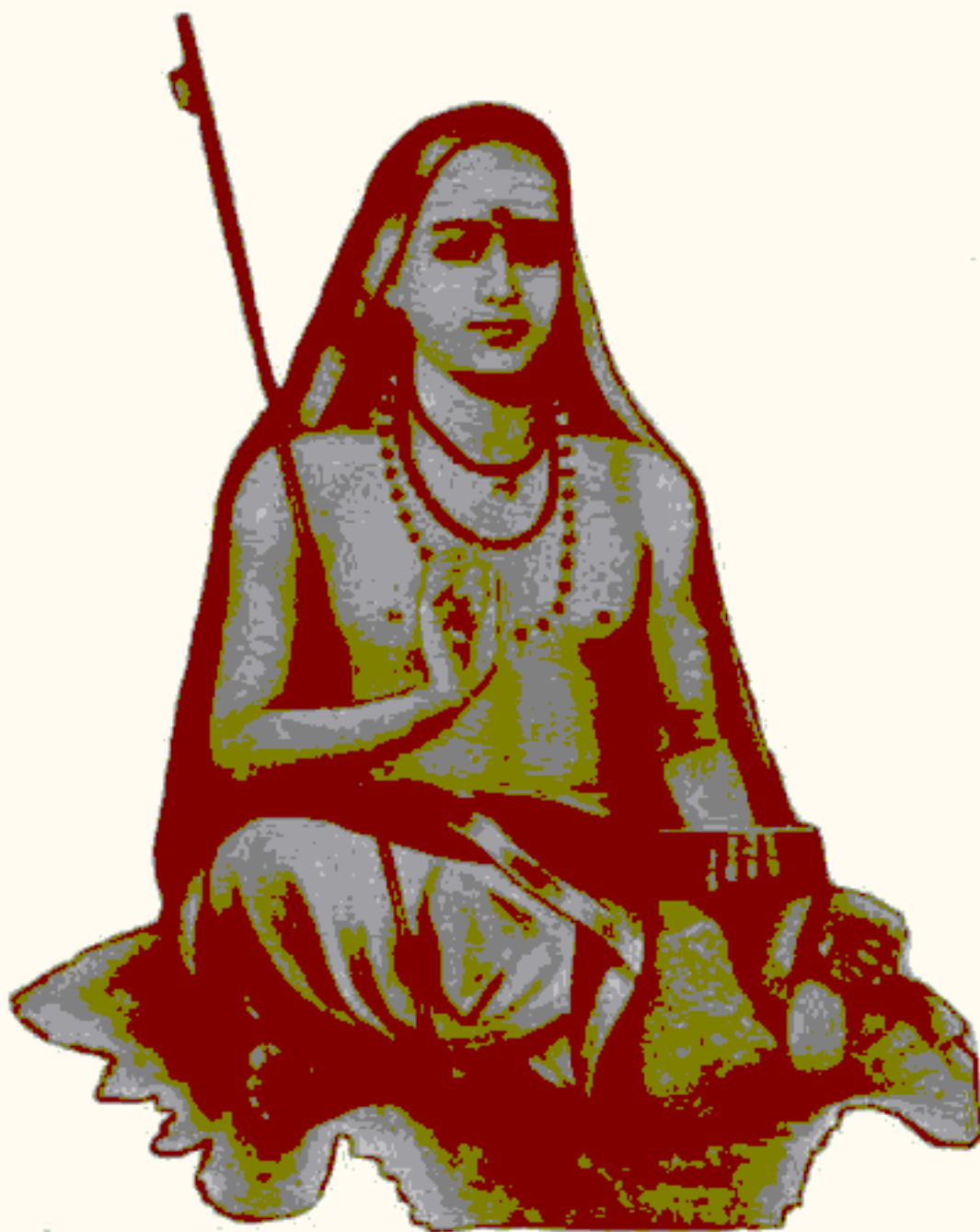


The VOICE of ŚĀNKAARA

śāṅkara-bhāratī

SILVER JUBILEE VOLUME



Editor :

R. Balasubramanian

**ṛṣā śaṅkara-bhāraṭi vijayata
nīruāṇa-saṁdāyini**

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

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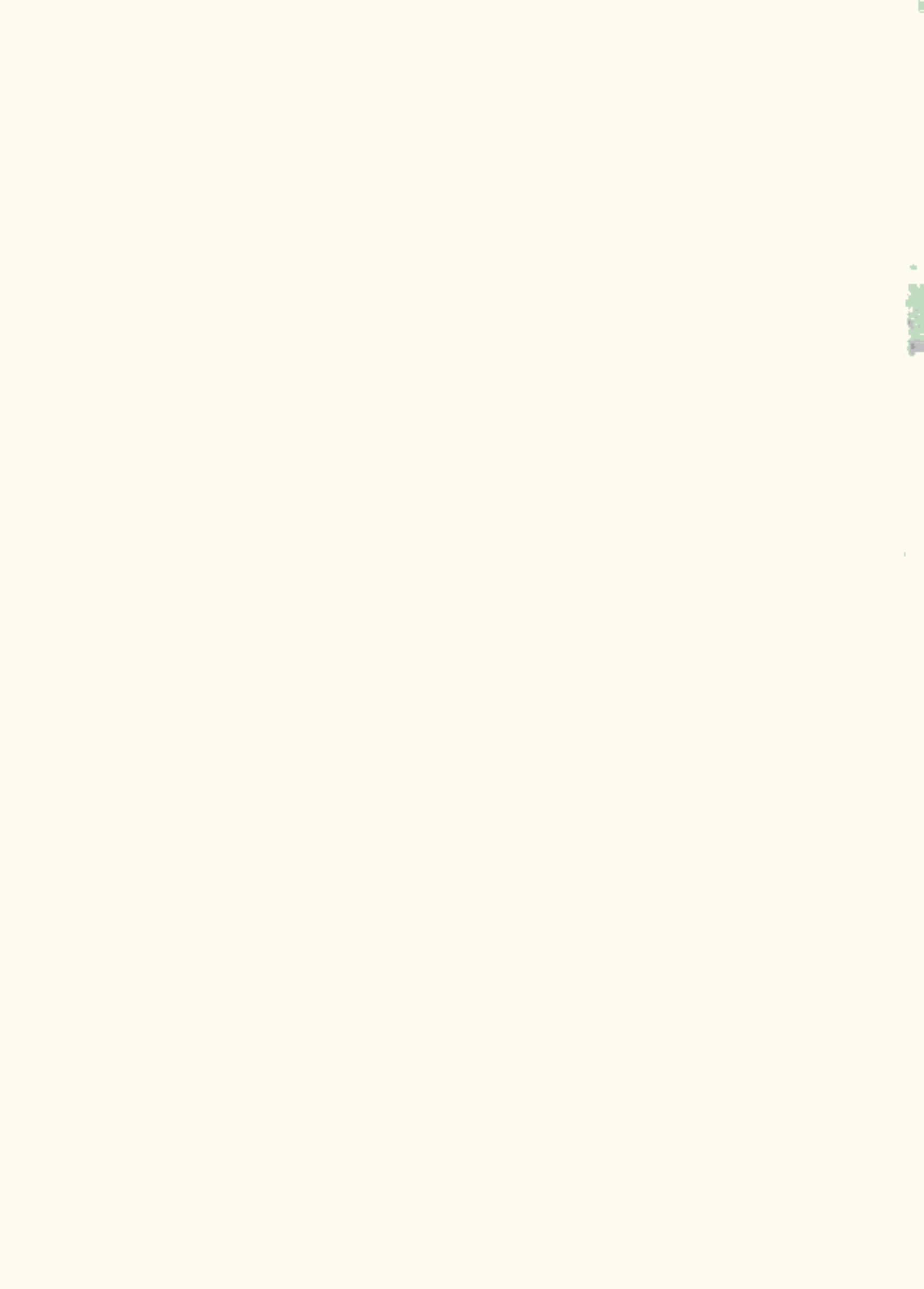
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HOMAGE TO ŚAṄKARA

[180]

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

*viṣṇoḥ pādānugām yām nikhilabhavanudam
 śaṅkaro'vāpa yogāt
 sarvajñam brahmasaṁstham
 munigaṇasahitam samyag-abhyarcya bhaktyā
 vidyām gaṅgāmivāham pravaraṅga-
 nidheḥ prāpya vedāntadīptām
 kāruṇyāt-tā mavocaṁ janimṛtinivaha-
 dhvastaye duḥkhitebhyah.*

Just as Śaṅkara (Śiva) obtained through his power of yoga the Gaṅgā which emanates from the feet of Viṣṇu and which purifies the entire world, even so Śaṅkara obtained through his power of yoga the knowledge which reveals the abode of Viṣṇu and which destroys the entire world of bondage. Having duly worshipped with devotion the

omniscient Śaṅkara, who is ever-established in Brahman, who is surrounded by a host of sages, I obtained from him, a treasure of excellent qualities, the knowledge revealed by the *Vedānta*, even as Bhagīratha obtained from Śaṅkara (Śiva) the *Gaṅgā* spoken about in *śruti*; and I have declared it (in the *Naiṣkarmya-siddhi*) out of compassion for the benefit of the suffering people so that the course of innumerable births and deaths may be put an end to.

[181]

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

*vedāntodaravarti bhāsvad-amalaṁ dhvānta-
 chid-asmad-dhiyo
 divyaṁ jñānam-atīndriye' pi viṣaye
 vyāhanyate na kvacit,
 yo no nyāyaśalākayaiva nikhilam saṁsāra-
 bījaṁ tamaḥ
 protsāryāvira-kāṛṣīd guruguruḥ pūjyāya
 tasmai namaḥ.*

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

Sureśvara, *Naiṣkarmya-siddhi*, iv. 76-77

PATHWAY TO MOKṢA*

Śrī Candrasekharendra Sarasvatī

1. Value of Bhakti

करलग्नमृगः करीन्द्रभङ्गो
 घनशार्दूलविखण्डनोऽस्तजन्तुः ।
 गिरिशो विशदाकृतिश्च चेतः
 कुहरे पञ्चमुखोऽस्ति मे कुतो भीः ॥

Lord Nārāyaṇa made up His mind to remain as a man when He incarnated as Rāma, in order to teach the world the importance of reverence or *bhakti* towards father, mother, teacher and God. He so identified Himself with His human role that He behaved exactly like an ordinary mortal and when any one attributed to Him qualities of God, He reminded him that He was only a man. *Ātmānam mānuṣam manye*. Similarly, though Śrī Ādi Śaṅkara was Lord Śiva incarnate, he tried to inculcate *Śiva-bhakti* in the people by

* Courtesy : Ācārya's call, Madras Discourses (1957-1960), part I, Śrī Kāmakōṭi Pīṭham Śrī Śaṅkarācārya Svāmī Maṭh, Kanchipuram-631502.

his actions and writings. One such composition of his is the *Śivānanda-laharī*.

In the above verse occurring in the *Śivānanda-laharī*, Śiva is conceived of as having five faces, four of them looking at each of the four directions, east, south, west and north, and the other turning upwards. The upturned face is called *Īśānam*, while other four faces are called *Sadyojātam*, *Vāmadevam*, *Aghoram*, and *Tatpuruṣam*. Śiva holds in his right hand a deer (hence *valam-kai-mān* in Tamil), symbolic of the mind which is unsteady or restless. This aspect of the mind is found referred to in the *Gītā* in the words, *cañcalaṁ hi manaḥ kṛṣṇa*. The deer is also by nature restless and timid and continuously turns its gaze hither and thither. But when the same deer is held in the hand of Śiva, it gazes into His benevolent eyes, keeps its look steady there, forgets its fear and remains motionless, with a feeling of security and happiness. Śiva wears the hide of an elephant and that of a tiger. In the atmosphere of peace and security that pervades in His presence, all creatures remain motionless and blissful, their mind concentrated on Him and Him only. "Where is fear," asks the great Ācārya, "when this five-faced Śiva is in the cavity of my heart?"

There is an interesting story about the manner in which Śiva came to wear the hide of an elephant. It is said that some sages who believed that the observance of the rites prescribed in the *Vedas* is everything and that there is no need to have devotion or *bhakti* to God, created an elephant by their *mantra* power and set it to attack Śiva, towards whom the wives of the sages were attracted, even as Śrī Kṛṣṇa attracted towards himself the devotion of the *Gopis*. *Īśvara* performed his *ūrdhva-tāṇḍava*, tossed the elephant about like a ball and

ultimately tore it up and covered Himself with its skin. On account of this dress, He came to be known as *Kṛttivāsah*. The *Vedas* use the expression, (*Kṛttivāsāḥ pinākī*) in several places. Amara Siṃha, a highly intellectual person, though a Jain, has done full justice to the Vedic names of God in his Sanskrit dictionary. When enumerating the names of Śiva, he has included the Vedic name, *Kṛttivāsāḥ*.

There is a story about the meeting between Ādi Śaṅkara and Amara Siṃha. Both Jainism and Buddhism expounded only truths which are within the comprehension of the intellect. Ādi Śaṅkara was able to convince Amara Siṃha that the ultimate Reality or *Īśvara Tattva*, is something beyond the reach of mere intellectual comprehension. Amara Siṃha thereupon started consigning all his writing to the flames. Ādi Śaṅkara rushed forward to prevent him from doing so, but was in time only to save the *Amara-kośa*, which has become a book of eternal value.

The *Gītā* also teaches us that the *Vedas* and the rites enjoined therein are not the be all and end all of our spiritual quest, but that there is also the Vedānta or the highest conception of the Supreme which transcends the intellect. It is up to us all to develop *Īśvara-bhakti* and derive happiness herein and hereafter.

The description of Śiva, the Lord of the universe, in this verse, can also be applied to the lion, the Lord of the jungle. *Pañcāsya* or *pañcamukha* is one of the names for the lion, derived from the fact that its head and mane together present a broad (*pañca*) appearance in contrast to its wiry body. While roaming about, the lion catches hold of deer with ease and also kills the elephant or tiger that crosses its path. Its den is known as *kuhara*, and when it is prowling

about, the other animals of the jungle remain hidden and motionless.

2. The Doctrine of Surrender

धनुः पौष्पं मौर्वी मधुकरमयी पञ्च विशिखा
 वसन्तः सामन्तो मलयमरुदायोधनरथः ।
 तथाऽप्येकः सर्वं हिमगिरिसुते कामपि कृपाम्
 अपाङ्गते लब्ध्वा जगदिदमनङ्गो विजयते ॥

What the grace of the Divine Mother can achieve is illustrated by Śrī Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda in this verse occurring in the *Saundarya-laharī*. Anaṅga, (Cupid) is able to conquer this world, though he is equipped only with a bow of sugarcane, whose string is composed of a row of bees, with five arrows of flowers, with only Vasanta (Spring) as his lieutenant, and with the *Malaya*-breeze as his chariot. Thus ill-equipped, from the standard of a warrior, he is able to achieve the feat of conquering the world, because he has obtained the grace of Śrī Pārvatī, daughter of the snow-capped mountain, conveyed through the glance from the corners of Her eyes.

In this Anaṅga's conquest of the world, the bow is sweet and brittle and the arrows are fragrant and soft. The person who wields the weapon is Anaṅga, one without any form. Yet, he derives his strength from the source of all strength, the grace of the Divine mother. Śrī Pārvatī as Dākṣāyaṇī consigns Herself to the flame of the *Yāga* of Her father, Dakṣa, unable to bear the abuse heaped upon Her Lord, Śiva, by Her own father, and earned the name of Satī. From this, the expression "Sati" came to be used when any woman immolated herself in the funeral pyre of her husband.

The function of a *Prabhu* or Lord is both protection and punishment. Śiva saved the world from disaster by swallowing the poison generated when the Ocean of Milk was churned. In other words, He took upon Himself the sins of the world in order to save humanity. It is this function of God which Christians attribute to Christ, namely, saving the sinners. Lord Śiva punished Cupid (Kāma) when the latter disturbed His penance; but restored him to life, though without form, at the entreaty of Rati and the intervention of Pārvatī. Śrī Pārvatī as Śrī Kāmākṣī or Śivakāmasundarī, is depicted as holding the bow and the arrows of Kāmadeva, controlling Kāma within Her eyes. Hence Kāmākṣī. She holds the sweet sugarcane bow representing the minds of human beings, and five arrows, representing the five senses through which the mind is influenced and is functioning, and won the grace of Lord Śiva, who alone, as the destroyer of Kāma and Kāla, is capable of saving us from the cycle of birth and death. If we surrender ourselves at the feet of the Divine Mother, in the manner in which Ādi Śaṅkara has taught us in the *Saundarya-lahari*, She will help us to keep the mind and the senses under control and purify our heart, so that we may attain perfection without being afflicted by *kāma* and *lobha* (lust and desires) and realise the ultimate Truth and achieve sublime peace and happiness.

3. Many Paths to the Same Goal

The dancing Naṭarāja and the reclining Raṅgarāja are but dual expressions of the one Supreme. Different schools of philosophy have come into existence to satisfy the needs of varying human temperaments, tastes and aspirations and any path, if consistently pursued, will lead to the same goal.

In most of our temples, the principal deity is installed to face east, though in a few temples we have the deity facing west also. In the latter case, the principal *gopuram* (tower) will be on the eastern side. But in Chidambaram and Śrīraṅgam, the deities face south, as if proclaiming to the devotees that they are there to protect them from the threat coming from the south, namely, mortality, as the God of Death, *Yama*, hails from that direction. As Lords of the entire created world, both are called "Rāja", and each holds His court in a *raṅga* (stage), the Lord of Chidambaram dancing in joy with uplifted leg and the Lord of Śrīraṅgam stretching himself at ease in the repose of *yoga-nidrā*. *Dakṣiṇāmūrti*, another aspect of Śiva, is also found facing south. *Naṭarāja* stands for *ānanda* (bliss) in excelsis, which expresses itself in the dynamic rhythm of ecstatic dance, His matted locks stretching out stiff as He whirls round with his *kuñcita-pāda*. *Dakṣiṇāmūrti* personifies subdued *ānanda* and He is depicted as being seated in silent serenity in static pose, with one crossed leg resting on the other and his locks gliding on his shoulders.

The *Māheśvara-sūtras* peal forth from *Naṭarāja*'s *dhakkā* (*Uḍukku*), as He beats it to keep time with His dance, and constitutes the basic alphabets of every tongue spoken in the world. The same sounds or *śabdās* are recorded in the pages of the book which *Dakṣiṇāmūrti* is holding in His left hand. *Ānanda-mudrā* is expressed by the right hand of *Naṭarāja*, while *Cin-mudrā* is expressed by *Dakṣiṇāmūrti*. We stand and gaze in wonder with eyes wide open at *Naṭarāja*'s dance, but we sit down to meditate with indrawn eyes in front of *Dakṣiṇāmūrti*. To the former we go for *darśana*, for feasting our eyes with the supreme majesty of

that manifestation, to the latter we go for *japa* or meditation, because He is the embodiment of the fullness of peace and bliss that comes as a result of *jñāna*. Raṅganātha has adopted the *nidrā-mudrā* - the sign of sleep. All these three, the *Ānanda-mūrti* (Natarāja), the *Dhyānamūrti* (Dakṣiṇāmūrti) and the *Yoganidrāmūrti* (Raṅganātha) face south to protect mankind from the fear of death.

The question that is likely to arise is "Why should there be three deities? Is not one enough?" The answer is given by Puṣpadanta in his *Śivamahimna-stotra*.

त्रयी सांख्यं योगः पशुपतिमतं वैष्णवमिति
 प्रभिन्ने प्रस्थाने परमिदमदः पथ्यमिति च ।
 रुचीनां वैचित्र्याद् ऋजुकुटिलनानापथजुषां
 नृणाम् एको गम्यस्त्वमसि पयसामर्णव इव ॥

The variety of schools, namely, *Vedas*, *Sāṅkhya*, *Yoga*, *Pāśupata*, and *Vaiṣṇava* came to be formulated to satisfy the varying tastes of men. Though their directions may appear to point differently, yet, as one pursues any school with the constancy ordained in it, after a shorter or longer journey, as the case may be, one will ultimately reach the Supreme, which is Omnipresent, even as all rivers flowing in different directions reach the ocean, which appears at land's end everywhere and envelops the globe in all directions. Like the ocean, the Supreme envelops all - *sarvaṁ āvṛtya tiṣṭhati*. To whatever school one may belong, one ought not to linger or stop on the way. If a person adheres to the chosen path without faltering, God will dower each votary, whatever his predilection, with constancy of faith to pursue his path with devotion. All of you are familiar with the scene at a railway station, as soon as a train arrives and the passengers emerge

out of the platform. A passenger will be stormed by drivers of a variety of conveyances, each trying to snatch his baggage in order to attract him to his vehicle. In whichever conveyance he ultimately decides to travel, his destination is his home. Similarly, the protagonists of each school of religious thought try to attract the seeker after truth by saying that their school is the easiest and surest way to realise the truth. When it is recognised that all paths lead to the same goal, there is no necessity to change the path one is already following. There is also no room for hatred towards a person following a different path. The temple, the God installed therein, and the form of worship, all these three may differ for different people, due to difference in taste. But what is required of one is to persist in the path one is following.

When the mind becomes ripe with the true knowledge of *Paramātmān*, the soul gets liberated from the bonds of birth and death. This liberation is called *mokṣa* or salvation. The *Tryambaka-mantra* epitomises the special kind of *mokṣa*, which accrues by the grace of Tryambaka, the three-eyed Śiva. The *mantra* conveys the meaning that one is released from mortality by the grace of Śiva in the same way as the cucumber fruit gets separated from its stalk, that is, automatically separated without even the cucumber being aware of its liberation from the creeper to which it has been all along lying attached. Every fruit, when fully ripe, is sweet, though it may have been bitter or sour when unripe. Similarly, when the soul becomes ripe through devotion, it is filled with the sweetness and joy that comes from *jñāna*. All fruits fall down from the branches on top, at the roots below, signifying that the root is their source, sustenance and ultimate sanctuary. The ripe soul, however, is the fruit of the tree of

saṁsāra, worldly bondage, whose roots are on top, *ūrdhva-mūlam* and whose branches grow down below (*adhah śākham*). So the passage of the liberated soul is upward, *ūrdhvagati*, and not downward or *adho-gati*. Strictly speaking, there is no *gati* or going, for the soul. It is released at the very place where it existed. That is why the example of cucumber fruit is given. This fruit does not fall down but gets itself detached from the stalk, or rather, the stalk gets itself detached, even without the fruit knowing it. Similarly, the liberated one does not give up the world; the world gives him up. Remembering that this life has been vouchsafed to us to get rid of future births and deaths, let us pray to the God of our heart, to obtain His grace to qualify for this kind of liberation of the soul, “cucumber *mukti*”.

4. Acquisition of Jñāna

All of us should strive to acquire *jñāna*. It is only then that we shall be able to endure any kind of suffering. No man can escape suffering in some form or other. Each of us has his or her share of suffering. We may think that a wealthy person, or one highly placed in life, is free from cares and anxieties, and, so thinking, may covet that wealth or that status in the belief that we can thereby get rid of our worries. But if you ask those persons, they will unburden to you their tale of woes. In fact, every man thinks that his suffering is the greatest, even as he thinks that he is the most handsome or the most wise. No person dares to express the latter two feelings openly; but each person thinks that his sufferings are greater than the sufferings of others and likes to parade them with a view to eliciting sympathy from others. In a sense, suffering seems to be our birth-right. Suffering is the

fruit of our actions in previous births. So, when we came into the world in the present birth, we came with the seeds of suffering deeply implanted into our being. There is no escaping from suffering.

But it is in us to blunt the edge of suffering. An idiot or a lunatic, a *jaḍa*, a *unmatta*, does not "suffer" as we do. He becomes impervious to suffering. But when this man is cured of his idiocy or lunacy, as the case may be, and he is normal like us, he becomes aware of suffering and begins to suffer as we do. Sleep is the soothing balm for all suffering. We are oblivious to suffering in dreamless sleep or *susupti*. The consciousness of suffering in waking life is negated in sleep. But we relapse into this consciousness when we wake up from sleep. The *jñānī* "sleeps to suffering" even when he is awake. It is not that he does not suffer in body; but it is that he does not suffer in mind. A heavy log of wood is not easily lifted or shifted; it requires a number of hands to do so. If the same log is immersed in water, it becomes light and even a child can move it without effort. Similarly, if we learn to immerse our load of suffering in the water of *jñāna*, it will become extremely light and we can make light of our suffering.

What is this *jñāna* that can lighten our suffering? It is knowing a thing as it really is. That is the quest of all scientists, namely, to arrive at the core of the truth of things. And we know that a scientist, engrossed in his research, loses himself in his pursuit and is undisturbed by any difficulty or distress. The pursuit of his research and the joy resulting from the knowledge he thereby acquires, far outweigh his personal suffering, which becomes very nearly non-existent to him.

We seek a *vaidya* or a *mantravādi* to cure our ills. But whatever relief either can give will only be temporary. The

remedy they prescribe will not drive out suffering from our system root and branch. The *jñānī*, however, is able to get over sufferings, because he develops a sense of imperviousness to it. Time is a great healer. Thirty years hence, our present woes, viewed in retrospect, will appear insignificant. We are also not afflicted by the sufferings of people in a distant place, as we are by the sufferings of people close to us. In the face of present and proximate sufferings also we must develop such a detachment. When a person who has acquired such a detachment is commiserated with for any loss or bereavement he has suffered, his reaction to the offer of sympathy will be: "It is not anything of much consequence. It came of its own accord and it went."

How much greater will be the sense of equanimity in the face of suffering when absolute *jñāna* dawns in the mind? To a *jñānī* there is no distinction such as friend or foe. He looks on all as *Paramātmān*. He allows nothing to irritate him. He detaches himself from his environment. He is not afflicted by sorrow or elated by joy. Such a sense of indifference and equanimity can come only from the knowledge of the ultimate Truth. This knowledge must be acquired gradually by intense meditation or *tapas*, as detailed in the Bhṛgu Vallī of the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*. Asking the question what is the purpose and purport of life (*kim saṁsāre sāram*), Śrī Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda answers, in his *Praśnottaramālikā*, that it is intense meditation on this question itself (*bhavo'pi vicintyamānam-idam-eva*).

The *jñāna* that ensues from such meditation alone will teach us to make light of our own sufferings and also prompt us to go to the help of others in distress, as a matter of duty. Engaging oneself in acts of public benevolence and devotion

to God produce *citta-śuddhi*, cleansing of heart, so necessary for meditation and *jñāna*. Such service is not for show or fame; but for chastening one's own mind. In fact, one ought not to expect gratitude for the service one renders. The ingratitude of the other person is the test of one's purity of motive and constancy of service. Rarely does the beneficiary feel benefited by the help rendered to him. By such service one does not help the other man so much as one helps oneself to have *citta-śuddhi*.

A true *jñānī* creates an atmosphere of detachment and holiness around him and draws innumerable people towards him. Such great *jñānīs* have arisen in the world, from time to time, no matter whatever religion they professed. All these prophets and saints proclaimed the same Truth, each in his own way, and if they happened to come back to life now and meet together, there will be perfect unity in their messages. It is the followers that have put into their mouths more than what they said and wrangle with others, freezing the original teachings, mangled in their hands into institutional forms, which foster narrowness and bigotry.

The test of a *jñānī* is whether all troubles and tribulations of life appear light to him. This attitude of the *jñānī* is the sure solvent for all our ills. To that end we should all strive, doing good deeds and entertaining devotion to God both of which will be futile unless oriented to that goal.

5. Surrender to God

No doubt, it is to some extent desirable, in this world, for a man to earn name and fame and also material wealth. All these things come to some people unasked. Others do not get them, however much they may try. But these things

do not attach themselves to us permanently. Either we leave them behind, or they desert us in our own life-time. Therefore, name, fame and wealth are not objectives for which we should consciously strive with all our energy. What we should aspire and strive for is a life free from sin.

There are two aspects to this freedom from sin. One is absolution from sins already committed (*pāpa-nāśam*) and the other is non-commission of sins hereafter, by purifying our mind and making it free from evil thoughts (*pāpa-buddhi*)

The former can be achieved by absolutely surrendering oneself to God, realising that He alone is our saviour, nothing happens without His knowledge, and that whatever happens to us, good or bad, is by His will and only for our ultimate good. Resigning oneself to the dispensation of God is the essence of absolute surrender or *śaraṇāgati*. We will be free from evil thoughts hereafter only by *bhakti* or devotion, that is to say, by devoting every free moment of ours to His thought or repeating His names or listening to His glories.

The claim of Christianity is that God appeared on earth to wash off our sins. It is sometimes argued that there is no corresponding conception in Hinduism. This is not correct. In the *Gītā*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa has given an assurance that He will absolve from sin those who surrender themselves to Him. The Lord says :

सर्वधर्मान् परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं व्रज ।

अहं त्वा सर्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि मा शुचः ॥

Śrī Kṛṣṇa asks Arjuna not to grieve telling him “I will free you from all sins (*sarvapāpebhyo mokṣayisyāmi*), if you give up all other *dharma* (*sarva-dharmān parityajya*), and surrender to Me absolutely (*māmekam śaraṇam vraja*)”. In

this context, the import of the expression, *sarva-dharmān parityajya* has to be understood correctly. The emphasis of the *Gītā* is on each man performing his prescribed duties in a spirit of dedication. Therefore, the call to “give up *dharma*” cannot be a message of inaction. Śrī Kṛṣṇa wants Arjuna, and through Arjuna all of us, to do the duties pertaining to our station in life. But what He wants us to give up is the notion that the performance of these duties will by itself lead us to the cherished goal. Śrī Kṛṣṇa wants us to perform our *dharma*, giving up the notion that they are the be-all and end-all of life, and surrender ourselves to Him without reservation.

In the verse previous to the one I have just quoted, Śrī Kṛṣṇa says :

मन्मना भव मद्भक्तो मद्याजी मां नमस्कुरु ।
मामेवैष्यसि सत्यं ते प्रतिजाने प्रियोऽसि मे ॥

When Śrī Kṛṣṇa says to Arjuna, “You are dear to me (*priyo’ si me*)” it means that all of us are dear to Him. So, when he gives the assurance “*satyaṁ te pratijāne*”, we can take it as an assurance given to all of us. The assurance is that we will reach Him (*māmevaiṣyasi*). For that purpose, we have to fix our thoughts on Him (*manmanā bhava*), become His devotees (*madbhakto bhava*), worship Him (*madyājī bhava*) and fall at His feet (*mām namaskuru*).

If we analyse one’s affection towards one’s son or wife, we will find that it ultimately resolves itself into one’s love for oneself. A man is fond of his son only so long as that son fulfils what he expects of him. Supposing that son gets married and neglects his father, the affection will turn into enmity. It follows that the affection we entertain is with a

purpose and not selfless. But there is no purpose or object behind one's love for oneself. When we come to realise that the "I" we love so much is "He", our mind becomes saturated with Him. That is the significance of the expression, "*manmanā bhava*". We think of Him not for securing any favours, but because we cannot help thinking of Him, having realised that the soul within us is none else than He. When this realisation takes deep root, the mind enters the state of *avyāja-bhakti*.

We have examples of such selfless devotion to God in our *Purāṇas*. Akrūra and Vidura had such *avyāja-bhakti*, Dhruva and Prahlāda are examples of those who surrendered themselves to God even from their childhood. Śabarī and Kaṇṇappar are examples of persons regarded as unlettered common people, on the bottom rungs of the social ladder, who are animated by an overwhelming devotion in which the consciousness of their individual entity has been completely wiped out. Parīkṣit is an example of one, who, within the last seven days of his life, experienced the bliss of devotion achieved in a life-time. Khaṭvāṅga is an example of a person who got purified by concentrated devotion of three and three-fourths *nāzhigās*, or 90 minutes.

While *śaraṇāgati* helps to "write off" past sins, *bhakti* alone will keep our minds away from sin. The heart has to be kept clean through *bhakti* so that the full effect of His presence there may be realised. In the ultimate analysis, surrender and devotion are the two facets of the same thing. In this life, all householders are engaged in various occupations necessary to maintain themselves. While so engaged, their minds will be concentrating on their work. But it is during their leisure that their minds are likely to go

astray. This leisure must be utilised in developing *bhakti*, through various process like *nāma-japa* (repeating God's name), *satsaṅga* (keeping holy company), *satkathāśravaṇa* (listening to Lord's glory), *pūjā* (worship), etc. The idea is to somehow keep our thoughts engaged on God. We should have no occasion to commit sin through mind, eyes, ears and speech. Even when we make any representations in our prayers, it should be in a spirit of detachment, namely, with the realisation that nothing is unknown to Him and with a feeling, "Let Him do with us as He pleases." Let us, in this way, strive to pursue the path of surrender and devotion, and earn the grace of God.

6. Value of Prayer

In this life we are faced with various kinds of difficulties, afflictions and sorrows. We go to a doctor to get relief for our bodily ailments. We approach numerous authorities for obtaining solution for our worldly problems. We also pray to God. Our great men have given guidance as to how to pray and what to pray for. There is one school of thought which says that we should pray to God only for our spiritual salvation. But there are others who think that we owe a duty to the members of the family, and, in the discharge of that duty, we have perforce to invoke the blessings of God by prayer. This is a proper approach and, therefore, even when we have to go to human agencies to get relief, we should first submit our difficulties and troubles to God.

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa says in the *Gītā* :

चतुर्विधा भजन्ते मां जनाः सुकृतिनोऽर्जुन ।
आर्तो जिज्ञासुरर्थार्थी ज्ञानी च भरतर्षभ ॥

Bhagavān mentions four categories of persons who pray to God. The first category is denoted by the term *ārtaḥ* i.e., those who are suffering physically and mentally, afflicted by diseases, pain, poverty, troubles, difficulties, etc. They pray to God to lighten their burden and make their existence tolerable. The second category of persons is denoted by the term *jijñāsu* those, who are thirsting for knowledge and are eager to get at the truth of things. The expression *arthārthī* denotes the class of people who are fairly well off in the world, but desire to be blessed with more of the good things of life, so that they can live free from troubles and sorrow and also serve others. The last category of persons is denoted by the term *jñānī*, those who have acquired *jñāna* or wisdom and realised the supreme Truth. They are people who have realised that there is nothing outside God and that all is God. Yet they too pray. Their prayer is described in the *Gītā* as prayer with the realisation that *Vāsudeva* is all (*Vāsudevaḥ sarvamiti*).

A person may have everything that contributes to happiness, and yet, if he has not developed the proper frame of mind, he cannot be happy and contented. When his mind is a slave to discontent, anger and envy, he cannot have peace and happiness. Like water kept in a leaky pot, everything he has will prove useless to him. Therefore, we should first of all seek God's help to cleanse our minds of all passions and impurities. Ādi Śaṅkara has given us proper guidance in the matter of prayer in his *Ṣaṭpadī stotram*, the opening verse of which is :

अविनयमपनय विष्णो दमय मनः शमय विषयमृगतृष्णाम् ।
भूतदेयां विस्तारय तारय संसारसागरतः ॥

Vinaya is a quality which is associated with a cultured gentleman. Gentleness, humility, consideration for others, freedom from egoism—these are some of the virtues we associate with *vinaya*. In fact, the purpose of education is to make one acquire *Vinaya* (*Vidyā-vinaya-sampannaḥ*). According to our *Śāstras*, a *Guru's* (teacher's) duty is to inculcate *vinaya* in his pupils. So also, the primary duty of the king is to see that his subjects are people endowed with the virtue of *vinaya*. Then his second duty is to protect his subjects, i.e. to see that they get education, and are gainfully employed and are free from wants. Governing and protecting his subjects from external aggression and internal disorders come last—*Vinayādhāna*, *rakṣaṇa* and *bharaṇa*.

Because of the emphasis on *vinaya*, the expression *vineya* is used to denote a disciple. The meaning of the word *vineya* is one who is to be equipped with *vinaya*. Śrī Padmapāda in a verse in praise of Ādi Śaṅkara, says:

यद्वक्त्रमानससरः प्रतिलब्धजन्म
 भाष्यारविन्दमकरन्दरसं पिबन्ति ।
 प्रत्याशमुन्मुखविनीतविनेयभृङ्गाः
 तान् भाष्यवित्तकगुरुन् प्रणतोऽस्मि मूर्ध्ना ॥

This verse describes the disciples of Śrī Bhagavatpāda as “bees (*bhr̥ṅgāḥ*) drinking the nectar of *bhāṣya* flowing from the lotus face of Śaṅkara”. The expression used to indicate the disciples is “*vinītavineya bhr̥ṅgāḥ*”. The special significance of this expression is that these *vineyas* (pupils coming to be equipped with *vinaya*) have become *vinīta* (persons possessing the virtue of *vinaya*) by the mere presence of the Guru. A student is called *śiṣya* in Sanskrit, because he has to undergo training or *śikṣā* under a Guru. In

the present day, the term *śikṣā* is applied either for training in music or for punishment. Probably the term Sikh must have been derived from *śikṣaka* or Guru. The religious head of the Sikhs is known as Guru. The followers being his *śiṣyas* or those who had undergone *śikṣā* under him, the term Sikh probably came to be used to denote the followers.

Therefore, in the *Ṣaṭpadī-stotra*, Ādi Śaṅkara prays to God to remove *avinaya*, evils like arrogance, which are opposite qualities to *vinaya*. *Avinaya* is an accretion that comes to be attached to persons, and if that is removed, *vinaya* will express itself naturally. Then Ādi Śaṅkara prays to God to keep his mind under control (*damaya manah*). When the mind is brought under control, it will cease to race after transient pleasures, and will remain steady in the thought of God. The next prayer is to eradicate the desires prompted by the senses (*śamaya viśaya-mṛga-tṛṣṇām*) when we no longer hanker after wordly pleasures. Our heart begins to beat in harmony with the rest of the world, and we acquire a broad and sympathetic outlook. So Ādi Śaṅkara next prays to enlarge his compassion for all creation (*bhūta-dayām vistāraya*). When the mind is so elevated spiritually step by step, the inevitable result will be the end of birth and death or the crossing of the ocean of *samsāra*. So he prays, *tāraya samsāra-sāgarataḥ*.

There is an aptness in the use of the term *mṛga-tṛṣṇā* in connection with pleasures of the senses. The meaning of *mṛga* is deer. When there is drought and deer are wandering in quest of drinking water, they drift towards the desert. They mistake the mirage in the desert for drinking water and run in pursuit of it and ultimately collapse and die. Similarly *kāma*, *krodha* and other passions, generated in us by our

senses, are like mirage which drives us ultimately to our destruction.

When speaking of the desert, another interesting thought occurs. Probably due to certain geological causes, deserts have come to be formed in places which were once an expanse of the sea. Sahara is a desert and the name might have been derived from *sāgara*, the Sanskrit term for the sea. By reason of these expanses being landlocked, and the absence of rivers flowing into them and on account of continuous process of evaporation by the sun's heat through the ages, the "*sāgara*" became "*sahara*". In India, there are deserts in Rajasthan and in Sanskrit, a desert is called *maruvāṭikā*. The terms Marwar and Marwadi are likely to have been derived from *maruvāṭikā*.

The *Ṣaṭpadī-stotra* is a beautiful composition. In one of the verses, Ādi Śaṅkara has employed the poetical technique known as *Antādi*, the word with which one verse ends being used as the opening word of the next verse. The verse in question is:

उद्धृतनग नगभिदनुज दनुजकुलामित्र मित्रशशिदृष्टे ।
दृष्टे भवति प्रभवति न भवति किं भवतिरस्कारः ॥

It will be noticed that Śrī Bhagavatpāda has employed the last word in a phrase, as the first word for the next phrase in the same *śloka*. After the six verses of the *Ṣaṭpadī-stotra*, the seventh and concluding verse is:

नारायण करुणामय शरणं करवाणि तावकौ चरणौ ।
इति षट्पदी मदीये बदनसरोजे सदा वसतु ॥

The beauty of this verse is that expression *iti ṣaṭpadī* (foregoing *ṣaṭpadī* or six verses) is applicable not only to six

verses that have preceded, but also to the six words, *nārāyaṇa*, *karuṇāmaya*, *śaraṇam*, *karavāṇi*, *tāvakaḥ*, and *carāṇau*, occurring at the beginning of this verse itself. Bhagavatpāda says : “Let these six verses (and also the six words of the last verse) reside always in my mouth”, meaning, bless me to constantly repeat them, even as the *ṣaṭpadī* (bee) resides in a lotus (*saroje*).

The sixth verse in this *stotra* is:

दामोदर गुणमन्दिर सुन्दरखदनारविन्द गोविन्द ।
भवजलधिमन्थनमन्दर परमं दामपतेय त्वं मे ॥

The Lord, addressed in this verse as Dāmodara, one who bears the marks of the rope with which he was tied up by His mother, Yaśodā, is described as *Guṇamandira*, the abode of all qualities. Here is a beautiful synthesis of the conception of God as both *saguṇa* (possessing attributes) and *nirguṇa* (attributeless). It is only when all the colours in the light mix together that we get the colourless rays of the sun. Similarly, by virtue of being the abode of attributes, God becomes *Nirguṇa*, attributeless. In the like manner, the term “*sundaravadanāravinda*”, in this *śloka*, brings to our mind the idea that even people who have realised God like to contemplate on God. Even when they have experienced the bliss flowing from the realisation of the identity of the *jīvātman* and the *paramātman*, and have also realised that God is in everything and everything is in God, they prefer to put aside, for a little while, the experience of this oneness with God, and to contemplate on Him as One slightly different from themselves, like the apparent difference between the waves and the ocean, and to enjoy the darling divine form of Kṛṣṇa. Śrī Madhusūdana Sarasvatī, that great apostle of

advaita, in one of his verses, finds indescribable beauty even in the yawning of the child; Kṛṣṇa, as He gets up in the morning. The expression “*bhavajaladhimandara*”, brings home to us the fact that we have to find salvation only by going through the trials and tribulations of this life. The taste of the thousands of leaves and barks of a tree may be disagreeable. Yet it blossoms and yields sweet fruits. The trials and tribulations of family life are but necessary steps leading to the sweetness of salvation. The only condition required is that we should not lose our hold of God, who is the churning stick (*mandara*) to churn the *amṛta* of salvation from the ocean of births and deaths.

It is significant to note that while the teaching of the Lord in the *Gītā* begins with the words, *aśocyān anvaśocastvam* (you grieve over persons unfit to be grieved for), and ends with *mā śucaḥ* (don't grieve). The *Ṣaṭpadī-stotra* of Ādi Śaṅkara begins with *avinayam apanaya* and ends with *apanaya tvam me*.

The prayer of Ādi Śaṅkara to bless him to recite the *Ṣaṭpadī-stotra* constantly is meant for us. Let these verses and the prayers contained therein be constantly on our lips, so that we can safely cross the ocean of *saṁsāra*, and find refuge in Him.

GLIMPSES OF VEDIC LITERATURE - II*

Kireet Joshi

V
Ṛg-veda

In these introductory notes, we have seen briefly the universality of the Veda and its emphasis on goodwill. We shall now consider here the real basis of this universality and the importance it attaches to goodwill. The real basis is the Vedic vision of oneness and unity of existence. This vision is the opposite of our normal perception of division and surprising unconnectedness despite discontinuous connections and relations. The vision of oneness and unity is termed by the Veda as knowledge, *vidyā*; our normal experience of division is termed ignorance, *avidyā*. The aim of the Veda is to lead us to knowledge as also to lifting of the mystery of

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ignorance by a wonderful consciousness of one Reality which reconciles the One and the Many.

There is a famous statement of the *Ṛg-veda*, which affirms the oneness of the Reality in the following words:

ekaṁ sad viprā bahudhā vadanti. (1.164.46)

There is One, which the wise call by many names.

The words appear in the very first *Maṇḍala* of the *Ṛg-veda*. In the last *Maṇḍala* also, the Veda repeats the same idea in somewhat different words:

*suparṇaṁ viprāḥ kavayo vacobhirekaṁ santaṁ
bahudhā kalpayanti.* (10.114.5)

The sages imagine and describe the one Being variously.

In the first *Maṇḍala*, (1.170), there is a very illuminating dialogue between Indra and Agastya. In the dialogue, Indra reveals to Agastya the nature of the one Reality. Indra declares:

*na nūnamasti no śvaḥ kastad veda yadadbhutam
anyasya cittamabhi sañcareṇyam-utādhītaṁ vi naśyati.*

It is not now, nor is It tomorrow; who knoweth That which is supreme and wonderful? It has motion and action in the consciousness of another, but when It is approached by the thought, It vanishes.

This verse brings out the following important characteristics of the one Reality: (1) It is not now, nor is It tomorrow. It is, in other words, beyond time and space. It is eternal. (2) It cannot be known by that which is in space and time. Our thinking which is moving within the bounds of space and

time cannot know It. (3) If, therefore, we try to reach It by thought, we shall fail to seize It. We have, therefore, to go beyond thought; we should take the help of Indra, who symbolises a consciousness above our thought; with that help we can approach It.

In the *Kātha Upaniṣad* (III.i.10-11), Yama reveals to Naciketas the nature of the one Reality and the means of knowing It in the following words:

The objects of sense are higher than the senses (ears, eyes, etc.); and mind is higher than the objects of sense; and the faculty of knowledge is higher than the mind; and the great Self is higher than the faculty of knowledge.

And higher than the great Self is the unmanifest and higher than the unmanifest is the *puruṣa*: none is higher than the *puruṣa*.

He is the culmination, He is the highest goal of the journey.

This Upaniṣad (II.i.12 and 23) throws light on how that *puruṣa* can be known:

Not with the mind has man the power to get Him, no, nor through speech, nor by the eyes...

The Self is not to be won by eloquent teaching, nor by brainpower, nor by much learning; but only he whom this Being chooses can win Him; for to him this Self bares his body.

When every desire, that finds lodging in the heart of man, has been loosened from its moorings, then this mortal puts on immortality; even he tastes that Reality, in this human body. (Ibid., III.i.14)

That there is one Reality behind this universe and that it can be known by transcending our ignorant mind are described in a profound manner in the *Īśāvāsya Upaniṣad* (which is the last chapter of the *Yajur Veda*). We shall take only a few verses:

All this is for habitation by the Lord, whatsoever there is movement in the universal motion. By that, renounced thou shouldst enjoy; covet not any man's possession. (1)

Into a blind darkness they enter who follow after the ignorance; they enter as if, into a greater darkness, who devote themselves to the knowledge alone. (9)

He who knows That as both in one, the knowledge and the ignorance, by the ignorance crosses beyond death, and by the knowledge enjoys immortality. (11)

It is the knowledge of the One, and therefore the knowledge of oneself in all and of all in oneself that provides the Vedic foundation for universality and goodwill for every one and everything. As the *Īśāvāsya Upaniṣad* (6-7) declares:

But he who sees everywhere the Self in all existences and all existences in the Self, shrinks not thereafter from aught. He in whom it is the Self-Being that has become all existences that are Becomings, for he has the perfect knowledge, how shall he be deluded; whence shall he have grief who sees everywhere oneness?

These immortal words require no comments. They only spur us to the needed effort for realisation.

VI

The supreme Reality is, according to the Veda, "That One" spoken of variously by the wise. This Reality came to be described in the Upaniṣads as *sat-cit-ānanda*, the pure conscious and blissful existent. In the Veda we find that it is described often as *sat*. It is also described as blissful. It is again described as conscious, and as force of concentrated consciousness, *tapas*. The Veda also speaks of It as *tripād*, the threefold Substance.

In an intriguing description of the totality of Reality and its manifestation, the Veda speaks of it as one having four horns and three feet (*catvāri śṛiṅgā trayo asya pādāḥ*). Evidently, the four horns symbolize the upper domain of Reality; and three feet symbolize the lower domain of Reality. It is also clear that the three feet would mean the three lower principles of manifestation with which we, living in the lower world, are quite familiar, namely, matter, life and mind. We can also see that of the four horns, three horns are those of *sat*, *cit* and *ānanda*. But what is the fourth horn, which is in the upper domain?

We presume that a reply to this question is in the following hymn (*sūkta*) of the *Rg-veda*, composed by Ṛṣi Aghamarṣaṇa. The first line of the first verse of this hymn runs thus:

From the *tapas* (force of concentrated consciousness) arose the Truth and the Right.

As we saw earlier, the Veda often describes the supreme Reality as *sat*, but also sometimes as *tapas*. This *sat* or *tapas* is the threefold substance, *Sat-cit-ānanda*, the three horns of

the upper domain of the Reality. We are now told that out of this *tapas* arose the Truth and the Right, which are also described elsewhere as the Great or *mahaḥ*. This is the fourth horn of the upper domain of the Reality. The totality of the Reality is thus sevenfold. The four upper domains are:

<i>sat</i>	Existence
<i>cit</i>	Consciousness - Force
<i>ānanda</i>	Bliss
<i>mahaḥ</i>	The Truth and the Right (<i>satyam, ṛtam</i>)

And the three feet, i.e. the three lower principles are:

<i>dyauḥ</i>	Mind
<i>antarikṣa</i>	Life
<i>pṛthvī</i>	Matter

These are the seven principles that we find present everywhere. That is why, the Veda also describes the Reality elsewhere as *saptahastāso asya*, seven-handed. But the Veda tells us something more about the order in which the Reality has manifested the universe; and this is quite important for the Vedic science. Let us turn to this account, which is given in the second and subsequent lines of the hymn of Ṛṣi Aghamarṣaṇa. The second line runs as follows:

tato rātryajāyata tataḥ samudro arṇavaḥ (1.190.1)

Then arose the night, and from it arose the watery ocean.

We may halt a little at this point to ask a question with some bewilderment. The question arises because of the following position: We may recall that in the first line we were told that from the Reality, which is *tapas*, the Truth and the Right arose. Here the emergence of Truth from *tapas* or

sat seems quite natural and logical. But in the second line we are told that from the Truth, *satyam*, what arose was the darkness of the night. And this seems quite surprising or even shocking and illogical. How can darkness arise from the Truth? We find a hint or even an explicit indication of the answer to this question in the last chapter of the *Yajurveda*. (This chapter is, as noted above, also well known as the *Īśāvāsya Upaniṣad*). The relevant Mantra (15) of the Upaniṣad reads as follows:

*hiraṇmayena pātreṇa satyasyāpihitam mukham
tattvam pūṣannapāvṛṇu satyadharmāya dr̥ṣṭaye.*

The face of Truth is covered with a brilliant golden lid; that do thou remove, O Fosterer, for the law of the Truth, for sight.

This means that the Truth as the first emergent of *tapas* can get covered by a brilliant golden lid. This lid is so effective that if the face of the Truth is sought to be seen, that lid needs to be lifted. But what is that lid? By what means does it get formed? Surely, the means can be *tapas* itself, since there is nothing else than that, *sat* which is *tapas*. *Tapas* by its very nature is concentration of Consciousness-Force; and this concentration can be of various kinds; it can be integral; it can be exclusive. In its action of exclusive concentration, by its intensity and persistence, it can create the lid.

This is what we can see in our own ordinary psychological functioning, where, by means of concentration on one point, we can relegate our awareness of all the rest in the background. But once this operation becomes effective, that concentration can serve as a barrier, as a lid. In the beginning that lid may be transparent, even brilliant. But there arises

also a further possibility of turning that lid to be thicker, even opaque. And once this opaqueness is achieved, the radiation of light becomes more and more difficult. (Analogically, this is what happens when the radiating light is drawn back from the internal pull of gravitation to such a great extent that the object radiates no light at all, and we get the phenomenon of the black hole.) The last stage of the operation of the exclusive concentration of consciousness would be that of any abysmal sleep. It is this which is described by the Veda as the night of darkness. In other words, the Veda states that after the emergence of the Truth and the Right from the *tapas*, there emerged the night; and this is further described as watery ocean, *samudro arṇavaḥ*, which is a symbol of darkness.

The next steps of emergence are rapidly described. In the hush of the night, there begins the process of ascent from below and descent from above in accordance with a specific preconceived purpose. As a result, there comes about alterations of light and darkness; ascent from darkness towards light of the Truth, and the descent of light of the Truth towards the darkness to transform it. Days of light are followed by the nights of darkness, which are again followed by days of light, and so on, *ahorātrāṇi*. As a result of this movement, a stair is built up between the luminous Truth, the Sun of knowledge, and the dense unconscious Matter. The Sun is always associated with delight, symbolised by *soma* or Moon, *candramas*. Below the realm of knowledge and delight is formed the realm of the Heaven of the mind, *divam*; and below it is the realm of Matter, *prthvī*,—with the realm of Life, *antarikṣa*, as a link between Mind and Matter. And, finally, there is the luminous world of *sva*, a passage

for ascent from Matter, Life and Mind and for descent from the world of Truth and Delight.

Let us go back to the text of the hymn and hear directly from the Ṛṣi Aghamarṣaṇa:

samudrādarṇavādadhī samvatsaro ajāyata
ahorātrāṇi vidadhad viśvasya miṣato vaśī. 1.190.2.
sūryācandramasau dhātā yathā pūrvamakalpayat
divaṁ ca pṛthivīm cāntarikṣamatho suvaḥ. 1.190.3

From the Watery Ocean there emerged the movement of descent and ascent (*samvatsara*); consequently, the alteration of light and darkness (*ahorātrāṇi*) ordained by the ruler of Time (or moment-to-moment movement). 1.190.2

As pre-planned by the Creator, there arose the sun and the moon; the heaven and the earth with the intermediate world, and then the world of *sva*, the heaven of descending light. 1.190.3

VII

Yajur-veda

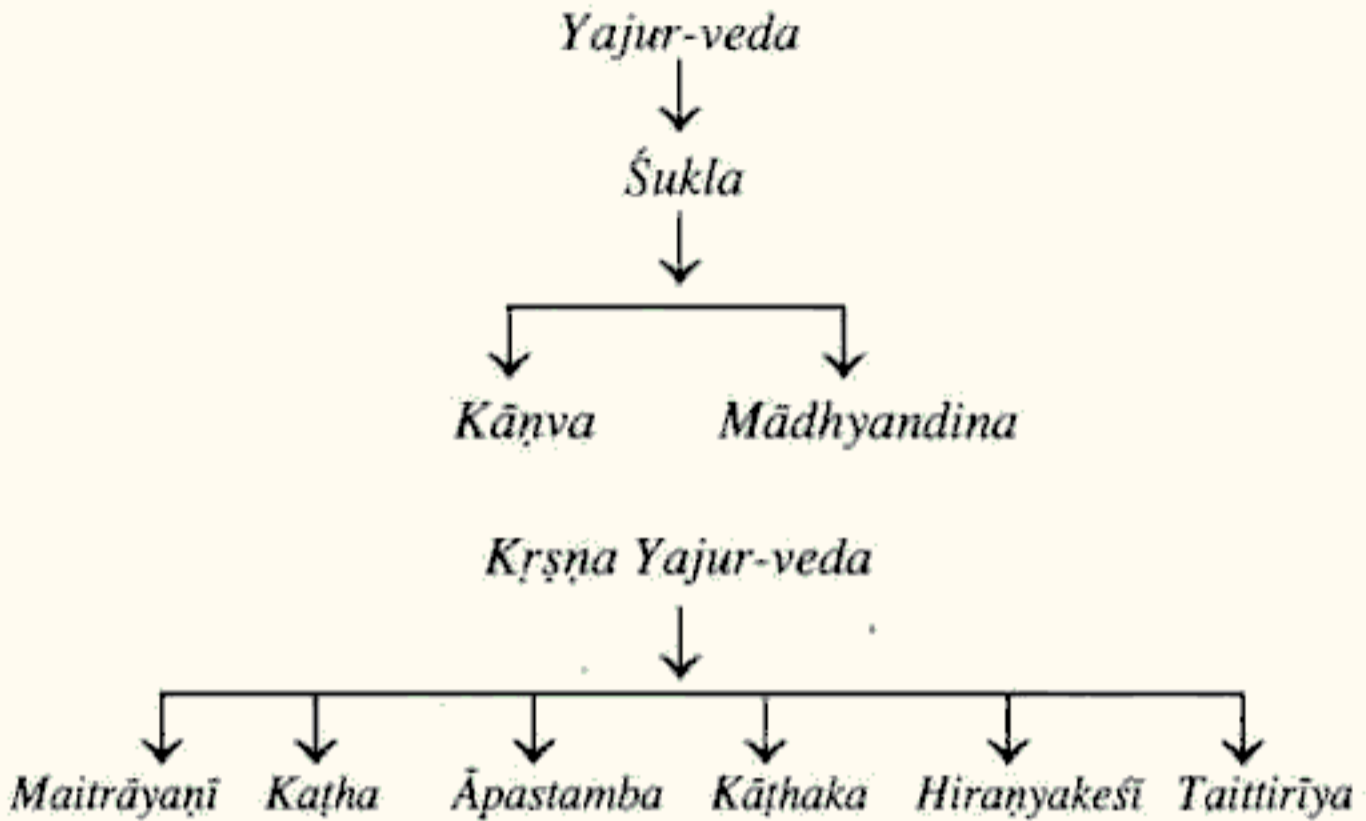
Mantras of the *Rg-veda* are all in poetic form. But the Mantras of the *Yajur-veda* are principally in prose form. The word “*yajus*” is derived from the root “*yaj*” which means to consecrate, to offer, to sacrifice. The Mantras of the *Yajur-veda* are, therefore, devoted to acts of sacrifice.

