

The VOICE of ŚĀNKARA



Editor :
R. Balasubramanian

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nirvāṇa-sandāyinī

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

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The VOICE of
ŚĀṆKARĀ

Śaṅkara-bhāratī

Editor

R. Balasubramanian

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HOMAGE TO ŚAṄKARA

[188]

ओङ्कारपङ्कजमधुव्रत वेदशीर्ष-
 कञ्जातबालदिननाथ कृपासमुद्र ।
 बृन्दारकेन्द्र-पदतीच्छयमनःप्रदायिन्
 श्रीशङ्करार्य मम देहि पदावलम्बम् ॥

oṅkāra-paṅkaja-madhuvrata veda-śīrṣa-
 kañjāta-bāladinanātha kṛpāsamudra
 bṛndārakendra-pada-taucchya-manaḥ-pradāyin
 śrī-śaṅkarārya mama dehi padāvalambam.

Oh Śrī Śaṅkara! You are indeed, an ocean of compassion; You are like the just risen Sun in making the lotus (in the form of Upaniṣads) bloom; you are like the honey-bee that hover around the lotus of Oṅkāra (the supreme Akṣara representing Brahman); and You are the one supreme master making all your devotees thoroughly detached from gaining the lordship of Indra. Oh Lord! kindly give me refuge at your benign pair of feet.

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नत्वा पदाम्बुजनियुगममहो यदीयम्
 वाचस्पतित्वमधिगच्छति जन्ममूकः ।
 स त्वं कृपार्णव सरोरुहपत्रनेत्र
 श्रीशङ्करार्य मम देहि पदावलम्बम् ॥

natvā padāmbujaniyugmamaho yadīyaṃ
 vācaspatitvam-adhigacchati janma-mūkaḥ
 sa tvaṃ kṛpārṇava saroruha-patra-netra
 śrī-śaṅkarārya mama dehi padāvalambam.

Oh Śrī Śaṅkara! Oh ocean of compassion! Beautiful Lord with eyes resembling blooming lotus flowers; those who are dumb even from their birth obtain the great status of Bṛhaspati (the eloquent Vedic Priest) by prostrating at the lotus-like pair of feet of yours. Oh Lord! Please offer me refuge at your benign pair of lotus-like feet.

Jagadguru Śrī Saccidānanda Śivābhinava Nṛsimhābhārātī
 in the *Śrīśaṅkarācāryapadāvalambastava*

THUS SPAKE ŚAṄKARA

R. Balasubramanian

Hermeneutics of the Upaniṣads

The work of interpretation is not new. It is said that Jesus interpreted himself to the Jews in terms of scriptural prophesy. Also, the Gospel writers interpreted Jesus to their audiences. However, hermeneutics as a systematic, rigorous method of Biblical interpretation came into prominence in the West in the context of European Protestant theology during the seventeenth century. But in India, the Mīmāṃsakas and the Vedāntins to whom the Vedic texts are important used this method for textual interpretation for a long time, probably from the first century B.C. Hermeneutics is a system of understanding. It is the interpreter's system for finding the "hidden" meaning of the text.

Like a trustworthy conductor who ably guides the traveller to the destination, the Upaniṣadic seers safely guide the spiritual aspirant to the goal of Self-realization stage by stage. Implicit in their utterances is the well-known method of *adhyāropa* and *apavāda*, i.e. superimposition and subsequent denial. Since they proceed from the known to the unknown, restating the given,

exposing the difficulties in the accepted position, and then moving on to the next, their utterances are contextual or "horizontal". Their statements are very often suggestive and symbolic; sometimes, they are puzzling and paradoxical. One should, therefore, apply the principles or canons of interpretation carefully in order to understand their purport (*tātparya*). Consider, for example, the *Īśāvāsyā* text (5) which says:

That moves; That does not move; That is far off;
That is very near; That is inside all this; and That
is also outside all this.

To a casual reader, the above text which is paradoxical does not make any sense. How is it possible, one may ask, for one and the same entity to move and to be stationary, to be near and far off, to be inside everything and also to be outside everything? It is difficult for a novice who does not know the background to comprehend the purport of the text which conveys the idea that the supreme Being is beyond the categories of thought. The reader should have a "pre-understanding" of the text and also should pay attention to the context in which it occurs. It is here that we require the help and guidance of the commentator. Commenting on this text, Śaṅkara observes:

The meaning of the text is that, though in itself the supreme Reality is motionless, it seems to move. Moreover, it is far off, because it is unattainable by the ignorant even in hundreds of millions of years. It is very near indeed to the men of knowledge. The reason for this is as follows. Being their very Self, ... it is also near. It is inside everything as stated in the Vedic text, "The Self that is within all" (*Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, 3.4.1.), is inside this world consisting of name, form, and activity. It is outside all this, because it is all-pervasive like ether; and it is inside, because it is extremely subtle.

Texts which are paradoxical occur not only in the Upaniṣads, but also in the *Bhagavad-gītā*. For example, the *Bhagavad-gītā*, 13.13, describes Brahman-Ātman as possessing hands and feet, eyes, heads, and mouths everywhere in order to convey that it is infinite and that it exists everywhere. The text reads: "With hands and feet everywhere, with eyes, heads, and mouths everywhere, with hearing everywhere, That [Brahman, which is to be known] exists enveloping all." Hands, feet, and other organs are not-Self; they are material; they constitute, in the language of the *Bhagavad-gītā*, *kṣetra* or the body. In his commentary on this text, Śaṅkara says that the Self which is devoid of organs is spoken of as possessing organs only for the purpose of indicating its existence through them; and whatever is attributed to the Self is denied in the next verse (13.14) which reads: "Shining by the functions of all the organs, yet without the organs; unattached, yet supporting all; devoid of qualities, but is the enjoyer of qualities." In the words of Śaṅkara:

There is the saying of those who know the right traditional method of teaching, "That which is devoid of the world of duality is described by superimposition and denial." Hands, feet, and the like, constituting the limbs of all bodies in all places, derive their activity from the energy inherent in the knowable (Brahman), and as such they are mere marks of its existence, and are spoken of as belonging to it only by a figure of speech.

A careful study of Śaṅkara's hermeneutics reveals three important points for our consideration. The first one is that, though a superficial reading of the Upaniṣads may suggest to us that they do not speak with one voice, that they contradict one another, a deeper study will reveal that they have only one message to convey, viz. that the primal Reality which is called Brahman, Ātman, Sat, and so on is one without a second and that, due to our

ignorance, we view it in multiple forms. Secondly, the method followed by Śaṅkara for reconciling the different texts is not his invention. Thirdly, the method itself is an old one embedded in the tradition; and Śaṅkara scrupulously follows this method in his hermeneutics. What Śaṅkara says in his commentary on the *Brahma-sūtra*, 3.2.17, summing up the purport of the teaching of both śruti and smṛti texts, is worth quoting here:

That Brahman is *nirviśeṣa* is proved by śruti texts also which expressly deny characteristics attributed to it; e.g. there are texts like, "Then follows the teaching 'not this, not this';" "It is different from the known; it is also above the unknown;" "From which all speech, along with the mind, turns away unable to reach it." Also, this idea is conveyed by the śruti text which relates how Bādhva, being questioned about Brahman by Bāṣkali, explained it to him by silence. When Bāṣkali approached Bādhva with the request, "Please teach me Brahman, Sir," the latter was silent. When the request was repeated a second and a third time, he said, "I am teaching you indeed; but you do not understand. Silent is that Self." The same teaching is conveyed by smṛti texts such as: "I will proclaim that which is the object of knowledge, knowing which one attains immortality; beginningless is the supreme Brahman. It cannot be said to be *sat* or *asat*." Of a similar purport is another smṛti text, according to which Nārāyaṇa in his cosmic form instructed Nārada: "O Nārada, you see me endowed with the qualities of all beings because of *māyā* projected by me; do not understand me in this form (as the reality)."

Though Advaita accepts more than one *pramāṇa*, śruti alone, strictly speaking, is *the* *pramāṇa* according to it. What remains concealed and therefore what is to be known is Brahman-Ātman, and nothing else. Since śruti alone conveys the knowledge

of Brahman-Ātman, Advaita holds that it alone is the *pramāṇa*. From the standpoint of the empirical realm (*vyāvahārika*), perception, inference, etc. are admitted to be *pramāṇas*; and here we proceed on the assumption that material objects due to concealment remain unknown. This assumption is not, in the final analysis, justified, because there can be concealment only for Brahman-Ātman which is consciousness. So long as we think, due to ignorance, that there are insentient objects which remain unknown to us—and this is what we ordinarily do—, we can, according to Advaita, speak of perception, inference, etc. as *pramāṇas*. There is yet another point to be noted here about *śruti*. *Śruti* as a *pramāṇa* is just informative, i.e. it only reveals Brahman-Ātman which is already there, but which remains concealed and unknown due to *avidyā*. The work of *śruti* as a *pramāṇa* is needed only so long as Brahman-Ātman is not known; and once it is known, there is no need for *śruti*. One who is ignorant of the truth needs *pramāṇa*, and not one who has known the truth. It means that Advaita accepts perception and other *pramāṇas* including *śruti* only in the state of bondage and that *śruti*, though indispensable for attaining *parā-vidyā*, ceases to be a *pramāṇa* once the highest truth is known. Śaṅkara conveys this idea of the difference between the state of ignorance and that of knowledge and all that it implies with regard to the *pramāṇas* including *śruti* by citing the authority of *śruti* itself as follows:

Prior to enlightenment, there is transmigratory existence for the *jīva*; and in this state alone, there is scope for the work of perception and other *pramāṇas*, because *śruti* texts such as, "But when to the knower of Brahman everything has become the Self, then what should one see and through what?" point out the absence of perception, etc. in the state of enlightenment. If it be said that the absence of perception, etc. would also mean the absence of *śruti*, this conclusion is quite acceptable to us. For, following the texts starting with, "In this

state the father is no father," and ending with, "The Vedas are no Vedas," we do admit the absence of śruti itself in the state of enlightenment.

Thus, śruti is viewed as the only pramāṇa from one perspective, and the final pramāṇa (*antyaṁ pramāṇa*) from another perspective for attaining *parā-vidyā*, as there is no work for any pramāṇa thereafter.

The Upaniṣadic texts which give an account of creation employing the category of cause-effect relation presuppose duality; but they purport to teach the non-duality of Brahman which is the source, support, and end of the world. To take the well-known case of clay and pot, which are related as cause and effect, it may appear that the effect (pot) is different from the cause (clay), but the truth is that it is non-different from the latter (*kārya-kāraṇayoḥ ananyatvam*). For example, the *Taittirīya* text, 3.1.1, "That, verily, from which these beings are born, that by which, when born, they live, that into which, when departing, they enter, That, seek to know. That is Brahman," defines Brahman as the cause of the world. But how can Brahman, which is one only without a second and also immutable, be the cause of the world? There is the world of day-to-day experience, which calls for an explanation, and śruti is the pramāṇa which tells us that Brahman who is omniscient, omnipotent, and so on is the cause of it. However, the description of Brahman as the cause of the world is for the purpose of establishing the non-duality of Brahman even though it operates at the level of duality. It is only provisional, and so the Upaniṣad withdraws it. Its final position is that Brahman is neither the cause nor the effect of anything. Śaṅkara knew the contradictions involved in the causal explanation. Cause-effect relation involves a series with an indefinite number of terms before and after any given number of the series. Since we assume that the causal series has no beginning, to postulate a first cause is arbitrary. Either the first cause has a previous cause, or else the

whole causal design is illogical. But the fact remains that the causal explanation cannot be given without assuming a first cause. Hence the difficulty in the causal explanation. In the course of his commentary on the *Brahma-sūtra*, 2.1.14, Śāṅkara observes:

The effect is this manifold world consisting of ether, etc.; and the cause is the supreme Brahman. So far as the effect is concerned, it is understood that in reality it is non-different from the cause, i.e. it has no existence apart from the cause. ... There are texts which purport to convey the unity or oneness of the Self: "In that all this has its Self; it is the true; it is the Self; you are that" (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, 6.8.7); "Brahman alone is all this" (*Ibid.*, 3.14.1); "There is in it no diversity" (*Bṛhadāraṇyaka*, 4.4.25). On any other assumption it would not be possible to maintain that, by the knowledge of one thing, everything becomes known. ... So this manifold world with its objects of enjoyment, enjoyers, and so on has no existence apart from Brahman.

Let us now consider the negative texts which purport to convey that Brahman is *nirguṇa*. There is the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* text, 2.3.6, which says: "Now therefore the description of Brahman: 'Not this, not this.' There is no other and more appropriate description than this 'Not this, not this'." It is first of all necessary to bear in mind the context in which this negative description occurs. The *Upaniṣad* first describes Brahman as having two forms—the gross (*mūrta*) consisting of earth, water, and fire, and the subtle (*amūrta*) consisting of air and ether. After explaining the two forms of Brahman, it proceeds to describe it as "not this, not this" with a view to show that Brahman is really free from these two forms. The two negative particles are used by Scripture in an all-inclusive sense to deny every possible specification or attribute that one may think of with regard to Brahman. The procedure that is adopted here is based on the well-known technique of super-

imposition (*adhyāropa*) and subsequent denial (*apavāda*). Śaṅkara's commentary on this text brings out the significance of the twofold negation, and also highlights why it is the most appropriate description. First, Śaṅkara refers to a possible objection to this mode of description and then gives his reply.

Objection: How can the two negations, "Not this, not this" bring out the nature of the Reality spoken of as the Truth of truth?

Reply: By the elimination of all differences due to limiting adjuncts, the two expressions refer to something that has no distinguishing mark such as name, or form, or action, or genus, or species, or qualities. Words denote objects through one or other of these. But Brahman has none of these distinguishing marks. Consequently, it cannot be described as "It is such-and-such" in the same way as we describe a cow by saying, "There moves a white cow with horns." It is possible to describe Brahman by superimposing on it name, form, and action. For example, there are texts which speak of Brahman as "knowledge and bliss" (3.9.28) and as "pure, consciousness" (2.4.12) and so on. When, however, we wish to describe its true nature, free from all differences due to limiting adjuncts, then it is an utter impossibility. Then there is only one way left, viz. to describe it as "Not this, not this" by eliminating all possible specifications of it that have been known.

Śaṅkara points out that Brahman-Ātman which is other-than-the-empirical, cannot be described by means of words in the same way in which we describe empirical objects. In his commentary on the *Bhagavad-gītā*, 13.12, Śaṅkara says:

It stands to reason to say that Brahman cannot be expressed in words such as 'sat;' for, every word employed to denote a thing denotes that thing—when heard by another—as associated with a certain *genus*, or a certain *act*, or a certain *quality*, or a certain mode of *relation*. Thus: *cow* and *horse* imply genera, *cook* and *teacher* imply acts, *white*

and *black* imply qualities, *wealthy* and *cattle-owner* imply possession. But Brahman belongs to no genus, wherefore it cannot be denoted by such words as 'sat (existent)'. Being devoid of attributes, it possesses no qualities. If it were possessed of qualities, then it could be denoted by a word implying a quality. Being actionless, it cannot be indicated by a word implying an act. The śruti says: "It is without parts, actionless and tranquil." (*Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad*, 6.19). It is not related to anything else; for it is one, it is without a second, it is no object (of any sense), it is the very Self. Wherefore, it is but right to say that it can be denoted by no word at all; and the passages of the śruti like the following point to the same thing: "Whence (i.e. away from Brahman, unable to approach Brahman) all words return." (*Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, 2.4.1).

It must be borne in mind that every text, be it affirmative or negative, occurs in a context, and so we must take into consideration the meaning which the text purports to convey in the context. It is true that the Upaniṣads declare that Brahman, which is not an empirical entity like a tree or table, cannot be signified by speech and comprehended by the mind. But it does not follow from this that the supreme Being is really beyond the reach of words and mind. If that were the case, the Upaniṣadic texts serve no purpose and would be useless. Both the affirmative and the negative texts have a specific and important role to play: they are intended to help us understand the principal texts (*mahāvākyas*). It means that these texts, which are called *avāntara-vākyas*, must be construed along with the principal texts such as "*Tat tvam asi*" and "*Aham brahmāmsi*". *Avāntara-vākyam* = *mahāvākya antaḥpāti-vākyam*. It is true that the negative texts which say that the immutable Brahman is "neither gross nor minute, neither short nor long ..." (*Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, 3.8.8), are intended to bring out the nature of Brahman as *nirguṇa*. Brahman which is

devoid of attributes, specifications, and relations is not an objective entity. But at the same time it is not a void or nothingness even though it has been emptied of all categories. Being of the nature of consciousness, it is identical with the Self of everyone of us without becoming a subjective entity, or an individuated self. It is, therefore, something positive, and also spiritual in nature. Though it is beyond the reach of conceptual and representative thinking, it is not beyond or outside our experience. Śaṅkara says that there is no one to whom the Self remains unknown in spite of transcending both the objective and the subjective. Since negation is only a preliminary to affirmation, the negative texts have a positive import. What Rudolf Otto says about negative theology is relevant in this context. "A conception negative in form," observes Otto, "may often become the symbol for a content of meaning which, if absolutely unutterable, is none the less in the highest degree positive. ... A negative theology can and indeed must arise ... from purely and genuinely religious roots, the experience of the luminous." (*The Idea of the Holy*, p. 189) Brahman which is no other than Ātman is self-luminous (*svapṛakāśa*). It shows itself all the time while revealing other things. We should, therefore, construe the negative texts along with the *mahāvākyas* which have a positive import.

 MAN'S DUTY

Śrī Candrasekharendra Sarasvatī*

The souls that are in the world are called "living beings". Living beings are those that are endowed with life (*prāṇa*). "Prāṇa" is life. Therefore, all beings endowed with life are called 'living being'. All living beings are always engaged in doing something or other. Every living being is ever seen to be busy doing some act or other. The ant is always on the move. The snail does something or other. The bird remains flying or eating something. Man goes to office and does his work. Or, he ploughs and rears crops. He is seen engaged in similar other works. Not even one person remains without doing some work or other. The Lord says this in the *Gītā*:

*na hi kaścit kṣaṇam api
jātu tiṣṭhaty-akarmakṛt (iii, 5)*

The meaning of this passage is: No one at any time remains without doing some work or other even for a moment.

* From a discourse given on October 9, 1932 by His Holiness Śrī Candrasekharendra Sarasvatī, Śrī Śaṅkarācārya of Kāñcī Kāmakoṭi Pīṭha: Translated into English by T. M. P. Mahadevan.

Thus, we observe in the world man always doing something or other. For a man who lives in a small village, there are only a few things to do. For one who resides in a big town, there are innumerable things to do. Why should all be doing something or other thus?

It is only when we are doing something that we are without misery. In order to be without misery, many things have to be done. In order to gain happiness also, many things have to be done. Nothing is so difficult as remaining quiet without doing anything. In order that we may thus do things, there is something within prompting us. Some one has placed "hunger" in all of us. That "hunger" prompts man saying, "Do this", "Do that". If we remain doing no action, the stomach pinches. One has to procure the medicine for removing the disease called "hunger", and so one has to do things. If we get a headache, we take medicine, and it disappears. And, again, after several days, it returns. But, this disease called "hunger" is not like that. There is great difference here from the diseases which, after having been cured, come after many days. For this disease, the medicine should be administered at each part of the day. In order to procure this medicine, everyone has to work. If the tiger kills the antelope or the cow, it is for curing this disease. It is for the same purpose that man acts many roles and tries to be clever. If he is hungry, he procures rice, cooks and eats it. For procuring rice, he works. If the body is to be preserved, one has to work. It is not possible to remain without work even for a moment.

If one remains without any work, one's body would become useless. If one is a wealthy person, it does not mean that he should sit idle without work. It is such a person that has many things to do. Anxiety haunts him always that the loans that he has given should be safe. In order to ensure this he has to attend to several things. More than a Brāhmaṇa who lives by gathering rice-grains by alms everyday, a wealthy man who has property worth ten lakhs is active. There is no end to the work he does.

Thus, there are many kinds of work that a man does. The things that he does for the sake of his own body constitute one kind. Another kind consists of things that he does for the sake of those who belong to him. Children, wife, father, mother and other persons have been entrusted to his care. There are things which he has to do for them. Over and above these, it may be that he owns a cow and a dog. If these attachments increase, there may be a cat. And, there are things to do for the sake of the farmer who looks after his land, his servants and others. After these, there are items of business connected with the village community. Just as keeping the house neat and tidy is the responsibility of the family which lives in it, managing the affairs of the village is the responsibility of its inhabitants. A family may consist of ten members; in a village there may be a thousand persons. Just as a man should attend to matters connected with his family, he should also attend to the affairs of his village. And, then, there are many things which have to be done for the welfare of the country.

Thus, there are several categories of action. Of these, cleaning the teeth, washing the clothes, bathing, eating, etc., are for the sake of one's body. Building a house, cleaning it, acquiring the accessories for running it, etc., are for the sake of the household, i.e., they are for the sake of those who belong to one's self. Digging a canal, repairing a tank, building a hospital, making adequate arrangements for the treatment of patients, etc., are for the sake of the village community. The things that are to be done for the country's welfare are known to all these days.

Among the things that we do, there are, besides those that are for feeding ourselves, the duties towards others. Those who have the ability should protect the weak and the disabled: this is the way of the world. The weak and the disabled are entrusted to the care of those who have the ability to protect them. A man who has the ability brings up his child. When he becomes old and decrepit, he is taken care of by his son. Thus, the process of change is natural to the world. This is characteristic not only of humans

but also of birds and other living beings. Birds and animals look after their young ones. This characteristic is seen among small creatures also, such as insects, cats and monkeys.

Things go on happening in the entire world. Man does many things; he gets involved in each of them; he earns money; he seeks co-operation; he digs canals; he builds hospitals; he attends to the affairs of government; he derives ways and means for removing the sufferings of people. Sacrificing some of his own interests, he works for the common-weal and also attends to his own affairs. He goes to his fields; he works in his office. Thus, he does many things for earning a living.

The things that are necessary for men are of three categories. For satisfying hunger, there is required food; then, for protecting one's self from the sun's heat, cold weather, etc., and for covering one's body, there are required clothes; and, for shelter and rest, there is required a house. These are of greater necessity than other things. Besides these whatever a man acquires is for the sake of maintaining his children, arranging for their marriage, etc.

Apart from what a man has to do for acquiring the three essential things, he has to be active in regard to other things also. He has to procure his daily food, repair his house when it gets damaged, and stitch his clothes when they get torn. But he also secures the essential things required for the others entrusted to his care. He procures food for the appeasement of the daily disease, hunger, eats and makes others eat. There is a particular aptness in describing hunger as disease and food as medicine.

*Kṣud-vyādhiśca cikitsyatām
 pratidinam bhikṣauṣadham bhujyatām
 svādvannam na tu yācyatām
 vidhivaśāt prāptena santuṣyatām
 śitoṣṇādi viṣahyatām na tu vṛthā
 vākyaṃ samucchāryatām*

audāsīnyam abhīpsyatām
janakṛpānāiṣṭhuryam utsrjyatām
 (Sādhana-pañcakam, v. 4)

Ācārya Śaṅkara enjoins in this śloka: "Take treatment for the disease called hunger." A man with disease would take only that amount of medicine that is necessary for the cure of the disease. He would continue to take the medicine that is good to taste. Besides, he would go in for the medicine that does not involve great cost. Similarly, one should take only that quantity of food which is essential for the satisfaction of hunger. And plain food should be enough. This is the meaning expressed in the śloka.

We have thus seen that man has to do several things both for his own sake and for the sake of others. Besides these, he does also certain extraordinary things. We shall see what some of these are. One man sets up a cross and builds a church. There nothing is seen which would appease his hunger. Another person wears a garland of *rudrākṣa* beads and smears his body with the sacred ash. With these, will he be rid of his hunger? Or, will these add anything to his dress? Yet another man puts on the mark of Viṣṇu. These doings do not fall within the essential things of which we spoke. These are not necessary for the satisfaction of hunger, or for one's clothes, or for the house. They are not at all necessary for the protection of those who are entrusted to one's care. These are things that are extra. A man, taking a *pañca-pātra* (small vessel of water) and *uddharanī* (spoon), makes some noise, and does something. He performs what is known as *Śrāddha*; he invites Brāhmaṇas and feeds them. By these acts will his hunger be satisfied? Will the rains come to make his fields fertile? Nothing of that sort will happen. Bringing stone from hills, man builds temples. The temples are not used for providing him with shelter. The temples remain locked during the nights. They are not even useful for seeking shelter against rain. Of what use are they?

Some persons perform several deeds in the name of religion. Some fight for the sake of religion; even heads get broken. Do not such actions appear as unnecessary over and above what are required for man?

Smearing one's body with the sacred ash, wearing *rudrākṣa* beads, building temples, performing *śrāddha*, feeding the Brāhmaṇas—can we not say that all these are extra actions? Of what use are such actions? As if these are not enough, there are *bhajana* parties functioning in this city (Madras) since some years past. What they do involve is great strain for the throat. There is no relation whatsoever between their *bhajana* and their office work. The act of *bhajana* goes on without being necessary. Do not all these actions appear to be quite unnecessary?

But are these really unnecessary? Why should they be performed? What is their use? We shall now ponder over these questions.

Why does man earn money? Will it not do if he gets his hunger satisfied everyday? If he goes to some household and asks for food, he gets it. He could eat also in charity homes. No one thinks: 'There is food to be had; why receive pay?' If a choice is offered between one measure of cooked rice and ten rupees, a person would choose the latter. Why? Is it not that he requires only food? What for is money? Cooked rice would be useful for one meal a day. Uncooked rice could be kept for another meal. But money could be used for fulfilling one's needs ten times. A man prefers that which could be used for several days.

To a boy who goes to school, his mother gives cooked food for his mid-day meal. If we are travelling to a distant place, we take with us rice and other accessories.

In former times there were no railways. There were no quick means of transport. On account of these, our troubles only increase. Train fare, hotel charges, charges for bus, coffee, etc., all these involve expenditure of money. Besides these, if we go to a new place we spend money for buying new things. All these expenses

are incurred nowadays. In former days when one travelled, there was no expense at home on food. And, by walking, there was strength for the legs.

I remember, now, of one who lived long ago in this manner, spending very little. There was one Krishna Ayyar in a place called Chittur near Palghat. He started a Bank. Out of the income from the Bank, he founded and maintained a Vedic School wherein over seventy students studied. In those days the students who completed their studies there used to come here and continue their studies in the Sanskrit college founded by V. Krishnaswamy Ayyar.¹ Among those who thus started schools there was another by name Muthu Ganapathi. He lived in Tiruvaiyaru. He arranged for Vedic study for about a hundred or a hundred and twenty boys. He also saw to their proper boarding, etc. He used to levy a penalty on those who were working under him when they committed mistakes, fund the money thus collected, and maintain the school out of the interest therefrom. One day, an officer visited that school. Seeing the boys, he said: 'Oh, what a waste! Why should these boys be rendered useless for life? What is the use of impounding them like a herd of sheep for ten years? No way is being shown to them to earn a living. If they had been taught English, they would have benefited greatly.' A person who was then by his side replied: "By keeping these boys here without sending them to learn English, half the expenses are saved. If they had been made to study English, money would have been spent on costly dress, hair-dressing, a bicycle, etc. All that money has now been saved. Had they learnt English and begun to earn, half their salary would go to meet these unnecessary expenses. Now, that has been avoided. As for earning the other half of such salary-amounts, we are showing them the way here. Even if they fail to learn anything here, they will gain by not having turned their attention to English." These instances have been given in order to show that there were people in those days who lived great lives by spending economically.

Even in those days people would take with them enough rice if they had to travel fifty miles. The quantify of rice, etc., would increase with the increase in distance.

No one thinks: "It is enough if I have my food today. Why should I worry about tomorrow?" We gather even today the things required for tomorrow, thinking that if tomorrow we do not have the requisite ability we would be put to trouble. If we do not think of tomorrow's comforts, then there would be no need for money. In this Maṭha,² the servants were being given wages in the form of food at first. But they were not very much satisfied. They thought that if they were given rice, it would be better. They could then use the quantity of rice required for themselves and sell the rest. Now, they are being given rice. It is only the dull-witted person that would receive what would last for a few days; the intelligent man would prefer things that would last for many days.

Thus, when we gather things for later use, we calculate on the basis of the number of days during which we would be happy. It is one day? One month? One year? How much do we put by? Is it a thousand? Ten thousand? The more we are able to gather, the better it would be for our happiness. But all do not know for how much time they could live happily. The last day has been fixed by God. Yet, we want to be happy always.

After the limit, the last day we referred to above, will the money and other accessories we gather here help us to be happy? These will be useful only as long as our present body lasts. After that, they will become useless. The works that we do are intended to help us remain happy later on. We should do things that will make us happy always. It is true that the works that we do at present should be done. Besides these, we must also do that which will keep us off from misery always. We do not die at any time. Only the body dies. Therefore, we must do even now that which will keep us in happiness always. There is no source of solace after death. Just as we insure even now for the future, we must do the things necessary even now.

We are at the foot of a mountain. We have with us one thousand rupees. And that too in cash consisting of paise-coins. A number of thieves approach us with evil intentions. A great turmoil is about to take place. If we could cross the mountain and reach the other side, we would be safe. In such a situation, a person comes and asks for exchange of cash for a thousand-rupee note. What would we do then? Immediately, we would give him the bag containing cash and receive the note and crossing the mountain get to safety. Only, that note should be such that it would be valid in the country beyond the mountain. Our story is similar to this man's. If we make use of our present strength and resources and do things that would be useful later, we shall meet with no difficulties.

One may ask: "We should be happy here. How is it certain that we shall exist later?" The answer to this question is "Suppose we exist, should we suffer?"

nāsti cen-nāsti no hāniḥ
asti cen-nāstiko hataḥ

In this verse, this is what is stated. The *āstika* says: "We shall exist even after this life; therefore, we should do good works now." The *nāstika* asks: "Where is the certainty that we shall exist?" The reply is: "If we do good works now, we shall gain if we exist afterward, and we shall not lose if we cease to exist." On either alternative, there is no misery for the *āstika*. If it is true that we shall exist, it is the *nāstika* who will be in trouble.

