destroyed even without knowledge.

Further, the desire-prompted *karmas* which were performed by a seeker after liberation in earlier life and kept in store are not productive like a barren woman. Just as a *karma*, according to the standpoint of Vedānta, is the means of attaining heaven, etc. only when, at the time of performing it, there is the desire therefor, whereas it does not produce a fruit such as heaven when there is no desire for such a fruit, even so, a *karma*, according to *aika-bhavika-vāda*, produces a fruit only if there is a desire therefor in the agent.

Even though a person in the earlier life did a desire-prompted *karma* for attaining a fruit, that desire-prompted action which is in store does not produce the fruit in this life to the same agent if he has no desire for it, having become a seeker after liberation. For example, a poor man, having a desire for wealth worships a certain rich person; subsequently, after a lapse of time due to some good luck he is free from the desire for wealth; the fruit of wealth as a result of worshipping does not accrue to him from the wealthy man. In the same way, the fruit of desire-prompted action performed in the previous life does not accrue to a seeker after liberation in this life as he is free from the desire therefor. So, liberation undoubtedly results from the performance of *karma* alone.

Since desire-prompted and prohibited *karmas* are not performed in the present life, attainment of a higher or lower world will not take place. The fruits of prohibited and desire-prompted actions, which were done in the previous life and which have already started functioning, can be destroyed only through enjoyment. Since the seeker after liberation performs daily and occasioned *karmas*, the sin that will accrue to him as a result of their non-performance will not arise. The prohibited actions which were done in the earlier life and kept in store get removed by the performance of ordinary expiatory *karma*. But the desire-prompted *karmas* which were done in the earlier life and kept in store do not produce their result, simply because the seeker after liberation is free from desire therefor. Hence, daily and occasioned *karmas* as well as ordinary expiatory *karmas* have to be done by a seeker after liberation. The extra-ordinary expiatory *karma* also

has to be done by him for the purpose of destroying the sin arising from the knowingly committed evil deed in this life.

There is also another explanation. Daily and occasioned *karmas* alone have to be performed by a seeker after liberation; the expiatory *karma* may be abandoned. The explanation for this is as follows: (1) The prohibited and desire-prompted actions of a seeker after liberation, which are in store, become fruitless. Just as it is said in the Vedānta systems that the *karmas*-in-store of a *jñānin* are destroyed, even so, according to this view, for a seeker after liberation who, after avoiding prohibited and desire-prompted actions, performs daily and occasioned *karmas*, all his *karmas*-in-store gets destroyed. (2) Or, all the desire-prompted and prohibited action of a seeker after liberation, which are in store, together give rise to one more birth. So, a seeker after liberation has to attain one more life alone than the present one. Otherwise, it will be conflict with the scriptural texts which say: "One should certainly experience the fruits of actions, good and bad, done earlier," "A *karma* whose fruit is not experienced does not die even after crores of years." (3) Or, since the fruits of many *karmas* which cause mutually different lives cannot take place in one life, as in the case of a *yogin*, who separates himself from the body, even a spiritual aspirant can, in one future life, experience together the fruits of all stored-up *karmas* of the previous life, whether they have started their work or not. (4) Or, happiness which is the fruit of good actions done in many lives can be experienced at the same time in one life; and suffering which is the fruit of bad actions have to be

experienced in another future life. So, the suffering arising from the performance of daily and occasioned *karmas* is the fruit of the prohibited actions of the earlier life, which are in store. Consequently, the prohibited action of the earlier life, which is in store, cannot be the cause of another life. All the desire-prompted *karmas* of the earlier life, which are in store, produce all their fruits in one future life alone by giving rise to many bodies. And in that life there will not be even a trace of misery for the seeker after liberation; since that life is the fruit of good deed, only happiness will be there, for that life has been obtained as a result of the performance of all prescribed *karmas*, which are in store. The entire prohibited action, which is in store, perishes in the one present life itself due to the suffering arising from the performance of daily and occasioned *karmas*. Thus, without the performance of expiatory *karma*, the daily and occasioned *karmas* produce liberation. So, daily *karmas* and also occasioned *karmas* if there are occasions for them, have to be done always. This view is spoken of as *aika-bhavika-vāda* (meaning that one life alone, or *karma* alone, is the means of liberation) in scriptural treatise. Thus, since liberation which is of the nature of the cessation of bondage takes place through *karma* alone, there is no need for *jñāna* for achieving it. That which arises from a particular means, and not from any other means, is the result of that means; *e.g.*, since the cognition of colour does not take place from any other means than the visual sense, the cognition of colour is the special fruit of the visual sense alone. Since the removal of bondage takes place through *karma* alone without *jñāna*, it is not the fruit of *jñāna*.

A HERMENEUTICAL STUDY OF THE TEXT
“BRAHMAVIDĀPNOTI PARAM”

C. L. Ramakrishnan*

*a jñānatimirāndhasy' jñānānjanaśalākayā
cakṣurunmilitam yena tasmī śrīgurave namaḥ.*

The word ‘hermeneutics’ signifies the science of interpretation. A study of the *Mahābhāṣya* of Patañjali on the *Pāṇini-sūtras*, of Śabara’s *Bhāṣya* on the *Pūrvamīmāṃsā-sūtras*, of Śrī Śaṅkara on the *Brahma-sūtras*, the *Upaniṣads* and the *Gītā* and the writings of several authors show that hermeneutics has been inherent in the Indian tradition. The maxims derived by Śabara and Śaṅkara from the *Pūrvamīmāṃsā-sūtras* and the *Brahma-sūtras* respectively, show the hermeneutical bent of mind that has perennially flown through several centuries in Indian thought. All our preceptors have been careful hermeneutists.

In the present paper, an attempt is made to explain the logical significance of the text “*Brahmavid-āpnoti param*” as interpreted by Śrī Vidyāraṇya, the noteworthy Advaita preceptor and a commentator on

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the *Vedas*. This text occurs in the second *anuvāka* of the eighth *prapāṭhaka* of the *Taittirīyāranyaka*. The seventh, eighth and the ninth *prapāṭhakas* of the text constitute the *Taittirīyopaniṣad*.

Śrī Vidyāraṇya prefaces the commentary on the above text by stating that this text summarises the essence of the entire *Upaniṣads*:

*dvitīyasya anuvākasya ādau kṛtsnopaniṣatsāram
saṅgrahena sūcayati 'om brahmavidāpnoti param iti'*

Very briefly translated, this text "*brahmavidāpnoti param*" means that he who knows Brahman 'attains' Brahman.

The import of the entire *Upaniṣads* is liberation, which is attained, *as it were*, by the knowledge of Brahman. Let us analyse the meaning of the expressions, *brahmavid*, *āpnoti* and *param*.

The word Brahman — derived from the root *br̥ha* (*br̥hi*) *vṛddhau* signifies an omnipresent entity. The concept of omnipresence without any qualifying attribute involves within itself unsublatability and absence of any relation to any defect whatsoever. It is with this in view Śrī Śaṅkara, in his commentary on *Brahma-sūtra* — "*athāto brahmajijñāsā*" states:

*brahmaśabdasya vyutpādyamānasya nityaśuddhatvā-
dayaḥarthāḥ pratiyante, br̥haterdhātoḥ arthānugamāt.*

The *Taittirīya* text — "*satyam jñānam anantam brahma*" defines Brahman. And the role of a definition is to distinguish the object defined from other objects. Now, according to Advaita, although there is no real entity apart from Brahman, yet in the realm of *avidyā*, we have factors associated with non-reality, insentience and finite nature and the three words — *satyam*, *jñānam*

and *anantam* distinguish Brahman from these three factors. The word *satyam* conveys Brahman by eliminating non-reality, while the word — *jñānam* conveys Brahman as free from insentience. The word *anantam* conveys that Brahman is free from limitations.

*kauṣasthyameva satyatvam sphuranam jñānamucyate
ānantyam ekatā caivam bodhyate brahma taiḥ tribhiḥ.*

It may be asked that if these three words convey one and the same Brahman, then there is the unwelcome position of treating these as synonyms. The Advaitin overcomes this objection by saying that these three words cannot be treated as synonyms, although they convey one and the same entity, because the processes through which these words convey Brahman are different from one another. The words — *satyam*, *jñānam* and *anantam* convey Brahman through the elimination of non reality, insentience and finite nature, respectively.

vācyārthabhedāvabhāsāt na paunaruktyam

The text “*tat tvam asi*” conveys that the individual soul is identical with Brahman. The individual soul, which is the content of the cognition ‘I’ (*aham*) is known to be an agent, experient and knower. Such a being cannot be identical with Brahman, which is of the nature of reality, consciousness and bliss. Hence it is derived that the so-called *jīva* is only an apparent diversification of Brahman itself, owing to the association of Brahman either in the form of reflection in or delimitation by *avidyā* and its product (mind). These two theories alluded to now are known, in the Advaita tradition as *pratibimbavāda* of the *Pañcapādikā-Vivaraṇa* school and *avacchedavāda* of the *Bhāmatī* school.

Śrī Śaṅkara in his commentary on the *Brahma-sūtra*,

yāvadātmabhāvitvācca na doṣaḥ taddarśanāt [2.3.30]

states that there is nothing like *jīva*-hood apart from what is fancied to be such by association with mind. He proceeds to point out that as long as this relation with mind caused by *avidyā* lasts, so long is the *jīva*, a *jīva*. When *avidyā* is removed, the *jīva* ceases to be a *jīva* and remains as Brahman.

*apī ca mithyājñānapurassaro'yam ātmanaḥ
buddhyupādhisambandhaḥ; na ca mithyājñānasya
samyagjñānādanyatra nivṛttirasti ityataḥ
yāvad brahmātmātānavabodhaḥ tāvadayam
buddhyupādhisambandhaḥ na sāmyati.*

From the foregoing it follows that the so-called individual soul (*jīva*) who realises his true nature as Brahman is known as *brahmavit*.

