

*A HALF-YEARLY JOURNAL OF ADVAITA-VEDĀNTA*

# *The VOICE of* ŚĀṆKARĀ

śaṅkara-bhāratī

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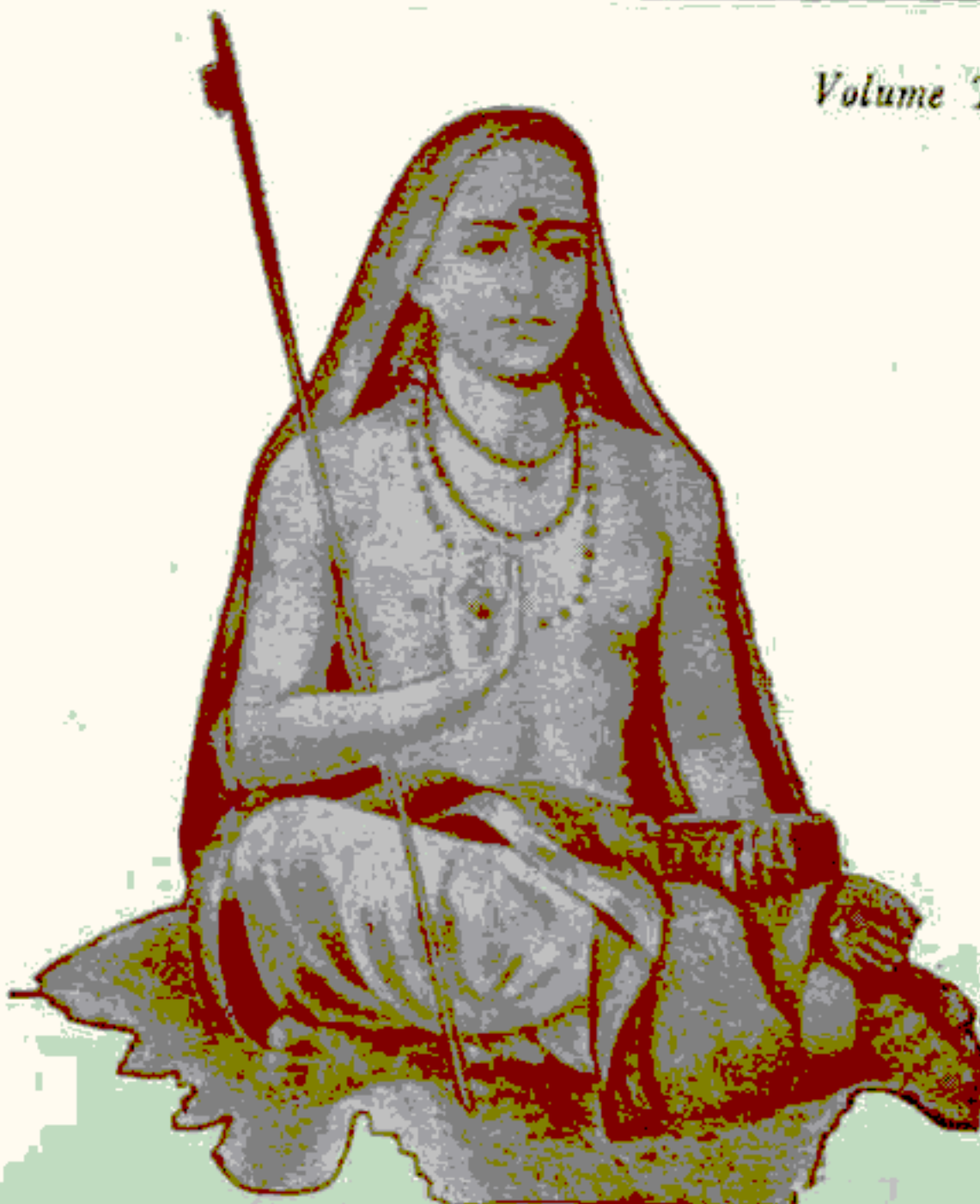
V. R. Kalyanasundara Sastri

*Editor*

R. Balasubramanian

*Volume TWENTYTWO*

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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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## HOMAGE TO ŚAṄKARA

[170]

चिन्मुद्रां दक्षहस्ते प्रणतजनमहाबोधदात्रीं दधानं  
वामे नम्रेष्टदानप्रकटनचतुरं चिह्नमप्यादधानम् ।  
कारुण्यापारवार्धिं यतिवरवपुषं शङ्करं शङ्करांशं  
चन्द्राहङ्कारहुङ्कृत्स्मितलसितमुखं भावयाम्यन्तरङ्गे ॥

*cinmudrām dakṣahaste praṇatajanamahābodhadātrīm*  
*dadhānam*  
*vāme namreṣṭadānaprakāṭanacaturam cihnamapy-*  
*ādadhānam*  
*kāruṇyāpāravārdhīm yativaravapuṣam śaṅkaram*  
*śaṅkarāṁśam*  
*candrāhaṅkārahuṅkṛt-smitalāsitamukham*  
*bhāvayāmyantaraṅge.*

I earnestly meditate on Śrī Śaṅkarācārya – the *avatāra* of Lord Śiva, in the core of my heart. Śrī Śaṅkara has put on the garb of the king of ascetics and has the *cinmudrā* (the sign of wisdom) on his right hand. The *cinmudrā* yields supreme knowledge to all the devotees who have resorted to

his feet. He has borne on his left hand the symbol that is skilful in displaying the generosity, viz. fulfilling all the desires of his devotees. He is the ocean of unbounded compassion and his face shines with the smile which threatens (is ready to destroy) the moon of ego (*ahaṅkāra*).

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बीजमिदं मत्पादप्रपतनमखिलेप्सितार्थपूगस्य ।  
इति बोधनाय धत्से चिन्मुद्रां किं यतीशान ॥

*bījamidaṁ matpāda-prapatanam-akhilepsitārtha-pūgasya  
iti bodhanāya dhatse cinmudrāṁ kiṁ yatīśāna.*

Oh! Lord of Ascetics! do you bear the *cinmudrā* to teach everyone that falls at your pair of feet – “This (*cinmudrā*) alone forms the seed of fruition of all kinds of desires” (of your devotees)?

Śrī Saccidānanda Śivābhinava Nṛsiṅhabhārati  
in Śrī Śaṅkarācārya Stotrakadambam



### On Brahman and Sākṣin

लये फेनस्य तद्धर्मा द्रवाद्यास्स्युस्तरङ्गके ।  
तस्यापि विलये नीरे तिष्ठन्त्येते यथा पुरा ॥

With the disappearance of the foam (in the wave), its characteristics such as fluidity etc. merge in the wave; again with the disappearance of the wave, in the water, these characteristics merge, as before, in the water.

प्रातिभासिकजीवस्य लये स्युर्व्यावहारिके ।  
तल्लये सच्चिदानन्दाः पर्यवस्यन्ति साक्षिणि ॥

With the disappearance of the *prātibhāsika jīva* (in the *vyāvahārika jīva*) Existence, Consciousness and Bliss (which are its characteristics) merge in the *vyāvahārika jīva*. When that also disappears (in *Sākṣin*) these characteristics (finally) merge in *Sākṣin*.

From *Dṛg-dṛśya-viveka*, 45-46

## THUS SPAKE ŚAṄKARA\*

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### *Karma-yoga Impossible for the Enlightened*

[In chapter 2 the Lord, after explaining *karma-yoga* and *jñāna-yoga*, points out that the latter is superior to the former. This prompts Arjuna to ask the Lord in the beginning of chapter 3, why he was advised to resort to *karma-yoga* if *jñāna-yoga* is superior to it. The Lord's answer is that, since he is not competent to pursue *jñāna-yoga*, he should practise *karma-yoga* alone. In chapter 4 the Lord, on his own, praises the greatness of *jñāna-yoga* and then concludes his discourse by exhorting Arjuna to practise *karma-yoga*. Remembering that the Lord has spoken about *karma-sannyāsa*, i.e. renunciation of all actions, now Arjuna asks the Lord in the beginning of chapter 5 to tell him which is better of the two, *karma-sannyāsa* or *karma-yoga*. Since *karma-yoga* and *karma-sannyāsa* are mutually opposed, one and the same individual cannot resort to both of them at the same time. Of the two, one has to be chosen; and so Arjuna wants to know the better of the two. Also, there is the question of the eligibility of the

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

person. Therefore, who is the person eligible for *karma-yoga*/*karma-sannyāsa*? Is it the man who has realized the Self or one who is ignorant of it?]

*Question:* Are both *karma-yoga* and *karma-sannyāsa* impossible, or is only one of them impossible, for a man who has realised the Self (*ātma-vit*)? If only one of them, is it *karma-yoga* or *karma-sannyāsa*? What is the reason for the impossibility?

*Answer:* Since the man who has realised the Self is free from illusory cognition, *karma-yoga* which is based upon illusion must be impossible for him. Here, in the *Gītā-śāstra*, in the sections treating of the real nature of the Self, it is said that a man who knows the Self, who knows himself to be the Self that is devoid of all changes such as birth, etc., and is actionless, and whose illusory cognition has been replaced by right knowledge,—that such a man has to renounce all actions, ever dwelling in the true actionless Self. Also, it has been said that, owing to the opposition between right knowledge and illusory cognition as well as between their efforts, he has nothing to do with *karma-yoga*, the opposite of *karma-sannyāsa*, for *karma-yoga* presupposes an active Self and the idea of agency caused by illusory cognition. So it is but right to say that, for him who has realised the Self and who is free from illusory cognition, *karma-yoga* which is based upon the illusory cognition is impossible.

*Same Result for Karma-Sannyāsa and Karma-Yoga*

*Objection:* *Karma-sannyāsa* and *karma-yoga*, which are meant for two distinct classes of people and are opposed to each other, should, properly speaking, be mutually opposed in their results also. They should not, on the other hand, both lead to *mokṣa* alike.



*Answer:* It is children who speak of Sāṅkhya and Yoga as producing distinct and opposite results. But the wise men of knowledge believe that they produce but one harmonious result. He who rightly observes even one of them, Sāṅkhya or Yoga, obtains the fruits of both. Both lead to the same result, viz. *mokṣa*. So, there is no difference in the result.

*Question:* How can a man obtain the results of both by the right observance of only one?

*Answer:* Sāṅkhyas are those who are devoted to knowledge and have renounced the world. They reach the state called *mokṣa*. The same state is reached by Yogins also, – but indirectly through the attainment of true knowledge and renunciation, – by those who perform their duties as a means of attaining knowledge, dedicating them to Īśvara, and having no selfish end in view. That man sees rightly who sees that Sāṅkhya and Yoga are one, as leading to an identical result.

#### *Pāramārthika-sannyāsa and Pāramārthika-yoga*

[The question raised by Arjuna relates to *karma-sannyāsa* and *karma-yoga*. After answering this question straightway, why should the Lord speak about Sāṅkhya and Yoga, which may appear to be irrelevant in this context. So, this calls for an explanation.]

*Objection:* Having started with the words “*sannyāsa*” and “*karma-yoga*”, how is it that the Lord speaks of Sāṅkhya and Yoga – with which we are not concerned here – as producing the same result?

*Answer:* There is no fault here. Arjuna’s question was with reference to simple *sannyāsa* and simple *karma-yoga* (i.e. *kevala=jñānahīna-sannyāsa-karma-yogayoh*). But the Lord,

without leaving these, has added to them some additional ideas of his own and has answered the question, using the term "Sāṅkhya" and "Yoga". According to the Lord, *karma-sannyāsa* and *karma-yoga* are themselves termed "Sāṅkhya" and "Yoga" when knowledge of the Self [*jñāna*] and equanimity (*samatva-buddhi*) which is the means to knowledge are added to them respectively. Hence the use of the term "Sāṅkhya" and "Yoga" in this context are relevant.... In the absence of knowledge, *karma-yoga* is superior to *karma-sannyāsa*. But that *sannyāsa* which is based upon knowledge is regarded by the Lord as Sāṅkhya; and Sāṅkhya itself is the true (*paramārtha*) Yoga. As regards the Vedic *karma-yoga*, it is by courtesy called Yoga or *sannyāsa* since it leads to the true Yoga (or *sannyāsa*). [The idea that is sought to be conveyed here is: *sannyāsa* is of two kinds – *pāramārthika* and *apāramārthika*. The former is based on knowledge, while the latter is bereft of knowledge. Again, *karma-yoga* is of two kinds: that which is associated with equanimity, etc. and that which is bereft of it. Of these, *pāramārthika-sannyāsa* is Sāṅkhya and the *karma-yoga* with equanimity, etc. is *pāramārthika-yoga*.]

### The Actions of a Sage

He who is equipped with Yoga, whose mind has been purified, who has conquered the body and the senses, who sees rightly, whose inner consciousness, the Self, has formed the self of all beings from Brahmā down to a clump of grass, – he will not be tainted, i.e. he will not be bound by actions, though he may continue to perform them for the protection of the masses (*loka-saṅgraha*), i.e. with a view to set an example to the masses.



### *Actions of a Karma-yogin*

He offers all actions to Īśvara in the faith that "I act for His sake," as a servant acts for the sake of the master. He has no attachment for the result, even for *mokṣa*. The result of actions so done is only purity of the mind, and nothing else. The steady-minded man who, resolved that "I do actions for the sake of the Lord, not for my benefit," abandons the fruit of action, attains the peace called *mokṣa*, as the result of devotion, through the following stages: first, purity of mind; then, attainment of knowledge; then, renunciation of all actions; and lastly, devotion to knowledge. But he who is unsteady is led by desire and is attached to the fruit, thinking "I do this act for my benefit." He is firmly bound. So, be steady-minded.

### *Liberated-in-life*

Actions are classified thus: obligatory duties (*nitya-karma*), occasioned duties (*naimittika-karma*), desire-prompted deeds (*kāmya-karma*), and forbidden deeds (*pratiṣiddha-karma*). The man who has subdued the senses, renounces all action in speech, thought, and deed, by discrimination, by seeing inaction in action, and rests happily. He rests happily because he has given up all action in speech, thought and deed, because he is without worry, because his mind is calm, because, excepting the Self, all interests (foreign to Self) have departed from his mind. Where and how does he rest? He rests in the body which has nine openings – seven in the head, being the organs of sensation and two nether ones for the passage of the urine and the dung. As having these nine openings, the body is said to be a nine-gated city. It is like a city, with the Self for its monarch,

inhabited by the citizens of the senses, mind, intellect, as well as their objects, – all working for the sole benefit of their Lord and producing consciousness of various objects. In such a nine-gated city the embodied one rests, having renounced all action.

He that is ignorant identifies himself with the mere aggregate of the body and the senses, and thinks: "I rest in a house, I rest on the ground, I rest on a seat." Such a man who identifies himself with the body cannot, indeed, cherish the idea that he rests in the body as in a house. But in the case of a man who regards the Self as distinct from the aggregate of the body, etc. the idea that he rests in the body is quite possible. And it is also right that he should renounce by thought – by knowledge, by discriminative wisdom – the action attributed to the Self through ignorance, but which really pertains to the not-Self. Though a man has attained discriminative wisdom (i.e. has realised his true Self as distinguished from the not-Self) and has renounced all concern with action, still, it may be said that he rests in the nine-gated city of the body as in a house, in as much as his personal consciousness (of resting) arises only with reference to the body in virtue of the traces of the unspent portion of the *prārabdhakarma* – the *karma* which has ushered in the present body – still continuing to be felt. Thus the qualification "he rests in the body" has a meaning, as pointing to a distinction between the respective standpoints of the wise and the ignorant.

### *The Actionless Self*

The Self, the Lord (of the body), does not create agency, i.e. does not on its own urge any one to action, saying "Do this." Neither does the Self create cars, jars, mansions, and



other objects of desire, nor does the Self unite him who makes a car or the like with the fruit of the act.

*Question:* If the Self in the body does not act, nor cause others to act, what then is it that acts and causes others to act?

*Answer:* Listen, it is Nature, *svabhāva*, *prakṛti*, *māyā*, “the divine *māyā* made up of *guṇas*.” (7.14)

### *No More Birth for the Wise*

Fixing their consciousness in Brahman and realising that the very supreme Brahman is their self, they renounce all actions and dwell in Brahman alone, – the supreme Brahman being their highest goal, their delight being solely in the unconditioned self. In the case of such men, all sins and other causes of mundane existence (*saṁsāra*) are destroyed by wisdom described above, and they depart from here, never returning to embodied life.

Even while living here on earth, birth has been brought under control by those sages who see the one, and whose mind (*antaḥ-karaṇa*) rests unwavering on the uniform presence of Brahman in all creatures. Though, to the ignorant, Brahman in such impure bodies as those of dog-eaters and the like appears to be contaminated by their impurities, yet it is unaffected by them and is therefore spotless. Further, it is not heterogeneous either, owing to any heterogeneous attributes ascribed to it; for, consciousness has no attributes. And the Lord speaks of desire and the like as the attributes of the *kṣetra* – of the body, of the not-Self (13.6), – and He speaks also of the self as beginningless and without attributes (13.31). Nor are there what are called “ultimate particulars” (*antya-viśeṣas*) as the basis of individual distinctions in the

**Self**, since there is no proof to establish their reality in respect of the Self in each body. It means that Brahman is homogeneous and one. So they (the sages) rest in Brahman only. Not in the slightest can blemishes of bodies affect them, since they have no egotism and do not identify themselves with the aggregate of the body and the like.

### *Freedom from Pleasure and Pain*

Pleasant and unpleasant objects can cause pleasure and pain to them only who regard the body as the Self, not to him who sees the pure Self, since the latter never comes by pleasant and unpleasant objects. He is undoubtedly conscious that the Self is free from delusion. He rests in Brahman described above; that is, he does no action, he has renounced all action.

When his mind (*antaḥ-karaṇa*) is uncontaminated by attachment to things contacted by the senses, to the sound and other sense-objects which are all external(to the Self), the sage realises the joy which there is in the Self. When his mind is absorbed in Yoga, in Samādhi, in a deep and steady contemplation of Brahman, then the sage attains the imperishable bliss. Therefore, he who seeks for the endless joy of the Self should withdraw the senses from the momentary pleasure of external objects.

The pleasures that are caused by contacts of the senses with sense-objects are only generators of pain, since those delights are caused by *avidyā*. We do find that all troubles arising in the body, etc. are traceable to them (delights) only. As in this world, so in the other. Seeing that there is no trace of joy in *saṁsāra*, the devotee should withdraw the senses



from the mirage of sense-objects. Not only do the delights cause pain, but also they have a beginning and an end. The contact of a sense with its object marks the beginning of a pleasure, and their separation is end. Delights are temporary, occurring in the moment of interval (between the origin and the end). A man who possesses discrimination and who has realised the supreme Reality does not rejoice in them. Only the ignorant persons, like cattle and the like, rejoice in the sense-objects.

### *Path of Liberation*

It has been said that those who, renouncing all actions, remain steady in right knowledge obtain instant liberation (*sadyomukti*). It has often been and will be declared by the Lord that *karma-yoga*, which is performed in complete devotion to the Lord and dedicated to Him, leads to *mokṣa* step by step: first, the purification of the mind, then knowledge, then renunciation of all actions, and lastly *mokṣa*.



## THE RELIGION OF THE WORLD\*

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*Jagadguru Śrī Candrasekharendra Sarasvatī*

There are ever so many religions in this world. Each has a separate name of its own to distinguish it from the others. All these names are personal and are derived from the founders of the respective faiths. Thus Buddhism takes its name from its founder, Lord Buddha, Jainism from Jina, Muhammadanism from Prophet Muhammed, Christianity from Jesus Christ, Zoroastrianism (the religion of the Parsees) from its founder Zoroaster, and the Chinese religion, Confucianism, from its propounder, Confucius. No doubt all these founders of new religions have been great men possessing the power to attract many men to their way of thinking. Thus every religion other than ours has a distinctive name of its own. But if you ask a youngster belonging to our religion what religion he professes, he would, if he happens to have received a little English education, at once reply that he belongs to the Hindu religion. On the other hand if we ask our peasants about the name of our religion, they would be at a loss to give a common name to it. If we put the same

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\* from His Holiness' discourse in 1931.

query to those employed in writing negotiable documents in the South of India, they would describe themselves as they do at the top of these documents, as belonging to the Śaivite or the Vaiṣṇavite cult. These are really subdivisions in our faith and cannot be taken as representing the whole of it: but even these names are not derived from those of any historic personages but merely follow the names of the respective divine forms selected for personal worship. If Hinduism is really the name of our religion, it should have been known and described as such even during the period of our remote forefathers. But it would appear that to our ancestors of even a few centuries back, the name 'Hinduism' would have been a strange and meaningless term. It is so because ours is a religion without a name.

No doubt the subdivisions in our faith go by certain specific names. These again take their names only after the various forms of the one Almighty selected for *upāsana* and not after human beings. For the general faith however it would be difficult to find a common name. Of late a name has been much in use, *viz.*, Sanātana Dharma, but even this cannot be said to be the strictly traditional name of our religion, for in that case it should be known as such to the poor peasant and to the humble widow, as in the case of the followers of other man-made religions. But such is not the case.

The term Hinduism is really a name somebody has presented us with. We can find in History a clue as to how this term came to be coined. Our forefathers were once the inhabitants of the region watered by the river Sindhu (the modern Indus) which, to some foreigners who came into contact with us was known as Indus. From this they christened the land in which this river flowed as the Indu Deśa or 'the



land of the Indus'. Naturally and in course of time they applied this name to the entire Bhāratavarṣa of which the part watered by Sindhu formed but a slice. Are we not familiar with the saying that 'beyond Hyde Park all is desert'?

Again every religion has some distinguishing symbol which at once marks it off from the others. The Cross of the Christians is one such example. The Hindus on the other hand, have no apparent symbol to point as being common to all of them. As we are without a name, even so we are without common symbolising badge. Ours, therefore, appears to be a religion without a name and a distinguishing mark! For instance, some of us wear the sacred ash, while others wear the "Vishnupād" on their foreheads. Some among us are "Vīra Vaiṣṇavas" and an equal number, the "Liṅgāyats" and similar others are "Vīra Śaivas". All these, however, have the consciousness that they are the adherents of one common religion.

The real grandeur of our faith consists in its being nameless. The need for names for an article arises only when there are many of that type so that each could, in some way, be distinguished from the others. But if there is one and one only of that article, why need a name for it? To take a concrete instance, if there are, say, four Rāmasvāmīs in a village we must give them different initials or personal names to tell the one from the other calling one of them, Rāmasvāmī, the dark, another of them, Rāmasvāmī, the fair, and so forth. If there be only one Rāmasvāmī, there is hardly any further naming required.

