

The VOICE of ŚĀṆKARĀ

śaṅkara-bhāratī



Editor :

R. Balasubramanian

eṣā śaṅkara-bhāratī vijayate
nirvāṇa-sandāyini

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

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HOMAGE TO ŚAṄKARA

[198]

विनिष्कासितानीश तत्त्वावबोधा-
 त्ततानां मनोभ्यो ह्यनन्याश्रयाणि ।
 रजांसि प्रपन्नानि पादाम्बुजातं
 गुरो रक्तवस्त्रापदेशाद्बिभर्षि ॥

*vinīṣkāsitānīśa tattvāvabodhān-
 natānām manobhyo hyananyāśrayāṇi
 rajāṁsi prapannāni pādāmbujātaṁ
 guro raktavastrāpadeśād-bibharṣi.*

O Supreme Master! Śaṅkara ! Benign Preceptor ! You have, indeed, worn the ochre robe that symbolises the mass of dust (red powders) (ignorance/desires, etc.) which has been warded off by you—through the awakening of the knowledge of Reality—from the minds of the ardent devotees who have bowed down at the pair of your lotuslike feet.

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भवाम्भोधिमग्नान् जनान्दुःखयुक्तान्
 जवादुद्दिधीर्षुर्भवानित्यहोऽहम् ।
 विदित्वा हि ते कीर्त्तिमन्यादृशाम्भो
 सुखं निर्विशङ्कः स्वपिम्यस्तयत्नः ॥

*bhavāmbhodhimagnān janān duḥkhayuktān
 javād-uddidhūrṣur-bhavān-ityaho'ham
 viditvā hi te kīrttim-anyaadr̥śām-bho!
 sukham nirviśaṅkaḥ svapimyastayatnaḥ.*

Oh Śrī Śaṅkara! You want to lift up hurriedly the miserable people who are immersed in the quagmire of the ocean of *samsāra*. Oh, how much compassionate you are! I am, indeed, wonderstruck as I come to know of your extraordinary fame; hence I fall asleep comfortably, without any anxiety and free from any endeavour at all (to help the mankind).

Śrī Saccidānanda Śivābhinava Nṛsiṃhabhāratī
 in Śrī Śaṅkarācārya-bhujāṅgaprayāta-stotra

THUS SPAKE ŚAṆKARA

R. Balasubramanian

Doing Philosophy from the Advaita Perspective

A Western Philosopher interviews Ādi Śaṅkara in a conference hall. The first part of the interview is given below. This imaginary dialogue shows how Śaṅkara would have responded to the questions, doubts, and arguments of a contemporary Western philosopher, highlighting some aspects of the philosophia perennis of Advaita.

Philosopher: May I have your permission to address you as Ācārya or Guru during my interview with you.

Śaṅkara: Yes, this is quite acceptable to me.

P: I offer my *praṇāms* to you, revered Ācārya. I extend a hearty welcome to you and the scholars assembled here. I have already given you a copy of my CV. which gives you an idea of my background and the work I have done. But I don't have your resume. Please let us know how you would like to introduce yourself.

- Ś: Probably you don't know how I introduced myself to my Guru, Pūjyaśrī Govinda Bhagavatpāda, when I met him for the first time for the purpose of becoming his sannyāsin-disciple.
- P: We don't know anything about it at all. Please tell us, Revered Ācārya.
- Ś: When my Guru asked me, "Who are you?" I did not answer the question, as you all do, by mentioning the name, qualifications, and other details. On the contrary, I told him that I am not the body made up of the five elements, or the senses, or the mind, but I am the pure, non-dual Śiva, which is pure consciousness. It is not necessary for me to elaborate all I said following this initial answer. I presume from your question that you have not heard about my composition, *Daśa-slokī*, which contains the details in my answer to my Guru. If you are interested, I suggest you may read it. It is available in print.
- P: May I request you, Ācārya, to tell us briefly the substance of what you have conveyed in your answer?
- Ś: The idea that I conveyed was that the Self or Ātman in me is the reality, and not the mind-sense-body complex with which people usually identify themselves when they answer the question, "Who are you?" The Self in me—and this is also true with regard to the Self in you and the Self in everyone in the audience and also others—is pure consciousness, one and non-dual, which is totally other than the elements out of which all material objects are produced. Ordinarily, anyone who is engaged in the daily routine of activities and functions at the mental, sensory, and bodily levels, when questioned, would answer by identifying himself/herself with the mind, or the senses, or the body. This is quite natural. It will be unnatural only if the answer is given differently. But one who has attained Self-realization, if he cares to answer such a personal question, would answer it in terms of the Self.
- P: Your explanation is quite interesting. Is this the way, Guruji, that in the Upaniṣadic tradition the Self has been referred to?