This raises the question in regard to the nature of knowledge *of* Brahman — the word 'of' underlined. According to Advaita, knowledge is only an attribute of mind. And that which is comprehended by mind cannot be Brahman. It is because the *Kenopaniṣad* text,

*yan manasā na manute yena āhuḥ mano matam
tadeva brahma tvam viddhi nedaṁ yadīdam-upāsate*

states that Brahman is that which is not an object of meditation. It is that which is not comprehended by mind; but it is that by which mind is manifested.

The above objection is met by the Advaitin by clarifying the concept of knowledge. According to

Advaita, knowledge is only a mental state or modification of the mind, inspired by the reflection of pure consciousness in it. The author of the *Vivaraṇa* states that the mental state of above nature is figuratively spoken of as 'knowledge'.

“*antaḥkaraṇavṛttāu jñānatvopacārāt*”

When the sense of sight comes into contact with an object — say, pot, the mind too comes out through the sense of sight, reaches the place of the object, and undergoes modification in the form of the object. The modification of mind is known as *vṛtti*. The consciousness conditioned by the object is reflected therein and it is the blend of the consciousness and the mental state that is known as the 'knowledge of the pot'. The *vṛtti*-element inspired by the reflection of consciousness in it, removes the modal ignorance — *tūlāvidyā* which is a derivative of primal nescience — *mūlāvidyā* and present in the consciousness conditioned by the object. The consciousness element in the *vṛtti* known as *phala* manifests the object. In fact, it is the identity of the consciousness-element and the pot that explains the subjectness or *viśayatā* in the pot. In the Advaita terminology, a factor is called an object or *viśaya* when it is in direct contact with consciousness — “*cittādātmyam ca viśayatā.*”

Now, in the case of Brahman the latter is concealed by primal nescience. There arises modification of mind in the form of Brahman from the major texts of the *Upaniṣads* like '*tat tvam asi,*' etc., when their import is enquired, verified to be true by reasoning and then meditated upon. The consciousness reflected in the mental state is known as *brahmajñāna* or know-

ledge of Brahman. The *vṛtti*-element inspired by the reflection of Brahman removes the primal nescience. But, unlike in the case of pot, the consciousness element in the *vṛtti* need not manifest Brahman, as it is self-luminous. Thus Brahman need not be in contact with the consciousness-element in the *vṛtti*. In other words, there is no *cittādatmya* in the case of Brahman and this answers for Brahman being viewed as *not* an object of knowledge. It is with this in view that in the *Kenopaniṣad* text cited above, it is said that Brahman is *not* comprehended by mind. It must be noted that mind plays a definite role in realising Brahman but that role is restricted to its undergoing modification in the form of Brahman on the basis of the study of the *Upaniṣads* and in removing the primal nescience. It is against this background that the text of the *Bṛhad-āraṇyakopaniṣad*, "*manasaiva anudraṣṭavyam*" should be understood. Śrī Vidyāraṇya interprets this text as follows:

brahmapratipādakaśāstram anu paścāt draṣṭavyam.

The mental state in the form of Brahman which arises from the Upaniṣadic text removes the false cognition of duality and it is known as *brahmasākṣātkāra*. He who has this realisation is known as *brahmavid*.

In the fourth *pāda* of the third *adhyāya* of the *Brahmasūtra*, it is ascertained that the pursuit of *śravaṇa*, *manana* and *nididhyāsana* constitute the proximate means to the knowledge of Brahman — the sole means to liberation. And performance of duties allotted to one's stage and class of life leads to the cleaning of the heart (*śattvaśuddhi*) and enables one to

pursue *śravaṇa*, etc. These are set forth in the *Brahma-sūtras*,

- (i) *sarvāpekṣā ca yajñādiśruteḥ aśvavat* [3.4.23];
and
(ii) *sahakāryantaravidhiḥ pakṣeṇa tṛtīyam tadvato vidhyādivat* [3.4.47].

Now, we shall turn to the discussion on the word 'param'.

In ordinary usage, the word *param* conveys the sense of another object (*paraśabdaḥ anyavastu-vācī*). But in the present case, since there is no other *real* object apart from Brahman, we cannot take the word *param* to mean another object. Everything apart from Brahman is known to be non-real, on the authority of the Upaniṣadic text,

*sadeva saumya idamagra āsīt, ekameva
advitīyam* [Chāndogya, 6.2.1]

From the first part of the text, it is known that the world presented in our cognition, prior to its origination remained in the form of Brahman — *sat* only. This means that the world in its latent form is present only in Brahman. The second part of the text states that Brahman or *sat* is one (*ekam*), one only (*eva*) and without a second (*advitīyam*). These three expressions signify that Brahman is free from any internal differences, it is like nothing and unlike everything.

Śrī Vidyāraṇya in his *Pañcadaśī* states:

*vṛkṣasya svagato bhedaḥ patrapuṣpaphalādibhiḥ
vṛkṣāntarāt sajātiyaḥ vijātiyaḥ śilāditaḥ*

*tathā sadvastunaḥ bhedatrayaṁ prāptam nivāryate
ekāvadhāraṇādvaitapraṭiṣedhaiḥ tribhiḥ kramāt*

[*Mahābhūtavivekaḥ*, 20-21]

Thus the world is negated in which it is said to be present. This precisely is the criterion for the non-reality of any object. Silver, for example, appears in a piece of shell and its absence is also noticed therein and silver is, therefore, treated to be non-real. In the same way, the world is said to exist in Brahman and there itself, its absence also is predicated of. Hence, the world is non-real.

Returning from this point of digression, we may state that since there is no other object, *real* in nature, apart from Brahman, the word *param* in the text cannot be taken in the sense of 'another' *real* object. and hence, the logical significance of the text cannot be this — that, he who knows Brahman 'attains' (the word 'attains' within inverted commas) something other than Brahman. Since Brahman is thus non-dual and transcendental, the word *param* must be taken in the sense of Brahman itself.

*utrṣṭārthatve tu brahmaiva paraśabdena abhidhā-
tvayam
itarasya sarvasya māyāmayatvena nikṣṭatvāt. tathā
sati brahmavit pumān brahmaiva prāpnoti ityuktam
bhavati.*

In the second *pāda* of the third *adhyāya* of the *Brahmasūtra* it has been ascertained that the word *param* signifies only the supreme Brahman. An objection is raised that the word *param* signifies something

other than Brahman. This view is recorded in the *Brahmasūtra* —

*param atah setu-unmānasambandha-bheda-
vyapadeśebhyaḥ* [3.2.31]

This *sūtra* means that there is some entity different from Brahman. It is because the *Chāndogya* text,

atha ya ātmā sa setuḥ vidhṛtiḥ [8.4.1]

which states that Brahman is a causeway, a sustainer. In ordinary experience the word 'causeway' means a barrage of earth to check the flow of the current of water. Hence, the word—causeway, used with reference to Brahman, implies the existence of something other than itself. This is confirmed by the use of the term 'crossing over' in the *Chāndogya* text — "*setum tīrtvā.*" [8.4.2]

From this it is known that just as one crosses a stream over a causeway to reach the otherside which is other than the causeway, so also one crosses over this causeway, that is, Brahman to reach something other than it. From this it follows that there is something other than Brahman and the word *param* signifies the sense of another object.

Further Brahman is stated to be limited in size in the *Chāndogya* text — "*brahma catuspāt*" [3.18.2]

In common life we find that whatever can be measured or counted to be so much presupposes the existence of something other than itself. Brahman here has been measured and so there must be something other than itself. On this ground too the word *param* means something other than Brahman.

Again there is the mention of connection in the case of Brahman in the *Chāndogya* text —

satā somya tadā sampanno bhavati [6.8.1]

which means that the soul becomes united with Brahman. Only limited things are noticed to come into contact with other things which are also limited. When it is said that the souls come to be united with Brahman in deep sleep then it is implied that there is something unlimited which is other than Brahman. On this ground too the word *param* must be taken as signifying another object.

The *Chāndogya* text —

*atha eṣaḥ antarāditye hiraṇmayah
puruṣaḥ dṛśyate* [1.6.6]

refers to Brahman or *puruṣa* as residing in the sun. Then another text of the *Chāndogya* —

atha ya eṣaḥ antaḥ akṣiṇī puruṣo dṛśyate [1.7.5]

refers to Brahman or *Puruṣa* as residing in the eye. Another text of the same *Upaniṣad* refers to the limited godhood of both of them. The *Chāndogya* text —

*ye ca amuṣmāt parāñcaḥ lokāḥ teṣām
ceṣṭe devakāmānām ca* [1.6.8]

refers to the former as one who rules over the worlds that are above the sun and the things dear to the gods. The text —

*ye ca etasmāt arvāñcaḥ lokāḥ teṣām
ceṣṭe manusyakāmānām ca* [*Chāndogya*, 1.7.6]

states with reference to the latter that he rules over the worlds that are below the earth and the things dear to men.

On these grounds it is asserted that there is something other than Brahman and so the word *param* must be taken to conveying another object.

The grounds mentioned above are rejected in the succeeding *Brahma-sūtras*. The *Brahma-sūtra* — “*sāmānyāttu*” [3.2.32] rejects the contention that Brahman is the causeway in the strict sense of the term. It is stated herein that just as a causeway helps to store water, in the same way, Brahman too holds together the world, and maintains its norms, duties etc. It is on the basis of this similarity, Brahman is metaphorically spoken of as the causeway. In the same way the reference to Brahman as possessing four feet is not to be understood in the sense of putting a limit to the nature of Brahman. It is mentioned for the sake of meditative worship. This is the import of the *Brahma-sūtra* — “*buddhyarthaḥ pādavat*” [3.2.33].