Sacrifice is understood primarily in its ritualistic sense; and the *Yajur-veda* itself speaks of various kinds of ritualistic sacrifices. Rituals of various sacrifices were laid down in

detail, and they are expected to be performed with meticulous care. There is a belief among ritualists that the rites, if properly performed, are effective and produce desired results. The important rites are related to sacrifices called “*Cāturmāsya*”, “*Vājapeya*”, “*Aśvamedha*”, and “*Rājasūya*”. But apart from the ritualistic meaning, sacrifice has also an inner meaning. It is this inner meaning which is extremely important. Every action is inwardly a sacrifice, if it is done as an offering to the Divine. All inner offering is received by the Divine, and the Divine receives by Himself offering something of His divine nature to the doer of action. When this process of offering of the doer and the offering of the Divine in the act of receiving is repeated again and again, in every act, in every manner of being, the Divine begins to take charge of the doer and, eventually, the doer is transformed into the divine worker; he becomes the channel of the divine will. The ultimate result that ensues is the occurrence of the divine event, with all its splendour, glory, miraculousness, and incalculable consequence for the world.

The *Yajur-veda* is fundamentally the secret science of the divine events, which can alter what is pre-planned or pre-destined by the power of human will, human action, *karma*. The basic teaching of the *Yajur-veda* is that *karma* can be altered, that humanly destined events can be prevented, modified, transformed by means of intense processes of inner sacrifice.

There are two main versions of the *Yajur-veda*: *Śukla Yajur-veda* and *Kṛṣṇa Yajur-veda*. At one time, there were 101 *śākhās* or branches. But over centuries, most of them have become extinct, and we have only the following *śākhās* as shown in the following table:



The (*Vājasaṇeyī*) *Yajur-veda* has 40 chapters; it has 29,625 words, and 88,875 letters. More than one third of the Mantras of the *Yajur-veda* have been taken from the *Ṛg-veda*. The last chapter of *Śukla-Yajur-veda* is the famous *Īśāvāsya Upaniṣad*, to which we have made reference earlier. But as this Upaniṣad is very important, we may give a brief idea of its main contents. It has eighteen Mantras. Its main message is as follows.

tena tyaktena bhujñīthāḥ. (1)

By that renounced, thou shouldst enjoy.

This *Upaniṣad* has four movements. In the first, it is declared that the entire universe is inhabited by the Spirit. On that basis, the rule of a divine life for man is founded,—enjoyment of all, by renunciation of all, through the exclusion of desire. There is then declared the justification of works and the physical life. In the second movement, the basis of fulfilment of the rule of life is found in the experience of unity by which

man identifies himself with the cosmic and transcendental Self and with all its becomings, but with an entire freedom from grief and illusion. In the third movement vidyā and avidyā, knowledge and ignorance are reconciled by their mutual utility to the progressive self-realization which proceeds from the state of mortality to the state of immortality. In the fourth movement, the relation of supreme Truth and immortality and the activities of the life are symbolically indicated. The prayer to Agni, which is given in the last mantra of this chapter is very famous. It runs as follows:

*agne naya supathā rāye asmān viśvāni deva vayunāni vidvān
yuyodhyasmajjuhurāṇamenobhūyiṣṭhām te nama
uktim vidhema.*

O Agni, Being of the illumined will, knowing all things that are manifested, lead us by the good path to the felicity; remove from us the devious attraction of sin. To Thee, with most complete speech of submission, we dispose ourselves.

VIII

Sāma-veda

After the *Ṛg-veda* and the *Yajur-veda*, we turn now to the *Sāma-veda*. This Veda is shortest of all the four Vedas, and most of its hymns have been taken from the *Ṛg-veda*. The total number of verses in the *Sāma-veda* is 1875. The *Sāma-veda* has this speciality that its hymns are chanted by the priests called *Udgātṛs* (singers). In the ritualistic tradition, these hymns are sung at those important sacrifices in which the juice of the Soma plant, clarified and mixed with milk

and other ingredients, was offered in libation to various deities.

In the process of chanting or singing, the hymns are prolonged and repeated; some syllables are inserted, and there are prescriptions about various modulations and rests. If one looks at the text of the *Sāma-veda*, one will find figures such as 1, 2, 3, 2, 3, 1, 2, indicated on the letters of the verses. These figures are symbols to guide the length of the pronunciation and modulation of the tune of the melody. This is the beginning of the musical science that developed in India. Different *rāgas* of Indian music have emerged from the melodies of the *Sāma-veda*.

According to Yāska, *Sāma* has three meanings:

1. *Sa+Ama*, where *Sa* stands for heaven and *Ama* stands for life-breath and song;
2. *Sa+Ama*, where *Sa* stands for knowledge and *Ama* stands for works.
3. *Sa+Ama*, where *Sa* stands for the divine power and *Ama* stands for the individual soul.

According to the ancient tradition, the *Sāma-veda* had 1,000 recensions, *Śākhās*. But at present, there are only three recensions extant. These three are: *Kauthuma*, *Jaiminīya*, and *Raṇāyanīya*. *Kauthuma-śākhā* is more prominently known. *Kauthuma* has two parts. The first part is called *Pūrvārcika*; the second part is called *Uttarārcika*. In the *Pūrvārcika*, there are two kinds of songs, *grāmageya* and *araṇyageya*. In the former, the songs are related to the sound *Ūha*. In the latter, they are related to the sound *Uhya*. In the *Uttarārcika*, Mantras are related to seven performance, viz. (i) *Daśarātra*, (ii) *Sāmvatsara*,

(iii) *Ekāha*, (iv) *Ahīna*, (v) *Satra*, (vi) *Prāyaścitta*, and (vii) *Kṣudra*.

An important part of the *Sāma-veda* is called *Mahānāmni Ārcika*. This *Ārcika* occurs between the first part of the *Sāma-veda* and the second part. It consists of only ten verses. They form some of the most sublime prayers of the Veda. These verses are as follows:

1. O God, Thou art omniscient. Guide us on the right path. Teach us how to reach our goal. O Lord of all powers, Most opulent, teach us Thy laws!
2. O most conscious and glorious Lord, all-pervading like the Sun, make us full of knowledge, with these spiritual meditations, for acquiring life and light of learning!
3. O Lord! Thou art the greatest giver, remover of sins. Thou art verily the mighty. O omnipresent powerful Lord, equip us with wealth, knowledge and spiritual force. O mighty Master, make us strong. Manifest Thyself in our heart. Accept our adoration. May Thou ever remain blissful with the drink of our purity offered to Thee.
4. O God, grant us the force to acquire knowledge. Thou art most heroic amongst the heroes. O the Almighty, O sin-destroyer, Thou art the Lord of all sciences and forces. Thou controllest thy subjects for their betterment.
5. He is the most charitable amongst all the wealthy people. He is pure like the Sun. O omniscient and

glorious God, lead us on for acquiring knowledge and strength. Praise Him alone, O man.

6. Verily, the Almighty, original Being rules over all. For our protection, we invoke that Unconquerable conqueror. He totally destroys our feelings of enmity. He is full of knowledge and action. He is our protector from sins, the supramental, vast and truth.
7. For acquiring prosperity, we invoke the Lord, the unconquerable Conqueror. He entirely destroys our feelings of enmity.
8. O indivisible God, O settler of all, grant us for our felicity, the immemorial, all-pervading, gladdening nature. O mighty Lord, the accomplishment of an action alone is praiseworthy. O omnipotent Lord, Thou rulest over all. I adore Thee, worthy of adoration!
9. O all-powerful, vice-destroying God, we sing Thy praise in man's pilgrimages for progress. Thou art wise, who lives in rays of Light, the Friend, worthy of service and peerless.
10. O Lord, Thou art the same as above.
 O Lord, Thou art resplendent Agni as described.
 O refulgent Lord, Thou art that same Indra.
 O Lord, Thou art the increasing Sun!
 O God! Thou art those very Gods! (*Sāma-veda*, 641- 650)

IX

Atharva-veda

The *Atharva-veda* has been looked upon as the Veda of secret and occult knowledge. It contains numerous Mantras from the *R̥g-veda*, the *Yajur-veda* and the *Sāma-veda*. The *Atharva-veda* has 20 *Kāṇḍas*, which have 34 *prapāṭhakas*, 111 *anuvākas*, 739 *sūktas* and 54,849 *mantras*. About 1200 mantras are common with those of the *R̥g-veda*. The sixth of the *Atharva-veda* is in prose, while the rest is poetic.

There is a legend in the *Gopatha Brāhmana* about *Atharvan* and *Aṅgiras*, after whom the fourth Veda has been named. According to this legend, Brahman undertook intense *tapasyā* for the creation of the universe. Consequently, two streams of sweat began to flow on his body. From one flow there emerged Sage Bhṛgu, who came to be known as Atharvan; from the other flow there emerged Sage Aṅgiras. The collection of mantras which was spread as *Atharva-veda* is also known *Atharvāṅgirasa*.

The *Atharva-veda* has two kinds of Mantras: (i) those relating to the cure of diseases and destruction of wild animals, *piśācas* and adverse forces; and (ii) those relating to establishment of peace in the family and village as also those relating to health, wealth, protection and friendship with enemies. Apart from these two categories of Mantras, the most important relate to the nature of the ultimate Reality, time, human personality, death and immortality.

According to Patañjali, the *Atharva-veda* has nine *śākhās*, but today only two *śākhās* are alive, namely, *Paippalāda* and *Śaunaka*. The *Atharva-veda* is believed to

be the origin of the *Āyur-veda*, the Indian science of medicine. It recognises a number of diseases, and it attributes them not only to physical causes but also, more importantly, to psychological causes, including *karma* and influence of adversary forces. A series of Mantras are related to practices designed to cure fever, nightmare, hemorrhage, toothache, serpent bite and madness. There are also prayers addressed to medicinal plants. There are also *mantras* concerning birth and death.

The Veda looks upon human life as a journey beset with difficulties and adverse forces; human life is, therefore, a battle in which human soul is connected with the physical and supraphysical worlds. In the battle, the Veda requires human beings to know how these worlds are interrelated, and how the forces of these worlds, gods and demons influence them as helpers or adversaries. The Veda does not teach escape from life and its problems, but analyses issues of life meticulously and reveals knowledge needed to deal with them so that the goal of fulfilment and immortality is attained. It is against this background that the *Atharva-veda*'s references to the issues of human life can be rightly understood.

According to one view, the *Atharva-veda* is a later composition, later than the *Ṛg-veda*, the *Yajur-veda* and the *Sāma-veda*. In support of this view, it has been pointed out that the Vedic knowledge has been referred to as triple knowledge, *trayī vidyā*, consisting of the *Ṛg-veda*, the *Yajur-veda* and the *Sāma-veda*. According to another view, the phrase triple knowledge refers to the *Ṛg*, *Yajus* and *Sāma mantras*, and since they are to be found not only in the *Ṛg-veda*, the *Yajur-veda* and the *Sāma-veda*, but also in the *Atharva-veda*, "triple knowledge" includes the *Atharva-veda*

also. At the same time, it has been noted that the *Atharva-veda* presents a geographical and cultural picture of life which is somewhat different from the one found in the *R̥g-veda*. But merely on this ground or similar other grounds, it is difficult to declare that the *Atharva-veda* is later than the *R̥g-veda*.

A very important hymn of the *Atharva-veda* is related to the earth. It is called the *Pr̥thivī-sūkta*, and it is directly relevant to the contemporary concern for environmental harmony. Apart from physical aspects of the earth, this *sūkta* also declares that the stability of the earth and of physical consciousness is rooted in the superconscient, which is characterized by *satyam*, *ṛtam*, and *br̥had*, the truth, the right and the vast. The *Pr̥thivī-sūkta* underlines the supraphysical basis of the physical. Let us study a few selected verses of this *sūkta* (hymn):

*satyaṁ br̥hadṛtamugraṁ dīkṣā tapo brahma
yajñāḥ pṛthivīm dhārayanti.
sā no bhūtasya bhavyasya patnyurum̐ lokam̐ pṛthivī
naḥ kṛnotu. 12.1*

Great truth, formidable right, consecration,
penance, Brahman, sacrifice sustain the earth; let
her for us, mistress of what is and what is to
be,—let the earth make for us wide room (*loka*).

*yārṇave'dhi salilamagra āsīt yām̐ māyābhiranva-
caram̐ manīṣiṇāḥ
yasyā hṛdayaṁ parame vyomantsatyenāvṛtam-
amṛtam pṛthivyāḥ
sā no bhūmistviṣim̐ balaṁ rāṣṭre dadhātūtame. 12.8*

*nidhim bibhratī bahudhā guhā vasu maṇim hiraṇyam
 pṛthivī dadātu me
 vasūni no vasudā rāsamānā devī dadhātu sumanasyamānā.*
 12.44

Bearing treasure in various secret ways, let the earth give me the stuff of being, jewel, and gold; giver of good, bestowing good things on us, let the divine mother earth shower all this with her mind filled with grace.

*janam bibhratī bahudhā vivācasam nānādharmāṇam
 pṛthivī yathaukasam
 sahasram dhārā draviṇasya me duhām dhruveva
 dhenuranapasphurantī.*
 12.45

Let the earth, bearing variously people of different speech, of diverse laws of development (*dharmān*), appropriate to their homes, yield (*duh*) me a thousand streams of prosperity, like a steady (*dhruva*) unresisting milch-cow.

The hymns of the *Atharva-veda* can be classified into the following ten groups:

1. Remedial hymns for curing diseases, physical and mental. These are called *bhaiṣajyāni* mantras.
2. Prayers for health and long life. These are called *āyusyāni* mantras.
3. Spells to secure harmony in a family, assembly, village, etc. These are called *sammanasyāni* mantras.
4. Hymns to secure happiness and prosperity. These are called *pauṣṭikāni* mantras.

5. Hymns pertaining to women, love and marriage. These are called *strīkarmāṇi* mantras.
6. Hymns to be used for royal ceremonies and for the welfare of the king. These are called *rājakarmāṇi* mantras.
7. Hymns to deal with enemies. These are called *ābhicārikāni* mantras.
8. Word-formulations or mantras, repetition of which can counter the occult formations employed by the enemy. These are called *kṛtyapariharaṇāni* mantras.
9. Mantras for expiating sin and defilement. These are called *prāyaścittāni* mantras.
10. Cosmogenic and the theosophic hymns. These are called *ādhyātmikāni* mantras.

It may also be added that the *Atharva-veda* is called *kṣatri*, because it contains the largest number of hymns to be employed at royal ceremonies like the *rājasūya*, *vājapeya* and *indramahotsava*. We also find hymns addressed to horses and elephants. Finally, it would be important to note that the *Atharva-veda*, of all the Vedas, contains the largest number of mantras connected with the themes of creation of the universe and of the nature of Brahman, the ultimate Reality, and its relation with the universe, creatures and human beings. The *Atharva-veda* is, therefore, also called the *Brahma-veda*.

JÑĀNAGHANAPĀDA*

S. O. Ramakrishnan

Among the many schools of Indian philosophical thought, the system of Advaita by virtue of its thoroughness and profundity occupies a pre-eminent position. Rooted in the Upaniṣads, this system was expounded, fairly consistently, by Gauḍapāda in his commentary on the *Māṇḍūkya-kārikā* and later, systematically worked out by Śaṅkarācārya in his commentaries on the '*Prasthānatraya*'. After him his followers took upon themselves the task of interpreting, elucidating, and supplementing his teachings; in the process, they formed distinct views on some of the important concepts like *māyā*, the nature of the individual soul (*jīva*) release (*mukti*), etc., which eventually led to the formulation of the three sub-schools, viz., the Vārtika, the Vivaraṇa, and the Bhāmatī. Noteworthy, and one of the earliest among these followers who made significant contributions to the

* Courtesy : *Preceptors of Advaita*, Sri Kanchi Kamakoti Sankara Mandir, Secunderabad, 1968. Sri S.O. Ramakrishnan, Former Professor of Philosophy, National College, Tiruchirappalli.

development of Advaitic thought, was Jñānaghanapāda. His views are identical with those of the Vivaraṇa school. His main work *Tattvaśuddhi* is known for its clarity and precision and has been referred to by Appayya Dīkṣita in several places in his *Siddhāntaleśasaṅgraha*.

There is a well-known half-verse which sets forth the fundamental position of the Advaita philosophy thus: “Brahman alone is real, the world is illusory and the so-called individual self (*jīva*) is non-different from Brahman”.¹ The predominant feature that strikes one at the outset in this half-stanza is the non-difference of Brahman or the Universal Self with the Ātman, the core of the individual self (*jīva*). This ultimate non-difference of the individual self (*jīva*) in its essence with Brahman forms the central theme around which every one of the post-Śaṅkara advaitic preceptors, Jñānaghana not excepted, weaves his theories. Brahman and Ātman, thus, in their non-difference as remaining unconditioned by the three divisions of time, viz., past, present, and future (*trikālābādhyam*) is eternal and is alone ultimately real, spoken of by the Upaniṣads as being “One only without a second”.² These words “One only without a second” referred to in the Upaniṣads, in the view of Jñānaghana, exclude internal differences (*svagatabheda*) from the non-dual Reality and declare that it (Reality) is partless-ultimate (*akhaṇḍaikaikarasa*).³ Jñānaghana commences his treatise with the chapter on “Advaita”, in which he tries to prove that Advaita can be established even through perception. According to him:

Perception comprehends bare reality, the constant substrate in pot, cloth, etc. The co-presence and co-absence of the sense-organ serves only in the

comprehension of bare reality, pot, etc., being delusively presented. Absence of sublating cognition is no defect. Differences cannot be cognised through perception, because they are cognised only together with the counter-correlates, many of which are remote in space and time; nor is difference cognised through memory, since there is no memory-impression of its being qualified by the counter-correlate as such; nor can it be inferred, since inference proceeds on the comprehension of difference; counter-correlates are but delusive appearances; hence, differences and their correlates are also delusive; hence no conflict of scripture-declared non-duality with perception.”⁴

Reality, further, as the irreducible substratum of existence that cannot be denied is of the nature of existence which is identical with consciousness. Advaita regards the triune perception involving the distinction of the knower, the known, and the act of knowing, as constituting different aspects of pure consciousness. The distinction among these is merely due to the mental modifications resulting from *avidyā*. When these modifications cease, what remains is the “Inward Self” (*pratyagātman*) as changeless and as of the nature of consciousness, which renders possible every type of knowledge but which does not depend on any other knowledge for its manifestation. In other words, Brahman-Ātman Reality, as of the nature of consciousness, is self-luminous (*svayamprakāśa*), and that it is so is demonstrated by Jñānaghana by means of perception (*pratyakṣa*), inference (*anumāna*), verbal testimony (*śabda*) and presumption

(*arthāpatti*).⁵ Since realising one's Self as being non-different from Brahman is regarded as the supreme bliss which is the *summum bonum* of all human endeavour (*parama-puruṣārtha*), Brahman-Ātman Reality referred to as of the nature of Existence and Consciousness is also spoken of as of the nature of Bliss (*ānanda*).

Jñānaghana, in this connection, takes care to stress that Existence (*Sat*), Consciousness (*Cit*) and Bliss (*Ānanda*) are not the qualities (*guṇa*) of Brahman but constitute its very nature. Brahman is *Sat-Cit-Ānanda-svarūpa*. To express it in the words of K.C. Bhattacharya, "They are not determinations, being each of them the unspeakable Absolute viewed by us as beyond the determinate absolutes, *sat*, *cit* and *ānanda* formulated by our consciousness."⁶ To show that existence, consciousness and bliss are not qualities, it is argued that quality (*guṇa*) as a relational category always implies a qualified (*guṇī*); the former, viz., quality, always depends upon the latter, viz., the qualified (*guṇī*) without which it (quality) has no meaning. This predicament is a relational predicament. But, the Absolute as conceived by the advaitic philosophers is "One without a second" and is devoid of all kinds of relations (*sajātīya-vijātīya-svagata-bheda-rahita*). So, the relationship between the quality (*guṇa*) and the qualified (*guṇī*) cannot exist in it.⁷ Hence the reason why Brahman is said to be "quality-less" or "attribute-less" (*nirguṇa*).

But Brahman being infinite and reflected in *māyā* is Īśvara,⁸ endowed with all auspicious qualities (*saguṇa*). Knowledge being His essential nature, He is all-knowing (*sarvajña*) and is able to perceive the world of the present, past and future; hence omniscient.⁹ Brahman viewed from

this perspective, i.e., Brahman in association with *māyā* is the cause of the universe. In trying to establish the advaitic position that only an intelligent principle like Brahman can be the cause of the universe, the rival schools of thought such as the Nyāya and the Sāṅkhya, holding atoms and *pradhāna* respectively to be the cause of the universe, are refuted. Brahman is not merely the efficient but the material cause as well (*abhinnanimittopādānakāraṇa*). Arguing on the basis of scriptures, he says that when the Upaniṣadic statements such as “In the beginning, O, gentle one! this was Being or Existence alone, one only without a second”, “In the beginning, verily, all this was Ātman only”, “Brahman alone is all this”, etc., speak of co-ordinate relation between a sentient cause and the world, they clearly indicate that Brahman is the material cause. If Brahman were not the material cause, the Upaniṣads cannot speak in terms of co-ordinate relation between Brahman and the world, the reason being that co-ordinate relation cannot hold between the non-material cause and effect.¹⁰ The effect is not a transformation (*pariṇāma*) but only a transfiguration or an appearance (*vivarta*) of the cause; and as such, it (the effect) as being neither existent nor non-existent is inexplicable (*anirvacanīya*), not only after but also even before its origination.¹¹

Since Jñānaghana enunciates his theory of the world on the basis of his causal theory, the corollary that follows from it is not far to seek. Viewed in the light of this theory, Brahman, the cause, by its own nescience, can only be said to appear as the world of names and forms without undergoing any change whatsoever, and that the world regarded as an effect, being an illusory appearance of the cause, is neither

real nor unreal. It is not real since it is sublated by the intuitive knowledge of Brahman.¹² Nor is it unreal, for unlike hare's horn, it comes within the range of perception. It is, therefore, inexplicable (*anirvacanīya*) and it is for this reason that Advaita regards the world as illusory (*mithyā*). This, however should not be taken to mean that the sacred and secular knowledge of the empirical world are unreal and so are not valid. For, even as the transactions in dream are regarded as real and valid till one wakes up, the empirical world and its knowledge as a means of empirical transaction should also be regarded as real till the individual self (*jīva*) realises its non-difference from Brahman.¹³

Discussing the nature of the individual self (*jīva*), Jñānaghana observes that it (*jīva*) is the reflection of Intelligence in the intellect (*antaḥkaraṇa*), the product of *māyā* or *avidyā*.¹⁴ The psycho-physical organism together with the substrate-intelligence constitute the nature of the individual self (*jīva*). The substrate-intelligence or the "inner-self" is otherwise known as the "witness-intelligence" (*sākṣi-caitanya*) since it remains as the unchanging witness in the three states of waking (*jāgrat*), dream (*svapna*), and deep-sleep (*suṣupti*) that the individual self experiences. The substrate or witness-intelligence is nothing other than Brahman conditioned as it were by *avidyā*. The witness-intelligence, though of the constitution of Brahman, appears to be of the constitution of the individual self (*jīva*) even as the "this-ness" which really belongs to nacre appears to belong to silver.¹⁵ However, it as being essentially non-different from Brahman is eternal, all-pervasive and self-luminous. The need for acknowledging the existence of such a principle is argued by Jñānaghana on the ground that in the absence of such a

self-effulgent principle which is the means or cause to accomplish everything, empirical usages cannot be accomplished. A passage from the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* may be quoted in favour of Jñānaghana's position. It reads as follows: "He presides over all actions and all beings reside in Him. He is the witness, and He is pure consciousness free from the three guṇas of nature."¹⁶

This brings us to Jñānaghana's concept of *māyā*. *Māyā* has been viewed essentially from two standpoints: (a) as the cause and (b) as the effect. Viewed from the former perspective, *māyā* may be said to be the principle of creation or the creative power (*śakti*) of Brahman while from the latter, to the phenomenal creation itself. In other words, it may be said to signify the causal as well as the manifest state of the universe. In its former aspect, *māyā* is the causal potency (*bījaśakti*) of the primordial nature, with the diversity being latent in it which becomes patent with the development of the objective world from it. And it is in this sense that *māyā* is said to be the origin of the world and the latter a product thereof. But *māyā* differs from its products in this respect that while it, as the source of the universe, is beginningless (*anādi*), its products have a beginning in time. Further, *māyā* being neither real for the reason that it is liable to be sublated by right knowledge, nor unreal as it is the root cause of all appearances, nor both as that would involve contradiction, is indeterminable (*anirvacanīya*) in its nature.

In this connection, it needs to be mentioned that, according to Jñānaghana, the terms *māyā*, *ajñāna*, and *avidyā* connote one and the same principle, viz., ignorance. Ignorance is called *māyā* because it is illumined by pure consciousness which is the eternal self; it is also called *ajñāna* since it is

contradictory to knowledge, being removable by it.¹⁷ The two, *māyā* and *ajñāna*, thus as referring to the same principle, viz., ignorance are regarded by Jñānaghana as being identical. In fact, in his work he makes use of these two terms, *māyā* and *ajñāna*, interchangeably and almost synonymously.¹⁸

Jñānaghana agrees with the other preceptors of Advaita in holding the view that *māyā*, in so far as it conceals the self-luminous Brahman, has Brahman for its content (*viśaya*). But he argues that to conceal Brahman which is consciousness, it is perforce necessary that *ajñāna* should have its abode in Brahman without which concealment will not be possible. So, *ajñāna* can conceal Brahman only by remaining in it, even as darkness can envelop only that place where it is particularly spread. It, therefore, follows that in the opinion of Jñānaghana, *māyā* or *ajñāna* has for its abode (*āśraya*) only its content (*viśaya*), viz., Brahman. In other words, *māyā* by itself does not (*na svataḥ*), require an abode other than its content. This is as it should be because *ajñāna* is not of the nature of an act (*akriyā*). Applying the analogy that the limiting adjuncts, say, mirror or pot are found to be related directly to the face and etheric space respectively and not to the face that is reflected in the mirror or the space delimited by the pot, Jñānaghana contends that *ajñāna* too can be appropriately said to be related to consciousness as such and not to its reflection in the intellect (*antaḥkaraṇa*), i.e., the individual self. For, if the latter case is admitted then the individual self itself being the product of nescience, there would arise the fallacies of “self-dependence” (*ātmāśraya*) and “mutual-dependence” (*anyonyāśraya*).¹⁹

This view that Brahman, the content of *māyā*, is also its abode is proved by Jñānaghana by means of presumption

(*arthāpatti*). The Vedic passages unequivocally declare Brahman knowledge as the means for release. These declarations would turn out to be purportless and unintelligible unless the existence of ignorance in Brahman is admitted which can be removed by Brahman-knowledge. He finds basis for his contention in the scriptures and in the experience of the sages that "Brahman itself undergoes transmigration and it itself attains liberation".²⁰

Besides concealing (*āvaraṇa*) Brahman, *māyā* or *ajñāna* operates in another way also, i.e., by projecting (*vikṣepa*) the world of names and forms. While the first, viz., concealing (*āvaraṇa*) is the absence of apprehension, the second viz., projecting (*vikṣepa*) is the positive generation of error. That is, not only is the Absolute not apprehended but something else is seen in its place. It is in this sense that *avidyā* or *ajñāna* is represented not as a mere negation or absence of knowledge (*jñānābhāva*) but something positive in its nature (*bhāvarūpa ajñāna*). And that it is so is established by Jñānaghana on the basis of the experience that one has of it (ignorance) during deep sleep and the subsequent recollection of it on waking up in the form of "I slept happily until this time and knew nothing." In other words, the recollection of ignorance in deep sleep cannot be accounted for, unless ignorance is regarded as something positive. Even in the waking state, *ajñāna* as a positive entity should be admitted. Otherwise, questions regarding the unknown things would become un-intelligible.²¹

But the "*āvaraṇa*" aspect of *māyā* in the case of Īśvara is powerless over Him in the sense that Brahman though concealed by *māyā* retains its own nature of pure consciousness without in any way being affected by the concealment

and is ever conscious of His identity with the world. Īśvara, in fact, as devoid of internal organ and sense organs is referred to as the non-doer (*akartā*) and therefore the merits and demerits which arise as a result of one's performing actions do not pertain to Him; His knowledge being unsurpassable is infinite and so independent.²² With regard to the individual self (*jīva*) on the other hand, it is just the reverse in that, it (*āvaraṇa*) accounts for its bondage. It is on account of ignorance (*ajñāna*) that the individual self identifies itself with the sense organs and internal organ, performs actions, earns merits or demerits as a result of which it gets itself entangled in the transmigratory existence. Further, being under the influence of ignorance (*ajñāna*) its knowledge is limited and therefore dependent (on the Lord).²³ As the mediacy characterising Īśvara and the transmigratoriness and finitude characterising the individual self (*jīva*) are the results of ignorance (*ajñāna*), the cognition of difference also, as caused by ignorance (*ajñāna*) cannot but be apparent like the difference between the original and the reflection. Both the Lord (*Īśvara*) and the individual self (*jīva*) are, as mere reflections and as having consciousness as their essential nature are essentially non-different.²⁴

It should be mentioned in this connection that Jñānaghana, besides advocating the theory of plurality of selves (*nānājīvavāda*), gives a free expression to the other theory also, viz., the theory of only one individual self (*ekajīvavāda*), otherwise known as the *dr̥ṣṭi-sr̥ṣṭi-vāda*. This view is regarded as the foremost of all the views expounding the nature of the individual self and that is probably the reason why Jñānaghana has accommodated this view also in his work along with the other one. According to the theory of only

one individual self, since ignorance (*ajñāna*) is one, and Brahman is associated only with that one adjunct, the individual self, the result of this association is also only one. All the other individual selves are innumerable reflections, fancied by this single individual self, by its own nescience (*ajñāna*). As a result of this differential appearance (*avabhāsāt*) of the individual selves, there are the “preceptor-disciple, bound-released, individual self-supreme self” and such other classifications which, as in the case of the dream state, hold good till the dawn of true knowledge. It is true that there are statements in scriptures declaring the release of Śuka, Vāmadeva, and others; but, they only aim at extolling the state of release. To the doubt as to who that one individual self is, Jñānaghana answers that the doubter himself is that self, while the other individual selves like those that are seen in dream are only reflections, and this individual self alone is entitled for release²⁵ which is attained on the removal of ignorance (*ajñāna* or *avidyānivṛtti*).

Regarding the nature of the removal of ignorance, Jñānaghana first admits that it is neither real, nor unreal, nor both, nor indeterminable, but is of a fifth kind. However, he does not seem to uphold this view till the end but changes almost in the same breath to another view that the removal of ignorance is nothing other than the Self.²⁶ Since Brahman-knowledge alone can bring about the destruction of ignorance, knowledge (*jñāna*) is referred to as the direct means for release. Rituals (*karma*) are only an indirect means in that they help in the generation of knowledge either through the purification of the intellect (*antaḥkaraṇa*) or through being the cause for aspiration.²⁷ Jñānaghana is not in favour of the view which combines knowledge and rituals (*jñānakarma-*

samuccaya) as the means for release.²⁸ It is only the immediate knowledge of Brahman generated by the mahāvākyas such as “That thou art” (*tat tvam asi*), “I am Brahman” (*aham brahmāsmi*) that can dispel the beginningless ignorance and bring about release. Concluding his treatise with a description of the nature of release, Jñānaghana observes that it is a state of consciousness which is ever-lasting, unsurpassable bliss, being the inner non-dual Supreme Self.²⁹

NOTES

1. *brahma satyaṃ, jāganmīthyā, jīvobrahmaiva nāparaḥ.*
2. “*ekamevādvitīyam*” *Chāndogyopaniṣad*, VI, 2, 1.
3. Jñānaghanapāda: *Tattvaśuddhi* (Edited by S.S. Suryanarayana Sastri and E. P. Radhakrishnan, University of Madras, 1951) p. 4.
4. See S. S. S. Sastri’s table of contents to his translation on Appayya Dīkshita’s *Siddhāntaleśasaṅgraha* (University of Madras, 1935), Vol. p. 31.
5. *Op. cit.*, p. 203.
6. K. C. Bhattacharya, *Studies in Philosophy* (Calcutta, 1956), Vol. I, p. 118.
7. *Op. cit.*, p. 10.
8. *avidyāpratībimbitaṃ brahma anavacchinnatvāt īśvara iti gamyate* - *Ibid.*, p. 243.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 18.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 24.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 157-158.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 100.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 104.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 244.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 222-223.
16. *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad*, VI, II.

17. *ato nityātmaprakāśenaiva māyādi-śabdavācyam jñāna virodhāt jñānaparyudāseṇa ajñānamiti ca ucyamānaṃ. Op. cit., p. 134.*
18. *avidyāpratibimbitaṃ brahma anavacchinnatvād-īśvara iti gamyate. antaḥkaraṇapratibimbitaṃ brahma jīvaśabda vācyam bhavati. Ibid., pp. 243-44.*
In another context he says: *tattva-māyāvacchede parameśvaratva vyavahāraḥ, antaḥkaraṇāvacchede jīvatva-vyavahāraḥ, p. 244.*
19. *Ibid., p. 251.*
20. *Ibid., pp. 251-253; brahmaiva saṃsarati, brahmaiva mucyate.*
21. *Ibid., p. 137.*
22. *Ibid., p. 240.*
23. *Ibid., p. 240 (also see p. 21).*
24. *Ibid., p. 244.*
25. *Ibid., p. 251.*
26. *Ibid., pp. 287-299.*
27. *Ibid., p. 263.*
28. *Ibid., pp. 254-263.*
29. *....nityasiddhaniratiśayānandapratyagadvitīyaparamātmacaitanyātmanā avasthānaṃ apavargaḥ, Ibid., p. 306.*

VEDĀNTIC SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY - III*

Sangam Lal Pandey

IV. The Concept of Loka

1. The Meaning of Loka

“Loka” is a Sanskrit word. Its dictionary meanings are two, world and humankind. The first meaning refers to the usages like *iha-loka* (this world), *manuṣya-loka* (the world of humans), *jīva-loka* (the world of living beings), *para-loka* (the other world), *deva-loka* (the world of gods), *pitṛ-loka* (the world of forefathers), *Brahma-loka* (the world of the absolute), etc. The second meaning refers to such usages as *loka-nātha* (the lord of the people), *loka-rīti* (the way of the people), *loka-gāthā* (the folk story), *loka-hita* (welfare of the people), *loka-saṅgraha* (solidarity of the people), *loka-mārga* (the path of the people), *loka-nīti* (morality of the

* Courtesy : S.L. Pandey, *Vedāntic Social Philosophy*, Allahabad Philosophical Series, Darshana Peetha, Allahabad, 1988, Chapters 4-5. S.L. Pandey, Former Professor of Philosophy, University of Allahabad.

people), etc. Logically speaking, both of these meanings are inseparable from each other. For, this world by definition is the world that is the habitat of humankind and the other kinds of the world are conceived on the basis or model of this world. The first meaning indicates the *locus* or *nexus* of spatio-temporal conditions of this world and the second meaning refers to the inhabitants that live in those conditions. Hence the word “*Loka*” primarily refers to the fact that there are human beings. When a different meaning is ascribed to it, a qualification is added to it. For example, in the word “*devaloka*”, the word “*deva*” is added to the word “*loka*” in order to use it for the world of gods. But all such worlds with qualifications are secondary worlds. Rather they are the secondary meanings of the word “*World*” and may not have any referential meaning at all. The primary world is the only referential meaning of the word “*World*”. It is the basic world and is the model of all secondary worlds.

The division of this world into the first world, second world, third world and fourth world that are politically and economically created contemporarily is also merely descriptive. There is no reference to this division of world. All these worlds are secondary worlds characterised by mere descriptions. It is thus the primary world that is called this world (*iha-loka*) It is here and now. As far as my memory goes, I always find myself in this world. It is given to me. I am really thrown into it. Obviously my worldliness and my humanity are intertwined. The phenomenon, I am in the world or man is in the world, is called “*Loka*”. Man without the world and the world without man cannot be called “*Loka*”. Man belongs to the world; much of his personality is due to the existence of the world. Analogously the world belongs to

man; much of worldliness is due to the existence of man. The world is human and man is worldly. Thus *loka* is not man plus world but something more than this conjunction. It is not brick and mortar concept but a monolithic concept that is more concrete than the concept of man or world. In fact man and world are just two predicates that are ascribed to the same fact called "*Loka*". Hence the concept of *loka* is a primitive concept. The concepts of man and the world are its derivatives. It is very important to understand the primitiveness of the concept of *loka* to grasp the contemporary development of socialism in the world. Historically and conceptually, it is a new phenomenon and hence it can better be described by new descriptive phrases like *lokavāda* and *lokāyana*. *Lokavāda* is the doctrine, tenet or canon while *lokāyana* is its dialectic, technique or organon. *Lokāyana* literally means the movement of *loka*, the development of one stage of *loka* to another stage. Sages and scholars of India have discovered a large number of rules that govern the movement of *loka*. They are called *lokanyāya* or *laukikanyāya* which functions as a sort of social force or dialectic. But it is different from the Marxist dialectic in many ways. Primarily it is not based on negation of negation and the doctrine of class-struggle. It is a harmonious way of solidarity. Hence it may be called monolectic, and not dialectic.

The meaning of the concept of *loka* can be clarified by contrasting it to its four important antonyms which are indicated in the following pairs:

- (a) *Laukika* and *alaukika*.
- (b) *Ihaloka* and *paraloka*.
- (c) *Vaidika* and *laukika*.

(d) *Loka* and *Rāja* (the commoners and elites).

Let us consider these contrasts in order. The first contrast is that of *laukika* and *alaukika*. In this context the *laukika* means visible, and *alaukika*, invisible. But the visible is not to be identified with the perceptible alone or the invisible is not to be excluded from the perceptible, for, there is a kind of perception that is called *alaukika* by Indian logicians. So the invisible need not be regarded as imperceptible. Nevertheless the *laukika* is, by and large, identified with the perceived fact and the *alaukika* with the unperceived *quid*. It can also be said that what is *laukika* is justifiedly perceived. That is, it is open to the perception of everybody and the repeated perception of the same observer. The characteristic of being perceived repeatedly may thus be regarded as an element in the meaning of *loka*. But it is not the whole or exclusive meaning of the word. Nor is it the defining characteristic of the same. For the *alaukika* also characterises the *loka*. The *laukika* is empirical and the *alaukika* is either transcendent or transcendental. As transcendental the *alaukika* is not the antithesis of the *laukika*. It is undoubtedly distinguished from the *laukika* and is described as *paramārtha* in sharp contrast to the *laukika* which is called *vyavahāra* or empirical truth. This doctrine gives rise to the antinomy of the *laukika* and the *alaukika* which is solved by the doctrine of two levels of reality or double truth—*vyavahāra* and *paramārtha*. As they are not on the same level, there is no contradiction in conceiving that the human world is both *laukika* and *alaukika*. The *alaukika* is the functional principle of the conception of everything that is empirical. So what is *laukika sub-specie temporis* is *alaukika sub-specie aeternitatis*.

Secondly, this world is contrasted to the other world or the next world. Whether the next world exists or not the contrast is very much meaningful. For even if a counter-positive is the fiction of human mind, it serves its purpose well and makes right distinction. 'Thisness' of this world is rightly distinguished from an 'other' irrespective of the fact whether the other is real or hypothetical. This world is here and now, it is before us, near us, around us, used by us, seen by us and so on. The other world is not here but there, not now but tomorrow, not before us but remote from us, not seen but unseen, not populated by persons like us and so on. It is imagined or conceived in order to point out the distinctive characteristics, strengths and weaknesses of this world. The other world is imagined to be free from growth and diseases; there is no phenomenon of death in the other world. This world is the world of mortals. Death is its distinctive characteristic. It may be taken as its defining feature also. Everything that is in this world is subject to destruction. Death is all that is the case. Life itself is simply a mode of death. That which is born decays and dies. Growth logically leads to decay. Further this world is ostensibly known. The indexical, "this" indicates a felt or experienced complex which is the criterion of all truth and reality. It has a reference which beggars description. Practically it has no description. The next world, however, has no reference, it has only description. It cannot be referred, but can fully be described.

Thirdly, *loka* is very often contrasted to the Veda. These two are taken as opposites by some people. Vedic philosophy is contrasted to *laukika* philosophy that is otherwise called Lokāyata-darśana. Vedic knowledge is revealed, *laukika* knowledge is empirical. Vedic word is eternal, *laukika* word

is ephemeral. Vedic moral order is truth; *laukika* moral order is truth—falsehood mix. Vedic action is *yajana* or sacred, *laukika* action is secular. But this opposition does not amount to a contradiction. The Vedic is not the contradictory of the *laukika* as it is interpreted and understood on the model of what is justified in the *laukika* experience and language. The Vedic undoubtedly deals with *dharma*, while the *laukika* does with *artha* and *kama*. But there is a perfect reconciliation between these three values of human life. The Lokāyata philosophers ignore it, and reject everything that is Vedic to espouse boldly the cause of the *laukika*. They, however, delimit the boundary of this world to the constraints and conditions of empirical knowledge only. But all other Indian philosophers have found that the Lokāyata's delimitation of the *loka* and its functions are without any justification. They have worked out a theory that the Vedic is related to the *laukika* in any of the following manners:

- (a) The Vedic is the basis as well as the source of the *laukika*.
- (b) The Vedic is the logical extension or extrapolation of the *laukika*.
- (c) The Vedic governs the *laukika* and is its determinant cause or condition.
- (d) The Vedic and the *laukika* mutually complement each other.
- (e) The Vedic syndrome is an ordering of the *laukika* materials meant for the very existence of the world.

As a matter of fact the *Vedas* are also in this world. They have informed the trends, textures and traditions of this

world. As for those who are born with normal vision this world is coloured, so for those who are born here, this world is ordered *a la* traditions called Vedic or Āgamika in Indian usages. In this connection it must be noted that all Semitic and tribal traditions are counted as Āgamic traditions by Indian scholars. This shows the breadth of their vision and makes their doctrine of *loka* universal. Their philosophy is world social philosophy. There is one and indivisible *loka* and all development is from one stage of *loka* to another stage.

Lastly the word “Loka” is contrasted to the word “Rāja”. In this context the *loka* means the commoners, common people, common sense, and so on. The *rāja* means the elites. This contrast is highlighted in the antinomy of *Lokanīti* and *Rājanīti*. *Lokanīti* is people’s morality while *Rājanīti* is state politics. The former deals with morals and the latter, with power. In all such contexts the word “Loka” is an exact synonym of the word “*Prajā*” or proletariat. But this meaning of *loka* is superficially tangential to the concept of *loka*. As the kings and rulers are first humans and then rulers or kings, so they have to follow *qua* humans all the rules of peoples’ morality that is called *nīti*, *sāmānya-nīti*, *lokanīti* or *lokadharmā*. If *rājanīti* is bereft of *lokanīti* it becomes autocracy and dictatorship and gives rise to tyranny that further leads to anarchy. Hence *lokanīti* is indispensable. It is the leitmotif of *rājanīti* in modern times. With the advancement of science and technology, egalitarianism is increasing. It is raising up *lokanīti* to the level of *rājanīti* and diminishing the gap that had existed between them since the rise of monarchy and feudalism in human civilization.

The antinomy of *lokanīti* and *rājanīti* points out the singular development of a colossus from within the *loka*. This

development is sometimes necessitated on account of the prevalence of uncontrollable violence in society. But the social development is not from a grouping to an individual called king. It is, on the contrary, from one social group to another social group that is more cohesive, coherent and functional. The king, therefore, is logically replaced by further social development. He is a freak of nature. The ruling group needs to be broad-based and the ruling power must undergo perpetual decentralization. The more widespread it is, the more democratic is the society. In this way maximization of people's participation on an ever larger scale in their own government and administration is the objective of *lokanīti*. It is the real *Rājadaṇḍa* that hangs like Damocle's sword over all rulers democratic or otherwise. The people have contemporarily risen from their political indifference all over the world. Their awakening is bearing fruits in political and social changes which are creating more and more justice in their social order. Unity, equality and social justice are now the chief characteristics of the people's social order that is called Lokāyana.

2. Usages of Loka, Jana and Prajā

A significant development in contemporary socio-political thought of India is the crystalization of a modern form of the traditional Indian perspective on society and politics. It is indicated in bold reliefs by recent trends in the nomenclature and ideology of political parties and is reflected in their social movements and demographic characters. For example, let us take the translation of the English word "Democracy" in Indian languages. Here the word "Loka" has got its rivals in two words, "*Jana*" and "*Prajā*".

Consequently, democracy is variously called as *lokatantra*, *janatantra* or *prajātantra*. But as the democratic process in India is qualitatively developing further and further and political parties are rising and falling and disintegrating, the words “*Jana*” and “*Prajā*” are left far behind yielding place to “*Loka*” which means the people, the society and the all cementing forces that bind individuals into a group. In fact the word “*loka*” cannot be translated into English. It is an Indian concept that defies its translation into a foreign language. In a sense it is the object of all secularist, democratic and socialist thought. The more it is analysed the more significant it becomes. Its analysis can never be complete. Nevertheless it is more clearly understood by Indians than any other social institution.

The word “*Prajā*” is temporarily relegated to its proper usage and reserved for the ruled subjects. It smacks of certain emotional overtones that are disregarded by the self-respecting people. Some former Rājās and Mahārājas, no doubt, formed political parties in the recent past under the names of Prajā Parishad and Prajā Party. But the people who were already disillusioned from their feudalism detected their political traps and rejected their parties at the hustings. The word “*Prajā*” necessarily refers to a Rājā or King. Since there is no king or Rājā in a democratic country the people thereof cannot be called Prajā. So *Prajātantra* cannot be an appropriate translation of democracy.

Similarly the word “*Jana*” despite the socialist R. M. Lohia’s efforts to the contrary, has now been monopolized by Indian communists who have least respect for democracy and freedom of thought. They have used it in the sense of the amorphous masses that can be moulded into

any shape at their will. But the people at large are not so amorphous as the *janavādi* claims, for they have their organisations, life-styles and thought-patterns which are at variance with communism. The people cannot break with their past traditions in many important ways. The communists, however, wean them from their past lock, stock and barrel. The term “*Jana*” necessarily implies the developed and well formed organizations that exist in society. Hence *Janavāda* as used and practised by the Indian communists is opposed to *Lokatantra*. At any rate, the communist use of *Janavāda* has caused the exit of the word “*Jana*” from the vocabulary of democracy. The democrats do not fall into their trap and have rightly opposed Janatantra by Lokatantra, or Janavāda by Lokavāda. Thus the exact Indian word for democracy that has historically emerged is *lokatantra*. This is one reason why political parties from the seventies have been using the terms *lokatantra*, *lokavāda* and *lokanīti*, *Lokadala*, for example, is the name of one such political party. If clarity of thought is desirable, the present socio-political usage of *loka* is a great achievement of contemporary Indian political praxis. The emergence of the concept of *loka* is also adding many new contents to the practice of Indian democracy.

Moreover, Lokavāda is also emerging as the Indian variety of socialism. The Indian socialists who discarded both Congress and communism and set up socialism as a rival of communism, at first tried to popularize the English words ‘socialism’, ‘socialist’ and ‘socialist party’ in Indian languages. But the people could not assimilate this vocabulary in their languages. Then these socialists used the terms “*Samājavāda*” and “*samājavādi*”. But the word “*ṣamāja*”, in Indian traditions and languages was never used

for the whole of human or national society and stood just for a cross-section or class of society as, for example, the *samāja* of farmers or poets or artisans. Furthermore, Gandhiji tried to popularise the words 'Grāmarāj' and 'Rāmarāj' in the sense of socialism. He also conceived a *sarvodaya* society that is characterised by maximization of egalitarianism. His idea of *sarvodaya* has rightly been contrasted to communism on the one hand and to utilitarianism on the other. But none of these words, Grāmrāj, Rāmarāj and Sarvodaya, could appeal to the Indian people's genius and so they could not get their due recognition and anchorage in the popular usage. His follower Vinoba Bhave developed the *Gītā* ideal of *sāmya* (equality) and launched the movement of Bhoodan according to which all land belongs to God and therefore it should be owned and used collectively by all those who live on it. In this way he developed Gandhian socialism a step further. But despite his efforts the word "*sāmyavāda*" is now practically settled in the sense of communism. Similarly the word "*Sarvodaya*" could not be used as an effective alternative to communism in India. Although Sarvodaya movement opposed communism at social and cultural levels, it could not oppose it at the political level. Its renunciation of state politics (*Rājanīti*) and exclusive concern with people's politics (*Lokanīti*) have made it a stooge to the ruling party, a training camp of Congress politicians and a hermitage of politically alienated leaders. Moreover, the Sarvodayist concept of *loka* was also inadequate as it was exclusive of state politics which is an important aspect of people's life that constitutes the essence of *loka*. Because of its mistaken identity with *loka*, the idea of *Sarvodaya* could not motivate the people for the establishment of a new social order. Its collateral, *satyāgraha*, has indeed electrified the social and political ethos in the

twenties of the present century. But Sarvodayist workers abandoned Satyāgraha from their programme and practice, and thus bade farewell to the dynamics of their ideology. Nevertheless, Sarvodaya thinkers like Gandhi and Vinoba, have done a great service to the nation by articulating its socialist trends and thrusts and contrasting it to communism. The merits and demerits of Sarvodaya ideology were keenly perceived by Jai Prakash Narain, the doyen of Indian socialists, who was disappointed with his earlier experiment on socialism. He found that Sarvodaya and Indian socialism can be brought together and their integral form may be accepted as an alternative to the status quoism that has brought about the stagnation of sociopolitical thought. Hence he joined Sarvodaya movement, elaborated its concept of *Lokanīti*, restored its snapped links with *Satyāgraha* and bridged the gulf between *Lokanīti* and *Rājanīti*. He rightly maintained that *Lokanīti* must determine *Rājanīti* and not *vice-versa*. By his practice and profession he won the heart of the people and was called Lokanāyaka, *i.e.*, the leader of the people. His political experiment culminated into the formation of Janata Party and its massive victory over Indian National Congress in 1977. But he could not live long to work for the successful functioning of the Janata Party Government which succumbed to its internal pressures that were inevitable in the absence of an authentic leadership, representation of the people and ideology. Consequently the first experiment on *Lokavādi* Government in India failed and the forces of reaction again recaptured the seats of power with vengeance. Nevertheless the *Lokavādi* process has come to stay. That is why it is making its inroads into every political party which is trying its best to be the genuine representative of the people. Thus it has been clearly established that the true form of people's

government can be provided only by *Lokavāda* which is the indigenous development of egalitarianism. At any rate, the new social order that is emerging slowly and gradually in India is *Lokavāda*. Hence there is a greater need today than ever before for the correct analysis of *Loka*, *Lokavāda*, *Lokagati*, *Lokanīti* or every concept and doctrine that is related to *Loka* in Indian traditions. *Lokavāda* is the Indian school of socialism that is stipulated as an alternative to capitalism and communism. Its roots are in the ethos and the genius of the Indian people and its goal is the social reconstruction of the present Indian society on the basis of its own dialectic which is called *Loka-Nyāya* or the people's way in contrast with Marxist dialectic that is the way of conflict and struggle (*Dvandva-Nyāya*).

3. People's Democracy

Loka is an ordered multitude of people. Its ordering is reflected in numerous institutions and rules of conduct. The rules that govern people's conduct however are called *loka-nyāyas*. They are the guidelines meant for the people's conduct. Their number is not fixed and settled for good as they are ever increasing. Nonetheless they give a richness to the concept of *loka* that is undeniable. It is they that distinguish *loka* from crowd and mob. Consequently *lokatantra*, the people's democracy, is not mobocracy or anarchy. It is significantly different from *Prajātantra* and *Janatantra* which are not the exact renderings of the word "Democracy", because democracy has a wider meaning and magnitude than these words. *Lokatantra* is the fittest translation of the word "Democracy". This translation is giving a new meaning to democracy in Indian contexts, for *Lokatantra* stands for

egalitarian government. It is the Indian variety of socialism or rather a modernized Lokamārga or Lokarīti of traditional Indian Social Theory.

V. Man and Dharma

The terms “Dharma” and “Religion” have different etymologies and semantics. But here they may be used as synonyms, because today the people of India use them so. As far as our knowledge goes back to ancient times, we find that the Indians were the first people in the world who declared that Dharma or religion is the distinguishing feature of man. There is a verse, attributed to Cāṇakya that describes it well. It runs as follows—“Food, sleep, fear and sex are the common features of man and animal. Dharma alone is the specific characteristic that distinguishes man from animal. Those men who have no religion are just like animals.”¹ This view of Cāṇakya has influenced Indians not only in their theology and metaphysics but also in their sociology, economics, politics, ethics, and literature, *i.e.*, in all arts and sciences that they conceived. They have discovered that religion is the string or *sutra* that unites and integrates all that concerns man. It is the key that unlocks his hidden potentialities and motivates him in all of his actualities. Essentially it is the core of all sorts of human concern. Nothing is beyond the scope of Dharma. Dharma, in fact, is the innate and inalienable characteristic of human consciousness.² At any rate, it is non adventitious quality of man, its essence is latent in the soul of man. He has simply to discern, discover, and develop it. Not to have religion means not to discern, discover and develop it.

The *Vedas* maintain that there is *ṛta* or order *per se* which governs the whole universe. On analysis and elaboration it is further found that all order owes its origin, being and justification to this *ṛta*. There are, thus, not two orders, the internal, mental or subjective order on the one hand and the external, physical or objective order on the other hand. The so-called subjective and objective orders, “the moral law within” and “the starry Heavens above”, as Kant³ puts them, are, in fact, the manifestations of one and the same order that is Dharma. The principle of unity that lies in the “I” is the same as the principle of unity that holds together the objective realm of things. The “that” is the “I” and the “I” is the “that”. This whole truth has been inimitably summarised in the Upaniṣadic formulas of *tat tvam asi*⁴ and *aham brahmāsmi*.⁵ So the correct understanding of Dharma, by and large, depends on the concept of the order that governs both the subjective and the objective realms. The more adequate is our concept of order, the more true is our knowledge of Dharma.

Obviously, there are several degrees of order. So there are the corresponding degrees of truth also, for order and truth go together. The ultimate form of Dharma is the realization of the Advaita that is the being of all beings, the truth of all truths and the order of all orders. The lowest Dharma is to seek the worldly pleasures in a non-violent way. In other words, *ahimsā* is the lowest degree of Dharma and *jīvan-mukti* or *nirvāṇa* is its highest degree. The former is the minimum of the necessities for the existence of mankind, while the latter is its greatest aspiration, its *summum bonum*. No society can exist without *ahimsā*, although at the same time no society can remain satisfied with *ahimsā*, for it has to

move higher than ahimsā to the annihilation of all sufferings to the attainment of the blissful.

Now, as Dharma has various degrees, so plurality of religions in the world is inevitable. But the essence of all degrees of Dharma is the same, the realization of the order that is Dharma *per se*. So all Dharmas lead to the same goal. They differ only in regard to their speakers (*vaktā*) and followers (*boddhavya*) and the modalities of their living. Thus the differences of Dharma are, by and large, due to *adhikāri-bheda*, i.e., due to the inbuilt characters and requirements of the persons concerned. Consequently, the Indian people accept not only a plurality of religions but also a plurality of perspectives on religion. Out of these perspectives they articulate the two main perspectives. According to the first view, Dharma includes both the *preyas* or worldly pleasures and *śreyas* or the spiritual bliss. Kaṇāda has given the definition of Dharma in this sense. He says that "Dharma is the means of the achievement of worldly happiness and the highest good."⁶ Vyāsa, the author of the *Mahābhārata*, has developed this view and applied it to all spheres of human life. He shows that all concerns of man should be governed by Dharma and says that *artha* or economic, social and political concern and *kama* or psycho-biological concern ought to be pursued only in accordance with Dharma.⁷ In other words, a man who does his entire business with the spirit of Dharma, achieves greater success than those who do not follow it. The latter may appear to be very successful in their life, but their success is short-lived and ultimately they have to pay the penalty of acting against Dharma. Both Kauṭilya and Manu have said that everything that is gained by unjust or bad means does not bring any merit to its doer

and that the use of such means necessarily brings ruin to him as well as to his family and society.⁸ Dharma is that which sustains the on-going life of society.⁹ The use of bad means is a diabolical design and causes social discord, disorder and dis-harmony. That is why it is called unjust and immoral. It is *anṛta*, i.e., other than *ṛta* that is the case.