Even so, with our religion. What is religion? It is that which shows us the way out of this miserable cycle of births and deaths or in other words sins and sorrows. It was pointed out at the outset that other religions are known by the names

of their respective founders. These religions therefore did not exist before the rise of these great personages. Specific dates are assigned to every such religion which existed before all these other faiths were born. Thus it should have existed at a time when it was the only religion in the world, administering to the spiritual needs of humanity as a whole. This then explains our religion not having had a specific original name, as there was no second religion from which this name should distinguish it. It was merely the Dharma – a word synonymous with Religion.

It would appear then that its having no specific name is itself a distinctive symbol. Although the religion has no distinguishing name of its own there is in it a common basis—viz., the faith in the final authority of the *Vedas*, i.e., *Veda Prāmāṇyam*, in spiritual matters. This is also implied in the saying current in some of our mother-tongues that makes the *Vedas* a simile for authoritativeness!

The question then arises that, if ours was the only religion prevalent at the time, were our religious principles observed by all the inhabitants of the world? We can now give plenty of instances to show that the reply to this question is in the affirmative.

For instance, one of the charges against Jesus which made the Jews crucify him was that Jesus drank water from a well intended for the lower classes. Does this not imply the existence of a caste system before Jesus' time?

Again an inscription unearthed in Egypt, dated 1280 B.C. contains the terms of a treaty between Rameses II and the Hittites. In this treaty the Vedic deity, "Maitrāvaruṇa", has curiously enough been cited as the witness! (See H.R.Hall's



*Ancient History of the Near East* – pp. 364 *et seq.*) Besides, in the ancient Egyptian chronology, we find a series of kings bearing the name of Rāma as for example, Rameses I, Rameses II, Rameses III, etc.

In the island of Madagasgar off the Eastern coast of South Africa, as many as seventy-five percent of the names of places happen to be Saṁskrit names. Most of them are akin to the name of hero of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, Rāma.

We are all aware of the Great Sahara Desert in Northern Africa. There is a theory that all deserts once formed the beds of the seas or, in Saṁskrit, Sagaras. Is the suggestion far-fetched, that the modern name, Sahara, is a corruption of the Saṁskrit “Sāgara?” It is said that while the Sahara was under water there was a thick population around its banks and that the names of those people were mostly Saṁskrit and were even related to the name of Rāma. (See *Encyclopedia Brittanica*, Vol. XXIII, Title-Sahara).

Evidences such as these are not wanting in the opposite part of the Globe. In distant Mexico a festival is being celebrated at about the same time as the Indian “Navarātrī” or “Dusserah” and it is known as “Rāmasīta”. (See p.56 of the Text and Plate 24 in T.W.F. Gann’s *The Maya Indians of Southern Yucaton, North and British Honduras.*) Further, the excavations made in that country have resulted in an abundance of the idols of Lord Gaṇeśa being unearthed (Baron Humboldt quoted in Har Bilas Sarada’s *Hindu Superiority*, p.151). The ancient inhabitants of those parts were “Āstikas” (i.e., those who believed in *Veda Prāmāṇyam* or the authoritativeness of the *Vedas*) a term which still lingers in the modern name “Aztecs” which is now given to this group!



In Peru, a country in the West of South America, the inhabitants were sun worshippers. Their principal festivals of the year fell on the solstices. (See *Asiatic Researches*, Vol. I. p.426). They were known as the "Incas", a name derived from one of the names of the Sun, "Ina".

While speculating in this strain, it is tempting to make another observation on the remarkable similarity between a series of names of places in California and several *purāṇic* names. We have all heard of the well-known story of the sixty thousand sons of King Sagara being burnt to ashes by the sage Kapila, to save whose souls their descendant Bhagīratha, is said to have brought down the Gaṅgā to the earth. The story goes that the horse sought for by the sons of Sagara was found in Netherlands (*Pātāla Loka*). America being roughly India's antipodes on the globe, is this description of that land in the *Purāṇas* as the netherland to be laughed at? Is it not very suggestive that *California* might be a corruption for "*Kapila Aranya*" (Kapila's forest), and that the two islands nearby, viz., "*The Horse Island*" and "*The Ash Island*", might represent the places where the horse of King Sagara was kept and where King Sagara's sixty thousand sons were burnt to ashes?

Figs.128-129 in p. 621 of *The Native Tribes of Central Australia*, by Spencer and Gillen (Macmillan, 1899) depict a kind of dance said to be current among the wild native tribes of Australia. This dance is described in the book as *The Siva Dance*. On closer examination, the dancers appear to have painted on their forehead a third eye, a fact suggestive of the possibility that the people of even such distant lands as Australia were once well-versed in Vedic lore.

Nearer home in the Eastern Archipelago evidences of

the prevalence of the Hindu faith are abundant. Java bristles with relics of Hindu cult and worship. In Borneo there is a forest which the Westerners were for a long time describing as a virgin forest, i.e., not having been penetrated by man (Wallace—*The Malay Archipelago*, pp. 44-45). A party of explorers, after they had gone a few hundreds of miles, discovered a stone which contained an inscription commemorating in detail the performance of some specified *Yāgas* and *Yajñas* (Vedic sacrifices) by a certain king (*Yupa inscriptions of Mulvarman of Koeti, Borneo*).

All these evidences only go to prove that our religion which was the only religion the world possessed for a long time, had spread all over the world.

It will not be out of place to examine here some conceptions of Hinduism about the Universe. The common Hindu belief about our terrestrial globe is that it is composed of seven *Dvīpas* or land masses. Ādi Śaṅkara Bhagavat-pādācārya refers to this in the following sentence in one of his books:

*sapta-dvīpa ca medinī.*

Each one of these *Dvīpas* consists of several *Varṣas* each of which in turn consists of several *Khaṇḍas*. Our country India has been described in our scriptures as *Bharata Khaṇḍa*, said to be a part of *Bhārata Varṣa*, which in turn is supposed to be situated in *Jambūdvīpa*. Mount Meru is supposed to be to the north of all the seven *Dvīpas*. There is an ocean belt between every two *Dvīpas*. The sun and the moon are said to move round Meru.

Let us now examine in detail the real import of these conceptions. The Westerners teach us in our Geography books



that earth is round and we think that this truth was first revealed to us by them. The Sanskrit term for "geography" is "*Bhū Goḷa*" which itself means "*the round earth*". Is not the very existence of this word proof of the fact that our ancients were aware of this fundamental geographical truth about the spherical nature of the Earth? In the ancient Indian mathematical science, words such as "*Khagoḷa*" and "*Bhū Goḷa*" occur which are further evidences in support of the above. In our *Saṅkalpa Mantras* we use the word "*Brahmāṇḍa*" while referring to the earth. The term *ṇḍa* in this word really means an egg, i.e., an oval-shaped body!

Let us now imagine the whole earth as a lime fruit with that part of it containing "*Meru*" (Himalayas) directed towards the north as its apex. Then "*Meru*" becomes the north pole and, hence, the northern most point on the earth. This position, then, will sufficiently explain the saying:

*sarveṣāmapī varṣāṇām mer-ṛuttarataḥ sthitaḥ.*

The rest of the sphere is all to the south of it. To the eye of a man standing on the apex of it, the sun and the moon would appear to go round it, i.e., the sun would not be exactly overhead at any part of the year, but would always be a side of it. This is what is meant by the statement in our *Śāstras* that the sun goes round "*Meru*". There is thus nothing in these conceptions which could be considered as being contradicted by modern geographical discoveries.

All the modern discoveries about the geography of our earth seem, therefore, to have already dawned on our ancient seers. References to these truths are also found in the works of Āryabhaṭṭa, Varāhamihira, and Appayya Dīkṣita.

Thus we come back to the truth which we established at the outset, viz., ours was the only religion extant on the face of the earth for a long time. All the other religions of the world have only taken up and developed some phases of our bigger faith which contains all the aspects of the different religions.

With a little propaganda characterized more by kindness and love than by conceit and arrogance, it might yet be possible for us to convince others of this truth.

## ŚRĪ ŚAṆKARĀCĀRYA SPEAKS\* AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

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A.S. Raman\*\*

One often refers, rather loosely Śaṅkarācārya as the Pope of the Hindus. But there is little in common between the two august offices. Actually, the difference is of kind, not of degree. The analogy is, however, valid in the context of externals, if not of essentials. The entire Hindu community, whatever be its inner rifts and ramifications, has the same affection for Śaṅkarācārya as the solidly united Roman Catholics have for their Pontiff. Perhaps the feelings of the devotee towards his revered leader are more tender and touching than those of his Christian confrere towards the Pope. For the Hindu, being basically a monist at heart, unreservedly identifies himself with the object of his worship, forgetting, for the moment, the demands of his particular creed. That is why the spell of Śaṅkarācārya is all-pervasive. The allegiance of the Śaivites to their Guru of Gurus is understandable. But the Vaiṣṇavas, the Mādhvas, the agnostics and even the atheists find him equally irresistible. By the way, Atheism is also a recognised system

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of Hindu thought. Indeed, it is impossible to conceive of religious doctrines, disciplines and dogmas (including Communism which is after all religion in reverse) anywhere in the world which the singularly eclectic and elastic Hindu fold, as open as the sea, does not embrace.

The similarities between the offices of the Pope and Jagadguru ("World-Teacher") Śaṅkarācārya are confined to protocol and pageantry. The forms that both these institutions have evolved down the ages are equally picturesque. What distinguishes the Hindu pontiff from his Roman Catholic counterpart is the plurality of authority typical of the organisation over which he presides. He shares his power and prestige with four others. For there are, not one, but four Jagadguru Śaṅkarācāryas, all of equal importance. They are the chiefs of the *mathas*, believed to have been set up by the Ādi Śaṅkarā himself, at Śṛṅgeri (Mysore) in the south, Dvārakā (Gujarat) in the west, Joṣimath (Uttar Pradesh) in the north and Pūri (Orissa) in the east. Though they all claim to be of equal stature and significance, the Svāmī at Śṛṅgeri has, it appears, precedence over his colleagues because he is the spiritual descendant of Sureśvarācārya (known in his *pūrvāśrama* as Maṇḍana Mīśra), the first disciple of Ādi Śaṅkara. But no dates or documents can be cited in defence of the antiquity or authority that legend and convention ascribe to these *mathas*.

But, today, by all accounts, none of these four Śaṅkarācāryas has the stature of the fifth – His Holiness Jagadguru Śrī Śaṅkarācārya Svāmī of the Kāñcīpuram Kāmakoṭi Pīṭham (Madras). Devotees of this great saint claim that the *matha* over which he presides is the oldest

because its origins are traceable to Sarvajña, the favourite *Śiṣya* (disciple) of Ādi Śaṅkara, who, being young, had to remain for sometime under the tutelage of Sureśvarācārya. Thus, while controversies make it impossible for us to fix the seniority of any one of these Śaṅkarācāryas, the fact remains that the chief of the Kāmakoṭi-pīṭham at Kāñcīpuram is the most powerful and his influence on the Hindu mind is ever on the increase. His popularity and prestige are, however, attributable more to his own personality than to the size or significance of the organisation behind him. The situation is best summed up thus: at Śṛṅgeri, the *maṭha* is more important than the man who presides over it: at Kāñcīpuram, the man is more important than the *maṭha*; at Joṣimaṭh and Pūri, neither the man nor the *maṭha* seems to matter.

Arthur Koestler's hastily written book on India and Japan, entitled *The Lotus and the Robot*, is conspicuous for its lies and half-truths which could have been less offensively told. The chapter on His Holiness Śrī Śaṅkarācārya of Kāmakoṭi Pīṭham however contains the least number of irreverent falsehoods and trivialities despite the author's frequent references to the nonexistent palanquin. The Kāmakoṭi Svāmī always travels on foot. Indeed he walks great distances. His *pādayātrās* are well known. The author's description of the primate of the Hindus is however most moving. This only shows what an electrifying effect Śrī Śaṅkarācārya's presence has even on supercilious scoffers. Koestler observes: "... a smile transformed his face into that of a child. I had never seen a comparable smile or expression. It had an extraordinary charm and sweetness. Later, on my way back, I wondered why in Western paintings of saints entranced, blessed or martyred, I had never encountered anything like that enchanted smile.



Since all mystics agree that their experience cannot be put into words, perhaps their expression also eludes representation by chisel and brush. However much I admired a Last Supper or a scene from Calvary, I have never felt that Jesus of Nazareth really looked like that. On the other hand, certain sculptures of the Gupta period of the early Indian Baroque do convey an idea of that peculiar smile."

When Paul Brunton wrote the following lines, His Holiness was "on the right side of forty."

"His noble face, pictured in grey and brown, takes an honoured place in the long portrait gallery of my memory. That elusive element which the French aptly term *spirituel* is present in this face. His expression is modest and mild, the large dark eyes being extraordinarily tranquil and beautiful. The nose is short, straight and classically regular. There is a rugged little beard on his chin, and the gravity of mouth is most noticeable. Such a face might have belonged to one of the saints who graced the Christian church during the Middle Ages, except that this one possesses the added quality of intellectuality. I suppose we of the practical West would say that he has the eyes of a dreamer. Somehow, I feel in an inexplicable way that there is something more than mere dreams behind those heavy lids." (*A Search in Secret India*)

Today, over thirty years later, at 70, His Holiness Śrī Śāṅkarācārya of Kāmakōṭi Pīṭham presents the same image of sweetness and serenity in the best *upaśānta* tradition. If anything, his face is nobler and his expression, more "modest and mild", the large luminous eyes glowing like the sun and the moon. His benign, beatific presence makes the same impact on us as dawn over Mt. Everest, the Gaṅgā



at Haridvār, the profiles of the Grand Canyon, the dome of St. Paul's, the smile of a child, the morning breeze and the stillness of mid-ocean. But how can one ever have *darśan* of His Holiness? Of course he is not inaccessible to those who seek his presence. Wherever he happens to be at a given moment, he is all over the place engaged in the observance of various rituals and ceremonies. His presence is at once felt. Soon the multitude of devotees starts streaming in from far and near. They are prepared to wait for hours and hours together just to exchange a few words with him. But he realises how futile it is to talk to them individually. So, as they place their offerings of flowers and fruits at his feet and prostrate themselves before him, he stands as unconcerned as the remotest star. But the smile, the sort of world-redeeming smile that Koestler intuitively describes, never deserts his small, sensitive lips which seem ideally made for the uttering of the profoundest of truths. The glow of compassion and wisdom perpetually remains in his dark, deep-set eyes and his right hand assumes the *abhayamudrā* ("gesture of protection"). No doubt he does not speak. But is his presence not eloquent enough? It is of course absurd to suggest that he does not wish to communicate with those around him. But other Svāmīs are admittedly more modern and democratic. It is said that His Holiness Śrī Śaṅkarācārya of Śṛṅgeri readily obliges movie stars and politicians when they invite him to their houses for some reason or other. Evidently, the Kāmakoṭi cheif's notions of the democratic way are different.

I make five attempts to meet His Holiness privately. Miraculously, my very first visit proves fruitful. I find myself in his presence. I cannot believe my eyes. He begins:

“It appears you are keen on talking to me privately. Now go on.” The language he uses is Tamil, and his intimate, informal manner of speaking immediately puts me at ease. But I do not know what to say.

“Your Holiness,” I reply in my own Tamil which no Tamilian can understand, “I have nothing to say, I only wish to listen to you, uninterrupted by crowds and ceremonies.”

“What is your mother tongue?” he asks searchingly, with the characteristic smile on his lips. “It is not Tamil, I am sure.”

“Telugu, Your Holiness.”

“Which is your home-town?” he asks in such chaste, crisp Telugu as is seldom spoken today even in the heart of Andhra Pradesh. He persuades me to go into elaborate personal detail about my early life—parentage, education, marriage, employment, commitments and so on. He often interrupts my talk purposefully with a view to assuring me that he and I have a number of friends in common. A disciple suddenly barges in and bursts into a harangue in Kannada. His Holiness answers in Kannada in accents natural than those of the fervent *bhakta*. A little later, another devotee arrives and addresses him in Malayalam. In reply, His Holiness gives a brief discourse in majestic Malayalam to the amazement of the visitor. A few minutes later, a local Sanskrit pundit enters, accompanied by a party of pilgrims. He composes *extempore* a brief panegyric in Sanskrit in praise of His Holiness. Naturally, His Holiness Svāmī makes a suitable speech in Sanskrit, a language which has on his lips the measured, mellifluous cadence of a



mountain stream. Kannada is, it appears, the mother tongue of His Holiness. Indeed, it is difficult for a stranger to say which other language is not His Holiness' tongue. By the way, he speaks the Queen's English with the appropriate accent. He has a remarkable command over seventeen languages. In addition, he is one of the world's leading authorities on Vedānta and Mīmāṃsā, which he can expound in a manner as authentic as it is acceptable to contemporary taste and sensibility. But the deep reverence in which he is held by all the Hindus of South India testifies more to his saintliness than to his scholarship. For he is essentially the Sanyāsin of Sanyāsins.

We resume our conversation in Telugu. This time it is his turn to talk. But suddenly he lapses into silence. His eyes are closed. He keeps fondling his thin beard with his fingers. "You see," he speaks at last, "Hinduism has many defects. It is easy to enumerate them. But its merits are as numerous as the stars above." Again, an interruption. Now it is another party of pilgrims from North India. They can express themselves only in Hindi. But he is deeply moved by their sentiments. He speaks to them in their own language, and, as they leave us, there is a strange glow on their faces.

"I don't seem to be very lucky today," I observe in despair, "May I request Your Holiness to give me another appointment?"

"Any day, any time," he replies most graciously. "We shall be leaving Madurai the day after tomorrow. But we shall be camping at Nārāyaṇapuram, a village hardly a mile from where you live, for about two months, Why don't you see me there?"



“Certainly, Your Holiness, May I leave you now, with your blessings?” I make obeisance to him and withdraw from his august, magnetic presence. I go away with such feelings of elation as only a cosmonaut can appreciate.

Three of my subsequent visits to the Ācārya’s camp at Nārāyaṇapuram afford me little satisfaction because I seem to have only fleeting glimpses of His Holiness. Each time I wait for about five hours and return home, disappointed, if not defeated. My fifth and final attempt proves most fruitful. For, on this occasion, His Holiness receives me at six in the afternoon and, as we part at ten, the camp has already assumed a sleepy look. Our four-hour-long conversation in Telugu goes on smoothly in an atmosphere of utter informality and relaxation. We meet in the dingy, dimly-lit storeroom surrounded by bags and baskets containing the sinews of the kitchen. We have literally strayed into the territory of mice and cockroaches. Breaks in our discussion occur twice - once, at the time of the colourful *dīpārādhana* and *gaja-pūjā* ceremonies; again, a few minutes later, at the time of His Holiness’ brief encounter with a squirrel, which startles him by suddenly appearing on his sacred torso. He watches it with the innocent curiosity of a child, as it vanishes into a rice-bag.

“This is my fifth attempt at having a peaceful, uninterrupted meeting with Your Holiness”. He makes no comment. He just smiles his usual smile.

“I had the good fortune to spend nearly forty-five minutes with Your Holiness during a specially arranged audience last week.” No comment again.

"On that occasion, Your Holiness had very graciously suggested that I might see you again 'any day, any time.'" His Holiness says nothing but keeps smiling reassuringly.

"I have been coming to the camp since then. But till this afternoon. I had no luck." Still no comment.

"I have a few questions to ask. Have I Your Holiness's permission?"

"Of course." He speaks at last and the language he uses, as on the earlier occasion, is chaste Telugu. "I have not forgotten you. I am always available to those who have genuine doubts. An honest enquiry interests me."

"Thank you, Sir. First question. What are Your Holiness's views on the religious basis for life in modern India? Are we Indians not basically more materialistic than the Europeans and the Americans despite our preoccupation with rites and rituals?" He shows no visible interest in my question. His indifference puzzles me. Is the question not properly framed? Does it sound irreverent? He stares at me intriguingly but with transparent concern.

"How many questions have I to answer in all?" he asks rather natively.

"I am afraid the questionnaire I have prepared is on the heavy side. It may make unwarranted demands on Your Holiness's time and patience."

"Doesn't matter. Go ahead, Read out all the questions first. Then you will have my replies which will be actually in the form of a composite statement – covering all your queries."

I do as I am told. After reading out the questionnaire.



I wait impatiently for his reactions. But, once again, he keeps teasingly mum. His eyes are closed and he wears an expression of ennui. He however continues to caress his crisp beard absent-mindedly. There is a sudden flash on his face. His lips widen and a few words are uttered gently. I cannot hear them. I request him to repeat them. Adjusting his falling ochre robe and straightening himself up, he says: "How many days did it take you to prepare this questionnaire? It is very elaborate. Let me attempt to answer it."

He speaks for about four hours with the consistent precision and percipience of a *tapasvin* and at the end of his talk I discover that all my queries have been answered completely and convincingly. Having sorted out my questions and his observations, I present them in the following coherent form.

To my first question on the religious basis for life in modern India, His Holiness' answer is:

"Religion can never cease to be a force in our country. Superficially, we may be materialistic. But we are religious to the core. Even our politicians need religion for their secular purposes. You remember how cleverly Gandhiji employed religion for capturing the hearts of the masses? In the name of religion, you can make our simple folk do anything. I hope you have not forgotten the cause for which millions of Hindus laid down their lives immediately after partition. They preferred death to humiliation. The communal riots that broke out as a result of the division of our country had much greater significance than the religious persecution in Medieval Europe. In Europe, one talks about individual martyrs. In India



whenever the challenge to religion came, it was the common people who defended their faith, not intellectuals or reformers. Do you want another proof of the religious fervour of the Hindus? Try and make a surprise visit to any of our places of pilgrimage on any day. Take some of your foreign friends also with you. You will see a perpetual carnival. A similar spectacle awaits you on the banks of our sacred rivers throughout the year. You know how the prospect of a mere bath can move millions in this country. The Kumbha Mela can continue to take place only in India. Religion has great mass appeal in our land even today in spite of our increasing interest in materialistic activities. It lies dormant in every one of us."

Question: By placing too much emphasis on secularism and socialism our leaders are, in my opinion, sowing seeds of scepticism among our masses. Don't you think so? A sort of vacuum is being created in their lives.

*His Holiness:* Our Governments, both Central and State, are, I am afraid, not avowedly secular but aggressively so, where Hinduism is concerned. They are anxious to protect the interests of the religious minorities, not those of the majority community, against whom all discriminatory legislation in regard to marriage, divorce, succession, worship in temples and so on is directed. Even our family planning seems to be meant exclusively for the Hindus who have recently achieved a 3% decrease in their numbers. Compare this figure with the 5% increase in the Muslim population. The Muslim population of Assam has been particularly on the increase. Frankly our legislators do not have the courage to alter the social or religious structure of the Muslims or the Christians. But they are always ready

even to demolish the very base of Hinduism.