In the same way, the references to connection and difference are to be understood figuratively. Being associated with the limiting adjunct — mind, Brahman attains to the state of *jīva*. And when this limiting adjunct provisionally merges in the *avidyā* in the state of deep sleep, the soul becomes one with Brahman. Similarly, the difference mentioned in the text between Brahman in the sun and Brahman in the eye is to be understood as based upon the difference in the limiting adjuncts. This is the import of the *Brahma-sūtra* — “*sthānaviśeṣāt prakāśādivat*” [3.2.34]

From the above it follows that the word *param* does not convey the sense of otherness. The *Brahma-sūtra* — “*tathā anyapraṭiṣedhāt*” [3.2.36] conveys that there is the denial of everything else apart from Brahman on the basis of the Upaniṣadic texts such as — “*neha nānāsti kiñcana*” [*Bṛhadāraṇyaka* 4.4.90]. It would be clear that there is nothing but Brahman and so the word *param* means Brahman only. And the text — “*brahmavidāpnoti param*” means he who knows Brahman attains Brahman itself.

Now the question arises as to how Brahman, which is non-dual and therefore all-pervasive, can be ‘attained’. In the case of expressions such as ‘He attains (reaches) a village’ the contact with the village is well-known to be attained by the activity in the form of movement. In the same way, it must be said that he who meditates upon the conditioned Brahman attains the world of Hiraṇyagarbha. Similarly, here also, it must be said that he who knows Brahman attains Brahman through knowledge. But this is not possible in view of the fact that Brahman being non-dual and all-pervasive is ever-attained.

The answer to the above objection lies in the clarification of the distinction between knowledge and meditation. The Advaitin makes a clear distinction between these two concepts. Knowledge totally depends upon the object. It is *not* a mental activity, although it is a mental mode (*vṛtti*). It is not based upon injunction.

*jñānam tu pramāṇajanyam, pramāṇam ca yathābhūta-
vastuviṣayam. ataḥ jñānam ... vastutantrameva.*

Meditation, on the other hand, is a mental activity. It depends upon the will of the person. It may be carried out, not carried out, or carried out in a different manner.

*dhyānam cintanam yadyapi mānasam tathāpi puruṣeṇa
kartum-akartum-anyathākartum vā śakyam, puruṣa-
tantratvāt.*

Thus, it would be clear that although knowledge and meditation are the factors of mind according to the Advaita, yet there is a vast difference between the two, precluding the possibility of identifying one with the other. Śrī Śaṅkara's observation is worth quoting in this connection:

tasmāt mānasatve' pi jñānasya mahadvailakṣaṇyam.

Hence, it is against this background that we have to consider the significance of the term *āpnoti*. Śrī Suresvara in his *Vārttika* on Śrī Śaṅkara's *bhāṣya* on the *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad* states:

*grāmādi kiñcid aprāptam-prāptum iṣṭam-ihēcchati
hemādivismṛtam kiñcid karasthamapi lipsate
parihāryam tathā aniṣṭam kaṅṭhakādi jihāsati
rajjuvām sarpādi kiñcicca tyaktameva jihāsati
niyatopāyasādhyatvāt avāpyaparihāryayoḥ
vidhitāḥ pratiśedhācca sādhanāpekṣitā bhavet
ajñānāntaritatvena samprāptatyaktayoḥ punaḥ
yāthātmyajñānato nānyatpurūṣārthāya kalpate.
[Sambandha Vārttika, 885-888]*

According to this, there are two kinds of attainments and also two kinds of removals. A village when

not yet attained, is attained by activity in the form of movement of the body. This is a question of attaining what has *not* yet been attained. There is another kind of attainment, which may be termed as '*attainment as it were*'. According to this, an object such as a necklace is ever-attained, but under the mistaken notion of its being lost, one has the feeling that it is has been lost and when informed by a person, that it is on the neck only, he feels he has 'attained' it. Here, there is only the removal of the false notion of the necklace being not attained. Attaining an object that is not yet attained depends upon activity; but attaining what has already been attained depends upon knowledge. In the same way, a snake which actually exists is a thing to be avoided and could be avoided by only activity in the form of driving it away. But, the snake that appears on a rope has already been avoided; but there is a mistaken notion of its not being avoided. This could be achieved only by the knowledge of the true nature of the rope. In the same way here, prior to the rise of the knowledge of Brahman, the so-called *jīva*, who is Brahman itself, has attained the false notion of being a *jīva*. And when the knowledge that the *jīva* is none other than Brahman arises, the false notion of being a *jīva* is removed; and the so-called *jīva* ceases to be a *jīva* and remains in its pure nature as Brahman. Here, it is not the question of attaining Brahman, but on the other hand, it is a question of shedding the false notion of being not Brahman. Attainment of brahman, therefore, is only figurative.

Śrī Vidyāraṇya in his commentary on the text, "*brahmavidāpnoti param*" summarizes the above position thus:

*yathā svakaṅṭhe avasthitam ābharaṇam ājñātvā
anyatra anviṣyan kenacit bodhitam, hastena
samspr̥ṣan 'idānim etat prāptam' iti upacarati,
tadvat aupācārikī brahmaprāptiḥ draṣṭaayā.*

The aphorisms, of the *Brahmasūtra*

- (i) *spaṣṭo hi ekeṣām* [4.2.13]; and,
(ii) *smaryate ca* [4.2.14]

set forth the view that from the liberated soul, vital airs do not depart. They are reduced to their substratum, namely, Brahman. Neither the ascent to the other world nor the path to be followed is intelligible in the case of the knower of Brahman who has become Brahman itself and has his desires and results of *karma* annihilated. Śrī Śaṅkara states:

*na ca brahmavidaḥ sarvagatabrahmātmabhūtasya
prakṣiṇakāmakarmaḥ utkrāntiḥ gatiḥ vā upapadyate
nimittābhāvāt. [Brahma-sūtra-bhāṣya, 4.2.13]*

With this in view, the following Upaniṣadic text says: *sa yo ha vai tat paramam brahma veda brahmaiva bhavati.* From this, it is clear that a *jīva* by the rise of the knowledge of Brahman does not attain Brahman. On the other hand being Brahman always, it remains so, after getting rid of the false notion of its *not* being Brahman.

The *Brahmasūtra* aphorism,

sāmpadya āvirbhūvaḥ svena śabdāt [4.4.1]

states that the soul having realized Brahman manifests in its own real nature. Liberation is considered as a

fruit from the point of view of the cessation of bondage and not from the standpoint of production of any fresh result. The import of the *Chāndogya* text,

*param jyotir upasāṃpadya svena rūpeṇa
abhinisṃpadyate [8.12.3]*

is discussed in the above aphorism. The expression 'abhinisṃpadyate' must be understood not in the sense of attaining origination but in the sense of remaining in one's true nature through the removal of factors presented extraneously.

To sum up the whole discussion: in Brahman, owing to *māyā* or *avidyā*, the characteristics of being God, being a soul and the world are falsely presented. And, when *avidyā* — the root cause is removed by the knowledge of Brahman, the so-called *jīva* ceases to be a *jīva*, the world vanishes and the state of being God too is removed. What remains then is pure Brahman. And this is liberation.

Thus, in Advaita, on its practical side, there is no question of realizing the not-Self. Śrī Śaṅkara sums up the whole position thus:

*yadā tattvamasītyevamjātīyakena abhedanirdeśena
abhedatḥ bodhitatḥ bhavati apagatam bhavati jīvasya
samsāritvam brahmaṇasca sraṣṭṛtvam samastasya
mithyājñānavijṛmbhitasya bhedavyavahārasya
samyagjñānena bādhitatvāt.*

[Śrī Śaṅkara's commentary on the *Brahmasūtra* 2.1.22]

VASIṢṬHA*

K. S. Ramaswami Sastri

Vasiṣṭha is one of the supreme seers, sages and saints of India. In the course of uttering the *Gāyatrī-mantra* day after day, the names of seven sages (Atri, Bhṛgu, Kutsa, Vasiṣṭha, Gautama, Kāśyapa, and Āṅgirasa) are repeated everyday. In Vālmīki's world-famous epic poem *Rāmāyaṇa* (the 19th *sarga* or chapter in the Bāla-kāṇḍa) the Sage Visvāmitra goes to King Daśaratha of Ayodhyā to ask him to send Rāma with him to protect (from destruction by demons) the sacrifice that was going to be performed by him. King Daśaratha was unwilling to do so because Rāma was young. Thereupon Visvāmitra tells him:

अहं वेद्मि महात्मानं रामं सत्यपराक्रमम् ।
वसिष्ठोऽपि महातेजाः ये चेमे तपसि स्थिताः ॥

*aham vēdmi mahātmānam rāmaṁ satya-parākramam
vasiṣṭho'pi mahātejāḥ ye ceme tapasi thitāḥ.*

* Courtesy: *Preceptors of Advaita*, Pub. by Śrī Kāñci Kāmakoti Śaṅkara Mandir, Secunderabad, 1968.

(I know Rāma to be high-souled and of true powers. The sage of spiritual radiance — Vasiṣṭha — and others who excel in *tapas*, i.e., spiritual austerity, also know him to be so.)

Even then the king was unwilling to send Rāma with Viśvāmitra. But Vasiṣṭha advised the king to grant Viśvāmitra's request, and thereupon King Daśaratha sent Rāma and Lakshmaṇa with Viśvāmitra. Vasiṣṭha was the *purohita* (spiritual adviser) of the kings of *sūryavamśa* i.e. the solar dynasty. Viśvāmitra taught them two potent *mantras* — Balā and Atibalā— which enabled them to conquer hunger and thirst and perform miraculous acts. Viśvāmitra performed his projected sacrifice unhindered, as Rāma and Lakshmaṇa protected it from all attackers.