Elaborating this all pervasive feature of Dharma, the ancient Indian philosophers have developed the theories of four *puruṣārthas* (Dharma, Artha, Kāma and Mokṣa), four stages of life (Brahmacarya, Gṛhastha, Vānaprastha and Sannyāsa), four *varṇas* (Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya, Vaiśya and Śūdra) and four sciences (Ānvīkṣikī, Trayī, Vārtā and Daṇḍanīti). These constitute their social philosophy. The doctrine of the four *puruṣārthas* (values of human life) is its quintessence. Dharma has been counted here as one of the four *puruṣārthas*. But there appears to be a category mistake in this classification, for Dharma is not one of the *puruṣārthas* but is the indwelling principle of all of them. Artha, Kāma and Mokṣa are the manifestations or developments of Dharma itself. Dharma *qua* *ṛta* is not one of the *puruṣārthas* but the breeding ground of all the *puruṣārthas*.

Even when Dharma is regarded as a *puruṣārtha*, it is maintained as the first *puruṣārtha*. This means that Dharma is the *prius* of all *puruṣārthas*. When it is contrasted to *artha*, *kāma* and *mokṣa*, it is taken as a separate kind of *puruṣārtha*. But this is the residual sense of Dharma. For, *artha*, *kāma* and *mokṣa* do not exhaust the whole range of Dharma, some aspects of which are left over after they are taken out of it.

The Indian society of the medieval period took Dharma in the sense of social responsibility and distinguished it from

Bhakti or love of God. It maintained that Bhakti may be taken as the indwelling value of all values. If Dharma is accepted as a single *puruṣārtha* beside the other *puruṣārthas*, in this sense Dharma, Artha, Kāma and Mokṣa are the transformations of Bhakti. At any rate, the first perspective on religion means that religion governs the whole of human life.

Now, the second perspective on religion means that religion is unique and cannot be replaced by anything whatsoever. There have been persons who have lived only for religion and have achieved the highest aim of human life. For them, Mokṣa or the spiritual bliss is the only value. Such persons are called *Mumukṣu* (lovers of Freedom). When they get Freedom they become Mukta, Jīvan-mukta or Sthitaprajñā. The *Kāthopaniṣad* makes a sharp distinction between *preyas* and *śreyas* and assigns value only to the attainment of the latter which is nothing short of self-realization.¹⁰ *Per contra* it condemns the *preyas* or pleasures.

In Western terminology the pursuit for *śreyas* is called mysticism and it is regarded as the highest form of religion. Every religion that is worth its name has produced a number of mystics who have realized the ultimate goal of human life. They have placed the ideal of God-realization before every human being and raised him or her up from his or her petty surroundings that, more often than not, dehumanize and corner him or her to a particular local class, caste or culture. It is they who have dreamed of One World, One Humanity and One Religion. But their religion is the religion of saints and sages and is free from all sorts of sociological nuances.

The ordinary human beings cannot grasp it if they do not come into the contact of a saint or a sage. Far less they

can live upto it. Moreover they are of two types, some of them are hedonists or *bubhukṣu* persons who seek only the worldly pleasures, and the others are eudaemonists or those persons who seek both worldly pleasures and spiritual bliss. But these two types of persons are not regarded as religious, as the *mumukṣu* or Mukta persons.

Now, what is important in this perception of Dharma is the fact that even *bubhukṣu* persons have to follow Dharma in and through their enjoyment, for they should be physically and mentally healthy before they enjoy. If they are physically or mentally sick, they cannot enjoy. Consequently for physical and mental health they have to follow the Dharma which prescribes discipline like self-control, breath-control, mind-control, emotion-control and the like. The five Yamas and the five Niyamas of Yoga philosophy¹¹ or the ten virtues that are called Sādhāraṇa Dharma by Manu¹² are, therefore, meant for all human beings whether they are *bubhukṣu* or *mumukṣu*. They are, in fact, the *sine qua non* of good life and constitute the ought for all human beings, No man or woman can be called human if he or she lacks them. Thus nobody is human by birth. It is Dharma alone that makes him or her human.

Now the two perspectives on religion can be called Varṇa-Dharma and Mokṣa-Dharma. The ancient Indian philosophers have perceived a conflict between the two perspectives. They have held that Varṇa-Dharma if left to itself, *i.e.*, if it is totally unrelated to Mokṣa-Dharma, does little good to human beings. That is why they have maintained that Varṇa-Dharma must be pursued with a view to attain Mokṣa, *i.e.*, Varṇa-Dharma must be related to Mokṣa-Dharma. But this compulsion is not required for Mokṣa-Dharma, for it can be pursued without the pursuit of Varṇa-

Dharma.

The so-called religions of the world are really Varṇa-Dharmas of the different people. As such there is a conflict among them. When they are strict and closed they have banned Mokṣa-Dharma or mysticism. But when they have become liberal and open, they have subordinated themselves to Mokṣa-Dharma. This subordination is a great contribution of Hinduism to the dialogue of all religions, for Hinduism has always maintained this relation between Varṇa-Dharma and Mokṣa-Dharma. It is a truism in the history of religions that whereas the proponents of Mokṣa-Dharma have no conflict among themselves the proponents of Varṇa-Dharma have always fought with one another for the supremacy of their Varṇa-Dharma. The balance that has been established between Varṇa-Dharma and Mokṣa-Dharma within Hinduism is the criterion of the truth of a religious order that is preserved in Varṇa-Dharma.

From the standpoint of Mokṣa-Dharma there can be several and parallel Varṇa-Dharmas. Again there can be a singular or plural Varṇa-Dharma. When Hinduism laid down four Varṇa-Dharmas, then in fact it envisaged a plurality of Varṇa-Dharmas.

In short, two concepts of man that emerge from the foregoing perception of Dharma are the following. First, man *qua* religious has to order his family, society, polity and brotherhood. He has to look after the well-being of himself and his kith and kin. With this end in view, he creates social organizations and institutions and arts and sciences. So he is called as a social animal, as a political animal, as a tool-making animal. For the Hindus, however, all these

descriptions of man indicate only his historical nature and character. But man is not merely historical; he is more than history, for he is the maker of all histories. Analogously, he is more than political, more than tool-making and more than a food gatherer. This "more" aspect of man is called spiritual. It can be realised in and through any of his historical characters as well as independently of any or all of them. In order to take up the first path he has to put the historical and social sciences and humanities in order and discipline them to Dharma. So Dharma has a necessary role to play in all formulation of social, political, economic and technological orders. Every science or art leads to God-realization because every word directly or indirectly describes nothing but the existence of God.¹³ So scientists, artists, economists, sociologists, politicians and the like should use their arts and sciences, and precepts and practices in a way that is conducive to Dharma. Dhārmika orientation is a desirable dimension of all arts and sciences because but for it society cannot be free from tensions, unrests and upheavals. Modern society, however, is still groping in the dark for this direction to its arts and sciences. At present this direction is scarcely visible. But there is no doubt that like ancient and medieval societies it will also evolve its own principles of peaceful co-existence with Dharma. The men of religion can play an important role in this sphere. They can specialize in any of the modern sciences, natural or social and adjust it to the goal of Dharma. Alternatively, society itself can cultivate a sense of religion further through its prescription of compulsory religious education for all persons and the products of such an educational system may give the requisite orientation to all arts and sciences. Be it what it may. But the fact that all arts and sciences have to exist peacefully with religion is a

perennial truth that can be ignored only at the cost of the destruction of society and its arts and sciences. The development of knowledge in every sphere is from disorder to order, from less order to more order. This inner logic of development of all arts and sciences necessarily compels them to grow to the ultimate order that is Dharma.

The second concept of man that has been highlighted by the Indian philosophers is that man is spiritual and his spiritual nature cannot be reduced to any thing else, for it is the presupposition of all that is there or that can be conceived by him. The science that deals with this nature of man is ontology. But unfortunately it has often been confused with cosmology or mythology. Cosmologies have given rise to sciences and mythologies, to religions. But as Śaṅkara says, all cosmologies and mythologies are just the devices for the communication of the view that the Absolute alone is the beginning, the middle and the end of everything.¹⁴ Consequently both cosmologies and mythologies have to be understood in their proper context. They are merely propaedeutic and hermeneutic in their nature.

Further, for the Indians mythologies undoubtedly have far deeper significance than cosmologies, for, they indicate that man is a myth-making creature and cannot live or believe without myths. So his ontology is inevitably couched with myths. The Advaita philosophers have, however, pointed out that although certain myths are necessary for man to believe in Being yet none of these myths constitutes the nature of Being that is man, because man is more than a myth and more than a myth-maker. The moment his final goal is realized all myths are cast aside. This truth has to be borne in mind by every student of religion who wants to enter a

dialogue with the followers of other religions or who wants to understand the true nature of man. It is ultimately a myth that divides religions. If myths are cast aside, all religions are one.

But what is important in the Hindu perception is that mythologies are more useful than histories. It is often argued against Hindus that they have no historical sense. This argument is, by and large, true because Hindus do not regard that man is a historical product or his nature is the product of historical and social forces. They are more concerned with the non-empirical and authentic nature of man than with his unauthentic and empirical nature. The historical and social sciences deal with the numerous veils of human nature rather than with its essential core or existential authenticity. Mythologies are indeed better placed than these sciences for revealing the nature of man. The reasons are quite in order. First, mythologies deal with myths which are inalienably related with all descriptions of truth for there can be no truth for understanding unless it is associated with some myth. Secondly, truth is somewhat mysterious and inexplicable. So there is an aura of myth around it. Thirdly, mythologies are more symbolic and better hermeneutic than histories and cosmologies as they do not create any mental confusion and convey the truth to the common man. Most effectively, their appeal is universal and emotional. The users of mythologies know that they are dealing with the mysterious and having its feel. They are fully conscious that mythologies are not the final but provisional description of the truth or fact that is before them. So while having an encounter with truth, the users of mythologies know their merits and demerits. The users of other devices, on the other hand, seldom know this

essential aspect of religious experience. So they become uncritical and fanatic in their views.

Now the unity and differences of all religions can be visualized clearly under the Indian perspectives on religion and man. All religions are one and the same when they indicate the ultimate nature of religious experience. But they differ and their differences are genuine and ineradicable, when they describe the experience and clothe it in some mythology, cosmology or history. If all religions are to work together in the modern world, their differences should not be played upon to divide them. Human nature is basically transcendent to all of its forms. It defies all formulations although it can be discovered lying hidden in and through any of them here and now. Inter-religious dialogue, therefore, has to fulfil two necessary functions. First, it has to reveal the true nature of man and his religious experience. Secondly, and more importantly, it has to make every religious community critically conscious of its sociological, historical and mythological conditions and limitations that conceal the true nature of religion. Thus both self-realization and self-criticism are needed on the part of every religious man. The modern world that has cornered all religions to a small play-ground, is badly in need of a free and frank dialogue among all religions that can help it preserve its perennial rhythm of *ṛta*.

A thorough-going self-criticism of religious traditions can play a significant role in the social life of modern humanity. The Indians, by and large, agree with Kant who says that religion must submit itself to the test of criticism. "Our age is, in a special degree, the age of criticism and to criticism everything must submit. Religion through its sanctity, and lawgiving through its majesty seek to exempt

themselves from it. But they then awaken just suspicion, and cannot claim the sincere respect which reason accords.²⁹¹⁵

NOTES

1. आहारनिद्राभयमैयुनं च
सामान्यमेतत्पशुभिर्नराणाम् ।
धर्मा हि तेषामधिको विशेषो
धर्मेण हीनाः पशुभिः समानाः ॥
2. वेदा विभिन्नाः स्मृतयो विभिन्नाः
नासौ मुनिर्यस्य मतं न भिन्नम् ।
धर्मस्य तत्त्वं निहितं गुहायां
महाजनो येन गतः स पन्थाः ॥
Ed. N.R. Acharya, Bombay, 1952. p. 173
3. *Critique of Practical Reason*, I. Kant, English Translation, Carl J. Frederic, Conclusion.
4. *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 6.7.7.
5. *Bṛhadāranyaka Upaniṣad* 1.4.10.
6. *Vaiśeṣika Sūtra* 1.1.2.
7. धर्मादर्थश्च कामश्च स धर्मः किं न सेव्यते ।
—*Mahābhārata*, Svargārohaṇa Parva, 51.62
8. अन्यायोपार्जितं द्रव्यं दशवर्षाणि तिष्ठति ।
प्राप्ते त्वेकादशे वर्षे समूलं तद्विनश्यति ॥
Cāṅakya-nītidarpaṇa 15/6. Also see *Manu-smṛti* 4.172-174
9. धारणाद् धर्म इत्याहुर्धर्मो धारयति प्रजाः ।
—*Mahābhārata*, Karṇa Parva, 67.59.
10. *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, 5.4
11. अहिंसासत्यमस्तेयब्रह्मचर्यापरिग्रहा यमाः ।
Yoga-sūtra 2.30 Also see *Manu-smṛti* 10.63.

12. धृतिः क्षमा दमोऽस्तेयं शौचमिन्द्रियनिग्रहः ।
धीर्विद्या सत्यमक्रोधो दशकं धर्मलक्षणम् ॥
—*Manu-smṛti* 6.92
13. सर्वे तद्वाचकाः शब्दाः ।
Rāmānuja's, *Vedārtha Saṅgraha*, English Translation, S.S. Raghavachar, Mysore, 1968, para 94 :
14. देवः सर्वज्ञः सर्वशक्तिः सर्वमेतत् चकार सुखावबोधन-
प्रतिपत्यर्थम् लोकवद् आख्यायिकादिप्रपञ्च इति युक्ततरः पक्षः ।
—Śaṅkara's Commentary on *Aitareya Upaniṣad* 4:1.
15. *Critique of Pure Reason*, I. Kant, English Translation, Norman Kemp Smith, London, 1956, p. 9.

 ŚAṄKARA ON JÑĀNA-YOGA*

V.R. Kalyanasundara Sastri

I

The *Bhagavad-gītā* which is included in the *prasthā-natrāya* is a *mokṣa-śāstra*. Its central teaching is in agreement with that of the *Upaniṣad*, and so though it is *smṛti*, it is as authoritative as the *Upaniṣad* which is *śruti*. Enjoying the status of scripture, the *Bhagavad-gītā* sets forth the nature of the highest end as well as the means thereto. It is necessary to make a few preliminary observations about the means taught in the *Bhagavad-gītā* before considering the nature of the highest end.

I invite your attention to the following verses in the *Bhagavad-gītā*. III, 1-3, which serve as the basis for the observations which I propose to make. Arjuna asks Lord Krishna: "If it be thought by Thee that knowledge is supreme to action, Oh Janārdana, why dost thou, Oh Keśava, direct

* Courtesy: Rashtriya Śaṅkara Jayantī Mahotsava Commemoration Volume, Dept. of Culture, Govt. of India.

me to this terrible action?" He then requests Lord Krishna as follows: "Tell me with certainty that *one way* by which I may attain the good." The following is Lord Krishna's reply to Arjuna's question: "In this world a twofold path was taught by me at first, Oh sinless one —that of the Sāṅkhyas by devotion to knowledge, and that of the Yogins by devotion to action," III, 1-3.

If we pay attention to the verses quoted above in the context of the entire teaching of the *Bhagavad-gītā*, the following points which emerge deserve careful consideration.

1. There are two distinct paths, the path of action and the path of knowledge, for the attainment of the highest goal.
2. What is called *bhakti-yoga*, the path of devotion, is only a variation of *karma-yoga*, the path of action.
3. The path of knowledge is superior to the path of action.
4. The two paths of *karma* and *jñāna* cannot be combined at the same time by the same individual.
5. Nevertheless, the two paths are related, the path of action serving as a preliminary discipline to the path of knowledge.

II

The five points mentioned above may be explained briefly for the purpose of bringing out the significance of *jñāna-yoga*, the path of knowledge.

1. In the introduction to his commentary on the *Bhagavad-gītā*, Śaṅkara speaks of the twofold Vedic religion of works and renunciation as maintaining the order of the universe. In another context in the same introduction, Śaṅkara observes: "The *Gītā-sāstra* expounds the two-fold religion whose aim is the supreme good."

What is called *pravṛtti-mārga* is *karma-yoga*, and what is known as *nivṛtti-mārga* is *jñāna-yoga*. The former consists in the performance of one's duties as an offering to the Lord without any concern for the fruits thereof, while the latter consists in the renunciation of all action leading to the pursuit of knowledge after having attained the purification of the mind. It is these two paths that Lord Krishna refers to in his reply to Arjuna. Krishna says that the Sāṅkhyas pursue the path of knowledge and that the Yogins, the path of action. In his commentary on these verses, Śaṅkara points out that “*jñāna-yoga* is suited to the Sāṅkhyas, who possess a clear knowledge of the Self and the not-Self, who renounce the world from *brahmacarya*, who determine the nature of things in the light of the Vedāntic wisdom, who belong to the highest class of *sannyāsins* known as the *paramahānsas*, and whose thoughts ever dwell on Brahman only.” The Yogins, on the contrary, are those who are inclined to action.

2. Ordinarily, we speak of three paths or disciplines, viz. *karma-yoga*, *bhakti-yoga* and *jñāna-yoga*. How is it, then, that Lord Krishna speaks of only two paths — *karma-yoga* and *jñāna-yoga*? Why is it that *bhakti-yoga* is not mentioned even though the twelfth chapter of the *Bhagavad-gītā* is about *bhakti-yoga*? The answer is that *bhakti-yoga* is only a variation of *karma-yoga* and so it is not mentioned as an independent path. Meditation on the universal form of the Lord as endowed with qualities is intelligible only in the case of one who pursues the path of action. Lord Krishna says at the end of Chapter XI: “He who does work for me, who looks on me as the Supreme, who is devoted to me, who is free from attachment, who is without hatred for any being, he comes to me, Oh Pāṇḍava.” (XI, 55). This declaration of

the Lord is certainly not applicable to one who, renouncing every action, seeks to realise the Supreme which is *nirguṇa*. One who is not devoted to the Lord will not do any action as an offering to the Lord. Again, one who pursues the path of knowledge after having attained the purification of the mind will not be engaged in action. It follows, therefore, that a devotee cannot be but a *karma-yogin*. So *bhakti-yoga* can be subsumed under *karma-yoga*. And it is for this reason that it is not mentioned as a separate path.

3. Arjuna understood that Lord Krishna has taught him that the path of knowledge is superior to the path of action.

4. He also understood that the two paths cannot be combined. If the two paths could be combined, he would not have requested Krishna to tell him with certainty that one path by which he may attain the supreme good. The path of knowledge is considered to be superior in so far as it is the direct means to the realisation of the highest good. *Karma-yoga* is a preparatory discipline. It is conducive to the attainment of the highest good, not directly, but only indirectly. And the two paths cannot be combined at the same time by the same individual because the conditions of the eligibility in the two cases are quite different. One has to practise *karma-yoga* for the purpose of attaining the purification of the mind. This is the preliminary discipline, the ground work for spiritual progress. After attaining the purification of the mind, and after renouncing all *karma*, one treads the path of knowledge.

5. It follows from what has been said that the two paths are related: *jñāna-yoga* presupposes *karma-yoga*, and *karma-yoga* must lead on to *jñāna-yoga*. There is a clear statement

in the *Bhagavad-gītā* itself stressing the importance of the performance of *karma* for the purpose of the purification of the mind. "By the body alone, by the mind alone, by the intellect alone, by mere senses also, Yogins perform action without attachment, for the purification of the mind." (V, 2)

It may be noted here that an action which a person performs may be bodily action or mental action. If so, *bhakti* or devotion is undoubtedly *karma* which is mental, as distinguished from bodily action. And every *karma*—whether it is bodily or mental — when performed without attachment to the results is conducive to the attainment of the purification of the mind which is necessary for the pursuit of the path of knowledge, through the threefold discipline of guided study (*śravaṇa*), rational reflection (*manana*), and repeated contemplation (*nididhyāsana*).

The sequential relation between the two paths and the attainment of the highest good through knowledge may be stated as follows: From *karma-yoga* there arises the purification of the mind; and from that, mediate knowledge; and therefrom renunciation of all action; and after that, establishment in immediate knowledge which is known as *jīvan-mukti*; and finally release from the body known as *videha-mukti*.

III

The expression "*jñāna-yoga*" means, according to Śaṅkara, that knowledge itself is *yoga* (*jñānameva yogaḥ*). The word "yoga" means that which unites (*yujyata iti yogaḥ*). Or, the word *yoga* may be explained as that by which union is attained (*yujyate anena iti yogaḥ*). The idea is that

knowledge is the means through which Brahman, the supreme reality, the supreme good, is realised. If knowledge is the means to the realisation of the supreme reality, it is necessary to know: what is knowledge? And it is equally necessary to know: what is ignorance? To know the distinction between *kṣetrajñā* and *kṣetra*, is knowledge; and to know anything else is ignorance. This is clearly stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (XIII, 2) by the Lord as follows: “Do thou also know me as *kṣetrajñā* in all *kṣetras*, Oh Bhārata. The knowledge of *kṣetra* and *kṣetrajñā* is deemed by me as the knowledge.” *Kṣetrajñā* is the Self, and *kṣetra* which means the body is the not-Self. The Lord elucidates the nature of the not-Self, *kṣetra*, by mentioning the elements which are all modifications of matter as well as the internal organ and its different forms and characteristics. He says: “The great elements, *ahaṅkāra*, the intellect, the *avyakta*, the ten senses and one, and the five objects of the senses, desire, hatred, pleasure, pain, the aggregate, intelligence, courage — thus the *kṣetra* has been briefly described with its modifications.” (XIII, 5-6) What is the Self or *kṣetrajñā*? *Kṣetrajñā* is explained as follows: “That which knows the body is designated as *kṣetrajñā* by those who know them.” (XIII, 1).

So according to the *Bhagavad-gītā*, it is necessary to know the distinction between the Self and the not-Self, *kṣetrajñā* and *kṣetra*. To know anything else is indeed ignorance; and to be in possession of those qualities which are not conducive to the attainment of the right knowledge, is to be under the sway of ignorance. The *Gītā* says, distinguishing knowledge from ignorance: “This is declared to be knowledge, and what is opposed to it is ignorance.”

There is a close link between metaphysics and the ethical discipline. Śaṅkara's insistence on the importance of *jñāna-yoga* as the means to the attainment of Brahman-realisation is based on a very simple, but a profound truth with which we are familiar in our day-to-day experience. But it was given to a great mastermind like Śaṅkara, who evolved from it a theory of great metaphysical significance taking his stand on the authority of the *Upaniṣads* and the *Bhagavad-gītā*. In all his numerous writings — whether they be his commentaries on the *Upaniṣads*, the *Bhagavad-gītā* and the *Brahma-sūtra* or his celebrated minor works — Śaṅkara sticks to this basic position with unswerving conviction. It is a matter of common knowledge that when we are ignorant about something we endeavour to remove that ignorance by gaining the true knowledge of that object. Take the familiar case of mistaking a rope which is in front for a snake. Not knowing the real nature of the object in front, a person thinks that it is a snake and begins to run away in fear. Ignorance of the real nature of the object is the cause of his thinking of it as a snake and the subsequent reactions in him like sweating, running away in fear and so on. It is not enough if he is told that the object in front is not a snake. The statement that it is not a snake does not serve to remove his ignorance of the object in front. Perhaps he has known to some extent what it is not. But this does not mean that his ignorance has been removed. His ignorance can be removed only by attaining the knowledge of the object in front, *viz.*, the rope. In short, it is knowledge and knowledge alone that removes ignorance in the same way as light removes darkness.

Śaṅkara's contention that *jñāna-yoga* is the direct means to the attainment of Brahman-realisation, which is release is

thus based upon what we experience in our day-to-day life. He has shown that this basic principle, *viz.* that knowledge is the antidote to all ignorance holds good not only with regard to removing our ordinary ignorance as exemplified in our mistaking a rope for a snake, but also in overcoming the metaphysical or foundational ignorance from which we suffer.

Man finds himself in the ever-revolving wheel of activity which makes him sick at heart. Not being able to escape from it, he plunges deep into it developing time-consciousness. Everything that he does is according to the time-schedule. Even the relation which he is supposed to have is according to the time-schedule. All the time, he is involved in action whether outward or inward. In the words of Lord Krishna: "None verily even for an instant ever remains doing no action; for everyone is driven helpless to action by the energies born of Nature." (III, 5)

It is desire that is the cause of all action, good or bad. It does not matter whether we do an action enjoined by scripture or prohibited by it. In every case there is the desire to attain some end or other; and it is desire which prompts one to do some action through deed, speech or thought. What, then, is the cause of desire? According to Śaṅkara desire arises due to the ignorance of the real nature of the Self. Desire relates to the not-Self. When a person attains the knowledge of the Self, when a person realises that there is only the Self and nothing else separate from it that can be desired, he becomes one without desires (*akāmaḥ*), one who is free from desires (*niṣkāmaḥ*). Since a man who has realised his identity with all has nothing to desire, he cannot perform the rites. Ignorance of the real nature of the non-dual *Brahman-Ātman* is the root cause of bondage; and this ignorance is, therefore,

characterised as foundational or metaphysical ignorance. The attainment of Brahman-knowledge removes ignorance, and the removal of ignorance results in the overcoming of bondage. The causal chain, therefore, proceeds from ignorance to desire, from desire to action and so on.

A complete enumeration of the several links of the causal chain will be as follows: From ignorance arises the defect (*doṣa*) in the form of desire and aversion; from these there arises action (*pravṛtti*) towards the *dharma* and *adharma*; and from action there results birth (*janma*), and consequent on birth there is misery (*duḥkha*). Liberation consists in the removal of *avidyā* and its results. The *Nyāya-sūtra*, I, i. 2, which Śaṅkara quotes, sets forth the causal chain starting from *avidyā* and ending in *duḥkha* as follows: “*duḥkha-janma-pravṛtti-doṣa-mithyā-jñānānām uttarot-tarāpāye tadanantarāpāyāt apavargah.*”

In order to appreciate that *jñāna* is the direct means to the attainment of Brahman-realisation, it is necessary to keep in mind the means-end relation. The means that we choose must be suitable and appropriate to the end which we want to attain. It is not the case that through any means any end can be attained. The means to be chosen must be appropriate to the end. The choice of the means is determined by the end. This point must be borne in mind in understanding the significance of *jñāna-yoga* as explained by Śaṅkara.

The *Bhagavad-gītā* (IV, 37-38) points out that knowledge is the means by which the fetters of bondage are broken and that there is nothing equal to knowledge. It says: “As a kindled fire reduces fuel to ashes, Oh Arjuna, so does the fire of knowledge reduce all actions to ashes. Verily, there

exists here no purifier equal to wisdom. He who has perfected by yoga finds it in time in himself by himself.’’

It is the same idea that is brought out in the *Upaniṣads*. The *Chāndogya* (VII, 1, ii) declares: ‘‘The knower of the Self goes beyond grief.’’ The *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (II, 1, i,) says: ‘‘The knower of Brahman attains the highest.’’ That knowledge is the only means to realise Brahman and that there is no other means for realising it, is clearly stated in a text of the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* (III, 8): ‘‘I know the Supreme person of sunlike colour, beyond the darkness. Only by knowing him does one pass over death. There is no other path for going there.’’ In the introduction to his commentary on the *Gītā*, Śaṅkara observes that ‘‘the aim of this famous *Gītā-śāstra* is briefly the supreme good, the complete cessation of bondage and of its cause. This results from a state of devotion to the knowledge of the Self preceded by a renunciation of all works.’’ The illusory serpent cannot be destroyed by means of a stick. It can be destroyed only by knowing the truth that the object in front is only a rope. The fear caused by the illusory serpent can be removed, not by medicine, not by *mantra*; it can be removed only by the knowledge of the object in front. In the same way, one can be cured of the bite of the serpent of *ajñāna* only by the knowledge of Brahman, and not by the *Vedas*, not by the *śāstras*, not by the *mantras*, and not even by herbs.

What is the means by which Brahman-knowledge can be obtained? This question is answered in the *Bhagavad-gītā* in XIII, 7-11. The possession of the following virtues is conducive to the attainment of Brahman-knowledge: (1) Humility, (2) modesty, (3) non-violence, (4) patience, (5) uprightness, (6) service to the teacher, (7) purity,

(8) steadfastness, (9) self-control, (10) dispassion, (11) absence of egoism, (12) perception of evil in birth, death, old-age, sickness and pain, (13) unattachment, (14) absence of attachment for son, wife, etc. (15) equanimity, (16) devotion to God, (17) resort to solitude (18) avoiding the company of the unenlightened, (19) constancy in self-knowledge, and (20) contemplation on *mokṣa*, which is the end to be attained by knowledge.

The fourfold condition of eligibility formulated by Śaṅkara for the study of the *Upaniṣads* sums up all these 20 virtues listed in the *Bhagavad-gītā*. In the course of his commentary, Śaṅkara remarks that the mature development of virtues such as humility leads to knowledge.

While Śaṅkara fully recognises the importance of *karma-yoga* in its own way, he is emphatic that the attainment of liberation which is the highest good falls directly within the scope of *jñāna-yoga* alone, and that nothing can vouchsafe for us this goal excepting the immediate and direct knowledge of Brahman-Ātman.

IV

The *Mīmāṃsā* view that liberation can be attained by means of *karma* alone or by means of the combination of *karma* and *jñāna* is not acceptable.

Let us first consider why liberation cannot be attained by means of *karma*. Liberation consists in realising the true nature of the Self as the eternal non-dual reality. It is a matter of common knowledge that anything which is produced by action is impermanent (*anitya*). If liberation were the result of *karma*, then it will be impermanent, and such a state is not

really desirable. As Sureśvara puts it: “Since release is unalterable, eternal, *karma* is not a means to that. If it were the result of *karma*, like heaven etc., it will not be eternal.” (*Taittirīya-vārtika*, I, 24).

There is also another reason for rejecting this view. *Karma* involves duality in the form of means and end, doer and deed. The perception of duality is ignorance. Further, it is only a person who has desire performs *karma*. Since he is ignorant of the non-dual Self, he thinks that there are objects other than the Self which he should strive for. In short, *karma* presupposes desire, involves duality, and is therefore a product of *avidyā*. If so, how can it destroy *avidyā*, the root cause of bondage and thereby bring about liberation?

The futility of *karma* in respect of attaining release can be shown in another way. Whenever we do any action, it is for the sake of production (*utpatti*), or purification (*saṁskāra*), or transformation (*vikāra*), or attainment (*āpti*). That is, *karma* can produce or perform or transform or bring within reach something. Apart from these four, a fifth use of *karma* cannot be thought of. From the point of any of these four uses, *karma* is of no use for attaining liberation. Remaining in one’s own true form is release; that is, realising the true nature of the Self which is ever-existent is release. So release is not something to be produced, for it is eternal (*nityatvāt*). It is not something to be purified, for it is bereft of all qualities and impurities (*nirguṇatvāt, nirdoṣatvāt ca*). There is also another reason here. It cannot be purified since it is not a means (*asādhana-dravyātmakatvāt*). Only a thing that serves as a means can be purified as a sacrificial vessel or clarified butter by sprinkling water and so on. It is not something to be transformed, for it is immutable (*kūṭasthatvāt*). It is not

something to be done, for it is already existent as the Self of everyone. Attainment is possible only with regard to something which is different from us, which is outside us, which is not within our reach. Since liberation consists in being identical with the Self, which is non-dual, there is no question of attainment in this sense.

Reference has already been made to the problem of the combination of *karma* and knowledge. From the way in which Arjuna asks Krishna to tell him that one path by means of which he can attain the highest goal, it is obvious that the combination of *karma* and knowledge at the same time has to be ruled out. *Karma* and knowledge are opposed to each other like light and darkness. Śaṅkara says that the antithesis between knowledge and *karma* is irremovable like a mountain. From the very distinction that is made between the two paths it is unmistakably clear that the two are quite different and that they cannot be combined at the same time. There is a special excellence about the path of knowledge; and so the *jñānī*, the enlightened man, is rated very high, when compared with other devotees. Reference is made to four kinds of devotees who worship the supreme God — the distressed, the seeker of knowledge, the seeker of wealth and the wise man (VII, 16) . Of these four kinds of virtuous men, the Lord says (VII, 17) that the wise man is the best, even though all the other three kinds of men are great. The enlightened man is the best of the whole lot, is excessively dear to the Supreme, because he is the very Self; by his knowledge, he remains as the Self, and not as different from the Self. (VII, 18).

Release or perfection is not something to be attained in a distant future in some other life. It is not a prophecy of the

future, making its attainment doubtful. On the contrary, it is what can be achieved here and now, provided a spiritual aspirant makes himself eligible for that by fulfilling the requirements therefor and pursues the path of knowledge. In other words, *jñāna* gives us *dr̥ṣṭa-phala*, a perceptible result now itself. This is one noteworthy feature which brings out the great excellence of *jñāna-yoga*. *Jñāna-yoga* leads to perfection, which is otherwise called release or *mokṣa*. For one who has attained this goal, viz., perfection, here and now, there is nothing else to be done by him; for he has realized Brahman-Ātman; he remains as Brahman-Ātman which is immutable, and which is, therefore, free from action. Such a one is spoken of as a man of wisdom (*dhīraḥ*), one who has given up all actions (*sarva-ārambha-parityāgi*), one who has transcended the three *guṇas* (*guṇātītaḥ*), one who is steady in knowledge (*sthitaprajñāḥ*). For such a person who rejoices in the Self, who is satisfied with the Self, who is content in the Self alone, there is nothing to be done (III, 17). Such a person who is a *jīvanmukta*, who is a personality without frontiers, is, by his mere presence in society, a solace to the suffering mankind, a beaconlight for guiding others in darkness; he is, to use a significant expression of T.S. Eliot, “the still point of the turning world”. In himself he is “the still point”; and we who are the sons of Martha and who constitute the turning world, go around him. The concept of *jīvanmukti* which forms an integral part of the theory of *jñāna-yoga* is another noteworthy feature of *jñāna-yoga*.

THE MOHAMUDGARA OF ŚAṄKARA (A Topic-wise Treatment)

T.P. Ramachandran*

Introduction

All the classical philosophies of India with the exception of Cārvāka are religious philosophies. They do not indulge in speculation for the sake of speculation. Their entire effort is devoted to releasing man from the miseries of life. The conception of liberation varies from school to school. But basically the goal is regarded as the complete and permanent rest for the soul from the ills that beset life. The chief obstacle to release is man's infatuation (*moha*) with the various attractions of life in spite of the fact that their pursuit is riddled with innumerable difficulties. This infatuation is entrenched in the mind by its taste in repeated births. Naturally, therefore, the first lesson impressed upon us by teachers in every school is that we should learn to wrench ourselves away from the snares of the world if we must devote our attention to the

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goal of liberation. Such a discipline is generally called *vairāgya*. We are here concerned with nature and significance of *vairāgya* according to Advaita.

The term *vairāgya* needs some clarification. *Rāga*, or *rakti*, is attachment to the various aspects of worldly life. *Vairāgya* is the state of non-attachment (*virāgasya bhāvaḥ*). It is easy to mistake absence of attachment for aversion (*dveṣa*), which is the opposite of attachment. But we are taught that aversion to the world is as dangerous to spiritual pursuit as attachment. Attachment and aversion form an inseparable pair (*dvandva*). And, therefore, the mind has the tendency to swing from the one to the other in recurring modes. So, though *vairāgya* is described as non-attachment, it implies equally non-aversion.¹

In this connection it is worth making a distinction between the attachment (*rāga*) of ordinary people and the love (*priya*) that reigns in the heart of a *jīvanmukta*. Attachment is bestowed on select individuals and objects excluding other from its purview. It is also governed by one's own interests, though they may be subtle and subconscious. But the love of a *jīvanmukta* knows no preferences and exclusions. It is equally showered on all. It is also absolutely free from any selfish consideration, since the *mukta* is one who has risen above all sense of agency and enjoyership. Such love becomes possible for him because he has realized the one supreme self (Ātman) that manifests itself as the many individual selves. It is this basic love that expresses itself as the narrow attachment of the ignorant for specific persons and objects.² It becomes narrow, as it gets conditioned by the limitations

(*upādhi*) created by *avidyā*. Forgetting our non-difference from Brahman, we think of ourselves as individuals bound to separate bodies, each seeking his own worldly desires and cultivating likes and dislikes.

Complete freedom from attachment is possible only when Brahman is realized. But it is also true that a measure of detachment should initially be imbibed for embarking on the path to enlightenment. Such preliminary detachment becomes possible through discriminative knowledge (*viveka*) relating to the nature of the world in which we live and the consequences of attachment to it. Reflection on the nature of things shows that they are not worth the attachment that we in our ignorance bestow on them. Even the best of allurements have their sordid aspects and are perishable in the long run. Correspondingly, reflection on the psychology of attachment reveals that it is a futile exercise. A necessary concomitant of attachment to worldly ends is desire (*kāma*) with reference to them. From desire there follows effort (*karma*) to fulfil it. It is well known that there is no guarantee that our efforts for worldly ends will succeed. Effort has often to encounter human as well as natural obstacles. It invites envy from others and strife with them, and may ultimately end up with defeat and frustration.³ Even assuming that effort succeeds, worldly ends by their very nature cannot give us lasting satisfaction. And hence attachment and desire shift from one object to another in an endless chain. Constant reflection, both on the limitations of worldly objects and on the perils of seeking them, helps to break down attachment and cultivate *vairāgya*. Scripture helps us in such reflection by dwelling on these aspects.

The *Mohamudgara* of Śrī Śaṅkara (also called *Bhajagovindam*) is an excellent treatise relating to *vairāgya*. The term *mudgara* means a hammer. The poem stands for relentless mental pounding on the weakness of infatuation (*moha*). Easy to recite, the poem of thirty-one delectable stanzas is a ready remedy to this deep-seated malady. But it does not teach *vairāgya* in isolation from the rest of Advaita discipline. *Vairāgya* is not an end in itself. It is necessary as one of the preliminaries to Brahman-knowledge. Hence the poem contains as well lessons on other aspects of discipline which follow *vairāgya*, namely dis-interested *karma*, *bhakti*, *yoga*, and *jñāna*. It reveals also the nature of *jīvanmukti* as the consummation of the whole effort and the importance of the preceptor's grace throughout. All these form the perspective in which *vairāgya* is to be understood.

In the following pages the contents of the poem are classified according to the topics they mainly deal with. The preparation of this article is based on a close study of the work *Śrī Bhajagovindam* with Tamil translation and notes published by Śrī Kāmakoti Kośasthānam, Madras, in 1955 (Śrī Kāmakoti Granthāvali-3). The book frequently cites the views of Svayamprakāśa found in his commentary on the work. It also cites the observations of Jagadguru Śrī Candraśekharendra Sarasvatī on different points arising from the poem in his discourses (also published by Śrī Kāmakoti Kośasthānam in 1933). Both these citations have been of immense help to me in grasping the true import of the verses and their implications. I acknowledge my indebtedness to the above publication. There is no attempt at literal translation of the verses in this article.

The glory of renunciation

सुरमन्दिरतरुमूलनिवासः
 शय्या भूतलमजिनं वासः ।
 सर्वपरिग्रहभोगत्यागः
 कस्य सुखं न करोति विरागः ॥ (18)

Nothing gives pure pleasure as the practice of *vairāgya*. Whatever pleasure that comes from pursuing worldly ends can only be impure, i.e. mixed with pain. The ascetic may live in the precincts of temples and at the foot of trees, and he may sleep on the bare floor. In short, he renounces all objects, such as a good house, nice clothes and bed, and so on. Even if he somehow happens to be associated with them, the thought of the pleasure accruing from them will not sully his mind. There is nothing equal to the pleasure of renunciation.

The nature of *vairāgya*

शत्रौ मित्रे पुत्रे बन्धौ
 मा कुरु यत्नं विग्रहसन्धौ ।
 भव समचित्तः सर्वत्र त्वम्
 वाञ्छस्यचिराद् यदि विष्णुत्वम् ॥ (25)

Vairāgya is not hatred towards the world. Attachment and aversion are an inseparable pair. We have to avoid both if we are to prepare ourselves for *jñāna*, which is the final means to release. In common life we hate the enemy; we love the friend, the son, and the relative. Even with those whom we love we are sometimes sore. We are here asked to avoid any activity that will either bind us to others or

involve us in conflict with them. If we are keen to attain liberation without delay, we have to practise equidistance of mind between attachment and aversion in respect of all.

The futility of wealth

The world provides opportunities as well as obstacles to detachment. Discriminative knowledge enables us to overcome the obstacles and utilize the opportunities. There are aspects of the world which are distinctively spiritual distractions, e.g. sense pleasure. There are others like disease and death, which if reflected upon, serve as means to detachment. Sometimes the same aspect is both an opportunity and an impediment to spiritual life depending upon how we view it. Wealth is one such aspect.

मूढ जहीहि धनागमतृष्णाम्
 कुरु सदबुद्धिं मनसि वितृष्णाम् ।
 यल्लभसे निजकर्मोपात्तम्
 वित्तं तेन विनोदय चित्तम् ॥ (2)

No one can live without money. Physical well-being is indispensable even to perform one's daily duties. But desire for money should not become a passion. One should be constantly aware of its subordinate value. One should give up greed for money, and with a mind free from avarice, one should contemplate on the ultimate reality (*sat*). A person should be content with whatever wealth he happens to acquire by virtue of his past *karma* as well as by the performance of the duties relating to his station and stage in this birth.

अर्थमनर्थं भावय नित्यम् ।
 नास्ति ततः सुखलेशः सत्यम् ।
 पुत्रादपि धनभाजां भीतिः
 सर्वत्रैषा विहिता रीतिः ॥ (29)

Wealth (*artha*) is worthless (*anartha*). There is not even a trace of happiness therein. This is the truth. Think of this always. Why, the wealthy man has to dread even his son (children in general). The lure of wealth blinds one to blood relationship and respect for parents. This is the established way of the world everywhere.

The condemnation of wealth in this verse does not mean that there is no need for money at all, but only that excessive attachment to wealth should be avoided. Money is not an end in itself, but a means to an end. How we use it depends on our discriminative knowledge. The ignorant person puts wealth to wrong use and earns demerit (*pāpa*). Only the wise use it for good ends. One should pray for wisdom before praying for money.

यावत् वित्तोपार्जनसक्तः
 तावन्निजपरिवारो रक्तः ।
 पश्चात् जीवति जर्जरदेहे
 वार्तां कोऽपि न पृच्छति गेहे ॥ (5)

The concern shown to a person by those connected with him often centres round his capacity to earn money. When in later life the person becomes frail of body and unfit to earn, none of those who hung on him would feel like calling on him to make a kind enquiry. Attachment is often motivated by desire for personal ends such as money and

other favours. And gratitude for favours received is a rare phenomenon. Affluence wins respectability in society; and when a person runs out of money, his desertion by others becomes unbearable. Therefore one should beware of the delusive power of wealth.

The perils of sense pleasure

नारीस्तनभरनाभीदेशम्
 दृष्ट्वा मा गा मोहावेशम् ।
 एतन्मांसवसादिविकारम्
 मनसि विचिन्तय वारंवारम् ॥ (3)

The lure of the flesh is a dangerous impediment to the acquisition of Brahman-knowledge. One should not be deluded by the charms of the human body, which, it should be brought to mind, are mere modifications of the flesh, fat, and so on. *Vairāgya* is necessary not only for acquiring knowledge of the self, but also for sustaining it after its acquisition.

The inevitability of death

नलिनीदलगतजलमतितरलम्
 तद्वज्जीवितमतिशयचपलम् ।
 विद्धि व्याध्यभिमानग्रस्तम्
 लोकं शोकहतं च समस्तम् ॥ (4)

Life on earth is as amazingly fickle as the pellet of water on a lotus leaf. One must also realize that the entire world is seized by disease and egoism and stricken with sorrow. Like this world, even the other worlds attained by one's

karma are imperfect and perishable. Therefore one should not postpone seeking Brahman-knowledge in all seriousness.

यावत् पवनो निवसति देहे
तावत् पृच्छति कुशलं गेहे ।
गतवति वायौ देहापाये
भार्या बिभ्यति तस्मिन् काये ॥ (6)

Dependent persons visit one's house and make kind enquiries about one's welfare only so long as one's life lasts. But when one's life is ebbing out, anxiety about themselves grips the minds of dependents, including one's wife, even as they see the dying body. Attachment to another ultimately centres round one's own interests.

दिनयामिन्यौ सायं प्रातः
शिशिरवसन्तौ पुनरायातः ।
कालः क्रीडति गच्छत्यायुः
तदपि न मुञ्चत्याशावायुः ॥ (12)

Day and night, morning and evening, the winter and the spring—these recur without end. Life ticks on to its close as time plays with us as it were. And yet, how surprising it is that we continue to be swept away by the whirlwind of desire for paltry worldly ends which are so hard to attain!

अङ्गं गलितं पलितं मुण्डम्
दशनविहीनं जातं तुण्डम् ।
वृद्धो याति गृहीत्वा दण्डम्
तदपि न मुञ्चत्याशापिण्डम् ॥ (15)

The limbs are worn out; the hair has gone white; the mouth has become toothless; old age has set in; and one moves about leaning on the staff. Even so, alas, this stuff called desire does not leave the mind! Persistent effort is called for to wear out desires, which are hard set in the mind through innumerable births.

अग्रे वह्निः पृष्ठे भानुः
 रात्रौ चुबुकसमर्पितजानुः ।
 करतलभिक्षस्तरुतलवासः
 तदपि न मुञ्चत्याशापाशः ॥ (16)

So strong is the phenomenon called desire that even old age spent in poverty and anxiety may not deter its preying on the mind. Here is an old man who lives by a handful of food earned by begging and rests at the foot of a tree. He spends the night with his chin resting on his knees, facing the fire, and awaiting the dawn at his back. With all this, his mind is not free from the fetters of desire.

सुखतः क्लियते रामाभोगः
 पश्चाद्धन्त शरीरे रोगः ।
 यद्यपि लोके मरणं शरणम्
 तदपि न मुञ्चति पापाचरणम् ॥ (28)

A sinful person enjoys illicit connections with women, but, alas, only to invite fatal disease as the result. Though life is bound to meet with death, such sinful habits do not leave such a person.

Petty distractions

बालस्तावत् क्रीडासक्तः

तरुणस्तावत् तरुणीसक्तः ।

वृद्धस्तावत् चिन्तासक्तः

परे ब्रह्मणि कोऽपि न सक्तः ॥ (7)

There are enough distractions to spiritual life in the world. In childhood one is lost in play; in youth one's mind is drawn into love of young women; in old age one is sunk in worry. As life is wasted in this manner, no one, we may say, is at any stage seriously engaged in contemplating the ultimate Brahman. It requires a firm mind to brush aside even small distractions.

The gravity of transmigration

पुनरपि जननं पुनरपि मरणम्

पुनरपि जननीजठरे शयनम् ।

इह संसारे बहुदुस्तारे

कृपयाऽपारे पाहि मुरारे ॥ (21)

So long as ignorance persists, there is bound to be rebirth. Ignorance leads to action (*karma*) done with desire for fruit. The results of such action are bound to be experienced by the agent, whether the action is good or bad. There is freedom in choosing actions, but not in undergoing the results of what has already been done with a result-motivation. Since the present life is not sufficient for experiencing the results of all the actions of the past, and since this life itself involves further action, there is bound to be recurring rebirth until the soul is released

through knowledge of reality. This beginningless and seemingly endless alternation of birth and death is called *samsāra*. It can be compared to a boundless ocean, which is wellnigh difficult to cross, except by the grace of God. Constant prayer paves the way for release from attachment to worldly results; and desireless action as taught in the *Bhagavad-gītā* prepares the mind for the saving knowledge.

Vairāgya and world-illusion

The reason put forward by most Indian schools for the practice of detachment is that the world is impermanent. But Advaita has a stronger reason for it. The world is more than impermanent — it is illusory. To pursue things of the world is as futile as pursuing the mirage in the desert. The Buddhists came close to this theory. The doctrine of impermanence is central to Buddhism. The Mādhyamika school pushed forward this doctrine to take the stand that because they are momentary, things as we take them must be illusory. But the illusion theory of Buddhism has a vital difference from that of Advaita. It did not occur to the Buddhist that any illusion must have a real basis. By reducing even the self to an illusion, Mādhyamika Buddhism denied itself the chance of recognizing a real basis for world-illusion. But to Advaita, Brahman is the basis for the entire world-illusion. Hence turning away from the world is not an end in itself; it implies seeking Brahman in its stead. There are places in the *Mohamudgara* where the exhortation for *vairāgya* is based explicitly on the reason that the world and its objects are an illusory appearance of Brahman.

वयसि गते कः कामविकारः
 शुष्के नीरे कः कासारः ।
 क्षीणे वित्ते कः परिवारः
 ज्ञाते तत्त्वे कः संसारः ॥ (10)

With old age, the play of sensual desire disappears. There is no pond as such when all the water has evaporated. When a person goes poor, his people desert him. Likewise, when the ultimate reality, Brahman, which underlies the world-illusion, is realized in experience, the cycle of births and deaths, which has its source in *avidyā*, comes to an end. An illusion cannot last when its real basis is discovered.

मा कुरु धनजनयौवनगर्वम्
 हरति निमेषात् कालः सर्वम् ।
 मायामयमिदमखिलं हित्वा
 ब्रह्मपदं त्वं प्रविश विदित्वा ॥ (11)

It is futile to take pride in the possession of wealth, the support of people, and the gift of youth. All these could be wiped out in a trice by the fell effect of time. What was not manifest earlier and is bound to become unmanifest later, exists in the middle only by semblance. It is of the nature of *māyā*, a mere superimposition on Brahman.⁴ Realizing this, one should give up attachment to everything in the world and prepare for entering the state of Brahman, i.e. for experiencing one's non-difference from Brahman, which is identical with release.

कस्त्वं कोऽहं कुत आयातः
 का मे जननी को मे तातः ।
 इति परिभावय सर्वमसारम्
 विश्वं त्यक्त्वा स्वप्नविचारम् ॥ (23)

This world and everything in it is ultimately an illusion like a dream and, thus, without substance. Therefore, giving up attachment to the world, one should seriously consider the true nature of one's own self, which has entered into various relationships in the world. A person should inquire into his own identity (*aham*) and its origin (*kuta āyātaḥ*), the identity of the person addressed by him (*tvam*), and even the identity of close relations like mother (*jananī*) and father (*tātaḥ*). Such reflection will pave the way for the experience of his true self, which is non-different from Brahman.

The value of satsaṅga

So far we have seen how discriminative knowledge, acquired by reflection on the various aspects of the world and life, helps to develop (*vairāgya*). Reflection of this kind is not easy. A valuable means to facilitate such reflection and cultivate detachment is to seek the company of virtuous people (*sajjanāḥ*), who are already well set in *vairāgya* and who are ever devoted to spiritual life. This is called *satsaṅga*.

का ते कान्ता धनगतचिन्ता
 वातुल किं तव नास्ति नियन्ता ।
 त्रिजगति सज्जनसङ्गतिरेका
 भवति भवार्णवतरणे नौका ॥ (13)

One who runs about feverishly after worldly concerns is compared to a hurricane. Having no one to guide him, such a one has worries, for example, about wife and possessions. Such a person is told to seek the company of the virtuous. In all the three worlds, the company of the good can be said to be the only boat to cross the ocean of *samsāra* — the cycle of births and deaths. These great ones constantly remind us of the need for *vairāgya* and *bhakti* to attain liberation.

सत्सङ्गत्वे निस्सङ्गत्वम्
 निस्सङ्गत्वे निर्मोहत्वम् ।
 निर्मोहत्वे निश्चलितत्वम्
 निश्चलितत्वे जीवन्मुक्तिः ॥ (9)

The immense value of *satsaṅga* is that step by step it ultimately leads to liberation even while the body is alive. From *satsaṅga* the mind learns to be detached from worldly objects. This is *vairāgya*, which is described as *nissāṅgatva* here. The more the mind becomes detached from objects, the less it is enticed by them. This is *nirmohatva*. Given this freedom from distracting objects, the mind becomes steady in contemplating Brahman, about which one has learnt from scripture. This state of mind is referred to as *niścalitatva*. Such steady contemplation culminates in actual experience of Brahman even while the physical frame continues to live (*jīvanmukti*). Those who have attained *jīvanmukti* have, in effect, neither death nor birth, and so they are described in scripture as *amṛtāḥ*, or deathless ones.

Vairāgya and other disciplines

The cultivation of *vairāgya* is the foundation for the practice of other disciplines for liberation. *Karma-yoga* and *bhakti-yoga* purify the mind and prepare it for *jñāna-yoga*. *Upāsana* secures the ever-flitting mind and fixes it on the chosen goal. *Bhakti-yoga* also has this advantage of mental fixation. *Jñāna-yoga* consists of the study of scripture (*śravaṇa*) under a preceptor, reflection on what has been learnt about Brahman (*manana*), and meditation on Brahman (*nididhyāsana*) with a view to facilitating the conversion of mediate knowledge into immediate experience. Hence the poem refers to all these disciplines, though its central theme is *vairāgya*.

भज गोविन्दं भज गोविन्दम्
 भज गोविन्दं मूढमते ।
 सम्प्राप्ते सन्निहिते काले
 न हि न हि रक्षति दुकृञ्करणे ॥ (1)

Pray to Govinda, serve him, and meditate on him, oh ignorant one, exhorts this verse. In fact, this exhortation is the refrain of every verse in the poem. The importance of the name “Govinda” is that, though the Lord has several names, in common life we more often utter this name than any other. When the destined time of death is drawing near, mere scholarship as in grammar will not help. Only the name of the Lord will give us peace. This does not mean that scholarship as such is condemned. Scholarship may have its secular uses. But according to Advaita, scholarship becomes really valuable only when it conduces to the knowledge of Brahman, which alone leads to liberation.

भगवद्गीता किञ्चिदधीता
 गङ्गाजललवकणिका पीता ।
 सकृदपि येन मुरारिसमर्चा
 कियते तस्य यमेन न चर्चा ॥ (20)

Even a small measure of devotional practice like studying a portion of the *Bhagavad-gītā*, drinking a drop of the holy Gaṅgā water, and ardently worshipping Śrī Kṛṣṇa at least once a day, will pave the way for release. A person who lives thus will willingly accept death when it comes, because he knows that it relates only to the body. The importance of the *Bhagavad-gītā* is that it is the essence of all the teachings of the Upaniṣads and was propounded by the Lord himself on the battlefield where one's life itself is at stake.

गेयं गीतानामसहस्रम्
 ध्येयं श्रीपतिरूपमजस्रम् ।
 नेयं सज्जनसङ्गे चित्तम्
 देयं दीनजनाय च वित्तम् ॥ (27)

Always study the *Bhagavad-gītā* taught by the Lord himself. Recite the psalm of the thousand names of Lord Viṣṇu. Ever meditate on the form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of Śrī Lakṣmī. In fact, reciting the names of the Lord itself trains the mind in meditating on him. Keep the mind for ever in the company of the holy ones. Give charity to the poor (as an act of service to the Lord). Thus *bhakti* takes many forms.

प्राणायामं प्रत्याहारम्
 नित्यानित्यविवेकविचारम् ।
 जाप्यसमेतसमाधिविधानम्
 कुर्वन्वधानं महद्वधानम् ॥ (30)

Though difficult as compared to devotion, the practice of *yoga* is an excellent preliminary to the pursuit of *jñāna-yoga*. The essence of *yoga*, according to Patañjali, is the control of the ever-turbulent mind. The technique as such is found in most schools of Indian philosophy, but as adapted to their respective metaphysics. We are here concerned with its orientation in terms of Advaita. Patañjali's *yoga* is allied to Sāṅkhya. According to Sāṅkhya, reality consists in the separate existence of the soul (*puruṣa*) and matter (*prakṛti*). And the goal of *yoga* is for the soul to sever its false connection with matter. But according to Advaita, the reality is the non-dual Brahman from which the soul is not different. The aim of *yoga*, therefore, should be to enable the soul to realize its non-difference from Brahman.

Yoga consists of eight steps: *yama*, *niyama*, *āsana*, *prāṇāyāma*, *pratyāhāra*, *dhāraṇā*, *dhyāna* and *samādhi*. The first two steps are the moral pre-requisite to the practice of the other steps. The third is regulating the body posture as a preparation for mental control. *Prāṇāyāma* is the regulation of breath, as breath is closely connected with the disposition of the mind. Following this, the senses are withdrawn from distracting external objects (*pratyāhāra*), and the mind is set on the reality, viz Brahman (*dhāraṇā*). A steady stream of thought is then directed at this chosen target, and this is called *dhyāna*. The process continues

until the mind gets absorbed and identified with the object (Brahman). This is *samādhi*.

