

The VOICE of ŚĀṆKARĀ

śaṅkara-bhāratī



Volume 24 No 2 1999

**esā śaṅkara-lhārafi vijayata
nirvāṇa-saṁdāyini**

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

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The VOICE of
ŚĀṆKARĀ

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Editor

R. Balasubramanian

Volume 24 No 2 1999

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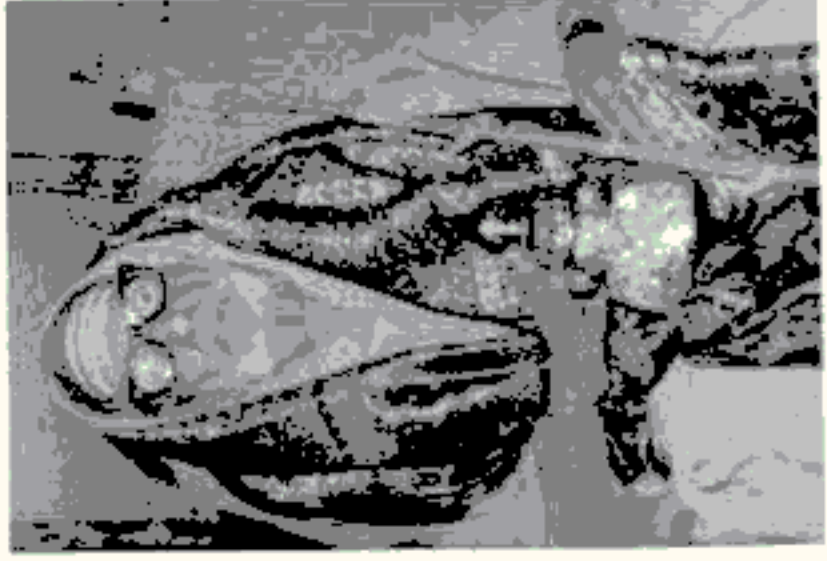
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HOMAGE TO ŚAṄKARA

[178]

यत्पादपङ्कजनतेरपि जातु मूक-
 लोकोऽपि दिव्यकवितामयते हि तूर्णम् ।
 स त्वं तव स्तुतिकृते कवितां वितीर्य
 श्रीशङ्करार्यं मम देहि पदावलम्बम् ॥

yat-pāda-paṅkaja-naterapi jātu mūka-
loko 'pi divyakavitām-ayate hi tūrṇam
sa tvaṁ tava stutikṛte kavitām vitīrya
śrīśaṅkarārya mama dehi padāvalambam.

Oh Śrī Śaṅkara! just by the obeisance paid once at your lotuslike feet, even the dumb gain proficiency in composing divine hymns at once; hence, O Preceptor!

grant me (i) the art of poesy to sing in praise of you, and (ii) refuge at your lotuslike feet.

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आकर्ण्य दीनगृहिणीवचनं कृपाद्रः
 स्वर्णात्मकामलकसन्ततिमासमन्तात् ।
 गेहस्य योऽतितरसा हि ववर्ष स त्वं
 श्रीशङ्करार्य मम देहि पदावलम्बम् ॥

ākarnya dīnagr̥hīṇīvacanam kṛpādraḥ
svarṇātmakāmalaka-santatim-āsamantāt
gehasya yo'titarasā vavarṣa sa tvaṁ
śrīśaṅkarārya mama dehi padāvalambam.

Oh great Ācārya Śrī Śaṅkara! listening to the appeal made by a poor housewife, you full of compassion, have showered in her house a sumptuous flow of golden *āmalaka* (gooseberry) fruits very swiftly; Oh Ācārya! please grant me refuge at your pair of lotuslike feet.

Jagadguru Śrī Saccidānanda Śivābhīnava Nṛsīṁhabhāratī
 in the *Śrī Śaṅkarāryapadāvalambastava*

ON SANSKRIT, PREMA, AHIMSĀ AND SPIRITUAL VALUES*

Śrī Candrasekharendra Sarasvatī

1. Knowledge of Sanskrit

When Sanskrit poetry is recited or when a speech is made in Sanskrit, everyone must be in a position to follow it, without the help of a translator. About 800 years ago, Sanskrit was the language of administration not only in India, but also in Greater India, namely, countries of the Far-East like Siam, Cambodia, Java and Bali. In those places, there are to be found even today Sanskrit inscriptions on stones and copper plates. What is more, the Tamil inscriptions found in some of the southern Tamil districts start with the words "Svasti Śrī", which are the opening words of every *śrīmukham* in Sanskrit emanating from the Kāmakoti Pīṭham.

* Courtesy : *Ācārya's Call*, Madras Discourses (1957-1960), Part - II, published by Śrī Kāmakoti Pīṭham Śrī Śaṅkarācārya Svāmī Math, Kanchipuram - 631 502.

In the days I am referring to, the *vyavahāra-kāṇḍa* of the *Dharmaśāstras* was being followed in the administration of justice. In fact, even during the brief period of Muslim rule in South India, prior to the advent of the British, the services of paṇḍits were requisitioned to decide cases, to which Hindus were parties, coming up before courts known as *Sadar Amin* and *Sadar Adalat*, just as the services of *kazis* were requisitioned to administer Muslim law. These paṇḍits found themselves without employment only after Maine's *Hindu Law* came to be written. Families in villages on the banks of the Kaveri are able to trace ancestors whose scholarship found recognition in the court of the Maharajas of Travancore. The Pudukkottai Durbar also, in a small way, honoured these paṇḍits. There were also paṇḍits from South India who received presents in the *sadas* of the Peshwas in Poona.

We can no longer look to kings and zamindars to encourage and patronise scholarship, because the princely states and zamindars have been liquidated. Democracy implies that every individual citizen is a king. Kingship has thus been fragmented and is vested with the people as a whole. Therefore, it behoves all of us to take steps to foster Sanskrit scholarship so that the wealth of knowledge, both secular and spiritual, preserved in the ancient books, is not lost to the country and to the world.

While Śrī Ādi Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda was engaged in instructing his disciples every day, a particular disciple, who later became famous as Śrī Totakācārya, for all outward appearances, seemed not to follow the lessons. This gave rise to a mild contempt towards him in the

minds of the other disciples. Śrī Śaṅkara sensed this and because such an attitude towards a fellow-student is harmful to those disciples themselves, he decided to disillusion them. The moment this thought entered the mind of the Ācārya, the seemingly “dull” disciple burst into ecstatic poetry and came dancing and singing verses in Toṭaka meter, beginning with “*viditākhila śāstra-sudhā jaladhe...*” The other disciples realised their error and prayed for forgiveness with tears in their eyes. The verses then sung are known as *Toṭakāṣṭakam* and are held in great reverence.

This fine composition expounds some of the finest philosophic ideas. Śrī Toṭakācārya understood Śrī Śaṅkara perfectly, as also the purpose of his mission in this world, and recognised that just as the rising sun dispels the enveloping darkness, Śrī Bhagavatpāda dispelled the darkness of ignorance and illumined the minds with jñāna, which will lead us to the realisation of the ultimate Truth.

Knowledge can be classified into *vyāvahārikam* and *pāramārthikam*. So long as the human mind is subject to passions like desire, anger, etc., it is not in a fit condition to receive the *pāramārthika-jñāna*. By doing good karmas and keeping good company, the mind has to be made to distinguish between the Real and the unreal. When knowledge of the Real dawns, the steps by which this knowledge is gained will automatically get effaced. On the other hand, if an unprepared mind is given the knowledge about the Real, the result will be only evil. Even a boy belonging to the *villi* community will be able to pull out a cobra from its hole dexterously. If we attempt this feat, we are sure to be bitten by the cobra. In the

same way, an untrained and unprepared mind will only lapse into evil path if knowledge about the Real is presented to it. That is why we are enjoined to keep this supreme knowledge confidential as enjoined in the *Gītā*: “*rājavidyā rāja-guhyam pavitram idamuttamam.*”

It is, therefore, very essential that the human mind, which is subject to weakness, must be prepared through practical knowledge, *vyāvahārika-jñāna*, to receive the Real and true knowledge, *pāramārthika-jñāna*. The variety and richness of the knowledge contained in our ancient works are beyond description. Even before the advent of modern science, our astronomers have adduced convincing reasons to establish that this earth is globular in shape and revolves round the sun. Another school of thought is equally vehement that the sun travels round the earth. The *Sūrya Siddhānta* speaks of *ākāṣaṇa śakti* or gravity, and this force has been discovered long before Newton established the theory of gravitation. All this shows the amount of knowledge enshrined in ancient works which is at our disposal if only we care to study them.

While each of us must become proficient in his or her mother tongue, all of us must acquire a working knowledge of Sanskrit. Without going into the intricacies of Sanskrit grammar, it will be possible for every one of us to acquire in a year or two as much knowledge in Sanskrit as will enable us to follow a Sanskrit speech or to understand the substance of a simple Sanskrit verse. For that purpose, study circles should be organised. I am glad that the Adhyayana Sabha, started when I was here twenty-five years ago, is still functioning, though attendance in it may not have increased. I hope many

study circles will be formed to learn Sanskrit and that, as a result, all of you will be able to derive benefit from the wisdom that has fallen from the lips of great seers of old and to contribute to the general welfare of humanity.

2. Prema and Ahimsā

Life without love is waste. Every one of us should cultivate *prema* or love towards all beings, man, bird and beast. If we are full of this universal love, we shall feel no sorrow. Children overflow with *prema*; but as they grow older, *prema* decreases. *Prema* is exemplified in the mother's love for her child. As the saying goes, an unaffectionate son may be seen in this world, but never an unloving mother. Like the mother's attitude towards her child, we too should be prepared to consider the happiness of every creature as of more value than our own happiness.

That which has a beginning must have an end, is an inexorable rule. *Prema* is no exception to this rule and so *prema* is not unmixed with sorrow. When a beloved one dies, the survivor suffers grief. On that account is it wrong to cultivate love towards others? No. But there is a *prema* which does not produce grief in the end. We should seek this *prema* that is indestructible, namely, *prema* to God, who is indestructible. All things on earth and in heaven may die out; but God is eternal. Everything else springs from Him, lives by Him, and, at death, goes back to Him. Loving God, if we look upon all things as God, we shall have in effect loved them as intensely as we love God. To consider things as God, we should remember that they are all *Īśvara-svarūpam*, possessing the *cit* and the *śakti* of God, without which none of them can exist or function. A non-luminous skylight illumines

a dark room when the sunlight falls on it. So too do all objects of the world obtain their intelligence and power from the omniscient and omnipresent God. If we love everyone and everything around us as God, even if they disappear, we will not be afflicted by grief, because our love of God will continue to remain.

Ahiṁsā in thought, word and deed is the outward expression of this universal love. But desirable and necessary as *ahiṁsā* is, it seems to be impracticable at all times and at all places and in respect of all beings. Even Gandhi, the apostle of *ahiṁsā*, had to permit *hiṁsā* to a diseased calf, so that its sufferings may be terminated. He is also reported to have approved the military action in Kashmir, which was *hiṁsā*. The followers of Gandhi had to do *hiṁsā* to his murderer, when they carried out the life sentence passed on Godse. Jesus Christ asked his followers to show their left cheek also if anyone smote them on their right. But it is the Christians of the Western world that brought about the holocaust of two world wars and are even now racing with one another in piling up armaments for committing *hiṁsā* on an unprecedented scale. The Buddha *inveighed* against *hiṁsā* of animals in Vedic *yajña*, but it is a tragic irony that he died as a result of eating pork contained in the alms given to him, and that, in the countries where Buddhism is the main religion, people are non-vegetarians, tacitly abetting the killing of animals for food. All this shows that, excellent as *ahiṁsā* may be as a theoretical ethical maxim, it cannot always be put into practice.

It can be pointed out to the credit of Hinduism that orthodox Hindus are vegetarians. Orthodox widows of Bengal are strict vegetarians, though Bengalis as a class

eat fish. These widows do not drink even a drop of water on Ekādaśī day. In the South, many people among non-Brahmins have adopted *śaiva* (vegetarian) food and on certain sacred days non-vegetarian food is taboo for the generality of non-Brahmins. The objection to meat is *hiṃsā* to animals. By the same token, cutting vegetables too is *hiṃsā*. By cooking grain, you scorch the *garbha* (seed) within it and that too is *hiṃsā*. It has been laid down that ripe fruits and leaves which fall off plants and trees will have to be eaten if one does not wish to injure any living being. The *Rṣis* of olden days took only such food and cow's milk after the calf had its fill. If one lives on this kind of food, one will be free from *kāma* (lust) and freedom from lust is a more potent means for family planning than the methods recommended in modern days.

It is obvious that this injunction to eat only fruits and dried leaves cannot be universally followed. Certain people qualified for it must adopt it, while the others may eat food which causes the minimum *hiṃsā*. Thus *ahiṃsā*, at whatever level, must be an ideal for the generality of mankind, but actually practised by a selected few qualified to practise it. The Buddha, Christ and Gandhiji recommended *ahiṃsā* for everybody, without consideration for differences in aptitude or capacity. Hinduism, on the other hand, recognised *adhikārabheda* and hence recommended it only for *sannyāsins*, who are free from every family and worldly obligation. The others are so hedged in with so many social obligations that they cannot practise *ahiṃsā* as uncompromisingly as a *sannyāsin*. The Hindu practice of *dharma* is based on the individual's status and the duties pertaining to it. That is

why Śrī Kṛṣṇa commanded Arjuna to fight when Arjuna was in two minds on the battlefield of Kurukshetra, while in another context he told Arjuna to adopt *ahimsā*. A judge's duty is to sentence a criminal to death or to other forms of punishment, which is *himsā*. We put one dear to us in chains if he becomes a lunatic and violent. The Buddha, Christ and Gandhiji failed to take note of this principle of *adhikārabheda* and so failed to make people practise what they taught. By practising *dharma* with due regard to *adhikārabheda*, all the high ideals will be preserved, wrongs will not be committed unnecessarily, and even necessary wrongs will be reduced to the minimum.

3. Teaching of Spiritual Values

In recent times, the Nattukottai Nagarathar community served our religion and earned merit by renovating several temples, including those about which our saints have sung praise. This sacred service was undertaken in the past by the Chola kings. The service done by those kings was continued by these Nattukottai Chettiars. But for them several of our temples would have gone into ruins. I am telling this not to praise any particular person present in this gathering—I am telling this because by expressing appreciation of the good work done by others, a little of the merit earned by them will attach to us also.

A person who has done a meritorious deed will lose the resulting merit if he listens to the praise of others or himself boasts of his deeds. I am praising the community because those responsible for the renovation of temples and other meritorious deeds are not present here.

How did the community get the incentive to perform such merit-earning deeds? Forty or fifty years ago, it was difficult to find even a single Nattukottai Chettiar without smearing sacred ashes and without wearing a rudrākṣa round his neck. For that Śrī Sundaraswamy, who was living on the banks of the Tambraparani, was responsible. He was a great devotee of Śiva and had gained spirituality by his religious observance. There was none to equal him in devotion and performing sacred services. He was responsible for the *kumbhabhishekam* of seven temples in Tiruvarur on a single day. Several Gujaratis who had settled down in the Sowcarpet area of Madras city were his disciples and they also used to wear rudrākṣa round their neck. This Swami has his *samādhi* at Chettinad. The seed of devotion to Śiva sown by him grew into a tree and bore fruit.

About fifty years ago, there lived in Koiloor in Chettinad, another equally great Swami, known as Veerappa Swamigal. He was also a person of great devotion and purity of life. But he was subject to fits of anger. If he cursed any person in his anger, it had disastrous effect. So the Nattukottai Chettiars dreaded him. If he directed any person to do a particular service, like renovation of a temple or the starting of a Veda *pāṭhaśālā* or the endowment of a choultry, that person implicitly carried out the direction. In that way, through the instrumentality of Veerappa Swami, several temples were renovated, several *pāṭhaśālās* started and several choultries founded. The seed of devotional service implanted by Śrī Sundaraswamy grew and flourished because of the influence of Veerappa Swamigal.

As I said, this Veerappa Swamigal had one drawback and that was his susceptibility to temper. We pray God that we should have no enemies. But what greater enemy can a person have than anger? Veerappa Swamigal was greatly worried over this drawback and was wondering how he could overcome this internal enemy, temper. Now, this Veerappa Swamigal had a Brahmin companion named Subbaraya Iyer. This Brahmin used to read out to Veerappa Swamigal the *purāṇas*, *nyāya-śāstra* and other works. Veerappa Swamigal asked this Brahmin whether he had come across in any of the *purāṇas* or temple legends (*sthala-purāṇa*) a method to get rid of anger. This Brahmin said that he was acquainted with several *sthala-purāṇas* and there was one particular legend which may be applicable to the Swami.

Now, it is a pity that there is a tendency to dub *sthala-purāṇas* as fiction, invented to exaggerate the importance of each temple. Even some *Āstikas* (religiously minded persons), hold this kind of argument and regard these *sthala-purāṇas* as having no particular significance. But the fact is that these *sthala-purāṇas* contain a fund of information and supply many a missing link. The story of a particular event in one *purāṇa* may be found amplified in another *purāṇa* and the version in a *sthala-purāṇa* may confirm and provide evidence for the veracity of this story. That is why great Tamil poets in the past took trouble to sing in Tamil a number of *sthala-purāṇas* written in Sanskrit. In fact, these temple legends will provide particulars establishing close connection, say, between temples in widely separated places like Benaras, Mayavaram, and Kuttalam.

The Brahmin mentioned to Veerappa Swamigal the legend associated with the Tirukkoilar temple near Tiruturaipundi. If you go to that temple, you will find the figure of Sage Durvāsa facing the deity. The story is that Durvāsa worshipped at this temple and got rid of his anger. The figure of Durvāsa radiates peace.

Veerappa Swamigal proceeded to this place and through his efforts the temple was renovated, and its tank was repaired. Houses also sprang up all round the temple. The Swamigal himself took up his residence in a hut in the street to the north of the temple. The Swamigal found that the temple lacked a car (*ratha*). So he had a beautiful car made. The artisans who constructed the car desired that before putting it into service, a goat, or at least a fowl, should be offered as sacrifice, so that the car may roll smoothly and without interruption. Veerappa Swamigal who was opposed to such a sacrifice, directed that the car should be dragged without any such offering. On the appointed day, the deity was placed inside the decorated car and the people of the place dragged the car. After moving a short distance, the car came to a stop and would not budge an inch in spite of the best efforts of the devotees. They came to the Swami and entreated him to permit an animal sacrifice so that the car may move and return to the starting point.

The Swamigal told them: "If a lamb or a fowl is killed, there will be its mother to weep over it. While you take away one life, you also cause grief to another life. Therefore, it is better that all of you go to the temple and pray with sincerity that the car may move uninterruptedly. If the car does not move even then, and if there is no other way, then I will offer myself to be

sacrificed under the wheels of the car, for, there is no relation to shed tears for me". The devotees prayed to God accordingly and pulled the car again. To the great relief of all, it moved again. When it came opposite his hut, the Swamigal was overwhelmed by this manifestation of divine grace and he stood before the Lord and praised His solicitude for the welfare of his devotees. At the moment, lighted camphor was waved before the deity and Veerappa Swamigal, shedding tears of joy, praised the great mercy of God and collapsed dead in the arms of Subbaraya Iyer who was standing behind.

This instance of divine grace and mercy is within the personal knowledge of many people. Even those who treat purāṇic stories as imagination and fiction, cannot deny this incident narrated by me. Veerappa Swamigal conquered his only weakness, temper, and divine grace fell on him and he got freed from future births and deaths.

There is also the story of Mūka Kavi. He was dumb from birth; but obtaining the grace of Śrī Kāmākṣī he burst forth into exquisite poetry. He sang five hundred verses in praise of Śrī Kāmākṣī in five *śatakas* of hundred verses each. In the first *śataka*, known as *Āryā-śataka*, occurs the following verse:

शिव शिव पश्यन्ति समं
 श्रीकामाक्षीकटाक्षिताः पुरुषाः ।
 विपिनं भवनममित्रम् मित्रं
 लोष्टञ्च युवतिबिम्बोष्टम् ॥

Great men, blessed by the *kaṭākṣa* (grace of) Śrī Kāmākṣī, regard with equal unconcern forest and palace, foe and friend, a piece of stone and the captivating lips of damsels. What a wonder, O! Śiva, O! Śiva.

In this verse, the poet indicates the test by which we can find out whether a person has been purified by the benevolent look of the Divine Mother or not. If he has received the grace of the Mother, he will be in a state of mind free from anger, enmity, desire, and fear, and such a man will view with equal indifference a piece of tile and a piece of gold or a young woman. He will be attracted by nothing, desire nothing, hate nothing, and fear nothing. God alone can work this miracle of ridding us of all passions. We need not go to purāṇic stories to find instances of such divine grace; we can see such instances even in the present times. That is why I narrated to you the story of Veerappa Swamigal.

We speak of Śiva as one who burnt Kāma by the look of his eyes and kicked Kāla with his leg. Kāla and Kāma are responsible for our endless births. One feels hungry and is unable to find food in the right way, i.e. earning food by honest labour. So he takes to wrong paths to satisfy his hunger. He suffers for his wrong deeds and is born again and again. Kāla is responsible for our birth and death, and Kāma is responsible for our various desires prompted by our senses. If we surrender our heart to Śiva, the destroyer of Kāma and Kāla, we will become free from the promptings of the senses; and when we are so free, there will be no more births. We will get merged with Īśvara. That is why our seers have asked us to worship Śiva, the liberator from birth and death.

Some may argue that they can, using their intelligence and effort, control their passions. Such an attitude puts a premium on the ego, and such persons will come to think highly of themselves. Instead of enthroning God in their hearts, they will be putting the feeling of "I" there. It is like putting in a place reserved for a great man (*mahān*) a footwear.

God is the embodiment of knowledge and love, and He alone is capable of filling us with that knowledge and love. Veerappa Swamigal had faith in the purānic story. He placed trust in God and conquered his temper. The result was that his soul left the mortal coils just when *dīpārādhana* was being performed to God. The inner light in him got merged with the divine light that pervades the universe.

It is this faith in God and adherence to the path of righteousness that had earned for India the reputation of a land free from thefts and also produced great men who spurned the transient joys of this world. One of the persons who accompanied Alexander the Great to India, 2500 years ago, has recorded in the Greek language that, if any valuable article is dropped on the wayside, it will remain untouched. He has also recorded the existence of a great man (*mahān*) who consigned to the flames valuable gifts presented to him.

We must train our people from an early age to study the lives of great men who led an unattached life, free from debasing passions like lust, anger, greed and fear and, following their example, develop faith in God. This will help them to grow up into dutiful and honest citizens, disciplined to lead a moral and ethical life. If the Government also takes sufficient interest in making

provision for teaching moral and spiritual values to children, it stands to gain much. For one thing, expenditure on police and law courts will get reduced. They will also be free from the troubles arising from strikes and other forms of student indiscipline.

