

The VOICE of ŚĀNKAARA



Editor :

R. Balasubramanian

eṣā śaṅkara-bhāratī vijayate
nirvāṇa-sandāyinī

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

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ŚĀṆKARĀ

Śaṅkara-bhāratī

Editor

R. Balasubramanian

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HOMAGE TO ŚAṄKARA

[185]

• नत्वा विशुद्धविज्ञानं शङ्करं करुणानिधिम् ।

भाष्यं प्रसन्नगम्भीरं तत्प्रणीतं विभज्यते ॥

natvā viśuddhavijñānaṃ śaṅkaraṃ karuṇānidhim

bhāṣyam prasannagambhīraṃ tatpraṇītaṃ vibhajyate.

Having paid obeisance to Śrī Śaṅkara, of wisdom pure, of grace the ocean, we proceed to analyse the clear, yet deep commentary written by him.

 THUS SPAKE ŚAṄKARA

THE LIGHT OF LIGHTS*

1. The Epistemic Problem

There are two basic questions which we raise in epistemology. They are: "How do we know?" and "What do we know?" The first question relates to the sources of knowledge (*pramāṇas*), and the second question, to the objects of knowledge (*prameyas*). Perception (*pratyakṣa*), inference (*anumāna*), verbal testimony (*śabda*), etc. are the *pramāṇas* through which we know the objects. The discussion that follows is not about *pramāṇas* such as perception, inference, verbal testimony, etc., but about the source of all *pramāṇas*.

Advaita holds that Ātman or the Self is cit or consciousness. It does not matter whether we use the term "self" or "consciousness", because both the terms refer to one and the same entity. A human being (*jīva*) has not only the body, the senses, and the mind, but also the Self, which is nothing but consciousness. According to Advaita, all the *pramāṇas* such as perception are

* A free rendering of excerpts from Śaṅkara's commentary on the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, 4.3, with an introduction of the problem and conclusion, by R. Balasubramanian.

able to function as sources of knowledge by the support of consciousness. We can convey this idea in another way. Usually we say that the senses and the mind, which are material (*jada*), are the organs through which we know the things of the world. If they are material like a piece of stone, how can they function as the organs of knowledge? No material object can know or reveal anything; and if the mind and the senses are material, then they cannot know or reveal anything. If so, how is it, one may ask, that these entities play the role of instruments of cognition? Advaita has an answer to this important epistemological question. Though these organs cannot reveal anything by themselves, still they function as instruments of cognition by borrowing the light, the revealing power, of consciousness. Consciousness by its very nature can reveal on its own; also, it can reveal through the mind and the senses as the case may be. Ordinarily, we say that through the light of the sun, or of the moon, or of the fire, or of the lamp, that we see things. In these cases we speak of light as having the power of illumination, power of revealing things; and this kind of ordinary speech is in conformity with our day-to-day experience. Strictly speaking, light as such cannot reveal things, or generate the knowledge of things though it facilitates the organs to know things. Similarly, the mind and the senses, which are material, cannot, on their own, reveal things, or generate the knowledge of things. It is consciousness alone that has the power of illumination. It is, therefore, described as the "light of lights" (*jyotiṣām jyotiḥ*), as the ultimate presupposition of all knowledge. The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, 4.3, contains the dialogue between King Janaka and the sage Yājñavalkya on this problem.

2. Śaṅkara on the Janaka–Yājñavalkya Dialogue

Initiating the dialogue, Janaka asks the question: "Yājñavalkya, what serves as the light for a man?"

Yājñavalkya replies: "The light of the sun, O Emperor," and adds: "It is through the light of the sun that he sits, goes out,

works, and returns." Like the sun, the moon, and the fire, he goes on to say, speech also provides the light and enables us to perform our activities.

Thereafter the King asks: "When the sun and the moon have both set, when the fire has gone out, and when speech has stopped, Yājñavalkya, what exactly serves as the light for a man?"

The Sage replies: "The Self serves as his light. It is through the light of the Self that he sits, goes out, works, and returns."

Śaṅkara in his commentary on the text brings out the nature and function of the Self vis-à-vis the organs of cognition, which are helped by the external light of the luminaries such as the sun. In the waking state, the eyes and the other organs, which are out-going, are helped by the external light of the sun with the result that a person is able to live and move in the world. So, we say that in the waking state a light extraneous to his body, which is an assemblage of parts, serves as the light for him. Just as a person sits, moves, and transacts his business of life in the waking state, even so he sits, moves, and does various activities in the dream state. In the dream state the sun we are familiar with is absent, and so a person who performs various activities in dream must be helped by some other light. What, then, is the light for him? When a person wakes up from sleep, he remembers his sleep experience and also claims that he slept happily and knew nothing at that time. There must have been some light in sleep with the help of which he was able to have the experience of happiness at that time. Had he not experienced happiness in sleep, he would not be able to recollect it when he wakes up from sleep. Therefore, there exists some extraneous light both in the dream and deep sleep states. What is that light?

Let us suppose that two persons are trekking in a jungle and that they get separated at a particular place. There is neither the sun nor the moon, not even the stars, to give them light at that time. When one of them shouts calling the name of the other person, the latter hears his speech and guesses the direction from

which the sound comes for the purpose of locating him. Sound, which is the object of hearing, stimulates the ear, i.e. the auditory sense, and activates the mind of the person who hears the sound. In a situation like this, we say that speech serves as the light. One may ask: "How can speech be called a light, for it is not known to be such?" Yājñavalkya answers this question. He says that, since a man lives and moves in the world helped by speech, it is spoken of as a light. Śaṅkara adds that what is true of speech is equally true of other organs. The mention of the light of speech includes odour, etc. For, when odour and the rest also help the nose and other organs, a man is impelled to act, or restrained from action, and so on. So, they also help the body and the organs.

What is the light which acts when speech has stopped? Yājñavalkya's answer is: "The Self serves as his light. It is through the light of the Self that he sits, goes out, works, and returns."

At this point Śaṅkara elucidates in his commentary how the Self serves as the light. He says: "By the word 'self' is meant that light which is different from one's body and organs, and illumines them like the external light provided by the sun, etc., but is itself not illumined by anything else." The Self is different from the body, the senses, and the mind; and it is located in the body. We have already seen how the senses and the body, being helped by an extraneous light such as the one coming from the sun, are engaged in different kinds of activities. Here, the extraneous light which is different from the body and the senses is perceived by the eye. But the light we are discussing now is not perceived by the eye, etc., when the lights of the sun, etc. are not available. Even though the lights of the sun, etc. are absent, the usual effects of a light take place, and so we conclude that "it is through the light of the Self that he sits, goes out, works, and returns." We are thus led to conclude that this light, different from those of the sun and other luminaries, must be inside the body and that it is immaterial. That is why, unlike the sun and other luminaries, it is not perceived by eye and other organs. So, Śaṅkara concludes

that the Self which is the light is inside the body, and yet different from it like the sun and other luminaries.

Then Janaka asks: "Which is the Self?"

Yājñavalkya replies: "This infinite entity that is identified with the intellect and is in the midst of the organs, the self-luminous light within the heart, i.e. the intellect, is the Self. Assuming the likeness (of the intellect), it moves between the two worlds; it thinks, as it were, and shakes, as it were. Being identified with dream, it transcends this world—the forms of death (ignorance, etc.)."

Explaining the purport of the King's question and Yājñavalkya's reply thereto, Śaṅkara observes:

Though the Self has been proved to be other than the body and organs, yet, owing to a misconception caused by the observation that things which help others are of the same class as they, Janaka is not able to decide whether the Self is just one of the organs, or something different, and therefore asks: "Which is the Self?" The misconception in this case is unavoidable, because the logic involved is too subtle to grasp easily. Though the Self has been proved to be different from the body, yet all the organs appear to be intelligent, since the Self is not perceived as different from them. Hence, the question: "Which is the Self?"

The word "this" has been used with reference to the Self, since it is directly known to us. "Vijñānamaya" means identified with the intellect. The Self is so-called (i.e. as "Vijñānamaya") because of our failure to discriminate its association with its limiting adjunct, viz. the intellect, for it is perceived as associated with the intellect, as the planet Rāhu is associated with the sun and the moon. The intellect is the instrument that helps us in knowing everything; it is like a lamp in the midst of darkness. It has already been said: "It is through the mind that one sees and hears" (1.5.3). Every object is perceived only as associated with the light of the intellect in the same way as objects in the dark are illumined by a lamp placed in front. The other organs are only the channels

through which the intellect functions. Therefore, the Self is said to be "identified with the intellect".

There is a doubt whether the Self is identical with, or different from the organs. The use of the locative case in the term "in the midst of the organs" indicates that the Self is different from the organs in the same way as the expression "a rock in the midst of the trees" indicates only nearness. "In the midst of the organs" means "different from the organs," for that which is in the midst of certain other things is undoubtedly different from them as "a tree in the midst of the rocks". The expression "within the heart" should be carefully understood. One may think that the intellect, which is of the same class as the organs, is meant, as being in the midst of the organs. But this is untenable, because there is the expression, "within the heart." "Heart" is primarily the lotus-shaped lump of flesh; here it means the intellect, which has its seat in the heart. The expression, therefore, means "within the intellect." The word "within" indicates that the Self is different from the modifications of the intellect. The Self is called light, because it is self-luminous, because it is through this light, the self-luminous Ātman, the entire aggregate of the body and the organs sits, goes out, and works, as if it were sentient, as a jar placed in the sun shines. To take another example: just as an emerald or any other gem dropped for testing into milk, etc. imparts its lustre to them, even so does this luminous Self, being subtler than the intellect, unify and impart its lustre to the body and organs, including the intellect, although it is within (i.e. reflected in) the intellect, for these have varying degrees of subtleness or grossness in a certain order, and the Self is the innermost of them all.

Being transparent and next to the Self, the intellect, easily catches the reflection of the consciousness of the Self. Therefore, even wise men happen to identify themselves with it first; next comes the mind, which catches the reflection of the Self through the intellect; then the organs, through contact with the mind; and

lastly, the body, through the organs. Thus the Self successively illumines with its own light (consciousness) the entire aggregate of the body and organs. Consequently, all people identify themselves with the body and the organs and with their manifold modifications, according to their discrimination. The Lord also has said in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, 13.33: "As the one sun, O Arjuna, illumines the whole world, so the Self, the owner of the field of this body, illumines the whole body."... There are also Upaniṣadic texts in support of this. For example, a text of the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, 5.15, says: "It shining, everything else shines; this universe shines through its light."... So the Self is the "light within the intellect;" it is the Puruṣa, i.e. the infinite entity, which is all-pervasive like the ether. Its self-luminosity is infinite, because it is the illuminer of everything; but it itself is not illumined by anything else. This infinite entity of which you ask, "Which is the Self?" is self-luminous.

It has been said that when the external lights that help the different organs have ceased to work, the Self, the infinite entity that is the light within the intellect, helps the organs through the mind. It must be noted that the luminaries such as the sun, which are material, exist for the sake of other entities; in the same way the body and the organs, which are insentient, cannot exist for themselves. This aggregate of the body and the organs cannot function without the help of the Self, the light that lives for itself. It is always through the help of the light of the Self that all our activities take place....

In the waking state, it is difficult to distinguish the Self from the body and the organs, because it is mixed up in the diversity of the functions of the body and the organs, internal and external; it cannot be extricated from the intellect, etc. and shown separately in the same way as a stalk of grass can be extricated and shown separately from its sheath. The same difficulty is there even in the dream state. That is why Yājñavalkya says: "Assuming the likeness...it moves between the two worlds." The infinite entity,

that is the self-luminous Ātman, assumes the likeness of the intellect. The intellect is that which is illumined, and the Self is that which illumines it like light. It is well known that we cannot distinguish what illumines and what is illumined. The reason for this is obvious. Light which is pure assumes the likeness of that which it illumines. When it illumines something coloured, it assumes the likeness of that colour. For example, when it illumines something green, blue, or red, it is coloured like them. Similarly, the Self, illumining the intellect, illumines through it the entire body and the organs, as we have already stated, through the illustration of the emerald. Therefore, through the similarity of the intellect, the Self assumes the likeness of everything.

So, the Self cannot be taken apart from anything else, like a stalk of grass from its sheath, and shown in its self-luminous form. It is for this reason that the whole world, to its utter delusion, superimposes all activities of the organs and the body on the Self, and also the nature of the self-luminous light on the body and the organs, and thinks, "This is or is not the Self; it has or has not such-and-such attributes; it is or is not the agent; it is pure or impure; it is bound or free; it is fixed, or gone, or has come; it exists or does not exist," and so on. So, "assuming the likeness (of the intellect) it moves" alternately "between the two worlds"—this one and the next, the one that has been attained and the one that is to be attained—by successively discarding the body and the organs already possessed, and taking new ones, hundreds of them, in an unbroken series. This movement between the two worlds is merely due to its resembling the intellect, not natural to it. The text goes on to show that this is a fact of experience. That is why it says, "It thinks, as it were." By illumining the intellect, which does the thinking, through its own self-luminous light that pervades the intellect, the Self assumes the likeness of the latter and seems to think, just as light (looks coloured). Hence, people mistake that the Self thinks; but really it does not. Likewise, "it shakes, as it were." When the intellect

and other organs, as also the Prāṇas, move, the Self, which illumines them, becomes like them, and therefore seems to move rapidly; but really the light of the Self has no motion.

The Self seems to become whatever the intellect which it resembles becomes. So, when the intellect turns into dream, i.e. assumes the modification called dream, the Self also assumes that form. In the same way, when the intellect moves on to the waking state, it also does. Hence, the text says, "Being identified with dream." "It transcends this world", i.e. it transcends the body and the organs, which function in the waking state in which secular and scriptural activities take place. Since the Self reveals by its own light the modification of the intellect known as dream, it must be self-luminous; also it must be pure and devoid of agency and action with its factors and results. It is because of the likeness of the intellect there arises the delusion that the Self moves between the two worlds. The Upaniṣadic text speaks of "transcending this world—the forms of death". What are the forms of death? Work, ignorance, etc. are the forms of death. Death has no other form of its own. The body and the organs are its forms. So, the Self transcends these forms of death, on which actions and their results depend.

3. Conclusion

The Self which is of the nature of consciousness is the transcendental *a priori* of all kinds of experience—cognitive, emotive, and conative—that we have. Given the Self which is the ultimate presupposition of our thought and action, everything is possible; and in the absence of the Self, nothing is possible. Thought and action do not belong to the Self; they belong to the mind-sense-body complex. The mind is the most important component of this complex. In the state of empirical existence, we transact all our activities through the mind-sense-body complex of which the Self is the back-up principle. When the Self

transcends this world, it is no more associated with the mind-sense-body complex. So long as the Self is in bondage as it were, it is associated with the intellect, and thinks as it were, moves as it were, along with the intellect. Strictly speaking, it has neither thought nor movement. Śaṅkara conveys this idea elsewhere in his commentary on the *Brahma-sūtra*, 2.3.30: *yāvad ayam ātmā saṁsārī bhavati, tāvad eva asya buddhi-saṁyogaḥ, na tu paramārthataḥ, ātmanaḥ saṁsāritvam buddhi-saṁyogād iva.*

SIMPLE LIVING AND DISCIPLINED LIFE*

Śrī Candrasekharendra Sarasvatī

In all ancient Tamil works, wherever reference is made to a good king, he is described as one who does not deviate from *Manu nīti* (duties of kings as laid down by Manu), and as one who collected only "one-sixth" of the produce from his subjects. When agriculturists, in olden days, paid *kist* in kind, and when the quantum of the *kist* was fixed as one-sixth of the produce actually harvested, there was plenty and contentment in the land. All kings constructed capacious granaries in their forts, and grain collected as *kist* was stored therein. With the advent of the British rule, revenue settlements were effected, and *kist* was fixed in terms of cash. The foreign ruler had a motive in changing the *kist* from kind to cash, obviously he could not transport grain to his country. But the introduction of the system of paying *kist* in cash worked havoc on our agricultural economy. When prices fell, a cultivator, in spite of a good harvest, was obliged to borrow to meet *kist* dues, even after selling out the entire crop. This change-over from kind to cash has been responsible for many of the ills from which we are suffering.

**Acharya's Call*, Madras Discourses (1957-1960), Part 2, Published by Sri Kamakoti Peetam, Kanchipuram, 1995.

In ancient days, the bulk of the internal trade was carried on through a system of barter. Grain was the wealth of the people. Gold or silver figured only in our trade with foreign countries, and hence, the saying, *tiraikaḍal oḍiyum diraviyam tēdu*. Kings and the merchant community alone possessed wealth in the form of gold, silver, and precious stones. The Brahmin lived, like the common man, in a hut, *parṇaśālā*, used mud pots (*chatti* and *pānai*) as utensils, and wore the most ordinary kind of cloth. The women of the community had only black beads around their necks. The names like *veṅkalapānai*, *kal-chatti*, and *vaira-ōlai* now in vogue, remind us of the old customs and ways of life. It is also to be noted that in the *Navaratna-mālā*, Kālidāsa describes Ambikā as wearing ear-rings made of palm leaves (*tālīpalāśa-tātaṅkāṁ*). The Brahmins of old who lived such simple lives were neither envied nor hated by others. A Brahmin, who strictly adhered to his *varṇāśrama-dharma*, was welcomed everywhere, and society saw to it that the Brahmin families, which had settled down in any village, found no necessity to move away.

When the Brahmin discarded his traditional ways and succumbed to the glamour of an artificial life, he not only swerved from *ācāra* (observances pertaining to his station in life), but also laid himself open to envy and hatred. He is now wanted nowhere, and instead of being welcomed as a necessary part of society, he is being despised, if not driven away. A chain of evil consequences has resulted from his deviation from the path of *dharma*.

If we examine how society fared in the old system, under which the tax or the king's share was fixed as one-sixth of the yield, we will find that each producer had with him much more than he could consume and consequently, he diverted his surplus produce for religious and charitable purposes. No one went hungry in those days. When famine conditions prevailed, as a result of drought or other natural calamities, the king's granary was thrown open for feeding the needy. We also find that the five-sixth of the crop retained by the producer was spent on a well-defined basis. The

Kural provides us with the clue to understand the Vedic injunction in this regard. According to the *Kural*, of the grain retained by him, a producer sets apart a fifth for the *tenpulattār*, meaning as offerings to the manes (souls of the ancestors), a fifth for *daivam* (religious purposes), a fifth for guests, a fifth for relations, and the remaining fifth for himself and the members of his family. The *Kural* in question is:

*Tenpulattār daivam virundu okkal tān enraṅ
aimbulattār ōmbal talai.*

The region of the South is believed to be the direction in which the souls of the dead, destined to be born again, travel. From that, the term *tenpulattār*, the occupants of the southern region, came to be used to denote the dead ancestors. The dictum of Tiruvalluvar in the *Kural* is also in accordance with the Vedic teachings. According to the Vedas, we are required to worship Īśvara by doing our duties to the *devas* (gods), and the *pitṛs* (deceased ancestors). That is why in all our *karmas*, designed to propitiate the gods, we say in the *saṅkalpa* or the preamble portion of the *mantra*, that we are doing such and such a thing for propitiating Nārāyaṇa or Parameśvara (*Nārāyaṇa prītyartham* or *Parameśvara prītyartham*). God is One, but he manifests himself in different forms according to the nature of the functions. As the tax to the Government has to go through the tax-collector, our offerings to Īśvara have also to go through these functional deities. It is this feature that distinguishes Vedic religion from other religions.

From the identity in the injunctions of the Vedas and the *Kural*, it is clear that there is nothing like a separate Tamil culture or a separate Aryan culture. We have only one culture and one religion and that is Vedic culture and Vedic religion. If this basic principle is understood, many of the present misunderstandings will disappear.

There is an inscription of Karikāla Chola which reads:

पात्राकलित-वेदानां शास्त्रमार्गानुसारिणाम् ।
तदेतु अरिकालस्य करिकालस्य शासनम् ॥

pātrākālita-vedānām śāstramārgānusāriṇām,
tadetu arikālasya karikālasya śāsanam.

This inscription means that the order of Karikāla, who is the *kāla* (death) of enemies, is that those who follow the Vedic path should be protected and those who pursue evil paths should be punished. Unfortunately, we forget the basic unity of the country and quarrel over words. The first book in Tamil, i.e. *Kural*, and the first book in Sanskrit, i.e. the Vedas tell the same thing. The same *kalācāra* prevails from Kanyakumari to the Himalayas. In fact archaeological findings confirm the view that at one time the Vedas prevailed all over the world, each country following a particular branch of a particular Veda.

There can be no better communism than the injunctions contained in the *Kural* regarding the utilisation of one's wealth than in the form of grain. By the performance of the various *karmas*, both *daiva* and *pitṛ-karmas*, a portion of the grain is distributed among different sections of society. The feeding of the guests, namely, *atithi*, meaning those we invite and *abhyāgata*, meaning those who come to our house accidentally. By feeding the guests also there is distribution of wealth. A householder is further enjoined to provide for his indigent relations. It is only what is left over after meeting all these requirements that a person can utilise for his personal and family use.

If life today has become complex and out of gear with the Vedic conception of an integrated social and political life, it is because we have allowed ourselves to deviate from the Vedic path. In absolute reliance of the Vedas, let us try to retrace our steps. First of all, let us simplify our food, clothing and shelter

requirements, by sticking to mere essentials and giving up all non-essentials. This change cannot come all on a sudden, but a beginning in that direction has to be made. That is the only way for each community rehabilitating itself in the eyes of society. There is no question of one caste being superior to another. This complex of superiority and inferiority will disappear only when Brahmins revert to the life of the *R̥ṣis* to whom they trace their origin, whereby they can retreat from sinful acts, gain the grace of *Īśvara*, and contribute to *lokakṣema*, welfare of the world as a whole.

Simple Living Habits

As we desire to be happy and free from wants, we should wish the same for others also. For this purpose we must focus our thoughts on the Divine Mother's feet at least for a few moments, everyday. We are all her children and we should develop the consciousness that the world is one family and we are all members of that human family. Then alone can there be happiness in this world.

From this feeling of human kinship flows the obligation that each one should render what little help he can to the less fortunate in society. In this matter-of-fact world, one will have the inclination to help another only when one is oneself free from all wants and worries. But there are a few people who have developed the strength of mind to bear their own difficulties, to go to the succour of those in need. The impact of Western civilisation has brought about several changes in our society. The love for one's neighbour has given place to individualism. We are trained to look upon the state to provide institutional care to the sick and the aged, the widow and the orphan. Some families have begun to depend on hotels for their food requirements. We have also multiplied our wants; and most of us have become indebted. If we are to recapture the concord and contentment of a past generation, we must change our entire outlook and learn to depend less and less on the state.

If we examine the food habits of olden days, we will find that irrespective of caste or wealth, all people were satisfied with millets and other foodgrains available in their locality. No indignity was attached to taking even ragi gruel. Raw rice was used only for special occasions and for making offerings to God. Now, everyone wants only raw rice. The result is rice shortage with the possibility of the re-introduction of ration for this commodity. In olden days, with the exception of kings and merchants, all people lived in huts, and in this respect there was no difference between a Brahmin and a Harijan. Cloth requirements were also limited. One used only cloth sufficient to cover nakedness and to obtain protection from cold. Men were satisfied with a cloth round the waist and a cloth to cover the body. Even well-to-do women went in only for cotton sarees worn by an ordinary peasant. This ideal was kept up by Gandhiji.

The disappearance of these simple habits, besides loading the family budget, has also widened the gulf between sections of society, resulting in ill-feeling and bitterness. Because the people have changed their outlook and also multiplied their wants, the Government is also obliged to borrow and plan for increasing the standard of living. India has the proud privilege of being the country in the world with the lowest cost of living. But things are changing. Before it is too late, we should pause and take stock of the situation. To begin with we must put a stop to coffee and other drinks which are heavily draining the family purse. Our women should cease to wear silk sarees. By imitating the West in our clothing and other habits, we consume more cloth and also incur additional expenditure by way of tailoring, laundering, hair-cutting, and toilet. A few started these wrong habits which have gradually spread among the rest of society. Let a few make a beginning in the right direction by giving up coffee and other costly habits, and in course of time others will follow them. In this respect the responsibility of rich people is great. They can set an example in plain living and utilise what they are able to save thereby to help the needy.

Disciplined Life

Having obtained from Mother Earth the food that sustains us, it will be sheer ingratitude if we do not, in return, do some act of charity that will endure after our death. In olden days people built temples, rest houses or mantapams, or dug tanks or wells. Some people constructed resting stones on which those carrying loads on their heads placed their burden and rested for a while before resuming their journey. Yet others erected rubbing stones on which cattle could rub their itching hide. Public benefactions have now taken the forms of schools, colleges and hospitals. Cooperative banks and stores are institutions where a number of people can work together for the common good. Gujaratis and Marwaris have founded "gośālās" for taking care of dry and decrepit cows. *Pasumathams* are being maintained in some places in Tamil Nadu for obtaining milk for worship in temples. The usefulness of these cowsheds can be extended by taking in dry cows also.

We regard the cow as the abode of Śrī (Lakṣhmī) and show to her the reverence due to a mother. Therefore cow slaughter is regarded as a heinous crime. Some states have passed legislation banning the slaughter of cows. It is significant that Afghanistan, a Muslim country, has passed such a legislation. In India, the Hindu-Muslim differences were made an excuse in the past for not bringing forward any such legislation. After the attainment of freedom, the states have been empowered to legislate on the subject. The Madras state has under consideration a bill to prevent the slaughter of milch cows. The difficulty in making the legislation applicable in respect of all cows seems to be the problem of taking care of decrepit animals. This is a field in which voluntary organisations can function, and if a movement for taking care of dry and decrepit cows was started, it will gain strength. This will also receive the support of other religionists.

Even today there is need for providing wells and tanks and for constructing temples. If every Hindu makes it a point to go to a temple everyday, as he ought to, many more temples will be needed. There are many dilapidated temples which can be renovated. Fortunately, these temples are so strongly built that they have withstood the ravages of time and neglect. The purpose of a temple is to remind us of God. Some may say that belief in God is superstition; but in the very process of denying God, they remember Him. Atheism, in this land, is mostly a political move; even the so-called atheists think of God when they are in difficulties. Not even a single blade of grass can grow without His grace. The food we take should be offered to God first, as a token of our gratitude for his mercy. Such offerings of food are made in temples for the community as a whole. There are even now a few persons in villages who will not touch food until they hear the ringing of the temple bell, which signifies that offerings have been made to God. Real happiness comes from peace of mind which we can secure only through *bhakti*. *Bhakti* will remove our ignorance, poverty and worry. One will be inspired with *bhakti* only if one leads a well-disciplined and regulated life.

While the purpose of education is to make us cultured and disciplined, it is rather paradoxical that there is, among the educated, much more indiscipline and disregard for the way of life that has earned for us, in the past, the reputation of being a highly cultured people, than among the unsophisticated illiterates. During the last few years, indiscipline has developed among students to a degree never before known in the history of this country. While this is to be regretted, we must attend to some basic matters which can change our mental outlook. We must introduce simplicity in dress and each one of us should make it a habit to wash one's own clothes. If some pioneers ventured to attend offices in dhoti and upper cloth, the fashion will soon catch on. Pure food contributed to purity of heart. The majority of

our people are vegetarians, and that is responsible for making us a peace-loving, contended and tolerant nation. It is these qualities that have won us respect in the eyes of the world. We must simplify our food habits further. The practice of each person cooking his own simple food that prevails among some people in the North is a wholesome one. This will prove highly useful in life and obviate the necessity for indiscriminate eating. A beginning in this direction can be made by each one cooking his food at least once a week. Butter-milk or *kanji* can be substituted for coffee and tea. Thereby we will avoid incurring debts and also save something, which can be utilised for charitable purpose. We must develop devotion to God and a disciplined way of life (*olukkam*) and render service to the poor and the needy, thereby contributing to the welfare of this country and the world at large.

Purity of Food

Purity of mind (*citta-śuddhi*) is the basis on which *sanātana dharma* rests. While every one of us is very much attached to our *Dharma* and feels proud of it, very few actively practise the principles enunciated therein. Several factors contribute to purity of mind. Of this, purity of food is an important one. The *maharṣis* have declared that purity of food leads progressively to the cultivation of several virtues. The taking of food is a physical act. What bearing could it have on purity of mind? This is a doubt that is likely to arise. By means of an example, not quite edifying, the relationship between the nature of food taken and the quality of mind may be illustrated. Let us take the example of liquor. Does not its use definitely affect the mind and bring about its distortion? Thus some articles of food exercise wholesome influence on the mind, while others evoke unhealthy tendencies. There is no doubt that the quality of food has a subtle psychic and psychological effect. That is the reason why we have in our land a comprehensive code of restrictions relating to food.

Right choice of food definitely brings about purity of mind. This in turn leads to the promotion of *bhakti* and *jñāna*—devotion and wisdom. One practical way of ensuring purity of food is to prepare it ourselves. We have the shining example of large numbers of people in our holy land, who prepare their food themselves, offer it to God, and then take it for the sustenance of the body. Pupils and teachers will do well to take to self-cooking (*svayampāka*). They can practise it on Sundays which are holidays. They should cook their food themselves and offer it to God within. Śrī Kṛṣṇa has stated in the *Gītā* that he is the *jātarāgni*, the vital fire within that consumes or digests the food taken. When the food taken becomes thus an oblation to God, it becomes incumbent that what is offered to him should be uncontaminated. It is improper to offer impure food to God.

If only students and teachers get into the habit of preparing their own food and taking it as a sacred offering made to God, they would have practised an essential principle of *sanātana dharma*. If the root is nourished properly, then the tree will grow, of its own accord, to huge proportions, bearing flowers and fruits. There is no meaning in watering the leaves and stems from above. Purity of food is the basis on which the superstructure of a good life has to be built. In the new basic schools started by Government, pupils are required to cook their own food; but there each person does the cooking by turns and the food cooked by one is shared by all. Instead of each pupil getting his turn once a way, it is better that every one prepares his food every day. This practice will be helpful to us when we go on pilgrimage or travel. As it is, when people are away from homes, they have very often to take impure food out of necessity. But if they practise *svayampāka*, they can easily avoid that difficulty. They will be happy themselves; their spiritual tempo will also improve and there will be no disturbance to the daily observance of their religious duties.

