

A HALF-YEARLY JOURNAL OF ADVAITA-VEDANTA

The VOICE of ŚAṆKARA

śaṅkara-bhāratī

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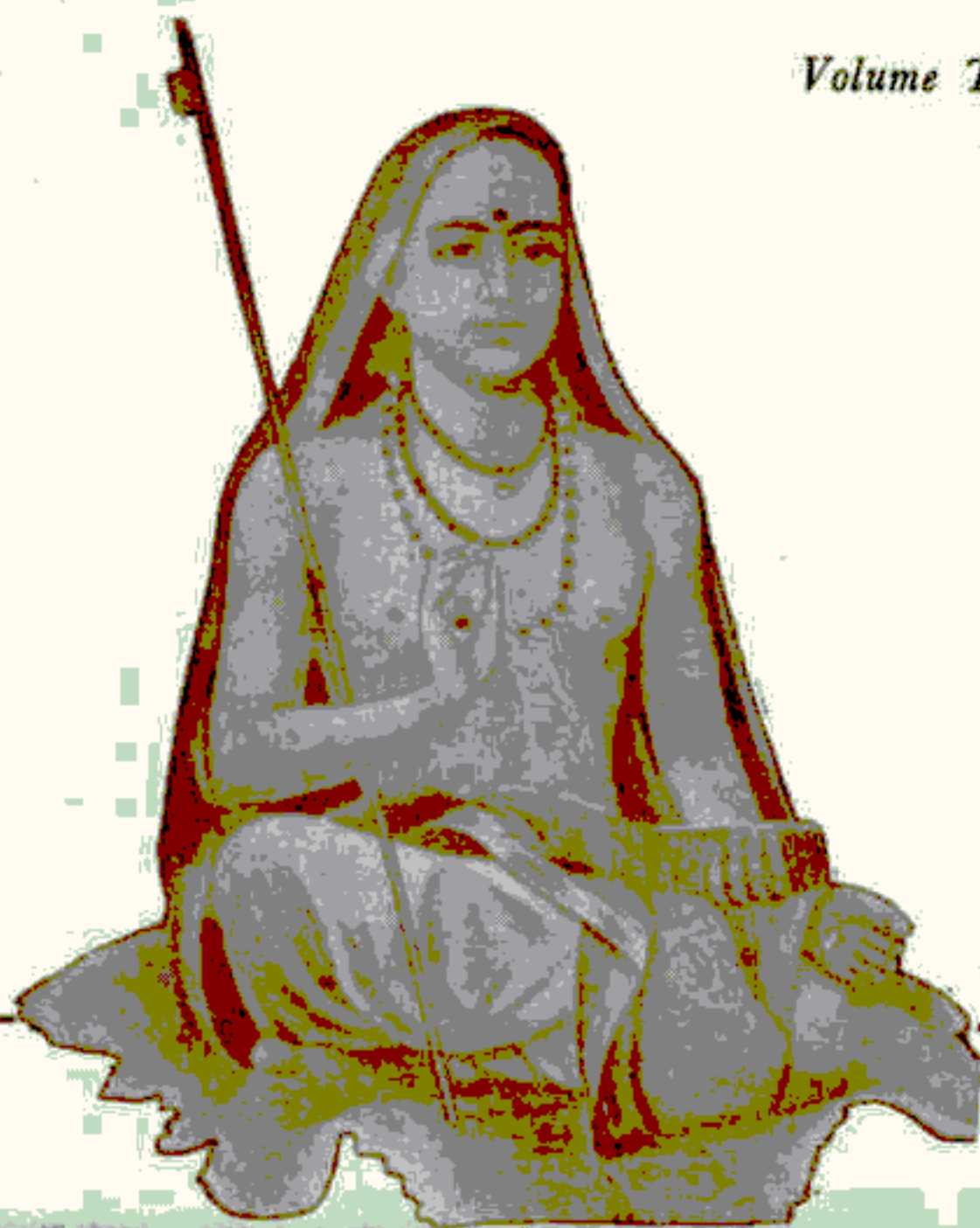
V. R. Kaivanasundara Sastri

Editor

R. Balasubramanian

Volume TWENTYONE

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esā śaṅkara-bhāratī vijayate
nirvāṇa-saṁdāyini

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

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CONTENTS

	1	Homage to Śaṅkara
	3	Thus Spake Śaṅkara
A. G. KRISHNA WARRIER	9	Hastāmalaka
S. RAJAGOPALA SASTRI	19	Toṭakācārya
S. K. CHATTO- PADHYAYA	27	Ego — the Problem Perennial of Philosophy
V. N. SHESHAGIRI RAO	55	Vācaspati on Jīvan-mukti
S. REVATHY	63	On the Perceptuality of Verbal Knowledge
JOHN GRIMES	78	Sureśvara's Interpretation of Mahāvākyas
R. BALASUBRA- MANIAN	99	Primal Culture: Its Univer- salism and Relativism
ŚRI ŚAṅKARA BHAGA- VATPĀDA	121	Vākyavṛtti
M. VENKATA- LAKSHMI	137	Individual Self in Advaita
ŚRI ŚAṅKARA BHAGAVATPĀDA	159	Praśnottara Ratnamālikā
GOMATHI RAMA- NATHAN	180	Bhakti in Advaita Vedānta

HOMAGE TO ŚAṄKARA

[166]

कम्बुस्तपञ्जलान्त-
नं प्राप तुलां यदीयकण्ठस्य ।
काङ्क्षितदानधुरीणं
तमहं प्रणमामि शंकराचार्यम् ॥

kambus-tapañ-jalāntar-
na prāpa tulāṁ yadīya-kaṅṭhasya
kāṅkṣita-dāna-dhurīṇaṁ
tamaḥaṁ praṇamāmi śaṅkarācāryam.

I bow down to Śrī Śaṅkarācārya (i) who is in the forefront in fulfilling the desires of his devotees, and (ii) whose neck is so beautiful that even conch could not become a pallel to this neck, though the conch performed penance within the waters to become a parallel to it.

[167]

राजाधिराजपदवीं
 सद्यः प्राप्नोति दीनधौरेयः ।
 यस्यापाङ्गलोका-
 त्तमहं प्रणमामि शंकराचार्यम् ॥

*rājādhirājapadavīm sadyaḥ prāpnoti dīnadhaureyaḥ
 yasyāpaṅgalokāt-tamaham praṇamāmi
 śaṅkarācāryam.*

I bow down to Śrī Śaṅkarācārya - at the fall of whose sidelong glances, even the most destitute person, at once, obtains the great position of a supreme sovereign.

Śrī Saccidānanda Śivābhinava Nṛsimhabhārati
 in Śrī Śaṅkarācārya-suvarṇamālāstava

THUS SPAKE ŚAṄKARA*

Renunciation of Action

Renunciation of all action is enjoined on the seeker of *mokṣa*, as the following passages from *śruti* show:

“Having given up all desire for progeny, for wealth and for the world, they lead a mendicant life.” (*Br. Up.* 3.5.1).

“Wherefore, of these austerities, renunciation, they say, is excellent.” “Renunciation alone excelled.” (*Taittirīya Up.* 4.78, 79).

“Not by action, not by progeny, not by wealth, but by renunciation, some attained immortality.” (*Ibid.* 4.12).

“One may renounce the whrld when yet a student.” (*Jābāla Upaniṣad*, 4).

* Readings from Śrī Śaṅkara's commentary on the *Bhagavad-gītā*, Chapter III, compiled by R. Balasubramanian.

The following passages from the *smṛti* may also be quoted:

“Give up religion, give up irreligion. Give up truth, give up untruth. Having given up both truth and untruth, give up that sense of agency by which you give them up.”

Jñāna-yoga and Karma-yoga

In this world — with reference to the people of the three castes, for whom alone are intended the teachings of the *śāstra* (scripture), — a twofold *niṣṭhā* or path of devotion was taught by Me, the Omniscient Lord, when at first, at the beginning of creation, I created people and revived the tradition of the Vedic doctrine for teaching them the means of attaining worldly prosperity and bliss. What was the twofold path of devotion? One of them was *jñāna-yoga*, the devotion of knowledge — knowledge itself being *yoga* — suited to the Sāṅkhyas, to those who possessed a clear knowledge of the Self and the not-Self, who renounced the world from the Brahmacharya, who determined the nature of things in the light of the Vedānta wisdom, who belonged to the highest class of *sannyāsins* known as the *Paramahamsas*, whose thoughts ever dwelt on Brahman only. The other was *karma-yoga*, the devotion of action, — action itself being Yoga or devotion, — suited to Yogins, to *karmins*, to those who were inclined to action.

Devotion to action is a means to the end, not directly, but only as leading to devotion to knowledge; whereas the latter, which is attained by means of devotion to action, leads to the goal directly, without extraneous help.

Since the Sāṅkhyas have been distinguished from the Yogins (3.3), the *karma-yoga*, devotion to action, is indeed meant for the ignorant only, not for the wise. As for the wise who are unshaken by the *guṇas*, and who in themselves are devoid of any change whatever, the *karma-yoga* is out of place.

Action and Inaction

Your bounden duty is the obligatory (*nitya*) act, that which one is bound to perform, and which is not prescribed (in the scriptures) as a means to a specific end. Action is superior to inaction in point of result. By inaction you cannot attain success in the life's journey. The distinction between action and inaction is thus seen in our own experience.

No Action for the Sannyāsin

But that man — a *sannyāsin*, the Sāṅkhya, one devoted to Self-knowledge — whose joy is in the Self, not in the objects of the senses; who is satisfied only with the Self, not with food-essence, etc.; who is contented in the Self; — all others derive contentment from possession of external things, whereas, disregarding these, he is content in the Self only and has no desire for anything; — for such a man, for the man who knows the Self, there is nothing to do.

For the man thus rejoicing in the Self, no purpose is served by action. Does, then, any evil called sin (*pratyavāya*) arise from inaction in his case? No evil whatever, either by way of incurring sin, or by way of losing the Self, arises in this world from inaction to such a person. Nor is there, in all beings from Brahmā (*Prajāpati*) down to the immovable objects,

any whose support he has to gain by action. He has no object whatever to gain, for which he has to depend upon any particular being; if he were to have any object in view, then he would have to exert himself to gain that object.

The Wise Act for Lokasaṅgraha

The wise kṣatriyas of old, such as Janaka and Aśvapati tried by action alone to attain *mokṣa* (*sam-siddhi*). If they were persons possessed of right knowledge, then we should understand that, since they had been engaged in works, they tried to reach *mokṣa* with action, i.e., without abandoning action, with a view to set an example to the world. If, on the other hand, such men as Janaka were persons who had not attained right knowledge, then, (we should understand), they tried to attain *mokṣa* through action which is the means of attaining purity of mind (*sattva-suddhi*).

For Me, or for any other person who, knowing the Self, thus seeks the welfare of the world, there is nothing to do except that which is done for welfare of the world at large.

Prakṛti — the Source of Action

Nature (*prakṛti*, *pradhāna*) is the equipoised state of the three *guṇas* or energies, viz., *sattva* (goodness), *rajas* (activity), *tamas* (darkness). It is by the *guṇas* or the modification of Nature, manifesting themselves as the body and the senses, that all our actions, conducive to temporal and spiritual ends, are done. The man whose mind (*antaḥkaraṇa*) is variously deluded by

ahankāra, by egoism identifying the aggregate of the body and the senses with Self, i.e., who ascribes to himself all the attributes of the body and the senses and thus thoroughly identifies himself with them — he, by ignorance, sees actions in himself: as regards every action, he thinks “I am the doer.”

Prakṛti Influences Human Action

Nature (*prakṛti*) is the *samskāra* (the latent self-reproductive impression of the past acts of *dharma* and *adharma*) manifesting itself at the commencement of the present birth. Even the man of knowledge acts according to his own nature; it needs no saying that an ignorant man acts according to his own nature. Thus all living beings follow their own nature. What shall coercion in the shape of prohibition avail? That is to say, to Me or to any body else, nature is irresistible.

Scope for Freedom

Objection: If every being acts according to its own nature only, — and there is none that has no nature of its own, — then, there being possibly no scope for personal exertion (*purusakāra*), scriptural teaching would be quite purposeless.

Reply: As regards all sense-objects, such as sounds, there necessarily arises in each sense love for an agreeable object, and aversion for a disagreeable object. Now I shall tell you where lies the scope for personal exertion and for the teaching of scripture. He who would follow scriptural teaching should at the very commencement rise above the sway of affection and aversion. For, what we speak of as

nature (*prakṛti*) of a person draws him to its course only through love and aversion. He then neglects his own duties and sets about doing those of others. When, on the other hand, a person restrains these feelings by means of their enemy, then he will become mindful of the scriptural teaching only, no longer subject to his own nature. Wherefore, let none come under the sway of these two; for, they are his adversaries, obstacles to his progress in the right path, like thieves on the road.

Svadharmā

For a man to die doing his own duty though devoid of merit is better than for him to live doing the duty of another though perfectly performed. For, the duty of another leads to danger, such as hell (*naraka*).

Desire, the Cause of Bondage

The enemy of the whole world is desire, from which all the evil comes to living beings. When obstructed by some cause, desire is transformed into wrath. Hence, wrath is desire itself. It is born of the energy of *rajas*. Or, desire itself is the cause of the energy of *rajas*; for, when desire arises, it rouses the *rajas* and urges the person to action. We often hear the cry of miserable persons — who are engaged in servitude, etc., under the impulse of the *rajas*, — saying “I have been led to act so by desire.” It is very sinful; for it is only when urged by desire that a man commits sin. So, know that this desire is man’s foe in *samsāra*.

HASTĀMALAKA*

A. G. Krishna Warriar

Unlike Suresvara and Padmapāda who have left an indelible mark on the history of Advaitic thought, Hastāmalaka and Toṭaka, two other direct disciples of Śrī Śaṅkara, have been revered more for what they were than for any works they have bequeathed to posterity. Nevertheless, if tradition may be trusted, a small treatise, *Hastāmalaka-stotra* by name, consisting of twelve verses, may be ascribed to Hastāmalaka, the marvellous boy disciple of the great Master. Its distinction is that it is accompanied by a commentary whose author, according to the traditionalists, is none other than Śrī Śaṅkara himself.¹ The views set forth in the *stotra* constitute orthodox Advaita, of course, and they may properly be taken to represent the quintessence of Hastāmalaka's spiritual experience. Before analysing these verses let us reproduce the few events in Hastāmalaka's life, incidentally incorporated in the *Śrī Śaṅkaradigvijaya* of Mādhavācārya and the *Śaṅkaravijaya* of Vyāsācala.² The fact that the

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

accounts given in these works discover a striking measure of agreement proves, not their authenticity so much as the dependence of the one on the other.

In the course of his triumphal tour of India as the authentic exponent of Advaita philosophy, Śaṅkara, accompanied by a large group of disciples and admirers, reached Śrī Bali a *brāhmaṇa* village near Gokarna. An affluent villager, Prabhākara by name, together with a sick son, thirteen years old, approached Śaṅkara hoping to get his son healed.³ According to etiquette the father bowed low before the sage and caused his son to do likewise. The latter, "a live coal hidden in ashes" would not get up, but remained prostrate demonstrating, as it were, his grievous malady. When, however, the compassionate sage lifted up the boy, his anxious father respectfully enquired what the matter could be with his son who behaved so strangely. Thirteen years had gone by and so far he had shown no sign of sensibility. Of course, he could not learn the Vedas so far, though the formal ceremony of initiation had been performed. In the midst of his playmates, the boy would remain listless; even physical harm inflicted on him failed to evoke angry reactions of any kind. In the matter of diet, too, he was indifferent. It was, thus, by the force of sheer *karma* that he was growing up.⁴

Upon hearing this account, the great Teacher asked the boy: "Who art thou? Why dost thou behave as one possessed?"

In answer, 'the great soul,' inhabiting the body of the boy uttered the twelve verses of the *Hastā-malaka-stotra*. They set forth, in the main, the nature

of the Self or the Ātman. The refrain of all of them is: I, the Self, am eternal Awareness, *nityopalabdhi-svarūpo'ham-ātmā*. The author of these verses seeks to translate into intelligible language the content of his integral experience, which, being *sui generis*, does not lend itself to such translation. Hence the profuse use of symbols and metaphors strewn in these verses. The initial step in the process of the translation has been to relate, unavoidably, the unrelated Absolute, the contentless awareness, to the activities of mind and sense-organs. The real inspirer of all activities, subjective and objective is the Ātman.⁵ The sun energizing the world of objects into their varied activities is a fit analogue of the Ātman. The author is very well conscious of the intrinsically indefensible nature of his initial step. The Absolute is, strictly, the relationless, the unconditioned. Hence, his characterization of it as *nirastākhilopādhi*. Its appropriate analogue may be sought for in the boundless space.⁶ (V.1).

The dependence of all objects for their activities on the unfailing Awareness or Ātman is reiterated in the second verse. Every object, not excluding the mind and sense organs, is inert. Their formations, functions and operations point to an Intelligence⁷ that supervises, controls, and directs them. (V.2).

This very Ātman abides in the living body as the Jīva, exactly as the face, in the guise of the reflection, is present in the mirror.⁸ In other words, the plurality of Jīva is only an appearance whose timeless truth is the non-duality of the Ātman. What differs from individual to individual is not the foundational principle of awareness,⁹ the real content of 'I'; the forms or

modes of the *antaḥkaraṇa*, embodying it from moment to moment, alone, differ. (V.3). Transcend these momentary fluctuations, and, at once, the indivisible wholeness of the Ātman is restored, just as once the mirror is removed, the reflection vanishes leaving the wholeness of the face, intact.¹⁰ The empiric plurality of the Jīvas is due to the superimposition, on the non-dual Ātman, of the manifoldness of the modes, in which this Ātman is reflected. (V.4)

The given fact of a temporal association of the Ātman with the psycho-physical organism is not denied; what is stressed is that in its timeless transcendence, the Ātman is relationless. It is, in very truth, the mind of the empirical mind; the eye of the empirical eye, etc.¹¹ In its utter transcendence, of course, it is beyond the purview of all instruments of cognition¹² (VV. 5 & 9). How then is such an entity affirmed at all? *Svato vibhāti* — Ātman is a self-luminous conscious being: as such it is self-positing and self-validated. As pointed out already (in verse 3) the factual plurality of the centres of consciousness may be traced to that of the reflecting media, the modes of the *antaḥkaraṇa*. (V.6). The phenomenon of the multiplicity of Jīvas may be elucidated with reference to an analogue. Just as a single sun, simultaneously, enables a multitude of eyes to behold various things, so does the non-dual Ātman, at one and the same time, enable Jīvas to perceive their respective objects. (V.7).

It was observed above that the Ātman is the mind of the mind, etc; i.e. it is the hidden source of their characteristic energies and operations. In the

world outside, the sun illuminates objects and makes them fit to be cognized; but this the sun cannot do without its illumination by the Ātman. In other words, exactly like the sense organs the sun, too, derives its characteristic energies and capacities from the sole source of all light and power.¹³ As the Ātman is the mind's mind and the eye's eye, so too it is the sun's sun. (V.8).

Despite the eternal transcendence of the self-luminous Ātman, the Self of the Jīva, the empirically experienced finitude and fragmentariness of the cognitions of the latter may not be gainsaid. Bondage of the Jīva is an incredible fact. It consists in the appearance, to the ignorant Jīva, of the Ātman as bound, *baddhavadbhāti mūḍhadṛṣṭeḥ*. A parallel phenomenon may be cited by way of illustration. An observer whose eye-sight is obstructed by clouds is apt to imagine that the sun is engulfed by them. As the sun, in fact, so the Ātman, in truth, does not suffer the slightest diminution in its natural effulgence. Notwithstanding all appearances to the contrary, the Ātman is eternally pure, awake, and free, *nityaśuddhabuddhamuktasvabhāvaḥ*. (V.10). The transcendence of the Ātman must be understood together with the complementary truth of its immanence in all phenomena. On it, but without, in the least, affecting its wholeness and purity, are strung the phenomena constituting the cosmos¹⁴. It is their abiding ground and in this respect its analogue is space accommodating the objective manifold. (V.11). The concluding verse reaffirms the nondual status of the Ātman while it traces all plurality to the limiting adjuncts and media of reflection. The psycho-physical organisms

are multiple and the Ātman, in empiric association with them, consequently, appears to be many. The phenomenal plurality of the Jīvas in no way affects the transcendental non-duality of the Ātman.

Thus the verses constituting the *Hastāmalaka-stotra* deal with the real or *pāramārthika* status of the Ātman. Their author seems to convey through them the fullness of his realization of the same. The author of the *bhaṣya* on these verses raises a few supplementary questions, a brief reference to some of which may also be made in order to underscore the major implications of the *Hastāmalaka-stotra*. The affirmation in verse two that Ātman is eternal awareness or cognition, calls for some elucidation since 'bodha' or awareness generated by the sense organs in contact with their objects is obviously *ephemeral*. Generated awareness perishes, after leaving its impression on the mind or it yields place to a subsequent awareness. In any case it is anything but eternal. Again, Ātman in its essence ought not to be awareness, for while Ātman is held to be eternal, awareness, as just shown, is ephemeral. In answer, it may be urged that by awareness is meant consciousness or *caitanya*. Awareness is of two kinds — what is generated and what is eternal. The former, being knowable, is no better than objects like pot and, therefore, is inert. That the generated awareness is a 'knowable' is clear from expressions like: I have had the awareness (=knowledge) of the pot, of the cloth, etc. Such awareness is experienced. Only such experienced and particularized instances of awareness may be treated as ephemeral. This does not militate against the proposition that the Ātman is eternal awareness.

What is the proof that Ātman is awareness or *Caitanya*? The awareness of the objective manifold, *jagatprakāśa*, may be cited as the requisite proof.¹⁶ None may deny that the world is presented to our consciousness in acts of cognition. In the complex of factors involved in this situation, every *known* factor is inert. The one factor not *known*¹⁶ but knowing, the Ātman, therefore, is the source of the *jagatprakāśa*. While illuminating all else, it shines forth in its own right, *sva-parap-rakāśavān*.¹⁷

Before concluding this brief account of Hastāmalaka's affirmation of Self-realization, the fact may be noted that he may be cited as the living proof of the state of *jīvanmukti*, implicit in the Advaitic position that Jīva is, in truth, *nityopalabdhisvarūpa*. None of the verses directly mentions it; the Commentary, however, argues the case as follows. The paradox resulting from the contention that *Mukti* is a state of disembodiment,¹⁸ and that, nevertheless, the *jīvanmukta* lives in the body has to be resolved. One may urge that by the disembodied state is meant, not that life in the body has ceased, but that egoistic experiences incidental to such life have ceased. This however is inconceivable; for so long as the sense-organs operate cessation of such experiences is out of question. "But as egoistic experiences result from nescience, should not their cessation logically follow from the fact that right knowledge or *samyagdarśana* has dispelled nescience?" No; for, though nescience has been dispelled, its consequences may very well persist as in the case with the illusory experience of the double moon. How else can the fact of embodiment of the liberated sage be accounted for? The assertion of

Śruti that pleasure and pain never cease for the embodied being¹⁹ may be cited as negating the dogma of *jīvanmukti*.

The following considerations, however, must be urged against the arguments set forth above. One who lives alone may acquire the knowledge of the real, *tattvajñāna*. No dead man ever grows wiser. In fact the circumstances leading to right knowledge, such as the study of scripture, ratiocination, the cultivation of moral virtues, etc., are relevant only to the living. The latter alone may take the step of renunciation, the *sine qua non* of illumination. Hence right knowledge or *Ātmajñāna* can accrue only to the living and it must entail emancipation in a state of embodiment.²⁰

In conclusion the point may be stressed that the sage Hastāmalaka is not concerned to develop a full-fledged system of philosophy with its complement of metaphysics, ethics, logic, and so forth. He just reveals, in the brief compass of twelve verses, his vision of non-dual Reality as plenary Consciousness. The charge of acosmism against his position, therefore, far from detracting from the merit of his affirmation is bound to prove a compliment.

NOTES

1. Cf. pp. 163 ff. Vol. XVI of *The Works of Śrī Sañkarācārya*, Sri Vani Vilas Edition. It is only fair to point out that the traditional view has been disputed by scholars like Belvalkar. Cf. Mallik Lectures on *Vedānta Philosophy*, Part I (first edition), p. 218.

2. Besides the authors referred to, Ānandagiri also briefly mentions Hastāmalaka in his *Śaṅkaravijaya*; 1868 A.D. Edition; cf. pp. 250 and 267.

3. *Śaṅkaravijaya* of Mādhavācārya, 12, 47.

4. *Ibid.*, 12, 50-53.

5. Cf. *Kenopaniṣad*, I, 1 and 2.

6. Cf. *niraṃśatvāt vibhutvācca tathānaśvarabhāvataḥ, brahmavyomnorna bhedo'sti caitanyam brahmaṇo'dhikam Hastāmalakastotrabhāṣya,*

— The Works of Śrī Śaṅkarācārya, Vol. XVI,
Śrī Vani Vilas Press, Srirangam,

7. *Bṛhadāranyakopaniṣad*, 3.7.23.

8. Cf. *ābhāsa eva ca; Brahma-Sūtra*, 2. 3. 50.

9. Cf. *What is Life?* pp. 89, 90. E. Schrödinger. Cambridge, 1944.

10. Cf. *Yoga-Sūtras of Patañjali*, I. 3. *tadā draṣṭus-varūpe'vasthānam.*

11. *Kenopaniṣad*, 12.

12. Cf. *Yato vāco nivarttante'prāpya manasā saha Taittirīyo'paniṣad*, 2.4. The fact that the eye, or the mind functions at all is due to their vivification by the Ātman. Cf. *tameva bhāntam anubhāti sarvaṃ tasya bhāsā sarvam-idaṃ vibhāti. Kathopaniṣad*, 5.15.

13. Cf. *Kathopaniṣad*, 5.15.

14. Cf. *Bhagavad-Gītā*, 7.7.

15. *jagatprakāśa iti brūmah—Hastāmalaka-stotra-bhāṣya,*
p. 160.

16. *vijñātāram-are kena vijānīyāt—Bṛhadāraṇyakoṇiṣad, 2.4.14.*
17. *Hastāmalaka-stotrabhāṣya, p. 166.*
18. *tadetadaśarīratvaṃ mokṣākhyaṃ—Śaṅkara's Bhāṣya on the Brahma-Sūtra, 1.1.4.*
19. *Chāndogyoṇiṣad, 8.12.1.*
20. *sa yo ha vai tatparamaṃ brahma veda brahmaiva bhavati, Muṇḍakoṇiṣad, 3.2.9.*

AN INVOCATION TO LORD HARI

सर्वैकशरणमक्षयमधीशमीशं धियां हरिं कृष्णम् ।
चतुरात्मानं निष्क्रियमरिमथनं नमत चक्रधरम् ॥

May you bow to Lord Hari, *i.e.* Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the wielder of the wheel (discuss), who is the sole refuge of all beings of the world, the undecaying (imperishable), the almighty, the only controller of all senses (organs), the pure intelligent Self, the One beyond all actions, and the slayer of all enemies.

TOṬAKĀCĀRYA •

S. Rajagopala Sastri

Śrī Śaṅkara, the greatest expounder of Advaita Vedānta is reputed to have flourished between 788 and 820 A.D. This date cannot be regarded as finally settled and a large number of Indian scholars bring down his date to the first or second century A.D. or B.C. However, the latter part of the eighth century has been accepted by thinkers as the most probable date. It is not worthwhile to enter into a controversy regarding the date of this Ācārya; for, the absence of relevant inscriptions and historical records permits a pliability in investigation which need not always take us in the right direction. Nor are the teachings of Śrī Śaṅkara affected in any way by the absence of certainty regarding his date. He is considered as the incarnation of Lord Śiva; and his specific object was to propagate the Vedic and the Upaniṣadic truths and eradicate the unhealthy trends and practices associated with Hinduism. Before his sixteenth year, he finished his main work of refuting all heretical views and restoring the lustre and purity of the

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

Vedāntic systems. But another span of sixteen years was allotted to him by providence to consolidate his work. During the course of his wanderings throughout the length and breadth of India, a large number of disciples came to him for initiation and knowledge, chief among them being Sanandana, who later on became Padmapāda, Ānandagiri better known as Hastāmalaka, and Giri who seems to have also another name, Kalanātha. This Giri was the son of one Visvanātha Adhvarī and he later on came to be called Toṭakācārya. According to tradition, Toṭakācārya, whose original name was Gīri was the aṁsa of Agni, while Hastāmalaka and Padmapāda were the incarnations of Vāyu and Śrī Nārāyaṇa.

Unfortunately not much is known about the life of these great disciples, except what tradition has cared to preserve. But in the case of Śrī Toṭaka even tradition seems to be silent; for, what we know about this Ācārya is very little, though he exemplified in his life the spirit of service and dedication to his Guru, even at the expense of knowledge. In this respect he is on a par with Bharata, the illustrious brother of Śrī Rāmacandra, and with Hanumān, Śrī Rāmā's great devotee. The reverence which he had for his Guru, the great Śaṅkarācārya so completely dominated him that Giri had no other interest in his life except to serve the great Master and neglected even his teachings and discourses. All that we know about him definitely is that his original name was Giri and from the time that Śrī Śaṅkara accepted him as his disciple, he lost himself in the service of his master. The work going by the name of *Toṭakāṣṭaka* is attributed to him. It was a spontaneous outpouring

of profound gratitude to the Guru whom the disciples held as Īsvara himself. It contains only eight verses and invokes in every verse the grace of Śaṅkara. The only other work of his called *Śrutisārasamuddharaṇam* in about 179 *ślokas* which contains the quintessence of the Advaita Vedānta. Śrī Śaṅkara, after his *digvijaya*, seems to have made Toṭaka the head of the Maṭha which he founded in the Badarī Kṣetra.