On the ground that free India is a secular state, the Government failed to make provision for religious and moral instruction in educational institutions. One line of justification adopted for this failure is, that India being a land of many religions, the state cannot favour any particular religion. The mistake has now been realised. A few days back a committee appointed by the Government of India (Sri Prakasa Committee), has submitted its report. The committee has expressed the view that "many ills in the educational world and in society as a whole today which have resulted in widespread disturbances were mainly due to gradual disappearance of the hold of religion on the people." The committee wants "the inculcation of moral and spiritual values in the minds of the people from the early years" and has emphasised "that it is most desirable that provision should be made for the teaching of moral and spiritual values in educational institutions."

Love of God should be implanted in our people during their impressionable age. We must bring up our children with faith in God. Then alone will they get the courage to resist evil thoughts and to stand firmly by moral and spiritual values. It is with this object in view that our ancients introduced the *Pāvai Nōnbu*. It was this training that was responsible for the absence of theft in the land about which the Greek visitor has recorded. Twelve valuable years after the attainment of freedom

have been lost. If teaching of spiritual and moral values had been introduced as soon as India became free, the Government, whichever party may be in power, would have been saved the troubles which arose from language differences and student indiscipline. It is only now that the Government has realised its mistake, and feels the need for religious hold on the people. We have attained freedom. We must retain it. The reason why nations have lost their freedom in the past can be traced more to the internal enemies that got established in the people's heart, than to external enemies. The removal of mental dirt is as important as the removal of bodily dirt. The soap that can remove internal dirt is faith in God. If we keep God constantly in our heart, no internal enemy can approach us. We have a duty to drive out our internal enemies. The attempt in this direction should be made by teaching our children faith in God. That is the significance of the *Tiruppāvai-Tiruvembāvai* movement.

GLIMPSES OF VEDIC LITERATURE-I*

Kireet Joshi

Introduction

There are a number of people in our country who have heard of the Veda but who have practically no idea of the Vedic literature and its contents. There is, therefore, a need to present to them a few introductory notes, which might provide some basic information about the Vedas, Brāhmaṇas, Āraṇyakas and the Upaniṣads, which constitute the core of the Vedic literature. It is to meet this need to some extent that these notes have been attempted. These notes avoid scholarly discussions. They do not even touch the fringe of the Vedic literature, and therefore the series of these notes has been entitled "Glimpses of the Vedic Literature". It is hoped that these

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notes will provide to the readers some such basic information, which would stimulate them to turn to larger books on the subject.

The significance of the Veda lies in the following facts: (1) The Veda is acknowledged to be the earliest available literary composition of humanity. (2) The text of the Veda has substantially remained uncorrupted for over two thousand years, and the sanctity of the text has prevented interpolations, alterations and modernising versions. (3) The Veda has been regarded as authoritative in the entire tradition of the Vedic literature, which covers not only Brāhmaṇas, Āraṇyakas, and the Upaniṣads, but also Purāṇas, doctrines of orthodox philosophical schools, which continue to develop up to the present day, and the teachings of most of the saints and sages of India. (4) The Veda contains secret knowledge—knowledge of the highest spiritual truth of which the human mind is capable and its relationship with world and the individual and collective life in the world and on the earth.

The difficulty in uncovering the secret of the Veda is very great because the language of the Veda is symbolic, and it has a double aspect. The *Rishis* who composed the hymns of the Veda, arranged the substance of that thought in a system of parallelism in which the key words signified cosmic forces and beings and indicated at once their internal and external powers. Those, therefore, who do not grasp the internal powers of these forces and beings are likely to miss the secret and internal meaning. This secret was known to the Upaniṣads, and even the entire Indian tradition acknowledges that behind the external meaning the Veda contains a secret internal meaning. But the secret meaning

came to be ignored in due course of time, and the general impression became widespread that the Veda is a book of rituals and incomprehensible myths. Fortunately, during the second decade of this century, Sri Aurobindo studied the Veda not only in the light of various interpreters, but also in that of his own yogic realisations, and discovered the internal secret of the Veda, which he expounded in two of his great works, *The Secret of the Veda* and the *Hymns to the Mystic Fire*.

Sri Aurobindo found that Yāska and Sāyana need to be studied for the outward meaning of the symbols used in the Veda and also for the store of traditional significances and explanations. He also found that European scholarship has obliged us to adopt the critical method of comparative research, which still needs to be perfected. From Maharshi Dayananda, he received the clues that the linguistic secrets of the Ṛṣis as also the idea of the one Supreme Reality, which is described variously in terms of numerous gods and goddesses. But it was in the Upaniṣads that he found various clues to the psychological and philosophical ideas of the Vedic Ṛṣis. Above all, Sri Aurobindo discovered in the Veda those secrets which he had come to arrive at by his own yogic realisations.

As we read Sri Aurobindo's work on the Veda, we feel convinced that the Veda is a book of knowledge and that the Veda is not, contrary to many modern interpreters, confused in thought or primitive in its substance, a medley of heterogeneous or barbarous elements, but it is a composition having overarching unity, even though contributions have been made to it by hundreds of Ṛṣis, old and new. We find that the Veda

is self-conscious in its purpose and purport, even though it is veiled sometimes thickly and sometimes transparently. The Veda, we find finally, never loses sight even for a single moment in its aim of arriving at the loftiest realisations of consciousness as also their applications to human problems and perfectibility.

The most important discovery of the Veda was that of a plane of consciousness where activities and manifestations are only of the Truth and the Right (*satyam rtam*). Ṛṣis called that consciousness "Ṛta-Cit", "Truth-consciousness". The Vedic Ṛṣis had found out the methods by which the human mind can find an entry into that of consciousness and can then be liberated from the human limitations. It is here that we find direct relevance of the Veda to our own times. If we study the root cause of the crisis through which humanity is passing today, we shall find that it has arisen from the inability or refusal of human consciousness to transcend its limitations, even when the surpassing of these limitations is being demanded imperatively and urgently. The problems of war and peace, of environmental degradation, of misuse of scientific and technological advancement, of mechanical and dehumanising hugeness of structures of organisation and governance, of the breakdown of the value systems, of the gravitational downward pull of the unbridled search for wealth and pleasure, of exploitation and domination—these problems demand effective solution. But these solutions require the alchemy by which human limitations can be broken and surpassed. It is for this reason that Sri Aurobindo has stated that the secret concealed in the Veda, when entirely discovered, will be found to formulate perfectly that knowledge and

practice of a divine life to which the march of humanity after long wanderings in the satisfactions of the intellect and the senses must inevitably return.

As is well known, Sri Aurobindo discovered that very plane of consciousness of the truth and right which the Vedic R̥sis had discovered, and he called it the plane of the Supermind. Not that he arrived at this discovery after studying the Veda. His was not derived knowledge, but what he discovered of the Supermind on his own got confirmed by what he later learned from the Veda and the Upaniṣads. Again, in keeping with the tradition of the Vedic knowledge, which welcomes new discoveries and new developments, Sri Aurobindo developed what has now come to be called *Integral Yoga*, which absorbs in its synthesis all essential elements of the Veda and the Upaniṣads as also of the other yogic tradition, but also envisages a new aim. That new aim is not only attainment of the Supermind by ascending to its greater and greater heights, but also the descent of the Supermind on the earth so that humanity can take the next evolutionary step by a process of the mutation of the human species. This is not the place to enter into the subject of the supramental manifestation on the earth, but it would be sufficient to state that Sri Aurobindo has shown how that manifestation is directly relevant to the needs of the contemporary crisis.

But how can that manifestation be accomplished without the recovery of the knowledge of the Supermind that is already formulated in the Veda? Many, who are not acquainted with the inner meaning of the Veda, have an impression that the Veda contains various kinds of prayers and prescriptions for sacrifices, religious rites

and ceremonies. This is a misconception, and it needs to be removed, particularly when the modern mind is apt to dismiss anything that is related to rituals and mechanical ceremonies connected with religious creeds and beliefs. Let us make it clear that the realisations that the inner meaning of the Veda brings out can be attained and practised independently of religious rituals and ceremonies. It may also be mentioned that the religious tradition, which looks upon the Veda as its origin, acknowledges that there is beyond religion the practice of Yoga in which the aim consists of change of consciousness by methods which are psychological and not ritualistic. It is this Yogic practice which is described in its depth, loftiness and integrality in the Veda. The Vedic prayer, in its internal aspect, is fundamentally an aspiration, which is not mechanical, but which is a spontaneous and irresistible process of quest. The Vedic sacrifice is, in its internal character, an act of self-offering so that egoistic consciousness is abolished on all the psychological processes. The Vedic gods are in their internal character cosmic powers and beings which are different aspects of the one Ultimate Reality.

Sri Aurobindo has discovered, through the internal evidence of the Veda itself, what each cosmic power and being (Godhead) stands for. The names of the Godheads are keywords, and if the inner meanings of these keywords are known, it becomes much easier to understand the secret of the Veda. For example, according to Sri Aurobindo, Agni stands for the Illumined Will, Indra for Illumined Intelligence, that can bestow Divine Light, Sūrya Sāvitrī is the Creator and Increaser, Uṣā the spiritual dawn, Bhaga is the Supreme Enjoyer,

Vāyu is the Master of the Life Energies, Br̥haspati is the Power of the Soul, Aśvins are the Lords of Bliss, Viṣṇu is the All-Pervading Godhead, and Soma is the Lord of Delight and Immortality. These and other keywords and their inner meanings become very useful to all those who want to practise Yoga and verify the truths of the Vedic knowledge. It may be added that Yoga is scientific in character since it is non-dogmatic, and it emphasises the processes of observation, experimentation, comparison, experience and verification of experience by means of abiding realisation. The contents of Yogic realisation are not creeds or beliefs; but they are articles of knowledge, which can be repeated through fresh experimentation, and which can even be expanded, sublimated, and surpassed or integrated into the higher states of knowledge. When we enter into the Veda, we should underline its Yogic character, and we should feel free to inquire, question and demand methods of verification. Students of the Veda must be pure seekers, free from prejudices and prepossessions. The Vedic Ṛṣis were great seekers and what they have described in the Veda are the records of their search, their methods of search and the results of their search. Their call is to make of us such seekers as they were.

The purpose of these notes is not to enter into the vast and profound contents of Vedic knowledge; the purpose is much more limited. It is only to help a beginner to get acquainted with an outline of the development of the Vedic literature starting from the Vedic Saṁhitās up to the Upaniṣads. It is just to introduce to the beginner the ABC of the Vedic literature; for the rest, there are a number of important and valuable books, and it is hoped

that these notes will make it easier for the beginner to enter into the deeper and vaster realm of the Vedic literature and Vedic knowledge.

The Four Vedas

The term "Veda" is derived from the Sanskrit root *vid*, to know. Its Latin cognate *video* to see is also having the same connotation. The Ṛṣis, who composed the contents of the Veda, were the seers of hymns, which when studied rightly, are found to embody knowledge of eternal value. Veda is, therefore, the Book of knowledge. Veda is a collective term, indicating four Vedas, viz., *Ṛg-veda*, *Yajur-veda*, *Sāma-veda* and *Atharva-veda*. The Vedas are called *Samhitās* because they are collections or anthologies. The great Vyāsa has been regarded as the compiler of these collections.

Among the Vedas, the *Ṛg-veda Samhitā* occupies a prominent place. This *Samhitā* is divided into ten *Maṇḍalas*¹ and 1017 hymns or *Sūktas*.² The total number of mantras in this *Samhitā* is more than ten thousand. Only one *Śakala Śākhā*³ of this *Samhitā* is available.

The *Yajur-veda samhitā* has two versions, viz., *Śukla* and *Kṛṣṇa*. The *Śukla Yajur-veda Samhitā* has two available *Śākhās*, viz., *Mādhyandina Śākhā* and *Kāṇva Śākhā* comprising forty chapters and about 2000 mantra-units. Similarly, *Kṛṣṇa Yajur-veda Samhitā* has five available *Śākhās*, viz., *Taittirīya*, *Kāṭha*, *Kāṭhaka*, *Kapīṣṭhala* and *Maitrāyaṇī*.

The *Sāma-veda Samhitā* is a book of songs. There are 1549 mantras or verses in it of which only 75 are independent new mantras. All the rest are reproduced from the *Ṛg-veda*. Only three *Śākhās* of this *Sam-*

hitā are available now, viz. *Kauthuma*, *Raṇāyanīya* and *Jaiminīya*.

The *Atharva-veda Samhitā* deals with the occult side of the Vedic knowledge as also with the cure of diseases, devices for counteracting evil influence of invisible forces, etc. and also for the maintenance of positive health, peace in the family and the country and humanity. Only two *Śākhās* are available now, viz. *Śaunaka* and *Paippalāda*. The *Samhitā* is divided into 20 *Kāṇḍas* comprising about 6000 mantras. In terms of Vedic Rituology, the *Ṛg-veda* is meant for *Hotā* who invokes the gods, *Yajur-veda* for *Adhvaryu* who offers oblations to the fire, *Sāma-veda* for *Udgātā* who sings songs in honour of the gods, and *Atharva-veda* for *Brahmā* who is in the overall charge of rituals. But behind the outer system of rituology, there is the secret of the Veda, which consists of the profoundest truths of psychology, methods of yoga and statements of the highest realisations of the spiritual Reality and its relationship with the universe and the individual. The Vedic knowledge has continued right up to the present day to grow as also to inspire various currents of Indian culture.

II

In this brief introduction to the Veda, we may present a few verses from the *Ṛg-veda*, which is the principal Veda. First, let us take the most famous verse, known as the *Gāyatrī* mantra. Actually, all the mantras in the Veda which are in the poetic meter, which is called *Gāyatrī*, are all *Gāyatrī* mantras. There are many meters and the system of these meters constitutes an elaborate science which is known as *Chanda-śāstra*. Among these

meters, one meter is called *Gāyatrī*. *Gāyatrī* has three parts, each of eight syllables, or it has four parts, each of six syllables. The total number of syllables is twenty four. Among hundreds of *Gāyatrī* mantras in the Veda, the following has traditionally become most famous; and, generally, when one is asked to recite the *Gāyatrī* mantra, it is this one that is recited. Every youth who is given *yajñopavīta* (sacred thread) is taught, first and foremost, this mantra. It was composed by one of the great Vedic Ṛṣis, Viśvāmitra. This mantra is addressed to Savitr, who symbolises the highest creative light and power, which is at once all-comprehensive and perfect in each and every particular movement of manifestation. The mantra is as follows:

ॐ भूर्भुवः स्वः ।
 तत्सवितुर्वरेण्यम् भर्गो देवस्य धीमहि ।
 धियो यो नः प्रचोदयात् ॥ ॐ

Let us meditate on that blissful light of the all-comprehensive creative Savitr, so that he may direct our intellect in all directions: the earth, the space, and the heaven.⁴

Actually, the first four words, “*om bhūḥ bhuvah suvaḥ*” are added to the main mantra that begins with *tatsavituh* and ends with *pracodayāt*. Om is called *praṇava* which is conceived as the Divine seed of the entire cosmos. *Bhūḥ, bhuvah, suvaḥ* are called *vyāhrtis* (divine prefixes). They refer to the earth, the space, and heaven. A short commentary may be in order. In the Vedic literature, the word “*om*” is given supreme importance. The Vedic Ṛṣis were great discoverers of

the secrets of the universe. In their search for the original force of the manifestation of the universe, they discovered that that force is an original Sound and that sound, when heard, translates itself as consisting of three syllables, *a, u, m*. This sound, they discovered, is imperishable, and it is as continuous as the universe. They also discovered that if this sound is repeated millions of times by any seeker, he/she will reach a state of the origin of that sound, which is the Supreme Reality itself. Not only that, but the seeker will be able to vibrate with the power of manifestation and he/she will become capable in due course to manifest the divine consciousness and divine will in all his/her activities. Because of this discovery, the R̥ṣis affirmed that the highest achievement of life can be realised with only one word, “*om*”, provided one becomes concentrated on that word and attains a state where this word begins to repeat itself spontaneously in one’s entire being, mind, life and body.

All mantras are really manifestation of *om*, and one who masters *om*, begins to have revelations and realisations of other mantras also; he/she becomes himself/herself the composer of mantras; he/she becomes R̥ṣi, the seer of mantras. This is one great truth discovered by the Veda, and in India, many have applied it in their life and attained great achievements.⁵

We may now come to the next three divine prefixes, *bhūh, bhuvah, suvah*. These three words, when rightly pronounced and repeatedly pronounced, create a state of consciousness of immense wideness that covers in one instant the entire physical universe, symbolised by the word, “*bhūh*”, the intermediate world of Life and Mind, symbolised by the word, “*bhuvah*”, and the higher world

of Mind and of Light and Home of creative forces, symbolised by the word, "suvah". In other words, the repetition of these three divine prefixes is designed to indicate to the seeker that he has to be as wide as the totality of the physical, vital, mental and higher worlds.

There is also another important point. Normally, we only see the physical universe. But that is because we are confined to physical senses. The Vedic Ṛṣis had, however, developed higher instruments of knowledge by means of which they were able to experience life-worlds and mental worlds. And, it is most important to add that they made a discovery of the faculties of revelation, inspiration and divine discrimination leading up to the truth-consciousness (which the Vedic *Rṣis* called *Rta-cit*) by means of which they discovered the universe called *suvah* where only Truth can exist and vibrate, where error and evil or crooked consciousness are automatically dissolved. This was one of their supreme discoveries. With the help of this discovery, they could perceive our physical universe in an entirely new way, and they could deal with it also in a new way. Therefore, they laid down that those who want to enter into the practice of mantra must endeavour to perceive the physical universe with complex eyes, complex consciousness, with profounder depths and wider vistas, so that *Rta-cit*, truth-consciousness, will ultimately dominate the perception of the mental world, vital world and physical world. It is only there that the physical world will be perceived in its true truth, in the total perspective.

Let us now come to the main text of the *Gāyatrī* mantra. It has three elements : (1) It is addressed to the original light of creation, symbolised by *Savitṛ*. (2) It aims

at inviting the power of that creative Light to enter into the seeker's being; and (3) It specifically selects one faculty, that of intellect, and expresses the aspiration that that faculty of intellect be impelled or directed by the original power of creativity, by the original power of Savitr, which is the home of Truth-consciousness. This means that Sage Viśvāmitra (who has composed this mantra) was aware of the Original Creative light of Truth-consciousness; he knew that this light can be effectively invited to enter into relationship with us, and that this mantra itself is the means of that invitation; and finally, he had discovered that among all the faculties of human beings, the most important one is that of the intellect, without whose aid, and without whose coming into contact with the creative Light, the human being cannot be liberated from his present limitations so as to become a new being of Truth-consciousness.

We can see how many discoveries the sage had made before he could arrive at the formulation of this mantra. We can also see how much experimentation must have been made to apply the knowledge of his discoveries so as to arrive at this mantra, which is itself the instrument of application of knowledge and means of practical achievement. For the sake of brevity, only a few points have been covered here.

III

We are giving below four important verses, which are also easy to understand, from the *Rg-veda* (*Māṇḍala*, I, *Sūkta* 89). These have been chosen with a special purpose. They bring out the emphasis that is laid in the Veda on (a) universality, (b) goodwill, (c) well-being, (d) unselfishness, and (e) all-round good health.

आ नो भद्राः ऋतवो यन्तु विश्वतो-
 ऽदब्धासो अपरीतास उद्भिदः ।
 देवा नो यथा सदमिद् वृधे
 असन्नप्रायुवो रक्षितारो दिवेदिवे ॥ 1 ॥

May thoughts of goodwill come to us from all directions, without any obstruction or restraint, leading us to higher ideals, so that we may be recipients of divine protection without any hindrance from day to day for our well-deserved growth.

स्वस्ति न इन्द्रो वृद्धश्रवाः
 स्वस्ति नः पूषा विश्ववेदाः ।
 स्वस्ति नस्तार्क्ष्यो अरिष्टनेमिः
 स्वस्ति नो बृहस्पतिर्दधातु ॥ 6 ॥

May Indra, with the opulent power of divine hearing, be propitious to us. May the Omniscient Pūṣan be propitious to us. May Garuda, with His irresistible weapons, be propitious to us. May Bṛhaspati be auspicious to us.

भद्रं कर्णेभिः शृणुयाम देवाः
 भद्रं पश्येमाक्षभिर्यजत्राः ।
 स्थिरैरङ्गैस्तुष्टुवांसस्तनूभिः
 व्यशेम देवहितं यदायुः ॥ 8 ॥

O Gods, may we hear with ears what is auspicious; may we see with eyes what is auspicious. O Gods worthy of worship, may we sing songs of gratitude with all our bodies endowed with firm faculties and live the full span of our life devoted to divine welfare.

शतमिन्नु शरदो अन्ति देवा

यत्रा नश्चक्रा जरसं तनूनाम् ।

पुत्रासो यत्र पितरो भवन्ति

मा नो मध्या रीरिषतायुर्गन्तोः ॥ 9 ॥

Hundred autumns are assigned to us by the Divine in this fleeting existence of bodies, subject to old age and decay. Those who are sons today shall be fathers tomorrow; may we have (therefore) no affliction or infirmities in the midst of our life-span.

A few words of commentary: “ ā no bhadrāḥ kratavo yantu viśvataḥ ” (May good thoughts come to us from the entire universe). These words of the Veda are often quoted to indicate that the Vedic teachings is wide open to the whole universe and is ready to receive thoughts of goodwill from all, irrespective of country, race and religion. These words also emphasise the earnestness of the Veda for goodwill, for all that is auspicious, pleasant and sweet. The verse in question is aware of the fact that, realistically, the good is usually met with obstruction, opposition or restriction.

Gravitation towards the lower levels of existence is easy and smooth; but climbing upwards, which is effected by thoughts of goodwill, is always difficult. The sage, therefore, prays for daily protection from the Divine so that upward growth is fostered. The force of this prayer is deeply realised by those who are in the midst of difficulties or who are surrounded by enemies and who are desperately in need of conquering them in order to experience higher or upward movement of growth.

The next verse is straightforward and expresses the prayer for Grace. At a deeper level, however, a fundamental law of the universe lies behind this prayer. This law can be explained in the following words of Sri Aurobindo:

There are two powers that alone can effect in their conjunction the great and difficult thing which is the aim of our endeavour, a fixed and unfailing aspiration that calls from below and a Supreme Grace from the above that answers.

It is also noteworthy that, in the Veda, aspiration or the call from below is represented by Agni, and Grace or the power that descends from above is represented by the Sun who stands for omniscience or all-knowing light. Again, in the framework of Vedic knowledge, Sun or Supreme creative Light acts through three agencies, the agency of light that inspires, the agency of light that reveals, and the agency of light that tears the veils of darkness by means of irresistible weapons.

In other words, the power of the Grace is the power of the Sun, which in this verse, is addressed as Pūṣan

(which means the increasing or rising light of the Sun), and the adjective attached to it is *Viśvavedāḥ* (which means Omniscient). But the first delegate of the Sun is Indra, who stands between our Mind and Solar Supermind, and who comes to us in the form of increasing inspirations, words that are heard increasingly. That is why we find Indra with the epithet *vṛddhaśravāḥ* (opulent power of divine hearing). Indra is always supported by the action of force or weapons which are irresistible (*ariṣṭanemiḥ*) and which can tear open the veils of ignorance and darkness. And when this is effected, the light of the Sun manifests as truth that can be seen, the word that can be revealed, which is indicated in the verse by reference to Brhaspati who symbolises the Lord of the Word or Revelation or Creation. In the light of the above, we can see that this verse gives the secret of the law of aspiration and of Grace as also the secret of the elements that are involved in the Action of Grace that descends from above.