R. Thangaswami*

Śrī Vyāsa in the first aphorism of the *Brahma-sūtra* indicated that the knowledge of Brahman is the cause of the removal of bondage. This idea has been developed by Śaṅkara in his *adhyāsa-bhāṣya* stating that bondage itself is mere illusion. This doctrine has been subjected to severe criticism by the pluralistic, the theistic, and the Pūrvamīmāṃsā schools. A school of Advaitins took up the defence of the doctrine of Śaṅkara on the basis of logical arguments; and Ānandabodha belongs to that school.

Two methods can be noticed in the books devoted to the criticism of rival schools. Of these, the earlier method is characterised by close reasoning, depth of sense and diction, sweet to the ear: it is conversational in form. When the modern logicians like Gaṅgeśa transformed logic into something entirely new, scholars from Madhusūdanasarasvatī to Brahmānandasarasvatī rose to refute them and, giving them their due, used a highly technical language. This is the later style; and Ānandabodha's is the earlier style. Unlike the other style it is neither artificial nor difficult; but there is no dullness in the presentation of ideas, statement of reasons, and

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choice of words. Expressions characterised by rigorous reasoning and elegant wit reveal Ānandabodha's eloquence and dialectical skill.

Ānandabodha's Preceptor: A commentary, *Dīpikā*, by Ānandabodha available in manuscript in the Madras Government Oriental Manuscripts Library on Prakāśātman's *Śabdanirṇaya* has a stanza "*namo...ātmavāsābhīdhānāya gurave guṇa-veśmane*". In the other works of Ānandabodha there are no verses of salutation to the teacher but only a verse of obeisance to the Supreme Being in whom plurality is assumed; this verse also states the four *anubandhas*, that is, the essential aspects of a work. From this we conclude that Ānandabodha was the disciple of Ātmavāsa.

Ānandabodha is usually regarded as the disciple of Vimuktātman. In his work, *Pramāṇamālā*, he quotes from the *Iṣṭa-siddhi*, mentioning the source of the quotation thus:

etadevoktam gurubhiḥ—

"nānyatra kāraṇāt kāryam na cet tatra kva tad bhavet".

From the word 'gurubhiḥ' it is proper to conclude that Vimuktātman was his *vidyā-guru* and Ātmavāsa was his *dīkṣā-guru*. But the commentary *Sambandhokti* by Citsukha on the *Pramāṇamālā* which is still in manuscript does not refer to Vimuktātman as the preceptor and Ānandabodha as his disciple; and it prefaces the quotation from the *Iṣṭa-siddhi* referred to above thus: "*uktam-artham iṣṭa-siddhi-kāra-vacanena dṛḍhayati.*"

Vimuktātman must have flourished before Sarvajñātman. The latter in the fourth chapter of his work, *Saṅkṣepaśārīraka* says:

citibhedam-abhedam eva vā

dvayarūpatvam-atho mṛṣātmatām

parihṛtya tamo nivartanam-

prathayante khalu muktikovidāḥ.

His commentators are agreed that the term *muktikovidāḥ* refers to the author of the *Iṣṭa-siddhi*. Sarvajñātman refers to the author of the *Iṣṭa-siddhi* in his other work, *Pañcaprakriyā*.¹

Prakāśātman in the *Vivarana* refers to the view of the *Iṣṭa-siddhi*. Hence we may conclude that Vimuktātman flourished before Sarvajñātman and Prakāśātman. And, he could not have been the disciple of Vimuktātman who must have flourished earlier than Sarvajñātman. The term 'guru' in the *Pramāṇamālā* is intended to show respect towards Vimuktātman. We may, therefore, take Ānandabodha to be the disciple of Ātmavāsa.

The Date of Ānandabodha: In his work *Nyāya-makaranda*, he refers to the views of Prakāśātman, the author of the *Vivarana* who flourished in the 11th century AD. Anubhūtiśvarūpa who flourished between the middle of the 12th century and the first half of the 13th century wrote commentaries on all the three works of Ānandabodha. Hence we may take that Ānandabodha flourished between the middle of the 11th century and the first half of the 12th century.

Ānandabodha wrote three works, viz. *Pramāṇamālā*, *Nyāya-dīpāvalī*, and *Nyāya-makaranda*. Of these, the *Nyāya-makaranda* is the most important one. This is of a polemical nature and refutes the doctrines of the Sāṅkhya, Bauddha, Vaiśeṣika, Nyāya and Pūrvamīmāṃsā systems and Jñānakarma-samuccaya-vādins by using the accepted procedure of debate.

Noteworthy among his contributions are the refutation of the difference between jīva and Brahman, rejection of difference in objects of knowledge, establishment of the *anirvacanīya* theory of error, phenomenal nature of the universe, self-revealing nature of the self, self as of the form of consciousness, the view that words refer (also) to accomplished or existing things, the doctrine of impartite sense, conception of liberation, the substratum of avidyā, and the doctrine that liberation results from knowledge only.

Doctrines Established in the Nyāya-makaranda: The main doctrine of Advaita is that the universe is phenomenal. It is by nature constantly changing and evolving and is ever unstable. So it does not satisfy the definition of Reality propounded by Śaṅkara; reality, he says, is that which does not fail to have that nature determined as belonging to it. The universe which evolves every moment, is always unsteady, and as a rule changing cannot answer to this definition; so also the various entities which are present in the universe.

Then, is the universe absolutely and always false? The reply to this question is presented with great effort aided by the support of scripture and reason, using the analogy of silver that appears in nacre. The Upaniṣads say: '*Ether was born from Ātman*'. Here the ablative case in '*from Ātman*' stands for the cause, material as well as efficient. This cannot be said to be self-contradictory and impossible, as, in the case of the nacre-silver, both kinds of causality are seen to exist in the same thing, nacre. Here, if there is no silver but only the recollection of silver once seen in the shop, how can there be the effort on the part of the percipient to pick up the thing before him? So, silver has to be postulated as existing there; otherwise the effort cannot be accounted for.

What is the material, and the efficient cause of this illusory silver? As regards all effects, both these kinds of causality are necessary. As the destruction of the effect is, as a rule, inferred from the destruction of the cause, we have to determine that as the cause of the silver, the destruction of which would lead to the destruction of the silver. It is the silver that is destroyed by means of the perceptual knowledge of the nacre. The causality of the knowledge of nacre in the destruction of the silver arises through the destruction of the nescience present in nacre. This naturally leads to the conclusion that nescience present in nacre is the material cause of the silver.

Again, where the nacre is totally unperceived, there silver does not appear. So we have to say that the perception of nacre in its

general form is also a cause. Thus the nacre perceived in its general form (i.e. as possessed of 'thisness') is the efficient cause; this itself is also called the substratum. Altogether, the nacre known in its general form and unknown in its particular form is the cause of silver. Known in its general form, it is the efficient cause; unknown in its particular form, it is the material cause. This co-ordination of these two kinds of causality is technically known as *vivarta* (transfiguration). The etymology of the term *vivarta* is: *vi*=opposite, *varta*=existence, i.e. having an existence (reality) different from that of the effect, whereas *pariṇāma* or modification is becoming an effect having the same degree of reality. Thus the nacre-silver is the modification of the nescience present in nacre, and transfiguration of the nacre itself. In the Upaniṣadic passage quoted above (*Ether was born from Ātman*) the ablative case in 'from Ātman' should be understood to refer to Ātman as the transfigurative cause. The universe is the modification of nescience present in Ātman and the transfiguration of Ātman itself.

Now a question arises. Unlike the nacre-silver, the universe is not seen to be sublated; so, how can it be said to be the modification of nescience? The reply is given with the support of scriptural passages like "*neha nānāsti kiñcana*" (There is no plurality here). The sublation of the world is known from these passages. It cannot be said that this passage does not deny the plurality relating to the universe but only that pertaining to the Ātman. For, what is the authority for assuming that the scripture denied plurality in particular, i.e. in regard to Ātman? On the contrary, it denies plurality in general. Also, plurality, not well known in regard to Ātman, does not stand to reason and so there arises no question of its denial. Nor is it a case of plurality of the creation of the universe being denied, as there will clearly arise lack of unanimity as well as prolixity. So, multiplicity of Ātman cannot at all be a subject of denial here; and as there can be no other subject of denial, we have to take that the difference between jīva and Īśvara is denied. Nor can this passage be taken to deny difference between Īśvara and

inert matter. It is well-known that the attributes of matter cannot exist in Īśvara, and so the difference cannot be denied. So, what is denied is the difference between jīva and Īśvara.

Now, the next point to be discussed is whether the denial pertains to all time or to a limited time. Two such kinds of denial are well-known: (1) The pot is not on the ground (This pertains to limited time); (2) Wind has no colour (This relates to all time). If the passage "*neha nānāsti kiñcana*" is denial of the first kind, then 'iha' will refer to Brahman as the substratum; this means Brahman is related to time. It is self-contradictory to say that Brahman is eternal and is related to time. So only the second type of denial remains, and this must be meant by the passage. This denial is technically called *bādha* (sublation).

Now, one question naturally arises. This denial would lead to the contingency that the universe is never related to Brahman; so, how can one justify scriptural passages describing creation of the universe, etc.? The reply is that the passages describing creation deal not with creation (primarily), but with Brahman which is one and undivided. There is a great dispute as to whether the substratum of the universe is one or many. The Advaitins say it is one; the dualists say that it is manifold. Among the dualists omitting the sub-divisions, there are varieties from the materialists to the Yoga school of philosophers. In short, all philosophers except Śaṅkara are dualists. This must be discussed.

Those who follow scriptures or reason as regards creation must be asked: Why is there difference among scriptural passages themselves regarding the order of creation? One passage says: ether was born of Ātman; another says: fire, water, food, etc. were born from Ātman. Elsewhere mind, etc. are spoken of as created from Ātman. Yet another passage speaks of creation as constituted of the three guṇas. Thus there is no unanimity regarding the order of creation. Further, scripture speaks of liberation through self-knowledge; it does not say, it is got through knowledge of creation. A passage says: "*tam eva viditvā atimṛtyum eti, nānyaḥ panthā*

vidyate ayanāya." But there is no passage which speaks of any special result as arising from the knowledge of creation. So, according to the maxim "In the presence of the fruitful statement the fruitless one becomes accessory," the creation becomes accessory to knowledge, as it is in the presence of self-knowledge which is fruitful. So, according to the rule that accessories are fruitful only through the principal, it is reasonable to conclude that the fruit of self-knowledge is the same as that of knowledge of creation. So, the main purport of the passages conveying creation is not the knowledge of creation but of the Supreme Being. And, this is accepted by tradition. This is shown by reason also. Creation which is perceived by us is traced by different philosophers to different causes like atoms. If we follow these divergent assumptions, we cannot arrive at a single substratum of the universe and in its absence, knowledge will not be adequate to lead to self-knowledge. So we have to postulate a single entity as substratum; this cannot be anything but the self. Otherwise, "the knowledge of all from the knowledge of one" is not possible. If this substratum is the self, there can be no *real* origination from it as the self is changeless. So the account of creation is given only to establish the Supreme Being which is the sole substratum.

Again, those who zealously assert the reality of creation cannot justify their acceptance of liberation. Philosophers differ in regard to liberation, from the (nihilist) Buddhist to the Vaiśeṣika. Ānandabodha has critically examined almost all views on liberation.² Is liberation the cessation of bondage? Bondage is a series of sufferings; in the view of those who say that creation is real how can there be a cessation of this series of sufferings? It cannot be said that cessation is brought about in the manner in which a pot is annihilated by means of a club. Of course, the cessation may be possible as, in the Nyāya view, the self's qualities exist only for two moments and in the Sāṅkhya view an opposite process can destroy the previous process. But how can there be a

cessation of suffering which is of the nature of non-recurrence? Nobody says that such recurring destruction or cessation constitutes liberation; all are unanimous in conceiving of liberation as eternal. So, if the universe is eternal, then suffering also is eternal and thus, liberation is as unreal as a flower sprung from the sky.

Liberation is accepted in all schools, and we must say what its cause is. Scripture states its cause to be self-knowledge and not the knowledge of pot or cloth or the categories accepted by the Naiyāyikas. Suffering is born of ignorance of self and from the knowledge of self arises the destruction of suffering which is the effect of ignorance.

Liberation is of the nature of total destruction of suffering and the manifestation of bliss, eternal and unsurpassed; and this is nothing but the destruction of avidyā. The Supreme Being is one; it is bliss independent, absolute and unsurpassed, but owing to avidyā it appears as having a second, as sullied by the attributes of the cycle of births and deaths, and as having the designation of jīva (individual self). Thus, the cycle of births and deaths is none other than beginningless avidyā, while liberation is its destruction and is dependent on the rise of the knowledge of Brahman which is beyond all differentiation and also immediate. This is the definition of liberation given in the *Nyāya-makaranda*.³ So, the falsity of bondage which is of the nature of suffering is proved on the ground that it is the product of avidyā.

Just as nacre-silver is not admitted to be real, on account of its being sublated by the perception of its substratum, so also the universe which is sublated by the intuitive knowledge of Brahman is not real. Further the universe in its ramifications is born of assuming the self to be enjoyer. This characteristic of being an enjoyer depends on the superimposition of body on the self, and the relation of the self to the body. This superimposition is due to avidyā. So it is established that the universe which consists of the objects of enjoyment, enjoyer, etc. is derived from avidyā which is

also known as 'māyā' or illusion. Māyā is the same as avidyā and it is a positive entity, opposed in nature to knowledge. It has varied powers and they are inferred from the products arising from it.

This māyā has consciousness as its substratum. Now, the question arises: how can there arise māyā in regard to the self which is of the nature of consciousness, just as there can be no darkness while the sun is shining? The solution to this problem is found in the *Nyāya-makaranda*. The existence of māyā has to be accepted by all schools as none can deny the universal experience, "I am ignorant".

Those philosophers who admit the existence of the self have to grant that the self is of the nature of consciousness. Some speak of consciousness as the attribute and not the very nature of the self and explain the perception of the self in association with this attribute. They have to explain how they can speak of the existence of the self during deep sleep. The conception that the self is eternal but its perception arises from a knowledge which is adventitious and momentary cannot support in any way the doctrine of the eternality of the Self. The position is this: those who admit the self to be eternal have also to admit that the self is of the nature of knowledge and, being ever perceived, is self-revealing.

There arises another question. How are we to account for the judgement, "I am ignorant"? The answer to this question is: We have to say that the self, being known in its general characteristics and unknown in its particular nature is the substratum of avidyā. Hence, in keeping with experience, the self is the locus of māyā or avidyā.

Another question is raised. Is the individual self the locus of māyā, or the supreme Self? In the former case, māyā would be many (which would mean that the material cause of the universe is also manifold); in the latter case, oneness would be lost. Thus there would result a paradox that the very Being which is to be resorted to for the removal of māyā is its locus. And the blind cannot lead the blind.

This question is answered thus: there is no fault in either case. In the view of the *Dr̥ṣṭi-sr̥ṣṭi-vāda* where māyā is considered as the transformative material cause, the plurality of māyā is acceptable. This does not mean that the oneness of material cause is lost; the *Dr̥ṣṭi-sr̥ṣṭi-vāda* speaks only of the transfigured cause, and this cause is the One, supreme Being. Thus it is logical that Brahman which has no beginning and end is the locus of avidyā or māyā.⁴ So it is correct to say that the supreme Being itself undergoes the cycle of births and deaths because of avidyā and is released through knowledge. It is Brahman and not jīva, that is the locus for avidyā.⁵

Another objection is raised in his other work, the *Pramāṇamālā*.⁶ If the universe is derived from māyā, it must be unreal, just as nacre-silver. This means that all the phenomena in the world and all knowledge are unreal. Even the knowledge of Brahman got from scriptures must be unreal because scripture is a part of the universe and it being unreal the knowledge imparted by it also must be unreal. This objection is wrong, since unreality does not mean absolute nothingness. It is neither real like Brahman, nor unreal like a hare's horn, but it is different from the two. The universe is neither absolutely real, nor absolutely unreal, but it is neither real nor unreal.⁷ This is Ānandabodha's definition of unreality given in Ānandānubhava's *Nyāyaratnadīpāvalī*, and Citsukha's *Tattvapradīpikā*. This is referred to and elaborated by Ānanda-jñāna in his *Tarkasaṅgraha*. This definition has been refuted by Vyāsatīrtha in his *Nyāyāmṛta*; and Madhusūdanasarasvatī in his *Advaita-siddhi* answers all the objections and proves that the definition is logically sound.

NOTES

1. *Bulletin of the Sanskrit Department*, University of Madras, p. 69.
2. *Nyāyamakaranda*, pp. 270-271.
3. *Vide*, p. 288.
4. *Nyāyamakaranda*, p. 313.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 336.
6. *Pramāṇamālā*, p. 16.
7. *Nyāyamakaranda*, pp. 115, 125, 145, 155, 305, 306. See also *Pramāṇamālā*, p. 16.

 INTERPRETATION OF VEDĀNTIC TEXTS

N. Veezhinathan

The Mīmāṃsakas of the Bhāṭṭa school admit six pramāṇas, namely, *pratyakṣa*, *anumāna*, *upamāna*, *śabda*, *arthāpatti* and *anupalabdhi*. The Advaitin too admits all these pramāṇas, and it is evident from Śaṅkara's reference to them in his commentary on the *Viṣṇu-sahasranāma-stotra*.¹ A pramāṇa is defined as that which gives rise to the knowledge of an entity which is hitherto unknown or veiled by avidyā and which is not sublated subsequently. According to Advaita, Brahman is veiled by avidyā as it alone is self-luminous. All other objects being inert by themselves need no external cause for being concealed. Further, according to Advaita, Brahman is the only reality, and everything else is indeterminable or provisionally real till there arises the direct knowledge of Brahman. When viewed in this light, it is only the Upaniṣads that could be considered as pramāṇa in the strict sense of the term. No doubt, all the pramāṇas according to Advaita are the transfigurations (*vivarta*) of Brahman through avidyā. But noticing that the Upaniṣadic texts give rise to the knowledge of Brahman and that the other pramāṇas to the objects of the

world, the Advaitin concludes that the sentient element of Brahman is predominant in the Upaniṣads and that the insentient element of avidyā is predominant in the other pramāṇas.²

Pratyakṣa, *anumāna*, *upamāna*, *arthāpatti* and *anupalabdhi* have the semblance of pramāṇas; they are *pramāṇābhāsas*. Their respective objects, being inert by nature, are not concealed by avidyā. They are not unsublatable too. Yet they are located in the consciousness conditioned by them; and the consciousness element is concealed by the derivative of avidyā known as *tūlājñāna*.³ The objects are unsublatable till the rise of the knowledge of Brahman. The pramāṇas such as *pratyakṣa*, etc. remove the *tūlājñāna* present in the consciousness conditioned by their respective objects which are unsublatable till the rise of the knowledge of Brahman. It is on this basis they are spoken of as pramāṇas, although the Upaniṣads alone can be viewed as the pramāṇa in the strict sense of the term.

Although *pratyakṣa*, etc. are *pramāṇābhāsas*, they are useful on the theoretical side of Advaita in one way or other. The Advaitin maintains that discussion about *pratyakṣa* is useful, because the Upaniṣads could give rise to the immediate experience of Brahman. *Anumāna* and *arthāpatti* are useful to prove the non-reality of the world. *Upamāna* gives rise to the knowledge of similarity between objects. In the same way, it would give rise to the knowledge that a particular object is dissimilar to another object. The Advaitin, on the basis of this pramāṇa, concludes that Brahman is unlike everything and like nothing, and the world, therefore, is not real like Brahman. *Anupalabdhi* is useful as it helps to ascertain, for example, the absence of silver in the shell after the rise of the knowledge of the true nature of the shell and to conclude that shell is free from silver in the three divisions of time—past, present and future. He is then able to extend this line of explanation to Brahman and to conclude that Brahman is free from the world and that it is acosmic. Thus, although *pratyakṣa*, etc. are *pramāṇābhāsas*, yet they have specific functions to perform.⁴

We have now to deal with the role of the ritualistic section of the Veda. Śaṅkara is of the view that the ritual-actions prescribed in this part of the Veda, when performed without any desire for their fruits, cleanse one's heart and make one fit to pursue a thorough enquiry into the import of the Upaniṣads.⁵ This view is based upon the text of the *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad*:⁶ "Those who seek liberation desire to have the knowledge of Brahman by the study of one's Veda, by the performance of sacrifices and the offering of gifts, and by austerity in the form of fasting (that consists in limiting one's food as a religious performance)." In this text, the expressions "study of one's Veda", "performance of sacrifices and the offering of gifts" and "austerity in the form of fasting" respectively signify the duties relating to the stage of the celibate, the house-holder, and the hermit. And, the relation between the duties pertaining to one's stage of life and the desire to have the knowledge of Brahman is set forth in this Upaniṣadic text.

Śabara in his commentary on the *Pūrvamīmāṃsā-sūtra*⁷ states that existent entities like sacrificial substances are subordinate to sacrifices, etc. which are to be achieved. In the Upaniṣadic section, however, sacrifices, etc. which are to be achieved are subordinate to the existent entity, viz. Brahman. This means that they indirectly lead to the realization of Brahman.⁸

Having thus set forth the role of the ritualistic section of the Veda in regard to the realization of Brahman, we shall now deal with the Upaniṣadic section which is its direct means. The Upaniṣadic texts, when analysed, fall into four groups which appear contradictory to one another. We shall set forth these texts.

1. There are certain texts which speak of Brahman as endowed with qualities. The *Chāndogya* text,⁹ "ya ātmā apahatapāpmā vijaro vimṛtyuḥ viśokaḥ vijighatsaḥ apipāsaḥ satyakāmaḥ satyasaṅkalpaḥ," states that Brahman is free from sins, from old age, from death, from sorrow, from hunger and thirst, and is the one which possesses desire and resolve that never go unfulfilled. Thus, this and other similar texts¹⁰ convey Brahman to be *saviśeṣa*.

2. Another group of Upaniṣadic texts speaks of Brahman as free from all phenomenal elements. The *Kāthopaniṣad* in its passage,¹¹ "*aśabdāṃ aśparśāṃ arūpāṃ avyayāṃ*," etc. and the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* text,¹² "*asthūlam anaṇu ahrasvāṃ adīrgham*," etc. convey Brahman as free from all qualities. Again, the text of the *Kāthopaniṣad*,¹³ "*neha nānāsti kiñcana*," declares that there is no duality in Brahman. These texts do suggest that Brahman is *nirviśeṣa*.

3. Yet another group of the texts of the Upaniṣads states that the souls and the world are not different from Brahman. The *Chāndogya* text,¹⁴ "*tat tvam asi*," is specific in stating the non-difference of the souls from Brahman. Another text¹⁵ of the same Upaniṣad, "*sarvāṃ khalu idam brahma*," and the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* text,¹⁶ "*idaṃ sarvāṃ yadāyāṃ ātmā*" and the text of the *Muṇḍakopaniṣad*,¹⁷ "*brahmaiva idaṃ viśvāṃ*," refer to the oneness of the world with Brahman.

4. The text of the *Śvetāśvataropaniṣad*,¹⁸ "*prthagātmānam preritāraṃ ca matvā juṣṭastatastena amṛtatvameti*," emphasizes the difference between the souls and Brahman by stating that the souls could attain liberation by realizing that it is different from Brahman. The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* text,¹⁹ "*sarvasya vaśī sarvasya īśānaḥ*," states that Brahman rules over everything and thereby implies the difference between the world that is controlled and Brahman that controls.

Thus in regard to the essential nature of Brahman there are apparent contradictions in the Upaniṣads, and Śaṅkara is chiefly concerned with interpreting the above texts in such a manner that there will be no inconsistency among them.

In regard to the two sets of the Upaniṣadic texts, one referring to Brahman as *saviśeṣa* and the other as *nirviśeṣa*, Śaṅkara, following the author of the *Brahma-sūtra* states that Brahman by itself is free from all qualities; but by its association with *māyā* or *avidyā* it acquires those qualities and they are, therefore, not real.²⁰

Śaṅkara's critique of the concept of *samavāya* would substantiate the above conclusion. A quality could exist in its substratum through the relation of *samavāya*. The latter, in order that it may serve as a relation, must be related to the relata, viz. quality and its substratum. Thus we have another relation between *samavāya* and the quality, and yet another relation between *samavāya* and the substratum of the quality. These two additional relations too would require some other relation to get themselves related to their respective relata. And so on *ad infinitum*. It is on this ground that the relation of *samavāya* is held to be a pseudo-concept.²¹ The qualities that are mentioned in respect of Brahman cannot, therefore, be really related to Brahman. They are only falsely presented upon it, and the cause of such a false presentation is avidyā.

The distinctive qualities, although non-real, are mentioned in Brahman, the *nirviśeṣa* entity, for the sake of meditative worship upon it. Śaṅkara emphasizes the Advaita position that Brahman as *nirviśeṣa* can only be realized as identical with the true nature of the soul, and Brahman as endowed with attributes can only be meditated upon.

*ekamapi brahma apekṣitopādhisambandham nirastopādhisambandham ca upāsyatvena jñeyatvena vedānteṣūpadiśyate.*²²

It follows from the above that there is no contradiction between the two sets of the Upaniṣadic texts—one proclaiming Brahman to be *nirviśeṣa* and the other as *saviśeṣa*.

As regards the text such as "*sarvaṃ khalu idam brahma*"²³ and the like which seem to convey the oneness of the world with Brahman, Śaṅkara is of the view that they purport to show that the world has no independent existence apart from Brahman. In other words, the world is superimposed upon Brahman like silver upon a piece of shell, and as such it derives its existence and manifestation from it.

Śaṅkara arrives at the above conclusion on the basis of the teaching of the *Chāndogya* text,²⁴ "*vācārambhaṇam vikāro*

nāmadheyam mṛttiketyeva satyam." This text states that pot, the effect, is merely referred to by name. It is not real. It is thus: we have the empirical usage in the form *mṛd ghataḥ*. The words "mṛd" and "ghata" are in appositional relation to each other. This would not hold good if the senses of the two words are different from each other. The words "cow" and "horse" whose senses are different from each other cannot be used in appositional relation to each other. Further, the appositional relation between *mṛd* and *ghata* cannot hold good if the senses of the two words are identical. For, in that case the practical efficiency of the two would be one and the same. This, however, is opposed to perceptual experience. Pot is used for the purpose of bringing water while the lump of clay is used for bringing a pot into existence. Thus, pot and clay are not identical. The result of this argument is that pot is neither identical with, nor different from, clay. The only alternative left is to treat it as non-real or indeterminable. This is the significance of the expression, "*vācārambhaṇam vikārah*". The above view that the effect, viz. pot, is non-real would preclude the possibility of having the verbal usage that pot has come into existence from clay. It is answered that in view of the logical difficulties outlined in the foregoing paragraph it must be held that the above verbal usage is devoid of any content. This is the significance of the expression "*nāmadheyam*" in the text.

Now the question arises: what, then, is real? The Upaniṣads state that the cause, namely, the clay alone is real. It is because the clay-element exists prior to the creation of pot, at the time of the existence of pot, and after the destruction of pot. It means that the causal factor alone is real and that the effect is non-real. When the Upaniṣad states that the clay-element is real, what is sought to be conveyed is that the causal element alone is real. It is because when compared to Brahman, the clay-element too is an effect, and so it is an appearance of Brahman. The Upaniṣad speaks of the reality of the clay-element in order to emphasize the fact that the cause is more real than the effect. According to the *Taittirīya* text,²⁵ "*yato*

vā imāni bhūtāni jāyante," etc. it is Brahman that is the cause of the world. The world being an effect is not real. The teaching of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* texts, "*dve vāva brahmaṇo rūpe mūrtam caivāmūrtam ca,*"²⁶ and, "*athāta ādeśo neti neti*",²⁷ confirm the view that the world is non-real. The former text states that there are two factors which define Brahman; and they are those which possess material shape, viz. earth, water and fire and those which do not have any material shape, viz. air and ether. This text thus affirms the existence of the world in Brahman. The second text negates the existence of the world in Brahman. These two texts, when read together, convey the absence of the world in the substratum in which it is said to exist.

The *Chāndogya* text,²⁸ "*sadeva saumya idamagra āsīt,*" refers to Sat or Brahman as associated with the world in its subtle form. And the text²⁹ that forms a complement to this, viz. "*ekameva advitīyam*" states that Brahman is free from any object that is either similar or dissimilar to it. It is free from internal differences too. Thus, according to these texts of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* and the *Chāndogya*, the world is negated in Brahman where it is said to exist. And the negation of an object in the substratum wherein it appears implies the indeterminable nature of the object. It may be added here that these Upaniṣadic texts have served as the basis for framing the definition of *mithyātva* by Prakāśātman in his *Vivaraṇa* as "*pratipannopādhau traikālika-niṣedha-pratīyogitvam.*"³⁰

It is in the light of what has been said above that the texts like "*sarvam khalu idam brahma*" and the like are to be interpreted. The words "*idam sarvam*" and "*brahma*" stand in appositional relation to each other. They cannot convey the sense of identity of their senses, because the world which is the sense of the expression "*idam sarvam*" and Brahman which is the sense of the word "*brahma*" cannot be identical as the former is inert and the latter is sentient. Hence, the appositional relation between the words must be taken in the sense of sublation. The above texts convey Brahman

as that wherein there is the absence of the world. In other words, Brahman is acosmic; it is non-dual.