Verse thirty exhorts the aspirant to begin with reflection on the distinction between the eternal and the evanescent (*nityānitya-vastu-vicāra*) with a view to earning detachment (*vairāgya*). Endowed with *vairāgya*, he is advised to practise (*kurvavadhānam*) all the eight steps of *yoga* with great care (*mahadavadhānam*).

The need for the care called for becomes evident when we remember that the practice of *yoga* incidentally endows the practitioner with certain miraculous super-human powers (*siddhi*), such as the power to become very small or very big or very light, the power to obtain anything, and so on.⁵ These powers have their own attractions in the world. But the temptation to cultivate and use these powers — even to bring temporary benefit to people — is born of *avidyā*. Hence the *yogin* who falls to such temptation is sure to miss the real goal of *yoga*, viz. liberation. Rigorous detachment is required even here. The *yogin*, fixing his aim firmly at liberation, has to brush aside the taste of the *siddhis*, though they occur in the course of *yoga*.⁶

Meditation on Brahman as *nirguṇa* is difficult. Hence the aspirant has to get initiated into it by practising meditation on Brahman as *saguṇa*. This can be done by mentally repeating a prescribed *mantra* or *nāma* relating to Saguṇa Brahman. This is called *japa*. Meditation aided by *japa* will lead to mental absorption in Saguṇa Brahman in the first instance (*jāpya-sameta-samādhi-vidhānam*). If the *yogin* stops with meditation on Saguṇa Brahman, he

will attain *brahma-loka* at death. Though the attainment of *brahma-loka* is not final release according to Advaita, one who attains to it acquires the experience of the non-dual Brahman with greater facility than on earth. But if the *yogin* follows up meditation on Saḡuᅇa Brahman with meditation on Nirḡuᅇa Brahman, the result will be *jīvanmukti* — liberation here and now irrespective of body.

The importance of *jñāna*

According to Advaita, *jñāna* is the final and direct means to release. Bondage is the result of ignorance. Therefore, knowledge, which removes ignorance, alone can be the direct means to release. All other disciplines are necessary and useful only as means to *jñāna* by purifying and steadying the mind. One who has realized Brahman may continue to perform good actions and offer devotion. But this has no motive and is purely the result of past tendency (*vāsanā*).

Jñāna is either mediate or immediate. Since our perception of duality, which is born of ignorance, is immediate, it is only immediate knowledge of Brahman, i.e. experience, that can bring release. Mediate knowledge, which results from the study of scripture and reflection on its teaching, only precedes immediate knowledge. It is transformed into experience when all mental obstacles to it are removed by meditation on Brahman.

The importance bestowed on *jñāna* in this poem is brought out when the Ācārya refers to one who has not attained *jñāna* as a *mūᅇha*. The first and second verses address the reader thus. The term literally means “one who lacks intelligence.” But this conventional sense cannot apply here,

for no one could be expected to listen to Vedānta if addressed in this disparaging sense. Hence the term is to be taken in the special sense of a person who lacks the experience of Brahman.⁷ Verse twenty-six makes this clear by the statement: *ātma-jñāna-vihīnā mūḍhāḥ*. The same idea occurs in verse fourteen where a *mūḍha* is stated to be one who fails to realize Brahman in spite of the opportunities met with in life: *paśyannapi ca na paśyati mūḍhaḥ*. Nothing is more certain and closer to the ultimate reality than our own selves. One may doubt the existence of anything external, but no one can doubt one's own existence. And yet, failing to wake up to our real nature as Ātman, we drift in the current of ignorance, doubt, and folly. This import of the term *mūḍha* is confirmed when we find that verse eight addresses the reader as *bhrānta*, because he is still subject to the delusion (*bhrānti*) of the world of duality.

का ते कान्ता कस्ते पुत्रः
 संसारोऽयमतीव विचित्रः ।
 कस्य त्वं कः कुत आयातः
 तत्त्वं चिन्तय तदिदं भ्रान्त ॥ (8)

This cycle of transmigration is extremely puzzling. One is born as somebody and enters into various relationships such as to wife and son. The insubstantiality of one's personal identity and of the resulting relationships will become evident when one experiences that one's real self is non-different from Brahman. Īśvara bereft of *māyā* and the *jīva* devoid of *avidyā* are the same as pure consciousness. Even the mediate knowledge of this truth as learnt from the Upaniṣadic statement *tat tvam asi* helps to break down the force of attachment to one's body and

blood relations. Hence we are asked to reflect on this truth (*tattvam cintaya tadidam bhrānta*).

जटिलो मुण्डी लुञ्छितकेशः
 काषायाम्बरबहुकृतवेषः
 पश्यन्नपि न च पश्यति मूढो
 ह्युदरनिमित्तं बहुकृतवेषः ॥ (14)

The aspirant for Brahman-knowledge adopts *sannyāsa* to facilitate its onset. *Sannyāsa* involves total control of body and mind. Even the regulations that govern the physical life of the *sannyāsin* are intended to turn the mind inward. If these regulations come to be observed for their own sake instead of being put to the service of *jñāna*, they become futile. Matting the hair, shaving the head clean, forcibly pulling off the hair one by one, wearing saffron robes of all kinds — all these could be described as mere means to livelihood so long as they do not help the ascetic to realize the ultimate reality, which is his true essence. Thus, feeling the reality in himself, though as the *jīva*, and yet not experiencing it as Ātman, he remains essentially a *mūḍha*.

कुरुते गङ्गासागरगमनम्
 व्रतपरिपालनमथवा दानम् ।
 ज्ञानविहीनः सर्वमतेन
 मुक्तिं न भजति जन्मशतेन ॥ (17)

Undertaking a difficult pilgrimage to a holy place like the confluence of the Gaṅgā and the sea, strictly observing fast on prescribed days, and rendering alms with due faith — these varieties of religious rite do have their value as means to self-

purification. But unless *jñāna* sets in, one cannot get released on any account even after a hundred births. *Karma* cannot be a direct means to *mokṣa*; only *jñāna* can.

त्वयि मयि चान्यत्रैको विष्णुः
 व्यर्थं कुप्यसि मय्यसहिष्णुः ।
 सर्वस्मिन्नपि पश्यत्मानम्
 सर्वत्रोत्सृज भेदाज्ञानम् ॥ (24)

In me, in you, in any other person or place, is the same Brahman. This being so, in truth, there is no room for impatience and anger towards any one. To get angry with another amounts to getting angry with oneself. A loving attitude to all comes into practice only when Brahman is actually realized. Perceiving the same Brahman in all, the sage is free from all sense of difference, which is the root cause of dispute and distress, sorrow and infatuation. But even before actual realization, believing in the doctrine of non-difference, one should endeavour to rise above the notion of difference, which is born of *avidyā*, and recognize the same *Ātman* in all.

कामं क्रोधं लोभं मोहम्
 त्यक्त्वात्मानं भावय कोऽहम् ।
 आत्मज्ञानविहीना मूढाः
 ते पच्यन्ते नरकनिगूढाः ॥ (26)

Mental purity is necessary to seek knowledge of Brahman. Therefore, giving up desire, anger, greed, infatuation, and such other infirmities, one should constantly inquire into the true nature of one's self. This will ultimately lead to the realization that one's true self (*Ātman*), which is bereft

of limitations, is non-different from the infinite Brahman. So long as we remain ignorant of the self (*ātma-jñāna-vihīnāḥ*), we cannot attain liberation; we shall continue to suffer the torment of transmigration, which is worse than hell. Body-consciousness causes worse suffering than the nether regions described in scripture.

The nature of *jīvanmukti*

योगस्तो वा भोगस्तो वा
सङ्गस्तो वा सङ्गविहीनः ।
यस्य ब्रह्मणि रमते चित्तम्
नन्दति नन्दति नन्दत्येव ॥ (19)

The *jīvanmukta* passes between *samādhi* and *vyutthāna*. *Samādhi* is the culmination of *yoga*. In *samādhi* the *mukta*'s consciousness is completely absorbed in Brahman; in *vyutthāna* it comes down to a lower plane where the *mukta* experiences the duality of the world, but is not deceived by it. But this difference in states is relevant only to the onlookers. As for the *jīvanmukta* himself, it makes no difference, since his consciousness permanently delights in the experience of Brahman, which is bliss. Hence it is said here that whether the *mukta* passes through *samādhi* (*yogarataḥ / saṅgavihīnaḥ*) or through *vyutthāna* (*bhogarataḥ / saṅgarataḥ*), his mind is engrossed in nothing but bliss (*nandatyeva*).

रथ्याचर्पटविरचितकन्धः
पुण्यापुण्यविवर्जितपन्थः ।
योगी योगनियोजितचित्तो
रमते बालोन्मत्तवदेव ॥ (22)

The *yogi* may wear apparel made out of torn cloth picked up from the street; but acquiring neither merit (*puṇya*) nor demerit (*pāpa*) by his selfless conduct, he, with his mind rooted in *yoga*, is firmly established on the path to *mokṣa* and delights verily in Brahman like a child and a mad man.

The *jīvanmukta* is impervious to the body from which he is virtually separate; hence he is indifferent to bodily needs like clothes and food. He is not necessarily inactive. Actions at times do flow from him. But having experienced Brahman, bad actions are impossible for him. Hence he does not earn demerit (*pāpa*). His actions are always good. But merit (*puṇya*) does not accrue to him either, because his good actions are not deliberate. They spontaneously emanate from his experience. The truth of the matter is that, being absolutely free from all sense of agency and enjoyership, he is untouched by the results of action. Having once for all realized Brahman, which is bliss, with his mind ever dwelling on Brahman, this perfect *yogī* delights in the self-forgetful manner of a child and a mad man.

The grace of the preceptor

गुरुचरणाम्बुजनिर्भरभक्तः
 संसारादचिराद्भवमुक्तः ।
 सेन्द्रियमानसनियमादेवम्
 द्रक्ष्यसि निजहृदयस्थं देवम् ॥ (31)

Both for initiation into spiritual practice and for its success the grace of one's preceptor is absolutely necessary. In a poem devoted to the *guru* (*Gurvaṣṭakam*) the Ācārya asks

at every stage, “what avails thee if the mind does not rest in the lotus feet of the *guru*?”

मनश्चेन्न लग्नं गुरोरङ्घ्रि पद्मे
ततः किं ततः किं ततः किं ततः किम् ।

In the same spirit the present verse assures us that with unflinching devotion to the feet of the *guru*, we shall attain freedom from transmigration. Disciplining the senses and the mind by the diligent practice of all the steps taught so far, the aspirant will experience Brahman in his own heart, i.e. as his true nature. Learning Vedānta well from the *guru*, observing *sannyāsa*, and practising *yoga* without desiring the powers (*siddhi*) that incidentally accrue from it—all these are means to Brahman-experience. When the mind and its tendencies dissolve themselves in the experience of the infinite Brahman, though the body is alive, there is *jīvanmukti*.

This poem named *Mohamudgara* is otherwise called *Bhajagovindam*. Govinda is the name of Śrī Śāṅkara's preceptor even as it is the name of Lord Mahāviṣṇu. Hence the composition of this poem by Śrī Śāṅkara, we learn, is as much a dedication to his *guru* as it is to the Lord.

NOTES

1. Vide *Bhagavad-gītā*, 2.64:
rāgadveṣa-viyuktaistu
viṣayān-indriyaiś caran
ātmaivaśyair-vidheyātmā
prasādam-adhigacchati.
2. Vide *Bṛhadāranyaka Upaniṣad*, 2.4.5 and
4.5.6: ātmanastu kāmāya sarvam priyam bhavati.

Also 4.3.32: *etasyaiva ānandasya anyāni bhūtāni mātrām upajīvanti.*

3. Vide *Bhagavad-gītā*, 2.62 and 63.
4. Vide Śrī Śaṅkara's commentary on the *Bhagavad-gītā*, 2.28: *ko vā pralāpaḥ adṛṣṭa-dṛṣṭa-praṇaṣṭa-bhrāntibhūteṣu bhūteṣu ityarthah.*
5. The powers are summed up thus:
*aṇimā laghimā prāptiḥ
 prākāmyam mahimā tathā
 īśitvam ca vaśitvam ca
 tathā kāmāvasāyitā*
6. Vide *Yogasūtra* of Patañjali, 3.51: *tad-vairāgyādapi doṣa-bīja-kṣaye kaivalyam.*
7. I owe this explanation to Pazhuvur Sri S.V. Subramania Sastri.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF BHARTṚPRAPAÑCA

Satya Deva Misra*

Bhartṛprapañca occupies a very important place among the Vedāntins who flourished before Ādi Śaṅkarācārya, the great exponent of Advaita Vedānta. He is known to be the first expounder of the Vedānta school, namely, Bhedābheda or "Identity-in-Difference." He might have reached the summit of his fame around the 8th century A.D., because Śaṅkara's disciple, Sureśvarācārya, has spent about one-fifth of his *magnum opus*, *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-upaniṣad-bhāṣya-vārtika* in review of his philosophy. No work of this Vedāntin is surviving now, but from the references to him in the writings of Śaṅkara and his successors, we know that he was the author of a number of works. It is almost certain that Bhartṛprapañca wrote a commentary on the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* which was more voluminous than that of Śaṅkara's.¹ M. Hiriyanna in his illuminating article on Bhartṛprapañca has furnished an evidence about his gloss

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on the *Īśopaniṣad*.² Gopāla Yatīndra, a commentator on the *Śāṅkara-bhāṣya* of the *Kāthopaniṣad*, has clearly stated that this Upaniṣad also had an exhaustive commentary from the pen of Bhartṛprapañca.³ Madhusūdana Sarasvatī, an eminent Advaitin of the 16th century A.D., refers in no uncertain terms to his exposition of the Vedānta-sūtra.⁴ From a *kārikā*⁵ (couplet) of Bhartṛprapañca recorded in Nṛsiṃhāśrama's *Vedānta-tattva-viveka*, we can possibly ascribe the authorship of at least one metrical work to him. Since none of these works is now available, his philosophy may not be known in full, yet from the copious references to it in Śāṅkara's commentary on the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, Sureśvara's *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Vārtika*, and Ānandagiri's commentary on the above *Vārtika*, his philosophy of Dvaitādvaita can be reconstructed in the form of an independent treatise. The task of reconstruction cannot be undertaken in a paper of limited scope. This paper, therefore, aims at only outlining the philosophy of Bhartṛprapañca with the help of some data gathered from the above works.

The Nature of Reality

Like other Vedāntins, Bhartṛprapañca also maintains that Brahman is the supreme Reality. But Brahman, in his system, is not indivisible, undifferentiated, impartite and attributeless. It is rather "Concrete Universal" because both the duality and non-duality form its essential nature. It is as real in its *apara* (lower) form as in its *para* (supreme) form.⁶ Bhartṛprapañca sees no contradictions in admitting Brahman as one in its supreme or transcendental nature, and many in relation to the diversities of the world. The supreme Reality is, therefore, *bhinnābhinna* or identity-in-difference. How a

thing can both be different and non-different can be explained on the analogy of the “snake” and its “coil”⁷, or the “sun” and its “rays”⁸. Just as the coil, a particular state of snake, is different from the snake because of its coilness, and non-different from the same due to snakehood inherent in it, even so the *jīva* is different from Brahman because of its individualness, and non-different from the same owing to its essential form of *brahmatva*.⁹ The relation between Brahman and the *jīva* is also that of identity-in-difference.

Having thus logically established the *Bhedābheda* doctrine, *Bhakti-prapañca* proceeds to substantiate it through the different means of valid knowledge.¹⁰ The perceptual support for this lies in the fact that we experience *bhedābheda* among worldly objects. The inferential evidence can be furnished as follows : Since all worldly entities are cognised as *bhinnābhinna*, Brahman, which is also an entity, should be accepted so. The *ekatva* and *anekatva* in a worldly thing can be illustrated by the well-known example of the universal “cowness” and particulars of a cow, such as the “dew-lap”, “head”, etc. The head and the dew-lap may differ from each other, but they are one because of their common characteristics, cowness.¹¹ Nor is there any inconsistency in admitting these two as different and non-different from each other. Similarly, all other objects are also *bhinnābhinna*. And when visible objects can be of this nature, even Brahman and the other things, which are beyond the reach of sense-organs may be inferred so.¹² All causes and effects are of the nature of *dvaitādvaita*, and they remain so even during the periods of origination, sustenance and dissolution.¹³ *Bhedābheda* is the *svābhāvika* (natural) form of the Self and other things.¹⁴ The Upaniṣadic text, “When there is duality,” (*yatra hi*

dvaitamiva bhavati, Br. Up. 2.4.14 and 4.5.15) also speaks of the *dvaitādvaita* nature of Brahman.¹⁵ Those Upaniṣadic passages, which deal with karmas (actions) would be purposeful only if the duality is also admitted as real. Nor are these passages without meaning, for they are also means to *ananta-puruṣārtha*, the supreme human-end. In case of the duality being unreal and the non-duality alone real, not only the purpose of the *karmakāṇḍa* will be defeated, but also its authoritativeness will be put to question. Thus the whole series of empirical and scriptural injunctions will be disturbed.¹⁶ In order to avoid this unwelcome contingency, it is necessary that both of them should be treated equally authoritative and real. Once the oneness and the duality are both accepted as real, all contradictions between the *jñānakāṇḍa* and *karmakāṇḍa* will disappear.¹⁷

Ways of Establishing Bhedābheda

In the Bhedābheda philosophy, the following four ways have been adopted to establish the relation of identity-in-difference between various things.¹⁸

1. *Kāraṇa* and *kārya*: i.e. the cause and the effect, as for instance, "clay" and "pot". The *apara-brahman*, like pots from clay, with all its diversities, comes into existence from the *para-brahman*, and ultimately merges in it so that both of them are neither totally different nor entirely one.

2. *Avasthāvat* and *avasthāḥ*: i.e. substance and its modes, as for instance "ocean" and its modes in forms of bubble and wave, etc. The *apara-brahman* along with all worldly objects is transformation of the homogenous para-

brahman. This view differs from the former one as the cosmological theory of evolution from that of creation.

3. *Bhāgin* and *bhāga*: i.e. “whole” and “part”, as for instance, “nave” and “spokes” of a wheel. The para-brahman would be thus a whole of which the parts are diversities constituting the apara-brahman.

4. *Sāmānya* and *viśeṣa*: i.e., the “universal” and the corresponding “particulars”, as for instance “cowness” and the various individual “cows”. The para-brahman, according to this view, would be the inmost principle of all existent entities, and the apara-brahman, an embodiment of these things. Ānandagiri remarks that the universal in this system is not only a collection of unrelated particulars, but also a collected whole.¹⁹

Of these four views, “the second view,” as M. Hiriyanna puts it, “is most commonly associated with Bhartṛprapañca.”²⁰ But Ānandagiri mentions that all the four views were maintained by Bhartṛprapañca.²¹

Modes of Reality

According to the second view stated above, there are the following eight possible *avasthās* or modes of Brahman.²²

1. *Antaryāmin*: This is that immortal principle which controls everything from within as described in *Br. Up.* 3.7. It is also sometimes called *Īśvara*.²³ This, however, is not Brahman, because it originates from the latter.²⁴

2. *Sākṣin*: This is individual, which is considered as another heterogeneous modification of Brahman. This is also

known as *kṣetrajña* i.e. the conscious principle dwelling in the body. *Sākṣin* is of two kinds : (i) cosmic and (ii) individual. Hiraṇyagarbha and the deities like Āditya are known as cosmic *sākṣin*,²⁵ and the rest individual ones.²⁶

3. *Avyākṛta*: This represents the whole of the physical universe in its subtle or causal form. All elemental effects having names and forms are, therefore, modifications of the *avyākṛta*.²⁷ It is viewed as the adjunct of *antaryāmin*.

4. *Sūtra*: This evolves from the *avyākṛta*, and is the adjunct of Hiraṇyagarbha.

5-6. *Virāj* and *devatā*: *Virāj* is the highest cosmic soul which proceeds from the *Sūtra*. It is also the gross material that constitutes the world of perception.²⁸ Various *devatās* are the sense-organs of *Virāj* through which it comes into action. These *devatās* which correspond to our sense-organs are the sixth modification of Brahman.

7-8. *Jāti* and *piṇḍa*: What *Bhartṛprapañca* means by the term ‘‘jāti’’ is not very clear. It may be taken for *ākṛti* which denotes types as distinguished from individuals. The last modification is the *piṇḍa* which means the individual bodies, such as the human,²⁹ and from which no subsequent effects arise. The *piṇḍa*, says Ānandagiri, implies the four types of individual bodies.³⁰

All these modifications are absolutely real³¹, with the difference that the first two are spiritual and the rest, material.

These eight modes together with Brahman have been classified into three *rāsīs* or categories.³² They are:

1. *Paramātma-rāśi*: This is the absolute principle, Brahman. Bhartṛprapañca might have included *antaryāmin* also in this *rāśi*, because it could not be grouped under the two remaining categories, otherwise named as *madhyama* and *adhama rāśis* respectively. The *paramātma-rāśi* is also called *uttama* or supreme *rāśi*.³³

2. *Mūrtāmūrta-rāśi*: The six material modes beginning with the *avyākṛta* fall under this category. The name of this *rāśi* is derived from the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Up.* 2.3. wherein *mūrta* and *amūrta* are depicted as the two forms of Brahman. According to Bhartṛprapañca, the term “*amūrta*” means *avyakta*, the source of the material world, and the *mūrta* denotes *pṛthvī*, the last of the *bhūtas* or elements.³⁴

3. *Jīva-rāśi*: The *jīva*, which is a real transformation of Brahman is included in this *rāśi*. Beginningless *vāsanās* i.e. the traces of previous *vidyā* and *karma* of the *jīva* are its determining factors.³⁵ The *vāsanā* or *āsaṅga* is, in fact, the characteristic of the *antaḥkaraṇa* (internal organ), but it is transmitted to the *jīva* because of the latter’s association with the internal organ. Due to this transmission, the *jīva* appears as the knower, enjoyer and doer.³⁶ Bhartṛprapañca also accepts *avidyā* or nescience, but “it accounts only for the lapses of Brahman into the condition of *jīva* and not also for its worldly life or *saṁsāra*.”³⁷ It is true that *avidyā* emanates from Brahman, but it affects only that part of its cause which has brought it into existence. As a barren spot affects not the whole field but a part of it, even so *avidyā* covers Brahman only partly and not fully.³⁸ In other words, *avidyā* is located in the *jīva*-part of Brahman.

Relation between the Real and Metaphysical Knowledge

Unlike the Śaṅkarites, Bhartṛprapañca maintains that the empirical and revealed knowledge are equally real. Perceptions, to him, is not only a means of knowing duality, but also a determining factor of its validity. Whatever is in cognition through the means of valid knowledge is real, be it *dvaita* or *advaita*.³⁹ If the reality were not granted to *dvaita*, all Upaniṣadic texts which preach creation, etc. would be deprived of their meaning, and the expressions like origination, maintenance and dissolution, would turn into false tales.⁴⁰ Since Bhartṛprapañca reconciles and establishes the validity of both types of knowledge recognized at empirical and spiritual levels, his view is rightly called *pramāṇa-samuccaya-vāda*.⁴¹

Mokṣa

Bhartṛprapañca advocates the combination of jñāna and karma for the attainment of *mokṣa*, while interpreting the Upaniṣadic passage, “*ātmānameva upāsīta*” (*Br. Up.* 1.4.45).⁴² This is a *samuccaya* wherein karma and jñāna are equally predominant. This *samuccaya* is again of two types.

All Vedāntins are of the view that *virakti* or detachment is a pre-requisite of one who is desirous of *mokṣa*. But while Śaṅkara and his followers hold that detachment results from *doṣa-darśana* in the worldly objects, Bhartṛprapañca maintains that it can be possible only through *bhoga* or enjoyment. One cannot be able to develop the sense of detachment until one attains the state of *sūtrahood*.⁴³ Therefore, a person, who longs for liberation must try to attain this state by identifying himself with the Hiraṇyagarbha or

Sūtra through the *upāsanā* combined with the *nitya-karmas* ordained in the scriptures. This constitutes the first type of *samuccaya*. It helps the aspirant to attain the state of *apavarga* or escape from the *saṁsāra*. But it should be borne in mind that this is different from *mokṣa*. It is *antarālāvasthā*, i.e. a state intermediate between *saṁsāra* and *mokṣa*. Having reached this state, the *jīva* should get rid of all attachments causing its births, but this is not all it wants. It has to move a step further to remove *avidyā*, which is the main cause of its limitation and separation from Brahman.⁴⁴ In other words, it has to recognize its identity with Brahman. Since knowledge alone is not capable of removing *avidyā*, it should be combined with the *upāsanā* of Sūtra.⁴⁵ The *samuccaya* of *jñāna* with the *upāsanā* of Advaita may possibly be another alternative for the attainment of the supreme state of salvation resulting from the realization of identity with Brahman.⁴⁶ It follows from this that Bhartṛprapañca recognizes two kinds of *mokṣa*: (i) *apara-mokṣa* or *apavarga* and (ii) *parā-mukti* or supreme liberation.⁴⁷ The first kind of *mokṣa* consists in realising identity with the Hiraṇyagarbha through the first *samuccaya* while living in the body. The second is acquired through the second *samuccaya*. This state of *mukti* is possible after death. It is also known as *brahmabhāvāpatti* or union with Brahman.

Summing up, Bhartṛprapañca as a philosopher made a very remarkable contribution to the development of Vedāntic thought. He, on the one hand, laid the foundation of the *bhedābheda* school, which was developed later by Bhāskara, and on the other, provided the nucleus to all dualistic schools of Vedānta which emerged in the long history of Vedāntic tradition.

NOTES

1. Śaṅkara's commentary on the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, p.2 (Vani Vilas edition) and Ānandagiri's commentary on the same.
2. See *Indian Philosophical Studies*, pp.79-80.
3. p. 3.
4. *Samkṣepa-śārīraka-vyākhyā, Sāra-saṅgraha*, p.14 (Chow. Edn.).
5. *Vedāntatattvaviveka*, Mysore University Edition, Ch. I, p.409.
6. Ānandagiri's Commentary on *Br. Vārtika* 46, p.1955 and on *Vārtika* 48, p. 1957 (Ānandaśrama Edn.)
7. See *Brahma-sūtra*, 3.2.37.
8. Ibid 3.2.28.
9. *Bhāṣya-ratna-prabhā*, p.658 (Nirnaya Sagar Edn.).
10. See *Br. Vārtika*, 4.3.1639-45.
11. Ānandagiri's Commentary on *Br. Vārtika*, 1.6.49, p.877.
12. *Br. Vārtika*, 4.3.1644-45.
13. Ibid. 5.1.55.
14. Ānandagiri's Commentary on *Br. Vārtika*, 4.3.1639, p.1669.
15. *Br. Vārtika*, 5.1.30.
16. Ibid. 5.1.58-60.
17. Śaṅkara's Commentary on the *Brahma-sūtra*, 2.1.14.
18. *Br. Vārtika*, 1.4.948-50.
19. Ānandagiri's Commentary on *Br. Vārtika*, 1.4.655.
20. See *Indian Philosophical Studies*, p.82.
21. See Ānandagiri's Commentary on *Br. Vārtika*, 4.4.949-50 and *Br. Vārtika*, 1.4.693.
22. Ānandagiri's Commentary on *Br. Vārtika*, 1.4.1043.
23. Cf. Ibid. on 1.4.487 and Śaṅkara's Commentary *Br. Up.* 3.7.3.
24. Śaṅkara's Commentary on the *Br. up.* p.447.
25. See *Br. Vārtika* 91, p.1007 and also Ānandagiri's Commentary on *Br. Vārtika*, 121, p.451 and 416 p.956.
26. Ibid. *Vārtika* 100, p.1009.

27. Cf. Ānandagiri's Commentary on *Bṛ. Vārtika*, 2.2.91-92.
28. Śaṅkara's Commentary on *Bṛ. up.* 3.8.12.
29. Ānandagiri's Commentary on *Bṛ. Vārtika*, 1.4.98.
30. Ibid. on *Vārtika* 5.1.54.
31. Ibid. on *Vārtika* 1.3.314 and 1.4.487.
32. Cf. Rāmānuja's Commentary on the *Vedānta-sūtra*, 2.3.17.
33. Śaṅkara's Commentary on *Bṛ. up.* 2.3.5.
34. Cf. *Bṛ. Vārtika*, 2.3.72-80.
35. Ibid. 4.4.2.
36. Ibid. 2.3.117-18.
37. *Indian Philosophical Studies*, p.85.
38. *Bṛ. Vārtika*, 2.3.23.
39. Ānandagiri's Commentary on *Bṛ. Vārtika*, 5.1.36.
40. *Bṛ. Vārtika*, 5.1.32. See also Ānandagiri's Commentary thereupon.
41. See Ānandagiri's Commentary on *Sambandha Vārtika*, 9.1.3.
42. *Bṛ. Vārtika*, 1.4.1700-1.
43. Ānandagiri's Commentary on *Bṛ. Bhāṣya*, 1.4.9.
44. *Bṛ. Vārtika*, 1.4.1713 and 2.4.42.
45. Ibid. 1.4.1709.
46. See fn. 5.
47. *Bṛ. Vārtika* 4.2.102. See also Dr. Gopinatha Kaviraja's Introduction to the *Bhāṣya-ratna-prabhā*, p.10.

DVAITĀDVAITA OF NIMBĀRKA: A REAPPRAISAL

K. Srinivas*

Introduction

Nimbārka is a well known teacher of the bhakti-vedānta tradition after Rāmānuja. The Dvaitādvaita of Nimbārka is an offshoot of *bhedābheda*, which was first advocated by Bhartṛpapañca. In fact, we come across in the *Brahma-sūtra* that there are two different strands of this doctrine of *bhedābheda* advocated by Auḍulomi and Āśmarathya.¹ According to the former, the jīva is different from Brahman in the state of ignorance (*avidyā*), but it becomes one with Him in the state of liberation (*mukti*). On the contrary, the latter advocates that Brahman and jīva are related to each other as cause and effect. The more detailed accounts of this doctrine with varying interpretations are found in the writings of Bhartṛpapañca and Yādava-prakāśa. But our study, at present is restricted to the philosophy of Nimbārka.

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It appears that Nimbārka is more influenced by Bhāskara than anyone else. In fact, he applies the doctrine of *bhedābheda* of Bhāskara to Vaiṣṇava theology. Bhāskara's doctrine of *bhedābheda* did not come into limelight as he never associated himself with any theistic cult. His doctrine remained highly philosophical in this respect. In order to understand the Dvaitādvaita of Nimbārka, it is necessary to know the basic tenets of Bhāskara's philosophy of *bhedābheda*. Bhāskara is a strict Vedāntin, for he heavily relies on the Upanisads and the *Brahma-sūtra* for his analysis. It is a well known fact that there are a number of passages in the Upanisads which speak of the supreme Reality (Brahman) as *nirguṇa*, *niravayava* and *nirviśeṣa*. There are also equally a large number of passages which declare that the supreme Reality is *saguṇātma*, for it possesses a number of auspicious qualities which are neither possessed by the primordial nature (*prakṛti*) nor by the *jīvas*. Thus the supreme Reality is different from *prakṛti* and the *jīvas*. Bhāskara's charge against Śaṅkara is that the latter takes the passages narrating the *nirguṇatva* of the supreme Reality literally, while the passages narrating the *saguṇatva* of the supreme Reality are misinterpreted. Thus Śaṅkara's teachings lean towards non-duality and attributeless Brahman. Bhāskara is also critical of Śaṅkara's doctrine of *māyā*. He maintains that it is Brahman which undergoes the real transformation by its own powers, but not *māyā*. Similar view is found in the *Pāñcarātrāgama*. In other words, the world of empirical objects and the selves is the resultant effect of the real transformation (*pariṇāma*) of Brahman through His diverse powers.² This interpretation of Bhāskara raises the question, namely, are the world of empirical objects and the souls (*jīvas*) different from Brahman or identical with it? Bhāskara's answer to this

question is that "difference" (*bheda*) inherently possesses the characteristic of identity (*abheda*). For example, the waves are different from the sea, but they are identical with it. Therefore, the one may also appear to be many, for there is neither absolute identity nor absolute difference.

Nimbārka's Metaphysics

Taking the cue from Bhāskara, Nimbārka, like other Vedāntins, held the view that Brahman is the only Reality. However, he holds that Brahman manifests Himself as the manifold world of becoming consisting of the world and the souls (*jīvas*) just as the life force (*prāṇa*) transforms into the various conative and cognitive sensory functions, yet it keeps its own independence, integrity and difference from them.³ In other words, both the world and the *jīvas* are dependent on Him for their existence. Thus plurality is reconciled with the one unitary Being (Brahman). Now the question that arises is: How is the existence of diversity reconciled with the one supreme Reality? Nimbārka's answer to this question is that all the contradictions that our worldly logic poses are resolved in His (Brahman's) spiritual Being. Of course, Nimbārka's answer does not sound logical. He goes on to say that the so-called contradictions can coexist in Him (Brahman) in harmony unlike in this world of becoming which is subjected to laws of time, space, and causation. In an attempt to establish his standpoint, Nimbārka puts forth his doctrine of *bhedābheda* in the following manner. Brahman, the supreme Reality, is non-different from the world and the souls (*jīvas*) insofar as they are dependent on Him for their very existence (being). At the same time, Brahman is different from them, because He has independent existence and possesses the unique qualities of omnipotence, omnipresence and the like.

which the world and the souls do not possess. In this respect the difference of the world and the souls from Brahman is something natural (*svabhāva*).⁴ But they are one with Brahman as they are His projections, and cannot sustain independent existence of Him. This position of Nimbārka is akin to that of Rāmānuja.

According to Nimbārka, the monistic interpretation of the Vedānta is logically ill-founded for the following reasons. First of all, the pure differenceless, qualityless consciousness as the supreme Reality is not amenable to ordinary sense-perception, for it is super-sensible. It is also not amenable to inference, for it is bereft of any distinctive marks or identifications. It is trans-linguistic for no words can signify it. Therefore, Brahman remains as a chimera like the hare's horn. Secondly, if Brahman is treated as self-luminous, then no proofs are required for its demonstration. This argument undermines the importance of scriptural texts that describe the nature of Brahman. Further, it is observed that the qualityless Brahman being pure is unassociated with any kind of impurity. Then it is eternally free from bondage of any sort. If it were the case, then the scriptural texts that provide us with necessary instructions about the attainment of liberation would turn out to be meaningless. Against this view, the followers of the monistic Vedānta hold that although the duality is false, yet as an appearance it serves the practical purposes. When the scriptures speak of bondage and its destruction, they mean that bondage is real, and is terminable. Further, Nimbārka maintains that illusion is possible in a locus only when it has both specific and general qualities. One experiences illusion when an object is known in its general manner without knowing its specific qualities. But it is held

by the monistic Vedāntins that the supreme reality (Brahman) is bereft of any qualities. Therefore, it cannot be the locus of any illusion. Not only that, since it is difficult to explain how *ajñāna* should have any support (*āśraya*), the illusion is inexplicable. Brahman, being consciousness, cannot support *ajñāna*.⁵ The monistic Vedāntins maintain that the objections raised against *ajñāna* are inappropriate for it is absolutely false knowledge. Therefore, it cannot affect the nature of Brahman. But Nimbārka does not accept *ajñāna* as the world-principle which is responsible for producing a world of appearance in association with Brahman. He maintains that *ajñāna* is a quality of *jīvas* who are by their very nature different from Brahman, although they are under His control. The *jīvas* are atomic and possess limited powers, yet they are eternal parts of Brahman. Since the *jīvas* are entangled in the beginningless chains of *karma*, they are blindfolded in their outlook on knowledge.⁶

Based on the view that there is an inseparable relation between Brahman on the one hand, and the world and the souls on the other, Nimbārka holds that Brahman is both the material and efficient cause of the world. When asked, "How is it possible for the creator to be a part of the creation?" Nimbārka replies that the omniscient and omnipotent Brahman transforms Himself into the form of the world because of His power (*prabhāva*). Therefore, the unconscious *prakṛti* of Sāṅkhya is not the material cause of the world. In the process of transformation the essence of Brahman is not affected. It is only His power which expands in the state of creation and contracts in the state of dissolution. Nimbārka differs from Rāmānuja as regards the relation between the one and the many. To view the world and souls as the

attributes (*viśeṣaṇa*) of God is to view that the attributes are different from their possessor. Since there is no entity other than Brahman, who is the cause of everything, He cannot be distinguished from another by any attribute. However, Nimbārka does not mind calling Brahman *Śarīrī* (soul) and the world, *Śarīra* (body). But Nimbārka prefers to say that there is both difference and non-difference in Brahman. Therefore, he prefers to call Vedānta Dvaitādvaita, but not Viśiṣṭādvaita. Nimbārka disagrees with Rāmānuja, for the latter calls souls and matter substances, and also views them as attributes. Apart from that, Nimbārka holds that we normally get the knowledge of a thing through its attributes. If it were the case, then the souls and the matter (world) as attributes of Brahman (God) must reveal to us the nature of Brahman. But it is not the case. Also, it is viewed that God is said to have all auspicious qualities as His attributes, besides the attributes of this imperfect and sinful souls and the world. This view does not go well with the notion of a perfect God.⁷

Brahman

Having shown that the theses advocated as regards the ontological status of Brahman, and the world and the selves by both the Advaitins and Viśiṣṭādvaitins are untenable, Nimbārka holds that reality is of two kinds, namely, independent (*svatantra*) and dependent (*paratantra*). The only independent Reality is Brahman (God).⁸ He classifies the dependent realities into conscious and non-conscious types. The *jīva* is the only conscious entity other than Brahman. The non-conscious entities are of three types. They are: (1) *aprākṛta* or supra-natural stuff, *kāla* or time, and *prakṛti* or primordial nature.⁹

Brahman (God) is known by several names. He is free from ignorance, egoism, attachment, hatred, fear, and death. He is the only Being who is not subjected to the law of *karma*. He is the substrate of all auspicious *guṇas*. He is *nirguṇa* in the sense that he does not possess the *guṇas* of *Prakṛti* (*sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*). These *guṇas* have no influence on him. He is the substrate of all auspicious qualities. He can free the *jīva* from bondage (*saṁsāra*). The eternal form of God is Rādhā-kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa is the Lord of love, and Rādhā is the power of love.

Coming to the manifestations of Brahman (God), Nimbārka maintains that He appears in many forms. These are technically called *vyūhas* and *avatāras*. The former are called emanations to regulate the various stages of creation and for the purposes of meditation. The latter are intended to protect the *dharma* and his devotees. Thus, for Nimbārka God has form, and He is the substrate of all auspicious qualities. When the Upaniṣads speak of Him as “*nirguṇa*”, it must be understood that He is not subject to the *guṇas* of *Prakṛti*. In the same Upaniṣads it is also mentioned that He is “*nirviśeṣa*”. It means that He is without any attributes born out of ignorance as in the case of the objects of the world. These attributes can only set limitations to Him. His form and auspicious attributes do not restrict His ubiquitous nature.¹⁰ Similarly, when the scriptures speak about Him as beyond thought, it should not be interpreted that He is an unknown and unknowable entity. It only means that the senses and the mind cannot know Him. He is only known to the mind that is purified by devotion and austerity.

Jīva

It is already made clear that in the Dvaitādvaita doctrine of Nimbārka, jīva is both different and non-different from Brahman, the supreme Reality. Nimbārka holds that the Upaniṣads contain several passages where it is clearly mentioned that the jīva is different from Brahman. Also, there are several passages which mention that the jīva is identical with Brahman. Now the question arises: how can the same Upaniṣads speak of jīva as both identical and non-identical with Brahman? Of course, the *bhedābheda-vādin* tried to resolve this contradiction by advancing the following theories. Bhāskara claims that the jīva is identical with Brahman when it is freed from the *upādhis*. This is possible only through liberation. Another *bhedābheda-vādin*, Auḍulomi, holds that the soul is different in bondage, but becomes one with Brahman in the state of liberation. According to Āśmarathya, even in the state of bondage the jīva is both different and non-different from Brahman just as the ray of light.

Nimbārka's conception is that the jīva is a part of the qualified and determinate being of God to whom it is subordinate and attributive in a primary sense. The jīva is different from Him since he is created by God. Therefore, he is subjected to ignorance and dependent on God for his existence. At the same time the jīva is also inseparable from God just as the rays of sun are inseparable from the sun. Thus the difference from and identity of jīva with Brahman, according to Nimbārka, can only be explained in a doctrine like Dvaitādvaita. Based on this interpretation Nimbārka describes the jīva as eternal and self-conscious like the 'I'. The jīva is neither born nor dies. The jīva is a knower and an agent. Consciousness is both the substrate

and the attribute of the jīva. Thus the jīva is *jñāna-svarūpa*.¹¹ Therefore, consciousness is not the accidental quality of the jīva. The jīva is a free agent, but his freedom is subject to the will of God. The jīva is an *aṁśa* of Īśvara, and is atomic in size, for otherwise it is difficult to understand how he passes from one body to the other. It is the liberation of the jīva that brings him back to the fold of God (Brahman). In this state alone the jīva is identical with Brahman.

Some Reactions Against Nimbārka's Dvaitādvaita

It is evident from the Upaniṣadic texts that Brahman is the only reality. There is nothing other than Brahman. This position is shared by the Advaitins, the Viśiṣṭādvaitins, and the Bhedābheda-vādins. But the problem arises with regard to the interpretation of the texts. Each school has its own way of interpreting the Upaniṣadic texts. In the process, there emerged a variety of interpretations. There are certain basic issues concerning the nature of Brahman, the nature of jīva, and the nature of the world, which need to be interpreted to suit the Upaniṣadic passages. Every interpretation has its own philosophical logic. If Advaitins and Viśiṣṭādvaitins are interested in showing the monistic nature of the ultimate reality, the Dvaitins claim that the Reality is pluralistic. But the Bhedābheda-vādins tried to satisfy both the monistic and dualistic claims of the Upaniṣadic texts. If Advaitins admitted *vivarta* of Brahman, the Bhedābheda-vādins supported *pariṇāma* of Brahman. The logic employed by them to defend their respective positions is highly appreciable. But the Dvaitādvaita of Nimbārka has

its own lacunae. First of all, the commentators of the Upaniṣads and the *Brahma-sūtra* are mainly interested in interpreting these texts with the help of grammar and etymology. Both these components play a vial role in the art of interpretation. At the same time they have also taken into consideration the philosophical, religious, and experiential aspects to make their interpretation more authentic and convincing.¹² Of all these aspects, the experiential aspect plays an important role in convincing others. If we are to accept the interpretation of the advaitins that both the finite (jīva) and the infinite (Brahman/Ātman) are absolutely identical, then we have to admit that the world is unreal in which the finite finds itself in bondage. Can Rāmānuja's *aprthak-siddhi* relation between the body and soul preserve the perfection of Brahman if its inseparable body is going through the travails of becoming? Śaṅkara, therefore, holds the view that Brahman is perfect, because the travails of becoming are only apparent for it and the creation of the world is mere *vivarta*, but not transformation. Bhedābheda-vādins like Bhāskara claim that the relation between the finite and infinite spirits is both identity and difference. This can be questioned on the ground that two contradictory or even contrary relations cannot hold good between any two realities at the same time. And if the opposition is neither contradictory nor contrary, what else is it? Bhedābheda-vādins cannot offer any satisfactory answer to these questions. The same criticism holds good in the case of Nimbārka too. Apart from that, Nimbārka, unlike Bhāskara, advocates the causal theory of real transformation of Brahman. This position is unacceptable, because it is mere power or potency or *śakti* of Brahman that is responsible for the creation or

transformation. It makes infinite Brahman appearing as finite. The eternal purity and perfection of Brahman can be retained only when we accept *vivarta*, but not *pariṇāma*. This point can be further substantiated with the help of an illustration. For instance, I am present in my dream, but my dream "I" forgets my waking "I", and the dream objects along with the dream "I" are created by, or are transformations of, the potencies (energy or *śakti*) of my waking "I" and its activities. Similarly, it is the energy of Brahman that takes on the forms, but always activated from within by Brahman. The question of relation between Brahman and its potency or energy, and its forms is only subsidiary. In fact, Bhāskara is right in saying that the material world is the transformation of the inherent energy of Brahman.

There is another important point to be noticed. If there is complete difference between Brahman on the one hand, and the finite souls and the material world on the other, then Brahman does not have any control over the latter. Then we cannot call the latter as the power or *śakti* of Brahman (God). Nimbārka who accepted both identity and difference will face the above difficulty. How is it possible for the finite souls and the material world to have independent being different from that of God, if they are only his energy? Therefore, Brahman and its power share the same being, just as fire and its burning power are identical in being. The burning power of fire cannot exist independent of fire. Similar is the case with God and His power.

It is a well known fact that the Bhedābheda-vādins since the time of Bhāskara are concerned with the problem

whether identity and difference can obtain with respect to Being (*sattā*) only, or with respect to nature (*svabhāva*) only, or with respect to both. Can there be identity between insentient nature and Brahman, which is the supreme intelligence? Can they be identical in nature? Again, can the finite self and supreme Ātman be identical in being? If the self and Brahman are identical in being, the former cannot be treated as finite; if they are identical in nature, the former will have infinite power. But these interpretations cannot be accepted, because our experience shows otherwise.

NOTES

1. Swami Tapasyananda, *Bhakti Schools of Vedānta*, Madras : Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1990, p.86.
2. Surendranath Dasgupta, *A History of Indian Philosophy*, Delhi : Motilal Banarsidass, Vol. III, 1991 (Reprint), p.6.
3. Ibid., p.406.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid., p.407.
6. Ibid., p.409.
7. Swami Tapasyananda, *Bhakti Schools of Vedānta*, pp.90-1.
8. Ibid., p.91.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid., p.94.
11. Ibid., p.96.
12. P.T. Raju, *Structural Depths of Indian Thought*, New Delhi : South Asia Publishers, 1985, p.516.

WHAT WE OWE TO ŚAṆKARA*

K. Satchidananda Murty

I

Śrī Bhagavatpāda Śaṅkarācārya has a very important place in the cultural history of our country and the spiritual life of our nation. All those who cherish Indian thought and tradition are gratified that during this year our Government are organizing a *mahotsava* of his Jayantī. For this to the Government, especially to the Prime Minister and Minister of Human Resource Development, all of us, I am sure, would like to convey our felicitations and thanks.

Perhaps the earliest thinker to proclaim the integrity of India was Kauṭilya. This country is the land which extends north to south from the Himalayas to the sea and measures a thousand yojanas across and is the field of the cakravartī.¹ This idea never receded from Indian consciousness. It is reiterated often in the *Purāṇas*. Says the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*: North

* Courtesy : Rashtriya Śaṅkara Jayanti Mahotsava Commemoration Volume, Dept. of Culture, Govt. of India.

of the sea stretching upto the Himalayas is the country that is Bhārata, and all its people are Bhāratīyas.² Aware of the essential unity and basic common culture of this great country, Śaṅkara was the first great thinker and spiritual leader to have made the whole of it his field of activity. Jawaharlal Nehru has, with remarkable insight, noted that “Śaṅkara wanted to add to this sense of national unity and common consciousness,” “tried to bring about a greater unity of thought all over the country,” and “left such an impress of his powerful mind and rich personality on India that it is very evident today.”³

F.W. Thomas has divided “the history of Indian mentality” into three main periods: “1. The Vedic, or Aryān, period, which witnessed the creation of the Indian man. 2. The period of maturity and organization. 3. The post-Śaṅkara or Vedānta period.”⁴ According to him, “the great success” which Śaṅkara’s ideas achieved was due to “their philosophic profundity”, and “the genius of their author” as well as to “the very energetic personal propaganda” with which he is credited. While Thomas also mentions “the political prestige” of South India in Śaṅkara’s time as “a subsidiary cause”, he considers that the “main factor” for their great success “may have been the attention attracted afresh to the Upaniṣads themselves.” “The conditions under which the *advaita* of Śaṅkara triumphed,” this Indologist comments, “suffices to prove that it did not flourish as a doctrine of pessimism, a consolation for political downfall or individual disappointment and lack of interest in life.”⁵ “The immense literature” to which Śaṅkara’s philosophy gave birth and “the even more extensive literature” which it influenced, justifies the age that followed Śaṅkara being called the “Vedānta

period'. Thomas emphasizes two points : (1) "The fact that the Vedānta domination arose at a time of South Indian prosperity and prestige shows that it did not flourish as a consolatory or pessimistic faith, but as a triumph of thought." (2) Thereafter Vedānta was supreme and "much adored by all active religions," and its idea is implied in all subsequent literature.⁶ He is right when he says its doctrine "is essentially a world idea, not linked to a particular people or to any theory of a divinely ordered state."⁷

The Advaita Vedānta of Śaṅkara, writes Heinrich Zimmer, is "the typical and best-known philosophy of India;"⁸ and, for A.L. Basham, it is "the standard philosophy of intellectual Hinduism to this day."⁹ "It is," Nehru asserts, "this philosophy which represents the dominant philosophic outlook of Hinduism today."¹⁰ This is borne out by the following facts.

The thought of Rammohan Roy who ushered in the modern epoch in India was firmly rooted in the Vedānta. For him Vedānta was the highest philosophical peak reached by Indian thought, and Vedānta as interpreted by "the celebrated Śaṅkarācārya" contained its authentic exposition. He abridged and rendered into Bengali and English Śaṅkara's commentaries on some *Upaniṣads* and *Brahmasūtras*. He sought to propound '*Vedāntapratipādyā Dharma*', and wrote an "abridgement of the Vedānta or Vedāntasāra." Bal Gangadhar Tilak, the father of the Indian liberation movement, by his commentary on the *Gītā* made it *the* scripture of modern India, drawing forth from it an ethic and a social and political message, capable of rejuvenation of Hindu society. His metaphysics was that of Śaṅkara.¹¹

Vivekananda, who created “a sense of community among the Hindus,” which in turn “gave Indian nationalism its dynamism and ultimately enabled it to weld at least the major part of India into one State,”¹² was an Advaita Vedāntin. On the basis of Advaita Vedānta he tried to develop a world-view in harmony with logic, experience and science. In his own way Ramatirtha attempted to develop Advaita Vedānta in a way relevant to the contemporary world. The essence of Vivekananda’s message is that: (a) in all the millions of men, from the rajah to the labourer and the priest to the pariah, “God Liveth”, and (b) the knowledge which delivers man from all fear and weakness is “the mighty Vedāntic *So-ham* (I AM HE).”¹³ Rabindranath Tagore conceived of ‘Advaitam’ as an absolute unity of harmony and bliss, the Infinite One Who is Infinite Love, the Self Unborn beyond space, and yet this person, the real Man, Who is Brahman.¹⁴ Mahatma Gandhi claimed to be an Advaitin, and many times spoke of the unity of life, and the soul being one in all.¹⁵ Vinoba Bhave was much influenced by Advaita Vedānta, and it was a passage in Śaṅkara’s *Upaniṣad Bhāṣya* which led him to conceive of Bhudan and Sampattidan. Jawaharlal Nehru’s fascination for Advaita Vedānta and his plea that its outlook should influence our development process is well-known.¹⁶ Vedānta did have some influence on Indira Gandhi’s attitude to life, and she held that the colonial restrictions, feudal system and the old caste system were opposed to the “broader Vedāntic view.”¹⁷ Her greatest historical hero, she stated, was Śaṅkarācārya.¹⁸ Thus a number of the leaders of our national liberation movement as well as some who shaped contemporary India owed much to the philosophy of Śaṅkarācārya.¹⁹

II

In the *Upaniṣads* we find that access to sublime saving knowledge is considered possible for all, including brahmanas and kshatriyas, young celibates, householders and old anchorites, sons of maid-servants with unidentifiable fathers, affluent shudra chiefs, and wanderers who had no occupation. One of the *Brahmasūtras* states that *all* men are entitled to Vedic study, implying that through it they may know the sublime saving truth, if they are ethically qualified — their marital status, occupation, etc., being immaterial for this.²⁰ Some great ancient Mīmāṃsā-Vedānta teachers (e.g. Bādari) mentioned in the *Sūtras* on Mimāṃsā-Vedānta asserted the right of all, including shudras, even to Vedic rituals.²¹ On the other hand, a number of *sūtras* reserved for the three upper classes the exclusive right to study the *Veda*, perform the rituals described in it and understand the highest truth conveyed in it.²² Some *dharmaśāstras* and the *Brahmasūtras* laid down the necessity of going through all the life stages and performing rituals, before taking up the study of Vedānta and turning one's mind to final release.²³ So, according to orthodoxy, only the highly born who had a right to study the *Veda* could perform rituals prescribed in it and later acquire the sublime saving knowledge contained in it. Transcendental truth, it considered, is a monopoly of the higher castes.

In this matter Śaṅkara wrought a revolution. Vedic rituals are necessary, he said, only for those who sought their fruits, and those who had the desire and competence for them may perform them. Those who are not interested in obtaining the promised fruits of rituals may abandon them. It is sufficient if everyone discharges his duties and leads an ethical life; and one may give up duties too if one gets tired of them

because of acquiring (a) discrimination between the eternal and the evanescent and (b) detachment from the worldly and other-worldly goods, (c) cultivation of sense-control, mental concentration, withdrawal from external objects, tolerance of suffering and misfortune, equipoise and faith, and (d) yearning for emancipation.* Such a one may utilise all his time in Vedāntic *cintanā*.²⁴ Chastity, *ahimsā*, *tapas*, speaking truth, sense control and mental concentration too, Śaṅkara argues, are actions; moreover, they are pure actions as are others like *dhyāna* and *dhāraṇā*: which can and ought to be practised by men of all castes and occupations, especially, as they are helpful for generation of saving knowledge. So, he concludes, all have a right to the highest knowledge: *ataḥ ... sarveṣāṃ cādhikāro vidyāyāṃ param ca śreyaḥ kevalāyā vidyāyā eveti siddham*.²⁵ Caste and occupation are not criteria for *Brahmavidyā*.

Śaṅkara himself did not go through the four life-stages; in his childhood itself he took *sannyāsa*. As a *sannyāsin*, in deference to his mother's wishes, he performed her funeral rites, defying śāstraic prohibitions. For going from the celibate state straight into the state of a recluse the authority of a very late *Upaniṣad* could be cited,²⁶ but for a recluse cremating his mother there is no śāstraic sanction. In this lies Śaṅkara's boldness in flouting irrational taboos and conventions, and his wisdom in giving importance to reason and humane values.

This may also be the place for giving some details about the traumatic but creatively transforming incident in his life mentioned in his biographies. In Kashi on an occasion while

* These four constitute *Sādhana-sampatti* (endowment of ethico-spiritual means).

Śaṅkara, accompanied by his disciples, was going towards the Gaṅgā for a holy bath and prayers, he saw a *paraiah* with ferocious dogs coming across his path and shouted to him: Move away! Move away! But the *paraiah* replied:

When hundreds of Upaniṣadic texts speak about the unique, pure, relationless, indivisible One Reality of the nature of truth, awareness and happiness (*satyabodha-sukharūpamakhaṇḍam*), your imagining difference is surprising. Some wear dress of recluses and act like them; without any real knowledge they deceive householders. When you shouted “Move away,” were you addressing the body or the self? All bodies are made of food, they are all material, and do not differ from one another. As for the inner witness Self, how is the consideration of its difference in a *paraiah* and a *brāhmaṇa* appropriate? As there is no difference in the sun’s reflections in the divine *Gaṅgā* and toddy, so there is none among the One Self’s reflections in various bodies. Neglecting the one perfect, eternal and bodiless Person in all the bodies, why this false apprehension, “I am a pure *brahman*, O Dog-eater, get away?”

Surprised and deeply shaken, Śaṅkara immediately recognised the truth of this and replied: “O you best among the embodied, you have but asserted what is Truth. So because of the words of you who are the knower of the Self, I am at once abandoning the notion ‘this is an outcaste’.”²⁷

Śaṅkara at once broke forth into five verses, each ending with: “He who has such steadfast insight is my *guru*, whether

he be an outcaste or a *brāhmaṇa*. This is my firm understanding.” “*caṇḍālo 'stu sa tu dvijo 'stu gururityeṣā maṇiṣā mama.*”²⁸

The first verse, for example, says: “I am the Awareness (*saṁvit*) which clearly shines forth in waking, dream and witnesses the world, — and not the thing seen. He who has such steadfast insight is my *guru*...” The other verses reiterate the truth of unity in different ways. According to the story, while Śaṅkara was thus rhapsodising about Oneness, he was blessed with a vision of Śiva in the untouchable and his four dogs appeared to him as the four *Vedas*. Śaṅkara’s encounter with the *caṇḍāla* must have been as ‘creative’ as the Maritzburg experience was for Mahatma Gandhi.