When Rāma and Lakshmaṇa returned from the island of Laṅkā after destroying Rāvaṇa and his rule over the universe, Vasiṣṭha was one of the eight sages who crowned Rāma as the king of Ayodhyā.

वसिष्ठो वामदेवश्च जाबालिरथ काश्यपः ।
 कात्यायनः सुयज्ञश्च गौतमो विजयस्तथा ॥
 अभ्यषिञ्चन् नरव्याघ्रं प्रसन्नेन सुगन्धिना ।
 सलिलेन सहस्राक्षं वसवो वासवं यथा ॥

*vasiṣṭho vāmadevaśca jābāriratha kāśyapaḥ
 kātyāyano suyajñaśca gautamo vijayastathā
 abhyaṣiñcan nara-vyāghraṁ prasannena sugandhinā
 salilena sahasrākṣaṁ vasavo vāsavaṁ yathā*

(*Vālmiki Rāmāyaṇa* — *Yuddha-kāṇḍa*, *sarga* 131, verses 61, 62).

(Vasiṣṭha, Vāmadeva, Jābāli, Kāsyapa, Kātyāyana, Suyajña, Gautama and Vijaya performed the coronation of Rāma with limpid and fragrant water, as Vasus crowned Indra as the King of all the worlds.)

Such a consummating coronation of Śrī Rāma by Vasishtha was supplemented and perfected by another coronation, i.e. the gift of spiritual knowledge to Rāma as described in the great work *Yoga-vāsiṣṭha* which is as great in merit in its way as *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa* and is much bigger in size than *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa*, Adapting a well-known Sanskrit verse about *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa*, we may say about Vasiṣṭha's work:

वसिष्ठगिरिसम्भूता रामसागरगामिनी ।

पुनातु भुवनं पुण्या रामायणमहानदी ॥

*vasiṣṭhagirisambhūtā rāmasāgaragāminī
punātu bhuvanam puṇyā rāmāyaṇa-mahānadi*

The first part of the work deals with *vairāgya* (freedom from desire), *mumukṣutva* (desire for spiritual liberation), *utpatti* (creation), *sthiti* (preservation) and *upaśama* (dissolution). The second part of the work consists of two sections, *viz.*, Pūrvārdha and Uttarārdha (the first part and second part) which deal in great detail with *nirvāṇa* (annihilation of individuality and achievement and spiritual experience of universality and divinity).

I shall quote in conclusion from the *Yoga-vāsiṣṭha* a few verses which combine wonderful beauty and divine sublimity.

तदेतत् पूजनं श्रेयः तस्मात्सर्वमवाप्यते ।
 तदैव स्वर्गभूः सर्वमिदं तस्मिन्नवस्थितम् ॥
 अकृत्रिममनाद्यन्तं अद्वितीयमखण्डितम् ।
 अबहिस्साधनासाध्यं सुखं तस्मादवाप्यते ॥
 एवं सर्वमिदं विश्वं परमात्मैव केवलम् ।
 ब्रह्मैवेदं पराकाशं एष देवः परः स्मृतः ॥

*tadetat pūjanam śreyah tasmāt sarvam avāpyate
 tadaiva sargabhūḥ sarvam idaṁ tasminnavasthitam
 akṛtrimam anādyantam advitīyam akhaṇḍitam
 abahissādhanāsādhyam sukhaṁ tasmād avāpyate
 evaṁ sarvamidaṁ viśvaṁ paramatmaiva kevalam
 brahmaivedaṁ parākāśam eṣa devaḥ paraḥ smṛtaḥ*

(The whole universe is one with Paramātmā, i.e. the universal Lord. He is known as Parākāśa, i.e. the supreme Sky. Worshipping Him is beneficial. From Him comes everything. He is the Creator of everything. All things rest in Him. He is not the creation. He is without beginning and end. He has no peer. He is undivided and indivisible and full. He is not created by an agency outside Him. We get all bliss from Him.)

ŚAKTI*

Śrīvatsa Somadeva Śarmā

In the uninterrupted lineage of the preceptors of Advaita, Śrī Śakti Ācārya occupies the fourth place. His biography and greatness are described in various Purāṇas. Vasiṣṭha, the spiritual son (*mūnasa-putra*) of Brahmā had a hundred sons through his wife, Arundhatī. The eldest among them was Śakti, who possibly on account of the varied powers he had, was named so.

The greatness of Śakti is set forth in the work '*Śrī Kāmakoṣi Pīṭha Jagadguru Paramparāratnamālā-stuti*', by Sadāśivabrahmendra with the commentary by Ātmaprakāśendra Sarasvatī, published by Śrī Vidyā Press, Kumbhakonam, in 1837.

बहुमित्रसहक्षितीशपापापहसांनिध्यं अरोध्यसत्प्रतापम् ।
महदञ्चितमन्त्रयन्त्रशक्तिं मनसा शक्तिमुपैमि सद्विरक्तम् ॥

* Courtesy: *Preceptors of Advaita*, Secunderabad, 1968.

*bahumitrasahakṣbitiśapīpāpahasāunidhyam
 arodhyasatpratāpam
 mahadañcita-mantra-yantra-śaktim
 manasā śaktimupaimi sadviraktam.*

“I meditate upon Śakti, the detached one, whose presence removed the sins of the king by name Bahumitrasahana, who had pre-eminent splendour, who possessed the *mantra* and *yantra* powers bestowed upon him by great ones.”

The commentator explains the meaning of this verse as follows: Mitrasahana of the solar dynasty had Vasiṣṭha as his family preceptor. Destruction of wild beasts and demons being the duty of the king, Mitrasahana once wanted to kill a demon; but the latter, by the power of his ‘*māyā*’ eluded the arrow and hid himself somewhere. With the evil intention of doing some wrong to the king, the demon disguising himself as a cook, prepared food from a human being’s flesh for the ancestral ceremony to be performed by the king. The food was served to Vasiṣṭha. But, the sage coming to know of the true nature of the food that was served to him, got angry and spelt a curse on the king that he should become a man-eating demon. The king not knowing the tricks played by the demon thought that Vasiṣṭha was wrong in cursing him and he, in turn, in an angry mood took water in his palms to spell a curse on the sage. The minister, however, dissuaded him from doing so, saying that by cursing the preceptor the whole family would be destroyed. The king, fully convinced, poured the water on his feet. If the water taken after determination is poured anywhere that portion or place would get dirty. As a result of the king’s pouring water on his feet, his

feet also became dirty; henceforth, he was called 'Kalmāṣapāda'. This act, according to the king, was mainly intended to show others that any insult done to the preceptor would be a sin. Thus having become a demon, one day while he was on a chase to kill the sons of Vasiṣṭha he came across Śakti Ācārya, and on seeing him, his sin and curse were removed. He then prayed to Śakti Ācārya to make him as his disciple and instruct him on the nature of Truth as a result of which he crossed the ocean of transmigration and attained release.

This narrative is slightly different from the one that is found in the other Purāṇa. There, it is found that 'Kalmāṣapāda' killed and ate all the one hundred sons of Vasiṣṭha including Śakti, that Śakti's son Parāśara by the grace of Lord Śiva appeared before the child to make him stop the sacrifice.

There seems to be a contradiction involved in the narratives of the two Purāṇas. But if we adopt the view that 'Kalmāṣapāda' ate Śakti and others from the first Purāṇa, and that his sins and curse were annihilated just by the mere presence of Śakti emerging from the sacrificial fire and that he attained liberation on receiving instructions from Śakti himself from the other one (Purāṇa), the mutual contradiction in the views expressed in the two *Purāṇas* get dissolved.

In the 65th chapter of the first half of the Liṅga-purāṇa the following version is found. It says that Śakti is the eldest of the one hundred sons of Vasiṣṭha. He learned all the arts from his father, married 'Adṛśyantī' and was running the life of a house-holder duly performing all the prescribed *karmas*. Visvāmitra,

as a result of his enmity towards Vasiṣṭha, accosted a demon by name 'Rudhiran' to enter the body of 'Kalmāṣapāda' and made him kill Śakti and the other sons of Vasiṣṭha. Overcome with grief at the death of his sons, Vasiṣṭha, as was the custom in that cosmic age fell from a hill-top with his wife in an attempt to end his life as well as that of his wife. This way of putting an end to one's life was known as '*bhṛgu-patanam*' which was not regarded as suicide, since one was permitted to end one's life at the time of grief by falling from the hill-top. But 'Bhūdevī', the Goddess of earth saved the old couple. Adṛsyantī, the wife of Śakti, consoled them by saying that since she was in the family way, the family thread would not be disrupted.

Vasiṣṭha was consoled on hearing this piece of good news. One midnight Vasiṣṭha heard the chanting of the *Vedas* from the place where Adṛsyantī was sleeping. As he was wondering, he heard an unknown voice saying that it was his grandson, the son of Śakti who was chanting the *Vedas* from the womb of his mother, that he (the child) was going to be a great devotee of Śiva and that he would compose Viṣṇu-purāṇa. Vasiṣṭha, forgetting the grief that had seized him, began expecting the day of his grandson's birth. At last, the day also came and the joy of Vasiṣṭha and his wife knew no bounds. After having worked out the child's horoscope, he was named 'Śākteya'. The child, noted for his wisdom even while in the womb, asked his mother the reason for her not being happy while begetting a child for her. While everyone else including Vasiṣṭha and his wife was avoiding a reply, the mother herself informed the child that his father

was killed by a demon and that was the reason why she was not happy. Even before she could conclude her narrative, the child told the mother that he would bring his father very soon. Śākṭeya, praying to Lord Śiva, lit up a fire and began performing a sacrifice aiming at exterminating the demons. Thousands of them perished in that fire. Devī Pārvatī, consort of Lord Śiva, astonished at the child's devotion to his father requested her husband, Śiva, to return the father to the child. Śiva also complied with the request of his consort. Śākṭeya, coming to know through his mother that Śakti was his father, prostrated before him. The father embracing the child told him thus: "Who can kill whom? It is only one's *karma* that is responsible for one's death. So, stop the sacrifice." The family of Vasiṣṭha was once again united. Sage Pulastya of the 'Rākshasa' race, blessed him thus: "Since you were like an arrow to the enemy, you shall henceforth be known as 'Parāśara' and you shall compose Viṣṇupurāṇa."