The text "*tat tvam asi*" conveys the identity of the true nature of the soul and that of God. The primary meaning of the word *tat* is God who is the creator of the world and who possesses all auspicious qualities. This we know from the *Taittirīya* text,³¹ "*yato vā imāni bhūtāni jāyante*," etc. and the *Chāndogya* text,³² "*satyakāmaḥ satyasaṅkalpaḥ*," etc. The primary meaning of the word "*tvam*" is the soul which is associated with the states of waking, dream and deep sleep and which is an agent and an experient. This we know from the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* texts,³³ "*tad yathā mahāmatsya ubhe kūle anusañcarati*," etc. and "*tad yathā asmin ākāśe śyeno vā suparṇo vā*," etc. Any identity between the two senses is impossible in view of the contradictory attributes present in them. Hence Śaṅkara holds the view that these two words through *jahad-ajahal-lakṣaṇā* leave out a part of their primary senses, viz. *īśvaratva* in the case of God and *jīvatva* in the case of the soul, and retain another part, namely, the element of pure consciousness. The logical significance of the text "*tat tvam asi*" is the non-difference between the essential nature of soul which is consciousness and the essential nature of God which too is consciousness. The text "*tat tvam asi*" does not speak of the identity between God and soul as such. Śaṅkara in his commentary on the *Brahma-sūtra*,³⁴ "*adhikaṃ tu bhedanirdeśāt*" specifically states that we do admit difference between God and soul as such and the texts like "*tat tvam asi*" convey the identity of the true nature of soul and that of God. Hence there is no contradiction between the texts which speak of the difference between the soul and God and which refer to the identity of the true nature of the soul and that of God. In the same way the text,³⁵ "*sarvasya vaśī sarvasya īśānaḥ*," speaks of the difference between God and the world, while the texts like "*sarvaṃ khalu idam brahma*" speak of Brahman as free from the world. Thus there is no contradiction among the Upaniṣadic texts.

The text "*pr̥thag-ātmānaṃ preritāraṃ ca matvā*" cited earlier is interpreted by Madhusūdana Sarasvatī in his *Advaita-siddhi* thus:³⁶ prior to the rise of the knowledge of Brahman, the Advaitin admits the distinction between God and soul. It is also accepted that God is the ruler and the soul is the ruled. By loving devotion towards God, the soul earns His grace, attains the knowledge of identity between Brahman and the true nature of the soul and is liberated. That the knowledge of identity between Brahman and the true nature of the soul alone is the means to liberation and not the knowledge of difference between the two is arrived at on the basis of the *Kāthopaniṣad* text,³⁷ "*mṛtyoḥ sa mṛtyum āpnoti ya iha nāneva paśyati*" which states that one who sees duality in Brahman would experience phenomenal existence incessantly.

So far we have explained the interpretation of the apparently contradictory statements of the Upaniṣads according to Śaṅkara. The Upaniṣads emphasize the non-dual nature of Brahman by stating that the soul is not different from it and that the world is indeterminable. As regards the conclusion that the Upaniṣads constitute the *pramāṇa* in respect of Brahman, the Advaitin cites the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* text,³⁸ "*taṃ tu aupaniṣadam puruṣam pṛcchāmi.*" But the other text of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*,³⁹ "*yo'yaṃ vijñāna-mayaḥ prāṇeṣu hṛdyantarjyotiḥ puruṣaḥ,*" states that Brahman is self-luminous. This means that Brahman does not depend upon any *pramāṇa* for its manifestation. It appears that the view which holds that scripture is the *pramāṇa* in respect of Brahman is in conflict with the view that Brahman is self-luminous. This position is referred to as a *prima facie* view in the *Saṅkṣepaśārīraka*.⁴⁰

The above difficulty is resolved by the Advaitin thus: in the case of pot, for example, the sense of sight gives rise to the mental state (*vṛtti*) in the form of pot. Thus pot is *vṛtti-vyāpya*. This *vṛtti* is inspired by the reflection of consciousness conditioned by pot. The reflected consciousness is known as *phala*. The *vṛtti*-element removes the ignorance present in the consciousness conditioned

by pot. The consciousness element which is present in the *vṛtti* and which is known as *phala* manifests the pot. Thus pot is *phala-vyāpya* too. In the case of Brahman, the Upaniṣads give rise to the mental state in the form of Brahman. The latter is *vṛtti-vyāpya*. Avidyā present in Brahman is removed by it. Brahman then manifests of its own accord, and so there is no need for the reflection of consciousness in the mental state known as *phala* to manifest it. Brahman, therefore, is not *phala-vyāpya*. Pot is referred to as an *object of knowledge* as it is manifested by *phala*. Brahman is not manifested by *phala*, and so it is *not an object of knowledge*. The Upaniṣads are considered to be the *pramāṇa* in respect of Brahman in the sense that they remove avidyā present in Brahman by giving rise to *vṛtti* in the form of the latter. Brahman is self-luminous in the sense that it manifests of its own accord when avidyā is removed. Thus, there is no contradiction between the Upaniṣadic texts which state that Brahman is self-luminous and the Upaniṣads constitute the *pramāṇa* in respect of it. Śaṅkara in his commentary on the *Brahma-sūtra*⁴¹ states: "The scripture is valid in respect of Brahman by removing duality projected by avidyā. Never, indeed, does the scripture convey Brahman as 'This is Brahman'." The text of the *Kenopaniṣad*,⁴² "*yasya amatam tasya matam, matam yasya na veda saḥ*," must be understood in the above light. Brahman is realized by him (*tasya matam*) who knows that it is not manifested by *phala* (*yasya amatam*). He who thinks that it is manifested by *phala* (*yasya matam*) has not realized it (*na veda saḥ*).

To sum up: the Upaniṣads according to Śaṅkara convey Brahman to be non-dual self-luminous consciousness. The soul is non-different from it, and the world is non-real.

NOTES

1. Śaṅkara's commentary on the verse—aprameyo hr̥ṣīkeśaḥ, etc. *Viṣṇu-sahasranāma-stotra*, 23.
2. Pratyakṣamvid-avacchinnaṃ ajñānam pramāṇākāreṇa vivartate, samvitprādhānyena vedavivartaḥ, *Sārasaṅgraha* on *Saṅkṣepasārīraka* (hereafter *SS*), 2.102.
3. N. Veezhinathan, "The Locus and Content of Modal Ignorance in Advaita," *Indian Philosophical Annual*, University of Madras, 1972.
4. N. Veezhinathan, "The Problem of Method in Advaita," *Indian Philosophical Annual*, University of Madras, 1968.
5. *Brahma-sūtra-bhāṣya* (hereafter *BSB*), 3.4.23.
6. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (hereafter *BU*), 4.4.22.
7. *Pūrva-mīmāṃsā-sūtra*, 3.4.40.
8. *SS*, 1.143, 312, 395.
9. *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (hereafter *CU*), 8.1.5.
10. *CU*, 3.4.2; *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*, (hereafter *MU*), 1.1.9.
11. *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* (hereafter *KU*), 3.15.
12. *BU*, 3.8.8.
13. *KU*, 4.11.
14. *CU*, 6.8.7.
15. *Ibid.*, 3.14.2.
16. *BU*, 2.4.6.
17. *MU*, 2.2.11.
18. *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad*, 1.6.
19. *BU*, 4.4.22.
20. *BSB*, 3.2.11.
21. *Ibid.*, 2.2.13.
22. *Ibid.*, 1.1.12.
23. *CU*, 3.14.2.
24. *Ibid.*, 6.1.4.
25. *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (hereafter *TU*), 3.1.1.
26. *BU*, 2.3.1.

27. Ibid., 2.3.6.
28. *CU*, 6.1.8.
29. Ibid.
30. *Vivarana*, Part II (Madras Government Oriental Series, 1958), pp. 175–76.
31. *TU*, 3.1.1.
32. *CU*, 8.1.5.
33. *BU*, 4.3.18, 19.
34. *Brahma-sūtra*, 2.1.22.
35. *BU*, 4.4.22.
36. *Advaita-siddhi*, p. 627.
37. *KU*, 4.10.
38. *BU*, 3.9.26.
39. Ibid., 4.3.7.
40. *SS*, 1.116.
41. *Aviṣayatve brahmaṇaḥ śāstrayonirvānupapattiriti cet, na. Avidyā-kalpitabhedanivṛttiparatvāt śāstrasya. Na hi śāstram- idantayā viṣayabhūtam brahma pratipipādayiṣati. kim tarhi, pratyagātmatvena aviṣayatayā pratipādayat avidyākalpitaṁ vedyā-veditr-vedanādi-bhedamapanayati, BSB*, 1.1.4.
42. *Kena Upaniṣad*, 2.3.

G.M. Mallica

3. Māyā

The concept of *māyā* is of vital importance to the philosophy of Advaita. It is the principle which explains how the non-dual reality, viz. Nirguṇa-Brahman, appears as the manifold scheme consisting of Īśvara, the individual souls, and the physical world of diverse objects and events. Theistic Vedānta also uses the term *māyā*, but in the sense that it is a real power belonging to God by which he engages in real cosmic activity, namely creation, sustentation and dissolution. But Advaita takes the word *māyā* in the literal sense: "that" (*yā*) "which is not" (*mā*). Thus *māyā*, according to Advaita, is that, which, though not existing, produces the illusion of existence. Although the theistic conception of *māyā* frequently occurs in the *Bhāgavata*, the text often leads the reader from the theistic to the Advaita conception of *māyā*.

The idea that duality is falsely caused by *māyā* is expressed in the following verses.

* Continued from the previous number

प्रत्यगात्मस्वरूपेण
 दृश्यरूपेण च स्वयम् ।
 व्याप्यव्यापकनिर्देश्यो
 ह्यनिर्देश्योऽविकल्पितः ॥

केवलानुभवानन्द-
 स्वरूपः परमेश्वरः ।
 माययान्तर्हितैश्वर्यं
 ईयते गुणसर्गया ॥ (VII, 6, 22-23)

The non-dual reality, which is also knowledge and bliss, appears as the universe consisting of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* elements through *māyā*. The distinction of the seer and the seen, the experient and the objects of experience, is presented by *māyā*. The Self, which cannot be designated by any term, is described as seer, etc. due to *māyā*.

The same truth that the notion of difference is caused by *māyā* is expressed in the following verse also in a different way.

मन्मायामोहितधियः
 पुरुषाः पुरुषर्षभ ।
 श्रेये वदन्त्यनेकान्तं
 यथाकर्म यथारुचि ॥ (XI, 14, 9)

It is only because their *buddhi* is clouded by *māyā* that people speak of different ways to attain blessedness according to their own past *karma* and tastes. The differences in *guṇas* in their minds lead to differences of opinion; and these, in turn, to different ways of action (*karma-bheda*), and these, to differences in taste (*ruci-bheda*). The root cause of all these differences is *māyā*, which produces the very notion of the not-self in the Self.

An important difference between Advaita and theistic Vedānta is that the former identifies *māyā* with *avidyā*, which the latter does not. *Māyā*, which is a cosmic concept, is spoken of as *avidyā*

with reference to *jīva*. In the following verse it is shown that transmigration (*samsāra*) is not real, but is only like a dream, because it is caused by *ajñāna*, which is only another name for *māyā*.

एतद्द्वारो हि संसारो
गुणकर्मनिबन्धनः ।
अज्ञानमूलोऽपार्थोऽपि
पुंसः स्वप्न इवेष्यते ॥ (VII, 7, 27)

Transmigratory existence is unreal (*apārtha*), being based on *ajñāna*. It can be equated with *svapna*. Just as the experiences of dream appear to be real until one wakes up, so also *samsāra* seems to be real as long as *ajñāna* lasts. The *jīva* sees everything through *buddhi*. But *buddhi* is so constituted as to see only difference. This is because it is a product of *māyā*.

Other passages on the same idea may also be cited.

न हि सत्यस्य नानात्वं
अविद्वान् यदि मन्यते ।
नानात्वं छिद्रयोर्यद्वत्
ज्योतिषोर्वातयोरिव ॥ (XII, 4, 30)

Out of ignorance alone will one perceive *jīva* and Brahman as two. Just as there is difference between the all-pervasive ether and the ether conditioned by pot on account of the limiting adjunct, viz. pot, and just as there is difference between the sun in the sky and the sun reflected in the water owing to the adjunct, viz. water, so also on account of the limiting adjunct of *māyā/avidyā*, there appears to be difference in the Ātman.

यदिदं मनसा वाचा
चक्षुर्भ्यां श्रवणादिभिः ।
नश्वरं गृह्यमाणं च
विद्धि माया मनोमयम् ॥ (XI, 7, 7)

Whatever is apprehended by mind, speech, eyes, etc. are mere creations of mind and hence illusory. One comprehends a particular object through a particular sense-organ only when the mind is active. Hence virtually one comprehends everything through the mind. In other words, everything is enveloped by the mind (*manomayam*). Since the mind is an off-shoot of *māyā*, whatever is enveloped by the mind is also said to be illusory.

ईक्षेत विभ्रममिदं मनसो विलासं
 दृष्टं विनष्टं अतिलोलमलातचक्रम् ।
 विज्ञानमेकं उरुधेव विभाति माया
 स्वप्नस्त्रिधा गुणविसर्गकृतो विकल्पः ॥ (XI, 13, 34)

One should ascertain this world to be a delusion, on the ground that it is fancied by the mind, that it is perceived, and that it is subject to destruction like the dream-world. The world, moreover, is fleeting like a fire-brand. Therefore duality caused by the transformation of the three strands of *māyā* is only an illusory appearance of the non-dual reality.

एतावानात्मसम्मोहो
 यद् विकल्पस्तु केवले ।
 आत्मन्तृते स्वमात्मानं
 अवलम्बो न यस्य हि ॥ (XI, 28, 36)

The notion of duality in the place of the Absolute is only a delusion of the mind. But illusion without a substratum is impossible. Excepting one's true self, there is no substratum for the erroneous objects of the world, which are similar to the illusion of silver in the shell

How does *māyā* present itself at all in spite of being not real? The Advaitin's answer is that the question itself arises from the influence of *māyā* and, therefore, cannot be answered so long as *māyā* has not been overcome. And when *māyā* is

removed, such questions will no longer arise. The *Bhāgavata* reflects this teaching when it says that the indeterminable *māyā* is the cause of all doubts, even regarding the ways of God.

सेयं भगवतो माया
 यन्नयेन विरुध्यते ।
 ईश्वरस्य विमुक्तस्य
 कार्पण्यमुत बन्धनम् ॥ (III, 7, 9)

How can God, who is ever free, feel miserable and bound (when he takes to *avatāras*)? The very generator of all such doubts is *māyā* alone, says the above verse.

The function of *māyā* is two-fold. On the one hand it conceals the real. On the other it projects the non-real. Hence *māyā* is said to have two powers, one for concealment (*āvaraṇa-śakti*) and the other for projection (*vikṣepa-śakti*). In the case of *Īśvara*, though he is in relation with *māyā*, he is not affected by its *āvaraṇa-śakti*, for *Īśvara* has always the knowledge of identity with the supreme Self. Again, though the world of objects is present before *Īśvara*, since *māyā* is at his control, even the *vikṣepa-śakti* does not delude him. It is only the *jīva*, who is utterly helpless before these powers of *māyā*, that is deluded. This truth is found in the following verses.

नमस्ये पुरुषं त्वाऽऽद्यं
 ईश्वरं प्रकृतेः परम् ।
 अलक्ष्यं सर्वभूतानां
 अन्तर्बहिर्विस्थितम् ॥
 मायाजवनिकाच्छन्नं
 अज्ञाधोक्षजमव्ययम् ।
 न लक्ष्यसे मूढदृशा
 नटो नाट्यधरो यथा ॥ (I, 8, 18-19)

God is beyond sense perception and is imperishable. He is immanent in the hearts of all beings, and he exists outside their

bodies too. He transcends *māyā* (*prakṛteḥ param*). But because of being veiled by *māyā*, he is not known to ordinary people. Just as the true name and designation of an actor is not known to an ordinary spectator, so also the true nature of God is unknown to one who is under the influence of *māyā*.

Māyā is not unreal, like the "hare's horn" or the "sky lotus." Nor is it real, as Brahman is. It is illusory (*mithyā*). However, according to Advaita, what is illusory need not be useless. Though *māyā* represents bondage, it also serves as the avenue to liberation. The case of an illusion producing a useful result is called *saṁvādi-bhrama*. Mistaking the lustre of a gem for the gem itself, one may approach it and obtain the gem. The *Bhāgavata* testifies to the usefulness of *māyā* to *mokṣa*.

तथापि तच्छक्तिविसर्ग एषां
 सुखाय दुःखाय हिताहिताय ।
 बन्धाय मोक्षाय च मृत्युजन्मनोः
 शरीरिणां संसृतयेऽवकल्पते ॥ (VI, 17, 23)

Whereas the results of *māyā* lead to the bondage of the soul, the effort made by the soul from within *māyā* leads him to liberation. Though bound by *māyā*, by doing good deeds and following the scriptural path, one can attain *mokṣa*.

The path to *mokṣa* has two stages. *Karma*, *bhakti*, and *upāsana* prepare the soul for *jñāna*. And it is *jñāna* that finally effects liberation. *Māyā* can be removed only by the direct knowledge of Brahman. *Māyā* is a superimposition on Brahman. And a superimposition can be removed only by knowing the true nature of the substratum on which it is superimposed. This truth is revealed in the following verses.

यथा सुषुप्तः पुरुषो
 विश्वं पश्यति चात्मनि ।
 आत्मानमेकदेशस्थं
 मन्यते स्वप्न उत्थितः ॥

एवं जागरणादीनि
जीवस्थानानि चात्मनः ।
मायामात्राणि विज्ञाय
तद्दृष्टारं परं स्मरेत् ॥ (VI, 16, 53 - 54)

The meaning is this. A person who is dreaming experiences the entire world in his self, but he notices himself to be in one and the same place after coming back to the waking state. Even so, the individual soul passes through the states of waking, dream and deep sleep as its field of experience. But he realizes that these are illusory only by knowing the witness of all these states on which they are superimposed. So what one has to do is to strive to realize the self, which is pure and the only reality.

4. Jagat

On account of *māyā* Nirguṇa-Brahman appears as Saguṇa-Brahman (*Īśvara*), *jīva* and *jagat*. Of the three, *jagat* is nothing but an appearance. When Nirguṇa-Brahman is realized, nothing remains of the world-illusion. But *Īśvara* and *jīva* are not appearances in this sense. They are Nirguṇa-Brahman itself, though appearing differently on account of their limiting adjuncts, viz. *māyā* in the case of *Īśvara* and *avidyā* in the case of *jīva*. Hence when Brahman is realized, *Īśvara* and *jīva* do not go into nothingness, but reappear in their true nature as Brahman. This means that *Īśvara* and *jīva* are not actually two entities, but are essentially one, viz. Brahman. Bereft of their adjuncts, they are nothing but Brahman itself. The *Bhāgavata* reflects this teaching of Advaita.

The world is non-different from Brahman only in the sense that an illusion is not different from its substratum. When the substratum has been discovered, the illusion totally disappears. When Brahman is realized, the world-illusion disappears. This idea is conveyed by the following verse.

इदं हि विश्वं भगवानिवेतरो
 मतो जगत्स्थाननिरोधसंभवाः ।
 तद्धि स्वयं वेद भवांस्तथापि वै
 प्रादेशमात्रं भवतः प्रदर्शितम् ॥ (I, 5, 20)

The universe, characterized by sentient and non-sentient beings, has no independent existence and manifestation, i.e. apart from Brahman. Hence Brahman is the only reality, says the following verse.

विश्वं वै ब्रह्मतन्मात्रं
 संस्थितं विष्णुमायया ।
 ईश्वरेण परिच्छिन्नं
 कालेनाव्यक्तमूर्तिना ॥ (III, 10, 12)

It is shown in the above that after the dissolution of the world, it is only Brahman that exists. At that time the world too becomes of the nature of *cit* alone, i.e. as no other than Brahman. Through the agency of *māyā*, Brahman creates the world out of time, which is no other than Brahman. So, ultimately, these are nothing but illusion. There is nothing other than Brahman.

तदिदं भगवान् राजन्
 एक आत्मा आत्मनां स्वदृक् ।
 अन्तरो अनन्तरो भाति
 पश्य तं माययोरुधा ॥ (I, 13, 47)

It is shown here that the world characterized by duality is only the illusory manifestation of the reality.

द्रव्यं कर्म च कालश्च
 स्वभावो जीव एव च ।
 यदनुग्रहतः सन्ति
 न सन्ति यदुपेक्षया ॥ (II, 10, 12)

All the objects of the world, sentient and insentient, derive their existence and manifestation from the ultimate reality which is always

self-luminous. If that reality is not manifest, there cannot be the manifestation of the world of objects and individual souls. Thus the above verse expresses *vivarta-vāda*.

The ultimate import of even *pariṇāma-vāda* is that the world is an illusion and, as such, it is not independent of Brahman, the cause. See the following verse.

न यत् पुरस्तादुत यन्न पश्चात्
 मध्ये च तन्न व्यपदेशमात्रम् ।
 भूतं प्रसिद्धं च परोण यद् यत्
 तदेव तत् स्यादिति मे मनीषा ॥ (XI, 28, 21)

That which neither existed before nor will exist hereafter does not really exist even in the middle, except in name. Hence an effect is the same as the cause by which it comes into being and by which it stands revealed.

To say that the world is an illusion does not mean that it is useless. In fact, if anything can be useful, it is only the illusory, i.e. what is neither real nor unreal. Utility implies duality, such as of means and end, of agent and action, and so on. Utility has no relevance to Brahman, which is beyond all distinction. The unreal, like the sky-lotus, cannot be useful, for it is never perceived.

The utility of the world is to be judged in terms of *mokṣa*. Other Vedāntins consider the world as real and, as such, as a positive training ground for *mokṣa*. But to regard the world as illusory, as Advaitins do, is actually to invest the world with greater utility for *mokṣa*. The spirit of dispassion (*vairāgya*) is more radical when it comes from the thought that the world is an illusion than when it comes from the idea that it is merely transitory.

मन्यमान इदं विश्वं
 मायारचितमात्मनि ।
 अविद्यारचितस्वप्न-
 गन्धर्वनगरोपमम् ॥ (IV, 12, 15)

Here the great soul Dhruva says that by realizing this world to be nothing more real than a dream or a hallucination caused by ignorance, and by knowing it to be superimposed on the Self by *avidyā*, he has developed *vairāgya* towards it.

5. Saguṇa-Brahman or Īśvara

The Upaniṣads declare that Nirguṇa-Brahman is beyond all thought and speech. Words and the mind return failing to comprehend it. Brahman is not an object of knowledge. It can only be realized as pure consciousness (*cin-mātra*). That in his essential nature Īśvara is non-different from Nirguṇa-Brahman is indicated in the following verse.

वचस्युपरतेऽप्राप्य
 य एको मनसा सह ।
 अनामरूपश्चिन्मात्रः
 सोऽव्यान्नः सदसत्परः ॥ (VI, 16, 21)

In its true nature Saguṇa-Brahman is beyond guṇas. The attributes associated with Saguṇa-Brahman are due to its connection with *māyā*. Hence they are appearances only and belong to the world created out of *māyā*. This is expressed in the following verses.

तथा विलसितेष्वेषु
 गुणेषु गुणवानिव ।
 अन्तः प्रविष्ट आभाति
 विज्ञानेन विजृम्भितः ॥

यथा ह्यवहितो वह्निः
 दारुष्वेकः स्वयोनिषु ।
 नानेव भाति विश्वात्मा
 भूतेषु च तथा पुमान् ॥ (I, 2, 31-32)

Commenting on these lines, Śrīdhara says that the word *iva* in *guṇavāniva* and the word *nāneva* suggest that the possession of attributes and manifoldness is not real but illusory.

In the following verse it is shown that Lord Śiva in his true nature is nothing but pure consciousness, which is undifferentiated. But through *māyā* he appears as Śiva. That in essence Śiva is identical with Brahman is also evident from the fact that in him the modes of the mind are ever absent.

शुद्धं स्वधाम्नि उपाताखिलबुद्धयवस्थितं
चिन्मात्रमेकमभयं प्रतिबिध्य मायाम् ।
तिष्ठन्स्तयैव पुरुषत्वमुपेत्य तस्याम्
आस्ते भवानपरिशुद्ध इवात्मतन्त्रः ॥ (IV, 7, 26)

It is also said here that Śiva is one (*eka*) and on that ground he is free from the fear of transmigration (*abhaya*). He controls *māyā*, and through *māyā*, assumes bodily forms and exhibits the characteristics of ordinary souls.

In the following verse the true nature of Kṛṣṇa is revealed. Lord Kṛṣṇa is Brahman itself, which is ever-released and which remains in its essential nature of self-luminous consciousness and bliss.

स वा अयं ब्रह्म महद्विमृग्य-
कैवल्यनिर्वाणसुखानुभूतिः ।
प्रियः सुहृद् वः खलु मातुलेय
आत्मार्हणीयो विधिकृद् गुरुश्च ॥ (VII, 10, 49)

The supra-relational and witnessing nature of God is set forth in the following verse.

कर्तास्य सर्गादिषु यो न बध्यते
न हन्यते देहगतोऽपि दैहिकैः ।
द्रष्टुर्न दृश्यस्य गुणैर्विदूष्यते
तस्मै नमोऽसक्तविविक्तसाक्षिणे ॥ (V, 19, 12)

Since Īśvara is always aware of his true nature as Nirguᅇa-Brahman, in reality he is free from any sense of agency or enjoyment in respect of his activities like creation, sustentation and dissolution. These activities are the effects of his *māyā* from which he is in essence detached. He is therefore in the nature of a witness of the cosmic process. This is the inner meaning of describing his activities as mere sport, or *līlā*.

Both Īśvara and *jīva* are Nirguᅇa-Brahman appearing through *māyā*. But the main difference between Īśvara and *jīva* is that while the *jīva* has lost sight of his identity with Brahman, Īśvara has always this knowledge. From this basic difference follows a difference in their attitudes to the world, which is manifest to both. Īśvara is aware that the world is illusory, but the *jīva* takes it to be real. This truth comes out in the following verse.

तं त्वां विदाम भगवन् परमात्मतत्त्वं
 सत्त्वेन सम्प्रति रतिं रचयान्तमेषाम् ।
 यत्तेऽनुतापविदितैः दृढभक्तियोगैः
 उद्ग्रन्थयो हृदि विदुर्मुनयो विरागाः ॥ (III, 15, 47)

Sages realized God as none other than the ultimate reality. Although that reality is free from any embodiment, it became endowed with a body, a form made up of *sattva* predominant *māyā*, in order to bestow grace on his devotees. It is by virtue of the Lord's compassion, that devotees became blessed with the inclination to pursue disciplines like *śravaᅇa*, *bhakti* and *yoga* and thereby realize the true nature of Īśvara in their hearts.

Though Īśvara is associated with *māyā*, he is not deluded by it like the *jīva*. This aspect is brought out in the following verse:

यो माययेदं पुरुरूपया सृजति
 बिभर्ति भूयः क्षपयत्यविक्रियः ।
 यद्भेदबुद्धिः सदिकात्मदुःस्थया
 तमात्मतन्त्रं भगवन् प्रतीमहि ॥ (IV, 24, 61)

God in his true nature is absolute Brahman alone. But, in association with *māyā*, he creates, sustains and destroys the world. It is true that God perceives the world of duality. Yet, he is not influenced by it, as he knows the world to be non-real.

Nirguṇa-Brahman appears as Saguṇa-Brahman, the world and the souls. So long as Brahman is viewed as *saguṇa*, the world and souls will also appear to be different from Brahman. When it is ascertained that the state of being *saguṇa* is only apparent to Brahman, it becomes evident that the separateness of the world and souls from Brahman is also apparent and not real. As if to illustrate this point, the Lord himself says in the following verses that both the world which is experienced by the souls and the souls who experience it are pervaded by him in the sense that neither has existence apart from him.

अहं वै सर्वभूतानि
भूतात्मा भूतभावनः ।
शब्दब्रह्म परं ब्रह्म
ममोभे शाश्वती तनू ॥

लोके विततमात्मानं
लोकं चात्मनि सन्ततम् ।
उभयं च मया व्याप्तं
मयि चैवोभयं कृतम् ॥ (VI, 16, 51-52)

6. Jīva

The *jīva* is pure consciousness delimited by, or reflected in, or in association with, *māyālavidyā* and its product, viz. the mind. This conditioned state of the *jīva* is known as bondage. While Īśvara has *māyā* at his control, the *jīva* is controlled by it. Hence overcoming *māyālavidyā* and realizing its true nature as Brahman constitutes the *jīva*'s liberation. For this reason, strictly speaking, there is neither bondage nor liberation. But these terms are

meaningful so long as *avidyā* persists. A close study of the *Bhāgavata* shows that its final view of the *jīva* is that of Advaita.

The *jīva* is in reality non-different from Nirguṇa-Brahman. This is indicated by showing that, like Brahman, the *jīva* is in essence pure existence, consciousness and bliss. That the *jīva* is pure consciousness is shown by the following verse.

एतद्रूपं भगवतो
 ह्यरूपस्य चिदात्मनः ।
 मायागुणैः विरचितं
 महदादिभिः आत्मनि ॥ (I, 3, 30)

The *jīva* is pure consciousness. But it is related to a physical body, which is the effect of the three strands of *māyā*, which is superimposed on Brahman.

The following verse says that the self is the seat of love. It is for the sake of the true self that everything else becomes dear. This shows that the self in its true nature is nothing but bliss. Nothing is more disastrous for a person than that the self should remain concealed.

नातः परतरो लोके
 पुंसः स्वार्थव्यतिक्रमः ।
 यदध्यन्यस्य प्रेयः
 त्वमात्मानः स्वव्यतिक्रमात् ॥ (IV, 22, 32)

An evidence for the true nature of the self as pure consciousness is the fact that the self is actually a witness of the three states of waking, dream and sleep, and not a party to them. The following verse shows that through the self apparently suffers transit through the different states of existence, in its true nature it is only a witness.

यथा यथा विक्रियते
 गुणाक्तो विकरोति वा ।
 तथा तथोपदृष्टाऽऽत्मा
 तद्वृत्तीः अनुकार्यते ॥ (IV, 29, 17)

Saguṇa-Brahman, or Īśvara, is an appearance of Brahman at the cosmic level and *jīva* is an appearance of Brahman at the particular level. Īśvara is Brahman associated with *māyā*, and *jīva* is Brahman in association with a part of *māyā*, viz. *avidyā*. In their true nature, i.e. as divested of their respective adjuncts, the essence of the *jīva* is the same as the essence of Īśvara, both being in reality Nirguṇa-Brahman. This identity is represented by the Upaniṣadic statement *tat tvam asi*, where *tat* stands for the true nature of Īśvara and *tvam* for the true nature of the *jīva*. This truth is reflected in the following verse.