The third and the fourth verses are also simple, as simple as all truths are. But the profundity of this simplicity will become manifest when we relate the prayers of these two verses with the principal aim that the Veda places before us for human life.

As is well known, the principal aim of the Vedic knowledge is the discovery of the Supreme Truth (*satyam, ṛtam*) and, by application of it in every part of our being, to attain to the state of immortality. Vedic immortality consists in the realisation of the eternal Reality, not only in its essence, but also in its manifest powers of Light and Force. This realisation has been variously described in the Veda. The following *mantra*

of Parāśara, for example, gives us quite a vivid image of the state of immortality:

ā ye viśvā svapatyāni tasthuh
 kṛnvānāso amṛtatvāya gātum,
 mahna mahadbhiḥ pṛthivī vi tasthe
 mātā putrair aditir dhyāse veḥ. (1.72.9)

They who entered into all things that bear right fruit formed a path towards the immortality; earth stood wide for them by the greatness and by the Great Ones, the mother Aditi with her sons came (or, manifested herself) for the upholding.

Commenting on this, Sri Aurobindo points out: That is to say, the physical being visited by the greatness of the infinite planes above and by the power of great godheads who reign on those planes break its limits, opens out to the Light and is upheld in its new wideness by the infinite consciousness, Mother Aditi and her sons, the divine Powers of the Supreme Deva. This is the Vedic immortality.⁶

Considering that the physical condition should be able to sustain the power of the realisation in the divine state of immortality, the Veda insists that the body should be kept in good condition, with firm organs and faculties (*sthirair-aṅgaih*) capable of singing songs of gratitude. And the Veda further lays down the condition that this can happen when we hear with our ears and see with our eyes always what is auspicious (*bhadram karṇebhiḥ śṛṇuyāma ... bhadram-paśyemākṣabhiḥ*).

It is in the context of the larger aim of immortality and of the conditions that have to be fulfilled to achieve

that aim that we can appreciate why the Veda advocates longest possible longevity (hundred years and even more). It is not the attachment to the physical frame or physical life that is the underlying motive; it is the basic motive of divine manifestation.

IV

We shall now refer to a few verses of the *Yajurveda*.⁷ These verses are devoted to the fostering of Good Will in our consciousness. All these six verses end with the phrase: “tanme manah śiva-saṅkalpamastu” (may that mind of mine be filled with Good Will). These verses are as follows:

यज्ञाग्रतो दूरमुदैति दैवं
 तदु सुप्तस्य तथैवैति ।
 दूरंगमं ज्योतिषां ज्योतिरेकं
 तन्मे मनः शिवसङ्कल्पमस्तु ॥ 1 ॥

The mind, irrespective of whether one is awake or asleep, travels to far distant corners; this far-distant moving mind is the light of lights. May that mind of mine be filled with Good Will.

येन कर्माण्यपसो मनीषिणो
 यज्ञे कृण्वन्ति विदथेषु धीराः ।
 यदपूर्वं यक्षमन्तः प्रजानां
 तन्मे मनः शिवसङ्कल्पमस्तु ॥ 2 ॥

It is by virtue of this mind that the enlightened ones, endowed with deep insight and operative skill, perform actions as a sacrifice; the mind is extraordinary, highly dynamic and effective, hidden with creative powers. May that mind of mine be filled with Good Will.

यत्प्रज्ञानमुत चेतो धृतिश्च
 यज्ज्योतिरन्तरमृतं प्रजासु ।
 यस्मान्न ऋते किञ्चन कर्म क्रियते
 तन्मे मनः शिवसङ्कल्पमस्तु ॥ 3 ॥

The mind represents insight and awareness, patience, light and nectar (or immortal light) within the human beings; without mind no action can be performed. May that mind of mine be filled with Good Will.

येनेदं भूतं भुवनं भविष्यत्
 परिगृहीतममृतेन सर्वम् ।
 येन यज्ञस्तायते सप्तहोता
 तन्मे मनः शिवसङ्कल्पमस्तु ॥ 4 ॥

That immortal mind permeates all the past, the present and the future; the mind itself extends into all actions of sacrifice endowed with seven sacrificers. May that mind of mine be filled with Good Will.

यस्मिन्नृचः साम यजूंषि यस्मिन्
 प्रतिष्ठिता रथनाभाविवाराः ।
 यस्मिंश्चित्तं सर्वमोतं प्रजानां
 तन्मे मनः शिवसङ्कल्पमस्तु ॥ 5 ॥

The mind is the receptacle of the *Rg-veda*, *Sāma-veda* and *Yajur-veda*; they are located in it just as spokes are contained in the centre of the wheel of a chariot; all the stuff of consciousness of all the beings is inter-locked in it. May that mind of mine be filled with Good Will.

सुषारथिरश्वानिव यन्मनुष्यान्
 नीयते भीषुभिर्वाजिन इव ।
 हत्प्रतिष्ठं यदजिरं जविष्ठं
 तन्मे मनः शिवसङ्कल्पमस्तु ॥ 6 ॥

As an expert charioteer mobilises the horses with the reins, so does the mind mobilise human beings. It is the most dynamic and fast moving (director) located in the heart. May that mind of mine be filled with Good Will.

The above verses indicate as to what great significance has been attached to Good Will in the Veda. We speak today of the imperative need of harmony, but it is not sufficiently realised that the only stable foundation of harmony is good will from oneself and good will from others. Considering that all problems of human

existence are essentially problems of harmony, it is obvious that generation of Good Will is the most important task in the world. One should also note that these verses are universal in character; they do not postulate any religious belief; they do not favour any particular group of community; they do not limit goodwill to any country or race; they express an unconditional aspiration for good will for all and for all time. The prayer contained in these verses thus transcends all narrow interests and it can be offered by every human being who sincerely wishes to express his or her humane, ethical and spiritual need to grow into purity, harmony and universality.

Another important element to be noted in these verses is the profundity of the knowledge that they contain about the nature of human consciousness. They describe briefly but quite comprehensively the nature and powers of the human mind. This description is an important part of the Vedic science of Psychology. Let us dwell a little more on this point.

The Veda uses the word "*manas*" with a special meaning in these verses. In the *Gāyatrī* mantra that we had studied earlier, the important word that was used was "*dhī*". In some other verses, Veda speaks of *medhā*; in some others, it speaks of *citta*; in still some others, it speaks of *buddhi* or *prajñā*. The distinction between *medhā* and *buddhi*, is that while *medhā* is dependent on sensations in its activity of understanding, *buddhi* is superior to sensation and can arrive at a judgement which may even contradict the evidence of sensation. *Buddhi* is the same as *dhī*, or *prajñā*. But is *buddhi* different or distinguishable from *manas*? What is the difference?

Manas, as used in these Vedic verses, is a larger term; *manas* has first, the basic function of coordinating the activities of all our five senses, viz. hearing, touch, sight, taste and smell. In fact, *manas* is regarded as the real sense, and other senses give us sense-experiences only when they are connected with *manas*. That is why when we sleep, and when our *manas* is withdrawn from outer senses like hearing, we do not sense anything even when objects impinge on our senses. If our sleep is deep, we do not hear even a loud noise. That is because the sense of hearing has momentarily got dissociated from *manas*.

Manas, as a coordinator of senses or as itself a sense is the lowest layer; there are higher layers also. *Manas* can, in its higher functioning develop senses other than the normal five senses of which we are normally aware. For example, we do not have, normally, the sense of weighing the volume of an object. But *manas* can develop this sense. *Manas* can also see even when eyes are blindfolded. *Manas* can touch even without contact with the skin; *manas* can even hear without the use of our ordinary sense of hearing. How, for example, do we see objects in our dreams when our outer eyes are closed? We all hear, touch and smell in our dreams. How does it happen? The Vedic Science of Psychology tells us that this happens because of the activities of *manas*. As it declares:

The mind or *manas*, irrespective of whether one is awake or asleep, travels to far distant corners; this far-distant-moving mind is the light of lights.

At a still deeper level, we find that the psychological powers of *manas* can be expanded. These expansions can be concentration of consciousness, by *dhyāna* and *samādhi*. In these expressions, we reach a level which is that of subliminal mental consciousness. The Vedic psychology tells us that the powers of the subliminal mental consciousness include the following : (a) deep insight (independent of reasoning), (b) operative skill (independent of learning or practice); (c) light of clarity (experienced often as sudden flashes); (d) knowledge of the past, present and future (often experienced as premonitions, warnings, visions of the future in dreams or in waking state or in trance); and (e) impulsion to action (based upon inner feelings, irresistible force of action, independent of one's prudent calculations or reasoning). In modern developments of psychology, all these powers are now being gradually acknowledged. But we see that these powers were already described in the Veda, and they were attributed to the mind (*manas*), as we see in the verses given above.

But at this stage, a question arises. Does the *manas*, with all these extraordinary powers, still need to be oriented towards Good Will? Why so? Is Good Will not automatic in *manas*? The answer is: No. For subliminal consciousness, although wide and complex, although endowed with light and numerous extraordinary powers, is not yet the highest consciousness; it is not truth-consciousness. According to the Veda, there are levels and states, higher and better than those of *manas*. Veda recognises four faculties of consciousness higher than the mental ones. They have been named, Revelation (*Ila*); Inspiration (*Sarasvatī*); Intuition (*Sarama*); and

Discrimination (*Dakṣa*). And, above these four is the faculty of *Rta-cit*. It is only in *Rta-cit* that Good will is automatic. At all levels lower than the *Rta-cit*, there is the need to orient towards Good Will by exercise of effort, by *tapasyā*, or by prayer of aspiration.

This is the real justification of the prayer that is contained in the above verses. These verses provide a good example of how the Veda contains psychological knowledge as also the method of its application. They describe mental states; they show their wide powers; they also describe their limitations; they also prescribe how these powers, wide but limited, can be oriented towards a dimension of Good Will; they even have the mantras, by repetition of which, one can enter into that dimension and be filled with the powers of that dimension.

In conclusion, we might make the following observations:

1. In Vedic Psychology, there is a recognition of a state of consciousness where knowledge and will are one unity. In that state, there is no conflict between what is known and what is done. If there is the knowledge of the Right, there will also be the Will for the Right and Right Action will follow. That state of consciousness is known in the Veda as *Rta-cit*. This is also connected with another Vedic phrase: *Kavikratu*. *Kavi* means the one who knows, one who is wise. *Kratu* means the Will to action. *Kavikratu* thus means the Will to action in accordance with the knowledge or wisdom.

2. At lower levels of consciousness, there is bifurcation between Knowledge and Will; there is also decreasing luminosity of knowledge and increasing

infirmity of Will, as one goes down at lower and lower levels of consciousness.

3. At the lowest level, there is inconscience; there the knowledge is thickly veiled. There is only unintelligent Will or action.

4. In the ascending scale, there is material consciousness, vital consciousness, mental consciousness, and still higher levels of consciousness until one reaches the highest levels of consciousness where Knowledge and Action are united as in *Rta-cit*.

5. Mental Consciousness is the middle point in this series. The verses given in this Section give us a vivid picture of this mental consciousness, *manas*. At this level, there are degrees of wider consciousness and wider powers. But they fall short of the highest levels of consciousness. Hence, there is still bifurcation between Knowledge and Will. The dimension of knowledge and dimension of Will are in a stage of disequilibrium.

6. Hence, in order to establish the right equilibrium, it is necessary to orient the mental consciousness and mental knowledge towards the dimension of Good Will.

7. The verses given in this section provide for this extremely important direction.

NOTES

1. Chapters
2. A *sūkta* (hymn) is a group of verses; the number of verses in a *sūkta* is not definite; some *sūktas* have a small number of verses, some others have a large number of verses. Each *sūkta* expresses one movement of *sādhana*, in which the knowledge

connected with that movement is revealed. (Each verse is called a mantra).

3. Śākhā means a branch of variation of version. In the course of development, each Vedic Samhitā came to develop certain variations on account of various factors. These variations came to be acknowledged and standardised, and although each Samhitā is substantially the same, Śākhās of each Samhitā became numerous and they embodied the recognised variations or versions.
4. *Vareṇyam* is recited as *vareṇiyam*. This is for phonetic purpose and for completing the requirement of the metrical/musical rhythm.
5. It has been suggested that it was this power of the mantra that acted powerfully when Swami Vivekananda uttered his famous words at the beginning of his address at the Chicago Parliament of Religions (September 11, 1893) "Sisters and Brothers of America" and produced incalculable effect on the audience.
6. *The Secret of the Veda*, Centenary ed., pp. 191-2.

THE SEER (RELATIVE AND
ABSOLUTE) WITH REFERENCE TO
VIDYĀRĀṆYA'S DR̥G-DR̥ŚYA-VIVEKA

Sharada Subramaniam*

A few preliminary observations will be helpful for providing the background to this paper. First of all, the focus of this paper is on the epistemological issues connected with the problem of the subject-object relation. I propose to show how the epistemological subject presupposes the metaphysical Self which is of the nature of consciousness. I shall examine this relation between the epistemological subject and the metaphysical Self from the Advaita standpoint with reference to Vidyāraṇya's *Dr̥g-dr̥śya-viveka*.¹

Secondly, the Indian tradition holds that epistemological inquiry, what is called *pramāṇa-vicāra*,

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must be the basis for metaphysical inquiry known as *prameya-vicāra*. Though Vidyāraṇya's book deals with epistemological and metaphysical problems of Advaita in forty-six verses, it discusses to start with the epistemological problem of the subject-object relation and issues connected with this problem. This is a clear indication that metaphysical inquiry should be preceded by epistemological inquiry. The late B.K. Matilal points out that Indian philosophy is opaque to the Westerners mainly because of the fact that very often metaphysical and soteriological issues are presented without the epistemological background.² For example, it will make no sense to anyone to talk about Nirguṇa Brahman, or Saguṇa Brahman, or about the identity of the jīva and Brahman (*jīva-brahma-aikya*), which are all important themes in Advaita, without providing the epistemological background therefor. Vidyāraṇya's approach in the *Dṛg-dṛśya-viveka*, which is a good introduction to Advaita, emphasizes the importance of epistemology as a preliminary to metaphysics.

Thirdly, the starting point of the philosophical investigation is the given. Whatever may be the philosophical standpoint that one adopts, realistic, or idealistic, or pragmatic, one has to pay attention to the given which provides the data for investigation. As a methodological device, the inquiry proceeds from the common to the uncommon, from the ordinary to the extra-ordinary, from the known to what is to be known. For example, Advaita in its metaphysics presents first of all the doctrine of Saguṇa Brahman as a preliminary to the doctrine of Nirguṇa Brahman. Keeping this methodological device in mind, Vidyāraṇya works out the epistemological inquiry into the subject-object

relation from the ordinary to the extra-ordinary in the *Dṛg-dṛśya-viveka*. Since this work is a brief introduction to the whole of Advaita, he has not elaborately discussed the problem. Nevertheless, he has highlighted the issues to be taken care of in the context of the subject-object relation. His presentation can be followed and appreciated with some acquaintance with the writings of Śaṅkara.

Vidyāraṇya (14th century A.D.) is one of the great teachers, of the Vivaraṇa tradition. His *Vivaraṇa-prameya-saṅgraha* is a commentary on the *Pañcapādikā-vivaraṇa* of Prakāśātman, which again is a commentary on the *Pañcapādikā* of Padmapāda. The Vivaraṇa tradition which started with Padmapāda has drawn its inspiration from the writings of Śaṅkara. In addition to the *Vivaraṇa-prameya-saṅgraha*, Vidyāraṇya is also the author of an independent treatise called *Pañcadaśī*, which gives a detailed account of Advaita. Apart from his association with the tradition of Advaita, he was the friend, philosopher, and guide of the early rulers of Vijayanagaram. There is a view that the *Dṛg-dṛśya-viveka* was written by Bhāratīrtha, the teacher of Vidyāraṇya. However, T.M.P. Mahadevan³ maintains that Vidyāraṇya who wrote the *Dṛg-dṛśya-viveka* was also known as Bhāratīrtha and that he was the preceptor of Harihara I.

Though Advaita is idealistic in its metaphysics, it is committed to realistic epistemology. It is a pity that scholars do not pay much attention to, and emphasize the importance of, its realistic epistemology. There is a traditional saying that Advaita follows the Bhāṭṭa Mīmāṃsā in empirical matters (*vyavahāre bhāṭṭa-nayaḥ*).

It means that Advaita builds its idealistic metaphysics on the basis of realistic epistemology. The minimum that has to be admitted to start the realistic epistemology is the existence of cognition. If one admits that there is such a thing called cognition, then one can build up the realistic epistemology by adding other factors which are necessary. Cognition by its very nature is object-oriented; every cognition points to a cognitum. It is impossible to think of a cognition without a cognitum. Just as a cognition is related to an object, even so it is related to a subject. A cognition must be somebody's cognition. Thus, the notion of cognition is not complete unless we bring in the object on the one hand and the subject on the other. In other words, cognition is two-way relational, and the Advaitin, like other *pramāṇa* theorists, accepts this basic standpoint. I have to sound a word of caution in this connection. The term "cognition" as used in basic epistemology should not be confused with the pure, non-relational consciousness, what the Advaitin calls *śuddha-caitanya*, which constitutes the essential nature of the Self. At the initial stages the Advaitin talks about cognition and the subject as well as the object associated with the cognition. These three constitute the three factors of knowledge as ordinarily understood. They are referred to as *tripuṭī* in the Mīmāṃsā and Vedānta traditions.

Vidyāraṇya begins his *Dṛg-dṛśya-viveka* by bringing in the subject and object implied by the notion of cognition. The term that he uses for the subject and object are the seer and the seen, *dṛg* and *dṛśya*. The two are related; at the same time they are also different. The title of the book suggests that there is the need for discrimination between the two. In fact, the metaphysics

of non-dualism is built by carefully utilizing the dichotomy between the seer and the seen, or the subject and the object as they are frequently referred to. It will be helpful to know what the Advaitin means by *dṛśya*. The word "*dṛśya*" means any object of knowledge. Unlike the Vaiśeṣika system which enumerates and classifies the objects of knowledge under seven categories (*padārthas*), Advaita does not work out the classification of objects. On the contrary, it subsumes all the objects of knowledge under one category of *dṛśya*. The term that is frequently used to refer to *dṛśya* is not-Self, i.e. *anātman*.⁴ Anything that is known is *dṛśya*, *anātman*. Though this kind of reduction by Advaita of everything that is known under one category simplifies the problem of the "object", one of the two poles of the epistemic problem, we do not find this kind of simplification with regard to the "subject", the other pole of the problem. There seems to be not one subject, but many, not one seer, but many. It is necessary to bear in mind that Advaita takes into consideration the common-sense point of view as its starting point, analyses it systematically stage by stage, and then decides whether the seer is one or many; and if the seer is one, who the seer is. The methodology it follows in analysing the problem of the seer is critical as well as constructive—critical because it does not accept the common-sense view as final and constructive because it is able to develop its theory in its search for the real seer. In other words, the Advaitin makes a distinction between two kinds of seers, relative and absolute. The discovery of the absolute seer helps the Advaitin to make the transition from epistemology to metaphysics. This is exactly what Vidyāraṇya does when he begins his inquiry

into the epistemic problem of the subject. In the opening verse he says:

The form is perceived and the eye is its perceiver. The eye is perceived and the mind is its perceiver. The mind and its modifications are perceived and the Witness (Self) is verily their perceiver. But the Witness (Self) is not perceived.

Here Vidyāraṇya first of all mentions the visual sense as the seer. It is well known that the visual sense comprehends colour and form of an object, and so it is a seer. Vidyāraṇya singles out the eye as a representative of all the sense organs, because what is true of the eye is true of the remaining senses. Every sense organ perceives certain objects which it is competent to perceive, objects which fall within its scope. All the sense organs function on the basis of the principle known as *pramāṇa-vyavasthā*. It means that what the eye does, the ear cannot do; and this logic has to be applied not only to the functioning of the different senses, but also to the functioning of the different *pramāṇas* such as perception, inference, comparison, and so on. It must be borne in mind in this connection that no sense organ in itself and by itself can be a seer; only when it is supported by the mind, does it become a seer. Our frequent experience, "I was absent minded and so I did not see you," confirms this claim.⁵

If every sense organ is a perceiver, one may ask: who is the perceiver of the sense organ? The answer is the mind. No sense organ can be directly perceived. It is through the mind that we have to infer the existence of the senses. It means that a sense organ is both the

perceiver and the perceived, the seer and the seen; that is to say, while it is the perceiver of the objects presented to it, it itself becomes an object of knowledge to the mind. It follows that it is not always the perceiver; it also becomes the perceived. If so, we call it a seer contextually in a relative sense. What is true of the sense organ is equally true of the mind. It is well known that the mind which functions at the waking and dream states does not function in the state of deep sleep. Sleep by definition is a condition in which the mind does not function with the result that there is no perception of anything, external or internal, at that time. If the mind were to function in that state, it will not be sleep; and if it is the state of sleep, it means that there is the cessation of the functioning of the mind. The *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* (fifth *mantra*) describes sleep as the condition where “the sleeper does not desire any enjoyable thing and does not see any dream.” It follows that the mind is not the seer all the time; sometimes it is the seer and sometimes it is not. So its role as a seer is contextual and relative.

It is legitimate to ask the question: how do we know the modifications (*vṛttis*) of the mind? In the Advaita tradition the internal organ (*antaḥkaraṇa*) is called by four different names depending upon the function it does. It is called mind (*manas*) when it is in a state of indetermination, intellect (*buddhi*) when it is in a state of determination, memory-stuff (*citta*) when it does the work of recollection, and the ego (*aḥaṅkāra*) when it develops the sense of “I”. Though the internal organ is one, its functions are, broadly speaking, fourfold. For the sake of convenience, we frequently use the term “mind” and speak of the modifications of the mind. This is what Vidyāraṇya does in the opening verse. The mental

states or the modifications of the mind are numerous. However, they are conveniently reduced to the three—cognition, affection, and conation; and these three are referred to as the three faculties of the mind. The mind itself cannot know its modifications; such a position is untenable because one and the same entity in the same cognitive act cannot be both the seer and the seen, i.e. the subject and the object of knowledge. According to Advaita, the mind and its modifications are perceived by the Witness-Self (*sākṣin*). For example, our statements such as “I know my mind” show that the mind, though a seer in some contexts, becomes the seen in relation to the Witness-Self. In other words, just as the sense organs are seers contextually and relatively, even so the mind is the seer only contextually and relatively. Vidyāraṇya brings out the seer-seen dual status of the senses and the mind in verses (2), (3) and (4) of the *Dṛg-dṛśya-viveka*.