The *Mahābhārata*, Ādiparvan, 192-195, gives a biographical sketch of the three preceptors — Vasiṣṭha, Śakti, and Parāśara. Once, a king by name 'Divodāsa' also known as 'Mitrāsaha' was returning after a tiresome hunting in the forest. On the way, he came across some sages among whom Śakti also was one. The king, feeling hungry and thirsty, asked the sages to give him way. Śakti told the king that it was he who should give way for the sages and not *vice versa*. The king, getting angry at this reply whipped Śakti, and the latter in return pronounced a curse on the king that he would forthwith become a demon. While the king, repenting for his action, was about to apologise

to the sage, Visvāmitra prevented the king from doing so, by making a demon called Kiṅkara enter the body of the king.

Śakti learnt all the Advaita texts under his father, Vasiṣṭha. He was always conscious of his identity with the Supreme Self. It was indeed our good fortune to have had such illustrious, realised souls like Śakti who kept alive the Advaita tradition for the benefit of posterity.



THE TEN INCARNATIONS

मत्स्यः कूर्मो वराहश्च नारसिंहश्च वामनः ।

रामो रामश्च रामश्च कृष्णः कल्की जनार्दनः ॥

Lord Viṣṇu assumed ten *avatāras*, viz. Fish, Tortoise, Boar, Man-Lion, Dwarf, Three Rāmas (with axe, bow and plough), Kṛṣṇa and Kalki. He yields Mokṣa.

PARĀŚASA*

Brahma Śrī N. Subramania Aiyar (Annā)

तत्त्वेन यश्चिदचिदीश्वरतत्स्वभाव-
भोगापवर्गतदुपायगतीरुदारः ।
सन्शयन्निरमिमीत पुराणरत्नं
तस्मै नमो मुनिवराय पराशराय ॥

I bow down to that great saint, Parāśara, who composed the gem of a Purāṇa (the *Viṣṇu-purāṇa*) revealing therein faithfully the truths about soul, matter, God, their inter-relationship, enjoyment of this world, freedom and the ways and means thereof.

— Yāmunācārya's *Stotra-ratna*, 4

I

Vasiṣṭha, the mind-born son of Brahmā, begot Śakti. Śakti begot Parāśara. Parāśara begot Veda Vyāsa. Vyāsa begot Śuka. And all of them were

* Courtesy: *Preceptors of Advaita*, Secunderabad, 1968.

great seers and the earliest of the builders of the enduring edifice of Sanātana Dharma.

Parāśara lived at the end of Dvāpara-yuga, just before the Kali era set in. He was once crossing the Ganges in a boat plied by a fallen angel in the guise of a fisherwoman, by name Satyavatī. Parāśara fell in love with her and of their union was born a child of destiny. We are told that the birth of the child was mysterious, that he was no sooner conceived than he was born, 'Sadyotpannaḥ'. He came to be known as Dvaipāyana because he was born on an island. He was called Kṛṣṇa because he was black. He earned the appellation of Veda Vyāsa, as he became later on the Codifier of the Vedic literature.

Perhaps the greatest glory of Parāśara is that he gave Veda Vyāsa to the world. A tree is known by its fruit. Speaking of Vyāsa, Sri Aurobindo says, "A wide and searching mind, historian, statesman, orator, a deep and keen looker into ethics and conduct, a subtle and high aiming politician, theologian and philosopher, it is not for nothing that Hindu tradition makes the name of Vyāsa loom so large in the history of Aryan thought and attributes to him a work so important and manifold."

Parāśara is illustrious not only because he is the father of Veda Vyāsa but on his own account as a Maharṣi, as a law-giver and as a powerful writer. We owe to him the Parāśara-smṛti and the Viṣṇu-purāṇa, called a gem among the Purāṇas.

II

The teachings of Parāśara can be understood from a few quotations given below, culled from the *Viṣṇu-purāṇa*:

As the air blown through different holes of a flute produces different notes, the one Paramātman appears as many.

He who creates, sustains and destroys the worlds in the guise of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva is Bhagavān Janārdana himself.

Whatever is seen is His manifestation but people who have no eyes to see the truth, see this manifestation as the universe.

The life (*jīva*) is His Kaustubha, Śrīvatsa is Prakṛiti, Buddhi is the mace; the Conch represents the Pañcabhūtas and the bow the Indriyas; the mind is the Cakra and the senses the arrows; the sword is Vidyā and its sheath is Avidyā. The Lord is Māyārūpin. Though he has no form, he assumes a form and wears ornaments and weapons for the good of the creatures.

Word is Śrī, meaning is Hari; Wisdom is Viṣṇu, Buddhi is Lakshmī; Dharma is Viṣṇu, Dharmic action is Lakshmī; Creator is Viṣṇu, Creation is Lakshmī; the earth is Śrī and he who lifts the earth is Hari; joy is Viṣṇu, and Gaurī is Lakshmī; the Lord is the tree, the Mother is the creeper; the flag is Śrī and the flagpost is Hari.

“I am Hari, all this is Janārdana and apart from Him there is nothing, gross or subtle” — He who realizes this will not be caught in the meshes of birth and death.

If one avoids calumny, envy, untruth, harsh words, He is pleased. If one extends the same love to others as to one's self or to one's own son, He is pleased.

III

The quintessence of Parāśara's philosophy of life is brought home to us in particular in his narration of the story of Prahlāda. Through Prahlāda, Parāśara reveals his own heart.

Says Prahlāda: Viṣṇu is not in my heart alone, he pervades the whole world. He is in me and in you and in every being and He stands revealed in all our actions. When He, the dispeller of all fears is seated in my mind, how can fear find a place there? By the mere thought of Him, fear of birth, old age and death is immediately dissolved.

The best way of worshipping Him is the practice of equality and equanimity and to see Him equally everywhere and in all things.

Those who came to kill me, those who gave me poison, who threw me into fire, who set elephants to trample over me and serpents to bite me — to them also I have nothing but love. I cannot wish evil, do evil or talk evil, seeing the Lord in everyone as in me. When the Lord is seated in the heart of every being, how can there be the distinction of friends or foes?

Unexpected good fortune, rulership and enjoyments come even to people who are unjust, unwise,

foolish and cowardly. Therefore, one who desires the highest good should not crave for pleasures but should strive for holy things and the practice of equanimity.

The Lord is everywhere. I am He. From me has come everything, I am everything, in me is everything. I am the imperishable Paramātman called Brahman. I am the beginning and the end. I am the Parama Purusha.

Realizing that he was not different from Vishnu, Prahlāda forgot himself and he did not cognize anything else.

Coming down from that place, he saw the world again and thought of himself as Prahlāda. Then he sang the praise of Purushottama with a one-pointed mind. The Lord then appeared before him clad in golden silk. Prahlāda uttered the following prayer:

As I wander in the world taking numerous births, wherever I may be born, may I always have unswerving devotion to Thee. May I be attracted to you with that love which the foolish people have for the fleeting objects of the world.

This is the philosophy of Parāśara.

VEDA VYĀSA*

Brahma Śrī R. Muthukrishna Śāstrī

व्यासं वसिष्ठनप्तारं शक्तेः पौत्रमकल्मषम् ।
परशरात्मजं वन्दे शुकतातं तपोनिधिम् ॥

*vyāsam vasishṭhanaptāram
śakteḥ pautramakalmaṣam
parāśarātmajam vande
śukatātām taponidhim.*

Śrīmad Bhagavadgītā emphasises that the Lord Almighty incarnates in this world for the establishment of Dharma as and when necessary. Dharma can be established in many ways, namely, protecting the pious, destroying the wicked, removing ignorance, and establishing knowledge. Among such incarnations, in the *dvāparayuga*, Lord Viṣṇu was born as Vedavyāsa in order to remove ignorance and establish knowledge on a firm basis. Out of the three basic energies (desire, action, and knowledge) this *avatāra* of Viṣṇu represents *jñānaśakti*.

*Courtesy: *Preceptors of Advaita*, Secunderabad, 1968.

ज्ञानशक्त्यवताराय नमो भगवतो हरेः ।

*jñānaśaktyavatārāya
namo bhagavato hareḥ.*

(*Bhāmātī-Śloka*, 5).

Born of *Maharṣi Parāśara* and *Satyavatīdevī*, Vyāsa is known by several names. We may refer to him as *Vedavyāsa* or merely *Vyāsa* because he codified the Vedas into four sections, viz. *Rg*, *Yajus*, *Sāma* and *Atharva*, and taught them to his four disciples, Paila, Vaisampāyana, Jaimini and Sumantu respectively, for the benefit of posterity. He is also known as *Dvairpāyana* because he was born in an island; *Kṛṣṇa* as he was dark in colour, and more familiarly as *Kṛṣṇa-dvairpāyana*, combining both the names. As he performed *tapas* under a badara tree, he is referred to as *Bādarāyaṇa*.