भगवानेक एवैष
 सर्वक्षेत्रेष्ववस्थितः
 अमुष्य दुर्भगत्वं वा
 क्लेशो वा कर्मभिः कुतः ॥ (III, 7, 6)

The impossibility of real difference between *jīva* and Īśvara is conveyed above in the form of a rhetorical question. When the Lord, who is the self of all, alone is seen in everything, how can there be essential difference between him and the *jīvas*?

The following verse states that, like fire appearing as different through different media, the Lord appears as different souls due to many psycho-physical organisms, which are products of *māyā*.

ज्योतिरादिरिवाभाति
 सङ्घातान्न विविच्यते ।
 विदन्ति आत्मानमात्मस्थं
 मथित्वा कवयोऽन्ततः ॥ (VII, 1, 9)

The *ātman* when falsely associated with the material adjuncts of body and mind constitutes the *jīva*. That this association is false and is a result of *avidyā* is the topic of the following verse.

अतः परं यदव्यक्तं
 अव्यूढगुणव्यूहितम् ।
 अदृष्टाश्रुतं वस्तुत्वात्
 स जीवो यत्पुनर्भवः ॥ (I, 3, 32)

The self in its true nature should not be identified either with the gross body or even with the subtle body. So the self is free from any limitation. The above passage also suggests that transmigration (*samsāra*) is illusory.

Again, the following verse says that the relation between the *ātman* and matter is due to *māyā*, or ignorance.

आत्ममायामृते राजन्
 परस्थानुभवात्मनः ।
 न घटेतार्थसम्बन्धः
 स्वप्नद्रष्टुरिवाज्ञसा ॥ (II, 9, 1)

The supreme reality (*para*) is of the nature of experience alone. Without *māyā*, it cannot have any relation to body, etc. So the seeming relation is only non-real. Just as a person who dreams has no real relation to what he dreams, the self cannot have any relation to body, and so on.

Agency and enjoyership are part of the notion of a *jīva*. But since the relation of the self to *prakṛti*, or *māyā*, is not real, the self is not really an agent of action (*kartā*) and an enjoyer of the fruits of action (*bhoktā*).

एवं पराभिधानेन
 कर्तृत्वं प्रकृतेः पुमान् ।
 कर्मसु त्रिभ्यमाणेषु
 गुणैरात्मनि मन्यते ॥ (III, 26, 6)

The above verse shows that the feeling of agency is only an illusion born out of the false identification with *prakṛti*. In reality the self is actionless.

The notion that one is a *jīva* carries with it the idea that one is separate from other *jīvas* similarly conceived. In other words, the concept of a *jīva* implies the plurality of *jīvas*. But since the notion of *jīva* is itself illusory, the idea of a plurality of *jīvas* is also illusory. It is the non-dual reality that appears as many *jīvas* owing to association with *māyā*, or *avidyā*. Take the following verse.

बहुरूप इवाभाति
 मायया बहुरूपया ।
 रममाणो गुणेष्वस्या
 ममाहमिति मन्यते ॥ (II, 9, 2)

The meaning is this. It is only due to *māyā*, which has manifold powers, that the Ātman appears in many forms. It is by the *guṇas* of *māyā*, such as the body, that the *jīva* has the false notion of "I" and "mine."

7. Bondage and Release

Bondage consists in the self identifying itself with matter. But since matter and its relation with the self are illusory, bondage also is an illusion. When bondage itself is illusory, it follows that liberation does not involve any actual change. It consists merely in the removal of ignorance. The self does not have to be liberated when liberation is its very nature. This position of Advaita finds expression in the *Bhāgavata*.

बद्धो मुक्त इति व्याख्या
 गुणतो मे न वस्तुतः ।
 गुणस्य मायामूलत्वात्
 न मे मोक्षो न बन्धनम् ॥ (XI, 11, 1)

The above verse shows that bondage and even release relate only to the false association of the self with matter. These states actually do not pertain to the essential nature of the self, which is non-different from Brahman.

The verse below indicates that in liberation there is only the realization of one's own self as Brahman and thereby the removal of the false notions regarding the self. This is like a person who, after identifying himself with the dream world while dreaming, realizes that he was merely a witness thereof after waking up.

सव्यापकतया आत्मानं
व्यतिरिक्ततया आत्मनि ।
विद्वान् स्वप्न इवामर्श-
साक्षिणं विरराम ह ॥ (IV, 28, 40)

Again, in the following verse, it is shown that in liberation there is nothing new to be achieved, but only the false notion of one's nature to be removed. By the dagger of wisdom one can cut asunder the knot of ignorance that veils the true nature of the self.

यदैवमेतेन विवेकहेतिना
मायामयहङ्करणात्मबन्धनम् ।
छित्त्वाच्युतात्मानुभवोऽवतिष्ठते
तमाहुरात्यन्तिकमङ्ग सम्प्लवम् ॥ (XII, 4, 34)

The real purpose of Śrī Śuka's recital of the *Bhāgavata* before King Parīkṣit was to enable him attain release from the cycle of transmigration. If a person can see himself as Brahman, one without a second, where can he have fear, from whom and for what? King Parīkṣit also reached this state when the narration of the *Bhāgavata* was completed. He realized his true nature as identical with Brahman, as revealed by his exclamation "I am Brahman, the supreme support, Brahman the highest goal." Then he could behold neither Takṣaka nor the body nor the world, says Śrī Śuka:

अहं ब्रह्म परं धाम
ब्रह्माहं परमं पदम् ।
एवं समीक्षन्नात्मानं
आत्मन्याधाय निष्कले ॥

दशन्तं तक्षकं पादे
 लेलिहानं विषाननैः ।
 न द्रक्ष्यसि शरीरं च
 विश्वं च पृथगात्मनः ॥ (XII, 5, 11-12)

When it is said that liberation consists only in the removal of ignorance regarding one's true identity with Brahman, it follows that the continuation of the physical body is no impediment to *mokṣa*. Hence Advaita asserts the possibility of *jīvan-mukti*, liberation while yet alive, in the literal sense, unlike in the figurative sense as in theistic Vedānta. Even after the dawn of knowledge, the body may continue to live as long as its *prārabdha karma* lasts. But the *mukta* will be totally free from any notion of a body for himself. It is only others who identify him with the body out of their own ignorance. In fact, that the *mukta* presents himself to others as though in a body is a blessing to them. Otherwise, there could be no preceptors or offer a helping hand to those steeped in ignorance and transmigration. When the body of a *jīvan-mukta* dies, although there is no change in the *mukti* already attained, with reference to the body, the subsequent state is called *videha-mukti*. The idea of *jīvan-mukti* in the literal sense adorns the *Bhāgavata* through the life and teachings of many liberated ones like Śrī Vyāsa and Śrī Śuka.

The following verse expresses the possibility of *jīvan-mukti*. The *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* passage II, 2, 8 is incorporated here with a slight change. When Brahman, which is immanent in the *jīvā*, is realized, *avidyā* is destroyed and the relation of mind to Ātman is severed.

भिद्यते हृदयग्रन्थिः
 छिद्यन्ते सर्वसंशयाः ।
 क्षीयन्ते चास्य कर्माणि
 दृष्ट एवात्मनीश्वरे ॥ (I, 2, 21)

That the continuation of the body is irrelevant to liberation is illustrated by the following verse.

देहस्थोऽपि न देहस्थः
 विद्वान् स्वप्नाद् यथोत्थितः ।
 अदेहस्थोऽपि देहस्थः
 कुमतिः स्वप्नदृग् यथा ॥ (XI, 11, 8)

An enlightened soul is not tied to the body even though he remains in one, any more than a person who has woken up from dream is tied to the dream. An ignorant person is attached to the body, even though not really present in it, just as one who is dreaming identifies oneself with the dream-body, though not really present in it.

The *jīvan-mukta* has no sense of the body. The following verse says that just as a man intoxicated with liquor sees not whether he is clothed or not, even so an enlightened soul no longer discerns whether the body is still present for him or not. The verse also states that the body will continue till *prārabdha karma*, which has given rise to it, lasts.

देहं च तं न चरमः स्थितमुत्थितं वा
 सिद्धो विपश्यति यतोऽध्यगमत्स्वरूपम् ।
 दैवादुपेतम थ दैववशादपेतं
 वासो यथा परिकृतं मदिरामदान्धः ॥ (III, 28, 37)

The nature and conduct of a *jīvan-mukta* is exemplified by Śrī Śuka, who is described thus:

तस्य पुत्रः महायोगी
 समदृक् निर्विकल्पः ।
 एकान्तमतिरुन्निद्रो
 गूढो मूढ इवेयते ॥ (I, 4, 4)

He is a *samadrk*, which means that he sees Brahman in each and every thing. The expression *nirvikalpa* indicates that he has transcended the notion of duality. He is an *ekāntamatih* in the sense that he is irrevocably fixed in Brahman. He is *unnidra*, meaning that in his case the phase of *avidyā* called *āvaraṇa* has been removed. At the same time he does not reveal himself as a realized soul. This is indicated by the word *gūḍha*. And from his activity one takes him to be a *mūḍha*, i.e. a dull-witted person.

The *jīvan-mukta*, having transcended the three guṇas of *prakṛti*, is not bound by Vedic injunctions. His conduct is moral, not by virtue of injunction as in the case of the ignorant person, but as the spontaneous expression of his inner perfection. For him there is nothing more to be attained by the practice of duty.

न वेदवादान् अनुवर्तते मतिः
 स्व एव लोके रमते महामुनेः ।
 यथा गतिः देवमनुष्ययोः पृथक्
 स्व एव धर्मे न परं क्षिपेत्थितः ॥ (IV, 4, 19)

The *jīvan-mukta* is not deceived by the world of *māyā*. This is the import of the following verse.

यदि स्म पश्यति असदिन्द्रियार्थं
 नानानुमानेन विरुद्धमन्यत् ।
 स मन्यते वस्तुतया मनीषी
 स्वाप्नं यथोत्थाय तिरोदधानम् ॥ (XI, 28, 32)

The *jīvan-mukta* does not perceive anything real other than the self. To deny this would not stand to reason. Just as one who, after having come back to the waking state from the dream state, treats the objects of the dream, which he recollects, to be non-real, even so the *jīvan-mukta* treats the objects of the world, which are presented to him in perception, to be non-real.

The following verse shows that neither *māyā* nor its products can in any way affect a *jīvan-mukta*.

भुक्तभोगा परित्यक्ता
 दृष्टदोषा च नित्यज्ञः ।
 नेश्वरस्याशुभं धत्ते
 स्वे महिम्नि स्थितस्य च ॥ (III, 27, 24)

The falsity of *māyā* can be known only by those who have realized their identity with the supreme self. So *māyā* does not influence the *jīvan-mukta* by whom the effects of *māyā* have already been experienced.

8. Means to Release

The soul's ignorance (*avidyā*) about its non-difference from Brahman is the cause of its bondage. Hence its release from bondage depends on the removal of *avidyā*. Knowledge (*jñāna*) alone can remove *avidyā*. In other words, *jñāna* is the direct means to release. Other kinds of discipline such as *karma*, *upāsana* and *bhakti* are also useful to the attainment of release, but only in an indirect way. They prepare the ground for the pursuit as well as the onset of *jñāna*. This is the Advaita scheme of means to release (*mokṣa-sādhana*), and it is amply illustrated by the *Bhāgavata*.

In the following verse Brahmā says that the birth of the Lord as Sage Kapila is to tear up the root of *karma*, viz. *avidyā*, through the instrumentality of knowledge and self-realization. This shows that *jñāna* is the direct means to *mokṣa*.

ज्ञानविज्ञानयोगेन
 कर्मणामुद्धरन् जटाः ।
 हिरण्यकेशः पद्माक्षः
 पद्मामुद्रापदाम्बुजः ॥

एष मानवि ते गर्भं
 प्रविष्टः कैटभार्दनः ।
 अविद्यासंशयग्रन्थिं
 छित्त्वा गां विचरिष्यति ॥ (III, 24, 17-18)

Only knowledge of the self removes bondage and the fear of *samsāra*. This gives one supreme bliss, and this is *moksa*, says the following verse.

मात्र अध्यात्मिकीं विद्यां
 शमनीं सर्वकर्मणाम् ।
 वितरिष्ये यथा चासौ
 भयं चातितरिष्यति ॥ (III, 24, 40)

It is also made clear that mediate knowledge of Brahman obtained from scripture is not enough. It must get fructified in experience. The following verse states that only those who experience non-duality through the knowledge obtained from the preceptor that cross, as it were, the false ocean of mundane existence. And the preceptor is the very self of all who shines like the sun.

एवंविधं त्वां सकलात्मनामपि
 स्वात्मानं आत्मात्मतया विचक्षते ।
 गुर्वर्कलब्धोपनिषत्सुचक्षुषा
 वे ते तरन्तीव भवानृताम्बुधिम् ॥ (X, 14, 24)

Immediate knowledge (*vijñāna*) is defined in the following verse. That knowledge is called *vijñāna*, on attaining which, one ceases to have the vision of multiplicity, but perceives only the one reality in everything.

एतदेव हि विज्ञानं
 न तथैकेन येन यत् ।
 स्थित्युपत्यप्ययान् पश्येद्
 भावानां त्रिगुणात्मनाम् ॥ (XI, 19, 15)

In preparing for *jñāna*, *karma*, *upāsana* and *bhakti* play an indispensable role. *Karma* done with desire for fruit continues to involve one in *saṁsāra*. But when actions are done in a spirit of dedication to the Lord, i.e. as *karma-yoga*, they do not necessitate one in experiencing its worldly fruits, but instead purifies the mind. And mental purity (*citta-śuddhi*) is an indispensable requirement for the pursuit of *jñāna*. This idea is explained in the following verses.

एवं नृणां क्रियायोगाः
 सर्वे संसृतिहेतवः ।
 त एवात्मविनाशाय
 कल्पन्ते कल्पिताः परे ॥

यदत्र क्रियते कर्म
 भगवत्परितोषणम् ।
 ज्ञानं यत्तदधीनं हि
 भक्तियोगसमन्वितम् ॥ (I, 5, 34-35)

Upāsana on Saguna-Brahman subserves *jñāna* by purifying and steadying the mind. The following verse says that the *yoga* which is characterized by absolute cessation of joy and sorrow leads to *jñāna*.

योग आध्यात्मिकः पुंसां
 मतो निःश्रेयसाय मे ।
 अत्यन्तोपरतिर्यत्र
 दुःखस्य च सुखस्य च ॥ (III, 25, 13)

Upāsana on Nirguṇa-Brahman is the same as *nididhyāsana*. It helps to convert the mediate knowledge of Brahman into direct experience by removing obstacles thereto. The obstacles to direct experience of Brahman are old habits of thought to dwell on the

world of duality in spite of intellectual conviction in non-duality (*viparīta-bhāvanā*). This is the import of the following verses.

ये त्वानन्येन भावेन
भावयन्त्यात्मभावनम् ।
आत्मनि प्रोतभुवनं
परं सदसदात्मकम् ॥

तेषां सुपक्वयोगानां
जितश्चासेन्द्रियात्मनाम् ।
लब्धयुष्मत् प्रसादानां
न कुतश्चित् पराभवः ॥ (III, 15, 6-7)

We now come to *bhakti*. The *Bhāgavata* shows that *bhakti*, like *yoga*, cleanses the mind and makes it one-pointed, thereby fulfilling the essential requirements for *jñāna*. In the following verse it is said that loving devotion of God without any thought of fruit and without any impediment leads to the cleansing of the heart. *Bhakti* thus employed immediately gives rise to absolute detachment and knowledge of the Upaniṣadic truth.

स वै पुंसां परो धर्मो
यतो भक्तिरधोक्षजे ।
अहैतुक्यप्रतिहता
यया आत्मा सम्प्रसीदति ॥

वासुदेवे भगवति
भक्तियोगः प्रयोजितः ।
जनयत्याशु वैराग्यं
ज्ञानं च यदहैतुकम् ॥ (I, 2, 6-7)

In securing self-purification and one-pointedness, *bhakti* is easier than *upāsana* because of the element of love in it. The *Bhāgavata* projects *bhakti* as *yoga* suffused with love. This advantage is exemplified in the love which the gopis bestowed on Lord Kṛṣṇa, as shown by the following verse. Through their pure and one-pointed devotion to the Lord, they were able to attain the knowledge of the identity of the self with Brahman. The realization of such a state by them is equal to that of the sages when they attained total absorption of the mind in Brahman (*samādhi*).

ता नाविदन् मय्यनुषङ्गबद्ध -
 धियःस्वमात्मानं अदस्तथेदम् ।
 यथा समाधौ मुनयोऽब्धितोये
 नद्यः प्रविष्टा इव नामरूपे ॥ (XI, 12, 12)

Though *bhakti* begins in a distinction between soul and God, it seeks to transcend that distinction. When *bhakti* rises above duality, it merges itself in *jñāna*. The fulfilment of *bhakti* as *jñāna*, as conceived of in Advaita, is expressed in the *Bhāgavata*, for example, in the following verse.

इत्थं शरत्प्रावृषिकावृतू हरेः
 विशृण्वतो मेऽनुसवं यशोऽमलम् ।
 सङ्कीर्त्यमानं मुनिभिर्महात्मभिः
 भक्तिः प्रवृत्ता आत्मरजस्तमोऽपहा ॥ (I, 5, 28)

Here a distinction is implicitly made between two levels of *bhakti*. Listening to the glories of God is the lower form of *bhakti*, which is a means to *jñāna*. When it intensifies, there arises the mental state in the form of God. This level is hardly different from *jñāna*. At this level of *bhakti*, the elements of *rajas* and *tamas* are removed from the mind (and it remains in a state of pure *sattva*).

While preparing the ground for *jñāna*, *bhakti* also helps *karma*. It is said in the following verse that *niṣkāma-karma* becomes easier when work is looked upon as service to God. On account of the distinctive advantage of *bhakti*, it is said here that even *jñāna*, which is the direct means to *mokṣa*, cannot shine forth without *bhakti* in it.

नैष्कर्म्यमपि अच्युतभाववर्जितं
 न शोभते ज्ञानमलं निरञ्जनम् ।
 कुतः पुनः शक्यदभद्रमीक्षरे
 न चार्पितं कर्म यदप्यकारणम् ॥ (I,5,12)

GĪTĀ RAHASYA OF LOKAMANYA TILAK

S.S. Antarkar*

I

Introduction

The Genesis of Tilak's Gītā Rahasya

The *Bhagavad-gītā* has always been both the source of inspiration and foundation for different schools of Vedānta philosophy, different Vaiṣṇava devotional sects, different types of spiritual aspirants and also for different social and religious reform movements. It gives the essence of the Hindu way of life in a simple and lucid style. It is one of the most popular books on ethico-religious and spiritual teachings. Perhaps it does not assert that there is one and only one way of attaining mokṣa, or that there is one and only one true way of life. It is an expression of the catholic spirit of Hinduism giving freedom to the reader to interpret the text in one's own way and to choose one's way of life. After expounding the teaching in all details, the Lord says, "Thus I have explained to

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you this knowledge, which is the secret of all secrets. Reflect on it fully and *do as thou choosest*."¹

Naturally, many commentaries have been written in Sanskrit on the *Gītā* by scholars of different schools of philosophy in support of their own doctrines. Many saints and religious preachers have translated it in the vernacular and foreign languages for guiding people to follow the right path. In modern times, socio-religious reformers and political activists have tried to provide ethico-metaphysical or philosophical support for reform and freedom movements by showing the relevance of the *Gītā* to the problems of modern society. Annie Besant, Mahatma Gandhi, Sri Aurobindo, Radhakrishnan, Vinoba Bhave and many others have interpreted the *Gītā* so as to apply it to the modern context. Lokamanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak belongs to this category of modern interpreters.

Lokamanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak (1856-1920) known as "the Father of Indian unrest", and also known for giving the *svārājya-mantra*, "Freedom is our birth right and we will achieve it," to the Indian people had his first acquaintance with the *Bhagavad-gītā* in 1872 at the age of sixteen. He tells us, "In the year 1872, during the last illness of my father, the task of reading out to him a Prākṛta commentary on the *Bhagavad-gītā* called *Bhāṣā-vivṛtti* fell to my lot. At that date, that is when I was only 16 years old, it was not possible for me to fully understand the import of the *Gītā*."² Still, the impressions made on the mind remained and the liking for it also continued. Later on, he studied, read from time to time the Sanskrit commentaries and other criticisms and also expositions by many learned scholars in English and in Marathi on the *Gītā*. He then faced the doubt as to why the *Gītā*, which was expounded in order to induce Arjuna to fight when he was dejected by the idea that it was a sin to war with one's own relatives, should contain an exposition of the paths of mokṣa like the path of knowledge or that of devotion. He could not find a satisfactory answer to this question in any commentary

on the *Gītā*. He then put aside all criticisms and commentaries, read the *Gītā* independently, and thought of its essential teachings. He "was convinced that the original *Gītā* did not preach the philosophy of renunciation (*nivṛtti*) but of action (*karma-yoga*); that possibly the single word 'yoga' appearing in the *Gītā* quite often had been used to mean *karma-yoga*. That conviction was strengthened by the study of the *Mahābhārata*, the *Vedānta-sūtra*, the *Upaniṣads* and other Sanskrit and English treatises on Vedānta".³ He then decided to publish his views. He continued to write articles, deliver lectures and to hold private discussions with scholars on this question. But he could not find time to write a treatise critically considering the views of the traditional commentators, showing their incompleteness with reasons and comparing the religion and philosophy expounded in the *Gītā* with other religions and philosophies not only of India, but also of Europe. When in 1908 he was convicted and sent to Mandalay prison in Burma, he found time to write this book. He took permission from the government to take books and other things essential for writing this book from Pune to Mandalay and made the first draft of this book in Mandalay jail in the winter of 1910–1911. The whole book was completed in the period of about five months from 2 November 1910 to 30 March 1911 (between Kārtika Śuddha 1st and Fālguna Vadya 30th of the Śāka year 1832).⁴ After Tilak's release from the jail when the government returned the manuscript to him after inspection, the work of making a fair copy, verifying references to other books made at different places in the work and its printing took over four years, and the first edition of the book was published in Marathi in June 1915. The book became popular, and its second edition was brought out within four months, i.e. September 1915.

Since then the original Marathi version has gone into nine editions. It has been translated in Hindi, Gujarathi, Bengali, Kannada, Telugu, Tamil and English. Its Hindi version has fourteen editions,

the Gujarathi and Kannada versions have three editions each and the English version has six editions. The first edition of the English translation came out as late as 1 August 1935—the fifteenth death anniversary of Lokamanya Tilak.

The title of the work is *Śrīmad-bhagavad-gītā-rahasya* or "*Karma-yoga-śāstra*. Even on the Marathi edition, Tilak has called it in English "The Hindu Philosophy of Life, Ethics and Religion". The title, *Śrīmad-bhagavad-gītā-rahasya*, literally means "the secret (teaching/doctrine) of *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*". Tilak brings out the essence of the *Bhagavad-gītā* teachings by critical and thorough examination of the text—both external and internal. External examination of the text means examination of the text in relation to (1) the whole *Mahābhārata* of which it is a part, (2) the *Upaniṣads*, (3) the *Brahma-sūtra*, (4) the *Bhāgavata-dharma*, (5) the Buddhist literature and (6) even the Christian Bible. He also discusses the problem of the date of the present *Gītā* text. All these considerations, he calls, "the external examination."

The internal examination of the text contains thirteen chapters dealing with different ethico-metaphysical issues like the central problem of the *Gītā*, enquiry into the nature of karma, Ātman, the universe, various ethical theories, karma and freedom, renunciation, action, devotion, liberated state and worldly activities, and so on. In Chapter 14, Tilak discusses the continuity and link between different chapters of the *Gītā*. Chapter 15 gives a resume. This theoretical discussion is supported by his own translation of the *Gītā*. It would not be an exaggeration, therefore, to say that this is one of the most comprehensive, independent and critical treatments of the *Bhagavad-gītā*. It is both scholarly and inspiring, bringing together the traditional Indian wisdom and scholarship with the modern Western thought. Tilak's interpretation of the *Bhagavad-gītā* is unique in many respects. It would not be out of place to mention at the outset some of the unique features of Tilak's treatment of the *Gītā*.

The Unique Features of Tilak's Interpretation

1. Firstly, he regards the *Bhagavad-gītā* not as a book of moral or religious injunctions and prohibitions telling Arjuna to do or not to do something, but as a book of theoretical ethics or moral philosophy propounding a theory of morality comparable and even superior to the utilitarian, intuitionist and metaphysical theories propounded in the Western philosophy by philosophers like Bentham and Mill, Aristotle and Kant, Spencer and Sidgwick, Schopenhauer and Nietzsche.

2. Secondly, he attempts to justify the *Gītā* ethics not on the ground of the divine authority of Lord Kṛṣṇa, but on the rational, philosophical grounds exposing inadequacies of the rival approaches and theories. He distinguishes three approaches to ethics—the utilitarian, the intuitionist and the meta-physical—and argues in favour of ethics based on the metaphysics of Advaita Vedānta.

3. Thirdly, unlike the traditional ācāryas, he does not consider the *Bhagavad-gītā* as an independent text among the three or four authoritative texts like the *Upaniṣads*, the *Brahma-sūtra* and the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* by taking it out of the historical context of the *Mahābhārata* of which it is a part. While deciding the import of the *Bhagavad-gītā*, he takes it as a part of the *Mahābhārata*. Though he takes cognizance of the historical context, his interpretation is not historical, but philosophical.

4. Fourthly, as pointed out earlier, he submits the *Gītā* text to thorough and critical scrutiny, both internal and external.

5. Another unique feature of his interpretation is that, faced with varied and even mutually incompatible interpretations, he explicitly adopts the rules of interpretation formulated by the Mīmāṃsā for determining the true import of a text.

6. He discusses the doctrines of the *Gītā* not in the narrow context of the Vedic tradition, but in the universal context of human moral predicament. Such an approach liberates the text from any sectarian

treatment, from the narrow bounds of specific spatio-temporal context, and provides the text with the widest canvas of deep existential problems. His main charge against the traditional commentators is that their treatment is sectarian and biased and not objective and universal.

7. Tilak formulates the central problem of the *Gītā* not as a problem of duty *versus* inclination, not as a conflict between sense of duty and temptation, not as a problem of knowledge *versus* ignorance, weakness or wickedness, but a problem of conflict of duties. It is, therefore, a problem of resolving a moral conflict, i.e. a conflict between two duties, or two right actions, each of which, when considered in itself, appears supreme, but the two, when combined, are incompatible.

8. Finally, Tilak's approach is unique in that he rejects the popular belief that there is no scope of action within the framework of Advaita Vedānta, that "Advaita Vedānta propagates a sterile doctrine of turning away from the active pursuit of life"; on the contrary, he maintains that Advaita Vedānta provides a firm basis for an adequate ethical theory. After a thorough examination of the historical context and the sequence of the chapters in the *Gītā*, after a critical analysis of its subject matter topic by topic, and by applying the Mīmāṃsā rules of interpretation of a text to find out its true import, Tilak concludes that the various interpretations offered by the traditional commentators according a secondary or subsidiary place to the path of action are not faithful to the *Gītā* text. The method establishes that the true import of the *Gītā* is "the path of action with devotion to, and knowledge of, Brahman" (*jñāna-bhakti-yukta karma-yoga*). It is not any one of the three paths separately considered, but the harmonious blending of them with emphasis on action that the *Gītā* teaches. Moreover, the *Gītā* does not prescribe a code of conduct as the law-books of Manu and Yājñavalkya do. Rather, it provides the rational or the basic principles of the path of action. The *Gītā*, thus, is a book of philosophy, or theory of right action.

In the light of these unique features of Tilaka's interpretation of the *Bhagavad-gītā*, the second section of this article would discuss the methodological issue about the rules of interpretation of a text. The third section discusses three theories of ethics. The fourth section argues that the metaphysics of Advaita Vedānta, according to Tilak, does not necessarily imply the path of renunciation as Śaṅkara maintains. The fifth section puts, in a nutshell, Tilak's conclusions about the true import of the *Gītā*. The last section raises some issues with regard to Tilak's interpretation of the *Bhagavad-gītā*.