A brief explanation of the term “Witness-Self” used in Advaita is necessary. The *jīva* is a complex entity consisting of the Self and the not-Self. Advaita uses the expression “not-Self” to refer to anything which is other than the Self. The mind, the senses, and the body (to mention only what is important and relevant in the present context) are not-Self. Of course, the things of the external world are also not-Self. While the Self is of the nature of consciousness (*cit-svarūpa*), the entire not-Self starting from the mind is material and therefore insentient (*jaḍa*). No material object, e.g. a stone, can reveal anything. Since the senses and the mind are material, they cannot reveal or know anything. If the mind and the senses function as cognitive instruments in our day-to-day life, it is because of the association of the

Self or consciousness with them. The Self is first of all associated with the mind, and then through the mind it is associated with the senses. Advaita explains the association of the Self with the mind as the reflection of consciousness in the mind. In the absence of this reflection the mind, being material, cannot know anything and also in its turn cannot help the sense organ. The Self is the revealing principle because it is of the nature of consciousness. While it directly reveals the mind and its modifications, it indirectly reveals other things through the medium of the mind. The mind is in the closest proximity to the Self. Also, by its very nature it is capable of reflecting consciousness. Just as a mirror reflects light, even so the mind which is pure (*svaccha*) reflects the light of consciousness. Since the Self directly reveals the modifications of the mind, i.e. since it is a witness to all that takes place in the mind, it is characterized as the Witness-Self. It remains absolutely unaffected, non-involved, when it is a witness to the mental modifications. Hence it is called the Witness-Self.

It will be helpful in this context to refer to the way in which Śaṅkara brings out the work of the Self and that of the mind as the revealing principles. Differentiating the seeing of the Self from the seeing of the mind, he says:

Seeing is of two kinds, ordinary and real. Ordinary seeing is a function of the mind as connected with the visual sense; it is an act, and as such it has a beginning and end. But the seeing that belongs to the Self is like the heat and light of fire; being the very essence of the Witness (Self), it has neither beginning

nor end.... The ordinary seeing, however, is related to objects seen through the eye, and of course has a beginning.... The eternal seeing of the Self is metaphorically spoken of as the witness, and although eternally seeing, is spoken of as sometimes seeing, and sometimes not seeing.....⁶

As stated earlier, neither the senses nor the mind can reveal anything in the absence of the Self. We can bring out the work of consciousness vis-à-vis the mind and the senses both positively and negatively. The Advaitin makes use of the logic of *anvaya-vyatireka*. Given the Self, the mind is capable of revealing things; and in the absence of the Self, the mind cannot reveal anything. The mind and the senses are spoken of as seers only metaphorically. By themselves they are not seers at all; but being inspired by the consciousness of the Self, they become seers. They shine, like the moon, by the borrowed light. In the composition of the jīva the mind, to use the language of distance, is one degree removed from the Self, the senses by two degrees, and the body which comes last by three degrees. What is closest to the Self is the mind. The transmission of consciousness to the body takes place through the medium of the mind and the senses. In his commentary on the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, Śaṅkara elucidates the relation among these entities as follows:

The intellect, being transparent and next to the Self, easily catches the reflection of the consciousness of the Self. So, even wise men happen to identify by themselves with it first; next comes the mind, which catches the

reflection of the Self through the intellect; then the organs, through contact with the mind; and lastly the body, through the organs. Thus, the Self successively illumines with its consciousness the entire aggregate of body and organs.⁷

It may be pointed out here that Vidyāraṇya, in his own characteristic way, explains the successive illumination of the mind, the senses, and the body in verses (6) and (7) of the *Dṛg-dṛśya-viveka*. So, taking into consideration the nature of the Self and that of the not-Self (here, the mind and the senses) we can say that the Self alone deserves to be called the seer in the real sense of the term. One should not hastily draw the conclusion from this and say that we cognize an external object, e.g. a tree, by the Self. Since the cognition of an external object is a case of ordinary seeing, we have to say that the nearby tree is perceived through the visual sense and not through the Self. While the Self reveals the mental modifications directly, it reveals other things through the appropriate medium. The Self is the light within the mind, within the senses and also within the body. That is why the Upaniṣad says: "It shining, everything else shines."⁸ Vidyāraṇya explains the nature of consciousness in verse (5):

This consciousness does neither rise nor set.
It does not increase; nor does it suffer decay.
Being self-luminous, it illumines everything
else.

The explanation of the nature of consciousness given by Vidyāraṇya is problematic. There are three issues involved in it. The first one is about the eternality

(*nityatva*) of consciousness. The second one is whether consciousness, like the mind, the senses, the body, and other external objects of the world, is also an object of knowledge. The third one is the meaning of the self-luminosity of consciousness. I shall consider these three issues one by one.

When Vidyāraṇya says that consciousness neither rises nor sets, he is suggesting that consciousness is eternal. A material object, whatever it may be, has a beginning and an end; and so it is perishable. In fact there is a saying that all material objects are subject to six changes, viz. origination, existence, growth, maturity, decline and death. To say that an object has a beginning and an end implies that it is subject to the other changes also, which occur between these two. These six changes are known as *ṣaḍbhāva-vikāras*. While the not-Self is subject to these six changes, the Self or consciousness is free from all of them. Hence, it is not only eternal, but also homogeneous. According to Advaita, the eternal, homogeneous Self is one and non-dual.

I shall now take up the second issue. It has already been stated that the Self alone is the seer in the absolute sense of the term.⁹ Granting that it alone is the seer, one may still ask the question whether the Self is known or not. If the Self is not known, we can never make any statement about it, much less say that it is the seer. So we have to choose the other alternative and say that it is known. If so, who is its knower or seer? In order to answer this question, we have to examine the available alternatives. Three alternatives are possible: (1) it is known by another Self; or (2) it is known by the not-Self; or (3) it knows itself. The first alternative assumes

that there is more than one Self. But this assumption cannot be proved. The Upaniṣad says that the Self (which is identical with Brahman) is real, knowledge, and infinite (*satyam jñānam anantam brahma*). Logically speaking, there cannot be more than one infinite entity. If Brahman/Ātman is infinite, then it is one, and one only. It may be pointed out here that, on the basis of the distinction between Ātman and jīva, Advaita holds the view that, while Ātman (the Self) is one, the jīvas are many. The Self qua Self is not the jīva, but the Self associated with the mind-sense-body complex is the jīva. We can say, in short, that the Self-in-the-body is the jīva. It follows that Advaita subscribes to both *ekātma-vāda* and *aneka-jīva-vāda*. Even if we grant for the sake of argument that there is more than one Self, the problem we are considering cannot be solved. If the Self is known by another Self, then we should answer how the second Self is known; if it is known by a third Self, then how is the latter known? and this way of answering the question in terms of a series of selves will lead to the fallacy of infinite regress (*anavasthā*). So the first alternative is untenable. Since the not-Self which is material cannot know anything, the second alternative too has to be rejected. We are now left with the third alternative, viz. that the Self (consciousness) knows itself. If the Self knows itself, it means that one and the same Self is both the subject and the object at the same time in the same act of cognition, which is impossible and untenable. The usual example given in order to explain this logical difficulty is that one cannot mount on one's own shoulders. The logical difficulty here is called *karma-kartṛ-virodha*. One may try to solve this difficulty by saying that one part of the Self is the seer and that the other part is the seen. This

way of solving the problem presupposes that the Self is divisible, which is untenable. Only an object made up of parts is divisible. The Self is partless and so indivisible. For all these reasons we have to reject the third alternative.

The foregoing explanation will help us to understand the concept of self-luminosity (*svapprakāśatva*) used by Vidyāraṇya in the course of his explanation of the nature of the Self or consciousness. The term "self-luminous" does not mean that the Self illumines itself, because this kind of explanation is neither intelligible nor tenable. According to Advaita, the Self is said to be self-luminous in the sense that, while it reveals everything else, it itself is not revealed by anything. It is eternal light revealing all the time its presence, and so it does not require the help of any other light for knowing it. In other words, the Self is never an object of knowledge (*dṛśya*); it is always the seer (*dṛk*).

There is one more point that requires some consideration. The Advaitin makes use of the concept of superimposition (*adhyāsa*) in the explanation of the association of the Self with the mind-sense-body complex. Though the Self and the not-Self are radically different—as different as the light and darkness as Śaṅkara would put it—ruling out any possibility of relation between them, *somehow* they get related, they get mixed up in such a way that the nature of the one is attributed to the other. The wrong ascription of the nature of one entity to another is technically called superimposition in Advaita. A brief explanation will be helpful. We have already stated that the Self has the power of revelation or seeing, because it is of the nature of consciousness. The not-Self which is material does not

have this power of revelation or seeing; this is because of its materiality. Nevertheless, when there is the reflection of consciousness in the mind, the latter becomes an instrument of cognition. The fusion of consciousness and the mind is such that the one cannot be distinguished from the other like the fire and the iron piece in the "red-hot iron ball". As a result of this fusion or blend, the mind becomes sentient as it were and becomes an instrument of cognition. As Śaṅkara points out, there is successive illumination of the intellect/mind, the senses, and the body one after another as a result of which the mind and the senses become instruments of knowledge and the body becomes a sentient entity capable of responding to others. Superimposition does not take place only in one direction from the Self to the not-Self. It also takes place in the opposite direction from the not-Self to the Self. For example, when someone says, "I am stout," or "I am blind," or "I am happy", the characteristics of the body (stoutness), the sense organ (blindness), and the mind (happiness) are illicitly transferred or superimposed on the Self, which is signified by "I" in all the three sentences mentioned above. As a result of this superimposition we think that the Self is subject to happiness and misery, and so on. In short, we think of it as the subject of knowledge (*jñātā*), the agent of action (*kartā*), and the enjoyer of the consequences of action (*bhoktā*), while the truth is that it is none of these. The reciprocal superimposition is technically called *itaretara-adhyāsa*. Vidyāraṇya refers to the different cases of superimposition in verses (6) to (9) in the *Dṛg-dṛśya-viveka*.

Before I conclude this paper I would like to make a special reference to three kinds of superimposition,

viz. identification of the ego with the reflection of consciousness, with the body, and with the Witness-Self mentioned by Vidyāraṇya in verse (8). When we say, "I know", it is a case of the identification of the ego with the reflection of consciousness. The statement, "I am a man," illustrates the identification of the ego with the body. When we say, "I am," it is a case of the identification of the ego with the Witness-Self. These three cases of false identification illustrate respectively the three kinds of superimposition mentioned above. The root cause of *adhyāsa* is *avidyā*. It may be mentioned here that *avidyā* which is a key concept in Advaita plays an important role both in epistemology and metaphysics. In the case of the epistemological problem we are considering here, it is *avidyā* that is responsible for forging a relation between the Self and its object even though the Self by its very nature is non-relational (*asaṅga*).¹⁰ Vidyāraṇya's analysis of the epistemological problem of the subject-object relation, though brief, is profound. By unfolding the complexity of the problem, it helps us to have access to the rich Advaita tradition. Vidyāraṇya has enriched the great tradition of Advaita by his valuable writings.

NOTES

1. With English translation and notes by Swami Nikhilananda (Calcutta:Advaita Ashrama, seventh impression 1995)
2. See his *Perception* (Oxford:Clarendon Press, 1986), p.8.
3. See his *The Philosophy of Advaita* (London: Luzac and Company, 1938), pp.1-8.
4. According to Advaita, Brahman or the Self is not an object of knowledge in the sense in which tree and table are objects of knowledge.

5. See *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, 1.5.3.
6. *Ibid.*, 3.4.2. with Śaṅkara's commentary.
7. *Ibid.*, 4.3.7 with Śaṅkara's commentary.
8. *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, 2.2.15.
9. Whether there is an object to be seen or not, the Self is always the seer.
10. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, 4.3.15.

THE METAPHYSICS OF ADVAITA
WITH REFERENCE TO THE
DṚG-DṚŚYA-VIVEKA

S.Revathy*

I

The Upaniṣads reveal Brahman as ultimate reality, as of the nature of consciousness. It is non-dual, i.e. one only without a second, one unitary whole which does not admit of any kind of distinction. It transcends all qualities. It is beyond any predication. Consequently, the non-dual nature of Brahman would preclude all possibility of empirical existence, birth and death, bondage and liberation. Therefore, the Advaitins consider it necessary to explain reality not merely as transcendent, but also, as the indwelling essence or underlying spirit of

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everything that appears. These two facets of reality, however, are not incompatible, because they are only two different statuses of the same reality.

The Upaniṣadic text which says that, prior to creation, this world (Which is now found to be differentiated into names and forms) remained as identical with Brahman,¹ speaks of Brahman as associated with the world (in its subtle form). The complement of the text "one only without a second" (*ekameva advitīyam-brahma*) predicates the absence of the world in Brahman. Thus, this text conveys that Brahman which is associated with the world is really free from the world. In the same way, the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* text, "There are only two factors which define Brahman, and they are those which possess form, namely, earth, water and fire and those which do not possess form, namely, air and ether,"² speaks of the existence of the world in Brahman. The same Upaniṣad in its text, "Therefore the specification (about Brahman): not this, not this,"³ declares the non-existence of the world in Brahman. From the above texts it is known that Brahman alone exists and that it is the reality of the world too. The world does not have any independent reality and is unreal. Now, the Advaitins have to explain how the real gets involved in the unreal. No time could be ascribed to this involvement, but yet it remains a fact. The Advaitins try to posit the nature of Prakṛti in its twofold aspect of māyā and avidyā as the cause of the origination of the world. And it is due to this māyā that the real gets involved into the unreal. The ground of the world of phenomena, which is the underlying spirit and which lends intelligibility to the world of objects is the reality. The classification of

reality into Brahman, God and the soul, and witness-self is known as *dr̥g-viveka*. Prakṛti in its two aspects of *māyā* and *avidyā*, the origination of the world of objects from the latter, the relation of God to the world, and the relation of the soul to sense-organs, mind, and the physical body, and also the states of waking, dream and deep sleep—the analysis of all these is said to be *dr̥śya-viveka*. This paper will confine itself to summarise the metaphysical principles explained in the *Dr̥g-dr̥śya-viveka* attributed to Vidyāraṇya.

II

All our empirical discussions get exhausted by the basic categories of seer and seen, *dr̥k* and *dr̥śya*. The objects of the world which are seen are insentient. If they are not revealed, the entire world would immerse in darkness. However, objects do manifest. So we are led to believe that something other than the objects exists in order to manifest or witness them. There can be no experience which is not witnessed. In other words, a *niḥsākṣika anubhava* is a contradiction in terms. Sarvajñātman in his *Saṅkṣepa-śārīraka* states:

The nature of being a witness and the nature of what is witnessed are neither admitted nor intelligible without reference to the witnessed objects and the witness (respectively). Hence these two are interdependent.⁴

In the famous dialogue between Janaka and Yājñavalkya occurring in the *jyotirbrāhmaṇa* section of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, Yājñavalkya instructs the nature of the Self to Janaka. He states that the Self is falsely identified with the intellect and attains to the status

of an individual soul and experiences the three states of waking, dream, and deep sleep. Vidyāraṇya states in the *Dṛg-dṛśya-viveka* that the internal organ, popularly called the mind, which is but a modification, gets itself identified with the reflection of consciousness and experiences the dream objects. The same inner organ identifies itself with the body and experiences the objects in the waking state through the respective sense organs.⁵ This internal organ is variously termed *ahaṅkāra* and *manas*. It is stated in the *Vedānta-paribhāṣā* thus:

The inner organ comprises *manas*, *buddhi*, *ahaṅkāra* and *citta*; the contents, i.e. the function of these are doubt, certitude, pride and recollection.⁶

Vidyāraṇya refers to *antaḥkaraṇa* as the material cause of *ahaṅkāra* and *manas*. It is also called *liṅga* because it is only through the functioning of *antaḥkaraṇa* that one realizes the non-dual Brahman by the rise of the mental state in the form "I am Brahman".⁷ Vidyāraṇya has defined *liṅga* in the "Tattva-viveka" section of the *Pañcadaśī* as follows:

The subtle body made up of the seventeen factors, namely, the five senses of perception, the five senses of action, the five vital airs, the mind and the intellect is called *liṅga*.⁸

If so, how can *antaḥkaraṇa* alone be referred as *liṅga* here? The commentary on the *Dṛg-dṛśya-viveka* resolves this contradiction by stating that, although mind is one of the constituents of the *liṅgaśarīra*, yet on the basis of the text "My mind was elsewhere, hence I did not see, and I did not hear", where mind is referred to as the

predominant factor generating all cognitions, it is itself spoken of as *līṅga*.⁹ This *antaḥkāraṇa*, although by nature insentient, appears as sentient and experiences the three states of waking, dream and deep sleep on account of its identification with the reflection of consciousness. Also, it appears to be associated with birth and death.¹⁰ This subtle body which exists in close proximity to the witness-self gets itself identified with the gross body and is referred to as the empirical *jīva*.¹¹ Since it considers itself as the agent, enjoyer etc. and since it is the product of the indeterminable *māyā*, and does not persist in the state of liberation it is called empirical.¹²

III

In the "Citradīpaprakaraṇa" of the *Pañcadaśī*, Vidyāraṇya adopts a fourfold classification of reality as *kūṭastha*, Brahman, God and the individual soul.¹³ But in the *Dṛg-drśya-viveka* he follows the traditional classification of reality into Brahman, God and the individual soul by including the *kūṭastha* in the *jīva* aspect of reality. He further maintains that the *jīva* is threefold as absolutely real (*pāramārthika*), empirically real (*vyāvahārika*) and apparently real (*prātibhāsika*).¹⁴

Of these three, the absolutely real *jīva* is the reality that is conditioned by the subtle and the gross body.¹⁵ It might be asked as to how *jīva* which is a limited entity can be identical with Brahman which is beyond all limitations. Vidyāraṇya answers that the limiting adjuncts, namely, the subtle and the gross body are indeterminable; and what is conditioned, namely, the reality is real.¹⁶ To explain: the limitation caused by *avidyā* and its products, namely, the subtle body in the reality is a superimposed one like the superimposition of

surface (i.e. concavity) and dirt on space (i.e. sky). In the state of deep sleep when there is the absence of *ahaṅkāra*, the reality remains free from any limitation caused by *ahaṅkāra*. Thus it may be known that the reality which is the witness is the same in all the three divisions of time. Due to the mutual superimposition of the reality and *ahaṅkāra* through the reflection of consciousness, there arises the notion of *jīva* in the reality. And the notion of Brahman in reality is natural and not caused by anything else.¹⁷

The second type of *jīva*, namely, the empirically real *jīva* is the reality that is reflected in mind which is one of the important constituents of the subtle body. It is superimposed on the absolutely real *jīva* whose nature is concealed by *māyā*. It is the agent and enjoyer of the results of actions. As it is the effect of the indeterminable *māyā*, and endures till the rise of the knowledge of Brahman it is considered to be empirically real.¹⁸ It has been stated in the *Pañcadaśī*:

Buddhi, the intellect is superimposed upon the *kūṭastha*; the reflection of consciousness in that *buddhi* is the *jīva*, the individual soul. He is called so as he sustains the life-breaths. It is he that is associated with *samsāra*.¹⁹

It might be asked: what is the proof for the existence of empirically real *jīva*? The perceptual cognitions such as "I am the agent, experient...", and the unintelligibility of agency, enjoyership, etc. in a substratum other than the *jīva* serve as proofs for the existence of the empirically real *jīva*. The absolutely real *jīva* cannot be the substratum of agency, etc. in view of the fact that it is immutable.²⁰ The difference between absolutely real *jīva*

and empirically real *jīva* lies in the fact that while the empirically real *jīva* although indeterminable, is viewed as possessing the attributes of a sentient principle being the reflected image in the self which is sentient, the absolutely real *jīva* is immutable and is not transmigratory being.²¹

In the state of dream, a derivative of *avidyā* called *nidrā* is operative. It conceals the empirically real *jīva* and illusorily projects mind, body, etc. The reality that is reflected in the blend of the latter is the apparently real *jīva*. When *nidrā* is destroyed there is the destruction of its effect, namely, the body-mind complex. As a result of it there is the removal of the apparently real *jīva*.²² The empirical *jīva* has the notion of his being a Brahmin, Yajñadatta, son of Devadatta and a devotee of Viṣṇu. But in the state of dream, the same *jīva* experiences himself to be a kṣatriya, Viṣṇuśarmā, son of Nārāyaṇa and a devotee of Mahādeva. Thus the nature of empirically real *jīva* is concealed in the state of dream.²³ As regards the nature of *jīva* in the deep sleep state the author is silent.

Of the three types of *jīva*, the apparently real *jīva* perceives the dream objects which are apparently real, as real and not as illusory. But the empirically real *jīva* considers both the dream world as well as its creator, namely, the apparently real *jīva* as illusory and not as real. It is because neither the dream world nor the apparently real *jīva* which cognises them persists in the states prior to and after the dream state.²⁴ The empirically real *jīva* experiences the world given in perception which is an effect of *māyā* as real and not as indeterminable. It is because, so long as the empirically

real jīva exists, the world also continues to exist. But the absolutely real jīva perceives the empirical world and the empirical jīva who perceives it, as indeterminable and not as real. It is because in the deep sleep state which is characterised as daily dissolution, neither the world of perception, nor the empirically real jīva exists.²⁵ What then does the absolutely real jīva considers as real? The absolutely real jīva which is the witness, which transcends all verbal usages such as "bound or liberated" and which is of the nature of existence, consciousness and bliss considers the identity with its true nature, namely, Brahman alone to be real. He sees nothing but his own self, and even if he sees the other he knows them to be illusory.²⁶ The *Chāndogya* text "Where one does not see the other"²⁷ and the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* text "When the self is only all this,"²⁸ confirm this view. Further, Vidyāraṇya states that the "*mahāvākyas*" of the Upaniṣads such as "*tat tvam asi*" and the like speak of identity of partless ultimate with this type of jīva which is a conditioned entity and is absolutely real. And it does not relate or have relevance to the other two varieties of jīvas, mentioned above.²⁹ One question suggests itself here. When there arises the cognition "I am Brahman" from the "*mahāvākyas*" of the Upaniṣad it is only the individual soul which is a reflected image that is considered to be the knower and not the reality which is *kūṭastha*. Vidyāraṇya raises this objection and answers it in the "Tattvadīpa-prakarṇa" of the *Pañcadaśī*:

Being a knower and being ignorant are both for the reflection alone and not for the (pure) Self. While so how can the reflection have the idea "I am the changeless self." This is not a

fault. The reflected consciousness is really of the nature of the changeless self only, as the state of being reflected is unreal and the state of being the changeless Self is what remains.³⁰

IV

The substratum of the world of objects that are experienced and the experient, namely, the consciousness conditioned by *ahaṅkāra* is Brahman—the ultimate Reality. Now we have to state the cause of this world. Brahman is beyond all causal relations. Hence it cannot be the cause. Therefore, the scriptures, introduce the principle called *māyā* or *avidyā* as the cause of the world appearance. Vidyāraṇya states that *avidyā* is variously termed as *ajñāna*, *tamas*, *moha* and *māyā* and it is present in Brahman which is of the nature of existence, consciousness and bliss. It is the source of all evil; it is indeterminable. It has the two powers of projection (*vikṣepa*) and concealment (*āvaraṇa*). The power of projection creates everything beginning with the subtle body and ending with the gross universe. Pure consciousness is devoid of differences from similar and dissimilar objects and also does not admit of internal differences. The power of projection projects such a consciousness as associated with the three states of waking, dream and deep sleep, and is known by the names of *viśva*, *taijasa* and *prājñā* respectively. Again it is due to this power of *māyā* that the pure Brahman appears as the diversified world of name and form.³¹ Creation, according to Vidyāraṇya, is only the manifestation of names and forms in the entity called Brahman which is of the nature of existence, consciousness and bliss. Just as the water of the ocean appears

as foam, waves and bubbles in the same way, it is only Brahman that appears as the world of names and forms.³² The world consists of the elements and their products which are of the nature of objects of enjoyment. Like the empirically real jīva, the world is also beginningless and they both exist till one attains liberation.³³

The other power of māyā is the power of concealment (*āvaraṇa*). Inside the body it *conceals the distinction* between the seer—the witness, and the seen—beginning with ego and ending with the body. And outside the body it *conceals the distinction* between Brahman and the phenomenal objects of experience. It makes Brahman—the pure Self as possessing the six kinds of changes (*ṣaḍbhāvavikāras*) such as birth, existence, growth, etc.³⁴ By the rise of the knowledge of the self in the form “I am Brahman,” when the concealing power of māyā gets destroyed inside the body, even the concealment of the distinction between the world and Brahman outside the body which was caused by māyā, is removed, and the distinction between them manifests clearly. Obviously, the changes such as birth, etc. appear only in the world and not in a part of Brahman even, which is pure bliss.³⁵

Although it is a convention in the Advaita works to mention the power of concealment first, followed by the power of projection, yet Vidyāraṇya breaks the convention by referring to the power of projection first. In fact both are equally necessary to explain the process of transmigration. From the above it follows that all the objects of the world are possessed of five features, namely, existence, manifestation, beatitude, name and form. Of these the first three belong to Brahman and the

next two to the world.³⁶ Vidyāraṇya makes this clear by the method of agreement and difference (*anvaya-vyatireka*) when he says that the attributes of existence, consciousness and bliss are equally present in ether, air, fire, water and earth as well as in gods, animals and men. How then are they distinguished? Names and forms help us to distinguish them from one another.