Tradition has it that the devotion of Gīri to his Master was very profound; but he did not profit much by the teachings. He seems to have felt that a strong personal devotion to the Guru was of far greater importance than a mere intellectual grasp of the teachings. The latter influenced only the intellect, while the former bound the whole personality to the Guru. He used to absent himself frequently from the classes taught by the Preceptor, preferring to do personal service to the teacher without wasting even that time in mere listening. Śrī Śaṅkara who was aware of the depth of his disciple's affection and reverence towards himself did not mind his absence during the discourses. But the other disciples including Padmapāda had a contempt for this ignoramus whose *guru-bhakti* was not apparent to them. One day the class was about to commence and all the other disciples were present. But the Guru did not begin his lessons waiting for someone. He was expecting Giri to come back to the class from the tank where he was washing his Master's clothes. Getting impatient at this delay, Padmapāda suggested to the teacher that since all the students had come, the discourse might start. "Let Giri also come", were the words of the Master. Padmapāda who had a great contempt for the intel-

lectual backwardness of Giri exclaimed rather hastily that there was the wall in the place of Giri. The Master who should have been a bit pained at this discourteous reference to Giri, nevertheless waited for his arrival. With a view to teach the students that a mere intellectual comprehension of the philosophical problems was after all only of secondary importance and that a right attitude and reverence were very necessary in the spiritual sphere, he silently blessed the absent Giri with a complete knowledge of the Vedāntic truth. Giri who was still engaged in washing his Master's clothes, suddenly felt an upsurge of his intellect and a divine flash of illumination. This made him experience and realise the spiritual uplift instantly. While others took years and perhaps several births to realise this truth, Giri was able to perfect this state of realisation almost in an instant. Gratitude to the Guru who in his extraordinary compassion had inspired him with divine knowledge and bliss made Giri spontaneously praise Śrī Śaṅkara in eight verses (*Toṭkāṣṭaka*) in Toṭaka metre each verse ending with the refrain, "*bhava śaṅkara deśika me śaraṇam*". It is clear that the composition of this work in Toṭaka metre earned for him the name of Toṭakācārya. Repeating these verses he approached his Guru and his holy presence, and in the midst of all his disciples he composed the work by name — *Śrutisārasamud-dharaṇam*. It is also known by another name *Vedānta-vedyaparātattvanivedanam*. These *ślokas* have an even flow and rhythm and an easy diction, but manifest an unrivalled depth of thought. With this single work, the fame of Toṭakācārya was made and he has now an abiding place in the galaxy of Advaita Ācāryas.

The *Śrutisārasamuddharaṇam*, according to tradition, is a spontaneous flow of a well-sustained discourse on Advaita Vedānta dealing with the most crucial and important topic of the identity of Jīva and Brahman. It seems to have been spontaneously composed and recited in the presence of Śrī Śaṅkara and the other disciples when Giri was under the silent inspiration of the teacher. However it may be, we have in this work a careful and authoritative exposition of the subject and Toṭakācārya being the direct disciple of Śrī Śaṅkara has lent to this work a peculiar significance. It is not necessary to give an elaborate account of the philosophy underlying the work; but even a cursory summary will reveal the masterly touch of one who had realised the Absolute, or who had become a *mukta*.

This small work in one hundred and seventy-nine *ślokas* has been published by the Śrī Vāṇi Vilās Press, Śrīrangam, with the commentary of Śrī Saccidānanda Yogī, together with a foreword in English by R. Krishnaswamy Iyer. The Ācārya insists that before one begins the *vedānta-vicāra*, one should be disciplined and be pure in mind. The four Sādhanas are very necessary and the novice should have disciplined himself thoroughly. He should have the firm belief that the Ātman alone is eternal and consequently worthy of cultivation and that all the other things are worthless. A stern negative attitude to all types of sense enjoyments, either in this world or in heaven should be cultivated. At the same time, the senses should be restrained from going outward, the mind must be content, and more than all, the aspirant

should have an ardent desire to attain *mukti*. Without this moral discipline Vedāntic study is entirely useless.

Though the central theme of the work is the exposition of the identity between the Self and Brahman, the Ācārya leads up to this topic by discussing some allied questions at the outset. The seeker should completely renounce his attachment to the five sheaths or kosas, *annamaya* (food), *prāṇamaya* (vital airs), *manomaya* (intellect), *vijñānamaya* (*buddhi*) and *Ānandamaya* (bliss). In other words, the aspirant should not identify himself with any of these sheaths. These are merely the outer coverings as it were of the true Self. Brahman is unlimited though immanent in every one. Brahman does not change, though associated with the changing and modifying *upādhis* like mind and intellect. Most of all, one should never identify oneself with *ahaṁkāra* (ego) because it is after all an adventitious factor and is not the real self. Brahman is absolutely unrelated to *ahaṁkāra*, and Toṭakācārya affirms that Ātman should not be equated with the individual self. Brahman is without any attributes or personality, and is eternal and self-luminous. All the *mahāvākyas* in the Upaniṣads assert that the Self is Brahman. This is the central theme of this work. The identity between the Self and Brahman is one of essential identity and the similarity should not be carried on to non-essential and trivial things. As the English Introduction points out, all unnecessary and irrelevant factors in each of the two equating terms should be eliminated. The *mahāvākya*, *tattvamasī* contains three words, viz. *tat*, *tvam* and *asi* (That, thou, and art). Of these "thou" stands for the

jīva which when divested of the adventitious conditions, is really the Pure Consciousness. This Pure Consciousness is delimited by individuality, when it comes to believe that it is a particular being. It then acquires *ahantā* ("I-ness"). Again the Jīva (as we should now call the particularised and delimited self) is limited by its experiences. There is also a third limitation when the jīva qualified by experiences begins to perceive empirical and personal states. When one says, "I see this," it is an indication that one is bound by a particular experience or perception. The state of "I see", is devoid of this particularity of perception but nevertheless is a limitation of the self in the direction of experience or perception. The statement implies a possibility of generalised experience. The most underlying delimitation lies in reducing the pure self to the status of an individual. We see here that the self is only limited to an individual subject and nothing more. The Ācārya points out that the state, namely, the one in which the direct apprehension of the various object is simultaneous with the functioning of the sense organs is called the waking state. The second one is the dream state in which the knowledge of things is acquired without the functioning of the sense-organs and is due to the latent impressions present in the mind. And, the third one is the deep sleep state when the intellect together with its latent impressions merge in *avidyā*. The real self is the eternal Witness (*sākṣī*) of these three states. It subsists in these three states but at the same time is beyond them. This is described as the *turīya* (the fourth) Toṭakācārya points out that the individuated 'I' though regarded by some as the real self is not so and that it is only the *upādhi* of the *buddhi*.

Regarding the term "That" (*tat*), it is pointed out that it is real, eternal, impartite and infinite. It is also *satyam* (truth) at all the three times. There was no time at which Brahman did not exist and in the same way there will be no time at which Brahman will cease to exist. The universe has no substantiality or reality apart from Brahman. It is created, sustained and destroyed, and hence it is not eternal and not true. But at the same time it is not an absolute nothing because it exists. It cannot be both true and untrue for this is a logical impossibility. It is clear that Śrī Toṭaka is making a reference to Māyā while speaking about the *prapañca* in this way. We thus see that the true meaning of the *mahāvākya* is that the individual Jīva is not different from the Paramātman (Brahman). The former is neither a part nor a modification of Brahman. The embodied self, when the embodiment is removed, is the same disembodied, eternal, impartite Self.

Toṭakācārya drives home this conclusion by removing certain possible misconceptions which may arise in the equation process. But these are too detailed for our purpose. By the process of negation (*apavāda*) we prove that the self is not the "I" nor the *buddhi* nor the *manas* nor the senses nor the *prāṇa*. References are made to other systems and their views are criticized. Direct references are made to the Vaiśeṣika philosophy and its statements are regarded as mistaken. Apart from the intellectual superiority of these teachings, one should admire the utter selflessness and spirit of devotion characteristic of Śrī Toṭakācārya; and if the Ācārya is today regarded as a resplendent luminary in the galaxy of Advaita teachers, one may be excused if appreciation is more for the high moral and spiritual character of the teacher than even for his teachings.

EGO — THE PROBLEM PERENNIAL OF PHILOSOPHY *

*S. K. Chattopadhyaya ***

I

Philosophy seems to have atleast one genuine problem and that, again, a perennial one—which cannot be ‘resolved’ by an analysis of propositions or of other forms of language. Nor can this problem be ‘solved’ by any branch of natural or social sciences. The problem is strictly philosophical, yet a mere philosophical understanding does not help its solution and so the problem remains a perennial problem. The case is similar to the case where the disease is correctly diagnosed and the curative medicine is prescribed but in the absence of active cooperation of the patient the treatment does not become fruitful. The patient or the sufferer has some degree of liking for

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** Courtesy: Indian Philosophical Congress. Professor S.K. Chattopadhyaya 1915 — 1987 taught philosophy at Ravenshaw College, Cuttack.

the suffering to stay. This has made the solution of the problem another problem. This problem is the problem of the *ego*, untamed and distempered. Because of it, the human individual is frequently at war with himself—how else could there be repentance and remorse? The individual is also open to clash and conflict with other members of society, community or any other social group. He is mal-adjusted and subject to tension and stress. Mere sermonising without understanding of the peculiar nature of the problem does not seem to help in any way. And for this understanding one has to look to philosophy.

The problem of the 'ego' is the problem of the '*I*', or of the 'I-sense.' This 'I' has mistakenly been taken as a 'substantive' reality, absolutely indubitable, and also as a thinking substance, while the 'I' is merely an individuated identity-sense, the ego sense, and its so called indubitability is 'presuppositional' and contextual, nor absolute. The 'I' is very often forgotten or shelved in the background and very rarely consciously attended to. It is lost in dreamless sleep, under a tranquillizer, and great relief follows by forgetting it or losing it. It is also a mistake to regard the 'I' as the so-called 'Self'. Of course, the 'ego' has a natural urge for building itself up as durable something, the urge of parading as the Self. But there is no individual self, nor can there be any. The individual selves are an innovation of pluralistic metaphysics, catering to the effective and conative urge of the ego to provide for a device for prolonging or perpetuating it even in a skeletal or ethereal form somewhere beyond its normal and natural span of existence

to accord to it an existence both pre-natal and post-mortem. The ego is infatuated with itself and has the natural urge to cling to itself perpetually, and cannot get reconciled with the idea of eventual non-existence. Pluralistic metaphysics have provided several devices in fulfilment of that blind urge of the ego but such devices are all frivolous and false.

The egos may be looked upon as individuated conscious foci through which Reality is *objectively represented* in distinguishable names and forms as an unmitigated plurality. Had there not been these ego-forms, Reality, whatever may be its nature, would have been an undistinguished and indeterminate mass of pure Being-as-such (*sadeva*). The Upaniṣadic statement that in the beginning there was only one pure Being-as-such and that this 'intended' to express and experience itself in multiplicities of forms need not be *taken* as senseless or mystical, provided we do not interpose a time-sequence, a before-and-after between the original state of pure Being-as-such and its manifold and manifold manifestations through the mechanism of the plural egos, that is, its *phenomenal* 'Becoming' as 'many'. The determinate plural manifestations through the ego-centres and the Indeterminate undistinguished one may as well be taken as coeval without the suggestion of a material difference—the former being 'mere appearance,' the latter, the Reality itself. The determinate 'many' is not product of any human manipulation. The determinate plurality and the Indeterminate absolute one-ness are provided in Reality as two 'poises'. The Indeterminate could not be known and understood as that, could not be realised as the identity and so, as the one

'Self' of the determinate plurality, were these latter not been there and were they not ultimately reducible to the former.

Although initially a *mechanism* of individuated representation, and nothing *substantive* and self-dependent, the ego when it no longer remains barely cognitive and an organ (*indriya*) through which something is objectively presented,—when it gathers up an effective and conative tone around its cognitive core, it no longer remains in the condition of a simple instrumental device, a mere 'sense', when it really is, but assumes the role of a substantive reality and grows and develops into an individual person. The 'I' (*ahampratyayin*), thereafter, begins parading as the individual 'self'.

The ego, the 'I', may be looked upon as an artefact of Reality itself, no product of human manipulation, no external imposition on Reality by you or by me. Śaṅkara did not suggest anything so absurd in his account of *adhyāsa* in the *Adhyāsabhāṣya*. As provided in nature, the ego is a mechanism for *Self-seeking*, that is, it looks for ever new *identities* in a grabbing and *possessive* way. Sometimes, it seeks identity with its bare itself and regards that as its 'self', sometimes it seeks identity with the body, with the mind, with the senses, with extra-organic entities, such as, one's family, community, landed property etc. etc. But this is its centrifugal development in which it gradually loses itself in what is not-itself. There is another movement of the ego—a centripetal one. It there progressively rejects all adventitious 'identities' previously acquired and returns back to

its bare cognitive I-sense, and discovers its one real identity in the Indeterminate one from which it had issued forth as a mechanism of individuated formation.

Much confusion seems to have resulted from the philosophers adherence to the view that the 'Self' is to be a substantive reality, immutable and eternal, having a transcendental existence of some kind. This has given rise to the controversy if the self is one or many and how it is, if at all, related to the cycle of existence. Some have disputed its very existence, some others have sought to reduce it to a mere configuration of psychophysical complex. It seems that the protagonists, and opponents of the Self-theory have all confused between the 'ego' and the 'Self', and have all speculated about substantive or unsubstantial nature of the ego under the belief that what they were discussing about was the nature of the Self and not that of the ego. A re-interpretation of the concept, such as, the 'Self' seems necessary therefore. The self of a thing is that *with which it is identified*. The Self is the *fact of identity*, real or fancied. It is also the 'value' which is realised through such identification that is, the satisfaction or fulfilment which attends on that identification. Of course, there are false selves and false values as there are *false identities*. But this does not contradict the fact that the 'self' in any situation is the identity which seems to satisfy or fulfil even temporality. The one true 'Self' is that identity which fulfils absolutely, leaving nothing more to be desired. This seems to be the secret of 'Śaṅkara's understanding of the true Self as *pāramārthika sattā* that is to be a state of identity and also the supreme value, and which fulfils absolutely. If Brahman or

Reality as such is regard as *Ātman* or Self, it is because the realisation of absolute one-ness with it becomes the supreme goal. It becomes the liberation in being the liquidation of the separatist 'I'.

Two kinds of problem are associated with the ego, in its aggressive and possessing manoeuvre creates tension and unrest for the individual and an atmosphere of aggression and exploitation in the larger human relationships, such as, society, community, and international relationships. The other problem has been a philosophical and speculative one—the ego, demanding or wishing for perpetuation beyond the span of the individual's life in the form of an eternal and immutable existence, however skeletal that may be, that is, as a transcendental individual self. Both these false senses need be corrected and the ego has to be tamed in the first case and brought to its proper sense and understanding in the second. The task is difficult, and mere sermonising does not help. That is the reason why the problem is perennial. The ego has to get over its false sense of substantivity and to awake to the sense of mere 'instrumentality' that is, of its nature as a *sense (indriya)* and not as a substance or Self. Religious mood seeking to supplant the 'I' by 'Thou' is a move in right direction although liberation in the full sense of the term can be possible in the Vedāntic way only—that is, by the lapsing of determinate 'I' in the Indeterminate Tranquil in self-realisation. The 'I' is to withdraw from all other identities secured by it in course of its outgoing movement, is to get over its false sense of substantivity and is to find its one identity in Reality self. This is true of all ego-formations.

II

Many of our contemporaries are likely to look askance at the very caption of this paper. Philosophy, according to them, has no problem to solve. All its so-called problems are pseudo-problems which arise from misuse of language or from linguistic confusion. Such pseudo-problems, we are told, can be fitfully 'resolved' by proper analysis of language. We are not disposed to quarrel with this view over resolution of problems which are all linguistic. This question which concerns us here is if all problems which we face in life can be resolved linguistically, or solved by the help of natural sciences. Human life is beset with problems of various kinds. All such problems, it seems, cannot be attended to in the same way, cannot all be solved in one specific way; nor can all be 'resolved' by logical analysis of statements or propositions. We are concerned here with one such problem. This problem is perennial in so far as, in spite of all that we may know about the nature and origin of this problem, mere theoretical knowledge in its regard does not, enable us to solve it,—much depends on the person himself to go all out for the solution instead of holding back. This problem is the problem of the 'I', the person that each one knows and feels so intimately and so importantly, and around which we all build up worlds of hopes and aspirations. The 'I' in me and whatever is related to this 'I', of me, and whatever I call 'mine' and my 'own' seem to be the central and the most vital facts with me. I cling to what is 'me' and 'mine', am agitated if anything goes against what I have known as 'my' interests, I feel elated and puffed up if everything goes well with 'me' and 'mine'. My

personal needs and requirements seem not to know any bounds. I regard that as right which is gainful to 'me', and that as wrong which goes against 'me' and 'mine'. Am I not myself a problem to me and also to others? Then again as I am an 'I' a self-centred individual person, so are all other conscious individuals, they are other 'I'-s. As I regard myself as all-important, others regard themselves in the very same way. Our interests very often clash; there are rivalries and competitions, love and hatred, aggression and malice. Do we not have personal problems, social problems, racial problems, economic and political problems—problems international? Do they not at their very core indicate presence of some ego-factor, some claim to racial, individual or personal *preference*? How is the concept of preferential treatment, or 'preference' meaningful without reference to the ego, to the 'I' covertly, if not overtly? Can all these problems be solved linguistically or with the help of our knowledge of natural sciences? What is wanted seems to be a remodelling of human character, a reformation of the very nature of man. But even that seems to touch only the fringe of the issue involved. What is demanded is a judicial settlement of the nature of the nature of the corefact in every conscious individual, the 'I'. Is not this 'I' really a problem to you and me? Are we not constantly agitated for this 'I', do not all our hopes and despair, weal and woe, as a last resort, refer to this 'I' and attach themselves to it? It can be seen that it is the very nature of this 'I', of the I-sense' to be more precise, to create all sorts of problems. With inanimate nature there is no problem—no demand for readjustment, resettlement of issues, no questionings and no challenges.

Man is the problem of this creation and what makes man the fountain-head of problems is this personal factor in him—his 'I'.

This 'I' is felt as a unity and identity. It looks as a substantive reality in so far as it remains unchanged and the same in spite of all bodily changes of the person. That 'I *am*' or 'I *exist*'; it is said, cannot be denied even when all else is denied. The 'I' thus, has created one of the knottiest of problems of metaphysics. The problem has been: if this 'I' which is immediately felt to be real and so, is empirically real, is also metaphysically real, and real transcendently, that is, real and existent independently of all its associations with the body. Then, again, this 'I' in me is the nearest and dearest to me as your 'I' is the nearest and dearest to you. I usually take my 'I' as you also take your 'I' as the very 'Self'. We are all worried and anxious not only about the earthly prospects of these 'our selves', that is, not only interested about various advancements of these selves in this life, but are also worried and anxious about the chances of their survival after death. There have been systems of philosophical thought in this country which conceived the life as it is ordinarily lived and led as a state of bondage. Different such systems have speculated about the possibility of a free, enlightened and blissful life, or at least of a state of peace and tranquillity which this 'I', the individual Self can have as a kind of prospect, here as also here after. The problem of a future life or of the so called immortal life of the spirit is also frequently associated with this 'I' conceived as a metaphysical reality, adventitiously related to the body. There are other problems too and not

less embarrassing. I and you and all self-conscious individuals like you and me fall apart from one another in absolute distinction and into pockets of isolation and utmost privacy in so far as all of us have 'I'-s, which differ absolutely from one another. Is it not intriguing that although you feel towards yourself as 'I' as much as I feel towards myself as 'I' yet the same symbol, the very same kind of sense or feeling, instead of giving rise to a 'commonwealth' of individuals, gives rise to 'an each-for-him-self-alone' that is, to an unmitigated plurality? It does not become an easy matter to share equitably without sense of deprivation or exploitation all that is valued in life. It even becomes difficult to concede that others are *like* me, they also feel in the same way, enjoy or suffer as I do. So here also there are lots of problem associated with the 'I'. The same 'I' has absolutely separate, even mutually exclusive *identities*. It is not an enigma that absolutely distinct identities remain distinct and isolated by virtue of a certain sense or feeling which apparently is at least of the same sort. When I feel myself as 'I' you do not feel towards yourself as 'X' but as 'I' although your 'I' and my 'I' are absolutely different.

Behind all human acts and expressions an 'I',—be it your 'I' or my 'I', has to be present in order that there can be such acts or expressions. The world of our thought and action has at its foundation or basis the 'I's— all individual and separate, determining it in some way. Without the 'I-s' there could be the world, of course, but not the one we know, not the world of *our* thought and understanding, action and reaction. The presence of the 'I'-s is not always

notified. Does not the statement 'fire burns' have an invisible 'I' at its back as the Speaker? Besides the 'I', which, as a personal pronoun is incorporated in thought and language, there is another metalinguistic 'I' accompanying every such action and expression. What is its role in language? It has been said that the 'I' is not only one of the basic particulars¹ but, that it is the most fundamental and foundational of all other demonstratives since all particulars, even the most elementary ones among them, are all ego-centric. Is this 'I' as the ego, any linguistic symbol or a metalinguistic presence? The type of dependence that all our linguistic symbols seem to have on the 'I' shows it up as pivotal. Is this 'I', the source of all symbolisation, itself any symbol? This may very well be doubted. If a symbol, what is it that it symbolises? The 'I' it so seems, is what an Indian philosopher might call an *inner sense (antarendriya)*, an instrumentation involving in inward unique reference to one's own individuality. Like a 'sense' (*indriya*) of that meaning it does not know itself as a separate fact but is taken for what it dwells upon at the moment. The 'I' an inward unique reference, a principle or instrumentation of self-conscious individuality, is very much unstable like a sense. It wavers and shifts from point to point, between a minimum and a maximum of a person's individuality—trans-psychic, psychic (cognitive, affective, conative), bodily, and even extra-organic individuality, such as, being a Professor, a legislator and a V.I.P. What is it that is ever common to your 'I' and my 'I'? Your 'I' and my 'I' seem to constitute *our absolute distinction*. Such being the case, how can we speak of any commonness or common factor? Yet both of us seem to understand in some way what it is

to be your 'I' known and understood. It is for this 'I' or rather the 'I' sense that there are *plural* experiences, *plural* facts and *plural* manifestation. Has not this emergent plurality created a whole host of problems, both personal and social? Will it be very much wrong to say that the 'I' the 'I sense',—has been the source of problems which are all problems, which are associated with the 'I' cannot be tackled by other means, these will have to be attended to *philosophically*, that is, by way of reflective thinking at the outset. Philosophy alone can show in what way the solution, if any, lies. But, as we have expressed earlier, something more than philosophy or reflective thought will be needed if the solution is at all to be arrived at or made and that, again, by each one for himself. This 'I' essentially an inward sense of intimate reference, when posited as an *existential* content, that is, as 'I am' may be called the Ego. This then parades as a substantial reality. Non-philosophers worry about the ways and means of its material advancement. Philosophers worry about its ultimate destiny, salvation and immortality. The Indian doctrines of bondage and liberation, we feel, may be better understood as several speculations about the ultimate nature and destiny of this 'I' parading as a pseudo-substance.

III

This problem of 'I', that, is of the ego, has not been *attempted* to be solved in one particular way in the various Indian systems. It is also doubtful if all the systems have ever solved it, that is, if they have *all* succeeded is showing in what direction a correct and permanent solution is even *possible*—the solution itself, as we have already said, is a practical affair. Then,

again, in respect of this problem, there can be no collective solution — no solution for all people together and collectively, no solution, again, by any extraneous arrangement or means, such as, by a social, economic or political planning. The problem is the individual's own, and has to be solved by the individual himself and for himself. It is associated with the individual's own existence as an individual, — the empirical person. Yet it will be quite wrong if an impression is created that this human problem which can be solved by the individual himself alone is without social significance or bearing. Society is nothing entitative, no absolute fact by itself. Society is the name for inter-relation of individuals as some have very wisely maintained.² Individual's own passions, appetites and inclinations, actions and reactions have a determining role in the maintenance of the health, the state of equilibrium of society. The social ego, at times elevated to the rank of a distinct entity, — an antecedent determining factor of the individual, is basically an accumulated functional form of stratified deposits of ego-strains through ages, originally individual in their formations. All human problems, individual and social-ethical, economic and political, thus seem to have grown up and developed in all dimensions around on one central and crucial factor and this is the ego, the 'I am so and so' (*ahamidam*) and 'mine so and so' (*mame-dam*).³ What disaster, both individual and social, has not been wrought by an aggressive and self-justifying manifestation of this 'I so and so'!

This ego or the 'ego-sense' this 'I-feeling' is a fact of conscious existence. Nothing can be gained, it seems, by an inquiry or stipulation as to how it origi-

nated, how it came to develop, how it came to be formed. It will be more rewarding if we accept it as a given fact, even as a primary datum. To all *appearance*, it seems to exhibit a substantive core, which is evidenced by all feelings and what we call 'conscious states' falling towards it or grouping around it in an immediate way. Even if this core fact is admitted in the way of a Humean or Jamesian⁴ empiricist as nothing entitative but a kind of *branding* or '*herding mark*' associated with the cerebral or neural mechanism of a living body, the fact remains that it is there, and it will be a clear case of *hysteron proteron* to argue that it is the product of the grouping or herding process.⁵ Among Indian philosophers, it was perhaps the Cārvāka materialists and the Buddhist functionalists, who ever wanted to regard it as some kind of an epiphenomenon, a pseudo-fact, an emergent product, in their bid to causally *explain* this core fact, which all others regarded as more or less fundamental.

It seems necessary to indicate initially what *we* mean by this core fact called the 'Ego' in order that there may not be any charge of equivocation. We can *provisionally* specify it as the '*self-feeling*', the feeling as '*I*', with which everybody is acquainted in an immediate way. That '*I am*' or '*I exist*' was once regarded by Descartes as a primary and indubitable fact, the denial of which according to him, involves self-contradiction. We shall hereafter, try to understand what this can mean. We do not, however share Descartes, illumination to regard this '*I am*' or the indubitable '*I*' as the *Self*. We would not also go for amorphously designating it as a *spiritual substance* as Descartes did. This '*I am*', the '*Self-feeling*',

seems to be a mode of 'feeling *towards*', collateral with the 'otherness' feeling. It is *directional* formation as the feeling of 'otherness' also is another *directional* formation. To take the help of a spatial metaphor, this '*self*-feeling' is characterised by an 'inward' direction as 'the otherness feeling is characterised by an 'outward' direction. Described otherwise, the '*Self-feeling*', as an empirical datum, is a '*coming to itself*' as the 'otherness-feeling' is a 'going out beyond itself', that is, some sort of an alienation from itself, a self-losing in a new and adventitious formation characterised by the sense of an 'otherness.' As a directional formation, the feeling as '*I*', however, enjoys a certain indisputable primacy since the feeling of 'otherness' as in '*Thou*' (*Yuşmat*), '*This*' (*Idam*), '*That*' (*Tat*) is necessarily relational to the '*I*' or the '*I*' feeling, which latter seems to be pivotal. It is this '*I*', or the sense of '*I*', which is felt as capable of standing in absolute exclusion from the 'other' (that is, in being absolutely unrelated to any other), and *not* the '*I think*' (*cogito*), since 'thinking' is transitive, and has always to be 'of' something as Professor Lindsay rightly points out.⁶ Therefore, '*I think*' is a further development in associative process and cannot stand out in complete dissociation to substantiate its claim to primacy.

Descartes' point seems to have been to trace the absolutely indubitable, and this he wanted to fix up by playfully instituting a process of doubting and possible negation. But the indubitable he was looking for could only be the *sense* of '*I am*', and not the '*I think*'. For, if 'thinking' is accepted and understood in the conventional meaning, such as, thinking of something, or thinking something, it is quite possible

that I do not think *always*, and it can be very well debated if 'I think' always. Not only Descartes' 'I think' but even Gassendi's 'I walk' do establish (although not in so very immediate way), the indubitability of 'I am' or I exist (which is the same as the 'I-sense' or 'I-feeling' we are speaking of) as a matter of *logical presupposition* as and when 'I think', 'I walk', 'I talk', 'I argue' and so on. Professor Ayer, then, seems to have taken Descartes' '*Cogito ergo sum*' in the right way so far' but his criticism of the 'I am' or 'I exist' as a degenerate statement and not a genuine statement seems to be beside the point, since in the discovery of what may be absolutely indubitable or absolutely primary, no one looks for anything that can be a full-fledged statement unless one is seized with the foolhardiness to milk a he-goat.