2. Methodology of Interpretation

Tilak begins by distinguishing two types of examination of a text—the internal examination (*antarāṅga parīkṣaṇa*) and the external examination (*bahirāṅga parīkṣaṇa*). Internal examination consists in studying the whole book with a view to extracting its essence, its hidden meaning, its subject matter, conclusions sought to be proved, and so on. External examination of a text, on the other hand, consists in studying authorship, time and place of the text, its language and diction, style and grammar, social conditions, what opinions, places and personages it mentions, whether the ideas are original or borrowed, and if borrowed, from where they are borrowed, and so on. Tilak very rightly points out that the traditional Indian scholars, who wrote commentaries and criticisms have not given attention to these external aspects. But the Western critics, and following them some modern scholars are devoting much attention to the external examination of the *Gītā*. Tilak, as pointed out earlier, undertakes both the kinds of examination. Tilak, on the basis of what the author of the *Mahābhārata* says about the *Gītā* and about the *Nārāyaṇīya*- or *Bhāgavata-religion*, concludes that the *Bhāgavata-religion* and the *Gītā* teach the way of action (*pravṛtti*) as opposed to the path of renunciation (*nivṛtti*). He further points out that it is known from

Śaṅkarācārya's commentary itself that the commentators before him have interpreted the *Gītā* as propounding synthesis of knowledge and action, i.e. the view that every person who has acquired spiritual knowledge has nevertheless to continue performing the duties prescribed by dharma so long as he lives. But this doctrine of "Vaidic-karma-yoga" was not acceptable to Śaṅkarācārya. It is with the intention of refuting this doctrine and stating what, according to him, is the true import of the *Gītā* that Śaṅkarācārya wrote his commentary on the *Gītā*. He also wrote commentaries on the principal *Upaniṣads* and the *Brahma-sūtra*, and attempted to show that all these three types of authoritative texts support his theory of absolute non-dualism with the path of renunciation or inaction. The dominant thought of the *Upaniṣads* is ascetic or renunciatory. The *Brahma-sūtra* is meant to harmonize the teachings of the *Upaniṣads* and hence it also emphasizes renunciation. As a result, neither in the *Upaniṣads* nor in the *Brahma-sūtra* do we find theoretical statement and justification of the path of action. According to Tilak, the *Bhagavad-gītā* filled in this lacuna by supplementing philosophy of action to the one-sided renunciatory thought of the *Upaniṣads* and the *Brahma-sūtra* and hence assumed equal status, authority and importance. But Śaṅkarācārya, who wanted to propound the metaphysics of absolute non-dualism with the path of renunciation, interpreted the *Gītā* also as preaching renunciation. The later ācāryas like Rāmānuja, Madhva, Nimbārka, and Vallabha differed from Śaṅkarācārya both in their metaphysical positions and in their views about the way of life or path to mokṣa, and wrote commentaries on the *prasthānatrayī*—the *Upaniṣads*, the *Gītā* and the *Brahma-sūtra*—with a view to show that these three authoritative texts support their sectarian views. What is common to all these interpretations is subordination of action to either jñāna or bhakti. The saints of Maharashtra tried to reconcile devotion with absolute non-dualism. Thus different schools have interpreted the *Gītā* in their own ways as teaching: non-dualism treating world as

illusory coupled with renunciation of action; qualified monism maintaining the reality of the world coupled with devotion to Vāsudeva; dualism coupled with devotion to Viṣṇu; pure non-dualism with devotion; non-dualism of the Śāṅkara school with devotion; or Pātañjala yoga with devotion; or devotion pure and simple; or yoga pure and simple; or knowledge of Brahman, pure and simple. Having mentioned these numerous interpretations of the *Gītā*, all of which subordinate the path of action, Tilak asks: "Is it possible to have such mutually contradictory interpretations of one and the same work? And if it is not only possible, but also desirable, then why should it be so?"⁵ Tilak's answer is that these different interpretations are due to each sectarian commentator treating only those statements which are consistent with his own particular cult as important and others as unimportant, and twisting the meaning of those which are incompatible with his own sect. But this way of determining the import of a book by looking at it from the point of view of one's own cherished theory is not proper; it does injustice to the text as one imposes one's own views on the text. Tilak, therefore, recommends the method of "examining in the first place without prejudice the whole work and drawing its implied purport without insisting that one's own cult is propounded by the *Gītā*."⁶

One must, therefore, give up the doctrinal method of determining the purport of a book, and follow the rules laid down by the Mīmāṃsā writers in determining the meaning of a book, or a chapter, or a sentence. The rules tell us to consider the following points:⁷ firstly, the beginning or commencement of the work and its end (*upakrama* and *upasaṁhāra*) must be taken into account in determining the purport of the book. Secondly, what point is repeated or emphasized again and again (*abhyāsa*) must be considered. Thirdly, we must ask: what is the new point that the author wants to make? No good author will write unless he has to make some new point. The novelty (*apūrvatā*) of the book must

be one important consideration while determining the import of a book. Fourthly, we must also consider the result, or the effect, or the fruit (*phalam*) of the teaching. The next is the consideration of the statements which are not claimed to be true, which do not constitute the part of the main argument, but which are used to glorify or praise the course which is recommended and condemn the course which is rejected. Such statements are called "*arthavāda*" by the Mīmāṃsākas. Lastly, one has to find out, while determining the purport of a literary work, whether evidence is marshalled in support of the conclusion and whether the points which would prove the opposite of the conclusion are refuted. This is called "*upapatti*", i.e. whether the conclusion is logically justified. By giving up the sectarian prejudices and following these rules of interpretation, the student must determine the import of the text. This recommendation raises the question whether the ācāryas were not aware of the Mīmāṃsā method of interpretation, and if they knew it, then why did they not follow it in interpreting the *prasthānatrayī*, and especially the *Gītā*. If they had followed it, how could they arrive at divergent and mutually incompatible conclusions? Tilak raises such questions and says:

The only answer to this question is that once a commentator is committed to a sectarian perspective, he adopts the method by which he can show that the authoritative religious text describes the sect to which he belongs. This is because the sectarian commentators have a preconceived notion that, if the said book has an import other than the one accepted by his sect, then it must be false and must be due to some ulterior motive. In showing that the text everywhere asserts the same meaning which has been accepted as true before handed by one's own sect, if any Mīmāṃsā rule is violated, the commentators do not mind because of their fixed notions.⁸

This doctrinal method giving rise to diverse and often incompatible interpretations of the text is prevalent not only in Hinduism, but also in Christianity and Islam. It is also prevalent in the secular legal matters where legislators, pleaders, or judges very often twist the law in one way or another to suit their purposes.

If such be the case with purely worldly matters, what wonder is there that divergent commentaries based on different traditions have been written on the *Upaniṣads*, the *Vedānta-sūtra* and also on the third book of *prasthānatrayī*, viz. the *Bhagavad-gītā*. But if one leaves aside this doctrinal method and pays a little attention to the *upakrama*, *upasaṁhāra*, etc. of the *Bhagavad-gītā*, it will be seen that the blessed Lord preached the *Gītā* to Arjuna at the critical moment before the Bhārata war was actually started... for inducing Arjuna, who had become dejected and was on the point of renouncing the world, to perform his duties as a warrior by preaching to him the gospel of Brahman.⁹

Tilak approaches the *Gītā* text without any preconceived notions or prejudices—sectarian or otherwise, and applies the Mīmāṁsā rules of interpretation in order to determine the purport of the *Gītā*. The problem which Arjuna faced as posed by him before Śrī Kṛṣṇa is whether the war with the Kauravas to regain the kingdom which they have usurped immorally and illegally, but which involves killing not only of kith and kin but also of revered preceptors, elders and so on, is righteous or not. He was perplexed about what is *dharma* and what is *adharmā* (*dharma sammudha cetah*). This is a moral issue which is resolved by Śrī Kṛṣṇa by telling Arjuna that his duty is to fight though it involves some defect (*doṣa*). These are *upakarma* and *upasaṁhāra* of the *Gītā*. What is repeated several times throughout the *Gītā* is "therefore you must fight, perform action, do your duty", and so on. This is the third consideration

called *abhyāsa*. The novelty (*apūrvatā*) of the *Gītā* teaching consists in establishing active way of life (*pravṛtti*) on the metaphysical foundation of absolute non-dualism. This novelty assumes utmost importance, because Śāṅkara Vedānta treats knowledge of absolute non-dualism and action as opposed to each other like light and darkness. The effect, or result, or the fruit (*phala*) of the *Gītā* teachings is Arjuna's decision to fight against the Kauravas. Throughout the *Gītā* text, performing one's duty or action, i.e. the active way of life, is praised, lauded, glorified, and running away from the battlefield, renouncing duty because it involves defect is condemned. This is *arthavāda*. Lastly, all the arguments converge in justifying righteous war (*dhārmya-yuddha*) and condemning inaction. Thus, contends Tilak, the impartial study of the *Gītā* proves without doubt that the true purport of the *Gītā* is to preach the path of action based on the knowledge of Brahman. He refers to the views of the non-dualistic philosopher, Paramahansa Śrī Kṛṣṇānanda Svāmī and quotes approvingly from his short Sanskrit monograph, *Gītārtha-parāmarśa*, his statement, "*tasmāt gītā nāma brahmavidyāmūlam nītiśāstram*", i.e. "therefore the *Gītā* is moral philosophy or ethics rooted in the metaphysics of Brahman."¹⁰

Though the *Gītā* deals with what is good or bad, right or wrong, in human conduct, it does not issue mere commandments like "Do not kill" or "Speak the truth". So the *Gītā* is not a code prescribing rules of conduct like *Manu-smṛti*. Rather, it discusses the fundamental and abiding principles underlying such ethico-religious rules of conduct. It is, therefore, more appropriate to call it "the philosophy of *karma-yoga*" (*karma-yoga-śāstra*). The word "yoga", as it occurs in the *Gītā* several times, is used in the sense of *karma-yoga*. The colophon (the statement marking the completion of a chapter in the *Gītā*) uses the expression "*yoga-śāstra*". The colophon also brings out the novelty or uniqueness of the *Gītā* approach by saying that it is in the framework of the metaphysics of Brahman (*brahma-vidyāyām-yoga-śāstre*). Tilak explains this colophon¹¹ by saying that, after a person attains realization of

Brahman, there are two alternative ways of life (*niṣṭhā*) open to him—one is the path of renunciation in which the person in the post-realization stage gives up all activities and lives as an ascetic or monk; the other is the path of action in which the person in the post-realization stage does not give up activities, but performs them in such a way that they no more bind him. The first is called Sāṅkhya, or the path of knowledge, and the second is called yoga, or the path of action. The former is discussed in the Upaniṣads, but the theoretical discussion of the latter is found no-where except in the *Gītā*. It is this uniqueness of the *Gītā* that the colophon brings out very explicitly.

Yoga-śāstra or *karma-yoga-śāstra*, i.e. the science of morals, discusses the problem: "Which is the best way of living? Can it be always followed? If not, what are the exceptions to it, and how do they arise? Why is certain path called good or bad? Who decides this goodness or badness and on what grounds?" The words "good" and "bad" are ordinary words. But we also use words like propitious and unpropitious, beneficial and harmful, sinful and meritorious, just and unjust, and so on. But since the persons using these words have different views about the nature of the cosmos, there are different ways of expounding the philosophy of action or the science of ethics. Tilak distinguishes between three approaches: *ādhibhautika*—positivistic or materialistic; *ādhidāivika*—theological or intuitionistic; and *ādhyātmika*—metaphysical. Tilak writes in a footnote that he has used these ancient names for the three methods of Auguste Comte, the 19 century thinker from France.¹²

3. Three Theories of Ethics

"One of the chief contributions which Lokamanya Tilak had made to the interpretation of the *Bhagavad-gītā* and which has not received the attention of scholars as it deserves," says R.D. Ranade, "is his scholarly exposition of the ethical doctrines of the *Bhagavad-*

gītā in relation to those of the European moralists."¹³ Before giving the exposition of the ethical doctrines of the *Gītā*, Tilak starts by showing inadequacies and limitations of the first two approaches mentioned above, viz. the *ādhibhautika* and the *ādhidaiivika*. The first ethical theory he considers is *ādhibhautika-sukha-vāda*.¹⁴

According to this theory, generally known as "ethical hedonism", whatever action a person performs is performed for obtaining happiness or pleasure and avoiding pain. The happiness of all humans is the highest worldly goal of life. Therefore, the true way of determining the moral value of an action is to weigh its pleasurable or painful consequences. The pleasure and pain relevant for determining moral value of an action are those that arise from the contact of organs with the external objects. The question that arises next is: whose pleasure and pain—one's own or those of others; of one person or many persons? There are differences of opinion on these matters.

Tilak considers three versions of hedonism.¹⁵ The first version is egoistic hedonism which holds that pleasures and pains to be considered are one's own. Tilak points out that Cārvāka has emphatically propounded this view. But Arjuna had already declared without waiting for the advice from Śrī Kṛṣṇa that "I do not want to kill them though I am killed, O Madhusūdana, even for the kingdom of the three worlds, how much less for the sake of the earth?"¹⁶ If Arjuna were to consider his own material pleasures, he would not have even faced the moral problem, and Kṛṣṇa would have advised Arjuna to take advantage of this golden opportunity to get the kingdom by killing all kith and kin coming in the way. But both Arjuna and Kṛṣṇa have rejected this egoistic hedonism *ab initio*. The *Gītā* mentions such a selfish view as an expression of the demoniac mind (*āsuri*). Egoistic hedonism "does not even deserve," says Tilak, "the name of ethics, or of an exposition of morality; and therefore instead of wasting more time in considering this view, we will now turn to the second version of ethical hedonism."¹⁷

The second version accepts one's own maximum pleasure as the ultimate end, but since it is not possible to achieve it unless one gives due consideration to the pleasures of others as one expects others to do to oneself, this version recognizes the need to follow certain ethical or moral principles promoting happiness of others. Tilak, therefore, thinks that hedonism as an ethical theory begins with this version. Unlike Cārvāka, these philosophers explain as to why ethical rules are required to be observed by everybody for the maintenance of society. This version accepts the other-regarding virtues like charity, generosity, pity, friendliness and so on, but their origin is nothing but means of acquiring one's own happiness and avoiding pain. Hobbes in England and Helvetius in France have held this view. But this view is rejected by scholars like Butler, who have shown that the human nature as a whole is not absolutely selfish and that there exist in human being from birth other-regarding tendencies like love, gratitude, etc. Even a cruel animal like tigress is prepared to die for the sake of her cubs. Therefore, it is futile to say that emotions like love and philanthropy come into existence in the human mind out of selfishness. Secondly, this version also subscribes to the Cārvāka view that a human being is nothing but a pleasure-seeking animal. Thirdly, it is also not proper to judge righteousness or unrighteousness of an action on the basis of the long-sighted selfishness. To reduce unselfishness or altruistic tendencies to long-sighted selfishness and then to say that human beings cannot act except on the selfish motive is to distort human nature.

The third version of ethical hedonism recognizes the existence of the two distinct tendencies in human nature: the egoistic tendency to pursue one's own happiness and the altruistic tendency towards happiness of others. Giving equal importance to both these principles, it constructs an ethical theory explaining good and bad conduct (*kārya-akārya-vyavasthiti*). But this version also subscribes to the hedonistic view that there is nothing beyond sensuous pleasure. Secondly, since this theory gives equal importance to

both the egoistic or selfish tendency and altruistic tendency, it cannot provide a way of preferring one to the other when these two tendencies are opposed to each other, or are incompatible. The proponents of this view claim that they do not reduce altruistic tendencies to far-sighted selfishness as Hobbes and others do; but they weigh these two tendencies and decide in what their self-interest lies and so they call their view "enlightened self interest" and not "farsighted self-interest". Tilak quotes Bhartṛhari and Kālidāsa both of whom maintain that those who do good to others sacrificing their own interests are the truly good persons; those who strive for the good of others without sacrificing self-interest are ordinary persons. Tilak points out that neither of these two authors gives equal importance to self-interest and the interest of others in judging moral worth of an action, but gives the highest place in the moral scale to persons who sacrifice self-interest for the interests of others. This, according to Tilak, is the true nature of morality. Persons belonging to this school like Sidgwick, however, maintain that the consideration of the ideal morality is not relevant. What is to be considered is how ordinary persons should act in the ordinary affairs of the world and "enlightened self-interest" is proper from the worldly point of view. Tilak does not find this answer satisfactory and says that even ordinary people regard sacrificing self-interest for others as better than the ordinary selfish path they follow.

Be that as it may, Tilak goes on to consider utilitarianism which maintains that "maximum happiness of maximum number" is the criterion of judging moral worth of an action.¹⁶ He finds this view acceptable as far as it goes and says that many saints like Tukaram have propounded it, and in many cases this criterion may be found useful. But to treat this as the essence and the sole criterion of morality and to construct a grand system of Ethics on this foundation is, according to Tilak, not correct. Firstly, there is a difference between well-being (*hita*) and "happiness (*sukha*) in the sense of material pleasures". But even if this difference is kept aside for the

time being, there are many more difficulties in accepting this principle. (a) The question of morality cannot be properly decided by reference to numbers alone. (b) There is no external measure for logically deciding in what lies the greatest happiness of the greatest number. (c) Thirdly, moral worth of an action cannot be determined solely by observing the external effect or result of that action, i.e. whether it promotes maximum happiness of the maximum number. It is necessary to see the motive or the intention of the person performing that act. This is why the *Gītā* says that thought or intention behind the outward action is more important.¹⁹ Hume and Kant have emphasized the inner aspects of action for determining its moral worth. Moreover, this view does not explain why and how interests of others are higher than self-interests, but it merely assumes that it is so. Spencer, for instance, argues that the survival of species being the law of nature, sacrifice of an individual for the survival of species is becoming more and more natural. Man should conform to this law and wipe out the opposition between self-interest and other's interest.

Tilak has mentioned the names of Hobbes, Helvetius, Bentham, Mill and Sidgwick, as the proponents of the various forms of hedonism, all of which hold that pleasure is the ultimate goal of life. He has also mentioned the names of their works, but he has not discussed in detail the views of any of these philosophers. From the lowest stage of pure egoism and pure sensuous pleasures of one's own self to the higher stage of altruism and pleasures like philanthropy and finally to utilitarianism, the proponents have identified happiness to material pleasures and have disregarded the importance of internal purity and internal happiness. They admit that mental happiness is higher than physical happiness, but they do not ask in what lies the true and permanent happiness. They have not discussed the Upaniṣadic distinction between *śreyas* and *preyas*, i.e. the good and the pleasant, nor have they considered the qualitative distinctions among pleasures: sensuous pleasures, pleasures of intellectual pursuit, spiritual bliss

and peace and so on. Sensuous pleasures are transient, happiness of intellectual pursuit may be less transient and spiritual bliss may be permanent. It is, therefore, necessary to examine the nature of happiness and unhappiness.

Tilak accepts two types of happiness and suffering, viz. bodily pleasures and pain (*ādhibhautika*) and mental happiness and suffering (*ādhyātmika*) omitting *ādhidaiivika* from the traditional three types.²⁰ *Ādhidaivika* happiness and suffering are caused by hellish or heavenly beings or by supernatural powers. Whosoever may cause them, they are either bodily or mental pleasures or pain and, therefore, must belong to either *ādhibhautika* or *ādhyātmika* category. Happiness or pleasure and suffering or pain are opposed to each other. But they are contraries and not contradictories; i.e. happiness is not just absence of suffering, nor is suffering mere absence of happiness. These two are separate things. Tilak accepts the Nyāya definition that happiness is "agreeable sensation or feeling" and suffering or pain is "disagreeable sensation or feeling." Since happiness and suffering are two separate things, we can ask whether life is all happiness, all suffering, or mixture of happiness and suffering. The general view is that life is a mixture of happiness and suffering. The extreme view that life is all suffering is based on the presuppositions (1) that pleasures are transient and dependent on external stimuli; (2) that experiences are found pleasurable, because they are preceded by pain or suffering, e.g. drinking water and eating food give pleasure, because they are preceded by pain of thirst and hunger and (3) that desires are insatiable. Satisfaction of a desire does satiate that desire, but creates craving for more. Arguing in this way, renunciation of all actions along with renunciation of craving (*trṣṇā*), desire (*kāma*) and discontent (*asantoṣa*) is prescribed by the *nivṛtti-vādins* like Buddhists, Jainas, Advaita Vedāntins, the Sāṅkhya philosophers and even devotionalists (*bhakti-mārgins*). Tilak, however, finds this argument to be fallacious and not supported by the *Gītā*. Firstly, though sensuous pleasures are dependent on the external stimuli

and are transient, this is not true of all types of happiness. For example, the highest happiness of intellectual pursuit, good moral and saintly character and spiritual bliss are neither dependent on the external stimuli nor are they transient. Secondly, this argument does not sufficiently distinguish between desire and craving. Every desire does not lead to craving, desire to eat at regular intervals and so on. Nor is every experience of pleasure preceded by experience of suffering, e.g. a child gets pleasure when it gets a chocolate without prior desire for it; a sight of beautiful sunset gives pleasure even when it is not preceded by any desire. Thirdly, though desires are insatiable, the solution is not to give up action, but to keep equanimity of mind. Moreover, every discontent is not bad. On the contrary, discontent with the present state of affairs is the seed or cause of progress, perfection and even liberation. Unless a person feels discontent about his bondage and has a desire for liberation, he won't attain liberation. In short, the solution of the *Gītā* is "to live an active life with self-control by giving up attachment to fruit and with equanimity." This is the essence of *karma-yoga*. There is a world of difference between (1) forcibly renouncing all action in order to eradicate craving and passions and (2) allowing the senses to do their respective functions not selfishly, but selflessly without attachment and with self-control. The *Gītā* recommends and preaches the second alternative and not the first one. The Lord says: "Treating alike pleasure and pain, gain and loss, victory and defeat, get ready for battle. Thus thou shall not incur sin."²¹ "To action alone are you qualified, but do not stake a claim on the fruits; let not the fruits of action be thy motive, neither let there be in thee any attachment to inaction."²²

Tilak summarizes this whole argument thus: pleasure and pain, or happiness and suffering are two distinct and independent feelings. Desire for happiness is never satiated by enjoyment of happiness. Therefore, we find in ordinary life that the sum total of suffering is greater than happiness. In order to avoid this suffering the proper thing to do is to continue the performance of all actions only by

abandoning the attachment to fruits. It is not proper to abandon actions along with craving or discontent. Enjoyment of sensuous pleasures alone is insatiable, transient and is just an animal nature; the rational human being must have a higher goal than this. This true ideal is happiness in the sense of inner peace which arises from intelligence established in the pure spirit. But though the spiritual bliss is supreme, it requires to be properly supplemented by material welfare also. Thus according to the *Gītā*-ethics, the criterion to judge what is proper and improper action is not the greatest happiness principle, or "the happiness of the agent himself", or any other external consequence of action, but the highest bliss of self-realization and the consequent purity of motive. It is, therefore, necessary to go beyond hedonism and utilitarianism.

The second type of ethical theory found in the Western philosophy is, what Tilak calls, "*ādhidāivika*". When he first introduced this term in Chapter 3, he used it to mean "theological" in Auguste Comte's sense. But when he comes to discuss this theory in Chapter 6, he writes in a footnote that the "*ādhidāivika-pakṣa*" means intuitionist school.²³ He connects these two senses by pointing out that the higher tendencies of mind, which make a person do some heroic or noble act and which provide foundation to ethics are not, according to this theory, learned or acquired, but are natural and autonomous. Such a capacity to choose what is right or noble without undergoing a complex process of reasoning is like a goddess. Its decisions, or insights, or intuitions are immediate, authentic and authoritative and need no further justification. This is also called "inner voice".

One of the objections against consequentialist ethics is that it has no place for the agent's motive or intention. The intuitionist theory escapes this objection. But according to this theory, argues Tilak, the judgement arrived at after considering pros and cons of an action and the immediate judgement without such considerations are not decisions of the same intellect. It, therefore, is required to regard conscience as a distinct and independent faculty. Whatever the

conscience calls good is good. There is no calculation involved in this judgement. This theory holds that judging whether an object is light or heavy, white or black, or whether a calculation is correct or incorrect, is qualitatively different from judging whether an action is right or wrong, just or unjust, righteous or unrighteous. The former involves a logical process weighing evidence, but the latter is immediate and does not involve any reasoning or calculations. The Western empiricists, however, refuse to accept any such independent faculty and hold that our intellect, which judges right and wrong calculations, or judges whether an object is black or white, light or heavy, is itself competent to judge whether an action is morally right or wrong by looking at its consequences.

According to Tilak, the ancient Indian thinkers also refuse to accept any distinct moral faculty. The *Gītā* does not accept "conscience" as a distinct and independent faculty. On the contrary, it accepts that one intellect (*buddhi*) performs three different functions: (1) to organize the data received from sense organs (*vyavasāyātmikā buddhi*), (2) to decide what is worthy of acceptance or rejection (*grāhyāgrāhya buddhi*), and (3) to implement the decision, i.e. to direct the organs of action to perform the action (*vyākaraṇātmikā buddhi*). The same mental faculty has been given different names according to its respective functions. There are not three distinct faculties, but three distinct functions performed by the same faculty called intellect (*buddhi*). Further, *buddhi* is of three types—pure (*sāttvika*), passionate (*rājasika*) and dull (*tāmasika*). The conclusions, decisions and implementations differ according to the nature of *buddhi*. The *Gītā*, therefore, asks persons to purify intellect, to make it *sāttvika* so that it would have pure (*sāttvika*) knowledge, pure happiness and would perform good or right actions with pure or noble motives or intentions. Tilak thus argues that the *Gītā* rejects the doctrine of a distinct moral faculty like intuition, conscience, or inner voice. But *buddhi*, in so far as it performs two functions (1) of judging whether an action is right or

wrong and (2) of choosing to perform or not to perform that action, has been given two names by the *Gītā*—*vyavasāyātmikā* and *vāsanātmikā buddhi*.²⁴

Tilak compares these two with Kant's "Pure Reason" and "Practical Reason" and says that if the former is not pure and steady (*suddha* and *sthira*), the latter also may not be so, and consequently the action may not be pure. What the intuitionists call "intuition" or "conscience" as a distinct faculty is nothing but *buddhi* that is pure (*sāttvika*) and "rooted" or grounded in Ātman (*ātmaniṣṭha*). Thus, Tilak concludes that both consequentialism and intuitionism are inadequate and that the *Gītā* propounds an ethics based on metaphysics.

Once it is agreed that *buddhi* cannot be pure unless it is rooted in knowledge of the self or God, the next question is: what is the nature of the Self? The enquiry into the nature of the self is done in two ways—(1) *Kṣetra-kṣetrajñā-vicāra* and (2) *Kṣara-akṣara-vicāra*. The former is consideration of the field, its constituents and the knower of the field while the latter considers the perishable or changing and the imperishable or permanent. The *Gītā* holds that there is a supreme person beyond these dualities of (1) the field and the knower of the field and (2) the perishable and the imperishable. These two considerations take us straight into metaphysics (*adhyātma*).

Tilak considers the Sāṅkhya view that the discriminative knowledge of the manifest, unmanifest and the knower (*vyakta*, *avyakta* and *jñā*) liberates a person from bondage. But he finds the theory of absolute non-dualism, in which the dualism between *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*, subject and object, the knower and the known, the enjoyer and the enjoyed is transcended, more adequate. The *Gītā* propounds, according to Tilak, the metaphysics of absolute non-dualism. This metaphysics is common to the *Gītā* and Śaṅkarācārya, but the *Gītā* prefers the path of action to the path of renunciation of action. This is the vital difference

between the practical philosophies of the *Gītā* and Śaṅkarācārya. Thus Tilak argues that the ethical theories based on pleasure principle and on intuition or conscience are neither accepted by the *Gītā* nor are they adequate and that the *Gītā* propounds an ethics based on the metaphysics of absolute non-dualism.

NOTES

1. *Bhagavad-gītā* (hereafter *BG*), 18.64.
2. *Śrīmadbhagawadgītā-Rahasya*, (hereafter *GRM*) Marathi, preface, p.15, *GRE* (hereafter *Śrīmadbhagawadgītā-Rahasya*), author's preface, p.17.
3. *GRM*, preface, p.15; *GRE*, author's preface, p.18.
4. *GRM*, p. 20; *GRE*, p. 29.
5. *GRM*, p. 21; *GRE*, p. 29.
6. *GRM*, p. 21; *GRE*, p. 30.
7. *GRM*, p. 23; *GRE*, p. 33.
8. *GRM*, p. 24; *GRE*, p. 34.
9. *GRM*, p. 27; *GRE*, p. 38.
10. *GRM*, p. 468; *GRE*, p. 664.
11. *GRM*, p. 61; *GRE*, p. 83.
12. *GRM*, p. 63; *GRE*, p. 85-86.
13. Ranade, p. 124.
14. *GR*, Chapter 4
15. *GRM*, pp. 76-84.
16. *BG*, 1.36.
17. *GRM*, p. 83; *GRE*, p. 113.

18. *GRM*, p. 84-94; *GRE*, p. 115-128.
19. *BG*, 2.49.
20. *GRM*, Chapter 5, p. 95; *GRE*, p. 129.
21. *BG*, 2.38.
22. *BG*, 2.47.
23. *GRM*, pp. 123-129.
24. *GRM*, pp. 132-136.

ON THE PROBLEM OF EVIL
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO VEDĀNTA

Sharada Subramaniam*

I

The theistic traditions, both in the east and the west, discuss the problem of evil on the basis of the following assumptions:

1. God exists.
2. God is omniscient and omnipotent.
3. God is infinitely good.
4. Evil exists.

Some thinkers contend that the fact of evil negates the above assumptions regarding God's omniscience, omnipotence and infinitely good nature. It follows from this that the fact of evil is incompatible with the above assumptions. If God is denied of these magnificent qualities, then for a theist God is not worthy of worship. This turns out to be a very discomfoting situation for the theist.

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Therefore, the problem involved here is: how can an omniscient, omnipotent, and infinitely good God permit evil in his creation? Thinkers, both in the east and the west, have offered various solutions to this problem. Before analysing this problem from the Indian philosophical perspective, I would like to cite a few Western classical and modern views with regard to this problem.

II

The early Greeks (Stoics) presented two solutions to this problem, a negative solution and a positive solution. The negative solution denies the real existence of evil on the ground that the world is good and perfect; consequently, what we call evil is only relative like the shadow in the picture, or the discord in music, which ultimately contributes to the beauty and perfection of the whole. According to the positive solution, evil is a necessary and inevitable consequence of the natural process. Consequently, evil is a necessary means for the realization of good. Virtue is impossible without its counterpart, viz. vice.

Some medieval and modern thinkers dealt with this problem in a theological manner. St. Augustine's attitude to this problem is optimistic. He attempts to reconcile the goodness and the omnipotence of God with evil. He holds the view that the whole creation is an expression of God's goodness. Existence of every kind is, therefore, good. We are in the habit of evaluating things as good and bad. What, then, is the criterion for our value judgements? According to St. Augustine, value judgements should be made in relation to the divine will and not from the standpoint of human utility. Therefore, evil is good in its own way. St. Augustine remarks that it is not evil which is good, but it is the good which appears as evil. Evil, to him, is privation of good, i.e. evil, serving the cause of good, gradually gets transmuted to good. According to Leibniz, this world is the best possible world in which there is variety and harmony. How, then, can we account for the

evil in the world? Leibniz says that evil is a foil to goodness and beauty. It is like the dark shadow of a picture, and it helps to bring out the good. Virtue gains strength in combating the evil. So, according to both St. Augustine and Leibniz, whatever exists is good, when viewed from the holistic perspective. Evil appears to be evil only from a partial viewpoint.