Every Asian country has a state religion – Ceylon, Burma, Pakistan, Malaya. Only India has none. The secularism of our politicians is clearly directed against the Hindus who, being dangerously divided, lack strength. They have no leadership, no spokesmen. So, who can force Parliament to adopt Hinduism as a state religion? The Muslims, Christians, Parsis and other minorities are powerful because they are well organised. Whenever the Hindus try to organise themselves, they are branded as communalists and their organisations are banned. Thus the majority community remains irredeemably demoralised. So far as Hinduism is concerned, our present rulers seem to be a much greater impediment than the British Viceroys ever were. Our leaders have a policy of appeasement for the religious minorities, and a policy of victimisation for the Hindus. I cannot understand them. Naturally, the influence of Hinduism on the lives of our masses is waning. But they can never forsake religion.

Question: What, according to Your Holiness, is the justification of the existence of the caste system? Does this dangerous anachronism lend itself to any reform or modification?

*His Holiness:* The caste system has its strengths as well as its weaknesses. It represents the world's oldest way of life and it remains well preserved to this day because of its vitality. Selfishness is the root cause of the decline of all civilisations. For it leads to competition, encroachment, exploitation and eventually annihilation – the poor give way to the rich, the ignorant to the learned, the simple to the sophisticated, and the believer to the non-believer.



But the Hindu caste system, as originally conceived, encourages none of these disruptive tendencies. On the contrary, it combats them most effectively. Otherwise it would not have been able to survive the tempestuous ups and downs spread over a period of 5,000 years. Its guiding principle is: "Live and let live." The emphasis is on creative cohesion and co-operative co-existence. Each part strengthens itself as much for its own sake as for the ultimate good of the whole – Hindu society. Unity through division: this is what we have achieved through the caste system.

Naturally, even today, the ageless pattern of life continues throughout the country. Language changes from State to State, sometimes from district to district. But the Hindus all over the country share a common way of life based on caste, and this has helped them in their spiritual evolution down the centuries. The caste system – again in its original form, I repeat – inculcates the spirit of tolerance in every Hindu. For each caste is preoccupied, not with the grabbing of what rightly belongs to the other three castes but with the preservation of its own integrity – its *svadharma*. For example, the Brāhman may be very poor. But he has no evil designs on the riches of the Vaiśya. Similarly, the Vaiśya however wealthy he may be never aspires to the throne of the Kṣatriya. The inspiration behind the greatest achievements in our religion, philosophy, art and literature is to be traced to the caste system. But today the Hindu caste system exists only in form, not in spirit. Hence the conflict. Division, which was once the main source of its strength, has become a disintegrating factor. It has been the cause of compartmentalisation of a most sinister kind. The result is tragic: all the four castes are mutually not merely exclusive but destructive. No wonder



that those outside the caste system are jubilant. They can attack each caste separately, you see. That is why even Brāhmanas provide such rich material for the Christian proselytisers.

In the past, the Brāhman was the spiritual leader of the Hindus. Actually, the term then in vogue was Brāhmanism, not Hinduism. Nowadays those down the ladder of the caste system are eager to usurp spiritual leadership from the Brāhman. Jealousy, arrogance and intolerance have begun to gnaw at the vitals of every caste. The Brāhman, the Vaiśya, the Kṣatriya and the Śūdra: they are all the time engaged in an invisible civil war. The Brāhman himself, if you ask me, is the main cause of the disintegration of the caste system. For he no longer commands respect from the other castes. He does not inspire confidence in them. He is not at all competent to lead the community on the spiritual plane. Once he symbolised not only the lowest rung of the economic ladder but the summit of spiritual and intellectual achievement. He was the epitome of plain living and high thinking. He was universally revered, despite his poverty. His absence, however brief, used to be acutely felt in his village. His house had the look and feel of a hermitage. He lived in the most exemplary manner possible, because he knew that he was being watched by the whole world. Being the spiritual leader of the community, he was always ready to make the maximum sacrifice in order to exert a healthy influence on the other castes.

But the present-day Brāhman has no awareness of his responsibilities. He is not qualified even to preach the ideals practised by his ancestors. It is difficult to distinguish him

from the Vaiśya, the Kṣatriya or the Śūdra. Naturally those down the social ladder feel justified in agitating for equality with the Brāhman. They will all eventually dissect, not merely distort, the caste system beyond recognition.

What is the remedy? Castelessness? A very facile solution. The antidote to the ills of the caste system lies within the structure itself. The Brāhman alone can resuscitate the institution and restore it to its original splendour. All that I have to say to him is this: "Live like a good Brāhman so that the other castes emulate your example. See that they follow your virtues, not your vices. Mind-control, self-control, voluntary poverty: these are some of the sacred ideals cherished by your ancestors. Practise them as they did. It is only then that you can inspire the other castes and thus achieve unity within the Hindu fold." Where spiritual values are concerned, he should make no concessions or compromises, whatever be the circumstances. Of course, he has to make great sacrifices. People die for their country. Why should not the Brāhman be prepared to die for his religion? It is time he realised that leadership has not only its rewards but its responsibilities too. The inherent strength of the caste system lies in the Brāhman's spirit of sacrifice and self-denial. Otherwise, how can we justify the exacting and elaborate code of moral conduct that our religion imposes on him? The Brāhman alone can save the situation.

Question: What is the method by which the present lost generation of Hindus can be reclaimed in terms of religion?

*His Holiness:* What is most important is the raising of the moral standards of the people. In the absence of



an inner urge in us to follow the path of virtue and righteousness, all legislation is bound to remain trivial and inconsequential. The children should, at school and at home, receive moral instruction in a form that makes powerful impact on their impressionable minds. Training in medicine or engineering can follow later. The pupil's manners and morals should be treated as Priority Number One. When education becomes purposive and spiritually satisfying, as it was in my younger days, legal enactments for the social or moral reform of the people become unnecessary. The present tendency, on the part of our rulers, to promote morals through legislation will result in chaotic, futile Acts which will only add to the bulk of the statute book and swell the pockets of lawyers. In the past, moral text-books used to be compulsory for students. Prizes used to be awarded for pupils who did not steal, who did not tell lies and who followed the precepts of their elders. Nowadays the schools offer prizes for proficiency in subjects which have no influence on the pupil's moral development. Career has become more important than character and conduct. It is necessary that the noble ideals expounded in our religious books and not Acts of Parliament should regulate the behaviour of our boys.

Question: What is the place of rituals in the religious life of an individual? Do they, for example, have any influence on his sense of right and wrong? Is it imperative that he believes in God in order to be virtuous? Is a good man necessarily a religious man? I am particularly interested in Your Holiness's views on the relation between religion and morality, between fear of God and love of humanity. Even dacoits and debauchees invoke the blessings of their favourite deities in order to be successful in their anti-social activities.

*His Holiness:* Rituals of course are not essential for one's inner realisation. But then it all depends on the spiritual stature of a particular individual. It is desirable that the ordinary devotee observes all the prescribed rituals as scrupulously as possible. For they enable him to achieve one-pointedness, if not anything else. Concentration, discipline, will-power, austerity: all these provide the necessary base for one's spiritual experience. Religion and morality are not interdependent. The Buddha and Mahāvīra were nonbelievers, but they followed the path of virtue and righteousness. Even within the Vedic fold we have atheists, the exponents of the Sāṅkhya philosophy. The Sāṅkhyas were concerned more with *karma* than with the concept of God. Perfect morality is possible only when an individual has an ideal before him. He surrenders himself to that ideal and then begins the transformation of his life.

God represents the conventional goal of one's inner struggle. There have been more saints in India than in any other country. Just think of the richness of our religious literature. Man cannot serve as man's ideal because of his imperfections. Naturally, he turns to a superior force in the interests of his moral uplift and spiritual advancement. The Buddha preached the ideal of Ahimsā which, in effect, replaced God. But what do we see in all Buddhist countries today? Non-vegetarianism in its most disagreeable forms. The people there perhaps do not slaughter animals, because they wish to observe the law of Ahimsā in letter, if not in spirit. But they can import butchers from our East Coast, you see. Without a perfect ideal before him, such as God, man cannot achieve moral perfection. For a nation, if not for an individual, God as an ideal is absolutely necessary. The two types of anti-social characters you mention are



like the present-day Buddhists. For the results that follow an individual's failure in his spiritual struggle, we have to blame, not the ideal before him, but his own human imperfections.

Question: What will be, according to Your Holiness, the impact of the recent spectacular achievements of science on man's faith in religion?

*His Holiness:* Science and spirituality are coming closer together. Today the scientist maintains that all matter can be reduced to energy which I call Parāśakti. He thus finds himself unconsciously in the company of Advaitins. His conviction that energy is the absolute power despite the multiplicity of its manifestations such as heat, electricity, and so on is bound to lead him to Śaṅkara's religio-philosophy. The perceiver – that is the soul – and the perceivable will eventually become one. Science in its destructive aspect is of course a different matter.

Question: Do you think there will be another World War? What are your suggestions regarding the preservation of peace? How can the ever-deepening racial and religious antagonisms (White vs Black, Arab vs Jew, Hindu vs Muslim, etc.) be checked?

*His Holiness:* I am not a prophet. But perhaps I need not be one to say that the third World War will be the last World War. For after this, there will be neither any world left nor wars. Thanks to their nuclear armaments race, neither Russia nor America will be rash enough to destroy each other and the world. The next war, if it ever breaks out, will not last more than two days. Love, tolerance, understanding, a spirit of compromise: these inspiring ideals

must provide the basis for whatever decisions a particular national government takes vis-a-vis other countries. Then an easing of tensions will inevitably follow and the prospects of world peace brighten.

Question: What is Your Holiness's opinion about the present tendency among the temple trustees to desecrate temples in the name of renovation? By painting *gopurams* and white-washing the stone pillars, rich in sculptural detail, they are not prolonging the life of the temple. On the contrary, they are making it look cheap and undignified. The serenity, the solemnity and the sanctity that age imparts to our great shrines are being sacrificed at the altar of so-called renovation. The "Sudhais" on our *gopurams* painted in garish colours look like "Kolu". They lack the dignity of the mutilated figures which they have replaced.

*His Holiness:* I agree with you. I could not have expressed myself on this subject as forcefully as you have done. A temple need not be attractive. But it should remain authentic under all circumstances. Its original grandeur should be preserved by our renovators. It is not enough that our temple trustees have faith. They should also have taste.

Question: What is your Holiness's assessment of the impact of films on the morals of the masses?

*His Holiness:* Like nuclear power, the cinema can be put both to constructive and destructive uses. I welcome it as an art form, and as contribution to science. But its uses, in my opinion, are limited. Documentary and educational films dealing with subjects such as geography, science, medicine, engineering, technology and so on are



certainly helpful to humanity. Feature films dealing with so-called social themes have no justification at all. Social reform should not be the objective of our films. It is tragic that modesty and dignity are no longer the proud possessions of our women who, by adopting the cinema as their career, have become vulgar exhibitionists. In ancient India, women surrendered themselves to their husbands as willingly as *śiṣyas* effaced themselves in the presence of their *gurus*.

The lure of the movies has resulted in shocking lapses from morals. One cannot imagine the mischief films can do. In our ancient land, women and children are being ruined beyond redemption. As I have already said, the cinema, like nuclear power, can be directed to creative purposes. After all, it is only an instrument and it has noble as well as ignoble uses. Women acting on the stage are all right. For their duties are traditional. The mewomen belonging to the community known by various names such as Bharataputras, Kalavants or Bhatrajulu are recognised by the caste system and acting is their profession. It is their allotted task. Women outside this class are not authorised to play any roles. Even the professional actresses appear on the stage only to assist their husbands. I am sure you are aware of the *naṭi-sūtradhāra* tradition. So no moral code is violated. I have in mind the conditions that prevailed in the remote past. Today, of course, who has the authority to lay down the law, especially for our movie-makers who seem to be a law unto themselves? They are on a perpetual picnic.

Question: I take it that Your Holiness does not approve of films which depict stories based on our *purāṇas*. Am I right?

*His Holiness:* When I insist that our movies should not deal even with social themes, the question of our unfortunate men and women appearing on the screen in the roles of gods and goddesses does not arise.

Question: What are Your Holiness's views on the language question?

*His Holiness:* You are already familiar with them are you not? I am an advocate of Sanskrit and English. None of the modern Indian languages and I know most of them.

I interrupt: "- as throughly as those born to them, I understand."

*His Holiness:* I don't know about that. None of them is half as good as Sanskrit and English. Sanskrit is our natural *lingua franca*. It is still a living language, in a recognisable form, in Thailand, Burma, Indonesia, Ceylon and several other countries. When we adopt Sanskrit as the national language, we show our readiness to share the common heritage of all the South-East Asian countries, which will at once accept India as one among them. Russian also contains a number of words deriving from Sanskrit. It is hightime we raised our classical language to the status of a modern language for practical, utilitarian purposes. Meanwhile, let us not banish English from our hospitable land. It is a wonderful language, is it not? It is our only medium of communication with the outside world. For international contacts, very few languages in the world are as adequately equipped as English.

Question: I presume Your Holiness reads newspapers. What is your attitude towards the Sino-Indian border



dispute? Do you think that we should negotiate with China on the basis of the Colombo proposals?

*His Holiness:* Of course I read newspapers. Rather, I have them read out me. Surely, you don't wish to involve me in a political controversy. As for the Sino-Indian border dispute. I have no solution to offer. But Bertrand Russell's much-discussed appeal to Mr. Nehru seems to make sense to me. Anyway, my views on politics and politicians are unimportant – as unimportant as my views on films. So ignore them. Let us discuss some thing else – some other subject, less trivial and more provocative.

Question: Has Your Holiness read Arthur Koestler's banned book; *The Lotus and the Robot*?

*His Holiness:* Yes, I read it before it was banned. Now it is my turn. Let me ask you a question. What do you think of this book?

"It is readable: that is all. But Koestler's account of his meeting with you is moving," I reply.

Question: May I ask Your Holiness one more question? What is the essential difference between the Western conception of God and the Indian?

*His Holiness:* How can there be any diversity in the conceptions of God? But in the attitudes towards Him, yes. In the West, one tries to approach God through religion. In India, we follow the path of philosophy. All our rituals, ceremonies and observances are meant to serve only as a prelude to this arduous journey. Their purpose will have been fulfilled the moment a devotee feels that his mind is attuned to its new role – the role of a seeker.

"Your Holiness," I observe rising to make my fare-well obeisance to him, "I seek your blessings once again before I go. I am aware of the physical strain our marathon four-hour session must have caused Your Holiness."

*His Holiness:* "Have I answered all your questions? I hope my Telugu is good enough." His Holiness lapses into silence. Again I see the same benign, beatific smile on those soft, sensitive lips, the same blinding glow in those large, luminous eyes, and the same gracious gesture of benediction, which literally unfold before me the strange vision of a form combining the dynamism of the Lord Naṭarāja with the serenity of the Buddha.

His Holiness has, at his command, all the paraphernalia one associates with the exalted position he occupies in the Hindu hierarchy – a bejeweled crown, a throne, several camels, horses and elephants. But he has no use for them. The only crown he wears is provided by the garlands offered by his devotees; the only mode of travelling he knows is walking; the only throne he occupies is the human heart. His Holiness does not work the type of miracles that normally one expects a *sanyāsin* to perform. He is not a magician, you see. For example, ashes in his hands do not turn into gold. Sterile women do not, with his blessings, become fertile. He does not pretend to be able to transform overnight the sickly into healthy, the poor into rich and the unsuccessful into successful. So perhaps he can be of no interest to those who seek immediate results such as forecasts of the New York Cotton numbers, promotions, increments, liquidation of enemies, supply of bridegrooms for age-barred spinsters and so on. But he performs one miracle which no magician will ever dare to attempt: he makes you feel the very presence of God.



**Śrī Śaṅkara on Goddess Lakṣmī**

कस्मै स्पृहयति कमला  
 त्वनलसचित्ताय नीतिवृत्ताय ।  
 त्यजति च कं सहसा  
 द्विजगुरुसुरनिन्दाकरञ्च 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.

## VIMUKTĀTMAN\*

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*P.K. Sundaram*

Madhusūdana Sarasvatī, at the end of his great classic *Advaitasiddhi*, refers to three *Siddhi* works, viz. *Iṣṭa-siddhi*, *Naiṣkarmyasiddhi* and *Brahma-siddhi*. The *Brahma siddhi* of Maṇḍana may be said to devote itself to the definition (*lakṣaṇa*) and testimony (*pramāṇa*) of Brahman indicated in the expression, *Brahmajijñāsā*, the desire to know Brahman. The *Naiṣkarmya-siddhi* of *Sureśvara* is interested in showing the how of Brahman-knowledge, i.e., whether it is by knowledge alone or by action that release is secured. The *Iṣṭa-siddhi* of Vimuktāman engages itself rather in the question of the why of Brahman-knowledge, enquiring into the nature and cause of error, that is, the world. In short, ontology, ethology and epistemology may be said to be the respective contents of these three *Siddhis*.

### *Summary of the Chief Points in the Iṣṭa-siddhi*

The various theories of error are enumerated by Indian philosophers as follows:

*ātma-khyātir-asat-khyātir-  
akhyātiḥ khyātirananyathā*

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



*tathā-anirvacana-khyātir-  
ity-etat-khyāti-pañcakam.*

These five *Khyātis* can be classified into two broad categories, viz., *sat-khyāti* and *asat-khyāti*. *Ātma-khyāti* of the Yogācāra Buddhists, *akhyāti* of the Prābhākara Mīmāṃsakas and *anyathā-khyāti* of the Bhāṭṭas and Naiyāyikas fall under the first category; and the *asat-khyāti* of the Mādhyamika Buddhists falls into the opposite camp. The doctrine of *anirvacanīya-khyāti* adopted by the Advaitins tries to show that the object of illusion is neither real nor unreal but indeterminate.

### *Akhyāti*

*Akhyāti* or non-discrimination is the explanation that the Prābhākara offers to the problem of illusion where there are *two* knowledges, each of which taken in isolation is not false (p.42). The failure to discriminate that there are really two *jñānas* leads to error. In other words, *bheda-agraha* or *asamsargāgraha* is the cause of error. This position of the Mīmāṃsakas is the result of their realism. Knowledge is self-valid and what it shows up is valid and true. If error arises, it is a subjective short-coming. Knowledge itself can never be doubted (p.41). There is no question of the defective senses presenting positive illusion (p.42).

Vimuktātman argues that the theory of the self-evidencing character of knowledge adopted by the Prābhākara rebels against his theory of error. For, if he is consistent he will see that the two separate knowledges (of the shell and silver in the illusion where the shell appears as silver, for example) must present themselves as separate in which case there is no question of their not being discriminated (p.43).

If truth, as the Prābhākaras hold, is that which succeeds

in yielding the expected results, Vimuktāman points out that there are instances wherein knowledge issues with no practical activity at all (pp. 45-46). To be sure, knowledge does lead to activity, but this is only incidental.

Again, non-discrimination is said to be the cause of error, but Prābhākaras at least cannot hold this doctrine for they do not accept negation as a category at all. For them there could be no absence of knowledge as in non-discrimination (p.116).

### *Anyathākhyāti*

The Bhāṭṭas hold that in error the object appears otherwise than what it is. But it remains to be asked, whether the object in error becomes other than what it is, or the knowledge becomes other than what it is, or the knowledge shows the object as other than what it is. The first two alternatives are rejected on the grounds that the object cannot become something else if it has a nature of its own, and that knowledge cannot suffer a change without reference to the object, for knowledge is object-dependent.

Thus it is the third alternative that is discussed elaborately by Vimuktāman. To the Bhāṭṭas, what appears in illusion is not unreal. But what is unreal is the *samsarga* or identity of the appearance with its basis. Defects in the sense-organs contribute positively to the production of error (p.45). While to the Prābhākaras, error is *bheda-agraha*, to the Bhāṭṭas it is *abheda-graha*.

All the time, the Bhāṭṭas protest that they are realists. In that event, it is not obvious how they can bear the introduction in error of a subjective element which brings about the mistaken identity between two real objects. This subjective element does not have any corresponding reality (p.105.).



Again, how can the silver, in the silver-illusion that is presented in immediate perception, be denied particularly when the Bhāṭṭas hold it to be real? If silver is denied, then illusion will have to be accepted and realism must be given up. If silver is not denied, there will be no question of illusion at all (pp. 94-96). Either that the silver is remembered or that it is presented here and now. But what is denied in the judgement '*nedam rajatam*' is the silver presented actually and not the remembered one. It was already stated that the presented object cannot be the content of negation without damage to the professed realism of the Bhāṭṭas. Nor can the remembered silver cannot affect the presented one and thus illusion would never have been negated. Hence, we cannot have both the remembered and the presented as factors in illusion.

If it is said that what is denied here and now of the shell, *viz.*, silverness, characterizes really another object existing elsewhere and that this is the intention of the negative judgement, in that case, it is the silverness that will be denied and not silver (I, 19). But in illusion we are concerned with the particular silver, and not with a universal.

Again, the negating judgement, *nedam rajatam*, is supposed to make only the predicate false, but not the this, or the realisation 'is' why should one alone of the three factors in "this is silver" be false? (III, 15). Moreover, the fact that while the 'this' element is reaffirmed by the negating judgement "This is not silver", the silver-element is denied clearly demonstrates that of the two elements, 'this' and 'silver', silver is less real than the 'this', which, in the example, is the shell, or at any rate, not real in the same sense. But this conclusion will militate against the pluralistic realism of the Bhāṭṭas.

*Ātma-khyāti*

The Yogācāra Buddhists hold that there are no external objects at all. What exist are only the cognitions. One proof for this the togetherness of object and thought, *Sahopalambhaniyama*. Even in an illusion, what we see as silver outside is only our own cognition. It is the mind that splits itself up as subject and object, as in dreams. To these Buddhists, silver is real only as a mode of cognition. What the negative judgement "This is not silver" does is to negate, not the supposedly external silver (there is no such thing) but the appearance of its externality (p.40).

Vimuktātman thinks it is useless to reduce the object to a mode of thought. While thought or knowledge is constant, objects are specific and shifting. The constancy of thought cannot be explained if it takes shape into objects. And there can be thought without objects (p.14).