Therefore, it is always good to do good works. When we have to go on a journey to another place, we should keep ourselves in a happy mood. If we do not do things that will make us happy after we have departed this body, we shall have to suffer. The things that we have to do in order to avert this (suffering) we can learn through discretion. If there are no immediate results for the acts that we do at present, the results will come later. What Newton

has stated has been explained a long time ago by our great men with reference to the soul. That every action has a reaction is declared clearly in our Śāstras.

The Christians do not accept the doctrine of re-birth. Yet, some of the things that they say show that even without their knowing they admit re-birth. What they say is this: After leaving the present body the soul waits for the Judgement Day, and as judged it goes either to Heaven or to Hell in accordance with its past deeds. Although the physical body which is the locus of pleasure and pain lies here dead in the coffin, it takes on another body and experiences pleasure or pain (in Heaven or Hell). We refer to such a phenomenon as re-birth. Just as for experiencing pleasure and pain in that body, there is the present body which is the locus of deeds that are the cause, even so, for the present birth, and its experience of pleasure and pain there must have been a previous birth as providing the cause.

It is, therefore, necessary that we should do some things that would be useful even after the present birth. What I referred to earlier as extra things are those which we do for the purpose of being happy always. Acts such as wearing the sacred ash and *rudrākṣa* beads, and performing *śrāddha*, are done for keeping ourselves happy always. The more we do such things, the more they will do us good.

Besides the things that we do for the sake of our welfare in the present life, we should do those things also which will secure our welfare for crores and crores of years, in fact, for ever. The currency of our country will not be valid in Russia. If for all countries there is a single king, there will be a single currency bearing his insignia which will be valid everywhere. For all the fourteen worlds, there is a sovereign ruler. He is God. There is currency which is legal tender in all his dominions. That currency will be valid everywhere and always. What is that? That, verily, is *dharma*.

Before leaving Ayodhya for the forest, Rāma went to Kausalyā to take leave of her. Is it not the practice that a mother gives edibles

to her son who is starting on a journey, so that he may eat them on the way? What is to be given to a son who is to be away for fourteen years? Kausalyā did not know what to give. After pondering deeply she said,

*yam pālayasi dharmam tvam
dhr̥tyā ca niyamena ca
sa vai rāghavaśārdūla
dharmas-tvām abhirakṣatu*
(Ayodhyākāṇḍa, xxv, 3)

"O Rāghava! There is nothing that I could do to protect you. There is only *dharma*. That *dharma* will protect you, which you have been preserving with courage, constancy and regularity. That is the only blessing that I can give." If we preserve *dharma*, it preserves us in turn. The *dharma* that protected Rāma is the *dharma* which is the Law in God's universal empire. Besides, what we do normally for the sake of children, parents, village, country, etc. we should also do those things which would bring lasting happiness to the soul. Let us see what those things are:

Whatever we do, we should do dedicating it to God. God is the limit of all knowledge. If we dedicate our deeds to him, those deeds would give us lasting happiness. If those deeds are not novel, but the ones which our forebears had handed down from generation to generation, their performance would be easy. Even if we have to do something bad, if we do it, not for filling our stomach, but as something extra, dedicating it to God, that will become *dharma*.

Which *dharma* should we follow? We are soaked in the *dharma* which has been followed by our great men for generations, for a long time. As a matter of experience, we can say that they gained happiness. It is enough if we follow that *dharma*. If we cast about for something new, it will be a vain endeavour; and there will be the doubt whether that new thing is good or not. Therefore, to follow the *dharma* which is meant for us and which our great men adopted as the rule for their lives is good.

It is thus clear that we should do something extra which is not for the sake of our stomach, or for our family, or for our village, or for our country. That thing should be what has been handed down to us through generations. We should do that, after dedicating it to God, and with courage and regularity. That is *dharma* that will give us happiness for ever.

Whatever we do with our mind, speech, and body—the three instruments of action—all that should bear *dharma*. We should acquire *dharma*, the spiritual currency, in exchange for all the money that we possess. All the powers that we have must be expended in augmenting *dharma*. The *dharma* that is thus acquired and augmented will be valid at all times and in all places. What Kausalyā described to Rāma as his talisman is that. Rāma had to face formidable obstacles. He overcame them through *dharma*.

Man should always do things that will uplift him. Among the animals, all except man are invertebrates. They are referred to as *tiryak* animals. It is man alone that grows vertically. His form shows that he is superior to the other animals. If he follows the way of *dharma*, even the animals would support him. If he adopts the path of *adharma*, even his brothers would desert him. This is illustrated in the story of Rāma. In the following śloka, this is clearly explained:

*yānti nyāyapravṛttasya
tiryāṅco'pi sahāyatām,
apanthānam tu gacchantam
sodaro'pi vimuñcati.*

(Anargha-rāghava-nāṭaka, i, 4)

Because Rāma followed the way of virtue, even monkeys helped him. Because Rāvaṇa adopted the ways of vice, even his younger brother broke away from him. Although Rāvaṇa was in his own kingdom, surrounded by his armies, he could not be saved. For a man of virtue, there is wellbeing everywhere.

Therefore, it is *dharma* that will protect one. Apart from what we do for satisfying our desire, anger, etc. apart from what we do for earning a living, we should do extra deeds—those which were done by our forebears—with courage and regularity. They will give us happiness.

NOTES

1. This discourse was given at the Madras Sanskrit College.
2. Kāncī Kāmakoṭi Maṭha.

ANUBHŪTISVARŪPA

L. Vasudeva Sarma*

Anubhūtisvarūpa has been well-known in the history of grammar, if not in that of Advaita. His *Sārasvata* grammar has long been in print. The identity and the several works of Anubhūtisvarūpa in the field of Advaita have been discussed by V. Raghavan in his paper on Anubhūtisvarūpa published in the *Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute*.¹ Anubhūtisvarūpa wrote mainly commentaries. All the three *Prakarāṇas* of Ānandabodha received his attention and we have manuscripts of his glosses on the *Nyāya-makaranda* (the *Saṅgraha*), the *Nyāyadīpāvalī* (*Candrikā*) and the *Pramāṇamālā* (*Nibandha*). Among other standard authors whose works Anubhūtisvarūpa has commented upon are Śaṅkara, Vimuktātman, and Śrīharṣa. On Śaṅkara's *Brahma-sūtra-bhāṣya*, Anubhūtisvarūpa wrote the commentary called *Prakaṭārtha-vivarāṇa*, and on his *bhāṣya* on the *Māṇḍūkya-kārikās* of Gauḍapāda a brief *ṭippaṇa* was written by Anubhūtisvarūpa; and three manuscripts

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of this work are known to exist. On the *Iṣṭa-siddhi* of Vimuktātman, he wrote an extensive commentary called *Iṣṭa-siddhi-vivarāṇa* which is available in manuscript in the Government Oriental Manuscripts Library, Madras. His commentary on Śrīharṣa's *Khaṇḍana-khaṇḍa-khādyā* also is not printed and it is available in a single manuscript in the Big Bhandar at Jessalamere. In the *Gītā-prasthāna*, Anubhūtisvarūpa made his contribution in the form of a brief gloss on Śaṅkara's *Gītā-bhāṣya*, which is still in manuscript.²

Anubhūtisvarūpa for all that he wrote became a forgotten author in the history of Advaita. But it should not be supposed that there was no trace left at all of him in the writings of the later Advaitins. His commentaries on Vimuktātman, Śrīharṣa and Ānandabodha no doubt fell into oblivion; but his commentary on the *bhāṣya* of Śrī Śaṅkara on the *Brahma-sūtra*, namely, the *Prakaṭārtha-vivarāṇa* was remembered in the Advaitic tradition. Even in this case his real identity was lost and he was remembered only as Prakaṭārtha-kāra or the author of the *Prakaṭārtha*.

To begin with, Anubhūtisvarūpa is very critical about Vācaspatimiśra.³ Amalānanda-Vyāsāśrama wrote in the later part of the 13th century his *Kalpataru* on the *Bhāmatī* of Vācaspatimiśra; and without mentioning the name of Anubhūtisvarūpa he defended Vācaspati against his criticism. The reference in Amalānanda's work could easily be identified as one to Anubhūtisvarūpa. An express identification of the reply in Amalānanda as directed against the Prakaṭārtha-kāra is to be had in the *Ratna-prabhā* of Govindānanda.⁴

Appayya Dīkṣita, the most noteworthy and versatile writer among the later Advaitins makes more than one reference to *Prakaṭārtha-kāra* in his *Siddhānta-leśa-saṅgraha*.

The above references have been pointed out to show that some of the criticisms and specific views of our author had not been completely forgotten.

Date of Anubhūti-svarūpa

Śrī-harṣa, on whose *Khaṇḍana-khaṇḍa-khāḍya*, Anubhūti-svarūpa has commented, flourished in the middle of the 12th century A.D. Amalānanda, the commentator on Vācaspati's *Bhāmātī*, replies, without mentioning the name, to Anubhūti-svarūpa's criticisms of Vācaspati. At the end of his *Kalpataru*, Amalānanda mentions that he wrote under the Yādava King of Devagiri, Kṛṣṇa, (A.D. 1248–1259) and his brother, Mahādeva. So we may take Anubhūti-svarūpa as having flourished between the middle of the 12th century and the first half of the 13th century.

Anubhūti-svarūpa's important contribution to Advaita lies in his view regarding avidyā. In Advaita, the supreme Lord, the individual soul, and the phenomenal world are but the appearances of the transcendent Reality, Brahman. The principle that accounts for this seeming diversification of Brahman is avidyā or māyā.

Some Advaitins draw a distinction between māyā and avidyā, Bhāratīrtha in the *Pañcadaśī* distinguishes avidyā, the impure-sattva-predominant prakṛti from māyā, the pure-sattva-predominant prakṛti. The former is the adjunct of the Lord. In the *Vivaraṇa-prameya-saṅgraha*, however, Bhāratīrtha follows the *Vivaraṇa* tradition of not making any difference between māyā and nescience (avidyā).⁵ Anubhūti-svarūpa closely follows the *Vivaraṇa* school, and he does not make any distinction between māyā and avidyā. He holds that the beginningless, indeterminable primal cause of beings which is present in the pure consciousness is māyā. The limited innumerable parts of māyā are endowed with the concealing and revealing powers and are called ajñāna.⁶ Thus Anubhūti-svarūpa, by referring to ajñāna or avidyā as the parts of māyā considers them to be identical.

As regards the locus and content of māyā or avidyā, Anubhūti-svarūpa's view is not very clear. He closely follows the *Vivaraṇa* school. This school maintains that Brahman, the pure consciousness, is the locus and content of māyā or avidyā. Anubhūti-svarūpa

says that māyā is present in, or associated with, pure consciousness as such. From this we may take that according to Anubhūtisvarūpa Brahman itself is the locus and content of māyā or avidyā.

As regards the nature of the supreme Lord and the individual soul, there is difference of opinion between the two main post-Śaṅkara Advaita schools—the *Vivarana* and the *Bhāmatī*. According to the former, the individual soul is the reflection of consciousness in avidyā, and consciousness that serves as the original is the supreme Lord. This view is known as *pratibimba-vāda*. According to the *Bhāmatī* view, consciousness delimited by māyā is the individual soul, and the consciousness which is not delimited by māyā is the supreme Lord. Anubhūtisvarūpa follows the *pratibimba-vāda*. He, however, makes some improvement on it. He holds that pure consciousness, when reflected in ajñāna or avidyā, which is a part of māyā, is the individual soul. And the consciousness that transcends māyā is the *śuddha-caitanya*.⁷ The parts of māyā which are termed ajñāna are innumerable. And, since the consciousness reflected in ajñāna is the individual soul and since there is a plurality of ajñāna, there are many individual souls.

Anubhūtisvarūpa maintains the distinction of released and bound souls thus:

In the case of an individual soul who has attained to the knowledge of Brahman, his ajñāna which is the part of māyā is annihilated and thereby he is released. The universe which is the transformation of māyā continues to exist; but the released soul is not attached to it, just as a blind man cannot see the colour although it exists. Māyā would be annihilated only when all its parts are annihilated, that is, when all the individual souls attain to the knowledge of Brahman.⁸

Appayya Dīkṣita in his *Siddhānta-leśa-saṅgraha* in the very first topic expounds the view that the injunction as regards the study of Vedānta, reflection, and meditation contained in the Upaniṣadic text that "Ātman is to be seen, heard, reflected on

and mediated upon" is an *apūrva-vidhi*; and, this is the view of Anubhūtiśvarūpa.⁹ It may be added here that the author of the *Vivaraṇa* maintains that there is *niyama-vidhi*, while Vācaspati-miśra holds that there is no injunction at all.

Anubhūtiśvarūpa flourished in an age when post-Śaṅkara Advaita had to contend against the *Bhedābheda-vāda* of Bhāskara and the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika. Anubhūtiśvarūpa attacked bitterly Bhāskara who opposed the philosophy of Śaṅkara. The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika realists hold several categories all of which are not acceptable to the Advaitins. And, they form the target of attack for Anubhūtiśvarūpa. By refuting the two schools mentioned above, Anubhūtiśvarūpa rendered a solid service to the cause of Advaita.

NOTES

1. Silver Jubilee Volume, pp. 352–68.
2. See *New Catalogus Catalogorum*, Vol. 1, p. 159.
3. See *Gleanings from Prakāṣārtha* by M. Hiriyanna, *JORM*. Vol. 15.
4. *Brahma-sūtra-śāṅkara-bhāṣya* with the commentaries, *Ratnaprabhā*, *Bhāmatī* and *Nyāyanirṇaya*, Nirṇaya Sāgar Edn. 1904, p. 311.
5. T. M. P. Mahadevan, *The Philosophy of Advaita*, p. 229.
6. *Prakāṣārtha-vivaraṇa*, Madras University Sanskrit Series No. 9, Vol. I, p. 3.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 4.
8. *Ibid.*
9. *Ibid.*, p. 989

THE HINDU DHARMA*

S. Radhakrishnan

From the time the history of the Aryans in India commenced up till today, it has been the privilege or the misfortune of India to be faced with serious racial and religious crises. In a special sense, India has been a small edition of the world. It is a laboratory where experiments of racial and religious syntheses relevant to the problems of the world are undertaken and worked out. If it be true that every people has its own distinctive note and brings out one particular aspect of the divine manifestation, India seems to have been selected, in the economy of things, for the purpose of offering solutions for racial and religious conflicts.

In the long history of the Hindu religion with all its cross currents and backwaters, with the windings of the stream and the barren expanses of sand, it is possible to discern a general tendency, a spiritual direction which has continued the same in spite of varying expressions. The central principles of the ancient Hindu *dharma* are not dead shells, but living powers full of strength and

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suggestiveness. Even if it be not so, it is not altogether without interest to understand the principles of the Hindu faith which has more than two hundred million followers today.

The term "*dharma*" is one of complex significance. It stands for all those ideals and purposes, influences and institutions that shape the character of man both as an individual and as a member of society. It is the law of right living, the observance of which secures the double object of happiness on earth and salvation.¹ It is ethics and religion combined. The life of a Hindu is regulated in a very detailed manner by the laws of *dharma*. His fasts and feasts, his social and family ties, his personal habits and tastes are all conditioned by it.

Mokṣa or spiritual freedom is the aim of all human life. It is the destiny of man to reach the summits of spirit and attain immortality. We are the children of God, *Amṛtasya putrāḥ*. The eternal dream of the human heart, the aspiration of the soul to come to its own, is the basis of the Hindu *dharma*. It assumes that the fundamental reality is the soul of man. All the desires of the heart, all discussions of logic presuppose the reality of the Ātman. It is something unprovable by reason, though no proof is possible without it. Nor is it a mere matter of faith, since it is the faith which underlies all reason. If the self of man is open to doubt, then nothing on earth is free from it. If anything can be, then the soul *is*. It is the ultimate truth which is above all change, the unseen reality which is the basis of all life and logic. It is the mystery which silently affirms itself. What our minds think is not of much importance beside the truth that we are. The fears of man are due to the imperfections which shut him from his destiny, the darkness which hides the light within. If we take refuge in the Self, the only fixed point of our being, we shall know that we are not alone in the apparently endless road of life or *samsāra* and that we can overcome the world and defy death. "Greater is he that is within you than he that is in the world."²

While the spiritual perfection of man is the aim of all endeavour, the Hindu *dharma* does not insist on any religious belief or form

of worship. The utmost latitude is allowed in the matter of addressing and approaching the supreme. The Hindu thinkers were good students of philosophy and sociology and never felt called upon to enforce religious belief. Misunderstandings and antagonisms in religious matters arise, when we put forward excessive claims on behalf of our own views of God. Besides, religion implies freedom and it is the greatest injury that we can inflict on man to compel him to accept what he cannot understand. Again, it is difficult to classify the ways of man to God. The heart of man has written, in its blood, its pathway to God. A Sanskrit verse says: "As the birds float in the air and the fish swim in the sea leaving no traces behind, even so are the paths traversed by the spiritual." Christ spoke of the mystery of the divine life revealing itself in the finite soul. "The wind bloweth where it listeth; thou hearest the sound thereof, and canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth, so is every one that is born of the spirit." God reveals himself now by a flash of lightning, now by a tremor in the soul. To a Hindu who has understood the spirit of his religion all faiths are sacred. In Rabindranath's school at Bolpur, where the one Invisible God is worshipped, abuse of others' faiths is disallowed. Gandhi is most tolerant in his religious views. Regarding the attitude of the Brahmin thinkers to other religions, Wilson writes: "The Brahmins who compiled a code of Hindu law, by command of Warren Hastings, preface their performance by affirming the equal merit of every form of religious worship. Contrarities of belief, and diversities of religion, they say, are in fact part of the scheme of Providence; for as a painter gives beauty to a picture by a variety of colours, or as a gardener embellishes his garden with flowers of every hue, so God appointed to every tribe its own religion that man might glorify him in diverse modes, all having the same end and being equally acceptable in his sight."³

This does not, however, mean that the Hindu thinkers have no right ideas of God and consider all beliefs to be equally true. They

have a sure perception of the highest truth, though they do not insist on a universal acceptance of it. They believe that if the mind is enlightened, the truth will be spontaneously perceived. Every religion is an expression of the mental and social evolution of the people who adopt it. It is therefore mischievous to attempt any sudden supplanting of existing beliefs by new ones. The cruder conceptions will give way before the rising rational reflection and the true reformer tries to improve the mental and moral nature of men. Truth is not so much the result of theological faith as the experience of a deeper moral life. So the Hindu thinkers pay more attention to the discipline than to the doctrine. The religion of the Hindus is not so much a theology as a scheme of life. Whether one is an orthodox Hindu or not depends, not on whether one believes this or that view of God, but on whether one accepts or rejects the *dharma*.⁴

The highest life enjoined by the *dharma* is what follows naturally from vital faith in the reality of God. If the indwelling of God in man is the highest truth, conduct which translates it into practice is ideal conduct. The several virtues are forms of the truth, *satyākāras*.⁵ Truth, beauty, and goodness are a part of the life stuff of the ideal man. He will be an embodiment of the virtues of self-denial, humility, fraternal love and purity. By the mastery of soul over sense, clouds of hate and mists of passion dissolve and he will be filled with *śānti* or serenity and will remain absolutely calm in moments of great peril, personal loss or public calamity. With tranquillity of soul, a steady pulse and a clear eye he will do the right thing at the right moment. He does not belong to this country or that, but is, in a true sense, the citizen of the world. The quality of *sattva* with its ideals of joy and love predominates over that of *rajas* with its craving for power and pride, and over that of *tamas* with its dullness and inertia. For the perfect men the *dharma* is an inspiration from within for others it is an external command, what custom and public opinion demand.

The ideal which requires us to refrain from anger and covetousness, to be pure and loving in thought, word and deed, is

much too high for those passing through the storm and stress of a life of sin and suffering. It seems to demand of life what it possibly cannot give. It kills all the constituent conditions of life. If renunciation of all were necessary for salvation, many may not care to be saved. The world is so organized that those who practise the divine rule do not have much chance of success or survival. We are familiar with the way in which the Sermon on the Mount is dismissed as impossible idealism. We cannot be turning our cheeks to the smiters to receive blows, when it is so tempting to give blows on both the cheeks. It may be divine to rejoice in suffering, but the flesh is weak for all that. Christendom consoles itself in the belief that even Jesus nodded once or twice. "O, my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me." "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Those who pride themselves on their practical spirit reduce the ideals to the level of ordinary human nature, subject to the temptations of power and profit, the flesh and the devil. The modern worldly reformer says: "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time: 'Thou shalt not kill,' but I say unto you, 'Thou shalt not kill except animals for food, birds for sport and men in battle.' It hath been said: 'Thou shalt not covet.' But I say unto you: 'Thou shalt not covet except on a large scale as in trade and imperialism.' Again, ye have heard it said by them of old time: 'Thou shalt not hate,' but I say unto you: 'Thou shalt not hate except the backward races, the enemy nations and the weak of the world.'" Alarmed at the sacrifices exacted by a religious life which tells us that happiness does not depend on power or wealth, but on love and peace, our advanced reformers make so many reservations to the divine law that they completely destroy the force of the latter and justify our modern practices that violence, abundance of possessions and armaments are the final end of man's life. They conveniently forget the story of the man who planned to build great store-houses to provide an abundance for many years, but was cheated of his chance by the blow of death which came overnight.

The Hindu thinkers are conscious of the great gulf that separates the actual nature of man, which is bad, from the ideal, which seems to be well-nigh impossible. The consciousness of the great distance between the actual and the ideal does not tempt them to distort the ideal itself. It would be a blasphemy against the spirit in us that shall not be forgiven. They therefore attempt to develop the infinitely precious ideal from out of the apparently refractory stuff of life. The nature of man and his habits of judgment change rather slowly. We must have patience in the striving after perfection. The Law of Karma tells us that millions of lives are consumed before one perfect life is produced. For thought to reach the highest plane we must plan, toil and agonize a lot. For our heart to pulse with joy, countless hearts must be crushed by suffering. Many strivings and sacrifices are needed to generate a holy character. Most men climb up the ladder to the spiritual heights only rung by rung. Few can fly from the bottom to the top at one bound. The *varṇāśrama dharma* or the discipline of the classes and stages of life is the Hindu's device for the gradual improvement of human nature. It is intended to make all the Lord's people prophets. Its principles are those of a kingdom of spirit, not a civil commonwealth — of a universal institution, not a national organization. If morality is that which conscience imposes, and law that which the State commands, *dharma*, is neither the one nor the other. It is the tradition sustained by the convictions of countless generations of men, which help to build the soul of truth in us. It corresponds to the *Sittlichkeit* of the Germans and is independent of both the individual conscience and the laws of the state. That is why dynastic feuds and imperialist aggressions have not touched the life of India which has continued the same for nearly fifty centuries. Successive storms of conquest have passed over the changeless millions as the wind over reeds.

Mokṣa or liberation is the ideal towards which humanity has to move. All life is set to the music of this ideal. All men are equal in that they are born of God. They are equal since they are to rise to the same divine destiny. But men differ with regard to their

actual equipment for the ideal. They have varying amounts of darkness and evil to eliminate, and have to put forth varying efforts to illumine their life with light and love. The education of the individual spirit is arranged through the scheme of *āśramas* or stages of life and *varṇas* or classes of men. It takes into account the different sides of human nature. The life of man is rooted in *kāma* or desire. Man is a bundle of desires. Manu says: "It is not good that the soul should be enslaved by desire, yet nowhere is to be found desirelessness (*akāmatā*)."⁶ Since our activities are impelled by our desires, the right regulation of our desires is also a part of *dharma*. So *kāma* or enjoyment is recognized as a valid pursuit. It is not mere satisfaction of animal impulses, but is the expression of the freedom of the self. This is not possible, until we escape from the tyranny of the senses. The life of man is not a mere succession of sensations, but is the manifestation of an eternal idea developing itself through temporary forms. The desires of men are directed into the channel of family life and public duty. The emotional or artistic life of man is also a part of life's integral good. But art cannot flourish in an atmosphere of asceticism. We must have *artha* or wealth. The economic needs of the community should be satisfied, if the creative impulses of men are to be liberated for the higher cultural life. Rules are laid down regarding the interests of the community in the matter of the wealth earned by individual members. The liberty of each is restricted by the needs of all. Self-denial is the only way to gain wealth and enjoyment. *Dharma* or duty controls the pursuit of both pleasure and profit (*kāma* and *artha*). Those in whom *dharma* predominates are of *sāttvik* nature, while the seekers of wealth are of *rājasik* nature and the seekers of mere pleasure are of *tāmasik* nature.⁷ The individual who observes the laws of *dharma* automatically attains *mokṣa*, and so is it said that *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma* and *mokṣa* form the ends of life.

Whatever may be the truth about the origin of life and the universe, the supremacy of the moral end is admitted by all. In

Hindu thought, man is said to come into being for a divine purpose. The unextinguished passions of our vanished lives bring about our birth on earth. It is through suffering that our weakness can be converted into strength, our ignorance into illumination. The evil of existence is expiated only by the suffering and self-restraint of life. The word "*āśrama*" comes from a root which means "to suffer". Without suffering, there is no progress; without death, no resurrection. Our life from beginning to end is a kind of death which means a larger life. The more we die to ourselves, the more do we live to God. Living and dying are inextricably blended and the perfect life is the crown of a complete death. Four stages are distinguished in the life of every Hindu, of which the first two are those of *Brahmacāri* or student, and *Gṛhastha* or house-holder. The last two stages deal with the retirement from life, in which the individual becomes a servant of God and of humanity.⁸

The first period opens with the sacramental symbol of initiation into a spiritual life. It is intended to build up the psycho-physical constitution of man. The building of the body and the training of the mind are the principal aims of this stage. The student is taught the habits of cleanliness, chastity, good manners and godliness.⁹ Social sympathies are cultivated by insistence on poverty for all students whether they are sons of princes or of peasants. Every student is required to beg for his food and this training in poverty impresses on the mind of the student that wealth is not an essential condition of a good life. The students are not allowed to become laws unto themselves; nor are they delivered into the hands of an ignorant and blind fanaticism. They are not allowed to build altars and idols in their own imagination or fall a prey to superstitions and creeds. Loyalty to truth and respect for tradition are insisted on. The kind of education that is to be given depends on the needs and capacities of the boys. The task was not so complex as it is to-day, since the future vocations of boys were roughly settled. In the programme of education, secular as well as religious, no

distinction is made between boys and girls. Only co-education was not encouraged.

When the stage of apprenticeship is over, the student becomes responsible for a family: "The man is not man alone, but his wife and children also."¹⁰ He becomes the bread-winner of the family and thus the mainstay of the community. Family life and social duty help towards the ultimate goal and presuppose self-restraint. Every man is expected to do his work for the world. He should not, out of mere selfish pleasure, abstain from social service.¹¹ We are pledged to one another and should live for one another, the individual for the family, the family for the community, the community for the nation and the nation for the world. The caste system, valid in the second stage of the householder, assumes the unity and the interdependence of humanity. It takes into account the needs of the society as well as the interests of the individual. It sustains personality in that it helps the individual to transcend himself by giving his devotion to something beyond himself. By focussing his energies at a particular point in the environment, it tries to actualize his potentialities. It is an illustration of Hegel's harmony of opposites, a point of view which reconciles the apparently conflicting claims of the individual and of society. Not the good of the self as a thing apart, or the good of society by itself, but a higher good, to promote which constant self-renewal and social service are the means, is the governing principle of the caste system. Taking into account the variety of human nature, it lays down ways and means by which each man can attain full self-expression. It works up to the ideal of equality by recognizing the actual differences. It is an attempt to co-operate with the forces of nature and not flout them. Those who criticize the institution from the platform of modern knowledge do not remember that in no other country were people belonging to stocks of very unequal value thrown together. The pre-Vedic peoples with whom the Aryans had to mingle were of a lower grade of civilization and

culture. They were constituted into the fourth estate of the unregenerate, the once-born, the *ekajāta*, in whom no quality of intellect, emotion, or will is particularly developed. The twice-born of the regenerated are divided into three classes according as their intellect, emotion or will is more dominant than the others. Those who are strongly endowed with the powers of thought and reflection are the *Brahmins*; those gifted with heroism and love are the *Kṣatriyas*; those strongly inclined towards the practical business of life are the *Vaiśyas*. The four classes correspond to the intellectual, the militant, the industrial and the unskilled workers. All of them serve God's creation by their own capacities, the *Brahmins* by their spirituality, the *Kṣatriyas* by their heroism, the *Vaiśyas* by their skill and the *Śūdras* by their service.¹² All of them place the common good above that of their party or class. Claims of egoism and ambition are subordinated to those of conscience and justice, the enduring values that are confided to our keeping. When the different classes fulfil their respective functions, the society is considered to be just or in accordance with *dharma*.

The true interests of the unskilled workers were not neglected. The *Vaiśyas* pursue trade and love, wealth and comfort, though they are required to interpret them in terms of life and welfare. This caste is an association of men united by an economic nexus. Commercialism, however, was checked, since the members of this class were called upon to hold the goods of life in the bonds of love. The *Kṣatriyas* were the defenders of society from external aggression and internal disorder. The military organization of the stage was entrusted to them. They were in charge of the political arrangements. It was not the intention of the Hindu *dharma* to make the entire body of the people act as a general militia. Efficiency is everywhere gained through specialization. Those whose business it is to make war and resist wrong by force must possess the proper aptitude for it and get the necessary training. The art of government cannot be practised by all. It is increasingly

felt that amateur politicians keen on satisfying their constituencies and with no other training than what could be got from the hurly-burly of popular elections are incapable of doing justice to the task of administration. One particular class was devoted to the military and the administrative purposes, and the people as a whole were not possessed by a passion for government, for domination and power. Today, the great wars are fought for the government of the world and for the possession of its markets and not for the moral elevation of the people or the pursuit of good. The political obsession is the cause of the drifting of the world in deep confusion to unseen issues. It may be said that when there is a professional ruling class, there is no guarantee that the rule will be unselfish. But the training to which they are subjected is a sufficient security for the right discharge of their functions. Besides, the rulers are not allowed to annul or alter *dharma*, but only to administer it. The changes in the *dharma* are introduced by the Brahmin thinkers, who possess no vested interests, but lead a life of spirit in compulsory poverty. They interpret the *dharma* in cases of doubt and difficulty.