Idealists like F.H. Bradley, Bernard Bosanquet, and others are of the view that evil is a mere appearance of reality. As idealists, they look at every problem in the context of "appearance and reality", and also of "whole and parts". According to them, the Absolute or Reality is totally free from imperfection of every kind including evil. What we call evil exists only from the finite point of view; but from the standpoint of the Absolute, there is no evil. The Absolute or Reality is a harmonious, undivided whole. It comprises everything that exists and everything that we can think of. However, our intellect does not comprehend the Absolute in its totality. Also, it splits it into fragments, and views each one of them in isolation from the others. In other words, while the Absolute transcends all relations, our intellect functions only in the realm of relations. Hence, our intellect fails to grasp the trans-relational Reality. A human being has not only intellect, but also feeling and will; and all these three—intellect, feeling, and will—constitute the total experience of a human being. What is true of a human being, who is a finite centre of experience, is equally true of the Absolute. For Bradley, Reality is a harmonious, undivided whole of experience; and so, as in the case of a human being, it comprises thought, feeling, and willing, all of which remain merged in one undifferentiated whole. If our intellect fails to grasp the non-relational Reality, then we must try to gain access to it through our feeling and willing. To Bradley, Reality is experience, and experience is Reality. He arrives at this conclusion through the analysis of human experience. Any immediately present "fact" which we speak of, which we claim to know, which we experience, is a blend of thought, feeling, and willing. One does not experience a fact

which is divested of all these three components. For a human being, reality is experience, and experience is reality. Bradley extends this argument to the Absolute, the highest Reality, and concludes that Reality is a harmonious, undivided whole of experience.

If so, what is the explanation for evil according to the idealists? Does evil exist or not within the framework of the Absolute? If the Absolute is a harmonious whole, a totality of perfection, how can there be evil or imperfection in it? According to the idealists, the problem is not with the Absolute, but with us; and so the idealists suggest two solutions to this problem. The first one calls for a radical change in our *approach* to the Absolute. When we break the harmonious, inter-related unity into pieces and look at each piece in isolation from the remaining pieces, we will experience only disharmony, because each part cannot be integrated with the other parts. It means that there is a need for a total view of Reality. The second one calls for a change in our *conception* of the Absolute. We must understand that there is a place for everything in the Absolute; and as a sequel to this, we must add that everything must be in its place in the cosmos. The Absolute is not just a totality of things, but a coherent whole in which there is a place for everything and everything must be in its place. If so, everything is relative to the Absolute, and nothing exists in itself and by itself. It means that what appears to be evil from a limited, fragmented point of view may not be evil when viewed from the perspective of the whole. In short, the idealists insist on the primacy of the whole over the part, while recognizing the place of the part in the whole. The important question here is whether we look at a part as a part and nothing more than that, or whether we look at a part as integrally connected with the whole. In the words of Mackenzie:

There can be no real unity without differentiation, and this involves the breaking up of the harmony of the whole and its restoration again. The broken music which arises in this process may, from the

point of view of the whole, seem perfect harmony;
but for us who are at the point of view of the parts,
there is necessarily something of the nature of evil.¹

III

Let us now consider the Indian approach to the problem of evil with a focus on Vedāntic systems. In the Indian philosophical tradition, all schools except the Cārvāka are spiritual in nature and consider the worldly existence of man to be predominantly a suffering/evil. It is not that they are unaware of the pleasant moments in life, but the very word "saṁsāra" means empirical existence characterized by birth and death, which alternate like day and night. It is, therefore, not possible for us to speak of the "beginning" of empirical existence. It means that it is not possible for us to speak of "the first life". Jainism, Buddhism, and Hinduism accept this view and hold that the jīva is *anādi*. All these three traditions are realistic enough to accept that there is suffering in empirical existence and that it is possible for a human being to put an end to this suffering through a discipline which is intellectual, moral, and spiritual. They maintain that the mind-sense-body-complex of a human being is the source of suffering and that it is possible for a human being to transcend the mind-sense-body-complex. Unlike Buddhism, Jainism and all the Hindu systems of philosophy accept the existence of an eternal self in addition to the mind-sense-body-complex in every jīva. The self of every jīva by its very nature is pure and perfect, untouched by evil and suffering. If so, the suffering of the jīva in its empirical life is due to the mind-sense-body-complex.

The important question to be answered is: how is it that the jīva loses its purity and perfection and is thrown into transmigratory existence characterized by suffering and evil? It is believed that the jīva which is essentially the pure Spirit is lured into this world by ignorance (*ajñāna*) and acts under the influence of

ignorance. Therefore, ignorance and acts (karma) done under the influence of ignorance are the cause of the fall of the Spirit. This fall is what we call the suffering of the *jīva*, or evil in the world. Therefore, according to the Indian tradition, evil or suffering for the *jīva* is a hard fact of life, and every effort has to be made for its eradication. Indian tradition resorts to therapeutic measures for its removal.

IV

Indian tradition, both theistic and atheistic in their own ways, ascribes evil or suffering to the *jīva*. Buddhism, Jainism, Sāṅkhya, and Mīmāṃsā, which are essentially atheistic, hold humans responsible for their sufferings. Man is the architect of his own destiny. Jainism holds that man is responsible for his suffering due to his karma. Karmas cloud his intellect and darken his soul. They are the sticking substance; and they completely cover his soul. Therefore, according to Jainism, karmas are the cause of one's bondage characterized by suffering and evil. Karmas in their turn are due to ignorance. So, Jainism lays down a comprehensive discipline which is at once intellectual, moral, and spiritual for the purpose of getting rid of the sticking substance called karma, and its cause, viz. ignorance. The *jīva* can overcome its bondage and attain liberation through right faith, right knowledge, and right conduct, which are called the three gems (*tri-ratna*) of a well-disciplined life. The Sāṅkhya system also holds that the ultimate cause of suffering and evil is *avidyā* or ignorance which produces non-discrimination between *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*. According to Buddhism, *trṣṇā* or desire is the cause of the endless birth and death (*jarā-maraṇa*), which constitute suffering and evil. The Mīmāṃsā system also maintains that evil and suffering are due to the performance of forbidden acts (*pratiśiddha-karmas*) and the failure to perform the obligatory deeds (*nitya-* and *naimittika-karmas*) by the *jīva*.

V

The theistic traditions of India too do not hold God responsible for the existence of evil in the world. To them, God is essentially omniscient, omnipotent, and good. Man, who is a free agent, is responsible for the sufferings through his ignorant actions. I take two models of Vedāntic traditions, viz. Viśiṣṭādvaita and Advaita, to study the problem of evil. The Vedānta tradition of both Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja holds the following propositions on the basis of reasoning and scripture.

1. Human beings are agents of action, and they have been provided with the required instruments, such as the body, the senses, and the mind for the performance of actions.
2. They are moral agents in the sense that they have to do the right as against the wrong, the good as against the bad. They can function as moral agents, because they possess the mind, the instrument which helps them to distinguish between the right and the wrong and the good and the bad, and also to distinguish between higher values and lower values, and so on.
3. As moral agents, they are responsible for what they do and fail to do.
4. Responsibility implies freedom. That it is to say, human beings are responsible for their actions, good and bad, because they are free agents. If they are not free agents, they are not responsible for what they do.
5. The Vedāntic tradition draws our attention to the scriptural injunctions and prohibitions (*vidhi* and *niṣedha*, as they are called) which they are expected to follow. Whether they follow them or not, depends upon their choice; and choice implies freedom.

Scriptural injunctions and prohibitions are only directives; and these directives do not and cannot compel a person to do something or to abstain from something. In other words, the Vedāntic tradition which relies on scriptural authority proceeds on the presupposition that the human being who is a moral agent enjoys freedom.

According to the Viśiṣṭādvaita system of which Rāmānuja is the most important spokesman, karma combined with ignorance is the cause of the suffering of the jīva. Rāmānuja holds that the real nature of the human being is to remain subservient to God. But when man revolts against this dependence on the Lord and violates the injunctions of the scriptures due to ignorance, he causes suffering for himself. It must be noted that Rāmānuja holds this position without prejudice to the freedom and responsibility of the human being.

An objection may be raised at this juncture. If, according to Rāmānuja, cit and acit (i.e. jīva and prakṛti respectively) form the body of God, then the jīva cannot be a free agent. Rāmānuja's definition of body is relevant in this connection.

Any substance which a sentient self controls and supports completely for its own purpose and which stands to the self in an entirely dependent relation is called its body.²

If it is so, then the jīva forming the body of the Lord has no freedom, and hence it is God who is responsible for the evil and sufferings of the jīva, and not the jīva. But this is not acceptable to Rāmānuja. The important issue here is whether the jīva is a moral agent or not. If it is established that the jīva is a moral agent, then it will follow that the jīva is a free agent and is responsible for what it does, good or bad. So, Rāmānuja brings in the scriptural authority in support of his position. The *Brahma-sūtra*, 2.3.33, says: "(This soul is) an agent, on account of scriptural (injunctions) having a meaning on

that ground only." Scriptural injunctions such as "He is to sacrifice," "He is to give," etc. will have meaning only if the *jīva* is a free agent. If not, these injunctions would become pointless. The very term "*sāstra*" is derived from the root "*śas*", to command; command means impelling one to action. It connotes an imperative or a moral "ought", and thus presupposes the freedom of the individual self. Moral autonomy implies the choice of either obedience or disobedience.

Rāmānuja is of the view that each individual *jīva* has the complete power to initiate oneself into action. The theory of karma, thus, according to Rāmānuja, is not incompatible with the freedom of the individual. *Īśvara* is a silent but not an indifferent spectator of the moral self, as he permits moral possibility. The moral self has the freedom to grow into the total goodness and perfection it is capable of, or lapse into evilness by choosing the way of evil. Duty is the command of the inner voice, and the imperative implies the obligation to obey it.

A question may be raised as to whether the agency of the soul is independent of, or dependent on, the Lord. If the agency of the soul is dependent on the Lord, then scriptural injunctions and prohibitions will be meaningless. Rāmānuja refutes this objection in the *Śri-bhāṣya* in the course of his commentary on the *Brahma-sūtra*, 2.3.40 and 2.3.41.

But that (agency of the soul) is from the highest Lord, that being declared by the scriptures.

But according to the efforts made (by the soul) (the Lord makes it act); (thus only would) injunctions and prohibitions, etc. be relevant.

The Lord makes the individual soul act by granting it permission, considering the efforts put forth by it; but action as such is not possible for the individual soul without the permission of the Lord. The Lord's permission is essential, but the responsibility for the initial volition is the soul's. Rāmānuja illustrates this truth by the

analogy of the joint ownership of a piece of property by two persons, *A* and *B*. If *B* wishes to transfer it to a third person *C*, he can do so only after obtaining the permission of *A*. The grant of permission by *A* depends on the initiative and effort of *B*, who desires the transfer. Likewise, *Īśvara* permits its "other" to use its freedom. At first a silent seer, he enters into the moral life of the *jīvas* and permits them to think, choose, and exercise their freedom, and then apportions pleasure and pain as the fruits of their actions.³ According to Rāmānuja, *Īśvara* is essentially a *kārmaphala-dātā*. He creates the bodies of *jīvas* according to their karmic deeds and allows them to work in this world for their salvation. The individual self acquires moral sovereignty over its animal inclination with a view to offering itself as a self-donation (*svarūpa-samarpaṇa*) to the supreme Self, who is the ultimate subject of moral endeavour. The two wills, then, co-exist; the finite will functions in tune with the infinite; thus there is no self-contradiction, because the freedom and responsibility of the *jīva* as well as its subservience to the Lord, who is the inner controller (*antaryāmin*), are ensured.⁴

The Advaita tradition puts forth its arguments regarding the problem of evil in a unique way. It speaks of two kinds of creation—God's creation (*Īśvara-sṛṣṭi*) and *jīva*'s creation (*jīva-sṛṣṭi*). *Īśvara* through his power of *māyā* creates the world of plurality constituted by the five elements. So, his creation is primary. The *jīva* who is conditioned by *avidyā* plays the triple role—it is the subject of knowledge (*jñātā*), the agent of actions (*kartā*), and the enjoyer of the consequences of actions (*bhoktā*). When the *jīva* plays the triple role, it becomes a creator, but a different kind of creator not to be compared with God. It is the creator out of the things created by God. The objects created by God are for the benefit of the *jīva*; they become a source of enjoyment for the *jīva* through its knowledge and actions. Vidyāraṇya says in the *Pañcādaśī*, 4.17:

Though all these objects are in themselves created by Īśvara, still by knowledge and action the jīva has converted them into his objects of enjoyment; hence they are said to be his creation.

The jīva is able to play the triple role through the help of the mind. Knowledge, desire, and action, which constitute a causal nexus, are all the functions of the mind. Action is preceded by desire; and desire in its turn is preceded by knowledge. A brief explanation of the interconnection among these three factors will be helpful. When we cognize something, we may like it, or dislike it. That is to say, cognition leads to desire or aversion as the case may be. Once desire or aversion arises, we cannot just keep quiet, because desire/aversion demands fulfilment through action. We are involved in action for attaining the object which we like, or for avoiding the object which we dislike. Though the object in itself is value-free, still we invest it with a value by saying that it is good or bad. There are also occasions when we may be quite indifferent to an object without considering it good or bad. The three kinds of attitude that we develop towards an object are the functions of the mind. The attitudes that we develop result in the appropriate actions. Thus, cognition, desire, and action constitute a causal nexus. The actions that we perform produce their consequences. It may be noted that the consequences that arise are the rewards of the actions performed by us, and we are responsible for them. Vidyāraṇya illustrates the three kinds of mental attitudes—desire, aversion, and indifference—that we develop by different examples. Only one example will do. Suppose there is a gem. One may like it; another may dislike it; and a third person may be totally indifferent to it. Though the object is one and the same, three persons react to it in three different ways. The problem is not with the object, but with the mental frame of the jīva. The following verse in the *Pañcādaśī*, 4.19, highlights the functioning of the mind of the jīva in its response to the things created by Īśvara through his power of māyā:

Māyā, the power of the Lord, is the cause of the objects of the world, because all of them are the modifications of māyā. However, as for the actual enjoyment of these objects, the functioning of the modifications of the mind of the jīva is the cause.

Then he explains in the next three verses (4.20–22) the three kinds of mental attitudes and the resultant consequences with the example of a gem:

Objects such as gems created by Īśvara do not alter; they remain the same. But gems may affect different people differently according to their mental states.

One person may feel happy on obtaining a gem, whereas another may feel disappointed at failing to obtain it. And a person indifferent to it may only look at it and feel neither happy nor disappointed. The jīva creates these three mental modes of happiness, unhappiness, and indifference with regard to the gem, but the nature of the gem as created by Īśvara remains the same throughout.

The point to be noted here is that, while Īśvara is the creator of the world and the giver of the results of action (*phala-dhātā*), it is the jīva who has to reap the consequences of its actions. Thus, according to Advaita, while Īśvara is the creator of the external world of space, time and causality, the jīva creates its own good and evil, happiness and misery, through mind-sense-body-complex of which the mind is the most important component inasmuch as it controls both the senses and the body. What is required for the purpose of overcoming the mind-created problem is a change in the mental set, a different mental perspective with regard to the things of the world. If the mind creates the problem, then it is the same mind that has to solve the problem. Thus, what really matters is the mind both with regard to bondage and liberation. That is why there is the saying that the

mind alone is the cause of bondage and that the mind alone is the means to liberation.

Though Brahman is one, Advaita draws a distinction between Nirguṇa-Brahman and Saguṇa-Brahman. The latter is called Īśvara or Creator-God. Brahman-in-itself is *nirguṇa*, i.e. free from qualities. But, when it is associated with qualities such as omniscience, omnipotence, etc. due to *māyā*, it is called Saguṇa-Brahman. That is why the second aphorism of the *Brahma-sūtra* states that Īśvara, i.e. Brahman qualified by *māyā*, is the cause of the origin, sustenance, and destruction of the world. We have to ascribe causality to Brahman for the purpose of accounting for the manifested world. When it is thus related to the world as its cause, it becomes relational, phenomenal, and cosmic. From the phenomenal standpoint, God is said to be in possession of multifarious powers. This is based upon the Upaniṣadic texts which say: "He is the doer of all (good) actions; he is possessed of all (good) desires, all (good) smells, all (good) tastes, and he pervades all this. He is without the organ of speech and has no hankering;"⁵ "Under the mighty rule of this Immutable, O Gārgī, the sun and the moon are held in their positions."⁶

Let us first consider an objection: if God is the possessor of multifarious powers and the creator of the universe, then he is responsible for the inequalities among the *jīvas*, because some are happy and some others unhappy. Does it mean that the Divine has also the qualities of malice and partiality to cause differences among the *jīvas* and to make some happy and some others unhappy? As there is so much of pain in the world, are we to treat him as cruel also? Such acts, it appears, nullify his goodness, perfection, and power, which are declared in the scriptures. The *Brahma-sūtra*, 2.1.34, takes note of this objection and answers it as follows:

No partiality and cruelty (can be charged against God) because of (His) taking other factors into consideration, because (the scripture) declares (it to be) so.

Partiality and cruelty cannot be charged against God, because God has not created an erratic, unjustifiably oppressive world according to his whims and fancies. We have already stated that he is not only the creator of this world, but also the dispenser of justice. He plays the latter role by taking into consideration the stock of merit and demerit of the *jīvas*. There is the *śruti* text which accounts for the inequalities among the *jīvas* in terms of the past karma of the respective *jīva*. It says: "One indeed becomes good through good work, and evil through evil work."⁷ Śaṅkara in his commentary on the *Brahma-sūtra* quoted above explains the impartiality of God through the example of rain. God is to be compared to rain. Though the rainfall is a common cause for the growth of paddy, barley, etc., it is not responsible for the differences that arise in the plants of these seeds; the special reasons for the differences that exist among these plants are to be traced to the individual potentiality of the respective seeds of these plants. Similarly, God is the common cause for the birth of gods, men, and others, while the stock of merit and demerit of these beings are the uncommon cause for the differences among them.⁸ Smṛti also shows that God's dispensation of justice is necessarily related to the specific merit of the work done by each creature. The *Bhagavad-gītā* says: "In whatever way men worship Me, in the same way do I fulfil their desires."⁹ Rāmānuja quotes the *Viṣṇu-purāṇa*, 1.4.51-2, to the effect that the Lord is the operative cause only in the creation of new beings; the material cause is constituted by the potentialities of the beings to be created.¹⁰

Another objection relevant to the above mentioned point may be raised here. There could have been no karma before creation, in accordance with which a diverse universe has emerged. Scripture declares, "In the beginning all this was but Being, one only without a second."¹¹ Thus it is only after creation that diversity among the *jīvas* could be possible depending on the results of work. Thus, the first creation would be perforce without any differences or inequalities. Who, then, is responsible for the initial differences among the *jīvas*?

The objection mentioned above and the reply thereto are contained in the *Brahma-sūtra*, 2.1.35:

If it be objected that it (viz. the Lord's having regard to merit and demerit) is impossible on account of the non-distinction (of merit and demerit, before the first creation); we refute the objection on the ground of (the world) being without a beginning.

The Vedāntic tradition holds the view that creation is without a beginning, and so the question of first creation does not arise. Creation and dissolution alternate like day and night. Creation is followed by dissolution, and dissolution is followed by creation. The relation between creation and dissolution is like the relation between seed and sprout. It means that the jīvas have always had a previous existence and must have done good and bad deeds according to their likes and dislikes. Taking into consideration the accumulated stock of merit and demerit of the jīvas, the Lord dispenses justice and ensures that the jīvas receive the rewards of their actions.

There is again the objection: how is it known that this transmigratory state has no beginning? To this the answer is given in the *Brahma-sūtra*, 2.1.36: "And (that the world is without a beginning) is reasonable and is also seen (from the scriptures)." It is quite reasonable to hold the view that creation is without a beginning. If creation had a beginning, then we must postulate "first creation"; in that case it would not be possible for us to account for the inequalities among the jīvas without holding God responsible for the problems of the jīvas. But we have already stated that God is not responsible for the inequalities among the jīvas. Then, who, or what else, could be the cause of the inequalities among the jīvas? The only reasonable alternative that is available to us to answer this question is: the jīvas. The jīvas, being impelled by the desires, are the creators of good and bad and the agents of the right and the wrong; and so they reap the consequences of their actions. It is

absurd to say that the *jīvas* are subject to happiness and suffering without a cause. The cause in this case is not external, but internal. The existential predicament of the *jīvas* is self-created and not God-created. That the world of empirical existence is *anādi* is brought out by the scriptural text which says, "The Lord created the sun and the moon as before."¹² Therefore, it is impossible to think of the predicament of the *jīva* without prior karma, and also it is impossible to think of karma without the *jīva*.

The *jīva* or human being, according to Advaita, is a mind-sense-body-complex. Though man is only a part of creation, he is considered to be the crown of creation. The *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, 2.1.3, extols the position of man by making a specific reference to him in the account of creation. Every being has come from Brahman and is also a modification of the essence of food. However, man is specifically mentioned in the *Taittirīya* because he is the most important among created beings on account of his possession of knowledge (*jñāna*) and action (*karma*). By virtue of these abilities he knows the higher and the lower worlds. He wills and aspires to achieve his goal, viz. immortality, for which he is endowed with discrimination, while the other beings are merely conscious of their hunger and thirst.

A human being is endowed with reason and will. As a result of his reasoning capacity, he is capable of projecting his goals; as a result of his capacity of will, he is capable of performing his actions for realizing his goals. What kind of end he aims at is a matter of his choice. He can choose the good or bad exercising his freedom. Does man's freedom contradict God's omnipotence? If God is all-powerful and predetermines everything as the creator, then how can man be free? The theist's reply to this criticism is as follows. God grants free will to man so that he, in turn, through obedience to God, will choose the good and attain his goal. Great world teachers like Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Jesus Christ, and others were free men who could choose either good or evil. But they always chose the good and proved their greatness. Hence, if God decrees that man should do the right always, then the latter does

not act freely. The will of God cannot be created or controlled by the human being; on the contrary, the human being must realize what it is, and how and why it functions, and act exercising his reason and freedom.

Thus, man becomes good by good work, and bad by bad work. Though he is conditioned by the past, he still can shape his future by exercising his free will. Radhakrishnan explains this problem with the analogy of the card game. The player has no choice or control over the cards which he receives after the shuffling. But how he plays the cards which he has received is left entirely to him. He may play a good game or a bad one. It all depends upon his thinking, his choice, and his willingness to face the outcome of the play. Radhakrishnan's comment on the "freedom of will" is worth quoting here:

The integration of the individual has to be achieved by a conscious effort. If God had desired to create a world of automata, there would have been no evil, no failure; God could have eliminated evil if he had so wished by denying us freedom of choice. Evil is there because we sometimes abuse free will. If the world is a machine, then the human individual has no meaning. Man in so far as he is made in the image of God is a creator. He is not free until he is capable of creative activity. While animals are creatures, men are creature-creators. There is no animal delinquency. Evil is not passivity but activity. Without creative freedom man cannot produce either a paradise or a desolation on earth. God permits evil because he does not interfere with human choice.

Man is subjected to different sets of laws. He cannot disobey the law of gravitation. If he is unsupported in mid-air, he must fall to the ground like a stone. As a living organism, he is subject to various biological laws which he cannot violate. These laws

he shares with the animals, but there is a law which he does not share with animals, a law which he can disobey if he so chooses. It is the law of *dharma* or right and wrong. Religion is essentially a passion for righteousness.¹³

The conclusion that can be drawn at the end of this brief study of the problem of evil from the different perspectives is: (1) God who is omniscient and omnipotent is infinitely good. (2) Human beings are free agents. (3) There is evil in the world for which human beings, and not God, are responsible. Hence there is no incompatibility between the existence of evil and the omniscience, omnipotence, and the goodness of God. It is not a case of *either* divine will *or* human freedom, but *both* divine will *and* human freedom. The human being has to take responsibility for what he is and what he does. Sartre conveys most effectively the sense of moral agency and freedom of the human being when he says, "Man is condemned to be free."

NOTES

1. See his *Outlines of Metaphysics*, p. 155.
2. Rāmānuja, *Śrī-bhāṣya* (hereafter *ŚB*), 2.1.9.
3. See P.N. Srinivasachari, *The Philosophy of Viśiṣṭādvaita*, Adyar Library and Research Centre, reprinted 1978, p. 148.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 149.
5. *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (hereafter *CU*), 3.14.4.
6. *Bṛhadāranyaka Upaniṣad* (hereafter *BU*), 3.8.9.
7. *BU*, 3.2.13.
8. See Śaṅkara's commentary on the *Brahma-sūtra*, 2.1.34.
9. 4.11.
10. See *ŚB*, 2.1.34.
11. *CU*, 6.2.1.
12. *Rg-veda*, 10.190.3.
13. S. Radhakrishnan, *The Brahma-sūtra, The Philosophy of Spiritual Life*, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1960, pp. 155-56.

THE ANĀTMAŚRĪ-VIGARHAṆAM OF ŚAṆKARA
(Some Reflections)

T.P. Ramachandran*

INTRODUCTION

This article is a complement to my earlier one on Śaṅkara's "Mohamudgara", which appeared in *The Voice of Śaṅkara*.¹ Both the poems are on detachment (*vairāgya*), but they differ in regard to their content and point of view. Let me first indicate this difference.

Detachment from worldly ends is a basic requirement for the pursuit of *mokṣa*. *Vairāgya* may be said to be of two levels. The first level is the giving up of all worldly desires that lead to bad action (*pratiṣiddha-karma*). Bad action earns demerit (*pāpa*), and demerit in its turn brings suffering to the agent in succeeding lives, if not in the present one. The pursuit of such desires is opposed to *dharma*, and what is opposed to *dharma* is also opposed to *mokṣa*.

There are many other worldly desires that are, from a moral point of view, legitimate and permissible. Man may pursue them if

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he is so inclined. Actions in pursuit of such desires are called *kāmya-karma*. To show their contrast to immoral desires, the Lord of the *Gītā* declares his presence in them as in many other excellent aspects of the world. "I am that *kāma* of beings which is not opposed to *dharma*."² But the pity is that, though they have the sanction of *dharma*, they are not relevant to *mokṣa*. At the most, they lead to *abhyudaya*, i.e. ascendance in the scale of rebirth. They could lead to a high birth on earth or even take one to the abode of the gods to enjoy the bliss of heaven. But such enjoyment, because of its very attractiveness, diverts one from the true goal of life, viz. *mokṣa*. In the terminology of the Upaniṣads, they constitute *preyas*, or the pleasurable, in contrast to *śreyas*, or what is worthwhile in terms of liberation. In the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* Lord Yama tests the dispassion of young Naciketas by offering him the best goods of the pleasurable kind. But Naciketas is made of sterner stuff. He rejects them outright and insists on being given the knowledge of the self, which alone leads to the great result of liberation.³ To give up desires of this kind, which are morally permissible but spiritually unhelpful, constitutes the second level of *vairāgya*. There is a significant line in the *Manusmṛti* which M. Hiriyanna quotes with appreciation and explains in one of his writings: "It is natural for beings to seek their own interests (provided it is done in a virtuous way); but it is far better to turn away from them altogether."⁴

It is desires coming under the second level as represented above that are collectively described in the present poem as *anātmaśrīḥ*. The word *śrīḥ* stands for prosperity, high position, beauty, any virtue or excellence, embellishment, super-human power, intellect, or all the three values of *artha*, *kāma* and *dharma* taken collectively—in short whatever is worthy of desire from a worldly point of view. Those who are intent on *mokṣa* have to be wary of even these ends.

The second level of *vairāgya*, which is directed at all purposes that come under the head *anātmaśrīḥ*, is even harder to practise than the first. In the first level we confront objects that have no

sanction from *dharma*. But in the second the objects enjoy the accordance of *dharma*, though not of *mokṣa*. For this very reason, they are more formidable to renounce than the objects of the first level. In the *Mohamudgara* both levels of *vairāgya* are adequately represented. But the present poem dwells mostly on the second level of *vairāgya*. The word *vigarhaṇam* means censure, blame, reproach. So the title of the poem means that all pursuits coming under the description *anātmaśrīḥ* are censured here as unfit for *mokṣa* and so fit for renunciation.

Within the head *anātmaśrīḥ* we may now make a distinction. Most of these pursuits are as such unconnected with liberation, for example high position or super-human powers. They are thus plainly distracting and have to be renounced or ignored totally. But some of the ends coming under the title *śrīḥ* are not as such unconnected with or inimical to *mokṣa*. They could be useful and in some cases even indispensable to the pursuit of *mokṣa*. They become obstructive to that goal only when they are looked upon as ends in themselves instead of as means thereto. So in such cases, what is needed is not renunciation of these pursuits as such but only a renunciation of a wrong attitude towards them. In other words, what is needed is a correction in the perspective from which they are viewed. For example, prosperity, virtue, and intellect could be put to use in the effort for *mokṣa*. *Dharma* itself would then be practised for the sake of release instead of for its own sake or for the sake of *abhyudaya*. However, the human mind being what it is, there is always the risk of one losing this perspective and mistaking the means for the end. They then become distractions and hurdles to liberation and deserve to be called *anātmaśrīḥ*.

This poem consists of eighteen stanzas. Excepting the last two verses, which are concerned with the fruit of the enquiry, the poem makes a list of ends and achievements which deserve to be abjured either totally or discriminatively. In censuring such ends, the method of the poem is to ask at each stage the rhetorical question—"of what use is this—by which one's (true) self has not been realized?"

(ततः किं ; येन स्वात्मा नैव साक्षात्कृतोऽभूत्)⁵ The last two verses assert that he alone who sternly rejects the *anātmaśrī* is fit to realize his (true) self, and not the one who is doubly deluded by the illusory world. In presenting the import of the poem, I have consulted the translation made by Dr. C.S. Venkateswaran,⁶ and I acknowledge my indebtedness to it.

The content of *vairāgya* in this poem, i.e. the objects from which one has to be detached, falls into four categories:-

1. Earthly possessions and pursuits
2. Religious rituals and symbols
3. Powers of *yoga*
4. Moral virtues

Individual lines taken from the various stanzas of the poem have been classified on this pattern for exposition. The number of the verse to which a line belongs is given at the end of it in brackets.

1. *Earthly possessions and pursuits*

प्राप्ता संपत् प्राभवाढ्या ... (1)

Supreme wealth has been attained.

केयूराद्यैः भूषितो वा ... (2)

(The body) has been adorned with bracelets and other (ornaments).

कौशेयाद्यैः आवृतो वा ... (2)

(The body) has been clad in silken and other (rich robes).

तृप्तो मृष्टान्नादिना वा ... (2)

(The body) has been pampered with dainty rice and other (food).

नष्टं दारिद्र्यादिदुःखं ... (3)

The pain of poverty and the like has disappeared.