What is said to be *sahopalambha niyama* by the Buddhists is really *sahopalabhyatva-niyama* and there can be no such *niyama* between *dr̥k* and the *dr̥śya*, for the *dr̥k* is not seen. Nor is it *sahopalabdhitvam* for the object is not and cannot be the seer. Moreover, the very notion of externality will be impossible to explain when there is no external object at all. *bāhyatvasya asataḥ khyāti-prasaṅgācca*.

Again, how can one cognition which is momentary according to the Vijñānavādin be the cognizer of another cognition? Both of them cannot co-exist. *asatvāt, kṣaṇikatvācca* (p.113). Lastly one cognition cannot reveal itself and at the same time be revealed by another, and to the Vijñānavādin, cognition is self-luminous. The silver being a mode of cognition must be at once apparent, in which case there is no occasion for error at all.



*Asat-khyāti*

In error, the *asat-khyāti-vādin* argues that that which is non-existent appears as existent. The negating judgement "This is not silver", establishes the non-existence of the perceived silver in the silver-illusion (p. 115).

If, either in the error or by its cancellation, the existent were known it will be tantamount to admitting that there is no illusion at all since there is no possibility of error or its cancellation when the content is the existent *sat*. That which is existent can be cancelled neither by the knowledge of the existent, nor of the non-existent. Nor does the knowledge of existent cancel the knowledge of the existent or that of the non-existent. As then, the relation of the sublating and the sublated cannot subsist between two cognitions of the existent, and as a sublation is actually perceived, it is fair to conclude that it is the non-existent that appears as the existent in error.

To the argument that the merely non-existent cannot be perceived, the *asadvādin* replies that the negative judgment points to the fact that the non-existent can be experience (p. 156). Even when one urges the perception of non-existent *tuccha* as error, one accepts it as presented in error (p. 157). Even Advaitins must accept the perception of *tuccha*, because in *māyā*, which is of the nature of inexplicability, silverness and reality are perceived in error. Both of them are thus *tuccha* and perceived.

Now, against this theory, Vimuktātman asks: How can the non-existent appear as existent, when it cannot even appear as non-existent? Again, since there is not possible distinctions of time in *śūnya*, the earlier appearance and the later sublation have no meaning and consequently both the error

and its cancellation will be there always; and if this is not desired, never at all, because of distinctionlessness itself. Since there is not restrictions of space in *sūnya* either, it is not possible to suggest that silver that exists elsewhere appears in the shell. Moreover, the usage in illusion is: "This is silver" and not "negation is silver". Even the "This" does not appear in the form of negation. There is no such apprehension of the "This" as "this is not".

### *Anirvacanīya-khyāti*

When the theories of the sat and the asat as presented in error cancel out each other, what we are left with is the fact that the object in error is characterisable neither as real nor as unreal nor as both.

*khyāteḥ nāsat, bādhāt na sat iti anyonyapakṣam  
nirākurvadbhiḥ vādibhireva rūpyasya anir-  
vacanīyatvaṁ sthāpitam.*

There can be no knowledge without an object. In error, then, we seem to have an object which belongs to an order of reality different from the normal (p. 120). Silver, the product of nescience, like nescience itself cannot be an object of any valid means of knowledge. Likewise, its negation, too, is not open for knowledge by means either positive or negative. Does the effect of nescience exist and come into being *or* is it non-existent? Does nescience also existing in the same form become otherwise, or does it change and become otherwise? Does it, existing, perish or being non-existent perish? Is this destruction a negation or a positive entity? Questions like these are relevant only with reference to either positive or negative entities, and not to the inexplicable illusion. That the inexplicable should appear as existent is precisely the illusion. And it is not *asat-khyāti* because there is no



evidence for the unreality of that inexplicable form. As is silver, so is everything in this world.

### *Nescience*

*Ajñāna* or nescience is the material cause of all illusion. Just as a single principle continues to manifest itself both in the seed and the sprout, the earth and the pot, one beginningless persistent cause produces all the empirical existence. There is no necessity that when the cause is present, the effect is necessarily present. Otherwise, since *ajñāna* is always present, the illusion will constantly be present.

This *ajñāna* is beginningless. Though the shell in illusion has a beginning, its ignorance is beginningless. This is because this ignorance is not located in the shell but in the Intelligence-Self, even as the knowledge of the shell is. Nescience is established only by Self-Intelligence, and not by *pramāṇas* (p. 60-61).

The non-apprehensibility by *pramāṇas* is, however, not the reason why nescience is indeterminable, but its destructibility by knowledge. (*jñāna-mātra-apanodyatvāt*) (p. 63). For, non-apprehensibility is found even in determinable categories like apprehensibility is found even in determinable categories like knowledge, pleasure, etc. (p. 63). Nescience of specific objects are many, though the *mūla-ajñāna* or primordial nescience is one. In fact, there are as many nesciences of, say, a shell as there are shell-cognitions (p.63). All cognitions, in other words, have the hitherto unknown for their content. Everytime an object is cognized, the nescience concealing that object is removed.

Nescience is not just absence of knowledge. If it were, it will be known by a negative means, *abhāva-pramāṇa*; one

reason for this is that it is located in the Self. *Ajñāna* cannot be of the nature of mutual negation, because mutual negation has for its substrate the object, while for nescience it is the Self. Nor is it posterior non-existence for which beginning is accepted and nescience is beginningless. Again, while nescience is removable *pradhvaṃsa* is not.

*Ajñāna* is like darkness which is not mere antecedent non-existence of light. It is positive. Otherwise, it will be difficult to explain how a lamp taken from one place to another dispels darkness there. *Ajñāna* is called so either because of its conflict with knowledge or because of its being other than knowledge

#### *Removal of Nescience*

Destruction of nescience does not conform to any of the known categories, existent, non-existent, both, and indefinable, but belongs to the fifth alternative: *pañcamaparakāra*. One has, as Professor Hiriyanna suggests, to speak of it thus by the fact of the actual removal of nescience which is indefinable. But in the last chapter of the *Iṣṭa-siddhi*, Vimuktātman seems to take the view that the destruction of nescience is indefinable with this difference that while *ajñāna* is removable by knowledge, *ajñāna-nivṛtti* is not (VIII, 2). He also says that Ātman alone is *ajñāna-nivṛtti*. Jñānottama writes that Vimuktātman agrees to the suggestion of some among the Advaitins that Ātman alone is the removal of *ajñāna* in so far as it does not conflict with non-dualism (p. 620).

But the difficulty that if Ātman is the remover of *ajñāna* how there was any bondage at all is felt by Vimuktāman. He suggests the alternative view that *avidyānivṛtti* is the absence of any other than Ātman. And Advaita is not opposed to the non-existence of anything other



than Ātman. Moreover, if Ātman were not opposed even to the presence of nescience, how can it be opposed to its absence? Here the *abhāva* is only the removal.

### *Jīvan-mukti*

Vimuktātman does not accept the theory that the continuance of the body after realization in the case of *jīvan-mukta* is due, not to *ajñāna* itself, but to its latent, impressions, (*saṃskāras*). Latent impressions are nothing apart from nescience. In the case of the rope-snake illusion, it is suggested that fear, trepidation, etc., are present even when one knows that there is only the rope and not the snake, and that, similarly, the *saṃskāras* alone are responsible for the continuance and maintenance of the body of a *jīvan-mukta*. But this is a mistaken view. Fear, trepidation, etc., do not constitute the body of nescience. Only the snake-illusion does. And when that is over, nescience at that place is removed. If the *saṃskāras* themselves causing fear, trepidation, etc., were part of the *śukti-ajñāna*, they will be enough to produce the *sarpa-bhrānti* at any time. But that is not found to happen.

It is, then, reasonable to suppose that in the *jīvan-mukta* there is a residuum of *ajñāna* in the form of the *prārabdha-karmas* which is responsible for the continuance of the body. There is no conflict between *prārabdha* and the origination of redeeming knowledge. In principle, actions bestow their fruits only without conflict with the results of other actions that have commenced yielding their consequences. Actions of great merit like the Horse-sacrifice wait for their operation for the exhaustion of the *prārabdha-karmas*. Similarly, actions which pave the way for the rise of true knowledge will yield their results only in the body which is the locus of experiences brought about by other activities, without conflict (p. 75).

Knowledge then does not militate against experience and *vice versa*. This shows that though inhabiting a body, a *mukta* is not a *baddha*. The body should be there for the released soul so that he can transmit the knowledge to others. If wisdom and death were simultaneous, there will be no one to pass the wisdom on to others and with the first wise man, his wisdom would be buried. The actions which lead to knowledge, says Vimuktātman, preserve the body for sometime for this purpose.

*vidvaccharīram paripālayantyeva vidyārthānyapi karmāṇi  
kiñcit kālam yāvatā vidyā-santatyucchedo na bhavet.*

Indeed, without the teacher and his instruction, mere activities, however correct according to scriptures, will never lead to permanent good.

### *Means to Release*

The intuition into the oneness of Reality alone can remove *avidyā* completely. For this intuition, *śravaṇa*, *manana*, and *nididhyāsana* are the means. Calmness and equanimity are prescribed till renunciation of all actions takes place. Even sacrifices indirectly help this process by creating purity of mind. The *asambhāvanā* (the notion of improbability) and *viparīta-bhāvanā* (the notion of contrariety) with regard to the real nature of Brahman are removed by the scripture by means of explaining the nature of Ātman beginning with *astitva* and ending with freedom from hunger and thirst. (See *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*). The Upaniṣad repeats nine times the declaration: *tat tvam asi*, dispelling every time an illusion about Reality.

If *śravaṇa* or hearing once only without these aforesaid means could bring about intuition, they would be futile. When the mind is sufficiently pure to receive the final illumination



mellowed by intuition, removing the specific illusion every time it is repeated. Here too, Vimuktātman does not see eye to eye with the school of Maṇḍana which holds that mediate knowledge arising from *śravaṇa* needs to be transformed into immediacy by repeated meditation. He, on the contrary, suggests that from *śravaṇa* itself intuition takes place, provided it comes at the top of all spiritual equipment.

*na ca parokṣam vastu parokṣa-jñānaireva abhyasyamānaiḥ  
aparokṣībhavet.....tasmāt śravaṇādīni abhyasyamānāni  
aparokṣa eva ātmani anekaparakārān bhramān nivartayati-  
santi sāksāt darśanārthāni bhavanti (p. 64).\**

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\* The numbers within brackets refer to the page number or the *adhyāya* number in *Iṣṭasiddhi* edited by Professor Hiriyanna in Gaekwad Oriental Series, Baroda.

## PATHWAY TO MUKTI\*

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*Rabindranath Tagore*

My timidity makes it difficult for me properly to enjoy the honour you have done me today by offering a chair which I cannot legitimately claim as my own. It has often made me wonder, since I had my invitation, whether it would suit my dignity to occupy such a precarious position on an ephemeral eminence, deservedly incurring anger from some and ridicule from others. While debating in my mind as to whether I should avoid this risk with the help of the doctor's certificate, it occurred to me that possibly my ignorance of philosophy was the best recommendation for this place in a philosopher's meeting, – that you wanted for your president a man who was blankly neutral and who consciously owed no allegiance to any particular system of metaphysics, being impartially innocent of them all. The most convenient thing about me is that the degree of my qualification is beyond the range of a comparative discussion, – it is so utterly negative. In my present

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\* Presidential address delivered at the IPC first session held at Calcutta, in December 1925. *Courtesy: Indian Philosophical Congress.*



situation, I may be compared to a candlestick that has none of the luminous qualities of a candle and, therefore, suitable for its allotted function, which is to remain darkly inactive.

But, unfortunately, you do not allow me to remain silent even in the circumstance when silence was declared to be prudent by one of our ancient sages. The only thing which encourages me to overcome my diffidence, and give expression in a speech to my unsophisticated mind, is the fact that in India all the *vidyās*, – poesy as well as philosophy, – live in a joint family. They never have the jealous sense of individualism maintaining the punitive regulations against trespass that seem to be so rife in the West.

Plato as a philosopher decreed the banishment of poets from his ideal Republic. But, in India, philosophy ever sought alliance with poetry, because its mission was to occupy the people's life and not merely the learned seclusion of scholarship. Therefore, our tradition, though unsupported by historical evidence, has no hesitation in ascribing numerous verses to the great Śaṅkarācārya, a metaphysician whom Plato would find it extremely difficult to exclude from his Utopia with the help of any inhospitable Immigration Law. Many of these poems may not have high poetical value, but no lover of literature ever blames the safe for infringement of propriety in condescending to manufacture verse.

According to our people, poetry naturally falls within the scope of a philosopher, when his reason is illumined into a vision. We have our great epic *Mahābhārata*, which is unique in world literature; not only because of the

marvellous variety of human characters, great and small, discussed in its pages in all variety of psychological circumstances, but because of the ease with which it carries in its comprehensive capaciousness all kinds of speculation about ethics, politics and philosophy of life. Such an improvident generosity on the part of poesy, at the risk of exceeding its own proper limits of accommodation, has only been possible in India where a spirit of communism prevails in different individual groups of literature. In fact, the *Mahābhārata* is a universe in itself in which various spheres of mind's creation find ample space for their complex dance rhythm. It does not represent the idiosyncrasy of a particular poet but the normal mentality of the people who are willing to be led along the many branched path of a whole world of thoughts, held together in a gigantic orb of narrative surrounded by innumerable satellites of episodes.

The numerous saints that India successively produced during the Mohamedan rule have all been singers whose verses are aflame with the fire of imagination. Their religious emotion had its spring in the depth of a philosophy that deals with fundamental questions, – with the ultimate meaning of existence. That may not be remarkable in itself; but when we find that these songs are not specially meant for some exclusive pandits' gathering, but that they are sung in villages and listened to by men and women who are illiterate, we realize how philosophy has permeated the of the people in India, how it has sunk deep into the subconscious mind of the country.

In my childhood I once heard from a singer, who was a devout Hindu, the following songs of Kabir:

When I hear of a fish in the water dying of thirst,



it makes me laugh.

If it be true that the infinite Brahma pervades all space.

What is the meaning of the place of pilgrimage like Mathurā or Kāśī?

This laughter of Kabir did not hurt in the least the pious susceptibilities of the Hindu singer; on the contrary, he was ready to join the poet with his own. For he, by the philosophical freedom of his mind, was fully aware that Mathurā or Kāśī, as sites of God, did not have an absolute value of truth, though they had their symbolical importance. Therefore, while he himself was eager to make a pilgrimage to those places, he had mind that, if it were his power directly to realize Brahma as all-pervading reality, there would have been no necessity for him to visit any particular place for the quickening of his spiritual consciousness. He acknowledged the psychological necessity for such shrines, where generations of devotees have chosen to gather for the purpose of worship, in the same way as he felt the special efficiency for our mind of the time-honoured sacred texts made living by the voice of ages.

It is a village poet of East Bengal who in his songs preaches the philosophical doctrine that the universe has its reality in its relation to the Person. He sings:

The sky and the earth are born of mine own eyes.

The hardness and softness, the cold and the heat  
are the products of mine own body;

The sweet smell and the bad are of mine own nose.

This poet sings of the Eternal Person within him, coming out and appearing before his eyes just as the Vedic Ṛṣi speaks of the Person, who is in him, dwelling also

in the heart of the Sun.

I have seen the vision,  
The vision of mine own revealing itself,  
Coming out from within me.

The significant fact about these philosophical poems is that they are of rude construction, written in a popular dialect and disclaimed by the academic literature; they are sung to the people, as composed by one of them who is dead, but whose songs have not followed him. Yet these singers almost arrogantly disown their direct obligation to philosophy, and there is a story of one of our rural poets who after some learned text of the Vaiṣṇava philosophy of emotion was explained to him, composed a song containing the following lines:

Alas, a jeweller has come into the flower garden!  
He wants to appraise the truth of a lotus by rubbing  
it against his touchstone.

The members of the Baul sect belong to that class of the people in Bengal who are not educated in the prevalent sense of the word. I remember how troubled they were, when I asked some of them to write down for me a collection of their songs. When they did venture to attempt it, I found it almost impossible to decipher their writing – the spelling and lettering were so outrageously unconventional. Yet their spiritual practices are founded upon a mystic philosophy of the human body, abstrusely technical. These people roam about singing their songs, one of which I heard years ago from my roadside window, the first two lines remaining inscribed in my memory.

Nobody can tell whence the bird unknown



Comes into the cage and goes out.  
I would feign put round its feet the fetter of my mind,  
Could I but capture it.

This village poet evidently agrees with our sage of the *Upaniṣad* who says that our mind comes back baffled in its attempt to reach the Unknown Being; and yet this poet like the ancient sage does not give up his adventure of the infinite thus implying that there is a way to its realization. It reminds me of Shelley's poem in which he sings of the mystical spirit of Beauty.

The awful shadow of some unseen Power  
Floats, though unseen, among us; visiting  
This various world with as inconstant wing  
As summer winds that creep from flower to flower,  
Like moonbeams that behind some piny mountain shower,  
It visits with inconstant glance  
Each human heart and countenance.

That this Unknown is the profoundest reality, though difficult of comprehension, is equally admitted by the English poet as by the nameless village singer of Bengal in whose music vibrate the wing-beats of the unknown birds, – only Shelley's utterance is for the cultured few, while the Baül song is for the tillers of the soil, for the simple folk of our village households, who are never bored by its mystic transcendentalism.

All this is owing to the wonderful system of mass education which has prevailed for ages in India, and which today is in danger of becoming extinct. We have our academic seats of learning where students of flock round their famous teachers from distant parts of the country. These places are like lakes, full of deep but still water,

which have to be approached through difficult paths. But the constant evaporation from them, forming clouds, is carried by the wind from field to field, across hills and dales and through all the different divisions of the land. Operas based upon legendary poems, recitations and story-telling by trained men, the lyrical wealth of the popular literature distributed far and wide by the agency of mendicant singers – these are the clouds that help to irrigate the minds of the people with the ideas which in their original form belonged to difficult doctrines of metaphysics. Profound speculations contained in the systems of Sāṅkhya, Vedānta and Yoga are transformed into the living harvest of the people's literature, brought to the door of those who can never have the leisure and training to pursue these thoughts to their fountain-head.

In order to enable a civilized community to carry on its complex functions, there must be a large number of men who have to take charge of its material needs, however onerous such task may be. Their vocation gives them no opportunity to cultivate their mind. Yet they form the vast multitude, compelled to turn themselves into unthinking machines of production, so that a few may have the time to think great thoughts, create immortal forms of art and to lead humanity to spiritual altitudes.

India has never neglected these social martyrs, but has tried to bring light into the grim obscurity of their life-long toil, and has always acknowledged its duty to supply them with mental and spiritual food in assimilable form through the medium of a variety of ceremonies. This process is not carried on by any specially organized association of public service, but by a spontaneous social adjustment which acts like circulation of blood in our bodily



system. Because of this, the work continues even when the original purpose ceases to exist.

Once when I was on a visit to a small Bengal village, mostly inhabited by Mohamedan cultivators, the villagers entertained me with a opera performance the literature of which belonged to an obsolete religious sect that had wide influence centuries ago. Though the religion itself is dead, its voice still continues preaching its philosophy to a people who in spite of their different culture are not tired of listening. It discussed according to its own doctrine the different elements, material and transcendental, that constitute human personality, comprehending the body, the self and the soul. Then came a dialogue during the course of which was related the incident of a person who wanted to make a journey to Brindāvan, the Garden of Bliss, but was prevented by a watchman who started him with an accusation of theft. The thieving was proved when it was shown that inside his clothes he was secretly trying to smuggle into the garden the self, passing it on his own and not admitting that it is for his master. The culprit was caught with the incriminating bundle in his possession which barred for him his passage to the supreme goal. Under a tattered canopy held on bamboo poles and lighted by a few smoking kerosene lamps, the village crowd, occasionally interrupted by howls of jackals in the neighbouring paddy fields, attended with untired interest, till the small hours of the morning, the performance of drama, that discussed the ultimate meaning of all things in a seemingly incongruous setting of dance, music and humorous dialogue.

These illustrations will show how naturally, in India, poetry and philosophy have walked hand in hand, only

because the latter has claimed its right to guide men to the practical path of their life's fulfilment. What is that fulfilment? It is our freedom in truth, which has for its prayer:

Lead us from the unreal to Reality,  
For satyam is ānandam, the real is joy.

From my vocation as an artist in verse, I have too my own idea about the joy of the real. For to give us the taste of reality through freedom of mind is the nature of all arts. When in relation to them we talk of aesthetics we must know that it is not about beauty in its ordinary meaning, but in that deeper meaning which a poet has expressed in his utterance: "Truth is beauty, beauty truth". An artist may paint a picture of a decrepit person not pleasant to look at, and yet we call it perfect when we become intensely conscious of its reality. The mind of the jealous women in Browning's poem, watching the preparation of poison and in imagination gloating over its possible effect upon her rival, is not beautiful; but when it stands vividly real before our consciousness, through the unity of consistency in its idea and form, we have our enjoyment. The character of Karna, the great warrior of the Mahābhārata, gives us a deeper delight through its occasional outbursts of meanness, than it would if it were a model picture of unadulterated magnanimity. The very contradictions which hurt the completeness of a moral ideal have helped us to feel the reality of the character, and this gives us joy, not because it is pleasant in itself, but because it is definite in its creation.

It is not wholly true that art has its value for us because in it we realize all that we fail to attain in our life; but



the fact is that the function of art is to bring us with its creations, into immediate touch with reality. These need not resemble actual facts of our experience, and yet they do delight our heart because they are made true to us. In the world of art, our consciousness being freed from the tangle of self-interest, we gain an unobstructed vision of unity, the incarnation of the real which is a joy for ever.

As in the world of art, so in God's world, our soul waits for its freedom from the ego to reach that disinterested joy which is the source and goal of creation. Its cries for its *mukti* into the unity of truth from the mirage of appearances endlessly pursued by the thirsty itself. This idea of *mukti*, based upon metaphysics, has affected our life in India, touched the springs of our emotions, and supplications for its soar heavenward on the wings of poesy. We constantly hear men of scanty learning and simple faith singing in their prayer to Tārā the Goddess Redeemer:

For what sin should I be compelled to remain in this dungeon of the world of appearances?

They are afraid of being alienated from the world of truth, afraid of their perpetual drifting amidst the forth and foam of things, of being tossed about by the tidal waves of pleasures and pain and never reaching the ultimate meaning of life. Of these men, one may be a carter driving his cart to market, another a fisherman plying his net. They may not be prompt with an intelligent answer, if questioned about the deeper import of the song they sing, but they have no doubt in their mind, that the abiding cause of all misery is not so much in the lack of life's furniture as in the obscurity of life's significance. It is a common

topic with such to decry an undue emphasis upon me and mine, which falsifies the perspective of truth. For, have they not often seen men, who are not above their own level in social position or intellectual acquirement, going out to seek Truth, leaving everything that they have behind them?