आचिनोति च शास्त्रार्थं आचारे स्थापयत्यपि ।

स्वयमाचरते यस्मात् तमाचार्यं प्रचक्षते ॥

*ācinoti ca śāstrārtham ācāre sthāpayatyapi
svayamācarate yasmāt tamācāryam pracakṣate.*

“Cogent presentation of truths spread out in different Śāstras, directing the disciple to follow the tenets of our Dharma, and practising them himself rigidly, are said to be the chief characteristic of an ideal guru.”

Śrī Vyāsa was a shining example of these qualities. Books written by him are so many and voluminous, and unsurpassed in depth of thought and elegance of

expression, so much so that we are sometimes led to wonder whether one person could have found the time to write such a large variety of literature, and that perhaps several persons wrote these Volumes and passed them under the name of Vyāsa. But there is no reason to doubt their authenticity, as both internal and external evidences go to prove that they were all the products of one mighty intellect.

Brahma-Sūtra

There are six systems of Āstika philosophy, namely, *Nyāya*, *Vaiśeṣika*, *Sāṅkhya*, *Yoga*, *Pūrvamīmāṃsā*, and *Uttaramīmāṃsā* or *Vedānta*. Out of these, Vyāsa is the author of *Brahma-sūtra* in respect the Vedānta philosophy of the Upanishads. This *sūtra* is known by several names, such as *Vyāsa-sūtra*, *Brahma-sūtra*, *Bhikshu-sūtra* and *Vedānta-sūtra*. This consists of four *adhyāyas* or sections and there are 555 *sūtras*.

Sūtras are brief and significant statements, that could be expanded and expounded by gurus and and scholars to their disciples. 'Sūcanāt sūtram.'

The word 'sūtra' also means a thread used to string flowers into a garland. Śrī Śaṅkara, in his *bhāṣya* on the *Brahma-sūtra*, says that the sentences of the Upanishads are strung together by the thread of these *sūtras*, like flowers in a garland, and hence they are known as *sūtras*.

वेदान्तवाक्यकुसुमग्रथनार्थत्वात् सूत्राणाम्

vedāntavākyakusumagrathanārthatvāt

sūtrāṇām (*Brahma-sūtra-bhāṣya* of Śaṅkara 1-2).

The Nyāya, Vaiśeṣika, Yoga and Sāṅkhya systems of philosophy try to arrive at the ultimate truth by means of reasoning only. Pūrvamīmāṃsā, although based on the authority of the Vedas, is unable to express the true import of the Upanishads, which form the final expression of the Vedas. To this extent, all these systems of philosophy are defective in arriving at the *Ātmatattva*, the truth that is the Atman. To a careful student, it will be apparent that it is not possible to understand the ultimate truth, that is Ātman purely by intellectual arguments. At the same time, it has to be stated that the Upanishads are not in any way contrary to reasoning. To understand the Upanishadic thought, although human intelligence can be useful to a certain extent, we can never arrive at the ultimate truth through reasoning alone.

तर्कप्रतिष्ठानादन्यथानुमेयमिति चेत् एवमप्यविमोक्षप्रसङ्गः

tarkāpratiṣṭhānādanyathānumeyamiti cet

evamapyavimokṣaprasaṅgaḥ (Brahma-sūtra, 2-1-11).

The following passage from the *Mahābhārata*, namely, *tarko' pratishṭhaḥ śrutayaḥ vibhinnāḥ (Vana-parva, 314-119)* also confirms this view of the *Brahma-sūtra*. If we examine the *Vyāsa-sūtra* we shall come to the conclusion that Advaita alone is their true import. We shall now explain a few *sūtras* here.

“The state of liberation, according to Advaita philosophy, is the attainment of one's own disembodied nature of eternal bliss and knowledge—the removal of nescience. According to others, it is settling in a superior world with body, mind, and other senses. In the *Vyāsa-sūtra*, “*sampadyāvīrbhāvaḥ svena śabdāt*”

(4-4-1), the words “*svena*” and “*āvīrbhāva*” clearly declare that the liberation is the manifestation of one’s own self. The same conclusion is arrived at in the succeeding *sūtras* also, *viz.*

ब्राह्मेण जैमिनिरुपन्यासादिभ्यः ।

चितितन्मात्रेण तदात्मकत्वादित्यौडुलोमिः ।

एवमप्युपन्यासात् पूर्वभावादविरोधं बादरायणः ।

“*brāhmaṇa jaiminirupanyāsādibhyaḥ*” (4-4-5)

“*cititanmātreṇa tadātmakatvādityauḍulomiḥ*” (4-4-6)

“*evamapyupanyāsād pūrvabhāvād-
avirodham bādarāyaṇaḥ*” (4-4-7)

The first *sūtra* is an exposition of the view of Jaimini that the released soul gains all the highest qualities of the *Saguṇa* or qualified Brahman. The second is of Auḍulomin. According to him, the released soul is manifest as pure knowledge alone. The third is the view of Bādarāyaṇa, according to which, there is no contradiction between the two above-mentioned views. Now, this reconciliation of *Saguṇa* and *Nirguṇa* states is exactly what the Advaitins maintain and others reject.

There is another *sūtra* in the first *adhyāya*,

शास्त्रदृष्ट्या तूपदेशो वामदेववत् ।

“*śāstradr̥ṣṭyā tūpadeśo vāmadevavat*” (1-1-30)

In this *sūtra*, the sage Vāmadeva, on his realization of Brahman, declares that he is “Manu” and he is “Sūrya”. “I am all” is the Śāstraic realization. “I

am different from my fellow being” is the typically wordly knowledge. This distinction between wordly knowledge and Śāstraic realization — the prominent feature of Advaita philosophy — is brought out in this *sūtra*. (See *Advaitāksharamālikā*, p. 276.)

Śrī Śaṅkara, in his *Sūtrabhāṣya*, has explained in unambiguous terms that these *sūtras* are definitely advaitic in their meaning. According to his *Vhāshya*, the theme of the first chapter is *Samanvaya*, that is: the true import of all the Upanishadic passages is the non-dual Ātman. The second chapter is called *Avirodha*, that is: there is no conflict between the import of the first chapter and other *pramāṇas*. The third chapter expounds the *sādhana* necessary to attain the knowledge of Ātman or Brahman. The fourth chapter explains the nature of the result *i.e.* *Phala*, of the knowledge of Brahman. This, in brief, is the substance of the *Brahma-sūtra*.

Similarly, Śrī Rāmānuja, Śrī Madhva, and other *ācāryas* also have written *Bhāṣyas* on the *Brahma-sūtra*. It is an accepted tradition that no exposition can be treated as authoritative unless quotations from the *Brahma-sūtra* can be given to support those views. Therefore, it is no wonder that the *Brahma-sūtra* has given rise to a large volume of literature, consisting of *Bhāṣyas*, *Tikā*, *Vārtika*, *Vivarāṇa*, etc. There are many books expounding Advaita philosophy based on the *Brahma-sūtra*. Similarly, many books have been written on the *Viśiṣṭādvaita* and *Dvaita* aspects based on the *Brahma-sūtra*. Nothing more need be said to show the importance of the *Brahma-sūtra* for the real understanding of the *tattvas*.

Itihāsa and Purāṇas

As the *Brahma-sūtra* was necessarily terse and brief and could not easily be understood by men of average intellect, Śrī Vyāsa wrote the *Mahābhārata* and the eighteen *Mahāpurāṇas*. These *Itihāsa-purāṇas* enable one to understand better and appreciate the truths adumbrated in the Vedas and the Upanishads. It is said that the Vedas are really afraid of one who has not properly studied the *itihāsa-purāṇas*, because such a one will misunderstand the truths.

यश्चतुर्वेदविद्विप्रः पुराणं वेत्ति नार्थतः ।

तं दृष्ट्वा भयमाप्नोति वेदां मां प्रतरिष्यति ॥

*yaścaturvedavidviprah purāṇam vetti nārthataḥ
tam dr̥ṣṭvā bhayamāpnoti*

vedo mām pratarisyati. (Sūta-saṁhitā, 1-1.34)

Therefore, it follows that to expound the Vedas a study of the *Itihāsa* and *Purāṇas* is necessary. It is thus to the credit of Śrī Vyāsa that he wrote these *Purāṇas* and the *magnum opus*, the *Mahābhārata*.

(1) Creation, (2) Dissolution, (3) Manvantara, (4) the Genealogy of the Sūrya- and Candravam̐sa, and (5) the story of the descendants of these Vam̐sas — these five are elaborately dealt with in the *Purāṇas*, only with a view to explain clearly and in easy language the profound and ultimate truth of Ātman and Brahman. It is, therefore, that in all these *Purāṇas*, under some pretext or other, compact and terse philosophic chapters are added, like precious gems in a jewel-box. For example,

Brahma-gītā in the *Yajñavaibhava-kāṇḍa* of the *Sūtasamhitā* in the *Skānda Purāna*.

Jadupākhyānam, comprising the 36th to 44th chapters of the *Mārkaṇḍeyapurānam*.

Īśvaragītā in *uttara-khaṇḍa* of the *Kūrmapurānam*.
Śrutigītā, *Uddhavagītā*, and other portions in the *Bhāgavata*.

Bhagavadgītā, *Sanatsujātīyam*, and *Mokṣadharmaprakaraṇam* of *Śāntiparva* in the *Mahabhārata*, etc.

The eighteen Mahāpurānas

- (1) Brāhmam, (2) Pādmam, (3) Vaishṇavam,
(4) Śaivam, (5) Bhāgavatam, (6) Bhaviṣyam,
(7) Nārādīyam, (8) Mārkaṇḍeyam, 9) Āgneyam
(10) Brahmavaivartam, (11) Laiṅgam, (12) Vārāham,
(13) Skāndam, (14) Vāmanam, (15) Kaurmam,
(16) Mātsyam, (13) Gāruḍam, (18) Vāyavīyam.