But what is this 'I am' or 'I exist'—'*aham asmīti*' or '*ahamasmitā*' and what has this got to do with the 'self' which Descartes believed to be a spiritual substance? What can make this 'I am' a spiritual substance? We have already seen that the 'I think' and 'I am' are not equivalents. The fact that I cannot argue that I am not (*nāhamasmīti*) or prove that I *am not* so long I feel that I am, does not show, as Descartes thought that it showed, that this 'I' is a thinking substance, or that 'to think' is its inseparable quality or essential nature. What has this 'I am' or 'I exist', to do with thinking? It involves some kind of awareness no doubt, and that also in an introspective or retroactive bid, but such awareness cannot be called thinking. Thinking is always of a content distinguished from itself but the directional awareness involved in 'I am' or 'I exist' does not involve such act-content

distinction. Not only that, the 'I-sense', the conscious 'being-thereness' of 'I' does not seem to persist there *always*. Are you always aware of yourself in distinction from your surroundings? It will be a sign of mental health if we can remain placid and tranquil and do not constantly dwell upon the feeling that 'I am'—if the feeling of 'I-there' remains subdued, or shelved to the background. Dreamless sleep, to be sure, gives us relief from the obsession of the 'I am' or 'I-being-there'. Even in all our normal transactions of day-to-day life, we seem to be either keeping the 'I am half' buried in the 'not-I', or distributing it among the several transactions in such a way that this 'I am' lies well-scattered, allowing its claim to indubitability to be ignored if not also a lapse. What, then, is the much talked of indubitability of 'I am' or 'I exist', or of 'I-being-there'? This seems to be at best *situational*. The 'I am' is the presupposition, the essential core fact of *whatever else 'I am'* in whatever else I do. It cannot be that these later developments are there even though *I am not there*, and it may, again, be the case that although this or that transaction of mine is not there still *I am there*, and also that, *I am there* even when sometimes *I am not conscious of myself as being there*,— as in dreamless sleep. Had I not persisted in physical sense at least, I could not reassert in the way that 'I am' after a state of swoon or dreamless sleep. But this does not certainly prove the '*I am*' as a thinking or spiritual substance. It does not seem to be a substance at all.

IV

It is true that much has been made of this '*I am*'. This '*I am*' has frequently been regarded as the 'Self'

and as a substance or substantive entity. Many have speculated as to the possibility of its survival, transmigration, immortality and what not. There have been systems of Indian philosophy which, even though not regarding this 'I' as a spiritual substance with consciousness or knowledge as any of its essential and inseparable property, have all the same, supported its claim to an absolute, eternal and all-pervasive (*vibhu*) existence of some kind.⁸ Some other systems, again, have accepted it as an individual spiritual substance with consciousness as its essential property, and knowable as the 'I' (*ahampratyayavedya*),⁹ although not itself self-luminous. Again, there have been some who, while relegating the 'I' to the domain of the natural and the 'objective' as a configuration of some kind (*ahamkara*), have postulated a principle of self-luminosity transcendent of it, with which, according to these theorists, this I-formation is confused and is regarded as the apparent Self.¹⁰ Śaṅkara, in his commentary on the first *sūtra* hints at these endless controversies regarding the true nature of that which remains indubitable and unrejectable in what is commonly accepted as the individual self, the 'I am'.¹¹ That Śaṅkara, or the Vedānta according to Śaṅkara's version, does not regard the 'I am', the consciousness or the feeling of being 'I' as the Self becomes quite clear when, in connection with his controversy with the Prabhākara Mīmāṃsā in the context of his commentary on the fourth *sūtra*, we come across his statement *tatsākṣitvena pratyuktatvāt*. The Self, according to his view, is *not* and *cannot be* any determinate *this*, which the 'I am' definitely is. The self is conceived as the witness (*sākṣī*), and that is witness which is just the revealer (*prakāśaka*) of all *objective* formations, and so, is

their ground transcendental. The Self is unrejectable because it is presupposed in every determinate formation, such as the 'I am' and in every affirmation and denial, and not because it is one such determinate formation. Moreover, as the Vedānta shows, it is the Self itself which when grasped as itself turns out to be the ultimate rejector of all else that *appears* as the objective appearance, and as distinguished and *manifest*. We are not concerned with an elaboration of what is or what is not the Vedāntic view at this place. What immediately concerns us here is showing that the problem of the 'I' has been the basic problem of Indian Philosophy in so far as the Indian schools speculated about its possible survival or about our possible absolute release from its fetters and trappings. What is more, we have claimed that all our problems in conscious living are associated with this 'I', and therefore, the sense of 'I', otherwise called the *ego*, is a genuine problem of any philosophy which is not mere logomachy. We are not interested in settling how far, if at all, the '*I am*', or the ego-feeling is indubitable, we are interested in showing that this sense of 'I' is a primary fact, the core-fact around which we build up our universe as also our social order, and that solutions of all our problems, individual and social, depend on how far we are able to solve this ego-problem.

We are not disputing that what we regard as inanimate objects of nature are without this ego-sense. We do not dispute also that lower animals do not have this 'I-feeling' in the form we have. We do not dispute either that even in human beings this ego-sense or 'I-feeling' may be subject to some impercep-

tible process of growth and development. Even, then, the fact remains that it is around this 'core fact' that we build up our known order *as we know it*, and conduct ourselves in it in the way we conduct ourselves, that is, act and react as individual persons in social, moral, religious and other relationships. The way this 'I', this Ego, is fostered and developed therefore, has far-reaching consequences for our individual and social life. Our happiness and misery, aspirations and frustrations, fulfilment and bankruptcy all seem to rest on how we conduct this ego, how we bear with it.

V

The 'I am' is an *individuated formation*. By its very nature, it gives rise to a division between itself as a core fact and the rest of 'what is there'. This rest of 'what is there' becomes an other to it. This is next reacted to as its 'object'. In the process of exploring the objective, it undergoes further specification in its subjective mould. The given as 'I' and the given as 'other' undergo collateral specifications. Both the 'I' and the 'other' were an undistinguished one before the advent of 'I' or the Ego as an individuated formation. It is not known *when*, if ever, this division of reality into this 'I' and 'not-I' *first* started. It may as well be accepted that this division which results in cognitive, conative and affective *assessment* of the given order in terms of subject-object relationship did not *start* at all, and *that it was always there*. A reflective analysis does not go to showing an absolute beginning in time. If the given order is looked upon as the *objective* whole which has appeared there in distinction from the subjective 'I', and so *minus* the 'I', it may be

an intriguing question how the 'I', a seemingly conscious fact, could have emerged from the seemingly unconscious objective. But if the given is understood as the indeterminate whole which has given rise to or has resulted in the subjective and objective formations that we know of, the point may not be so intriguing. The fact stands out that it is through the subjective formations called the egos, or the 'I-s', that there arises a distinction in reality between the subjective and the objective series, which are all collateral and relative. As the subjective formation with the ego as its core *ramifies* itself progressively in terms of *I see, hear, taste, smell, touch, think, doubt, decide* and the whole lot of all subjective functions, the objective situation also shows a whole multitude of qualities which we classify variously as primary, secondary, tertiary and so on. In short, the existential situation in which we find ourselves, the empirical situation in which we enjoy or suffer, the social situations in which we all interact and interplay, is a development out of 'Ego-not-ego', 'I-and the world' situation. This can be shown in another way.

The world we live in, know and feel — the world of our actions and reactions, can be understood and interpreted in another way as the world articulated in our thought and speech. The 'I', otherwise called the 'ego sense', is a necessary presupposition as also an immanent constituent of this world articulated in thought and speech. 'I am' or 'I exist' is the minimum as also the most basical assertable in thought and speech. Russell's independent particulars, being all 'ego-centric', are in fact this 'I-centric'. The 'I' is the most fundamental among demonstratives, and when

demonstrated, it necessarily takes the form 'I am'. The 'am' or 'exist' in 'I am' is not, of course, a genuine predicate. But *this creates the urge* for a genuine predicate for greater articulation, and thus leads to greater determination and specification of the 'I'. This is fulfilled when one says 'I am *this*' (*ahamidam*), or 'I am *so and so*'. Śaṅkara would take Ayer upside down. There is no real degeneracy in the indeterminate, 'I' in 'I am'. The subject (I) remains more or less as *itself*, that is, as, the mere 'I'. Degeneracy, pulverisation, even progressive de-subjectivisation of the subjective 'I', starts with greater and greater determination and adventitious extension of the 'I' from its original mooring in the indeterminate focal point. From the 'I am' the passage to 'I know', 'I think', 'I see' etc. involves determination of the 'I' in term of the mind and the sense. In 'I am' as a purely directional felt awareness, we have the polar opposite of the direction involved in 'this' or 'that'. The 'I', in this taking, seems to be just a bodiless spark of subjectivity. In 'I think', 'I know', it not only becomes embodied but its body seems to grow in volume in a progressive way. There is growth in greater volume still when this 'I' passes from the purely cognitive formation to the affective and the conative. There takes place greater 'involvement', that is, greater participation in objectivity and therefore, greater de-subjectivisation. In 'I am happy or miserable', 'I am infirm or vigorous', 'I am young or old', the 'I-sense' or 'I-feeling, seems to settle upon the body, mind and the senses, or 'appropriate' the physical body as the more important property of itself. In 'I desire', 'I decide', 'I am the agent or doer', we have a still fuller *embodied* 'I'. It thus appears that when from the level of mere

ejaculatory assertion³² of existence, such as, '*I am*' or '*I exist*' one passes on to the enjoying and the more self-imposing and self-advertising level of the doer or agent, greater degeneracy of the erstwhile cognitive, 'I', that is, of the knower, describer, or witnessing 'I', takes place. Even a greater increase in the volume of de-subjectivisation of 'I' through greater embodiedness with full-fledged cognitive, affective and conative growth and development, the erstwhile somewhat ethereal 'I' becomes, so to say, a 'part' of nature, although epistemically distinguished as the knower and the recorder of nature in its dual formations — both objective and subjective. Be it remembered that the ego or the 'I-sense' we speak of, is no *external* imposition on reality from an alien source. It is there as a *peculiar mode of its self-expression* an inner fixation of some kind for all that we know. The Upaniṣadic statement that Reality, one undivided existence of being *as such* (*sadeva*), desired to realise itself as 'many', may not sound either sense-less or esoteric, once we accept the position that what we call the 'ego' and which we find to be *many*, and which also develops *many-wise*, were *somehow there* in Reality, catering to its need of playful self-expression in an infinite plurality of ways. This *becoming many-wise* may not be *real becoming* but only empirically or phenomenally so, or this may just be neither real nor unreal, rather an indeterminate form of self-expression of reality alongside the other mode of self-expression as pure self-identity in the *one* indeterminate, boundless, and tranquil.

Tranquillity and agitation, rest and unrest, self-composedness and self-assertion, *Ātman* and *Brahman*

of the Upaniṣads, are two-fold expression or manifestation of the self-same reality. Why it is so cannot be answered. It will be an *atī-praśna*, not a legitimate question at all. Why is water liquid in itself and a form of life and nourishment to the vegetative and the animate? Why is there ignorance and, again, right knowledge? If the transition from *avidyā* (ignorance) to *vidyā* (enlightenment) be a fact of existence, so is a possible dissipation or distortion of truth into falsity and falsehood alongside or covering up the truth. Light has its shade, though no essential part of itself. Reality *is* and also *appears*, but it does not appear *as it really is*, it only appears *as it appears*. There can be no over-simplification either of the fact of the existence or of the nature of what we call reality. Will reality as the tranquil be a very meaningful concept had there not been the other aspect, that is, agitation and unrest? Where will you place the latter? You can place it neither inside Reality nor outside of it. It just hangs on, like the Vedāntic *anirvacanīya*. It makes the other concept meaningful and intelligible. So sings the seer of the Upaniṣads—*hiraṇmayena pātrena satyasyāpihitam mukham. tat tvam pūṣan apāvṛṇu satyadharmāya dṛṣṭaye*—with a golden vessel the Real's face is covered up. That do thou *Pūṣan*, uncover for one whose *dharma* it is to see the Real.¹³

The configuration, called 'the ego', so peculiar to conscious persons is the mechanism through which Reality seems to realise itself in *two* ways, (a) *side by side*, (from the standpoint of Reality) and also (b) *alternately* (in experience of transition from *avidyā* to *vidyā*) as many and also as the 'indivisible one.' The first mode of realisation may be metaphorically descri-

bed as incidental to progressive *going out of itself* on the part of Reality in adventitious 'self-posing' in the 'many', the second as incidental to its progressive coming back to itself and finally, its absolute one-ness. This 'going out' and 'coming back to itself', are states of affairs which, as subsequent elaboration will show, cannot be sensibly denied as facts that *happen*, but which cannot also be causally accounted for. It is better to concede that such happens although we do not know, and cannot also explain why such sequences or developments take place. Much has been said and discussed about the so-called self (*ātmā*) in philosophy. As a concept, it seems to be the one most familiar with us, — a common-place notion. Yet when we have attempted a philosophical determination of it as to what it actually stands for, we have invariably come to face a certain elusiveness in its regard, and have landed ourselves in endless controversies. Śaṅkara hints at this at the end of his commentary on the very first *Brahmasūtra*. The 'self', thus, happens to be in one way, the *most known*, in another way, the *least known*. Why so? How to meet and solve this enigma of a fact? Will it be less puzzling and more understandable if it is said that the entire course of our conscious existence, the entire manifestation of Reality in subjective-objective formations, the entire course of conscious events, and whatever is known to happen in one way or the other, is merely alternative *ways of looking for the 'self'*, and seemingly finding the self and deriving satisfaction from the thought of having found it in 'this', or 'that'? The ego is *not* the self in as much as it is not satisfying in itself, not a value. It is, on the contrary, the mechanism used in the self-searching and the self-finding. The final goal

in which the ego finds rest is the true Self. But the ever wavering nature of the ego, its vicarious formations in this way or that, has rendered the 'self', an originally fixed value and accomplished reality, into a 'wandering minstrel', shifting and fleeting in all directions,—now settling upon a given 'this' as its perch, then fleeting farthest away from it as if smarting from an electric shock. This had made the 'self', which is Reality itself, and the supreme value, at once tranquil and restless. The ego looks for the self and finds it in 'this' or 'that' viz.,—*in itself*, as an *assumed* substantive reality and value, *in the body, in the mind, in one's near and dear ones, in the purse, in the bank-account* and so on. Then again, the ego misses it gradually in 'this' or 'that' (*nedam, na eṣa neti*), and looks for the self in other directions. The struggle ends only when the ego shrinks within and unto its bare 'I' and dissolves itself in its absolute one-ness and identity with its ground, that is, dissolves itself in Reality from which it sprang. There is one kind of search for the self and for its own identity by the ego in the outward direction and another kind of search for its self and identity in the inward direction. This seems to have been provided by Reality itself, or in a Reality, which is both tranquil and restless. As being, it is eternally self-accomplished, restful and tranquil; again, as *Becoming*, it is the restless looking for a temporary perch in multiplicities through the instrumentation of the ego, which itself is infinitely many.

To put the whole matter in a different way, it may not be contested if we say that the order of our conventional experience may be regarded as a system of *determinate* conscious representations, each of which

is ego-centric at the core, and yet taken together, all such plural determinations and representations are believed to be only varied configurations or *assessments* of the very same fact, called reality or the world. Now, instead of regarding the relation between these ego-centric foci of individuated representations and the world or Reality in the Leibnitzian way, that is, instead of regarding the whole of the world as *immanent* in the Infinitely plural centres of individuated representations called monads and as being progressively unfolded from within them, let us regard the relation between Reality and the individuated foci of representations in the opposite way. This will, then, 'situate' all the ego-centric foci, the infinitely plural 'I'-s — each characterised by a certain feeling of exclusiveness, *in* the constitution of Reality or the world itself, in some way, or will make them just one kind of *feature* by virtue of which reality in one kind of its self-expressions, becomes *empirically* a veritable 'many'. Cannot this facilitate understanding of the Upaniṣadic statement that Reality, which is eternally self-accomplished (*pariniṣṭhita*), which is in itself, and *as itself* the Indeterminate One, also undergoes *apparent* determinations in terms of conscious personalised representation in so far as the individuated 'I'-s, the infinitely plural egos, form the foci of separate presentations the multiple 'becomings'? What oddity will be there if this development, this apparent course of becoming is expressed figuratively as: Being *as such* (*sadeva*) which is one and without a second (in so far as it is indeterminate) desired (*aikṣata*) to express itself many-wise in terms of a wide multiplicity of *names* and *forms*?¹⁴ Let us put the matter in a somewhat naive way. Had there not been these egos, these plural foci

of animated and conscious expressions in Nature, could Reality be in any way represented and understood in the way we conventionally understand it, that is, as a *system of plural facts* which can be grouped and arranged collaterally as subjective and objective? Could it not be as well a non-distinguished mass, infinite and unitary, without any assignable, and therefore, any *determinate* character could it not be what the Vedānta calls 'nirviśeṣa'? It is the presence of the egos, as centres of individuated conscious representations, which seem to take all the difference.

NOTES

1. Cf. Russell, *An Enquiry into Meaning and Truth*, ch. 7.
2. Cf. MacIver, *Community*.
3. Cf. Śaṅkara's opening sentence in the *Adhyāsabhāṣya*.
4. Cf. James, *The Principles of Psychology*.
5. Cf. *Śāṅkarabhāṣya*, 2.2.19.
6. See his Introduction to Descartes' *Discourse on Method and Meditation* (Everyman's Library Series).
7. Ayer, *The Problem of Knowledge*, ch. 2.
8. This seems to be the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika view.
9. The Prābhākara school of Mīmāṃsā as presented and reviewed by Śaṅkara, *B.S.B.* 1.1.4.
10. The Sāṅkhya view.
11. It is a gross mistake to hold that Śaṅkara takes 'I' as the Self. Cf., *Ātmā sa bhokturityāpare*, *B.S.B.* 1.1.1.
12. Cf. Ayer, *The Problem of Knowledge*, ch. 2.
13. *Iśa. U.* 15, *Maitrī* 6.35, *Bṛhad* 5, 151.
14. *Chāndogya* 6.2., *Taittirīya* 2.6., *Aitareya* 1.1.

(to be continued)

VĀGASPATI ON JĪVAN-MUKTI

V. N. Sheshagiri Rao *

I

Jīvanmukti

In this short paper I propose to discuss the question whether or not the concept of *jīvanmukti* (liberation even when one is alive) is acceptable to Vācaspati. It may be argued by the opponent that there cannot be the so-called '*jīvanmukta*', as impressions of ne-science (*avidyā saṃskāras*), according to Vācaspati, continue to persist in him (*jīvanmukta*) as he is still with a body which is due to *prārabdha karma*. For instance a bilious person, though cured of his bile, may continue to have the impressions that sugar is bitter. So also, in the case of the so-called *jīvanmukta*, the impressions of transmigration and consequent usages (*avidyā*) may continue to persist.

Vācaspati rejects this contention by saying that, since the enlightened one knows the truth, he holds

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these empirical usages and notions to be fictitious. A person suffering from bile and consequently cured of it, has in fact, no belief in the bitterness of sugar as he has realised the truth though he spits it out and abandons it.¹ Thus the impressions of nescience may continue to persist in an enlightened person, but he has no belief in them. This means that the impressions of nescience do not really bind a *jīvanmukta*.

Again, Vācaspati asserts that the *jīvanmukta* is free from all action, as he has realised that the totality of act, agent, means and fruit, etc., is not real. In non-duality there is neither the relationship of object subject, nor agency since there is nothing to be done.² To quote his words: As for that intuition which is real, there is not something to be done, since it is of the nature of Brahman.³ He, who has no faith, is not eligible to engage in rituals and conversely rituals performed by 'inteligible' persons (*viz*, the *jīvanmuktas*) have no fruit.⁴

Now, as to the conduct of *jīvanmukta*, Vācaspati holds that only prohibitions apply to the *jīvanmukta* and not prescriptions. It is so, argues Vācaspati, inasmuch as the latter require faith, conceit of agency, etc., but not the former. He who has faith in prescription is eligible, not he who has no faith. In other words, though codes and conventions of ordinary morality do not bind the *jīvanmukta*, it cannot be said that he transgresses the moral law. Such a position does not arise at all inasmuch as he has no egoism, which may force him to transgress the moral law. He is absolutely free from egoism and will be a law unto himself. To quote his words: "For him, however, who knows the difference from everything beginning

with the intellect, for him who is devoid of the conceit of the enjoyership of *karma*, there is no eligibility in respect of *karma*. And thus, there is not (for him) acting as he likes, since for him who is devoid of conceit there is not even that.”⁵

However, it should be noted that Vācaspati seems to contradict this stand elsewhere. He seems to say that the *jīvanmukta* is not wholly devoid of the conceit that he is human; rather does that conceit continue in him in slight traces through the continuance of the impressions of nescience.⁶ This difficulty, however, is more apparent than real as *avidyā samskāras*, though continue to persist in the *jīvanmukta*, do not bind him to any limited ‘I’ as they are bereft of that power. Vācaspati clearly pronounces that as the *jīvanmukta* the truth of the *avidyā samskāras*, he considers them to be illusory. He stands for transcending the *guṇas*. He cannot possibly go wrong in view of total transformation of his psycho-physical organism.

It may again be objected that, *avidyā* being unreal, cannot be expected to leave impressions as only a real entity can leave an impression behind. An impression of *avidyā* is not real and so cannot continue. Hence there cannot be embodied release (*jīvanmukti*). Vācaspati refutes this contention. According to him, all effects exist as potencies in causal nescience in the state of dissolution. Knowledge leaves its impression; false knowledge also leaves its impression. *Avidya* is inexplicable *aniravacanīya* and its effects are also inexplicable. And so there is nothing unreasonable in this view.⁷

II

Continuance of Prārabdha-karma

It should be stated here that Vācaspati is opposed to Maṇḍana's view that, on the onset of Brahman-knowledge, all *karmas* ('*sañcita*' or that which has not yet begun to operate, '*āgāmi*' or that which is yet to come, and *prārabdha* or fructified *karma*) vanish like thin air.⁸ In the opinion of Vācaspati, Brahman-knowledge removes all *karmas* except *prārabdha*.⁹ Since it has already begun giving rise to its results, it must cease of its own accord as in the case of flame, and for this it does not require another knowledge; till then it continues in the form of the physical body. *Prārabdha-karma* may be compared to a missile that has begun to take flight, and it drops only after its force has been spent. This theory is called *bādhitānuvṛtti*.

Thus the body continues to persist even after the realisation of Brahman. It continues to exist as long as the *prārabdha-karma* lasts. And it is the continuance of the body even after the release of the soul that makes possible the teaching of Advaita by the preceptors. If the body does not exist after release, we will be forced to disbelieve in *jīvanmuktas* like Manu, Uddālaka, Hiraṇyagarbha, and others who are believed to have lived a life of longer duration even after liberation, as taught by the Purāṇas—asserts Vācaspati.¹⁰

Vācaspati along with Śaṅkara¹¹ and Suresvara¹² maintains the view that the physical body of a released soul continues to exist because of *prārabdha* and that it will come to an end only when its inevitable

workings are fully exhausted. This in fact is the meaning of the *Chāndogya* text, '*tāvadeva ciram*' (for him, there is delay only so long as he is not delivered from the body; then he will become one with Brahman)¹³— says Vācaspati. We may add that the Vivaraṇa school gives almost the same explanation of *jīvanmukti*.¹⁴

It is to be noted that Vācaspati holds to the view of Śaṅkara that in the case of *jīvanmukta* there is the persistence of a part of nescience in the form of *prārabdha-karma*. Yet, it must be said that elsewhere he seems to hold to Maṇḍana's view also, viz. that in the *jīvanmukta* only the impressions of nescience persist, not a part of nescience.¹⁵ In any case, whether it is the continuance of a part of nescience or impressions of nescience, Vācaspati is very emphatic in saying that, since the *jīvanmukta* knows the truth he considers them to be merely illusory. Hence they cannot bind him. Thus, the continuance of body does not really come into conflict with *jīvanmukti*. They are compatible with each other.

III

Brahmajñāna is not Simultaneous with Aśarīratva

Now it cannot be argued that Brahmajñāna and *prārabdha-karma* cannot co-exist in case of the *jīvanmukta*, as they are dead opposed to each other; for it is a fact that in the world opposites exist together,¹⁶ says Vācaspati. Thus Brahman realisation need not be simultaneous with disembodiment; the body continues to persist even after Brahman-realisation. But the persistence of the body does not cause any bond-

age as he has realised the truth of non-dual Brahman. It will not lead to any further result because he has realised his true nature and hence cannot fall again in the ditch of *samsāra*. Being embodied, further argues Vācaspati, is not real; for if it were real, that would not cease during the life-time; it is, however, caused by illusory knowledge and that can be removed even during life by the rise of true knowledge. Non-embodiment is the true nature of the Self and it cannot be destroyed, for by destruction of its nature there would result destruction of existence.¹⁷

Since being embodied is caused by illusory knowledge, it is established, argues Vācaspati, along with Śaṅkara, that for the wise one even when alive, there is non-embodiment. Though the body exists, it does not bind him, as he looks upon it as illusory. He quotes the *Upaniṣad*: "Therefore as the slough of a snake lies dead and cast off on the ant hill, in the very same way lies this body; then that non-embodied immortal life is Brahman alone, light alone."¹⁸ Here Vācaspati, unlike Maṇḍana, wholeheartedly endorses the view of Śaṅkara, that a *sthitaprajña* (a man of steady wisdom), is a *siddha* (perfected one) and not a *sādhaka* (seeker after perfection).¹⁹ He is self-realised and perfect. He is a man free from distinctions of any sort, one who has realised the non-dual nature of reality.²⁰ The *prārabdha-karma* of such a person ceases to function of its own accord when the enjoyment is exhausted; then the body falls off (*deha pāta*) and the soul acquires final release. The *jīvanmukta* never returns to this *samsāra* again.

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NOTES

1. *Bhā. Ca. Sū.* p. 81.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 242.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 244.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 81-82.
5. *Bhā.* II. iii. 48, p. 626.
6. *Bhā.Ca.Sū.* p. 82.
7. *Bhā.* IV i. 15

8. R. Balasubramanian, *Advaita Vedānta*, p. 262: However it must be correctly stated here that in Maṇḍana both the views i.e., body falling off immediately on the onset of Brahman-knowledge, and the body persisting for sometime even after Brahman-realisation as a result of trace of nescience (*avidyā saṃskāra*), are there. Both according to him, are sound and tenable. However he prefers the second but not to the exclusion of the first. See *Brahmasiddhi* p. 132 Part I. See also introduction p. xxxviii.

9. *Śāṅkara-bhāṣya* on the *Brahmasūtras* and *Bhā.*, III. iii. 32, IV i.15; IV i.19,

10. *Bhā.*, IV i.15.

11. See *Note* 9.

12. *Naiṣkarmyasiddhi* pp. 196 to 202; *Bṛhadāraṇyakoṣaṇiṣad vārttika* Part II, pp. 735-741,

13. VI. xiv. 2.

14. P.P. V. (V.S.S 1892) p. 284.

15. *Bhā.Ca.Sū.* p. 82.

16. *Bhā.* IV. i. 15, *Siddhānta*

17. *Bhā.Ca.Sū* p. 233.

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ON THE PERCEPTUALITY OF VERBAL KNOWLEDGE

S. Revathy *

Of the two traditions in Advaita—the *Vivarana* and the *Bhāmatī*, the former upholds the view that perceptual knowledge could arise from sentences too. This view is based upon the nature of perceptual knowledge according to Advaita.

Knowledge - Its Nature and the Criterion of the Perceptuality

Knowledge, according to Advaita, is neither the pure consciousness nor the mental state that reveals it. On the other hand, it is a blend of the two. The process of the rise of knowledge is explained by the Advaitin thus: Sense of sight for example, comes into contact with the object in front of it (say) - pot which according to the fundamental position of Advaita, is located in the consciousness conditioned by it. The latter is termed *viṣayāvacchinnaśaitanya*. Mind too which is luminous comes out through the sense of

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sight, reaches the place of pot and undergoes modification in the form of it. This modification is known as *ghaṭākāravṛtti* or the mental state in the form of pot. Mind which is the material cause of its modification, that is, *vṛtti*, the *vṛtti*-element and pot — these three which are the limiting conditions of consciousness are now located in one and the same place. Consequently, the consciousness conditioned by the three which are respectively known as the knower or *jīva*, the cognition of pot, and the pot-conditioned consciousness become one. We have said that the consciousness conditioned by the mental state in the form of pot is the knowledge of pot. It becomes perceptual in the sense that it has become identical with the consciousness conditioned by pot. It comes to this: the consciousness conditioned by the mental state in the form of pot which is the knowledge of pot becomes perceptual when it becomes identical with the consciousness conditioned by the pot. And it becomes so in the manner described above.

Perceptuality of Object

Pot which is located in the consciousness conditioned by it and which derives its existence and manifestation from its substratal consciousness now receives existence and manifestation from the consciousness conditioned by the mind which is the knower of *jīva*. To state this in other words, pot does not have any independent existence or manifestation apart from the consciousness conditioned by mind. And this answers for the perceptuality of object.

To sum up this part of the discussion:

(i) consciousness conditioned by the mental state in the form of an object is knowledge; and it becomes

perceptual when it becomes identical with the consciousness conditioned by the object; and,

(ii) the pot is perceptual as it does not have any independent existence and manifestation apart from the consciousness conditioned by the mind.

The Advaitin now in the light of the above position identifies the nature of verbal knowledge that arises from the secular statements like 'You are the tenth man' (*daśamastvamasi*) and the sacred texts such as *tat tvam asi* and the like to be perceptual in nature.

Interpretation of the Text — daśamastvamasi

In the case of ten travellers who had crossed a stream and reached the other shore, the head of the party, in order to ascertain that all had reached safely, started counting the number of persons. In that process he left himself and was deeply distressed over the loss of the tenth person. And when a passer-by instructed him 'you are the tenth man,' he attains the perceptual knowledge of his being the tenth man. Here the cognition that has arisen from the statement — 'you are the tenth man' must be admitted to be perceptual in character as it has removed the false notion — perceptual in nature that the tenth man was lost. And the knowledge arisen from the above statement is perceptual because the consciousness conditioned by the mental state in the form of one being the tenth man arisen from the above statement and the consciousness conditioned by the tenth man have become one and the same. Thus by the application of the criterion of the perceptuality of knowledge, the

Advaitin proves that perceptual knowledge could very well arise from sentences too. This paves the way for the Advaitin to conclude that perceptual knowledge of the identity or more strictly the non-difference between the true nature of God and soul — Brahman and Ātman could very well arise from the Upaniṣadic texts like *tat tvam asi*.