- Ś: Yes. You have mentioned in your CV. that you have studied the Upaniṣads. I presume that you must have studied the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad*, which is the shortest of all the Upaniṣads. In the seventh mantra of this Upaniṣad there is the description of the Self as "*prapañca-upaśamaṁ śāntaṁ śivaṁ advaitaṁ caturthaṁ manyante sa ātmā sa vijñeyaḥ*". This is how the enlightened people who have realized the Self would describe it.
- P: Since you have mentioned about the Upaniṣads, I would like to ask you at this stage whether your position is that of a philosopher or a theologian.
- Ś: I am really surprised at your question. What you have asked will be meaningful only if there is a clear line of demarcation between philosophy and theology. The two cannot be separated, though distinguished for the purpose of analysis. I am a philosopher as well as a theologian. To me, the two disciplines are complementary, and so there is no incompatibility between the two roles I play. I would like to add that I am also a traditionalist, a follower of *sampradāya*. But I keep an open mind and welcome new ideas which are compatible with scripture and also reasonable. I do not accept tradition just for the sake of tradition. The tradition that I accept is sound and well-grounded. We call such a tradition *sat-sampradāya*.
- P: Is it not the case that, while philosophy is a rational inquiry, theology or religion is dogmatic? What is based on reason and functions through reason is totally different from that which is based on the dogmas or doctrines of scriptures. Hence, the difference between philosophy and theology. Since you believe in scriptural authority and elucidate your position by depending on it, it is but proper to say that you are a theologian and not a philosopher.
- Ś: It seems to me that your conception of both philosophy and theology is restricted and narrow. I do admit that you have the freedom to define philosophy as well as religion in the

way you want to. It is well known that philosophy has been understood in different ways from time to time. Philosophy originally meant love of wisdom, and so a philosopher is a lover of wisdom. But this definition of philosophy has been modified from time to time. At one time, philosophy was subordinated to theology with the result that it was, in a contemptuous way, treated as a handmaid of religion. With the advent of science and empirical studies, philosophy was separated from religion, and was made an independent discipline. Even in this case, there was a deep difference between rationalists on the one hand, and empiricists on the other. At a later stage, philosophy assumed the role of analytical study of the problems generated by sense experience. Still further, it was viewed as a linguistic study of terms and propositions. When other disciplines came in, philosophy was viewed as pragmatism, as phenomenological study, as hermeneutics, and so on. There is, then, no single definition of philosophy. As for theology, you know that it is of two kinds—natural theology and revealed theology. While the former is interested in proving the existence of God through reasoning, the latter holds the view that God can be known only through scriptural revelation. In the case of theology also, we have many kinds of theology. So far as I am concerned, philosophy as rational inquiry has its limitations since its sphere of operation is restricted to empirical things. I use the expression "empirical things" in a comprehensive sense to include not only the limited objects of our daily experience, but also the magnificent, awe-inspiring, and life-sustaining luminaries—the sun and the moon, the stars and the galaxy. It is impossible to know what we generally call the Creator-God through reasoning; it can be known only through śruti, i.e. scriptural revelation. The sphere of śruti is restricted to what is trans-empirical. So when I have to say anything about the object of the empirical realm, I do make

use of *pramāṇas* such as perception, inference, analogy, and so on. But when I say something about *Īśvara* or *Brahman*, I am guided by the scriptural text, particularly the *Upaniṣads*.

P: I seek from you, Gurudev, a clarification at this stage. You have clearly indicated the different spheres of operation of reason and scripture. But still, I am confused about the role of reason. Do you think that there is no scope for reasoning with regard to the teaching of scripture? If your answer to this question is in the affirmative, then your position is dogmatic, because you are guided only by scriptural doctrines or dogmas.

Ś: I want you to reflect on what you have just now said about "being guided by scriptural doctrines or dogmas". The expression "guided by scripture" is very significant. One must ask the question: what does it mean to be guided by scripture? How is one guided by scripture? Let me answer this question. To be guided by scripture, one should properly understand it, then reflect on what is taught by it, and subsequently contemplate on the teaching. Only when a person is willing to go through these stages, he is said to be guided by scripture. You would have noted the need and the work of reason in this process of guidance. I have explained this position in my writings. What I have maintained is that the blind acceptance of scripture without proper inquiry will not be conducive to the good; on the contrary, that which is properly ascertained from scripture through the guidance of a competent teacher and carefully investigated by means of reasoning, will help a spiritual aspirant to elevate himself/herself and achieve transcendence.

P: Is this your personal view? Or is there scriptural support for this?

Ś: It is no doubt my personal conviction, but my personal conviction is rooted in the scriptural authority; it is inspired by scripture. Hence, it is authoritative.

P: May I know the scriptural text which supports your position?