It is doubtful whether anyone in his lifetime would be able to study all these eighteen *Purānas* containing 4,00,000 *granthas*. Of these eighteen *Purānas*, ten speak of the glories of Śiva, four of Mahāvishṇu, two of Brahmā, one of Agni, and one of Sūrya.

कथ्यते दशभिर्विप्राः पुराणैः परमेश्वरः ।

चतुर्भिः कथ्यते विष्णुः द्वाभ्यां ब्रह्माजगत्पतिः ॥

एकेनाग्निस्तथैकेन भगवान् चण्डभास्करः ॥

kathyate daśabhirviprāḥ purāṇaiḥ
parameśvaraḥ

*caturbhiḥ kathyate viṣṇuḥ dvābhyām
Brahmā jagatpatiḥ
ekenāgnīstathaikena bhagavān caṇḍa-
bhāskaraḥ.*

The fact that the same author should have written several *Purāṇas* glorifying different gods is a positive proof that the Vedas do not make any difference between one god and another, and that all arrive at the same goal provided they worship with *ekāgra cintana* (concentrated meditation) on any one of the gods.

The *Purāṇas* explain, with detailed and interesting examples and stories, the different natures of *dharma* and *adharmā*, the importance of particular *kṣhetras* and *puṇyanadis*, the significance of different *mūrtis* and also particulars of anatomy and health precepts. In fact, these *Purāṇas* form the sources from which we can study the culture, civilization, religious and social laws, and organization of our ancient period. Without the help of these, our ancient history will be full of dark patches, and we cannot rightly interpret our Vedic tenets and principles.

The Mahābhārata

It is said that Śrī Vyāsa put forth his best effort in writing the *itihāsa*, the *Mahābhārata*. The *Hari-vaṁśa* also is a section of the *Mahābhārata*. One cannot do enough justice by words to the important place this *itihāsa* holds in the life and thought of the Hindus, so much so it has been called the fifth *Veda*.

‘ भारतः पञ्चमो वेदः । ’ ‘ महाभारतपञ्चमान् ’ ।

‘ काष्णं वेदम् । ’

*bhārataḥ pañcamao vedah; mahābhārata-pañcamān;
kāṛṣṇam vedam.*

It is also known as the *Veda* written by Krishna-dvaipāyana. Śrī Vyāsa starts writing this *itihāsa* by stating: “What is not mentioned in this *itihāsa* cannot be found in any other book; and what is mentioned in other books can be found in this.”

यदिहास्ति तदन्यत्र यन्नेहास्ति न तत्क्वचित् ।

yadihāsti tadanyatra yannehāsti na tatkvacit.

The famous texts such as the *Bhagavad-gītā*, *sanat-sujātiyam*, *Anugītā* and *Mokshadharmaprakaraṇam* of *Śāntiparva*, all of them help to explain and expound the thoughts expressed in the *Upaniṣads*. Further *Viduranīti*, *Yakṣapraśnam*, *Anusāsanaparva*, and others set forth the basic principles of Dharma and codes of conduct. *Viṣṇusahasranāmam*, *Śivasahasranāmam*, and others sing the glories of the respective gods and promote *bhakti*. *Rājadharmaprakaraṇam* and *Āpaddharma-prakaraṇam* of *Śāntiparva*, speak of administrative principles. Thus, almost all aspects of human conduct, both individual and communal, are dealt with in great detail, with precision and authority.

The *Mahābhārata* has been the source and inspiration of most of the *Mahākāvya*s composed in India during the last several millenniums. Śrīharaṣa’s *Naishadham*, Bhāravi’s *Kirātārjunīyam*, Māgha’s *Śiṣu-pālavadharmam*, and Kālidāsa’s *Abhijñāna-Sākuntalam*, all owe their inspiration to the stories narrated in the *Mahābhārata*. Kavi Kālidāsa has incorporated several

sentences and ideas verbatim from the *Mahābhārata* in his own works. The poet *Bhāsa* also has based many of his dramas on this *itihāsa*.

Śrī Śaṅkara, Śrī Rāmānuja and other ācāryas have borrowed very liberally and quoted stanzas from the *Mahābhārata* in their own Bhāṣyas.

How can we sing the praise of such a genius as Vedavyāsa! We shall have to content ourselves with quoting below some *ślokas* in praise of this great ācārya.

नमोऽस्तु ते व्यास विशालबुद्धे फुल्लारविन्दायतपत्रनेत्र ।
येन त्वया भारततैलपूर्णः प्रज्वालितो ज्ञानमयः प्रदीपः ॥

namo'stu te vyāsa viśālabuddhe
phullāravindāyatapatranetra
yena tvayā bhāratatailapūrṇaḥ
prajvālito jñānamayaḥ pradīpaḥ.

“You poured the oil of *Mahābhārata* and lit the lamp of our knowledge to shine brightly for ever. What return can we ever give you for this act of grace on your part? We can only bow down in adoration.”

It is thus obvious that without the oil of *Mahābhārata* the lamp of our knowledge will cease to burn.

यो विद्याच्चतुरो वेदान् साङ्गोपनिषदो द्विजः ।
न चारुयानमिदं विद्यात् नैव स स्याद्विचक्षणः ॥

yo vidyāt caturo vedān
sāṅgopaniṣado dvijaḥ

*na cākhyānamidaṁ vidyāt
naiva sa syād vicakṣaṇaḥ.*

“Even if one is learned in all the four *Vedas* and their auxiliary disciplines, one will not be considered a scholar if he has not mastered the *Mahābhārata*.”

त्रिदशानां यथा विष्णुः द्विपदां ब्राह्मणो यथा ।
भूषणानाञ्च सर्वेषां यथा चूडामणिर्वरः ॥
यथायुधानां कुलिशं इन्द्रियाणां यथा मनः ।
तथेह सर्वशास्त्राणां महाभारतमुत्तमम् ॥

*tridaśānām yathā viṣṇuḥ
dvīpadām brāhmaṇo yathā
bhūṣaṇānām ca sarveṣām
yathā cūḍāmaṇirvaraḥ.
yathāyudhānām kulīśam
indriyānām yathā manaḥ
tatheha sarvaśāstrāṇām
mahābhāratamuttamam.*

(Mārkaṇḍeya-Purāṇam, 1.4 & 5).

As is *Vishṇu* among the gods, Brahmins among two-legged animals, *cūḍāmaṇi* among jewels, *Vajrāyudham* among weapons, mind among senses, even so is *Mahābhārata* among *Śāstras*.

A Dharma-sāstra by name *Vyāsa-smṛti* and *Vyāsa-śikṣā* explaining the *lakṣhaṇa* of the *Vedas* are also to be found in the name of Śrī Vyāsa.

Thus Śrī Vedavyāsa has written many books to expound the sacred truths contained in the Vedas and the Upanishads.

We have not seen Śrī Vyāsa face to face. But we are very lucky now in having in our midst the great scholar-saint, Śrī Kāmakoṭi-pīṭhādhipati Śrī Candrasekharendra Sarasvatī Pūjyapādāḥ at whose feet I dedicate this humble essay of mine.

ŚUKA*

Brahmaśrī K. Balasubrahmanya Iyer

The truth of Advaita rests not merely on the inherent validity of the scriptures or the *Vedas* but on that of actual experience or *anubhava*. The great Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda, who is the foremost expounder of the truth of Advaita, clearly states in his commentary on the second *sūtra* of the *Brahma-sūtra* (*janmādyasya yataḥ* 1.1.2) that unlike in the case of Dharma, the knowledge of Brahman rests also on experience (*śrutyādayaḥ anubhavādayaśca yathā-sambhavam iha pramāṇam*). Again when discussing the possibility of the existence in this world of *jīvan-muktas* or realised souls, he emphasises that the only test for the existence of such realised souls in the human form is their own heart-experience, and such experience cannot be questioned by arguments about the possibility or not of the existence of *jīvan-muktas* after they have destroyed their *karmavāsanās*. Hence it is that Śaṅkara postulates the necessity for initiation by a Guru for the realisation of the truth of Advaita. As a corollary to this proposition came the acceptance of a series of Gurus, who developed the Advaita-sampradāya. Before initiation into the study of Vedānta, everyone

* Courtesy: *Preceptors of Advaita*, Secunderabad, 1968.

is expected to make a *Śāntipāṭha*, and in that one recites the *Guru-paramparā*, from the beginning. God Nārāyaṇa himself is the first Guru, next comes Brahmā, next Vasiṣṭha, then his son Śakti, then Śakti's son Parāśara, afterwards the son of Parāśara, the great sage Vyāsa, then his son Śuka, afterwards Gauḍapāda, his śiṣya Govinda Bhagavatpāda, and then his śiṣya Śrī Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda, and then his śiṣyas Hastāmalaka, Suresvara, Padmapāda, Totaka and others, and then downwards to one's own Guru under whom one gets initiation into the study of Vedānta. We find therefore that Bhagavān Śuka occupies a highly honoured place in our *Guru-paramparā*. In this *Guruparamparā*, that has been handed down to us in the Advaita tradition, all the Gurus are, as will be seen, realised souls that have experienced the Advaita-tattva.