It might be argued that the cognition of one being the tenth man has arisen from the contact of sense-organ. But this is wrong. It is because even prior to the rise of auditory perception from the sentence — ‘You are the tenth man’, there has been the contact of sense-organ and yet there has not arisen the cognition of one being the tenth man. It might further be argued that the cognition arisen from the statement — ‘You are the tenth man’ is only mediate in nature. This cannot be, because as we have said earlier, the false notion of one being not the tenth man is perceptual in character and a perceptual erroneous cognition cannot be removed by a mediate cognition. Herein the cognition arising from the statement — ‘You are the tenth man’ is noticed to remove the perceptual erroneous cognition and hence it cannot be anything but perceptual in nature.

It might again be argued that in respect of the perceptual cognition of one being the tenth man it is only sense-organ that is the instrument and the statement — ‘You are the tenth man’ is only an aid to the sense-organ. This argument also does not hold good in view of the fact that nowhere is it noticed that a sense-organ in order to give rise to the perceptual knowledge of an object is aided by a sentence or the *pramāṇa* — verbal testimony.

दशमस्त्वमसि इत्यत्र हि न इन्द्रियजन्यं दशमत्वज्ञानम्,
शब्दश्रवणात् प्राक् इन्द्रियसन्निकर्षे सत्यपि तदनुदयात् ।
इन्द्रियस्य प्रत्यक्षजनकतायां शब्दस्य सहकारित्वं कुत्रापि न
क्लृप्तमिति न शब्दसहकृतेन्द्रियजन्यत्वेनापि तदापरोक्ष्यम् ।
न च तस्य परोक्षत्वमेवेति शङ्क्यम्; अपरोक्षाध्यासनिवर्त-
कत्वायोगात् । एवञ्च शब्दजन्यं ज्ञानं अपरोक्षम् ।¹

Vyāsatīrtha argues that in the cases of cognitions such as 'You are righteous', 'The mountain has fire' and the like which arise from corresponding statements, the substantive elements, namely, the person addressed and the mountain are perceptual, while the adjectival elements, namely, righteousness and fire are mediate only. In the same way, in regard to the cognition — 'You are the tenth man' that arises from the corresponding statement, the adjectival feature, namely, one being the tenth man is mediate only. Madhusūdana Sarasvatī argues that in that case the removal of the false notion of one not being the tenth man which is perceptual in nature by the cognition arising from the statement — 'You are the tenth man' will not hold good.

न च धर्मवांस्त्वमिति पर्वतोऽग्निमानित्यादौ विशेष्यापरोक्ष-
त्वेऽपि विशेषणपारोक्ष्यवत् अत्रापि दशमत्वे पारोक्ष्यम्
अस्त्विति वाच्यम् । परोक्षत्वे अपरोक्षभ्रमानिवृत्तिप्रसङ्गात् ।²

It comes to this: the sentence — 'You are the tenth man' gives rise to valid perceptual knowledge.

The Advaitin argues that on the analogy of the secular text — 'You are the tenth man', the sacred one, namely, *tat tvam asi* also gives rise to valid perceptual knowledge.

Interpretation of the Text - tat tvam asi

From what has been said above it comes to this: that the mediacy or preceptuality or immediacy of knowledge depends on the object and not on the instrument of knowledge.

तत्र पूर्वाचार्याणां अयमाशयः । संविदापरोक्ष्यं न करणविशेषोत्पत्तिनिबन्धनम् किन्तु प्रमेयविशेषनिबन्धनम् इति ।³

If the object is immediate, that is, if the consciousness conditioned by the object is identical with the consciousness conditioned by the mind, then the mental state in the form of the object inspired by the reflection of consciousness which is knowledge of the object becomes identical with the consciousness conditioned by the object thus making the knowledge perceptual. The point that is of importance here is that the mental state could arise from either sense-organs or from verbal testimony. From the text — *tat tvam asi*, there arises the mental state in the form of pure consciousness — the true nature of the individual soul which is the most immediate one. The mental state in the form of pure consciousness inspired by the reflection of pure consciousness is the perceptual knowledge of Brahman.

It comes to this: mediacy or immediacy are not the characteristics of knowledge, that is, the mental state. On the other hand, they are the characteristics of the object. And the knowledge or the mental state that reveals the object that is immediate is immediate. Here Brahman — the true nature of the soul is immediate and so the knowledge of Brahman which arises from the major texts of the *Upaniṣads* and

which is of the nature of mental state is immediate only.

Anumāna as Proof for Perceptuality of Verbal Knowledge

Madhusūdana Sarasvatī in the *Advaitasiddhi* states that inference goes to prove that the knowledge arising from the text *tat tvam asi* is perceptual in nature. The inferential argument is as follows:

Perceptuality or immediacy exists in the knowledge arising from the text *tat tvam asi*;

it is because perceptuality is not the counter-positive of the absence that exists in an immediate knowledge;

like the state of being a knowledge —

अपरोक्षत्वम् तत्त्वमस्यादिवाक्यजन्यज्ञानवृत्तिः अपरोक्ष-
ज्ञाननिष्ठात्यन्ताभावाप्रतियोगित्वात्, ज्ञानत्ववत्'

In this argument, perceptuality is the *pakṣa* or the subject of inference. The thing that is sought to be established is the existence of perceptuality in the knowledge arising from the text *tat tvam asi*. The ground of inference is that perceptuality is not the counter-positive of the absence that is present in a perceptual knowledge. The illustrative example is the state of being a knowledge. The latter is not the counter-positive of the absence that is present in a perceptual knowledge. That is, in a perceptual knowledge there is not the absence of the state of being a knowledge. Further, it is present in the knowledge arising from the text — *tat tvam asi*. Thus the ground or *hetu* of the present inferential argument proves the

existence of perceptuality in the verbal cognition that arises from the text — *tat tvam asi*.

It might be argued that the thing that is sought to be established is existence (of perceptuality) in the knowledge that arises from the texts of the ritualistic section of the Veda such as 'He who desires heaven shall perform the *jyotiṣṭoma* sacrifice'.

न च कर्मकाण्डजन्यज्ञानवृत्तित्येवमपि साध्येत⁵

Madhusūdana asks as to what exactly is the purpose for which perceptuality is sought to be attributed in the case of knowledge arising from the texts like the one cited above. Is it for the purpose of enabling one to perform the *jyotiṣṭoma* sacrifice or is it for the purpose of attaining the fruit, namely, heaven? To either of the views there are difficulties. The performance of *jyotiṣṭoma* sacrifice can be carried on by the mediate knowledge itself that arises from the text. And, the fruit, heaven would result by the performance of sacrifice.

Vyāsatīrtha argues that the ground of the inferential argument presented by the Advaitin is counter-balanced by the ground of the following inferential argument.

The text — *tat tvam asi* is not the instrument of perceptual knowledge;

it is because it partakes the character of a sentence.

न च विमतः शब्दः नापरोक्षधीहेतुः शब्दत्वात् इति प्रति-
साधनम् ।⁶

Madhusūdana points out that the ground assigned by Vyāsatīrtha lacks correpondence in the case of the statement — ‘you are the tenth man’. This statement partakes of the character of a sentence and hence the ground — *śabdatva* exists therein. And it has been proved earlier that it is an instrument of perceptual knowledge of one being the tenth man. Hence on the basis of the inferential argument of Vyāsatīrtha we cannot conclude that a sentence in view of its being a sentence cannot be an instrument of perceptual knowledge.

दशमस्त्वमसि इत्यादावेव व्यभिचारात्?

Further the Dvaitin is of the view that the knowledge arising from the text — *tat tvam asi* could only be mediate as it arises from a text, like the knowledge of the relation of *jyotiṣṭoma* sacrifice to heaven.

तत्त्वमसीति वाक्यजन्यं ज्ञानं परोक्षं वाक्यजन्यत्वात्
ज्योतिष्ठोमादिवाक्यजन्यज्ञानवत्^४

The inferential argument may be refuted by pointing out that it suffers from the fallacy *svarūpāsiddhi* or absence of the *hetu* in the *pakṣa* or the subject of inference. It is thus: according to the Bhāṭṭa school of Mīmāṃsā, words convey their individual word-meanings and are exhausted thereby. And the word-meanings give rise to the verbal cognition. The point that is of relevance here is that verbal cognition which is the subject of inference does not possess the ground assigned, namely, the state of being generated from the sentence. As such the inferential argument advanced by the Dvaitin is not valid.

दशमस्त्वमसीति वाक्यजन्यज्ञाने व्यभिचारात् अभिहितान्व-
यवादे पदार्थानामेव शाब्दबोधकारणत्वेन वाक्यजन्यत्वाभा-
वेन स्वरूपासिद्धेश्च नोक्तानुमानेन तत्त्वमसीतिवाक्यजन्य-
ज्ञानपरोक्षतापत्तिः ।⁹

It comes to this: inference goes to prove the perceptuallity of verbal knowledge.

Sabda as Proof for the Perceptuality of Verbal Knowledge

The Upaniṣadic texts — *tat ha asya vijajñau Chānd.Up.* 6.7.6. (Śvetaketu has realized Brahman from the instruction of the preceptor); *tamasah pāram darśayati, Chānd.Up.* 7.2.6. (Sanatkumāra has enabled Nārada to have the direct knowledge of Brahman — the substratum of *avidyā* through instruction), emphasize the view that the *Upaniṣads* constitute the instrument of the direct knowledge of Brahman.

It must be noted here that the Upaniṣadic texts which state that Brahman is to be realized only by mind must be taken as conveying that mind is the general cause and not the instrumental cause in respect of the direct knowledge of Brahman. Mind is the general cause of knowledge because the latter is only its modification. The Upaniṣadic text — “He sees with mind” confirms this view.

मनसा ह्येव पश्यति¹⁰

It is only the sense of sight that is the instrument of visual perception. And the latter will arise only if the mind is attentive and not otherwise. This text, therefore, testifies to the fact that mind is only the general cause of knowledge and it is in this sense that the text which states that Brahman is to be realized by mind

only is to be understood. It comes to this that mind is never known to be instrument of knowledge.

It might be argued that if mind is not admitted to be the instrument of knowledge then the rise of the knowledge of the self and of happiness, etc., cannot be satisfactorily explained as according to the Nyāya school the knowledge of self and happiness, etc., are admitted to arise from mind.

Madhusūdana answers this by saying that according to Advaita the self is self-luminous, and happiness etc., are manifested by the witness-self and as such mind has no role to play in respect of the cognition of self and of happiness, etc.

आत्मनः स्वप्रकाशत्वात् सुखादीनां साक्षिवेद्यत्वात्¹¹

Further, the Upaniṣadic text — 'Brahman is that which is not manifested by mind' is specific in denying that mind is the instrumental cause of the knowledge of Brahman.

यन्मनसा न मनुत इति मनसः करणत्वनिषेधात्¹²

The *Bhāmatī* tradition which maintains that mind is the instrumental cause of the knowledge of Brahman would argue that what the above text denies is only the instrumentality of the immature mind to the direct knowledge of Brahman and not to the mature mind.

मनसैवानुद्रष्टव्यमिति तृतीया-श्रुत्यनुसारेण न मनुत
इत्यस्यैवापक्वमनोविषयतया¹³

This contention is wrong. It is because the complement of the above text 'Brahman is that by which

mind is manifested' it is not only the immature mind but mind in general that is said to be manifested. So we must take that the Upaniṣadic text 'Brahman is that which is not manifested by mind' denies that mind in general is the instrumental cause of the knowledge of Brahman.

Madhusūdana points out that the admission that mind is the instrumental cause of the knowledge of Brahman involves the defect of prolixity. The *Bhāmatī* tradition would argue that just as the above text denies instrumentality of mind to the direct knowledge of Brahman, in the same way the Upaniṣadic text 'Brahman is that which is not manifested by speech' denies instrumentality of the *Upaniṣads* too in respect of the knowledge of Brahman. Vyāsatīrtha records this view:

यद्वाचाऽनभ्युदितम्,

यतो वाचो निवर्तन्त इत्यादिश्रुतिबाधःस्यात्¹⁴

This contention is not sound. The above text denies the instrumentality of the *Upaniṣads* in respect of the knowledge of Brahman through primary signification (*mukhya-vṛtti*). It comes to this that the words of the *Upaniṣads* do convey Brahman through secondary signification. If it is held by the followers of Vācaspatimīśra that the above text states that Brahman is not conveyed by the *Upaniṣads* even through secondary signification, then they cannot hold the view that direct knowledge of Brahman arises from mind. It is because mind serves as the instrumental cause of the knowledge of Brahman only when it is associated with the traces left behind by *nididhyāsana*. *Nididhyāsana* is only the continuous

stream of the mediate knowledge of Brahman that has arisen from the *Upaniṣads*. And the latter could give rise to the knowledge of Brahman only through secondary signification. Hence the followers of Vācaspati-misra must admit that the text 'Brahman is that which is not manifested by words' denies instrumentality of the *Upaniṣads* in respect of the knowledge of Brahman through primary signification only and not through secondary signification.

Madhusūdana Sarasvatī in this connection cites the text चकितमभिब्रूते श्रुतिरपि¹⁵ from the *Śivamahimnastotra* of Puṣpadanta. This text means that the *śruti* too conveys the nature of reality in an indirect way, that is, through secondary signification.

Now it may be asked as to what exactly is the difference between perception and verbal testimony when it is held that from verbal testimony too perceptual knowledge arises. The author of the *Vedānta Paribhāṣā* answers this by saying that this objection could be raised in respect of the *pramāṇa-anupalabdhi* too. It is because the Advaitin admits that from the *anupalabdhi-pramāṇa*, that is, from the non-apprehension of an object there arises the perceptual cognition of the non-existence of an object. And this is answered by saying that the difference of nature in the *pramāṇa* is intelligible, even with difference of nature in the mental state. And thus the mental state whose form is the non-existence of an object is not sense-generated, rather it is generated by the non-cognition of pot. And this answers for the difference between *Pratyakṣa* and *anupalabdhi* although the resultant cognition is of similar nature. In the case of verbal testimony, the Advaitin does not say that perceptual

knowledge arises from sentences as such. But he specifies that if the mental state that arises from a particular text relates to the object which is immediate, then the cognition that arises from the text in respect of that object is perceptual. Here too the difference of nature in the mental state answers for the distinction between verbal testimony and perception.

Finally it may be added that Śrī Śaṅkara seems to favour the view that the direct knowledge of Brahman arises from the Vedāntic texts when he states —

अस्यानर्थहेतोः प्रहाणाय आत्मैकत्वविद्याप्रतिपत्तये सर्वे
वेदान्ता आरभ्यन्ते¹⁶

This text means: the characteristics of agency, etc., which constitute transmigratory existence or evil (*anartha*) has super-imposition or false identification of mind upon the Pure Consciousness as its cause (*hetu*). In order that the latter may be removed along with its cause, namely, *mithyājñāna* or *avidyā* (*prahāṇāyā*) what is necessary is self-realization (*ātmaikatvavidyā*). The latter is only the direct knowledge of the true nature of *jīva* to be Brahman. And for the attainment of such a knowledge (*pratipattaye*), a serious study of the Upaniṣadic texts with a view to ascertain their import (*śravaṇa*), profound and valid reasoning upon the import with a view to ascertain that import is true (*manana*) and concentrated fixing of the mind (*nididhyāsana*) upon the truth since arrived at are enjoined (*sarve vedāntāḥ ārabhyante*).

NOTES

1. C. on *VP*, p. 55. *Vedāntaparibhāṣā* of Dharmarājādhvarindra with the commentary *Paribhāṣāprakāśika* by Mahamahopadhyaya Anantakrishna Sastri by Navrang, New Delhi, 1993.

2. *AS*, p. 1273, *Advaita-siddhi* of Madhusūdana Sarasvatī along with *Nyāyāmṛta* of Vyāsātīrtha (2 Vols.) Saddarśanaprakāśanasthānam, Varanasi, 1977.

3. *VP*, p.341.

4. *AS*, pp. 1271-1272.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 1272.

6. *Nyāyāmṛta*, See *AS*, p. 1270.

7. *AS*, p. 1272.

8. C. on *VP*, p. 54.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 55.

10. *Bṛhadāraṇyakoṇiṣad*, 1.5.3.

11. *AS*, p. 1272.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 1277.

13. *Ibid.*

14. *Ibid.*, p. 1278.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 1277.

16. *Brahma-sūtra-bhāṣya* of Śaṅkara, 1.1.1.

SUREŚVARA'S INTERPRETATION OF MAHĀVĀKYAS

John Grimes *

According to Advaita Vedānta, the path to a proper understanding of scriptural statements lies in and through knowledge (*jñāna*). The question arises, "What is knowledge?" Advaita replies that whatever it is, it is not merely information. It is not about things, people, places, externals. Knowledge in this context means wisdom, which is the Self, within. Such knowledge is not a prize for passing a test or a reward for good behavior. An individual is eligible for knowledge because one's essential nature is knowledge. It is not something to be merited or acquired; it is one's very own nature.

Advaita, in consonance with the *Upaniṣads* claims, the Self (*Ātman*) is one and non-dual. The pluralistic universe of an individual's day to day experience, which appears to one as real, is an illusory superim-

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position which is neither real nor unreal. This appearance is rooted in ignorance (*avidyā*) which conceals the real (*sat*) and projects the unreal (*asat*). One's entire experience of life seems to involve differentiations like, "I am male, I am old, I am hungry, I am meditating, I am seeking liberation, I am having a vision" and so on. These differentiations are based on the superimposition of one thing on another or the attributes of one thing on another due to ignorance.

If the Self is one and non-dual, what is the status of the world, what is the status of all this multiplicity, including myself — what I think I am and what I think the world is? Even if it is true that appearances are illusory superimpositions, it still appears that there is a duality. The Self may exist, and I seem to exist, and this "I" may even be the Self. But there seems to be something else, an "other" or second if you will. Even if what I think I am is illusory, still it is 'something' illusory. To put it another way, if the Self and the world are non-dual, one and the same, then there is no reason to seek the Self (for there is nothing that it is not). Yet, if that is the case, why am I miserable and happy, by turns? That seems to imply duality. On the other hand, if the world and the Self are different, then surely that is duality. To answer this question, Advaitins relate a tale: One day a washerman was taking his donkeys to the forest to graze them. He happened to chance upon a new-born lion cub. The lion cub did not know that it was a lion and so the cub grew up with the donkeys. As time passed, by living in their company, the lion began to speak like the donkeys, to eat with them, and to travel back and forth to the river carrying laundry on its

back. The lion grew up thinking of himself as a donkey. One day, when he was grazing on the river bank with his donkey brothers, another lion came down to the river to drink. While he was drinking he caught sight of this young lion and was shocked and puzzled to see him standing in the midst of donkeys in such a pitiful condition. He came closer to the young lion and said, "Brother, what are you up to?" The young lion replied, "I am grazing with my brothers". Shocked, the elder lion said, "How can you call them brothers? They are asses and you are a lion. Come with me and look at your reflection in the water. Look at your reflection and then look at my reflection. Is there anything similar about us?" The young lion gazed down at his reflection and saw that he looked just like the old lion. The old lion demanded, "Are they your brothers or am I your brother? Now stop braying like a donkey and roar like a lion." The young lion began to roar. All the donkeys as well as the washerman ran away.

Was the young lion ever a donkey? No. He only thought he was a donkey. Was the young prince ever not a prince? No. He only thought he wasn't. The human being is not a limited, unhappy, imperfect being. Human beings only believe they are small, finite, mortal creatures. Once one discards this ignorant superimposition, one will manifest the strength, the glory, the majesty that one is, and always has been. It is only one's awareness that need be changed. We never were limited, and never will be limited, because we are the Self. Though a mirage appears in the desert, there never was, isn't now, nor ever will be, water there. Though subjects and ob-

jects appear in one's nightly dreams, they are not real. Upon waking the next morning, one remarks, "Oh, it was but a dream." It is an improper question to ask, "Where did they go?"

Generally, the human being directs all one's thoughts, actions, everything, outwards. This is because the sense organs are turned outwards and attuned to contacting things from the outside. To turn within is the first requirement regarding the question, "Who am I?" An individual whose attention is turned outwards, by that very act, excludes any possibility of discovering who they really are. An object, the known, will never be the knower. Yet strangely, even in the act of turning outwards, the divine consciousness within one is not excluded. It is merely unnoticed.

Whether an individual knows it or not, Vedānta says that they are this divine inner consciousness. That which conceals this truth from an individual's conscious experience is one's ignorance, one's age-old habit of clinging to externals. If one were to dive deep within, it is impossible not to find the so-called secret heart-cave, the ocean of consciousness, the mysterious Self, the source of one's very being. God dwells within you as you. That thou art. I am *Brahman*. One understands such scriptural declarations when one comes to experience, first hand, the divine essence which is within one, which one really is and always has been.

There is a tale about ten simpletons which reveals the truth of Advaita Vedānta in an easy to understand manner. It seems that, once upon a time,

ten simpletons set out on a journey. Eventually they came to a large, swollen river. The current was strong and there was no bridge available with which to cross the river. Thus, they decided to swim across. When they reached the other side, their leader decided to count their number to determine whether they all made it safely or not. His worst fears were confirmed. He counted only nine members present. He asked each of the other simpletons to count and they reached a similar conclusion, there were only nine of them present and thus one of them must have drowned. They looked high and low, upstream and downstream, but no trace of the missing person could be found. That could mean only one thing. He had been drowned while crossing the river. They began to weep and their grief was unconsolable. Soon a wandering pilgrim came by. Wondering why these individuals were weeping, he asked them what the matter was. Their leader related the entire tragic story of how ten of them had started out on a journey and, after crossing the swollen river, only nine of them had remained, with the tenth man drowned, dead, and gone. The pilgrim was a wise person and a quick glance revealed to him that there were still ten of them present. He guessed how each one of them counted only nine. Obviously every fool had counted all except himself. Thus, the pilgrim announced, 'the tenth man is not dead, but alive'. The simpletons began to excitedly crowd around the wise pilgrim and shout, "Where is he, where can we find him, please take us to him." The pilgrim pointed his finger at the leader and said, "You are the tenth man." At once the mystery was solved. The missing tenth man the leader was searching for was none other

than himself. The redeeming knowledge came in a flash: "I am that missing tenth man!" All their sorrow immediately disappeared and their tears of agony were replaced with waves of bliss.

All human beings are on a journey, as it were, the journey of life. At some stage each individual suddenly becomes aware of someone or something missing. Each person thinks, "there must be more to life than this." What or where that something is one does not know. But deep down, everyone intuitively has this feeling. (The knowledge that the tenth person/*Brahman* is one's own Self is obscured. "I do not know where the tenth man/*Brahman* is" — ignorance arises). Thus begins the search to discover if there is someone or something which can bring fulfillment, which can make render one's incompleteness, complete. But, at this stage, one does not know who or what it is or even if it really exists. (The existence of the tenth person/*Brahman* is concealed, the tenth person/*Brahman* seems absent — "I do not see *Brahman* nor do I know if *Brahman* exists or not"). Some people just give up at this stage and discontinue their search for ultimate, eternal, unceasing bliss and settle for momentary pleasures and pains. Others begin to notice their sufferings and feelings of incompleteness and begin to search for a solution. (One has the feeling that the tenth person is dead. One has the feeling that one is an ordinary human being subject to birth, death, fear, ignorance, delusion, pain, finitude and so on.) A wise person or teacher enters the scene and reveals that the tenth man/*Brahman* is living/exists. (This is indirect knowledge). This wise person then reveals to the leader of the ten simpletons

that you are that tenth man. (Direct knowledge) This knowledge immediately destroys the grief and suffering caused by the thought that the tenth man was missing. It destroys the individual's sense of fear, finitude, sorrow, and mortality. At the same time, this knowledge produces bliss at the discovery of the missing man. The individual experiences ineffable bliss which arises from one's own innermost Self.

This Reality that exists within each and every person is Pure Consciousness, Pure Awareness, the Self. The name does not matter. It is what the various names are pointing towards that is of paramount importance. No person can even say that they do not know it. In the very act of denying its existence, one must presuppose it! No one can say, "I do not exist." Who is the I who is saying that they do not exist? Of nothing else in the universe, or beyond the universe, can this be said of. This is the uniqueness and speciality of this consciousness, though until it is experienced it might as well be said to not exist at all. Nearer than the nearest and yet seemingly farther than the farthest. "It is only when you search for It, that you lose It. You cannot take hold of It, but then you cannot get rid of It."

The mark of this ocean of consciousness is that it always exists and it exists by and in itself. It is totally independent, neither needing effort nor support for its existence. To seek it within oneself, all that is necessary is to understand who or what is doing the seeking. One's habitual pattern is to go in search of it as if it were just another object, even if the greatest/

grandest object of all. But that is precisely the problem.

The only thing that one knows for certain, with absolute certainty, is the fact that "I Am". Nothing else has this certainty. But, the problem is, one does not know *who* this "I Am" is. Are you the physical body or is it you who possess the body? Do you know the body or does the body know you? Be clearly aware that the body is an object and that you who know of, and can observe, the body are quite apart from it. You pervade the entire body and are aware of every part of it but it does not know you. Even the feeling that you have a particular name and form belong only to the mind, and you as the knower of the body and the mind, are apart from both.

You are That, that Reality which cannot have a seer to see it as an object. That, which remains after all knowledge and all ignorance has vanished. You are That reality where all that is illusory has been absorbed; where the duality of a "Thou" and a "That" cannot survive. When the source of consciousness itself has been reached, consciousness disappears. Then, the source of consciousness and all that appears within consciousness is the Self.

A Great Saying (*mahāvākya*) is an identity statement which reveals the non-duality of the Absolute (*Brahman*) and the individual (*Ātman*). How can there be any understanding of this statement so long as the identification with the body as a separate entity does not cease? Or of the understanding that others are not different from oneself?

Who is the "me" who is going to have this understanding? If the one who wants to "achieve" this understanding is none other than the "me" or "ego" or the mind, it cannot be achieved. The thief cannot become a policeman to catch the thief. The mind cannot destroy the mind. The mind or me is a creation within space and time, and it is only that kind of understanding which is not of space and time that can destroy the time-bound mind or ego.

According to Advaita, scriptural knowledge refers to the very constitutive Being of anything whatsoever, *Brahman/Atman*. As such, it is self-evident and absolutely certain. As a 'radical empiricism', to know is to be. As the constitutive fact of all experience, it cannot be denied without self-contradiction. When the knower and the known are identical, certainly it is inescapable. As such, it is prior to all proofs which must necessarily presuppose it. It is the presupposition, both logically and ontologically, which cannot be denied.

However, when an individual hears one of the "great sayings" and still ignorance remains undestroyed, it means that the individual does not possess the necessary pre-requisites. The Advaitins emphasize the importance and pre-requisite of 'qualifications for eligibility'. Ignorance is acknowledged to be the root of all bondage and can be destroyed only by correct knowledge. By correct knowledge what the Advaitin means is the final, immediate plenary experience of the non-difference of the individual (*jīva*) from the Absolute (*Brahman*).

The Advaita Vedānta system expounds an oft-quoted, well-known, four-fold requirement qualifying an aspirant to pursue the path of knowledge. These qualifications are: (1) discrimination of the eternal from the non-eternal; (2) non-attachment to the enjoyment of the fruits of one's actions either in this world or in any other; (3) possession in abundance of the six virtues, *viz.*, calmness, equanimity, turning away from the sense-objects, forbearance, concentration, and faith; and (4) a longing or intense desire for liberation.

According to tradition, only that individual who possesses this four-fold requirement is qualified to study the Vedānta texts under the guidance of a teacher (*guru*) who is not only learned in Scripture but also well-established in Truth. A *guru* is defined as a spiritual master who has attained oneness with the Divine and without whom a disciple cannot attain liberation. The path of knowledge (*jñāna*) itself consists of three steps: 1. hearing (*śravaṇa*); 2. reflection (*manana*); and 3. contemplation (*nididhyāsana*). Hearing means the proper understanding of the meaning of Vedāntic statements. These are of two kinds: intermediary texts and major texts. The former relate to the nature of the world, the nature of the individual, etc. The latter impart the supreme knowledge of non-duality.

Intermediary texts only impart secondary or mediate knowledge of the truth. It is from the major texts that the direct experience of the plenary reality may be obtained. Though, unless one is a qualified aspirant, even the hearing of the major texts will not

produce the plenary experience due to impediments. These impediments are in the form of long-established false beliefs. These false beliefs are to be overcome by reflection and contemplation. When the impediments have been removed, there arises the intuitive experience of non-duality.

Not only does Advaita say that an individual must be qualified (*adhikāri*) to pursue the path of knowledge, but also that the Absolute can be known *only* through religious statements (*śabda pramāṇa*). Perception, which reveals the existence of empirical entities, cannot be a source of knowledge of *Brahman* which is trans-empirical. For one reason or another, all the other valid sources of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) suffer the same fate as perception — with the sole exception of ‘words as knowledge’. There is no conceivable way in which one may come to learn of the non-dual Reality except through religious discourse, i.e. words as knowledge.

According to Suresvara, the knowledge that one obtains from *śruti* texts such as the great sayings (*mahāvākya*), *tat tvam asi* and *aham brahmāsmi*, is immediate and non-relational. Such knowledge directly signifies the transcendental non-dual Reality or *Brahman*. In another place I have maintained that within Advaita there is a tradition which claims that first-level expressions directly name the fact of the non-dual Absolute and second-level language symbolically, figuratively, and secondarily does so. Here, our concern is with the ways in which Suresvara interprets these texts.