They know that the object of these adventures is not betterment in wordly wealth and power, – it is *mukti*, freedom. They possibly know some poor fellow villager of their own craft, who remains in the world carrying on his daily vocation, and yet has the reputation of being emancipated in the heart of the Eternal. I myself have come across a fisherman singing with an inward absorption of mind, while fishing all day in the Ganges, who was pointed out to me by my boatmen, with awe, as a man of liberated spirit. He is out of reach of the conventional prices which are set upon men by society, and which classify them like toys arranged in the shop-windows according to the market standard of value.

When the figure of this fishermen comes to my mind, I cannot but think that their number is not small who with their lives sing the epic of the unfettered soul, but will never be known in history. These unsophisticated Indian peasants know that an Emperor is a decorated slave remaining chained to his Empire, that a millionaire is kept pilloried by his fate in the golden cage of his wealth, while the fisherman is free in the realm of light. When, groping in the dark, we stumble against object, we cling to them believing them to be our only hope. When light comes we slacken our hold, finding them to be mere parts of the all to which we are related. The simple man of the village knows what freedom is – freedom from the isolation



of self from the isolation of things which imparts a fierce intensity to our sense of possession. He knows that this freedom is not in the mere negation of bondage, in the bareness of belongings, but in some positive realisation which gives pure joy to our being, and he sings:

To him who sinks into the deep, nothing remains unattained.

He sings:

Let my two minds meet and combine  
And lead me to the City Wonderful.

When the one mind of ours which wanders in search of things in the outer region of the varied, and the other seeks the inward vision of unity, are no longer in conflict, they help us to realise the *ajab*, the *anirvacanīya*, the ineffable. The poet saint Kabir has also the same message when he sings:

“By saying that Supreme Reality only dwells in the inner realm of spirit we shame the outer world of matter and also when we say that he is only in the outside we do not speak the truth”.

According to these singers, truth is in unity and therefore freedom is in its realization. The texts of our daily worship and meditation are for training our mind to overcome the barrier of separateness from the rest of existence and to realize *advaitam*, the Supreme Unity which is *anantam*, infinitude. It is philosophical wisdom having its universal radiation in the popular mind in India that inspires our prayer, our daily spiritual practices. It has its constant urging for us to go beyond the world of

appearances in which facts as facts are alien to us, like the mere sounds of a foreign music; it speaks to us of an emancipation in the inner truth of all things in which the endless Many reveals the One, as the multitude of notes, when we understand them, reveal to us the inner unity which is music.

But because this freedom is in truth itself and not in an appearance of it, no hurried path of success, forcibly cut out by the greed of result, can be a true path. And an obscure village poet, unknown to the world of a recognized respectability untrammelled by the standardised learning of the Education Department, sings:

“O cruel man of urgent need, must you scorch with fire the mind which still is a bud? You want to make the bud bloom into a flower and scatter its perfume without waiting! Do you see that my lord, the Supreme Teacher, takes ages to perfect the flower and never is in a fury of haste? But because of your terrible greed you only rely on force, and what hope is there for you, O man of urgent need? Prithee, says Madan the poet, Hurt not the mind of my Teacher. Lose thyself in the simple current, after hearing his voice, O man of urgent need.”

This poet knows that there is no external means of taking freedom by the throat. It is the inward process of losing ourselves that leads us to it. Bondage in all its forms has its stronghold in the inner self and not in the outside world; it is in the dimming of our consciousness, in the narrowing of our perspective, in the wrong valuation of things.



The proof of this we find in the modern civilization whose motive force has become a ceaseless urgency of need. Its freedom is only the apparent freedom of inertia which does not know how and where to stop. There are some primitive people who have put an artificial value on human scalps and they develop an arithmetical fury which does not allow them to stop in the gathering of their trophies. They are driven by some cruel fate into an endless exaggeration which makes them ceaselessly run on an interminable path of addition. Such a freedom in their wild course of collection is the worst form of bondage. The cruel urgency of need is all the more aggravated in their case because of the lack of truth in its object. Similarly it should be realized that a mere addition to the rate of speed, to the paraphernalia of fast living and display of furniture, to the frightfulness of destructive armaments, only leads to an insensate orgy of a caricature of bigness. The links of bondage go on multiplying themselves, threatening to shackle the whole world with the chain forged by such unmeaning and unending urgency of need.

The idea of *mukti* in Christian theology is liberation from a punishment which we carry with our birth. In India it is from the dark enclosure of ignorance which causes the illusion of a self that seems final. But the enlightenment which frees us from this ignorance must not merely be negative. Freedom is not in an emptiness of its contents, it is in the harmony of communication through which we find no obstruction in realizing our own being in the surrounding world. It is of this harmony, and not of a bare and barren isolation, that the Upaniṣad, speaks, when it says that the truth no longer remains hidden in him who finds himself in the All.

Freedom in the material world has also the same meaning expressed in its own language. When nature's phenomena appeared to us as manifestations of an obscure and irrational caprice, we lived in an alien world never dreaming of our *svarāj* within its territory. With the discovery of the harmony of its working with that of our reason, we realize our unity with it and, therefore freedom. It is *avidyā*, ignorance, which causes our disunion with our surroundings. It is *vidyā*, the knowledge of the Brahma manifested in the material universe that makes us realize *advaitam*, the spirit of unity in the world of matter.

Those who have been brought up in a misunderstanding of this world's process, not knowing that it is his by his right of intelligence, are trained as cowards by a hopeless faith in the ordinance of a destiny darkly dealing its blows, offering no room for appeal. They submit without struggle when human rights are denied them, being accustomed to image themselves born as outlaws in a world constantly thrusting upon them incomprehensible surprises of accidents.

Also in the social or political field, the lack of freedom is based upon the spirit of alienation, on the imperfect realization of *advaitam*. There our bondage is in the tortured link of union. One may imagine that an individual who succeeds in dissociating himself from his fellows attains real freedom in as much as all ties of relationship imply obligation to others. But we know that, though it may sound paradoxical, it is true that in the human world only a perfect arrangement of interdependence gives rise to freedom. The most individualistic of human beings, who own no responsibility, are the savages who fail to attain their fulness of manifestation. They live immersed in obscurity, like an ill-lighted fire that cannot liberate itself from its envelope



of smoke. Only those may attain their freedom from the segregation of an eclipsed life, who have the powers to cultivate mutual understanding and co-operation. The history of growth of freedom is the history of the perfection of human relationship.

The strongest barrier against freedom in all departments of life is the selfishness of individuals or groups. Civilization, whose object is to afford humanity its greatest possible opportunity of complete manifestation, perishes when some selfish passion, in place of a moral ideal, is allowed, to exploit its resources unopposed, for its own purposes. For the greed of acquisition and the living principle of creation are antagonistic to each other. Life has brought with it the first triumph of freedom in the world of the inert, because it is an inner expression and not merely an external fact, because it must always exceed the limits of its substance, never allowing its materials to clog its spirit, and yet ever keeping to the limits of its truth. Its accumulation must not suppress its harmony of growth, the harmony that unites the in and the out, the end and the means, what is and what is to come.

Life does not store up but assimilates; its spirit and its substance, its work and itself, are intimately united. When the non-living elements of our surroundings are stupendously disproportionate, when they are mechanical and hoarded possessions, then the mutual discord between our life and our world ends in the defeat of the former. The gulf thus created by the receding stream of soul we try to replenish with a continuous shower of wealth which may have the power to fill but not the power to unite. Therefore the gap is dangerously concealed under the glittering quicksands of things which by their own

accumulating weight cause a sudden subsidence, while we are in the depth of our sleep.

But the real tragedy does not lie in the destruction of our material security, it is in the obscuration of man himself in the human world. In his creative activities man makes his surroundings instinct with his own life and love. But in his utilitarian ambition he deforms and defiles it with the callous handling of his voracity. This world of man's manufacture, with its discordant shrieks and mechanical movements, reacts upon his own nature, incessantly suggesting to him a scheme of universe which is an abstract system. In such a world there can be no question of *mukti*, because it is a solidly solitary fact, because the cage is all that we have, and no sky beyond it. In all appearance the world to us is a closed world, like a seed within its hard cover. But in the core of the seed there is the cry of life for *mukti* even when the proof of its possibility is darkly silent. When some huge temptation tramples into stillness this living aspiration after *mukti*, then does civilization die like a seed that has lost its urging for germination.

It is altogether true that the ideal of *mukti* in India is based upon a philosophy of passivity. The *Īsopaniṣad* has strongly asserted that man must wish to live a hundred years and go on doing his work; for, according to it, the complete truth is in the harmony of the infinite and the finite, the passive ideal of perfection and the active process of its revealment; according to it, he who pursues the knowledge of the infinite as an absolute truth sinks even into a deeper darkness than he who pursues the cult of the finite as complete in itself. He who thinks that a mere aggregation of changing notes has the ultimate value of



unchanging music, is no doubt foolish; but his foolishness is exceeded by that of one who thinks that true music is devoid of all notes. But where is the reconciliation? Through what means does the music which is transcendental turn the facts of the detached notes into a vehicle of its expression? It is through the rhythm, the very limit of its composition. We reach the infinite through crossing the path that is definite. It is this that is meant in the following verse of the *Īśa*:

“He who knows the truth of the infinite and that of the finite both united together, crosses death by the help of *avidyā* and by the help of *vidyā* reaches immortality.”

The regulated life is the rhythm of the finite through whose very restrictions we pass to the immortal life. This *amṛtam*, the immortal life is not a mere prolongation of physical existence, it is in the realization of the perfect, it is in the well-proportioned beautiful definition of life which every moment surpasses its own limits and expresses the Eternal. In the very first verse of the *Īśa*, the injunction is given to us: ‘*mā gṛdhaḥ*’; Thou shalt not covet. But why should we not? Because greed, having no limit, smothers the rhythm of life – the rhythm which is expressive of the limitless.

The modern civilization is largely composed of *ātmahanojanāḥ* who are spiritual suicides. It has lost its will for limiting its desires, for restraining its perpetual self-exaggeration. Because it has lost its philosophy of life, it loses its art of living. Like poetasters it mistakes skill for power and realism for reality. In the Middle Ages when Europe believed in the kingdom of heaven, she struggled

to modulate her life's forces to effect their harmonious relation to this ideal, which always sent its call to her activities in the midst of the boisterous conflict of her passions. There was in this endeavour an ever present scheme of creation, something which was positive, which had the authority to say: Thou shalt not covet, thou must find thy true limits. Today there is only a furious rage for raising numberless brick-kilns in place of buildings. The great scheme of the master-builder has been smothered under the heaps of brick-dust. It proves the severance of *avidyā* from her union with *vidyā* giving rise to an unrhythmic power, ignoring all creative plan, igniting a flame that has heat but no light.

Creation is in rhythm, – the rhythm which is the border on which *Vidyām ca avidyāmca*, the infinite and the finite, meet. We do not know how, from the indeterminate, the lotus flower finds its being. So long as it is merged in the vague it is nothing to us, and yet it must have been everywhere. Somehow from the vast it has been captured in a perfect rhythmical limit, forming an eddy in our consciousness, arousing within us a recognition of delight at the touch of the infinite which finitude gives. It is the limiting process which is the work of a creator, who finds his freedom through his restraints, the truth of the boundless through the reality of the bounds. The insatiable idolatry of material that runs along an everlengthening line of extravagance, is in-expressive; it belongs to those regions which are *andhena tamasā vṛtāḥ*, enveloped in darkness, whichever carry the load of their inarticulate bulk. The true prayer of man is for the Real, not for the big, for the light which is not in incendiarism but in illumination, for Immortality which is not in duration of time, but in the eternity of the perfect.



Only because we have closed our path to the inner world of *mukti*, the outer world has become terrible in its exactions. It is a slavery to continue to live in a sphere where things are, yet where their meaning is obstructed. It has become possible for men to say that existence is evil, only because in our blindness we have missed something in which our existence has its truth. If a bird tries to soar in the sky with only one of its wings, it is offended with the wind for buffeting it down to the dust. All broken truths are evil. They hurt because they suggest something which they do not offer. Death does not hurt us, but disease does, because disease constantly reminds us of health and yet withholds it from us. And life in a half world is evil, because it feigns finality when it is obviously incomplete, giving us the cup, but not the draught of life. All tragedies consist in truth remaining a fragment, its cycle not being completed.

Let me close with a Baül song, over a century old, in which the poet sings of the eternal bond of union between infinite and the finite soul, from which there can be no *mukti* because it is an interrelation which makes truth complete, because love is ultimate, because absolute independence is the blackness of utter sterility. The idea in it is the same as we have in Upaniṣad, that truth is neither in pure *vidyā* nor in *avidyā* but in their union:

It goes on blossoming for ages, the soul-lotus in which I am bound, as well as thou, without escape. There is no end to the opening of its petals, and the honey in it has such sweetness that thou like an enchanted bee canst never desert it, and therefore thou art bound, and I am, and *mukti* is nowhere.

### Śrī Śaṅkara on penance

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

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.



Professor Kutumba Śāstri's *Sriśavimsati* is published herein in continuation of his article *Sri Guruprapatti* published in the *VOS* vol. 22, no. 1.

*Editor*

Professor ...  
...  
...

with



## ŚRĪŚAVIMŚATIḤ

*Kuṭumba Śāstri*

श्रीश! प्रभो तव हि भक्तजनस्य नाथ!  
किं साधुकृत्वमसि? नेत्यपि? शङ्कते मे ।  
चित्तं; यतो भवदवेक्षणबद्धतृष्णं  
वैकुण्ठवासविमुखं क्रमशः करोषि ॥

1. O! Lord of Goddess Lakṣmī! O! Almighty! My Lord! my mind doubts whether you do good to your devotees or not. For, you gradually turn away my mind—which possesses an insatiable thirst to look at your form—even from residing in Vaikuṇṭha.

अभ्यस्ततावकमहोज्ज्वलसन्निधानं  
चित्तं तदद्य विकलं मम दूरभावात् ।  
सोढुं कथं प्रभवतीह सुगाङ्गवारि-  
पूरस्थमत्स्यशिशुको हि तटेऽधिवासम् ॥

2. My mind which is used to having your resplendent proximity is now in distress because of its separation from you. How can a tiny fish, which is used to the ever-over-flowing waters of the Gaṅgā, withstand life on its banks?

गर्भालयेऽतिवचनं भवदीयरूप-  
 माकर्षतीह वलितं गलमप्रयत्नात् ।  
 दोषी त्वदीयनिरवद्यगुणप्रकर्षः  
 दण्डस्तु मामकगलस्य, विभो! किमेतत्?

3. O! Lord! it is beyond me to describe your form inside the sanctum sanctorum. It pulls at my neck which turns back without any effort. The abundance of your auspicious qualities that are without blemish, is truly the culprit, but my neck is punished.

प्राप्तस्य तावकसुवर्णकवाटदेशं  
 चित्तं प्रसादयसि, कौतुकमातनोषि ।  
 ब्राह्मं पदं गमयसि, स्मरणं विहासि  
 देहस्य, मुक्तिरुचिदर्शनमत्र दत्से ॥

4. O! Lord! to the person who reaches your golden door, you give peace of mind. You create in him curiosity to know more of you. You lift him to the state of Brahman. You relieve him of the awareness of the body. Indeed, in this very world you make him taste the joy of the state of liberation.

अष्टाङ्गयोगसुलभां नु निवृत्तिसाध्यां  
 ब्रह्मानुभूतिमथ पूर्वसुकर्मलभ्याम् ।  
 आपामरं तव सुवर्णकवाटदेश-  
 प्राप्त्यैव भावयसि देव! दया ह्यमेया ॥

5. O! God! how immeasurable is your compassion! For, you bestow the experience of the ultimate Reality on one and all, even to the lowliest of men on account of their merely approaching your golden door. This experience is otherwise attained only by the study and practice of the eight limbed *yoga*, by renouncing the world, and by the accumulated merits of previous births.



Note: The eight limbs of *yoga* as described by Patañjali are: *yama* (universal moral commandments) *niyama* (self purification by discipline) *āsana* (posture) *prāṇāyāma* (rhythmic control of breath) *pratyāhāra* (withdrawal of the mind) *dhāraṇā* (concentration) *dhyāna* (meditation) and *samādhi* (fulfilment of *yoga* in the form of unifying with the object meditated upon).

स्थातुं त्वदीयसुसुवर्णकवाटदेशे  
गातुं सुवर्णमहितं तव सुप्रभातम् ।  
द्रष्टुं सुवर्णमणिभूषितविश्वरूपं  
चित्तं सदैव वृणुते न हि किञ्चिदन्यत् ॥

6. My mind desires to stay forever at your golden door to sing your *suprabhātam* which is finely composed and to dwell upon your *viśvarūpa* form embellished with diamonds in the early hours of the morning. It desires nothing else.

Note: The *darśan* which immediately follows the recitation of the *suprabhātam* is called *viśvarūpadarśan*.

त्वत्तोऽपि मे प्रियतरा तव दर्शनैक-  
हेतुस्सुवर्णमयपुण्यकवाटभूमिः ।  
देशान्तरे कृतनिरीक्षणदुःखभाजः  
दूती खलु प्रियतरा प्रियदर्शयित्री ॥

7. Your golden door, which is auspicious and which is the only passage to entry to behold you, is more pleasing to me than you. For, sometimes, to the lover in a far off place, longing for one glimpse of his beloved, the mediator who shows his beloved to him is greatly pleasing.

पङ्क्तौ भवन्, शिरसिजानि समर्पयंश्च,  
भक्तो हि मन्दिरजनस्य कुचेष्टितानि ।  
सोल्लुण्ठ-साग्रह-सगर्व-कुभाषितानि  
सोद्वाऽ "ह" मर्पयति तावकपादमूले ॥

8. By suffering a long wait in the queues, by tonsuring the head, by bearing with the unmannerly gestures of the officials who control and regulate the crowd of devotees, the devotees thus offer their ego at your feet.

शक्तिं शिवं भुवनपालनकर्मदीक्षं  
विष्णुं कुमारमपि देवचमूपतिं तम् ।  
एकत्र दर्शयसि तावक-मूर्ति -भूषा-  
बिल्वार्चनो त्सव-मृगाधिप-चिह्नजातैः ॥

9. In you, in one place, you show us the presence of the Divine Mother, of Śiva, of Viṣṇu who is the protector of the world, of Subrahmaṇya who is the commander-in-chief of the divine army, through your form, your ornaments, your acceptance of worship with *bilva* leaves, through the time and season selected for the celebration of *Brahmotsavam* and your gracious acceptance of the symbols of lions on the walls of your temple.

त्वं कोटिशो धनचयं परिगृह्य दत्त्वा  
कृत्वा सुवास-सुखभोजन-मुख्यसौख्यम् ।  
लब्ध्वा धनं बहुगुणं सुनिदर्शनं नो  
जातोऽसि हे! भुवनशासक! शासनानाम् ॥

10. O! Lord! Ruler of the universe! you receive money offerings in crores which you return to us. Besides, you reciprocate the gesture by providing us with comforts, such as good food and good shelter. Yet, again and again your treasury is replenished. Thus you stand as a model to governments.

पङ्क्तौ चिरं समुपविश्य च देहपीडां  
सम्मर्दखेदमधिकारिविरुक्षवृत्तिम् ।  
सोढ्वा, जनोऽद्रिपथतुल्य-सुवक्रपंक्तिं  
क्रान्त्वाऽथ विस्मरति सर्वमिदं त्वदर्थे ॥



11. When finally beholding you, one forgets the hardships that one has endured, such as, sitting for long in the sheds, suffering physical strain in the crowds, bearing with the harsh behaviour of the temple authorities and inching along the queues that are similar to the serpentine road leading to your hill.

लोके पदार्थनिचये बहुशो हि दृष्टे  
मन्दीभविष्यति मनो न पुनर्दिदृक्षु ।  
त्वां वीक्ष्य वीक्ष्य बहुशोऽपि न यामि तृप्तिं  
किं तत्र कारणमिति स्फुटतो न जाने ॥

12. When a thing is repeatedly seen for several times, people lose interest to see it any more. But, in spite of beholding you several times repeatedly, I do not feel satiated. What could the reason be? I am unable to understand.

अग्रे स्थितं जनमिमं प्रणयेन दृष्ट्वा ऽऽ  
पृच्छामि वेह कुरुषे हससीव मन्दम् ।  
जाने न; युक्तमथ नो; कलये भवन्तं  
बन्धुं सचेतनमनुष्यशरीरभाजम् ॥

13. While standing in front of you, I feel that you look at me lovingly with a smile as though you were enquiring after my welfare. I do not know whether it is right or wrong on my part to feel so and to give expression to my experience that you are my relative in a living human body.

नाथ! त्वदीय पदपङ्कजदर्शनोत्काः  
दिग्भ्यो जनास्समुपयान्ति सहस्रशश्च ।  
त्वं चोभयत्र भुवनेषु सुखानि दत्त्वा  
प्रेम्णा प्रमोदयसि तान्; तदुभौ प्रशस्तौ ॥

14. O! Lord! Thousands and thousands of people throng to your place from all directions longingly to have darśan of your lotus feet. You too make them happy by lovingly blessing them with happiness in this world and in the world after death. Indeed, both you and your devotees are great.

इच्छामि लब्धुमिह नाथ! गतस्तवाग्रे  
 कृत्वा नतिं सपदि दण्डवदेव भूमौ ।  
 गोविन्द! सप्तगिरिनाथ! विपन्निहन्ते-  
 त्यामन्त्रयन् मनसि मे कृतकृत्यभावम् ॥

15. O! my Lord! I long to have sense of fulfilment of life merely by reaching your place and standing in front of you, by prostrating before you, dropping down like a stick, and by crying out O! Govinda! O! Lord of seven hills! O! Dispeller of all difficulties!

मन्दस्मितं महितभूषणसन्ततिञ्च  
 कारुण्यमुद्गिरददो मुखपङ्कजञ्च ।  
 धीराकृतिं तव विभोऽनुपमं च रूपं  
 दृष्ट्वाऽपरं न हि दिदृक्षति मानसं मे ॥

16. O! Lord! my mind,—having beholden your smile, your array of most precious jewels, your lotus-like face overflowing with compassion and your majesty in form, indeed, your peerless form,—is not inclined to see any other form.