When praising Vyāsa, the famous verse about him refers to him as the father of Śuka (*śukatātom taponidhim*). This is a unique distinction for, usually, the name of the son is denoted by the name of his father. Here Vyāsa is extolled by being mentioned as the father of Śuka. This shows with what veneration the great devotees of Advaita Vedānta looked upon Śuka. He is one of the greatest of Brahma-niṣṭhas. The story of Śuka's wonderful birth and the way of his realisation of Brahman are very graphically narrated in the *Mahābhārata* — Śānti Parva-Adhyāya 323, and following Adhyāyas. It is said therein that Bhagavān Vyāsa performed a severe penance for begetting a son. He meditated on the great Śiva. Pleased with his austerities God Śiva blessed that a son would be born to him who would

be pure as fire, air, earth, water and etheric space and that he would attain fame throughout the three worlds by his spirituality. Having attained this boon from Lord Śiva, it is narrated that Vyāsa began to produce fire from two sticks of wood (*araṇi*). At that time the beautiful celestial dancer Ghṛtācī appeared. Enslaved by kāma on seeing her, Vyāsa let fall his *Vīrya* on the fire produced from the sticks of wood, and out of it a son was born. As the Apsaras Ghṛtācī took the form of a parrot (*śukī*) at that time, this son came to be known as Śuka. This boy shone like effulgent fire and resembled Vyāsa in his appearance. The child was later initiated into the study of the Vedas, and Vyāsa instructed him in all Śāstras. The child was also instructed by Bṛhaspati himself. Curiously enough in a short time the boy attained the knowledge of all branches of learning. But his mind did not move by the attractions of the other two āśramas, of Gṛhastha and Vānaprastha. But he was intensely longing for Mokṣa. Hence his father Vyāsa, advised him to go and study under the great Rāja Rishi Janaka at Mithilā. The *Mahābhārata* specifically says that from the great āśrama on the Himalayas, Śuka came all the way to Mithilā on foot, even though he had the power to fly over the intervening space between the Himalayas and Mithilā. When he went to the palace of Janaka a discriminating gate-keeper readily admitted him, struck by his attractive appearance. Śuka was received in the palace by the ministers of Janaka and enjoyed the hospitality of the maids of the palace. Even then he had absolute self-control, and was indifferent to their attractions. In the morning Śuka was received by Janaka and instructed in the path to Mokṣa. Then Janaka portrays to him beauti-

fully the characteristics of a realised soul, how he is utterly devoid of jealousy and other evil qualities, how he looks upon all people with the same eye, how he is devoid of the opposites, praise and calumny, pleasure and pain, heat and cold, how he treats gold and iron as same, and how he has mastered the mind and the *indriyas*.

Having thus been instructed in the Moksha-mārga by Janaka, Śuka returned to his father. At that time his father, Vyssa was engaged in teaching the four Vedas to Sumantu, Vaisāmpāyana, Jaimini and Paila. He taught Śuka all the four Vedas as his fifth *śiṣya*. Then Śuka sought Nārada as his Guru for being instructed in Rājayoga and Bhaktiyoga. Nārada taught the way of Dhyāna, Abhyāsa and Bhakti. He emphasised the absolute importance of *jñāna* and *vairāgya*. After obtaining the complete knowledge of the way of realisation of Moksha through Yoga and Bhakti, Śuka entered into austerities and attained Sūryaloka and became part of the effulgence of Sūrya. In the same way he identified himself with the other elements, Vāyu, Jala and Bhūmi, and finally he attained Brahman and wandered about.

Vyāsa was stricken with profound grief on account of the separation from his son and ran after him. It is during his journey following his son that a wonderful incident occurred. The heavenly dancers who were sporting in the water without dress, remained unmoved when Śuka went along that path, and when Vyāsa came, they hastily dressed themselves. When asked by Vyāsa the reason for the difference in

their conduct towards himself and his youthful son, they said that Śuka was a person absolutely devoid of the knowledge of the difference of sex, and that Vyāsa had not come to that stage. This incident is mentioned with great enthusiasm in the *Bhāgavata* also. The greatest achievement of Śuka, according to the traditional story, is his reciting the *Bhāgavata* to King Parīkṣit, who expecting death in a period of seven days, on account of a curse uttered by a sage, was intently meditating upon the Lord and was anxiously seeking for the way to attain the feet of God. The *Bhāgavata* narrates that Parīkṣit was seated near the banks of the Ganges surrounded by Rishis and at that time Śuka made his appearance.

There is a beautiful description of Śuka who was of the age of sixteen at that time. The great Brahmaniṣṭha who never stayed even a short time before any householder, stayed for seven days and instructed King Parīkṣit the famous *Bhāgavata-purāṇa*. The *Bhāgavata* goes into ecstasies over the fine appearance of this lad of sixteen years with soft limbs of beautiful proportion, with attractive eyes, and smiling face, saturated with a mind absolutely tranquil and devoid of any desires. The whole assembly of Rishis rose to their feet on seeing this regat Brahamaniṣṭha and made obeisance to him. Parīkṣit received him with great veneration and made him seated and asked him to teach him the way of meditating upon the Lord and concentrating on him. He said he was very fortunate in having Śuka to instruct him when he was greatly anxious to attain the knowledge of the way of salvation. Very much pleased with his desire to know the truth Śuka congratulated him, and himself began to

utter verses ending with *tasmai subhadraśravase namo namaḥ*. This hymn to the Lord by Śuka, one of the finest in the *Bhāgavata* is fit to be uttered by everyone desiring to practice devotion to the Lord. In this hymn Śuka emphasises the greatness of Bhakti to the Lord. He declares that the path of Bhakti can be followed by all irrespective of caste, creed or race.

किरात-हूणान्ध्रपुळिन्दपुल्कसा

आभीरकङ्का यवनाः खशादयः ।

येऽन्ये च पापाः यदुपाश्रयाश्रयाः

शुद्धयन्ति तस्मै प्रभविष्णवे नमः ॥

kirāta-hūṇāndhrapulinda-pulkaśā

ābhirakaṅkā yavanāḥ khaśādayaḥ

ye anye ca pāpāḥ yadupāśrayāśrayāḥ

suddhyanti tasmai prabhaviṣṇave namaḥ.

He also stresses that the goal of all religious system is the realisation of God and the different *mārgas* expounded by those who have realised God is due only to their differences in the exposition of their experience due to the varying degrees of their intellectual perception.

But the only way by which they have attained the knowledge of Brahman is concentration through Bhakti-yoga on the feet of the Lord, by which their mind is purified.

यदङ्घ्र्यनुध्यानसमाधिधौतया

धियानुपश्यन्ति हि तत्त्वमात्मनः ।

वदन्ति चैतक्वयो यथारुचम्

स मे मुकुन्दो भगवान् प्रसीदताम् ॥

*yadañghryanudhyānasmādhidhautayā
dhiyānupaśyanti hi tattvamātmanah
vadanti caitat kavayo yathārucam
sa me mukundo bhagavān prasīdatām.*

Bhagavān Śuka thus expounded the great message of Bhakti as the royal road for all people irrespective of their intellectual attainment for the realization of God. This Bhakti, the *Bhāgavāta* declares, is the be all and end all of life. But the Bhakti according to the *Bhāgavata* must be inspired by *tattvajñāna* (the knowledge of the truth) and by the practice of *vairāgya* accompanied by the pursuit of Rājayoga. Śuka remains for all time as the foremost example of a Brahmaniṣṭha, who realised God through Jñāna, Vairāgya and Yoga. The *Bhāgavata* rightly extols Śuka as a Muni, a sage with the cosmic universal heart (*sarvabhūtahṛdaya*).

Therefore it is true that both the *Mahābhārata* and the *Bhāgavata* state that at the call uttered by Vyāsa the whole of nature responded to the call (*putretī tanmayatayā taravo'bhineduh*). Even the trees, being united with him, responded to his name. Even the great sage Tāyumanavar refers to the cosmic mind of Śuka and to the incident of nature echoing to the call of the his father Vyāsa. He reckons Śuka among the immortal Yogis. Śuka is undoubtedly among the illustrious galaxy of saints, who attained the shining star the knowledge of Brahman and merged into the universal soul, even during their sojourn on earth.

HOMAGE TO ŚUKA

यं प्रव्रजन्तमनुपेतमपेतकृत्यं
 द्वैपायनो विरहकातर आजुहाव ।
 पुत्रेति यन्मयतया तरवोऽभिनेदुः
 तं सर्वभूतहृदयं मुनिमानतोऽस्मि ॥

“Śrī Śuka was wandering about, not accompanied by anyone, and free from the bonds of *karma*. Śrī Vyāsa (Dvaipāyana, Śuka’s father) called his son, Śuka as “Oh Son!” for he (Vyāsa) was affected by the pangs of separation from his son. But Śuka wandered about, being immersed in Brahman-realization (Bliss). So the trees also echoed the calling of Vyāsa.” To such a great *Muni* Śuka, being Brahman itself, who ever dwells in the hearts of all beings, I pay my obeisance.

Dhyānaśloka of the Bhāgavata

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- (1) to undertake the carrying on of scientific research for the extension of knowledge in the fields of Natural and Applied Sciences generally, and in particular in the fields of Physics and Metaphysics.
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संसाराध्वनि तापभानुकिरणप्रोद्भूतदाहव्यथा-
 खिन्नानां जलकाङ्क्षया मरुभुवि भ्रान्त्या परिभ्राम्यताम् ।
 अत्यासन्नसुधाम्बुधिं सुखकरं ब्रह्माद्वयं दर्शय-
 त्येषा शङ्करभारती विजयते निर्वाणसन्दायिनी ॥

samsārādhvani tāpabhānukiraṇaprodhbhūtadāhavyathā-
khinnānām jalakāṅkṣayā marubhuvi bhrāntyā
paribhrāmyatām
atyāsannasudhāmbudhiṁ suhakarain brahmādvayain
darśayaty-
eṣā śaṅkarabhārati vijayate nirvāṇasandāyini.

To those who are afflicted, in the way of the world, by the burning pain given rise to by the scorching sun-shafts of misery, and who through delusion wander about in the desert (of worldliness) seeking water — showing the felicitous ocean of nectar, which is very near, the non-dual *Brahman*, this — the Voice of Śaṅkara — is victorious, leading, as it does, to liberation.