Words convey their meaning through three kinds of signification, i.e., primary signification (*mukhya-vṛtti*), secondary signification (*lakṣaṇāvṛtti*), and signification based upon a knowledge of a similarity of qualities (*gauṇī-vṛtti*). As well, one must take into consideration the co-ordinate relation (*viśeṣaṇa-viśeṣya-sambandha*) of the words in the text. These are defined as follows:

1. *Primary Signification*: A word used to convey a sense (through either a genus (*jāti*), quality (*guṇa*), activity (*kriyā*), or relation (*sambandha*) which exists in the sense that is conveyed.

2. *Secondary Signification*: When the literal meaning of a text is unintelligible, then one or more of the words constituting it must convey some other meaning that is invariably connected with the primary meaning. There are three types:

1. *Exclusive*: *Jahallakṣaṇā* is when the implied meaning of a word of expression excludes the primary meaning. The implied meaning is other than, but nonetheless related to, the primary meaning which is completely given up, i.e., in the sentence, 'the village on the river,' the primary meaning of the word 'river' is completely given up and the bank or shore, which is related to the river, is implied.

2. *Inclusive*: *Ajahallakṣaṇā* includes the primary meaning in the implied sense. Here, a meaning is implied which is other than the primary meaning of the word, yet which is related to it with the primary meaning not being given up, i.e., in the

sentence, 'the school works today,' the word 'school' indicates the members of the school. Thus, the primary meaning is maintained and included in the implied meaning.

3. *Quasi-Inclusive: jahad-ajahallakāṣaṇā* is when a part of the primary meaning of a word is given up and part of it is retained, *i.e.*, in the sentence, 'this is that John,' the meaning of the word 'this' refers to John as qualified by present time, place, etc., and the meaning of the word 'that' refers to the same John as qualified by past time, place, etc. The primary meanings of the two terms are incompatible. Thus, in quasi-inclusive implication, part, of the meaning of the words 'this' and 'that', *viz.*, the individual John, is accepted and another part of their meaning, *viz.*, 'as qualified by temporal and spatial aspects, etc.,' is rejected.

3. *Gauṇī-Vṛtti*: Signification based upon the knowledge of a similarity in qualities is when the literal sense of a sentence is unintelligible and one of the words in the sentence conveys some other meaning which has the same qualities that are present in its primary meaning. For instance, "John is a lion" is unintelligible if it means that a man (John) is literally an animal (lion). But it makes sense to understand that John possesses the qualities of valor, cruelty strength, etc. — the qualities which are present in the primary sense of the word 'lion'.

4. *Co-ordinate Relation: Sāmānādhikarāṇya* is the grammatical principle which states that one entity

may have two aspects, i.e., a 'blue lotus' has 'blueness' and 'lotusness'.

5. *Substantive-Attribute Relation: Viśeṣana-viśeṣya-sambandha* is the subject-predicate relation. The flower (lotus) is what is qualified by a color (blue).

This brings us to the heart of the matter. The Great Sayings appear to be unintelligible in their primary meanings. The word 'that' (*tat*) primarily refers to *Brahman* (which is omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent, etc.) and the word 'thou' (*tvam*) primarily refers to the individual self (which is finite, limited, mortal, etc.) The same problem arises in regard to 'I' (*aham*) and *Brahman*. Thus, it is with the above-stated interpretive tools that Suresvara (in his *Naiṣkarmyasiddhi*) will attempt to overcome this dilemma and demonstrate that the Great Sayings do, in fact, coherently signify that *Ātman* is *Brahman*.

Aham Brahmāsmi-I

In the text, 'I am the Absolute' (*aham brahmāsmi*), the opponent claims that 'I' refers to one's ego-nature on the grounds of grammatical co-ordination (*sāmānādhikarāṇya*). Just as there is grammatical co-ordination between the words 'I' and 'fair' in the expression, 'I am fair', so too, there is grammatical co-ordination between 'I' and 'Absolute'.

Suresvara replies that grammatical co-ordination need not imply identity. There are two types of grammatical co-ordination: co-ordination in the sense of sublation (*bādhāyām sāmānādhikarāṇya*) and co-ordination in the sense of oneness (*aikye sāmānādhī-*

karanya). One must employ this grammatical principle carefully. In the expression, 'I am fair', 'fairness' is a characteristic of the body, but, the body is not 'I'.

Suresvara interprets this *mahāvākya* by means of the grammatical principle, co-ordination in the sense of sublation. He gives the example of the judgement, 'this post is a man'. In one's earlier judgement, one believes that an object (a man) is a post. But a subsequent judgement, upon closer scrutiny, reveals that it is post. Likewise, one's original judgement believes that the 'I' refers to one's ego-nature, while a subsequent judgement sublates this earlier view and reveals that 'I' is the Absolute. Upon realization, the ego-nature is sublated. The 'I' with adjuncts is not the Self; the 'I', in its essential nature, is the Self.

Aham Brahmāsmi-II

Suresvara demonstrates another way in which to interpret this *mahāvākya*. In its primary (*mukhya* or *prasiddha vṛtti*) meaning, 'I' equals one's ego-nature. Because this primary meaning is unintelligible, one must resort to a secondary meaning (*lakṣaṇā vṛtti*). The type of secondary meaning that Suresvara invokes here is exclusive or *jahallakṣaṇā*. The primary meaning of 'I' (consciousness with attributes) is completely given up and a secondary meaning (consciousness without attributes), other than but nonetheless related to the primary meaning, is accepted.

Aham Brahmāsmi-III

Suresvara demonstrates that there is still a third way in which *aham brahmāsmi* can be interpreted. There exists a similarity between the Self and the ego.

Both have the common qualities of subtly, inwardness, and behave as if they are the perceiving Self. On this account, one may interpret the text by means of signification based upon the knowledge of similarity of qualities (*gaunī vṛtti*). Thus, the Self is implied by a word ('I') which primarily refers to the ego — even though the ego is material and insentient and cannot be equated with *Brahman*.

Aham Brahmāsmi-IV

Finally, Suresvara interprets *aham brahmasmi* directly or in a primary sense to mean 'I' am the 'Absolute' on the strength of the knowledge that the ego-notion cannot exist without the Self. All that is not the Self, is not Consciousness, is not-real and therefore cannot even appear to exist without the aid of the Self. Thus, in a peculiar and interesting twist, 'I' (or any word for that matter) must refer to the constitutive being of anything whatsoever and as such designates that which is self-evident, immediate, direct, and certain, i.e., the Self.

Thus, the word 'I' may be applied to the Absolute by: (1) grammatical co-ordination in the sense of sublation (2) indirect exclusive usage (3) figurative usage, and (4) primary meaning. Suresvara shows considerable ingenuity by demonstrating that whatever sense one chooses to take the word 'I' to mean, whether primary, secondary, or figurative, the text is in any case both intelligible and meaningful.

Tat-tvam-asi — I

According to Suresvara, the knowledge which is derived from *tat tvam asi* is immediate and non-rela-

tional. Normally sentences are relational and yet we will observe that a relational sentence, *tat tvam asi*, will give a non-relational meaning. The relational, verbal sense (*vākyaṛtha*) of the text will give a non-verbal, unitary, impartite meaning (*avākyaṛtha*). Suresvara is fond of emphasizing that non-relational *Brahman*-knowledge arises from a relational sentence.

There are three steps/considerations which must be taken into account in the understanding of a *mahāvākya*:

1. *Grammatical Co-ordination (sāmānādhikarāṇya-jñāna)*: This is the grammatical co-ordination or relation which exists between two terms, i.e., 'blue lotus' or '*tat tvam asi*'.
2. *Subject-Predicate Relation (viśeṣaṇa-viśeṣyatā-jñāna)*: This is knowledge which has a subject-predicate relation.
3. *Indirect Implication (lakṣya-lakṣaṇa-sambandha-jñāna)*: This is implied meaning inherent in the terms of a statement.

Now, a sentence sense (*vākyaṛtha*) can be of two kinds:

1. *Relation of Duality (bheda-sāmsarga)*: In which the meaning of a sentence is conveyed through a relation obtained among the words conveying the difference, i.e., 'bring the cow with a stick' (wherein, from the usage of the various words, difference is known — stick/cow/bring/etc.

2. *Relation of Non-duality (abheda-sāmsarga)*: In which oneness is known through the relation of the

words, i.e., 'blue-lotus' or '*tat tvam asi*'. This is of two kinds:

- i. *Relation with Oneness (samsarga abheda)*: In which there is oneness with relation; the object is one though it has multiple meanings/attributes.
- ii. *Identity Statement (svarūpa abheda)*: In which a non-relational sentence in which two entities referred to are actually identical/one.

Before we actually observe how Suresvara interprets the *mahāvākya* '*tat tvam asi*', it should be noted that an understanding of a *mahāvākya* involves a two-fold benefit. Even in an empirical statement which involves grammatical co-ordination, there is this two-fold benefit. For instance, in the statement, 'blue lotus', both the color 'blue' benefits as well as the flower 'lotus'. The idea of 'blueness' removes all other possible colors from the lotus and 'that' which is blue is precisely a 'lotus'. Thus, each is enriched and benefits from their association.

In a similar manner, '*tat*', by its association with '*tvam*' removes the misconception that it is remote unattainable, hidden, etc., and reveals itself as that which is ever-manifest, immediate, direct, and the inner-most Self. In a similar manner, '*tvam*', in its association with '*tat*' removes the misconception that it is mortal, finite, bound, and imperfect and reveals itself as that which is self-existent, ever-pure, ever-free, and immortal. Thus, what was conceived of as the farthest of the far is revealed as nearer than the nearest; what appeared to be unattainable is already attained; what is ever hidden is really self-manifest. Or, as Gauḍapāda said, "This view (that there is

duality) is only for the sake of instruction. When the truth is known, all this duality is gone.”

Now, according to Suresvara, there are three steps or considerations to take in interpreting the meaning of ‘*tat tvam asi*’:

1. *Sāmānādhikāraṇya*: The connotations of the two terms ‘That’ and ‘thou’ are different. ‘That’ refers to *Brahman* which is omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient, etc., and ‘thou’ refers to the individual self which is finite, bound, limited, etc. When the meanings of two words are different, one usually thinks that their denotations are also different. However, where there is grammatical co-ordination in a sentence, the things referred to are not different. The words ‘That’ and ‘thou’ are in grammatical co-ordination and thus refer to the same object, even as ‘blue’ and ‘lotus’ refer to the same object.

2. *Viśeṣaṇa-Viśeṣya Sambandha*: In order to do justice to the different connotations of, and the co-ordinate relation between, these two terms, Suresvara invokes the subject-predication relation. In the expression, ‘the blue lotus’, one object is denoted while, being a flower, also possesses a blue color. Thus, though the two terms have different connotations, they have the same denotation. This way of construing the meaning is known as ‘identity which involves relation’ (*abheda-samsarga*).

3. *Lakṣya-Lakṣaṇa Sambandha*: There is a difficulty involved in interpreting ‘*tat tvam asi*’ by *abheda samsarga*. It works well with ‘the blue

lotus' because there is a 'subject-predicate relation'. But with the *mahāvākya*, there is an identity wherein 'Thou' cannot be an attribute of 'That'. Thus, one must apply the relation of non-duality (*svarūpa abheda*). It would be unintelligible to identify 'That' with 'thou' in view of the fact that the determinants of the two terms are mutually incompatible. In other words, this statement cannot be treated as an attributive judgement. The import of the statement is identity — but not a relational identity. Thus, the non-relational meaning of the text can only be revealed by a recourse to its implied meaning.

Thus, according to Suresvara, "On our view, the relations such as *sāmānādhikārya* (which connect words and their meanings) directly bring out the non-verbal import of '*Tat tvam asi*' like the identity of ether through the cancellation of the different adjuncts."

What he has emphasized is that, in employing the secondary meaning of the terms in the *mahāvākya*, he has removed the incompatible determinants of each term. By removing omniscience, omnipotence, etc., from 'That' and by removing limitedness, boundness, fallibility, etc., from 'thou' — while retaining the common element between them, i.e., consciousness, he has demonstrated that *tat tvam asi* conveys a sense of non-relational identity.

ŚRĪ SUREŚVARA ON ŚRĪ ŚAṄKARA

विष्णोः पादानुगां यां निखिलभवनुदं शङ्करोऽवाप योगात्
 सर्वज्ञं ब्रह्मसंस्थं मुनिगणसहितं सम्यग्भ्यर्च्य भक्त्या ।
 दिद्यां गङ्गामिवाहं प्रवरगुणनिधेः प्राप्य वेदान्तदीप्तां
 कारुण्यात्तामवोचं जनिमृतिनिवहध्वस्तये दुःखितेभ्यः ॥

Just as Śaṅkara (Śiva) obtained through His power of *yoga* the *Gaṅgā* which emanates from the feet of Viṣṇu and which purifies the entire world, even so Śaṅkara obtained through his power of *yoga* the knowledge which reveals the abode of Viṣṇu and which destroys the entire world of bondage. Having duly worshipped with devotion the omniscient Śaṅkara, who is ever-established in Brahman, who is surrounded by a host of sages, I obtained from him, a treasure of excellent qualities, the knowledge revealed by the *Vedānta*, even as Bhagīratha obtained from Śaṅkara (Śiva) the *Gaṅgā* spoken about in *śruti*; and I have declared it (the knowledge revealed in *Vedānta* in the *Naiṣkarmyasiddhi*) out of compassion for the benefit of the suffering people so that the course of innumerable births and deaths may be put an end to.

The *Naiṣkarmyasiddhi*. IV, 76

PRIMAL CULTURE: ITS UNIVERSALISM AND RELATIVISM *

R. Balasubramanian

I

The Tradition of Primal Culture

The view of life as well as the way of life constitutes the culture of a people. Philosophy and religion, the aspirations and achievements, both material and spiritual — all these form the culture of a people. It is obvious that all these have to be cultivated by the people making use of what is provided for them in their own constitution as well as in the constitution of the world. Human beings have been provided with three faculties, cognitive, affective, and conative. They are placed in a world with resources of various kinds which have to be utilized with utmost care and consideration for their benefit as well as for the benefit of other beings in the world. Human beings, who are called *jīvas*, are as creative as God is. What they

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achieve through their creation is culture. Their creation is as important as God's creation. That is why the Hindu tradition speaks of two kinds of creation — *jīva-sṛṣṭi*, i.e. creation by human beings, and *Īśvara-sṛṣṭi*, i.e. creation by God. The whole realm of culture belongs to the former. It is what is assiduously cultivated by the people as a result of their cognition, desire, and conation. A culture which centres round the concept of primal Being or Spirit which is looked upon as the source and support of all beings, sentient and insentient, is called primal culture. Though Indian culture as it is today is composite in character containing Hindu, Jaina, Bauddha, Islamic, and Christian elements, it is predominantly Hindu in character whose antiquity is as old as the Vedas. The Hindu culture is the Vedic culture; and the Vedic culture is primal culture. It is believed that the Vedic culture took a definite shape between 2500 B.C. and 500 B.C. There is a mixture of the temporal and the eternal in the Vedic culture. The earliest conception of the primal Being as one and infinite, as that which encompasses everything, sentient and insentient, occurs in the Vedic literature. It is this aspect which has endured through time absorbing features coming from other religions and philosophies. Jainism and Buddhism which originated in the Indian soil protested against the Vedic priesthood and ritualism. However, they have much in common with the philosophy of the Upaniṣads, which form part of the Vedas. The basic teachings of Islam and Christianity are not opposed to the teachings of the Upaniṣads. It is not, therefore, surprising that the primal culture of the Vedic times is the support of the present-day Indian culture which is composite in character.

Primal culture of the Vedas is, indeed, complex because it contains both pre-axial and axial features. There are at least five criteria for characterizing it as primal. First of all, it has no name. One must speak of it and identify it with reference to the people who practised it. Strictly speaking, we cannot even call it as Hindu culture. Second, it holds that the world around is controlled by various unseen powers. Third, myths and rituals play an important part in it. Fourth, it is totally pragmatic. Fifth, it is holistic unifying God, humans, and the world. It permeates all aspects of life of the people revealing the unity of theory and practice. Also, it views the life of the people in relation to the visible world around on the one hand and invisible power which supports, sustains, and controls humans and nature on the other. If we apply these criteria to the Vedic culture, we have to say that it is primal.

There are also reasons for calling it axial. According to Jaspers,¹ the salient features of the axial period are: *rationality*, which clarifies experience in terms of intelligible categories; *spirituality*, which reveals new dimensions in humans and nature and opens up avenues of transcendence; *awareness of the primal Being* as one and non-dual; *ethical discipline* which formulates several paths converging on the same goal; and the *pursuit of salvation* as an individual affair. The Vedic culture, when judged by these criteria, is undoubtedly axial.

Primal culture has both perennial and temporal features. While the basic doctrines constitute its perennial dimension, religious practices covering a wide range are temporal and transitory. Decadence

sets in when the temporal and transitory elements gain importance almost to the point of ignoring or side-tracking the perennial features. Historical, social, and political changes necessitate modification, sometimes radical, sometimes minor, in the religious practices and social norms of the people, while the doctrinal side of it remains intact. Continuity of the essentials amidst the changing flow of life helps to preserve the cultural tradition.

Let us now identify the two structures, the essential and the non-essential, of primal culture. The essential structure which has endured through the vicissitudes of time contains the basic doctrine that the primal Being is the source, support, and end of everything, sentient as well as insentient. This basic doctrine may be characterized as the major premise of primal culture. In the "Hymn of Creation" the Vedic seer speaks about "That One" (*tad-ekam*), which is the ground, the uncaused cause, of everything. The hymn says:

That One, breathless, breathed by its own nature. Apart from it there was nothing whatsoever ... Therefore rose desire in the beginning; desire, the primal seed and germ of mind...²

This passage is reminiscent of a text from the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* which reads:

In the beginning, my dear, this was Being alone, one only without a second... It desired: may I become many, may I grow forth...³

The monistic vision which is a notable feature of primal culture is obvious in the two passages cited above. It must be borne in mind that there is no conflict between polytheism and monotheism, or between polytheism and monism as understood in primal culture. Though they are in each pair two extremes in the religio-philosophical thinking, they have been accommodated as different standpoint at different levels. They are irreconcilable only when they are placed together at the same level. One of the oft-quoted hymns of the *Ṛg-veda* provides a clue for reconciling the problem of many gods and goddesses and one Godhead. It says: "What is but one, wise people call by different names — as Agni, Yama, and Mātariśvan."⁴ Reference to gods such as Agni and Yama may be replaced by the well known gods of the Hindu pantheon such as Śiva, Viṣṇu, Śakti and so on. Śaṅkara explains the distinction between the supreme Godhead and its various forms such as Śiva, Viṣṇu, and so on as the distinction between the "unconditioned" reality and its "conditioned" forms. Agni and Yama are conditioned beings endowed with a name and form and other qualities whereas the One is unconditioned, devoid of name and form, specifications and qualities. Since it is the one Reality that is worshipped in many forms such as Agni, Śiva, and so on, one who worships Agni or Śiva should not quarrel with one who worships Yama or Viṣṇu, Agni, Yama, Śiva, and Viṣṇu being the conditioned aspects of the same Reality. This significant idea of the *Ṛg-vedic* hymn has been accepted and further elaborated by the Upaniṣads. It provides a theoretical framework for religious harmony, which is one of the characteristic features of primal culture, and which

has received special emphasis right from the beginning till this day.

The logic which holds good for solving the problem of one Godhead and a plurality of gods is extended to another area. Though the one Being (for which the Upaniṣad uses the terms "Brahman" and "Ātman") is in all beings, sentient and insentient, differences among human beings arising from gender, race, colour, age and so on created all kinds of social problems. Though all human beings are *essentially* one, as the same Being or Spirit is in all of them, differences arise because of the mind-sense-body adjunct, which is the conditioning factor. So, all humans are one, though there are differences among them in their mental abilities, sensory capacities, and bodily features. These differences are not essential, but adventitious. In support of this idea, we have the following text of the Upaniṣad:

You are woman. You are man. You are the youth and the maiden too. You, as an old man, totter along with a staff. Being born, you are facing in every direction⁵

As in the case of religious harmony, primal culture provides a theoretical base for the ideal of social harmony by emphasizing the essential oneness of all humans notwithstanding the unavoidable differences among them arising from the mind-sense-body complex associated with each one of them.

What makes primal culture valid for all times and in all places is its *inclusiveness*. It includes everything by providing a place for it in the whole. Earlier,

we have referred to the principle of standpoints or levels, which can be meaningfully applied to different areas of life — religious, social, political, and so on. Broadly speaking, there are two standpoints, absolute and relative. These two standpoints are called *pāramārthika* and *vyāvahārika*. The Upaniṣads make use of them in the explanation of the epistemological, metaphysical, axiological and soteriological problems. What is true at one level may not be so at another level. A dream-lion which appears to be true or real in dream experience loses its truth or reality at the waking level. What is accepted as a value at one time may turn out to be a disvalue at another time. The pluralistic universe which is accepted as real may cease to exist in the state of liberation. The *pāramārthika* or absolute standpoint is higher whereas the *vyāvahārika* or the relative standpoint is lower. The higher standpoint which transcends the lower does not invalidate it. One who has moved from the relative to the absolute standpoint knows the truth of the former; but one who is tied up to the relative standpoint cannot understand the truth of the absolute standpoint. Consider the case of two persons who climb up a mountain in order to reach the peak. While one of them reaches the peak, the other, due to some disability, is not able to proceed beyond the foot-hill. One who has reached the summit knows what kind of experience is available to one at the foot-hill; but one who is at the foot-hill does not understand the kind of experience one has at the top. We have to apply this logic to the different kinds of religious experience without subverting the *pāramārthika-vyāvahārika* hierarchy. The Upaniṣads describe the two levels as higher wisdom and lower knowledge.

Experience of plurality is quite common; it is quite natural. No special effort or discipline is required for such an experience. But experience of oneness is uncommon. One does not get it without special effort or appropriate discipline. The transition is from the common to the uncommon. A text of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* describes the two levels of experience as follows:

For, where there is duality as it were, there one sees the other, one smells the other, one knows the other... But, where everything has become just one's own self, by what and whom should one smell, by what and whom should one know?⁶

Without disregarding the pragmatic value of the day-to-day empirical knowledge, primal culture emphasizes the importance of higher wisdom. It will be of interest to quote Wittgenstein in this connection. He says:

In religion every level of devoutness must have its appropriate form of expression which has no sense at a lower level. This doctrine, which means something at a higher level, is null and void for someone who is still at the lower level; he *can* only understand it *wrongly* and so these words are *not* valid for such a person.

For instance, at my level the Pauline doctrine of predestination is ugly nonsense, irreligiousness. Hence it is not suitable for me, since the only use I could make of the picture I am offered would be a wrong one.

If it is a good and godly picture, then it is so for someone at a quite different level, who must use it in his life in a way completely different from anything that would be possible for me.⁷

I shall now consider two other doctrines which are essential to primal culture. They hold that nature is spiritual and that the human being is divine. These two doctrines may be characterized as the minor premises of primal culture.

The large-scale violence that we deliberately do to the elements of nature, such as the earth and the water, the air and the sky, has made us compunctious such that we begin to think in terms of the spirituality of matter. The remorse that has overtaken us makes us think that matter, being a manifestation of spirit, is essentially spiritual and that to harm it is to harm one's self or spirit. The separation between spirit and matter, which has been the problematic in Western philosophy ever since the time of Descartes, led to the postulation of two realms, a realm of rational beings who are free and a realm of the material world which is subject to causal necessity and thereby has produced a tension between freedom and determinism, between philosophical idealism and scientific materialism which constitutes the core of the Enlightenment crisis. Another difficulty has also resulted from the Cartesian dualism. The claim that the human beings are rational and, therefore, free, that they are superior to nature, and that they must be, in the words of Descartes, "masters and possessors of nature", has led to the unscrupulous, cruel, and destructive despoilation of nature in

the name of the quest for knowledge, scientific development, and technological progress. Fortunately for us, there is a global awakening to the significance of the earth. As there is a strong desire to be rooted not only in the earth, but also in the primal Being which is the source and support of everything, the crisis of modernity compels us to reconsider the message of primal culture which did not separate spirit and matter. The truth is that spirit and matter can be distinguished, but not separated. According to primal culture, earth and heaven and other phenomena of nature are not "objects" of knowledge in the epistemological sense, or "inferior objects" to be tamed and conquered, to be explored and experimented upon in the scientific and technological sense, for the purpose of satisfying the ever-increasing needs of humans, but are forces of support and sustenance of human beings; and so they are worthy of love and veneration. The primal Being is Brahman which is identical with Ātman. Since the primal Being is spiritual, the material world which is a manifestation of it is also spiritual. There is a text of the Upaniṣad which says:

From that Brahman which is Ātman, was produced ether. From ether emerged air. From air was born fire. From fire was created water. From water came earth...⁸

The Upaniṣads make use of the primordial symbol of the tree in order to convey the spiritual heritage of the world. The tree that they speak of is not only the familiar banyan tree (*nyagrodha*) which has its roots in the earth, but also the unfamiliar peepul tree (*aśvattha*) whose roots, unlike those of other trees, are

said to be above the earth. Let us begin with the uncommon tree which is described in the Upaniṣad as well as in the *Bhagavad-gītā*. The *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* describes it as follows:

This is the beginningless *aśvattha* tree that has its roots above and branches below. That (which is the root) is pure; that is Brahman; and that is called immortal. On that (Brahman) are fixed all the worlds. None transcends that. This, verily, is that.⁹

This tree is called *aśvattha* because it is constantly changing. Since the beginning of the world is not known, the tree which symbolizes the world is said to be beginningless. Brahman, which is the root of the tree, is said to be "above" in the sense that, as the cause of the tree or the world, it has ontological superiority or priority. In the case of the familiar banyan tree described in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* we are told that a mighty tree will be alive so long as its sustaining principle, "the living self", is present in it. The fruit of the tree contains the very subtle "essence" in the seed, which is its sustaining principle. In the same way the entire manifested universe arises from the subtle essence of the primal Being.

The symbol of the tree, like that of earth and other phenomena of nature, is extremely significant. A tree cannot exist without the root. A rootless tree will not be alive. The symbol of the tree, therefore, suggests that a people or a nation should be rooted in the spiritual tradition which has shaped and sustained it. A society which has become rootless is no better

than a rootless tree, which is dead wood. Secondly, just as the root of the tree is not visible, the primal Being which is the source and support of the entire universe is not visible. Though the root of the tree is not visible, its existence does not require any proof. Even so is the case with regard to the cause of the universe. There is one more significance in the symbolism of the tree. According to Cousins, a tree symbolizes a double dynamic — its rootedness in particularity and its branching out into universality. In the case of the banyan tree, it sends new roots from the branches into the earth suggesting that the source is also the end. It conveys an important message to us. No society can be static. To be healthy it has to be dynamic. Like the new roots from the branches of the tree, it has to show new developments. However, the changes that take place in a society, like the new roots developed by the banyan tree, must be grounded in the soil of the tradition so that they may support the tree of society.

Primal culture emphasizes not only the spirituality of nature, but also the divinity of all living beings including humans. Human beings are essentially spiritual or divine because the primal Being or Spirit indwells in them, though it remains concealed by the material outfit, the mind-sense-body complex, through which it functions. The principal texts of the Upaniṣads, *mahāvākyas* as they are called, identify the jīva, the human being with Brahman. This conception of the human being which is one of the integral features of primal culture greatly influenced contemporary leaders like Swami Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi. God is not in a remote place in the heavens;

on the contrary God is the self and body of the human being. In the words of Swami Vivekananda:

The God of heaven becomes the God in nature, and the God in nature becomes the God who is in nature, and the God who is nature becomes the God within the temple of the body, and the God dwelling in the temple of the body at last becomes the temple itself, becomes the soul and man — and there Vedānta reaches the last words it can teach.¹⁰

II

The Renewal of Primal Culture

Primal culture of the Vedic times was renewed from time to time; and each renewal which was a kind of renaissance reiterated the essential principles of primal culture even though the non-essential features were modified or replaced as the situation demanded. Thus, there was both continuity and change in primal culture — continuity with regard to the three essential doctrines which constitute the *philosophia perennis* and change with regard to the non-essentials connected with rituals and other practices, ethical norms and codes of conduct, principles of social organization and institutional structure. If primal culture which has spanned nearly four millennia is still relevant today, it is because of the universality of its essential principles. If it has survived the ravages of time, it is because of its flexibility in respect of the non-essentials, which are bound to change. So there is conservation as well as change in primal culture. As Whitehead observes:

Mere change without conservation is a passage from nothing to nothing. Its final integration yields mere transient non-entity. Mere conservation without change cannot conserve. For after all, there is a flux of circumstances and the freshness of being evaporates under mere repetition.¹¹

The first renewal of primal culture took place with the advent of the Upaniṣads. There was a long time-lag between the Mantras and the Upaniṣads. During the transition from the Mantras to the Brāhmaṇas, sacrifices of various kinds became so complicated, mechanical, and dominant that life was almost controlled by priests. It was at this time that the Upaniṣads emerged and renewed the essential principles of primal culture. The second renewal took place soon after the fall of the Mauryan empire. It was the time when Buddhism was in the decline. This time the renewal of primal culture was achieved through the two epics, the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa*. The third renewal took place with the emergence of the *bhakti* movement about the beginning of the ninth century. When the *bhakti* movement was at its peak, the historical situation witnessed the establishment of the Muslim kingdom and the Moghul empire and then the British rule. Notwithstanding the *bhakti* movement, there was an all-round decline. There was an urgent need for renaissance in all spheres of life. The perennial elements of primal culture were of great help to the social reformers, political leaders, and religious personalities.

The renaissance that took place in the beginning of the nineteenth century is important for two reasons.