The organization of the society is essentially aristocratic in the best sense of the term, since only the philosophically minded men with detachment of view lay down the laws. The priests were the law-givers even among the Jews, the Iranians and the Celts. The qualifications of the true Brahmins, wisdom, self-control and disinterestedness, made selfish legislation difficult. The Brahmins engaged in the pursuit of knowledge and the beautifying of life were regarded as superior to the officers and administrators, and were not obliged to do what was congenial to the latter. They were freed from all material cares and from subordination to earthly authorities in spiritual matters.¹³ The institution recognizes that all good reforms start in the mind of one man and at first repel the world at large. Society cannot progress if all forward steps should first obtain the sanction of the majority. Absolute freedom for the creative thinkers is the first condition of culture

and progress. Bertrand Russell, in a brilliant article in the *Century*, observes that "without freedom, the man who is ahead of his age is rendered impotent." The considered conviction of one wise man is more worthy than the opinions of a myriad fools, according to Manu.¹⁴

The moral codes are adapted to the different stages of the unfolding of the life of spirit. The trader hoards up life zealously for material ends; the warrior flings it away for order and organization and resists evil by the employment of force. The Brahmin lives the life of *ahimsā* or non-violence with zeal and determination. His non-violence is not a sign of weakness or cowardice, but the natural expression of spiritual strength and divine love. He has passed through the stage of a warrior and has found it unworthy of a true believer in God. Centuries of hereditary training and the influence of environment have made the Hindu a mild passive meditative being, a worshipper of the ideal of the Brahmin *sannyāsin*. Even today he is willing to pay his tribute of profound admiration to an emaciated saint like Gandhi.

The existence of orders lower than the Brahmin, and the dedication of one class to the business of war, have misled many students of Hinduism into thinking that the Hindu *dharma* is not based on the principle of non-violence. The simple explanation that we have to pass through the lower stages in order to transcend them is forgotten. The higher we rise, the more austere should our life be. The legend of St. Christopher, who undertook to carry the Christ-child on his shoulders across a stream, is applicable to us all. The deeper he entered into the water, the heavier became the burden. By a slow conquest of the passions, by a rising knowledge of the spiritual basis of the world, all men who are born *Śūdras* gradually rise in the scale till they became Brahmins. The load becomes heavier the higher we rise, and our strength will have to increase in proportion to the rise in the weight of the load. While the *Kṣatriya*, in view of his limitations, may employ force, though without hatred and with a clean conscience, the

Brahmin should refrain altogether from the use of force and the cherishing of hatred or ill-feeling for any.

The relativity of the stages leading up to the absolute ideal may also be illustrated from another case. Modern evolution is confirming the Hindu theory of the continuity of the animal and the human worlds. The Hindu *dharma* inculcates respect for life and tenderness towards all forms of animal creation. "Thou shalt not kill" applies to the animals as well. It is also believed that animal diet clogs the finer sensibilities of human life. More than what it adds to the physical it takes away from the psychical. Jesus himself is quite clear that even animals are objects of sacredness, and that not a sparrow falls to the ground without the notice of God. Yet the peoples of India were accustomed to animal diet, and so regulations were laid down restricting the use of animal diet for the fourth class and prohibiting it as a rule for the other classes, with the result that the Hindus as a whole are tending to give it up more and more.

Caste has economic implications. Many of the modern castes are only occupational divisions. Every man is not fit for all things and does not feel that he can begin any trade as he pleases. Nor do individuals go about in search of work, but they serve society by filling the station in which they happen to be placed. Unlimited competition and selfish individualism are checked. A religious character is impressed on every kind of work and form of industry. The bricklayer and the carpenter, the blacksmith and the milkman believe that they glorify God by the right performance of their work. In these days of large-scale production and factory labour, we tend to forget that when a man is cut off from his family and made to work in a large factory, the work becomes joyless and mechanical. The caste on the other hand puts all men working in the same profession in their natural surrounding, instead of tearing them away from their homes and making them work for long hours on small wages. The fullness of communal life, with its living associations of beauty, love and social obligations, helps

to make the worker happy. The members of his family who share in his work introduce sweetness and humanity into it. If women and children are to be made to work, it is better that they work in the atmosphere of a home where it is possible to embody their creative impulses in what they turn out. There is a finer stimulus to right action here than mere success in competition or the satisfaction of customers can supply. Those who practise the same craft develop corporate feeling and professional honour. The young acquire from the plastic influences of the environment the right kind of vocational training. They absorb unconsciously the tradition of the trade, and the economic pursuit happens to be the free self-expression of their soul. It is true that modern conditions are working against cottage industries and small-scale production. But it is not everywhere the case. Fine arts, decorative industries, even spinning and weaving, as supplementary interests of the agriculturists, may be confined to homes, and we can have small factories worked by electricity or oil engines. Caste as a trade guild is not yet out of date. While the suggestion of a definite programme of life at the very beginning is not undesirable, still stereotyping it without the least regard to the natural endowment and special aptitudes is likely to result in an enslavement of life which finds it difficult to adjust itself to the complex condition of the modern world.

Strictly speaking, the caste of a man is determined by the predominance of reason, emotion or will in him. These correspond roughly to the three *gunas* or qualities of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*.¹⁵ Manu mentions three principles as governing the caste of a man, viz. *tapas* or individual effort, *śrutam* or the cultural environment and *yoni* or heredity. The first is a vague test and is not available for objective use. The second depends on the home influences, which in their turn depend on the third consideration of birth. The only practicable test is birth, and this view is in consonance with the principles of rebirth and *karma* accepted by the Hindus.

Peoples with different racial heritages can live together in amity and fellowship only on the basis of caste. The formulators of the

institution felt that, though birth was the only available test, spiritual character was the real basis of the divisions of society. Manu allows that, if an individual practises the ways of the good and leads a pure life, he overcomes the effects of heredity.¹⁶ According to the *Mahābhārata*, the test of regeneracy is "not birth, not learning, but only conduct".¹⁷ We have ignored all factors other than birth, with the result that the system has rigidly confined people for all time to particular compartments, enslaved successive generations of men and proved well-nigh fatal to the free growth of social polity. The natural plasticity and fluidity of life are not taken into account by the inflexible moulds and barriers of the system. We have reached a condition of society where the disorganization of social life is so great that the principle of birth should be subordinated. Referring to a similar state of affairs, the *Mahābhārata* says: "There has been so much mixture in marriages that the test of *jāti* or birth is no good. The governing consideration should be *śīla* or conduct, and the first Manu has declared that there is no point in distinctions of caste, if character is not considered."¹⁸

Since the distinction of functions among the different classes is likely to generate pride and exclusiveness, in spite of the training during the student period, the general laws of the equal treatment of all are insisted on. The highest virtue consists in doing to others as we would be done by. *Viṣṇu-purāṇa* says: "Everywhere ye should perceive the equal; for the relations of equality or *samatva* is the worship of God."¹⁹ There are duties which men of all castes are required to obey, such as non-injury to life, truth, integrity, cleanliness and self-control.²⁰ After all, the caste divisions are incidental to our imperfections and should not therefore constitute a source of pride. The one Eternal has no caste. The rules of caste are applicable only in the stage of the householder. Even here, they are not superior to the claims of humanity. What is necessary at the present day is acceptance of the aims of caste and the cultivation of a more truly social spirit. The blighting bigotries

and the rigid restriction on the amenities of life are inconsistent with humanity and fellowship and are therefore to be given up. Manu does not encourage them. "The plough man, the friend of the family, the cowherd, the servant, the barber and the poor stranger offering his service—from the hands of such Śūdras may food be taken."²¹

The caste rules were not rigid until the advent of the Mohammedans into India. The social laws were fluid and elastic and the mutability of growth was not sacrificed to the strait waistcoat of a legal formula. We read in the *Purānas* stories of individuals and of families who changed from lower to higher castes. Manu admits the possibility of ascent and decent.²² Rules for change of caste by gradual purification are also mentioned.²³ The higher strata were accessible to merit from below. When Hindu India lost political freedom and the new rulers adopted a policy of proselytism, social initiative disappeared and law and custom became fetishes, with disastrous results for national solidarity. We have to recover the original spirit of the *dharma*, which was not limited to particular forms, but manifested itself in fresh ones, changing the old and developing the new. The exaggerated value given to caste in times of political insecurity is no more necessary. Caste has a future only if it is confined to social matters. In every society, people enter into marriage relations only with those who are near to them in habits of mind and action. Since a common cultural tradition is better developed among those who pursue the same vocation, marriages among members of the same profession become the order of the day. Even in ancient India, intermarriages among members of different castes were not forbidden, though they were not encouraged. *Anuloma* and *pratiloma* marriages are not usual, though they are not invalid according to Hindu law.²⁴ If such marriages are not common, it is because they tend to disturb the intimate, industrial, social and spiritual life of the community. Caste as a basis of intimate social relations does not interfere with the larger life of

the nation. As the emperor Asoka said to his Hindu minister: "Caste may be considered when it is a question of marriage or invitation, but not of *dharma*; for *dharma* is concerned with virtues, and virtues have nothing to do with caste."²⁵

To say that social service is unknown to the Hindus is to utter a bold untruth. Much capital is made out of the treatment of the untouchables. It is not remembered that a free India rendered them much greater service than what other free countries even in recent times have done for their backward classes. How have the superior nations civilized the Tasmanian and the Australian aborigines, certain Maori peoples and North American Indian tribes? They generally refine them into extinction, and where that is not possible they sink them into the slough of vice and crime worse than any normal expressions of savage life. If the Kaffir has multiplied under the British protection and the Javanese under the Dutch, if the populations of Straits Settlements and British India have not vanished before their civilizers, it is because a good God has put them in a climate unfavourable to the civilizers. The tropics can never become the habitat of the Europeans. They can be held, but not peopled by them. But for the limits set by Nature, the history of the tropical regions would have been different. From the time the Aryan met the peoples of a lower grade of civilization, they devised ways and means by which the different portions of the population could develop in social, spiritual directions. The Aryans even accepted a non-Aryan representative of the "black" peoples—Kṛṣṇa, and made him deliver the message of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. Kṛṣṇa's conduct scandalised society and provoked the Vedic gods, Indra and Brahmā. Today the Aryan worshippers of these gods look upon Kṛṣṇa as an Avatār of God. Kṛṣṇa, however, had great respect for the Aryan thinkers, and it is said that he washed the feet of the Brahmin guests at the *Rājasūya-yāga* of King *Yudhiṣṭhira*. The Aryans took to the non-Aryan gods very kindly, improved them where possible, and subordinated them where necessary. The worshippers of *Mahiṣa*

(buffalo-demon) were told that the Cosmic Spirit was greater than the *Mahiṣa*. The worshippers of serpents were instructed that there was one greater than the serpents, the Lord of serpents, Nāgeśvara or Kṛṣṇa, who danced over the head of Kāliya. The marks of the gradual civilizing of the lower classes are visible throughout the cultural history of India. Whenever there was a tendency to overlook the common humanity of men, a Buddha or Śaṅkara arose, emphasizing the common lot of all—high and low. The extent of the country 2,000 miles long and 1,500 miles broad is not similar to that from Dan to Beersheeba. The means of communication that we have at the present day were not available till recently. If the work of civilizing the backward classes had not been undertaken and carried on with zeal and success by the ancient Indians, we would have had not merely fifty millions of these "depressed" classes, but a much larger number. When the outside invaders came into the country, the Hindu felt nervous, and, as a sheer act of self-preservation, stereotyped the existing divisions, and some tribes were left outside the pale of the caste order. Though Manu says that "there is no fifth class anywhere,"²⁶ the tribes who were not influenced by the *dharma* formed themselves into the fifth class. "He who has abandoned his duties, is cruel and pitiless, and oppresses others, and who is passionate and full of destructiveness is a *mleccha*."²⁷ No words are too strong for the deplorable condition of these people. To disregard the claims of man simply because he happens to be low or belongs to another race is against the religious spirit of Hinduism. Now that things are in a more settled condition, the Hindu leaders are reiterating the central truth that the least of all man has a soul and need not be considered past all power to save.

The last two stages of *Vānaprastha* and *Śannyāsa*, which may be taken as one for our purposes, treat of those who have retired from the competitive struggle for life. The *Śannyāsin* represents the highest type of Indian manhood. From selfishness, the individual has progressed to self-annihilation through the

extinction of all prejudice, hatred and ambition. He has passed through all institutions, and is now above them. His emotional life expresses itself in the love of God or bhakti, and not in animal lusts or personal likes. He perceives the oneness and wholeness of humanity, and his mind is freed from all superstition and unreason. His active energies are devoted to the service of humanity, knowing as he does that God is in all beings and *is* all of them.²⁸ He who has the vision of all in one, in whom the impersonal predominates over the personal, cannot sin.²⁹ He is the superman of the *Bhagavad-gītā*, the awakened of Buddhism, the true Brahmin who glories in his poverty, rejoices in suffering, and is finely balanced in mind, with peace and joy at heart. He loves all men, birds and beasts, and resists not evil, but overcomes it by love. In him the soul of man is at its highest stretch. The ideal of the *sannyāsin* has dominated the life of India from the time of the *Rṣis* of the Upaniṣads. They follow this ideal, kings lay down their crowns and scepters and assume the garb of poverty, fighting heroes forget the pride of victory and break their weapons, and skilled traders and workmen pursue their till with steadfast mind surrendering to God the fruits thereof.

These *Sannyāsins*, as a rule, are the helpers of humanity. The greatest of them, like Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja, Rāmānanda and Kabir, have entered into the life-blood of the nation and laid the foundations of its religion. It is, however, true that in India, as in Mediaeval Europe, many ascetics made the mistake of escaping into the wilderness from the worries of the world. These hermits of the cloister and monks of the desert are voices astray in the dark. Their perpetual consciousness of sin and their pre-occupation with their own salvation show that they have lost their lives in their anxiety to save them. As the tide of monasticism which swept over Europe in the Middle Ages is not true to the teaching of Jesus, who asks us to look upon ourselves as servants trusted by the master, porters bidden to watch, stewards to whom much is committed, sons to whom the father confides his affairs, so the

deserters from the battle of life are not the true *Sannyāsins*, who are prepared to suffer for mankind, with intense humility, glowing faith and sincere love.

To reach the highest state it is not always necessary to adhere literally to the rules of *dharma*. There are cases of sudden conversion, uprushes of the spirit from seemingly commonplace souls, astonishing moral elevation among men who have not learned the highest lesson of existence. The rules of *dharma*, however, represent the normal growth of spirit. The freed souls sometimes smile at the irrelevance of the painful scrupulosities and anxious questionings about ceremonial propriety which worry those in the lower stages of life. The order of *Sannyāsins* is open to men of all castes. No man, however, should desire liberation without paying his three debts³⁰—to the gods by means of hymns and prayers, to the *pitrs* or the ancestors by gifts and charity and social service and by the rearing up of progeny, and to the *Rṣis* by passing on to others the instruction received by himself.

The Hindu *dharma* has room for all kinds of men, the dispassionate old who have retired from the business of life and the eager pushful young who are keen on worldly success. The four castes and orders are not intended to be special moulds into which the Indian people are thrown, but forms capable of embracing the whole of humanity. Without the employment of force or eagerness for exploitation, Hinduism has been able to civilize a large part of Asia. What has attracted it is not imperialist expansion, but the cultural conquest, the peaceful penetration of the thought and mind of the peoples which it achieves by its own spirituality. From the kingdom of Khotan in Central Asia to the Island of Java, which lies on the way between India and Australia, the creative urge of the Hindu genius found its expression in life and art. Java had Hindu settlers as far back as the second century A.D., and she has remained since then predominantly Hindu and Buddhist. Today, Japan, China and Burma look to India as their spiritual home even as Christians look to Palestine. Wherever we

go from Russia to China, at Samarkand, at Tibet, we can trace the influence of Indian civilization. All these pale into insignificance when we remember that there are records of Indian culture in Western Asia, in the plains of Mesopotamia, in the regions watered by the rivers Tigris and Euphrates. Inscribed tablets discovered at Boghaz-koi, assigned by competent scholars to 1400 B.C., speak to us of people who were worshipping the Hindu gods. This influence of India is not because her religion is old or her empires are great, not because she developed weapons of destruction or exercised force on a large scale, but because she had an intelligent understanding of the deeper unity in the midst of all diversity. Wherever she went, the deep and silent influence of her vision of the unity of all things in God pervaded. All the mighty impulses that entered into India were synthesized on the same plan. All religions she welcomed, since she realized from the cloudy heights of contemplation that the spiritual landscape at the hill-top is the same, though the pathways from the valley are different. To those who were wandering at random in the plains without suspecting that all roads lead to the same top, she says: "Raise your eyes. Things in the valley separate us. Up yonder, high above us, we are all one. The variety of ways has meaning at the foot of the hill, but if we understand what they signify on the snowy summits, we shall know that all are reaching out for God." It may be that India with her assimilative genius may yet succeed in harmonising the mighty currents of the world's great religions that have met on her soil.

NOTES

1. *Abhyudaya* and *Niḥśreyasa*.
2. I, John, v. 21.
3. H. H. Wilson, *Essays and Lectures*, Vol. II, p. 8.
4. See Manu, II, 11.

5. See *Mahābhārata. Anuśāsana parva*, 162 and *Śānti parva* 33.
6. *Manu*, I, 23.
7. *Manu*, XII, 38.
8. *Manu*, VI, 87.
9. *Manu*, II, 69.
10. *Manu*, IX, 45.
11. *Bhagavad-gītā*, III, 16.
12. *Śukranīti*, 1, 38–42.
13. *Manu*, IV, 11.
14. *Manu*, XII, 113.
15. See *Bhaviṣya Purāṇa*, III, IV, 23.
16. See also *Mahābhārata, Vana-parva*, Ch. 216.
17. *Vṛttam eva, Mahābhārata, Vanaparva*, Ch. 314.
18. *Vanaparva*, Ch. 182. See *Manu* IV, 224 and 225.
19. *Viṣṇu-purāṇa*, XVII.
20. *Manu*, X, 63; VI, 91–92.
21. *Manu*, IV, 253.
22. See *Manu*, X, 42; IX, 335.
23. *Manu* X, 57–65.
24. See *Bombay Law Reporter*, Bai Gulab vs. Jivanlal Harilal, Vol. XXIV.
25. *Indian Social Reformer*, June 4, 1922.
26. *Manu*, X, 4.
27. *Śukranīti*, I, 44.
28. *Sarva-bhūtamayaṁ harim. Viṣṇu-purāṇa*, I.19.9.
29. *Manu*, XII, 118.
30. See *Manu*, VI.35.

AN EXPOSITION OF THE GLORY OF THE
DIVINE MOTHER, CAṆḌIKĀ

S. S. Raghavachar*

1. Introduction

It is a pleasure for me to pay homage to a great scripture devoted to the exposition of the glory of the Divine Mother, Caṇḍikā. It is one of the fundamental scriptures in the field and is the object of special devotion in Bengal and the Divine Mother Sri Ramakrishna worshipped was conceived in the frame of reference set up by the work. It is variously named, *Durgā-saptaśatī*, *Devī-māhātmya*, and *Śrī Caṇḍī*. The work has about seven important commentaries in Sanskrit. But the philosophy of the work has not entered into the main stream of current reconstructions of Indian philosophy and something like a philosophical study of the work can be of value.

The work is regarded with great reverence bordering on awe, and untold occult virtues are attributed to it and to worship

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incorporating it as a part of the rituals of worship. It is a devotional classic and has fostered and promoted in a distinctive and systematic fashion the worship of Caṇḍīka in the spirit of highest devotion. The Bhakti promulgated in the work has entered into the powerful Bhakti movement dedicated to Devi. Wherever Devi worship prevails, whether in Rajasthan or Maharashtra, in Karnataka or Kerala, in the Maths of the great Śaṅkarācāryas moving devotion is offered to the deity in the idiom of this Sacred poetry. In Bengal, it is needless to add, it has inspired religion in practice and exalted religious poetry such as that of Rāmaprasād and Kamalā Kānta. Thus the text has figured as a fountain-head of Sattvic Occultism and pure Bhakti.

But these aspects of the work should not be allowed to eclipse its philosophical significance. It contains a deep philosophical substance and its high valuation in the religious sphere is undoubtedly due to this philosophical core also. Its occult power and devotional height are directly facilitated by the lofty vision of reality it embodies. To elucidate, this vision somewhat falls within the field of Indian philosophy conceived on proper lines. There is also the charm of freshness in as much as it is comparatively unexplored in the spirit of Vedānta. The heavy traditional commentaries are largely dominated by the tantric and mantric motivations. It is worthwhile treating the work in the manner in which the *prasthāna-traya* is treated by the great Ācāryas.

There is an initial handicap in this venture. The *Caṇḍī* consists of stories depicting the glory of the Divine Mother and certain hymns addressed to her. It is easy to follow the philosophical thought of the hymns. But the stories are mythological in character like the stories in the Purāṇas in general. But they are not pure mythology, if such a thing is conceivable. They are poetic and vivid representations of metaphysical ideas. As Swami Vivekananda said, "Behind these ancient mythologies are nuggets of truth, and often, behind the fine, polished phrases of the moderns, is arrant trash." (*Jñāna-yoga*, p. 26). The interesting peculiarity of the greater

mythologies is that the propositions which they advance through the stories are such that they are identical with what the stories mean if taken as literal, historical truth. Thanks to psychologists like Jung, we are getting accustomed to see in mythologies profound revelations of the spirit of a civilization than in its bald and prosaic professions of credo. It is often the case that plastic fiction can be a better vehicle of truth than the hardened and limited facts of so-called history and science. Plato did well in casting his greatest intuitions into his celebrated myths. Our master-writers of the Purāṇas such as the *Bhāgavatam* and *Śrī Caṇḍī* are experts in these subtleties of exposition and their stories carry their hidden imports in unmistakable suggestiveness and the poetic vehicle converts the austere truth into vibrant beauty.

Our theme, the *Caṇḍī*, requires a specific procedure of study. Accordingly, it is necessary to form an adequate idea of the narrative frame-work. The narratives are brimming with points of spiritual importance. It is good to set in relief this frame-work with brief and necessary comments to bring out the full volume of its purport. There are four major hymns, all occurring at crucial points, which set forth the philosophy of the work in the context of devotion offered to the supreme Mother. These hymns have to be carefully analyzed and the elements of philosophical weight in them are to be duly distinguished. After these two divisions of study, the major step of gathering the philosophical ideas must be taken and the fundamental philosophy of the work must be articulated; that which inspires it at the base, as it were, and forms its final and crowning message.

2. The Narrative Frame-work

(a) There was a great ruler by name Suratha belonging to the dynasty of Caitra. He was a mighty and good emperor. In a battle with enemies called Kolavi Dhvaṁsins, though his force outnumbered theirs, he was defeated. He returned to his capital. He could

not reestablish himself or reorganize his forces for avenging the defeat. His enemies gradually penetrated to his capital and his own officers in authority gradually went over to their side. Thus undone, he left the kingdom and found a friendly shelter and hospitality in the peaceful hermitage of the sage, Medhas. The latter was a great Sage and in his holy Āśram, the ferocious beasts of the forest lived in perfect non-violence. Though settled in the holy place, the king was passing through a perceptual agony of thought concerning his overthrow and the fate he feared had overtaken his beloved kingdom. In the meanwhile, a merchant, named Samādhī, joined the hermitage in a similar plight of sorrow and downfall. He had been a prosperous man, but his wife and sons had driven him out after appropriating all his wealth. He too dwelt in the Āśram, lost in sorrow and thought about the welfare of his family. May be, the names Medhas, Suratha and Samādhī are not insignificant. The symbolism is rather transparent as we shall see.

The two visitors exchanged thoughts and understood each other well. They planned an interview with the Sage and in all humility and respect they sought enlightenment from him on their common problem. Their situation is somewhat philosophised and they seek not boons of relief or restoration but a clear light on their problem. The problem is well stated by the king. He asks, "How is it that both of us, dispossessed and rejected, and knowing our position well, still suffer from attachment to what has hurt us so deeply? How is it that even men of understanding, such as ourselves, are subject to delusive attachments?" This is a perennial spiritual problem, that of man knowing the higher and being engrossed in the lower values. There is knowledge but no wisdom. In the words of our text, there is jñāna but no viveka. The problem is not far removed from the question of Arjuna.

अथ केन प्रयुक्तोऽयं पापं चरति पूरुषः ।
अनिच्छन्नपि वाष्णेय बलादिव नियोजितः ॥

Bhagavad-gītā, 3.36

The Sage propounds a great answer. Knowledge of a sort is there in man. The understanding of the environment through the senses is there as a matter of nature. In this, man is more or less in the condition of animals. They too have sensory equipment and make the necessary assessments of their external situation. One is reminded of a similar observation by Śaṅkara in his *Adhyāsa-bhāṣya*. But this animal understanding is a poor thing. It cannot prevent or eliminate bondage to delusive hankerings. A man may be awake to the world but may be in the deepest slumber concerning the 'truth' that could make him 'free'. This root anomaly of the human situation, it is proclaimed by the Sage, is due to the functioning of Mahāmāyā, the Yoga Nidrā of Viṣṇu. It is she, the Mahāmāyā, that brings about the delusion of even the enlightened ones by her prowess and it is she that sets up this world of animate and inanimate beings. She is the absolute power; and she casts creatures into captivity and if she is gracious, she can emancipate them into final beauty. In brief and pregnant words, the Sage propounds the basic teaching of the work. We may note briefly the meaning of the concept of Mahāmāyā inaugurated here for purposes of a clear understanding of what follows. Mahāmāyā is an absolute power, the supreme force behind all creation. It is force that can both crush and bless. This power is a dimension, an aspect, an attribute of Viṣṇu. It belongs to Viṣṇu in the truly metaphysical sense of 'belonging.' The Mahāmāyā, is not the psychological process of running into an illusion; it is not a *bhrānti*, however much it may be the matrix of illusions. It is an ontological verity, wrought into the fundamental being of ultimate reality. This power, the Mahāmāyā, is a person, a deity, a Goddess, exercising sovereignty and abounding in mercy. The personalistic imagination is very strong in the *Caṇḍī*; the wrath of the deity emanates as a person, and even her out-breathings in the course of a fight solidify into warriors replenishing her army. Thus the Mahāmāyā, an ultimate and sovereign power of Viṣṇu, is of the nature of an omnipotent divine personality and is the cause of all

that happens to the creatures. It is she that accounts for the presence of delusions even in those that are enlightened in the normal human sense.

The disciples,—we can speak of them as such hereafter—Suratha and Samādhī set aside for the time being their personal griefs and seek fuller enlightenment about the Goddess, Mahāmāyā. The intellectual quest is afoot. The Sage tells the first *carita*, heroic doing, of Mahāmāyā.

Though Mahāmāyā is eternal and immutable, she manifests herself in different incarnations for the protection of the righteous and it is manifestation such as these that is spoken of as her birth in the world. In the great antiquity at the end of a Kalpa when deluge waters had covered the world and Lord Viṣṇu resorted to the slumber of Yoga and had withdrawn into himself, two demons Madhu and Kaiṭabha, who themselves were born of the secretions of his ears, had mounted an attack on Brahmā and were bent upon destroying him. Yoga-Nidrā is an aspect of Mahāmāyā and it is due to her enveloping Viṣṇu, by his own choice obviously, that Brahmā was exposed to the demons. Brahmā represents the Vedas and the attack was certainly directed at their destruction. When driven to his last resource, as it were, Brahmā addressed a hymn of praise to her. In his prayers he appealed to her to arouse Viṣṇu to his cosmic concern and also to delude the two demons appropriately. Then the Goddess Yoga Nidrā, the tamasic aspect of Mahāmāyā, withdrew from Viṣṇu. The latter arose and went into battle at once with the demons. The battle was terrific. There is a fine feature in the *Caṇḍī* in the treatment of battles. They are made tremendously terrific but move rapidly to the climax. The enemies are annihilated in graceful quickness after putting forth their frightful might. In this, the work resembles somewhat the battles of Hanuman in the Sundarakāṇḍa of Vālmīki. In the present fight, the two demons are impressed by Viṣṇu's prowess, and in the generosity of foolish pride and under the influence of māyā, promise to give a boon to Viṣṇu as a mark of their appreciation. If

this is surprising, Viṣṇu's choice of the boon is more so. He asked the boon that they might die at his hands. They give the boon but specify a condition that appears to them to be impossible of fulfilment. They want him to kill them in a waterless spot. Viṣṇu seizes them and puts them in his lap and kills them. The danger to Brahmā and the Vedas he contains is eliminated completely. The moral of the story is significant. Knowledge concerning divine verities is obtainable only through divine grace and the grace is to be obtained through the propitiation of Mahāmāyā. She withdraws from the supreme being and thus renders his grace active and she blunts the forces destructive of that knowledge. One is almost tempted to interpret Brahmā as representing sattva and Madhu and Kaiṭabha as representing Rajas and Tamas. But our text does not explicate this symbolism. It is also to be noted that the active protective concern of Viṣṇu becomes operative not because of this māyā but only after māyā leaves him. In other words, he is self-absorbed and practically acosmic when enveloped by māyā and it is only when māyā leaves him that he regains cosmic activity. The self-destructive pride of the demons is due to the delusion that māyā spreads over them. Evil perishes by a law of self-destruction which is executed by Mahāmāyā. The demons too arise from the ultimate Divine principle. There is no dualism of the powers of right and wrong in the scheme of reality in itself.

(b) The second *carita* of Mahāmāyā is less complicated in structure and is truly magnificent. Here the goddess does not indirectly aid the destruction of evil but constitutes the principal agent. There was a mighty demon in ancient times called Mahiṣāsura and his name and his actual form as represented in the story imply that he was a buffalo-demon. This could only mean that he was massive and had beastly strength. It is so easy to see in him the personification of Rajas and Tamas. There was a pro-longed battle between him and the gods and he was absolutely victorious. He established himself as the emperor of the universe.