- Ś: There is the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* text which says that "the Self must be heard of, reflected on, and contemplated on" by a spiritual aspirant who is desirous of knowing the ultimate reality. This text refers to the triple discipline of *śravaṇa*, *manana*, and *nididhyāsana* for the purpose of knowing Brahman/Ātman. What is needed is reasoning guided by scripture, and not reasoning which runs its own course. Reasoning which functions on its own is what I call "dry reasoning", reasoning just for the sake of reasoning. This kind of reasoning may appear to be sound for sometime till it is overthrown by another kind of reasoning, stronger and more powerful than that. This is what we have witnessed in the history of philosophy where there is the battle of minds among philosophers who depend exclusively on *tarka*, i.e. reasoning.
- P: Please allow me, Gurudev, to make an intervention. I have an observation to make and also I seek some explanation from you. I am simply fascinated by the expression "battle of minds" just now you used. I request you to explain to me from the perspective of Indian philosophy the battle of minds with regard to the role of reasoning.
- Ś: Sāṅkhya and Nyāya are two reputed philosophical systems in Indian philosophy. The Sāṅkhya system tries to establish *pradhāna*, otherwise called *prakṛti*, as the first cause of the world only through reasoning. The arguments it has formulated in this regard are very impressive. Anyone with a fairly good background of the theory of evolution would feel comfortable about the Sāṅkhya arguments. The Nyāya system is noted for its logic. In fact, anyone who wants to know Indian philosophy will be advised to do some preliminary study of a standard manual on the Nyāya system. The arguments given by the Sāṅkhya system with regard to the first cause are refuted by the Nyāya system. In the same way, the arguments given by the Nyāya are not final, because they are also refuted by some

other system. It means that any conclusion established by means of reasoning is not conclusive and final. In other words, there is an inherent weakness in reasoning. Bādarāyaṇa, who is also known as Vyāsa, wrote the *Brahma-sūtra*, which is the basic work for all the Vedānta systems. In one of the aphorisms, Bādarāyaṇa speaks about the inherent weakness of *tarka* or reasoning. He points out that reasoning has no sure basis or foundation. What he means is that any argument formulated through reasoning, however convincing it may appear, is not final. It is liable to be disproved by another argument based on reasoning. The field of reasoning is like the battle field in which victory is followed by defeat, which again is followed by victory, and so on. That is why I used the expression "battle of minds". In Indian philosophical tradition, we have seen such battles of minds waged by philosophers who relied on the weapons of reasoning.

P: Does this not mean, revered Ācārya, that in every theory constructed by reasoning there is scope for falsifiability? In contemporary Western philosophy, we hold that any theory which is formulated by reasoning and also empirically proved should be open to falsifiability. From this one should draw the conclusion that reasoning by its very nature is unstable, unfounded, liable to be pulled down.

Ś: I am happy to hear this.

P: Thank you very much for your clarification. I am now tempted to ask you a further question. Will I be right if I say that your philosophy is based on scripture as well as reasoning?

Ś: Yes, you may, but it will be confusing if it is not understood in the proper context. The reason for this is that I expound what is taught in the Upaniṣads, and in order to make my exposition intelligible, I make use of reasoning. So reasoning is not on a par with scripture. It is a useful instrument which is assigned only a subordinate place with regard to scripture.

P: In recent times, philosophers in the West talk about *doing philosophy*. I would like to know how you are *doing philosophy*.

Ś: I am surprised that you are talking about *doing philosophy*. The expression seems to be a little ambiguous, because it carries a reference to the instrument as well as the object. A person does something through an instrument, and there is also a reference to an object which is done, something which is accomplished through the instrument. So, do you want me to spell out the instrument or the object in my philosophizing?

P: I want both.

Ś: The instrument or means I make use of in my philosophizing is primarily scripture which is supported by reasoning for the purpose of clarification of the position. As I told you a little ago, scripture, and scripture alone, is the means through which Brahman can be known. There is a need for analysis and interpretation of the scriptural texts; and they are accomplished through the help of reasoning. Though the role of reasoning is secondary, it is important in philosophizing. As for the content or object of philosophizing, as a follower of scripture I am interested only in Brahman, which is the source, support, and end of everything. There is no point in knowing the things of the world, keeping aside or ignoring Brahman which is the source of all of them. To know Brahman is to know everything, because it is the source and sustaining principle of all the objects. I can give you a familiar example in order to explain my point. Take the case of clay-pot relation. One who knows the clay can claim to know everything made of clay, be it a pot, or a pan, or a saucer, and so on, for every one of them, whatever may be its configuration (*rūpa*) and name (*nāma*), it is nothing but clay. What is important is not the configuration and name, but its essence or nature; and it is clay that constitutes its nature. That is why, I say that to know clay is to know every object made of clay. The same principle holds good in the case of Brahman and the world. Since Brahman constitutes

the essence of the world of plurality, to know Brahman is to know everything. In other words, from the knowledge of the One, we get the knowledge of all.

P: It means that the content of your philosophizing comprises everything—from Brahman down to a minute atom.

Ś: Yes. That is quite true.

P: What is the starting point of your philosophizing? Obviously, you will have to start with Brahman without bothering about anything else, because you hold that to know Brahman is to know everything.