First of all, it is a period in which a number of socio-religious movements came into existence articulating the changing social experience of the people within the framework of tradition. Secondly, it has vindicated the hold that the tradition of primal culture has on the minds of the people. Commenting on the importance of the continuity of tradition and the need for change, Radhakrishnan observes:

We cannot restore the practices of the Vedic period, for that would be to deny the dialectic of history. Again, we cannot start *de novo* as if India has no history and as if people could change their nature merely by taking thought. Possibilities must be grounded in the nature of the actual. Civilization must live on the lines of their own experience. Like individuals, even nations cannot borrow experience from others. They may provide us with light, but our own history provides us with the conditions of action. The only revolutions that endure are those that are rooted in the past. We can make our own history, but we cannot do so at will, in conditions of our own choosing. Culture is tradition and tradition is memory. The duration of this memory depends on the continuous appearance of creative personalities.¹²

Great personalities associated with the Brahma Samaj, the Arya Samaj, the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda order, the Theosophical Society, and also sages like Ramana Maharshi, mystics like Sri Aurobindo, academics like Radhakrishnan, and political leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, examined both the essential and

the non-essential structures of primal culture and came out with two kinds of responses, positive and negative. Their attitude was positive with regard to the essentials of primal culture: they affirmed their validity and accepted them since they fulfilled the demands of the rational critique. But they were negative in their response to some of the variables of the tradition of primal culture: they questioned their tenability, rejected some of them, suggested modifications in some others, and gave a new meaning and significance to some, taking into consideration the changes that have taken place in the social, political and economic spheres of society.

The Brahmo Samaj, for example, denounced polytheism and idol-worship as sinful, deprecated caste distinctions, and made faith in the doctrines of karma and rebirth optional and also questioned scriptural authority, but it did not reject the three essential doctrines of the tradition of primal culture. Positively speaking, it strengthened the tradition by popularizing social reform and by rousing the orthodox Hindus to organize themselves and work for a revival of their tradition through self-awareness and self-criticism.

Though the Arya Samaj was critical of the Brahmo Samaj, it also condemned, like the Brahmo Samaj, some of the non-essentials of primal culture such as animal sacrifices, priest-craft, idolatry, ancestor-worship, the caste system, untouchability, and child marriages. It gave a new interpretation to some of the traditional concepts. *Dharma*, according to it, is the practice of equitable justice; *artha* is righteously acquired wealth; the enjoyment of legitimate

desires with the help of honestly acquired wealth is *kāma*. Again, it holds that *varṇa* and *āśrama* of an individual should be determined by one's merits. With its call of "Back to the Vedas", it has upheld the basic doctrines of primal culture.

Swami Vivekananda as a renaissance leader emphasized the need for the unity of theory and practice for the pursuit of the basic principles of primal culture. His lectures on the "Principles and Practices of Vedānta" testify to the importance of this problem. He has played a magnificent role as a critical theorist warning his countrymen in the most unambiguous terms about the danger of the gap between the theory of Vedānta, which speaks of the innate freedom of everyone, and the problem of its practice on a hierarchical social structure which accepts social inequality and denies social justice. The Vedāntic idealism on which primal culture is based must be shown to be socially relevant, and the socio-economic life of the people in its turn must be inspired by the Vedāntic idealism. The Vedāntic idealism without social relevance is empty, and the social life without the Vedāntic idealism is blind. Swami Vivekananda's exhortation that no one should preach religion to an empty stomach and that a Vedāntist is one who has reached the universal brotherhood should be viewed in the context of the theory-practice problem that engaged his attention. No renaissance leader, it must be borne in mind, was so vocal about this problem as Swami Vivekananda. He declared:

When a man has reached the highest, when he sees neither man nor woman, neither sex

nor creed, nor colour, nor birth, nor any of these differentiations, but goes beyond and finds that divinity which is the real man behind every human being, then alone he has reached the universal brotherhood, and that man alone is a Vedāntist.¹³

Swami Vivekananda wants to drive home two points arising from the basic doctrines of primal culture. One of them is connected with the body, and other, with the spiritual nature, of the human being. The human body should neither be disregarded nor despised. Hunger, malnutrition, and disease which are due to poverty are symptoms of the economic illness of a society in which there is economic exploitation of one class or group by another. There is, therefore, the need for rendering help to the poor through proper reorganization of the economic structure of society. The disrespect to the body of a person because of birth, or caste, or gender is a symptom of social sickness arising from the concept of discrimination operating in society. This, again, calls for a rearrangement of the social relations among the people. As for the spiritual nature of the human being, we have to treat all human beings as rational and moral agents capable of reason and will, and therefore, as capable of rights of various kinds such as liberty, equality, fraternity, and so on, which have to be guaranteed to them. All attempts at the reorganization of society must be based upon the moral principle of universalizability which, again, is derived from the universal competence for the pursuit of knowledge and the performance of work every human being is capable of due to the possession of divine nature, as shown

by Swami Vivekananda, following the Vedāntic tradition.

One more renaissance leader whose life and teachings, which reflect primal culture, have shaped independent India is Mahatma Gandhi. He accepted the essential doctrines of primal culture and showed their application to the different spheres of life. Like other renaissance leaders, he examined some of the ideas, beliefs, and practices connected with the non-essential structure of the tradition of primal culture, rejected some of them as untenable, and reinterpreted some others in the context of the new situation after India got its independence. He formulated a new *dharma* suitable for the people and practised it. He also showed through his writings and in his lectures that this new *dharma* is rooted in the tradition and that it is an incarnation of the most ancient, never-old, but ever new *sanātana dharma* which was pursued and practised by generations of people in situations which have been changing from time to time.

According to Gandhi, the opening verse of the *Īśāvāsya Upaniṣad* contains everything essential to primal culture. It says: "All this, whatsoever moves on earth, is pervaded by the Lord. Support yourself by surrendering all this. Do not covet the wealth of any man." He said in one of his lectures that Hinduism would live for ever if this one verse is remembered by the people even though all the Upaniṣads and all other scriptures of the Hindus are lost. He finds in this verse (1) the idea of the presence of God in everything, living and non-living, justifying all the three premises of primal culture, (2) his concept of surrender to the divine will, (3) his belief in the brother-

hood not only of all human beings, but of all living beings as well, (4) his spirit of renunciation, and (5) his ideal of service to his fellow beings. He interpreted primal culture in terms of *satyāgraha*, *ahimsā*, and *swadeshi*. "*Satyāgraha*" is "clinging on to truth". The word "*satyam*" means real or truth. He said that "Truth is God". One must cling on to truth which is real, which is the support of everything. And, the means to truth is *ahimsā*, which means non-violence. To quote Gandhi:

Ahimsā and truth are so intertwined that it is difficult to disentangle and separate them. They are like the two sides of a coin or rather of a smooth unstamped metallic disc. Who can say which is the obverse and which is the reverse? Nevertheless, *ahimsā* is the means. Truth is the end.¹⁴

To Gandhi, the word "*ahimsā*", though apparently negative in form, is positive in its import: it must be understood in the sense of universal love. On the basis of his conception of truth and theory of *ahimsā*, he condemned untouchability, advocated women's rights, pleaded for cow-protection, and reinterpreted *varṇa-dharma*. While the caste system, as it is prevalent and practised, is an evil, the *varṇa* system as originally conceived is commendable according to Gandhi, because it is based on (1) spiritual economy, (2) division of labour, (3) the principle of heredity, and (4) the equality and oneness of all life. The principle of *swadeshi* which he advocates is an integral aspect of the new *dharma* formulated by him. He defines *swadeshi* "as the spirit in us which restricts us to the use and

service of our immediate surroundings to the exclusion of the more remote." According to him, the principle of *swadeshi* is applicable to politics, economics, education, and religion. It provides a programme for constructive action through social service, love of one's neighbour, caring for one's social surroundings, proper utilization of economic resources, decentralised political administration, healthy religious practices and a life-promoting and life-sustaining ecological environment. It is a principle for all, Indians as well as others. In short, *satyāgraha*, *ahimsā* and *swadeshi* are the basic principles of the new *dharma*, which Gandhi advocated for the preservation of tradition in the new age. Every one, according to Gandhi, has a place in the cultural milieu. Everything belongs to God; and everyone should act as a trustee of what is given to him contributing to the good of the whole of which he is a part. Wittgenstein echoes the Gandhian way of life when he says:

A culture is like a big organization which assigns each of its members a place where he can work in the spirit of the whole; and it is perfectly fair for his power to be measured by the contribution he succeeds in making to the whole enterprise.¹⁵

The essential principles of primal culture are universal. But they are surrounded by concepts and norms, theories and practices which are relative. They provide for continuity and change respectively.

NOTES

1. Karl Jaspers, *The Origin and Goal of History* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1953). pp. 3-4.
2. *R̥g-veda*, 10.129.
3. 6.2.1-3.
4. *R̥g-veda*, 1.164.46.
5. *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣads*, 4.2.
6. 4.5.15.
7. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, Reprinted 1988), p.32e.
8. *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, 2.1.
9. 2.3.1.
10. Swami Vidyatmananda (ed.), *What Religion Is in the words of Swami Vivekananda* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1978), p. 67.
11. A N Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World* (Cambridge: University Press, 1953), p. 250.
12. S. Radhakrishnan, *Religion and Society* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1969), p. 113.
13. Swami Vidyatmananda (ed.). *op. cit.*, p. 49.
14. *From Yervada Mandir*, p. 14.
15. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *op. cit.*, p. 6e.

VĀKYAVṚTTI*

Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda

Introduction

The *Upaniṣads*, *Brahmasūtras* and the *Bhagavadgītā*, collectively referred to as the *Prasthānatraya*, form the basis of the different systems of Vedānta. The *Upaniṣads* contain the great enunciations known as the Mahāvākyas such as the '*Tat tvam asi*', forming the basic principle of philosophical discussions. Among the short tracts known as *Prakarana* texts, establishing the *advaita* philosophy, the *Vākyavṛtti* of Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda was composed along with the other *Prakarana* texts while he was staying with his preceptor Govinda Bhagavatpāda on the banks of the river Narmadā. It occupies an important position.

It is a tradition to convey one's obeisance to one's preceptor before commencing the texts of this type. Hence the Ācārya prefixes the work with two verses, the first making obeisance to Lord Nārāyaṇa and the second to the preceptor. In this work the Ācārya explains the significance of the statement '*Tat tvam asi*'

* Translation and notes by Dr. N. Gangadharan

in 51 verses composed in the *anuṣṭubh* metre. It is in the form of a dialogue between the preceptor and an earnest pupil, the preceptor dispelling the doubts of the latter. He explains at first the significance of the term 'tvam', then of the term 'tat' and then shows how the explicit sense conveyed by the two words cannot explain the purport of the statement and explains the identity of the individual soul and the supreme soul indicated by the two terms.

In the concluding verses the Ācārya explains the mode of practice to be followed by an aspirant for shedding the attachment for worldly objects as the pivotal part of the practice.

वाक्यवृत्तिः

[1]

सर्गस्थितिप्रलयहेतुमचिन्त्यशक्तिं
 विश्वेश्वरं विदितविश्वमनन्तमूर्तिम् ।
 निर्मुक्तबन्धनमपारसुखाम्बुराशिं
 श्रीवल्लभं विमलबोधघनं नमामि ॥

I make obeisance to the beloved Lord of Goddess Lakṣmī the prime cause of the world for its creation, preservation and destruction, possessing inconceivable powers, omnipotent, omniscient, of infinite forms, free from all bondages, an ocean of unbounded bliss, and an embodiment of pure knowledge.

The term 'śrī' denotes Goddess Lakṣmī and 'śrivalabha', her consort Lord Viṣṇu. The reference to him as the cause of the three actions — creation, preservation and

destruction denotes the three attributes — *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. Each one of the expressions here refer to his attributes such as omniscient, omnipresent and omnipotent. This verse refers to his forms both with attributes and without attributes and makes obeisance to such a form.

[2]

यस्य प्रसादाद्दहमेव विष्णु-
 मय्येव सर्वं परिकल्पितं च ।
 इत्थं विजानामि सदात्मरूपं
 तस्याङ्घ्रिपद्म प्रणतोऽस्मि नित्यम् ॥

I ever bow to that pair of lotus feet (of the preceptor) on account of whose grace I know my sentient form of the self to the effect that I indeed am Viṣṇu and that the entire world is superimposed on me.

This verse explains that true knowledge has to be gained by the grace of the preceptor.

[3]

तापत्रयार्कसन्तप्तः कश्चिदुद्विग्नमानसः ।
 शमादिसाधनैर्युक्तः सद्गुरुम्परिवृच्छति ॥

An aspirant endowed with the means such as the tranquility etc., being scorched by the three kinds of sun-like sufferings and becoming perplexed in his mind asks the virtuous preceptor.

The expression '*tāpatraya*' denotes the three kinds of worldly sufferings — caused by the mind (*ādhyātmika*), by the beings (*ādhibhautika*) and by fate (*ādhidaivika*). The

expression 'śamādisādhanaih' refers to the four indispensable qualifications laid down for an aspirant for liberation — discrimination of the perpetual and non-perpetual objects (*nityānityavastuviveka*), renunciation of the enjoyment of the fruits of action in this world and the next (*ihāmutraphala-bhogavirāgaḥ*), the six treasures such as tranquility, self-control, not thinking of the sensual objects, ideal forbearance, constant practice of fixing the mind in God and faith (*śamadamādisādhanasampat*), and intense desire for liberation (*mumukṣutvam*).

A *sadguru* is defined as a learned person in the scriptures who has realized the truth by means of his personal experience and is hence fit to instruct others.

The next verse contains the actual query of the aspiring student.

[4]

अनायासेन येनास्मान्मुच्येय भवबन्धनात् ।
तन्मे संक्षिप्य भगवन् केवलं कृपया वद ॥

O Venerable One! describe me briefly how I may get released without much effort from this bondage of worldly existence.

The use of the expression 'without much effort' is to show us that if a deserving and aspiring student engages himself in meditation after knowing through the preceptor the import conveyed by the great statements, he would be able to gain the direct experience. The preceptor replies the student in the next verse.

[5]

साध्वी ते वचनव्यक्तिः प्रतिभाति वदामि ते ।
इदं तदिति विस्पष्टं सावधानमनाः शृणु ॥

Your query seems to me to be noble. I shall describe you clearly which is which. Listen to me attentively.

This verse indicates that the purport of the great enunciation 'That thou art' is easy to comprehend. In this verse the preceptor appreciates the earnestness of the student since he is endeavouring to engage himself in self-inquiry.

[6]

तत्त्वमस्यादिवाक्योत्थं यज्जीवपरमात्मनोः ।
तादात्म्यविषयं ज्ञानं तदिदं मुक्तिसाधनम् ॥

The knowledge relating to the identity between the individual soul and the supreme Soul gained from statements such as 'That thou art', is the means for attaining liberation.

The preceptor explains the means in this verse. There are two points to be noted here — (1) liberation may be gained only by means of knowledge, and (2) that knowledge arises through the statements which proclaim the identity of the individual soul and the supreme soul. The term *tādātmyaviṣaya* means pertaining to the identity.

[7]

को जीवः कः परश्चात्मा तादात्म्यं वा कथं तयोः ।
तत्त्वमस्यादिवाक्यं वा कथं तत्प्रतिपादयेत् ॥

What is the individual soul? What is the supreme Soul? How can there be identity between the two? How can the statements such as 'That thou art' establish that identity?

The disciple raises these questions. His query relates to three expressions — *jivātmā*, *paramātmā* and *tādātmya* mentioned by the preceptor in the preceding verse. This query leads to the exposition of the concept. This method of exposition known as *vytti* is perhaps the basis of the title of this work.

[8]

अत्र ब्रह्मः समाधानं कोऽन्यो जीवस्त्वमेव हि ।
यस्त्वं पृच्छसि मां कोऽहं ब्रह्मैवासि न संशयः ॥

We shall explain your doubt. What else, indeed, is the individual soul but yourself? It is your own self that asks me the question 'Who am I'. You are verily the Brahman without doubt.

In this verse the preceptor replies the query of the pupil. He explains that the self is the same as the person (pupil) raising the question. This assertive pointer will be helpful for clearing the doubts of the pupil. It will be enabling the preceptor for assessing the earnestness of the pupil.

[9]

पदार्थमेव जानामि नाद्यापि भगवन्स्फुटम् ।
अहं ब्रह्मेति वाक्यार्थं प्रतिपद्ये कथं वद ॥

O venerable One! I have not yet understood clearly even the meaning of the words. (Hence) how

can I comprehend the purport of the statement 'I am Brahman'? Tell me.

The disciple tells the preceptor that he has not understood the sense conveyed by the words even. Hence how would he comprehend the sense of the statements such as 'I am Brahman'. This is answered by the preceptor in the following verse. In order to understand the sense conveyed by a sentence, one has to know the meaning of the words forming the sentence at first.

[10]

सत्यमाह भवानत्र विगानं नैव विद्यते ।
हेतुः पदार्थबोधो हि वाक्यार्थावगतेरिह ॥

What you have stated is true indeed. Certainly there is no contradiction in this matter. Comprehension of the sense conveyed by the words is really essential for understanding the purport of a sentence.

In Sanskrit, individual words have varied meanings. Only if the true import of the words in a sentence are understood, the sense conveyed by a sentence would correctly be comprehended. Being satisfied with the earnestness of the pupil, the preceptor seconds his statement and begins to enlighten him in the next verse.

[11]

अन्तःकरणतद्वृत्तिसाक्षी चैतन्यविग्रहः ।
आनन्दरूपः सत्यः सन्निकं नात्मानं प्रपद्यसे ॥

Don't you know your own self — that is blissful, real and an embodiment of consciousness that is the

witness of the impulses which arise in the internal organ consisting of the mind, intellect and ego?

Beginning from this verse and ending with verse 27, the text explains the significance of the word 'you' (*tvam*) in the statement 'That thou art'. All the worldly experiences arise from the impulses made in the internal organ by means of the organs of sense. When a deep inquiry is made, it will become clear that there is something different from the mind and intellect that stands aloof as a witness of the actions of the mind and intellect. It remains aloof unaffected by all actions, all experiences and in all the states.

It stays on unaffected without any change or modification. It is an embodiment of consciousness witnessing the actions of the senses and the internal organs. Hence it is known as *sat* and *cit*. Moreover it is the bliss that is experienced when all the vibrations and thoughts in the minds cease. Hence this verse employs significant words denoting this state of *sat-cit-ānanda* associated with the witness, namely, the soul.

The preceptor asks the pupil how he has not known the soul as described above. Since it is very difficult to shed the ignorance due to long experiences, the preceptor outlines further the ways for the same.

[12]

सत्यानन्दस्वरूपं धीसाक्षिणं ज्ञानविग्रहम् ।

चिन्तयात्मतया नित्यं त्यक्त्वा देहादिगां धियम् ॥

Meditate always on the soul (the self), that is of the form of reality and bliss, a witness of the intellect, and an embodiment of knowledge, after withdrawing the intellect associated with the body etc.

On account of its association with the body etc., the intellect ignorantly identifies itself with the body. One has to shed this ignorance and contemplate the soul as the self.

[13]

रूपादिमान्यतः पिण्डस्ततो नात्मा घटादिवत् ।
त्रियदादिमहाभूतविकारत्वाच्च कुम्भवत् ॥

Whence the gross body has form, colour etc., like the pot etc., it cannot be the soul. Since it has the body like the pitcher and is composed of the five elements such as the ether etc., it cannot be the self.

Although the body possesses attributes such as form, name, etc. like a pot made of earth, it cannot be the soul. The soul does not get any transformation. But the body undergoes six transformations — birth, existence, transformation, growth, decay and destruction. The body composed of the five elements is an inert thing deriving activity from the soul.

There are four requirements for knowing through inference — the thing to be known (*sādhya*), the thing relating to which inquiry is made (*pakṣa*), the means for knowing that (*hetu*) and the example (*udāharanam*). In this verse, the body is not the soul, the body, the characteristics of the body and the earthen pot serve the above four requirements respectively. In the next verse the pupil makes a plea to the preceptor to make him perceive the soul.

[14]

अनात्मा यदि पिण्डोऽयमुक्तहेतुबलान्मतः ।
करामलकवत्साक्षादात्मानं प्रतिपादय ॥

If the body cannot be the soul on account of the aforesaid reasons adduced by you, you make me perceive the soul like the berry on the hand.

In the next verse the preceptor answers this request of the pupil.

[15]

घटद्रष्टा घटाद्भिन्नः सर्वथा न घटो यथा ।
देहद्रष्टा तथा देहो नाहमित्यवधारय ॥

Just as the witness of the pot is always different from the pot and cannot be the pot in any case, so also is the witness of the body. Understand, therefore, I am not the body.

Since through inference external objects alone could be known and the soul, the witness of all actions, cannot be known through inference, the pupil asks the preceptor in the previous verse to make him comprehend the soul. The preceptor endeavours to satisfy him in the following verses.

The perceiver cannot always be identical with the perceived. Because of this mistaken identity, we undergo all kinds of miseries. This has to be pondered well repeatedly.

[16]

एवमिन्द्रियदृङ् नाहमिन्द्रियाणीति निश्चिनु ।
मनो बुद्धिस्तथा प्राणो नाहमित्यवधारय ॥

Similarly you know certainly that I am the witness of the senses and not the senses themselves. In the same way you firmly grasp that I am not the mind, the intellect and the life-forces.

After having pointed out that 'I' am different from the gross body in the preceding verse, the preceptor makes it clear that 'I' am different from the subtle body also. The gross body functions with the aid of the subtle body which is also composed of the five elements and is inert.

[17]

संघातोऽपि तथा नाहमिति दृश्यविलक्षणम् ।
द्रष्टारमनुमानेन निपुणं संप्रधारय ॥

In the same way I am not the combination (of these). Understand well by reasoning the witness that is distinct from the objects.

Although the gross body as well as the subtle body cannot be the soul, a doubt may arise that the union of these two may be the soul. Although either of these two cannot function without the other, both of them are inert. Hence their union cannot be the soul.

[18]

देहेन्द्रियादतो भावा हानादिव्यापृतिक्षमाः ।
यस्य संनिधिमात्रेण सोऽहमित्यवधारय ॥

Understand "I am He", by whose mere proximity the body, senses and other objects become capable of all activities of selection (of the desired objects) and rejection (of the undesired ones).

Just as the worldly objects function by deriving energy from the Sun, so also the body etc. function in the proximity of the self. The organs of sense function for selection and the organs of action for rejection. In all these activi-

ties the self endows them with energy and remains as a witness.

This verse and succeeding ones provide us with helpful hints relating to meditation.

[19]

अनापन्नविकारः सन्नयस्कान्तवदेव यः ।

बुद्ध्यादीश्चालयेत्प्रत्यक् सोऽहमित्यवधारय ॥

Know "I am that inner self", which impels the internal organs such as the intellect, but without itself changing, like the loadstone.

The same idea is explained again in the next verse.

[20]

अजडात्मवदाभान्ति यत्सान्निध्याज्जडा अपि ।

देहेन्द्रियमनः प्राणाः सोऽहमित्यवधारय ॥

Comprehend "I am He", by whose proximity, the body, senses, mind and life-forces, though inert, yet appear to function like the self.

The gross and subtle objects such as the body, senses, internal organs etc. do not have the ability to function independently. Although they appear to be functioning independently, their real nature could be known from their functioning during dreaming state with the aid of the lustre of the soul.

[21]

अगमन्मे मनोऽन्यत्र सांप्रतं च स्थिरीकृतम् ।

एवं यो वेद धीवृत्तिं सोऽहमित्यवधारय ॥

“My mind had gone elsewhere, but it has now been made steady.” Understand “I am He” who knows as above.

The self-luminant soul impels the intellect etc. to function and knows that these internal organs function alternatively. The preceptor points out that this self is ‘I’.

[22]

स्वप्नजागरिते सुप्तिं भावाभावौ धियां तथा ।
यो वेत्त्यविक्रियः साक्षत् सोऽहमित्यवधारय ॥

Understand “I am He”, who himself is without change and is the witness of waking, dreaming and sleep, the witness of the presence and absence (of objects) and the functions of the intellect.

The inner consciousness is aware of the states of existence etc. It is aware of the impulses arising alternatively on the consciousness during the first two states, and totally disappearing in deep sleep. It does not undergo any change just as a lamp that sheds light. That inner consciousness which always remains aloof without any modification is to be known as the self.

[23]

घटावभासको दीपो घटादन्यो यथेष्यते ।
देहावभासको देही तथाहं बोधविग्रहः ॥

In the same way as it is stated that the lamp revealing (the presence of) a pot is different from the pot, so also am I an embodiment of knowledge, the dweller in the body that reveals the body.

It is well-known that the object that reveals something and the object that is revealed are entirely different. Hence it should be remembered that the self bound by the body etc. is never identical with them.

[24]

पुत्रवित्तादयो भावा यस्य शेषतया प्रियाः ।
द्रष्टा सर्वप्रियतमः सोऽहमित्यवधारय ॥

Understand "I am the witness", that is most endearing, for whose sake alone, sons, wealth and other objects are dear.

In general, it is well-known that one loves his internal organs more than the external organs. Similarly the foremost endearing entity is the individual soul ultimately. It is only for its sake, one's kinsmen, wealth etc. are loved by all. This refers to the concept explained in the *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad* II.iv.5 and IV.v.6. The same idea is explained further in the next verse.

[25]

परप्रेमास्पदतया मा न भूवमहं सदा ।
भूयासमिति यो द्रष्टा सोऽहमित्यवधारय ॥

Comprehend "I am the witness", who being the most endearing object (feels) let me never cease to be, but let me ever exist.

One loves the self above all other objects. Hence one is prepared to sacrifice anything in order to save it. Hence one entertains the fear whether he would cease to exist anytime and he desires to live for ever. This feeling arises only on account of the association of the self with ego.

[26]

यः साक्षिलक्षणे बोधस्त्वम्पदार्थः स उच्यते ।
साक्षित्वमपि बोद्धृत्वमविकारितयात्मनः ॥

The consciousness that is the witness is stated to be the sense of the word 'thou'. The nature of itself being the witness and the knower is due to the changeless nature of the self.

By its mere proximity the consciousness impels the internal organs in their activities and remains as a witness without any transformation. That is to be understood as the self.

[27]

देहेन्द्रियमनःप्राणाहंकृतिभ्यो विलक्षणः ।
प्रोज्झिताशेषषड्भावविकारस्त्वंपदाभिधः ॥

The word 'thou' denotes that which is different from the body, senses, mind, life-forces and ego and which is entirely free from the six states of transformation.

Since the gross and subtle bodies are not capable of functioning independently they appear to function by themselves when impelled by the lustre of the internal consciousness, namely the self.

It is well-known that there are six states of transformation — birth, existence, transformation, growth, decay and destruction for all the objects except the self.

(to be continued)

AVIDYĀ — ILLUSION

आच्छाद्य विक्षिपति संस्फुरदात्मरूपं
जीवेश्वरत्वजगदाकृतिभिर्मृषैव ।
अज्ञानमावरणविभ्रमशक्तियोगा-
दात्मत्वमात्रविषयाश्रयताबलेन ॥

Avidyā, owing to the strength of having pure consciousness as its locus and content, acquires a veiling and a transfiguring faculty. It veils the ever-luminous consciousness, and then projects it illusorily in the form of embodied souls, God, and the world.

Sarvajñātman in the *Saṅkṣepaśārīraka*

INDIVIDUAL SELF IN ADVAITA

*M. Venkatalakshmi**

In the Advaitic tradition a basic dichotomy has been made between the Self (*Ātman*) and the not-Self (*anātman*), subject (*asmad*) and object (*yuṣmad*). The Self alone is the reality. It is pure existence, consciousness and bliss (*sat-cit-ānanda*). It is eternal self-luminous consciousness, supreme non-dual bliss, attributeless, free from differentiation, and immutable. Everything else other than the Self is regarded as the not-Self. Whatever comes under the realm of the not-Self has only empirical reality; it is an appearance (*mithyā*).

Brahman-Ātman which is of the nature of *sat-cit-ānanda* somehow in association with *avidyā* embodies itself. This embodied Self is technically termed *jīva* in Advaita. In other words, "Brahman-Ātman in the empirical dress" is *jīva*. It does not mean that Brahman becomes *jīva* by undergoing transformation, but appears to be so due to the association of the adjunct, viz. *avidyā*. The *Upaniṣad* declares, "You are that" (*tat tvam asi*). It means that there is no difference

* Prasanthinilayam - 515134

between Brahman, the supreme Self and jīva, the individual self. The difference between them is only adventitious and not essential. To the question: "When did the jīva come into existence?" the answer is that the jīva is beginningless. Though it has no beginning, the jīvahood disappears the moment the jīva realizes its own nature by removing *avidyā* through knowledge (*jñāna*), and then it frees itself from the body delusion.

To understand the jīva in its totality, it is necessary to discuss the constituents of the jīva. The jīva as understood in Advaita is the combination of the Self and the not-Self. While the Self constitutes the innermost being of the jīva, the not-Self forms only the adjunct (*upādhi*) of the jīva. The jīva is endowed with a psycho-physical organism. The mind, the senses, and the body form the not-Self aspect of the jīva. Only these three of the not-Self are mentioned, even though there are some other factors also. The jīva has three bodies (*śarīra*), viz., gross (*sthūla*), subtle, (*sūkṣma*) and causal (*kāraṇa*). Nescience (*avidyā*) forms the causal body; the internal organ, the organs of knowledge, the organs of action, and the five vital airs form the subtle body of the jīva; and the external visible physical frame constitutes its gross body. The three bodies can be correlated with the five sheaths (*pañca-kośa*) viz. the sheath of food (*annamaya-kośa*), the sheath of vital air (*prāṇamaya-kośa*), the sheath of mind (*manomaya-kośa*), the sheath of intellect (*vi-jñānamaya-kośa*) and the sheath of bliss (*ānandamaya-kośa*). While the Self forms the spiritual aspect of the jīva, the not-Self, its material aspect. Suresvara distinguishes the Self from the not-Self on the basis of three

criteria (1) The Self whose very nature is consciousness is self-evident and self-established (2) It is free from attributes. (3) It is free from all changes like origination, destruction, etc.