It is appropriate at this stage to comment a little on this division of demons and gods. The *Gītā* offers unfailing guidance on the point. The demons are beings governed by the philosophy of brute material force and the gods are beings that have attained positions of authority in the scheme of the world through good deeds so that they may maintain the moral order on which it is founded. This is no division of souls by virtue of anything innate in them. This is a contingent division of beings on grounds of their antecedents, present deeds and their dispositions. The gods are tools of Dharma while the demons are antagonistic to it. The composition of the two groups varies but the division remains. The ethical dualism is fundamental though there is no metaphysical dualism. The demons under the leadership of Mahiṣa consolidated themselves and deposed all the gods. They took over the functions of them and utilized their powers for goals other than divine and Dhārmic. Naturally the gods gathered and under the leadership of Brahmā, approached Viṣṇu and Śiva. They submitted to these ostensibly supreme gods their plight and begged for rescue and restoration. The good under subjection to evil seeks the divine for the reestablishment of the moral order. The two supreme gods became intensely enraged and their rage radiated from them and took the shape of blazing powers. Following them, the powers of all the other lesser gods also externalized themselves. All these powers got integrated and the outcome was the formation of a resplendent goddess, filling the three worlds with her luminous presence. The powers of the several gods went into the formation of the several parts of that Divinity. The gods were overjoyed at the cumulative concretization of their powers and they hastened to furnish the goddess with their own destructive weapons and the decoration they could supply. The radiant power so formed, equipped and adorned, thundered forth terrific battle shouts. This challenging war-cry echoed throughout the universe. All the worlds were frightened, the oceans trembled, the earth shook and the mountains were set in motion. The gods shouted for her victory

and the sages sang her praise. The demons mobilized themselves and sprang forth for war. Maḥiṣa himself arrived within the sight of the Goddess, under whose foot the earth was bending, whose crown was shining in the heavens and whose prowess was causing havoc even in the nether worlds. With a thousand arms, she was wielding countless weapons. Her battle was full of sound and fury and she filled effectively all space. Battle started in full swing. It may be remarked that for briskness of narration and for conveying the fierceness of the battles involving all the weapons of warfare, our work is superb. There is a vividness that is truly terrifying. The great heroes on Maḥiṣa's side, Cikṣura, Cāmara, Udagra, Mahāhanu, Asiloma, Bāṣkala, Vidala, fought bravely and mightily. Horses, elephants, chariots were thrown into action in huge number. The Goddess and her vehicle, the lion, faced the mighty forces with amazing destructive power. The heroes doing wonders, fell one by one. Finally, Maḥiṣa took the fight into his own hands. His agility, skill and strength were equal to the occasion. The account impresses us with the immensity of his prowess. He could take many forms, that of a giant of a man, a lion, an elephant that could overpower even a lion, and that of a he-buffalo. The last seems to have been his favourite form. He fought in all of them and the Goddess struck him down in all of them. Finally, he assumed the buffalo-form for the second time. The Goddess pressed him down by her foot on his neck and drank the martial wine; obviously she was using the drink also as a weapon as one of the gods had specifically provided her with it. While the demon was partly emerging into human form the buffalo-form pinned down to the earth, the great Caṇḍikā severed his head with her great sword. He fell. There was an uproar of shocked grief and fright in the army of the demons and the gods got exuberantly delighted. The celestials sang and danced in joy. The gods and great sages approached the victorious Mother and gave themselves up to her adoration.

Then follows a sublime hymn of thankful praise. The divine mother is graciously pleased by the exalted devotion of the divinities and bursts into further bountifulness. She demands of them to specify some further boon. They gratefully acknowledge the favours showered on them by this destruction of their great foe, Mahiṣāsurā. As she insists on conferring a further boon, they pray that she may respond in future also to their devotion in the form of just remembrance and destroy whatever dangers and afflictions they may be subject to at the time. It is significant that nothing more than mere remembrance is named here as forming the core of devotion. This is the characteristic case and simplicity of devotion prescribed in the *Caṇḍī* and this mercy of expectation is repeated in the work several times. The divine mother seems to await just *Smaraṇa-Bhakti* and nothing more and on its arising, she swings into her saving operations. The gods pray further that whoever in future resorts to the Divine Mother by reciting the hymn they have just now sung, may receive her bountiful grace by way of all prosperity. The gods prayed thus for a large boon to themselves and a boon for the world in general and Śrī Caṇḍikā conferred them and withdrew her manifestation from their wondering sight. She is truly Bhadrā-Kālī, as the text calls her here, for She is auspicious and destructive. Her destructiveness follows from her redemptive graciousness. We move on now to the next carita of *Śrī Caṇḍikā*.

(c) Two powerful demon-brothers Śumbha and Niśumbha with a powerful and huge following acquired mastery of the world order, deposed the gods as usual, took up their appointed functions and authority and established themselves as supreme rulers in the scheme of things. The moral government of the world was replaced by the Āsuric rule.

The gods remembered the boon of the Divine mother that she would instantly destroy their enemies and dangers whenever they offered the devotion of remembering her. Her very words of promise echoed in their aching hearts. They resorted to the lofty

Himalayas and offered their prayers to the goddess, Viṣṇu-māyā. These prayers constitute the third major hymn in our text. As the hymn of prayers was being brought to a climax, Pārvatī, the divine daughter of Himavān, arrived on the scene in order to bathe in the sacred Gaṅgā. She asked the gods, rather in a surprisingly casual and unconcerned way as if they were not addressing her, as to what goddess they were praying to. From the sheath of the body of Pārvatī emerged Śivā, Mother Ambikā, and answered Pārvatī that she, Ambikā, was the object of their worship and they had come to her defeated and dispossessed by the demons, Śumbha and Niśumbha. On Ambikā coming out of her body, Pārvatī became the dark Kālī and Ambikā bearing the most charming form was sighted by Caṇḍa and Muṇḍa, the servants of Śumbha and Niśumbha.

They returned to Śumbha and reported about the bewitching beauty of Ambikā. They also added that he, being the master of all the most precious things in the world, the treasured possessions of the deposed gods, was legitimately entitled to have this most precious of women. She was, they exclaimed, a ātrī-ratna, a jewel among women, fit to become his possession. Śumbha heard the report like Rāvaṇa, but unlike Rāvaṇa adopted a rather straight method. He ordered his messenger, Sugrīva, to approach the lady and make the proposal in a manner suited to winning her love. Sugrīva proceeded accordingly and expatiated upon the greatness of his master and his brother in glowing words. He proposed on behalf of Śumbha that she might accept him or his brother as her husband. Ambikā listened to the proposal in a charming way but regretted that the matter could not be settled so smoothly. Stupid as she was, she had taken a vow that she would accept as her lord only him who could over-power and defeat her in battle. Sugrīva reprimands her for the foolishness. Not gods can stand in battle even against the followers of Śumbha. How could she, a mere woman, offer battle to the mighty Śumbha and Niśumbha? He says that if she does not voluntarily accept the proposal, she would

be dragged to wedlock through force. She pleads her inability to break the vow and in consequence, prefers marriage by defeat and capture, she gently suggests that Sugrīva might hasten the prospects of this strange but honest marriage. Sugrīva returns to Śumbha and reports the stupid stipulation of Ambikā. On hearing this, the demon-king is indignant and issues war commands. The first hero to be commissioned to bring the erring damsel by force is the general, Dhūmra-locana.

There is a point in this manner of the commencement of the war. The Divine Mother plants in the heart of the demon sex-desire and infuriates him by frustrating it. That itself would have been sufficient provocation for violence. But the apparently perverse condition laid down by her traps him straightaway into utmost commitment to war. It is not that violence is simply perpetrated by him. It is actually demanded of him. If the condition was not there, perhaps there would have been scope for deception as in the case of Rāvaṇa. What destroys man ultimately are not the external enemies, but Kāma and Krodha. Kāma in this case calls for Krodha. Krodha arises here both by frustration of Kāma and the actual requirement that Kāma should be fulfilled only through it. Truly has Lord Kṛṣṇa declared:

काम एष क्रोध एष रजोगुणसमुद्भवः ।

महाशनो महापाप्मा विद्म चेनमिह वैरिणम् ॥

(*Bhagavad-gīta*, 3.37)

The seeds of the destruction of Śumbha and Niśumbha are well-sown. The battle commences in full swing. An immense army of demons and divine beings get involved in it. All possible weapons of destruction known to Indian antiquity are mentioned and they are used effectively by both sides. Animals, the lion of the Goddess, elephants, horses and chariots are thrown into the front in merciless and volcanic action. The noise of the battle and war-laughter rise in shattering volume and pitch and seem to break

up the universe. The earth is flooded with the blood of the slaughtered. The picture is that of unspeakable fierceness. Dhūmra-locana though a great warrior offers not much trouble. He is dispatched in no time. Śumbha orders Caṅḍa and Muṅḍa to the bloody task of attack and capture. On seeing them, the peaceful and captivating Ambikā flew into a rage. Her rage made her black and from her face twisted and burning with anger emerged Kālī, terrifying in all aspects, emaciated and hungry. She started devouring the hostile forces in devastating fury and power in lightning speed. She spared nothing, not even the chariots and the inanimate equipment of the enemy in her all-devouring ferocity. Caṅḍa and afterwards Muṅḍa did their heroic best to arrest the ruination she wrought. But they were no match. She cut out their heads and offered them as an oblation to Ambikā and predicted the completion of the bloody sacrifice by Ambikā herself, slaughtering Śumbha and Niśumbha. The sweet Caṅḍikā declared that Kālī would be known thenceforth as Cāmuṅḍā.

The next stage of the battle is elaborately introduced. Śumbha orders a march of his entire army. The Devī, her lion and Kālī greeted the advancing mass of demons with a terrific battle-roar. They were also encircled by the fierce formation of the enemy. At this point, the gods planning for a decisive battle and anxious for complete victory started augmenting the Devī's might. From each important god emerged a female replica of him, bearing his individual form, wearing his characteristic weapons, riding his special vehicle and possessed of his prowess. These were the śaktis of the gods. There were śaktis of Śiva, Viṣṇu, Brahmā, Varāha, Skanda, Narasimha and Indra. They joined Caṅḍikā and the united group worked a tremendous destruction of the enemies. Śiva encouraged Caṅḍikā and asked her to annihilate the demons for love of him. He, in his turn, was sent as a messenger to the demons with the proposal that the demons might return the three worlds to the gods and establish themselves in *pātāla*, the nether world. This only infuriated the demons further and war mounted up. The

struggle seemed to be swinging in favour of Caṇḍikā. At this stage, a demon, named Rakta-bīja, entered the centre of the battle. There was a special magical potency in himself. When his blood was shed in battle, each drop would itself become a demon-warrior, equal in strength to him. When he was attacked by the goddesses, there was a generation of a bewildering mass of heroic demons. The number of the new warriors swelled enormously and practically filled the whole field of battle. This put the gods and goddesses into dismay. Caṇḍikā asked Kālī to spread her mouth widely and catch quickly all the drops of blood that the demon was shedding in battle and all the demons that might arise out of them. Kālī was just the right goddess for it. She caught every drop of blood and every demon that arose out of the drops that had touched the ground. She was equal to the feed. Gradually Rakta-bīja lost all his blood and succumbed to the blows delivered by Caṇḍikā. The gods rejoiced over his fall and the goddesses danced in glee.

The point of this story is that evil rarely perishes in its entirety. The very assault on it generates evil offspring in abundance. Evil should be so destroyed that the very destruction does not cause generation of fresh evils.

Now the final phase of the war is on. Niśumbha fights resolutely and mightily. His courage, prowess and skill in war are marvellous and he almost equals his elder brother. He is ably supported by him. Eventually, after a worthy combat he falls, pierced at the heart by the spear and beheaded by the sword of Caṇḍikā. Śumbha is the surviving warrior of might. He surpassed all others in every martial feat and was their natural leader. He accuses her of false strength. She, he says, fights with the power of other goddesses but takes pride in victories not due to her own doings. Caṇḍikā repels the accusation and withdraws all the goddesses into her own being. They, she maintains, are her own several manifest-ations and in reality she is one without a second. Then the single combat is on; between him, the mightiest of the

demons and Caṇḍikā, the Divine Mother, one without a second. They fight in every way and on earth and air. The fight causes fright to the whole world and amazes even the all-knowing sages. At the crescendo of the combat, the Devī arrests the enemy rushing towards her with clenched fist and spears him at the chest. He falls shaking the whole earth with all its oceans and mountains. The evil one perishes.

Peace and joy once again returned to the world. The very elements and the gods over-flowed with gladness. There was unprecedented rapture everywhere. The gods reassembled and made their grateful obeisance to the Divine Mother. They hymned their adoration to her in sublime words. This hymn is the fourth and the final one in the scripture.

The Goddess is gracious and offers another boon to them and to the world at large. They ask for the destruction of all afflictions in all the three worlds and for the destruction of their own possible enemies in future. She grants the boon. She lists her future incarnations and protective manifestations. She is to kill Śumbha and Niśumbha in another birth, eat up the demons called Vaipracittas. In a period of great drought and famine, she is to cast her thousand eyes of grace on the sages and to grow sustaining vegetables on her own body till rains come, become Durgā by killing a demon called Durgama, become Bhīma Devī and devour demons at the Himalayas for protecting the sages and destroy the demon called Aruṇa in the form of countless bees. Thus she will continue to exercise her maternal care for all eternity. She concludes by commending the holy narration in the text and extols its marvellous powers. She specially recommends the chanting of the great hymns it contains.

After concluding this glorious account of Caṇḍikā, the sage Medhas advises Suratha and Samādhi to take to devotion to her. They do so in earnest austerity. They worship her, sing her praises and even make offerings sprinkled with their own blood. The king prays for his restoration to the kingdom and also for kingship in

future births. The merchant is a higher type of devotee and he prays initially for the vision of the Mother and on her gracious self-revelation begs for emancipating wisdom. They are granted their respective prayers. Such is the bare skeleton of the *Devī Māhātmya* stripped of its high poetry of vivid and picturesque description and quick movement of stirring narration. Even in its prosaic kernel the terror and sublimity of the divine presence stand out prominently. The paradox of the mother aspect of god-head issuing in devastating might is conveyed in telling depth.

3. Analysis of the Four Hymns

(a) The first major hymn to Mahāmāyā is from Brahmā, in his hour of peril at the hands of Madhu and Kaiṭabha. To him, the Divine mother constitutes the sacred formulas Svāhā and Svadhā used in the Vedic worship of the gods and manes and is the power behind their efficacy. Hers is the force contained in all the mystic potency of the sacrifices. She is immutable and can lead to the final bliss of liberation. She takes the form of 'Om', the most sacred *praṇava*. She functions as its three constituents and also the inarticulate culmination of it. She is the great mother, dwelling in the supreme mantra of Sāvitrī. The predominant thought here is that she constitutes the very body of the Vedas.

Her cosmic forms is no less significant. She creates, sustains and dissolves the universe. She is the very act of creation, the very being of beings in their state of actuality and is the process of destruction at their destruction.

In spiritual life she visits as illumination and in bondage and delusion, she is the power of darkness. She is the primordial prakṛti functioning through the guṇas and brings about the slumber of souls thereby. All that is graceful and grand in creation is her self-disclosure. She is beauty supreme and the absolute sovereign. She bears weapons in her concrete person for purposes of protecting the devotees and as a mark of her readiness to do so.

Whatever is or is not, in manifest actuality, whatever is good or bad, has whatever potency it has, through her. In fact, she constitutes all potency. How can she be fittingly praised?

Even he, who creates, protects and swallows up the universe, is induced to obliviousness by her. Who can really pay her adequate tributes? Even Viṣṇu, Śiva and Brahmā resort to incarnations under her power. Who can command the resources for the full appreciation of her majesty?

Four propositions stand out prominently in this hymn.

(1) Mahāmāyā forms the very body of the sacred illumination constituting the Vedas.

(2) She is the source of delusion and bondage, on the one hand, for the creatures and also of illumination and liberation for them.

(3) She is the primordial power, creating, sustaining and dissolving the worlds. Incidentally, the gods usually associated with these cosmic functions are said to be under her sway.

(4) Within the created world, all powers of all beings spring from her and all that is good, true and beautiful in them and all forms of grandeur are her self-disclosures. She is beauty supreme.

To her, we ought to resort in prayerful surrender in our trials and tribulations and she holds herself in gracious readiness to rescue and uplift us.

(b) The second major hymn rises from the grateful hearts of the gods, after the destruction of Mahiṣāsura. They are devoutly humble and are filled with the ecstasy of bhakti.

The Devi pervades the world with her inherent power and is herself the consolidated mass of the powers of all gods. No one,

not even Viṣṇu, Brahmā and Śiva can offer adequate praise to her. She is the prosperity of the good and the privation of the unrighteous, the intellect of the sages, the faith of the pious and the decorum of the well-bred. May she protect the world and resolve upon the destruction of fear, sorrow and evil! How can her beauty, greatness of prowess and marvellous deeds be praised fully? She is the cause of the whole cosmos and sustains the three primordial guṇas but is not touched by evil. Even the great gods cannot measure her greatness. She is the support of all, this whole universe is a part of hers, she is the unmanifested basal principle of nature.

The sacrifices gratify the gods as she is adored in them, and the worship of the fathers reaches them if she is duly praised in it. She secures liberation to the austere sages and she is the highest wisdom of the wise ones. She is the three Vedas and also the science of worldly wisdom necessary for the conduct of the ordinary pursuits of life. She is the dispeller of even the greatest distress. She is the intelligence comprehending the essence of all the śāstras and she is the Durgā, taking creatures beyond the ocean of transmigration. She is Lakṣmī, the consort of Viṣṇu, and she is Gaurī, the consort of Śiva. It is a wonder that Maḥiṣāsura could attack her, in spite of her splendour of personality. How did he continue to live after beholding her form of utmost frightfulness? She in her righteous indignation can wipe out entire dynasties, however big and powerful they may be. The case of Maḥiṣāsura is an illustration thereof. If she is gracious, all the good things of life come to the devotee in unmeasured plenty. The law of Karma productive of good to the righteous is operated by her. It is, in fact, she that confers the fruits of good deeds.

Durgā removes the fears of all who remember her. She kindles the right understanding in those who remember her in serenity. She dispels anxieties, grief and poverty. Who else is as tender-hearted as she, for bringing about all the happiness for all?

दुर्गे स्मृता हरसि भीतिमशेषजन्तोः
 स्वस्थैः स्मृता भतिमतीव शुभां ददासि ।
 दारिद्र्यदुःखभयहारिणि का त्वदन्या
 सर्वापकारकरणाय सदार्द्रचित्ता ॥

This tender-heartedness is not restricted towards the good only. When the demons are destroyed the rest of the world is no doubt saved. It is also a boon to the wicked demons, as otherwise they would protract their career of sin leading them to damnation. She could have killed them by her very ferocity of looks but she sustains them by her beauty. She plans for them also in compassion. If they were to die actually at her hands, they would be purified by her weapons. Destruction in this case is verily purification.

She thus rewards the righteous, answers the prayers of the oppressed and sanctifies even the wicked. She subdues evil conduct, her form is uniquely blissful to the beholders, her prowess cuts down even the conquerors of the gods, and her compassion extends to even to the antagonists. What parallel could there be for her strength, her form terrific to the foes and excessively captivating to the others? She is compassionate at heart but deadly in battle. Only in her could opposite virtues co-exist. She is indeed the granter of boons in all the three worlds. These worlds are saved by the annihilation of the enemies and the enemies themselves are lifted heavenwards and the gods are freed from the fear of the demons.

Naturally the gods bow down to her in complete adoration. They pray for continued protection, through her forms terrific and forms charming. The main ideas embedded in the hymn may be summed up as follows:

(1) The Devī is the all-pervading power and is the primordial foundation of things. Yet she transcends evil. Even the great gods find it impossible to grasp her greatness.

(2) She is the glory that crowns righteous lives and is the deprivation to which the unrighteous are condemned. In fact she is the worker of the law of Karma.

(3) She is not only the power behind the Vedas, and the efficacy of Vedic rites; she is liberating knowledge also, as also secular science.

(4) She is beauty and compassionate grace.

(5) Her grace takes many forms. It brings about final liberation. It confers liberating knowledge. It rescues devotees omnipotently from fears, dangers and afflictions, if only they remember her in the hour of distress. It confers untold blessings on the needy worshippers. Finally, it works out; herein lies the unique idea of the hymn; the sanctification of the wicked through the very process of their apparent annihilation.

(c) The third hymn is also from the gods and it is the form in which they worship and pray to the divine mother for relief from the almost complete overthrow they have sustained at the hands of Śumbha and Niśumbha. It is simple in philosophical content but excels in the poetic refrain of adoring salutation to the Divine Mother.

नमस्तस्यै नमस्तस्यै नमस्तस्यै नमो नमः ।

The Mother is universally immanent. As the *Gītā* has it and as we have it in the earlier hymns also, the transcendent Mother

descends to her creation and discloses her presence in all that is of significance, by way of power or goodness or beauty. She permeates the universe by her radiant being and reveals herself in things and situations, both good and bad, in so far as they have any speciality or importance. The focal points of revelation in the hymn confine themselves to the human aspect of creation. All that makes a difference to human beings is a radiation from the indwelling mother. She is Viṣṇu-māyā, the inscrutable power of Viṣṇu. She is consciousness in beings. She is the intellect. She is even sleep, hunger and reflection. She is śakti in all beings. She is desire, forgiveness, the generic attribute and birth and also the decorous sense of shame. She is peace and renunciation. She is faith, radiance, wealth, and even the occupation that men live by. She is memory, mercy, and contentment. The mother of every creature is she. She is illusion. She is the pervading force actuating the senses. She pervades the cosmos as the principle of sentience. To her, say the gods, "We offer our obeisance again and again." In fact, in each of these forms she receives five obeisances. The spirit of the hymn is one of utter self-surrender to all the cosmic manifestations of the Deity.

(d) The final hymn records the acknowledgement of the great Mother's protective grace. She is truly the mother of all existence. She is the sovereign over all. She sustains all beings as the earth and nourishes them as water. She is the infinite power of Viṣṇu and, through her, creatures are deluded. Again she is the cause of their salvation. She is the dispeller of the affliction of those who seek refuge at her feet. All sciences are her forms, all women are her manifestations and she fills the entire universe. Such is her greatness that there can be no praise of her, by way of extolling her. All praise becomes under-statement in her case. She is all existence, and is the giver of heaven and even liberation. She is the intellect of all men. She is time that overtakes all creation. She is the very essence of auspiciousness of all that is auspicious. She is the refuge and the power of creation, maintenance and

dissolution. She supports the three guṇas and abounds in excellencies which are really guṇas. She is ever engaged in rescuing the humble and the afflicted who throw themselves on her mercy. She is Brāhmaṇī, Maheśvarī, Kaumārī, Vaiṣṇavī, Vārāhī, Nṛsimhī, Indrāṇī, Śiva-dūtī, Cāmuṇḍā, Lakṣmī and Sarasvatī. In short, she is all the goddesses that figure in the fight against the demons. She is of the nature of all beings. She is the supreme sovereign over all and is the possessor of all powers. From her, protection from all fear is sought. In all these stanzas of praise and prayer, there is a refrain "nārāyaṇi namo'stu te" 'adoration to thee, Nārāyaṇī'. She is principally addressed as Nārāyaṇī. She cures all diseases and, if indignant, can destroy all objects of desire. There is no peril to those who depend upon her. In fact, such devotees will offer refuge to others. Single-handed, she has destroyed all demons, hostile to Dharma, through a multitude of forms. She is the source of all knowledge and yet she runs the delusive process of transmigration. She is 'Viśveśvarī' the sovereign of the universe, who protects it. She is 'Viśvātmikā' the soul of the universe, who sustains it. She is 'Viśveśa-vandyā' worshipped by the lords of the worlds. Those who are humbly devoted to her become 'Viśvāśraya' the supporters of the universe. The gods invoke the mother's everlasting grace both on themselves and the entire world. The hymn is a fitting climax to the many-sided bhakti of the gods. It is an ecstatic self-surrender to the Divine mother, conceived in all her infinity of powers, beauty, manifestations and compassionate grace. Perhaps, the following three verses represent the essence of the hymn. The Sri Ramakrishna order has displayed great discernment in incorporating them in the daily prayers.

सर्वमंगलमांगल्ये शिवे सर्वार्थसाधिके ।

शरण्ये त्र्यम्बके गौरि नारायणि नमोऽस्तु ते ॥

She is the principle of auspiciousness.

सृष्टिस्थितिविनाशानां शक्तिभूते सनातनि ।
गुणाश्रये गुणमयि नारायणि नमोऽस्तु ते ॥

She is the eternal power expressing itself in the entire cosmic process.

शरणागतदीनार्तपरित्राणपरायणे ।
सर्वस्यार्तिहरे देवि नारायणि नमोऽस्तु ते ॥

She is the unfailing refuge for all beings who are virtually lost and she is wholly concerned in the redemption of all who come unto her.

4. The Philosophical Standpoint

(a) It is difficult to get out of the imaginative vision which the *Caṇḍī* sets up, as is necessary for making detached philosophical observations on it. A firm grasp of the fundamentals requires a certain psychic distance and release from the emotional submergence in the datum and also a certain non-engrossment in details. The peculiarity of our work is such that it envelops the student with the living reality of the all-permeating mother. She rarely leaves the stage after once introduced in the text, and all through the movement of the narrative and passage of hymns, she takes possession of us in her multifarious forms and activities. In Advaita, there is the theory that the comprehension of the central *Mahāvākya* 'Tat tvam asi' produces a direct experience of the absolute. Whether it is true or not, in the case of Upaniṣadic pronouncements, it is certainly a fact in the case of the *Caṇḍī*. The only other work which achieves this miracle of transmuting study into almost perceptual vision is perhaps Tulasī Das's *Rāmāyaṇa*. Well may the scripture declare that the Mother appears on the scene the moment she is remembered and the work as a whole produces a solid and sustained remembrance of her, which as *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* would have described as *Dhruvā Smṛti*.

It is rather a compassionate concession on the part of the work that the only spiritual exercise it prescribes and extols frequently is this remembrance of the Mother. Other forms of worship are just necessities of bhakti but are not necessities for realization. The basic requirement is simple and easy of attainment. It is true that Suratha and Samādhi practised elaborate worship to the point of sprinkling the offerings to the Mother with their own blood. The commentator, Nāgoji Bhaṭṭa, who is otherwise no good commentator helps us in this context. He says that only the king who wanted secular boons from the Mother and not the elevated devotee, Samādhi, did so. He may be correct. Further, it is after all the devotee's own blood that is offered as symbolic of self-oblation and no slaughter of other beings is envisaged as essential for the ritual. The later association of Durgā worship with animal sacrifices or even human sacrifice is a deviation and a fall from the standpoint of our scripture. It is also significant that the caste hierarchy is somewhat upset in the *Caṇḍī*. The Kṣatriya is after lower puruṣārthas, while the Vaiśya rises definitely higher.

But devotion by way of devout remembrance is just the pramāṇa for acquiring certainty of knowledge. With regard to the Mother it is all that is necessary and sufficient. The knowledge so gained does not remain merely a subjective vision with every chance of being a hallucination. Our scripture propounds a principle of confirmation that transcends the internal perception. The Mother involved in remembrance testifies to her reality by accomplishing the redemption of the devotees from the danger, fear, affliction, delusion and sin for the sake of which they resort to the devotion of remembrance. There is a transformation of the human situation from that of anguish and asceticism to that of triumphant purification, illumination and fulfilment. The reality of this upliftment guarantees the authenticity of the vision of the Mother answering the seeker's imploring remembrance.

Thus the *Caṇḍī* has in it a complete epistemology of the experience of the divine. It propounds the cardinal principle of experimental mysticism.

(b) It is necessary to remark on the distinctiveness and freshness of the mother-worship propagated in the *Caṇḍī*. It is singularly free from the involved and esoteric Kuṇḍalini-yoga, which forms so large a part of a later Tantra. There is not even the faintest allusion to it. Even the yoga technique formulated by Patañjali is referred to only a little. 'Mahāvratas' elaborated in the *Yoga-sūtra* are just mentioned once (4-9). The Āśrama of Medhas has sublimated even blood-thirsty beasts of the forest into non-violence. This also, perhaps, alludes to Patañjali's proposition that a true yogi causes the cessation of enmities in his vicinity. In the final devotional practice of the king and merchant, there is considerable conformity to standard yogic practice. But, as for the non-Patañjalian cult of Kuṇḍalini-yoga, with its ladder of *cakras*, the coiled up cobra of consciousness and the method of its ascent to Śiva's *Sahasrāra*, there is no trace of it in the *Caṇḍī*.

There is another remarkable feature. The *Caṇḍī* is certainly a glorification of the Divine mother but there is not a single gross anthropomorphic representation of Caṇḍikā. She is a Goddess no doubt and the mother of universe. She is fierce in her battles and is also enchantingly beautiful. She captivates by her enthralling charms all who behold her, even the enemies in the hour of their fatal combats. She is 'Strī-ratna' as Caṇḍa and Muṇḍa report to Śumbha. But the *Caṇḍī* contains no physical description of the feminine beauty of the Goddess. Even as Tulasidas conveys the boundless beauty of mother Sītā, without drawing attention even once to her bodily characteristics, the *Caṇḍī* succeeds in presenting the supreme beauty of the Mother without a single reference to the sexually significant characteristics of her physical person. In this respect, it scores a spiritual victory over the devotional compositions on the mother such as even *Lalitā-sahasra-nāma*, *Saundarya-laharī* and *Syāmalā-daṇḍaka*, which are otherwise of a high order of excellence. The great Ānanda-varadhana reprimands even mundane poets of the stature of Kālidāsa for treating the love-making of the gods in the crude style of vulgar sex

(*Dhivanyāloka*, III-6). That the manifestly pious poets on Devī should descend to gross sexual association in their poetry is more reprehensible. The problem here is crucial. The Divine mother is a mother and a concrete personality and reveals herself in transcendent beauty of form. But in depicting her form or beauty, the devotee-poet should exclude rigorously the sickly extremes of anthropomorphism. Otherwise, he will blow up his devotion in the orgy of sexual imagery. In achieving this discipline and sanity of representation, the *Caṇḍī* reaches the highest mark of perfection. This indicates the measure of the spiritual maturity that has gone into its formation. It is in consistency with this that the *phala-śruti* of the *Caṇḍī* has nothing corresponding to the fantastic successes by way of sexual attraction promised in *Lalitā-sahasranāma* and *Saundarya-laharī* to the worshippers of the Devī (*Lalitā-phala-śruti*-42. *Saundarya-laharī*-13).