We have mentioned earlier three types of jīva as absolutely real, empirically real and apparently real. The absolutely real jīva is the reality conditioned by the subtle and the gross body. The empirical real jīva is superimposed on the absolutely real jīva. And the apparently real jīva is superimposed upon the empirical real jīva. Now there arises a question that on account of their being superimposed entities, the empirically real jīva and the apparently real jīva are only indeterminable entities, and therefore the element of sentience will not exist in them. Vidyāraṇya answers this in the concluding section of the *Dṛg-drśya-viveka* by stating that just as the characteristics of water such as sweetness, fluidity and coolness which inhere in the waves of the (ocean) appear also in the foam of which the waves are the substratum, even so, existence, consciousness and bliss which are natural to the *sākṣī* appear to inhere in the empirically real jīva on account of its relation with the witness and through it similarly inheres in the apparently real jīva too.³⁷

Having explained superimposition (*adhyāropa*), Vidyāraṇya proceeds to negate it (*apavāda*). When the foam in the waves disappears, its characteristics such as fluidity, etc. merge in the wave; again when the wave disappears in the water, these characteristics merge as

before in the water itself. Adopting this method of prior superimposition and subsequent negation, what Vidyāraṇya wants to convey is, that when the apparent jīva disappears in the empirical real jīva, existence, consciousness and bliss which are its characteristics merge in the empirically real jīva. With the disappearance of even the empirically real in the *sākṣin*—the pure Self, these characteristics also finally merge in the pure self.³⁸ It is with this end in view it is stated that the destruction of a superimposed entity is nothing but being reduced to its substratum.

NOTES

1. *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (CU), 6.2.1.
2. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (BU), 2.3.1.
3. *Ibid.*, 2.3.6.
4. *Saṅkṣepa-śārīraka*, 3.190.
5. *Dṛg-dṛśya-viveka*, edited with the commentary by Brahmānandabhāratī, Varanasi, 1957, (DDV), 11.
6. Cited in the *Vedānta-paribhāṣā*, p.59.
7. Commentary on DDV, 12.
8. *Pañcadaśī* (PD), 1.23.
9. Commentary on DDV, 12.
10. DDV, 12.
11. *Ibid.*, 16.
12. *Ibid.*, 37.
13. PD, 6.18.
14. DDV, 32.
15. *Avacchinnaḥ paricchinnaḥ paripūrṇe parabrahmaṇi avidyāhaṅkārahyaṁ avacchedyam yatsākṣicaitanyam sa eva avacchinnaḥ prathamō jīvaḥ syāt* -C. on DDV, 32.
16. DDV, 33.
17. Commentary on (DDV), 33.

18. *Cidābhāsaḥ cillakṣaṇarahitaḥ tadvadavabhāsamānaści-
dābhāsaḥ antaḥkaraṇākhye ahaṅkāraśabdavācye, līṅgaśarīre
pratibimbītam yaccaitanyam sa eva cidābhāsākhyo dvitīyo
jīvaḥ*. Commentary on *DDV*, 32 and 36-47.
19. *PD*, 6.23.
20. *Kṛṣṇālaṅkāra (KA)*, a commentary on the *Siddhānta-
leśasaṅgraha (SLS)*, pp. 86-87, (ed. S.R. Krishnamurti Sastri
and N. Veezhinathan, Śrīmad Appayadīkṣitendragranthāvalī
Prakāśanasamīti, Secunderabad, 1973).
21. *DDV*, 41.
22. *Ibid.*, 38.
23. *KA*, Commentary on *SLS*, p. 87.
24. *DDV*, 40.
25. *Ibid.*, 41.
26. *Ibid.*, 42.
27. *CU.*, 7.24.1.
28. *BU*, 2.4.14.
29. *DDV*, 34.
30. *PD*, 7.14.15.
31. *DDV*, 13.
32. *Ibid.*, 14.
33. *Bhogyarūpamidam sarvam jagat syāt bhūtabhautikam—
ibid.*, 36.
34. *Ibid.*, 15.
35. *Ibid.*, 19.
36. *Ibid.*, 20.
37. *Ibid.*, 43-44.
38. *Ibid.*, 45-46.

SVAYAMPRAKĀŚAMUNI'S
COMMENTARY ON THE EKAŚLOKĪ

N. Gangadharan*

The *Ekaślokī* of Śaṅkarācārya is an explanation of the concept of Brahman in one verse consisting of questions and answers. Svayamprakāśamuni, the disciple of Gopālayogīndra, has written a commentary¹ called the *Tattvadīpana* on the *Ekaślokī* drawing support from the Upaniṣads and the *Bhagavadgītā*. In the introductory verse, the commentator acknowledges his preceptor's grace that has enabled him to make his exposition on the verse. He further states that the venerable Śaṅkara with the distinguished attributes such as (i) the study of the *Vedas* in his eighth year, (ii) mastering the *Śāstras* in his twelfth year (iii) composing the commentaries (on the *Śāstra* texts) in his sixteenth year, and (iv) leaving his

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mortal coil in his thirty-second year, a potential spell for the serpent in the form of a powerful opponent; sanctifying the three worlds like the sacred water, protecting like a good physician, shedding nectar like the moon and adorning like the gems with his good virtues, he traversed through the country once. Once on his way he noticed in a particular village a leper with his body pale like the pumpkin, unable to behold the sun like an owl, unable to look at the people on account of shame, repeatedly making obeisance crying "protect me! protect me!" He (the leper) was endowed with the four-fold means such as tranquility, detachment towards enjoyment of pleasures of this and the next world, etc. Beholding him the most compassionate Śaṅkara resolved to liberate him from this distress of mundane existence and make him accomplished in order to uphold his resolve "I am their redeemer from the chain of death and mundane existence." Indeed his counsel is for the protection of the people. He then recited this text, *Ekaślokī*, in the form of questions and answers having in his mind the central idea of the dialogue between King Janaka and Sage Yājñavalkya in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*,

अस्तमित आदित्ये याज्ञवल्क्य
 चन्द्रमसि अस्तमिते शान्ते अग्नौ
 शान्तायां वाचि किं ज्योतिरेवायं पुरुषः इति
 आत्मैवास्य ज्योतिर्भवति ।²

and

कतम आत्मेति योऽयं विज्ञानमयः
प्राणेषु ह्यन्तर्ज्योतिः पुरुषः ।³

In order to impart the truth by means of questions and answers with the very same expressions of the *Upaniṣad*, Śaṅkara has put the same in his *Ekaślokī*, viz.

किं ज्योतिस्तव ? भानुमानहनि मे रात्रौ ? प्रदीपादिकं
स्यादेवं, रविदीपदर्शनविधौ किं ज्योतिराख्याहि मे ?
चक्षुस्तस्य निमीलनादिसमये किं ? धीर्धियो दर्शने
किं ? तत्राहमतो भवान् परमकं ज्योतिस्तदस्मि प्रभो ॥

It means : "What is your light? The sun (is the light) during the daytime and lamp and the like during the night. Let it be so. Tell me what is that light which enables the intellect to behold the sun and the lamp. The eye. When the eye remains shut (what is the light)? The intellect. What enables the intellect to behold? That is I. Then you are the supreme Light. O Lord! I am that."

To explain (according to the commentary): By what light one is able to behold the desired object after dispelling darkness is the first question. Here, in order to explain the self-effulgent Self beyond the purview of the present and past activities, especially like the purport of the Vedic statement "Here that Puruṣa is self-luminous"⁴ and as per the scriptural statement, "All shine

after that light and everything shines by its light"⁵ and the maxim "*anukṛtes-tasya ca*" and to show that the light of the sun and other things are dependent on that supreme one, the venerable teacher raises the question "what is the light?" Here the word "*bhānu*" denotes "a ray" and "*bhānumān*" denotes the sun as one endowed with rays. It is similar to the formation of the word "*pañkaja*" denoting a lotus. It means that the sun enables us to behold the objects such as the pot by being helpful to the eyes and the like. Then the venerable master raises the question, "What (is the light) in the night?" "The lamp and the like (are the light in the night)" is the reply. In the night, the luminaries the moon, stars and the like enable us to see. Here the suffix "*ka*" in the word "*pradīpādikam*" is indicative of one's own. Otherwise we may take it in the diminutive sense. Compared with the effulgent nature of Brahman, the light of lamps and the like is insignificant as known from the texts such as "Neither the sun, nor the moon, nor the fire illumines it"⁶ and "The gods adore that light and the life of lights".⁷

In order to please the disciple the master states "Let it be so". It indicates the acceptance of the statement of the disciple as true. If his statement is not appreciated, the disciple may feel depressed. Accepting that it is true that the lamps and the like are known to give light in the night, now the master questions about a different light, "Tell me what is that which enables us to behold the sun, lamp etc..." The word "*vidhi*" here is to be construed in the sense of beholding. No other sense would be appropriate. "You tell me what is that light." It means that you are capable of establishing a subsequent different light. The disciple replies "the eye". It should

be taken to mean the two eyes. Then the master asks about a different light by raising the question, "What is it, when the eyes remain shut?" The word "ādi" indicates concealment also. He gives the reply, "the intellect". "What is that which enables the intellect to behold?" is the next question. He gives the reply "I am". It is based on the text of the *Upaniṣad*, "Desire, resolve, doubt, faith, want of faith, steadiness, unsteadiness, shame, intelligence and fear—all these are but the mind."⁸ According to this statement "I", devoid of any trans-formation, forms the witness of the desire and activity of the intellect. Otherwise, one may not be able to feel the transformation of the self. That is the meaning. It has been stated that "I am the knower of that one subject to six kinds of transformations. I am without transformations, and different from that. The investigation relating to those transformations is not always accomplished."⁹ Then in order to show that "In fact you are the supreme light that illumines that sun, lamp, eye, intellect and the like as told above" the master says: "You are the supreme light. On account of that, you are the one that illumines that which illumines the sun and the others; and hence you are the supreme light." Here the word "jyoti" denotes the eternal, pure, enlightened, liberated, self-luminous knowledge. It does not merely denote the ordinary light (of the sun and the like) which dispel, darkness i.e. removes ignorance. The scripture says: "Brahman is truth, knowledge, and bliss."¹⁰ The disciple anticipates his accomplishment by means of the self that is self-luminous, and explains: "*todasmi prabho.*" It means: "O Master! By your advice, I in the form of Brahman, have become accomplished." It means that: "I do not behold anything else other than

you, and think constantly of you only since you have accomplished in securing me the purport of the scriptural passage." "You are indeed our father. You enable us to ford across ignorance"¹¹

It has been stated that I am to be known from all these transformations. This universe consisting of the movable and immovable things rest in me. That preceptor who has shown me the secret, that one alone is to be thought of by me." By the statement "I am that, O Master!" there is only the establishment of the visualization that originated from the *mahāvākya* "I am Brahman." For a person beholding the rejection of the three kinds of bodies and the acceptance of the self (that is the witness of them), there is clear visualization, since there is no other contrasting visualization. It has been stated: "The spirit that is closely attached to the three states—waking, dream and deep sleep, that itself verily you are. There is nothing superior to it." The scripture also declares: "One finds the notion of immortality known in the waking state."¹² One becomes fully accomplished by knowing about immortality as and when one knows the Self that is the witness of all the known mental activities relating to the waking state. Then one becomes accomplished of one's objective. It has been declared: "If one knows the Self as "I am that," then, desiring for what, would one exert one's body?"¹³ and "O Bhārata! after understading this, one becomes accomplished of one's object."¹⁴ It has been established in the *Gītā*, "In my view, knowledge is that which exists between the field and the lord of the field."¹⁵ Hence (what)? If it is argued that the statement about the worthlessness of Brahmaloaka is disputable since there is

transformation of action according to (the texts): "Just as the world of action decays herein, in the same way the world of merit decays therein"¹⁶ and "From Brahmaloaka onwards, the entire world causes rebirth, O Arjuna!"¹⁷ and the defect of being transitory as shown by the statement, "Commencing with Brahmā everything is inauspicious," we say, "no". There is reality of the validity for the three statements instructing detachment till cessation only. Otherwise, there may not be the establishment of the practice of detachment until the cessation of the universe on account of (the statement) "Loss of memory may be the limit of cessation similar to sleep", because of the reality for such a cessation to remain established in the seventh state. Hence the main puport is that even at the time of enjoyment of the fruits of deeds which have begun, there is the attitude of worthlessness in the respect of the Brahmaloaka for a person immersed in self-bliss. He is above the sixth and seventh states. It should not be argued how there can be perception in the absence of the experience of bliss, for, it is established that there is perception in respect of knowledge relating to witness of the three kinds of future bodies either once or without break.

Since the venerable preceptor has stated, "The knowledge similar to the knowledge of the body and the self annuls the knowledge of the body and the self. Whoever is drawn towards one's own self, such a person is liberated even if he does not desire,"¹⁸ it should not be argued how there can be the perception of the knowledge about the witness of the three bodies; for, it is established that there is knowledge determining liberation of the self resting in the sixth and seventh states.

Further, similar to the statements, "Attitude of the worthlessness of the Brahmaloaka is considered to be the limit of detachment" and "Just like sleep, loss of memory is the limit of cessation," it has been established by Vidyāraṇya "Knowledge is similar to the knowledge of the body and the self."¹⁹ Hence one should not mistake that there is perception from the statement relating to the limit.

Well. Since the attitude of worthlessness of Brahmaloaka is accomplished from the perfection of detachment towards enjoyment of pleasures in this and the next world as forming part of the fourfold means (discrimination about eternal and non-eternal nature of things, detachment towards enjoyment of the fruits in this and the next world, the collection of virtues such as tranquility, self-restraint and the like, and desire for liberation), how can there be gradation of the fruit of liberation of the self on account of the distinction in the gradation of the sixth and seventh places in respect of detachment acquired prior to the gain of knowledge? It cannot also be argued that it is for the cessation of ignorance arising from the influence of the doubt and error to be produced at a future time, since ignorance is only one. Since the ignorance has been removed by knowledge through the statements such as "I am Brahman," there is no authority for a different ignorance or the recurrence of the ignorance that has been removed. Knowledge has been defined as the retention of the nature of an object by means of its discrimination. If it is stated that there is no recurrence of knowledge of duality weeded out by the knowledge of oneness since it has been

established after vanquishing the elephant-like disputant by the lion-like *ācārya*, we say "True".

Knowledge arises from validity and it does not get annulled except by an extraordinary validity. Nothing else is considered to be an extraordinary validity than the Vedānta. Just as the *Vedas* studied everyday, though lost in memory on account of dream and sleep, is regained the next day after waking up, even so, knowledge relating to non-duality though lost in memory during sleep, death, unconsciousness and the like, does not get destroyed. It cannot also be argued that how could there be realisation of Brahman since some are incapable of accomplishing it. Accomplishment or non-accomplishment is related to one's proficiency or lack of proficiency. It is on account of impropriety to have any activity preceded by authority in respect of children, common people and the like and attainable by means of one's own experience only. Therefore, one becomes accomplished by means of knowledge of one's natural state of being eternal, pure, enlightened, liberated, and supreme Bliss as, "I am Brahman".

NOTES

1. Vide *Bulletin of the Madras Government Oriental Library*, Madras 1948, vol. I, part 1, pp. 57-65. See also *Journal of the Tanjore Maharajah Serfoji Sarasvati Mahal Library*, 1952, vol. VIII, part 2.
2. *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad* 4.3.6.
3. *Ibid.*, 4.3.7.
4. *Ibid.*, 4.3.9.
5. *Muṇḍakopaniṣad*, 2.2.11, and *Kāthopaniṣad*, 5.15.
6. *Gītā*, 15.6.

7. *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad* 4.4.16.
8. *Ibid.*, 1.5.9.
9. *Advaitamakaranda*, 6.
10. *Taittirīyopaniṣad*, 2.1.
11. *Praśnopaniṣad*, 6.8.
12. *Kenopaniṣad*, 2.4.
13. *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad*, 4.4.12.
14. *Gītā*, 15.20.
15. *Ibid.*, 13.34.
16. *Chāndogyopaniṣad*, 8.1.6.
17. *Gītā*, 8.16.
18. *Pañcadaśī*, 7.20.
19. *Ibid.*

 THE HARISTUTI OF ŚAṆKARA

N. Veezhinathan

Among the miscellaneous works of Śaṅkara, the work *Haristuti* is an important one. It consists of forty-four verses, each one in the *mattamayūra* metre. It gives a comprehensive account of the nature of Brahman, its relation to the soul and to the world, and the means of realizing it. It has two commentaries—one by Svayamprakāśānanda, a disciple of Kaivalyānanda and another by Ānandagiri, the well-known commentator on the works of Śaṅkara. The former one was published in the Government Oriental Library Series, Mysore in 1899 and the latter at the Adyar Library Series.

The philosophy of Advaita involves the doctrine of avidyā which is indeterminable either as real (sat) or as an absolute nothing (asat). The distinguishing feature of this school is the theory that the world (*prapañca*) is an illusion. The ultimate reality which is termed Brahman is

non-dual consciousness free from all attributes. Owing to avidyā it appears as God, soul and world. The soul is the reflected image of Brahman in avidyā and its product, the psycho-physical organism of which the mind is the predominant factor. It is the *ahampadārtha* or the content of the cognition "I". It is neither Brahman nor the mind, but is a blend of the two. Brahman, when reflected in the mind, is falsely identified with it and acquires the characteristics of the mind, i.e. the characteristics of being an agent (*karṭṛtva*), an experient (*bhokṭṛtva*) and a known (*pramāṭṛtva*). These three constitute what is known as bondage or saṃsāra to the soul. This relation of mind to Brahman is caused by avidyā, and so it is indeterminable. It follows that bondage to the soul which is based upon the relation of mind to Brahman, which is indeterminable, is also indeterminable. God too is Brahman itself when the latter, in relation to the reflecting media, namely, avidyā and mind and its reflected image therein, acquires the adventitious feature of being a prototype. He is, therefore, not Brahman as such, but is Brahman associated with the illusory characteristic of being the prototype. Thus, while the soul is Brahman associated with the characteristic of being a reflected image, God is Brahman associated with the characteristic of being the original. Further, the characteristic of being an agent, an experient and a knower that pertain to the soul, and the characteristic of being the cause of the origination, sustentation and dissolution of the world that pertains to God are indeterminable. The characteristic of being *bimba* and that of a *pratibimba* in regard to God and the soul are indeterminable, and the sentient element of consciousness in both God and the soul is real. The consciousness-element in God is referred to as Brahman

and that in soul, as Ātman. It is the identity of the consciousness-element in both God and the soul that is the logical significance of the great texts of the Upaniṣads such as *tat tvam asi*.

God is always aware of His identity with His true nature and so He is ever-released. The soul, on the other hand, which under the influence of avidyā identifies itself with the mind, performs actions, and experiences their fruits undergoes transmigration. When avidyā is removed, the relation of the soul to the mind also will be removed, and the soul would cease to be a soul as it would become free from the characteristic of being a reflected image and also from the characteristics of being an agent, an experient and a knower. God too could cease to be God as He would become free from the characteristic of being the original and also from the characteristic of being the cause of the origination, sustentation and dissolution of the world. The world too would vanish, and what would then remain is Brahman as consciousness free from any duality whatsoever. And this condition is liberation.

Avidyā relates to the identity of the true nature of the soul with Brahman. It would be removed by the direct knowledge of the soul as Brahman. While Brahman which is of the nature of consciousness is the witness of avidyā, the knowledge of Brahman, which is the mental state that arises from the great texts of the Upaniṣads and which is inspired by the reflection of consciousness in it, is the annihilating factor of avidyā. Since avidyā is falsely present in Brahman, its removal is but its being reduced to its substratum, namely, Brahman. Brahman is thus equated with the removal of avidyā, the not-cause of bondage in the form of the characteristic of being an

agent, an experient and a knower, all of which constitute *saṁsāra*. It follows from this that Brahman when reflected in the mental state that arises from the great texts of the Upaniṣads removes (*harati*) *avidyā*, and so Śāṅkara refers to it as Hari; and, equates it with the removal of *avidyā* which is the root cause of *saṁsāra*. Of the forty-four verses that comprise this text, *Haristuti*, the last one sets forth the fruit that would ensure from the recitation of the text and also from the realization of the import of it. The refrain of each one of the other verses is: “*taṁ saṁsāradhvāntavināśam harim-īde.*” This means: I praise the Hari which is the annihilating factor of *avidyā* and which is of the nature of the removal of *avidyā* that is the cause of *saṁsāra*, that is, the characteristics of being an agent, an experient and the knower that pertain to the soul.

*saṁsārasya—kartṛtvādirūpasya kāraṇaṁ yat dhvāntaṁ—ajñānaṁ tasya vināśaṁ—nivṛttirūpaṁ harim-vṛttyārūḍhaṁ sat ajñānavirodhicaitanyam ityarthah.*¹

We shall now deal with the basic tenets of Advaita incorporated in select verses of the *Haristuti* setting forth the teachings of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* and the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*.