It is necessary to understand the nature of the three bodies and the five sheaths which form the adjuncts of the *jīva* in order to establish the dependent and transient nature of the material aspect of the *jīva*; and this in turn will prove that the *jīva* is essentially the unlimited, immortal, blissful Self.

The Three Bodies

(i) The gross body (*sthūla śarīra*): This forms the physical frame of the *jīva*. It is a composite of the quintuplicated elements. According to Śaṅkara, it is composed of seven ingredients, viz. marrow, bone, fat, flesh, blood, skin and cuticle. It also consists of the limbs and their parts — legs, thighs, the chest, arms, the back and the head. This body is the seat of delusion in the form of “I” and “mine”.¹ It undergoes six modifications (*saḍbhāva-vikāra*), viz. origination, existence, growth, transformation, decay and destruction. Śaṅkara observes, “Know this gross body to be like a house to the householder on which the entire dealings of the external world rests.”² The gross body has been referred to in the *Kaṭhōpaniṣad* as the city of eleven gates. Thus, it states:

There is a city with eleven gates belonging to the unborn one of unwavering consciousness. He who meditates on Him grieves no more. Released (from the bonds of ignorance, desire and *karma*) he becomes free. This is that.³

In this context Satprakashananda observes:

As the ruler is distinct from the city, so also the Ātman is distinct from the body. Just as the ruler is responsible for the corporate life, so is the Ātman responsible for the direction and coordination of the different functions of the body and the organs. Just as the city collapses when the ruler deserts it, so the body *corrupts* when the Ātman departs from it.⁴

The *Bhagavad-gītā* explains the gross body as the garment of the indwelling Ātman. Death has been understood as the event of changing the worn-out clothes by a new set of clothes. Thus it says:

Just as a man casts off worn-out clothes and puts on new ones, so also the embodied Self casts off its worn-out bodies and enters new bodies.⁵

(ii) The subtle body (*sūkṣma-śarīra*): According to Śaṅkara, the five sense organs (*jñānendriyas*), the five motor organs (*karmendriyas*), the five vital airs (*pañca-prāṇas*), the mind (*manas*) and intellect (*buddhi*), totally seventeen factors, form the subtle body of the *jīva*. The *pañca-prāṇas* are: *prāṇa*, *apāna*, *samāna*, *vyāna* and *udāna*. These are not five *prāṇas*, but five names of one and the same *prāṇa* depending on its function. *Prāṇa* is the life principle operative in the lungs and the heart. It is also responsible for respiration. It is the principal vital force (*mukhya prāṇa*). *Apāna* functions below the heart down to the navel and goes out through the anus. *Samāna* is located in the stomach. It digests and assimilates food and drink. *Vyāna* pervades the whole body and is responsible for

the operation of the nerves. *Prāṇa* and *apāna* are regulated by it. Speech is possible because of *vyāna*. *Udāna* functions from the sole of the feet to the head. It is responsible for maintaining the bodily heat.

By contrast to the external senses, the mind is termed the internal organ (*antaḥ-karāṇa*). Though it is one, it is known by four names, *manas*, *buddhi*, *citta* and *ahaṅkāra* depending on its functions. When the internal organ is indecisive, it is known as *manas*; when it is determinate and is decisive, it is called *buddhi*; when it recollects, it is termed *citta*; and when it declares, "I know," "I am a Brahmin," "My house," etc., it is called *ahaṅkāra*. The internal organ is the most important one since it controls the senses and the body. This is well expressed in a text of the *Upaniṣad*:

Know the Self as the Lord of the chariot and the body as verily the chariot; know the intellect as the charioteer and the mind as verily the reins. The senses are called the horses, the objects of the senses are the paths . . . To one who has no understanding, whose mind is always unrestrained, the senses are out of control, as wicked horses are for a charioteer. But to one who has understanding, the mind is always restrained, and the senses are under control, as good horses are for a charioteer.⁶

The subtle body is very fine and durable since it is composed of rudimentary elements. It is not destroyed at the destruction of the gross body. At the time

of death, the jīva leaves behind only the gross body, but retains its subtle body until it attains liberation. Thus it is stated in the *Brahma-sūtra*:

The subtle body continues until the final liberation, because the scriptures declare the continuance of the transmigratory state till then.⁷

The subtle body is the storehouse of all the subtle forces developed by the organs and the mind. Merit (*puṇya*), demerit (*pāpa*) and the impressions (*vāsanās*), remain in the subtle body in a potent form. The kind of birth is determined by the jīva's *karma*. The subtle body is also called *liṅga-śarīra* (the index body) because it betokens the jīva's previous incarnations and also portends its future. The subtle body is the seat of dream experiences.

(iii) The causal body (*kāraṇa śarīra*): The *Vedānta-sāra* explains the causal body as follows:

The *ajñāna* associated with the individual soul is known as the causal body because it is the causal state of egoism and rest; it is also known as the blissful sheath because it veils the soul like a sheath and emits bliss. It is further known as profound sleep, because into it everything subsides; and consequently it is also designated as the state of the dissolution of the gross and the subtle phenomena (that appear in the waking and dream states respectively).⁸

Nescience (*avidyā*) is regarded as the causal body of the jīva. When the jīva is qualified by the causal

body, it is known as *prājñā*. The causal body (*kāraṇa-śarīra*) is so called because a particular aspect of it is the (*kāraṇa*) of the gross body, the subtle body, etc.

Kāraṇa-śarīra is the seat of deep sleep. In this state all the mental episodes cease to exist. There is total stillness. Here all the mental tendencies are in a potent form comparable to the seed of a fruit in which the whole potency of the tree lies dormant. In the deep sleep state even the ego that is ever ready to operate disappears. The person in this state is totally unaware of himself.

The causal body is of the nature of "unspecified ignorance and emits bliss". So, when a person wakes up from deep sleep, he says: "I slept, happily; and I did not know anything". From this it is clear that in the state of deep sleep, a person does not lose his consciousness, but remains as a cogniser of that causal body which is of the nature of *avidyā*. Here, *avidyā* veils the *jīva* without affecting the self-luminosity and blissful nature which is his essential nature. Hence he is vaguely aware of his ignorance and his innate bliss in the deep sleep level. Thus Śaṅkara observes:

This undifferentiated (*avidyā*), characterized as the equilibrium of the three *guṇas*, is the causal body of the soul. Profound sleep is its special state in which the functions of the mind and the organs are suspended. Profound sleep is the cessation of all kinds of specific cognition in which the mind remains in a subtle seed-like form. The test of this is the universal verdict, "I did not know anything then."⁹

The Five Sheaths

The three bodies are correlated with the five sheaths, viz., (1) the sheath of food (*annamaya-kośa*), (2) the sheath of vitality (*prāṇamaya-kośa*), (3) the sheath of mind (*manomaya-kośa*), (4) the sheath of intellect (*vijñānamaya-kośa*), and (5) the sheath of bliss (*ānandamaya-kośa*). The physical or the gross body forms the physical sheath; the subtle body contains the vital, mental and intelligent sheaths; and the causal body is made up of the sheath of bliss. In describing the relation among the five sheaths, R. Balasubramanian observes: "The empirical Self has an outfit of five sheaths arranged in a telescopic manner, one inside the other, the outer deriving its being from the inner."¹⁰

Among the five sheaths, the *annamaya* is the grossest and most external and the *ānandamaya-kośa* is the finest and most internal. They are called sheaths because they are like coverings of the Self, layer after layer. The method of Self-realization consists in uncovering these sheaths so that the Self is left alone free from the sheaths. By understanding their true nature, one can distinguish these sheaths from the Self. The Self which is the reality is the substratum of the sheaths. Though each sheath is sustained by the sheath which is inward to it, all the sheaths are really supported by the Self which is at the back of them. They cannot exist by themselves in the same way as the illusory snake cannot exist by itself. They are illusory because they are the effects of the Self whereas the Self which is their cause is real. The general principle is that the substratum alone, whatever it may be, e.g. clay in the case of pot, rope in the

case of snake, and Brahman in the case of the world, is real and what is superimposed on it is illusory (*kalpitasya adhiṣṭhīnameva svarūpam*). The Self should not be confused with the mind which is subject to thousands of modifications. It is the witness to them and remains unaffected. The Self is different from the three bodies and the five sheaths. While it is the witness of their presence as well as absence, they are the witnessed. It is well known that the witness and the witnessed are different. Śaṅkara says:

There is some self-existent entity, which is the perpetual substratum of the ego consciousness, and the witness of the three states (waking, dream and deep sleep) and which is distinct from the five sheaths.¹¹

The *annamaya-kośa* cannot be the Self for it depends on the *prāṇamaya-kośa*. Being inert, it is animated by the vital sheath. Even the vital sheath cannot be the Self for it depends on the Self for its existence. Thus, Śaṅkara observes:

Nor is the vital sheath the Self, because it is a modification of the vital principle and like the vital principle it enters into, and comes out of the body and it never knows its weal and woe or those of others, being ever dependent on the Self.¹²

The volitional mind with the five sense organs constitutes the mental sheath (*manomaya-kośa*) and the cognitive mind with the five sense organs forms the intelligent sheath (*viññānamaya-kośa*). Mind by its very nature is material; however, since the Self is reflected in it, it appears to be self-luminous and is very often

identified with the Self. In fact, this forms the migratory Self. Śaṅkara gives a graphic description of the intelligent sheath in his *Viveka-cūḍāmaṇi*.

Even the sheath of bliss cannot be regarded as the Self though very often it is confused with it, since the Ātman is of the nature of bliss. Though it is the highest among the sheaths, it is only conditioned self. This sheath does not possess bliss by its very nature but manifests bliss due to certain factors. First and foremost, it is the conditioned self of which the intellect is the adjunct and since Brahman is reflected in it, it carries the semblance of Brahman which is bliss. The joy which is manifested in the intellect is due to *upāsana* and *karma* performed by the jīva in the previous life. Further, like the other sheaths, even *ānandamaya* sheath also is an evolved principle. Hence, it cannot be the highest reality. There is another important reason for not accepting *ānandamaya* as Brahman. In the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* it is said that the person who knows Brahman transcends all the sheaths including *ānandamaya* sheath. Transcendence (*saṅk-rānti*) is possible only when something is beyond something, and the object of transcendence must be a modification (*vikāra*). Ultimately, all the sheaths are only illusory in nature because all of them are superimpositions on the non-dual Self. By realizing the illusoriness of these sheaths, the jīva has to transcend these and realize Brahman which alone is real, which forms the essential nature of the jīva.

The internal organ (*antaḥkaraṇa*), the senses and the body which belong to the category of the not-Self are superimposed on the Self because of *avidyā*. Due to superimposition, the Self is wrongly identified with

the entities which are not-Self. The internal organ, the senses and the body are the adjuncts of the Self. They are insentient in nature. The body appears to be sentient because of the identification of the Self with it. Similarly, the senses by themselves are not sentient. They derive sentience from the Self. Even the mind is material in nature; and because of the reflection of consciousness in it, it appears to be conscious.

The association of consciousness with the internal organ gives rise to the ego or "I". Very often the "egot" is identified with the Self, and hence it is very difficult to distinguish the one from the other. The ego is material in nature; however, because of its proximity to the Self it is mistaken for the Self. In fact, it is characterized as the "villain of the piece". Suresvara holds that for all practical purposes it is the ego which is the main cause for jīva's suffering because it is the knot which binds the Self with the not-Self. The Self by its very nature is neither a seer nor a hearer nor an agent, nor an enjoyer. But it is said to be so because of its association with the ego. So there is mutual superimposition of the one on the other, i.e. the nature of the sentient Self on the ego and the sense of ego on the Self.

The Essential Nature of the Jīva

According to Advaita, the jīva in its essential nature is Brahman itself. The *Upaniṣad* declares, "*Tat tvam asi*" (you are that). Here "*tat*" refers to Brahman or Ātman and "*tvam*" refers to the individual self (jīva). A question may arise: "How does the jīva which is limited can be identified with the Self or Brahman which is limitless?" Here Advaita brings in the theory

of meaning with the view to show their identity. There are two types of meaning: (a) *vācyārtha* (primary meaning) and (b) *lakṣyārtha* (secondary meaning). There are three kinds of secondary meaning: *jahallakṣaṇa*, *ajahallakṣaṇa*, and *jahadajahallakṣaṇa*. In *jahallakṣaṇa*, the primary meaning is given up and only the secondary meaning appropriate in the context is taken into account. In *ajahallakṣaṇa*, without giving up the primary meaning, the secondary meaning is added to it. In *jahadajahallakṣaṇa*, a part of the primary meaning is retained and a part of it is given up. For example, when a person by name Devadatta acts as a lady in a drama, then somebody recognizing him thus says, "This is that Devadatta." Here the male attire of the person on the one hand and the female attire he has put on on the other hand, which are part of the primary meaning, are dropped as they stand in the way of conveying the identity of the person concerned, but part of the primary meaning relating to the identity of the person is retained. In the interpretation of the *mahāvākya* "*Tat tvam asi*," the same method is followed. The accidental qualities of the individual Self and Brahman which form part of the primary meaning and which are incompatible are removed for the reason that they stand in the way of achieving the sense of oneness of the two entities, but the remaining part of the primary meaning which conveys the purport of the text is retained. Thus we are able to show that the *jīva* is essentially Brahman.

There are three theories for explaining the non-difference between the *jīva* and Brahman.

(i) *Pratibimba-vāda*. Padmapāda and his followers advocate this theory. Here Brahman is the original of which the jīva is the reflection just as the face or the sun is the original whose reflection is in the mirror or the water. In fact, the reflection as such has no existence. What really exists is only the original object. Because of the reflecting medium like mirror or water, there seems to be another entity. Once the medium is taken away, there is no reflection. Reflection is only an appearance. Similarly, because of the bodily adjuncts, there seems to be jīvas. Brahman is the original object reflected in the limiting adjunct (*upādhi*), viz. the intellect, and this gives rise to the jīva which is a reflection in the *upādhi*. Essentially, the jīva is Brahman and Brahman alone, but appears to be different because of the reflecting medium.

(ii) *Ābhāsa-vāda*. A crystal which is colourless appears to be red at the proximity of a red flower. The "red" crystal has an apparent existence. Here the red flower is the limiting adjunct. Similarly, Brahman is like a colourless crystal, but appears to be the jīva because of the limiting adjunct. When the limiting adjunct is removed, what exists really is only the non-dual Brahman, the pure consciousness. This view is advocated by Suresvara and also by Vidyāraṇya.

(iii) *Avaccheda-vāda*. Vācaspatimishra formulated this view. According to him, Brahman delimited by *avidyā* is the jīva. He compares Brahman with the *mahākāśa*. The all-pervasive ether, when enclosed in a pot, is called *ghaṭākāśa* (ether-of-the-pot). When

the delimiting factor, viz. pot, gets broken, then there is no more *ghaṭākāśa* since it becomes one with the ether outside. Similarly, the *jīva* appears to emerge as a separate entity because of the delimiting factor; when the delimiting adjunct disappears, what exists is only the consciousness, which is Brahman. In other words, once the limiting adjunct is removed the *jīva* attains its original status.

The Self-in-the-body

According to Advaita, the *jīva*, being the combination of the supreme Self and the mind, is the agent of all *karmas*. In contrast to this view, the Śāṅkhya school holds that the intellect alone is the agent of all *karmas*, but not the *jīva*, which is only an enjoyer (*bhoktā*). Because of the non-discrimination between the *jīva* and the intellect, the *jīva* is wrongly thought of as the agent. The Advaita view has been well established in the *Brahma-sūtra* in contrast to the standpoint of the Śāṅkhya. Vācaspatimīśra further clarifies this view by stating that the Vedic texts prescribe the means like sacrifice and so on for the one who desires heaven, progeny, etc. From this it is obvious that it is the *jīva* who desires such things. Hence, the *jīva* must be the agent who desires and enjoys the fruits of actions. If the intellect is the agent, and if the enjoyer is the *jīva*, then it means that the doer does not enjoy the fruits of actions, but somebody else. This is absurd. Hence, the *jīva* alone is the agent.

The critics raise an objection. If the *jīva* is the agent of actions, then it must be independent. If it is independent, it must perform such actions which

will bring beneficial results to it. But it is not so. On the contrary, the jīva very often engages in actions which are not really beneficial to it. Hence, the jīva is not independent. It is not difficult to answer this objection. Though the jīva is free to choose its actions, still it chooses harmful and not helpful actions because it is under the erroneous notion that such actions will yield beneficial results. So its freedom is not at all at stake. It alone is responsible for the wrong choice it makes. It follows, therefore, that the jīva alone is the agent. The *Vedas* prescribe the means for self-realization like the study of the scriptural texts (*śravaṇa*), reflection thereon (*manana*) and contemplation (*nididhyāsana*). One who is competent alone should pursue the means. It is the jīva who is entitled for liberation; and so it alone should pursue the prescribed discipline. Here 'pursuing' the prescribed means implies the agent.

The Mechanism of Karma

Transmigration of the jīva takes place because of its association with eight factors: (i) five motor organs (*karmendriyas*), (ii) five sense organs (*jñānendriyas*), (iii) the internal organ (*antah-karaṇa*), (iv) five vital airs (*pañca-prāṇa*), (v) five great elements (*pañca-mahābhūtas*), (vi) desire (*kāma*), (vii) action (*karma*) and (viii) nescience (*avidyā*). Of these, *karma* is the most important factor which is responsible for the jīva's transmigration. *Karma* refers to other factors, viz. *vidyā* and *pūrvaprajñā*. Here *vidyā* is understood as the subtle forms of valid as well as erroneous knowledge which the jīva had acquired in its innumerable births. *Pūrvaprajñā* stands for the tendencies, *samskāra* and *vāsanā* left over in the mind. When an

action is performed, it leaves a tendency to perform it again. This tendency is called *samskāra*. Similarly, experience of the fruit of an action leaves behind a tendency to experience it once again. This tendency is termed *vāsanā*. But how does the jīve perform an action? *Avidyā* by itself cannot make the jīva act. If that be the case, in deep sleep level where only *avidyā* exists, it should have been possible for the jīva to act. But it does not happen. So, it is evident that *avidyā* is not directly responsible for the performance of the *karmas*. It is stated in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* and the *Bhagavad-gītā* that it is desire (*kāma*) which is mainly responsible for the performance of the *karmas*. Of course, it is nescience (*avidyā*) that gives rise to desire and desire in its turn leads to the performance of *karmas*. Performance of actions results in merit and demerit, depending upon the nature of actions. Good actions give rise to good *samskāras* and bad actions, to bad ones. Merit and demerit determine the birth of the jīva. If the actions are done without expecting any fruits thereof, without any sense of agency, then it leads to self-realization; and if actions are done with desires and with a sense of agency, then it binds the jīva to the results of the *karmas*.

Jīva in its Essential Nature is not an Agent

Agency (*kartrtva*) is not natural to the jīva. If it is natural to it, then release can never be possible. Being an agent, it must always experience the fruits of actions. But *śruti* speaks of liberation of the jīva. If agency is natural to the jīva, then it can never be separated from it and hence, release is out of question. Agency is only a superimposition on the Self because of the adjuncts which are products of *avidyā*.

Entanglement and Release

It has already been stated that the Self, the pure consciousness, in association with the internal organ, gives rise to ego or "I" (*ahaṅkāra*). The ego or "I" is different from the Self. But due to ignorance the Self identifies itself with, and plays the role of, the "I"; and having become the "I", the Self further identifies itself with the mind, the senses and the body; thus it says, "I am happy," "I am blind," "my house," "my wife," etc. The *jīva* develops a continuous chain of desires to enjoy the worlds of objects because of its identification with the mind, the senses and the body. Balasubramanian aptly puts in phenomenological language:

The empirical journey of the transcendental subjectivity to the world horizon passes through the landmarks of the mind, the senses and the body. As it moves from its non-dual, non-relational state, there is a progressive entanglement with the objects until it emerges as the enworlded subjectivity in all its completeness.¹³

The *jīva* develops a pragmatic attitude towards the objects. He considers them as helpful and harmful depending on the love and aversion towards them. Further, he develops an attitude of dependence on them though the objects themselves gain meaning only because of the Self, the pure consciousness, the transcendental subjectivity, which is the reality of the *jīva*. Substantiating the standpoint of Suresvara, Balasubramanian comments:

Nothing is more tragic, more poignant, than the existential situation in which the source

becomes the supported and the helper, the helped. Such is the entanglement of the Self as the embodied subjectivity functioning as a being-in-the-world overwhelmed by the natural attitude of 'That I am' and 'That is mine'. The journey of the Self is one of the progressive fall.¹⁴

Desire leads the *jīva* to perform actions with a sense of agency, expecting the fruits of actions. The *jīva* is bound by its actions. Actions produce tendencies and these again lead the *jīva* to be born again. So the cycle of birth and death repeats. At this stage the *jīva* is entangled; it is bound. The root cause of *jīva*'s bondage is its ignorance of its essential nature.

Bondage, according to Advaita, is not real. If it is real, then it is never possible for the *jīva* to liberate itself. The *jīva* in its essential nature is never bound. It is ever free. But because of *avidyā*, a false identity with the not-Self takes place; and because of this false identity whatever happens to the not-Self is wrongly superimposed on it. This is obvious in the rope-snake example. The object in front is only a rope. But it is mistakenly thought of as a snake; and so a person develops fear. But when the true knowledge of the object dawns on him, fear vanishes. Similarly, it is the false knowledge of one's own Self that is the source of bondage.

According to Advaita, liberation is realization of one's nature. It is Self-realization: that is to say, it is the realization that the Self which is the reality in one's own being is ever-free and never-bound. It is, therefore, a dis-covery. It is dis-covery in the sense that

one removes the covering of ignorance by means of right knowledge. When the covering is removed, the Self which is self-luminous shines of its own accord.

Since dis-covering one's nature is liberation, *karma* is not a means thereof. By means of *karma* something can be produced (*utpādyam*), e.g. a pot. What is produced has a beginning; and whatever has a beginning has an end. In other words, a thing that is produced is not eternal. But liberation is eternal; and if it is not eternal, it is not worth seeking. So *karma* cannot be a means thereto. A thing which one does not have can be attained by *karma*. But liberation is ever-existent. So there is no question of its attainment (*prāpyam*) by action, scriptural or secular. A thing can be modified by means of *karma*, e.g. the lump-like form of clay is modified into the form of a pot. But liberation is not subject to a any modification (*vikāryam*). Whatever is subject to modification, is perishable, is subjected to decay and death. Liberation is not subject to any change because it is ever-existing; it is remaining as the Self which is immutable. Again, while a thing can be purified by *karma*, liberation is not subject to any kind of purification (*samskāryam*). The process of purification implies a prior state of impurity. The Self, however, is ever-pure; and so the question of its purification by *karma* does not arise.

Advaita gives three analogies in order to explain that liberation is only a realization of one's Self, one's own Being, one's own nature, which is already there. The first analogy is about the forgotten necklace (*vismṛtakaṇṭhābharana*). A woman, forgetting the fact that the necklace is around her neck, searches every-

where. At last she comes to know through somebody that it is around her neck. The second analogy is about the prince who was brought up by a hunter (*vyādha-vardhita-rājakumāra*). A prince who got lost in his infancy and brought up by a hunter thinks that he is a hunter, but later on the king's people identify him and make him realize that he is only a prince, but not a hunter. The third analogy is about ten people who crossed a river and counted to make sure that all the ten of them were safe. Each one started counting the rest excepting oneself and as a result thought that they were only nine. Then came a stranger who saw their predicament and asked one of them to count again. When he committed the same mistake of not including himself at the time of counting, he said, "You are the tenth one" (*daśamastvam asi*). In all the three cases it was a matter of realization of what was already there. The necklace was never lost and never regained; the prince never became a hunter; nor did the hunter become a prince afterwards; similarly, the tenth man was never lost and was never restored.

The point that Advaita wants to convey here is that the *jīva* is neither bound nor gets liberated. It is what it has always been, the ever-free and never-bound Self. It is because of wrong knowledge about one's own nature that the *jīva* thinks that it is bound; and when the *śruti* text reveals its essential nature, the *jīva* realizes the truth of one's own status.

Advaita accepts liberation-in-life (*jīvan-mukti*). At the dawn of knowledge, *avidyā* ceases to exist along with *sañcita-karma* (karma-in-store) and *āgāmi-karma* (karma-yet-to-come). However, *prārabdha-*

karma continues because it has to be exhausted through enjoyment. It is powerless like the burnt-seed. The body continues because of the *prārabdha-karma*. The continuance of the body is not a problem for liberation, but only a false identification with it. Since *avidyā* has been removed, there is no more identification with the body. The liberated person is really bodiless, even though others see him with a body. The body which continues for sometime will fall off when *prārabdha* is exhausted. He is then spoken of as having attained *videha-mukti*, i.e. liberation from body. It must be pointed out here that there is only one liberation, though it is spoken of in two ways, as *jīvan-mukti* and *videha-mukti*.

The *jīva* in order to get liberated must fulfil certain antecedent conditions. Śaṅkara speaks of the fourfold discipline: (i) discrimination between things transient and eternal (*nityānitya-vastu-viveka*), (ii) detachment towards the enjoyment of the fruits of actions in this world and heaven (*ihāmutra-phalabhoga-virāga*), (iii) possession of six treasures, viz (a) *śama* (withdrawal of the mind from the senses), (b) *dama* (withdrawal of the senses from the objects), (c) *uparati* (refraining the external organs from the actions), (d) *tīkṣṇā* (enduring the dualities of life), (e) *śraddhā* (faith in the scripture), (f) *samādhāna* (mind centered on the *ātmajñāna*), and (iv) *mumukṣutva* (intense desire for liberation). Then the spiritual aspirant must pursue the threefold discipline of *śravaṇa* (study of the scriptures), *manana* (reflection on the content of the Upaniṣadic texts), and *nididhyāsana* (repeated contemplation). Following this, the direct knowledge of the Self dawns on the *jīva*. He becomes a *jīvan-mukta*. His presence is a great boon to the whole mankind.

NOTES

1. *Viveka-cūḍāmaṇi*, 90.
2. *Ibid.*, 72-73.
3. *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, II. 2.1.
4. Swami Satprakashananda, *The Goal and the Way*, Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras.
5. *The Bhagavad-gītā*, II. 22.
6. *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, 1.1. 3-6, quoted from R. Balasubramanian, "Peace through self-integration and social integration," Paper presented for the seminar "God: The Contemporary Discussion" in New Ecumenical Research Association, May 7-12, 1992, Chateau de Bellinglise, Elin-court Ste-Marguerite, France.
7. *Brahma-sūtra*, IV. 2.8.
8. *Vedānta-sāra*, VII.
9. *Viveka-cūḍāmaṇi*, 120-121.
10. R. Balasubramanian, *Taittirīyopaniṣad Bhāṣya-Vārtika of Sureśvara* (Centre for Advanced Study in Philosophy, University of Madras, 1974), p.126.
11. *Viveka-cūḍāmaṇi*, 125.
12. *Ibid.*, 145-166.
13. R. Balasubramanian, "Advaita Vedānta on the problems of enworlded subjectivity," *Indian Philosophy and Phenomenology*, Ed. D.P. Chattopadhyaya, Lester Embree, Jitendra Mohanty, Indian Council of Philosophical Research, New Delhi in association with Motilal Banarsidass, Pvt Ltd., New Delhi, 1992, p. 88.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 89.

PRAŚNOTTARA-RATNAMĀLIKĀ

Śrī Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda

(Continued from *VOS XVII. 2*)

[18]

कः साधुः सद्वृत्ताः
कमधममाचक्षते त्वसद्वृत्ताम् ।
केन जितं जगदेतत्
सत्यतितिक्षावता पुंसा ॥

Who is the pious one? He who is of good conduct. Whom do the wise call the vile? One who does wicked acts alone. Who has conquered this world? Whoever has truth and patience.

[19]

कस्मे नमांसि देवाः
कुर्वन्ति दयाप्रधानाय ।
कस्मादुद्वेगः स्या-
त्संसाराण्यतः सुधियः ॥

Who is worshipped even by the gods? He who is merciful. Wherefrom do the wise keep aloof? From the forest of transmigration (*samsāra*).

[20]

कस्य वशे प्राणिगणः
 सत्यप्रियभाषिणो विनीतस्य ।
 क्व स्थातव्यं न्याय्ये
 पथि दृष्टादृष्टलाभादृचे ॥

Who can subjugate living beings? One whose words are full of truth and affection, and who is ever humble. Which path should one ever resort to? The path of justice that enables one to acquire wealth in abundance, directly and in an unseen manner.

[21]

कोऽन्धो योऽकार्यरतः
 को बधिरो यो हितानि न शृणोति ।
 को मूको यः काले
 प्रियाणि वक्तुं न जानाति ॥

Who is the blind man? One who, though learned, does bad deeds. Who is the deaf man? Whoever does not listen to good advice. Who is the dumb man? Whoever cannot utter good words at the proper moment.

[22]

किं दानमनाकाङ्क्षं
 किं मित्रं यो निवारयति पापात् ।
 कोऽलंकारः शीलं
 किं वाचां मण्डनं सत्यम् ॥

Which is a gift? That which is given unasked for. Who is a friend? Whoever prevents us from committing sin. Which is beauty? Good character. What forms the beauty of the tongue? Speaking truth alone.