Sex-motivation is entirely absent in the worship of the mother promulgated in the *Caṇḍī*. There is no touch of *vāmācāra* whatsoever in our scripture.

(c) The Divine mother is introduced in the text as the Mahāmāyā of Viṣṇu. That this description of hers is no mere religious catholicity but a fundamental doctrine is amply proved by the entire text and particularly in the final adoration wherein she is invoked as Nārāyaṇī. She is the Śakti or power of Viṣṇu in ultimate conception. The fundamental metaphysical principle is named here Viṣṇu or Nārāyaṇa and the philosophy is unequivocally monistic. Mahāmāyā is a power, a creative attribute of the central principle. It is not necessary to labour that this māyā is not the conventional Advaitic māyā, just illusion or the cosmic principle of illusion. Mahāmāyā does not pass away on the rising of philosophic enlightenment. There is no *Viśvamāyā-nivṛtti* in the theory of the *Caṇḍī*. Illusions may cease but she is the power that causes illusions and is also the power that destroys them. In reality, her constructive role as grace that grants enlightenment and even liberation takes effect fully only after the cessation of mundane

illusions. She is the eternal splendor of the ultimate principle creatively operative, co-existentially with the fundamental being. Her substratum is no *Nirviśeṣa-vastu* from any standpoint that matters. Rather it only appears to be so when the *nidrā* aspect of *māyā* is operative and on its suppression, the constructive aspect of divine Śakti takes the field in all its manifold creativity. This is in radical contrast to the position of Śaṅkara who refuses to concede metaphysical ultimacy to the category of Śakti, as, for instance, in his commentary on the *Bhagavad-gītā* (13.12) in explanation of the expression '*anādi-mat-param brahma*'. The entire philosophy of the *Caṇḍī* stands or falls with the acceptance or otherwise of the ultimacy of the principle of Śakti as a fundamental character of the ultimate metaphysical principle. Nagoji Bhaṭṭa tries to insert the conventional view by splitting '*guṇāśraye guṇamaye*' into '*guṇāśraye*' and '*aguṇamaye*.' The expedient is odd and does violence to the rest of the great verse in the hymn. How can she be '*aguṇamaye*' if she is *sr̥ṣṭisthiti-nāśānām śakti-bhūte sanātani*? She supports the three *guṇas* of *prakṛti* and is herself of the essence of the perfection of God-head, which are *guṇas* in reality and characterise her in all metaphysical seriousness. This interpretation is ably supported by another consideration. There is no trace in the whole of the *Caṇḍī* of the philosophical position of Śaṅkarite Advaita. In this it contrasts rather sharply with *Lalitā-sahasra-nāma* and *Saundarya-laharī*, which presuppose that system very definitely in some major concepts. This circumstance may establish the antiquity of the *Caṇḍī* but it also clarifies its philosophical identity. The ultimate reality in the system is the one Divine principle characterized inalienably by the category of Śakti.

There is of course the problem of properly formulating the relation of Śakti-mat to Śakti. While the negation of Śakti in an ultimate sense in Brahman is an untenable interpretation of our Śakti, can we take Śakti as a mere attribute, somewhat in the way in which the *guṇas* are understood in Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika? The *guṇas*

are rather external adjuncts to the substances in that system. It is hard to import that position into our work. In the first place, there is no terminological trace of that system in the *Caṇḍī*. There is, secondly, no artificial patching of entities by the superfluous and untenable *samavāya*. It is thus not possible to elucidate the relation of Śakti to the substantive entity in terms of this system.

It is possible to understand Śakti somewhat on the principle of 'Viśeṣa' propounded in the later Dvaita philosophy? In that school, the distinction between substance and its inherent attribute is only a conceptual and verbal device not founded on any distinction in reality. On that hypothesis Śakti will be only a verbal abstraction without any ontological distinctness. There is a difficulty in the account. It has to be examined whether the conventional distinction is *bhrānti-mūla* or *pramāṇa-siddha*. On the first alternative, the position boils down to its historical antithesis, the system of Advaita. On the second, it cannot be distinguished from Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika. Positing of the category of Viśeṣa cannot finally solve the problem and it calls for further investigation and determination of the ontological status of the attribute. The *Caṇḍī* offers another complicating proposition. The Śakti or Mahāmāyā is a full-fledged being or personality, concrete and effectively operating in the scheme of things. It is no abstract feature to be metaphysically discountenanced. It contains the paradoxical nature of being both a power and an entity belonging no doubt to the substantive principle but also exercising the functions of a substance by itself. It has creative agency and can enter into operational relation with its substantive. It bears many forms and is itself a bearer of attributes. This renders the explanation of Śakti on the Dvaita principle of Viśeṣa unworkable. We have to rest content with the thesis that the supreme Being has this fundamental Śakti and the Śakti itself is a personal power of infinite consequence. A position such as this does not abrogate the basic monism, for the Śakti is just an adjectival mode of the one principle. We are witnessing in the

Caṇḍī something like an anticipation in principle of either the later Viśiṣṭādvaita or, better still, Acintya-bhedābheda.

(d) The Śakti, or Mahāmāyā performs a remarkable function in relation to the conflict of polytheism and monotheism. The Mahāmāyā who destroyed Maḥiṣāsura was the combined mass of the powers of all the deities such as Viṣṇu, Śiva, and Brahmā. The mother here is no mere aggregate of all gods but an integral entity functioning as a unity. Again when Śumbha accuses Caṇḍikā as glorying in the exploits of other divine fighters, she claims them as her own vibhūtis and withdraws them at once into her own all-inclusive being. There is unity in God-head without negating the multiplicity of deities. Again the divine Mother herself breaks up into Kālī, Pārvatī, Ambikā as exigencies demand and conducts the campaigns against the demons with an army composed of her own diverse presentations. Even her angry breath and rage do take on personal shapes and work in cooperation with her and under her command. There is an easy management in all this of the transitions between unity and variety. The faith in one deity taking on many forms, neither the unity nor variety being a deception, gets conspicuously established in the *Caṇḍī*. This is a bold solution of one of the major problems of Hindu religious thought. In this handling of the monotheism, there is another agreeable feature in the *Caṇḍī*. It is absolutely non-sectarian. *Caṇḍī* is, no doubt Nārāyaṇī, Viṣṇu-māyā but she is also the consort of Śiva as indicated in the story of the war against Rakta-bīja. The avatārs of Viṣṇu, Narasiṃha and Varāha, do play important parts in the fight against Śumbha and Niśumbha. The incarnation of Viṣṇu as Rāma is nowhere referred to. This is a notable silence. Kṛṣṇa is named once and his foster mother, Yaśodā is predicted to give birth to the Mother in a future incarnation of hers, in which she is to kill Śumbha and Niśumbha in their next rebirth. Indra does come in somewhat both as a victim of the aggression of the demons and also as one whose Śakti adds up to the composition

of Caṇḍikā. The god Skanda does come in along with him. Surprisingly, Gaṇeśa does not get mentioned. The mother by herself is named indifferently as Lakṣmī, Sarasvatī and Gaurī. Nārasimhī is well-described in the expression: (सटाक्षेपक्षिप्त-नक्षत्र-संहतिः)

"The constellations of the stars are scattered by the toss of the mane of the Lion-man Goddess". Thus the believer in every principal god of the Hindu pantheon feels at home in the *Caṇḍī*. In this catholicity, one somewhat anticipates the universal devotionism of Tulasidas and Sri Ramakrishna. The breath of Hinduism in its all-embracing vitality is there in the *Caṇḍī*. If some forms of later Vaiṣṇavism kept away from the religion of Durgā, it was partly due to the cult of the Mother identifying itself wholly and illegitimately with exclusive Śaivism. There is no original basis for any fanatical polemic between Mother worship and Vaiṣṇavism. It is partly due to the Vaiṣṇava intolerance of a Goddess who was so universally and equally associated with all the gods. It is interesting to note that even Śaṅkara in an ultra-Vaiṣṇavite mood records his deprecation of the mother-worship in his commentary on the *Gītā* (9-25, 17-4). But in its fundamentals the worship of the Divine mother is non-sectarian and the goddess has intimate links with every important god of Hinduism.

(e) Mahāmāyā is absolute power. The principal modes in which the Divine power actuates itself must be indicated.

(1) In the first place, it is the bed-rock of the cosmic process. The entire creation rises out of it, subsists in it and finally dissolves into it. This is the conventional three-fold cosmic activity of god-head. It has to be noted that this omnipotent role is exercised by the divine mother universally, in respect of beings that live and of elements and objects that are merely physical. Even the galaxy of gods such as Indra draw support from her and seek her merciful intervention when their position is in jeopardy. She is the very principle of dynamism and change as time.

(2) In relation to finite selves such as we are and the beings whose rescue she accomplishes and whose ends she brings about,

there are some special modes of her activity. She is the life-principle and the power of consciousness actuating them. Whether they pursue good or evil, the strength on their part to do so is derived from her. She is immanent as power in both the good and the wicked. She is the cause of the delusion of the deluded and the source of light for the enlightened. She binds creatures in her powerful meshes of māyā. The mother imparts strength to the fetters of māyā, so that when the revulsion from the wrong direction of life arises, it must be from the depths of being and that would be possible only if the implications of the initial Āsuric choice are gone through in all their thoroughness. She, therefore, inheres in sin and destroys it too, according to her own wise dispensation. Whatever is special, meaningful, effective in any creature, bright or dark, is drawn from this source. This is the burden of the Vibhūti-yoga of the *Gītā* and that teaching forms the substance of the third major hymn of our text.

(3) She is a tremendous destroyer also. In fact that is the aspect of Kālī that strikes the student of the scripture of begin with. She destroys the wicked, specially when they become heinous by seeking to destroy the good. Her mercy and grace, the softer attributes would stand nowhere if they were not sustained and fostered by the irresistible destructive might of the Mother. Power may not be the principal character of the deity, but without it there is no conservation of values. It requires, as Swami Vivekananda insists and following him Sri Aurobindo, a heroic type of religious spirit to adore the terrible aspect of God. The wars of the Divine Mother in the *Caṇḍī* are marvellous representations of divine power.

(4) It is necessary to specify what she destroys. At the time of cosmic dissolution she absorbs the manifested universe into herself. From a gross point of view, she destroys beings who are evil, in whom the principle of evil is incarnate, such as Mahiṣāsura, Caṇḍa, Muṇḍa, Rakta-bīja, Śumbha and Niśumbha. In this aspect, she is too terrific even for contemplation. She also destroys delu-

sion and worldly infatuations as in the case of Samādhi. Sometimes she herself inserts delusion as in Madhu and Kaiṭabha for purposes of finally destroying them. But in relation to the devotees, her role is that of an enlightener and she destroys their ignorance. Even when there is knowledge, a devotee may lack the strength of will and clarity of discrimination. In such a case, she imparts wisdom and moral stamina, and then destroys the weakness of his spirit. There is another aspect of the Mother's destructiveness, uniquely emphasized in our text. When she hurls the evil ones into destruction, what she is actually doing is the destruction of the evil principle in them. They thereby undergo a violent purification. The mother's violence is an act of mercy to the victims also. This idea is hinted a little in Śrī Rāma's answer to Vāli in the *Rāmāyaṇa* and is prominently exhibited in the devotional compositions of Vedānta Deśika. In the *Caṇḍī*, it forms one of the central elements in its theory of divine destructiveness. (Chapter IV verses 18 to 23).

(5) Now we come to the character of power as grace. In reality all other aspects of power are instrumental to grace. Her cosmic activity, her involvement in the history of creatures, her destructive power are all for purposes of working out her grace. They confer uniqueness on grace, as they render it omnipotent. Her motherhood is fundamental. Let us see the various constructive operations of grace. She constitutes the saving wisdom enshrined in the Vedas, Gāyatrī and *praṇava*. She works the law of Karma, so that the human effort goes to waste. She brings prosperity to the righteous and privation to the unrighteous in accordance with the Law of Karma, which is itself an expression of her grace. She is the principle of beauty in herself and all the beauty of nature and human lives are partial manifestations of this infinite beauty. Her beauty has a sustaining power and even the wicked demons feeding on it in battlefields, managed to live as long as they could. She sustains the creatures as earth, nourishes them as water and illumines them as the Sun, Moon, and fire. Insofar as the elements are

friendly to man, they are expressions of her cosmic care. She liberates man from fears, afflictions and calamities just on his remembering her in the moment of peril. She grants illumination when worshipped with that end. Even those who incur punishment at her hands, are baptised to sinlessness thereby. Finally, she is the great liberator. Mukti, the ultimate goal of life, is her supreme gift.

The *Gītā* classifies devotees into four categories, Ārtta, Arthārthī, Jijñāsu and Jñānī. The divine Mother fulfills eminently the aspirations of all the four. She rescues those who are in grief and danger, she confers worldly blessings on utilitarian devotee. She illumines the souls of the seekers of truth and the enlightened devotees receive from her the grace of final perfection. The divine Mother is absolute grace as concretised in her magnificent personality.

(6) It remains to add one important clarification. Though she is grace absolute, in power, expansiveness and manifold modes of operation, she functions in response to human initiative. Man must at least turn to her in remembrance for her to grant him her visitation. The manner and direction of grace are determined by the specific prayers of the seekers. Grace operating without human co-operation by way of appeal for it, may take the undesired form it took in relation to the warring demons. If it is to take a positive form it will have to be an answer to an invocation to that effect. The mother feeds as and when the children wail for food. There is bliss when the finite will is crowned with fulfilment through the divine will. When the finite will is not there, grace operates still but not by way of blissful consummation, but by way of purgation which may bear the aspect of brute force for earthly consideration. The mother's forgiveness may itself take the shape of violence as Tagore would say: "Thy forgiveness burst in storms, throwing them down, scattering their thefts in the dust. Thy forgiveness was in the thunder-stone; in the shower of blood, in the angry red of the sunset". (*Fruit Gathering*-36). The ancient problem of

suffering in a universe governed by grace is solved in substance in this account. The sufferings of the wicked are explained that way. The sufferings of the just are due to their not yet turning to the mother for relief and redress, and thus converting their goodness into godliness. The gods suffer till they come unto the Mother. She swings into action at the very moment of their remembrance of her. The one residual problem of evil is the triumph of the unjust. Their day of reckoning is on its way and they will receive the corrective treatment inevitably. Till then they are bound with the fetters of their own making no doubt but strong with the strength of the Mother.

There remains the problem of evil-doing. The Mother endows the creature with freedom for going that way. She does not leave it in the dark. She offers knowledge of right and wrong through her revelations. She in fact sent Śiva himself to the demons with proposals for peace. If that knowledge is powerless to produce wisdom and the power of right resolve in the creature, it is proof that Mahāmāyā in her tāmasic aspect is at work; that can be subdued only by the devout recollection of the Mother. So if sin is perpetrated, māyā is to be taken as behind it and the only remedy is the remembrance of the Mother. In short, the basic cause of moral evil is lack of devotion to the Mother. Even so is suffering as noted already. It is the Mother's way of purifying the evil minded. Putting the two together, the solution to the problem of evil is that the ignoring of the Mother is the cause of evil. As the Upaniṣads would have said there has been a *Nirākarāṇa* of the divine and hence evil befalls the creature in an answering *Nirākarāṇa*. The initiative and responsibility for evil must be squarely located in the individual. Man is putting up a fight against the onrush of divine grace. Hence the fundamental prayers of the *Caṇḍī* are acts of adoration and surrender. In the establishment of the right relation to her, lies the solution for the problem of evil. Evil in both its aspects of sin and suffering is life-negation arising from god-negation. As the Upaniṣads would say, the affirmation

of the divine is the sole pathway to life-accomplishment. *Theoretically, the solution to the problem of evil lies in the god-denying egoism of the creature. Practically, the solution lies in the self-erasing devotion to the divine mother.* The Mother is all in all but she functions in response to human initiative by way of negation or affirmation and that autonomy of initiative also her primordial gift. She is indeed चैतन्य-स्तन्य-दायिनी

I am unable to discern in the *Caṅḍī*—I rejoice over this inability—a final message other than that of a call to total surrender to the divine Mother. She is to be approached with the reverberating chant "*namas-tasyai namas-tasyai namas-tasyai namo namaḥ*" This message necessarily implies the reality and noumenal ultimacy of grace. Man may be redeemed from the illusions of Saṁsāra, the illusion of the absolute reality of the external world and that of the separate reality of his individual existence. But the grace, whose suspension was the cause of those manifold illusions and whose release into operation effectuates his redemption is no illusion. On the contrary, it is the reality of realities, *Satyasya satyam*. This undoubtedly constitutes the first and last truth of *Śrī Caṅḍī*.

LAKṢMĪNṚSĪMHA—KARĀVALAMBA-
STOTRAM OF ŚAṆKARA
(Some Reflections)

T.P. Ramachandran*

Introduction

This hymn is also known by the name *Lakṣmīnṛsīmha-karuṇārāsa-stotram*.¹ It consists of seventeen verses. If we consider its content, it is a complement to the other hymn by Ādi Śaṅkara on Lord Narasīmha, namely the *Lakṣmīnṛsīmha-pañcaratnam*, which consists of five verses. The object of both the poems is to secure for the devotee the spirit of dispassion (*vairāgya*) by invoking the grace of the Lord.

The importance of *vairāgya* in the pursuit of *mokṣa* cannot be over-emphasized. The final and direct means to *mokṣa*, according to Advaita, is *jñāna*, the direct experience of Brahman. The groundwork for *jñāna* lies in the techniques of study of scripture (*śravaṇa*), reflection thereon (*manana*), and meditation on the

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truth thereby known mediately (*nididhyāsana*). These three in turn depend for success on the chastening and steadying of the mind through disciplines like disinterested action (*karma*), devotion to God (*bhakti*), and meditation on Saguṇa-Brahman (*upāsana*).² *Vairāgya* lies at the bottom line of the whole edifice of spiritual discipline along with *viveka*. Just for this reason, *vairāgya* cannot be regarded as least important. It is important in its own way, as without it, the rest of the journey cannot even commence.

Vairāgya does not amount to fleeing from the world in disgust. Such a step is not even possible, let alone desirable. Having been born at all in the world and bearing a body without choice as it were, one has to *live*, undergoing the sweet and bitter fruits of life. However, we are taught that it is possible to detach our minds from objects, if we cannot literally run away from them. What leads us to the world of objects in a manner as to bind us to them is desire to enjoy them. It is desire, and not objects, that has to be given up. But it is not easy to renounce desire. It is a bent deeply ingrained in our minds through its free play in countless births. Constant effort is necessary to wear it down bit by bit. The effort lies through the exercise of discrimination (*viveka*). *Viveka* is the chief means to *vairāgya*. And *viveka* can be cultivated by observation and reflection thereon.

The student of spirituality has to be as much an observer of life in the world as a scientist is of natural phenomena. But the purposes are radically different. Scientific observation is meant to find out the physical nature of things—their structure, function, and interaction. Spiritual observation is for gaining insight into how far things are valuable for securing the final goal of life. From this point of view, the various aspects of life in the world may be said to fall into three classes.

(1) There are aspects of life which are patently inimical to spiritual well-being, for the reason that they cannot be secured without breaking codes of conduct, e.g. living off the fruits of theft or cheating. *Mokṣa* cannot be secured without respect for

morality. What is morally reprehensible must, therefore, be avoided at all costs.

(2) There are other aspects of worldly life, which, though not opposed to moral considerations, are irrelevant to the pursuit of *mokṣa*. The development of yogic powers or the acquisition of detailed knowledge about physical phenomena which are neutral to our spiritual concerns, like the presence of water in Mars, are examples of this category. Such ends are not objectionable and may be pursued so long as there is taste for them. But ultimately one must learn to withdraw from them if one is serious about liberation.

(3) There are yet other aspects in life which are not only morally permissible, but even spiritually serviceable, provided they are not allowed to become ends in themselves. Unlike the previous two categories of worldly goods, this one is not by nature either inimical or irrelevant to the pursuit of *mokṣa*. It could become so only if it is valued for its own sake. For a seeker of *mokṣa* the right perspective is to view the aspects coming under this category as means to liberation. They could be useful, and in some cases even indispensable, for the pursuit of the final goal. For example, good health and freedom from poverty are not only welcome but unavoidable for the rigorous observance of spiritual practices. Incidentally, it may be remarked that the modern generation has perverted the real value of wealth and made economic development the sole objective of human life. The whole of the foregoing analysis is intended to show how important discriminative knowledge (*viveka*) becomes in the cultivation of detachment (*vairāgya*).

Apart from *viveka*, scripture, mainly Itihāsas and Purāṇas and some portions of the Upaniṣads, also helps to induce *vairāgya* into our minds. The Epics and Purāṇas contain vast portions devoted to the depiction of the sordid aspects of life. There is no life that is devoid of some element or other of pain. Even the pleasure that we derive from various aspects of earthly pursuits is not only short-lived, but is also either mixed with pain or followed

by pain. Pain (*duḥkha*) is of three kinds: *ādhyātmika*, or caused by the mind, i.e. by our own folly; *ādhibhautika*, or caused by other living beings; *ādhidaivika*, or resulting from unknown causes, by which is meant the sins of our past lives which we do not know. Apart from depicting pain in the present life, scripture also goes into elaborate accounts of the misery of death and rebirth and of retribution in hell (*naraka*) for sins done on earth. There are also accounts of enjoyment in the world of the gods, but it is carefully shown that such enjoyment is not endless, but holds the necessary prospect of one returning to the mixed experience of earthly life. Yet another topic dwelt upon by scripture is the process of the evolution and involution of the world. Against such a huge background, our own lives on earth look so small. All such scriptural accounts are intended to instil in the minds of readers the precious virtue of dispassion. We shall give two instances of authority to support this claim.

Verses 18 and 19 of Chapter VIII in the *Bhagavad-gītā* describe how all beings become manifest from Brahmā at the beginning of a *kalpa* and subside in him at the end of a *kalpa*. Introducing these verses, Śaṅkara says in his commentary that the purpose of the teaching is to induce detachment from *samsāra*.³ Again, in the first five verses of Chapter XV of the *Bhagavad-gītā* the beginningless course of transmigration (*samsāra*) is figuratively described as an inverted peepul tree, whose root is the ultimate reality (Brahman), whose trunk is Brahmā, or Hiraṇyagarbha, whose foliage is the Veda, and whose branches growing above and below are the various living beings. While introducing these verses, Śaṅkara observes in his commentary that the intention behind such a description is to produce *vairāgya* in our minds and adds that only one who is detached from *samsāra* is fit for the knowledge of Brahman, and not any other.⁴

We have earlier referred to *viveka* as the chief means to develop *vairāgya*. But *viveka* is a human exercise. All human effort has its limitations. It is, therefore, natural for human beings to seek

the help of God for the success of their endeavours. Most men find it necessary to seek divine assistance even in temporal pursuits. How much more is God's help needed in our spiritual endeavours! For the development of *viveka* and its fructification into *vairāgya*, sincere prayer to God comes spontaneous to struggling mortals. It is for the fulfilment of such a need that Ācārya Śāᅅkara has composed the poem which is the subject of the present article—*Lakᅣmīᅅsiᅅha-karāvalambam*. The other hymn composed by him, *Lakᅣmīᅅsiᅅha-paᅅcaratnam* is also meant as prayer for the favour of *vairāgya*.⁵ But we may discern two main differences between the two poems. We shall refer to them before entering into the details of the *Karāvalamba-stotram*.

In the *Paᅅcaratnam* the mind addresses itself as a "bee" (*ceto-bhᅅᅅga*) and exhorts it to seek the nectar of pure bliss at the lotus feet of Lord Lakᅣmīnarasiᅅha. In the *Karāvalambam* the mind addresses the Lord and beseeches him to lend it his helping hand of grace. This is the difference in the method of the two poems.

The second difference relates to the content. Both the poems dwell on the need for *vairāgya*. But the reasons cited for *vairāgya* happen to be different. The *Paᅅcaratnam* is more metaphysical in its reasons. It hints at the *jīva* as an image (*pratibimba*) of Īśvara (v. 1). It speaks of the world as an illusion and compares it to the illusory silver appearing in the shell (v. 2). It draws attention to the radical difference between worldly pleasure and the bliss that is Brahman (vv. 3 and 4). And finally it returns to clinch the illusion theory by comparing the entire world to a dream (v. 5).

The *Karāvalamba-stotram*, on the contrary, reaches out to the more common aspirant for *mokᅣa*. Its reasons for *vairāgya* centre round the insurmountable misery associated with worldly life, which necessarily involves transmigration (*samsāra*). Various metaphors are employed to bring out the profundity of the misery of worldly existence. We may cite them: forest fire (v. 3); snare (v. 4); deep well (v. 5); frightening elephant (v. 6); serpent (v. 7); tree bearing bitter fruit (v. 8); wide ocean (vv. 9 and 10); terrible

forest (v. 11); nooses (v. 12); sense organs as thieves, discrimination as lost wealth, infatuation as dark well, and ignorance as blindness (v. 15). By secondary meaning, such metaphors convey the gravity of the misery experienced in worldly life. But the unexpressed intention behind such comparisons is to suggest the need for detachment (*vairāgya*) from the world. Such a surmise is confirmed by verse fifteen, where the words *moha* and *viveka* find expression. Thus the whole poem breathes of what Ālaṅkārikas describe as *lakṣaṇāmūla-dhvani*.

That the cause of misery is nothing but one's own attachment to the world, which itself is born out of ignorance, is clearly brought out by verse fifteen. Hence the repeated prayer to Lord Narasimha in every verse to extend his helping hand to the suffering subject is also, by implication, a prayer to save him from ignorance and attachment. And we are assured by the last verse that those who recite this hymn with devotion will reap the benefit (of detachment) in this world and finally attain liberation (figured as the blissful lotus feet of the Lord). We shall now enter into the individual verses. For the exposition of these verses, I have consulted the text and translation of the hymn given by N. Gangadharan.⁶ I am indebted to this contribution.

[1]

श्रीमत्पयोनिधिनिकेतन चक्रपाणे
भोगीन्द्रभोगमणिरञ्जितपुण्यमूर्ते ।
योगीश शश्वत शरण्य भवाब्धिपोत
लक्ष्मीनृसिंह मम देहि करावलम्बम् ॥

Lord Viṣṇu had taken the form of Narasimha to save his great child-devotee, Prahlāda, from the torment of his demonised father, Hiraṇya, who had turned enemy to Lord Nārāyaṇa. This verse praises the glorious form of Viṣṇu. The milky ocean is his abode; he holds the disc in his hand; he rests on the Lord of serpents

(Ādiśeṣa), who is adorned with gems; he is the master of yogins; he is the eternal and the refuge; above all, he is the raft for crossing the ocean of birth and death. May he lend me his supporting hand!

[2]

ब्रह्मेन्द्ररुद्रमरुदर्ककिरीटकोटि -
सङ्घट्टिताङ्घ्रिकमलामलकान्तिकान्त ।
लक्ष्मीलसत्कुचसरोरुहराजहंस
लक्ष्मीनृसिंह मम देहि करावलम्बम् ॥

This verse, though not referring to worldly existence, offers a general prayer for the Lord's helping hand. It praises the Lord thus. You shine with the pure lustre of your lotus feet, the feet which are touched by the countless crowns of Brahmā, Indra, Rudra, the Maruts, the Sun, and other gods when they offer obeisance. You are the royal swan that dwells in the lotus bosom of Goddess Lakṣmī.

[3]

संसारदावदहनातुर-भीकरोरु-
ज्वालावलीभिरतिदग्धतनूरुहस्य ।
त्वत्पादपद्मसरसीशरणागतस्य
लक्ष्मीनृसिंह मम देहि करावलम्बम् ॥

In this verse worldly existence is compared to a forest fire (*dāva*), which causes extensive damage. Unable to bear the heat of that dreadful fire, with my hair burnt down by its extensive columns, I take refuge in your lotus feet, which is like the tank to cool off my burnt self. Oh Lakṣmīnṛsiṃha, do extend to me your hand of support!

[4]

संसारजालपतितस्य जगन्निवास
 सर्वेन्द्रियार्थबद्धिशार्थझषोपमस्य ।
 प्रोत्खण्डितप्रचुरतालुकमस्तकस्य
 लक्ष्मीनृसिंह मम देहि करावलम्बम् ॥

Worldly existence is not merely painful; it is deceitful. Its petty attractions enslave us. Hence the world deserves to be described as a snare (*jāla*). I have fallen into this trap, cries the devotee, having been drawn into it by the objects of all the sense organs even as a fish is drawn by the hook with head and cheeks rent asunder. Save me, Oh Lakṣmīnṛsīmīha, who are omnipresent!

[5]

संसारकूपमतिघोरमगाधमूलं
 संप्राप्य दुःखशतसर्पसमाकुलस्य ।
 दीनस्य देव कृपया पदमागतस्य
 लक्ष्मीनृसिंह मम देहि करावलम्बम् ॥

To be caught in worldly existence is like falling to the bottom of an unfathomable and frightening well; and undergoing hundreds of worldly miseries is like being tormented by serpents at the bottom of that well. Save me, this distressed one who has resorted to your feet, Oh Lakṣmīnṛsīmīha!

[6]

संसारभीकरकरीन्द्रकराभिघात-
 निष्पिष्टमर्मवपुषः सकलार्तिनाश ।
 प्राणप्रयाणभवभीतिसमाकुलस्य
 लक्ष्मीनृसिंह मम देहि करावलम्बम् ॥

Lakṣmīṅṛsimha is the destroyer of all miseries to whom the lament of the devotee is addressed. Worldly existence is like a terrifying elephant. And my vital parts have been ground by pounding from its trunk. That is to say, I have lost my sense of discrimination. Consequently, the fear of repeated birth and death afflicts me. Oh Lakṣmīṅṛsimha, lend me your supporting hand!

[7]

संसारसर्पघनवक्त्रभयोग्रतीव्र-
 दंष्ट्राकरालविषदग्धविनष्टमूर्तेः ।
 नागारिवाहन सुधाब्धिनिवास शीरे
 लक्ष्मीनृसिंह मम देहि करावलम्बम् ॥

Worldly existence is now compared to a serpent. Its mouth is wide and scary; from its fangs emanate strong and fell poison; I am burnt and ruined by this venom. The import of this lament is that it is not easy to escape from the cycle of birth and death with all its attendant pains, as our desires are irresistible. Oh Lakṣmīṅṛsimha, Viṣṇu, Lord of the milky ocean, lend me your saving hand!