In his *bhāṣya* on the *Brahmasūtra* which exclude shudras from access to the supreme liberating knowledge in the *Veda*, Śaṅkara cites the cases of Vidura and the righteous butcher of the *Mahābhārata* and explains: “As in them there was generation of sublime knowledge due to the impressions of their past actions (*pūrvakṛta-saṁskāra*), their attaining the fruit of it cannot be prohibited or prevented. Knowledge must culminate in its fruit. Further, according to the *smṛtis*, the four castes have a right of access to *Itihāsa-Purāṇas*; so through them they can attain the highest knowledge, but not through the *Veda*.²⁹ Such was Śaṅkara’s conclusion which, in fact, makes the prohibition of Vedic study for shudras ridiculous, for they may get the very same knowledge from other sources!

Tradition has preserved an instance of Śaṅkara actually reducing this prohibition to absurdity. Once during his extensive travels through the country, in a village he came across an outcaste leper in a pitiable state, but with the

sādhana-sampatti mentioned above. To free him from transmigration, tradition avers, Śaṅkara composed for him a *śloka* in the form of question and answer,³⁰ which was nothing but a faithful echo of Yājñavalkya-Janaka dialogue of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (IV.3.1.ff):

What is your Light? The sun during the day and lamps, etc. during the night. Let it be so, but tell me what is the Light that beholds (cognises) the sun, moon etc. as shining? That is my eye. And, when it is closed, what beholds them? My mind (reason). What is it that beholds (cognises) your mind? "I". So, you are the supreme Light. That I Am, my Master.³¹

Hearing this the outcaste leper, according to tradition, forthwith became a *Brahmajñānī* (knower of the Absolute) and had a vision of Truth!

This was an ingenious way of circumventing superstitious orthodoxy. If one wishes to enlighten those whom orthodoxy does not permit to hear the holy texts, let one express their meaning in other words. A quiet peaceful revolution, indeed! No other great Vedāntic teacher of medieval India who commented on the *Brahmasūtra* showed such liberalism and humanism. Śaṅkara was, indeed, a most compassionate *Brahmajñānī* (*karuṇālaya*).

III

Śaṅkara gave the greatest importance to self-effort and self-enquiry culminating in personal experience of Truth. One does need a *guru* to show one how to proceed on the path to the spiritual goal. As the *Upaniṣad* says, a man blindfolded

and brought from Gāndhāra to a solitary place in, say, *madhya-deśa* and left there needs someone to free him and direct him as to how to go back to his own place; and then going from village to village in due course he reaches his destination. In the same way, the passage says, one who has an *ācārya* knows the Real (*ācāryavān puruṣo veda*).³² But Śaṅkara enjoins that one should not rest content forever relying on what the teacher taught; the nature of the Real must be known by oneself very clearly and directly (*vastusvarūpaṁ sphuṭabodhacakṣuṣā svenaiva vedyam na tu paṇḍiteṇa*).³³ Moreover, a true teacher, according to him, “creates in the disciple his own sameness” (*i.e.* makes him exactly equal to himself)³⁴ Śaṅkara emphasizes that without enquiry, by no other means (such as rituals or worship) will knowledge be generated (*notpadyate vinājñānaṁ vicāreṇa anyasādhanaiḥ*).³⁵ Intense intellectual effort preceded by rigorous moral discipline resulting in the purification of the mind is indispensable for direct Advaitic knowledge.

Anubhava or integral experience in which Brahman is known as one's self is, in other words, the realisation of oneself as Brahman. The means for this is the ‘hearing’ of the Upaniṣadic *mahāvākya*. As soon as an individual self knows that he is in fact Brahman, he becomes Brahman, and such realisation is *anubhava*; that is liberation itself. Just as a prince kidnapped by robbers in his childhood does not know that he is a prince, but realises himself to be a prince as soon as he is told, an individual realizes himself to be Brahman as soon as he hearkens to the *mahāvākya*. Whether a man has knowledge of Brahman is to be judged by his own heart's conviction alone (*svahrdayapratyayam brahmavedanam*). *Anubhava* is the assured conviction, the clear undoubted

awareness that one is Brahman, generated by Vedāntic sentences (*vedapramāṇajanitabrahmāvagama*).³⁶

There is no inferential proof for Brahman. Śaṅkara's school has criticized theological proofs, showing they cannot give any certain knowledge. But arguments showing the probability of Advaita being truth can be formulated, and arguments against it can be demolished. Sense-perception is impossible in the case of Brahman, nor can yogic intuition independently apprehend the oneness of the Self. Only the 'hearing' of Vedāntic sentences, meditation on them and contemplation of their meaning results in *sākṣātkāra* ('vision' of Brahman).³⁷ This is Śaṅkara's standpoint: "Only when scripture and rational arguments join together to throw light on the Oneness of the Self, they can show it as clearly as a bael fruit in one's palm" (*āgamopapattī hi ātmaikatvaprakāśanāya pravṛtte śaknutaḥ karatala-gatabilvamiva darśayitum*).³⁸

IV

Śaṅkara emphasizes that "even a hundred scriptural texts do not become valid if they say fire is cold or does not give light; for no one can cognise anything opposed to what is seen."³⁹ Advaita Vedānta is not opposed to empirical experience, history and science; nor does it need confirmation by them. Vedāntic sentences and one's own experience: these only are the *pramāṇas* for the truth of Advaita (*antassiddhau svānubhūtiḥ pramāṇam*).⁴⁰

As the *Gītā* points out, those for whom duality has been destroyed (*chinnadvaidhāḥ*) and who have been equal-minded (*samabuddhayaḥ*), will be engaged in the welfare of the world.⁴¹ The great men who have won peace, says Śaṅkara,

work for the world's welfare (*śāntā mahānto... lokahitam carantaḥ*). Humility and non-hatred constitute the very nature of a Brahmajñānī, who would be an ethical personality of a high order.⁴²

According to Erwin Schrodinger, the Upaniṣadic doctrine of Identity has an ethical dimension, that of equality. It provides, he thought, the only adequate and satisfying basis for an ethics of altruism and unselfishness.⁴³

NOTES

1. deśaḥ pṛthvī, tasyām himavatsamudrāntaram udīcyāt yojanasahasra-parimāṇam tiryak cakravartikṣetram.
2. uttaram yatsamudrasya himādreścaiva gacchatām varṣam tadbhāratam nāma bhāratī yatra santatih. (II 3.1.)
3. *Discovery of India*, pp.190,191.
4. *Indianism and Its Expansion*, Calcutta, 1942, p. 7.
5. *Op. cit.*, pp. 48-9.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 53 & 50.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 53.
8. *Philosophies of India*, New York, 1953, p. 460.
9. *The Wonder That Was India*, London, 1985, p. 328.
10. *Loc. cit.*, p. 189.
11. K. Satchidananda Murty, *Indian Philosophy since 1498*, Andhra University, Waltair, 1982, pp. 36-44.
12. K.M. Panikkar, quoted in Murty, *op. cit.*, p. 39.
13. Quoting Aurobindo, S.M. Banerjee, *Vedānta as a Social Force*, Calcutta, 1972, pp. 46-47.
14. He quotes: para ākāśāt aja ātmā; tasmād vai vidvān puruṣamidam brahmeti manayati (*Religion of Man* etc.).
15. Murty, *loc. cit.*, p. 66.

16. "In considering these economic aspects of our problems,... perhaps we might also keep in view the old Vedāntic ideal of the life force which is the inner base of everything that exists." Nehru, "The Basic Approach" in *The Economic Review*, quoted in *imprint*, Vol. I, no. 7, Oct. 1961, Bombay.
17. N.S. Bose, *Indira Gandhi on Herself & Her Times*, Calcutta, 1987, pp. 54, 55.
18. In an interview to *Frankfurter Allegemine: The Hindu*, Hyderabad, Sunday, Nov. 4, 1984, p. 2.
19. In her important work, Dr. Hiltrud Rüstau (Humboldt University, Berlin, GDR) has maintained that among ancient Indian philosophical systems only Vedānta is alive; and has shown that all the Hindu thinkers of the Indian Freedom Movement were influenced by Vedānta, though each interpreted it selectively, determined by his political and ideological point of view. (Fourth World Sanskrit Conference of IASS. Weimar, 1979: *Summaries of papers*, Berlin, 1979, pp. 104-5.)
20. *Brahmasūtra*, I. 3.25: ḥṛdyapekṣayā tu manuṣyādhikā-ratvāt. *Sūtra*, III, 4. 36-38.
21. *Mīmāṃsāsūtra*, VI. 1.70: tasmāt sarvādhikāram syāt.
22. *Mīmāṃsāsūtra*, VI. 1.25-28.
23. *Manusmṛti*, VI. 35-7. *Brahmasūtra*, III. 4.26, 32-4; IV. 1.16.
24. āsupteḥ āmṛteḥ kālaṁ nayed vedānta cintayā.
25. *Taittirīyopaniṣad-bhāṣya*, *Śikṣāvallī*, *anuvāka*, II. See also the passage: *brahmacaryam satya-vadanam śamo ... dhyāna-dhāraṇāni lakṣaṇāni*, *Ibid.*, III. 2.5.
26. yadahareva virajet tadahareva pravrajat.
27. For this whole episode: Mādhavāchārya, *Sri Shankara Vijaya*, with Dhanapati's Comm. (Telugu script), Madras, 1926, VI, 24-34. (pp. 138 ff.) If the female slaves of Maṇḍana Miśra in Māhiṣmatī can converse with Śāṅkara in Sanskrit and the former's pet birds repeat śāstraic discussions, a wise *caṇḍāla* of Kāśī, the greatest seat of learning in those days, could have certainly reminded the Ācārya about the Advaita he professed. (*op. cit.*, p. 186).

28. *Maniṣāpañcakam* (with 2 comms.) in *Prakaraṇāṣṭakam* by Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda (ed. S. Subrahmanya Shastri), Varanasi, 1978, pp. 1-23.
29. *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya*, I. 3. 9. 39: itihāsa-purāṇādhi game cāturvarṇyasya adhikārasmaranāt.
30. R. Thangaswami, *Advaita Vedānta Literature, A Bibliographical Survey*, Madras 1980, p. 216. M. Venkatarama Shastri, *Vedānta Sarvasvamu* (Telugu), Hyderabad, 1981, pp. 103-105.
31. kiṁ jyotistava bhānumānahani me rātrau praḍīpādikaṁ syādevaṁ ravidīpa-darśanavidhau kiṁ jyotirākhyāhi me, cakṣus-tasya nimīlanādisamayē kiṁ dhīrdhiyo darśane kiṁ tatrāham ato bhavān paramakaṁ jyotistadasmi prabho. — *Ekaśloka*. On this there is a commentary by Svayamprakāśa Yati.
32. *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, VI. 14. 1-2.
33. *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi*, 54.
34. *Śataśloki*, 1 : sadguruḥ svīyaśiṣye svīyaṁ sāmyaṁ vidhatte.
35. *Aparokṣānubhūti*, with Vidyāraṇya's comm., in *Prakaraṇā-ṣṭaka*, *op. cit.*, p. 7. Other means = karmopāsanalakṣaṇaiḥ: Vidyāraṇya.
36. For details regarding "Anubhava" and references: K. Satchidananda Murty, *Revelation & Reason in Advaita Vedānta*, Reprint, New Delhi, 1974, pp. 112 ff.
37. *Ibid.*, chapters on 'Yogic Intuition', 'Reason' & 'Reason & Scripture'.
38. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad Bhāṣya*, III. 2.2
39. *Gītābhāṣya*, XVIII, 67. *Bṛhadāraṇyakabhāṣya*, 1.4.10: na hi śrutiśatamapi śīto 'agniraprakāśo veti bruvan prāmāṇyamupaiti; na ca dr̥ṣṭavirodhaḥ kenacid abhyupagamyate.
40. On this, see 'D' in K. Satchidananda Murty, *The Advaitic Notion*, Sringeri, 1985.
41. V. 25; XII. 4.
42. *Naiṣkarmyasiddhi*, IV. 69, 62-7.
43. *My View of the World*, Cambridge, Mass., USA., 1964.

ON THE HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE OF ŚAṄKARA*

G.C. Pande

Professor Satchidananda Murty raised three important questions about Śaṅkarācārya, to which I propose to address myself briefly. These questions are — (1) Wherein lay the greatness of Śaṅkara? (2) What was the synthesis which he is said to have contributed to Indian culture and philosophy? (3) What is the philosophical methodology of Śaṅkara?

In seeking to discover the greatness of Śaṅkara we must not isolate him from his age. The historical individual is as inseparable from his society as the organism is from its environment. The work of Śaṅkara can only be understood in terms of the leading spiritual, intellectual and cultural trends of the 7th and 8th centuries in India. This period may be described as the transition from the Classical to the early Mediaeval Age. Buddhism was declining before the emergent Smārta-Paurāṇika religion which was catholic in the spiritual side, but increasingly rigid on the social side. *Bhakti* and

* Courtesy : Rashtriya Śaṅkara Jayanti Mahotsava Commemoration Volume, Dept. of Culture, Govt. of India.

Tantra, abstract logic and polemical metaphysics, syncretic ritual and social codes were developing side by side. Śaṅkara not only summed up his age but founded a tradition which continued to develop in the subsequent ages. He restored and renovated the Vedāntic tradition by absorbing the ideas of Gauḍapāda and combated those of *Mīmāṃsā* and *Sāṅkhya*. His strict monistic interpretation of *Vedānta* became the standing challenge for subsequent generations of *Ācāryas*. His concept of *upādhi-tāratamya* made it possible to accommodate the vast Purāṇic pantheon within the bounds of a strict monism. He held that no social eligibility was required for spiritual knowledge. Although vedic study did require social eligibility, the lowest castes could also have access to spiritual truth through hearing non-revealed religious literature. Finally, Śaṅkara's greatness lies in the still continuing influence which he has exercised on Indian thought and culture, in his classic formulation of *Vedānta* through his great commentaries and in his masterly expression of perennially relevant spiritual values.

In Śaṅkara we can discover a manifold synthesis. The Smārta-Paurāṇic tradition sought to synthesise *pravṛtti-dharma* and *nivṛttidharma*. Although Śaṅkara gave the highest position to *nivṛtti*, he admitted *pravṛtti* within the scope of Vedic *dharma*. The apparent distinction of *Nirguṇa*- and *Saguṇa-Brahman* provided the metaphysical basis for the twofold Vedic *dharma*. This synthesis also included the hierarchical synthesis of *karma* and *jñāna* with in which *bhakti* was given an esteemed place. Another aspect of the synthesis which Śaṅkara achieved was the reconciliation of faith, reason and spiritual experience in the structure of *Vedānta*. The identity of the self and Brahman can only be

known through revelation, but it can and must be personally experienced. Reasoning is needed to eradicate what has been described as *asambhāvanā* and *viparīta-bhāvanā*. It has also been argued by some scholars that Śaṅkara carried forward the synthesis which Gauḍapāda had formulated between some Mahāyānic and Upaniṣadic ideas, especially where illusionism and the distinction between *paramārtha* and *vyavahāra* were concerned.

A great difficulty in the proper assessment of Śaṅkara as a historical figure arises from the absence of any authentic biographical sources about him. The existing biographies all date from mediaeval times. It seems that the history of Śaṅkara was increasingly replaced by his legend. It is the legend of Śaṅkara as fostered by these mediaeval biographies which survives as the social and memory image of the great man.

One aspect of this legend needs to be specially mentioned and that relates to the tradition of Śaṅkara having founded the four great monasteries in the four corners of India. Satchidananda Murty had put me on to enquiring into the historicity of this tradition. I am afraid that despite searching into the records of Śaṅkara's age and adjacent centuries, I have not so far come across any evidence which would confirm the historicity of this tradition. There is evidence of Pāśupata-Śaiva *maṭhas* between the 6th and 10th centuries but not of any *maṭhas* which could be attributed to Śaṅkara or his school.

As for the methodology of Śaṅkara it may be said to reflect the inner structure of the Advaitic mode of self-enquiry. Beginning with faith in revelation it uses rational reflection

not only to understand and interpret the revealed truth, but also to negate the instinctive and philosophical prejudices against it so that personal experience becomes possible. The analysis of self-awareness, distinguishing its indubitable reality from its spurious characterization, is an essential part of the process. The philosophical methodology of Śaṅkara may thus be said to be a combination of exegetical and dialectical reasoning within the context of a transcendental ontology which, as a whole, would express the second of the three steps in the Vedāntic search for truth. In the exegesis of Vedāntic texts apart from using traditional canons and method of interpretation, he relies on the concept of two truths or standpoints. In his independent exposition of Vedāntic principles or his criticism of rival philosophies he brings out the contradictions latent in empirical consciousness and existence. He appeals to two basic principles, *viz.*, that the subject can never be the object, and that the real cannot change or be sublated. Empirical consciousness and existence are shown to be false because they violate these principles. This transcendental falsity is, however, compatible with pragmatic validity so that the discovery of truth becomes a process of 'superimposition and negation'.

ADVAITA AND NYĀYA-VAIŚEṢIKA
ON GOD, SOUL AND THE WORLD

S. Revathy*

The present paper seeks to examine the philosophy of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika school in regard to three major problems of God, soul, and the world from the standpoint of Advaita.

The fundamental principles of Advaita are: (1) Brahman is the only reality, and it is the true import of the Upaniṣads; (2) God, soul and the world are apparent variations of Brahman through *avidyā* which is indeterminable either as real or as an absolute nothing; (3) the soul is none other than Brahman; and (4) the direct knowledge of the true nature of the soul as Brahman is the sole means to liberation which is of the nature of bliss. These principles are opposed to the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika school according to which God, soul and the world are distinct realities. We shall set forth in detail the nature of God, soul and the world according to Advaita and Nyāya-

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vaiśeṣika, and then critically examine the view-points of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika school.

God

God, according to Advaita, is Brahman, the consciousness and bliss associated with *avidyā*. Brahman, when reflected in *avidyā* and its product, viz mind, is the soul. The soul is thus the reflected image (*pratibimba*) of Brahman in *avidyā* and mind. As related to the reflecting media and the reflected image, Brahman which is the pure Being acquires an adventitious characteristic, viz the state of being the original (*bimbatva*). Brahman as associated with this characteristic is known as God. The consciousness-element in God being Brahman is real, while the characteristic of being the original is non-real as it is due to the functioning of *avidyā*. God is the material and the efficient cause of the world. He is the material cause in the sense that the consciousness-element in Him is the substratum of *avidyā* whose transformation is the world. He is also the efficient cause in the sense that the consciousness-element in Him comes to possess knowledge, desire and will which are essential for world-creation and which are the modifications of *avidyā* inspired by the reflection of consciousness in them. Brahman in its aspect of God is the material and the efficient cause of the world. The state of being God is non-real.

The *Taittirīya* text, "That from which the world arises, from which it derives its existence and manifestation, and into which it lapses back at the time of dissolution, seek to know that; That is Brahman"¹ together with the *Śvetāśvatara* text, Know *māyā* (*avidyā*) to be the material cause and Brahman as the substratum of *māyā* (*avidyā*),² conveys that

Brahman through *avidyā* is the material cause of the world. The significance of the two texts we shall explain later. The *Taittirīya* text, "Brahman *by itself* manifested itself as the world," affirms that Brahman is both the material and the efficient cause of the world. When it is said that Brahman itself manifested as the world, it is known that Brahman is the material cause, and when it is said that Brahman manifested itself as the world, it is known that Brahman is the efficient cause. Here the word "Brahman" must be understood in the sense of God, i.e. Brahman as associated with the characteristic of being the original. The aphorism, "From which the creation, etc. of the world given in perception take place (is Brahman),"³ discusses the import of the *Taittirīya* text, "That from which the world arises,..." cited above. Śaṅkara in his commentary thereon states that the world derives its origination, etc. from Brahman which is omniscient and omnipotent.⁴ The world, Śaṅkara observes, is differentiated into names and forms; it consists of agents in respect of specified rites and also of experiencers in regard to specified rites, and also of experiencers in regard to specified fruits; and it is the substratum of place, time and determinant of the fruits of respective actions, and these are unalterably fixed.⁵ From this it is known that the cause of the origination, etc. of the world must be an omniscient Being.⁶ Śaṅkara further points out that it is impossible even to have a mental formulation of the design of such a world that is to be brought into existence.⁷ From this it is known that the cause of the origination, etc. of the world must be an omnipotent Being.⁸ When it is said that Brahman, the cause of the origination, etc. of the world is omniscient and omnipotent, it must be understood that Brahman in the form of God is referred to be so. Brahman as such is of the nature of consciousness and

bliss. It is neither omniscient nor omnipotent in the sense that it possesses omniscience and omnipotence as its attributes. But when associated with *avidyā*, it is endowed with the attributes of omniscience and omnipotence, which are the modifications of *avidyā*. It is only in this way we could explain the Upaniṣadic texts, "Brahman is consciousness and bliss"⁹ and "Brahman is omniscient."¹⁰ From the above it emerges that according to Advaita, Brahman as associated with *avidyā* is God and is the material and the efficient cause of the origination, etc. of the world. And God is known only from the Upaniṣadic texts.

We shall proceed to consider the idea of God in the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika system. There are no references to it in the aphorism of Kaṇāda. Kaṇāda says in the aphorism, *dharma* or merit is that from which ensues the knowledge of the true nature of the soul and liberation.¹¹ In another aphorism he states that liberation results from the knowledge of the true nature of the soul as distinct from the categories which are six; and the knowledge of the soul arises from merit of especial worth or value.¹² Praśastapāda in his commentary states that the knowledge of the true nature of the soul would arise from merit. Merit being inert cannot give forth any result. So when it is said that merit leads to the knowledge of the true nature of the soul, it must be understood that God who is gratified by the performance of the deeds prescribed in the Vedas directs the merit which is inert to give forth its result, viz. the knowledge of the true nature of the soul.¹³

Gautama in his *Nyāya-sūtra* makes only a casual mention of God. In the aphorism, "God is the cause; for it is noticed that the soul which acts does not invariably attain

the desired fruit,"¹⁴ he states that in respect of the attainment of the fruit in accordance with the action performed, God is the cause. He anticipates an objection to this view, and he refers to it in the aphorism, "God cannot be the cause; for, if He were so, fruit could ensue without any effort on the part of the soul."¹⁵ This objection he rejects by stating in the aphorism that God is the dispenser of the fruits of actions of the soul; He does not grant the fruit to the soul who does not perform any act; and so the argument that God cannot be viewed as the cause is not sound.¹⁶ From these aphorisms it is known that the action of the soul, being inert, is not efficacious in giving forth any fruit, and it is God who grants the fruit in accordance with the actions performed by the soul.

Now the question arises as to what exactly is the nature of God. God is classed under *Ātman*, one of the nine substances. He is described as *paramātmān* to distinguish Him from the soul. Like the souls, He too is omnipresent and eternal. He has knowledge which is eternal, universal and perfect. He possesses desire and will, which are also eternal. He is admitted to be the efficient cause of the world by making suitable dispositions of the atoms which constitute the inherent cause of the world. Vātsyāyana in his commentary on the *Nyāya-sūtra* states that God is distinct from the souls as He is associated with attributes, and the attributes are knowledge, desire and will, which are eternal.¹⁷

The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika school seeks to prove the existence of God by means of syllogistic arguments. Udayana in his *Nyāya-kusumāñjali* suggests eight arguments which are as follows: Earth and such other products (*kārya*) should

have been created by a conscious agent who has full knowledge of every detail relating to the required causal apparatus. And that conscious agent must be God.¹⁸ The *Gītā* text, “I am the source of everything and everything comes into existence from Me,” substantiates this argument.¹⁹ At the beginning of creation, activity on the part of atoms leading to their conjunction must be induced (*āyojana*) by a conscious being, and that being is God.²⁰ The *Gītā* text, “The primal cause being directed by Me gives rise to the world consisting of movable and immovable objects,”²¹ confirms this view. The various planets having great weight do not fall down and are sustained in their position. This must be due to the sustaining effort (*dhṛti*) of a conscious being who is God.²² The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* text “Owing to the volitional effort of this immutable entity, the heaven and earth are sustained in their position,”²³ corroborates this view. In the same way, the destruction of the whole world is caused by the volitional effort of a being, and that being must be God.²⁴ The *Gītā* text, “All beings at the end of the cosmic age lapse back into my *prakṛti*, and I create them at the beginning of the cosmic age,”²⁵ gives support to this theory. The first introduction (*pada*) of arts like weaving, pot-making, etc. into the world must be by an intelligent being who should be taken to be God.²⁶ The *Gītā* text, “I am the father, mother and the creator of the world,”²⁷ provides evidence for the truth of this view. The validity of knowledge derived from the Vedas accounts for the infallibility of the latter. And, knowledge is valid on account of the eternal purity of the source from which the Vedas came into being. That source is God.²⁸ The Vedas are composed by an omniscient being on the ground of their being the Veda; and that omniscient being is God.²⁹ The state of being the Veda is the characteristic of being not composed

by the souls and of being favoured by the wise ones as the authoritative text.³⁰ The number *two* that belongs to atoms is the cause of the size of a binary atom. Two and the higher numbers result from enumerative cognition of the person who counts. At the beginning of creation such enumerative cognition could be attributed to God only. Thus the number *two* that causes the size of the binary atom results from enumerative cognition. It is because the number *two* is different from the number *one*, like the number *three* that is present in pots.³¹ God thus known through inference is the efficient cause of the world. He not only creates the world out of atoms, but also protects it and destroys it in due course.

The Advaitin does not subscribe to the view of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika that God is to be known through inference and that He is only the efficient cause of the world. We shall take up the first syllogistic argument for examination. The argument is that the world is an effect like pot (say) and that it points to an agent, and that agent is God. From this, the Advaitin argues: if it is known that there is *one* agent who is by knowledge, desire and volition equal to the task of creating the world and if it is known that knowledge, etc. present in the agent are eternal and universal, then it could be established that that agent is God distinct from the souls. But this is not the case. The ground of inference (*hetu*) in the present syllogistic argument is the state of being an effect (*kāryatva*). And it could only point to the presence of some efficient cause. It is not efficacious enough to prove that the efficient cause is one only and knowledge, etc. present in him are eternal and universal.³²

Further, the efficient cause is the one who has the volitional effort to bring something into existence. And volitional effort is noticed in ordinary experience to be originated at a particular point of time. It is not eternal. Hence, the ground of inference, viz. the state of being an effect could give rise to the knowledge of an efficient cause whose volitional effort is not eternal but is produced.³³ If the efficient cause, viz. God is admitted to be having volitional effort that is eternal, then the question arises regarding the possibility of eternal knowledge and desire that are essential for the creation of the world. It is because knowledge and desire are the means of bringing an effect into existence only by generating volitional effort. If volitional effort in God were eternal, then there is no need for knowledge and desire in His case. Hence the admission that God is the efficient cause of the world as He possesses eternal knowledge, desire and volitional effort does not seem to be sound.³⁴

Moreover, inference could be considered as the means of valid knowledge only when it proves something that is in conformity to that which exists in nature, or to the facts known. In ordinary experience we find palaces, etc. are being brought into existence by many agents or efficient causes who do possess passion and hatred. Hence in respect of the world too, one could prove through inference many efficient causes or agents possessing passion and hatred and not God who is one and who is free from any ignoble qualities.³⁵

We have said that in the case of God too the volitional effort cannot be eternal and is something produced. In order that volitional effort may arise in God, God must be

embodied as we have noticed volitional effort in the souls that are embodied. If God were admitted to be embodied, then like the transmigratory beings, He would also be subject to experience of pleasure and pain.³⁶

The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika school admits that God causes activity in the atoms. As a result of this, the atoms come into contact with each other, and the products in the shape of dyads, triads, and so on arise; and creation of the world thus takes place. The Advaitin rejects this contention by stating that God, in order that He may cause activity in the atoms, must be related to the atoms. No relation between the two can be conceived of. Inherence is not possible as it is not admitted between two substances. Conjunction may be thought of between the two as both are substances, and the relation of conjunction is admitted between substances only. But conjunction being non-pervasive is possible between two substances which are composed of parts, and not between God and the atoms which are partless. In the absence of any relation between God and the atoms, God cannot have the knowledge of the atoms out of which He is admitted to create the world.³⁷

It may be objected at this stage that the Advaitin, who admits that Brahman through *avidyā* is the efficient cause of the world, must admit a relation between the two which he cannot. For there can be neither the relation of inherence nor contact between the two. Śaṅkara answers this objection by stating that we admit the relation of super-imposed identity between the two.³⁸

The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika school might argue that in ordinary experience we do not notice a single efficient

cause in respect of the creation of palaces, etc. Yet, following the principle of parsimony we can infer in respect of the creation of the world a single efficient cause having eternal knowledge and also free from any defect. In that case the Advaitin suggests that following the principle of parsimony the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika school could infer the single efficient cause to be the material cause too. This is as it should be; for the assumption of a material cause different from the efficient cause in regard to the creation of the world would involve the defect of prolixity.³⁹ For the Advaitin, however, the Vedas, being not composed by anyone at any point of time, are intrinsically valid; and the sense they convey need not be exemplified by providing illustrative examples. Hence from them there results the ascertainment of God who, unlike the efficient cause in ordinary experience, is both the efficient and the material cause of the world and is omniscient. In the case of such a God there is no scope for attributing passion, hatred and other defects, as the Vedas which give rise to the knowledge of such a God conveys that He is free from any defect whatsoever. This is the distinction, a vital one between the conception of God according to Advaita and that of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika.⁴⁰

God must be admitted to be both the material and the efficient cause of the world. Otherwise there would arise conflict with the Upaniṣadic teaching that by knowing the one everything else would become known.⁴¹ To the question as to how could there arise the knowledge of everything by the knowledge of one factor, the Upaniṣad itself explains what has been said in general terms by providing three illustrative examples. Of these, the first

one relates to the knowledge of effects such as pot, dish, etc., that results from the knowledge of their cause, the clay. The second and the third relate to the knowledge of the effects made up of the lump-form of gold and of black iron resulting from the knowledge of their cause, the lump-form of gold and the lump-form of black iron respectively. The Upaniṣad also states that the effects are mere names only and that there is no substance in them. It is only the causal element, viz. clay, or gold, or black iron, that is real.⁴² From this it is known that by knowing the cause, the effect-forms of the latter will be known.

When it is said that there would result the knowledge of effects from the knowledge of the cause, it is implied that the cause must be the material cause. It is because in ordinary experience it is only the knowledge of the material cause, viz. the clay, that enables one to have the knowledge of the effect, viz. the pot. From the *Taittirīya* text, "That from which the world arises," etc.⁴³ and from the *Śvetāśvatara*, "know *māyā* (*avidyā*) to be the material cause,"⁴⁴ it is known that Brahman is the material cause of the world through *avidyā*. And by the knowledge of Brahman there would arise the knowledge of the effects.

An objection may be raised at this stage. The knowledge of Brahman is the knowledge of the true nature of the soul as Brahman. It cannot result in the knowledge of the world in all its specific aspects. For, the world is an appearance of Brahman, like silver in a shell. The knowledge of the shell would remove the appearance of silver, and as such we do not have the knowledge of silver at all. In the same way, when the knowledge of Brahman arises, the world which is an appearance in Brahman will

be removed, and so one cannot have the knowledge of the world at all. So the contention that by the knowledge of Brahman there would arise the knowledge of the world is wrong. This objection the Advaitin rejects on the ground that, when it is said that by the knowledge of Brahman, there would arise the knowledge of its effect, viz. the world, what is intended to be conveyed is that there will arise the knowledge of the true nature of every object. And this knowledge is of the form that Brahman is the essential nature of every object, and no object has any independent existence apart from Brahman.⁴⁵

The *Muṇḍakopaniṣad* too contains the similar teaching. In that Upaniṣad, the sage Śaunaka besought Aṅgiras to impart to him the knowledge of That by which everything else will become known.⁴⁶ Aṅgiras imparts him the knowledge of Brahman and concludes by saying that by attaining this knowledge one would transcend the knot of *avidyā*.⁴⁷ He has not said that by the knowledge of Brahman everything else will become known. And when he says that the knowledge of Brahman will result in transcending *avidyā*, what he means is that everything else will be known as having no independent reality and every object as deriving its existence and manifestation from the substratal principle viz. Brahman.

It must be noted here that the soul, when it attains the knowledge of its true nature as Brahman, becomes freed from the characteristics of being an agent, an experient and a knower and remains as Brahman, the pure consciousness. If there were an efficient cause different from Brahman, the material cause, the former would not be known by the knowledge of the latter. In that case the

Upaniṣadic teaching that by the knowledge of Brahman everything else would become known will be contradicted. The Advaitin, therefore, concludes that the view of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika that God is only the efficient cause of the world is in conflict with the Upaniṣadic teaching.

We have already shown that the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika view that God is known through inference only is not logically sound. It may be said that the aphorism, "From which the origination, etc. of this world proceed (is Brahman)," sets forth that Brahman is the cause and that the world is the effect. This view is thus based upon the invariable relation that whatever is the effect must have a cause, that the world being an effect must have a cause and that the cause must be Brahman. Śaṅkara too while commenting on this aphorism describes the variegated nature of the world and also its cause as the omniscient and the omnipotent Being and concludes by saying that apart from God possessed of the attributes already mentioned, the world, as described, cannot possibly be thought of as having its origin, etc. from any other principle such as *pradhāna* which is insentient, or from atoms, or from non-existence, or from some soul under worldly conditions, viz. Hiraṇyagarbha.⁴⁸ And what has been said in the aphorism, namely, the state of being originated, etc. in respect of the world is considered as the ground (*hetu*) by the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika who, on this basis, provides the syllogistic argument: "Earth, etc. originate from the one who has the knowledge of their material cause, and also desire and volitional effort; it is because they are originated, like pot, etc." Śaṅkara sums up the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika view by stating that those who seek to establish

God as the efficient cause consider this feature, viz. the state of being originated, etc. present in the world is the means of inferring the existence of God as distinct from the souls.⁴⁹

Padmapāda in his *Pañcapādikā* states that Śaṅkara's statement that "apart from God possessed of the attributes already mentioned, the world as described cannot possibly be thought of as having its origin, etc. from any factor" is only an argumentation (*yukti* or *tarka*); and this is falsely considered by the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika school as constituting an independent *pramāṇa* in respect of the existence of God.⁵⁰ He further observes that the Upaniṣadic texts such as "From which these beings arise That is Brahman."⁵¹ and the like are considered by the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika to be similar to the statements that constitute inference for others (*parārthānumāna*)⁵² Prakāśātman in his *Vivarāṇa* explains the view of Padmapāda by bringing out the distinction between *yukti* or argumentation and *anumāna* or inference. Argumentation is not inference. It is an auxiliary to a *pramāṇa* including inference; and it provides us with the knowledge of probability. With reference to the one who has doubt as to whether there is an agent for the world or not, there is the argumentation that, wherever there is the state of being an effect, there the state of being caused by some being is noticed as in the case of pot, etc. This does not provide proof, but only commends itself to the mind as worthy of belief though not accepted as a certainty. It is easier to instruct the one who has attained the cognition of probability of the world having a cause that the cause of the world is the omniscient and omnipotent Brahman on the basis of the *Upaniṣads*. Inference, on the other hand,

has a non-inconsistent pervasion, and it gives certitude about the thing. The argumentation which is the cause of the cognition of probability is mistaken by the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika as inference.⁵³

The syllogistic arguments provided by Udayana seek to prove God either as the substratum of eternal knowledge, or as the substratum of eternal volitional effort. But the concepts of eternal knowledge and eternal volitional effort are opposed to the cognition of invariable relations such as “whichever is knowledge is produced by mind,” “whichever is produced is non-eternal,” and “whichever is volitional effort is subject to origination.” Hence God cannot be proved as the substratum of eternal knowledge or eternal volitional effort on the basis of syllogistic arguments.

From this it follows that from inference one could merely establish the existence of a cause for the world, but could not establish that cause to be an omniscient being in the absence of revelation. It should not be thought that the Advaitin totally dispenses with inference on the epistemological side. He definitely emphasizes the need for inference for reinforcing the teachings of the *Upaniṣads* provided such an inference does not run counter to the teachings of the *Upaniṣads*. It is because the *Upaniṣad* itself in the text, “Ātman is fit to be realized; for that the Vedāntic texts should be studied and then their import should be reflected on and meditated upon,⁵⁴ speaks of the need of arguing within oneself with a view to ascertain that the teachings of the *Upaniṣads* are valid.⁵⁵ And from the Upaniṣadic texts we could know the cause of the world to be Brahman associated with *avidyā* and endowed with

the characteristics of omniscience and omnipotence, and not from inference.

The prevailing view among the Indian philosophers is that the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika school, especially the Nyāya school, relies upon inference and not on revelation to establish the existence and the nature of God. But a careful study of the text, *Nyāya-kusumāñjali* by Udayana, the chief objective of which is to prove the existence of God, shows that Udayana relies more upon revelation than upon inference. In the beginning he sets forth the objective of his work by saying "In this text *Kusumāñjali* is explicated the nature of God, meditation upon whom is ascertained by the wise to be the means to the attainment of heaven and of liberation."⁵⁶ To the question as to what precisely is the need for any proof in regard to God who is well-known, his answer is: "This attempt at arriving at the knowledge of God through logical processes is designated as *manana* or arguing within oneself. It is subsequent to the study of the scriptural texts, and is only an act of applying oneself to the careful and serious consideration of problems at issue. God is known through the study of *śruti*, *smṛti*-, and *purāṇa*- texts. And this knowledge is to be re-confirmed by arguing within oneself."⁵⁷ Vātsyāyana too in his commentary on the *Nyāya-sūtra*, while giving the etymological derivation of the word "*ānvīkṣikī*" observes that which transcends sense-organs cannot be proved on the basis of inference. "*Anvīkṣā*" means inference that depends upon perception and scripture. Subsequent reflection upon what is earlier known through perception and scripture is *anvīkṣā*. That which is based upon *anvīkṣā* or reflection is known as *nyāya-vidyā*,

ānvīkṣikī and *nyāyaśāstra*. But the inference which is in conflict with perception and scripture is not a proof, but has only the semblance of a proof.⁵⁸

If the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika school considers that the inferential arguments must be in conformity with the Upaniṣadic teaching, then that school must view God as both the material and the efficient cause of the world, and as possessing omniscience and omnipotence, not as His essential attributes, but as adventitious features.

Soul

The soul, according to Advaita, is only the reflected image (*pratibimba*) of Brahman, the consciousness in *avidyā* and mind, the predominant factor in the subtle body. The latter is an annexe to the soul till it attains the knowledge of its true nature as Brahman. Owing to false identification with mind and its characteristics of being an agent, enjoyer and knower, the soul has the false cognition that it is an agent, enjoyer and knower. The author of the *Brahma-sūtra* in the aphorism, “But the soul comes to have such appellations because of the dominance of the characteristics of mind; this is just as in the case of Brahman,”⁵⁹ states that the soul is none other than Brahman which is consciousness, but appears to be the one associated with agency, etc. owing to its relation to mind. Śaṅkara in his commentary on the above aphorism states that there can be no transmigratory state for Brahman unless it be through mind. He adds that although Brahman is not an agent, an experient and a knower, and though it has no transmigratoriness and is ever free, yet it comes to have the states of being an agent, etc., this being caused

by the superimposition of the modes of mind acting as a limiting adjunct. Hence owing to the predominance of mind and its modes, Brahman as the soul is said to have a dimension corresponding to that of the mind.⁶⁰ Not only this: the qualities like empirical knowledge, happiness, sorrow, desire, dislike, volition, merit, demerit and latent impression which belong to mind are falsely superimposed on the soul owing to the latter's identity with the mind, due to the work of *avidyā*.⁶¹ The souls are many as the limiting adjuncts, namely, the minds are many. And the appearance of manyness is only illusory. From the above it follows that the soul, according to Advaita, is none other than Brahman with adventitious characteristics presented upon it.

The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, on the other hand, admits plurality of souls. Each soul is all-pervasive and not spiritual in nature. Unlike the objects of the world which are inert, each soul comes to be endowed with nine specific qualities, viz. knowledge, pleasure, pain, desire, dislike, hatred, volition, merit, demerit and latent impression.⁶² These, as has been said above, are accidental features arising in the soul through the contact of the latter with mind and through the contact of mind with the sense-organs and their respective objects. The soul, however, mistakes these non-essential features for its essential features. Further, it mistakes things which are external to it like body, mind and sense as belonging to it. This is termed *mithyājñāna*, which is positive error.⁶³

Śaṅkara, following the author of the *Brahma-sūtra* rejects the contention of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika that there is a plurality of all-pervasive souls by pointing out that the

distinction of happiness, misery, etc. experienced by each soul individually cannot be satisfactorily explained.⁶⁴ An all-pervasive object, according to the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika school, is that which is in contact with all substances which have limited size. Thus when it is said that the soul is all-pervasive, it means that it is in contact with all substances which have limited size. Thus when it is said that the soul is all-pervasive, it means that it is in contact with all the minds. In other words, each soul in order that it may be all-pervasive must be in contact with all the minds without distinction. It has been said that happiness, misery, etc. arise in a soul owing to the contact of the latter with the mind, the mind with sense-organs and the sense-organs with their respective objects. Thus, in order that there may arise happiness, etc. in a soul, what is necessary is the contact between the mind and the soul. As we have said, the soul must be in contact with each and every mind; otherwise it will cease to be all-pervasive. So, when there arises happiness in a soul owing to its contact with a particular mind, then the other souls too which are in contact with that mind must experience the same happiness.

It might be said that there will be the experience of happiness to a particular soul only that is present in a particular body, and thus the experience of happiness is fixed to only one soul. This contention too is not correct, because it is not possible to restrict the body that is originated in the proximity of all the souls as belonging to one soul alone and not to other. If, however, a particular body is restricted to a particular soul only, then since that particular soul will not be in contact with other physical bodies, it would cease to be all-pervasive. Not only that:

the other souls, as they will not be in contact with the body that is restricted to a particular soul, would lose their all-pervasiveness. It might be said that the body originated by the unseen potency of a particular soul belongs to that particular soul. And the soul present in that body, when it comes into contact with the mind that exists in that body, experiences happiness or misery, and this experience cannot be had by the other souls. Thus, the distinction of the experience of happiness, misery, etc. by each and every soul individually can be explained. This contention too is wrong. It is because in order that unseen potency may be originated in a soul, that soul must unite with one mind and with that mind all the souls must be united. Otherwise the other souls would lose their all-pervasive character. Hence there is no possibility of the unseen merit originating in a particular soul only. It might be argued that mere union with the mind is common to all the souls; the resolve, "I shall attain this fruit," and also the volition that is conducive to the act originating the unseen potency are distinct in the case of each and every soul. And from this there could result the restriction of unseen potency in the case of a particular soul. This contention too is wrong, because resolve and volition are to be originated in the soul owing to the latter's conjunction with the mind. The mind, however, is common to all souls and as such distinction could not be established in respect of resolve and volition.

From the above it follows that the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika school which accepts the soul to be all-pervasive in nature and also to be many cannot satisfactorily explain the experience of happiness, misery, etc., which is noticed to be unalterably fixed in the case of each and every soul. According

to Advaita, the distinction of happiness, misery, etc. as pertaining to each and every soul could easily be explained. It is because the limiting adjunct of each and every soul, viz. mind is distinct, and happiness, misery, etc. which are only the modifications of the mind of a particular soul will strictly pertain to that soul only and not to the other souls.

World

The Advaitin explains the origination of the world by adopting the theory known as *vivarta-vāda*. According to it, the cause appears as the effect without itself undergoing any change whatsoever. On the basis of the Upaniṣadic texts,

That from which the world arises, from which it derives its existence and manifestation and into which it lapses back at the time of dissolution — seek to know that; That is Brahman, and “Know *avidyā* to be the material cause and Brahman as the substratum of *avidyā*,”

it is admitted that Brahman appears as the world through *avidyā*. *Avidyā* is the transformative material cause, while Brahman, being the substratum of *avidyā*, is viewed as the transfigurative material cause.

The theory known as *vivarta-vāda* proceeds on the basis of the criticism of the theory of *asat-kāryavāda* or *ārambhavāda* of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika and that of the *satkāryavāda* or *pariṇāmavāda* of the Sāṅkhya-Yoga.

The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika school holds the view that every effect comes into existence from its prior non-existence. The effect does not exist in its cause prior to its origination. It is by the causal operation of the efficient

cause, like the weaver, the effect, namely, the cloth which is non-existent prior to its production comes into existence through the relation known as *samavāya* or inherence over and above its cause, namely, the threads.⁶⁵ According to the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika school, the threads constitute what is known as the *samavāyikāraṇa* or the inherent cause. The threads are parts while the cloth is the whole. And between the parts and the whole, the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika school admits the relation known as *samavāya*. It is in the threads the cloth arises through the relation known as *samavāya*, and so the threads are termed *samavāyikāraṇa*. It may be added here that, according to the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika school, it is only a substance that could serve as the inherent cause.⁶⁶

The conjunction of the threads (*tantusamyoga*) too, which is brought about by the efficient cause, is necessary for the rise of the cloth. This conjunction is termed *asamavāyikāraṇa* or the non-inherent cause. Conjunction is a quality, and the threads come under the category of substance. Between the two, there is the relation of inherence or *samavāya*. Thus the conjunction of the threads exists through the relation of inherence in the threads which constitute the *samavāyikāraṇa* of the cloth. And by being present therein, it is the cause of the origination of cloth. It is technically termed *asamavāyikāraṇa*. According to the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, it is only a quality or an action that could serve as the *asamavāyikāraṇa* of an effect.⁶⁷ That which is different from the two and yet serves as the cause is termed *nimittakāraṇa* or efficient cause.⁶⁸ The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika theory of causation is termed *asatkāryavāda*, because according to it the effect is non-existent in its cause prior to its production. It is termed *ārambhavāda* on the

ground that according to it the effect is a new creation.

On the basis of this theory, the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika school argues that atoms, which are eternal and partless, constitute the inherent cause of the world. There are four kinds of atoms: earth, water, fire and air. At the beginning of creation of the world, there arises, by the will of God, movement in each and every atom. Two atoms join together to give rise to a binary compound (*dvyaṇuka*) which has an invisible size (*aṇutva*) and minuteness in length (*hrasvatva*). Three such binary compounds join together to give rise to a triad (*tryaṇuka*), which has a visible size (*mahatva*) and visible length (*dīrghatva*). Four such triads combine together to form a *caturaṇuka*, which has greater visible size and visible length. In this way, the effects, earth, water, fire and air are produced.

Anubhūtiśvarūpa, the noteworthy preceptor of the Advaita school in his *Prakaṭārtha-vivaraṇa*, a commentary on Śaṅkara's *Bhāṣya* on the *Brahma-sūtra*, while examining the view of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika points out that there is no basis for admitting that the *caturaṇuka* arises from the group of four triads. He cites a text from one *Rāvaṇa-bhāṣya* on the *Vaiśeṣika-sūtra*, which states that the *caturaṇuka* arises from four atoms and that it is the collection of the latter that is responsible for the rise of visible size in it.⁷⁰ It may be added here that Śaṅkara refers to this view in his commentary on the *Brahma-sūtra*.⁷¹ It comes to this: according to the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, the atoms constitute the inherent cause of the binary compound. It is the conjunction of the two atoms, that constitutes the non-inherent cause. And God is the efficient cause.

The Vaiśeṣika seeks to establish the existence of the atom on the basis of the following inference :

The gradation in limited size ends somewhere;

It is because it has the characteristic of being a gradation;

Like the gradation in great size.⁷²

The gradation in great size ends in *ākāśa* or *Ātman*. In the same way the gradation in limited size must end in a particular object, and that is the atom. This inferential argument is set forth by Śrīdhara in his *Nyāya-kandalī*.⁷³

Anubhūtiśvarūpa argues that in the above inferential argument the *hetu* is fallacious. It is thus: according to the logicians, the *pakṣa* or the subject of inference must be a valid one. Gradation which is the *pakṣa* in the present inferential argument does not stand logical scrutiny, and hence not valid. It cannot be taken as a quality of size. It is because size being a quality cannot have another quality. It cannot be viewed as a generic attribute in view of the fact that a generic attribute, being uniform in nature, does not admit of difference such as superiority or inferiority. Gradation, however, possesses the latter. Hence it is not a generic attribute too. Thus since the *pakṣa* or the subject of inference could not be proved, the *hetu* which seeks to establish something in it is associated with the fallacy known as *āśrayāsiddhī*.⁷⁴ It might be said that gradation is a *dharma* or a feature. Anubhūtiśvarūpa argues that in that case it would end in a *dharmin* and that *dharmin* is the size, and Advaitins would accept this position. The point to be noted here is that the factor wherein gradation ends is not the atom as the logicians think, but is only the

size. Hence the above inferential argument does not prove the existence of atom.⁷⁵

The logicians attempt to prove the existence as well as the eternal nature of the atom on the basis of the *mahāvidyā* syllogisms. The distinctive feature of a *mahāvidyā* syllogism is this: the *hetu* which is *kevalānvayī*, besides proving the intended *sādhya* in the *pakṣa*, proves another *sādhya* of the *hetu* of *anvaya-vyatirekī* type. It is because the *sādhya* that is intended to be proved by the present *hetu* would be intelligible only if the *sādhya* of the *anvaya-vyatirekī hetu* exists in the *pakṣa*. This syllogism is termed *mahāvidyā* as it is free from any fallacy.⁷⁶ The following example from the *Mahāvidyā-vidambana* of Bhaṭṭavādīndra would make the above position clear: “*ayaṁ śabdaḥ, svasvetara-vṛttivānadhikaraṇānityaniṣṭhādhikaraṇam, prameyatvāt, ghaṭavat*”.⁷⁷ In this inferential argument, the *sādhya* may be explained as follows: *sva-svetaravṛttitvobhayābhāvavān yaḥ anityaniṣṭho dharmah*. In order to know the significance of this *sādhya*, it is necessary to have a clear understanding of the concept of *ubhayābhāva*. If pot alone exists and not the cloth, there is the absence of the two. Thus, if one of the two objects is present, then there is *ubhayābhāva*. This will become clear if we contrast it with *anyatarābhāva*. The latter we have when there is the absence of the pot as well as the cloth. This means that neither the pot nor the cloth is present.⁷⁸ To sum up this position: if one object is present and another is not, then we have *ubhayābhāva*. If the two are not present, then we have *anyatarābhāva*. Now the present *sādhya* is a feature which possesses *ubhayābhāva*. And this feature varies when we construe it with the *sapakṣa*

and the *pakṣa*. In relation to the *sapakṣa*, the *sādhyā* is *tadghaṭatvam*. It possesses *ubhayābhāva*. It is thus: the word *sva* in the sentence that stands for the *sādhyā* signifies *śabda* which is the *pakṣa* or the subject of the present inference. This feature, viz. *tadghaṭatvam*, is not present in *śabda* which is the meaning of *sva*. Thus it is not *svavṛtti*. It is, however, present in the pot, which is different from *śabda*. It is, therefore, *svetaravṛtti*. Thus this feature is *svetaravṛtti*, but not *svavṛtti*. In other words, the characteristic of being present in something other than *śabda* (*svetaravṛttitva*) abides in *tadghaṭatvam*. The characteristic of being present in *śabda* (*svavṛttitvam*) is not present in it. As a result, *svasvetara-vṛttitvobhayābhāva* is present in *tadghaṭatvam*. The latter is present in the non-eternal object, viz. pot, which is the *sapakṣa*.

In relation to the *pakṣa*, the *sādhyā* is *etacchabdatva*. It is *svavṛtti* as it is present in *śabda*. It is *svetarāvṛtti* as it is not present in anything that is different from *śabda*. In other words, *svavṛttitva* is present in *etacchabdatva* while *svetara-vṛttitva* is not present. Hence, *etacchabdatva* has *svasvetara-vṛttitvobhayābhāva*. And *etacchabdatva* is present in the *pakṣa-śabda*. The *hetu*, i.e. *prameyatva*, too is present therein. The feature, *etacchabdatva*, is said to be present in a non-eternal entity. This would hold good only if *śabda* wherein *etacchabdatva* is present is non-eternal. Thus, this inferential argument incidentally proves the non-eternal nature of the *śabda*.⁷⁹ The latter is proved by a *hetu* of the *anvayavyatirekī* type which is as follows:

Śabda is non-eternal;
it is because it is produced
like a pot.⁸⁰

Thus, the *mahāvidyā* syllogism referred to earlier proves that the feature *etacchabdatva* is present in *pakṣa*. And as a matter of course, *śabda* is proved to be non-eternal too.

The logicians seek to prove the existence of atom on the basis of the following *mahāvidyā* syllogism: “*ayam ghaṭaḥ etadvyatiriktānityetaramūrtānyonyābhāvavān, prameyatvāt, paṭavat.*”⁸¹ This syllogism may be explained as follows: “This pot has difference (*anyonyābhāvavān*) from an object which has limited size (*mūrta*) and which is different from a non-eternal object (*anityetara*) that is distinct from the pot (*etadvyatirikta*); it is because it is knowable; like a cloth.” In the cloth which is the *sapakṣa*, the *sādhya* is present. It is thus: cloth has difference (*anyonyābhāvavān*) from this pot which has limited size (*mūrta*) and which is different from rope — a non-eternal object (*anityetara*) that is different from this pot (*etadghaṭavyatirikta*). The *hetu*, i.e. *prameyatva*, too exists therein. The *pakṣa*, namely, “this pot”, has difference (*anyonyābhāva*) from the atom which has limited size (*mūrta*) and which is different from a non-eternal object, namely, cloth (*anityetara*) that is different from this pot (*etadghaṭavyatirikta*). Here the *sādhya* is *paramāṇubheda*. This would hold good only if *paramāṇu* or atom exists. Thus the existence of atom is proved by this *mahāvidyā* syllogism.⁸²

The existence of atom is proved on the basis of *anvaya-vyatirekī hetu* thus:

The part of the triad, namely, *dvyāṇuka* is composed of parts;

It is because it has the characteristic of giving rise to an object of greater visible size (*mahadārambhakatva*); like a pot-sherd⁸³

The part of *dvyanuka* is atom. The *hetu* is *anvaya-vyatirekī*. It is thus: whichever is *mahadārambhaka* is composed of parts like a potsherd. And whichever is not composed of parts like *ākāśa* is not *mahadārambhaka*. Thus the atom which is proved on the basis of this *hetu* of *anvaya-vyatirekī* type is proved by the *mahāvidyā* syllogism.

Anubhūtiśvarūpa rejects the above syllogism thus: if it is contended that let the *hetu* be there and the *sādhya* need not be, logicians have no valid argument to disprove this contention. Moreover, the *sapakṣa*, namely, the cloth, may be viewed as different from itself according to this syllogism. It is thus: cloth has difference (*anyonyābhāvavān*) from itself which has limited size (*mūrta*) and which is different from rope, a non-eternal object (*anityetara*) that is different from this pot. But cloth cannot have difference from its own self. Thus the *sapakṣa* does not possess the *sādhya*, and hence there results the defect known as *sādhya-vaikalya*.⁸⁴ Anubhūtiśvarūpa, therefore, concludes that this *mahāvidyā* syllogism is not sound.

The logicians establish the eternal nature of atom on the basis of the *mahāvidyā* syllogism which is as follows: “*paramāṇuḥ nityatvavyatiriktaitanīṣṭhadharmānyadharmavān prameyatvāt paṭavat.*”⁸⁵ In relation to the *sapakṣa*, the *sādhya* is clothness. It is thus: cloth has a feature (*dharmavān*), namely, clothness. It is different (*anya*) from *etatparamāṇutva* or the characteristic of being this particular atom which is present in this particular atom

(*etanniṣṭha-dharma*) and which is different from eternality (*nityatva-vyatirikta*). Thus clothness is proved in the *sapakṣa* wherein the *hetu*, viz. *prameyatva*, too exists. In relation to the *pakṣa*, *nityatva* itself is the *sādhya*. It is thus: the atom has a feature (*dharmavān*), namely, eternality (*nityatva*). It is different (*anya*) from *etatparamāṇutva* which is different from eternality (*nityatvavyatirikta*). Thus eternality is proved in the *pakṣa* wherein the *hetu*, i.e. *prameyatva*, too exists.⁸⁶

The eternal nature of the atoms is proved by a *hetu* of the *anvaya-vyatirekī* type which is as follows: "Atoms are eternal; because they are partless substances; like the self."⁸⁷ The *hetu* is *anvaya-vyatirekī*. It is thus: whichever is a partless substance is eternal like the self. And whichever is not eternal like the pot is not a partless substance. Thus the eternal nature of the atoms which is proved on the basis of this *hetu* of *anvaya-vyatirekī* type is proved by the *mahāvīdyā* syllogism.