Ś: I will not begin my philosophizing with Brahman. To start with, Brahman is a totally unknown entity, and it will not make any sense to begin with Brahman. A good teacher will proceed from the known to the unknown. So, I have to begin with the things known to us; for example, you and I and the objects of the world. You and I are living beings, called the *jīvas*; and the objects of the world such as stone and wood are inanimate objects. A philosopher to start with must take note of all these beings: a philosopher, that is to say, has to inquire into the life-world of which he is a part, in which he participates with others. That means that the life-world provides enough data for the philosopher's investigation. I don't know whether you had any occasion to read my commentary on the *Brahma-sūtra*. Before commenting on the first sutra, I wrote an introduction to it in which I have elucidated the relation between the subject and the object. Every philosopher, to be sensible, must start with the subject-object distinction. The inquiring person is the subject and everything else is the object. The subject-object distinction is otherwise called knower-known distinction. The subject is different from the object, and the two can never be mixed up. They are mutually exclusive in the same way as light and darkness are mutually exclusive.

P: Please permit me, Gurudev, to interrupt you at this stage. The incompatibility between light and darkness is quite obvious.

But how would do you bring out the incompatibility, or mutually exclusive relation between the subject and the object?

Ś: This is a good question. There is no better way to bring out the incompatibility between the subject and the object than to consider the relation between "you" and "I". As you know, grammatically speaking, the two pronouns denoting the second person and the first person respectively cannot be syntactically related as the object and the subject in a sentence. For example, I cannot say, "You are I," or "I am you." The rules of grammar do not permit this kind of co-ordination, but it will be possible to co-ordinate "he" and "I" in a sentence. I can say in a particular context of discussion, "I am he," or, "He is me." In the same way, the subject which stands for "I", the inquiring subject, cannot be identified with the object, which is totally different from the subject. The point which I am driving at is that a philosopher has to commence his inquiry with the analysis of the subject-object relation, and then proceed to consider all that is implied by such a relation. It means that we should not begin our inquiry with Brahman, even though it may be the ultimate reality, the source and support of everything.

P: I seek a clarification, Gurudev, about the subject-object distinction. Am I right if I say that the subject is the knower and the object is any entity that is known? It means that, by subject-object distinction, you are referring to knower-known distinction. Here my doubt is this: Is this distinction absolute or relative?

Ś: I hold, following the Upaniṣad, that this distinction is absolute in the sense that the subject or the knower is always the subject or the knower and that it can never become the known. If so, the object which is known is always the known and can never become the knower.

P: This seems to be an untenable position. For example, what I claim for myself as the knower must be granted to another person like me, and so he is also the knower in his own right. It means that I am not the only knower; there are other knowers

as well. Just as I know him, he too knows me. If so, though from my perspective he is the known, from his perspective he is the knower and I am an object known by him. It means that the knower–known distinction is only relative and not absolute.

Ś: I appreciate the kind of argument you have developed to show the relative nature of the knower–known distinction. It is necessary first of all to probe further into the example you have given. When I say that another person is known by me, what is it that I know of him. His body? Of course, this is true. What about his senses? I can't know them directly in the way in which I know his body; whatever I know of his senses, is through inference. In fact, he too must know his senses only indirectly through inference. Similarly, I cannot directly know his mind, but I can know it through inference. Finally, what about the Self in him? Is it possible for me to know it directly or inferentially? Neither way is possible. The Self which is of the nature of consciousness is not an object of knowledge in the sense in which other things, such as the mind, the senses, the body, and any entity in the external world, are objects of knowledge. This is the reason why I say that the distinction between the knower and the known, i.e. the subject and the object, is absolute.

P: Still, I am not comfortable. I can give you a counter-example of an entity which is both the knower and the known. Consider, Gurudev, the case of sense organ, e.g. the visual sense. It sees or knows colour, configuration, and so on, and so it is the knower, while colour, etc. are the known. The sense organ is not only the knower, but also the known, because the person concerned knows it through inference. The same explanation holds good with regard to the mind, which is both the knower and the known. I, therefore, hold that the distinction between the knower and the known is only relative and not absolute.

Ś: What you have said about the senses and the mind is true from the commonsense point of view. Superficially viewed, it

appears that the sense organs and the mind are both the knowers and the known: it appears, that is to say, that the mind and the sense organs seem to have the dual status, the status of the knower (*dṛg*) as well as the status of the known (*dṛśya*). However, the truth is that they are only cognitive instruments through which things are known in the same way as through telescope or microscope objects are known. An instrument, whatever it may be, is an entity which is known; if we say that they are knowers, it is only by courtesy. The same is the case with regard to our senses and the mind. They are only instruments of cognition, no better than an instrument like telescope. They are always in the category of known objects. It is only by courtesy that we say that a sense organ, or the mind is the knower. The real knower which is the supporting principle of both the mind and the sense organs is the Self or consciousness. It is always the knower and never the known. It is for this reason that I hold that the distinction between the knower and the known is absolute and not relative. The only entity which is the knower is the Self or consciousness, and everything else comes under the category of the known. The final position that emerges from this is: the Self or consciousness is the only knower, and all else starting from the mind and the things of the external world have to be brought under the category of objects which are known. It is on the basis of this absolute distinction between two categories, *dṛg* and *dṛśya*, the knower and the known, that we have to begin our epistemology and metaphysics.