[8]

संसारवृक्षमघबीजमनन्तकर्म-
 शाखाशतं करणपत्रमनङ्गपुष्पम् ।
 आरुह्य दुःखफलिनं पततो दयालो
 लक्ष्मीनृसिंह मम देहि करावलम्बम् ॥

The cause of *saṁsāra* is our beginningless ignorance (*avidyā*). Out of ignorance, we think of ourselves as separate from all other objects, which we perceive by the senses. We get attached to select objects, and from attachment (*rāga*) we develop desire (*kāma*) in respect of those objects. From desire comes action (*karma*) to

fulfil desire. Action invites results (*phala*) which are never entirely pleasing. In the false hope of pure enjoyment we are born again and again. Thus *saṃsāra*, which necessarily involves pain, has a number of constituents, which are organically connected among themselves. To bring out this idea, *saṃsāra* is compared to a tree. Ignorance, its seed, is described as sinful (*agha*), since it does not belong to our true nature and is the root cause of misery. The senses are the leaves. Attachment and desire, represented as flowers, are subtle forces. Hence they are described as formless (*anaṅga*). Our many desireful actions are represented as hundreds of branches. The final outcome of *saṃsāra* is only pain, which is represented as bitter fruit.

The central import of this description is that we cannot pursue worldly ends and yet avoid the fruit of pain. Having mounted this tree of bitter fruits, cries the devotee, I am fallen (*patataḥ*), oh merciful one. Though it is not stated from what I am fallen, the implication of this complaint can only be that the fall is from the goal of liberation. (It would not stand to reason to read that I am fallen from the tree of *saṃsāra* which I have mounted, because to fall off that tree would only be welcome.)

[9]

संसारसागरविशालकरालकाल-
नक्रग्रहग्रसितनिग्रहविग्रहस्य ।
व्यग्रस्य रागनिचयोर्मिनिपीडितस्य
लक्ष्मीनृसिंह मम देहि करावलम्बम् ॥

Worldly existence is marked by two features—attachment (*rāga*) and the consequent bondage (*nigraha*). In the wide ocean of worldly life I am bound and ruined like one whose body is seized, held, and eaten up by dreadful and deadly crocodiles. The reason is not far to seek—I am bewildered and intensely afflicted by a

multitude of attachments. Oh Lord Lakṣmīnṛsiṃha, lend me your supporting hand (and save me from attachment and bondage.)!

[10]

संसारसागरनिमज्जनमुह्यमानं
दीनं विलोक्य विभो करुणानिधे माम् ।
प्रह्लादखेदपरिहारकृतावतार
लक्ष्मीनृसिंह मम देहि करावलम्बम् ॥

The image of the ocean comes up again for worldly existence. I am benumbed and drowned in this ocean. Cast your glance at me, this hapless creature, Oh Lord, who are the treasure-trove of mercy and who incarnated for dispelling the grief of Prahlāda. Lend me, Lakṣmīnṛsiṃha, your hand of grace!

[11]

संसारघोरगहने चरतो मुरारे
मारोग्रभीकरमृगप्रवरार्दितस्य ।
आर्तस्य मत्सरनिदाघनिपीडितस्य
लक्ष्मीनृसिंह मम देहि करावलम्बम् ॥

For a change, earthly life is compared to a terrible forest. I am groping about in this forest (impelled by desire). But my infatuation (*mārogra*) itself has turned to torment me like a fierce lion, the king of forests. And jealousy, the brood of desire, afflicts me as summer afflicts (the wayfarer). Save me, Lakṣmīnṛsiṃha, by your hand of support!

[12]

बद्ध्वा गले यमभटा बहु तर्जयन्तः
कर्षन्ति यत्र भवपाशशतैर्युतं माम् ।
एकाकिनं परवशं चकितं दयालो
लक्ष्मीनृसिंह मम देहि करावलम्बम् ॥

Death is inevitable for any living being. But death will hold no terrors for one whose mind is detached from the world during life. The fear of death will haunt one only if one is mentally bound to the world and is unwilling to be separated from it. And the fear will be greater in proportion to the degree of attachment that one has cultivated for worldly aspects. Here am I, laments the devotee, who am tethered to worldly objects by hundreds of nooses. Attachment (*rāga*) is rightly called *pāśa*, which primarily means "cord", or "fetter", as it ties down the subject to one place or another. Being stuck up thus in the world, I am unable to stand the prospect of death, which appears in the form of the servants of Yama, who bind me by the neck, constantly admonish me, and drag me somewhere. (Wrenched from what is now dear to me) I am alone, helpless, and struck with fear. Oh Lord Lakṣmīnṛsimha, the compassionate one, save me by your hand! The appeal here is not for being saved from death, which is unavoidable, but for being relieved from the bonds of attachment, which obstruct the peaceful and willing acceptance of death. Death may sometimes be physically painful, but attachment inflicts unendurable mental pain on the subject at the approach of death. There can be no greater blessing in life than to be able to leave the world in the peace of non-attachment.

[13]

लक्ष्मीपते कमलनाभ सुरेश विष्णो
 वैकुण्ठ कृष्ण मधुसूदन पुष्कराक्ष ।
 ब्रह्मण्य केशव जनार्दन वासुदेव
 देवेश देहि कृपणस्य करावलम्बम् ॥

This verse is full of praise for Lord Viṣṇu, describing his various forms and roles and beseeching him to extend his helping hand to the devotee, who is a poor creature (*kṛpaṇa*).

[14]

एकेन चक्रमपरेण करेण शङ्खं
 अन्येन सिन्धुतनयामवलम्ब्य तिष्ठन् ।
 वामेतरेण वरदाभयपद्मचिह्नं
 लक्ष्मीनृसिंहं मम देहि करावलम्बम् ॥

This, like the previous verse, adores the Lord. It describes in full the very form of Lakṣmīnṛsiṃha to whom the devotee prays for the supporting hand. The disc, the conch, and Goddess Lakṣmi adorn three of his hands. The fourth hand on the right side, holding the lotus as symbol, offers the boon and the protection sought by the devotee.

[15]

अन्धस्य मे हतविवेकमहाधनस्य
 चौरैः प्रभो बलिभिरिन्द्रियनामधेयैः ।
 मोहान्धकूपकुहरे विनिपातितस्य
 लक्ष्मीनृसिंहं मम देहि करावलम्बम् ॥

It is clearly shown here that discriminative knowledge (*viveka*) is the foundation for dispassion (*vairāgya*). If one yields to the temptation of sense organs, one will lose the power of discrimination and thereby the spirit of detachment. Submitting to the sense organs is here pictured as being robbed of wealth by powerful thieves and abandoned in a forsaken place. The loot of the thieves (the sense organs) is my great wealth of discrimination; and the place into which I have been flung is the dark cavernous well of infatuation. Having been deprived of discrimination, I am as good as being blind. Such is my plight. Oh Lakṣmīnṛsiṃha, save me by the grace of your supporting hand!

[16]

प्रह्लादनारदपराशरपुण्डरीक-
 व्यासादिभागवतपुङ्गवहृत्त्रिवास ।
 भक्तानुरक्तपरिपालनपारिजात
 लक्ष्मीनृसिंह मम देहि करावलम्बम् ॥

A fervent appeal to Lord Narasimha to save us from the vortex of *saṃsāra*, the cause of which lies in our own ignorance and infatuation, will never fail. He is like the wish-fulfilling Pārijāta tree, and he protects his devotees out of compassion for them. He protects them not merely in an external manner, but intimately also, as he is seated in their hearts. The Supreme Being is not only transcendent (*para*), but also immanent (*antaryāmin*). That his presence could be felt within is evidenced by the lives of the great devotees of yore cited above. May such a One lend me his helping hand !

[17]

लक्ष्मीनृसिंहचरणाब्जमधुव्रतेन
 स्तोत्रं कृतं शुभकरं भुवि शङ्क्रेण ।
 ये तत्पठन्ति मनुजा हरिभक्तियुक्ताः
 ते यान्ति तत्पदसरोजमखण्डरूपम् ॥

This verse is reminiscent of the other hymn on Lord Lakṣmīnṛsīmha, viz. *Lakṣmīnṛsīmha-pañcaratnam*. In that poem the devotee-author refers to his mind as a bee (*ceto-bhr̥ṅga*) and exhorts it to resort to the pure lotus feet of Lord Lakṣmīnṛsīmha for the nectar of bliss, instead of wandering in vain in the desert of mundane existence. Here also the Ācārya puts himself in the same position. He says that this poem has been composed by him, who is a honey-bee (*madhuvrata*) resting on the lotus feet of the Lord.

As is the practice, the final verse promises the results of reciting this hymn with devotion. In fact, two good results are held out—one to be reaped during life in the world and the other to be attained later. As regards the first, it is not expressly stated. But in the light of all the previous verses, there can be no doubt that the result promised in this world is progress in the spiritual endeavour for liberation. No doubt, worldly existence represents bondage. But it contains plenty of opportunities for spiritual training. In the first place, looking around and reflecting on the intractable imperfections of the world, and remembering its ultimate illusoriness, we acquire by God's grace, the *viveka* and *vairāgya* to start on the journey to liberation. The entire hymn is devoted to this initial spiritual preparation. Equipped with this indispensable qualification, we may practise the various succeeding steps in spiritual discipline. All these are the auspicious fruits of life in this world (*bhuvi śubhakaram*)—so indicates this last verse.

The end result of this long and arduous spiritual journey on earth is the attainment of liberation, as promised by the same verse. It is represented here, for the sake of the devotee, in theistic terms as attaining the lotus feet of Lord Hari. But this final state is also expressed here as of "partless form" (*akhaṇḍa-rūpam*). Such an expression is indicative of the Advaita conception of release as realizing the non-dual Brahman.

NOTES

1. Vide *Works of Śaṅkara (Śrīśaṅkara-granthāvaliḥ)*, Sri Vani Vilas Press, Srirangam, Vol. 11.
2. At the preliminary stage of *upāsana*, it is Saguṇa-Brahman that is meditated upon—first with the aid of symbols (*pratīka*) and images (*pratimā*) and later without either of these aids. But when meditation is applied on Nirguṇa-Brahman, *upāsana* becomes identical with *nididhyāsana*.

3. . . . अतः संसारे वैराग्यप्रदर्शनार्थं च इदं आह
4. तत्र तावद् वृक्षरूपककल्पनया वैराग्यहेतोः संसारस्वरूपं वर्णयति, विरक्तस्य हि संसाराद् भगवत्तत्त्वज्ञाने अधिकारो न अन्यस्य इति -
5. See my article in the previous number of the *Voice of Śaṅkara*.
6. *The Voice of Śaṅkara* (Volume II) (Collection of hymns by Śaṅkara) published by Ādi Śaṅkara Advaita Research Centre, Chennai, Edition 2001, pp. 164–75.

ON MITHYĀTVA

N. Veezhinathan

The Upaniṣads make a clarion call that man's energies must be directed towards putting an end to the confounding of the passing with the permanent or the phenomenal with the real. The real, according to Advaita, is above all imperfection because it is not derived but original, not partial but complete, not subject to qualification as it is unlimited, and not dependent upon anything else because it is self-sufficient. It is beyond what appears to ordinary sense experience, and is non-dual, pure consciousness. It is the substratum of the appearances of Īśvara, the jīva, and the world. As the inmost truth of the world, the Upaniṣads refer to it as Brahman, and as the inmost essence of the jīva, they designate it as Ātman. We shall use the word "Self" to represent both Brahman and Ātman.

The principle that accounts for the appearance of the Self as Īśvara, the jīva, and the world is avidyā or māyā which is inexplicable either as real (*sat*) or an absolute nothing (*asat*) or both.

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Avidyā is located in Brahman. A remarkably profound hymn of the *Ṛg-veda* speaks of the real as one and as associated with avidyā. The hymn is:

Before the creation of this world, there existed neither the lord of death, nor the nectar of the divine beings; there did not exist the sun and the moon—the marks of day and night. There existed only *That one (tadekam)* which is free from activity and which is associated with avidyā (*svadhā*). Nothing existed apart from it.¹

Referring to *svadhā* as *tamas*,² another hymn describes it as neither real (*sat*) nor an absolute nothing (*asat*).³ It is *anirvacanīya*. Yet another hymn of the *Ṛg-veda*, "The true nature of the Self is veiled by an entity similar to mist",⁴ and the *Chāndogya* text, "the true nature of the Self is concealed from the jīvas by *anṛta*",⁵ state that *tamas* or avidyā conceals the true nature of the Self. Madhusūdana Sarasvatī in his *Advaita-siddhi* points out that since *abhāva* or non-existence cannot veil an object, and since avidyā is said to veil the true nature of the Self, avidyā is not absence of knowledge (*jñānābhāva*), but a positive entity.⁶ It is positive in nature not in the sense that it is similar to jar, pot, etc., but in the sense that it is efficacious enough to make the Self appear as Īśvara, the jīva, and the world.

The world is the transformation (*pariṇāma*) of avidyā, and the transfiguration (*vivarta*) of the Self. *Pariṇāma* or transformation is the resulting in an effect having the same level of reality with the material cause. *Vivarta* or transfiguration is the resulting in an effect whose reality is not equal to that of the material cause. It is here the Advaitin admits two levels of reality, viz. absolute reality and empirical reality. Both avidyā and the world which is its effect have empirical reality, as both are subject to sublation by Self-realization, i.e. the direct knowledge of the true nature of the jīva as Self. It is on this ground the world is said to be the

transformation of avidyā; and, avidyā is stated to be the transformative material cause. The Self, being the substratum of avidyā whose transformation is the world, is known to be its transfigurative material cause. The Self is absolutely real in the sense that it is unsublated for all time, while the world is empirically real in the sense that it is unsublated till there arises Self-realization. Since the two belong to two different levels of reality, the world is considered to be the transfiguration of the Self.⁷ The world consists of earth, water, fire, air, and space, and also the seventeen factors, viz., the five senses of knowledge, the five senses of action, the five vital airs and the internal organ in its twofold aspect of the mind and the intellect. These seventeen factors constitute what is known as the subtle body that serves as the "empirical home" for the jīva till it attains the knowledge of its true nature as the Self.

The Self which is pure consciousness gets itself reflected in avidyā, the subtle body and the physical body, and attains to the state of the jīva. The mind is the predominant factor in the subtle body. The jīva is thus the reflected image of the Self in avidyā and the mind. It is not pure consciousness; not is it the mind, but it is a blend of consciousness and the mind. It is *cid-acid-granthī*. The Self in relation to the reflected image and the reflecting media acquires the state of being the original. And as associated with this characteristic of being the original, it is viewed as Īśvara. The state of being a reflected image and that of being the original are not real, as they are caused by avidyā. And the essential nature of Īśvara and that of the jīva is consciousness which is real. Īśvara, being the original, is not affected by the characteristics of the reflecting media, while the jīva, being the reflected image, is affected by them. The characteristics of the mind are the states of being an agent (*karṭṛtva*), an experient (*bhokṭṛtva*), and a knower (*pramāṭṛtva*). These three constitute what is known as *saṃsāra* which is bondage.⁸ The jīva, under the influence of avidyā, loses sight of its identity with the Self, and under the influence of the

mind, entertains the false notion that it is an agent, an experient, a knower. Just as the world comprising earth, etc. is not real, in the same way, *saṁsāra* or bondage in the case of the *jīva* too is not real. Sureśvara in his *Vārttika* on Śaṅkara's commentary on the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Upaniṣad* states:

If agency, etc. were essential to the *jīva* and hence real, then do not aspire for liberation. For, the intrinsic nature of an object can never be removed, just as heat which is real by being the essential nature of the sun can never be removed from it.⁹

From the above it emerges that both the external world and bondage in the case of the *jīva* are not real.

The *Taittirīya* text, "Brahman (i.e. the Self) is real, consciousness, and infinite"¹⁰ describes the Self as real. It is implied from this that whichever is different from the Self is non-real. If the world too were real, then this definition would be exposed to the defect of being too wide (*ativyāpti*), as it would be applicable to the world too. The same text conveys that the Self is infinite in nature. It is infinite in the sense that it is not conditioned by time, space, and objects.¹¹ Limitation or circumscription by time is the state of being present at a particular point of time and not so at a different period of time. The object "pot", for example, is subject to antecedent non-existence (*prāgabhāva*) prior to its origination, and to annihilative non-existence (*dhvaṁsa*) subsequent to its destruction. It is, therefore, the counter-positive (*pratiyogin*) of its antecedent non-existence and annihilative non-existence. The state of being so is known as limitation by time (*kālataḥ paricchinnaṭvam*).¹² Again, pot which exists at a particular place is non-existent at another place. There is thus its absolute non-existence, and it is its counter-positive (*pratiyogin*). The state of being so is known as limitation by space (*deśataḥ paricchinnaṭvam*).¹³ Reciprocal non-existence is the absence of and object in another through the relation of identity. This is known

through the cognition and the corresponding expression of the form "A jar is not a cloth". Herein the jar is the counter-positive of the reciprocal non-existence. The state of being so is known as limitation by object (*vastutaḥ paricchinnatvam*).¹⁴

The Self, on the other hand, cannot be viewed as having antecedent non-existence or annihilative non-existence. If it is said that it has these two kinds of non-existence, then the question arises as to the factor that comprehends them. The Self cannot comprehend its own antecedent non-existence or its annihilative one. For, it is only the relation of identity of the Self (*cit-tādātmya*) with an entity that is known as manifestation or comprehension of that entity by the Self. When viewed in this light, it is essential that both the Self and its antecedent and annihilative non-existences must coexist at the same point of time, which, however, is impossible. To get over this difficulty, if it is held that something other than the Self comprehends them, then the chief criticism would be that whichever is different from the Self is insentient by nature, and being so it cannot comprehend them. It is the absence of any *pramāṇa* that could comprehend the antecedent and the annihilative non-existence of the Self that suggest that the Self is free from these two kinds of non-existences. As it is not the counter-positive of its antecedent non-existence, it has no beginning; and, as it is not the counter-positive of its annihilative non-existence it has no end. It is thus not subject to limitation by time.¹⁵

The Self is not subject to limitation by space too, as its absolute non-existence cannot be conceived of. We have the cognition of the relation of *sat* in respect of each and every object of the world in the form "The post is real", "The jar is real", etc. Herein *sattā* or reality is attributed to the jar, etc. At this stage it is essential to bring out the fine shade of difference between the terms *sat* and *sattā*. Vidyāraṇya in his commentary *Tāttparyadīpikā* on the *Sūtasamhitā* states: the Self which is *sat* or real is referred to as *sattā* when it serves as the substratal principle of the objects that

are superimposed upon t. In *sat* itself, *sattā* or reality is viewed as its attribute, and this substance-attribute relation between the two is fancied or *kalpita*. At the dawn of Self-realization, when the world-appearance comes to an end by the removal of its cause, viz. avidyā, the Self is referred to by the term *sat* only. For, there is no object which needs be pervaded by the Self then.¹⁶ Sureśvara in his *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Upaniṣad-bhāṣya-vārttika* states:

The word *sattā* is derived by the addition of the *taddhita* suffix, "tal" to the nominal stem "sat". And the suffix does not convey any sense other than the sense of the nominal stem.¹⁷

From this it follows that *sat* in its aspect of *sattā* is present as the content of the cognition of every object, and so its absolute non-existence cannot be predicated of.¹⁸ In other words, it is not the counter-positive of its absolute non-existence. And so it is not subject to limitation by space.

Nor is the Self subject to limitation by other objects. It is because every object is manifested by being identical with *sattā* which, as has been said above, is an aspect of *sat* which is the Self. Hence there is no possibility of the non-existence of any object in the Self through the relation of identity. We cannot, therefore, say that there is reciprocal non-existence between the Self and other objects.¹⁹ The Self thus does not become the counter-positive of reciprocal non-existence. Hence it is not subject to limitation by objects.

It is the absence of limitation by time, space, and objects that accounts for the infinite nature of the Self. The author of the *Vedānta-sūtras*, in the aphorism—*ato anantena tathā hi liṅgam*²⁰ states that the jīva realizes its true nature as infinite, i.e. the Self. Herein he identifies the Self as infinite.

The *Chāndogya* text, "That which indeed is the infinite, that is bliss. There is no bliss in the finite. The infinite alone is bliss" treats infinite and bliss to be the same. It describes the infinite as,

"That wherein one does not see, hear or understand anything else", and the finite as "That wherein one sees, hear or understand something else"; and, it concludes by saying "That which is the infinite, is immortal and that which is finite, is mortal".²¹ Śaṅkara commenting upon this text states:

The finite exists during the period of ignorance. It is like a thing seen in a dream, which exists only during that period, before waking. For that very reason it is *martya*, or subject to destruction, verily like a thing seen in dream. The infinite is opposed to that, and that is immortal.²²

In the *uṣasta-brāhmaṇa* section of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Upaniṣad*, Yājñavalkya instructs Uṣasta thus: "You cannot see that which is the witness of vision. This is your Self that is within all; everything else but this is perishable".²³ In the *Kahola-brāhmaṇa* section of the same Upaniṣad, Yājñavalkya gives the same instruction to Kahola that everything excepting the self is perishable.²⁴ Again, he tells Uddālaka, "The internal ruler is your own immortal Self. Everything else but him is mortal".²⁵ Śaṅkara states:

Everything within the category of ignorance is perishable, unsubstantial like dream, an illusion, or a mirage. The Self alone is detached and eternally free.²⁶

The *Taittirīya* text adverted to earlier regards the Self as *satya* or real and as *ananta* or infinite or eternal.

From the above it could be deduced that whichever is real is eternal, and that whichever is different from the Self is non-real and non-eternal. According to Advaita, reality and eternity, and non-reality and non-eternity are *sama-vyāpta*. Whichever is real is eternal, and whichever is eternal is real. In the same way,

whichever is non-real is non-eternal, and whichever is non-eternal is non-real. Since *satyatva* and *nityatva*, and *mithyātva* and *anityatva* are *sama-vyāpta* as explained above, Vācaspatimiśra interprets the expression *nityānitya-vastu-viveka* as *satyāsatyavastu-viveka*. It comes to this that the Self is real and the world is non-real.

In the sections entitled *Ajāta-śatru-brāhmaṇa* and *Mūrtāmūrta-brāhmaṇa* of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Upaniṣad*, it is said, "The secret name of the Self is the real of the real". By way of explaining this, the Upaniṣad further states, "The *prāṇas* are real; of these, the Self is the real."²⁷ Here the word "*prāṇāḥ*" signifies the sense organs. It is indicative of their respective objects too. Thus it stands for the whole world. The world consisting of sense organs and their objects is said to be real. And compared with it, it is stated that the Self is more real. Reality is of the nature of unsublatedness (*bādhyatvābhāva*). In respect of it there can be no superiority or inferiority. The only distinction that we can make is that, while the Self remains unsublated for ever, the world remains unsublated for sometime, i.e. till there arises Self-realization. Hence the Self which is said to be real of the real remains unsublated for all time, while the world which is stated to be real is unsublated for the time being. In other words, the Self is absolutely real, and the world is provisionally so. Reality that is noticed, e.g. in the case of pot of the form "The pot is real" is not natural to the pot. It is derived from the Self wherein the object is superimposed or appears. The reality of the Self, however, is natural to it. From this we could gather that the world whose reality is dependent upon the Self which is the real is by nature non-real. The dream state and also the shell-silver are non-real. But they appear to be real as long as they are cognized. They are admitted to be apparently real "*prātibhāsika-satya*", as they are removed by the knowledge of the waking state and by the true nature of the shell. The world-appearance could be removed only by Self-realization and hence it is characterized as empirically real (*vyāvahārika-*

satya). The world is a prolonged dream, while the dream state and shell-silver are the short-lived one.

The world is characterized as *mithyā* or non-real by the Advaitins. According to the other schools of Vedānta, there are only two categories, real (*sat*) and an absolute nothing (*a-sat*). It is only the Advaitin who admits a third category known as *mithyā-padārtha* which is neither real, nor an absolute nothing. It appears to be real or unsublated for the time being and is given in perceptual cognition. The absolute real must be distinguished from the real that is known.

We shall now pass on to the discussion regarding the nature of *mithyātva*. Śaṅkara in his celebrated introduction to his commentary on the *Vedānta-sūtras* states that the false identification of the Self with the mind has for its material cause "*mithyājñāna*". Padmapāda in his *Pañcapādikā* interprets it as "*mithya ca tat ajñānam ca*". He adds that the word "*mithyā*" signifies *anirvacanīyatā* or indeterminability. The term "*ajñāna*" stands for the insentient power known as *avidyā* which is different from knowledge.²⁸ Based upon this sense of the word "*mithyā*", Padmapāda has defined *mithyātva* as *sad-asad-vilakṣaṇatva*.²⁹ This definition is based upon the hymns of the *Ṛg-Veda*, "*na asat āsīt, na sad āsīt*",³⁰ "*tama āsīt*"³¹ to which reference has been made earlier. These two texts describe the state prior to the creation of the world. During that period "*sat*", i.e. the Self exists and so it is not correct to interpret the passage "*na sad āsīt*" in the sense that "*sat*" did not exist then. The prohibitive particle "*nañ*" is not to be taken in the sense of absence, but in the sense of "that which is different from". Hence the first text means that at the time prior to creation there existed something different from *sat* and also from *asat*. And that "something" is *tamas* or *avidyā*. When it is said that *tamas* is different from being *sat* and *asat*, we gather that the world too which is itself effect is so. *Sattva*, according to Padmapāda, is unsublatedness in the three divisions of time—past, present, and future. It is of the nature of the Self, and yet is viewed

as being present in it. *Asattva* is absence of any relation to time. It only pertains to an absolute nothing like a flower sprung from the sky (*gagana-kusama*). The world consisting of space, etc. and the objects like shell-silver are sublated by the direct knowledge of their respective substratum. Hence they are different from *sat*. Further, space, etc. are superimposed upon "*sat*" and hence have the relation of superimposed identity with it. Shell-silver too is superimposed upon the consciousness (*sat*) conditioned by the shell. So it has the relation of identity with the consciousness conditioned by the shell. Space, etc. and shell-silver are related to time. On these grounds they are different from being *asat*. Padmapāda states that which is superimposed is not *asat*. If it were so, it would not be manifested.³² In order to dispel the misconception that the world being superimposed upon the Self is *asat*, he states:

[The *pūrvapakṣin* asks]: Is it not your conclusive view that the entire world is "*asat*"? [Padmapāda replies]: Who has said so? We have given a loud and clear call that it is of the nature of beginningless, indeterminable nescience. Noticing the absence of *avidyā* and the world after Self-realization, if you assert that the world is "*asat*", you are free to entertain such a view.³³

This definition of *mithyātva* gives us the knowledge that *sattva* does not pertain to the world. It does not provide us with the knowledge that there is the absence of the world in the Self.

Ānandabodha in his *Nyāya-dīpāvalī* defines *mithyātva* as *sad-viviktatva*.³⁴ He takes the word "*sat*" in the sense of being the content of the cognition that has arisen from a source that is not defiled by any defect. Accordingly it is only the Self that could be viewed as "*sat*", as it alone is the content of the cognition that arises from the Upaniṣads which are free from any defect. That which is different from *sat*, viz. the world is *mithyā*. From this it

is known that an object is *mithyā*, if it is the content of the cognition that arises from a defective source. The world is so, as it is the transformation of *avidyā*.³⁵

It may be said that this definition is over-applicable in the case of an absolute nothing (*asat*), as the latter is different from the Self (*sad-vivikta*). Ānandabodha is of the view that the Dvaita school admits that the world is *sat* and it is different from being *asat* (*asad-vilakṣaṇa*). So, with reference to that school, it is enough if we prove that the world is different from being *sat*. Madhusūdana Sarasvatī, however, in his *Advaita-siddhi* has incorporated the phrase "*asad-viviktatva*".³⁶ This definition does not materially differ from that of Padmapāda. The subtle difference between the two is that *sattva*, according to Padmapāda, is unsublatability for all time, while, according to Ānandabodha, it is the state of being the content of knowledge that has arisen from a source free from any defect.

Prakāśātman in his *Vivarāṇa* has given two definitions of *mithyātva* of which the first one is:

*pratipannopādhau traikālika-niṣedha-
pratiyogitvam.*³⁷

This definition is based upon the śruti text, "There is no duality in the Self" (*na iha nānā asti kiñcana*).³⁸ The word "*iha*" in this text has reference to the Self as associated with the world. The verb "*asti*" in the text has the personal ending of the present tense. Associated with the prohibitive particle "*nañ*", it conveys the absence of the world in the Self at the time of its appearance itself. When the world is thus conveyed to be non-existent in the Self which is its substratum even at the time of its appearance, it goes without saying that it did not exist therein in the past, and nor would it exist in future. The world, therefore, is the counter-positive of its absence in the three divisions of time in the substratum, i.e. the Self wherein it appears. Hence it is *mithyā*.

Here the question arises as to whether there is the negation of the very essence of the world (*prapañca-svarūpa*) in the Self; or, there is the negation of only the absolutely real feature (*pāramārthikatva*) which is erroneously cognized in it. If the second alternative were held, then the following difficulty would arise: when it is said that the pot does not exist on the floor as cloth, then what is known is that there is the absence of clothness in pot and not the absence of pot on the floor. In the same way, if it is said that the world does not exist in the self as possessing the feature of absolute reality, then we will be getting at the knowledge that in the world there is absence of absolute reality and not that there is the absence of the world in the Self. Even if the world exists in the Self, we could very well say that it does not exist by having the feature of absolute reality. In that case, the present definition will in no way differ from the one framed by Padmapāda. According to that definition too, we get at the knowledge that the world is different from being *sat*, and not that there is the absence of the world in the Self. If, however, we admit that there is the absence of the very essence of the world in the Self, then we will know that there is the absence of the world in the Self, and thereby we can bring out the distinction between the definitions framed by Padmapāda and Prakāśātman.

It might be said that if there is the absence of the very essence of the world in the Self in the three divisions of time, then there arises the unwelcome position of viewing the world as *asat* or an absolute nothing. For, the latter too does not have any existence at any point of time. This contention is wrong; for, an *asat* is that which does not have the relation of identity with *sat* and which is not related to time. The world, on the other hand, has the relation of identity with *sat* at the time of its appearance and has temporal relation. Hence it is different from *asat*.