आकाशगाङ्गसलिलैः प्रतिशुक्रवारं  
 दुग्धादिना मृगमदादिसुगन्धितीर्थैः ।  
 वेदादिपाठसहितं भवतोऽभिषेक-  
 सन्दर्शनं सुरसुदुर्लभमत्र लभ्यम् ॥



17. Amidst the chanting of the *Vedas* and *Divya-prabandham*, your *darśan* during the *abhiṣekasevā* (*snapanatirumañjanam*) which is performed on every friday with milk and the holy waters brought specially for the occasion from *Ākāśagaṅgātīrtha* which are mixed with the paste of musk and sandal and the sight of which is inaccessible even for gods in the other world is, indeed, accessible for the people of this world.

ब्राह्मे मुहूर्तसमये जलसिक्तवस्त्राः  
 शैत्योत्थकम्पसहिताः तव नाम जप्त्वा ।  
 अङ्गप्रदक्षिणमथो शतशो लुठन्तः  
 कुर्वन्ति, जन्मलुठनं परिहर्तुकामाः ॥

18. During early hours of the day, people in hundreds, wrapped in wet clothes, shivering because of the cold and the winds, perform *aṅgapradakṣiṇam* of your temple by rolling on the floor with a desire to avoid rolling repeatedly in the cycle of births.

देवेश! नित्यनिखद्यगुणौघमूर्ते!  
 श्रीवेङ्कटेश! वृषशैलपते! शरण्य ।  
 त्वत्पाददेशपतितं करुणामृताब्धे!  
 दीनं जनं समुचितं परिपाहि मां त्वम् ॥

19. O! Lord of gods! O! repository of eternal and auspicious qualities! O! Lord of the mountain *Vṛṣabhādrī*! O! refuge of all! O! *Veṅkaṭeśa*! O! ocean of nectar of compassion! protect me who has fallen at your feet and who is pitiable, in an appropriate and befitting way.

शक्तिर्न मे; चतुरता पटुता न बुद्धौ;  
 प्रागल्भ्यमस्ति न; धनं न च; पण्डिती वा ।  
 त्वं वर्तसे कुलधनं वृषशैलनाथ!  
 मद्रक्षको; न च ततो मम कापि चिन्ता ॥

20. O! Lord of the mountain Vṛṣabhādri! I do not possess power, cleverness, intellectual expertise, dynamism, money or scholarship. But, I have you who are my protector and my hereditary wealth. Hence I do not feel any sense of want.



## LAGHUVĀKYAVṚTTI\*

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*Śrī Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda*

Introduction

The *Laghuvākyavṛtti* is a short exposition in eighteen verses apparently an abridged version of the *Vākyavṛtti* of Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda which is a well-known treatise on Advaita explaining the implications of the great statements (Mahāvākyas). The Mahāvākyas are pithy statements found in the *Upaniṣads* on great truths, such as That thou art (*tat tvam asi*). In general, four great statements drawn from the different *Upaniṣads* belonging to each one of the four *Vedas* are chosen for discussion by the exponents of Vedānta: (1) Consciousness is Brahman (*prajñānam brahma*) from the *Aitareyopaniṣad* (*Ṛgveda*), (2) That thou art (*tattvamasi*) from the *Chāndogyopaniṣad* (*Sāmaveda*), (3) I am Brahman (*aham brahmāsmi*) from the *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad* (*Yajurveda*), and (4) This self is Brahman (*ayam ātmā brahma*) from the *Māṇḍūkyaopaniṣad* (*Atharvaveda*).

While the *Vākyavṛtti* explains elaborately the sense conveyed by the two great statements – 2 and 3 among the four statements mentioned above, the *Laghuvākyavṛtti* deals with the third one only. The author at first examines the nature

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\*Translation and Notes by Dr. N. Gangadharan

of our consciousness. It is always associated with an idea and it appears always to be changing. This associated consciousness is termed in the text as a reflection of consciousness *bodhābhāsa*. It is to be distinguished from the pure consciousness (*śuddhabodha*). While the former is ever changing the latter remains unchanged and it is the substratum of all the phenomena. One has to realise his true nature as the absolute Brahman characterised by the pure consciousness. The examination of our three states of existence (waking, dreaming and deep sleep) is helpful in the above realization. The individual self according to this text is a reflection of the pure consciousness. This view is substantiated in certain Upaniṣadic passages. The concept of the self as an apparent limitation of consciousness is also found in the Upaniṣadic texts. We may hold them as not opposed to each other but as two view-points arising from two different perceptions.

[1]

स्थूलो मांसमयो देहः सूक्ष्मः स्याद्वासनामयः ।  
ज्ञानकर्मेन्द्रियैः सार्धं धीप्राणौ तच्छरीरगौ ॥

The fleshy body is gross one whereas the self is subtle and the body is made up of desires together with the organs of sense and action, and the vital forces and intellect constitute the subtle body.

The term *prāṇa* denotes the five-fold functions of the five breaths – *prāṇa*, *apāna*, *vyāna*, *udāna* and *samāna*. The intellect includes the mind also. The organs of sense carry on the acts of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and touching and organs of action the speaking, manipulating, moving, excreting and reproducing. This verse describes the three



adjuncts – the gross adjunct, the fleshy body comprising the flesh, bones, blood etc., the subtle adjunct represented by the subtle body dominated by desire.

[2]

अज्ञानं कारणं साक्षी बोधस्तेषां विभासकः ।  
बोधाभासो बुद्धिगतः कर्ता स्यात्पुण्यपापयोः ॥

Ignorance is the cause. The pure consciousness remains as the witness, the illuminator. The reflection of the pure consciousness attached to the intellect (due to ignorance) becomes the agent of good and bad actions.

This verse introduces the third adjunct through ignorance which is the causal adjunct. The true nature of absolute Brahman as subsisting in these adjuncts is defined here. Moreover the individual self is explained as the agent relating to worldly existence.

[3]

स एव संसरेत्कर्मवशाल्लोकद्वये सदा ।  
बोधाभासाच्छुद्धबोधं विविच्यादतियत्नतः ॥

The individual self in the reflected consciousness in the subtle body, always migrates (through birth and death) in the two worlds under the influence of its actions. Hence one should discriminate the pure consciousness from the reflection on the intellect with great effort.

All actions lead to pleasure and pain in this and the next world. The actions that belong to the individual self are of three types – portions of the accumulated results of the past actions (*sañcitakarma*), those resulting in the immediate

birth of this present body (*prārabdha*), and some actions (*āgāmi*) with which a realized person does not have the sense of agency.

[4]

जागरस्वप्नयोरेव बोधाभासविडम्बना ।  
सुप्तौ तु तल्लये बोधः शुद्धो जाड्यं प्रकाशयेत् ॥

The waking and dreaming states only are the fields for the activities of the reflected consciousness. But in deep sleep (the reflected consciousness along with the intellect) being merged in ignorance, the pure consciousness illumines ignorance only.

The reflected consciousness is the cause of different functions in the waking and dreaming states. But it ceases to exist in deep sleep and the pure consciousness illumines the ignorance only. It amounts to this: the immutable pure consciousness alone remains in itself in the state of deep sleep when everything else disappears.

[5]

जागरेऽपि धियस्तूष्णींभावः शुद्धेन भास्यते ।  
धीव्यापाराश्च चिद्भास्याश्चिदाभासेन संयुताः ॥

Even in the state of wakefulness, the quiet state of the intellect is illumined by the pure consciousness. Even the activities of the intellect along with the reflection of the pure consciousness are illumined by the pure consciousness.

In this verse the reference to the activities of the intellect relates to the functioning of the mind. The mind when it functions is illumined by both the mutable and immutable



consciousness. But the mind in its quiet state is illumined by the pure immutable consciousness alone.

[6]

वह्निप्लवजलं तापयुक्तं देहस्य तापकम् ।  
चिद्भास्या धीस्तदाभासयुक्तान्यं भासयेत्तथा ॥

Water boiled by fire causes scalding of the body because of the association with heat. Similarly the intellect illumined by the pure consciousness reveals other objects by the association with the reflection of that (pure consciousness).

Water boiled by fire acquires heat and becomes capable of causing scalding on the body. Similarly the intellect gains the ability to illumine the external objects such as the earthen jar etc.

[7]

रूपादौ गुणदोषादिविकल्पा बुद्धिगाः क्रियाः ।  
ताः क्रियाः विषयैः सार्धं भासयन्ती चितिर्मता ॥

Notions such as good and evil in form etc. (of objects of senses) are activities relating to the intellect. It is considered that the pure consciousness illumines these activities of the mind together with the objects (of the sense).

Notions such as "This is good", "This is bad" relating to sense-objects are caused by intellectual activities and not by pure consciousness. The pure consciousness does not get affected by any modification.

[8]

रूपाच्च गुणदोषाभ्यां विविक्ता केवला चितिः ।  
सैवानुवर्तते रूपरसादीनां विकल्पने ॥

The absolute pure consciousness is distinct from the form and notions of good and evil. The pure consciousness verily stands behind the cognition of form, taste and the like.

The absolute pure consciousness is distinct from the sense-objects and stands as a witness of the cognitions of all objects and their characteristics through the adjuncts such as the intellect.

[9]

क्षणे क्षणेऽन्यथाभूता धीविकल्पाश्चितिर्न तु ।  
मुक्तासु सूत्रवद्बुद्धिविकल्पेषु चितिस्तथा ॥

Every moment, the modifications of the intellect are variable, but not the pure consciousness, although the pure consciousness exists in all the modifications like a thread in a string of pearls.

While the modifications of the mind are varying every moment, the pure consciousness remains unchanging. The latter exists similar to a string running through the pearls of a necklace.

[10]

मुक्ताभिरावृतं सूत्रं मुक्तयोर्मध्य ईक्ष्यते ।  
तथा वृत्तिविकल्पैश्चित् स्पष्टा मध्ये विकल्पयोः ॥

(Just as) the thread covered by the pearls is perceived in between two pearls, so also the pure conscious-



ness (hidden) by the modifications of the intellect becomes clearly visible in between any two modifications.

[11]

नष्टे पूर्वविकल्पे तु यावदन्यस्य नोदयः ।  
अहं ब्रह्मेति वाक्येन सोऽयमर्थोऽभिधीयते ॥

The unmodified pure consciousness shines forth clearly in the midst of two modifications (of the intellect) when the preceding one has ceased and the other is yet to appear.

[12]

एकद्वित्रिक्षणेष्वेवं विकल्पस्य निरोधनम् ।  
क्रमेणाभ्यस्यतां यत्नाद्ब्रह्मानुभवकाङ्क्षिभिः ॥

The suppression of a modification should be practised carefully in this manner by the aspirants desiring to experience Brahman duly for one, two, three moments and so on.

This verse advises the aspirant for experiencing Brahman to restrain the mental modifications moment by moment.

[13]

सविकल्पकजीवोऽयं ब्रह्म स्यान्निर्विकल्पकम् ।  
अहं ब्रह्मेति वाक्येन सोऽयमर्थोऽभिधीयते ॥

The individual self now subject to modifications (of the intellect) may become (identical with) Brahman, devoid of modifications by realising through the statement "I am Brahman" - that is the idea conveyed (in this treatise).

The individual self remains affected by modifications until it is initiated by a preceptor and has undergone the disciplines and has realised the oneness with Brahman of the form of pure existence-knowledge-bliss.

[14]

सविकल्पकचिद्योऽहं ब्रह्मैकं निर्विकल्पकम् ।  
स्वतः सिद्धा विकल्पास्ते निरोद्धव्याः प्रयत्नतः ॥

The reflected consciousness with modifications viz. "I" is really one with Brahman, the undifferentiated. These self-evident modifications have to be suppressed with all efforts.

One has to strive constantly to suppress the modifications arising out of ignorance of the true nature of the Self.

[15]

शक्यः सर्वनिरोधेन समाधिर्योगिनां प्रियः ।  
तदशक्तौ क्षणं रुद्ध्वा श्रद्धालुर्ब्रह्मतात्मनः ॥

If one is able, one can suppress all modifications and have perfect concentration cherished by the Yogins. If one is not able to do so, the earnest seeker can restrain for a moment and realise his own Brahmanhood.

Two ways have been advocated in this verse: one for a person capable of controlling his modifications and the other for a person not capable of doing so.

[16]

ब्रह्मालुर्ब्रह्मतां स्वस्य चिन्तयेद् बुद्धिवृत्तिभिः ।  
वाक्यवृत्त्या यथाशक्ति ज्ञात्वा ह्यभ्यस्यतां सदा ॥



The earnest seeker should meditate his own Brahmanhood by means of the faculties of the mind. Having comprehended the truth by means of the statement (I am Brahman), one should practise this always as much as he can.

Here the term *vākya* refers to the statement "I am Brahman" explained in this text *viz.* in the *Bṛhadāraṇyako-paniṣad* 1.4.10.

[17]

तच्चिन्तनं तत्कथनमन्योन्यं तत्प्रबोधनम् ।  
एतदेकपरत्वं च ब्रह्माभ्यासं विदुर्बुधाः ॥

The wise men knew the practice of Brahmanhood (as consisting of) meditating That, discussing That, enlightening one another about That and cherishing this as the one supreme end.

The practice consists of meditating with the mind divested of all other objects, to speak about the same in the light of the teachings of Vedānta and to cherish the idea of one's own identity with pure consciousness.

[18]

देहात्मधीवद्ब्रह्मात्मधीदाढ्ये कृतकृत्यता ।  
यदा तदायं म्रियतां मुक्तोऽसौ नात्र संशयः ॥

One is liberated indeed without any doubt whenever and wherever he may die if one has the fulfilment of one's effort in (attaining) the firmness in the thought of one's identity with Brahman, just like the firmness ordinarily man has – in the thought of his identity with the body.

## AN INVOCATION OF 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 (discus), who is the sole refuge of all beings of the world, the undecaying (imperishable), the almighty, the only controller of all sense organs, the pure intelligent Self, the One beyond all actions, and the slayer of all enemies.



## BEING AND BEINGS: SOME EPISTEMOLOGICAL AND METAPHYSICAL CONSIDERATIONS

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### I

The system of Advaita can be identified by four doctrines which are integrally connected with one another. They are: (1) the doctrine of Nīrguṇa-Brahman, (2) the doctrine of *vivarta*, (3) the doctrine of *anirvacanīya-khyāti*, and (4) the doctrine of *jīvan-mukti*. Anyone who subscribes to these doctrines is an Advaitin. Though there are differences among the Advaitins in the enunciation of the several views connected with these doctrines, they unreservedly accept these basic doctrines, which remain the same in the tradition of Advaita from the time of the Upaniṣads down to the present time even though we speak of pre-Śaṅkara, post-Śaṅkara, and contemporary Advaita subjecting what transcends time to a time span. Jñāneśvara (13th century AD), the philosopher-saint of Maharashtra, belongs to the main stream of Advaita which flows from the Upaniṣads. The basic doctrines of Advaita can be derived from the *Chāndogya* text, 6.2.1, which says, "Being alone, my child, was this in the beginning, one only without a second." The Upaniṣads speak of the reality as Sat, as Brahman, as Ātman. It is called *Sat* in the sense that it is Being, mere existence, mere *esse* – subtle, indefinable, all-pervading. It is called Brahman because it is big,

and infinite. It is also known as Ātman because it constitutes the nature (*svarūpa*) of everything; also it is that which pervades all bodies. This reality is described elsewhere in the Upaniṣad as not only real (*satyam*) and infinite (*anantam*), but also as knowledge (*jñānam*) lest it should be confused with the *prakṛti* of Sāṅkhya, which is insentient (*jaḍa*) even though it is said to be real and infinite.

The *Chāndogya* text mentioned above presents the metaphysical problem of the one and the many in a paradoxical way. Pointing to the pluralistic universe, the manifested universe characterized by name, form, and change, as "this" (*idam*), the text identifies it with Being in its unmanifested form, because it declares that in the beginning before creation it was Being alone, while emphasizing at the same time that Being is bereft of plurality on the ground that it is one only without a second. The question is whether an entity which is one can also be many. It may appear that there is no difficulty for an entity to be both one and many. Consider, for example, a tree which is a one-many: it is one as a tree and also many as it is a differentiated entity containing many parts such as the root system, trunk, branches, and so on which are different from one another. However, Being which we are considering is not a differentiated entity like a tree. It is not a whole consisting of parts. Nor is it a substance possessing attributes. That is why the Upaniṣad says that it is "one only without a second" (*ekam eva advitīyam*). The three words in this expression are intended to convey that Being is free from three kinds of difference – *sajātīya-bheda*, *vi-jātīya-bheda*, and *svagata-bheda*. For example, two trees which belong to the same class may be different from each other: that is to say, there is *sajātīya-bheda* between them. There is *vi-jātīya-bheda* between a tree and a stone because they belong to two



different classes. There is *svagata-bheda* in a tree which is made up of different parts. But Being is totally different from other objects: there is nothing similar or dissimilar to it; nor does it admit of internal differentiation. It follows that Being which is one without a second cannot be a one-many. Though the many, i.e. the pluralistic universe, is related to the one, the latter remains unaffected by it as the non-dual entity, homogeneous and immutable. How the one appears as the many is the problematic involving both metaphysical and epistemological issues. It is through the paradox of identifying the many with the one that the *Chândogya* text raises metaphysical and epistemological issues. Hence its importance for Advaita.

The four doctrines of Advaita mentioned earlier can be derived from this *Chândogya* text. We have already said that Being is identical with Brahman or Ātman. An entity which is non-dual cannot be but *nirguṇa*. That is why Advaita holds that Brahman, the non-dual reality, is *nirguṇa*. Further, it is a matter of common experience that a material entity is subject to modification, and an entity which is subject to modification is *saguṇa*. But Brahman which is knowledge by nature is *nirguṇa*; and so it is immutable (*avikāri*). Since it is not subject to change, it cannot be the cause of the world through *pariṇāma*, but only through *vivarta*. The theory of *vivarta* which Advaita advocates is integrally connected with the doctrine of Nirguṇa-Brahman. In order to explain the causal relation between the immutable Brahman and the manifested world, there is the need to bring in an additional factor which is called *māyā* or *avidyā* whose ontological status is neither real nor non-real. Being a projection of such an entity, the manifested world is also characterized as neither real nor non-real, i.e. *anirvacanīya* which means indescribable as real

or as non-real. So Advaita formulates the doctrine of *anirvacanīya-khyāti*, which is both epistemological and metaphysical in character. If Brahman is the sole reality, if it is ever free and never bound, and if it is no other than the Ātman of the jīva, then the suffering of the jīva in empirical existence is due to *avidyā*. Since the saving knowledge which is capable of destroying ignorance can be attained here in this life itself, Advaita advocates the doctrine of liberation-in-life (*jīvan-muktī*). Thus, all the four basic doctrines of Advaita can be derived from the *Chāndogya* text mentioned above.

## II

Jñāneśvara, also known as Jñānadeva, subscribes to all the four doctrines of Advaita. He holds that Brahman is *nirguṇa*. Brahman cannot be characterized as such-and-such because it does not possess any quality or specification. Even the statement<sup>1</sup> that it is "real, knowledge, infinite" which is called the *svarūpa-lakṣaṇa* of Brahman does not tell us what it is even though it is the best possible definition that is available to us. Like Śāṅkara, Jñāneśvara also tells us that this statement should be interpreted negatively and not positively.<sup>2</sup> Brahman is called real (*satyam*) in order to differentiate it from things which are not real (*anṛta*); it is called knowledge (*jñānam*) in order to differentiate it from things which are material (*jaḍa*); it is called infinite (*anantam*) in order to mark it off from things which are finite (*paricchinna*); and it is called bliss (*ānanda*) in order to distinguish it from things which are sources of pain (*duḥkha*).

There are two reasons for saying that Jñāneśvara upholds *Brahma-vivarta-vāda* as against *Brahma-pariṇāma-vāda*. The first reason is that Brahman, without undergoing any change,



is the cause of the many; and this will be possible only on the basis of *vivarta*. As Jñāneśvara puts it, "Whenever He becomes the many, He really becomes nothing; and yet, without becoming anything, He is everything."<sup>3</sup> The language of Jñāneśvara, it should be noted, is paradoxical. Brahman is *everything* in the world as declared by the Upaniṣad; and yet it is *nothing* as it remains the same, the non-dual, impartite reality. The point which Jñāneśvara wants to drive home here is that, remaining what it is, Brahman serves as the ground or substratum (*adhiṣṭhāna*) for the appearance of the world of plurality. So Brahman and the world are related as the ground and the grounded, the substratum and the superimposed, reality and appearance. The second reason for saying that Jñāneśvara is an advocate of the theory of *vivarta* is connected with the relation between Brahman and the world. While cause and effect have the same ontological status (*sama-sattā*) in the case of *pariṇāma*, they have different ontological status (*viśama-sattā*) in *vivarta*. Consider clay and pot which are related as cause and effect. Here clay is the cause of pot through *pariṇāma*. Both of them have empirical reality (*vyāvahārika-sattā*); and so they have the same ontological status. But in the case of the rope-snake example in which rope is the transfigurative material cause (*vivartopādāna-kāraṇa*) of snake, they have different ontological status; for, while rope has empirical reality, snake has phenomenal reality (*prātibhāsika-sattā*). There are passages in the writings of Jñāneśvara in support of this position. For example, using the significant expression "*jagadābhāsa*" (world-appearance) he says that "Lord Viṣṇu hides Himself and shows the world-appearance; and then He swallows it by manifesting Himself."<sup>4</sup> Again, clarifying the nature of Brahman in relation to the appearance and disappearance of the world, he says: "Whenever He is manifest, the world disappears, and whenever He is veiled,



it makes its appearance. [The truth is] He is neither manifest nor hidden, remaining untouched or unaffected [by both the processes of manifesting and hiding]."<sup>5</sup> It is well known in the case of rope-snake example that, when the snake is seen, the rope remains concealed and that, when the rope is seen, there is no more the appearance of the snake. Such a situation arises in the case of appearance and reality. What is true of the rope and the snake is true of Brahman and the world.