P: Then, how is it that the mind, the sense organs, and the body respond to the stimuli coming from outside, and the mind and the sense organs particularly identify the stimuli as such-and-such? From your explanation, all of them are other than consciousness; they are only material objects. No material object can respond to the stimuli, either through reflexive action or deliberative action. If so, how is it that the mind, the sense

organs, and the body, which are all material, respond in these ways?

- Ś: This no doubt is an important question as it touches a basic problem of the relation between the Self, i.e. consciousness, and other entities starting from the mind. In our daily life, the nature of the Self is wrongly identified with that of the mind, or the senses, or the body such that, even though all these entities are material and therefore incapable of responding in the way in which they do, they become sentient as it were, I repeat "as it were", through the superimposition of the nature of the sentient Self on them. Superimposition is imposing the nature of one thing on another; it is a case of illicit transfer. In Advaita, we use the word "*adhyāsa*" for superimposition. This kind of superimposition takes place in two directions—from the Self to the mind, the senses, and the body, and also in the reverse direction from the body, the senses, and the mind to the Self. Just reflect on the kind of statements that we make such as "I am stout," "I am deaf," "I am happy," and so on. In these cases, stoutness, deafness, happiness, which are all the characteristics of the body, the senses, and the mind, are superimposed on the Self. Similarly, when I say that my body is sensitive to heat and cold, my eyes cannot withstand the glare of the sunlight, my mind sharply reacts to the remarks of others, we superimpose the sentient nature of the Self on all these entities. The point to be noted here is that, knowingly or unknowingly, we are involved in superimposition in all aspects of our life, scriptural as well as secular.
- P: You seem to rely on our ordinary language as the evidence for superimposition.
- Ś: Yes, I do.
- P: Could you spell out the justification for it?
- Ś: Language is the mirror of the thought-structure of a person. As you know, our ideas shape our life, and they have to be expressed through the medium of language. As a person

thinks, so he expresses himself. One cannot think of a better medium for conveying one's ideas than language. Sometimes, our language directly reveals our ideas, and at other times, indirectly.

P: I request you to elucidate the last point a little further.

Ś: A person can express the identification, or the unity, of the Self with the mind-sense-body complex in two different ways. The Self is usually referred to by the personal pronoun "I". For example, when I say, "I am stout," I do not straight away convey through my sentence the identification of the Self and the body. Normally, I should have said, "My body is stout." Instead of saying this, I pick out a bodily characteristic, viz. stoutness, and identify it with the "I", which stands for the Self. This kind of language usage serves as a veil or a cover which prevents us from directly articulating the identification or unity which is implied by this language usage.

P: I am happy to note that in Indian philosophy there is linguistic analysis of the ordinary statements that we make in our daily life. I was under the impression till I heard from you that only in the West, particularly in recent philosophy, there is linguistic analysis of terms and propositions. Your analysis, revered Ācārya, is an eye-opener to me.

Ś: I am happy to hear this.

P: Now, I go back to the problem of superimposition. How is this fact of superimposition connected with philosophical inquiry?

Ś: Philosophical inquiry is threefold. Firstly, there is epistemological inquiry called *pramāṇa-vicāra*. Secondly, there is metaphysical inquiry called *prameya-vicāra*. Finally, there is inquiry into values called *prayojana-vicāra*. Whatever be the inquiry, the inquirer is the *jīva*. The *jīva* must develop the sense of "I" and "mine," and then engage in different kinds of activities. For the sake of convenience, all these activities can be classified under three categories, viz., cognitive, conative, and affective. Through these activities, the *jīva* fills the daily

agenda and plays different roles in the transactional world. Philosophical inquiry is an important part in the life of the jīva. In short, philosophical inquiry in a comprehensive sense deals with the life-world.

P: As an Advaitin, you hold that Brahman is the only reality and that everything else is an appearance. Then, where is the need to inquire into the life-world comprising different individuals and manifold objects?

Ś: This question is important, because it calls for the linkage between the life-world and its source, the mode of transition from the one to the other. It is an accepted principle of Advaita that first of all we have to inquire into the life-world of the jīva; that is to say, there is the need to inquire into the jīva on the one hand, and the external world on the other. This method of twofold inquiry, very often called subjective and objective, is the stepping stone to the inquiry into Brahman. It is only after doing this preliminary inquiry that one should begin the inquiry into Brahman. As I told you earlier, I did not straight away begin my commentary on the opening aphorism of the *Brahma-sūtra*. Instead, I prepared the ground for it through an analysis of the jīva-in-the-world. I would like to tell you that we should not undertake the inquiry into the world without the jīva who is the inquiring subject. Similarly, we should not inquire into the jīva completely ignoring the world. The reason for this is obvious. The jīva is a part of the world, and the world includes the jīva. It is through the inquiry into the jīva-in-the-world that we have to discover Brahman which is immanent both in the jīva and the world. To me, this is the method of doing philosophy.

P: I was under the impression that for you, as an Advaitin, the world as an entity can be ignored because it is said to be illusory. What is the point in inquiring into an entity which is illusory? This is what I thought. Now it seems to me that I have to revise my view in this regard. Am I right, Gurudev?