Anubhūtiśvarūpa rejects the above syllogism. He states that the present *hetu* which seeks to prove the *sādhya*, namely, the eternal nature of the atoms, is a fallacious one as it can be used to prove the opposite side too. In other words, the present *hetu* is associated with the fallacy known as *virodha*. This Anubhūtiśvarūpa explains thus: "*paramāṇuḥ anityatvavyatiriktaitanṣṭhadharmanyadharmavān, prameyatvāt, paṭavat*"⁸⁸ The *sapakṣa*, viz. the cloth, has clothness as its feature (*dharmavān*). The clothness is different (*anya*) from *etatparamāṇutva* which is present in the *paramāṇu* (*etanniṣṭhadharma*). The latter is different from the feature *anityatva* or non-eternality. Thus the *sādhya*, namely the clothness, is

present in the *sapakṣa* and the *hetu, prameyatva*, too is present therein. The *pakṣa* i.e. the atom has non-eternality (*anityatva*) as its feature (*dharmavān*). It is different (*anya*) from *etatparamāṇutva* which is present in the *paramāṇu* (*etanniṣṭhadharma*). The latter is different from the feature, i.e. *anityatva* or non-eternality. Thus the syllogism which is aimed at proving eternality of the atoms can also prove the reverse of it, namely, the non-eternality. The point that is of importance here is that the *mahāvidyā* syllogisms which are characterized as free from fallacies are not so. Hence, on the basis of these syllogisms neither the atoms nor their eternal nature can be proved.

The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika theory of causation is not sound. According to this school, the effect does not exist in its cause prior to its production, and the causal operation brings into existence that which is totally non-existent. This position is wrong. It is because the non-existence of the effect, (say) cloth, is present everywhere prior to its production. Hence the cloth could arise even from a lump of clay. But it is not so. One who desires to have a cloth seeks only the threads and not the clay. This recourse to an appropriate material shows that the effect pre-exists in its cause. It is precisely on this ground that the theory of causation admitted by the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika school is rejected by the Sāṅkhya school.⁸⁹

The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika school might get over the above difficulty by stating that it is only the threads that have the potency to give rise to the cloth and not the lump of clay. Hence recourse to the threads by one who seeks the cloth becomes intelligible even according to the *asatkāryavāda*.⁹⁰ Vācaspatimiśra anticipates this objection

and rejects it in his *Sāṅkhya-tattva-kaumudī* thus: the contention of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika school that threads alone have the potency to give rise to the cloth involves the relation between the potency and the cloth, which is to be effected. This implies that the relata of the relation must be existent. Here, although potency, one of the relata, exists, the other relatum, namely, the cloth that is to be effected is not present prior to its production. And there cannot be any relation between potency and the effect which is not existent. Hence the argument of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika is not sound.⁹¹

To sum up: (i) The theory of causation according to the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika is known as *asatkāryavāda* or *ārambhavāda*. It has been proved to be logically unsound; (ii) Atoms are admitted to be the ultimate cause of the world. They are held to be eternal too. It has been proved that neither the atoms nor their eternal nature can stand logical scrutiny.

NOTES

1. *Taittirīya Upaniṣad (TU)*, 3.1.1.
2. *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad (ŚU)*, 4.10.
3. *Brahma-sūtra (BS)*, 1.1.2.
4. *Brahma-sūtra-śāṅkarabhāṣya (BSB)*, 1.1.2.
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Ratnaprabhā (RP)*: Com. by Rāmānanda on *BSB* (Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1996), p. 47.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 47-48.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 48.
9. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad (BU)*, 3.9.34.

10. *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad (MU)*, 1.1.9.
11. *Vaiśeṣika-sūtra*, 1.1.2.
12. *Ibid.*, 1.1.4.
13. *Praśastapāda-bhāṣya*: Vaiśeṣika-darśana with the Bhāṣya of Praśastapāda and the commentary *Upaskāra* by Śaṅkaramiśra (Chowkhambha Sanskrit Series, Varanasi, 1923), p. 2.
14. *Nyāya-sūtra*, 4.1.19.
15. *Ibid.*, 4.1.20.
16. *Ibid.*, 4.1.21.
17. *Nyāya-sūtra-bhāṣya*: *Nyāya-sūtra-bhāṣya* on Gautama with the C. *Prasannapadā* of Sudarsanacarya Sastri, Ed. by Swami Dwaraka Das (Sudhi Prakashana, Varanasi, 1986), 4.1.21.
18. *Nyāya-kusumāñjali (NK)* (Kendriya Samskrita Vidyapeetha, Tirupati), 5.2.
19. *Bhagavad-gītā (BG)*, 10.8.
20. *NK*, p. 297.
21. *BG*, 9.10.
22. *NK*, pp. 300-301.
23. *BU*, 3.8.8.
24. *NK*, p. 302.
25. *BG*, 9.7.
26. *NK*, p. 303.
27. *BG*, 9.17.
28. *NK*, p. 304.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 305.
30. *Ibid.*, pp. 305-6.
31. *Ibid.*, pp. 309-11.
32. *Brahma-vidyābharaṇam (BVB)*, ed. S.R. Krishnamurthi Sastri (The Sanskrit Education Society, Madras, 1976), Vol. I, Part I, p. 157.
33. *Ibid.*, p. 158.
34. *Ibid.*, p. 208.

35. *RP*, p. 489.
36. *BVB*, Vol. II, p. 208; *BSB*, 2.2.40.
37. *BVB*, Vol. II, p. 208.
38. *BSB*, 2.2.38; vide also *RP*, pp. 490-1.
39. *RP*, p. 489.
40. *Ibid.*
41. *Chândogya Upaniṣad (CU)*, 6.1.2.
42. *Ibid.*, 6.1. 4-6.
43. *TU*, 3.1.1.
44. *ŚU*, 4.10.
45. *Kṛṣṇālankāra (KA)*: Commentary on *Siddhānta-leśa-saṅgraha (SLS)*, ed. S.R. Krishnamurthi Sastri & N. Veezhinathan (Sri Appayadiksitendra Granthavali Prakasanasamiti, Secunderabad, 1973).
46. *MU*, 1.1.3.
47. *Ibid.*, 2.1.10.
48. *BSB*, 1.1.2.
49. *Ibid.*, vide also, *BVB*, Vol. I, p. 157.
50. *Pañcapādikā (PP)* with *Vivarana (V)* and other commentaries, ed. S. Subrahmanya Sastri (Mahesh Anusandhan Samsthan, Varanasi, 1992), p. 539.
51. *TU*.
52. *PP*, p. 540.
53. *V*, pp. 539-40.
54. *BU*, 2.4.3.
55. *BSB*, 1.1.2.
56. *NK*, 1.2.
57. *Ibid.*, 1.3.
58. *Nyāya-sūtra-bhāṣya*, 1.1.1.
59. *BS*, 2.3.29.
60. *BSB*, 2.3.29.
61. *Ibid.*, 2.3.30.

62. *Vaiśeṣika-sūtra*, 3.2.4; 6.1.5, 9.2.6; *Nyāya-sūtra*, 1.1.10.
63. *Nyāya-sūtra-bhāṣya*, 1.1.2.
64. *BS*, 2.3.51-53; see also *SLS*, p. 292.
65. *Tarkasaṅgraha (TS)* with *Dīpikā*, *Prakāśikā* and *Bālapriyā*, ed. N. Veezhinathan (Madras, 1980), p. 133.
66. *Kārikāvalī*, 23.
67. *Ibid.*
68. *TS*, p. 133.
69. *Dīpikā*, p. 85.
70. *Prakaṣārtha-vivarāṇa (PV)* (Madras University Sanskrit Series No.9, Madras, 1935, 1939), Vol. I, p. 491.
71. *BSB*, 2.2.11.
72. *PV*, Vol. I. p. 515.
73. *Nyāya-kandalī*, p. 79. *Nyāya-kandalī* on the *Praśastapāda-bhāṣya*, Ganganatha Jha Granthamala, Vol. I. ed. by Pt. Durgadhara Jha, Varanasi, 1977.
74. *PV*, Vol. I, . 515.
75. *Ibid.*
76. *Mahāvidyāvidambana (MVV)* of Bhaṭṭavādīndra with the commentaries of Ānandapūrṇa and Bhuvanāsundarasūri and the *Daśaślokī* of Kulārkaṇḍita with *Vivarāṇa* and *Vivarāṇaṭippaṇam (Mahāvidyāsūtra)*, GOS 1920), p. 3.
77. *Ibid.*, p. 6.
78. See V.N. Jha: "On Ubhayābhāva, Anyatarābhāva and Viśiṣṭābhāva," *Annals of BORI*, Poona, Vol. LXIII, 1982. See Ingall's *Materials for the Study of Navya-Nyāya Logic* (The Harvard Oriental Series, Vol. 40) p. 64.
79. See note No.23 in Chapter III of S. Revathy, *Three Little Known Advaitins (TLA)*, University of Madras, 1990.
80. *MVV*, p. 6.
81. *PV*, Vol. I, p. 515.
82. See note No.26 in Chapter III of *TLA*.
83. *TSD*, p. 85.

84. *PV*, Vol.I, p. 515.
85. *Ibid.*
86. See note No.30 in Chapter III of *TLA*.
87. *PV*, Vol. I, p. 514.
88. *Ibid.*, p. 515.
89. *Sāṅkhya-tattva-kaumudī* of Vācaspatimiśra with *Sārabodhinī* (Nimaya Sagar Press, Bombay, 1940), p. 239.
90. *Ibid.*
91. *Ibid.*, pp. 241-2.

THE PARAMĀCĀRYA ON
RELIGIOUS PLURALISM

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This paper is a continuation of my article of “Vedantic Secularism of Swami Vivekananda.”¹ I want to reiterate the points discussed in that article in the light of the Paramācārya’s views so that the ideas may percolate in the minds of the present day politicians who swear by secularism and the fundamentalists in religion. These people are slowly turning our institutions unstable and disrupting the bonds of cooperation and trust that held all Indians together. They are making the people just stand near one another as a random aggregation without cohesion. Yet, we have not reached the stage of chaos in our society, which is not far away if we do not act with vision and basic discipline. This vision calls for many things — sincerity of approach, commitment to truth without fear or favour, clarification of our personal philosophies of life and critical refinement of our national purposes. Fortunately, the Paramācārya, who lived in our

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midst till recently, has given us a philosophy of life — a philosophy affirming absolute honesty, openness, justice and equality.

The fundamentalists think that their religion is the only religion that should be practised by every human being and none else. Their view may be termed “religious totalitarianism,” which is against the existence of the plurality of religions. They forget that the different religions which serve as microscopes are the particular manifestations of the ultimate truth. Henri Poincare once asked whether a naturalist who had never studied the elephant except by means of the microscope would think he knew enough about that animal. When a religion becomes microscopic and discusses only the minor details and its differences with the other religions, it misses the wood for the tree. A man who has developed a narrow attitude towards other religions speaks like a man who says that his watch alone shows the right time. The message of the Paramācārya is: If one realizes that every religion is a microscopic reflection of the macroscopic principle, one can remain truly in one’s religion with the awareness that the other religions also contain and reflect the same truth. If one truly and devoutly understands the truth enshrined in one’s our religion, one really transcends one’s narrow domestic walls of the particular religion and grasps and becomes a member of the one eternal religion. For such a man there is no need to exclude other religions. It is a tragedy of human civilization that a variety of religions has led to war and infights. Due to fundamentalism, intolerance, more than the greed for gold, has become the dominant trait of the present day mankind. Delivering

“The Besant Lecture 1999” at the International Headquarters of the Theosophical Society at Adyar on 28th December 1999, F.S. Nariman, senior Supreme Court advocate, quoted the 1993 Guatemalan Nobel Peace Prize winner who said that “religious fundamentalism is not part of rights or human values. It is one of the worst crimes in the annals of mankind. It degenerates and divides the base of society.” Nariman observed that it was time to restore and internalise the values of selflessness, integrity, objectivity, openness and accountability.²

Regarding the present day political attitude about religions in India, the Paramācārya says that in the name of secularism the state interferes only in the social and religious institutions of Hinduism, the majority religion, and not those of the minority religions, and observes that secular state does not mean a state opposed to the majority religion. It only means that the state does not advocate any religion whatsoever.³ This attitude of the politicians towards minority religions and giving a niggardly provision of a step-motherly treatment to the majority religion, i.e. Hinduism, has made the principle of secularism a mockery. If we scan the pages of the five volumes of *Deivattin Kural*, we can easily discern the solution suggested by the Paramācārya for the ills and problems of secularism.

Before considering the solutions, we shall pass in review what religion is and what secularism is. Let us explain how one should understand the term “religion” as we are situated in the present day world. The world of today is characterized by delusion and despair. We live in a world where the sense of shame is lost at all levels. We do not know where we stand.

Now we are all like Socrates to the extent that the only thing we know is that we know nothing definite. There never was a time when so many people were so uncertain about so many things as at present. Disbelief and hypocrisy have become the warp and woof of our society. Where there was once certainty, doubt has crept in. It is said that the unbelieving epoch is the cradle of a new superstition. In such an age our only hope is religion — religion not in the narrow, fragmentary sense of the term. The eminent American theologian, Paul Tillich, has defined religion as a state of being grasped by an ultimate concern. To man the ultimate concern springs from loving God with all his heart, soul, mind and strength and his neighbour as himself. The ultimate concern has a dual role — (i) the vertical or right upward relation towards God, which seeks oneness with Him, and (ii) the horizontal or sideward relation towards fellow beings, which seeks oneness with all living beings. This oneness with God and all living beings can be developed only by love. True religion is the religion of love. It is unrelated love, a love that knows no bargain, a love that expects no return. We should not look upon God as a mere municipal authority who does good to us if we pay the taxes regularly. A love that expects no return is true love and this is what is meant by religion. All our doctrines, dogmas, rituals, books, temples and other forms turn our minds from love to law. Once we develop a legal mind, with dos and don'ts, we cannot know God in His true form. For the legal mind, always the other is responsible. If some of our actions go wrong, we transfer the responsibility to others. This is what Sri Ramakrishna calls 'the power of attorney'. But the mind soaked in love, soaked in true religion, takes the responsibility to itself. The

Paramācārya stresses this point in his discourses.⁴ One must be a lover in religion and not a lawyer in religion. When you love somebody, you do not talk law. When you love, law disappears, because love becomes the ultimate law. Love is law unto itself, and it needs no other law. The moment you start looking at life only through the law, the code, you start missing the joy of life. Every law has its opposite. Only love has no opposite. True love is religion, and love is the mission of religion and bed-rock of society. That is why we find truly religious men working in the flood - and cyclone - affected areas, day and night, without caring for their personal comforts. But look at the politicians. They discuss, debate and accuse each other as to how best they can utilize the relief work and the money to the advantage of their own parties.

The various religions are the different bathing ghats in the river of spirituality. Many rivers in the world are named after colours. But the river itself has no colour. The river takes the colour of the terrain it passes through, and every river finally falls into the ocean. Our differences are because of our terrain. But our innermost essence is colourless. It is the same. Really we are colourless. In Hinduism we have a name for the *sannyāsin*. We call him *vairāgi*. This means colourless being. A *vairāgi* is one who is unattached and who has come to know his colourless being. A *vairāgi* is a *sannyāsin*, who is a 'classless' individual. *Sannyāsa* stands for inner distancing from anything particular. By *jñānavicāra*, by spiritual enquiry, his little 'ego' goes. ('The 'ego' by enquiry, it goes). The Paramācārya defines *sannyāsa* as genuine love.⁵ His view is that genuine love, that is, true religion, should be made the centre pivot of society, and then only true happiness can be sought. We must make religion

the immanent principle of society. One should not think religion as a transcendent — outside society — doctrine. All the values of society stem from the root of religion. A society is to be judged, according to the Paramācārya, not by its industrialization, or by its urbanization, or by its technocracy, or by its economic success, or by its westernization. All these values of society may enhance the standard of living, but only religious values make our living qualitative. In this connection it would be worthwhile to quote the Paramācārya's distinction between standard of living and quality of life.

Standard of living என்பதை 'வாழ்க்கைத்தரம்' என்று மொழி பெயர்ப்பதே சரியல்ல. 'வாழ்க்கைத்தரம்' என்பது மிகவும் உயர்ந்த விஷயம். நல்ல குணங்களுடன், ஈசுவரபக்தியுடன் வாழ்கிற வாழ்வே 'தரமான' வாழ்வு. வாழ்க்கைத் தரத்தை Quality of life என்று சொல்ல வேண்டும்.⁶

Having stated what genuine religion is, let us turn our attention to the term 'seculum' which is equivalent to profane. It will be of interest to note the origin of the term 'profane'. When the ancient Romans acknowledged a deity somewhere, they built for it a 'fanum', i.e. a house for God. In front of the 'fanum' was the 'profanum', that is the space for people outside the sacred enclosure. Thus the word 'seculum' gained the connotation of keeping God and religion out of man's other activities of life. Harvey Cox in his book, *The Secular City*⁷ has given us certain marks of a secular society. They are: 1. The anonymity of modern life, that is, its impersonal attitude towards others. 2. The mobility and modernity of human life. By modernity is meant the improvement of this world rather than a world yet to come. In terms of modernity religion is viewed to be authoritarian, since it insists on behavioural conformity.

Further religion tends to be monistic while modernity tends towards pluralism. 3. The third mark of secularism is pragmatism. The modern man judges things, ideas and events by the results they will achieve in practice. 4. Profanity is the fourth mark of a secular society. It stands for the disappearance of any supernatural reality. 5. The fifth mark of a secular society is tolerance. All these characteristics may be viewed as the negative connotation of secularism. The Paramācārya is against this type of negative secularism.

According to the Paramācārya, the concept of God is a fundamental element in the human constitution. The sense of divinity is a basic human sensitivity. Hence there is no place for profanity in religion. One of the corner stones of religion is service to humanity. Hence there is no place for anonymity in it. Any genuine religion accepts every other religion as an authentic possibility of coming into contact with the divine power. Thus religion is out and out democratic, and no religion can have an authoritarian role over the others. True religion expects every man to work without an eye on the results. In this sense, religion is anti-pragmatic. A careful analysis of tolerance will show that it is a disguised form of fanaticism. According to Swami Vivekananda, tolerance is an insult and blasphemy. To tolerate is first to condemn and then to put up with. To put up with is itself to condemn. Tolerance may ultimately imply compromise which means acceptance under duress. This again implies absence of freedom or even presence of coercion. Tolerance in the field of religion would suggest just to allow other religions to exist though as a necessary evil. This is not secularism

as we understand it. Secularism based on tolerance will be rootless, rudderless secularism. A secularism, therefore, with the characteristics of anonymity, modernity, pragmatism, profanity and tolerance, as listed by Harvy Cox, will lead only to disintegration and cessation of unity because such a secularism stands purely on division, disintegration and disunity. Following the title of an article by C. Rajagopalachari, we can safely say that "Religion is our only real policeman" against the evils of negative secularism.

According to the Paramācārya, instead of tolerance, the truly religious people must discover the spirit of acceptance within the sealed bosom of all religions. Acceptance implies equal rights. It develops a healthy attitude that we are fellow workers in religion. Acceptance is a passionately disinterested inquiry of all religions, an understanding which is intimate appreciation. Acceptance is felt-explanation. The concept of acceptance is deeply rooted and entrenched in Indian culture and tradition, and has been the preservative of Indian religious unity in spite of its pluralism. Ashoka's Rock Edict XII is a clear formulation of what we may call secularism in the positive sense. The Hindu notion of *samanvaya* contains the idea of acceptance. The ethics of the *Bhagavad-gītā* extends an open invitation to all to cultivate and practise acceptance in matters relating to faith. The Paramācārya refers to the *Gītā* concept of *samadarsīnaḥ*,⁸ that is seeing everything with an equal eye. The ultimate Reality is present in all the religions, and when we look at the various religions from that standpoint, "we see with an equal eye" and accept that all religions convey the same truth. Swami Vivekananda's Chicago Address is the expression of this secular spirit. Hence,

the Paramācārya pleads that the destructive attitude must give room to constructive mental make-up, and the hate-culture should come to an end.⁹ We must stop the prevalent hate campaign which raps the vitals of human well-being.

Acceptance can be there only if there is faith and belief. Faith is not acceptance without proof, but it is acceptance without reservations. It is an openness of consciousness. It is a radical openness. The Paramācārya's equivalent term for faith is *śraddhā*. This *śraddhā* is not confined to religion alone as is popularly thought. There are numerous instances to show that faith becomes the vehicle of discovery in science. Faith is the condition, prerequisite and foundation of science. In science faith consists of consenting to the correctness of a certain statement even without the possibility of empirically proving that statement's correctness. For example, Reimannian geometry was formally established decades before it was recognized by Einstein as the key to gravitation. In science we use mathematical formalism to predict observation still unmade. Hence in the name of intellectual honesty we must reject all efforts to reserve the term 'faith' exclusively for religion.

The principle of acceptance leads to an attitude of *sarva-dharma-sama-bhāva*. It means equal treatment to all religions. This is positive secularism, and its basic tenet is *compresence*. Compresence is an attitude of "let us be together, even though we have different views". The basic idea behind compresence is not merely the right to be equal, but also the equal right to be different. This is the spirit of Indian culture, which expresses itself in the concept of *adhikāribheda* based on a scientific principle of individual differences. The

Paramācārya refers to this concept in many places in his discourses. This concept of *adhikāribheda* is a fundamental condition of the positive secularism of the Indians. Once differences are admitted, one has to admit *Iṣṭadevatā*. The concepts of *adhikāribheda* and *Iṣṭa-devatā*, according to the Paramācārya, are the basic concepts of Indian culture and civilization. We may, therefore, safely say that these two concepts pave the way for positive secularism which has the noble intention of maintaining communal harmony and good will among the different faiths in the Indian continent. Unfortunately we have somehow forgotten our heritage of accommodation and acceptance, and it is time for remembering it. Further, the spiritual experience of one seer has been universally experienced by the mystics of all religions. This shows that there is *a law of parallel* in all religions; the truths of one religion are the same as experienced and felt by men belonging to other religions. In one of his essays on religion, Rudolf Otto urges that it is a mistake to talk of 'borrowing' in religions. All we can truthfully speak of is 'convergence'. Hence we must become witnesses, instead of warriors of faith. Our attitude to other religions must be to listen, listen to learn, and listen honestly. In expressing what we have learned, we share our feelings with others. In listening to what others have learned, we share in theirs. This is the sense in which the Paramācārya defines Advaita as one which embraces all other systems.¹⁰

By acceptance we do not mean anything that does violence to the integrity of any tradition. It refers only to the attitude of compresence. In an article on 'Swaraj in Ideas'¹¹ Krishna Chandra Bhattacharya writes:

What is universal is only the spirit, the loyalty

of our ideas and the openness to other ideals, the determination not to reject them if they are found within our ideals and not to accept them till they are so found. The only way to apprise a new ideal is to view it through our actual ideal; the only way to find a new reverence is to deepen our old reverences.

This is the same perspective on the basis of which the Paramācārya says that one need not convert oneself to another religion. By conversion one insults Godhead by limiting Him to that religion to which one is getting converted.¹² The Paramācārya's nobility can be seen when he expresses sympathy for the people who want to convert others into their religion by saying that they do it with the good intention of bringing welfare to the converted individual.¹³ This would be his solution to the mindless controversy over the religious conversion issue in recent Indian society after Pope Paul's visit. In this connection he suggests a method to prevent conversion from Hinduism to other religions. He want us to create a confidence in the minds of all such Hindus (who fall an easy prey to conversion) that Hinduism stands for self-respect of the individual, and its noble aim is genuine love and service to humanity.¹⁴

The Paramācārya narrates the incident of Amarasirīha and shows how Ādi Śaṅkara prevented him from burning his book, *Amarakośa*, to show how 'acceptance' is the hall-mark of Advaita Vedānta.¹⁵ He also says, that most of the present-day Advaitins, who say that they are the followers of Ādi Śaṅkara, do not know that their great Ācārya has not identified any deity as the only God, and says that they have not

understood Śaṅkara's teaching to treat all deities as equal.¹⁶ According to the Paramācārya, the greatness of Śaṅkara consists in accepting each religion as a stage or level in the realization of the Ultimate.¹⁷ He goes to the extent of defining Vedic religion as one which does not discredit the other religions to prove the superiority of its own which does not discredit the other religions to prove the superiority of its own religion.¹⁸ He also says that acceptance, *samarasam*, or the mental attitude of non-hostility, is the only path shown to us by the great Ācārya.¹⁹ In another place, the Paramācārya says that the greatness of the Vedas is to facilitate the worship of the personal deity.²⁰

The Paramācārya warns us not to mistake acceptance for compromise, and also suggests that we need not keep quiet when others impose their religion on us.²¹ What is important, according to the Paramācārya, is that even in criticism there should be an absence of ill-will or condemnation.²²

To conclude, we may quote from the *Radhakrishnan Report of the University Education Commission (1-950)*:

(Secularism) does not mean that nothing is sacred or worthy of reverence. It does not say that all our activities are profane and devoted to the sordid ideals of selfish advancement... To be secular is not to be religiously illiterate. It is to be deeply spiritual and not narrowly religious.

In other words, secularism in the Indian context does not mean that the state is anti-religious or irreligious. It does not mean that the state is indifferent to religion as such. It

means that the state does not advocate any one religion in preference to other religions. Secularism means that the state views all religions as equal. So far as religions are concerned, the state has neither preferences nor exclusions. That is, the right to choose a religion is vested with the individual and with the state. Hence there is no question of minority status of religion as far as the state is concerned. In this context we may safely say that the Paramācārya's Vedānta philosophy is sacred secularism. It is sacred in that it upholds the divinity of man and the spiritual character of the whole reality. It is secular in that it treats the various religious expressions of the divinity as equal. In this sense the Paramācārya's philosophy is Vedāntic secularism. Vedāntic secularism is not a contradiction in terms. It is Vedāntic, for it is spiritual in character. It is secular, for it treats all spiritual disciplines as different roads to realization and as equal approaches.

NOTES

1. Anand Amaladoss (ed.), *Political Thinkers of India* (Chennai: Satya Nilayam Publications, 1998), pp.32-46.
2. *The Hindu* dated Dec. 29, 1999, page 3, columns 5 and 6.
3. In this article the quotations from the Paramācārya are taken from *Deivattin Kural*, volumes I to V (Chennai: Vanathi Pathippagam). See also Vol.II, pp. 915 - 16 and also Vol.III, p. 14.
4. Vol I, pp. 376 - 9 discusses love; refer p. 378.
5. Vol. V, p. 908.
6. Vol. I, p. 398.
7. Harvey Cox, *The Secular City* (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1965), pp. 38-84.
8. Vol. II, p.1000.

9. Vol. II, p. 1040.
10. Vol. IV, p. 759.
11. This discourse was given at a meeting of the students of the Hooghly College of which K.C. Bhattacharya was the Principal. The present paper was recovered from his unpublished writings. Subsequently it was published in the *Viswa Bharathi Journal*, Vol. XX, 1954, pp. 103-114.
12. Vol. I, pp. 149-152. Refer the whole chapter on 'Religious Unity'.
13. Vol. I, p. 186. Refer also Vol. I, p. 157; Vol. V, p. 329.
14. Vol. III p. 157.
15. Vol I, pp. 613 - 614.
16. Vol. II, p. 121.
17. Vol. II, p. 128.
18. Vol. II, p. 143.
19. Vol. II, p. 156.
20. Vol. II, pp. 305 - 6.
21. Vol. V, pp. 337 - 40.
22. Vol. V, p. 343.

THE PARAMĀCĀRYA AS A SAHRDAYA

S. Ramaratnam*

A *sahrdaya* is one who has a taste for literature, appreciates it and enjoys it. He is well acquainted with the rules of rhetorics and has the critical acumen to comment on the subtleties of literary beauty. He is highly cultured, experienced and trained in the art of bringing out aesthetic appeal that may lie hidden in the works of great poets. Judged from his speeches, the Paramācārya appears to be a *sahrdaya par excellence*.

Poetry consists of words that convey a charming sense. Sense may be explicit or implicit. The beauties of sound like alliteration and those of the sense like figures of speech belong to the explicit category. But it is the implicit, the unexpressed, the suggested sense, that is the soul of poetry. A matter of fact and a figure of speech can also be suggested. But the *rasa* or the sentiment can never be expressed in ever so many words. It can only be

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suggested. It is only a *sahrdaya* who knows exactly where the explicit ends and the implicit begins. The rasa realization is treated on par with the blissful experience a vedāntin enjoys in his realization of the supreme Brahman. Hence a *sahrdaya* is comparable to a yogin, and a yogin can also be a *sahrdaya*, as is evident from the life of the Paramācārya. There is nothing that is beyond the scope of great yogins, and it is no wonder that art appreciation comes naturally to them like a fish taking to water.

In one of his lectures, the Paramācārya takes up for discussion the famous *stotra* addressed to Lord Vināyaka recited at the beginning of all *pūjās*.

सुमुखश्च एकदन्तश्च कपिलो गजकर्णकः ।'

The first word here, *sumukha*, literally means 'one endowed with a good face'. In Sanskrit, there is no separate word for 'mouth'. The word *mukha* has the sense of 'face' as well as 'mouth'. So the word *sumukha* can also be interpreted as 'one having a good mouth'. Lord Vināyaka has the face of an elephant. Elephant is a fascinating animal. Its sheer size and its peculiar features like its trunk are sources of attraction for everybody. The special feature of the elephant's mouth is that it is covered by its trunk. What does it indicate? It is suggestive of the necessity to keep the mouth shut. While most of the sense organs have only one job to do — the eye, for example, can only see but cannot hear — the mouth has two functions to perform. It swallows food and utters words. Both these functions are dangerous indeed. They lead to disaster if they are not controlled. Out of temptation, man eats more than what is necessary and invites all kinds of problems associated with

it. Likewise through his uncontrolled speech man gets into unwanted problems. It is, therefore, absolutely necessary that man controls his mouth and its functions. The mouth of the elephant is indicative of the aspect, and this is what man has to learn from the elephant and the elephant-faced Lord.

The chanting of the sixteen names of Lord Vināyaka (*sumukha*, etc...) is recommended while taking up any task, whether it is education (*vidyārambha*) or marriage (*vivāha*), before entry into (*praveśa*) or departure (*nirgama*) from a task, before taking up a war (*saṅgrāma*), or any endeavour (*sarvakāryeṣu*) for that matter. The Paramācārya explains that, while *vidyārambha* is indicative of the *brahmacarya-āśrama*, *vivāha* relates to the *gṛhasthāśrama*. Since the *sannyāsa-āśrama* has only a few takers, it is not stated explicitly. But it is suggested, and important things are always suggested. The *sannyāsa-āśrama* is implied by the terms *nirgama* and *praveśa*. The former refers to the departure from the mundane life and the latter, the entry into the *sannyāsa-āśrama*. Otherwise, having said 'all endeavours', words conveying the sense of 'entry' and 'departure' would be superfluous. Likewise the word *saṅgrāma* (war) has an inner meaning. It is suggestive of worldly life since life itself is a continuous war or a struggle against several forces.

We have seen the necessity of controlling the mouth. Well, it is not only the mouth, but every other sense organ that spells a doom. It is imperative, therefore, that they have to be controlled. Uncontrolled sense organs lead a man to destruction like a boat in an ocean by a cyclonic storm. The *Bhagavad-gītā* (2.67) says:

इन्द्रियाणां हि चरता यन्मनोऽनुविधीयते ।
तदस्य हरति प्रज्ञां वायुर्नावमिवाम्भसि ॥

While explaining this concept, the Paramācārya quotes the following verse from the *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi* of Śaṅkarācārya:

शब्दादिभिः पञ्चभिरेव पञ्च पञ्चत्वमापुः स्वगुणेन बद्धाः ।
कुरङ्ग-मातङ्ग-पतङ्ग-मीन-भृङ्गाः नरः पञ्चभिरञ्चितः किम् ॥²

Five beings in this world are driven to their destruction through the attraction of the sense organs by the respective sense objects — the deer by the sound (being attracted by the sound of a peculiar trumpet blown by the hunter), the elephant by the touch of its mate, the fire-fly by the colour of the fire, the fish by the taste of the insect kept as a bait and the bee by the smell of the *campaka* flower. But, alas, man is dragged to his doom by all the five sense organs. Hence the necessity of controlling them.

The aim of human life must be the attainment of liberation. For this, one must strive to attain the knowledge of the supreme Brahman. This knowledge can be attained only through concentration (*dhyāna*) on the supreme Brahman. One must practise renunciation of worldly desires before embarking on *dhyāna*. It is not easy to practise renunciation. Before that one must turn the mind away from the fruits of actions done and show compassion towards all beings. While explaining this step-by-step process towards the ultimate goal, the Paramācārya quotes an instance. In the Tirumala temple, the Lord is given a sacred bath with milk, curd, honey and the like. After the final bath with pure water, the Lord's image is mopped

with a thick gunny-like cloth. Then it is wiped with a thick towel, then with a thin towel and so on. Finally the last bit of moisture is removed with a thin muslin cloth. Instead, if the muslin cloth were to be used in the first wiping itself, it would be torn in no moment.³ Likewise one must start with acts of love and compassion at the first stage and proceed towards *dhyāna* in the final stage to attain liberation. The Paramācārya quotes a verse from the *Ṣaṭpadī-stotra* of Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda where the Ācārya himself prays to Lord Viṣṇu for imbibing the feelings of compassion towards all beings.

अविनयं अपनय विष्णो
 दमय मनः शमय विषयमृगतृष्णाम् ।
 भूतदयां विस्तारय तारय संसारसागरतः ॥ ⁴

Oh! Lord Viṣṇu! remove my immodesty, help me to control my mind, quench the desire towards the worldly objects, expand compassion towards all beings and pull me out of the ocean of worldly life.

The words *śama* and *dama* are closely related. While *dama* refers to the control of the mind, *śama* concerns with the control of the sense organs. Both are necessary for an aspirant of liberation. The Paramācārya digresses a little here and analyses the word *mṛgatṛṣṇā*. It means mirage. Just as a mirage drags a deer into despair and disappointment, even so the mirage of worldly desires leads a man to his downfall. The word *mṛgatṛṣṇā* has a synonym in *maruvāṭikā*, which is a common feature of a desert like the one in Rajasthan. Hence the Rajasthanis are called

maruvāṭikās, which got changed to *marvadis* in the common man's language in Chennai.

The Paramācārya often analyses the semantic changes of such words and comes with startling new theories. Thus according to him, California is in some way related to *Kalipāraṇīya* which must have been the actual name of the place in the language of the original inhabitants of the region. *Kalipāraṇīya* should have been originally pronounced as *Kapilāraṇya* where the interchange of 'l' and 'p' is admissible according to a linguistic rule called metathesis. *Kapilāraṇya* was probably named after Sage Kapila who burnt down the thousand sons of Sagara (in the Bhagīratha story) to ashes for their offence. The incident took place in the nether world according to the story. Interestingly, America is right below India in the globe, and hence was called the nether world. In support of his theory, the Paramācārya refers to the names of Ash Island and Horse Island near the American coast. It may be noted that the ash and the horse have a significant relevance in the Purāṇic story.⁵

The pun is an interesting device adopted by the poets either directly or as the basis of some other figure of speech. The Paramācārya quotes a verse said to have been composed by Bhāskararāya, the celebrated commentator on the *Lalitāsahasranāma*. The speciality of the verse is that it has a pun with reference to two languages, Sanskrit and Telugu. The verse runs thus:

न स्यात्-चेत्-इति वाक्यस्य कोऽर्थः कस्मिन् पिकभ्रमः ।

आन्धी-गीर्वाण-भाषाभ्यां एकमेव उत्तरं वद ॥ ⁶

Tell the word where the 'mistaken identity caused by the cuckoo' exists and which also means 'if it is not so' in Telugu. The answer is *kākapote* which means 'in the nest of the crow' in Sanskrit, and 'if it is not so' in Telugu. The cuckoos are said to drop their eggs in the nest of the crows which hatch them thinking them to be their own eggs. The young ones of the cuckoos and the crows look alike, and so the cuckoos will not be able to identify them at all. So, in the nests of the crows, there arises a mistaken identity caused by the cuckoos.

The Paramācārya cites a verse from the *Mahābhārata* which again is interesting for its pun.

नदीजलं केशवनारिकेतुः नगाह्वयो नाम नगारिसूनुः ।
 एषाङ्गनावेषधरः किरीटी जित्वा वयं नेष्यति चाद्य गावः ॥ 7

It is in the form of Droṇa's address to Bhīṣma during a mini war that was fought in the Virāṭa country. Bhīṣma was astonished on seeing a woman showering arrows at will and wondered who it could be. Droṇa tells him indirectly that it was Arjuna who had come in the disguise of a woman (Bṛhannalā). The verse means : "This person in the disguise of a woman wearing a crown is river water (*nadījala*), a mark of Keśava's woman and he is called a mountain (*naga*). He is the son of the enemy of tree. By him we are conquered and he dries away the cows." It makes little sense and there seem to be a lot of contradictions. The puzzle is solved by splitting the words differently. The first half of the verse is to be rendered as '*nadīja, laṅkeśa-vana-ari-ketuḥ*' which means "Oh, son of river (Bhīṣma), he is the one who has on his flag, the

symbol of the enemy of the forest of Lañkeśa, Rāvaṇa' (the entire expression meaning, Hanumān). He has a tree (*naga*) in his name (Arjuna is also the name of a tree). He is the son of the enemy of the mountains — *naga* (that is, son of Indra).

There was a contemporary poet called Chamarajnagar Rāma Śāstrī who composed a poem called *Sītā-rāvaṇa-saṁvāda-jharī*. It is in the form of a conversation between Sītā and Rāvaṇa. The latter abuses Rāma in the presence of Sītā thus:

अतल्पं निद्रालुः रजनीषु कुवाक् दुर्गतमः
 महाकातर्यादयः मनसि विदुत प्रोज्वलयज्ञाः ।
 वधात् मांसादानां बहु विमतलाभौ जनकजे
 कथं श्लाघ्यो रामः, खल, तं असकृत् मा स्पृश गिरा ॥ ४

Your Rāma goes without a bed at nights even when he is feeling sleepy; he speaks indecently; he has fallen into bad ways; he is a coward, has become unpopular and has earned a lot of enemies by killing a few demons.

Sītā gives a brief, but a fitting reply by saying '*khala, tam asakṛt mā sprśa girā*' - wicked fellow, do not touch him (abuse) with words. It also means — remove the letter 'ta' from your expressions. If it is done so, the entire meaning changes, *atalpa* becomes *alpa*, *durgatamaḥ* becomes *durgamaḥ* and so on. The new meaning is: "Rāma sleeps very little even at night. He is one who cannot be approached by unbecoming words. He is popular like the moon. He has attained glory by killing the wicked demons."

The Paramācārya is equally proficient in Tamil. He

quotes a verse of poet Kāḷamegam, who has the pun as his *forte*.

கஞ்சி குடியாளே கம்பஞ்சோறுண்ணாளே
 வெஞ்சினங்களொன்றும் விரும்பாளே - நெஞ்சுதனில்
 அஞ்சுதலை அவர்க்கு ஆறுதலையானவளே
 கஞ்சமுகக் காமாஷி காண். ⁹

The expression '*kānci kuṭiyālē*' apparently means 'she will not drink the gruel', but it has to be reinterpreted as 'residing in the city of Kāñcīpuram'. Likewise all the expression in the verse can be interpreted in two ways, which makes an interesting reading.

The Paramācārya quotes a number of instances from the lives of great poets like Kālidāsa, Bhāravi, Māgha, Appayya Dīkṣita and Nīlakaṇṭha Dīkṣita. Appayya Dīkṣita was a prolific writer. He has contributed works to almost all fields of Sanskrit literature. During his times, the Śaiva-Vaiṣṇava conflict was at its peak. Yet Appayya Dīkṣita distanced himself away from such controversies and composed works in praise of both Śiva and Viṣṇu. The then Vijayanagara king had a great regard for him. There was also a Vaiṣṇava poet called Tātācārya in the court of the king. Once the king, accompanied by both the poets, visited a temple. There was an idol of Śāstā Ayyappan in the temple. The Lord was depicted in a pensive mood, keeping his finger on the nose. The king asked for the reason, and the temple authorities replied that the sculptor has only depicted what he had seen in his dream. He had also predicted that a noble soul would be visiting the temple in future and explain the cause of the pensive mood of the Lord, after which the Lord would become his normal self.

Since then many scholars have visited the temple and have tried to explain the reason for the peculiar posture of the Lord but nothing has happened. That was the story prevalent in the area, but nobody knew who the sculptor was. On hearing this, the king looked at Tātācārya who immediately composed a verse explaining the reason:

विष्णोः सुतोऽहं विधिना समोऽहम्
 धन्यस्ततोऽहं सुरसेवितोऽहम् ।
 तथापि भूतेश सुतोऽहमेतैर्
 भूतैर्वृतश्चिन्तयतीह शास्ता ॥ ¹⁰

Śāstā is wondering thus: I am the son of Viṣṇu. Hence I am equal to Brahmā. I am fortunate to be worshipped by all the gods. But I happen to be the son of the Lord of the goblins (Lord Śiva) also, and hence I am surrounded by the goblins.

Everybody was looking for a change in the posture of the Lord, which did not take place. Then the king looked at Appayya Dīkṣita with the suggestion that it was his turn now. The poet immediately composed a verse:

अम्बेति गौरीं अहमाह्वयामि
 पत्न्या पितुर्मातर एव सर्वाः ।
 कथं नु लक्ष्मीं इति चिन्तयन्तं
 शास्तारमीडे सकलार्थसिद्धये ॥ ¹¹

I call Gaurī as my mother since all the wives of the father are mothers. But how can I call Lakṣmī now?

It may be noted that Lord Ayyappan was born to Śiva and the Mohinī form of Viṣṇu. Viṣṇu, being his mother, Lakṣmī becomes 'mother's wife' which is the cause of the confusion. No sooner had Dīkṣita completed the verse did the Lord take out his finger from his nose and became a normal Ayyappan.

Nīlakaṅṭha Dīkṣita was not only a great poet, but was also an administrator. In fact, he was the Chief Minister of King Tirumalai Nayakkar (late half of 16th century) of Madurai. There was also another great scholar called Pazhamaneri Mahādeva Śāstrī who lived in Tanjore during the same time. He visited Madurai once in order to carry out a prayer. One day Nīlakaṅṭha Dīkṣita was going in his palanquin on the main road. Mahādeva Śāstrī came on the way inadvertantly. Nīlakaṅṭha Dīkṣita got annoyed and ordered his men to give him a "proper treatment with the palm held in the shape of the crescent moon," in other words, neck him out.

आयान्तमध्वन्यतिदीर्घकर्णं बुधं महादेवसुनामधेयं
विलोक्य मन्त्रीमखिसार्वभौमः श्रीनीलकण्ठः शिबिकाधिरूढः ।
निष्कासयैनं त्वतिदीर्घकर्णं कृत्वार्धचन्द्रं दुतमित्युवाच
शास्त्री तदाकर्ण्य झटित्युवाच तं दीक्षितं ज्ञानलवाढ्यमूढम् ॥ ¹²

Mahādeva Śāstrī was very much upset by the inhuman treatment meted out to him and gave him a fitting reply through a verse:

सूर्ये प्रणष्टे शशिनि ह्यदृष्टे तारासु मन्दद्युतिषु प्रकाशम् ।
महान्धकारेऽतिविराजिते हि खद्योतकोऽत्यल्परुचिर्न चित्रम् ॥ ¹³

“It is no wonder that, at a time when the sun has set, the moon has not risen yet, the stars looking dull, the fireflies show off their light taking advantage of the darkness.” (Likewise people without merit pose themselves as poets in the absence of a truly great poet in their area.)

Nīlakaṇṭha Dīkṣita immediately recognized him to be Mahādeva Śāstrī, about whom he had heard already. He got down from his palanquin and profusely apologised to Śāstrī for his haughtiness. The Paramācārya narrates this story in order to prove the point that great men maintain dignity even while attacking a rival through words.

Kings of yesteryears used to hold the scholars in high esteem. Acyuta Naik of Tanjore was one such king who offered his court poet, Govinda Dīkṣita, an eminent position in his court. In fact, he used to share his throne with the poet. On seeing them together thus, a poet observed:

त्रिनामाद्यन्तनामानौ महीक्षित् दीक्षिताकुभौ ।

शस्त्रे शास्त्रे च कुशलौ आहवेषु हवेषु च ॥ ¹⁴

Acyuta, Ananta and Govinda are the three names chanted by devout people during their daily rituals. These two (the king and Dīkṣita) possess the first (Acyuta) and the last (Govinda) of the three names respectively. The king is trained in the *śastra* (weaponry) while Dīkṣita is proficient in *śāstra* (scriptural knowledge). The former is an expert in *āhava* (warfare) while the latter, in *hava* (Vedic sacrifices).

The Paramācārya sometimes quotes verses that are replete with word jugglery, as for example,

*Mitrātri-putra-netrāya trayī-śātrava-śatrave
gotrāri-gotrajatrāya gotrātre te namo namaḥ.*¹⁵

This verse is in praise of Lord Śiva and Lord Viṣṇu simultaneously. The repetition of the sound 'tra' is another attraction in the verse.

The Paramācārya is a no mean poet himself. The song composed by him and rendered by Smt. M.S. Subbalakshmi at the United Nations will speak volumes for his passion for world peace, and will ever be remembered for his *sahṛdayatva*.

मैत्रीं भजत सकलहृज्जेत्रीम्
आत्मवदेव परानपि पश्यत ।
युद्धं त्यजत स्पर्धां त्यजत
त्यजत परोष्वकूममाकूमणम् ॥

NOTES

The numbers of Volumes and pages referred pertain to the *Deivattin Kural* (Tamil) published by Vanati Patippakam, 13, Deenadayalu Street, T. Nagar, Chennai - 600 017, 1998.

1. VI. pp. 4ff.
2. IV. p. 593.
3. IV. p. 816.
4. IV. p. 940.
5. I. p. 169.
6. III. pp. 946-47.

7. III. p. 915.
8. III. p. 926.
9. III. p. 951.
10. V. p. 53.
11. V. p. 56.
12. IV. p. 1116.
13. IV. p. 1116.
14. III. p. 776.
15. III. p. 934.

THE ĀTMA-BODHA OF ŚAṆKARA - I

R. Balasubramanian

1. The Background

The *Ātma-bodha* of Śaṅkara, which contains only sixty-eight verses, is a simple, short, but valuable introduction to Advaita. Traditionally it is viewed as a *prakaraṇa-grantha* like the *Upadeśa-sāhasrī*, the *Viveka-cūḍāmaṇi*, and so on composed by Śaṅkara. The Upaniṣads, the *Brahma-sūtra*, and the *Bhagavad-gītā*, well known as the *prasthāna-traya*, are the basic sources of authority for all the systems of Vedānta including Advaita. Śaṅkara wrote commentaries (*bhāṣyas*) on the *prasthāna-traya*. These commentaries are called “major works” with a view to distinguish them from the independent treatises like the *Ātma-bodha*, which are referred to as “minor works”. The terms “major” and “minor” should be understood contextually and not literally. They are not used in consideration of either the size of the work or its importance. The value of a work is not decided by its size; nor does the size of a work determine its importance. What

we call the minor works are as valuable and important as the major works. So we have to understand the sense of these terms contextually with reference to the *prasthāna-traya*, which serves as the source book for the doctrines of Advaita. Śaṅkara's commentaries on the *prasthāna-traya* are called major works since they are directly concerned with the source books; and by contrast, works which are characterized as minor teach the doctrines of Advaita independently of, but drawing their inspiration from, the source books. In addition to the *prasthāna-traya-bhāṣyas* and *prakaraṇa-granthas*, Śaṅkara wrote commentaries on the *stotras* such as the *Viṣṇu-sahasranāma-stotra-bhāṣya*, the *Lalitā-triśatī-stotra-bhāṣya*, and so on. Also, he composed hymns (*stotras*) on the various gods and goddesses of the Hindu pantheon. His main objective in composing works of various kinds was to convey the teachings of the Upaniṣads to the people at large, learned as well as lay, and help them overcome the deep-rooted suffering through the knowledge of the oneness of the Self, which can be obtained only through the Upaniṣadic texts.¹ Those who are not competent to read the *Bhāṣyas* on the *prasthāna-traya* may read the introductory manuals such as the *Ātma-bodha* and get the full benefit which one may receive from the study of the *Bhāṣyas*. Those who are both emotionally and intellectually inclined to study only the *stotras* composed by him will derive the same benefit through the proper comprehension of the teachings contained therein. What kind of a text a reader chooses for study, reflection, and contemplation depends upon his mental make up. The choice of a text speaks volumes about the chooser.

That Śaṅkara is the author of the *Ātma-bodha* has become controversial. Modern scholars are of the view that

most of the *prakaraṇa-granthas* ascribed to Śaṅkara are not his compositions. Here is a problem of tradition versus modern scholarship. We have to bear in mind two points in this connection. First, modern scholars who rely on style and other linguistic features to determine the authorship of a work cannot easily unsettle the traditional view. The authorship of this work, as in the case of other *prakaraṇa-granthas*, is not based on hearsay. On the contrary, it is based on, and supported by, the commentarial tradition which cannot be easily dismissed as reverentially blind and, therefore, uncritical and questionable. It must be borne in mind that we are not considering the tenability and consistency of the doctrines and arguments presented in the original text as viewed by the devout followers belonging to the same tradition; if that were the case, one can level the criticism that the followers of the tradition are undiscerning and uncritical in their views. On the contrary, we are concerned with the question of the authorship of a text and how the followers of the tradition to which the text belongs have received it. There are more than twelve commentaries, published as well as unpublished, on it; and the commentators on it are no mean writers; they are greatly respected preceptors in the Advaita tradition. Padmapāda, Citsukha, Madhusūdana Sarasvatī, Rāmānanda Tīrtha, Nārāyaṇa Tīrtha, Brahmānanda—these are some of the authorities who have written *ṭīkā* or *vyākhyā* on this text. Of these illustrious commentators, Padmapāda was a direct disciple of Śaṅkara. Nothing will be more fantastic and capricious than the suggestion that Padmapāda and others belonging to the tradition were mistaken about the authorship of this text. Secondly, even if Śaṅkara's authorship of this text is doubtful, the content of

the text does not suffer any damage because of that. In fact, to a student of philosophy, the content of a text is much more important than the question about its authorship. It may be that in the case of a traditional text we are not able to identify its author. What really matters here is the content of the book, the message it conveys, the integral nature of its teaching encompassing all beings, sentient and insentient, which helps us to have access to and preserve the tradition. It will be of interest to refer to the case of Pseudo-Dionysius in this connection. It is said that there are few figures in the history of Western spirituality, who are more enigmatic than the fifth or sixth century writer known as the Pseudo-Dionysius. The real identity of the person who wrote under the pseudonym of Dionysius the Areopagite is unknown. Western scholars who are much concerned about the history of a book and its author are not able to fix the exact dates of his writings and the identity of their author. However, the writings which go under the name of Pseudo-Dionysius are important in Western spirituality. If so, it does not matter even if someone with the name of Śaṅkarācārya (different from Ādi Śaṅkara), or under the pseudonym of Śaṅkarācārya, wrote this classic called *Ātma-bodha*. This book which has come down to us from the tradition is a valuable bridge between the past and the present. It is a book for all times.

2. Upaniṣads and the Vedānta Systems

Every system of Vedānta claims that its basic doctrines are derived from the teachings of the Upaniṣads. This claim is not unjustified. A careful study of the Upaniṣads will show that there are four philosophical views in them. There are texts which lend support to the theories of *bhedā* (difference)

and *abheda* (non-difference). These two positions, one may argue, are mutually exclusive such that one who is committed to the philosophy of difference cannot at the same time accept the philosophy of non-difference. While Dvaita Vedānta upholds the philosophy of difference, Advaita Vedānta justifies the philosophy of non-difference. Some Vedāntins are of the view that the theory of difference is as tenable as the theory of non-difference, and so they argue for a third alternative—the philosophy of *bhedābheda*, i.e. identity-in-difference—which combines the two basic positions. Bhartṛprapañca, a pre-Śaṅkara Vedāntin, advocated the philosophy of Bhedābheda. In the post-Śaṅkara period, Bhāskara supported this view. Some others combine the principles of difference and non-difference in yet another way formulating the philosophy of *viśiṣṭādvaita*, i.e. non-dualism of the qualified. Yāmuna, Rāmānuja, and others advocate the philosophy of Viśiṣṭādvaita. Thus, four Vedānta systems, which are basic, have emerged from the Upaniṣads—Dvaita, Advaita, Bhedābheda, and Viśiṣṭādvaita. Each of these philosophical positions may be viewed as a framework or a model, which can be identified by certain doctrines for which there are supporting arguments.

There are three ways in which one can view these different frameworks. First, one may ask the question whether all these frameworks are supported by the Upaniṣads. It is true that the supporters of each framework or model claim that the Upaniṣads favour their view. However, they do not stop with this claim. They also maintain that the Upaniṣads support *only* their framework. I do not propose to analyse and examine the different frameworks vis-à-vis the Upaniṣadic texts to find out whether the texts *purport* to teach

the truth embedded in all the models, or in any one of them, with all the doctrines and arguments that go with each one of them. This will be a larger study which is not warranted in the present context, though it is certainly worth undertaking. Second, one may examine one framework from the perspective of another framework, and evaluate the doctrines and arguments of both of them vis-à-vis the Upaniṣadic texts. Such an approach will be polemical as it will involve a careful consideration of the arguments and counter-arguments, objections and replies, and so on of the two frameworks. Some traditional commentators have adopted this approach, which is extremely rewarding as it helps towards achieving clarity about one's own position vis-à-vis that of others. Though clarity is not enough, it is absolutely necessary. I do not propose to do this kind of analysis here as it will go beyond the scope of this paper. Third, one may view the framework along with the doctrines and arguments which go with it for the proper understanding of the framework itself in the context of the tradition which it is supposed to reflect providing the linkage between the tradition and the reader. I propose to follow this point of view in studying the Advaita framework as presented in the *Ātma-bodha*. Such an approach will be rewarding in two ways. First, it will help us, when we read and understand the text, to have intellectual conviction about the truth which it speaks about. A word of caution is necessary at this point. It is wrong to think that everyone will achieve intellectual conviction in the first or even in the second reading of the text. One may or may not; it all depends upon the mental frame, the power of receptivity, of the reader. In many cases the exercise has to be repeated several times; what is required is not mere study, but serious and steadfast reflection and

contemplation on the content, of the text. Such an endeavour is bound to be fruitful. Secondly, following the intellectual conviction one will be able to progress towards spiritual transcendence stage by stage leading to liberation. Though the goal is realizable, the time factor involved in the process is unpredictable. This point is always emphasized in the practice of the discipline of *śravaṇa-manana-nididhyāsana* for attaining the goal of liberation. What Śaṅkara says about the need for repetition (*āvṛtti*) is worth remembering in this connection.² There cannot be, according to Śaṅkara, any ruling with regard to repetition. To one who can comprehend the meaning of a text as soon as it is uttered, there is no need for repetition. But in the case of one who does not comprehend the text in the first instance, there is the need for it, as seen in the case of Śvetaketu to whom the *mahāvākya* "That thou art"³ has to be repeated several times. To spiritual aspirants who are so advanced and so little attached to the world of sense objects, there is no need to go through the exercise of *āvṛtti*. But generally such advanced aspirants are very rare. Ordinary people, who are deeply rooted in the idea of the mind-sense-body-complex, do not realize the truth by a single enunciation of it; they cannot easily overcome the obstacle of ignorance, doubt, and misunderstanding (*ajñāna-samśaya-viparyaya-lakṣaṇaḥ pratibandhaḥ*); hence, there is the need for repetition for them; and they go through the progressive process of comprehension (*krama-pratipatti*).