The world which is an appearance (*ābhāsa*) is neither real (*sat*) nor non-real (*asat*). That which exists all the time, that which is not subject to sublation (*bādha*) is real. Since Brahman alone fulfils this criterion, it alone is real. What is non-real is totally non-existent. For example, "sky-flower" which is never experienced by anyone at anytime is non-real. There is neither cognition (*pratīti*) nor sublation (*bādha*) for it. But the world is not real because it exists and disappears: that is to say, it suffers sublation, and so it is not real (*bādhyamānatvāt na sat*). Nor is it non-real because it is cognized (*pratīyamānatvāt na asat*). Since it is neither real like Brahman nor non-real like sky-flower, Advaita characterizes it as indescribable (*anirvacanīya*). What appears and disappears, like the rope-snake, has a peculiar ontological status. It is a "third category" different from the real and the non-real. Advaita rejects the argument that a given entity must be either real or non-real and that the admission of a "third category" which is neither real nor non-real violates the law of excluded middle. It is experience that provides the directive principle for logic and not the other way. The need for the admission of the "third category" arises because of experience. Logic cannot legislate for experience. On the contrary, it has to conform to and accommodate experience. So Advaita holds that the world-appearance, which has empirical reality and which cannot, therefore, be



ignored is illusory (*mithyā*), an illusory appearance (*mithyāvabhāsa*). To say that the world has empirical reality amounts to saying that it is an appearance. It is not, therefore, surprising that the Advaitin advocates *anirvacanīya-khyāti* in his epistemology and metaphysics. In his commentary on the *Bhagavad-gītā*, 7.4, Jñāneśvara says that the eightfold *prakṛti* of the Lord is His *māyā*.<sup>6</sup> Again, commenting on the *Gītā* text, 13.12, he says that the supreme cannot be said to be non-existent (*asat*) because it is manifest in the form of the world. From this one should not rush to the conclusion that the universe is the supreme Self, because it is His *māyā*.<sup>7</sup> In other words, the world being a projection of *māyā* is *anirvacanīya*.

The *jīva* in its essential nature is Brahman itself. Since Brahman is ever free and never bound, the Self in the *jīva* is always free. The *jīva* must realize that it is not the body, or the senses, or the mind, but the *Ātman* which is no other than Brahman. The help of the Word, the Upaniṣadic text, is needed to realize one's Self. In the words of Jñāneśvara, "When a thing is lost to us or to others in forgetfulness, it is regained by the Word that reminds it."<sup>8</sup> If entanglement in the body is bondage, dis-entanglement from it is freedom. The Word helps the *jīva* to realize its Self even as it is tenanted in the body; and this Self-realization is *jīvan-mukti*. As Jñāneśvara puts it, "The Word sets free the finite Self entangled in the body. The *Ātman* meets Himself by means of the Word."<sup>9</sup>

### III

Śaṅkara and Jñāneśvara in their commentaries on the thirteenth chapter of the *Bhagavad-gītā*, which deals with *kṣetra* and *kṣetrajña*, raise quite a few epistemological and metaphysical issues connected with Being and beings. The

word "*kṣetra*" means field, and "*kṣetrajña*" means the knower of the field. Every system of philosophy inquires into certain categories which are viewed as ultimate. The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika system, for example, accepts seven categories, six positive and one negative, which cover the whole of reality. Sāṅkhya, on the other hand, develops its philosophy on the basis of only two categories. Unlike Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika which is pluralistic and Sāṅkhya which is dualistic, Advaita is non-dualistic because it accepts only one reality, Brahman or the Self. Though its aim is to inquire into Brahman, it cannot and does not straight away start its inquiry with Brahman. It starts with the lived experience, the life-world of the *jīva*, in order to discover the reality which is immanent it. In other words, Brahman-in-the-world is the starting point of philosophical inquiry; and Brahman which is mixed up with the world can be distinguished from the world through inquiry. The distinction between Brahman and the world is so sharp, so fundamental, that it requires another pair of words, the Self and the not-Self, to highlight their antithesis. Śaṅkara uses the words "*asmad*" and "*yuṣmad*", which are freely translated as the subject and the object respectively, to convey their antithetical nature. The epistemological and metaphysical inquiry, usually called *pramāṇa-prameya-vicāra*, which Advaita undertakes like any other system, starts with the dichotomy between the Self and the not-Self, between the subject and the object, even though Advaita is non-dualistic. Śaṅkara justifies this procedure on the ground that the worldly life (*loka-vyāvāhara*), the lived experience of every *jīva*, is carried on by identifying the Self and the not-Self, the subject and the object, even though such an identification is untenable. In the words of Śaṅkara:

It is a matter not requiring any proof that the object and the subject, whose respective spheres are the notions of



the "Thou" and the "I" and which are opposed to each other as much as darkness and light are, cannot be identified. All the less can their respective attributes be identified... In spite of this, it is quite natural to the human being, because of wrong knowledge, not to distinguish the two entities (viz. the object and the subject) and their respective attributes, although they are absolutely different, but to superimpose upon each the characteristic nature and the attributes of the other, and thus coupling the real and the unreal, to make use of expressions such as "That I am" and "That is mine".<sup>10</sup>

Jñānadeva points out that the acceptance of dualism at the commencement of the inquiry is only provisional. Commenting on the *Gītā* text, 13.13, which says,

With hands and feet everywhere, with eyes, heads, and mouths everywhere, with ears hearing everywhere, it (Brahman) exists pervading all.

he argues that, though Brahman has no forms, scripture describes it as having forms, as pervading everything through its organs, employing the language of dualism in order to convey the truth of non-duality. In the words of Jñāneśvara:

Because of its omnipresence we have described it in this way; otherwise, how can we speak of it which is devoid of all forms as having hands, feet, and eyes? When a wave rises in the sea and swallows another small wave, is the swallowing wave different from the swallowed wave (both being water)? In the same way as Brahman is the same everywhere, how can it possess dualism as the pervaded and the pervader? But in order to explain what it is, it has become necessary to adopt the notion of dualism. Just as a small dot is used to denote zero, the language of duality has to be used in expounding

oneness. Otherwise . . . the institution like the preceptor and the disciple (in which instruction is imparted by the former to the latter) will cease to exist, and all talk about oneness will come to an end. It is for this reason that the Vedas have adopted the language of dualism to expound the truth of non-dualism.<sup>11</sup>

The distinction between *kṣetrajña* and *kṣetra* is the distinction between the Self and the not-Self, between the subject and the object. The term "*kṣetra*" is comprehensive enough to include everything other than the Self. In the words of Jñāneśvara, "All things in this world with the exception of the supreme Self take birth and die and constitute this field."<sup>12</sup> All these things are objects, while the Self or *kṣetrajña* alone is the subject. If Brahman or the Self is Being, these objects can be called "beings" in the sense that whatever existence they have is derived from Being. The non-dual reality which transcends the knower-known distinction gets divided, as it were, through some "shaking" or "throbbing", what Jñāneśvara calls "*kṣobha*" or "*sphūrti*", into the knower and the known. To quote Jñāneśvara:

Untouched by pleasure and pain, He Himself stands in front of Himself by momentarily exploding into this form (of the world, of the object).

That (explosion) is named as the becoming of the seen (i.e. the phenomenal world). Just as the reflectedness of the reflected object is due to its reflection, (likewise) seeriness is attributed to the pure consciousness by it (i.e. by the explosion).<sup>13</sup>

It may be noted that the pure consciousness becomes the seer in the presence of the seen. In the absence of the seen, it cannot be called the seer, because the seer and the



seen are relative terms. Both Śaṅkara and Jñāneśvara consider the knowledge of the distinction between the field and the knower of the field to be important for the correct understanding of Brahman because it comprehends everything worth knowing and there is nothing else to be known apart from these two. That is why Kṛṣṇa says: "To know the field and the knower of the field, I deem it as the knowledge."<sup>14</sup>

#### IV

Some important epistemological and metaphysical issues are raised by both Śaṅkara and Jñāneśvara during the discussion of the nature of *kṣetra* and *kṣetrajña*. According to Jñāneśvara, Kṛṣṇa's teaching centres round four aspects of Brahman – *kṣetra*, *jñāna*, *jñeya*, and *ajñāna* (vv.5-18).<sup>15</sup> It is only for further elucidation that Kṛṣṇa proceeds to discuss about *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*, the cause of bondage, and the four paths to liberation in the remainder (vv. 19-34). Śaṅkara too has identified the same issues in his commentary. Both of them show the same linkage with the ideas in the earlier chapters, wherever necessary.

The objective world which is called *kṣetra* is the product of *prakṛti* or *māyā* which has a dependent existence according to Advaita. Brahman, through *prakṛti* or *māyā*, is the cause of the world. Making a distinction between two kinds of *upādāna-kāraṇa*, Advaita holds that, while *māyā* is the transformative material cause (*pariṇāmyupādāna-kāraṇa*), Brahman is the transfigurative material cause (*vivartopādāna-kāraṇa*). In the course of his commentary on the *Gītā* text, 7.6, Jñāneśvara says that *prakṛti* which lays out the manifold name and form is a "reflection" of Brahman and "nothing else;"<sup>16</sup> and so Brahman alone is the origin and dissolution of the universe. Again, commenting on the text, 7.13, he

says that *māyā*, consisting of three *guṇas*, is Brahman's "reflection and shadow" and that it acts as a veil hiding the true nature of Brahman.<sup>17</sup> Explaining why the beings of the world find it difficult to recognize the Lord (7.13), he says:

The beings created by me do not know me and are not in me, just as pearls produced from water do not get dissolved in water. The pot made out of clay mixes into it easily, but does not do so when baked in fire; so all the creatures are truly my limbs and have come into being through the play of my *māyā*. So, though they belong to me, they are not the Self and do not recognize me and have become blinded by sense-objects and deluded by the notions of "I" and "mine".<sup>18</sup>

The expressions used by Jñāneśvara to bring out the nature of *māyā* show that *māyā* which is dependent on Brahman is not identical with it. He characterizes *māyā* as Brahman's "reflection and shadow". A reflection or shadow has no reality of its own; even so, *māyā* has no reality of its own. The beings of the world projected by *māyā* belong to the Self, because *māyā* which is their source belongs to it. But neither *māyā* nor the beings of the world are the Self. In short, the entire not-Self – the *kṣetra* comprising the great elements, egoism, intellect, and the unmanifest, the ten senses and the mind, and the five objects of the senses, the qualities or states of the mind such as desire, hatred, pleasure, pain, intelligence and courage, and the aggregate of the body and the senses – is neither real nor non-real, and belongs to the third category which is *anirvacanīya*. It may be noted here that, according to both Śāṅkara and Jñāneśvara, desire and aversion, pleasure and pain, intelligence and courage are not the characteristics of the Self as maintained by the Vaiśeṣikas, but of the mind. Being objects of knowledge, they are knowable and are, therefore, not-Self: while the Self is the



seer (*draṣṭā*), the not-Self is the seen (*drśya*).

The seer-seen problem calls for a brief excursus at this stage. How can Advaita, one may ask, bring in the seer-seen dualism while it upholds the thesis of non-dualism? Though Advaita is non-dualistic in its metaphysics, it is realistic in its epistemology. The minimum claim of realism in its epistemology is that there is such a thing called cognition. Starting with the minimum claim, it gradually enlarges its scope to accommodate two more factors. Ordinarily we do not come across bare cognition. Cognition is always cognition of something. In other words, it is transitive pointing to an object. Again, cognition is always cognition of someone; it belongs to some person. It means that cognition is two-way relational involving contact with the subject on the one hand and an object on the other. Cognition, cognizer, and cognized are the three factors (*tripuṭī*) involved in a knowledge situation as it takes place in the waking and in dream experience. The non-dual consciousness is split into two – the seer and the seen, or into three – the seer, the seen, and seeing – by *avidyā*. To quote Jñāneśvara: “Hence, due to the work of *avidyā*, there is the seen-seerness. That I do not know. It exists like this only without beginning.”<sup>19</sup> Again, he says: “In the same way, it [i.e. pure consciousness] itself goes on showing the seen within itself to itself; thereby, it displays this trinity of the seer-seen-sight.”<sup>20</sup> What Jñāneśvara wants to convey here is this: “How the subject-object dualism, which is due to the work of *avidyā*, arises is beyond our understanding. Since *avidyā* is beginningless, the subject-object dualism is equally beginningless. The pure consciousness which transcends the seer-seen distinction remains unaffected by it. However, in our day-to-day life in which we transact all kinds of business, we develop “I-cognition” (*aham pratyaya*) and “this-

cognition" (*idam pratyaya*) consequent on the reflection of consciousness in the internal organ which is a product of *avidyā*." His conclusion is:

Thus, the one (pure consciousness) alone has become the three (i.e. seer, seen, and sight). On the disappearance of the three, the one alone remains. Hence, the three is only an illusion and oneness alone is the reality.<sup>21</sup>

The standpoint of Jñāneśvara is the same as that of Śaṅkara. In the course of his commentary on the *Gītā* text, 13.2, Śaṅkara observes:

It is only by a figure of speech that the Self, the immutable consciousness, is spoken of as the cognizer, just as, in virtue of its heat, fire is said, by a figure of speech, to do the act of heating ... the Lord has taught us that the Self has in itself no concern with action, or with its accessories, or with its results, that they are imputed to the Self by *avidyā*, and that they are, therefore, said to belong to the Self only by a figure of speech.

## V

Both Śaṅkara and Jñāneśvara hold that liberation can be attained only by knowledge. While Śaṅkara's explanation of what one gains by knowledge is brief, Jñāneśvara is eloquent in his description of the post-knowledge situation. This is what Śaṅkara says about the fruit of knowledge: "The end of this knowledge is *mokṣa*, the cessation of mortal existence, of *saṁsāra*."<sup>22</sup> Jñāneśvara's description of the fruit of knowledge is as follows:



This knowledge destroys ignorance and brings about the union of the embodied Self with the supreme Self. It closes the doors of the senses, diminishes activity, and dispels anxiety of the mind. With the attainment of this knowledge, the sense-duality disappears, and the Self realizes its identity with the supreme Self. This knowledge destroys the ego, devours the great delusion, and banishes all talk of "mine" and "others". It uproots worldly existence, cleanses the impurity of desire, and embraces the all-pervading Brahman.<sup>23</sup>

How do we know, one may ask, that a person has attained the saving knowledge? Though no one has direct access to the saving knowledge attained by a person, it can be inferred by a close observation of the behaviour of the *jñānī*. This is what Jñāneśvara means when he declares that "it can be seen by the physical eye." To quote Jñāneśvara:

It is not true that it cannot be seen by the physical eyes. For, when the body becomes permeated by the power of this knowledge, its symptoms become visible through the actions of the sense organs. Just as the blossoming of the trees indicates the advent of the spring, so the actions of sense organs bear testimony to knowledge.<sup>24</sup>

Though the final knowledge cannot be described as it transcends subject-object duality, the behaviour of one who possesses this knowledge, variously called as *sthitaprajña*, *brahma-niṣṭha*, *jñānī*, *jīvan-mukta*, and so on, can be described. That is why Arjuna asks Kṛṣṇa elsewhere how a *sthitaprajña* would speak, sit, and move about;<sup>25</sup> and Kṛṣṇa's description of the behaviour of a *sthitaprajña* in response to Arjuna's question has become a classic. Jñāneśvara is of the view that once again Kṛṣṇa enumerates a series of characteristics (13. 7-11) such as absence of pride and hypocrisy,

non-injury, and so on, which reveal the presence of the liberating knowledge in a person. His explanation of each one of these characteristics with a number of similes apt and suggestive, sayings well-tested in experience, and arguments simple and convincing, is brilliant. It is necessary to point out in this connection that Jñāneśvara's view of these characteristics is different from that of Śaṅkara's. The *Gītā* text, 13-11, after mentioning the characteristics beginning from "humility" (*amānitvam*) and ending with "perception of the end of the knowledge of truth" (*tattvajñānārthadarśanam*) says that "this (list of characteristics) is declared to be knowledge, and what is opposed to it is ignorance."<sup>26</sup> Since it is not right to say that the characteristics such as humility are knowledge, Śaṅkara is of the view that they are said to be knowledge because they are conducive to the origination of knowledge. It follows that the opposite set of characteristics constitute ignorance, because it leads to the perpetuation of bondage. Jñāneśvara, too, is aware of the difficulty in calling humility and other characteristics as knowledge, and so he says that they are the external marks of knowledge which one has attained. A person who is ignorant will reveal the opposite features such as pride, hypocrisy, and so on.

## VI

The objective world consisting of beings of all sorts collectively called the field can be known through perception and other *pramāṇas*. Of the six *pramāṇas* accepted by the Advaitin, *pramāṇas* other than *śruti*; viz. perception, inference, comparison, postulation, and non-cognition are needed for knowing the objects of the world. More than one *pramāṇa* is required because some objects can be known through perception (*pratyakṣa*), and some only through



inference (*anumāna*) and postulation (*arthāpatti*); while the knowledge of similarity (*sādrśya-jñāna*) can be obtained only through comparison (*upamāna*), the knowledge of the non-existence of a thing (*abhāva-jñāna*) can be obtained only through non-cognition (*anupalabdhi*). *Śruti* is of no use with regard to things empirical. It is required only with regard to Brahman which is trans-empirical. The Advaitin holds that there is a functional arrangement called *pramāṇa-vyavasthā* in the operation of the *pramāṇas*. While *pramāṇas* other than *śruti* have their functional scope restricted to things empirical, *śruti* which is scriptural authority has its operational sphere confined to the trans-empirical reality. It means that there is no contradiction (*virodha*) between *śruti* and the other *pramāṇas*. A scriptural text which says that fire is cold and that ice is hot is not authoritative in the same way as perception and other *vyāvahārika-pramāṇas* are not valid when they speak about Brahman, the trans-empirical reality. The Advaitin, therefore, insists on the principle of demarcation between *śruti* on the one hand and the other *pramāṇas* on the other.

If *śruti* is the *pramāṇa* through which Brahman is known, then the latter becomes an object of knowledge (*jñeya*), a position which contradicts the earlier view that Brahman or the Self which is *kṣetrajña* is the knower (*jñātā*) or the subject. If it is the subject, one may argue, it cannot be the object. Thus it becomes necessary for the Advaitin to clarify whether Brahman is the subject or the object. We have already stated quoting the authority of both Śaṅkara and Jñāneśvara that Brahman or the Self which is of the nature of consciousness gets divided, as it were, into the subject and the object due to *avidyā*. It means that the status of a subject or a knower (*jñātṛtva*) is superimposed on it due to *avidyā*. Veiled as it is in the state of *avidyā*, it remains unknown

though it is eternally present as the inward consciousness; and it can be known by the purified mind (*saṁskṛta-manasā*) with the help of the Word or the Upaniṣadic text. It is, therefore, said to be an object of knowledge. That is why there is the *śruti* text which says: "Only through the mind (Brahman) can be attained."<sup>27</sup> There is also the *sūtra* which says: "Scripture is the means of the knowledge (of Brahman)."<sup>28</sup> It is against this background that we should understand Kṛṣṇa's declaration:

That which has to be known I shall describe, by knowing which one attains the Immortal. Beginningless is the supreme Brahman. It is not said to be "*sat*" or "*asat*".<sup>29</sup>

A new problem arises when the text says that Brahman, the knowable, cannot be spoken of as either existent or non-existent. Śaṅkara examines at length several possible objections in this regard. There is first of all the objection that, if Brahman, the knowable, cannot be spoken of as existing, then it does not exist, because whatever is knowable is existent and what is existent alone is knowable. It is true that the text says that Brahman cannot be spoken of as non-existent. Even then, this averment of the text does not solve the problem. If we cannot say that it is not non-existent, then we have to say that it is existent, a position which is denied by the text.

The objection may be reformulated in order to show how serious the difficulty is arising from the self-contradictory standpoint of the text. There are only two kinds of cognition – cognition of something as existent (*sad-buddhi*) or cognition of something as non-existent (*asad-buddhi*). For example, we say that a pot is existent: here, the pot-cognition is a case of *sad-buddhi*. Also, we say that a sky-flower is



non-existent: here, the sky-flower-cognition is a case of *asad-buddhi*. In a given situation we develop either *sad-buddhi* or *asad-buddhi*; and since it is not possible to have the cognition of something as both existent and non-existent at the same time, we are compelled to say that Brahman, the knowable, must be an object of either *sad-buddhi* or *asad-buddhi*. If the former, then we can say that it is existent; if the latter, then it is non-existent. If so, ignoring the two alternatives which alone are available, how can the text, so the objection goes, go in for the third alternative and say that Brahman cannot be spoken of as existent or non-existent. Śaṅkara argues that this objection is untenable as it proceeds on the wrong assumption that Brahman, which is said to be knowable, is on a par with empirical objects like pot, which are knowable. In the case of objects such as pot, which can be perceived by the senses (*indriya-gamyam*), we do have the cognition of it as existent or non-existent as the case may be. But Brahman does not fall within the scope of the senses. It can be known only through the Word, the *śruti* text. When a pot is the object of *sad-buddhi*, we say that it is existent; and when it is the object of *asad-buddhi*, we say that it is non-existent. Since Brahman is not the object of *sad-buddhi*, we cannot say that it is *sat*; and since it is not the object of *asad-buddhi*, we cannot say that it is *asat*. It does not follow from this that Brahman, the ground of the entire universe, does not exist. Such a conclusion will go against not only the *Chāndogya* text with which the present discussion has started, but other texts as well. The point which Śaṅkara wants to drive home here is the contrast between objects which are determined by space, time, and cause and which have only empirical reality and Brahman which transcends space, time, and cause and which is, therefore, ever existent. He objects to the extension of the logic of the finite to the infinite on the

ground that, while the former falls within the reach of *buddhi*, the latter does not.

There is the objection that it is a self-contradiction to say that Brahman is knowable, but at the same time it cannot be said to be *sat* or *asat*: that is to say, what is knowable must be one of these two; and what is neither is not knowable. This objection too, says Śāṅkara, is untenable. Strictly speaking, Brahman is not knowable. Brahman is knowledge by its very nature; and "knowability" is superimposed on it in the state of *avidyā*. In support of this Śāṅkara cites the *śruti* text which says: "That (Brahman) is surely different from the known and also different from the unknown."<sup>30</sup> Expressions such as "known" and "unknown" which we use in our ordinary discourse have no application with regard to Brahman, because it is knowledge by its very nature; and *jñānam* is totally different from *jñeyam*. It is, therefore, necessary to understand the *Gītā* text in the correct perspective.