Ś: Yes, you are right. It is necessary for you to understand the Advaita standpoint. According to Advaita, the world in which all of us live has empirical reality. We use the expression "vyāvahārika" with regard to the world. What is said to be empirically real is not something imaginary, not a non-existent entity, but something real in our day-to-day life. It is an entity we have to reckon with. Only, it is not absolutely real. How can we ignore this transactional world of which we are a part when we know, through scriptural teaching, that it is the manifestation or creation of Brahman? Scriptural teaching apart, we see this world and experience it; the outside world has an impact on us every minute, every day; also, we respond to it in several ways as an agent of action. In several places in my writings I have emphasized the empirical reality of the world of space, time, and causality. I would like to mention in this connection that the Advaita position is entirely different from that of the Vijñāna-vāda Buddhist. For the Vijñāna-vādin, there is no such thing as the external world. What really exists, according to him, is only cognition, which comes and goes in a series. It is the subjective cognition that appears as the external object. I do not subscribe to this view. I have argued in the course of my refutation of the Vijñāna-vāda position in my commentary on the *Brahma-sūtra* that the external world of space, time, and causality, which is guaranteed by all pramāṇas such as perception, cannot be denied until one is able to discover the underlying reality. It means that so long as Brahman is not known, one has to accept the existence of the empirical world. It is only when there is Brahman-realization, the world as the world ceases to be. My teacher's teacher, the revered Ācārya Gauḍapāda, said that, when the non-dual reality is known, the world of plurality ceases to be. His expression, "jñāte dvaitam na vidyate," is reverberating in my ears.

P: Before I conclude, I would like to say that during the last one hundred years there has been a strong movement called "Phenomenology" which insists on the study of the life-world of the individual as the starting point of philosophy. It means that one should not straight away begin with epistemology or metaphysics. Instead, one should study the life-world of the individual as experienced in its totality. I am happy to note that the great tradition of Advaita begins the philosophical inquiry with the jīva-in-the-world. I am beholden to you for agreeing to this dialogue.

Ācārya Śaṅkara gets up from his āsana and blesses the entire audience including the interviewer.

*The entire hall is filled with the spiritually elevating chorus:
"Jaya Jaya Śaṅkara, Hara Hara Śaṅkara."*

 ŚIVA AND VIṢṆU ARE ONE*

Śrī Candraśekharendra Sarasvatī

It is found stated in the Purāṇas, *śivasya hrdayam viṣṇuḥ* and *viṣṇośca hrdayam śivaḥ*. This brings out the non-distinction or identity between the two. This identity is stressed in the names like Śaṅkaranārāyaṇa and Harihara given for the Supreme Being. Rāmeśvara and Rāmanātha are the names that are significant for this line of thought. There is an interesting story concerning the meaning of the name "Rāmeśvara". It is narrated that once the Devas got perplexed as to what exactly was the meaning of Rāmeśvara. They approached Viṣṇu and requested him to enlighten them as to the exact significance of the term. Viṣṇu is reported to have told the Devas that the word is an example of *tatpuruṣa samāsa* and should be interpreted as *Rāmasya īśvaraḥ* or Rāma's Lord, and that Rāmeśvara denoted Śiva. The Devas were not satisfied. They had a suspicion that Viṣṇu gave this interpretation out of a sense of humility, not wishing to assume for himself a superior position. So they approached Śiva and requested him to clarify the position. Śiva had no hesitation in

* From *Acharya's Call*, Sri Jagadguru's Madras Discourses (1957-1960) Part I.

telling the Devas that the word was an example of *bahuvrīhi samāsa* and that it should be interpreted as *Rāmaḥ īśvaraḥ yasya saḥ rāmeśvaraḥ*—He to whom Rāma is Īśvara. Thereby he signified that Viṣṇu is Lord for him also. The Devas were not satisfied with both the interpretations and they appealed to Brahmā, whom they believed would be impartial and non-partisan. Brahmā is stated to have explained that the word should be interpreted by regarding it as an example of *karmadhāraya samāsa* and that it affirmed the identity of both parts of the name. Rāma and Īśvara, that is, *Rāmaśca asau īśvaraśca rāmeśvaraḥ*. That is the story behind the verse:

विष्णुस्तत्पुरुषं ब्रूते बहुव्रीहिं महेश्वरः ।
उभयोरप्यतृप्तानामात्मभूः कर्मधारयम् ॥

When we read the Purāṇas, we come across several instances of Śiva vanquishing Viṣṇu and also several stories telling us how Viṣṇu vanquished Śiva. There are also stories recording how each went to the rescue of the other at critical times. At one place, Viṣṇu is worshipped as *Hara-śāpa-vimocaka*, the remover of the Brahmahatyā affliction of Śiva. On the other hand, there is a reference to Śiva as *netra-arpaṇeśvara*—one to whom Viṣṇu offered his own lotus eye to make up the one thousandth lotus flower during his worship of Śiva. This reference is to be found in the following *śloka*:

विष्णुर्यस्य सहस्रनाम नियमादम्भोरुहाण्यर्चयन्
एकोनोपचितेषु नेत्रकमलं नैजं पदाब्जद्वये ।
सम्पूज्यासुरसंहतिं विदलयस्त्रैलोक्यपालोऽभवत्
तस्मिन् मे हृदयं सुखेन रमतां साम्बे परब्रह्मणि ॥

So, there is no meaning in taking the view that Śiva and Viṣṇu are two different gods and then raising a controversy as to who is the real Paramātmā. The truth about the matter is contained in Brahmā's verdict that both are One.