The Nature of the Ultimate Reality

As in Viśiṣṭādvaita and Dvaita, in Advaita too there is a trinity—God, soul and the world—each having its own rights. The difficulty, of course, has been to show how these three are capable of interacting with one another. Advaita has overcome this difficulty by interpreting all three as illusory manifestations through

avidyā or māyā of a single spirit termed Brahman. The latter is consciousness, bliss, infinite, pure identity, attributeless and is free from relation to any phenomenal element. The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* in its section entitled *mūrtamūrtaabrāhmaṇa*² describes Brahman as the substratum of the negation of the world. First, the Upaniṣad refers to Brahman as having two forms, gross and subtle: “*dve vā va brahmaṇo rūpe mūrtam ca amūrtam eva ca.*”³ Of these two forms, the gross one consists of earth, water and fire, while the subtle one, of air and space: “*tadetanmūrtam yadanyat vāyośca antarikṣāt ca.*”⁴ ... *atha amūrtam vāyuśca antarikṣam ca.*”⁵

Having thus defined Brahman as consisting of these two forms, the Upaniṣad proceeds to deny them by stating: “*atha ataḥ ādeśo neti neti.*”⁶ This text means: subsequent to the presentation of the two forms of Brahman (*atha*), since Brahman is to be presented as free from any relation to the world (*ataḥ*), there is the instruction regarding the nature of Brahman (*ādeśaḥ*). And the instruction of the form “Not this”, “Not this” (*neti neti*). The two negative particles (*nañ*) deny the existence of the two forms and thereby instruct Brahman to be free from any relation to the world.

A doubt may arise at this stage that the text “*neti neti*” merely negates the existence of the world and that it does not provide any instruction regarding the nature of Brahman. In order to dispel such a doubt the Upaniṣad states: “*na hi etasmāt iti neti, anyat param asti.*”⁷ This means that there is no other and more appropriate description of Brahman (*etasmāt na hi*) than this, that is, “Not this”, “Not this” (*neti neti*). Since negation without any reference to a substratum is unintelligible, there is

the principle which is different from the two forms that the negated and which is the substratum of the negation of the two forms (*anyat param asti*).

It might be asked as to why the Upaniṣad first predicates the existence of the world in Brahman and then negates it. It is answered that the very fact that the Upaniṣad negates the existence of the world in Brahman wherein it appears to exist shows that the world is not real; it is merely an appearance. Brahman is thereby instructed as non-dual, as the presence of the world which is non-real will not impair the non-dual nature of Brahman. If, however, the Upaniṣad merely negates the existence of the world in Brahman without ascribing it therein, there may arise the doubt that the world negated in Brahman exists elsewhere, just as colour that is negated in air exists in objects like pot, etc. In that case, the knowledge of the existence of the world elsewhere will contradict the knowledge of the non-dual nature of Brahman.

Thus, an analysis of the *mūrtāmūrtabrāhmaṇa* section of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* shows that the world given in perception is non-real; it appears in Brahman and Brahman, being free from any relation to it, is non-dual.

The texts which we have referred to above form the subject-matter of the *Brahma-sūtra*: "*prakṛtāitāvattvaṁ hi pratiśedhati tato bravīti ca bhūyaḥ*."⁸ This aphorism means that the text, "*net neti*," denies what has been mentioned up to this, that is, the world in its gross and subtle forms. The complement of the text (*anyat param asti*) refers to the existence of Brahman as the substratum of the denial of the world.

In the section entitled *akṣarabrāhmaṇa* of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*⁹ which sets forth the dialogue between Gārgī and Yājñavalkya, Brahman is described as the immutable consciousness free from every characteristic that belongs to the phenomenal world. Gārgī asks Yājñavalkya as to the principle by which the entire world characterized by duality is pervaded: “*yad bhūtaṁ ca bhavacca bhaviṣyacca... kasmin tat otaṁ ca protaṁ ca.*”¹⁰ Yājñavalkya replies that the whole dualistic universe exists in the unmanifested ether (*avyākṛtākāśa*), that is, *avidyā* and is pervaded by it. “*yad bhūtaṁ ca bhavacca bhaviṣyaccha ityācakṣate ākāśe tadotaṁ ca protaṁ ca.*”¹¹ Gārgī further asks about the principle by which the unmanifested ether is pervaded. Yājñavalkya replies that it is pervaded by *akṣara*, the immutable one. “*kasminnu khalu ākāśaḥ otaśca protaśceti;*¹² *sa hovāca, etadvai tadakṣaram gārgī.*”¹³ When Gārgī presses him to define the *akṣara* or the immutable one, Yājñavalkya says:

It is neither gross nor minute, neither short nor long; it possesses neither red colour nor oiliness; it is neither shadow nor darkness, neither air nor ether. It is unattached. It is without eyes or ears, without the vocal organ or mind; it does not have material luminosity (like that of fire); it is without the vital force or mouth; it cannot be measured by anything; it is without interior or exterior...¹⁴

In other words, it is, Śaṅkara states, devoid of all attributes; it is one only without a second and so what is there that can be specified and through what with reference to the immutable one; “*sarvaviśeṣanarahitam*

ityarthah, ekameva advitīyam hi tat kena kim viśisyate."¹⁵

Yājñavalkya then proceeds to state that the immutable principle is the witness or the consciousness that manifests the objects of the world and that it could not be known through instruments of cognition. (*tadvā etadakṣaram gārgi adṛṣtam draṣṭr*).¹⁶ He adds that by this immutable the unmanifested ether is pervaded and that there is no other witness but this: "*nānyadeto 'sti draṣṭā .. etasminnu khalu akṣare gārgi ākāśa otaśca protaśceti*"¹⁷

So far the discussion in regard to the nature of Brahman on the basis of the Upaniṣadic texts that deny the existence of the world and the characteristics that pertain to the world of objects.

There are certain other Upaniṣadic texts which are affirmative in nature. The *ānandavallī* section of the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* commences with the aphoristic statement: "*brahma vidāpnoti param.*"¹⁸ This means that he who realizes Brahman attains the Supreme, that is, Brahman. The word "*brahma*" refers to the subject-matter of the Upaniṣad. The expression "*vid*" stands for the knowledge of Brahman. And the sentence, "*āpnoti param*" points to the fruit that would ensue from the knowledge of Brahman. The Upaniṣad further explains what has been set forth in an aphoristic manner by stating:

*satyam jñānam anantaṁ brahma yo veda
nihitam guhāyām parame vyoman so 'śnute
sarvān kāmān saha, brahmaṇā vipaściteti.*¹⁹

The text, "*satyam jñānam anantaṁ brahma*" explains the significance of the word "*brahma*"; the text, "*yo veda nihitam guhāyām,*" that of the word "*vid*"; and the

text “*so’snute sarvān kāmān saha,*” that of the words “*āpnotī*” and “*param*” in the aphoristic statement, “*brahma vidāpnoti param.*” The text “*satyam,*” etc. means: Brahman is real, (*satyam*) that is, non-sublatable in the three divisions of time; it is self-luminous consciousness (*jñānam*) and is free from the threefold limitation by time, space and objects (*anantam*). Thus it defines Brahman as real, consciousness and infinite. The texts: “*yo veda nihitam guhāyām paramē vyoman*” and “*so’snute sarvān kāmān saha brahmaṇā vipāścitetī*” state that he who realizes Brahman immanent in the mind (*guhā*) that is present inside the space in the lotus-like heart as his true nature experiences the objects of desire simultaneously by remaining as Brahman. It must be noted here that, when it is said that he who realizes his true nature to be Brahman experiences all the objects of desire simultaneously, what is meant is that the knower of the truth remains satisfied by realizing that his true nature which is Brahman is the factor that manifests every object of desire.

When it is said that Brahman is immanent in the mind that is present inside in the lotus-like heart, it is evident that the soul which is distinctly manifested as “I” by being reflected in mind is none other than Brahman with certain features falsely presented to it. The *Chāndogya* text: “*anena jīvena ātmanā anupraviśya nāmarūpe vyākaravāṇi,*”²⁰ specifically states that Brahman gets itself reflected in the beings in the form of the soul. Brahman attains to the state of the soul by being associated with the three bodies, viz. the causal body, the subtle body and the gross body. The causal body is *avidyā* which is the source of everything including the subtle and the gross bodies. The subtle body consists of

seventeen factors, viz. the five senses of knowledge, the five senses of action, the fivefold vital-air and *buddhi* and *manas*. *Buddhi* is that mode of internal organ which stands for certitude, and *manas* is that mode of internal organ that stands for desire and doubt. The gross body known as *sthūla-śarīra* comes into being from the quintuplicated elements, viz. space, air, fire, water and earth. The subtle body and the gross one arise from *avidyā* located in Brahman.

These three bodies—the causal, the subtle and the gross—when expanded further constitute the five sheaths of Brahman. The five sheaths are: the sheath of food (*annamayakośa*), the sheath of vitality (*prāṇamayakośa*), the sheath of consciousness (*manomayakośa*), the sheath of self-consciousness (*viññānamayakośa*), and the sheath of bliss (*ānandamayakośa*).

Avidyā which is the causal body is the *ānandamayakośa*. The *buddhi* along with the senses of knowledge constitutes the *viññānamayakośa*. The *manas* with the senses of knowledge constitutes the *manomayakośa*. The group of vital airs along with the senses of action constitutes the *prāṇamayakośa*. And the physical body constitutes the *annamayakośa*. The sheaths of vitality, consciousness, and self-consciousness together constitute the subtle.

From the above it follows that Brahman attains to the state of the soul only as associated with these five sheaths. As such, all these constitute the limiting adjuncts of the soul. Yet, it is usually said that the mind is the limiting adjunct in view of the fact that Brahman is distinctly manifested as "I" only in mind.

The Upaniṣad enables the aspirant to identify his true nature as Brahman by first directing his mind from external objects to the physical body (*annamayakośa*), from the physical body to the vital force (*prāṇamayakośa*), from the vital force to the mind (*manomayakośa*), from mind to the intellect (*viññānamayakośa*), and from the intellect to bliss (*ānandamayakośa*).

1. *sa vā eṣa puruṣo'nnarasamayah;*²¹
2. *tasmādvā etasmādannarasamayāt anyontara ātmā prāṇamayah;*²²
3. *tasmādvā etasmātprāṇamayāt anyontara ātmā manomayah;*²³
4. *tasmādvā etasmānmanomayāt anyontara ātmā viññānamayah;*²⁴ and
5. *tasmādvā etasmadvijñānamayāt anyontara ātmā ānandamayah*²⁵

In order that there should not arise the false notion that the *ānandamayakośa* is the ultimate reality, the Upaniṣad states: "*brahma puccham-pratiṣṭhā.*"²⁶ The word *puccha* conveys the sense of substratum (*ādhāra*). The *ānandamaya* which is only Brahman associated with *avidyā* consisting of the latent forms of the subtle body cannot be Brahman, the pure Being and as such it requires a substratum which is the ultimate reality transcending *avidyā*. The Upaniṣad, in order to emphasize the infinite nature of Brahman, states that the world has originated from Brahman (*tasmāt*) which is immanent in the mind (*etasmāt*): "*tasmādvā etasmāt ātmanah ākāśah sambhūtaḥ, ākāśād vāyuh. . . pṛthivī.*"²⁷ The effect, viz.

the world does not have any independent existence apart from the cause, i.e. Brahman. It is non-real. And this is affirmed by the *Chāndogya* text: “*vācārambhaṇam vikāro nāmadheyam mṛttiketyeva satyam.*”²⁸ This text means: pot, etc. which are only the different configurations (*vikāra*) of the lump of clay do not have any substance in them. They come within the range of verbal expressions such as “This is pot”, etc. (*vācārambhaṇam*). They are mere names only (*nāmadheyam*). The lump of clay which exists prior to the manifestation of pot and subsequent to its disappearance is real. In other words, the cause alone is real and the effect is non-real. The characteristic of being the cause of the world that pertains to Brahman we shall explain in the sequel. The point that is important here is that Brahman which is of the nature of consciousness is infinite in the sense that it is not limited either by the world or the souls as the world is non-real and the souls are non-different from it.

The *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* proceeds to point out that Brahman which is immanent in the mind is bliss by nature. The text: “*ko hyeva anyāt kaḥ prāṇyāt yadeṣa ākāśa ānando na syāt, eṣa hi eva ānandayāti,*”²⁹ states that, if this *ānanda* or bliss which manifests all around (*ākāśa*) does not exist, who among the beings could carry out activities, sacred or secular; and who could attain the bliss that results from the pursuit of *dharma*, etc.

The *Upaniṣad* then states that he who realizes his true nature to be Brahman which is ever-perceptual, is free from phenomenal elements (*adṛśya*), from gross body (*anātmya*), from subtle body (*anirukta*) and from avidyā (*anilayana*), becomes instantaneously (*atha*) free

from the trammels of transmigration (*abhayam gato bhavati*):

*yadā hi eva eṣa etasmin adṛśye anātmnye anirukte anilayane
abhayam-pratiṣṭhān vindate, atha saḥ abhayam gato bhavati*³⁰

The means to the realization of one's true nature as Brahman, the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* sets forth in the section entitled *Bhṛguvallī* which is in the form of a dialogue between Varuṇa and his son, Bhṛgu. Bhṛgu makes an earnest entreaty to his father, Varuṇa, to instruct him about Brahman. Varuṇa states that Brahman is that from which all beings arise, from which they are sustained and into which they lapse back at the time of dissolution. He asks him to realize it as identical with his own self.

*yato vā imāni bhūtāni jāyante, yena jātāni jīvanti, yat
prayantya bhisamviśanti tadvijijñāsasva, tad brahmeti*³¹

Here Brahman is described as the cause of the world. The Upaniṣad in the *Ānandavallī* section describes Brahman as real, of the nature of consciousness and infinite. Then it states: "*tadātmānam svayam akuruta.*"³²

Brahman (*tat*) itself (*svayam*) manifested itself (*ātmānam akuruta*) (in the form of the world). When it is said that Brahman manifested itself into the form of the world, it is known that Brahman is the material cause of the world. And when it is said that Brahman itself manifested into the form of the world, it is known that Brahman is the efficient cause of the world.

An objection that suggests itself at this stage is that Brahman cannot be viewed as the material and the efficient cause of the world. It is because a material cause

is that which undergoes a different configuration or modification. If Brahman were admitted to be the material cause of the world, then it must be held that it undergoes modification into the form of the world. The whole of Brahman cannot be viewed as undergoing modification, because in that case Brahman as such would cease to exist as it would have undergone a different modification. To get over this difficulty, it cannot be held that a part of Brahman undergoes modification; for, it would amount to admitting that Brahman has parts and so it will be non-eternal for the reason that whichever is composed of parts is non-eternal. It emerges from this that Brahman cannot be viewed as the material cause of the world. Nor can Brahman be considered as the efficient cause. It is because an efficient cause is the one who makes a choice, resolves it into an intention and puts that intention into an effect. This process is not possible in the case of Brahman which is free from any instrument of cognition and which is of the nature of consciousness. Thus Brahman cannot be viewed either as the material cause or as the efficient cause of the world.

The above objection is answered by the Advaitin by stating that the Upaniṣad itself introduces the principle of māyā identical with avidyā to account for the material and the efficient causality of Brahman. The *Śvetāśvatara* text, "*māyām tu prakṛtiṃ vidyāt māyinaṃ tu maheśvaram*,"³³ speaks of māyā-avidyā as the material cause of the world and Brahman as possessing māyā-avidya. On the authority of the above text it must be concluded that Brahman in relation to avidyā is to be viewed as the material as well as the efficient cause of

the world. Earlier we have said that in relation to avidyā and the reflected image therein, Brahman which is consciousness without any distinction whatsoever comes to be endowed with an advertitious feature, viz. the state of being the original. And as associated with the state of being the original, it is viewed as God, and also as the material and the efficient cause of the world. This characteristic of being the material and the efficient cause of the world serves as the *qualification per accidens (tatastha-lakṣaṇa)* of Brahman.

Avidyā is the transformative material cause (*pariṇāmyupādāna*) and Brahman is the transfigurative material cause (*vivartopādāna*) of the world. *Pariṇāma* signifies actual diversification of the cause into another by losing its form; and the thing that undergoes diversification and the effect of such a diversification would belong to the same level of reality. *Vivarta* is apparent diversification of one thing into another. Herein the thing that undergoes apparent diversification and the resultant effect of such a diversification belong to different levels of reality. When viewed in this light, the element of consciousness, that is, Brahman in God who is a complex of Brahman and avidyā is the transfigurative material cause of the world as it is the substratum of avidyā whose transformation is the world. Brahman is absolutely real, that is, unsublatable in the three divisions of time—past, present and future, while the world which appears therein is empirically real, that is, unsublatable till there arises the knowledge of Brahman. Material causality thus pertains to both avidyā and the Brahman-element in God. In the case of avidyā, it is the transformative material cause and in the case of

Brahman-element in God, it is the transfigurative material cause.

It is God who is Brahman associated with the state of being the original that is the efficient cause. Making a choice, resolving it into an intention and putting that intention into an effect—all these which constitute an efficient cause can be had in the Brahman-element in God. These are only the modifications of avidyā or avidyā-vṛtti inspired by the reflection of Brahman-element in them. Since avidyā is all-pervasive, its modifications inspired by the reflection of Brahman-element in them together constitute what is known as omniscience. And the Brahman-element in God which has omniscience is, therefore, omniscient. Brahman in its essential nature is consciousness only; and as associated with the characteristic of being the original, it is God and is omniscient. Efficient causality pertains to the element of Brahman in God. It may be added here that both the material and the efficient causality are the projections of avidyā, and so they are not real. Taking into consideration these two forms of causality which are projected by avidyā, Varuṇa has given the aggregate of the two as the *tatastha-lakṣaṇa* of Brahman. He has further instructed Bṛgu to realize Brahman by reverential inquiry (*tapas*). And Bṛgu after careful examination has eliminated the five sheaths and identified the consciousness-element which is bliss as his true nature.

Śāṅkara in the *Haristuti* summarizes the teachings of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* and the *Taittirīya Upaniṣads* thus:

*mūrtāmūrte pūrvamapohyātha samādhau
 dṛśyam sarvaṃ neti netīti ca vihāya
 caitanyāṃśe svātmani santaṃ ca viduriam
 taṃ saṃsāra-dhvānta-vināśaṃ harimīde.*³⁴

“That Brahman which is ascertained to be the substratum of the negation of the world consisting of the gross and the subtle form and also of everything that comes within the range of cognition, which is realized as identical with one’s true nature as consciousness and which (when reflected in the mental state that arises from the major texts of the Upaniṣads) removes avidyā, the root cause of *saṃsāra* and which is, therefore, equated with the removal of avidyā, I praise.”

*otaṃ protaṃ yatra ca sarvaṃ gaganāntam
 yo’sthūlānaṅvādiṣu siddho’kṣarasamjñah
 jñātāto yo netyupalabhyo na ca vedyaḥ
 taṃ saṃsāradhvāntavināśaṃ harimīde.*³⁵

“The entire world up to the unmanifested ether (avidyā) is pervaded by Brahman which is ascertained to be immutable from the text “Not gross, not minute,” etc. and which is the witness of everything while not coming within the range of cognition. That Brahman (which when reflected in the mental state arising from the major texts of the Upaniṣads) removes avidyā, the root cause of *saṃsāra* and which is, therefore, equated with the removal of avidyā, I praise.”

These two verses summarize the teaching of the *mūrtāmūrta-*, and the *akṣara-brāhmaṇa* sections of the *Bṛhadāranyaka Upaniṣad*.

Further in two verses Śaṅkara summarizes the teaching of the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*. The verses are:

*satyaṃ jñānaṃ śuddham-anantaṃ vyatiriktam
 śāntaṃ gūḍhaṃ niṣkalamānandamananyam
 ityāhādau yaṃ varuṇo 'sau bhṛgave 'jam
 taṃ saṃsāra-dhvānta-vināśaṃ harimīde.*³⁶

“It has been said earlier (that is, in the *Ānandavallī* section) that Brahman is real, of the nature of consciousness and is infinite. It is different from the five sheaths that envelop it; and it is free from the characteristics of being an agent, etc. It is immanent in the mind is partless, of the nature of bliss and is non-different from the soul. Varuṇa instructed about this to Bhṛgu. That Brahman which (when reflected in the mental state arising from the major texts of the Upaniṣads) removes avidyā, the root cause of *saṃsāra* and which is, therefore, equated with the removal of avidyā, I praise.”

*kośānetān pañca rasādīn-atihāya
 brahmāsmīti svātmani niścītya dṛśistham
 pitrā śiṣṭo veda bhṛguryaṃ yajurante
 taṃ saṃsāra-dhvānta-vināśaṃ harimīde.*³⁷

“Bhṛgu, being instructed by his father, realized that he is Brahman which is immanent in the body-mind complex by leaving out the false notion that the five sheaths constitute Brahman. This is stated in the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*. That Brahman which (when reflected in the mental state arising from the major texts of the Upaniṣads) removes avidyā, the root cause of *saṃsāra*, and which is, therefore, equated with the removal of avidyā, I praise.”

The above is only an outline treatment of the content of the text, *Haristuti*. Śaṅkara, in order that those

who could not grasp the essentials of Advaita Vedānta from his commentaries on the Upaniṣads, the *Bhagavad-gītā* and the *Brahma-sūtra* may understand them in an effortless manner has composed this hymn. It is, indeed, an abiding monument to the literature on Advaita Vedānta.

NOTES

1. *Haritattva-muktāvali*, p.190.
2. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad (BU)*, 2.3.
3. *Ibid.*, 2.3.1.
4. *Ibid.*, 2.3.2.
5. *Ibid.*, 2.3.3.
6. *Ibid.*, 2.3.6.
7. *Ibid.*
8. *Brahma-sūtra (BS)*, 3.2.22.
9. *BU*, 3.8
10. *Ibid.*, 3.8.3.
11. *Ibid.*, 3.8.4.
12. *Ibid.*, 3.8.7.
13. *Ibid.*, 3.8.8.
14. *Ibid.*
15. Śaṅkara's *Bhāṣya* on the above.
16. *BU*, 3.8.11.
17. *Ibid.*
18. *Taittirīya Upaniṣad (TU)*, 2.1.
19. *Ibid.*
20. *Chāndogya Upaniṣad (CU)*, 6.3.2.
21. *TU*, 2.1.1.
22. *Ibid.*, 2.2.1.
23. *Ibid.*, 2.3.1.
24. *Ibid.*, 2.4.1.
25. *Ibid.*, 2.5.1.

26. Ibid.
27. Ibid., 2.1.
28. *CU*, 6.1.4-6
29. *TU*, 2.7.
30. Ibid., 2.8.
31. Ibid., 3.1.
32. Ibid., 2.7.
33. *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad*, 4.10.
34. *Haristuti*, 38.
35. Ibid., 39.
36. Ibid., 19.
37. Ibid., 20.