It might be asked as to why the negation of the world is admitted in the Self even prior to the attainment of Self-realization. Let there be the absence of the world subsequent to the dawn of Self-

realization. It is answered that the absence of the world subsequent to the rise of Self-realization is known from the śruti texts, "He who has realized the true nature of the jīva overcomes avidyā (and its effect)".³⁹ It is on the basis of this text, Prakāśātman has framed another definition "*jñānanivartyatvam mithyātvam*". But the śruti text "*neha nānāsti kiñcana*" conveys the absence of the world in the Self even at the time of its appearance therein. Prakāśānanda in his *Vedānta-siddhānta-muktāvalī* states that *bādha* or sublation is only the ascertainment of the absence of the world in the Self in the three divisions of time.⁴⁰

Citsukha in his *Tattvapradīpikā* has given the definition of *mithyātva* as, *sva-samānādhikaraṇa-atyantābhāva-pratīyogitvam*. The word "*sva*" in this definition stands for shell-silver. Its substratum is the shell. Therein exists the absolute non-existence of the shell-silver. Its counter-positive is the silver. The state of being the counter-positive exists in the silver, and it is *mithyātva*. It may be added here that there is hardly any difference between the definition, *pratipannopādhau traikālika-niṣedha-pratīyogitvam* framed by Prakāśātman and the present one. But there is a subtle difference between the two. According to the present definition, what appears in a substratum is the *viśeṣya* or the substantive feature and the state of being the absolute non-existence in the substratum is the *viśeṣaṇa* or the adjectival feature. According to the definition of Prakāśātman, the absolute non-existence is the *viśeṣya* and the appearance in the substratum of absolute non-existence is the *viśeṣaṇa*. Excepting this change in the substance-attribute relation, there is no difference between the two definitions.⁴¹

It emerges from the above that there is no difference between the definitions of *mithyātva* framed by Padmapāda and Ānandabodha, and also by Prakāśātman and Citsukha. According to the definition of Padmapāda, the world is *sad-vilakṣaṇa*. When there arises the question as to why the world is so, the answer is that it is *bādhya* or subject to sublation. Ānandabodha is of the

view that the world is different from *sat* which is the content of the cognition that arises from the śruti texts which are free from any defect. When it is questioned as to why difference from *sat* of this nature is predicated of with reference to the world, the answer is that the world is the content of the cognition that arises from the proofs which are defiled by avidyā, desire, merits, and demerits of the jīva and which is, therefore, erroneous. When it is asked as to how are we to identify the cognition of the world as erroneous, it is answered that its content is subject to sublation. Thus we see that *bādhyatva* or sublatability is the factor that explains the concept of *mithyātva* derived from the definitions—*sad-asad-vilakṣaṇatva* and *sad-viviktatva*. It is precisely the exact nature of *bādhyatva* that is explained in the definition of Prakāśātman and that of Citsukha. According to these two preceptors *bādhyatva* is of the nature of the absence (of the world) in the three divisions of time in the substratum wherein it appears.

The nature of *bādhyatva* is explained by Prakāśātman by framing yet another definition, viz. *jñāna-nivartyatvaṃ mithyātvam*. This may be explained as follows: every object exists in a twofold form: one, in the gross form and another, in the latent form. The gross form of pot may be destroyed by breaking it; and, yet it would continue to exist in a latent form in its cause, viz. avidya which is its transformative material cause. And this form will be removed by the removal of avidyā by the knowledge of the Self. Even if the pot continues to exist in its gross form yet it will be removed by the knowledge of the Self. Hence knowledge brings about the removal of both the gross and the subtle form of an effect. The effect is thus the counter-positive of the absence caused by knowledge; and, it is mithyā. Thus *jñānanivartyatva* means the state of being the counter-positive of the absence of both the gross and the subtle form that is caused by knowledge. The shell-silver is the effect of the *tūlājñāna* present in the consciousness conditioned by the 'this'—element. By the knowledge of the form 'This is shell', the silver along with its cause is removed. The

silver thus is the counter-positive of its absence caused by knowledge and so it is *mithyā*.

This definition is based upon the śruti text, "The knower of the truth becomes free from name and form, i.e. the world".⁴² This text conveys that the world is removed by knowledge. This would be unintelligible if the world is real. Never indeed does the Self which is real get removed by knowledge. And this unintelligibility is removed by postulating the world to be *mithyā*. It is thus on the basis of *Śrutārthāpatti* too, we know that the world is *mithyā*.

The theory of *mithyātva* has not resulted from the exercise of one's imagination, but is based upon the Upaniṣads. It must be noted here that when the Advaitin says that the world is *mīthyā*, he assigns provisional reality to it allowing room for one to pursue the means to liberation.

NOTES

1. *Rg-veda*, 8.7.17.2.
2. *Ibid.*, 8.7.17.31.
3. *Ibid.*, 8.7.17.1.
4. *Ibid.*, 8.3.17.7.
5. *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (hereafter *CU*), 8.3.2.
6. *Advaita-siddhi* (hereafter *AS*), Parimala Publications, Delhi, 1997, p. 570.
7. *Vedānta-paribhāṣā*, ed. by Suryanarayana Sastri, The Adyar Library and Research Centre, Chennai, 1984, p. 37.
8. *PP*, p. 10.
9. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Upaniṣad-bhāṣya-vārttika*, (hereafter *BUBV*), Mahesh Research Institute, Varanasi, 1990, 1.1.55, 56.
10. *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (hereafter *TU*), 2.1.1.
11. *AS*, p. 315.
12. *Ibid.*
13. *Ibid.*
14. *Ibid.*

15. *Siddhānta-bindu* (hereafter *SB*) with the commentaries *Nyāya-ratnavalī* (hereafter *NR*) and *Laghu-vyākhyā*, Chowkhamba Sanskrit Samsthan, Varanasi, 1990, pp. 123–26.
16. *Tāttparya-dīpikā* on the *Sūtasamhitā*, Balamanorama Press, Madras, 1954, pp. 470–71.
17. *BUBV*, 4.3.1688.
18. *NR*, p. 127.
19. *SB*, pp. 127–32.
20. *Vedānta-sūtra*, 3.2.26.
21. *CU*, 7.23.1 and 7.24.1.
22. Śaṅkara's *Bhāṣya* (hereafter *ŚB*) on *CU*, 7.24.1.
23. *Bṛhadāranyaka Upaniṣad* (hereafter *BU*), 3.4.2.
24. *Ibid.*, 3.5.1.
25. *BU*, 3.7.20.
26. *ŚB* on *BU*, 3.5.1.
27. *BU*, 2.1.20; 2.3.6.
28. *Pañca-pādikā* (hereafter *PP*) with the commentary *Vivarāṇa*, Madras Government Oriental Series, Vol. CLV, Madras, 1958, p. 26.
29. *Ibid.*
30. *Ṛg-veda*, 8.7.17.1.
31. *Ibid.*, 8.7.17.31.
32. *PP*, p. 66.
33. *Ibid.*
34. *AS*, p. 195.
35. *Ibid.*, pp. 195–97.
36. p. 202.
37. *Ibid.*, p. 94.
38. *BU*, 4.4.19.
39. *CU*, 7.1.3.
40. *Vedānta-siddhānta-muktāvalī*, Chowkhambha Orientalia, Varanasi, 1975, verse 40.
41. *AS*, pp. 182–83.
42. *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*, 3.2.8.

CONSCIOUSNESS, COSMOLOGY, AND SCIENCE: AN ADVAITIC ANALYSIS

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For the purposes of this essay, I have chosen to discuss consciousness, cosmology, and science from the Advaitic standpoint and show that neither consciousness (Ātman) nor ultimate reality (Brahman) can be scientifically studied, in the prevailing understanding and practice of "scientific study." In the beginning I shall state in a clear and concise manner the central notions (not concepts) and propositions of Advaita Vedānta. Brahman is ultimate reality, whose varieties of manifestation are the worlds of phenomena. What is a phenomenon? Here is my definition: "Phenomenon" is anything that is, or can in principle be, an object of consciousness. All phenomena exist in time and some phenomena also exist in space. Thus tables, chairs, stars, galaxies, bacteria, college professors, etc., exist in both space and time; whereas thoughts, emotions, feelings, dreams, etc., exist only in time. Brahman, the ultimate reality, is unborn, uncreated, undying, and hence timeless, eternal, and immortal. Brahman is formless and hence nameless; Brahman is not to be mistaken for the God(s)

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worshipped by people. Never was there a time when Brahman was not; nor will there ever be a time when Brahman will not be. Brahman is neither a She nor a He, but the That (*Tat*). Brahman cannot be captured by the senses and mind; for whatever can be perceived and conceived is always an object. Brahman is impartite—not made up of parts; for if Brahman were partite (composite), the parts would be fundamental and ultimate, and not Brahman. No one can picture or visualize Brahman, for whatever one can picture and visualize is always, inevitably and ineluctably, an object. Brahman thus transcends the senses, mind, space, time, and causality. Let it be emphasized that to say that Brahman is transcendent is not to say that Brahman is beyond our ken and pale, and cannot be experienced. Rather, to say that Brahman is transcendent is to say that Brahman cannot be experienced as one alongside other phenomena (objects). Brahman is to be experienced (realized) in non-dual intuition, by rendering the senses and mind quiescent. Hence Yoga, the goal of which is to attain total cessation of mental modifications (*cittavṛtтинirodha*). To clarify these observations further, simply imagine a potter making cups, saucers, pots, jars, pans, etc. These objects can be destroyed (made to disappear), but the clay of which they are made continues to exist. That is, these objects depend for their existence on the clay, but the clay does not depend for its existence upon these objects. Further, a pot can be destroyed and made into a dish. What has changed? That which was hitherto called a "pot" is now called a "dish." Thus, all changes are changes only in name and form, but are not changes in that of which the objects are but appearances (names and forms).

Ātman is pure, objectless consciousness and is not to be mistaken for the ego (*jīva*). The ego is an object, a psycho-physiological composite. Sensations, perceptions, thoughts, feelings, emotions, etc., are all objects of consciousness (phenomena). They constantly arise and pass away, but consciousness remains the same. No one can perceive consciousness as an object; one can

only notice changes in the objects of consciousness but never in consciousness itself. Consciousness (\bar{A} tman), like Brahman, is formless and nameless. Hence, no one can picture or visualize consciousness. Thus everything we have said about Brahman, of course only negatively, can also be said of consciousness: unborn, uncreated, undying, timeless, eternal, and immortal. Consciousness (\bar{A} tman) is always singular; it is therefore absurd to talk about \bar{A} tmans. Just like Brahman, \bar{A} tman (consciousness) is transcendent, in the sense that it cannot be captured by the senses and mind. Different *jīvas* (sentient beings) are simply different appearances of \bar{A} tman under the limiting conditions (*upādhi*) of the body-mind complex. The consciousness of, say, a cat, cannot be distinguished from the consciousness of a human being. Cats and human beings differ only in the ranges of objects they can be conscious of. The ranges are a function of the psycho-physiological makeup, there being absolutely no difference in consciousness itself. In the Western tradition, "consciousness," "mind," "self," and "I" are used synonymously. According to Advaita, mind is not consciousness, but only a subtle sense-organ; it is an information-processing instrument. Put simply, mind is a phenomenon, whereas consciousness is not a phenomenon. Mind is not a box containing thoughts; rather, mind is no more and no less than thoughts arising and passing away. Our sense of time is grounded in the dynamic of mind. Only when the mind is rendered wholly quiescent, will there be no sense of time.

One might now wonder whether, according to Advaita, there are two ultimate realities, namely, Brahman and \bar{A} tman, the former underlying the so-called external world and the latter the so-called internal world. According to Advaita, the very idea of two ultimates is absurd, in the sense of self-contradictory. "Brahman" and " \bar{A} tman" are simply two different labels for one and the same ultimate reality. Put otherwise, Brahman and \bar{A} tman are non-different, just as Washington, D.C. and the capital of the USA are one and the same, non-different.

The clearest argument (demonstration) that Brahman and Ātman are non-different is to be found in the briefest and most famous *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad*. For the purposes of this essay, I need not go into the argument.

Before proceeding further, it should be emphasized that Advaita distinguishes the higher truth (*pāramārthika-satya*) and lower truths (*vyāvahārika-satya*). This distinction was most clearly formulated in the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*. Lower truths are the product of the activity of the senses and mind, whereas the higher truth transcends the senses and mind, all perceptions and conceptions. Thus all rational-scientific truths are lower truths. "Lower truth" does not mean falsehood; rather, it means truth certifiable by all inquirers who are constituted alike and conduct their inquiry according to a certain categorial framework. It is truly remarkable that the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* regards even the Vedas, the sacred writings of the Hindu tradition, as lower truth, insofar as the Vedas are couched in language (percepts and concepts). Further, there are many lower truths, since there are many phenomena and categorial frameworks; in contrast, there is just one higher truth, since there is just the non-dual, ultimate reality transcending all percepts and concepts. In the case of every lower truth, truth and being are separable; to give an example, the proposition "this board is black" is true, because there is a certain state of affairs, namely, this board's being black; however, in the case of the higher truth, no such separation is possible, for here truth and being are non-different. The higher truth, unlike lower truths, cannot be experienced and certified through the senses and mind, but only through non-dual intuition, in which the tripartite distinction of the knower, known, and the act of knowing, characteristic of all lower truths, simply vanishes away. Put directly, in the higher truth, one's being is the truth. Let it be emphasized that lower truths are not to be disparaged and belittled, for they are valid in their own domains. That is, we should most rigorously continue our rational-scientific inquiries.

I come now to the scientific study of consciousness. In the last few years, a spate of books have been published on the scientific study of consciousness. Some of these are under cognitive studies, others under neuro-physiological studies, and yet others under philosophical studies. But none of them seems to deliver the goods they promise, namely, the findings of scientific study of consciousness. In a very real sense, I am provoked to write this essay by these disappointing works.

What is it to study anything scientifically? Scientific study involves a categorial framework, primitive (undefined) terms, defined terms, a system of logic, axioms and postulates, and a set of criteria by which to determine whether a problem is genuine and a proposed solution acceptable. However, I have not encountered a single author who articulates the categorial framework underlying his study. I therefore assume that these authors take for granted the prevailing framework underlying all modern scientific inquiries.

Different sciences study different kinds of phenomena—physical, chemical, biological, mental, emotional, economic, political, and so on. As has been clarified earlier, a "phenomenon" may be defined as anything that is or can in principle be an object of consciousness. All phenomena exist in time, and some also exist in space. This definition is at the very heart of the prevailing understanding and practice of scientific inquiry. Whatever one studies scientifically is always, inevitably, a phenomenon, an object of consciousness. Thus, anything that is given as an object of consciousness can be studied scientifically, and anything that can be studied scientifically is given as an object of consciousness. Being given as a phenomenon, an object of consciousness is thus both a necessary and sufficient condition for its scientific study. Furthermore, the scientific study of anything results in a description of the object, its structure, its properties, and its relations to other objects.

It is a fundamental fact of the phenomenology of our experience that consciousness is never given to us as an object. Therefore,

the inescapable conclusion is that consciousness cannot, in principle, be scientifically studied, in the prevailing understanding and practice of "scientific study."

Not being aware of this fundamental fact of the phenomenology of our experience, many self-proclaimed scientists and philosophers use such absurd phrases as "the phenomenon of consciousness" and "the structure of consciousness." Consciousness is not a phenomenon, an object, and hence cannot have a structure, properties, and relations. Have you ever perceived your consciousness as an object, in order for you to be able to describe its structure, properties, and relations?

It is not surprising, then, that people who claim to scientifically study consciousness and write books only end up talking about their observations on synapses, neuronal circuits, various perceptual, linguistic, and emotional centers, and so on, all of which are objects of consciousness. When a physicist studies a certain particle, he/she clearly gives us all the above. A biologist scientifically studying, for example, a genome also does the same. This is true of all scientists. Likewise, anyone who claims to study consciousness scientifically should also give us a description of consciousness, its structure, properties, and relations to other objects. Otherwise, the claim is an empty one.

In this context I would like to dispel a serious misunderstanding concerning Yoga. Many people mistakenly think that Yoga, in its various forms, including Patañjali's Yoga, is a scientific study of consciousness. Yoga is not a scientific study of consciousness, but of various states of consciousness, objects of consciousness. The aim of Yoga is to study varieties of modes of consciousness, ordinary as well as extraordinary, and learn to render the mind quiescent and still, in order to be consciousness without objects.

Am I then saying that consciousness cannot be studied scientifically? Yes, that is precisely what I am saying, insofar as "scientific study" means study of phenomena, objects. Am I suggesting that we do not engage in scientific investigation as we

actually conduct it? Certainly not. To the contrary, we should rigorously continue scientific inquiries by which to discover various phenomena, their structures, properties, and relations, hitherto unknown.

My thesis that consciousness cannot, in principle, be studied scientifically is to be regarded as an impotency-principle (an impotency-principle is a statement that something cannot, in principle, be done). Examples of the impotency-principle are the second law of thermo-dynamics, Heisenberg's uncertainty principle, Godel's second incompleteness theorem, etc.

There is, however, an important and significant difference between my impotency-principle and the others: my impotency-principle is directly based upon the phenomenology of our experience, whereas the others's are based on logico-empirical considerations. Let me emphasize, however, that these logico-empirical considerations themselves are fully founded and grounded in the phenomenology of our experience.

If someone has an argument, along with adequate evidence, to refute the impotency-principle I have proclaimed here, I should be most happy to hear.

Let me now place the above observations on the scientific study of consciousness in the context of Advaita Vedānta—non-dualistic Vedānta. The pivotal message of Advaita Vedānta, as has been explicated earlier, is that ultimate reality, Brahman, of which the myriad worlds are appearances, is non-different from Ātman, pure, objectless consciousness. Neither Brahman nor Ātman can be perceived by the senses and mind—imperceivable and inconceivable, but can only be experienced in non-dual intuition, *prajñā*, by rendering the mind wholly quiescent and still, through various yogic techniques.

Why there is something rather than nothing, cannot be explained by science. Explanation, demonstration, argument, proof, etc. belong in the domain of the dual; and since Brahman is that beside which nothing can in principle exist, the existence of the world in

the last analysis, as Śaṅkara long ago taught us, is *anirvacanīya*—indefinable and inexplicable. This is the reason why cosmologies become mere stories. Thus no one can explain what caused the Big Bang; for space, time, and matter come into existence with the Big Bang, and therefore there cannot, in principle, be any talk of cause and effect prior to the Big Bang (if I may be permitted to use the term "prior" here). Yes, cosmologists tell us that the Big Bang happened because of spontaneous quantum-fluctuations. But is this really an explanation? Certainly not. We cannot, in principle, have any initial conditions by which to explain the Big Bang. Hence Brahman, the ultimate reality, is inexplicable. Since Brahman is non-different from Ātman, pure, objectless consciousness, Ātman too cannot be explained by science, for like Brahman, Ātman, cannot be an object of consciousness and therefore cannot be scientifically studied. Every discipline that is genuinely scientific will have laws, formulated by systematically studying the reproducible and repeatable (phenomena); and since the cosmos as a whole is not reproducible and replicable, cosmology cannot, in principle, be a science as "science" is understood and practised.

It is to be emphasized that Brahman (Ātman) is *not* God (Īśvara, creator, preserver, destroyer, and judge of the world). God is merely a conception of the inconceivable. Different religious traditions are centered around different conceptions of the inconceivable. Hence different religions and different Gods, each religion claiming that its own conception is the true and real conception and condemning other peoples' religions as false. No wonder, then, that people from one religious tradition try to convert others; and if conversion cannot be achieved through persuasion, they will resort to any means they deem fit, including violence. In this manner arise religious wars, resulting in unspeakable bloodshed and horrors.

If unity were to be found among different religious traditions it could only be found at the mystical level, *never* at the level of

doctrines and dogmas; and all religious traditions have two sides, the exoteric (the public and visible) and the esoteric (the private, invisible and mystical). Mystical experience comes only by transcending doctrines, dogmas, and authorities. Doctrines, dogmas, and authorities only give you second-hand truth, which is always open to the assault of doubt and therefore can be lost. Only truth certifiable through one's own authentic experience is first-hand truth. Mystics from all traditions exhort us to attain the first-hand truth, by transcending all conceptions of ultimate reality, non-different from one's true being, Ātman. Mysticism is marginal and peripheral in religious traditions controlled by central authorities. The Vedic-Upaniṣadic tradition is unique in its emphasis upon the mystical experience and therewith first-hand truth. Hence, Advaita Vedānta is the mystical tradition, *par excellence*.

People should remain in the traditions they inherit and most earnestly pursue the way of the mystics and hence first-hand truth. Converting other peoples to one's own religious tradition is the highest violence and indignity one can inflict on other human beings. Converting people to one's own religious tradition is the hallmark of ignorance (avidyā). First-hand truth is too important to be left for others to determine. Consciousness (Ātman) and ultimate reality (Brahman), not being phenomena (objects), are the higher truth and therefore cannot be scientifically studied.

To conclude, (1) Consciousness cannot, in principle, be studied scientifically, (2) cosmology cannot, in principle, be a science, and (3) since Advaita Vedānta had long ago discovered and taught these two truths and consequently unflinchingly recommends the transcendence of all conceptions of ultimate reality (Brahman-Ātman), Advaita Vedānta is at once *Jñāna-yoga* (the Way of Knowledge) and mysticism, unsurpassed and unsurpassable.

NOTES

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THE PLACE OF ŚAṄKARA IN INDIAN
PHILOSOPHY AND HIS INFLUENCE ON
MODERN INDIAN THINKERS

Hiltrud Rustau*

Sometimes we can find the statement that Śaṅkara's Advaita Vedānta represents a doctrine of salvation rather than a philosophy (1, p. 50, 2, p. 74, p. 141). This assessment can only be agreed with to a certain extent. Of course Śaṅkara's philosophical concepts are inseparably linked to religious ideas, and he himself understands his philosophy as a means leading from the sufferings of the impermanent world and the beginningless circle of rebirth to salvation by the objectless recognition of the identity of one's own self with the supreme spiritual being. But in this, his understanding of philosophy corresponds to a widely spread concept in his time. The close connection between religion and philosophy was the common feature both in India and in Europe in the middle ages. Śaṅkara has been both an important religious reformer and a philosopher with great intellectual capacities. Under the presupposition that philosophy is to be understood as the

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endeavour to rationally grasp the world in its totality, to fathom its development, to recognise the position of man in the world, his ability of realising the world and his behaviour in society and to systematically explain the results of this endeavour, Śaṅkara justly can be called a philosopher. He rationally gives the reasons for his concept of the final identity of the world as well as the individual soul with Brahman, the non-dual all-comprehensive, eternal and unchangeable absolute. In deduction of this he gives the status of dependent existence of the phenomenal world and also the multiplicity of individuals to māyā. He outlines the process of the development of the phenomenal world and develops a gnoseology containing thoughts on the means of cognition founded on the assumption of two steps of truth in dependence of the chosen point of view of the empirical world or of the absolute. Avidyā as an uncorrect or false cognition of the true essence of the world plays a decisive role in his gnoseology. Further, Śaṅkara developed concepts on the rules and the importance of moral behaviour. Thus we find systematically explained reflections on all the three essential parts of philosophy, viz., ontology, gnoseology, and ethics, the philosophical importance of which consists mainly in the manner in which he interprets and synthesizes earlier developed philosophical conceptions and in his new constructions in trying to solve philosophical problems derived out of this. In this connection we have to mention, above all, not only the concept of the unity of everything existing and of the two-graded truth, but also the understanding of the philosophical process of development gradually leading from materialism as the lowest step to the absolute monism of Advaita Vedānta, taught by Śaṅkara, as the ultimate step. Important sources of Śaṅkara's philosophy can be seen mainly in the ideas of Yājñavalkya and in the teachings of Gauḍapāda, but he fell back also on Uddālaka's cosmogony giving it an idealistic interpretation, as well as the theory of development of the Sāṅkhya philosophy. Besides these roots, the **post-Buddhistic Upaniṣads and Buddhist concepts** like

those of Nāgārjuna, especially those of the Vijñānavāda have played an important role in shaping his philosophy. We can find also some elements of logic and gnoseology developed by Nyāya and Mīmāṃsā as well as elements of Patañjali's Yoga. Thus we can draw the conclusion that Śaṅkara in its full extent has used the philosophical knowledge of his time, and he himself enriched the philosophical discussion very much by arguing comprehensively with all the important systems of that time.

Śaṅkara is frequently supposed to be one of the most important Indian philosophers of all time, sometimes also as the most important philosopher on the whole generally. If we really want to determine Śaṅkara's place in the history of Indian philosophy, a historical evaluation is the precondition. At first we have to ask about his importance in his time. What, e.g. might have been the reasons for his commentary on the *Brahma-sūtra* to have been the first amongst a probably long list of forerunners preserved up to our days?

The time Śaṅkara lived in is often called a dark one, a period of decline following the so-called Golden Age of the Guptas. But mostly it has been a formative time, a time of change in which feudal trends of social development got stronger and regional dynasties gained strength. National languages and popular cults developed. In the south of India the process of assimilation of the Dravidian and the North Indian culture was continued. The rule of the Pallava dynasty undoubtedly can be seen as a climax of this development. The Cheras of the Malabar coast, Śaṅkara by tradition is linked with (3, p. 40) were closely connected with the Pallavas (4, p. 172). Temples as well as individual Brahmins were given big land grants. The cultural climate of those days was characterised by the decline of Buddhism and Vedic ritualism in the South, the evolution of Hinduism into the religion of the masses with a large variety of directions and the inclusion of new cults of the not yet Hinduized population into Hinduism and above all an active philosophical life. There was a contradiction between the

religion of the ruling elite, based on the Brahmanical orthodoxy, and the multiformed popular cults, mostly centred around the devotion to a personal God. At the same time, notwithstanding the political decentralisation, there already developed a more or less cultural unity of the upper strata all over the country. Sanskrit, pushed back by the national languages to the position of a scholarly language only, spread all over India; and by this it became the linguistic base of the cultural unity.

The endeavour of the ruling classes was towards the integration of the many different popular religious faiths into the ruling ideology in order to strengthen the process of political consolidation of the feudal states by ideological means. For the same reason it was at the same time necessary to bridge the contradictions contained in the authoritarian Vedic tradition which the orthodox Brahmins relied on and to synthesize this tradition with the popular cults. It was mainly due to Śaṅkara that the Brahmin orthodoxy could successfully adjust itself to the new conditions of the feudal development in India.

Śaṅkara's religious activities can be called a part of an early middle age Hinduistic reform movement. He essentially contributed to the theological foundation of Hinduism notwithstanding the fact that he claimed to give only a correct interpretation of the content of the *śruti* literature; and he took pains to prove that his point of view, i.e. Advaita Vedānta, was the uniform teaching of this literature. But to call Śaṅkara a main representative of the Brahmanic restoration or of the Brahmanic counter-reformation (2, p. 51) does not contribute anything to a real understanding of this great personality.

Śaṅkara effectively influenced the further philosophical development. His commentary on the *Brahma-sūtras* was in the centre of a philosophical discussion lasting beyond the centuries. This discussion similar to that in Europe in those days was mainly focussed on the relation among God, man, and the universe. In this dispute new philosophical and theological concepts arose.

The criticism of Śaṅkara was mainly centred on his devaluation of the world's reality, the strong individualism on the stress he laid on the privileges of *dvijas*. The greatness of Śaṅkara's conceptions first of all has to be evaluated with the demands of his time. His philosophy was elitistic and its social background was formed by orthodox Brahmins being the ideologists of the ruling classes. But on the other hand his philosophy also included many implications which were of interest also to the feelings and hopes of the broader masses.

In the 11th century, Śaṅkara's philosophy most probably was not much known in the north of India, a conclusion which can be drawn from the fact that Alberuni did neither mention Advaita Vedānta as a philosophical system nor the name of Śaṅkara (5). He dealt with Sāṅkhya and Yoga and was deeply impressed by the *Bhagavad-gītā* of which most probably he knew another version as that commented on by Śaṅkara (6). He gave some information on the *Purāṇas*, the epics and on Jainism. It might be that Gauḍapāda was meant by the hermit Gauḍa, who is said to have written a book on salvation and on the process to become God (5, p. 132). But the name Śaṅkara we do not find. In analysing the philosophical development of India we can draw the conclusion that up to the 17th century most probably Advaita Vedānta was a philosophical system amongst others which flourished in India in the middle ages (7, pp. 1-8).

When the British came to India the existence of two philosophical systems caught their attention: Bedang (Vedānta) and Neodirsin (Nyāya) (8, p. 120). In Bengal, Nyāya was the dominating system, and at the end of the 18th century corresponding to ancient reports in nearly every Bengal town we could find a Nyāya school (8, p. 128). The other systems mostly had been absorbed by Vedānta or Nyāya, and as independent system they only lived in the shadow. An exception, however, has to be made regarding the South and Kashmir, where Śaiva Siddhānta and Śaivism respectively were flourishing. When in the beginning of the 19th

century the development of Indian early bourgeoisie started, a philosophy was needed which could correspond to the demands of the new social development. What was asked for was a philosophy of liberty, equality and brotherhood, backing the demand for releasing human creativity and the development of personality and a rationalist world view, a philosophy which was in line with the natural tradition of the country in order to be effective. The demand for justice and equality had to put off its abstract character, for it was included into the dispute with the colonial rule. At the same time the widely spread religiosity of the population had to be taken into account, and in order to strengthen the new social development a religious reform became necessary. Thus the developing modern Indian philosophy was confronted with a whole bundle of tasks coped with in Europe by Renaissance, Reformation, Enlightenment and Romantics. First of all, philosophical penetration of social problems had become necessary. Nyāya philosophy mostly concentrated on logic and gnoseology, whereas the different directions of Vedānta were well suited to the further development and re-interpretation according to the new demands. For the first time these new philosophical endeavours took shape in Ram Mohan Roy's considerations. He was the first who on modern times made effective the humanistic implications of the Vedānta philosophy by developing out of its structure the philosophical explanation of the equality of man and the demand for charity as well as for active social work. But he also on a theoretic basis gave explanations for the unity of the world and the supremacy of reason.