We regard Śiva, Brahmā and Viṣṇu as three manifestations of the supreme Paramātmā. There are three qualities of *guṇas* associated with the functioning of this universe, and they are *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*. These *guṇas* in turn are associated with colours, namely, *sattva* with white, *rajas* with *lohita* or golden yellow, and *tamas* with darkness or black. We say Brahmā creates, Viṣṇu protects and Śiva destroys. Brahmā, who is the dynamic creator, functions by *rajas* and his colour is also depicted as golden yellow. The task of sustaining and protecting this universe and making it function is the outcome of *sāttvic* quality; but he who is responsible for this function does so while himself being all the while engrossed in *yoga-nidrā* or slumber. Slumber is *tāmasic* in nature, and Viṣṇu is dark in colour or *kṛṣṇa*. There appears to be an apparent contradiction between the *sāttvic* function of protection and the *tāmasic* colour of Viṣṇu. Similarly Śiva exercises the *tāmasic* function of dissolution; yet has the *sāttvic* whiteness of crystal.

Śrīmad Bhāgavatam teaches us that we should worship the embodiment of *sattva-guṇa* for our welfare and the devotees of Viṣṇu are firm in their stand that, of the three manifestations of the Divine Being, Viṣṇu alone should be worshipped. If we turn to the Purāṇas associated with Śiva, like *Skānda*, we are told that the crystal pure Śiva is the embodiment of *sattva-guṇa*. His dance is the dance of ecstasy, and so we must worship him for our welfare. Viṣṇu, whose function is *sāttvic* in nature, appears *tāmasic* black, while Śiva, whose function of destruction is *tāmasic* in nature, appears *sāttvic* white. What we should understand from this is that the *sāttvic* element is present in both Śiva and Viṣṇu. That also accounts for the worship of both Śiva and Viṣṇu by great saints. Moreover, both white and black are not included in the seven primary colours of the sun's rays. This further illustrates the truth that both Śiva and Viṣṇu are one and that the *tāmasic* slumber of Viṣṇu and the *tāmasic* destruction of Śiva ultimately resolve themselves into the *sāttvic* quality of infinite mercy with which they both bless their devotees.

In the discharge of his function of destruction or dissolution, Śiva is popularly depicted as a terrible and cruel God. But far from being cruel, Śiva is really kind, merciful and auspicious or "śivam", as his very name connotes. This destruction or dissolution is effected through *pralaya*. There are three kinds of *pralaya*, namely, *nitya* or daily, *naimittika* or periodical, and *ātyantika* or absolute. In all these *pralayas*, there is *laya* or resting for what was in a state of dynamic flux. So these *pralayas* provide quiescence and peace for shorter or longer durations, depending upon whether it is *nitya*, *naimittika* or *ātyantika*. *Nitya-pralaya* occurs in the case of each one of us and that is dreamless sleep, when, prince or peasant, all of us forget our sorrows and are one in the enjoyment of *susupti*, undisturbed rest. The dissolution of the universe at the end of a *kalpa* is *naimittika pralaya*. To give rest and peace to the tormented souls which have passed through several births and deaths in the course of a *kalpa*, Īśvara, in the abundance of his mercy, creates a *pralaya*, or deluge, which lasts for as many years as life existed in the universe between one *pralaya* and another, during which period the souls rest in slumber unaffected by pain and sorrow. On the occasion of the next creation (*śṛṣṭi*), they are born again in accordance with their *saṃskāras*. *Ātyantika pralaya* relates to the disappearance of plurality-consciousness, on the dawning of *jñāna* and the realization of *advaita-bhāva* or oneness with God. Thus when the Āḷvār called out to the Supreme as "*Muniyē, Nānmukhanē, Mukkaṇṇappā*" (முனியே, நான் முகனே, முக்கண்ணப்பா), the suffix "appā", signifying paternal affection, was applied to the three-eyed Śiva, to indicate his supreme grace in helping created beings to be lulled into the slumber of *pralaya* to obtain rest from their restless lives. It is the same Paramātmā that performs the triple functions of creation, conservation and dissolution and let us all develop in our hearts devotion to that supreme Being.

 PRATYAKSVARŪPA*

S.R. Krishnamurti Sastri

In order to keep alive the Advaitic tradition for the benefit of posterity, many Advaitic preceptors wrote treatises on Advaita; and among them Pratyaksvarūpa is prominent. His preceptor is Pratyak-prakāśapūjyapāda, and Pratyaksvarūpa praises him as the source of the sacred river *vidyā* that removes *ajñāna*.