गोत्रं सम्यक् भूषितं वा ... (5)

The family has been well provided for.

Wealth and its symbols like ornaments, nice apparel, and dainty food, relief from poverty, and the well-being of the family—all these

are necessary as the physical foundation for the pursuit of *dharma* and *mokṣa*. But often there is the temptation to look upon them as ends in themselves. They then become obstacles to both *dharma* and *mokṣa*. How true such a teaching is, becomes more evident when we ponder over the irreversible modern craze for material development. Even if we leave alone the thought of spiritual development, how far we are better off than earlier societies morally, and even materially, is a moot question. The stark reality that we face today is increasing violence to both nature and fellow-beings in the name of material progress.

भुक्ता नारी सुन्दराङ्गी ... (1)

One is pleased with the company of a charming lady.

पुष्टाश्चेष्टा बन्धुवर्गाः ... (3)

Many dear relatives have been nourished well.

लब्धाः पुत्राः स्वीयपत्न्याः ... (7)

One is blessed with sons through one's wedded wife.

भूयो मित्रैः पूरितो वा ... (8)

One is endowed with more friends.

The above are examples of one's company. While it is necessary to be courteous, kind and helpful to all around, to develop attachment towards any of them would be an impediment to the pursuit of *mokṣa*.

कीर्त्या व्याप्ताः सर्वलोकाः ... (6)

One's fame has spread to all the worlds.

Fame may come unsought for one's good qualities and works. But it should be ignored or taken with humility. To develop a taste for it and unwittingly seek it would be a clear distraction to one's effort for liberation.

दृष्टा नाना चारुदेशाः ... (3)

Many beautiful countries have been seen.

Sight-seeing may seem to be an innocent pastime. But to a seeker of *mokṣa*, it is a patent distraction if it is sought after and made much of. If beautiful and striking aspects of nature happen to be seen in the course of his journeys, they should serve to remind him of the mystery and majesty of the Creator instead of being taken as mere sources of delight.

बाणैः लक्ष्यो भेदितो वा ... (13)

The target has been rent with arrows.

Sport and pastime are necessary and good for growing children, but for the adult seeker of serious knowledge relating to the self, they should not hold any attraction.

युद्धे शत्रुः निर्जितो वा ... (8)

The enemy has been vanquished in battle.

भूपेन्द्रत्वं प्राप्तं उर्व्याम् ... (12)

Sovereignty over the earth has been obtained.

देवेन्द्रत्वं संभृतं वा ... (12)

Lordship over the gods has been secured.

मुण्डीन्द्रत्वं चोपलब्धं ... (12)

Lordship over tonsured monks has been attained.

Military and political power for its own sake is a heady temptation for rulers in all ages. That it partakes of the nature of demons (*rākṣasas*) has been well portrayed in our Epics and Purāṇas. Its ultimate outcome is self-destruction and not self-realization. Our ancients teach that rulers must exercise the power that devolves on them only for the good of the people, subjecting that power to the guidance of those who are learned in the scriptures.⁷ Temporal power thereby becomes a means of earning merit (*punya*) and paves the way for liberation.

लब्धा विद्या राजमान्या ... (1)

Learning which is honoured by kings has been acquired.

कालज्ञानं चापि लब्धं ... (13)

Knowledge of time (past, present and future), i.e. astrology, has been gained.

The Upaniṣads classify knowledge (*vidyā*) as *parā* and *aparā*, higher and lower. The former is knowledge relating to the nature of Brahman, obtained first in a mediate form through *śravaṇa* and *manana* and then in an immediate form through *nididhyāsana*. In respect of *mokṣa*, *parā-vidyā* is knowledge in the primary sense. All other knowledge is lower (*aparā*), and is knowledge only in a secondary sense. *Aparā-vidyā* may be said to fall into three categories—what is necessarily useful for *mokṣa*, what could be made use of in this regard, and what is entirely irrelevant and useless in respect of it. Knowledge of the remote means to *mokṣa* such as *karma*, *bhakti* and *upāsana* is necessary for their diligent practice. It is *aparā-vidyā* of the first kind.

There are some areas of *aparā-vidyā* which, though not necessarily connected with *mokṣa*, can be of utility in its pursuit. Traditionally, they are described as *Vedāṅga*, limbs in support of the Veda. It is under such a category that the knowledge of astrology (*kāla-jñāna*) comes. Astrology could be used for understanding the reasons for the state of one's present life and plan for a future course of life that would be in accordance with *dharma* and conducive to *mokṣa*. If astrology is not thus deliberately applied to spiritual ends, but used merely for bettering prospects in *artha* and *kāma*, it becomes as good as useless.

Aparā-vidyā has also a numberless variety of forms where the content is simply irrelevant to *mokṣa*, whatever may be its secular attractions, such as being honoured by kings. To emphasize its irrelevance to the goal of liberation, such knowledge has been characterized as "examining the crow's teeth" (*kāka-danta-parikṣā*). We may boast of our present-day revolution in Information Technology. However significant to modern life, from the standpoint of *mokṣa*—if such a standpoint matters at all—the current

explosion in information is nothing but an explosion in *aparā-vidyā* of a useless nature.

2. Religious rituals and symbols

स्नातः तीर्थे जहनुजादौ ... (4)

Holy baths have been taken in sacred rivers like the Gaṅgā.

गात्रं भस्माच्छादितं वा ... (5)

The body has been besmeared with holy ash.

रुद्राक्षादिः संधृतो वा ... (5)

The rosary of *rudrākṣa* and the like have been worn well.

कायः क्लिष्टः च उपवासैः ... (7)

The body has been emaciated by fasts.

The body is the seat of the mind, and the mind, the seat of the soul. There are religious acts which discipline the mind—like *vandana*, *japa*, *pārāyaṇa*, *dhyāna*, *homa*, *pūja*, and so on. But the necessary preliminary to all such acts is the purity of the body (*śarīra-śuddhi*). Rituals like taking holy bath, wearing sacred ash and *rudrākṣa*, and undergoing fasts are meant for physical purification as a preparation to mind-related religious acts. These body-related acts are not ends in themselves. Nor do they directly lead to liberation. Unless they are viewed in the proper perspective, they become futile.

दानं दत्तं द्व्यष्टसंख्यं ... (4)

The sixteen kinds of gifts (enjoined in worship) have been given.

अन्नैः विप्राः तर्पिता वा ... (6)

Brāhmaṇas have been propitiated with food.

जप्ता मन्त्राः कोटिशो वा ... (4)

Mantras have been muttered by the crores.

यज्ञैः देवाः तोषितो वा ... (6)

The gods have been pleased by sacrificial oblations (*yajña*).

मन्त्रैः सर्वः स्तम्भितो वा ... (13)

Everything has been controlled through mantras.

Unlike the entire set of religious acts like holy bath which are body-related, offering of food and other gifts, reciting mantras, and performing sacrifices are acts related to the mind. They produce results according to the motivation of the agent. They may be performed with desire for some personal or altruistic end, like relief from disease, poverty, social animosity, and so on, or promotion of peace, onset of rain, and so on. Given such a motivation, the acts become *kāmya-karma*. *Kāmya-karma* is optional, as it depends entirely on the presence of desire for worldly results. The point of interest for us in the present context is that, however laudable the ends sought may be, *kāmya-karma* has nothing to do with self-realization, or *mokṣa*.

However, the same acts of charity, mantras and sacrifices do not always belong to the *kāmya* kind. They are often part of obligatory deeds. Of these there are deeds which a person ought to perform daily by virtue of his station and stage in life (*nitya-karma*), like *sandhyāvandana* for a *brāhmaṇa*. There are also deeds which he ought to perform on specific occasions (*naimittika-karma*), e.g. *śrāddha* for a parent on the day of his death. Though there is no question of any end desired by the performer, such duties are not entirely bereft of results either. They help to chasten the mind of the doer. And purity of mind (*citta-śuddhi*) is an essential condition for the pursuit of *mokṣa*. These duties also spontaneously lead to the acquisition of merit (*puṇya*), which leads to better births for the agent—births which are more conducive to the pursuit of *mokṣa*. Thus, unlike *kāmya-karma*, *nitya* and *naimittika* karmas are indirectly connected with *mokṣa*. Viewed in this perspective, gifts, mantras and sacrifices become useful to self-realization, but not otherwise.

3. Powers of yoga

योगैः प्राप्ताः सिद्धयो वा ... (8)

Super-normal powers have been attained by the practice of *yoga*.

प्राणायामः साधितो वा ... (7)

The technique of regulating breath has been mastered.

अब्धिः पद्भ्यां लङ्घितो वा ... (9)

The ocean has been crossed on foot.

वायुः कुम्भे स्थापितो वा ... (9)

The atmosphere has been trapped in a pot.

(Or the vital breath has been arrested in the lungs in *prāṇāyāma*.)

मेरुः पाणौ उद्धृतो वा ... (9)

The mountain Meru has been lifted in the palm.

क्ष्वेडः पीतो दुग्धवद् वा ... (10)

Poison has been drunk like milk.

वह्निः जग्धो लाजवद् वा ... (10)

Fire has been eaten like fried paddy.

प्राप्तश्चारः पक्षिवत् खे ... (10)

Flight in the sky like a bird has been achieved.

बद्धाः सम्यक् पावकाद्याः ... (11)

Fire and other elements have been controlled .

साक्षात् विद्धा लोहवर्याः ... (11)

Superior metals have been directly pierced.

लब्धो निक्षेपो अञ्जनाद्यैः ... (11)

The treasure-trove has been detected by means of collyrium and the like.

धातुर्लोकः साधितो वा ... (16)

The world of Brahmā has been attained.

विष्णोर्लोको वीक्षितो वा ... (16)

The world of Viṣṇu has been seen.

शंभोर्लोकः शासितो वा ... (16)

The world of Śiva has been ruled over.

All these lines refer to a subtle distraction that could ensue paradoxically from a spiritual practice, viz. *yoga*, or *upāsana*. To explain this phenomenon, it is necessary to set forth the essentials of *yoga* briefly in the first instance.

According to Patañjali, there are eight steps in *yoga*. The first two steps (*yama* and *niyama*) are the indispensable ethical foundation to the rest. *Yama* consists of virtues which are of the nature of self-restraint, like non-injury and non-stealing. *Niyama* consists of virtues of the nature of observance, like cleanliness and contentment. They represent the negative and the positive sides of moral culture. Their inclusion only shows how difficult and responsible is the practice of *yoga*. *Yoga* is not for the morally impure, who may misrepresent and misuse it. The next three steps pertain to disciplining the body to make it a willing tool for the concentration of the mind. These are posture (*āsana*), regulation of breath (*prāṇāyāma*), and withdrawal of the senses from their objects in the external world (*pratyāhāra*). Here again the perspective is important. There are many who regard *yoga* as mere body culture and make much of *āsana* and *prāṇāyāma*. *Yoga* does give physical benefits, but those who look forward to liberation do not stop with the physical aspect of *yoga*. The inclusion of *pratyāhāra* shows the necessary transition from the physical to the mental aspect of *yoga*. If the mind is to be controlled, the tendency of the senses to drag it towards various physical objects must be reversed first.

It is the last three steps (*dhāraṇa*, *dhyāna* and *samādhi*) that constitute *yoga* proper. These three are successive stages in mental concentration. They help in getting a gradual mastery over the ever-fickle mind. *Dhāraṇa* is fixing the mind on the object of meditation. *Dhyāna* is meditation as such. It consists in directing an uninterrupted flow of thought towards the object. As a result of *dhyāna*, the mind gradually penetrates the form of the object and is absorbed in its meaning. This is *samādhi*. The process of applying these three steps on any chosen object is called *saṁyama*.⁸

The question arises at this stage as to what should be the object of *saṁyama*. Theoretically speaking, any object may be targeted by *saṁyama*. The Upaniṣads mention a variety of objects ranging from the concrete to the abstract. Depending upon the object of meditation, various specific worldly results are also mentioned as accruing for the agent—such as long life or enjoyment in heaven.⁹ Such results are totally unconnected with *mokṣa*, and when contemplated, serve only as distractions to the final goal. As such, they amount to what is called in the present poem *anātmaśrīḥ*, though this instance is not covered in the poem.

If *yoga* is to serve for *mokṣa*, the object of *saṁyama* should be the ultimate reality itself, no matter how conceived in a particular school of philosophy. It may be the disparateness of *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* as in Sāṅkhya, or a personal form of God as in theistic Vedānta, or any other conception. In Advaita, the final focus of *saṁyama* is Nirguṇa-Brahman. The real purpose of the Upaniṣads in recommending meditation on various objects other than Brahman is to provide for graded training in the technique of mind concentration. The *yogin* may resort to them for this preliminary advantage, strictly abjuring the particular results mentioned, however attractive they may be.

According to Advaita, the part played by *yoga* in securing liberation is indirect. The direct means to *mokṣa* is *jñāna*. It is obtained in a mediate form through *śravaṇa* and *manana*. *Nididhyāsana* renders it immediate by removing old dualistic tendencies in the mind, which are inimical to the non-dual experience. And *upāsana* on Nirguṇa-Brahman is identical with *nididhyāsana*. *Yoga* thus subserves *jñāna*.

We now come to the question of siddhis alluded to in the verse lines quoted at the beginning. The acquisition of super-normal powers is an off-shoot of *saṁyama* (no matter what the object). The *Yoga-sūtra* mentions a number of siddhis from *sūtra* 17 to *sūtra* 50 of Chapter III, though the important among them are said to be eight.¹⁰ These powers, whatever they may be, are not in any

way useful to *mokṣa*. But uniformly they are so enticing that they promote egoism in the *yogin* once he begins to pay attention to them. They are thus powerful enemies to the pursuit *mokṣa*. They are even more deceptive diversions from the final goal than material attractions precisely because they occur in the course of a spiritual practice. In the *Mohamudgara* the seductive power of siddhis is succinctly mentioned in one verse, viz. thirty. But the present poem, true to its name, pays special attention to them in many verses.

Verse eight warns us against the futility of yoga-siddhis comprehensively. Verse seven hints that the final steps of *yoga* should be practised with a mind free from any desire for siddhis. The mention of *prāṇāyāma*, the fourth step, here may be taken as representative of all the steps in *yoga*. Or it may be taken to mean that starting from *prāṇāyāma*, one should take care to brush aside the temptation of siddhis.

In the lines quoted above, a few of the siddhis which are of a more tangible kind are referred to by way of examples. Crossing the ocean, trapping the air, lifting Mount Meru (v.9); drinking poison, eating fire, flying like a bird (v.10); subduing fire, piercing metals, finding treasure (v.11)—these are specific instances of psychic power over nature. Attaining the world of Brahmā, seeing the abode of Viṣṇu, ruling over the world of Śiva (v.16)—these represent power of contact with celestial beings.¹¹ The expression "ruling over" (the world of Śiva) may even be a hyperbole.

When a *yogin* acquires super-human powers, he is tempted to try them out for himself and even to demonstrate them before others. Such an act bloats up his ego and deepens his ignorance about Ātman. On seeing these powers, ignorant people, amazed at them, begin to praise and worship the *yogin*. Such a development only confirms and deepens his ego. To avoid this outcome, the *yogin* may try to employ his powers for doing service to others. In fact, relieving others of their sorrow and giving them joy is itself mentioned among the powers.¹² But, as is well known, altruism is only the obverse of egoism. The gratitude and adulation the *yogin*

receives for service are themselves promoters of egoism—the *yogin* may come to think of himself as a saviour. Thus, in any case, the *yogin* has to be unsparing in avoiding and rejecting the development of these powers. Only then can he concentrate on the goal of *mokṣa* and pursue the *jñāna* required therefor.¹³

4. Elements of moral purity

कामातङ्गः खण्डितो वा ... (14)

The malady of desire (for sense pleasure) has been annihilated.

कोपावेशः कुण्ठितो वा ... (14)

The passion of anger has been blunted.

लोभाश्लेषो वर्जितो वा ... (14)

The contact of avarice has been kept off.

मोहध्वान्तः पेषितो वा ... (15)

The darkness of infatuation has been dissipated.

जातो भूमौ निर्मदो वा ... (15)

Freedom from pride (has been kept up) from birth on earth.

मात्सर्यार्तिः मीलिता वा ... (15)

The pain of jealousy has been erased.

The practice of *karma* and *bhakti* in a disinterested manner endows the aspirant with purity of mind (*citta-śuddhi*). The purity is indicated by the absence of vices and weaknesses, like desire, anger, greed, attachment, pride, jealousy, and so on. Moral purity is laid down as an indispensable qualification for the pursuit of *jñāna-yoga*. But only in this indirect and preparatory sense is it a means to *mokṣa*. *Jñāna* alone is the direct means. To remain self-satisfied with moral purity, as though it would lead to liberation by itself is a deception which should be avoided. The aspirant for *mokṣa* should look beyond moral purity and betake himself to the serious pursuit of *śravaṇa*, *manana* and *nididhyāsana*.

The fruit of the study

यस्येदं हृदये सम्यक्
 अनात्मश्रीविगर्हणम् ।
 सदोदेति सं एव
 आत्मसाक्षात्कारस्य भाजनम् ॥ (17)

He alone is the fit person for the experience of the (true) self in whose heart always arises well (the topic of this poem called) *anātmāśrī-vigarhaṇam*.

The topic of this poem is the censure of all those pursuits which are morally either neutral or acceptable but which are either useless or obstructive to the pursuit of *mokṣa*. The thought of renouncing such pursuits should always and well be remembered by one who is serious about the final goal. Only then does one become qualified for realizing one's true nature as non-different from Brahman.

अन्ये तु मायिकजगद् -
 भ्रान्तिव्यामोहमोहिताः ।
 न तेषां जायते क्वापि
 स्वात्मसाक्षात्कृतिर्भुवि ॥ (18)

But (there are) others who are subject to bewildering infatuation with the delusion caused by the illusory world; for them the experience of their (true) self never arises (in their lives) on earth.

The importance of abjuring all that deserves to be called *anātmāśrī* is here brought out negatively by reference to those who fail to realize the (true) self in the absence of this qualification.

NOTES

1. Volume 25, Nos. 1 & 2, 2000 (Silver Jubilee Volume), pp. 99-125.
2. धर्माऽविरुद्धो भूतेषु कामोऽस्मि भरतर्षभ। *Bhagavad-gītā*, 7, 11.
3. यत्साम्पराये महति ब्रूहि नस्तत् , *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, 1, 1, 29.
4. प्रवृत्तिरेषा भूतानाम् निवृत्तिस्तु महाफला, vide *Indian Conception of Values*, p. 231, n. 37.
5. See for instance the first verse:-
लब्धा विद्या राजमान्या ततः किम्
प्राप्ता सम्पत्प्राभवाद्दया ततः किम् ।
भुक्ता नारी सुन्दराङ्गी ततः किम्
येन स्वात्मा नैव साक्षात्कृतोऽभूत् ॥
6. Vide *The Voice of Śaṅkara*, Volume, 4, 4, pp. 330-39.
7. Vide Kāidāsa, *Śākuntalam*, Act 7, v. 35, first half:-
प्रवर्तताम् प्रकृतिहिताय पार्थिवः
सरस्वती श्रुतिमहती महीयताम् ।
8. त्रयमेकत्र संयमः, *Yoga-sūtra*, 3, 4.
9. Vide *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, 3, 15, 2 and 7, 1, 5.
10. अणिमा लघिमा प्राप्तिः
प्राकाम्यं महिमा तथा ।
ईशित्वञ्च वशित्वञ्च
तथा कामावसायिता ॥
11. Cf. *Yoga-sūtra*, 3, 33.
12. मैत्र्यादिषु बलानि, *Yoga-sūtra*, 3, 24.
13. तद्वैराग्यादपि दोषबीजक्षये कैवल्यम्, *Yoga-sūtra*, 3, 51.

THE TRANSCENDENTAL SELF

Paul YF Loke*

There is a story about Schopenhauer who was sitting on a bench in the Park one fine morning, deep in thought and contemplation. He had not shaven; and given his preoccupation with the higher principles of life, he was also carelessly attired. A policeman, mistaking Schopenhauer for a vagrant, prodded him with his baton and rather rudely asked, "Who are you?" To which, Schopenhauer is said to have replied, "I wish I knew." This may be a simple and somewhat comical anecdote in the life of a great thinker, but it underscores a very basic issue, which many of us, irrespective of race, language or culture, must have thought about at some point of our lives.

Advaita tells us that beyond the material corpus of the mind, senses and body, or what is collectively called the not-Self, is a spiritual principle, which presupposes every claim the *jīva* makes. Be it the claim as an epistemological subject (*jñātā*), or the claim as an agent of action (*kartā*), or the claim as an enjoyer of the consequences of its actions (*bhoktā*)—these claims are made possible

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only because of the Self (Ātman). It is in this sense that the Self is said to be transcendental to the entire experience of the jīva, which generally can be divided into three segments, viz. the waking state (*jāgrad-avasthā*), dream (*svapna*) and deep-sleep (*susupti*). Indeed, beyond these three states (*avasthātraya*), the jīva can have no other experience. An analysis of the states of human experience, therefore, offers a rare insight into the spiritual principle that the scripture and sages had been telling us through the ages. For this analysis, the Advaitin is helped by the logical method known as *anvaya-vyatireka*. In Western logic, this is called the method of agreement and difference. *Anvaya* means continuance, and *vyatireka* means discontinuance. What is uniformly present everywhere is *anvaya*; and what is sometimes present and sometimes absent is *vyatireka*. Co-presence and co-absence of two factors are also said to be *anvaya* and *vyatireka* respectively.

The waking state is perhaps the most significant segment of the jīva's experience since the jīva spends approximately sixteen out of twenty-four hours in that state each day. The jīva carries out many activities at the waking level with the consciousness extending outwards. It is this outward orientation of consciousness or *bahisprajñā*, which enables the jīva to experience and interact with the objects of the world. For the purpose of analysis, let us consider a fundamental activity, such as visual perception. In the waking state, the jīva sees and interacts with both animate and inanimate objects of the world. The question which arises is: "How does the jīva have access to these objects?" To understand what the jīva has or is equipped with to acquire this kind of experience, one should begin the inquiry with the jīva's gross body where the senses are located.

It should be pointed out at this juncture that the term "perception" or "perceptual experience" is used in Advaita, as in the other Indian philosophical systems, with regard to all the five senses. To the Advaitin, one perceives sound, smell, taste as one perceives colour. Feeling heat and cold too is a kind of perception. Indeed,

anything known through the five senses, viz. the visual sense, the auditory sense, the olfactory sense, the gustatory sense and the tactile sense, is a case of perception. So it is through the five senses, located in the body, that the *jīva* experiences the various external objects. However, the senses by themselves would not give knowledge of anything unless there is the mind (*antahkarana*). This is clearly evident in people who are in coma, where perceptual experience is absent because the mind is inoperative. Knowledge of any external object is possible only when the mind is present. Furthermore, it is important that the mind must cooperate with the sense organs. Let us take the example of visual perception. When the functioning of the mind is not synchronized with the eye, the latter cannot perceive anything. The common experience of a person who is deep in thoughts and not able to recognize a familiar face, which may be in front of him, is a case in point. It is, therefore, clear that both the mind and the senses are necessary in the *jīva*'s experience of external objects. However, the mind and the senses by themselves are not sufficient to bring about perceptual experience. According to the six systems of Indian Philosophy, namely, Sāṅkhya-Yoga, Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, Mīmāṃsā and Vedānta (to which Advaita belongs), both the mind and the senses are material in nature. Being material, they are no better than a piece of stone or wood, which is not capable of giving any knowledge. However, the mind is different from the other material objects in that it is capable of reflecting consciousness. In all other respects, the mind and the senses are no better than ordinary material things. Like a piece of stone, the mind and the senses are insensitive and inert. By themselves, they can never give rise to any knowledge. This may appear contradictory to what has been said about the importance of the mind and the senses in perceptual experience. To overcome this apparent contradiction, one has to consider the crucial but often over-looked role of the Self. Indeed, unlike material objects, the mind and the senses are able to function as instruments of cognition only because of the

fact that they are helped by the Self. It is the Self or pure consciousness, which gives sentience to these otherwise material entities. The *jīva*'s experience at the waking level is, therefore, made possible and is entirely dependent on the Self. This is clearly stated in a text from the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* which says, "Beyond the sense are the objects (of the senses) and beyond the objects is the mind; beyond the mind is the understanding and beyond the understanding is the great Self."¹

The Self is, therefore, the light or the revealing principle. Just as a light, which reveals the presence of objects, so too the Self reveals the presence of objects. In the case of external objects, these are revealed by the Self functioning through the mind and the senses. External objects include not only the usual objects the *jīva* comes across in its worldly existence, but also its own gross body, which is tangible and perceptible.

The mind is closet to the Self. The "distance", so to speak, between the Self and external objects is the farthest. The senses do not have direct access to the Self, but have access to it only through the mind. The mind, therefore, can be said to be functioning as the mediating principle between the Self and the senses. R. Balasubramanian has described the relative distance between the Self and other entities such as the mind, the senses, the body and external objects in terms of degrees. The mind is just one degree removed from the Self; the senses, two degrees; the body, three degrees; and the external objects are said to be four degrees away from the Self.

It is clear from the above discussion that the full complement of the *jīva*'s equipment comprising the Self or consciousness, the mind, the senses and the gross body, are present in the waking state. As a result of which, the *jīva* is able to establish contacts with the things of the world and experience them. Of course, ultimately it is the Self which is the prime mover since the mind, the senses and the body are insentient in nature.

In the dream state, the body and the sense organs, which function at the waking level, are absent. However, the mind is still operative, and "at the back" of the mind is the Self or pure consciousness. But unlike the waking state, the consciousness in dream is not externally oriented. The *jīva* in the dream state is said to be *antaḥprajñā* or inwardly cognitive. The objects experienced in dreams are subtle because they are internal objects. These are unlike the objects experienced at the waking state, which are gross. Therefore, as one moves from the waking state to the dream state, two important components of the day-to-day life get dropped. The body and the senses we are familiar with at the waking level have disappeared. Only the mind is active, and all that is experienced at that level is the creation of the mind. In the dream state, the person who sees an object like a chariot has the perceptual experience, "I see the chariot." When the person comes back to the waking state, there is the recollection in the form, "I saw the chariot in my dream." According to the Advaitin, the perceptual experience "I see the chariot" holds good only if the object (chariot) is present in front of the person. The dream state is characterized by the absence of the senses, the body, and the external objects. Therefore, to experience objects like chariot, roads, etc, these must have been created by the dreamer. The creation of a dream object is similar to the creation of silver in shell. In the final analysis, both the dream object and the shell-silver are illusory in nature. They are considered to be *prātibhāsika*, or existing only in appearance, because their illusoriness consists in their being generated by ignorance (*avidyā*). The appearance of dream objects in the dream state and silver in shell are the results of the experience of these at the waking level, which are recorded in the mind as impressions. When these impressions are released in dreams, some are normal whilst others may be grotesque. This is an interesting point, because judgement of normalcy or otherwise is usually made from the standpoint of the waking level.

Before moving on to examine the deep sleep state, a comparison of the waking and dream states will show us that both these states have only relative existence or reality. Indeed, to the person who has realized, or is liberated, the waking state is only a prolonged dream (*dīrgha-svapna*). One is, therefore, not justified to say, as is commonly assumed, that the waking state is more real than the dream state. In fact, both the states are mere appearances superimposed on the ground of pure consciousness.

Most people perceive objects in dreams as unreal and see objects in the waking state as real, because dream objects disappear when the person wakes up. However, if the process is reversed, we would find that objects of the waking state do not persist in dream state either. We have heard of cases such as a person who goes to sleep after a hearty dinner soon dreams that he is hungry. It has been said that at the waking level external objects are objectively perceived as they can be seen, touched and smelt. There is also sharing of common experience amongst the people. Both the observations, however, are not exclusive to the waking state. We are well aware that objects are present and perceived in dreams too and that they are felt to be as real as those in the waking state while the dream lasts. One needs only to reflect on any dream experience. The person in the dream state is not an impartial observer of the experience. The dreamer is an active participant. We only describe the experience as a dream after we are awake and recall the dream experience. In dream, every object and person are real to the dreamer. It is not uncommon to find people waking up from their dreams screaming in fear or in a cold sweat. The notions of space and time may be different from the standards in the waking state, but these are nothing queer or abnormal to the dreamer. Also, the dream characters do share the same experiences and emotions as in the dream of a tragic or a joyous event where several people are involved. It has also been argued that dream objects are unreal, because they have no consequence in waking life. Water in a

dream, for instance, will not quench one's thirst at the waking level. However, the reverse is equally true. Water of the waking state will also not do any good to a man dying of thirst in a dream.

Śrī Ramakrishna, in one of his parables, drew attention of his listeners to the relative reality of the waking and dream states. The parable is about a hunter and his wife. One day their son died, and the hunter's wife was overwhelmed with grief and wailing uncontrollably. She was, however, shocked and dismayed when she found that her husband was not quite upset over the tragic event as she was and promptly chided him for lack of affection for the child. The hunter replied that for sometime he had been dreaming of living happily with six children. However, the night before, he dreamt that all of them were killed in an accident. He continued, "You lost the child you reared by day while you were awake. I lost the children I reared by night while I slept. Now tell me, do I not have more cause to weep for the six children I lost than you have to wail over the single child that you lost?" Therefore, when one carefully examines the states of waking and dream, one will find that both are equally unreal. Neither of them is able to pass the test of reality in that both are sublated in the three divisions of time—past, present and future. The objects and experiences in both dream and waking are predicated with a beginning and an end. It might be added that the deep sleep state too, which we shall be discussing hereafter, does not meet the criterion of unsublatability as it is either disrupted by dream or waking.

We now come to the final segment of the human experience, viz. deep sleep. In the context of our analysis, it is important to examine how deep sleep is different from the other two states of waking and dream. Our own experience of the deep sleep state corroborates the Upaniṣadic position that in deep sleep both the mind and the senses are inactive. At the time when the mind is not functioning, the jīva has no external awareness (*bahisprajñā*) nor internal awareness (*antahprajñā*). One is not even aware of one's identity at that time. In dream, there is still self-identity. The person

may be involved in a dialogue or argument between himself as an individual and another person in the dream situation. The identity of the dreamer is still very much intact. At the waking level, the sense of identity is largely taken for granted. Indeed, according to Advaita, it is the person's individuality that is responsible for all the woes and worries experienced in the world of practical affairs.