If Ram Mohan Roy belongs to a tradition which goes back to Rāmānuja's Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedānta, Ramakrishna was mostly influenced by Śaṅkara's Advaita Vedānta, although some influence of the Bhakti movement can be seen too. Ramakrishna in the form of an indirect protest against the colonial rule stresses the equality of religions. In putting forward this claim he essentially relied on Śaṅkara. Ramakrishna's teachings can be

summed up in four points. (1) All religions essentially are true, they have to be looked at as only different ways leading to God. On the one hand, this concept was opposed to sectarianism of the Hindu society and was meant to create harmony among all religions in order to unite the Indian people notwithstanding the religious differences. On the other hand, he stressed the equality of the Indians and their religions thus rejecting the activities of the Christian missionaries, this being important for the maintenance of cultural identity. (2) God is pervading everything; he has to be recognised also in every human being: *jīva* is Śiva. Service to man not only has to be seen as a way to God, but is itself already service to God. (3) Following Śaṅkara, Ramakrishna looked at the different philosophical systems as steps on the way to the supreme philosophical knowledge, i.e. that of the Advaita Vedānta. (4) In the field of ethics, Ramakrishna stressed the necessity and value of action which according to the *Bhagavad-gītā* should be done free from selfish motives.

Whereas in the teachings of Ramakrishna only an indirect protest against the colonial rule found its expression, the philosophy of Swami Vivekananda can be seen as a reflection of the development of a radical wing of the national liberation movement at the end of the 19th century. All his teachings were directly linked to the national question. Swami Vivekananda can claim the credit for having been the first who developed a comprehensive social concept based on Advaita Vedānta. If Ramakrishna had mainly stressed the equality of religions, Vivekananda, continuing this line of thinking, developed out of the main positions of Śaṅkara's philosophy the demand for equality of human beings. Especially he used the idea of each man's individuality and of the unity of the universe contained in Śaṅkara's philosophy.

In Vivekananda's teachings we can find two main aspects, the demand for equal rights for men as well as for nations and the endeavour for the development of the personality. Vivekananda took over Śaṅkara's concept of the finally sole existence of

Brahman and the only relative reality of the phenomenal world, but he emphasized that the time had come for practically using this knowledge, i.e. applying Vedānta to the everyday life of the common man. According to the demands of his time, Śaṅkara was mainly concerned with proving the all-comprehensive existence of Brahman, by which the determination of the universe as māyā was included, and explaining the essence of salvation and the way to this goal. Vivekananda very much admired Śaṅkara who "...had caught the rhythm of the Vedas, the national cadence... his whole life's work is nothing but that, the throbbing of the beauty of the Vedas and the Upaniṣads." (9, VIII, pp. 278-79) But at the same time he criticized Śaṅkara's detachment from the world and his exclusiveness: "Śaṅkara left this Advaita philosophy in the hills and forests, while I have come to bring it out of those places and scatter it broadcast before the work-a-day world and society." (9, VII, p. 160) Mostly he criticized that Śaṅkara did not feel with the masses, that, although he had a great intellect, he had no great heart (9, II, p. 265). Vivekananda felt with the suppressed masses of his mother country, recognising at the same time that, without including them, it would not be possible to overcome colonial suppression and to open the way to a new flowering time of India.

Vivekananda very much stressed the point of universal brotherhood. If the absolute alone with which every individual is identical exists, then every human being by his very essence is divine and there does not exist any fundamental difference between men: "...man is man all the world over, the same wonderful human nature is everywhere represented." (9, I, P. 386) He strongly rejected not only every caste discrimination in India as well as every racial or social discrimination in the countries of the West, but also privileges in general. Out of the Advaita teachings, he also derived national solidarity: "I am an Indian, every Indian is my brother." (9, IV, P. 413) In continuing Ramakrishna's thoughts he demanded to see God in all men and to serve God by serving them.

It is not surprising that Vivekananda's protest against social inequality found continuation in the concept of an ideal society drawn up by him, where lower strata of society were raised to the level of the higher. Vivekananda combined the Hindu conception of the four ages and of the four *varṇas* with the belief in the future socialist society, governed by the Śūdras, the fourth class: "Everything goes to show that socialism or some form of rule by the people, call it what you will, is coming on the boards. The people will certainly want the satisfaction of the material needs, less work, no oppression, no war, more food." (9. V, p. 132) Man, according to Vivekananda, is individual in being universal and not in being particular. Out of this assumption, Vivekananda conceived the demand for reconstructing society in such a way that each and everybody has the opportunity for the development of his personality. This, according to Vivekananda, concerns most of all the downtrodden masses, in whose lack of opportunities to develop their abilities the decline of India was rooted. India has lost her identity because the masses have been trampled under foot, and they should be raised in order to gain back identity for the nation. Here one reason can be seen for the high-ranking position Vivekananda always gave to education, which he rightly thought was of great importance for strengthening of self-confidence of his compatriots. He wanted them to overcome their feelings of being slaves which they had been taught by the British: "... do not believe that you are weak ... You can do anything and everything without even the guidance of anyone. Stand up and express the Divinity within you." (9. III, p. 284) "We are children of the Almighty ... How can we be nothing?" (9, III 376). Thus Vivekananda on the basis of Śaṅkara's philosophical concept developed a thorough humanist social philosophy responding to the demands of his time. Swami Vivekananda, called by Jawaharlal Nehru a bridge between India's past and present, has been one of the first who outside India appeared before the public articulating the national awakening of his country, and he has

been the very first who outside India proclaimed the equality of men and by this also the necessity to overcome every form of colonial suppression backed by the philosophy of Advaita Vedānta. Vivekananda's Practical Vedānta quickly became widespread, and many people at present take it for granted that Śaṅkara has to be understood by the interpretation given by Vivekananda.

Also Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak in his philosophical views has been influenced by Śaṅkara's Advaita Vedānta, although at the same time we cannot overlook a strong influence of Rāmānuja and Jñāneśvara, too, on him. Śaṅkara in the eyes of Tilak used to be an important authority whom in order to strengthen his point of view he again and again appeals to. He admires Śaṅkara: "The Ācārya was a superman and a great sage and he had by his brilliant intellectual power refuted the Jain and the Buddhist doctrines which had then gained ground on all sides and established his own Non-Dualist (Advaita) doctrine..." (10, I. P. 18). But at the same time Tilak criticises Śaṅkara's interpretation of the *Bhagavad-gītā* as teaching renunciation. "Therefore, we must say that the first attempt to deprive the *Gītā* of its Energistic form and to give it a Renunciatory doctrinal form was made by the *Śaṅkara-bhāṣya*." (10. I. P. 20) According to Tilak, Śaṅkara's teachings contains two different aspects, namely first the knowledge of non-duality, combined with *māyā-vāda*, and secondly the way of renunciation. Whereas he affirms the first aspect, he rejects the second one (10. II. P. 701), viz., that body, senses, etc. as well as the external world are transient, and that is the reason why they have to be looked at as *mithyā*, though this transient world of name and form is based on something eternally permanent. Therefore, Vedānta philosophy has laid down the doctrine that there is, under the ever-varying (that is, illusory) appearance both of the physical organs and of the external world, "some permanent (*nitya*), i.e., real (*satya*) substance." (10. I. P. 305)

That means Tilak accepts the real existence of the external world, a concept which has to be seen in correlation with his

philosophy of action. The demand of the *Gītā* for unattached fulfilment of one's own duties concentrated on social prosperity (*lokasaṅgraha*), was, for Tilak, closely linked to the demand for active participation in the national movement.

Another outstanding representative of modern philosophical thinking in India, Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, can also be mentioned in this connection. We can recognise the direct influence of Śāṅkara's Advaita Vedānta on him to a much greater extent than in the case of Tilak. Similar to Vivekananda, Radhakrishnan connected the ideals of the French Revolution—liberty, equality and fraternity—with the divine nature of everything existing. Besides the equality of men he stressed the equality of religions, an idea which, from Ramakrishna onwards, constitutes an important ideological aspect of the Indian freedom movement. In addition to the stress laid on the unity of the world, the concept of *māyā* also belongs to the fundamental thoughts of Radhakrishnan's philosophical views. Like Tilak, he interprets it as expressing the transiency of the world in contrast to the unchangeability of Brahman. Radhakrishnan does not doubt the real existence of the world. As Radhakrishnan sees it, the fundamental reflection of Hinduism is in the formula of Uddālaka Āruṇi of the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, "*Tat tvam asi*". This is to say, Radhakrishnan holds that all people are children of the eternal which implies the demand for active charity in Hinduism. But the relevance of Radhakrishnan's interpretation of Advaita Vedānta does not primarily lie in this field, but in his efforts to connect these ideas with a global view of the world. Radhakrishnan comes to the conclusion that all people of the world are part of a universal community. As early as 1926 he develops, in line with this idea, his ideal of the brotherhood of free nations living together harmoniously and maintaining their cultural particularities (11, p. 54). Again and again he repeats the demand for creating a genuine universal community; and this demand comes to the fore in the nineteen-fifties and sixties when Radhakrishnan sees the further existence

of the human civilization threatened by nuclear weapons. He thinks that nations are only intermediate stations in human development and that the nation state is not suitable to the modern world and finally does not correspond with the fundamental unity of the universe. His main aim is to overcome the isolation and the inner conflicts of the individuals as well as its selfishness and to spread the consciousness of human solidarity everywhere. If the world cannot see itself as a unity, he said, chaos would be the result. Thus Radhakrishnan finds out two prominent features in our time: the increasing unity of the world through interdependence and the danger of its total annihilation. Starting from this knowledge he becomes an active supporter of the policy of peaceful co-existence, since for him this policy of peaceful co-existence is the logical conclusion following the spiritual unity of the world, the universality of Brahman. Therefore, this policy is not a temporary compromise, but a fundamental need of mankind founded in its nature. Radhakrishnan can claim the credit for having applied the fundamental philosophical elements of Advaita Vedānta to the most decisive problems mankind today is confronted with: the avoidance of all wars, the prevention of a nuclear war and the realization of the policy of peaceful co-existence among nations.

As a last example illustrating the long-lasting impact of Śaṅkara's view, Govinda Chandra Dev (1907–1971), the East Bengal philosopher who, truly meeting the ideal of a *jīvan-mukta*, sacrificed his own life in order to save his students, can be mentioned here. Directly following Vivekananda, Dev fully accepted the tradition of Advaita Vedānta. Of course, this did not mean to be uncritical towards Śaṅkara. According to Dev, the task of philosophy consists in realizing the essence of reality thus distinguishing between the real as such and the real as it appears. The absolute is the substratum of the empirical world, but without losing its special essence or gaining additional attributes within this process. **From the point of the world of experience, therefore, the phenomenal multiplicity exists, whereas from the metaphysical**

point of view, it does not exist. However, it is not the product of subjective imagination, for the absolute itself has something as its own which renders possible the appearance of the empirical world. This connection, named by the term *māyā*, cannot be explained but can only be grasped by intuition. Both change and permanence are real, because the empirical world is constantly changing, whereas the supreme reality, the substratum of every change, is completely free of every movement. Social inequality, exploitation and suppression do not go together with the principle of the absolute identity of all being. In this way Dev connects his fundamental philosophical concept with the demand for social activity aiming at the creation of a social order based on equality. The principle of identity has to be realized in the material sphere in the form of a social structure, where privileges as well as discrimination do not exist anymore. The society of future, therefore, will not be dominated by the so far privileged few, but by the common men, who after thousands of years of suppression become self-confident. In the just society of the future, there will be guarantee of individual development as well as collective security by fulfilling the material and spiritual needs of the common men. Therefore, according to Dev the creation of a classless society is a very urgent demand of our day. In view of the existence of nuclear weapons, the realization of the unity of humanity gains vital importance. Out of the Advaita philosophy of unity it follows, according to Dev, that the future of mankind can only be seen in solidarity and peace, but not in conflict and war. Therefore, he strengthened the point that the morality of a person can only be measured in terms of its contribution of unity, understanding, peace and prosperity of mankind.

By way of conclusion, it has to be mentioned that Śaṅkara's view of course can be interpreted in different ways. It means that regressive social forces also refer to him. However, this paper only aims at making evident the most important philosophical

tendencies connected with Advaita Vedānta in the course of Indian philosophical development. These are tendencies which in our day display the humanistic potentiality contained in Śaṅkara's Advaita Vedānta as a philosophy of humanism. We can recognize a shift of accent in Advaita philosophy during its course of development following the philosophical and religious turn to the world in modern times. Instead of discussing the essence of Brahman and salvation, modern humanistic Advaita Vedānta is centred around equality of men and the fundamental unity of the world as a consequence of which men are liable to live together peacefully and to give up war and violence.

Coming back to the question of the greatness of Śaṅkara, we can say that undoubtedly he was one of the greatest Indian philosophers. His greatness consists in his reflecting the ideological demands of his time in the most effective way, a fact which can be seen as the main reason why his philosophy has always played an important role in Indian history. I would like to conclude with the remark that in every philosophical discussion of peace, the concept of Advaita Vedānta has to be taken into consideration.

NOTES

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THE ANUBHAVAVILĀSA
OF HARIHARĀŚRAMA PARAMAHANSA*

G. Mishra

व्यवहरति तत्र चाद्यो मधुमत्तवदेव नैव तात्पर्यात् ।
अपरस्तात्पर्येण च परकार्येभ्विह यथा लोकः ॥१५२ ॥

The first interacts like an inebriated person without having a specific motive. The other person works with a motive for the benefit of the other people like anybody else. (152)

अस्ति च जीवन्मुक्तिः सिद्धा सा स्वानुभूतितो यस्मात् ।
श्रुतिरप्याह विमुक्तो विमुच्यते चेति सुस्पष्टम् ॥१५३ ॥

There indeed is a state of Jīvanmukti (liberated while being alive) since it is established by the experience of one's own self. This has been stated clearly by the scriptural passage which clearly states, "the liberated is again liberated." (153)

See *vimuktaśca vimucyate, Kāṭha Upaniṣad, 5.1.*

* Continued from the previous number

चित्तपरिपाकवशतो ज्ञानं चैतत् प्ररूढिमभ्येति ।
अतिनिर्मलचित्तस्य तु लसच्छ्रुतेरेव पूर्णविज्ञानम् ॥१५४ ॥

Because of the maturity of the mind, this knowledge attains to the state of sublimation. For a person, who has an absolutely clear mind, the manifestation of knowledge in its plenitude comes only from the enlightening scripture. (154)

सकलैस्साधनवर्गैरेव ज्ञानं कथञ्चिदन्यस्य ।
अतिमलिनमानसस्य तु बहुभिस्स्याज्जन्मभिर्ज्ञानम् ॥१५५ ॥

For the other person, knowledge arises only with the help of all the means. But for one, whose mind is extremely impure, knowledge comes only through (after) several births. (155)

तत्रातिमलिनबुद्धेर्जातो बोधोऽपि नैव फलदः स्यात् ।
प्रतिबद्धे देहादिप्रत्ययरूपैर्विपर्ययैर्यस्मात् ॥१५६ ॥

Even the rise of knowledge does not yield the result to a person who has an impure mind, since it gets obstructed by the wrong identifications in the form of body and the like. (156)

प्रतिबन्धापगमार्थं तेन निदिध्यासनञ्च कर्तव्यम् ।
यावत्प्रतिबन्धलयाज्ज्ञानं सफलं भवेत्तावत् ॥१५७ ॥

In order to get rid of the obstructions, he has to do contemplation till such a time when knowledge becomes fruitful by the destruction of the obstruction. (157)

आदर्शे व्युत्पन्नस्तत्प्रतिबिम्बं विचित्रितं पश्यन् ।
न प्रत्यक्षीकुरुते प्रतिबिम्बपरो हि यद्वदादर्शम् ॥१५८ ॥

A sensible person by perceiving his beautiful reflection in a mirror does not perceive the mirror since he is interested only in reflection. (And there is no reality of the reflection apart from the mirror.) (158)

तद्वद् व्युत्पत्त्यभावात्परचिति विविधं तत्र देहेन्द्रियाद्यं
 पश्यन्नात्मत्वतो वै तदनुगतमना नेक्षते स्वात्मभूतम् ।
 नित्यप्रत्यक्षरूपं निरवधिकजगद्भासकं मोहमात्रात्
 तन्मोहोत्सादनार्थं खलु सततनिदिध्यासनं संविदध्यात् ॥१५९ ॥

Because of the lack of sufficient understanding of the supreme consciousness and by identifying the body, mind etc. with one's own self and having the mind directed towards those things, a person does not perceive his own self, which is eternally perceived directly and which illuminates the worlds in an unexcelled manner because of his own nescience. In order to destroy that misperception, one should do continuous meditation.

यथा हि किञ्चित्पुरतोऽस्य संस्थितं
 स्फुटं न पश्यत्यनवस्थितत्वतः ।
 केनापि चोक्तं प्रतिपद्य तत्परः
 समीक्षते तद्वदमुं निजान्तरम् ॥१६० ॥

As one does not see properly something which is situated in front due to lack of attention and when reminded by somebody, sees it clearly, similar is the case with one's own inner self. (160)

तस्माद्यत्प्रतिबद्धं ज्ञानं चैतत् परोक्षकल्पं स्यात् ।
 अपरोक्षज्ञाने सति न ध्यानादेरिहास्ति फलमीषत् ॥१६१ ॥

Therefore, whatever knowledge arises through a medium (obstruction) is ineffect indirect in nature. When the immediate knowledge dawns, the meditations and the like have very little use. (161)

विशुद्धचैतन्यमयं सदद्वयं
 यदा निजात्मानमवैति हि स्फुटम् ।
 तदा न तस्यास्त्यपि कर्म किञ्चना-
 फलत्वतः प्राप्तमहाफलात्मनः ॥१६२ ॥

This non-dual reality is pure consciousness and when a person perceives it as his own self, then he does not have any action to perform, as there is no fruit that can be attained thereby. This is because the highest goal is attained already. (162)

संस्कारमात्रात्प्रकरोति पूर्ववत्
क्षीबोऽनुसन्धानमृते यथा तथा ।
तत्स्यान्न लिप्तो भवतीषदप्ययं
ज्ञानी कृतेनाम्बुजपत्रवज्जलैः ॥१६३ ॥

Because of the residual impressions, he engages himself in action as before without a trace of memory whatsoever like an inebriated person. He does not, as a result of it, get involved at all even a little. Such an enlightened one remains like a lotus leaf untouched by water. (163)

अग्निष्टोमैर्वाजपेयाश्वमेधैः
स्वर्णस्तेयैर्ब्रह्महत्यादिभिश्च ।
देहातीताद्वैतचिन्मात्रसंस्थो
नेषद्धर्माधर्मवान् स्यात्कदाचित् ॥१६४ ॥

The person who abides in the non-dual consciousness transcending body never gets associated with merits and demerits arising from sacrifices like Agniṣṭoma, Vājapeya and Aśvamedha or from sinful activities like stealing gold or killing a Brahmin. (164)

नैतावतायं प्रतिषिद्धकर्मणि
प्रवर्तते क्वापि यथेष्टकर्मकृत् ।
प्रागेव यस्मात् प्रतिषिद्धवर्जनं
कृतं ततो नास्ति हि तत्र वासना ॥१६५ ॥

Because of such a state of his being, doing things as he likes, he does not engage in prohibitory actions. It is because he has already dissociated himself from the prohibitory actions earlier. (during his preparations to become a liberated person). Hence there is no latent impression to indulge in such actions (prohibitory actions). (165)

रागद्वेषनिमित्तमस्य कारणं नाज्ञानिवत्सम्भवेत्
किन्तु प्राक्कृतवासनापरवशः कुर्याच्च किञ्चित् क्वचित् ।
ज्ञानाभ्यासदशासु वर्जितमभूद्यस्मान्निषिद्धं चिरात्
नष्टा तेन निषिद्धसंस्कृतिरसौ कुर्यात्कथं तत्पुनः ॥१६६ ॥

The activity of such a person is not prompted by liking and aversion as in the case of an ignorant person. But because of the latent impressions he may at times under their control perform such acts. In the state of practising *jñāna-yoga*, he has already done away with the prohibitory actions. There are, therefore, no impressions relating to such actions. Hence, how will he be able to perform such actions again? (166)

यतः पश्येज्ज्ञानी फलविधुरतां कर्मविततै-
रकर्तारं स्वञ्चाप्यभिमति-विहीनश्च वपुषि ।
ततो नायं कुर्याद्विहितमपि किञ्चित्कथमसौ
पुनः कुर्यान्निन्द्यं यदिह न कृतं प्राक् क्वचिदपि ॥१६७ ॥

A person of wisdom perceives the absence of results of actions in and through the activities, and remains to be the non-doer, bereft of the notion of self in the body. So, he cannot perform even any prescribed deeds. How can he engage himself in the prohibitory actions which he has not performed so far? (167)

Cf. Naiṣkarmya-siddhi of Sureśvara, 4. 61-64

रागादितो यदि करोति निषिद्धकर्म
नास्त्येव बोध इति तस्य विनिश्चयोऽयम् ।
प्रारब्धसंस्कृतिनिमित्तत एव कर्म
कुर्यात्ततो न हि निषिद्धकृतेः प्रसङ्गः ॥१६८ ॥

If by sheer attachment, he engages himself in the forbidden act, it is but sure that he does not have the understanding of Brahman. But the liberated, acts only by reason of the impressions of the deed already commenced. So there is no scope for the performance of the forbidden acts. (168)

तस्मादेवं स्वात्मतत्त्वं विदित्वा
 हित्वा देहादी विपर्यस्तबुद्धिः ।
 अस्ताशङ्कस्त्वागतं ह्याददानो-
 न्यत्रो वाञ्छन्स्वस्थ एवेह विद्वान् ॥१६९ ॥

Hence, realizing the truth about one's own self in this manner and by giving up the wrong notion of the self in the body, the man of wisdom will be free from all anxiety. He accepts whatever comes to him and does not desire anything else. He abides in his own self. (169)

दृश्यं विकल्पात्मकमेव मत्वा
 तदुपतां चित्तगतां च हित्वा ।
 दृश्यच्युतं केवलचित्स्वरूपं
 आत्मेति मत्वा स्वदृढं यथेष्टम् ॥१७० ॥

He understands the perceived world as dual. By giving up its form which is in the mind, he firmly believes that the self is in the form of pure consciousness alone, which is bereft of the object of perception and which is abiding and moves about as he wishes. (170)

दृश्याकारे चित्तगे सन्निरुद्धे
 भान्तं चिन्मात्रात्मना स्वात्मबोधम् ।
 मत्वाद्वैतब्रह्मभूतं विशङ्कः
 स्वस्थो ज्ञानी सर्वतस्स्याद्विमुक्तः ॥१७१ ॥

By obstructing in the mind, the perceived world and by remaining in the state of consciousness and by having the understanding of one's own self, the wise one remains carefree in his own state which is same as the state of non-dual Brahman. He will be then fully liberated being liberated from all the dualities. (171)

गच्छंस्तिष्ठन्निषन्वापि भुञ्ज-
न्जीवन्मुक्तस्सर्वदैवात्मतत्त्वम् ।
बुद्ध्या पश्येन्नष्टमोहावृतिर्यत्
भूयोऽविद्यासम्भवो नास्ति तस्य ॥१७२ ॥

While walking, standing, winking, eating, the person who is liberated while alive, always perceives the reality of himself in the mind. Since he has got rid of illusion, there is no possibility of his getting into the world of illusion again. (172)

प्रबलप्रमाणमतिसन्निवर्तिता
प्रभवेच्च सा कथमिवेह वै पुनः ।
न हि रज्जुबुद्धिविनिवर्तितः पुनः
भवतीह कुत्रचिदहिर्मृषात्मकः ॥१७३ ॥

Because of the operation of the stronger means of knowledge, the earlier (erroneous) state of mind cannot arise again. Once the illusory snake is removed by the knowledge of the rope, it is not seen to recur again. (173)

तत एव नो भवति बाधिता क्वचित्
व्यवहारतोऽपि परमात्मगा मतिः ।
व्यवहारसन्ततरतौ हि दृश्यते
विदुषामपीह महतां विचित्रता ॥१७४ ॥

That is why, the awareness regarding the ultimate self is never sublated by the empirical experience. Even in the case of the extremely wise, plurality (illusory knowledge) is experienced because of their continuous involvement in the day-to-day activities. (174)

अन्यथा कथमिहोपदिशेद्वै
 ज्ञानपद्धतिमसौ गुरुवर्यः ।
 देहरक्षणमपीह कथं स्यात्
 ज्ञानतो व्यवहतिं यदि जह्यात् ॥१७५ ॥

Otherwise how would the preceptor instruct about the path of knowledge? How is it possible to sustain one's body, if the empirical usage is abandoned by the attainment of the knowledge? (175)

ज्ञानोत्तरं देहवियोग आपतेत्
 जीवद्विमुक्तिस्तु ततो न सिद्ध्यति ।
 तस्माद्धुधे स्याद्व्यवहारसन्ततिः
 विद्याविरुद्धा परिदृश्यते यतः ॥१७६ ॥

If the body gets disintegrated as soon as knowledge arises, then liberation while being alive will not take place. That is why there is seen a continuity of the day-to-day activities in a man of knowledge which is opposed to knowledge. (176)

विज्ञानिनो व्यवहतिर्निखिलाज्ञवत् स्यात्
 किन्त्वज्ञवन्न हि तदीयफलाफलेषु ।
 हर्षं विषादमुपयाति कथञ्चनापि
 संशीतलान्तरतया च सदा समास्ते ॥१७७ ॥

The empirical usage of a wise person may be like that of an ignorant person. But as far the good or bad results of the actions are concerned, he does not behave like an ignorant one. Happiness and misery may come to him. But with his inner self being extremely calm, he always abides (in his own self). (177)

आदेहपातमतिशीतलितान्तरङ्गः
 प्रारब्धसंस्कृतिवशाद्द्वयवहृत्य पश्चात् ।
 देहे विशीर्णं उपयाति परं पदं स्वं
 तोये विलीनकरकेव तदात्मकस्स्यात् ॥१७८॥

He, with an extremely composed mind, performs the worldly activities by virtue of the latent impressions produced by the fructified deeds. This he does till the fall of his body. Subsequently, once the body is destroyed, he attains to his own true transcendental state and becomes one with it like a hailstone dissolves in water. (178)

तस्माद्गुरुं समुपगम्य निजात्मतत्त्वं
 अद्वैतवस्तु गुरुदर्शितवेदमार्गात् ।
 निश्चित्य सम्यगखिलं परिहृत्य बुद्ध्या
 निःश्रेयसा समधिगच्छ निजात्मभूतम् ॥१७९॥

Therefore, approach the teacher and determine the exact nature of your non-dual self, by following the Vedic path shown by him. Reject the whole apparent reality with your liberating intellect and realize your own self. (179)

श्रुत्वेत्थं गुरुवचनं शिष्यः श्रुतिवाक्यतो विनिश्चित्य ।
 अद्वैतात्मसतत्त्वं ब्रह्मैवाभूदखण्डसुखसान्द्रम् ॥१८०॥

Thus listening to the words of the preceptor, and determining the truth with the help of the scriptural texts, the disciple realised his own non-dual self and became Brahman itself which is undifferentiated pure bliss. (180)

अनुभवविलास एषः प्रोन्मिषितो हरिहराख्ययतिना यः ।
प्रीणातु तेन विष्णुर्गुरुरूपो हृदि समाहितस्सततम् ॥१८१ ॥

The work *Anubhavavilāsa* has been unfolded by the revered ascetic Harihara. May Lord Viṣṇu who is always present in my heart, in the form of my spiritual teacher be pleased with this. (181)

स्वातन्त्र्यं सकलेऽपि च येषां तन्त्रे परात्मविद्यायां
शङ्करतुल्यानेतान्नमामि विश्वेश्वराख्यपरमगुरुन् ।
संश्रितपरमहंस्यान्शिवरामाश्रमगुरुंश्च शिवरूपान्
यत्कृपयाऽहं भीमसंसाराम्बोधिमुत्तीर्णः ॥१८२ ॥

I bow down to the grand preceptor Viśveśvara who is equal to Śaṅkara, who was an independent authority in all systems of thought as well as in the knowledge of the Supreme self. I also bow down to my preceptor Śivarāmāśrama, who belongs to the Paramahansa order and who is the embodiment of Lord Śiva himself and by whose grace I could cross over the frightening ocean of transmigratory existence. (182)

इति श्रीमत्परमहंसपरिव्राजक-पदवाक्यप्रमाणज्ञ-विश्वेश्वराश्रमशिष्य-
श्रीशिवरामाश्रमचरणकमलानुवर्तिना हरिहराश्रमपरमहंसेन
कृतमनुभवविलासाख्यं प्रकरणं समाप्तम् ॥

Thus ends the *Prakarāṇa, Anubhavavilāsa*, authored by Harihara Paramahansa, a follower of the lotus feet of Śrī Śivarāmāśrama, who was a disciple of the great Paramahansa Parivrājaka, Viśveśvarāśrama, an authority on grammar, Mīmāṃsā and Nyāya.

॥ हरिः ॐ तत् सत् ॥

ABOUT THE PUBLISHERS

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संसाराध्वनि तापभानुकिरणप्रोद्भूतदाहव्यथा-
 खिन्नानां जलकाङ्क्षया मरुभुवि भ्रान्त्या परिभ्राम्यताम् ।
 अत्यासन्नसुधाम्बुधिं सुखकरं ब्रह्माद्वयं दर्शय-
 न्त्येषा शङ्करभारती विजयते निर्वाणसन्दायिनी ॥

*samsārādhvani tāpabhānukiraṇaprodhbhūtadāhavyathā-
 khinnānām jalakāṅkṣayā marubhuvi bhrāntyā paribhrāmyatām
 atyāsannasudhāmbudhiṁ sukhakaram brahmādvayam
 darśayant-
 yeṣā śaṅkarabhāratī vijayate nirvāṇasandāyini.*

To those who are afflicted, in the way of the world, by the burning pain given rise to by the scorching sun-shafts of misery, and who through delusion wander about in the desert (of worldliness) seeking water—showing the felicitous ocean of nectar, which is very near, the non-dual Brahman, this—the Voice of Śaṅkara—is victorious, leading, as it does, to liberation.