There is yet another way by which Śāṅkara tries to justify why Brahman cannot be said to be *sat* or *asat*. Śāṅkara argues that the nature of language is such that it cannot signify or reveal the nature of the non-dual Brahman. Every word that we use in our ordinary language is intended to denote a thing which belongs to a class (*jāti*), or which possesses a quality (*guṇa*), or which is involved in action (*karma*), or which has a relation (*sambandha*) with something else. It means that language operates only in the sphere of duality; and the object which can be signified by a word is structurally, functionally, and relationally dualistic. There is a built-in limitation with regard to both language and object, which has to be taken note of. For example, the word "cow" signifies an animal which belongs to the class of "cowness". The word "white"



signifies a quality of an object. The word "cook" means a person who performs the act of cooking. The word "wealthy" means a person who possesses wealth. So Śaṅkara concludes:

Brahman belongs to no class. So it cannot be signified by such words as *sat*. It possesses no qualities. If it were in possession of qualities, then it could be signified by a word meaning a quality. Since it is devoid of action, it cannot be indicated by a word implying an act. The *śruti* says: "It is without parts, actionless, and tranquil."<sup>31</sup> It is not related to anything else, for it is one; it is without a second; it is not an object; and it is the very Self. Hence it is but right to say that it cannot be signified by any word. And the scriptural texts such as "Whence (unable to reach Brahman) speech returns"<sup>32</sup> convey the same idea.<sup>33</sup>

Wittgenstein echoes Śaṅkara when he says: "The boundaries of my language are the boundaries of the world."<sup>34</sup> The metaphysical subject, *viz.* Brahman, is not in the world; it does not belong to the world. It is the border of the world; it is outside the world.<sup>35</sup> One cannot *say* what does not exist in the world. So the language of dualism is inadequate to express what is trans-worldly and therefore trans-linguistic.

According to Jñāneśvara, Brahman is not *jñeya* in the usual sense of the term. The objects of the world which are knowable have a beginning and an end; and they are known by the ordinary *pramāṇas* such as perception. But Brahman, says Jñāneśvara, has neither a beginning nor an end; and it can be known only by knowledge obtained from the Upaniṣadic text. Once it is known, there is nothing else to be known because it is everything. It is, therefore, *jñeya* in a special sense. Knowability in the case of Brahman and the

empirical objects is not the same.<sup>36</sup>

In his own characteristic way Jñāneśvara explains why we cannot say that Brahman is non-existent or existent. This is how he analyses the problem.

If you say that it is non-existent, it becomes manifest in the form of the universe; and if you say that the universe is the supreme Self, it is only the projection of *māyā*. Brahman has no form, colour, or shape. It is not seen nor does it see. So, who can say that it exists and how? Well, if you say that it does not really exist, then how did the Great Principle (*mahat*) and the other evolutes come into being? Since no one could say that it is or it is not, speech becomes dumb and the power of thinking too comes to a dead halt.<sup>37</sup>

## VII

What cannot be proved by *pramāṇas* or ordinary language cannot be dismissed as a non-entity, as something which does not exist at all. Brahman, we have already said, is beyond the reach of the senses which go outward, beyond the mind which is sullied and, therefore, gives only separative knowledge, and beyond the ordinary language which is functionally effective only in the realm of dualism. Nevertheless, it is the ground for the appearance of the *jīva* and the world, *kṣetrajñā* and *kṣetra*, the subject and the object which interact with each other such that the *jīva* becomes the subject of knowledge, the agent of action, and the enjoyer of the consequences of action. There is, therefore, the need to prove the existence of Brahman. A word of caution is necessary at this stage about the proofs or arguments for the existence of Brahman. These arguments show that, unless



we presuppose the primal Being as the supporting principle of the various cognitive and conative activities of the *jīva* and of the manifold changes that take place in the world of name and form, we cannot account for the well known *loka-vyavahāra*. They do not and cannot establish the essential nature of Brahman or the identity of *jīva* and Brahman, for which the help of *śruti* is needed. They are "transcendental" in nature in the sense that they show Brahman or the Self as the necessary condition for the possibility of experience, action, and personal identity. As Sureśvara puts it, "Given this reality [i.e. Brahman or the Self], the 'this' [comprising the world of objects] is manifest and in its absence nothing is manifest."<sup>38</sup> We notice four arguments for the existence of Brahman in the *Gītā* text (13. 13-17). They are: (1) introspective argument (v. 15), (2) psycho-physical argument (v. 13), (3) epistemological argument (vv. 14 and 17), and metaphysical argument (vv. 15-16).

The basic doctrine that Brahman is no other than the inward Self (*pratyak*), which is referred to quite frequently in the text (see 13.15), contains the introspective argument for the existence of Brahman. Everyone of us, with a little reflection, can know that a human being is a complex entity consisting of the body, the senses, and the mind. We do not have any doubt about the body with which we perform many actions. Nor do we doubt the presence in us of the senses with which we hear the sound, feel heat and cold, perceive colours, and so on. Sometimes we say, "I was absent-minded, and so I did not notice the presence of something." "I am mentally depressed," "I have made up my mind to do that," and so on, referring to the role of the mind in our cognitive, affective, and conative activities. Of course, we do not and cannot perceive the mind and the senses even though we

perceive the gross external body. However, we know them through inference. Cognition, desire, aversion, volition, perseverance, etc. are the states of the mind. The sense of "I" (*aham*) that a person develops is also associated with the mind. It is the "I" that passes for the inward Self while the truth is that it is not. Though it is not the Self, it is a pointer to the Self which is its source. Whenever a person develops the sense of "I", she has access to the Self. That is why Śaṅkara declares that there is no one to whom the Self remains unknown. Ramaṇa Maharshi exhorted his disciples to ask the question, "Who am 'I'?" "What is the source of 'I'?" It means that the Self is known through introspection following the process of eliminating one by one the body, the senses, and the mind. When the *Gītā* text, 13.15, says that Brahman is "within" (*antaḥ*) all beings, it refers to the inward Self (*pratyagātman*) which is no other than Brahman.

We will now consider the psycho-physical argument which proves the existence of the Self on the ground that it is the source of all activities of the organs such as hands and feet. It is well known that the motion of a physical object such as a cart is due to the sentient principle. A human being pushes a cart; or, a horse pulls a carriage. Here, a human being or a horse is a sentient being responsible for the movement of the cart which is a material thing. *Kṣetra* is the adjunct (*upādhi*) of the *kṣetrajña*. Śaṅkara observes that *kṣetrajña*, i.e. the Self, the sentient principle, is so-called because of the *upādhi* of *kṣetra*; and this *kṣetra* has different organs such as hands and feet, eyes and ears, and so on, including the mind. These organs constituting the body of the Self perform various activities due to the energy inherent in the Self; and so they are marks (*liṅga*) of the existence of the Self. The argument may be stated in the form of inference:



The Self exists.

Because it is conditioned by *upādhis* such as hands and feet like *ākāśa* which has pot as its *upādhis*.

Whatever is conditioned by *upādhi* exists.

Though the Self is one, it appears to be many because of the plurality of bodies. It is infinite; that is why the text says that the Self, which is spoken of as the knowable, has its hands and feet, eyes, mouths, and heads everywhere. It should be borne in mind that the distinctions – structural, functional, and qualitative – in the *upādhi* are superimposed on the Self.

The epistemological argument for the existence of Brahman is suggested in two verses, 13.14 and 13.17, of the *Gītā* text. The argument as presented in 13.14 can be viewed as metaphysical as well as epistemological in character. Both Śaṅkara and Jñāneśvara interpret the expression "*asaktaṁ sarvabhṛt*" (unattached, yet supporting all) in a metaphysical way. In the course of his commentary on this text, Śaṅkara observes: "Since it [i.e. the Self] is devoid of the senses, it is unattached, i.e. devoid of all attachments. Though it is so, it supports all." The world of plurality is an appearance, and there is no appearance without reality. In the rope-snake example, it is the rope which is the reality that supports the snake which is an illusory appearance, even though the rope has no relation with the snake. What holds good in the rope-snake example also holds good in respect of Brahman and the world. Jñāneśvara also holds the same view.

Though the relation of the supporter and the supported is undoubtedly metaphysical in character, Śaṅkara explains it in an epistemological way. His argument is very brief. He

says: "Indeed, everything is based on the Sat, the existent; for, everywhere the cognition of 'sat' is present" (*sadāspadam hi sarvaṃ, sarvatra sadbuddhyanugamāt*). He has elaborated this argument elsewhere in his commentary (see 2.16). The argument may be elucidated in four steps.

First, we perceive every object, whatever it may be, as something existent; and we express ourselves by saying, "The pot is existent," "The cloth is existent," and so on. That is to say, our cognition is about the "existent pot" (*san ghaṭaḥ*), the "existent cloth" (*san paṭaḥ*), and so on. We cognize two aspects of the given object, its "existence" aspect and the "form" (*vikāra*) in which it presents itself to us, i.e. the form of the pot or of the cloth. Of these two aspects, the "existence" aspect is uniformly present in all our cognitions, whereas the particular "form" of the object such as pot, cloth, and so on varies from cognition to cognition. That which is uniformly present in our cognition, so Śaṅkara argues, is real (*sat*); and that which is sometimes present and sometimes absent is unreal (*asat*). It means that the objective form which varies from cognition to cognition is not real whereas the "existence" aspect is real.

Secondly, the *sat* that is cognized in every act of perception is Brahman. The existent (*sat*) is real (*satyam*), and the real is the existent. The *Chāndogya* text (6.2.1), "Being [Sat] alone, my dear, was this in the beginning," and the *Taittirīya* text (2.1.1), "Real, knowledge, and infinite is Brahman" are the relevant scriptural authority in this regard.

We now move to the third step in the argument. If the existent is cognized in perception and if the existent is Brahman, then how is it, it may be asked, that the world is cognized as existent? The answer is that the existence ascribed



to the world is due to a false identification (*tādātmya adhyāsa*) of the world with Brahman. Just as we speak of the "clay-pot" (*mṛdghaṭaḥ*), even so we speak of the "existent world" (*sajjagat*). In both the cases, we have cause-effect relation; and in both, the effect is identified with its cause. However, there is an important difference between the two cases. Since the cause-effect relation between clay and pot arises through *pariṇāma*, i.e. modification of the cause into effect, both of them have identical nature (*sālakṣaṇya*). In the other case, Brahman is the transfigurative cause (*vivartopādāna-kāraṇa*) of the world, and so there is difference in nature (*vailakṣaṇya*) between Brahman and the world. The world appears to be existent because of Brahman, the substratum, on which it is superimposed. In other words, what belongs to Brahman is illicitly transferred to the world due to *avidyā*. Whereas an ignorant man affirms the reality of the world because the world alone is existent to him, one who has realized the truth declares the reality of Brahman and cognizes everything as Brahman. So, any object that we perceive as something existent is a pointer to the existence of Brahman.

We will now consider the second epistemological argument for the existence of Brahman. The *Gītā* text, 13.17, speaks of Brahman as "the light even of lights" (*jyotiṣāmapi jyotiḥ*). Śaṅkara's explanation of this expression is brief. He says: "That, the knowable, is the light even of lights such as the sun. Indeed, these latter shine only when illumined by the light of the consciousness of the Self." Jñāneśvara praises the greatness and the grandeur of the eternal inner light of the Self in a poetic language. He says:

That knowable kindles the fire, provides nectar to the moon, and gives vision to the sun to oversee the affairs of the world. By its light the starry sky is illumined, and

the sun moves at pleasure in the universe... it is the intelligence of the intellect... it is the mind of the mind, eye of the eyes, ear of the ears, the faculty of speech of the tongue...<sup>39</sup>

As it is, we do not get the form and the force of the epistemological argument both from Śaṅkara and Jñāneśvara. It will be helpful to have a brief look at the Upaniṣadic background.

To Janaka's question, "What is the light for man when there is no illumination of the sun and the moon, no light of the fire, no guidance of speech?" Yājñavalkya's reply is: "The Self, indeed, is his light, for with the Self as the light, one sits, moves about, does one's work, and returns."<sup>40</sup> In his commentary on this text Śaṅkara observes:

By the word "self" is meant that light which is different from one's body and organs, and illumines them like the external lights such as the sun, but is itself not illumined by anything else.

There are three points to be noted here. First, it is through the Self that the mind and the organs of knowledge serve as the light, give us knowledge of the things of the world. Since they are material, they cannot by themselves reveal anything; and so they have to depend upon the Self. Second, it is through the Self that we know the mind and the senses. Third, while the Self illumines everything starting from the mind, the Self itself is not illumined by anything else, for everything other than the Self is material. It is in this sense that the Self is said to be self-luminous (*svapṛakāśa*). In brief, as a text of the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* says: "It shining, everything else shines."<sup>41</sup> The same idea is conveyed in the *Gītā* text, 13.33, "Even as the one sun illumines the entire world, so *kṣetrajña*



(the One in the entire *kṣetra*) illumines all bodies." So, our inquiry to find out the ultimate source of our knowledge leads us to the Self, "the light of lights".

The second epistemological argument which centres round the Self as the revealing principle can be formulated in another way by raising the fundamental question about the presupposition of all knowledge. Advaita holds that epistemological inquiry, which is called *pramāṇa-vicāra* in the Indian tradition, proceeds on the basis of two assumptions. The first one is that there is such a thing called consciousness, otherwise called the Self, which is the basic revealing principle. The part that consciousness plays in the realm of knowledge is such that Husserl called it "the principle of principles", what the *Gītā* characterizes using the felicitous expression as "the light of lights." There are two reasons for its importance in the entire *pramāṇa-vicāra*. The first is that whatever is affirmed by it can never be denied. The second reason is that whatever is denied by it can never be accepted. We say that an object is such-and-such or that it is not such-and-such only on the evidence of consciousness. All our affirmations and denials including the most important distinction that we make between the real (*sat*) and the non-real (*asat*) are guided by, and are dependent on, our consciousness: they are, in the language of Śaṅkara, *buddhi-tantra*. If we say that the mind and the senses are revealing principles, it is only by courtesy. Strictly speaking, they are not the sources of knowledge on their own. Borrowing the light from consciousness, they reveal objects. Śaṅkara's elucidation of the role of the mind and the senses vis-à-vis the Self in the generation of knowledge is helpful:

The intellect, being transparent and next to the Self easily

catches the reflection of the intelligence of the Self. So even wise men happen to identify themselves with it; next comes the *manas*, which catches the reflection of the Self through the intellect; then, the organs, through the contact with the *manas*; and lastly the body, through the organs. Thus, the Self successively illumines with its own light the entire aggregate of body and organs.<sup>42</sup>

The second assumption is that there is such a thing called superimposition (*adhyāsa*) at the back of epistemological inquiry. In the justly famous *adhyāsa-bhāṣya*, which is the introduction to his commentary on the *Brahma-sūtra*, Śaṅkara draws our attention to the work of *adhyāsa* as the *sine qua non* of *pramāṇa-vicāra* through a chain of dependent relation with *pramātā* at one end and *adhyāsa* at the other end. No inquiry is possible without an inquirer. In the present case the inquirer is the epistemological subject known as *pramātā*, i.e. a knower. It is the knower who undertakes the inquiry into the sources of knowledge. In the absence of the knower no epistemological enterprise, what Śaṅkara calls *pramāṇa-pravṛtti*, is possible. For the purpose of epistemological enterprise, we require the organs of knowledge such as the visual sense, the auditory sense, and so on. It is well known that the five sense organs are required for perception which is the basic *pramāṇa*. Every other *pramāṇa* starting from inference is dependent on perception at some stage or other. That is why perception is accorded the primary status; it is viewed as *jyeṣṭha-pramāṇa*, the first among the sources of knowledge, by the *pramāṇa* theorists. So the sense organs are required for the work of perception and other *pramāṇas*. The important question here is about their location. They cannot hang in the mid-air; they require a support (*adhiṣṭhāna*) for their existence. And body is their support.



Further, the body as such cannot come into operation unless one identifies oneself with the body: that is to say, the body, though material, must become sentient, which will be possible above to emphasize the Advaita view that Brahman, without undergoing any change in its being, is the cause of the world in the same way as a rope, without any modification whatsoever in its being, is the cause of the illusory snake. The two examples initially mentioned by Jñāneśvara in this context may, when superficially viewed, suggest that Brahman, the first cause, is subject to change.

Just as the sea is the support of its waves, so Brahman is the support of all beings and forms. It, therefore, supports all beings as the body supports childhood, youth, and old age.<sup>43</sup>

There is movement and change in the sea when waves appear therein. Likewise there are changes in the body, which are identified as childhood, youth, and old age. Unlike the sea and the body, Brahman is immutable. One may, therefore, be tempted to say that the two illustrations are not apt. It is first of all necessary to correct the mis-understanding of the two examples. Jñāneśvara has used these two examples not for the purpose of elucidating the immutability of Brahman, but for some other purpose. When we examine the cause-effect relation, we will notice that the effect, first of all, has no existence of its own independently of its cause and that, secondly, it is non-different from its cause. These two principles, *adhīnatva* and *ananyatva*, hold good both in the case of *pariṇāma* and *vivarta*. Consider the clay-pot example. The pot has no existence of its own, no nature of its own, independently of clay, its material cause. Also, it is non-different from its cause. In the same way, the illusory snake does not exist, and has no nature of its own, independently

of its substratum, viz. the rope; also, it is not different from it. It must be borne in mind that the pot, which is an effect or modification (*vikāra*), is as much *kalpita* as the rope-snake. Just as the rope is the substratum for the snake, even so clay is the substratum for the pot. The dependence of the effect on its cause is conveyed by the formula: "*kalpitasya adhiṣṭhānameva svarūpam.*" That the effect is non-different from its cause is conveyed by the formula: "*kārya-kāraṇayoḥ ananyatvam.*" Let us now look at the two examples given by Jñāneśvara in the light of these two principles. The sea is said to *support* the waves because the waves do not exist independently of the sea and also because they are not different from it. The same logic holds good in the case of body and its changes. In the same way Brahman *supports* the world, because the world is dependent on Brahman and is not different from it. Jñāneśvara employs another example in order to convey the idea of immutability of Brahman.

Brahman remains the same without a break in all the stages of creation, just as the sky remains unaltered at any time of the day, whether it is morning, noon, or evening.<sup>44</sup>

The causal argument which Advaita formulates on the basis of both day-to-day experience and scriptural authority establishes, first of all, the reality of cause (*kāraṇa-satyatvam*). Effects such as pot, pan, etc. which come out of clay exist only in name; they are not real. On the contrary, clay which is their material cause is real. What is true of clay is true of any other cause. Extending the logic which holds good in the clay-pot example to the causality of the world, Advaita maintains that only Brahman, the first cause and the prime mover of the world, is real and that everything else which is an effect is unreal. *Śruti* establishes the reality of Brahman by restating the causal relation as it obtains in our day-to-day experience. To know the cause is to know all



the effects which have come out of it because every effect is *essentially* the same as its cause. This is how *śruti* recalls our experience, “Just as my dear, by one clod of clay all that is made of clay becomes known, the modification being only a name arising from speech while the truth is that it is just clay,”<sup>45</sup> in order to justify its thesis that from the knowledge of the One we can attain the knowledge of all (*eka-vijñānena sarva-vijñānam*). Secondly, in the process of establishing the reality of cause, Advaita is able to show how the effect is not only dependent on its cause, but also is non-different from it. Attention has already been drawn to these two principles. It will be helpful in this connection to bear in mind three *sūtras*. Bādarāyaṇa establishes in 1.1.2 that Brahman which is “real, knowledge, infinite” is the cause of the world. He maintains in 1.4.23 that Brahman is not only the efficient cause, but also the material cause (*prakṛtiśca*) as this alone will be in accordance with the thesis of “from the knowledge of the One to the knowledge of all” and the illustrations such as clay-pot given in the *Chāndogya* text. Again, he shows in 2.1.14 that the effect is non-different from its cause. Thirdly, the *vivarta* version of the doctrine of causality shows that the primal cause, which is one and non-dual, is immutable even though it serves as the ground of the world in the same way as the rope which is the substratum for the appearance of the snake remains the same all the time – before the appearance of the snake, at the time of the appearance of the snake, and after the disappearance of the snake.

## NOTES

1 *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, 2.1.1.

2 See his *Amṛtānubhava*, 5.10,12,13 included in B.P. Bahirat, *The Philosophy of Jñāneśvara*. Bombay: Popular Prakashan, Reprinted 1993.

3 *Cāṅgadeva Paśaṣṭi*, v.3. Text with English translation and notes by S.R. Talghatti. Hereafter CP.

4 Ibid., v.1.

5 Ibid., v.2.

6 See M.R. Yardi (tr.), *Shri Jñāneśvara's Bhāvārtha Dīpikā*. Pune Kendra: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1995, p. 161. Hereafter BD.

7 Ibid., p. 416.

8 AA, 5.67.

9 Ibid., 6.8.

10 See Śaṅkara's introduction to his commentary on the *Brahma-sūtra*. This introductory portion is called *adhyāsa-bhāṣya*.

11 BD, pp. 417 - 8.

12 Ibid., p. 367.

13 CP, vv. 16-17.

14 *Bhagavad-gītā*, 13.2. Hereafter BG.

15 BD, p. 422.

16 Ibid., p. 162.

17 Ibid., p. 166.

18 Ibid.

19 CP, v.8.

20 Ibid., v.18.

21 Ibid., v.25.

22 See his commentary on BG, 13.11.

23 See his commentary on BG, 13.6. BD, pp. 367 - 8.

24 Ibid., p. 368.

25 BG, 2.54.

26 Ibid., 13.11.

27 *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, 2.1.11.

28 *Brahma-sūtra*, 1.1.3.

29 BG, 13.12.

30 *Kena Upaniṣad*, 1.4.



- 31 *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad*, 6.19.  
 32 *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, 2.4.2.  
 33 Śaṅkara's commentary on *BG*, 13.12.  
 34 Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico Philosophicus*, 5.6.  
 35 *Ibid.*, 5.632.  
 36 *BD*, p. 416: commentary on *BG*, 13.12.  
 37 *Ibid.*  
 38 *Naiṣkarmya-siddhi*, 1.4.  
 39 *BD*, p. 421. Commentary on *BG*, 13.17.  
 40 *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, 4.3.6.  
 41 2.2.15.  
 42 See Śaṅkara's commentary on the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, 4.3.7.  
 43 *BD*, p. 420. Jñāneśvara's commentary on *BG*, 13.16.  
 44 *Ibid.*  
 45 *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, 6.1.4.

### Lord Hari

आत्मारामाश्च मुनयः निर्ग्रन्था अप्युहक्रमे ।  
कुर्वन्त्यहैतुकीं भक्तिं इत्थम्भूतगुणो हरिः ॥

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.

*Śrīmad Bhāgavata*



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संसाराध्वनि तापभानुकिरणप्रोद्भूतदाहव्यथा-

खिन्नानां जलकाङ्क्षया मरुभुवि भ्रान्त्या परिभ्राम्यताम् ।

अत्यासन्नसुधाम्बुधिं सुखकरं ब्रह्माद्वयं दर्शय-

न्त्येषा शङ्करभारती विजयते निर्वाणसन्दायिनी ॥

*samsārādhvani tāpabhānukiraṇaprodhūtadāhavyathā-*  
*khinnānām jalakāṅkṣayā marubhuvi bhrāntyā*

*paribhrāmyatām*

*atyāsannasudhāmbudhiṁ sukhakaram brahmādvayaṁ*

*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.