THE HUMAN CONDITION

Paul Y.F. Loke*

Birth as a human being is the pre-requisite for self-realisation which is the highest goal of human life. Man at the pinnacle of the evolutionary ladder, is set apart from the other living creatures and organisms in that he has the conception of duty and is capable of acquiring knowledge. The human being is a paradigm case. He knows what has to be done and he also knows how to acquire the appropriate knowledge to do it. It is this twofold eligibility—in the words of Śaṅkara from his commentary on the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, 2.1.1, “his competence for karma and knowledge”—which gives the human being the unique privilege of realising his true nature. The precious human birth is again spoken of in another scriptural text, the *Aitareya Āraṇyaka* (11.3.2-5), where it states:

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In man alone is the Self most manifest, for he is the best endowed with intelligence. He speaks what he knows; he knows what will happen tomorrow; he knows the higher and lower worlds; he aspires to achieve immortality through mortal things. He is thus endowed (with discrimination), while other beings have consciousness of hunger and thirst only.

Indeed, it is this *jñāna-karma-adhikāra* or the eligibility of pursuing knowledge and the performance of duty which gives credence to the popular saying, "Man is the crown and glory of God's creation." It is against such a backdrop that this article which focuses on the human condition, on the condition of the *jīva* or individual in empirical existence is written.

Our existence in this world as individuals can be fully described in the three roles which we play—as an agent of actions, as a subject of knowledge, and as an enjoyer of the consequences of actions. In the Vedāntic terminology, a human being is a *jñātā* and a *bhoktā*. We can say that these are the nodes of human existence. We cannot think of human existence beyond these three roles. It is when the *jīva* becomes the subject of knowledge, as when he says, "I know this", that the question arises, "How do I know?" It is to answer this question and also to have a better understanding of the nature of doership and enjoyership in our lives that we need to examine what are known as the components or constituents which make up the *jīva*. We may also call these the equipment of the *jīva*. In other words, we have to find out how the *jīva* is equipped for his roles as *kartā*, *jñātā*, and *bhoktā*.

We have used the term "jīva" and its English equivalent, the individual. Who or what really is this "jīva"? The jīva is a complex entity. It is complex in the sense that it has two parts or two components in it, namely, the Self or Ātman and the not-Self. One part of the jīva is, therefore, pure consciousness and the other, insentience. Various other terms have also been used to describe the jīva such as the Self-in-the-body, the Self-in-the-world, the individuated self or the Self with the mind-sense-body complex.

The Self or Ātman, which is of the nature of pure consciousness (*svarūpa-caitanya*) needs no explanation. That it is the non-dual, attributeless Brahman pervading, animating and actuating the jīvas is a fundamental truth in Advaita. The importance and relevance of the not-Self is often overlooked. One should, however, not lose sight of the fact that without the not-Self, the *svarūpa-caitanya* or pure consciousness has no function. As in the case of electricity, by itself it is of no practical use. You need the physical medium to manifest its effects. Be it light from the tungsten element of the lamp or the mechanical action or motion from a motor. Of course, the reverse is also true. The physical medium by itself is of no use. Without the electricity, the lamp and motor are mere appliances. A human body without the consciousness is a mere body. It is not a jīva.

The not-Self or the material entity, which in normal parlance we call the body, is really made up of three structures, technically called "the three bodies". These are, the external gross body or *sthūla-śarīra*, the subtle body or *sūkṣma-śarīra* and the causal body or *kāraṇa-śarīra*. These bodies are made from the five sheaths or

kośas which do not have any independent reality. These are: the physical sheath or *annamaya-kośa*, the vital-air sheath or *prāṇamaya-kośa*, the mental sheath or *manomaya-kośa*, the intellectual (consciousness) sheath or *vijñānamaya-kośa* and the blissful sheath or *ānandamaya-kośa*.

The physical sheath which makes up the body is made from the combination of the sperm and ovum (*dvandva-yoni*) which in turn are the products of the essence of food. In short, the gross body is made from food or *anna*. *Annamaya* means the transformation of food. The body is therefore material and *tāmasic* in nature. Consequently, it is subject to the six kinds of changes or *vikāras*, namely, existence, birth, growth, change, decay and death. The physical sheath is the most gross and dense of the five sheaths. It is also the easiest to identify given its presentation to touch and cognition.

Of special importance to the understanding of the human condition is the subtle body. Unlike the physical body, the subtle body is not an object of the senses. It is an aggregate of nineteen subtle principles which manifest the personality of an individual. The subtle principles are: the ten senses or *indriyas*¹, comprising the five senses of knowledge or *jñānendriyas* namely, seeing (eye), hearing (ear), smelling (nose), tasting (tongue) and feeling (skin) and the five organs of action or *karmendriyas*, namely, talking (voice), grasping (hands), walking (feet), generating (genitals) and excreting (anus); the five vital airs of the *pañca-prāṇas* namely, *prāṇa*, *apāna*, *vyāna*, *samāna* and *udāna*; the *buddhi*; the *citta*; the *aḥṅkāra* and the *manas*. The last four being the functional components which make up the internal organ or

antaḥkaraṇa. The subtle body is also known as the *liṅga-śarīra*. It is called *liṅga-śarīra* because it is a symbol or mark (*liṅga* means symbol or mark) pointing at one's individuality beyond the gross body. It is pertinent to point out that for purposes of analysis we regard the *citta* and the *aḥāṅkāra* as the functional aspects of the internal organ itself and not merely as subordinate functions of the *buddhi* and *manas* respectively, as has been done by some of the traditional Indian thinkers. Being subtle, the existence of the subtle body can only be inferred from the effects produced by the nineteen principles constituting it. In particular, it is the function and interaction of the internal organ with the five senses of knowledge and the five organs of action which make human life possible. The ten senses originate from their respective physical organs located in the body which are also known as the external organs or *bahihkaraṇāni*. The subtle body therefore does not exist in isolation but is closely connected with the physical body.

Our examination of the subtle body complex begins with the five vital airs or the *pañca-prānas*. The five vital airs or energies are: *prāna*, the energy which governs the breath; *apāna*, the energy which regulates the functions of the organs below the navel such as kidneys, the intestines and the reproductive organs; *vyāna*, the energy which is diffused all over the body, governs muscle control and movement; *samāna*, the energy essential for digestion because it absorbs the active principle in food and drink which we consume; and finally, *udāna*, the energy prevailing in the part of the body above the larynx which is said to move upwards at the time of death. These five vital airs, together with the five organs of action is

called the sheath of vital airs. The *pañca-prāṇas* and the five organs of action, which are characterised by activity are produced from the active or rājasic aspect of the five rudimentary elements. It is the sheath of vital airs, by virtue of its proximity to the physical body, which animates it.

Going beyond the physical sheath and the vital-air sheath brings us to what could perhaps be described as the more important principles of the subtle body, namely, the internal organ and the capacities or the psychical aspects of the external organs. The external organs are distinguished by the two characteristics of location or *sthāna* and specific function or *vrata*. In the case of the five senses of knowledge for instance, the eye, ear, nose, tongue and skin are located in the gross body. Each one of these has a structure as well as a specific function. The structure is located in a particular part of the human body and discharges a specific function. The eye, for example, can only see, but cannot hear. *Vrata* means doing a thing meticulously in a limited way. Associated with the physical eye is the sense of sight. This sense of sight is the power of the eye which, although originating from the physical organ, resides in and forms part of the subtle body. Like the sense of sight, the powers of the other outer organs, namely, the sense of smell, touch, hearing and taste and the five motor senses belong to the subtle body.

Pivotal to the understanding of the *jīva*'s roles in the empirical world is the internal organ. Unlike the external organs, the internal organ does not have any location. Indeed, the term "internal organ" may be a misnomer as the *antahkaraṇa* is not an organ in the usual

sense. Instead, it pervades the whole body and its *vṛttis* are non-specific. The internal organ is an aggregate comprising four functional aspects, namely, *manas* or the mind, *citta* or memory stuff, *ahaṅkāra* or the "I"/ego and *buddhi* or intellect. It is the product of the *sattva* component of the five basic elements. It should be underscored that in reality, the four aspects of the internal organ cannot be identified individually and given any specific location. Instead, the aspects have been described as the strands of a rope or *guṇa-rāśi* woven together. The four aspects can therefore be seen as four different processes coming together and working together. This working together of the *manas*, *citta*, *ahaṅkāra* and *buddhi* is called the processes or *vṛttis* of the internal organ. We shall now examine each of the four aspects in greater details.

The *manas* is the outermost "layer" of the internal organ. Involved with the external organs as well as with the internal organ, the *manas* is the bridge between the two. It is the *manas* which gives meanings to sensory data. The data received from the sense organs are organised by the *manas* which is concerned with the present or the contemporaneous data that we get. In the *manas*, which is usually called the mind, the impressions of the sense organs will occur as *vṛttis*. Where the *vṛttis* of the *manas* there the subtle body really begins, as distinct from the gross body.

The *citta* is mostly the memory part of the internal organ. It is the storehouse of all previous experiences and impression. The *citta* will determine what the present interpretation (by the *manas*) is. The root word "*citi*" means heaping or gathering. All the past impressions are

gathered and in this gathering, organisation is involved. This is what is called *saṁskāra-vāsanā*. The *citta* is therefore concerned with not only the past but is also a principle of organisation. It may be pertinent to point out here that there has been some confusion in the literature published in the English language regarding the term “*citta*”. This has been in no small part due to the use of this term in the Yoga system to mean the mind. The internal organ in the Yoga system is said to be made up of two divisions, namely, *prāṇa* (responsible for the vital physiological functions) and *citta* (responsible for the psychological processes). As a result, we come across in the Yoga system concepts such as the five *citta-vṛttis*, namely, *mūḍha* (dull mind), *kṣipta* (restless mind), *vikṣipta* (restless but at times tranquil), *ekāgra* (one-pointed mind) and *niruddha* (empty mind). The use of *prāṇāyama* (breath control) is prescribed to control the *citta* which is suppressing not only the memory but the entire mind. Memory in the Yoga system is called *smṛti*.

The *ahaṅkāra* or “I” or ego is said to be the representative of the *jīva*. It operates as the organising factor of the internal organ. “*Aham*” means “I and “*kāra*” is “to make”. *Ahaṅkāra* is, therefore, technically known as the maker of “I”. As the organising factor, the *ahaṅkāra* ties up the past, present, and future to give the *jīva* a perspective for action or otherwise. One may ask, “Where is the *ahaṅkāra* located?” The “I” has no location but is made every time when one has an experience; as when one says, “I come” or “I go” or “I do this or that”. In deep-sleep (*suṣupti*) or when one is engrossed with some activity like, reading a book or painting, the “I” is not there. Therefore, the *ahaṅkāra* is

the identification of the individual in all the processes. It is the "I" which makes the distinction between the experiencer and the experienced. The genesis of the dual notion of *yuṣmad* and *asmad* (the object and the subject) stems from this "I".

The *buddhi* is generally translated as "intellect". A more accurate meaning perhaps is "to be aware". The *buddhi*, made from the *sattva* aspects of the subtle elements, is the faculty which enables us to know. It is the instrument of knowledge. By itself the *buddhi* is inert. But when the light of the Self falls on it, the *buddhi* becomes creative.

As an aspect of the internal organ, the *buddhi* is basic to the *manas*, *ahaṅkāra* and *citta*. Citsukha, an early Advaitin of the 13th century in his work *Citsukhī*, calls the *buddhi*, "*bhitti-sthānīya*".² "*Bhitti*" means wall. The *buddhi* is, therefore, seen as a wall which serves as the ground for the other aspects of the internal organ. The *buddhi* is pure all the time. In fact, it has been described as of the nature of consciousness, pure and undifferentiated, that we have in deep sleep and absorption in deep meditation (*samādhi*). However, the medium between the *buddhi* and the *manas* is clouded by the *vāsanās* and *saṁskāras* inherent in the *citta*. Unlike the *manas*, *ahaṅkāra* and *citta* which are oriented outward, the *buddhi* can face either the object, i.e. outwards or the subject Self, i.e. inwards. It is the latter feature which makes the *buddhi* the medium of self-realisation. It is, therefore, necessary to harness the *buddhi* for the insight into one's real nature. In empirical life, when an external object is presented to the *jīva*, the *buddhi*'s original state of pure consciousness becomes

oriented outward. This activates the *ahaṅkāra* which in turn prompts the *manas*. The *manas* in turn takes the help of the *citta* which enables the evaluation of the pros and cons, resulting in a process which eventually leads the *jīva* to act or not to act. Later Advaitins, like Appayya Dīkṣita have used the analogy of water being drawn from the river into canals (for irrigation), to show how the *buddhi*, as a mode of consciousness, operates in the *jīva*'s empirical existence.

It is the *buddhi*, when in collaboration with the five senses of knowledge that is called the consciousness sheath. The *jīva*'s role as an agent arises when the attributes of this sheath are falsely ascribed to the Self, resulting in the claims of doership and action in such statements as, "I am the writer of this article", "I have done this or that", etc. Similarly, when the attributes of the Self are erroneously superimposed on the consciousness sheath, the *jīva* makes claims to consciousness, intelligence and knowledge, when one says, "I am conscious", "I know this or that", etc. Similarly when the *manas* is in association with the five senses of knowledge, it is regarded as the mental sheath. Again, it is the mutual superimposition or *itaretara-adhyāsa* of the characteristics of the sheath and the Self on each other which gives rise to the pains and pleasures of the *jīva* one experiences in one's worldly life.

We have thus far examined all the nineteen principles of the subtle body and four of the five sheaths, namely the physical sheath and the three sheaths (consciousness, mental and vital) which make up the subtle body. It is perhaps logical to leave the analysis of the causal body to the last because as is evident by its

name, the causal body is the cause of the other bodies. The nature of the causal body is pure nescience (*avidyā*). Here, the *sattva-guṇa* is completely subordinated to the *rajas* and *tamas*. The causal body is, therefore, dull and inert. However, once it gets associated with the pure consciousness of the Self, we get the spontaneous rising of the last of the five sheaths, namely, the blissful sheath. By virtue of its close proximity to the Self, this sheath is inhered with the nature of bliss (*ānanda*) of the Self. It is this "blissful ignorance" which the *jīva* experiences in the state of deep sleep. It should also be pointed out that it is the causal body, which is made up of three components namely, *avidyā* (ignorance), *kāma* (desire) *karma* (action) together with the subtle body, that is responsible for the transmigration of the *jīva* after physical death. After death, the body dies and with it all the physiological and psychological functions cease, leaving behind the *saṃskāras* or latent impressions in the *citta* of the subtle body. The causal body is also described as *kāryotpādaka* that which results in the next body as an effect. It is, therefore, this "loaded" complex which transmigrates from existence to existence.

The *jīva*, as we have seen, is adequately equipped to function in the world and carry out its roles as *jñātā*, *kartā* and *bhoktā*. "Somehow" through the interplay of the Self and the three bodies, we "become". This becoming is called *jīva-bhāva* or the mode of the *jīva*. Most of the time the *jīva* when in existence functions only at three levels; the mental, the sensory and the physical. These correspond to the not-Self components of the mind, senses and body of the *jīva*. The Self, which remains shrouded by the sheaths, eludes him. Arising

from the mutual superimposition of the Self on the not-Self and vice-versa, the jīva is condemned to his existential predicament of desires, likes and dislikes. However, the human story is not all doom and gloom. There is yet hope. The very equipment which cause the yoke of his empirical bondage can be used to overcome it. The sages of yore have left behind a rich and valuable legacy for those who are ready to break the veil of ignorance and to realise their true nature. To do this, we need to “de-construct” the web of relationships built around our lives. The relationships which we have are not just with the animates but also with the inanimates. These relationships, born out of attachments and aversions, in the ultimate analysis, are transitory and unreal. What we really need to do is to go inwards beyond the five sheaths to “dis-cover” the real timeless Self, buried in the thick of ignorance which is the very essence of our worldly life.

NOTES

1. The ten senses or *indriyas* are the powers or capacities of the physical organs which they are associated with. They should not be confused with the physical organs.
2. Citsukha borrowed this term from Abhinavagupta, a literary critic and Kashmerian philosopher, who lived in the 9th century. Abhinavagupta had used this term in his “Locana”, a commentary on a literary work, the *Dhvanyāloka*.

BHĀṢYABHĀVAJÑA
V. R. KALYĀNASUNDARA ŚĀSTRĪ
A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH
(14 March 1911— 24 February 1999)

R. Balasubramanian

I

Brahmaśrī V.R.Kalyāṅsundara Śāstrī was one of the outstanding teachers of Vedānta in whom there was a happy combination of tradition and modernity, scholarship and creativity, learning and simplicity. Only a few teachers have been privileged to influence many hundreds of students as deeply and considerably as Śrī Kalyāṅsundara Śāstrī.

II

The sacredness of the place where one is born is as important as the charismatic personalities who shape the mind and train the intellect of a person. The young

Kalyāṇasundaram, the second son of Rāmānatha Śāstrī and Rajalakshmi, was fortunate enough to have both the benefits. Varahur, a tiny village in Tanjavur district, is one of the holy places associated with Viṣṇu, which fulfilled the religious vows and spiritual aspirations of many a devout Hindu living in the surrounding region. It is the place of birth of Kalyāṇasundaram. Since there was no facility for higher education in the traditional way in the village where he received some elementary education and also underwent *Vedādhyayana* in the traditional style under the care of his own uncle, he had to leave the village in 1921 in search of school for fulfilling his aspirations.

Two well known places attracted the young Kalyāṇasundaram; and he moved between these two places as if he was on an educational pilgrimage. First he had his education in *Kāvya* and *Vyākaraṇa* under the illustrious scholar, Mahāmahopādhyāya Yagnaswami Sastrigal at Raja Pāṭhaśālā in Kumbhakonam, a place considered to be holier than Kāśī. Then, from Kumbhakonam he moved to Mylapore, another holy place in Madras for his further education. He studied under the reputed scholar, Mahāmahopādhyāya Karungulam Krishna Sastrigal, in the well known Sanskrit College located in Mylapore and passed the Sāhitya Śiromaṇi examination in 1932. The title “Sāhitya-viśārada” was conferred on him by the same institution in 1932. Since a formal training to be a Paṇḍit was necessary for the purpose of appointment as a Sanskrit teacher in educational institutions, he enrolled himself as a student in Annamalai University and successfully completed the Paṇḍit training course in 1933. In the case of Kalyāṇasundaram this was only a formality. Even

without any training he showed all the good qualities of a teacher. While studying the Sāhitya Śiromaṇi course, he used to teach his classmates and clear their doubts revealing his potentiality of a teacher. In fact, he was asked to teach *Vyākaraṇa* to the juniors till a teacher was appointed for that subject. Since his main interest was in Vedānta, he enrolled himself as a student at Aiyuvaiyar Pāṭhaśālā in Kumbhakonam, studied Vedānta under the guidance of the famous scholar, Śāstraratnākaram Vepattur Vaidyanatha Sastrigal, who was an authority on Nyāya and Vedānta, and passed the Vedānta Śiromaṇi examination with distinction. Once again he moved to the Mylapore Sanskrit College for completing his educational pilgrimage. This time he joined the institution as a research scholar in 1938 and wrote and published a dissertation on "Vṛtti Mīmāṃsā". With this his formal education came to an end.

III

As a Pandit in the Government Oriental Manuscripts Library, Madras, where he was employed for sixteen years from 1940, he assisted the Curators in the publication of many rare manuscripts, in addition to the preparation of his own editions and publications of some rare works. Generally, the work of a Pandit in a manuscripts library is a routine one involving copying and comparing the manuscripts, helping the Curators in the preparation of definitive editions, and so on; and so a traditional Pandit who remains in the background and whose valuable work is not very often openly acknowledged by the head of the institution remains unknown to the scholarly world. This is only one side of the problem, which is most unfortunate. On the other

hand, it also happens that these Pandits do not pursue their own personal study and teaching outside the library. Pandit Kalyāṇasundara Śāstrī, like some others, is an exception to this. His scholarship was recognized not only within, but also outside, the manuscripts library as he was regularly teaching almost every morning Vedānta texts to scholars and laymen interested in them.

Then in the year 1956 at the invitation of the management of Ramakrishna Mission Vivekananda College, a premier post-graduate teaching and research institution in Madras, Śrī Kalyāṇasundara Śāstrī joined the Department of Sanskrit for teaching Vedānta and other subjects to M.A. students. It may be mentioned here that his joining the faculty of Vivekananda College, for which the then Principal of the College, Professor N.Sundaram Aiyar who studied, with a few others, some Advaita classics under him was mainly responsible, gave him the opportunity to be in the mainstream of the academic world.

After his retirement he was selected by the University Grants Commission as Professor of Sanskrit for teaching and research for a period of three years from June 1971. When the UGC assignment came to an end, Vivekananda College utilized his services as Guest Lecturer for nearly eight years, thanks to a special endowment instituted by Dr.N.C.Krishnan who was a leading Chartered Accountant and also a devoted student of Śrī Śāstrī.

IV

There is an institution called Upaniṣad Āśramam in Nungambakkam, a well known locality in Madras. It will

not be an exaggeration to say that the Upaniṣad Āśramam was listed almost daily in the engagements column of the local daily newspapers carrying the announcement of a discourse by Śrī Kalyāṇasundara Śāstrī at 7:30 A.M. in that place. For nearly thirtyfive years Śrī Śāstrī taught Śaṅkara's commentaries on the *Prasthānatraya*, i.e. the Upaniṣads, the *Brahma-sūtra*, and the *Bhagavad-gītā* on *adhyayana* days in the traditional way and other Advaita classics on other days. Everyday about twenty persons listened to his discourse in that institution. The Upaniṣad declares that not many people have the good luck even to hear the Self from the Vedānta texts and that quite a few among those who hear it do not understand it. It then draws the conclusion that the one who teaches it is, indeed, wonderful and that those who know when taught by a competent teacher are proficient. What the Upaniṣad says holds good in the present case: we have to say that both the teacher and the taught are praiseworthy. Judged from any standard, the attendance in Śrī Śāstrī's daily discourse is incredibly large; to sustain their interest in such a study is a marvellous achievement of the teacher. The Paramācārya of Kāñcī heard about the daily classes conducted by Śrī Śāstrī. During his visit to Madras in 1963 he was camping in the Nungambakkam area where the Upaniṣad Āśramam is located. One day His Holiness surprised Śrī Śāstrī as well as the students by his presence in front of the Āśramam even a little before 7:30 A.M., the scheduled time for the commencement of the class. As the visit of His Holiness to the Āśramam was rare, particularly at the time of the morning class, Śrī Śāstrī reverentially requested him to conduct the class. Pat came the reply from His Holiness: "I am here to listen to your teaching and not to conduct a class." The

Paramācārya sat through the entire duration of the class and commended the services of Śrī Śāstrī for preserving and propagating the Vedānta tradition.

During the last few years Śrī Śāstrī continued his daily discourse on Śaṅkara's commentaries on the *Prasthānatraya* and also on other Advaita works in his own house with the attendance not diminishing and not in the Upaniṣad Āśramam.

During 1972 to 1982 Śrī Śāstrī gave lectures for the public on the classics of Advaita at Śaṅkara Gurukulam, an institution founded by a great Advaitin by name Tethiyur Subrahmanya Sastrigal, on three days in a week. In addition to this, he conducted classes at the Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, on three days in a week for the *sannyāsins* and *brahmacārins* of the Math.