[23]

विद्युद्विलसितचपलं
 किं दुर्जनसङ्गतियुवतयश्च ।
 कुलशीलनिष्प्रकम्पाः
 के कलिकालेऽपि सज्जना एव ॥

What is it that allures people and is pleasant just for a moment like a lightning? Wicked company and love of damsels (courtesans). Who are not haughty and are ever stubborn like mountain though they are born in noble family and possess good behaviour even in this age of Kaliyuga? Only the very great and virtuous people.

[24-25]

चिन्तामणिरिव दुर्लभ-
 मिह किं कथयामि तच्चतुर्भद्रम् ।

किं तद्वदन्ति भूयो
विधूततमसा विशेषेण ॥

दानं प्रियवाक्सहितं
ज्ञानमगर्वक्षमान्वितं शौर्यम् ।
वित्तं त्यागसमेतं
दुर्लभमेतच्चतुर्भद्रम् ॥

Which is rare as a precious gem? The four qualities collectively known as the *catur-bhadra*, viz. gift followed by soothing words, knowledge without pride, valour with mercy and forgiving, and wealth with sacrifice.

[26]

किं शोच्यं कार्पण्यं
सति विभवे किं प्रशस्तमौदार्यम् ।
कः पूज्यो विद्वद्भिः
स्वभावतः सर्वदा विनीतो यः ॥

Which is to be pitied? Selfish miserliness. Which is praiseworthy? The quality of being merciful towards other beings. Whom do the wise men worship? The naturally humble man.

[27]

कः कुलकमलदिनेशः
सति गुणविभवेऽपि यो नम्रः ।

कस्य वशे जगदेत-
त्प्रियहितवचनस्य धर्मनिरतस्य ॥

At the sight of which sun, will the lotus of our life bloom? Real humility amidst plenty of virtues. Who can conquer this world? He who speaks gently and does good deeds.

[28]

विद्वन्मनोहरा का
सत्कविता बोधवनिता च ।
कं न स्पृशति विपत्तिः
प्रवृद्धवचनानुवर्तिनं दान्तम् ॥

By which do the learned people get attracted? Good poetry, and fresh, youthful maiden of knowledge. Whom can disaster not overtake? Him who listens to the words of elders (teachers) and one who has sense-control.

[29]

कस्मै स्पृहयति कमला
त्वनलसचित्ताय नीतिवृत्ताय ।
त्यजति च कं सहसा द्विज-
गुरुसुरनिन्दाकरं च सालस्यम् ॥

Whom does Goddess Lakṣmī like? Him whose mind is not at all lazy and who sticks to righteous

path always. Whom does She (Kamalā) abandon at once? Him who censures brahmins, elders (teachers) and gods, and who is idle forever.

[30]

कुत्र विधेयो वासः
 सज्जननिकटेऽथवा काश्याम् ।
 कः परिहार्यो देशः
 पिशुनयुतो लुब्धभूपश्च ॥

Which is the fittest place to dwell in? The neighbourhood of good men and the holy city of Benares. Which is the place not fit to be lived in? The neighbourhood of low people and the kingdom of a miserly ruler.

[31]

केनाशोच्यः पुरुषः
 प्रणतकलत्रेण धीरविभवेन ।
 इह भुवने कः शोच्यः
 सत्यपि विभवे न यो दाता ॥

What can free a man from misery and sorrow? A dutiful wife and wealth that can indure. Who deserves to be miserable? He who has, but will not give.

[32]

किं लघुताया मूलं
 प्राकृतपुरुषेषु या याञ्जा ।

रामादपि कः शूः
स्मरशरनिहतो न यश्चलति ॥

Which is despicable? To beg of the lowly. Who is more valourous than Rāma? One who is unaffected by Cupid's arrows.

[33]

किमहर्निशमनुचिन्त्यं
भगवच्चरणं न संसारः ।
चक्षुष्मन्तोऽप्यन्धाः
के स्युर्ये नास्तिका मनुजाः ॥

Which should be contemplated upon both during day and night? The holy feet of the Almighty, not this world and our life in it. Who can be called blind, though possessing eyes? The *nāstikas* or those who do not believe in the *Vedas*.

[34]

कः पङ्गुरिह प्रथितो
व्रजति च यो बाधेके तीर्थम् ।
किं तीर्थमपि च मुख्यं
चित्तमलं यन्निवर्तयति ॥

Who is well known as the lame (cripple) in this world? He who goes on pilgrimage to holy places during old age. Which is holiest among the sacred

water? That which cleanses us of the dust surrounding the mind.

[35]

किं स्मर्तव्यं पुरुषै-
 हरिनाम सदा न यावन्ती भाषा ।
 को हि न वाच्यः सुधिया
 परदोषश्चानृतं तद्वत् ॥

What should men reflect upon forever? The sacred name of Lord Hari, and never the language of the *mlecchas*. What cannot be uttered by a good man? Whatever is not truth and the faults of others.

[36]

किं संपाद्यं मनुजै-
 विद्या वित्तं बलं यशः पुण्यम् ।
 कः सर्वगुणविनाशी
 लोभः शत्रुश्च कः कामः ॥

Which is worthy of being acquired? Learning, wealth, valour, fame, and good deeds. Which destroys all good qualities? Greediness (miserliness). Who is the real enemy? Lust.

[37]

का च सभा परिहार्या
 होना या वृद्धसचिवेन ।

इह कुत्रावहितः स्या-
न्मनुजः किल राजसेवायाम् ॥

Which assembly should be avoided? An assembly devoid of old and experienced councillor. In what matters should one be careful in this world? In regard to the service of the king.

[38]

प्राणादपि को रम्यः
कुलधर्मः साधुसङ्गश्च ।
का संरक्ष्या कीर्तिः
पतिव्रता नैजबुद्धिश्च ॥

What is dearer to us than life? The duties prescribed to us by heredity and the company of good men. Which should be preserved? Fame, chastity and one's own knowledge.

[39]

का कल्पलता लोके
सच्छिष्यायार्पिता विद्या ।
कोऽक्षयवटवृक्षः स्या-
द्विधिवत्सत्पात्रदत्तादानं यत् ॥

Which is like the mythological creeper of plenty in this world? The knowledge imparted to a good and deserving disciple. What is the indestructible banyan

tree (of merit)? The gift offered to a deserving and righteous person, in a proper manner and at a proper time.

[40]

किं शस्त्रं सर्वेषां
 युक्तिर्माता च का घेनुः ।
 किं नु बलं यद्धैयं
 को मृत्युर्यदवधानरहितत्वम् ॥

What is the weapon which everyone has? Reasoning. Who is the mother of all? The cow. Which is the army? Bravery. Who is the god of Death? Indifference.

[41]

कुत्र विषं दुष्टजने
 किमिहाशौचं भवेदृणं नृणाम् ।
 किमभयमिह वैराग्यं
 भयमपि किं वित्तमेव सर्वेषाम् ॥

Which is the abode of poison? Vicious men. Which is the worst of all pollutions? Debt. Which is the state of fearlessness? Renunciation. What begets fear? The possession of wealth.

[42]

का दुर्लभा नराणां
 हरिभक्तिः पातकं च किं हिंसा ।

को हि भगवत्प्रियः स्या-
द्योऽन्यं नोद्वेजयेदनुद्विग्नः ॥

Which is rare to achieve? Devotion to Lord Hari. What is sin? Cruelty to others. Who is the most beloved of the gods? He who does not feel injured in his mind and does not injure others.

[43]

कस्मात्सिद्धिस्तपसो
बुद्धिः क्व नु भूसुरे कुतो बुद्धिः ।
वृद्धोपसेवया के
वृद्धा ये धर्मतत्त्वज्ञः ॥

What can enable a man to accomplish whatever he aims at? Penance. What produces penance? Enlightenment. Where does enlightenment reside? With the person of knowledge. Which is real enlightenment? That which is attained through devotion and service to a teacher. Who are the elders (teachers)? Those who have understood the correct import of the scriptures — though they may be young in age.

[44]

संभावितस्य मरणा-
दधिकं किं दुर्यशो भवति ।
लोके सुखी भवेत्को
धनवान्धनमपि च किं यतश्चेष्टम् ॥

To one who is renowned which is worse than death? Scandal. Who is happy in this world? A rich man. What is wealth? That through which a person gets what he likes.

[45]

सर्वसुखानां बीजं

किं पुण्यं दुःखमपि कुतः पापात् ।

कस्यैश्वर्यं यः किल

शंकरमाराधयेद्भक्त्या ॥

Which is the root cause of happiness? The performance of good deeds. Which is the root cause of misery? Sin. Who gets to the supreme state? One who worships Lord Śaṅkara with devotion.

[46]

को वर्धते विनीतः

को वा हीयेत यो दृप्तः ।

को न प्रत्येतव्यो

ब्रूते यश्चानृतं शश्वत् ॥

Who grows? A humble and polite person. Who wanes? An adamant and impolite person. Whom should one never rely upon? Him who tells lie and lie alone forever.

[47]

कुत्रानृतेऽप्यपापं
 यच्चोक्तं धर्मरक्षार्थम् ।
 को धर्मोऽभिमतो यः
 शिष्टानां निजकुलीनानाम् ॥

When is lying not a sin? When it is uttered in due performance of one's duties. What is one's duty? Following the virtuous ones who excel in the traditional prescriptions.

[48]

साधुबलं किं दैवं
 कः साधुः सर्वदा तुष्टः ।
 दैवं किं यत्सुकृतं
 कः सुकृती श्लाघ्यते च यः सद्भिः ॥

Which is the strength of the pious men? God. Who is the pious man? The ever-satisfied person. Which is God? Our own good deeds. Who is the person of good deeds? He who is praised by the great people.

[49]

गृहमेधिनश्च मित्रं
 किं भार्या को गृही च यो यजते ।

को यज्ञो यः श्रुत्या
विहितः श्रेयस्करो नृणाम् ॥

Who is the beloved of the householder? Wife. Who is a householder? He who performs the daily ritual (sacrifice). What is sacrifice? That which is prescribed in the scriptures, and which yields supreme bliss to all.

[50]

कस्य क्रिया हि सफला
यः पुनराचारवाञ्छितः ।
कः शिष्टो यो वेद-
प्रमाणवान्को हतः क्रियाभ्रष्टः ॥

Whose work is fruitful? He who adheres to good conduct and well-trained in Vedic lore. Who is *śiṣṭha* (man of supreme authority)? He who upholds *Veda* as the only authority. Who is lost? One who has discarded (neglected) Vedic rituals.

[51]

को धन्यः संन्यासी
को मान्यः पण्डितः साधुः ।
कः सेव्यो यो दाता
को दाता योऽर्थितृप्तिमातनुते ॥

Who is the rich? The ascetic. Who is to be honoured? The learned and the good. Who is worthy

of being served upon? The giver. Who is the giver?
He who gives to the receiver's heart's content.

[52]

किं भाग्यं देहवता-
मारोग्यं कः फली कृषिकृत् ।
कस्य न पापं जपतः
कः पूर्णो यः प्रजावान्स्यात् ॥

Which is the greatest enjoyment? Health. Who enjoys the fruit of labour? One who endeavours. Who will not be affected by sin? One who always meditates on God. Who is a complete man? He who has progeny.

[53]

किं दुष्करं नराणां
यन्मनसो निग्रहः सततम् ।
को ब्रह्मचर्यवान्स्या-
द्यश्चास्खलितोर्ध्वरेतस्कः ॥

Which is difficult to perform? The subjugation of the mind. Who is a celibate? He who has conquered lust (*kāma*).

[54]

का च परदेवतोक्ता
चिच्छक्तिः को जगद्भर्ता ।

सूर्यः सर्वेषां को
जीवनहेतुः स पर्जन्यः ॥

Who is the God of all the universe? Śakti in Her aspect as the *Jñānāmbikā* or the Goddess Who is the Embodiment of knowledge. Who is the protector of this Universe? The Sun-God, *Sūrya*, for he is the giver of food and nourishment to all the created beings in this world. Who is the prime cause of Life-principle (water) for all beings? The Rain-God, *Parjanya*.

[55]

कः शूरो यो भीत-
त्राता त्राता च कः स गुरुः ।
को हि जगद्गुरुः
शंभुर्ज्ञानं कुतः शिवादेव ॥

Who is the valiant man? The protector of one who fears. Who is a protector? The true preceptor. Who is the teacher of all the worlds? The Lord Almighty. Whence does knowledge come? From Him, our Lord.

[56]

मुक्तिं लभेत कस्मा-
द्भुक्तुन्दभक्तेर्भुक्तुन्दः कः ।
यस्तारयेदविद्यां
का चाविद्या यदात्मनोऽस्फूर्तिः ॥

How can salvation be attained? By devotion to Lord Mukunda. Who is Mukunda? He who helps us to overcome ignorance. What is ignorance? That which makes us forget the real nature of the self.

[57]

कस्य न शोको यः स्या-

दक्रोधः किं सुखं तुष्टिः ।

को राजा रञ्जनकृ-

त्कश्च इवा नीचसेवको यः स्यात् ॥

Who is free from sorrow? One who has quelled anger. Which is real happiness? The inner laugh — not the visible outer one. Who is the king? He who pleases all. Who is a dog among men? He who serves the lowly persons.

[58]

को मायी परमेशः

क इन्द्रजालायते प्रपञ्चोऽयम् ।

कः स्वप्ननिभो जाग्र-

द्व्यवहारः सत्यमपि च किं ब्रह्म ॥

Who is the conqueror of *Māyā* or the great illusion of this Universe? The Lord Paramesvara. Which is magic? This very world. Which is dream? The affairs of this world. Which is the ultimate Truth? The *Parabrahman* or the Supreme Absolute.

[59]

किं मिथ्या यद्विद्या-
 नाशयं तुच्छं तु शशविषाणादि ।
 का चानिर्वचनीया
 माया किं कल्पितं द्वैतम् ॥

Which is destroyed by knowledge? Untruth — e.g. hare's horn, etc. Which is it that cannot be stated as either true or false? *Māyā* or the *Appearance* of this world. What lesson does *Māyā* teach? *Dvaita* or the dualistic nature of things.

[60]

किं पारमार्थिकं स्या-
 दद्वैतं चाज्ञता कुतोऽनादिः ।
 वपुषश्च पोषकं किम्
 प्रारब्धं चान्नदायि किं चायुः ॥

Which is the real Truth? *Advaita* or Non-dualism. Wherefrom Ignorance? It is beginningless. What feeds the body? *Karma* or our own past actions. Who is the giver of food? Age.

[61]

को ब्राह्मणैरुपास्यो
 गायत्र्यर्काग्निगोचरः शंभुः ।

गायत्र्यामादित्ये

चाभौ शंभौ च किं नु तत्तत्त्वम् ॥

Whom should the brahmin worship? The Lord who resides in the *Gāyatrī*, in the Sun-God and in Fire. Who is the Lord? The supreme Tattva (truth).

[62]

प्रत्यक्षदेवता का

माता पूज्यो गुरुश्च कस्तातः ।

कः सर्वदेवतात्मा

विद्याकर्मान्वितो विप्रः ॥

Who is our visible God on earth? One's mother. Who is the teacher who should be worshipped? One's father. Who is the in-dweller of all gods? The learned and dutiful brahmin.

[63]

कश्च कुलक्षयहेतुः

संतापः सज्जनेषु योऽकारि ।

केषाममोघवचनं

ये च पुनः सत्यमौनशमशीलाः ॥

Which is it that destroys one's good pedigree? Anything likely to cause anger in the minds of good

and pious men. Whose words will come true? The words of one who observes truth and silence and is merciful.

[64]

किं जन्म विषयसङ्गः
 किमुत्तरं जन्म पुत्रः स्यात् ।
 कोऽपरिहार्यो मृत्युः
 कुत पदं विन्यसेच्च दृक्पूते ॥

What is the cause of this life? Attachment to the objects of this world. What is next birth? It is of the form of son. What is inevitable? Death. Where should one keep one's footstep? In a place which is found to be tidy by one's own eyesight.

[65]

पात्रं किमन्नदाने
 क्षुधितं कोऽर्च्यो हि भगवदवतारः ।
 कश्च भगवान्महेशः
 शंकरनारायणात्मैकः ॥

Who is worthy of being fed? The hungry one. Who is to be worshipped? The incarnations of the Lord. Who is the supreme God? He who is both *Saṅkara* and *Nārāyaṇa*.

[66]

फलमपि भगवद्भक्तेः
 किं तल्लोकस्वरूपसाक्षात्त्वम् ।
 मोक्षश्च को ह्यविद्या-
 स्तमयः कः सर्ववेदभूरथ चोम् ॥

Which is the fruit of devotion to God? Attainment of heavenly Bliss. What is liberation? The destruction of ignorance. Which is the origin and end of all the *Vedas*? The *Pranava* "Om".

[67]

इत्येषा कण्ठस्था
 प्रश्नोत्तररत्नमालिका येषाम् ।
 ते सुक्ताभरणा इव
 विमलाश्चाभान्ति सत्समाजेषु ॥

Those who wear (get by heart) such a work, *viz.* the *Praśnottararatnamālikā* (the best gem-necklace of questions and answers) shine brightly in the learned assembly of great people, like the pure, pristine and precious pearl necklaces.

BHAKTI IN ADVAITA VEDĀNTA

*Gomathi Ramanathan**

Many a time we confront the question whether Bhakti is possible or necessary in Advaita Vedānta. Some Western scholars have even traced the origin of the doctrine of Bhakti to Christian influence. E. B. Cowell who has translated the *Sarvadarśana Saṅgraha* and the *Śāṅḍilya Śatasūtrīya* has opined that "the doctrine of Bhakti arose in India as a more or less direct reflection of Christian ideas."

The doctrine of Bhakti is as old as the *Ṛg-veda* itself. In the *Ṛg-veda* there is a clear allusion to the reciting of the Lord's name as "If you praise the Ancient Cause — the origin of the *ṛta* (the divine law), according to your knowledge, you will be freed from birth. If you cannot praise Him, recite His name. However, we, O Lord Viṣṇu, devote ourselves to your light and attributeless form."¹ In another text of the *Ṛgveda*² there is a clear allusion to surrender to Him. So we can assert with certainty that the doctrine of Bhakti was not imported from the West.

The seeds of Bhakti can be found in the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*³. The *Śvetāśvataropaniṣad*⁴ actually uses the

word *bhakti* and indicates *prapatti* also. According to Advaita, which etymologically means "that wherein there is no duality," Brahman is the only Reality; the world and the individual souls are mere superimpositions on Brahman owing to *māyā* or *avidyā*. In essence, the individual soul (*jīva*) is non-different from Brahman.

The objection has been raised that, if we accept the doctrine of absolute non-difference, the ordinary means of right knowledge like perception etc. will become invalid, because they are based on distinctions such as subject and object which are non-real; the entire body of teaching regarding 'liberation' will be useless, since the distinction between teacher and pupil, word and meaning, on which it depends are non-real according to Advaita.

Śrī Śaṅkara has answered this objection in his *Bhāṣya* on the *Brahma-sūtra* (II.1.14). The reply shows clearly that the objector is betraying a confusion of stand-points. The fact that the world is non-real dawns on one only when one has realized Brahman. The world is not non-real to one who has not realized Brahman. A clear distinction has to be made between the stand-point of one who has not realized Brahman and that of one who has realized Brahman. Of course we all do have the intellectual conviction that Brahman alone is real. But this is no basis for renouncing the world. Our intellectual conviction must be transformed into direct experience. In the *vyāvahārika* state, the *jīva* is in bondage and yearns after liberation. According to Advaita, *jñāna* leads to *avidyā-nivṛtti* which is liberation. It is here that *bhakti* steps in.

The word '*bhakti*' has been used by Śaṅkara in the sense of *nididhyāsana*.⁵ He says⁶ that *bhakti* is the greatest of all the instruments for *mokṣa*. *Nididhyāsana* is more intellectual than emotional, and used in the sense of the intuitive knowledge of Brahman itself. *Bhakti*, according to the *Bhakti-sūtras* of Nārada⁷ is of the nature of "supreme love for God." It is loving devotion to God. According to Advaita, God is Saguna Brahman — the non-dual Self that appears to be endowed with attributes on account of *māyā*. Nirguna Brahman is the attributeless and unconditioned Reality unassociated with *māyā*. Saguna Brahman is not different from Nirguna Brahman. It is not right to allege that there are two Brahman. Saguna Brahman means that God is Brahman looked at from a lower level of relative experience. There are two forms of Brahman — "Brahman-as-it-is-itself" and "Brahman-as-it-is-in relation to the world." The former is the unconditioned Brahman. The latter is Brahman as endowed with forms and excellences.

And, loving devotion is offered to the Saguna Brahman endowed with form and excellences. Devotion implies the relation between the devotee and a personal God. At the absolute level, no relation is possible, according to Advaita. But at the empirical level, there are *jīvas* whose natural instinct is devotion to a personal God, *viz.* *Īśvara* endowed with form and excellences. The realization of a distinctless Reality is obtained through knowledge which is *bhakti*, according to Śaṅkara. True knowledge dawns only on a mind which has been purified and is disciplined. Dedicated duty cleanses the mind. The fruits thereof are to be dedicated to God. This is devotion, accord-

ing to Advaita. *Bhakti* or loving devotion to God serves as a link between the path of action (*karma*) and the path of knowledge (*jñāna*). The grace of God descends on the devotee whose pure mind is turned towards God; and this culminates in true knowledge. Śrī Śaṅkara in the *Brahma-sūtra-bhāṣya*⁸ says that one gets release from bondage through knowledge that comes through God's grace.

“Devotion in the highest sense is the same as knowledge.” This supreme devotion is called “*ananya-bhakti*.” Madhusūdana Sarasvatī in the *Bhakti-rasāyana* has ably proved that Nirguṇa Brahman can be an object of *bhakti*. He explains the path of “disinterested love of the Nirguṇa Brahman” in his *Gūḍhārtha-dīpikā* and *Bhakti-rasāyana*. He has propounded the theory of Nirguṇa Prema Bhakti. He is of the view that Kṛṣṇa is the Nirguṇa Brahman, and is obtainable through Bhakti. In the *Gūḍhārtha-dīpikā*,⁹ he says that Bhakti is the means of immediate liberation.

According to Madhusūdana Sarasvatī, knowledge of Brahman is as much necessary for a devotee as it is for the follower of the path of knowledge, and his devotion helps in securing the *prasāda* (grace) of the Lord. He has established that Bhakti is the principal aim of human life. He says that “Bhakti is of the nature of a conditional modification of the liquified mind, experiencing beautification.” All beings, including birds and animals are entitled to Bhakti. In the *Gūḍhārtha-dīpikā*, Madhusūdana quotes a verse from the *Bhāgavata* — “Even sages who enjoy the bliss of Ātman and who are free from all bonds, spontaneously dedicate themselves to Viṣṇu (*Urukrama*) without

having any purpose in view."¹⁰ Even Jīvan-muktas' hearts are filled with loving devotion to God.

Bhakti or loving devotion towards Sākāra Brahman, if practised along with *jñāna-yoga*, gives concentration of thought and renders *nididhyāsana* on Nirguṇa Brahman possible. Unless one has concentration of thought one cannot pursue *nididhyāsana*. Concentration of thought can be attained through *upāsana* on Saguṇa Brahman. This is possible only by *bhakti* towards the concrete manifestation of Brahman. Thus *bhakti* is necessary for one to pursue *nididhyāsana*. This is the view according to Advaita Vedānta. When the mind of the aspirant becomes pure by pursuing *jñāna-yoga* along with *bhakti*, there arises the intuitive knowledge of Brahman either from the major texts of the *Upaniṣads* or from the mind itself. The Grace of God is very essential for warding off all impediments that stand in the way of the successful accomplishment of *jñāna-yoga*. Advaita, thus, accords a prominent place to *bhakti* in its scheme of practical discipline.

Śrī Śaṅkara, the exponent of Advaita has composed many soul-stirring hymns in praise of the different deities with a view to stress the importance of *bhakti* in the life of a spiritual aspirant. He is of the view that the practice of *bhakti* is as important as the practice of *karma* for a spiritual aspirant; for both of them are helpful to the attainment of the purification of the mind (*citta-śuddhi*) which is necessary for the final discipline of *śravaṇa*, *manana* and *nididhyāsana*. Śrī Śaṅkara established the *Ṣaṅmata* and has laid down the norms for temple-worship. He has taught prayer and supplication as forming an indispensable part of

worship. He has burst forth into rhapsody of devotional fervour in his melodious hymns on Devī — the Divine Mother, and on Gaṇeśa, Subrahmaṇya, Sūrya, Śiva and Viṣṇu. His commentary on the *Viṣṇu-sahasranāma* bears ample testimony to his devotion on the Saguṇa aspect of Brahman. From the description of the Saguṇa Brahman, he has woven the concept of Nirguṇa Brahman. His brilliant commentary on the *Viṣṇu-sahasranāma* proves the importance of *bhakti* and the recitation of the Lord's name in the practical discipline of Advaita. "The first stage is Image worship; the next consists in Japa and Prayer; still higher is mental worship; the highest is of the form 'I am He'."

The *Śivānanda-laharī* of Śrī Śaṅkara is an impassioned outpouring in 100 stanzas of overpowering melody of a *jīva* yearning union with the Lord, and striving hard to restrain the wayward mind from being carried away by worldly pleasures and to bring it to rest at the feet of the Lord.

The *Ṣaṭpadī-stotra* of Śrī Śaṅkara consisting of seven stanzas highlights the view that among the different paths leading to self-realization, *bhakti* is the best. The eleven types of *bhakti* described in the *Bhakti-sūtras* of Nārada are described in the *Śivānandalaharī*.¹¹ The various stages of *bhakti* are vividly portrayed. The seed of the Aṅkola tree though falling on the ground away from the root of the tree slowly moves towards it and finally coalesces in it. In a similar way, the devotee clings to the feet of the Lord. A piece of magnet attracts iron when it comes within a certain distance from it. Similarly a devotee comes nearer to God by his *bhakti*. A devotee is com-

pared by Śrī Śaṅkara to a chaste wife who loves her husband with all her heart and soul. These three examples cited above are examples of *dāsya-bhakti*.

Next, Śrī Śaṅkara gives an example of *sakhyabhakti*. A creeper growing near a tree slowly catches hold of the trunk of the tree and completely entwines round the tree. The third and final stage of *bhakti* which is called *Ātmanivedana* is exemplified in a river finding its way to the sea and completely merging with it. These three stages are a progression from 'dualism' to the final stage of non-dualism. All the devotional hymns composed by Śrī Śaṅkara emphasize this truth and integrate convincingly Saguna worship and *bhakti* into the grand concept of Advaita.

Madhusūdana Sarasvatī, the staunch follower of Śaṅkara's Advaita, was an ardent devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa. This is neither self-contradictory nor surprising. How Nirguṇa Brahman can be an object of Bhakti has been proved by Madhusūdana in his *Bhakti-rasāyana* and the *Gūḍhārtha-dīpikā*. Even the *Advaita-siddhi* which has been recognised as the standard work on Śaṅkara Vedānta, is replete with verses confirming the Advaitin's loving devotion to the Lord. According to Madhusūdana, when the mind liquified by devotional acts, assumes an uninterrupted form of the Lord — that state of mind is called *Bhakti*. So he says, "when the melted mind grasps the Venerable one who is omnipresent and eternal, and who is a plenum of knowledge and bliss, naturally nothing remains further to be achieved."

To sum up: *Bhakti* is not only possible, but also necessary in Advaita Vedānta. This has been amply proved by the soul-stirring devotional hymns of Śrī Śaṅkara. A reputed Advaitin like Madhusūdana Sarasvatī views Kṛṣṇa as the absolute impersonal Brahman. Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭattiri soars into a rhapsody of poetry when he describes and praises the impersonal Absolute as Lord Kṛṣṇa. He offers salutations to that Kṛṣṇa¹² — “who is the ground on which the world manifestation appears; who is both the material and efficient cause of it; into which it dissolves; who manifests as all the world, but nonetheless transcends them all, and forms the light of consciousness by which and to which they are revealed, who is far beyond the scope of exact description by words and conception of mind; whose true nature, neither the gods nor the sages have known, much less others.” This is the absolute Brahman of Advaita Vedānta.

NOTES

1. *Rg-veda*, 1.156.3.
2. *Rg-veda*, 1.156.2.
3. *Kāthopaniṣad*, 2.23.
4. *Svetāśvataropaniṣad*, 6.23.
5. *Viveka-cūḍāmaṇi* — स्वस्वरूपाच्युत्सन्धानं भिक्तरित्यभिधीयते, 1.31.
6. *Ibid.* — मोक्षसाधनसामग्र्यां भक्तिरेव गरीयसी ।

7. Narada, *Bhakti-sūtra* — 1. सा तु अस्मिन् परमप्रेमरूपा ।
8. *Brahma-sūtra-bhāṣya*, II.iii.41.
9. *Gaḍhārtha-dīpikā*, IX.9.
10. आत्मारामाश्चमुनयः निग्रन्था अप्युरुक्रमे ।
कुर्वन्त्यहैतुकीं भक्तिं इत्थम्भूतगुणो हरिः ॥
11. *Sivānandalahari*, 61.
12. *Nārāyaṇyam*, 98.1.

ABOUT THE PUBLISHERS

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संसाराध्वनि तापभानुकिरणप्रोद्धूतदाहव्यथा-

खिन्नानां जलकाङ्क्षया मरुभुवि भ्रान्त्या परिभ्राम्यताम् ।

अत्यासन्नसुधाम्बुधिं सुखकरं ब्रह्माद्वयं दर्शय-

न्त्येषा शङ्करभारती विजयते निर्वाणसन्दायिनी ॥

samsārādhvani tāpabhānukiraṇaprodhūṭadāhavyathā-
khinnānām jalakāṅkṣayā marubhuvi bhrāntyā

paribhrāmyatām

atyāsannasudhāmbudhiṃ sukhakaram brahmādvayaṃ

darśayant-

yeṣā 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.