3. The System of Advaita

Advaita is a total philosophy for two reasons. First of all, its subject matter is comprehensive enough covering God, *jīva*, and the world, the three entities which a philosophical

system is expected to deal with. It explains the nature and status of both the *jīva* and the world in relation to God, who is the source and support of all beings, sentient and insentient. Secondly, it comprises all the major divisions of philosophy—metaphysics, epistemology, axiology, and soteriology. Since the problems it discusses are interrelated, it makes use of these divisions of philosophy to support one another in the analysis of the issues. There is a view, strongly prevalent, though a mistaken one, that Advaita is only a metaphysical system and that its interest in metaphysics is ancillary to its soteriology. It must be borne in mind in this connection that there are two approaches to a philosophical problem—exclusive and inclusive. The former approach consists in studying a problem in isolation from the total context of the system. Such an approach would give us not only a fragmented view of the problem, but would also result in reductionism. It is necessary to point out in this connection that every metaphysical thesis has an epistemological presupposition in the background. Similarly, an epistemological view may have a metaphysical background as its support. It means that metaphysics and epistemology are mutually dependent. Also, metaphysics has its bearing on axiology and soteriology. Let us consider by way of illustration three concrete cases. Advaita holds the view that Brahman is *nirguṇa*, an entity which is totally free from qualities of every kind. In other words, unlike other Vedāntins, the Advaitin uses the term “*nirguṇa*” in the absolute sense of the term without any qualification or restriction. The concept of Nirguṇa-Brahman and the metaphysical theory which Advaita formulates on the basis of this concept have been the targets of criticism from the other schools of Vedānta. A

critic like Rāmānuja challenges the Advaitin to justify the existence of an entity which is *nirguṇa* in the absolute sense of the term. The existence or otherwise of an entity has to be proved by means of a *pramāṇa*. Rāmānuja argues that the Advaitin cannot show the evidence of any *pramāṇa* for the existence of such an entity.⁴ Since the metaphysical standpoint of Advaita is challenged on epistemological grounds, the Advaitin has to defend his position by means of epistemology. Let us now consider an epistemological problem to show how it leads to a metaphysical position. Advaita holds that the object of erroneous perception, e.g. the rope-snake, is neither real (*sat*) nor non-real (*asat*), but something indescribable, what the Advaitin calls *anirvacanīya*; that is to say, the rope-snake which is the object of perception is ontologically *anirvacanīya*. The epistemological problem of erroneous perception has a bearing on metaphysics. The Advaitin argues that what is true of the rope-snake is equally true of the empirical world, i.e. just as the rope-snake is *anirvacanīya*, even so the empirical world is *anirvacanīya*. Critics like Rāmānuja challenge the Advaitin to show the evidence of a *pramāṇa* for the existence of an entity whose ontological status is *anirvacanīya*.⁵ Unless the Advaitin defends the epistemological problem connected with the rope-snake, he cannot establish the *anirvacanīya* status of the empirical world. In other words, we have to make a transition from epistemology to metaphysics. Finally, we may consider one more instance. It will be possible for us to understand the Advaita theory of *jīvan-mukti* only if we are clear about the nature of the Self (*Ātman*) as non-relational (*asaṅga*) distancing it from the mind-sense-body-complex. By its very nature the Self is bodiless, disembodied (*aśarīra*). One who

fails to comprehend this essential nature of the Self cannot understand the concept of *jīvan-mukti*. In other words, the metaphysics of the Self has a bearing on the theory of liberation formulated by the Advaitin. It means that, though we may distinguish one division of philosophy from another, it will not be possible for us to keep them in water-tight compartments, and so it is wrong to treat any problem as though it is purely metaphysical, or epistemological, or axiological, or soteriological. A fragmented study and analysis of a philosophical problem is neither possible nor desirable.

There are four doctrines in the system of Advaita. They are: (1) *nirguṇa-brahma-vāda*, i.e. the doctrine that Brahman, the non-dual reality, is devoid of qualities; (2) *brahma-vivarta-vāda*, i.e. the doctrine that Brahman without undergoing any transformation is responsible for the appearance of the world; (3) *anīrvacanīya-khyāti-vāda*, i.e. the doctrine which posits the existence of an entity whose ontological status is indescribable as it is different from both the real and the non-real; and (4) *jīvan-mukti-vāda*, i.e. the doctrine which holds that liberation can be attained while being alive. All these four theories are interconnected, and go together. It means that one who does not accept all the four doctrines cannot claim to be an Advaitin. Though the first two doctrines appear to be metaphysical, they have an epistemological background. The third doctrine is both epistemological and metaphysical. The fourth one which is soteriological will be meaningful only when it is viewed against the metaphysical background of the nature of the Self and the theory of the identity of jīva and Brahman (*jīva-brahma-aikya*).

4. Topical Analysis of the *Ātma-bodha*

The subject matter of the *Ātma-bodha* as presented in the text is as follows: (i) the person eligible for the study of the *Ātma-bodha* (v. 1); (ii) the importance of the knowledge of the Self for attaining liberation (vv. 2-5); (iii) the illusoriness of the world (vv. 6-9); (iv) the discrimination between the Self and its *upādhis* (vv. 10-17); (v) the nature of the Self (vv. 18-28); (vi) the discipline of *śravaṇa*, *manana*, and *nididhyāsana* (vv. 29-30); (vii) meditation on the Self and its result (vv. 31-44); (viii) the identity of the *jīva* and Brahman (vv. 45-46); (ix) the characteristics of a *jīvan-mukta* (vv. 47-53); (x) the nature of Brahman (vv. 54-67); and (xi) the fruit of Brahman-knowledge (v. 68).

Special Competence for the Study

Following the tradition, Śaṅkara first of all discusses the problem of special competence (*adhikāra*) for the study of the text he has composed. There are two kinds of competence, general and special. Every human being, according to Śaṅkara, has the general competence for knowledge and action (*jñāna-karma-adhikāra*). It is this general competence that distinguishes the human being from other animals. The human being (*puruṣa*) who is equipped with the mind is able to know things, express his feelings of various kinds, remember the past and plan for the future, and engage in voluntary activities in pursuit of the goal he has chosen. Though he does not differ from other animals in respect of the satisfaction of the basic needs such as food, water, shelter, and so on, he differs from them in his competence for knowledge and action. Because of his competence for knowledge, he is able to discriminate between

the right and the wrong, and the good (*śreyas*) and the pleasant (*preyas*), and do the right as a moral agent and pursue the good, which is the highest value, as a spiritual aspirant. What Śaṅkara calls the competence for knowledge and action is the same as the capacity for reason and will spoken of by T.H. Green. Though every human being has this general competence for knowledge and action, a special competence is required for the study and comprehension of a philosophical text like the *Ātma-bodha* which contains the quintessence of the Upaniṣadic teaching. What is required by way of special qualification for the study of the Upaniṣads is also required for the study of this text. According to tradition, one acquires the special qualification through the fourfold disciplinary practice called *sādhana-catustaya*. The ability to discriminate the eternal from the ephemeral, renunciation of the objects of enjoyment here and hereafter, control of the mind and the senses, and an intense longing for liberation—these are the four requirements whose fulfilment constitutes the special competence for the study of any Vedāntic text. The requirements may be formulated in different ways, sometimes explicitly, sometimes implicitly; whatever be the formulation, the requirements should be substantially taken care of. For example, Śaṅkara insists on the practice of austerities for attaining the purification of the mind. There are austerities at the bodily, mental, and speech levels; and these austerities are intended for the purification of the mind (*citta-śuddhi*). One who is mentally purified will be able to discriminate between the eternal and the ephemeral; one who is free from cravings has overcome attachment to the sensuous things; and one who is peaceful in heart has achieved tranquillity through the control of the mind and the senses. Śaṅkara says:

*tapobhiḥ kṣīṇapāpānām śāntānām vītarāgīṇām
mumukṣūṇām-apekṣyo 'yam ātmabodho vidhīyate. [1]*

I compose the *Ātma-bodha* for the benefit of those who have been purified through the practice of austerities, who are peaceful in heart, who are free from cravings, and who are desirous of liberation.

It is true that any person who knows the language and the principles of syntax and semantics for construing the meaning of a sentence can read a text though there is no guarantee that he will be able to *understand* the text by knowing the rules of the language game. Understanding the purport of a sentence is different from knowing its meaning. Understanding is possible only when the reader or hearer comprehends the intention (*tātparya*) of the writer or speaker, and establishes a kind of dialogic relation, or rapport, with the writer/speaker. So it is much more than knowing the literal meaning of a sentence or a text. A text like the *Ātma-bodha*, which reflects the teachings of the Upaniṣads, serves as a bridge between the tradition and the reader/speaker. Śaṅkara, the author of the text, helps us to have access to the tradition through this text. He is, therefore, mediating between the tradition and the reader/ hearer. Consequently, there is, in the language of Gadamer, a fusion of horizons—the horizon of the tradition and that of the hearer/reader. Though Śaṅkara wrote this work at a particular time and place, it has, true to the nature of a classic, transcended the limitations of space and time, and has been speaking to several generations of readers. To understand a classical text, one has to pay attention to the text, the context of the text, what the text says in the context, and what the tradition says about the meaning and the message of the text. One will not be able to understand

the text and the tradition behind it unless one has the right mental frame, which has been referred to earlier as the special competence.

There are two pitfalls to be avoided in the interpretation of tradition through a text. First of all, one who introduces a text as an interpretation of the tradition should not foist any interpretation on the tradition and claim that it is the right one. To do so will be a case of interpretative violence. Secondly, the reader of the text should not interpret it to justify his own preconceived view. To do so will be a case of interpretative licence. In other words, one should carefully avoid the twin dangers of *śruta-hāni* and *aśruta-kalpanā*. The person who transmits the tradition through a text and the reader who interprets the text which embodies the tradition have to submit themselves to an "asceticism", a discipline, in the service of the tradition. It will be impossible to understand the framework of Advaita which is grounded in the tradition without comprehending its roots. That is why Śaṅkara, whenever the occasion demands, refers to the tradition, and justifies his interpretation by citing the authority of "the preceptors who know the traditional meaning of the Vedānta texts (*atroktaṃ vedāntārtha-sampradāya-vidbhiḥ ācāryaiḥ*).⁶ He severely reprimands those who are not acquainted with the traditional meaning of the text, calls them ignorant though learned, and suggests that they have to be neglected.⁷

Doctrine of Nirguṇa-Brahman

The doctrine of Nirguṇa-Brahman is central to Advaita, and other doctrines are derived from it. Advaita holds that Brahman which is the sole reality is *nirguṇa*. The term "*nirguṇa*" is used in a comprehensive sense suggesting the

absence of qualities, specifications, parts, actions, modifications, defects, and so on. That is why the Upaniṣad speaks of Brahman as *niṣkalam* (partless), *niṣkriyam* (actionless), *sāntam* (changeless), *niravadyam* (faultless), *nirañjanam* (taintless).⁸ The argument in support of the view that Brahman is *nirguṇa* is implicit in the Upaniṣad itself. Consider the Upaniṣadic description of Brahman (also called Sat) as “one only without a second (*ekam eva advitīyam*).⁹ The use of three words here is significant. The Upaniṣad could have just stopped after saying that Brahman is one (*ekam*). But it adds an emphatic particle “*eva*” (only) to “*ekam*”; it then goes on to say that Brahman is also non-dual (*advitīyam*). Every word in this description is important, and the traditional commentators bring out the full significance of this three-word-description. There is no other object which is similar to Brahman, and so it is one. The emphatic particle has been added in order to convey the idea that there is no other object which is dissimilar to it. The denial of the existence of a second entity alone is not enough to establish the oneness of Brahman as there is still the possibility of Brahman being a one-many like a tree through internal differentiation. Though a tree is one, it is also a many as it consists of many parts such as the root system, the trunk, the branches, and so on; it means that a tree admits of internal differentiation (*svagata-bheda*). If so, though Brahman is one, one may argue, it is also a many consisting of parts, qualities, and so on. It is to deny this possibility that the term “non-dual” has been used in the text. It means that Brahman is one and homogeneous devoid of difference of every kind—*sajātīya-bheda*, *vijātīya-bheda*, and *svagata-bheda*. Such an entity is necessarily *nirguṇa* in the absolute sense of the term.¹⁰

Doctrine of Vivarta

If Brahman by its very nature is *nirguṇa* and *niṣkriya*, it cannot undergo any modification and be the cause of the world. Only an entity which is *saguṇa* can have qualities and relations, and serve as the cause of something else. We hold on the basis of our daily experience that there is such a thing called the world and that like any other object it presupposes a cause for its existence. Since nothing else could be the cause of the world excepting Brahman which is the sole reality, we connect Brahman and the world as cause and effect though such a relation is not warranted by logic. The nature of Brahman is such that it cannot be the conventional or ordinary cause (*kāraṇa-sāmānya*) which is subject to modification. It is a special or extraordinary cause (*kāraṇa-viśeṣa*) about which we know only through scripture. Even then, how are we to comprehend it? For, we cannot even imagine the possibility of the existence of such an extraordinary cause. The only way by which we can make it somewhat intelligible is to start with an empirical example which is analogous to the problem we are considering. We have to proceed from the known to the unknown, from the ordinary to the extraordinary, bearing in mind that the analogy serves only a limited purpose and that it should not, therefore, be stretched too far. The rope-snake example comes in handy for the Advaitin. When we mistake a rope, which is in front, for a snake, the rope serves as the substratum (*adhiṣṭhāna*) for the appearance of the snake thereon. The rope, without undergoing any change or modification (*pariṇāma*), serves as the cause for the appearance of the world. What really exists here is only the rope; the snake which we claim to see is only an illusory appearance (*mithyā*), because the moment

we manage to cognize the rope as the rope, the snake disappears. What appears and disappears cannot be real; and we know this through our dream experience. Since the rope serves as the substratum for the appearance of the snake without undergoing any change, it is called the *vivarta-kāraṇa* (transfigurative cause) and not the *pariṇāmi-kāraṇa* (transformative cause). The same is the case with regard to Brahman. Since Brahman which is immutable (*kūṭastha, avikāri*) is responsible for the appearance of the world without undergoing any change whatsoever, we say that it is the *vivarta-kāraṇa* and not the *pariṇāmi-kāraṇa* of the world. The world-appearance persists so long as the truth of Brahman is not known. When a person realizes Brahman, he is no more deceived by the world-appearance. It must be noted that the analogy between Brahman and the rope does not hold good in all respects. Notwithstanding this limitation, this analogy helps us to understand the role of Brahman as the substratum or ground for the appearance of the world. Thus, *nirguṇa-brahma-vāda* leads to *brahma-vivarta-vāda*.

Following the Upaniṣad, Advaita maintains that Brahman which is one and non-dual is the sole reality and rejects the metaphysics of dualism. If so, the world of names and forms (*nāma-rūpa-prapañca*) which we experience is not real. What, then, is its ontological status? Does it mean that the world does not exist at all? If it does not exist, how is it that we experience it and claim that it exists? A brief explanation of the Advaita conception of sat and asat is necessary in order to answer these questions. Advaita holds that what exists all the time, past, present, and future, is real (sat). Since Brahman alone fulfils this criterion of the real, it maintains that Brahman is real. On the contrary, that which

is totally non-existent is non-real (asat). An entity like the sky-flower, which is totally non-existent, can never be experienced by anyone at any time. It is true that we speak about it, and the person who hears the expression "sky-flower" understands its meaning. What is experienced alone can be sublated; and since the sky-flower is not an entity which is cognized or experienced, there is no sublation (*bādhā*) for it. Thus, for Brahman there is no sublation, because it exists all the time; and there is no sublation for an entity like the sky-flower, because it is not cognized at all. The world of our daily experience is neither real (sat) nor non-real (asat); it is different from both of them. It is not real, because it suffers sublation at the time of Brahman-realization (*bādhyamānavatvāt na sat*). It is not non-real, because it is cognized (*pratīyamānavatvāt na asat*). The world which is different from the real and the non-real (*sad-asad-vilakṣaṇa*) is, therefore, said to be an illusory appearance (*mithyā*) like the rope-snake or shell-silver, which appears and disappears. Just as the rope appears as the snake due to avidyā, even so Brahman appears as the world of names and forms due to avidyā. When the reality is known, there is no more the appearance. The world which has origination, existence, and dissolution is characterized as *samsāra*. It is a product of māyā or avidyā.¹¹ We develop attachment and aversion to the objects of the world, and derive pleasure and pain therefrom. Śaṅkara explains the nature and status of the world vis-à-vis Brahman in the following verses:

*samsāraḥ svapnatulyo hi rāgadveṣādi-saṅkulaḥ
svakāle satyavad-bhāti prabodhe sati asad-bhavet. [6]*

The world, filled with attachment, aversion, etc., is like a dream. It appears to be real as long as

one is ignorant (of Brahman), but becomes unreal when one is awake.

tāvat-satyam jagad-bhāti śuktikā-rajatam yathā yāvat na jñāyate brahma sarvādhiṣṭhānam-advayam. [7]

The world appears to be real as long as the non-dual Brahman, which is the substratum of all, is not known. It is like the appearance of silver in the shell.

Brahman is not only real and consciousness, but also is infinite.¹² It is, therefore, referred to as Viṣṇu (*vyāpana-śīlah*). It is eternal. It is that which appears as the manifold objects in the same way as gold appears in the form of bangles and other ornaments. Just as gold constitutes the essence of the ornaments made out of it, even so Brahman is the essence of the manifested objects of the world.¹³ Śaṅkara observes:

saccidātmani anusyūte nitye viṣṇau prakalpitāḥ vyaktayo vividhās-sarvā hātake kaṭakādivat. [8]

The different objects of the world are superimposed on the eternal and infinite Viṣṇu (Brahman), which is real and consciousness by its nature and which is their substratum. The manifested objects are like bangles, etc., and Viṣṇu is like gold.

In order to complete the theory of *vivarta*, it is necessary to bring in *māyā/avidyā*. Since Brahman by its very nature is one and non-dual, the question of its relation to a second entity does not arise. However, unless we admit its relation to the world, it cannot be the substratum or ground for the appearance of the world. In other words, Brahman which is

acosmic (*niṣprapañca*) has to become cosmic (*saprapañca*) and get related to the world: that is to say, Brahman-in-itself becomes Brahman-in-relation-to-the-world. To forge a relation between Brahman which is pure being and the world which is becoming, there is the need for another entity which can have some kind of a relation with Brahman, make it determinate, and also be a source of becoming. Unless we postulate such an entity, we cannot fully account for the world of becoming. Such an entity, according to the Upaniṣad, is *māyā/avidyā*, which is a mysterious principle. *Māyā/avidyā* is the principle of objectivity, of self-expression, of self-limitation for Brahman. Functioning as the power of Brahman, it undergoes transformation and projects the world of name and form on Brahman which serves as the substratum. As a result of its association with Brahman, the latter becomes *Saguṇa-Brahman* or *Īśvara* who is the Creator-God, a complex of being and becoming, of the one and the many. According to Advaita, it is *Īśvara* who is both the material and efficient cause (*abhinna-nimittopādāna-kāraṇa*) of the world. *Māyā/avidyā* is neither real (*sat*) nor non-real (*asat*). It is a third category different from *sat* and *asat*; and so the world which is the result of the transformation of *māyā/avidyā* is essentially of the nature of this third category. Since we cannot determine its ontological status as either real or non-real, it is characterized as *anirvacanīya*. It has two powers—*āvaraṇa-śakti* and *vikṣepa-śakti*. The former conceals the truth while the latter projects the false. It is responsible for dividing the non-dual Brahman into *Īśvara* and *jīva*. Since it has no cause, it has no beginning, and so it is said to be *anādi* (beginningless). Its relation to Brahman, the pure consciousness, which is its locus (*āśraya*), is also *anādi*.

According to Advaita, the supreme reality which is called Brahman from the objective point of view is called Ātman (the Self) from the subjective point of view. Brahman which is the reality of the space-time-cause-world is identical with Ātman which is the reality of the jīva. "Brahman" means that which is big, infinite. "Ātman" means that which is pervasive in all bodies. Being of the nature of undifferentiated consciousness (*niravacchinna-caitanya*), both are identical. However, the two terms are used contextually. The one, unchanging reality is called Brahman in the context of the world, and Ātman in the context of the jīva. The knowledge of the Self is the knowledge of Brahman: that is to say, Ātma-bodha is Brahma-bodha. Of the two approaches, subjective and objective, to the study of the reality, the former is easier than the latter, because the Self is nearer to everyone, and there is none to whom the Self is not known in some way or other.¹⁴ However, what is needed is the right knowledge (*samyag-jñāna*) of the Self. Hence, the importance of Śaṅkara's book, *Ātma-bodha*.

Just as the one undifferentiated Brahman becomes Īśvara and gets related to the world due to the work of māyā/avidyā, even so the Self which is one undifferentiated consciousness becomes jīva and gets involved in the worldly experience as the subject of knowledge, agent of action, and enjoyer of the consequences of action due to the work of māyā/avidyā. Brahman-in-the-world is Īśvara; the Self-in-the-body is the jīva. The jīva is a complex entity consisting of the Self and the three bodies (*śarīra-traya*) which serve as the adjunct (*upādhi*) of the Self. The three bodies are: the external gross body (*sthūla-śarīra*), the internal subtle body (*sūkṣma-śarīra*), and the causal body (*kāraṇa-śarīra*). The

three bodies are sometimes spoken of as five sheaths (*pañca-kośa*). The gross body is identified with the sheath of food or matter (*annamaya-kośa*); the subtle body with the sheath of vitality (*prāṇamaya-kośa*), the sheath of mind (*manomaya-kośa*), and the sheath of intellect (*vijñānamaya-kośa*); and the causal body with the sheath of bliss (*ānandamaya-kośa*). The point to be noted here is that the three bodies or the five sheaths which cover the Self are material (*jaḍa*), being the products of the five elements (*pañca-bhūta*) and are, therefore, different from the Self which is of the nature of consciousness. With a view to drive home the idea that the three bodies are essentially different from the Self, they are collectively characterized as the not-Self so that the contrast between them is obvious. Just as the relation between Brahman and the world is mediated through *māyā/avidyā*, even so the relation between the Self and the not-Self is mediated through *māyā/avidyā*. The three bodies of the *jīva* constitute a miniature world, a microcosm. Just as we speak of Brahman-in-the-world, even so we can speak of the Self-in-the-world. What is true of the macrocosm is equally true of the microcosm. The three bodies are material, mutable, and perishable whereas the Self is non-material, immutable, and eternal.

In our day-to-day discourse, we are accustomed to refer to the Self by using the first person singular, "I"; and there are reasons in justification of this usage, which need not be considered here. The Self which is indicated by the "I" is essentially different from the mind, the senses, and the body; but we are in the habit of identifying or associating the nature of the mind, the senses, and the body, which are not-Self, with the Self though this identification, which Śāṅkara calls

adhyāsa, is untenable. For example, when someone says, "I am stout," "I am black," the characteristic of stoutness or blackness which belongs to the body is superimposed on the Self. In the same way, when someone says, "I am blind," or "I am happy," blindness which is a characteristic of the visual sense and happiness which is a state of the mind are superimposed on the Self. Śaṅkara says:

*nānā upādhivaśādeva jāti-varṇāśramādayaḥ
ātmany-āropitāḥ toyē rasa-varṇādi-bhedavat. [10]*

Owing to its association with the various adjuncts, such ideas as caste, colour, and position are superimposed on the Self in the same way as flavour, colour, and so on are superimposed on water.

In the absence of any relation between the Self and the sheaths, the association of the characteristics of the latter with the former can be accounted for only through *adhyāsa*. Śaṅkara drives home this point by means of an example. Though a crystal is pure without any colour whatsoever, it appears to be red or blue when it is in the proximity of a red or blue cloth.

*pañcakośādi-yogena tattanmaya iva sthitaḥ
śuddhātmā nīla-vastrādi-yogena sphaṭiko yathā. [14]*

Owing to the union with the five sheaths, the pure Self appears to be like them in the same way as a crystal (which is pure) appears to be endowed with such colours as blue or red when it is in contact with a blue or red cloth.

He goes on to say:

*dehendriyaguṇān karmāṇyamale saccidātmani
adhyasyanty-avivekena gagane nīlatādivat. [20]*

Ignorant persons, through non-discrimination, superimpose on the pure Self which is real and consciousness, the qualities and actions of the body and the senses, in the same way as people ascribe blueness, concavity, and so on to the sky.

*vyāpṛteṣv-indriyeṣu ātmā vyāpārīva avivekinām
dṛśyate 'bhreṣu dhāvatsu dhāvanniva yathā śaśī. [18]*

As the moon appears to be moving when the clouds move in the sky, even so to the non-discriminating people the Self appears to be active when in reality the senses are active.

Śaṅkara points out that *adhyāsa* takes place in both directions, from the not-Self to the Self, and *vice versa*. Consider the nature of the mind and the senses, and what is claimed for them. Being material, the mind and the senses cannot reveal anything and claim the status of instruments of cognition (*jñānendriya*). But still we say that through the senses we know sound and other objects and that the mind functions not only as the backup principle of the senses, but also in its own right gives us the knowledge of the right and the wrong, knowledge of the past, and so on. But the power of revelation or illumination belongs to the Self which is of the nature of consciousness. Unless the consciousness of the Self is associated first with the mind, which is closest to it, and then with the senses, neither the mind nor the senses, which are material, can reveal anything and function as the instruments of cognition. The nature of the Self is such that it cannot have any relation with anything; but still we have to assume

some kind of a relation through *adhyāsa*. If so, there is mutual superimposition (*itaretara adhyāsa*) even though it is wrong to think of any kind of relation between the Self which is real and the not-Self which is unreal. The following texts from the *Ātma-bodha* are relevant here:

*ātma-caitanyam-āśritya dehendriya-mano-dhiyaḥ
svakriyārtheṣu vartante sūryālokaṁ yathā janāḥ.* [19]

The body, the senses, the mind, and the intellect do their work with the help of the consciousness of the Self just as men work with the help of the light that is inherent in the sun.

*ātmano vikriyā nāsti buddher-bodho na jātviti
jīvaḥ sarvamalaṁ jñātvā jñātā draṣṭeti muhyati.* [25]

The Self does not undergo any change, and the intellect is never endowed with consciousness. But a person wrongly thinks that the Self is identical with the intellect, and is under the delusion that it is the seer and the knower.

That the Self is different from *māyā/avidyā/prakṛti* and its product, viz. the mind-sense-body-complex, is conveyed in the following text:

*dehendriya-mano-buddhi-prakṛtibhyo vilakṣaṇam
tad-vṛtti-sākṣiṇam vidyād-ātmānam rājavat-sadā.* [17]

Know the Self to be different from the body, the senses, the mind, the intellect, and *prakṛti* (*māyā*). Like a king, it is always the witness of their functions.

Doctrine of Anirvacanīya-khyāti

Like the doctrine of *vivarta*, the doctrine of

anirvacanīya-khyāti is also a corollary of the doctrine of Nirguṇa-Brahman. If Brahman/Ātman is the sole reality, then anything else that we experience cannot be real, but must only be an appearance. We have already stated that an entity which is totally non-existent (asat) cannot present itself as an appearance to anyone because of its non-existence. So, an appearance must be different from asat. Also, it is different from the real (sat), because it disappears, i.e. suffers sublation, whereas there is no sublation for the real. Being different from sat and asat, an appearance is *anirvacanīya* in the sense that it is indescribable as either sat or asat. “*Khyāti*” means cognition. So the cognition or experience of an appearance is a case of *anirvacanīya-khyāti*. It is thus possible to show how the doctrine of Nirguṇa-Brahman leads to the doctrine of *anirvacanīya-khyāti*.

It will be helpful to show the linkage between these two doctrines through an analysis of our experience. Without straightaway introducing Brahman/Ātman as the sole reality, Advaita builds up its metaphysics from the “facts” of our experience, which can neither be ignored nor denied. It follows the principle that anything that is experienced must be admitted to be real till it is disproved. “How does Advaita,” one may ask, “arrive at this principle? How is this principle phenomenologically grounded?” The answer is simple and straight. Since consciousness is the ultimate revealing principle, it is the witness to the presence as well as the absence of an object. The claim that something is and that something else is not, that something is real and that something else is not real, is grounded in consciousness. In other words, whatever is affirmed by consciousness cannot be rejected, and whatever is denied by it cannot be accepted. Though Advaita holds the view that

Brahman/Ātman is the sole reality, it makes a distinction between the *absolutely* real and the *relatively* real for the purpose of metaphysical analysis; and it arrives at this distinction not initially, but as a result of analysis, on the basis of the evidence of consciousness.

Let us consider two concrete cases, one for veridical perception and the other for erroneous perception. Every cognition has a cognitum; and this is as much true with regard to erroneous perception as it is with regard to veridical perception. When I perceive a rope as a rope, my perception is veridical; and on the basis of my rope-cognition I claim that a rope, the cognitum of my cognition, exists and that it is real. My claim is based on the evidence of my cognition or consciousness. I can generalize and say that the objects of the external world, which are revealed by consciousness through the senses, exist and are, therefore, real. Thus I claim reality for them on the basis of my consciousness. However, I have to revise my claim when my consciousness reveals that everything which I see is Brahman, not the world. It means that Brahman-consciousness sublates the earlier world-consciousness, and so I have to say that the world which was real to me is no more real. The world which appears and disappears, which is existent and non-existent, is only relatively real. It is real till the rise of Brahman-knowledge. It is, therefore, an appearance which is *anirvacanīya*. Śāᅅkara's observations in the context of his refutation of the Vijñāna-vāda Buddhism are relevant in this connection:

In every act of perception we are conscious of some external thing corresponding to the idea, whether it be a post, or a wall, or a piece of cloth, or a jar; and that of which we are conscious cannot

but exist. ...¹⁵

That the outward thing exists apart from consciousness, has necessarily to be accepted on the ground of the nature of consciousness itself. ...¹⁶

For, this apparent world, whose existence is guaranteed by all means of knowledge, cannot be denied without comprehending some other (higher) reality—for a general principle holds good in the absence of contrary instance.¹⁷

Contrasting Brahman and the world, the Advaitin says that while the former has absolute reality (*pāramārthika-sattā*), the latter has empirical reality (*vyāvahārika-sattā*). Brahman is absolutely real in the sense that it is not subject to sublation in all the three periods of time (*kālatraya abādhyatvam = pāramārthika sattvam*). The world which has only relative reality is said to be empirically real in the sense that it continues to exist till it suffers sublation only through Brahman-knowledge (*brahma-jñāna-mātra-bādhyatvam vyāvahārika-sattvam*).

What is true of veridical perception is equally true of erroneous perception. Let us consider the well known case of the rope-snake illusion. Mistaking the rope, which is in front, for a snake, a person says, "This is a snake." But a little later he manages to realize the truth, corrects the mistake, and says, "This is not a snake, but a rope." Here there are two cognitions, one following another. On the basis of the initial cognition the person claims the existence and the reality of the snake, which is the object of his cognition. However, when the subsequent cognition sublates the content of the earlier cognition by revealing the object as a rope and not a snake, he denies the existence and the reality of the snake. In this

case what exists all the time—before perceiving the snake, at the time of the perception of the snake, and after the disappearance of the snake—is only the rope; nevertheless, there is the appearance of the snake at the time of perception. The snake which appears and disappears is no doubt illusory, but it has to be credited with some kind of reality in order to justify the fact of its cognition. The illusory snake is relatively real; in this case, its reality is relative to the time of its cognition. It exists and is real only when it is cognized; also, only on the basis of its cognition can we say that it exists and is real. In other words, in the case of an illusory object like the rope-snake, its perception and existence are coeval. It is accorded phenomenal reality (*prātibhāsika-sattā*). The term “*prātibhāsika*” means that which has reality only at the time of its cognition (*pratītikālamātra-sattākāḥ*). It is, therefore, different from an object which has empirical reality. It means that there are two kinds of objects which have relative reality—those which have phenomenal reality (e.g. rope-snake, dream-lion) are of one kind, and those which have empirical reality (e.g. tree, table, of our normal waking experience) are of another kind. Brahman-Ātman which has absolute reality is different from both of them.

Doctrine of Jīvan-mukti

Like the other two doctrines, viz. *vivarta-vāda* and *anirvacanīya-khyāti-vāda*, the doctrine of *jīvan-mukti* can be derived from the doctrine of Nirguṇa-Brahman, which is foundational to Advaita. We have already stated that the metaphysics of Advaita has a bearing on soteriology. Unless one is clear about the nature of Brahman-Ātman, one cannot understand the Advaita theory of liberation. In the present

context the term "Ātman" is relevant as we are concerned with the problem of bondage and liberation. It is the jīva that is in bondage; and so it is the jīva that has to attain liberation. The jīva, as stated earlier, is a complex entity consisting of the Self and the not-Self. The Self by its very nature is ever-free and never-bound. The not-Self comprising the three bodies or five sheaths, which serve as the adjunct (*upādhi*) of the Self, makes it finite and limited, provides the necessary outfit for it to play the role of the subject of knowledge, agent of action, and enjoyer of the consequences of action and thereby get involved and suffer in empirical existence. It is, therefore, necessary to bear in mind the distinction between the Self *per se* and the Self-in-the-body. While the former is free from avidyā, the latter is overwhelmed by it. It is because of avidyā that the jīva not only does not know the real nature of the Self, but also identifies it with the mind-sense-body-complex. The work of avidyā can be counteracted only by knowledge. Just as darkness can be removed only by means of light, even so ignorance can be removed only through knowledge. The knowledge that is required here is not the knowledge of empirical things such as pot and pan, mountain and ocean, and so on, but the right knowledge of the Self (*ātma-bodha*). Śaṅkara observes:

*paricchinna ivājñānāt tannāśe sati kevalaḥ
svayam-prakāśate hyātmā meghāpāye' mśumāniva. [4]*

The Self appears to be finite only because of ignorance. When ignorance is destroyed, the Self which is free from the manifold adjuncts truly reveals itself in the same way as the sun reveals itself when the cloud is removed.

Śaṅkara points out that the root cause of the bondage of the jīva is avidyā, which is ignorance. We are engaged in various kinds of activities in our daily life in pursuance of our likes and dislikes (*rāga-dveṣa*). We would like to possess an object which we like; and this will be possible only by means of action (karma), which is appropriate to the end. Also, we would like to avoid what we dislike; and this also calls for actions of various kinds for keeping away from us what we dislike. The Self which is ever-free and never-bound is the highest good; it is bliss *par excellence*. Forgetting the inward Self, we go outward in search of the objects of the world thinking that they are good and great, permanent and beneficial, that they are sources of sustaining pleasure and abiding satisfaction, and so on, while the truth is that they are just the opposite. It is avidyā which turns us away from the inward Self to the outward objects and throws us into the never-ending series of action, one following another, for the fulfilment of our manifold desires. It means that avidyā is the cause of karma in the sense that it is responsible for all kinds of worldly action that we perform. If so, karma which is dependent on avidyā cannot destroy it. On the contrary, it is knowledge (jñāna/vidyā), and knowledge alone, that can destroy avidyā. That is why Sureśvara says:

Action is not competent to remove ignorance, because it arises from ignorance. Right knowledge is its enemy in the same way as the sun is the enemy of darkness.¹⁸

If avidyā is the root cause of bondage, then how is it to be removed or destroyed? Śaṅkara discusses this question in all his writings. He maintains that jñāna alone can destroy avidyā, and not karma. In the *Ātma-bodha* he says:

*avirodhitayā karma nāvidyām vinivartayet
vidyāvidyām nihantyeva tejas-timira-saṅghavat.* [3]

Karma cannot destroy ignorance, because it is not opposed to ignorance. Knowledge alone destroys ignorance in the same way as light destroys dense darkness.

Since the Self by its very nature is bodiless (*aśarīrī*), it is ever-free and never-bound. Avidyā is responsible not only for its association, but also for its identification with the body. It is the latter that binds, as it were, the Self. If the jīva can realize the true nature of the Self which is lodged in it and remain as the Self, then it is free even though it may be in the embodied condition; it remains, that is to say, unattached to the body and untouched by pleasure and pain, and also without the sense of “I” and “mine”, which are the characteristic features of bondage. The *Chāndogya* text, 8.12.1, highlights the difference between the condition of a person who, due to ignorance, identifies himself with the body and that of the enlightened man (*jñānī*) who, though associated with the body, remains unattached to it. The perishable body is the seat (*adhiṣṭhāna*) of the immortal and bodiless Self. It is not the presence of the body, but a wrong identification with it that constitutes the bondage of the jīva. It will be helpful in this connection to refer to two passages from Śaṅkara’s commentary. In his commentary on the *Brahma-sūtra*, 2.3.48, Śaṅkara clarifies the meaning of the expression “*deha-sambandha*’ (connection with the body) as follows:

Deha-sambandha means connection with the bodies. What is this connection with the body? It consists in entertaining the wrong notion about

the Self that it is the aggregate of the body, etc. This erroneous notion is seen to prevail in all living beings and finds its expression in thoughts such as, "I go," "I come," "I am blind," "I am not blind," "I am confused," "I am not confused." This erroneous notion cannot be removed by anything but perfect knowledge...

Commenting on the *Chāndogya* text, 8.12.1, cited above, he observes:

Embodiedness for the Self, which is naturally without any body, consists in its wrong identification with the body claiming, "I am that body, indeed, and the body is verily *myself*." So it is well known that, if the Self is touched by pleasure and pain, it is only on account of its identification with the body due to non-discrimination... However, pleasure and pain cannot touch it when it becomes disembodied, i.e. when it remains in its natural condition of bodilessness, due to discrimination.

That knowledge is the direct means to liberation is emphasized by Śaṅkara in the following verse:

*bodho 'nya-sādhanebhyo hi sākṣān-mokṣaika-sādhanam
pākasya vahnivaj-jñānam vinā mokṣo na siddhyati. [2]*

As fire is the direct cause of cooking, even so knowledge, and not any other form of discipline, is the direct cause of liberation; for, liberation cannot be attained without knowledge.

Since the saving knowledge can be attained in this life

itself through the Upaniṣad, Advaita advocates the doctrine of *jīvan-mukti*, i.e. liberation-in-life. Following the Upaniṣads, Advaita describes liberation as “remaining in one’s own Self” (*svātmanyavasthānam*), as “remaining in one’s own state” (*svarūpāvasthānam*). It is the Self that is the reality in the *jīva*; it is the Self that constitutes the essential nature of the *jīva*; and so to know the Self and be the Self is liberation. Since the Self is no other than Brahman, to “attain” the Self through knowledge is to attain Brahman; consequently, liberation is also referred to as “the attainment of Brahman” (*brahma-prāpti*). The point to be noted here is that, since the right knowledge of Brahman/Ātman, which is spoken of in the tradition as *brahma-bodha* or *ātma-bodha*, can be attained here in this life itself through the discipline of *śravaṇa-manana-nididhyāsana*, Advaita advocates *jīvan-mukti*. Śaṅkara’s argument in justification of *jīvan-mukti* is as follows:¹⁹ (1) Liberation is the state of being free from the body (*aśarīratva*), i.e. the state of bodilessness. (2) Bodilessness is natural (*svābhāvika*) to the Self. (3) Embodiment (*saśarīratva*) is due to erroneous cognition (*mithyā-jñāna*). (4) Erroneous cognition can be removed by right knowledge (*samyag-jñāna*). (5) Since embodiment is due to erroneous cognition, the person who has attained true knowledge is free from his body even while he is with the body, i.e. he is a *jīvan-mukta*.

Śaṅkara describes a *jīvan-mukta* as follows:

*jīvan-muktastu tadvidvān pūrvopādhi-guṇāms-tyajet
saccidānanda-rūpatvāt bhavet bhramara-kīṭavat.* [49]

A *jīvan-mukta*, endowed with Self-knowledge, abandons the traits of the previous *upādhis*.

Realizing that he is of the nature of the Self which is real, knowledge, and bliss, he verily becomes Brahman-Ātman like a worm becoming a bee.

The Advaita doctrine of *jīvan-mukti* is unique. It should not be confused with its namesake which we come across in the Sāṅkhya system. The two doctrines are different because of the difference in the metaphysical standpoint of the two systems.

NOTES

1. Śaṅkara at the end of the celebrated *adhyāsa-bhāṣya* in his commentary on the *Brahma-sūtra* says: “*asya anarthahetoḥ prahāṇāya ātmaikatva-vidyā-pratipattaye sarve vedāntāḥ ārabhyante.*”
2. See his commentary on the *Brahma-sūtra*, 4.1.1-2.
3. *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, 6.8.7.
4. See his *Śrī-bhāṣya*, 1.1.1: “*saviśeṣa-vastu-viśayatvāt sarva-pramāṇānām.*”
5. *Ibid.* “*sarvaṁ hi vastujātaṁ pratīti-vyavasthāpyam. sarvā ca pratītiḥ sadasadākārā. sadasadākārāyāstu pratīteḥ sadasadvilakṣaṇam viśaya itī abhyupagamyamāne sarvaṁ sarvapratīteḥ viśayaḥ syāt.*”
6. See his commentary on the *Brahma-sūtra*, 2.1.9.
7. See his commentary on the *Bhagavad-gītā*, 13.2: “*asampradāyavit sarva-śāstra-vidapī mūrkhavadeva upekṣaṇīyah.*”
8. *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad*, 6.19.
9. *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, 6.2.1.
10. See Vidyāraṇya's *Pañcadaśī*, 2.20.
11. *Māyā*, *avidyā*, *prakṛti*, *akṣara*, *tamas* — all these terms refer to one and the same entity which is material (*jaḍa*) and which is constituted by three *guṇas*—*sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas* (*triguṇātmaka*).

12. The *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, 2.1.1, says that “*satyaṁ jñānam anantam brahma.*” This text states the *svarūpa-lakṣaṇa* of Brahman.
13. See *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, 6.1.5.
14. See Śaṅkara’s commentary on the *Bhāgavad-gītā*, 2.18: “*na hi ātmā nāma kasyacit aprasiddho bhavati.*”
15. Śaṅkara’s commentary on the *Brahma-sūtra*, 2.2.28.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid., 2.2.31.
18. *Naiṣkarmya-siddhi*, 1.35.
19. See his commentary on the *Brahma-sūtra*, 1.1.4.

 THE ĀTMA-BODHA OF ŚAṆKARA - II

N. Veezhinathan

In order that the fundamental doctrines of Advaita may easily be grasped by those who do not have the intellectual ability to comprehend them by a study of his commentaries on the Upaniṣads, the *Bhagavad-gītā* and the *Brahma-sūtra*, Śaṅkara had composed several manuals of which the *Ātma-bodha* is one. It is in sixty-eight verses summarizing the essentials of the philosophy of Advaita. The present paper seeks to present some aspects of this text.

The *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, 2.3.17,

*aṅguṣṭhamātraḥ puruṣaḥ antarātmā
 sadā janānām hṛdaye sanniviṣṭaḥ
 taṁ svāt śarīrāt pravṛhet muñjādīva
 iṣikāṁ dhairyena, taṁ vidyāt śukram amṛtam*

states that one should draw out from one's body one's true nature, as one would draw out the stalk that is inside from the reed. The true nature of man is identified as self-effulgent consciousness by Yājñavalkya. In the famous dialogue between Janaka and Yājñavalkya recorded in *Jyotir-*

brāhmaṇa of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, Janaka raises the question as to what may be the light on the basis of which a human being acts.

Yājñavalkya kimjyotirevāyaṃ puruṣa iti. (BU, 4.3.2)

The question, Śaṅkara explains, is about the ordinary man with head, hands, etc. identifying himself with the body and the sense-organs. Does he use a light extraneous to his body which is made up of parts, or does some light forming a constituent of his whole being provide a light for him?

*ayam prākṛtaḥ kāryakāraṇa-saṅghātarūpaḥ śiraḥpāṇyādīmān
puruṣaḥ pṛcchyate; kim ayam svāvayava-saṅghāta-bāhyena
jyotirantareṇa vyavaharati, āhosvit svāvayava-saṅghāta-
madhyapātinā jyotiṣā jyotiṣkāryamayam puruṣo nirvartayati.*

After suggesting the luminaries—the sun, the moon, fire and speech—Yājñavalkya affirms that it is the Self that serves as the light for the *puruṣa*—the soul identified with the body, the sense-organs, etc. to act.

ātmaiva asya jyotirbhavati. (Ibid., 4.3.6)

He then proceeds to say that this Self is identified with the intellect and is in the midst of the sense-organs. It is the self-effulgent light within the intellect.

*yo'yaṃ vijñānamayaḥ prāṇeṣu hṛdi antarjyotiḥ
puruṣaḥ. (Ibid., 4.3.7)*

This effulgent light identifies itself with the intellect, assumes its likeness and moves between this world and the world hereafter; it thinks *as it were* and moves *as it were*.

*sa samānaḥ san ubhau lokau anusañcarati dhyāyatīva
lelāyatīva. (Ibid.)*

Śaṅkara, while commenting on this text, states that by illumining the intellect, which does the thinking, through its own self-effulgent light that pervades the intellect, the Self assumes the likeness of the latter and seems to think. Hence people have the mistaken notion that the Self thinks; but really it does not. Likewise the Self moves *as it were*. When the intellect and other organs as well as the vital airs move (to the other world after the fall of the body), the Self which illumines them becomes like them, and therefore seems to move; but really the Self, the effulgent light, has no motion.

yataḥ dhyāyatīva—dhyānavyāpāraṁ karotīva, cintayatīva, dhyānavyāpāra-vatīm-buddhiṁ saḥ tatsthena cit-svabhāva-jyotīrūpeṇa avabhāsayan tatsadṛśaḥ tatsamānaḥ san dhyāyatīva ālokavadeva. ato bhavati cintayatīti bhrāntiḥ lokasya. na tu paramārthataḥ dhyāyati. tathā lelāyatīva atyartham calatīva teṣveva karaṇeṣu buddhyādiṣu vāyuṣu ca calatsu tad avabhāsa-katvāt tat sadṛśam tat iti lelāyatīva. na tu paramārthataḥ calanadharmakam tad-ātmajyotiḥ.

From the above it follows that the self-effulgent light which is the Self identifies itself with the intellect and seems to undergo transmigration or cyclic existence. It is the individual soul or *jīva*.

Śaṅkara in his commentary on the *Brahma-sūtra*, 2.3.30, “*yāvad-ātmabhāvitvācca na doṣaḥ tad darśanāt*,” observes:

As long as the *jīva* is associated with the adjunct, viz. mind, so long only is the *jīva* a *jīva*. In reality, however, there is nothing like *jīva*-hood apart

from what is fancied to be such by reason of this adjunct.

The *jīva* whose true nature is self-effulgent consciousness cannot have any real association with the mind, the insentient factor. Any relation between the two must be non-real. Śāṅkara in his commentary on the above *sūtra* points out:

This relation between the self-effulgent consciousness with the mind has but *ajñāna* or *avidyā* which is indeterminable as its source; and this *avidyā* cannot be removed by anything apart from the direct experience that the true nature of the soul is the self-effulgent consciousness, i.e. Brahman.

Herein Śāṅkara refers to *avidyā* as the source of the false identification of the self-effulgent consciousness with the mind. This *avidyā* is identical with *māyā*. It is located in the self-effulgent consciousness. And it undergoes transformation of the form of the world consisting of the mind, the sense-organs, the vital-airs, earth, water, fire, air and space. The consciousness, being the substratum of *avidyā*, is viewed as the material and the efficient cause of the world. It falsely identifies itself with the mind, the sense-organs, the vital-airs and the physical body, which are the illusory effects of *avidyā*, attains to the state of the soul, loses sight of its identity with its true nature and undergoes transmigration.

The self-effulgent consciousness which is said to be the true nature of the soul is identified in the Upaniṣads as Brahman, which, according to the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (2.1.1), is: “*satyaṁ jñānam anantam brahma*”. Brahman is unsublatable in the three divisions of time, is of the nature of

consciousness, and is not conditioned by space, time and objects. The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, 3.8.8,

*asthūlam-anaṇu ahrasvam-adīrgham alohitam-
asneham-acchāyam-atamaḥ avāyu anākāśam-
asaṅgam-arasaṁ agandham-acakṣuṣkam-
aśrotram-avāk amanaḥ atejaskam-aprāṇam-
amukham-amātram-anantaram-abāhyam na
tadaśnāti kiñcana na tadaśnāti kaścana,*

describes Brahman as neither gross nor minute, neither short nor long, neither red colour nor oily, neither shadow nor darkness, neither air nor ether, unattached, neither savour nor odour, without eyes or ears, without the vocal organ or mind, without lustre (like that of fire), without the vital force or mouth, not a measure, and without interior or exterior. It does not eat anything nor is eaten by anyone. The text of the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, 1.3.15,

*aśabdām asparśam arūpam avyayam tathā arasaṁ nityam
agandhavacca yat*

speaks of Brahman as one devoid of sound, of touch, of form, undecaying, devoid of taste, eternal, devoid of odour. These and other similar texts refer to Brahman as what it is not rather than what it is. Śaṅkara in his commentary on the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, 3.8.8, states that “Brahman is devoid of all attributes, for it is one only without a second; so what is there that could be specified, and through what?”

Śaṅkara in the *Ātma-bodha* summarizes the above Upaniṣadic teachings thus:

*anaṇvasthūlam-ahrasvam-adīrgham-ajam-avyayam
arūpaguṇavarṇākhyam tad-brahmety-avadhārayet. [60]*

*atadvyāvṛttibhedaiḥ tu vedāntaiḥ lakṣyate avyayam
akhaṇḍānandam-ekaṁ yat tad-brahmety-avadhārayet. [57]*

Ascertain that to be Brahman which is neither minute nor gross, neither short nor long, which is free from origination, is immutable, devoid of form, attributes and colour.

Ascertain that to be Brahman which is partless, bliss and is indicated by the *Upaniṣads* through the elimination of features that are different from it.

Brahman which is consciousness is bliss. The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, 4.3.32, “eṣo’sya parama ānandah,” says that Brahman is supreme bliss. And the text of the same *Upaniṣad*, 4.3.32, “etasyaiva ānandasya anyāni bhūtāni mātrām-upajīvanti,” declares that the reflection of Brahman-bliss in the mental states which arise through the functioning of the senses, that is experienced by Hiraṇyagarbha and other souls. The *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, 2.8.1-5, refers to different levels of happiness experienced by beings all of which are but an extremely small amount of the bliss that constitutes the essential nature of Brahman. Brahman which is consciousness and bliss illumines the entire aggregate of the body and the sense-organs. It is, therefore, that all people identify themselves with the body, the sense-organs and their features and have a feeling of love towards them.

Śaṅkara, in the following two verses, has set forth the above view of the *Upaniṣad*.

*akhaṇḍānandarūpasya tasyānandalavāśritāḥ
brahmādyās-tāratamyena bhavantyānandino’khilāḥ. [58]*

*tadyuktam-akhilam vastu vyavahārastvatipriyaḥ
tasmāt sarvagatam brahma kṣīre sarpirivākhile. [59]*

Hiraṇyagarbha and others experience bliss (through sense-object contact)—the bliss which is an extremely small measure of the unconditioned bliss, that is, Brahman. And it admits of gradation.

Just as ghee pervades the milk, in the same way, Brahman which is bliss permeates every factor beginning with the physical body, etc. Hence it is but proper that there is a feeling of love towards the physical body, etc. and also the verbal usage “I am happy”.

The text of the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, 2.2.15,

*na tatra sūryo bhāti na candratārakam
nemā vidyuto bhānti kutoyam-agniḥ
tameva bhāntam-anubhāti sarvaṃ
tasya bhāsā sarvamidam vibhāti,*

declares that in respect of Brahman the sun, who, though illuminating everything, does not illumine. Similarly, not the moon, nor the stars illumine it. All this, the sun and the rest that shine, shine after only that Brahman which shines. Śaṅkara in his commentary on this text states:

Just as hot water or a torch, when it burns, burns only after fire, and does not itself burn, in the same way the sun and other luminaries shine only after Brahman which shines.

In the *Ātma-bodha*, Śaṅkara sets forth the above view thus:

*yadbhāsā bhāsyate'rkādi bhāsyair-yattu na bhāsyate
yena sarvam-idam-bhāti tad-brahmety-avadhārayet. [61]*

Ascertain that to be Brahman by the light of which the sun, etc. and every other object of the world are manifested, and which is not illumined by those that are manifested by it.

*svayamantarbahirvyāpya bhāsayan akhilaṃ jagat
brahma prakāśate vahnitaptāyasapiṇḍavat.* [62]

Just as the heated iron ball shines only after fire that permeates it, in the same way, Brahman by pervading the entire world illumines the latter and shines by itself.

The text of the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, 7.25.1, “*ahameva idaṃ sarvam*,” states that the content of the cognition ‘I’, i.e. the soul, is identical with everything in this world and so it is infinite. This may give rise to a misconception that the soul contained in the body and the sense-organs is the infinite. To dispel such a misconception, the same Upaniṣad displaces the sense of the soul implied in ‘I’ by Ātman or the essential nature of man which is consciousness. The text is (7.25.2):

Ātman alone is below. Ātman is above. Ātman is behind. Ātman is in front. Ātman is to the south. Ātman is to the north. Ātman alone is all this.

Thus is declared in this text that the infinite, i.e. Brahman, is Ātman which is the essential nature of the soul. Śāṅkara refers to the view contained in the above text in the *Ātma-bodha* thus:

*tiryagūrdhvam-ataḥ pūrṇaṃ saccidānandam-advayam
anantaṃ nityamekaṃ yattad brahmety-avadhārayet.* [56]

Ascertain that to be Brahman which passes through everything, which is above and below,

which is infinite, real, consciousness, bliss, eternal and one.

Brahman is unlike the world. The latter, being the illusory manifestation of Brahman through *avidyā*, has no independent existence apart from Brahman. Śaṅkara observes:

*jagadvilakṣaṇam brahma brahmaṇo'nyan-na kiñcana
brahmānyadasti cet mithyā yathā marumarīcikā.* [63]

Brahman is unlike the world. There is nothing apart from Brahman. Whichever is seen different from Brahman is illusory like the illusory pool of water on a highway on a hot day.

Brahman of this nature—owing to *avidyā* and its product, the body-mind complex—has attained to the state of the soul. The latter has lost sight of its identity with its true nature, and falsely identifies itself with the phenomenal features. In his commentary on the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, 1.3.12, Śaṅkara says:

This *māyā* is deep-seated, inconceivable and inscrutable; it is because man, being in reality Brahman, does not recognize this fact, although he is taught to be so. But even without being instructed he mistakes the aggregate of the body and the sense-organs which are clearly perceived and which are, therefore, like pot, etc., the not-self to be his true nature. He falsely thinks that he is the son of so and so. No doubt the whole universe turns round and round thus deluded owing to *māyā* located in the supreme (Brahman).

Man's chief aim should be to leave out his false

identification with the body, etc., which are clearly perceived like pot, etc. and are fragile like bubbles and which are, therefore, illusory. He should, with concentrated mind, realize his true nature as different from the body, etc. and as Brahman.

*āvidyakam śarīrādi dṛśyam budbudavat kṣaram
etadvilakṣaṇam vidyāt aham-brahmeti nirmalam.* [30]

He must, on the basis of reasoning, get intellectually convinced that his true nature is free from birth, old age and decay as it is different from physical body; and it is not related to sound, etc. as it is free from sense-organs.

*dehānyatvān-na me janma-jarā-kārśya-layādayaḥ
śabdādiviṣayaiḥ saṅgaḥ nirindriyatayā na ca.* [31]

On the basis of the text of the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*, 2.1.2, which says, "It (that is, his true nature) is free from vital airs and mind," he must ascertain that his true nature is free from the characteristics of the mind such as misery, desire, aversion, fear, etc. as it has no relation to mind.

*amanastvān-na me duḥkharāgadveṣa-bhayādayaḥ
aprāṇo hyamanāḥ śubhraḥ ityādiśruti-śāsanāt.* [32]

After getting intellectually convinced of the fact that his true nature is Brahman, one must—in order to get rid of the unconscious re-assertion of old habits of thought such as 'I' and 'mine'—pursue in a solitary place, with one's mind under control, intense meditation upon the true nature of one's soul.

*viviktadeśa āsīnaḥ virāgo vijitendriyaḥ
bhāvayed-ekamātmānam tamanantam-ananyadhīḥ.* [38]

When one's mind becomes free from the unconscious re-assertion of old habits of thought by intense meditation of

the form "I am Brahman", there would arise the direct experience of one's nature as Brahman which would annihilate *avidyā*.

*evam ātmāraṇau dhyānamathane satataṁ kṛte
uditāvagatijvālā sarvājñānendhanam dahet. [42]*

When, by the direct experience of one's true nature as Brahman, *avidyā* is removed, like darkness by the dawn personified as the charioteer of the sun, there will be the manifestation of Brahman in its pristine nature like the sun.

*aruṇeneva bodhena pūrvam santamase hrte
tata āvirbhaved-ātmā svayameva amśumāniva. [43]*

It must be noted here that the true nature of the soul, i.e. Brahman, is ever-attained. Yet, on account of *avidyā*, it remains unattained *as it were*. When *avidyā* is removed, it shines forth in its natural splendour, and it is figuratively said as attained. This is similar to the attainment of the golden ornament round one's neck which is thought of as being lost and which is viewed as attained when someone instructs that it is present in the neck itself. Thus, attainment of one's true nature which is Brahman is only figurative.