V

There are two kinds of supervisors for research scholars working for Ph.D. and D.Litt. in colleges and universities. A formal guide is one with whom a scholar registers his/her name for research work. In respect of scholars working on classical texts in Sanskrit it very often happens that a formal supervisor, apart from "lending" his/her name for the purpose of registration, is not really competent, though eligible, to guide the candidate. The help of a traditional Paṇḍit well-versed in, and capable of handling, the text is needed by the candidate to understand the thought structure and intricacies of the text comprising objections and replies, interventions and answers before and after the statement of the final position. In such cases the traditional Paṇḍit is, therefore, the *de facto* supervisor while the official guide is only

the *de jure* supervisor. Śrī Kalyāṇasundara Śāstri has guided, as *de facto* supervisor, research scholars, Indian and foreign, who undertook research requiring study of Vedānta texts in Sanskrit.

It is necessary to make a few observations about his role as a teacher and the manner of his teaching research scholars. First of all, the duration of each class for a student will be for about two hours so that a student will receive substantial information from him each time. Secondly, he will never engage a class without reading the text and refreshing his memory even though he might have been familiar with it. Thirdly, his approach to the text is always analytical. He will justify the text, be it on Advaita, or Viśiṣṭādvaita, or Dvaita, by formulating in as cogent a way as possible the arguments therefor. Without brushing aside the doubts and objections of the students, he will endeavour to answer them by means of reasoning, a procedure which is not followed by many traditional Paṇḍits. Fourthly, when there is some difficulty in construing the meaning of a certain passage in the text, he will not resort to the hasty practice of correcting the sentence, which is easy and is usually done by some scholars. On the contrary, he will endeavour to explain the given text as it is on the assumption that the printed text is correct and that one should not tamper with it unless it is absolutely necessary. He would also caution that the correction, if made, is only provisional and that the subsequent portion of the text must support it in order to retain it as final. Fifthly, however difficult and problematic the text may be, he will not leave any idea or view that emerges from it undecided. Let me give an illustration from my own experience with him. I used to

go to his house for studying Maṇḍanamiśra's *Brahmasiddhi* during 1957-59. There is a difficult passage in the text concerning the problem of *jīvanmukti* versus *sadyomukti*. On the basis of Śaṅkhaṇi's commentary printed along with the text of the *Brahmasiddhi*, Śrī Śāstrī arrived at a certain conclusion for the confirmation of which he wanted to look into a manuscript commentary on the *Brahmasiddhi* available in the Government Oriental Manuscripts Library. The next day a little before the appointed time he reached the Library, collected the manuscript, and was waiting for me. It was a great mental relief and a satisfying experience to him to find that the manuscript confirmed his interpretation of the text. To me this event was a revelation in a double sense: it revealed not only the greatness of my teacher, but also his concern for his student.

VI

Śrī Śāstrī will never participate in any *vākyārtha* discussion without adequate preparation. He will not only be thorough with the text in general, but also with the particular *adhikaraṇa* which is the topic for discussion. Two such *vākyārtha* discussions, which took place in the presence of the Paramācārya of Kāñcī, were memorable. His Holiness was camping in the National College premises (Teppakulam area), Tiruchirapalli in 1960. It was the time when Śaṅkara Jayantī was being celebrated. While participating in the *vākyārtha* on "tattu samanvayāt", certain views expressed by Śrī Śāstrī were questioned by a few senior scholars assembled there. Without giving up his point of view and explanation, Śrī

Śāstrī took up the challenge and wanted Govindānanda's *Bhāṣya-ratnaprabhā*, a commentary on Śaṅkara's *Brahmasūtra-bhāṣya*, to be brought in from the library in support of his elucidation, which is traditional and therefore authoritative. His Holiness was listening to the discussion as he was resting on the other side of the screen, drew the curtain, and asked Śrī Śāstrī to proceed with his *vākyārtha* as he knew that Śrī Śāstrī's explanation had the textual support. On another occasion there was a *vākyārtha* discussion on "ānandamayādhikaraṇa" when the Paramācārya was camping in Tiruvanaikkaval. Śrī Śāstrī discussed the issues of the *adhikaraṇa* making use of a polemical text called *Śaṅkara-pāda-bhūṣaṇam*. His Holiness was appreciative of Śrī Śāstrī's standpoint and asked him to proceed with his explanation when the latter insisted that the relevant book should be brought in so that he could convince the senior scholars, who questioned the tenability of his position, by showing the textual support therefor. On both the occasions, the Paramācārya averted a situation that would have embarrassed the senior scholars.

The Śaṅkarācāryas of Śrīgeri Śāradāpīṭham were also appreciative of Śrī Śāstrī's mastery of Śaṅkara-bhagavatpāda's commentaries on the *Prasthānatraya*, his lucid exposition of the philosophy of Advaita and the scholarly analysis of the issues during the *vākyārthavicāra* in the assembly of the learned. Special mention must be made of Śrī Śāstrī's exposition of the different kinds of *sāmānādhikaraṇya* (grammatical co-ordination) in a *vidvatsadas* that took place in the presence of the two Śaṅkarācāryas of Śrīgeri.

VII

Of the many honours conferred on Śrī Kalyānasundara Śāstrī, some may be mentioned here. In recognition of his profound scholarship in, and brilliant exposition of, Vedānta as well as devoted service to the cause of Sanskrit learning, His Holiness Śrī Candrasekharendra Sarasvatī, the Paramācārya of Kāñcī Kāmakotipīṭha, conferred on him the title "Bhāṣyabhāvajña" in 1963. The President of India awarded him the "Certificate of Honour" in 1979 in recognition of his scholarship in Sanskrit and śāstras. The title "Śāstra-bodhana-catura" was conferred on him in 1984 by the Sāhityapariṣad of Tiruchirapalli.

The family members, friends, and disciples of Śrī Śāstrī celebrated his *ṣaṣṭyabdapūrti* in 1971 by organizing a public function presided over by Swami Dayananda Sarasvatī. Sri K.K. Shah, the then Governor of Tamil Nadu, released a Souvenir brought out on the occasion. The religious ceremony as well as the public function was memorable because his own teacher, Mahāmahopādhyāya Vepattur Vaidyanatha Sastrigal, attended the function and blessed him.

VIII

Śrī Kalyānasundara Śāstrī's *Śatābhiṣekam* was celebrated on March 29, 1991. Under the chairmanship of Swami Dayananda Sarasvatī a public function was organized to honour Śrī Śāstrī and also a book of his entitled *Advaita Siddhānta Sāra* was released. Never was a public function organized in recent times in such a grand manner to honour a traditional scholar as it was done for Śrī Śāstrī. Never have we seen in recent times a Vedāntin

with such a devotion and commitment to the tradition of Śaṅkara as Śrī Śāstrī. Never have we come across in recent times a teacher so deeply loved and sincerely respected by a large circle of students, scholars, and teachers as Śrī Śāstrī.

Some excerpts from his book, *Advaita Siddhānta Sāra*, Vol. 1 published by Adi Śaṅkara Advaita Research Centre, Madras, are given below.

(i)

The real position is that the entire Veda purports to convey the sense of oneness of the Self. That is why it has been said by the Lord: "All the Vedas assert that I am the one to be known." There is also the statement of the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*: "That state which all the Vedas teach..." So the Veda alone is *śāstra* in the primary sense. All other works are called *śāstra* only by courtesy.

(ii)

Thus, *pramāṇas* such as the visual sense, in so far as they are vitiated by special defects, are pseudo-*pramāṇas*; and so they are weak. Since scripture is free from this (special defect), it is strong. Scripture, that is the Veda alone, is *pramāṇa*, and not *Āgamas* such as *Pāñcarātra*, for these, being the compositions of exceptionally great persons such as Nārada, are not *pramāṇas*. Indeed, the Veda is intrinsically valid, because it is impersonal. However, *smṛti*, etc. are *pramāṇas* in so far as they are in conformity with it. This has been established by Jaimini in the chapter on "Virodha". But the *Pāñcarātra* and other *Āgamas* are not *pramāṇas* at all, because they set forth a view opposed to the standpoint of Advaita which is based on *śruti*.

(iii)

There is an objection that there is no scope for undertaking the study of the scriptural text in the philosophy of Śaṅkara for the reason that there is no difference between the teacher and the disciple, and so on; for, it is declared that "There is neither teacher nor disciple, neither scripture nor instruction, neither you nor I, nor this world." The reply to this objection is that, even though there is no duality from the absolute standpoint, there is duality from the empirical standpoint; and so there is no untenability for undertaking the study of the scriptural text. Indeed, even for the Dvaitins there is the absence of duality in states such as *samādhi*, even though there is duality at other times. There is no further need to emphasise this point. It is well known to all that there is absence of duality in deep sleep, though in the states of dream and waking there is duality. There are *śruti* texts such as: "When verily, everything has become the Self, then by what and whom should one see?" That this *śruti* text is about the states of deep sleep and liberation has been established by Sage Vyāsa in the *Brahma-sūtra* ("The declaration of absence of all cognition is made) having in view either of the two states, viz. deep sleep and liberation, for this is made clear (by the scriptural texts.)"

(iv)

Brahman becoming many is due to *avyakta*, its adjunct, which becomes manifest as the many, and not by itself, for Brahman, being immutable, cannot become many. It is seen that an object which becomes many is, indeed, subject to modification, in the same way as clay

which appears in many forms such as pot, jar, etc., is subject to modification. Like clay, the *avyakta* is mutable, and so it is appropriate that it becomes many. How, then, is the scriptural statement—that the sentient Brahman, following its resolve, “Let me become many,” becomes many—intelligible? Just as the *jīva*, due to identification with the body, resolves to walk, even so does Brahman resolve to become many due to identification with the *avyakta*. Let it be, it may be asked, that the *jīva* who does not know the truth wrongly identifies himself with the not-Self; but how can it be possible in the case of Brahman who is all-knowing? If so, how is it that the following statements are intelligible in the case of Śrī Rāma who is the Lord? “I, Rāma, the son of Daśaratha, consider myself as human;” “I have lost my kingdom; I dwell in the forest; I am separated from my wife; and, Jaṭāyu has been killed—this is my misfortune which will even consume the fire totally.” If it be said that they are intelligible in the case of Lord Rāma due to *līlā*, then the same thing holds good in the case of Brahman also due to *māyā*. How can there be *ajñāna* in Brahman who is omniscient? *Māyā*, indeed, is called *ajñāna*. How can there be the manifestation of suffering, due to separation from Sītā, in the Lord who is full of supreme bliss? Manifestation is, indeed, *līlā*. From his own perspective, Rāma has no suffering due to separation from Sītā etc. but he appears to be suffering from *our* perspective. In the same way, there is no such thing as the resolve to become many in the case of Brahman from its own perspective, but it appears to have this from the perspective of the *jīvas*. Brahman appears to have such a resolve, and also to have become many.

(v)

Śrī Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda holds the view that the text of the *Bhagavad-gītā*, "You also know me as *kṣetrajña* in all *kṣetras*, Oh Bhārata," clearly establishes the same idea of the identity of the *jīva* and Brahman. The substance of the view of Śrī Śaṅkara is as follows: As in the case of the principal texts such as "*Tattvamasi*," here also the identity of *jīva* and *Paramātman* is ascertained through grammatical coordination between the two works, "*kṣetrajñam*" and "*mām*". On account of this identity, there is no scope for the supreme **Self** becoming a *saṁsārin*; nor is there scope for the absence of bondage; also there is no scope for scripture which speaks about bondage and liberation becoming useless. Since Īśvara is Himself *kṣetrajña*, He appears as if He is a *saṁsārin* owing to the distinction in the *upādhi* caused by *avidyā*; but not really a *saṁsārin*, in the same way as the individual self appears (due to *avidyā*) to be identical with the physical body. The instruction about the identity is for the purpose of removing the false difference. Just as the illusion of snake is removed through the utterance of the trustworthy person, "This is a rope, and not a snake," even so the individual self is freed from the illusion of bondage through the instruction of the Lord, the most trustworthy person. That is why there is the traditional statement, "Brahman itself is in bondage through its *avidyā*; also it gets liberated through its *vidyā*." Also, it is declared in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, "This (Self) was indeed Brahman in the beginning. It knew only itself as 'I am Brahman.' Therefore it became all. And whoever among the gods knew it also became that; and the same with sages and men."

(vi)

Are *jīva* and *Īśvara* different from each other like a pot and a cloth in respect of their form? Or, (2) Are they different like salt and camphor in respect of their quality? Or, (3) Are they different like two pots as individual things? Or, (4) Are they different like pot and colour in respect of categories? Or, (5) Do they differ like air and ether in respect of their qualities? Or, (6) Do they differ like pot and pitcher by their names? Of these, the first alternative is not tenable, for both *jīva* and *Īśvara* are without form. Nor is the second alternative tenable as both of them are devoid of qualities. The third alternative also has to be rejected, for they are not apprehended as two individual entities, and also for the reason that being unmanifest, there is no scope for them to be manifest as individual entities. Also, the fourth alternative is unacceptable, for both of them *qua* Self are identical; and there are *śruti* texts such as "Through the *jīva* which is the Self," "He is the Self," in support of their position. Nor can we accept the fifth alternative, because they are devoid of qualities. Therefore, there remains only the sixth alternative. Just as one and the same object has two names as pot and pitcher, even so one and the same consciousness is designated by two names—*jīva* and *Īśvara*. So, the view that the difference between *jīva* and *Īśvara* is real is untenable.

THE APPROACH TO ŚAṆKARA

S. Ramaswamy*

It is with deep diffidence and wholly unaffected humility that I venture to offer some reflections of mine for consideration by the readers of the Voice of Śaṅkara, a journal which has attracted the best minds of India and which has carried articles by some of the best saints, savants and scholars of the country. The contribution made of this journal to the spiritual enlightenment and enrichment of humanity is truly incalculable.

I have been somewhat puzzled, even troubled, by the apparently unexamined, perhaps even unethical acceptance by those committed to Advaita Vedānta in some degree at least, of some episodes in the life of Śaṅkara and even more by the seemingly wide and unbridgeable gulf that yawns between the way we lead

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our lives in this world and our apparently sincere commitment and devotion to Śankara's Advaita Vedānta. We study the *prasthāna-traya* and listen to discourses on them from learned pandits as well as modern scholars without a pang that our way of life contradicts and almost decisively refutes our professed faith in Advaita. Unfortunately the traditional dichotomy between the *pāramārthika* and *vyāvahārika* helps to give us a kind of absolution from the charge of living lives of organized hypocrisy, conscious rather than unconscious hypocrisy.

I shall take up just a few episodes in the life of Śankara which have puzzled me quite. I am well aware that our knowledge of Śankara's life is derived from the *Śankara-vijayas* which were composed centuries after Śankara departed from this life. I am also aware that there is some well-grounded suspicion of partisanship in the composition of these *Śankara-vijayas*. The *Vyāsācala-śankara-vijaya* published a few decades ago by the Government Oriental Manuscripts Library, Madras, is the earliest of the *Śankara-vijayas* and the devoted labours of Polagam Rāma Śāstri have established that the famed *Mādhaviya-Śankara-vijaya*, attributed to Vidyāranya by the Sringeri Śankara Math is largely based on and even verbally derived from *Vyāsācala's* account. Another early *Śankara-vijaya* attributed to Anantānandagiri and published by the Department of Philosophy of the Madras University contains statements about the place of birth of Śankara and one other matter which ought to excite some criticism. Anantānandagiri makes Cidambaram, the place of Śankara's birth, instead of the traditionally accepted Kālāḍi. He also says that Śankara was born to his mother Āryāmba after his father

had passed away. Who did the Brahmopadeśa of young Śaṅkara initiating him into the Brahmacharya life? Unkind and hostile critics of the Advaita Vedānta have made this the basis of their attack, illogically enough on Śaṅkara's doctrinal validity. They assert only a *vidhavā-putra* could have produced a doctrine so near Buddhistic *nihilism* as to be hardly distinguishable from it.

The tradition that Śaṅkara had his Brahmopadeśa when he was barely five years old and that he took *sannyāsa* at the age of eight need not be questioned. But the "Crocodile Drama" which led to his mother's reluctant assent to Śaṅkara taking up *sannyāsa* has been the subject of rather cynical comment. It has been suggested that Śaṅkara's anxiety to be rid of samsāric afflictions and attachments made him play a trick on his mother about an actual crocodile having gripped his feet. Cynics do not deserve to be answered as cynicism is often a wanton intellectual exercise by those who want to pass for extreme sophistication of mind and heart. It is worth noting that the crocodile of *samsāra* and its utter and *disastrous* delusiveness and duplicity are referred to by Śaṅkara in the *Viveka-cūḍāmaṇi* (and by Milton in Book-I of the *Paradise Lost* where he speaks of some night-founder'd stiff on a sea-monster, deeming it an island!) One can hardly tolerate the *apacāra* involved in accusing a remarkably self-disciplined youth like Śaṅkara of practising deceit on his mother even for so noble a cause as the assumption of *sannyāsa*. There was a spiritual dynamism and a strong sense of mission in Śaṅkara which probably made him take the seemingly cruel and unnatural step of tearing himself away from a devoted and aged mother. This step seems already to indicate

Śaṅkara's resolute awareness of the delusive evanescence of the earthly relationships. One need not worry about the date of Śaṅkara's birth at all. Whether he was born before Christ or seven centuries after Christ matters not in any consideration of his teaching. A Muslim scholar-politician attributes Śaṅkara's monism to the influence of Arab traders on the coast of Kerala mistaking, the dubious monotheism of the Arab Muslims for monism. Politicians can be trusted to draw freely on their imagination for facts and on their prejudices for their interpretation of the available evidence. But the link with Śiva Soma of Kambojadeśa makes us wonder whether Ādi Śaṅkara was the preceptor involved or some later Śaṅkara. Besides it raises the question of whether Śiva Soma had the *adhikāra*, now so much insisted on, for receiving *upadeśa* from Śaṅkara. Was Śiva Soma a *traivarnīka*? If he was not, then the *adhikāra* requirement now so much emphasized falls to the ground. Indeed, in his *Bhāṣya* on the first of the *Brahmasūtras*, caste or sex is not even barely mentioned, though some recent commentators have been rash enough to say that only the members of the three *varṇas* are capable of the principal requisites of *Brahmajijñāsā*. We have only to look around *circumspice*, to see the absurdity of this fantastic claim. George Thibaut who translated the *Brahmasūtra-bhāṣya* for the Sacred Books of the East series was not a member of any of the three privileged *varṇas* but a French scholar who taught Sanskrit, the *gīrvāṇa-bhāṣā* at the head quarters of Sanātana-dharma, Varanasi!

The *parakāyapraveśa* episode is one of the most disturbing and distressing episodes in the *Mādhavīya*

Śaṅkara Vijaya. Śaṅkara sought and secured what he wanted *Vāda-bhikṣā* from Kumarila Bhaṭṭa's brother-in-law, Maṇḍana Miśra, the great Mīmāṃsaka of Mahishmati. After being defeated by Śaṅkara, Maṇḍana, as had been agreed upon, became a *sannyāsin*. The umpire of the philosophic debate, ubhaya Bhāratī became, by tradition a *sannyāsinī*. One can hardly imagine a *sannyāsinī* or even a Dharmapatnī asking a *sannyāsin* about *Kāmaśāstra*. It is even more ridiculous to suggest that Śaṅkara was so fond of the bubble reputation of Sarvajñātman to agree to acquire, knowledge of it, while still being a *sannyāsin*. The *Amaru śataka* alone speaks of Śaṅkara seeking out a dead body to enter into for learning about the pleasures of sensual life. The small-minded may seek confirmation of this episode in the sensually disturbing lines of the *Saundaryalaharī* and the reference to wet dreams in the *Śataślokī*. Śaṅkara was such a noble, incomparable exemplar of the *sannyāsa* order that it is sheer *apacāra* to debit him with so grievous a violation of the discipline of the *sannyasa* order. Śaṅkara's exhortation to us to avoid the *aṣṭa-maithunas* in his *Sarva-vedānta-saṅgraha* is so resolute and absolute. The *Maniṣā pañcaka* is a vital document on the question of Śaṅkara's attitude to caste. Here is an Ācārya willing to envisage the possibility of a *brahmajñānī* among even Caṇḍālas and willing to accept such a person as his Guru! That he hailed *vipratva* highly does not invalidate this suggestion. *Vipra* means here only what it meant in the *Rg Veda*-“*ekam sad, viprāḥ bahudhā vadanti*”, viz. seers and scholars. The Kāpālika episode is so uncharacteristic of the Śaṅkara we know from his works. Śaṅkara would have persuaded the Kāpālika to abandon his crudi ties and not encouraged them.

So many of our *vyāvahārika* practices and observances are so grievously and utterly at odds with our professed commitment to an Advaitic view of life, that it is my conviction that there is urgent need to let Śāṅkara influence our lives and conduct more decisively and salutarily than has been or than seems to be the case with us today.

From KENOPANISAD

न तत्र चक्षुर्गच्छति न वाग् गच्छति नो मनो
न विद्यो न विजानीमो यथैतदनुशिष्यति ॥
अन्यदेव तद्विदितादथो अविदितादधि ।
इति शुश्रुम पूर्वेषां ये नस्तद्व्याचक्षिरे ॥

There sight travels not, nor speech, nor the mind. We know It, we know It not, nor can we distinguish how one should teach of It. For It is other than the known; It is therefore, above the unknown. It is so we have heard from men of old who declared That to our understanding.

From HITOPADEŚA

आहारनिद्राभयमैधुनं च सामान्यमेतत् पशुभिर्नराणाम् ।
धर्मो हि तेषामधिको विशेषः धर्मेण हीनाःपशुभिःसमानाः ॥

The human beings and animals have the same urges. They eat and sleep and copulate and besides, the feeling of fear are common to both. What, then, is the difference between the two? It is adherence to Dharma that distinguishes human beings from animals. Without Dharma to guide him, man would be no better than an animal.

ABOUT THE PUBLISHERS

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- (1) to undertake the carrying on a scientific research for the extension of knowledge in the fields of Natural and Applied Sciences generally, and in particular in the fields of Physics and Metaphysics.
- (2) to undertake and carry on scientific study and analysis of the Advaita system of thought as expounded by Ādi Śaṅkara and to conduct research as regards the relevance of his teaching in solving present day ills of mankind.
- (3) to undertake, promote, and encourage the study of ancient philosophical systems of India.
- (4) to undertake research for the purposes of establishing norms necessary for realising the divinity in man through moral, spiritual and cultural infrastructure.

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संसाराध्वनि तापभानुकिरणप्रोद्भूतदाहव्यथा-

खिन्नानां जलकाङ्क्षया मरुभुवि भ्रान्त्या परिभ्राम्यताम् ।

अत्यासन्नसुधाम्बुधिं सुखकरं ब्रह्माद्वयं दर्शय-

न्त्येषा शङ्करभारती विजयते निर्वाणसन्दायिनी ॥

*samsārādhvani tāpabhānukiraṇaprodbhūtadāhavyathā-
khinnānām jalakāṅkṣayā marubhuvi bhrāntyā
paribhrāmyatām
atyāsannasudhāmbudhiṁ suhakaram brahmādvayaṁ
darśayant-
yeṣā śaṅkarabhāratī 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.