In Western epistemology, the term "knowledge situation" is used to describe the waking and dream states. We have seen that in both these states the mind is functioning, and with it there is perceptual experience. A situation is called a knowledge situation when the following three factors are present: first, there must be the knower or cognizer; then, there must be an object which is known, i.e. the cognized; and finally, there must be the knowledge or cognition, which results from the relation between the knower and the known. These three factors are collectively called *tripuṭī-jñāna*. And when these three factors are present, they give rise to what is called a "knowledge situation," which we find at the waking level as well as at the dream level. However, this is not the case in deep sleep where there is no knowledge of anything.

In deep sleep, there is no knowledge situation, because the mind is not functioning. The knower is absent then. We have said that to have a knowledge situation, the mind is necessary. In deep sleep the mind is as good as absent. Where, then, has the mind gone in deep sleep? How did it disappear? According to Advaita, the mind exists in two conditions; one, in its causal condition and the other, in its effect condition. We know that the cause of the mind is ignorance (*avidyā*). Indeed, this ignorance is the basis of the whole phenomenological projection. It is for this reason that ignorance is called the causal body (*kāraṇa-śarīra*). Just as clay is the cause and pot is the effect in the oft-quoted clay-pot illustration, so too, the mind, the senses and the body are the products or effects of ignorance. The clay can assume the form of the pot, and the pot can go back to its original causal condition, i.e. clay. When it is in the form of a pot, clay can be used to carry things, such as water,

grain, etc. It has the ability to do that. However, if it is in the original condition as a lump of clay, it cannot be used to carry anything. Similarly, when ignorance is in the form of the mind, then it is fit (like a pot) to be active, and it gives rise to the knowledge situation. When the pot goes back to its causal condition, it becomes inoperative as pot. In deep sleep, the mind is in its causal form. It has become ignorance, and even the sense of identity is absent. There is then no knowledge situation as in the waking and dream states where the mind is functioning. Only ignorance prevails. And in the absence of the mind, the Self is not involved with the things of the world; and to be involved, the mind must be there. With an active mind, the *jīva* knows, cognizes, and gets involved leading to the entire existential drama of life.

Indeed, the state of deep sleep has been said to be a condition in which one has an intuition of the *jīva*'s true nature, divested of its burden of the body-sense-mind complex. We have said that in the waking state, the *jīva* is fully aware of all that is going on, and actively participates in the transactions of the empirical world. The *jīva* has, in waking, the full complement of its equipment. At the dream level, the body and the senses are absent. However, the mind is still functioning, and activity is restricted to the dream experience. In deep sleep, even the mind is dormant, having merged in its cause. There is only peace at that time, thanks to the inactivity of the mind. It is a state where the *jīva*, fatigued from its desires and actions, finds temporary rest. This is borne out by our everyday experience, when after a tiring day (either due to physical or mental exertion) we look forward to a good night's sleep. Good sleep invariably means rest, a condition free from dreams and other disturbances. The deep sleep state, therefore, offers us a glimpse of the Self's inherent nature, which is beyond distinctions and relations.

Perhaps, nowhere else has it been stated more directly that the deep sleep state offers man an intimation of the Self or pure consciousness than in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*. There is, for

instance, the text in which Uddālaka Āruṇi tells Śvetaketu that when a person is in deep sleep "he has reached pure being, he has gone to his own Self."² In yet another text of the same Upaniṣad, it is lamented, "Just as those who do not know the field walk again and again over the hidden treasure of gold and do not find it, even so, all creatures here go day after day into the Brahman-world and yet do not find it because they are carried away by untruth."³ It is pertinent to point out here that one should not mistake the deep sleep state for Self- or Brahman-realization, i.e. liberation, where after the destruction of ignorance the jīva remains in and as pure consciousness. One should be mindful that the person in deep sleep sooner or later reverts to the waking state and resumes his roles as the knower, agent of action and enjoyer. Furthermore, in the deep sleep state, there is still ignorance co-existing with the Self. That is why when the individual is asked to recollect his experience upon waking from a dreamless sleep, he replies, "I did not know anything, but I slept happily." There are two elements in this recollection: one is ignorance and the other is bliss. Both these elements are experienced at the deep sleep level. It has been argued by some critics that ignorance experienced in deep sleep is a mere absence of knowledge. The implication of which is that ignorance (avidyā or māyā) is not a positive entity as accepted in Advaita. Such an objection, however, is easily overcome if we examine the non-cognition of an object like a pot. To be able to say that the pot is absent necessarily implies the prior knowledge of the negatum. Logic dictates that, if there is no prior cognition of the pot, then there cannot be the perceptual cognition of its absence. Likewise, the remembrance of ignorance presupposes the perceptual experience of ignorance in deep sleep. Therefore, the content of that experience must have been a positive entity and not a mere absence of knowledge.

For the purpose of analysis, Advaita has given names to the Self at the three levels of experience. At the waking level, the Self is called Viśva. Taijasa is the name given to the Self at the dream

level. In deep sleep, the Self is called Prājña. However, notwithstanding these terms, the Self is in fact nameless. The nameless Self is named Viśva, Taijasa and Prājña because of the need to make a distinction between the Self in one state and the Self in another state. The Self in the waking state, associated with the *upādhis* of the mind, the senses and the body, gets involved in all kinds of activities (cognitive, emotive and conative). As a result of which it becomes the subject of knowledge, the agent of action and the enjoyer of the consequences of action. For the purpose of identification, this Self is called Viśva, which means the world. The same Self, which at the waking state is called Viśva, is also involved in dream experience. In dream, only the mind is functioning. The mind, which is material, becomes luminous because of the Self. Taijasa is something that is luminous. Therefore, the Self is called Taijasa, because through the mind, which is illumined, the Self is able to experience the thoughts projected by the mind. To distinguish the Self at the dream level from the Self at the waking level, the former is given the name Taijasa. In deep sleep, the mind, the senses and the body are not functioning; in their absence, the Self is not related to anything either externally or internally. It means there is only consciousness with avidyā in the state of sleep. The Self is called Prājña in deep sleep, because it is a mass of consciousness, "*prājñāna-ghanam*" as the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* describes it.⁴

The point to be noted here is that, though there is only one Self, different names are given to it, because there are different kinds of experience. Also, at each level of experience, the Self functions with different equipments or *upādhis*. At the waking level, the mind, the senses and the body are the *upādhis* of the Self. At the dream level, only the mind is the *upādhi* of the Self. In deep sleep, even the mind qua mind is absent. Therefore, even though the same Self is present throughout, it is called by three different names.

It is, therefore, quite clear from the above analysis that the Self is the ground of all our experience. It is present all the time, whatever

be the state of experience. Though experience is one and undivided, it is, for the sake of convenience, demarcated into waking, dream and deep sleep. Strictly speaking, a line cannot be drawn to separate one state from another, i.e. to separate dream from waking, and sleep from dream or waking. Conceptually, we can distinguish one state of experience from another. However, it is impossible to demarcate the different states in the way boundaries of different countries are demarcated. The three states of experience are not like three pieces of cloth sewn together in a patchwork. Waking experience is not one piece of cloth; dream experience is not another; and deep sleep experience is not the third piece. Indeed, experience, in the words of Balasubramanian, is "seamless".⁵ It is partless, distinctionless and non-dual. This indivisible, infinite, and total experience is otherwise called *Ātman* or the Self.

Although experience is one, distinctions are imposed on it; and so it is spoken of as three—waking, dream and deep sleep. Through the presence or absence of the mind, the senses and the body, the seamless experience is segmented. It is like the case of ether (*ākāśa*). Ether is everywhere. Yet, people speak of it as either-in-the-room, either-in-the-pot, etc. In reality there is only one ether. However, because of the limiting adjuncts of pot, room, etc., ether is compartmentalized. With reference to the pot, it is called ether-in-the-pot (*ghaṭākāśa*). The ether outside is called the "great" ether (*mahākāśa*). In other words, the one ether is made many by the *upādhis*. Similarly, experience is one, but it gets separated into three because of the limiting adjuncts of the mind, the senses and the body.

In his commentary on the second mantra of the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad*, Śaṅkara uses the examples of a cow and a coin to explain how the three states of waking, dream and deep sleep are really imaginary divisions superimposed on consciousness or experience. Consciousness, Śaṅkara contends, is not like the four legs of a cow, which are unrelated to one another. Instead, it is like the merging of four quarters of a coin to form a full coin called a

"*kārṣāpaṇa*".⁶ Experience is likened to the *kārṣāpaṇa*. In reality, there is only one coin made from the merging of the quarter in the half, the half in the three-quarter, and finally the three-quarter in the one *kārṣāpaṇa*. In reality, there is only one coin. Although one can conceptually speak of the four quarters of a coin, the coin in reality is one. In the same way, the idea of breaking experience into three is, therefore, purely arbitrary.

As we move from one segment of experience into another, it may appear that the three states of experience are unrelated or disconnected. But a careful study of the three states of experience will show that, whatever be the differences among them, there is one unifying factor connecting all of them. When the nature of experience is analysed, we find that there is only one "entity" which is uniformly and invariably present in all the three states; and that "entity" is the Self or consciousness. While the Self is uniformly present in all the three states, the adjuncts of the Self are not uniformly present. The body of the waking state is not present in the other two states. Again, the mind which is present in the waking and dream states is not present in sleep. That is to say, these adjuncts are sometimes present and sometimes absent; they appear and disappear. But the Self is invariably present in all the three states, and so it is the unifying factor of the three states of experience with the result that the *jīva* is able to preserve its personal identity. It must be noted that the Self remains unaffected by the body, the senses and the mind. The changes that take place in them do not affect the Self.

In the light of what has been discussed above, we have to answer the question, "How is the Self known?" We shall attempt to answer this question by first identifying the possible means of knowing the Self. Thereafter, each of the possibilities will be critically examined with a view to arrive at the correct answer to the question. The following are the possibilities that one can think of: (1) the Self is known by an external object; (2) the Self is known by another Self; and (3) the Self knows itself.

The first answer is inadmissible. To say that the Self can be known by an external object is to say that it can be known by the not-Self, for whatever is external to the Self is other than the Self, i.e. the not-Self. The not-Self, as we have said, refers to all the objects of the world including the mind, the senses and the body, which are material. An object which is material (*jada-vastu*) is not capable of knowing anything, because no material object can know anything. Therefore, the answer that the Self can be known by an external object is untenable. The second answer that the Self is known by another Self is equally untenable for two main reasons. Firstly, this explanation is based on the untenable assumption that there is more than one Self. Such an assumption is contrary to the central doctrine of Advaita, which holds the view that there is only one Self. Secondly, there is the objection to this answer on the ground of logic. Let us, for the sake of argument, accept the claim that the Self is known by another Self. The immediate question which follows would be: "How is the second Self known?" If the answer is, "By a third Self," then this again invites the question of how the "third Self" is known. Such a position invariably lands us in the logical difficulty of infinite regress (*anavasthā-doṣa*). Thus, on both counts the answer that the Self is known by another Self has to be rejected. This leaves us with the third and final possible answer to the question, viz. that the Self knows itself. This answer is based on the assumption that the Self is both the knower and the known, or the cognizer and the cognized, at the same time. But this assumption is untenable. Unlike the Self, a material object is made up of parts. The parts may be visible or invisible (such as protons and neutrons), or they may be gross or subtle. Any object that is made up of parts is divisible. Therefore, it is at least conceivable for an object, which is material, that one part may be the cognizer and another part, the cognized. However, according to Advaita, the Self or pure consciousness is non-dual, homogeneous and indivisible. Scriptural justification aside, it is common logic that one and the same entity cannot be both the

subject and the object at the same time. To cite an example used by Śaṅkara, the tip of the finger can touch something else, but not itself.

It is clear, therefore, that all the three alternatives are untenable. The question, however, remains as to how the Self is known. According to Advaita, such a question is really a contradiction in terms, because one speaks of knowing something only when that thing is unknown. The Self, unlike any object, is never completely unknown. Indeed, to everyone the Self is known. The real issue at hand is to what degree the Self is known. Everyone knows that there is a spiritual principle in him, which is different from the body, the senses and the mind. In his commentary on the *Bhagavad-gītā*, Śaṅkara points out that the Self is not something unknown to everybody; only, it is not known fully. For most of us, only the general aspect (*sāmānya-amśa*) of the Self is known. We know that the Self exists; and we make this claim on the ground that in the absence of the Self the mind, the senses and the body will not function. However, the special aspect (*viśeṣa-amśa*) of the Self is unknown to us. That is to say, we are ignorant of the Self's real nature. Therefore, the Self is known in a general way. This is evident from statements such as, "I know myself," "I exist," etc., which we all make at one time or another. Beyond that, the real nature of the Self as truth, consciousness and bliss remains unknown.

The knowledge of the Self even at the general level is unlike the knowledge of an object such as a stone or a chair. A stone, for instance, is always an object, because it has to be known. Being a material entity, it can never be the knowing subject. As an object, the stone requires a subject to know it. However, the Self is not in such a logical predicament. The Self is not an object of knowledge in the sense in which a stone or a table is an object of knowledge. These objects are known through *pramāṇas* such as perception. It is impossible to prove the existence of the Self by any *pramāṇa*. Every *pramāṇa* functions with the help of, and presupposing, the

existence of the Self. What is presupposed by a *pramāṇa* can never be proved by it. In the case of the Self, there is no need for any proof by any *pramāṇa*. We can drive home this point by an example. When we see a building, we do not ask the question about the existence of the foundations for the building. The existence of the superstructure is sufficient proof for the existence of the foundation. Here the question of proof does not arise, because the building cannot exist without the foundation. The latter is presupposed by the former. The same explanation holds good in the case of the Self. Every case of knowing is made possible by the Self, and so every time we make any knowledge claim, we presuppose the existence of the Self. So, the Self does not remain unknown. An object requires something else to know it. However, being the ground of all experiences, there is really nothing apart from the Self for knowing it. "Where there is duality, there one perceives another, one smells another, one contacts another, knows another; but where all this is *Ātman*, who is there to think, touch and know whom? Who can know him by whom all this is known? Who can know the knower?" declares a scriptural text.⁷ More specifically, the Self, being self-luminous (*svaprākāśa*), is shining all the time, revealing its presence. The term "*svaprākāśa*" conveys the idea that, while the Self reveals everything else, it itself is not revealed by anything else. We said earlier that the Self is revealing all the time—at the waking level, at the dream level and at the deep sleep level. The Self reveals because that is its nature. The Self is eternal light. It reveals the world, the body, the senses and the mind. Even in deep sleep, where the mind, the senses and the body are absent, the Self is revealing. It is like fire. Only when something flammable, like a piece of wood, is brought near the fire, the burning capacity of the latter becomes manifest. Fire burns only when something comes into contact with it. But unlike fire, the revelation of the Self is always manifest, because it reveals not only the presence of objects as in the case of waking and dream states, but also the absence of objects as in the case of deep sleep. The power of

revelation of the Self is manifest in the presence as well as in the absence of the objects.

It is the non-relational Self that becomes the *jīva* due to *avidyā*. The mind-sense-body complex is a product of *avidyā*. What is called the *jīva* is the Self in association with, or conditioned by, the mind-sense-body complex. The *jīva* is the Self-in-the-body. Though the Self by its very nature is non-relational, it becomes relational, as it were, with the mind-sense-body complex, gets involved in empirical existence (*vyāvahārika*) as the knower, agent, and enjoyer. The Self-in-itself, which is not involved in any empirical experience is called *Turīya*, or the Fourth. When all the three levels of experience are transcended, when the *vyāvahārika* is left behind, "That Beyond" where only the Self remains is called the Fourth. The Fourth is beyond the three states of experience; it is beyond *avidyā*; it is, therefore, said to be trans-empirical and trans-relational.

It is Ludwig Wittgenstein who taught us that at the highest level of mystical experience, what cannot be spoken about can only be shown. Wittgenstein made the distinction between the language of saying and the language of showing. The language of saying is effective up to a certain point. Beyond which language is ineffective in describing that experience. Here too the usage of the term "Fourth" is an admission of the limitation of language. What can we call the Self *per se* which is beyond all experience and therefore beyond all concepts? In the process of analysis of the three states of experience, *Viśva* comes first, *Taijasa* comes second, and *Pājñā* comes third. What is beyond these three can only be called the "Fourth" contextually. This is what we learn from the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad*.

NOTES

1. *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, 1.3.10.
2. *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, 6.8.1.
3. *Ibid.*, 8.3.2.
4. *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad*, 6.
5. R. Balasubramanian, *T.M.P. Mahadevan* (Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 1998), p. 80.
6. Śaṅkara's Commentary on the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad*, 2.
7. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, 4.5.15.

THE ANUBHAVAVILĀSA
OF HARIHARĀŚRAMA PARAMAHANSA*

G. Mishra

ज्ञानाभावो नैतदज्ञानमुक्तं
अज्ञत्वं स्यादन्यथा लोष्टकेषु ।
बन्धोऽपि स्यात्तस्य बुद्ध्यादिकञ्च
स्यादेतस्मात्कारणादेव सर्वम् ॥५२ ॥

Ignorance is not being spoken of as the absence of knowledge. If that were the case, then ignorance would be present in the pellets of clay also. It would be subjected to bondage and would be associated with mind, etc. because of the above reason. (52)

नैतत्सत्यं तन्नित्यवृत्तेः श्रुतत्वात्
यत्रो बाध्यं सर्वथा तद्धि सत्यम् ।
नैवासत्यं भासमानत्वहेतोः
तेनानिर्वाच्यं भवेदेतदत्र ॥५३ ॥

This ignorance is not real, since śruti declares its dissolution. That alone is real which is not sublated by any means. Nor is it

*Continued from previous number

unreal, because it is presented to our sense of sight. Hence it could only be indeterminable here. (53)

एतदेव जगतो हि निदानं द्रष्टृदृश्यवपुषः सकलस्य ।
रज्ज्वबोध इव सर्पभयादेः भ्रान्तिमात्रमत एतदुपैहि ॥५४ ॥

This (ignorance) indeed is the cause of the entire world in the form of the seer and the seen, just as the ignorance of the rope is the cause of the fear of the snake. Hence, know this world to be only illusory. (54)

भ्रान्त्या कथं स्यादिदमीदृशं जगत्
शङ्का न चेत्थं भ्रमशक्तिरीरिता ।
अचिन्त्यरूपा प्रविभावय स्वकं
स्वाप्नप्रपञ्चं भ्रममात्रमूलकम् ॥५५ ॥

Do not doubt as to how this visible world can be caused by illusion. The power of illusion is said to be incomprehensible in nature. Ponder over your own dream-world which is a product of illusion. (55)

स्वप्नात्परावृत्तदृशो विचारा-
द्यथा लयं यात्यखिलं जगत्तत् ।
तथा परावृत्तदृशो विचारा-
द्विलीयते सर्वमिदं क्षणेन ॥५६ ॥

Just as a man reverting from dream finds, on reflection, the entire dream-world dissolved, even so the man reverting from the world of objects, on reflection, finds the entire empirical world dissolved in a moment. (56)

गेहारामधनाश्वनागवसनाद्यं स्यात्समस्तं न हि
स्वं रूपं मम चैतदित्यधिगमात्स्वीयं भवेत्तेन तत् ।
तद्ब्रह्मेहक एष नो निजवपुर्देहो ममायं भवेत्
इत्थं भासनतः सतां तरतमं स्यादात्मनः स्वं वपुः ॥५७ ॥

One's entire possessions such as houses, gardens, money, horses, elephants and clothes do not constitute one's Self. They

become one's own only when one thinks, "All these are mine. "Similarly, "This body is not my Self; but it belongs to me,"—this is how the wise think. There are degrees of understanding with regard to one's body. (57)

तस्माद्यद्भाति ममेत्येवं तन्नो निजं वपुर्भवति ।
तेनाक्षमानसासुप्रमुखं नात्मेति जानीहि ॥५८ ॥

Therefore, whatever appears as "mine" is not one's true nature. Hence, know that the sense organs, mind, vital airs and the like are not your true Self. (58)

आत्मा सर्वदशास्वप्नचित एवेतत्तु देहाद्यम् ।
व्यभिचारितं खलु दृष्टं तस्माद्देहादिकं नात्मा ॥५९ ॥

The Self is continuously present in all states whereas the presence of the body, etc. is found to be inconstant. Hence the body, etc. are not the Self. (59)

सौषुप्ते देहाद्यं नो भात्यहमित्यतोऽन्वयो नास्य ।
तत्राप्यन्वित आत्मा सर्वाभावोपलब्धरूपोऽसौ ॥६० ॥

During deep sleep, body, etc. are not experienced as "I". Hence they lack continuity. However, in that state, the Self continues to be present, in the form of the Witness of the absence of everything. (60)

तत्रास्ति तदुपलब्धाव्युत्थाने तत् स्मृतिर्भवेद्यस्मात् ।
नावेदिषं तु किञ्चित्तत्रेत्येवं स्मृतिस्तु सर्वेषाम् ॥६१ ॥

In the state of deep sleep, the Self is existent, since after waking up, it is remembered in that manner. Everybody remembers it in the form, "I did not know anything in that state." (61)

स्मृतिर्न संस्कारमृते क्वचिद्भवेत् विनानुभूतिं न हि जातु संस्कृतिः ।
तदस्ति तस्मादुपलब्धिमानयं ततोऽन्वितस्सर्वदशास्वर्यं भवेत् ॥६२ ॥

Without impression there is no memory; without experience, there is no impression. Since experience is existent in all the states, the Self is in the form of experiencer, and it is continuous in all states of one's experience. (62)

एवं दशासु सकलासु समन्वितो यो यश्चापि नात्र ममताश्रयतामुपैति ।
देहेन्द्रियासुमनसामवभासको यः सत्योपलब्धितनुरेष भवेत्तवात्मा ॥६३॥

Thus that which is continuous in all the states of one's existence, and which is not existent in the form of "mine" and which is the manifesting factor of body, senses, vital airs and the mind, know that form of true experience to be your own Self. (63)

यैषा विचित्रविषयक्रमचित्रिताङ्गी
संवित्तिरन्तरतरा प्रतिभाति सैव ।
एका निरस्तनिखिलक्रमचित्रभावा
सर्वात्मतामुपगतैव भवेत्तवात्मा ॥६४॥

When that inner consciousness which is characterized by the images of variegated objects becomes devoid of all dualistic pictures, and attains to the state of one unified consciousness, know that to be your own Self. (64)

न ह्येषा संवित्तिर्भिन्ना विषयस्य भेदभासनतः ।
यद्बद्धमठभेदेऽप्याकाशे नास्ति भेदलेशोऽपि ॥६५॥

Just because consciousness manifests differences in the objects, consciousness by itself does not become differentiated. Ether, though conditioned by different objects like a pot or a hermitage, has no difference within itself. (65)

भिन्नां यदा वित्तिमुपैषि पूर्वा
परेति चैवं प्रतिभासतस्तदा ।
भायान्न मध्यं खलु संविदोर्वै
संवित्तिसम्बन्धमृते कथञ्चन ॥६६॥

(However) if you distinguish cognitions which appear as earlier and later, then the interval between the two (cognitions) would

in no way become manifest unless the contact of consciousness (through the mind) is accepted. (Hence consciousness is continuously present.) (66)

वेद्यं न हि संवित्तेः स्वरूपमेवैति कश्चनोपैति ।
तस्मात्संविद् रूपे भेदो नास्त्येव भेदकाभावात् ॥६७ ॥

Nobody experiences that the object of consciousness is the same as the nature of consciousness. Hence, in the absence of any differentiator, there is no difference in the nature of consciousness. (Though the objects of consciousness are numerous, they do not serve as differentiators of consciousness.) (67)

घटपटयोर्हि विभेदो जात्याकृति - भेदतोऽत्र सम्भवति ।
निर्गतजात्याकारा संविद्भिन्ना कथं नभस्तुल्या ॥६८ ॥

There is difference in the objects such as pot and cloth due to the difference in the class feature and configuration. (But) how can consciousness which is devoid of class and configuration like ether be differentiated? (68)

कालादिर्देशो वा संवित्सम्भेदनाय नैवालम् ।
संवित्संव्याप्तत्वाद्यथा नभोऽणुर्न भेदयति ॥६९ ॥

Time, etc., or space, are incapable of differentiating consciousness as they too are pervaded by consciousness. It is like an atom which does not divide the ether. (69)

एवं समस्तविषयेषु च देहकेषु
देशेषु लोकनिवहेषु गतागतेषु ।
संवित्तिरद्वयतनुः स्वविभाससिद्धा
या तामुपैहि सुधियैव निजात्मरूपम् ॥७० ॥

Thus in all objects and bodies, in all places and people of the worlds of the past and the future, it is the non-dual consciousness

which is pervasive, because it is self-manifested. Know that to be your own Self through a steady intellect. (70)

एवंविधासु विबुधादिमनुष्यतिर्यक् -
कीटान्तदेहततिषु प्रतिभानमात्रः ।
आत्मा घटादिविविधार्थसुसन्निविष्ट -
व्योमेव सन्ततवपुर्हि भिदाविहीनः ॥७१ ॥

Thus in different bodies, belonging to the celestials, humans, animals and insects, the Self is manifested. This Self is inherent in all without any difference, like ether which is present in several objects such as pot. (71)

संवित्तिरेषा न परप्रकाश्या
परा यतो नास्त्यनवस्थितेश्च ।
प्रदीपसूर्यादिरिव प्रकाश-
कर्तुर्न चान्यस्य भवेदपेक्षा ॥७२ ॥

This consciousness is not manifested by any other thing, as there is nothing other than this, and such a different object cannot exist at all. The Self does not require another illuminator like a lamp or the sun. (72)

सत्यैषा सा वित्तिः कालत्रितयेऽपि बाधराहित्यात् ।
बाधः कथमेतस्याः यतस्तु साक्षी न तत्र सम्भवति ॥७३ ॥

Consciousness is real since it is not sublated in the three states of its being. How can there be sublation to that as there is no witness to perceive the act of sublation? (73)

बाधस्त्वभावभानं भानाभावश्च कैश्चिदभ्युदितः ।
न हि संवित्तेर्द्विविधो बाधः सम्भवति चात्र तत्सत्या ॥७४ ॥

Sublation is the cognition of the absence of that object. Some also define it as absence of cognition. Here in the case of

consciousness, both the types of sublation are not possible as it is ever existent. (74)

अभावभानन्तु विशेषसंविदो
भवेन्न साध्यन्यतनोर्हि संविदः ।
अभावभानेऽपि च भानरूपतो
यतोऽस्ति तस्मात्खलु सा परा चितः ॥७५ ॥

Manifestation of non-existence does not take place in the case of particular consciousness. Even that particular consciousness is not caused by another consciousness. Since that is still manifest, notwithstanding the manifestation of non-existence, it must be different from particular consciousness.(75)

Note: The cognition of absence applies to knowledge concerning specific objects. This is not the case with the common consciousness which is present in all the states. Hence in the cognition of absence, that which remains to be the manifesting factor, one should know that to be the transcendental consciousness.

भानाभावो नैवेह स्यात्संविद्यैवै स्वाभासायाः ।
यस्माद्भानाभावोऽप्येषः सिद्धिं यायात्संविद्यैव ॥७६ ॥

Absence of manifestation does not occur for consciousness, which is self-illuminating, for the said absence of manifestation is cognized only through consciousness. (76)

सत्याद्वितीयपरसंविदियं निजात्म रूपा
यतस्तत्र ततः सुखरूपिणी स्यात् ।
प्रीत्यास्पदं हि सकलस्य यतो निजात्म-
रूपं प्रियं खलु सुखं च यतः प्रसिद्धम् ॥७७ ॥

This consciousness, which is real, non-dual, and supreme, is one's own Self. Therefore, it can be in the form of your bliss too. This is so because, whatever is of the nature of one's own Self is wellknown to be a source of happiness to all the living beings. (77)

प्रियाधनसुतादिकं भवति वै यदर्थे प्रियं
 प्रियेषु परमावधिः किल निजात्मरूपं ततः ।
 अतः परसुखात्मको भवति संविदात्मा यतः
 सुखं च विषयोत्थितं न हि निजात्मनो भिद्यते ॥७८॥

That entity on account of which one's beloved wife, riches and sons become dear to one, that indeed is the supremely beloved, i.e. one's own Self. Hence this consciousness is the transcendental bliss which is the Self. The happiness gained from the objects is not different from one's own Self. (78)

विषयविशेषपरिष्कृत-सत्त्वाकारे निजान्तरङ्गे स्वम् ।
 सुखमादर्शं मुखमिवाभिन्नं जानाति बालवन्मुग्धः ॥७९॥

The deluded person enjoys the happiness in his mind derived from the consciousness conditioned by particular objects. He is like a child who thinks of his reflected image in the mirror as his own Self. (79)

सुषुप्तिभारापगमादिकेषु सुखं समस्तैरनुभूयते यत् ।
 सकारणं तत्र भवेद्यतोऽतस्तदात्मरूपं सुखमित्यवेहि ॥८०॥

The happiness experienced by everybody in deep sleep, or when relieved from load, does not have a cause. Hence know that happiness to be the form of one's own Self. (80)

न तत्र भारापगमश्च सुप्ति-
 हेतुत्वमभ्येत्य सदात्मकत्वात् ।
 अभाव एवापगमो हि यस्मात्
 बुद्धिप्रवृत्तेर्विगमश्च सुप्तिः ॥८१॥

The relief from the load and the state of deep sleep are not the causes of such happiness since they are not of that nature. The happiness is in the form of reality. Relief of burden is only a state of absence. So is the deep sleep which is the absence of activity of the mind. (81)

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न्त्येषा शङ्करभारती विजयते निर्वाणसन्दायिनी ॥

*saṁsārādhvani tāpabhānukiraṇaprodhūtadāhavyathā-
khinnānām jalakāṅkṣayā marubhuvi bhrāntyā paribhrāmyatām
atyāsannasudhāmbudhiṁ sukhakaram brahmādvayam
darśayant-
yeṣā śaṅkarabhārātī 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.