*ātmā tu satataṁ prāptaḥ hi aprāptavad-avidyayā
tannāśe prāptavad-bhāti svakaṅṭhābharanam yathā. [44]*

He who has attained the direct knowledge of his true nature as Brahman would continue to remain in his body till the fructified merits and demerits, which have given rise to the body in which he has attained the knowledge of his true nature, are exhausted by experiencing their fruits. He is a *jīvanmukta*, one who is released and yet embodied. Remaining as the substratum of the world superimposed upon his true

nature, he feels his presence in every object.

Although the realized soul is present in the body-mind complex, it will not be tainted by the characteristics of the latter. It is omniscient in the sense that it has the direct experience that everything else has no independent existence apart from its true nature which is Brahman. Like the space which is not affected by any impurity, it will remain unaffected by the mind-body complex. It will be unattached toward everything else like wind and conduct itself as an ignorant one.

*upādhistho'pi taddharmaiḥ na lipto vyomavan-muniḥ
sarvavit mūḍhavat-tiṣṭhad-asakto vāyuvat caret. [52]*

When the fructified merits and demerits are exhausted, the realized soul becomes dissociated from its physical and psychological accompaniments and remains as Brahman. Just as the pure water poured into pure water becomes the same, the true nature of the realized soul becomes one with the supreme Brahman.

Thus we see that in the *Ātma-bodha* Śaṅkara has summarized the essentials of Advaita Vedānta as could be gleaned from the Upaniṣads.

DISSOLUTION OF MIND AND EROSION OF IMPRESSIONS

Manonāśa and Vāsanākṣaya in Advaitin's Scheme of Liberation

Godabarisha Mishra*

1. Introduction

In Advaita liberation consists of being in the state of Brahman, i.e. *brahmabhāva eva mokṣaḥ*. Bondage is a product of avidyā, i.e. illusion, and liberation is redeeming oneself from this illusion, which is simultaneous with the advent of the knowledge of the Self. There is mutual superimposition between the Self and the not-Self comparable to a red-hot iron ball. The characteristics of redness and heat belonging to fire are visibly found in the ball, and the characteristics of iron, viz. being hard and round, are found in the fire. In the same way, there is mutual erroneous identity between the conscious Self and the not-Self, i.e. unconscious body and the like. According to Advaita, this mutual superimposition between the Self and the not-Self is bondage.¹ This superimposition is caused by ignorance of the real nature of

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the Self. Removal of this ignorance is through the knowledge of the Self. Knowledge being the sole means to liberation, there is no intrinsic difference between the two types of mukti, i.e. *jīvan-mukti* and *videha-mukti*, as far as the content of mukti is concerned. The difference lies only in the state in which the liberation takes place, whether it is in the state of living or at the time of the fall of the body. There are two views prevalent in Advaita with regard to the direct cause for attaining immediate knowledge (*aparokṣa-jñāna*). The advocates of the Vivaraṇa school hold the view that hearing (*śravaṇa*) the *mahāvākyas* is the direct cause. The Bhāmatī school of Vācaspatimiśra holds that listening to the *mahāvākyas* can give only indirect knowledge. Only through reflection (*manana*) and contemplation (*nididhyāsana*), mediate knowledge (*parokṣa-jñāna*) leads to immediate knowledge (*aparokṣa-jñāna*).²

Vidyāraṇya accepts both the views, but he puts forth new ideas based on tradition and scriptures to clarify certain important points with regard to *jīvan-mukti*. In this endeavour, his main support is the *Yoga-vāsiṣṭha-rāmāyaṇa* which talks of direct and indirect means to *jīvan-mukti*. For Vidyāraṇya, the direct means are truth (*tattva-jñāna*), obliteration of latent impressions (*vāsanā-kṣaya*) and dissolution of the mind (*mano-nāśa*). The indirect means are *vividiṣā-sannyāsa* and strong dispassion (*tīvra-vairāgya*). There is a negative relationship between the means and the state of *jīvan-mukti*. It is because the means does not produce the state of *jīvan-mukti*.³ Knowledge removes ignorance; obliteration of latent impressions removes *vāsanās*; and the practice of dissolution of mind removes the distractions of the mind. When all these obstacles are removed, the state of *jīvan-mukti* manifests by

itself. For Vidyāraṇya, all these means are to be practised for a long time, and also simultaneously.⁴ He stresses the importance of simultaneous practice, as for him it is not possible to practise one in the absence of the other two. Vidyāraṇya says that there is a mutual causal relation among them, and the practice of one would be incomplete in the absence of the other. The presence of one is a necessary condition for the meaningful existence of the other two.⁵ The result of the renunciation of the seeker (*vividiṣā-sannyāsa*) is the knowledge of truth. The result of the renunciation by the knower of truth (*vidvat-sannyāsa*) is *jīvan-mukti*. Hence one may contend that after attaining knowledge at the stage of *vividiṣā-sannyāsa*, one moves on to *vidvat-sannyāsa* to attain *jīvan-mukti* through *vāsanā-kṣaya* and *mano-nāśa* showing the gradual occurrence of all these means. For this, it is said that at the stage of *vidvat-sannyāsa*, the practice of the dissolution of mind and the obliteration of latent impressions are primary, and the practice of knowledge is secondary. For a *vidvat-sannyāsin*, the practice of knowledge does not mean acquiring knowledge afresh, but only remembrance of knowledge in all possible ways.⁶

Here it may be noted that Vidyāraṇya does not dispute the idea that the removal of ignorance is liberation, but he wants to confer equal importance on the means of *mano-nāśa* and *vāsanā-kṣaya*, which have to be taken up simultaneously for achieving the state of *jīvan-mukti*.⁷ On the lines of the *Yoga-vāsiṣṭha*, he proposes to clarify the enigma surrounding the idea of a liberated Self and his being in the world. So here is an attempt to bridge the gap between the destruction of *avidyā* and the possibility of living while being liberated.

Definition of jīvan-mukti

In his *Jīvanmukti-viveka*, Vidyāraṇya defines the state of *jīvan-mukti* as follows:

Bondage to a living being consists in attributes of the mind such as *kartr̥tva* (doership) and *bhoktr̥tva* (enjoyership), pleasure and pain, which are because of the very nature of the bondage. The removal of such a state is liberation while being alive.⁸

The definition asserts that the attributes of the mind bind the *jīva* as they are different forms of pain. What is meant by the attributes of the mind are the modes (*vṛtti*) of the mind, which are of two kinds, subjective, called *ahamvṛtti*, such as doership and enjoyership, and objective, i.e. *idamvṛtti*, e.g. pleasure and pain. In his *Pañcadaśī*, Vidyāraṇya explains these two as the representatives of all other mental modes.⁹ In the case of a *jīvan-mukta*, the mind and its attributes are present, but they do not bind him because they are understood as not real, and hence they do not afflict him. What is implied here is that the attributes of the mind afflict the *vividiṣā-sannyāsin* or a *vidvat-sannyāsin*, but not a *jīvan-mukta*.¹⁰

According to the *Pūrṇānandendu-kaumudī*, a commentary on the *Jīvanmukti-viveka*, the definition refers only to the means of *jīvan-mukti* and not to the state of *jīvan-mukti* itself. Removal of all mental modes is the means, and the *jīvan-mukti* is the end. Here it is a case where the means is identified with the end. To substantiate this point, the *Pūrṇānandendu-kaumudī* cites an example that “the plough is one’s life”.¹¹ The plough itself is not one’s life, but a mere means of livelihood. It is similar to the Vedic statement, “The

person having a teacher knows the truth,"¹² wherein a teacher is a means to know the truth. In the same way the definition refers to the means to *jīvan-mukti* and not to the state of *jīvan-mukti*.

2. Dialectics on Jīvan-mukti

As regards *jīvan-mukti*, there are two views. Maṇḍana and Sarvajñātman show their preferences for *sadyo-mukti* (immediate release) even though in different contexts they accept the ideal of *jīvan-mukti*. On the basis of the *Muṇḍakopaniṣad* text, which says: "The knot of the heart is cut and all his doubts are dispelled and his karmas get terminated when he sees the lower and the higher,"¹³ Maṇḍana argues that the word "*karmāṇi*" (karmas) in the text refers to the cessation of all karmas including the *prārabdha-karma*. The present body, which is a product of *prārabdha-karma*, will also disappear along with ignorance and other karmas. Hence the *jñānī* will get only *videha-mukti*, which is known as *sadyo-mukti*.¹⁴ In this sense, *sthītaprajña* and the like, described in the *Bhagavad-gītā* and other texts, which imply the state of a *jīvan-mukta*, would only mean a *sādhaka* (seeker after truth) and not a *siddha*, a person who has realised Brahman while being alive. To further clarify this point, Maṇḍana explains the *Chāndogya* text which says that "one should wait till the fall of body to attain final liberation". To Maṇḍana, this text does not convey the idea of delay in the attainment of final liberation; rather it conveys the idea of total absence of delay or quickness in attaining to that state. The expression "*tāvadeva*" (only so long as) in the text means the limit (*avadhi-viśeṣam*), and it should be interpreted to convey the sense of quickness or absence of delay in attaining final release.

It may be pointed out here that Maṇḍana gives a second interpretation of the *Chāndogya* text and exegetically shows that the persistence of the body in certain cases even after Brahman-realisation is only for a short while and the body will fall off soon marking the attainment of final release. This shows that Maṇḍana accepts *jīvan-mukti* as well in those cases.¹⁵

Sarvajñātman is of the view that the *jīvan-mukta* has a specific role to play, i.e. sharing his enlightenment with the people of the world, who are in the state of bondage. This is possible when the multiplicity of selves (*aneka-jīva-vāda*) is accepted. But if we accept *eka-jīva-vāda* (the theory that there is only one jīva), that self alone is entitled for liberation. Accepting this view, Sarvajñātman says that the idea of *jīvan-mukti* exemplified by Śuka and others is to glorify such a state. Hence, he says that from the standpoint of *eka-jīva-vāda*, *jīvan-mukti* is not tenable. The liberation takes place in the form of *sadyo-mukti*.¹⁶

The other view which is advocated by the adherents of the Vivaraṇa school is that the future bodies are destroyed along with ignorance and not the present body. The present body is the result of *prārabdha-karma*, and hence it will not disappear immediately after the rise of knowledge. The knowledge which arises in the mind would destroy the ignorance which is there in the mind; it would not, however, destroy the body. When the fructified deeds are exhausted, the body, which is a product of it, will fall off. But the person who has attained the state of Brahman will continue to live in this world with the body-mind-complex, and this is known as *jīvan-mukti*. There are two views in Advaita with regard to sustaining *prārabdha-karma*. The first view is that it is a

saṃskāra of ignorance which sustains the body-mind-complex. When ignorance is removed, its residuum, *avidyā-saṃskāra*, continues to exist for sometime, and it sustains the body till the exhaustion of the *prārabdha-karma*. It is like the fragrance of the flower, which remains in the flower vase even after the flowers are removed. The second view is that it is *avidyā-leśa* (a portion of *avidyā*) which sustains the body and the mind. *Avidyā* has two powers, *āvaraṇa-śakti*, concealment and *vikṣepa-śakti*, projection. By the dawn of knowledge, the former is removed, and the latter which is *avidyā-leśa* sustains the body and the mind till the *prārabdha-karma* gets exhausted.¹⁷

Jīvan-mukti—The Ultimate Goal of Jñāna

In the *Vāsanā-kṣaya-prakaraṇa* of his *Jīvanmukti-viveka*, Vidyāraṇya says that if one practises the means of *vāsanā-kṣaya* and *mano-nāśa* without pursuing the knowledge of the reality, one will not attain liberation. It is because the subtle body (*liṅga-deha*) is not yet destroyed. It can be destroyed only by knowledge.¹⁸ Hence the commentator's view that the definition deals only with the means and not the end (i.e. *jīvan-mukti*) holds good, and this is the reason why the definition given in the text of the *Jīvanmukti-viveka* talks of the direct means to *jīvan-mukti* in the case of the knower of the truth and not with regard to the seeker after the truth. In the case of a *vividiṣā-sannyāsin*, the removal of the mental modes cannot be the direct means to knowledge; but for a person who has already gained knowledge, what is required is the removal of mental modes, and that results in the liberation while being alive. Vidyāraṇya analyses this in detail by means of two concepts called *asthita-*

prajña and *akṛtopāsti*. An *asthita-prajña* is a person who has knowledge of the truth, but who does not become a *jīvan-mukta* because of having an impure mind. The impurities are due to the latent impressions and unsteadiness of the mind. Once these impurities are removed, the state of *jīvan-mukti* becomes manifest. An *akṛtopāsti* is an aspirant who pursues knowledge without acquiring the necessary purity of mind, and it is possible that he may accidentally acquire the knowledge of the reality for a short time. When such an aspirant attains the state in which all mental modes are permanently removed, the state of *jīvan-mukti* follows by itself. This shows that mere attainment of knowledge is not enough, but the removal of all mental modes should also take place simultaneously. Vidyāraṇya is insistent upon this idea that by the obliteration of latent impressions and the dissolution of the mind alone one cannot attain the state of *jīvan-mukti*. Both these have to be simultaneously practised with the knowledge of the identity of Brahman and Ātman through the impartite mode of the mind (*akhaṇḍākāra-vṛtti*) brought about by the right understanding of the *mahāvākyas*.¹⁹

Prārabdha-karma and Pauruṣa (Personal Efforts)

After explaining *jīvan-mukti* as the removal of the attributes of the mind as one of the direct causes, Vidyāraṇya establishes the possibility of removing the attributes. He deals with the idea of "removal" (*nivāraṇa*) in this context and shows the relationship between *prārabdha-karma* and personal efforts, which is implied in the practices of Yoga. Thereafter, he relates personal efforts to the obliteration of latent impressions. Vidyāraṇya perceives two impediments in realizing *jīvan-mukti*; one is external in the form of

prārabdha-karma, and the other is internal in the form of the force of *vāsanā*. He says that the word “removal” in the expression “*tasya nivāraṇam*” (in the definition of *jīvan-mukti*) does not mean “*nāśa*” or the destruction of the mind, but only the subduing (*abhibhava*) of the mental attributes. He elucidates this position by considering two alternatives. We have to consider whether bondage is to be removed from the Witness-Self or from the mind. It cannot be from the Witness-Self since it has already been removed by knowledge at the stage of *vividiṣā-sannyāsa*, and hence it need not be removed. It cannot be the second, because it is impossible to remove attributes from the substance without destroying the substance. The fluidity of water cannot be removed without destroying water. Similarly, the state of heat cannot be removed from fire without destroying the fire. In a similar fashion, the *kartr̥tva* (doership), etc. cannot be destroyed without causing the mind to disintegrate. And if we hold such a position, it would amount to *videha-mukti* and not *jīvan-mukti*. Hence, even if the definition mentions the removal of the attributes, such removal in the sense of destruction is not possible. Here Vidyāraṇya explains that the attributes of the substance cannot be destroyed, but they can be subdued without destroying the substance, just as in the case of water the fluidity can be subdued by the admixture of clay. The heat of the fire can be controlled through incantation, or by the application of a gem. In the same way, the attributes of the mind cannot be destroyed, but can be controlled by the practices of Yoga.

3. Pruning the Impressions (Vāsanā)

In the *Yoga-vāsiṣṭha*, vāsanā is defined as “the hankering after things, which gains mastery over the mind, as to preclude even enquiring into their antecedents and consequents.”²⁰ Vidyāraṇya shows that the attachment towards (i) one’s surroundings, (ii) one’s customs and practices, (iii) the language one speaks, (iv) the country one lives in, and so on, grows because of these vāsanās. In the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, it is said: “As the desire (*kāma*), so the ideas; as the ideas, so the action; and as the action, so the result.” The commentary *Pūrṇānandendu-kaumudī* explains the word “*kāma*” in the śruti text as “vāsanā”. In another passage it is said: “The self takes its next birth in accordance with the vidyā (upāsanā) and karma (action) and *pūrvaprajñā*.” Here the word “*pūrvaprajñā*” can be interpreted to refer to vāsanā or latent impressions.²¹ In the *Laghu-yoga-vāsiṣṭha*, we come across two types of vāsanās, pure and impure. That which causes rebirth is spoken of as impure and that which puts an end to rebirth is called pure.²² Vidyāraṇya accepts the force of vāsanā, the latent impressions, as one of the major impediments in controlling the mind or the mental modes. Citing the famous dialogue between Rāma and Vasiṣṭha, Vidyāraṇya says that there are three types of vāsanās, pure (*śubha*), impure (*aśubha*) and mixed (*śubhāśubha*). In certain exceptional cases people have pure vāsanās or impure vāsanās, but by and large, they have the third one alone. If a person has pure vāsanās, then attaining the state of *jīvan-mukti* is involuntary, as the pure vāsanās would lead him to *jīvan-mukti*. If the mind is preoccupied by impure vāsanās, then the person has to exercise his personal efforts to remove them. In the case of the person who has

mixed *vāsanās*, he should engage himself in subduing the impure *vāsanās*; so the pure *vāsanās* will lead him to his goal of attaining *jīvan-mukti*. Vidyāraṇya elucidates his position that impure *vāsanā* can be replaced by a pure one through an illustration. If a child is presented with a real fruit and with something looking like a fruit, the child would take the real fruit. The mind is like a child. It cannot entertain both pure and impure *vāsanās*. By the association with the virtuous people, one can get rid of the bad, and acquire good *vāsanās*.

Vidyāraṇya suggests two methods to achieve these two important means of dissolution of the mind and obliteration of latent impressions. Those are the soft and the hard methods. He gives the example of a domestic animal that can be taken to the shed by luring him by the offering of grass or some grains. This is a soft method. The cow can be taken to the shed by beating or whipping, which is a harsh method. In the same way, the mind, which is like a restive animal, can be led to its source, which is the Self, by the soft or the hard method.²³ The soft method consists in the vision of equality between a friend and a foe (*samadṛṣṭi*). The hard method consists in the practice of *haṭha-yoga* through which the mind is controlled. Here it may be asked: is not this method of equal vision applicable only to a seer of truth and not to either a *jīvan-mukta* or one ignorant of the truth? The answer given is that an ignorant person cannot have knowledge of reality and hence cannot have equal vision. The *jīvan-mukta* will have equal vision, and he does not need any method to achieve any further goal. Hence the method is addressed to the knower of truth, for whom knowledge has not so far culminated in *jīvan-mukti*.

Vidyāraṇya has used two examples: (i) that of the child and the clay-fruit and (ii) that of driving the cow to its shed. The first illustration refers to the obliteration of latent impressions through the replacement of values, and the second refers to the dissolution of the mind because driving the mind to its source amounts to its dissolution.

Jñāna or Cinmātra-vāsanā

Vidyāraṇya gives a *prima facie* view with regard to the applicability of the definition of vāsanā to the pure vāsanā. It has been stated that the absence of enquiry into the past and future is one of the criteria of vāsanā. Hence the given definition cannot be applied in the case of vāsanā of *tattva-jñāna*. This objection is answered by explaining that there is absence of enquiry because of a strong impression. The impressions, which are practised for a long time such as anger and the like, appear suddenly, without enquiry into past or future. In the same way, *brahma-jñāna* is also contemplated for a long time, and such practice creates strong impressions of *brahma-jñāna*. Once such an impression is created, one need not pursue any further enquiry into the attributes of Brahman. Hence the definition of vāsanā becomes applicable to pure vāsanās such as Brahman-knowledge also.

Obliteration of Impressions

In the *Yoga-vāsiṣṭha*, we come across the process of obliteration of latent impressions. Vidyāraṇya quotes, "The attachment towards vāsanā is called bondage, and the obliteration of vāsanā is liberation. Having given up all vāsanās, one has to give up even the desire for liberation."²⁴ The implication here is that all the pure and impure vāsanās have to be given up and should be replaced by the vāsanā of

pure consciousness, and ultimately even that has to be abandoned. Vidyāraṇya gives a list of *vāsanās*; first, he divides them into two, *mano-vāsanā* and *viṣaya-vāsanā*. *Mano-vāsanā* is threefold as *loka-vāsanā*, *śāstra-vāsanā*, and *deha-vāsanā*; and these are reactions towards the things like pride, vanity and the like. The impressions which are generated from desire for objects such as sound, touch and the like are *mano-vāsanās*, and the impressions which are created by the enjoyment of those objects are *viṣaya-vāsanās*. The impure-*vāsanās* are to be replaced by pure *vāsanās*. Here it is important to note that, according to Vidyāraṇya, these good *vāsanās* too should be given up. Being detached from both, one should remain attached to the impression of consciousness (*cinmātra-vāsanā*), for which the *cit* alone is the content. This is understood as the state of *savikalpaka-samādhi*, in which one is aware of the *tripuṭī*, knowledge, knower and known. From this, one has to move on to *nirvikalpaka-samādhi* by giving up the *cinmātra-vāsanā*, and ultimately that too is dropped by one's attainment of the supreme Self. This is the final state of elimination of all the *vāsanās*.²⁵ The objects of the world present themselves to the consciousness in the form of *vṛttis*, modes of mind. Every mode is nothing but the manifestation of consciousness with a name and a form. The consciousness with a name and a form is called knowledge of objects, or *vṛtti-jñāna*, which is superimposed on the Self. In order to get rid of this superimposition, one should shift one's attention from the objective knowledge to the content of knowledge or pure consciousness. This can be achieved by the practice of *cinmātra-vāsanā* and not by all the other types of *vāsanās* of pure or impure type.

Replacing the Cinmātra-vāsanā

The impression of pure consciousness is of two kinds: 1. endowed with mind and intellect and 2. devoid of mind and intellect. This state of mind refers to impartite mode of mind or *akhaṇḍākāra-vṛtti*, and the word “intellect” refers to the sense of doership. Here contemplation is in the form: “I, which is non-dual, will contemplate upon the pure consciousness alone.”²⁶ In this, the doer is conscious of himself and the object of contemplation (*kartṛkaraṇa-anusandhāna*). This is the first kind of practice, the practice of *cinmātra-vāsanā*, which is known as dhyāna. Dhyāna becomes samādhi when the object of dhyāna alone is cognised, and other cognitional characters like instrument of cognition and doership are absent.²⁷ Ultimately, this effort of performance of samādhi should be given up after realising the ultimate Self. Such a person, Vidyāraṇya says, is a *jīvan-mukta* whose understanding is without any presupposition (*nirvāsanā*) and who, being wide awake even in sleep, does not perceive the world of waking.²⁸

4. Dissolution of the mind

Vidyāraṇya shows the inter-dependence of the three means of knowledge, obliteration of latent impressions and the dissolution of the mind. He relates *mano-nāśa* with *tattva-jñāna* by citing a verse from the *Laghu-yoga-vāsiṣṭha*: “If a person has not attained the knowledge of reality, he cannot have dissolution of the mind; and if the mind is not dissolved, one cannot have knowledge of reality.”²⁹ He then goes on to define the mind: “The internal organ (*antaḥkaraṇa*), taking the form of a series of transformations, resembling in this respect the flame of a lamp, is called mind on account of its

functions.”³⁰ Dissolution of the mind means giving up all distracting mental modes and assuming a state of restraint. When the impressions tending to distraction are subdued, impressions holding the mind in control manifest. In this sense “dissolution” does not mean destruction of the mind, but the destruction of all the mental modes.

In the above sense, mind is a condition of the internal organ characterized by thinking modes. The thin difference between the two is that the *antaḥkaraṇa* is a substance and mind is only a mode of that inner sense. The dissolution of mind is the state when the *antaḥkaraṇa*, by giving up the distortive modes, assumes the form of restraint (*nirodha*). It implies two processes of one and the same substance called *antaḥkaraṇa*: doing away with the distortive thinking modes and assuming the form of restraint. It is like the pot assuming its clay-form after giving up its superimposed form such as pot, saucer and the like. Vidyāraṇya cites the *Yoga-sūtra* (3.9): “When the mind (*citta*) is united with that moment of restraint in which (moment) there is disappearance of the impressions of distractive modes and increase of impressions of restraint, that is known as the state of restraint (*nirodha-pariṇāma*).” This state is also known as *asamprajñāta-samādhi*.

Dissolution through Restraint

According to the *Yoga-sūtra*, there are two types of modes for the *antaḥkaraṇa*. One is distraction (*vyutthāna-vṛtti*) and the other is restraint (*nirodha-vṛtti*). The sense experiences and the thinking process create modes of distraction. These modes leave their impressions (*samskāras*) in the *antaḥkaraṇa* and disappear. Even in the absence of sense objects, these impressions distract one’s meditation.

The practice of yogic meditation creates modes of restraint. These too leave their impressions in the *antaḥkaraṇa* and disappear. Those modes of restraint (*nirodha-vṛtti*) can replace only the modes of distraction (*vyutthāna-vṛtti*) and not the impressions of distraction. The impressions of distraction can be replaced only by opposite impressions called the impressions of restraint. Due to the long practice of the modes of restraint, more and more impressions of restraints are caused. In due course, the constant practice of modes of impressions disappears, and impressions created by these modes take over the control of the modes. These impressions called *nirodha-saṁskāra* not only destroy the impressions of distractions, but also sustain the modes of impressions. Thus, this state of mind (i.e. mode of restraint), called *saṁskāra-śeṣa*, is wholly maintained by the impressions of restraint alone. This state suggests that even the mind is not existent. These moments, in which modes are maintained by the impressions alone, are said to be the moments of restraint (*nirodha-kṣaṇa*). The condition of mind at this moment is called *nirodha-pariṇāma*. Vidyāraṇya describes this state as *mano-nāśa*, which is dissolution of mind.

Vidyāraṇya gives a slightly different account of the above in another context.³¹ The mind is a non-eternal substance having many parts and is capable of undergoing various modifications like substances such as lac, gold, etc. The citta, as identified with *antaḥkaraṇa*, is of the nature of three guṇas, namely, sattva, rajas and tamas, and exhibits three kinds of modes: light (*prakāśa*), activity (*pravṛtti*) and delusion (*moha*). Even though the inner organ has three guṇas, its basic material cause is only sattva. The rajas and tamas are adventitious. This is the reason why sattva alone remains

as the native form of the mind of the realized person after rajas and tamas are removed. This sāt̥tvic state of mind is able to attain the state of one-pointedness (*ekāgratā*) because of the removal of *rajoguṇa* which is the cause of the unsteadiness of the mind. The same sāt̥tvic mind is said to be subtle (*sūkṣma*) because of the absence of tamas, which is the cause of gross objects. The mind, which is one-pointed and subtle, becomes capable of reflecting the Self. Vidyāraṇya gives two examples to explain the necessity of one-pointedness and subtlety of the mind. The inferior or superior quality of a gem cannot be determined with the help of a lamp whose flame is oscillating due to breeze.³² In the same way, a piece of fine cloth can be stitched with a needle and not with a crowbar. The first example is to say that the rājasic (oscillating) mind cannot determine the real nature of the Self, and the second is to say that a tāmasic mind cannot know the nature of the truth, as it is too gross. A sāt̥tvic mind alone which is free from rajas and tamas can know the truth. The rajas and tamas elements of the mind are responsible for modes of distraction (*vyutthāna-vṛtti*). The dissolution of mind would mean the suspension of rājasic and tāmasic elements from the mind, and when those two elements are removed, the mind remains in its native nature, i.e. sāt̥tvic form and is characterised by subtlety (*sūkṣma*) and one-pointedness (*ekāgratā*). This mind alone can comprehend the real nature of the Self and manifest bliss.

In the *Pūrṇānandendu-kaumudī*, we come across a fine illustration through which the dissolution of the mind is explained. The sea-water, which is salty and wavy, assumes the forms of the cloud because of the heat of the sun. The cloud comes down as rain, and the rainwater collected tastes

sweet and is free from waves.³³ *Mano-nāśa* is similar to the collected rainwater free from tamas and rajas. This mind is separated from rajas and tamas through the yogic practices, just as the sea-water is separated from salt by the heat of the sun. Such a mind, which exists only in the impressions, is not only free from all external disturbances, but also manifests the bliss of the Self.

5. Relevance of *Mano-nāśa* to *Vāsanā-kṣaya*

What is meant by the elimination of impressions is the process leading to disintegration of the mind. As has been pointed out, the mind can dwell upon objects only along the course of *vāsanās*. *Vāsanās* are the fuelling energy for the mind to run after objects. When these *vāsanās* are eliminated, mind too recedes to its source, like the flame of a lamp when oil is removed. Hence, through the obliteration of latent impressions, the dissolution of the mind is accomplished. Even then, in order to safeguard the conditions of the obliteration of the latent impressions, the dissolution of the mind is necessary. If the mind is not dissolved, then either by perception or by contemplation one is led to the enjoyment of objects. Through the enjoyment of objects impressions may be created again. So, if effort is directed to accomplish the dissolution of the mind, the obliteration of the *vāsanās* is secured effortlessly and permanently.

Mano-nigraha — a Possibility

The dissolution of the mind may be a necessary prerequisite for attaining the state of *jīvan-mukti*, but one has to find out whether it is possible to control the mind at all. Vidyāraṇya cites the authority of Janaka, Vasiṣṭha and

Gauḍapāda to substantiate this idea of mind control.³⁴ In the *Gītā*, Arjuna states that it is impossible to control the mind. He says, "The wind is ever moving, impetuous, powerful, and very strong and hence it cannot be controlled. In the same way the mind is also restless, impetuous, powerful and hence cannot be controlled."³⁵ Vidyāraṇya says that what is put forward by Arjuna is the surface level analysis of the mind without the employment of reason. All that it means is that by force one cannot control the mind. There are two types of control: *haṭha-nigraha* and *krama-nigraha*. *Haṭha-nigraha* is the method of controlling the mind by achieving control over the senses (*golaka*).³⁶ By applying force over the *golaka*, one can control the movements of the senses and organs. But this cannot be applied in the case of mind, as the functioning of the mind does not depend on the *golakas*.

Gradual Controlling of the Mind (Krama-nigraha)

Vidyāraṇya prescribes what is called gradual controlling of the mind.³⁷ He enunciates four steps for actualizing such a possibility. 1. *adhyātma-vidyā*, the knowledge of the Self, 2. *sādhu-saṅgama*, coming into contact with the wise people, 3. *vāsanā-kṣaya*, elimination of latent impressions, and 4. *prāṇa-nigraha*, the control of the breath. In keeping with the tradition of Yoga and Advaita, samādhi has been eulogised as the *rāja-mārga*, the royal path, to achieve the state of dissolution of the mind.³⁸ In his *Jīvanmukti-viveka*, Vidyāraṇya deals with this at length to show the importance of samādhi as a means to controlling one's mind.

Adhyātma-vidyā to Achieve Mano-nāśa

It is in the form of having understanding that the Self alone is real and that the entire not-Self is not real. The entire not-Self can be known, can be made the object of one's knowledge, whereas the Self cannot be known, cannot be objectified. After being convinced of this, the mind recedes to its source like the fire when fuel is absent. The mind, Vidyāraṇya maintains, owns objects if they are knowable and pragmatic. It does not objectify things like shell-silver or cold-fire. When the limitation of wrong cognitions is noticed, a person gets convinced of the limitation of the not-Self and of the permanence and non-objectifiability of the Self.³⁹ Vidyāraṇya says that the non-objectifiability of the Self is because of the inability on the part of the mind, and that the nature of the mind being understood, the mind recognizes its own limitations, and hence recedes to its source. This is the inward journey of the mind, and without the application of force it gets dissolved effortlessly.

Association with the Wise (Sādhu-saṅgama)

For people who do not grasp the truth easily or those who are forgetful, reality can be comprehended, and mind can be brought under control by association with wise people. In this method, there is the minimum of effort on the part of the aspirant. As mentioned earlier, impure vāsanās are impediments to the attainment of the state of *jīvan-mukti*. The idea of association with the wise does not come to a person who thinks that he already knows (*vidyā-mada*).⁴⁰ Such people hesitate to go to a wise man to seek knowledge. Such aspirants should first eliminate these impure vāsanās through discrimination, and then they will automatically be drawn

towards the company of wise men. The company of the wise paves the way for the dissolution of the mind.

Control of the Breath (Prāṇa-nirodha)

For aspirants who have strong vāsanās that do not get subdued by discrimination, the practice of the control of the breath is prescribed. Since mind and breath are related with each other, the control of the one necessarily leads to the control of the other. According to Vidyāraṇya, there is reciprocity among prāṇa, vāsanā and manas, and these are interrelated with each other. The functioning of the mind is effected by both prāṇa and vāsanā. Breath gives the energy for the mind to function, and the vāsanā provides the direction in which the mind should think.⁴¹ So, if the breath is controlled, then automatically vāsanās are also controlled. When breath and vāsanās are controlled, naturally the mind is controlled. In other words, when the aspirant cannot get rid of his vāsanās such as pride of learning and the like, the dissolution of the mind is not possible. Hence, one has to adopt the method of controlling the breath, which has direct effect on one's mind control.

Vidyāraṇya prescribes prāṇāyāma, yogic posture and diet restrictions to control the flow of prāṇa. On the basis of the *Laghu-yoga-vāsiṣṭha*,⁴² Vidyāraṇya says that for adopting the prāṇāyāma method for breath control, one should go to a preceptor. One should practise āsanās in accordance with the rules laid down by the Pātañjala Yoga. Meditation creates unseen results (*adrṣṭa*) and is conducive to the accomplishment of āsanās (yogic postures), and that should be followed by the prāṇāyāma, as prescribed in Yoga texts.

6. Samādhi—the Pre-eminent Means for Mano-nāśa

As pointed out earlier, Vidyāraṇya gives enormous importance to concentration of the mind as a means to liberation. He quotes Vyāsa to enumerate the states of mind as *kṣipta* (raving), *mūḍha* (dormancy), *vikṣipta* (distraction), *ekāgratā* (one-pointedness) and *niruddha* (restraint).⁴³ When the mind is preoccupied with demoniac values and worldly impressions such as *loka-vāsanā*, *śāstra-vāsanā*, and *deha-vāsanā*, the state of mind is called *kṣipta*. The state in which the mind is under the influence of sleep, sloth, etc. is known as dormancy (*mūḍha*). The mind, which is mostly in the state of raving, and occasionally becomes sātत्वic, is in the state of *vikṣipta* (distraction).

In the states of *kṣipta* and *mūḍha*, there is no scope even to suspect the presence of concentration. In the case of distraction, there is the possibility of contemplation, but it is overpowered by distraction, and hence it cannot be said to be concentrated. Since contemplation exists for a few moments in a series of distractions, it dies out as soon as it occurs.

Vidyāraṇya, and following him the commentary *Pūrṇānandendu-kaumudī*, explore one more reason for these states not being conducive to Yoga. In *moha* and *kṣipta*, the mind is purely under the influence of rajas and tamas. In *vikṣipta* it is predominantly rājasic, and is occasionally influenced by sātत्वic elements, which trigger a temporary concentration. Hence the state of distraction (*vikṣipta*) is not included within Yoga as a state of samādhi.

Ekāgratā or Samprajñāta-samādhi—Concentration

The state of mind which reveals an object in its real

form removes all physical and mental pains, and loosens the bonds of karma; and in this state if a person is absorbed in himself, then he is known to be in *samprajñāta-samādhi*.⁴⁴ It is known as *ekāgratā*. The state of mind in which all these modes are restrained is known as *asamprajñāta-samādhi*. This is otherwise known as *niruddha*.

Vidyāraṇya presents the concept of samādhi in two ways, *ekāgra-bhūmi* and *niruddha-bhūmi*. The state of *samprajñāta-samādhi* refers to *ekāgra-bhūmi*, and the state of *asamprajñāta-samādhi* refers to *niruddha-bhūmi*. The *ekāgra-bhūmi* is defined by Patañjali in his *Yoga-sūtra* as “that transformative state of mind in which the present mode is similar to the preceding modes which are subsided.”⁴⁵ That is, if the content of both the preceding and the succeeding modes are one and the same, then it is said to be one-pointedness of the mind. The mind influenced by the tendency of rajas dwells upon different and varied objects one after another. By constant yogic practices, many-pointedness of the mind diminishes gradually, and gives rise to one-pointedness. This state of one-pointedness is common to the states of mind of *dhyāna*, *dhāraṇā* and *samādhi*. The *Yoga-sūtra* defines samādhi as “concentration in which the object of absorption alone is cognised, and the other factors of meditator and meditation are not there.”⁴⁶ In his *Upadeśa-sāhasrī*, Śaṅkara explains the content of concentration as: “The highest (Brahman)—which is of the nature of seeing, like the sky, ever-shining, unborn, one alone, imperishable, stainless, all-pervading, and non-dual—‘I am’ is ever released. I am seeing, pure and by nature changeless. There is by nature no object for me. Being the Infinite completely filled in front, across, up, down, and in all directions, I am

unborn and abiding in myself.”⁴⁷ Vidyāraṇya raises a *prima facie* view here. The above verses refer to concentration of a conscious variety. But they are cited to explain the state of concentration only. Concentration is the means, and conscious concentration is the goal. The goal cannot be cited to explain the means. To explain this, Vidyāraṇya gives an example to show that at times there is no difference between means and the end like a student and a teacher. Ordinarily, the teacher is the means to produce a competent student. A student becomes a teacher after he learns the subject properly. Similarly, even though the content is the same, i.e. concentration, because of difference in their perceptibility, the states of *dhyāna*, *dhāraṇā*, and *samprajñāta-samādhi* are taken to be different. These three are the states of the mind, and hence are internal to the mind. The five auxiliaries of yama, niyama, etc. are the external ones. The conscious concentration is of two types: first, the concentration which is practised in order to accomplish occult powers, and the second, which is practised to attain liberation. The persons interested in powers such as floating in the air, disappearing from sight, etc. concentrate on the physical elements, and the like. Patañjali states that these are the obstacles on the way to liberation.⁴⁸ The aspirants for liberation should avoid such type of concentration.⁴⁹ They should concentrate on the Self, which leads them to the obliteration of latent impressions and dissolution of the mind.

Nirodha-samādhi—Restraint—Asamprajñāta-samādhi

Patañjali defines this state as the one wherein the mind is united with that moment of restraint in which there is disappearance of the impressions of distractive modes and increase of the impressions of restraint (*nirodha* or *asampra-*

jñāta-samādhi).⁵⁰ The *asamprajñāta-samādhi* is that state of concentration which exists in the form of impressions alone, and is caused by the constant practice of cessation of all modes. This state is also known as *nirbīja-samādhi*. In this state, the mind exists only in the form of *saṁskāras*, and it leads to the destruction of mind without any seed to sprout again. There will not be any further arousal of mind which sprouts into desire, and thereby leads to further *saṁskāra*. This state refers not only to concentration (*samādhi*), but also to *samprajñāta-samādhi*, *asamprajñāta-samādhi* and *nirbīja-samādhi*.⁵¹ Vidyāraṇya cites the authority of the *Bhagavad-gītā* to substantiate this point.

By giving up all desires, which are the products of one's volition, restraining all the senses from all quarters by the mind, slowly he should withdraw by holding on to firm reason. Keeping his mind established in the Self, let him not think of anything; and by restraining the unsteady mind from all possible causes, he should bring it back to the direct control of the Self.⁵²

Time and again, Kṛṣṇa repeats the idea of mind control:

Oh, Kaunteya, the mind is indeed restless and difficult to curb; but it can be brought under control by repeated practice (of meditation) and by the exercise of dispassion. Yoga is difficult of achievement for one who does not have the mind under control; but by him who strives and is self-controlled, it can be easily attained through practice. This is my conviction.⁵³

7. Impediments for the Dissolution of the Mind

After dealing with the means to the dissolution of the mind, Vidyāraṇya utters a word of caution about the possible obstacles for controlling the mind. Those are *laya* (lassitude), *vikṣepa* (distraction), *kaṣāya* (strong *vāsanās*) and *samprāpta* (equipoise). In the *Māṇḍūkya-kārikā*, Gauḍapāda deals with these impediments, and shows the way to get rid of these incidental obstacles so that one would be able to realise one's own Self.⁵⁴

Laya - The mind, which is withdrawn from its objects for the purpose of restraint, becomes prone to lassitude or sleep due to habit. At such moments, it should be activated either by effort or by keeping off the causes of sleep.

Vikṣepa - Once the mind is alert after sleep, there is a strong tendency to go towards the objects of the world. All the distractions should be controlled, and the mind should be brought back to equipoise.

Kaṣāya - The mind entertains strong likings and dislikings towards the objects of the world. These are deeply rooted in a person, and the entire thinking faculty is contaminated by these factors, which are called *kaṣāya*. There is possibility that these may appear in the state of *samādhi*, and occupy the state of concentration. One should carefully discern these states as the strong impressions and not a state of *samādhi*, even if those appear to be so.

Samprāpta - Once the states of *laya* and *vikṣepa* are done away with, the aspirant is ready for *tattva-jñāna*. But one should not confuse this with the final state, since it is the state of reflected bliss alone, not the real bliss, which is Brahman itself. Thus, when one diligently gets over all these

obstacles, the mind abides in the supreme Self, which is Brahman itself.

Gauḍapāda says that, when the mind is not withdrawn or distracted, then being in the state of equipoise and without any modal presentation, it (the mind) rests in Brahman.⁵⁵

Two Varieties of Mano-nāśa

Vidyāraṇya points out two types of dissolution of the mind, *svarūpa-nāśa* and *arūpa-nāśa*. *Svarūpa-nāśa* is dissolution of the mind when it is in the form in which the modes of the mind are destroyed and not the mind itself. The mind exists in the form of impressions. In the second type, even the impressions are destroyed. The first type leads the aspirant to *jīvan-mukti*, and the second, to *videha-mukti*.

Vidyāraṇya deals with two kinds of experience leading to the state of a *jīvan-mukta*. For the first, there is the experience of the world of duality with the recognition that it is unreal. This state is spoken of as *dvaita-mithyātva*. The other is the state of absence of the experience of duality, which is *dvaita-apratīti* or *dvaita-pratibhāsa-abhāva*. In the *Bhagavad-gītā*, we notice the description of these two stages in the terms “*sthītaprajña*” (the person whose Self-knowledge is firm) and “*samādhista*” (the knower of truth who is established in *samādhi*). Vidyāraṇya, though he recognises the role of *dvaita-mithyātva*, favours *dvaita-pratibhāsa-abhāva* as the superior state of the knower of the truth.⁵⁶

8. Conclusion

In fine, it may be said that Advaita gives enormous importance to the concept of knowledge as the means to

liberation. Vidyāraṇya justifies Advaitic position with examples chosen from the dialogues of Rāma and Vasiṣṭha to substantiate this traditional viewpoint. His contribution lies in analysing the concept of jñāna in the context of *jīvan-mukti*. Since knowledge is the sole means to mukti, there cannot be any gradation in mukti as superior or inferior. Nevertheless, in keeping with the stage in which it occurs, it can be divided into two, viz. liberation after the fall of the body (*videha-mukti*) and that which is attained when one is alive (*jīvan-mukti*). He treats the two as synonymous on the ground that a *jīvan-mukta* does not experience the presence of the body due to *prārabdha-karma*.⁵⁷ On the basis of the śruti text, "Being liberated, one becomes free,"⁵⁸ Vidyāraṇya asserts that in *jīvan-mukti* and *videha-mukti* the content of mukti is the same. Thereafter he elaborately deals with the idea of *vidvat-sannyāsa* and the process one has to go through to become a *jīvan-mukta*. Vidyāraṇya points out that even a great *vidvat-sannyāsin* like Yājñavalkya renounces the world to become a *jīvan-mukta*.⁵⁹ In explaining the means to *jīvan-mukti*, he is thoroughly convinced that *vidvat-sannyāsa* causes *jīvan-mukti* through the dissolution of the mind and obliteration of impressions. Here lies the special contribution of Vidyāraṇya. He holds that *prārabdha-karma* is more powerful than knowledge, and human efforts in the form of practice of Yoga are still more powerful than *prārabdha-karma*. The whole endeavour of Vidyāraṇya is to clearly spell out the possibility and practicability of *jīvan-mukti*; and this, indeed, is his great achievement.

In recent days, we had great spiritual personalities who exemplified *jīvan-mukti*. It would be proper to cite the example of Ramakrishna Paramahansa, who tried to keep

awake in the lower plane to get rid of the state of *laya* (lassitude) so that he could be available to others and to perform the day-to-day activities.

One day I (Swami Turiyananda) arrived at Daksineswara when the Master was having his dinner. A number of bowls containing various food items were placed before him. Someone might have thought this as unbecoming luxury, fit only for a rājasic life. The Master at once said: "Well, the tendency of my mind is always towards the infinite. It is by such rājasic devices that I hold it down to the lower plane. Otherwise, I could not talk to you."⁶⁰

Ramana Maharshi was having the similar type of experience. He was blessed with Self-knowledge even without *śravaṇa* (hearing of the *mahāvākyas*), and revelled in absolute bliss. Once he is reported to have told:

At Tiruvannamalai as I listen to the *Rbhu-gītā* and other works, I ... discovered that these books were analysing and naming what I had personally felt intuitively without analysis and name. In the passage of the books, I should describe my mental or spiritual condition after the awakening as *śuddha-manas* or *vijñāna*, i.e. the intuition of the illumined.⁶¹

The above passage testifies to the fact that in a *jīvan-mukta* too there is the presence of a minutest trace of ego, which helps him to reach to the people, and share his knowledge with others who are in the world of *avidyā*. In their state of *vyutthāna*, when they come out of the state of

samādhi, they act and interact in the world for the purpose of *loka-saṅgraha*. What Ramakrishna Paramahansa says in this connection is worth quoting:

A man cannot get rid of the ego and the consciousness that the body is the soul. The ego of the incarnations returns to them when they come down from the plane of samādhi, but then it is the ego of knowledge or the ego of devotion. Through the ego of knowledge, they teach men. Śaṅkarācārya kept the ego of knowledge.⁶²

In his *Jīvanmukti-viveka*, Vidyāraṇya shows that the ideal of *jīvan-mukti* is neither utopian nor wishful thinking. It has the sanction of śruti, and can be experienced transcending the ordinary states of “I” and “mine”. In his *Brahma-sūtra-bhāṣya*, Śaṅkara defends the idea of *jīvan-mukti* saying that “It is not a matter for dispute at all whether the body of him who knows Brahman continues to exist for some time or not. For how can one man contest the fact of another possessing the knowledge of Brahman—vouched for by his heart’s conviction—and at the same time continuing to enjoy bodily existence?”⁶³

NOTES

1. When one says “I am six feet high” and “the body is conscious” there is mutual erroneous identification between the Self and the body. The consciousness, which is present in the body, belongs to the Self and the height of six-feet, which is attributed to the Self, belongs to the body. See *Adhyāsa-bhāṣya* of Śaṅkara.
2. *na ca eṣa sāksātkāraḥ śabdasya pramāṇasya phalam*, *Bhāmātī* on the *Brahma-sūtra*, 1.1.1.

3. The relationship that exists between the three means and *jīvan-mukti* is not like the one between *Jyotiṣṭhoma* and *Svarga*. The relation between karma and heaven is positive. But in the case of *jīvan-mukti*, it is negative.
4. These two are known as *samakāla-abhyāsa* and *cirakāla-abhyāsa*. Even though three means are enumerated, Vidyāraṇya uses the word "sādhana" in the singular. The *Pūrṇānandendu-kaumudī* says that though the means are three in number, they are not the independent means to *jīvan-mukti*. The simultaneity makes the three means as "three in one" and hence the author uses it in the singular.
5. *mithaḥ kāraṇatām gatvā, Jīvanmukti-viveka (JMV), p.38.* (S. Subrahmanya Sastri and T.R. Srinivasa Ayyangar, (ed), Adyar Library and Research centre, Madras, 1978).
6. *kenāpi dvāreṇa punaḥ punas-tatvānusmaraṇamiti brūmaḥ, ibid., p.42.*
7. In the *Yoga-vāsiṣṭha*, Vasiṣṭha says that these three means are inter-related; knowledge dawns when the impressions are dissolved and impressions are dissolved when knowledge dawns. Following the lines of Vasiṣṭha, Vidyāraṇya says that the *vāsanā-kṣaya* and *mano-nāśa* are direct means to the *jīvan-mukti* whereas knowledge is subordinate. He gives a reference to śruti where knowledge is the cause of *vāsanā-kṣaya*. Vidyāraṇya makes a regressive analysis of this standpoint. He feels that it is important that the Vidvat-sannyāsin should do away with saṁsāra, and that is the result of knowledge (*jñāna-phala*). As T.M.P. Mahadevan says, "The important problem in Advaita is not realising the truth, but unrealising what is untruth" (From a conversation with Professor R. Balasubramanian). See also *Laghuyoga-vāsiṣṭha, (LYV), p.112, JMV, p.40:*
Laghuyoga-vāsiṣṭha, (LYV), p.112, JMV, p.40:
yāvan na vāsanānāśas tāvat tattvāgamaḥ kutaḥ
yāvan na tattvasamprāptir na tāvad vāsanā-kṣayaḥ.
8. *JMV, p. 10.*
9. *Pañcadaśī, 6.70.*

10. On the basis of the *Kahola-brāhmaṇa* of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, 3.5.1, Vidyāraṇya tries to show the state of *jīvan-mukti* to be higher than that of *vidvat-sannyāsa*. The Upaniṣad says: "Having realized that Ātman, the Brāhmaṇas renounce all desires for offspring, wealth and the worlds and go about as mendicants." Here the word "*viditvā*" (having known) implies *vidvat-sannyāsa*. For this Vidyāraṇya has the basis in the later Upaniṣads. *JMV.*, p. 5.
11. *lāṅgalaṃ jīvanam, Pūrṇānandendu-kaumudī*, a commentary on *Jīvanmukhi-viveka*, by Acyutaraya Modak, edited by H.N. Apte, Anandasram Press, Poona, 1916, p. 103.
12. *ācāryavān puruṣo veda, Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, 6.14.2.
13. *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*, 2.2.8.
14. While commenting on the Smṛti text, "*jñānādeva tu kaivalyam prāpyate yena mucyate*," Vidyāraṇya says "*kevalasyātmano bhāvaḥ kaivalyam, dehādirahitatvam, tacca jñānādeva prāpyate*." *JMV*, p.45. See "*sadehatvasya ajñānakalpitatvena jñānaikā-nivartyatvāt samyag-darśananīṣṭhānām sannyāsīnām sadyo-mukir uktā*," *SB on Gītā*, 5.26.
15. *Brahma-siddhi*, p.130, See R. Balasubramanian, *Advaita Vedānta*, University of Madras, 1976, pp. 262 - 268.
16. *San̄kṣepa-sārīraka*, 4.38. See N. Veezhinathan, 1964, pp.139 - 142.
17. *Siddhānta-leśa-saṅgraha* of Appayyadīkṣita, ed. S.R. Krishnamurthy Sastri and N. Veezhinathan, 1973, pp. 365.
18. *JMV*, p. 45.
19. In *Advaita-siddhi*, Madhusūdana Sarasvatī holds the view that the nature of Śuddha Brahman is transcending the modal knowledge of Brahman generated through *akhaṇḍākāra-vṛtti*. The speciality of *akhaṇḍākāra-vṛtti* is that it not only destroys nescience but also destroys itself, i.e. its aspect of being a mode. *Advaita-siddhi*, p. 234.
20. *JMV*, p.52; *LYV*, 28.48.
21. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 4.4.5 and 4.4.2.

22. *vāsanā dvividhā proktā śuddhā ca malinā tathā malinā janmahetuḥ syāt śuddhā janmavināśinī, LYV.1.10.*
23. *JMV, p. 14.*
24. *LYV, 18.20, JMV, p.67.*
25. *JMV, p.67, LYV, 18.20-23.*
26. *JMV, 82.*
27. *tatra pratyaikaikatānatā dhyānam, Yoga-sūtra 3.2, tadevārthamātra-nirbhāsaṁ svarūpaśūnyamiva samādhiḥ, Yoga-sūtra 3.3. JMV, p.82.*
28. *yo jāgarti suṣuptisthaḥ yasya jāgranna vidyate yasya nirvāsano bodhaḥ sa jīvanmukta ucyate, LYV, 5.92.*
29. *yāvanna tattvavijñānaṁ tāvaccittaśamaḥ kutaḥ yāvanna cittopaśamo na tāvat tattvavedanam. LYV, 25.111.*
30. *pradīpajvālāsantānavad vṛttisantānarūpeṇa pariṇamamānaṁ antaḥkaraṇadravyaṁ mananātmakatvāt mana ityucyate. JMV, p.38.*
31. *JMV, pp. 63-65.*
32. *na khalu vāyunā dodhūyamānena pradīpena maṇimuktādīlakṣaṇāni nirdhārayitum śakyate, JMV, p. 66.*
33. *Pūrṇānandendu-kaumudī, p. 294.*
34. *JMV, pp. 86-90.*
35. *Bhagavad-gītā, 6.17.*
36. *Golaka* refers to those physical and psychological systems through which the faculties of the sense (*jñānendriyas*) and the faculties of action (*karmendriyas*) function.
37. *krama-nigrahe cādhyātmavidyāprāptyādaya evopāyāḥ, JMV, p. 89.*
38. *Pūrṇānandendu-kaumudī, p. 294*
39. *sā ca vidyā dṛśyamithyātvaṁ dṛgvastunaḥ svaprakāśakatvaṁ ca bodhayati, Ibid, p. 89.*
40. This is referred to in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* in the dialogue of Śvetaketu and Uddālaka, when the son Śvetaketu thinks that there is nothing to be known beyond what he has studied.
41. In the *Laghuyoga-vāsiṣṭha*, Vasiṣṭha says: "The flow of breath depends upon *vāsanā*, and *vāsāna* depends upon the breath. These

two stand in the relation of the seed and the sprout to the tree of mind." See *LYN*, 28.65.

42. *JMV*, p.91.
43. *Yogasūtra-bhāṣya*, 1.1.
44. *JMV*, p. 99.
45. *Yoga-sūtras*, 3.12.; *JMV*, p.99.
46. *Ibid.*, 3.3.
47. *Upadeśa-sāhasrī*, 10.1-2.
48. *Ibid.*, 3.38.
49. *muktihetusamādhivirodhitvāt na asmābhiḥ tatrādarah*, *JMV*, p. 102.
50. *Ibid.*, 3.9.
51. *Yoga-vārtika* on the *Yoga-sūtra* 1.1.
52. *Bhagavad-gīta*, 6.24-26.
53. *Ibid.*, 6. 35-36.
54. *Māṇḍūkya-kārikā*, 3. 42-46.
55. *yadā na liyate cittam na ca vikṣipyate punaḥ
anaṅginam anābhāsam niṣpannam brahma tat tadā*, *Ibid*, 3.46.
56. In *JMV*, Vidyāraṇya extols the *brahmavid-variṣṭha* type of *Jīvan-mukta* as superior to all other kinds. He is superior because he never experiences duality at all.
57. In a different context, Vidyāraṇya says that *videha-mukti* occurs even before the fall of the present body. He says that the condition of *videha-mukti* comes about the very moment knowledge appears. For him the word "deha" in the term "videha-mukti" refers to only future bodies and not to the present body. *JMV*, p. 45.
58. *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, 5.1.
59. *JMV*, p. 72.
60. Swami Chetanananda ed., *Ramakrishna as We saw Him*, Advaita Ashram, Calcutta, 1992, p. 191.
61. B.V. Narasimhaswami, *Self Realisation*, Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai, 1976, p. 24.

62. *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, Chennai, 2000, p. 700.
63. *bādhitamapi tu mithyājñānaṁ dvicandrajñānavat saṁskāraśāt kiñcitkālam-anuvartata ea. api ca naivātra vivaditavyaṁ brahma-vidā kiñcitkālam śarīraṁ dhriyata vā na vā dhriyata iti. katham hyekasya svahṛdayapratyayaṁ dehadhāraṇaṁ cāpareṇa pratikṣeptuṁ śakyate. Brahma-sūtra-bhāṣya of Śaṅkara on Anārabdhādhikaraṇa, 4.1.15.*

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संसाराध्वनि तापभानुकिरणप्रोद्भूतदाहव्यथा-

खिन्नानां जलकाङ्क्षया मरुभुवि भ्रान्त्या परिभ्राम्यताम् ।

अत्यासन्नसुधाम्बुधिं सुखकरं ब्रह्माद्वयं दर्शय-

न्त्येषा शङ्करभारती विजयते निर्वाणसन्दायिनी ॥

*saṁsārādhvani tāpabhānukiraṇaprodbhūtadāhavyathā-
khinnānām jalakāṅkṣayā marubhuvi bhrāntyā*

paribhrāmyatām

atyāsannasudhāmbudhim sukhakaram brahmādvayam

darśayant-

yeṣā śaṅkarabhārati vijayate nirvāṇasandāyini.

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