"vidyānadīmūlam vidyāgurum"

Pratyaksvarūpa wrote only one work, and that too is a commentary by name *Nayanaprasādinī* on the *Pratyak-tattva-pradīpikā* or *Tattva-pradīpikā* of Citsukhācārya. The title *Nayanaprasādinī* is significant, as the study of this work leads to clear perception by removing blindness in the form of *ajñāna* and brings forth delectation to the heart.

ajñāna-timira-jetrī mānasa-nayana-prasādinī tīkā

The *Tattva-pradīpikā* of Citsukha closely follows the method of *Khaṇḍana-khaṇḍa-khādyā* of Śrīharṣa. To appreciate the place occupied by Śrīharṣa, Citsukha and Pratyaksvarūpa in the his-

* Courtesy: *Preceptors of Advaita*, Sri Kanchi Kamakoti Sankara Mandir, Secunderabad, 1986, pp. 174–177.

tory of Advaita in the post-Śaṅkara period, it is necessary to consider some of the authors who preceded them in the immediate past—authors who were active in opposing the philosophy of Śaṅkara. The later opponents of Śaṅkara and his school fall into two main groups—the Buddhists and the Naiyāyikas. These two formed the main targets of the criticisms by the Advaitins during five or six centuries immediately following Śaṅkara. In the field of Nyāya there was a revival of activity which was directed mainly against the concept of *jagan-mithyātva*. Before the 13th or 14th century, if we may draw a rough demarcation like that, the orthodox *darśanas*, particularly the Nyāya, were concerned with opposing the Buddhist schools. After this period when the influence of Buddhism waned, the attention of the orthodox schools turned in a more pronounced manner against each other. Different schools of Vedānta developed and the controversies in the field of philosophy were concerned with these differing standpoints within the fold of Vedānta. The renewed activity in the field of Nyāya may be said to have received a fresh impetus from the new technique developed by one Kulārka-panḍita in his *mahā-vidyānumāna*. Śrīharṣa, Citsukha, Ānandapūrṇa, and Pratyaksvarūpa appeared on the scene at this stage and opposed the Buddhistic and Nyāya schools. At the end of the 14th century, Advaita definitely triumphed over the other schools and reached its highest point.

While the *Khaṇḍana-khaṇḍa-khāḍya* following the *viṭaṇḍa* type of discussion only refutes the viewpoints of other schools, the *Tattva-pradīpikā* explains and establishes the Advaitic concepts also. It critically examines the viewpoints of the orthodox and heterodox schools. And, the Nyāya school comes in for a good deal of criticism. The *Prācīna-nyāya* works are replete with the discussions regarding the nature of the soul. The *Tattva-pradīpikā* critically reviews them. While commenting on these portions, Pratyaksvarūpa refers to the works and the authors, and he cites the relevant passages. One Nyāya writer, Vādivāgīśvara, the

author of the *Mānamanohara*, is severely criticised by Citsukha and Pratyaksvarūpa. The *Tattva-pradīpikā* examines the views of the Nyāya works that are not examined by the *Khaṇḍana-khaṇḍa-khāḍya*. And, Pratyaksvarūpa, while commenting on these sections, gives the names of the works and the authors. While the *Tattva-pradīpikā* refers to a particular viewpoint and criticises it, Pratyaksvarūpa in his commentary gives all the possible arguments in favour of the opponent's viewpoint and later proves them to be unsound. The greatest contribution of Pratyaksvarūpa to Advaita lies in this that all the objections that were raised later by the dualistic schools had already been anticipated and answered by him.

Like the commentator, Ānandapūrṇa-Vidyāsāgara, Pratyaksvarūpa also is indifferent to the identity of the authors of the views he examines. For example, while examining the Nyāya conception of liberation in the fourth section of the *Tattva-pradīpikā*, Pratyaksvarūpa refers to a passage from the *Yogasūtra-bhāṣya* and says that Patañjali is the author of that passage,¹ which he is not. At the end of each *pariccheda*, Pratyaksvarūpa gives a verse summarizing the subject-matter of the entire chapter. Later Brahmānanda in his commentary on the *Advaita-siddhi* adopts this method.

The *Tattva-pradīpikā* freely uses the *mahā-vidyānumāna*. Pratyaksvarūpa employs this type of syllogism while discussing not only the Nyāya school but, also the viewpoints of the other schools. As has been stated already, the *Tattva-pradīpikā* deals with the views of the *prācīna-nyāya*, and this provides an occasion for Pratyaksvarūpa to explain the theories of *prācīna-nyāya*. While dealing with the theory of error and the concept of liberation of the Buddhistic school, Pratyaksvarūpa cites passages from the works of the Buddhistic school. A careful study of this work undoubtedly yields profound knowledge of both the orthodox and heterodox schools of thought. This author closely follows the *Vivaraṇa* school. The *Tattva-pradīpikā* establishes that *tamas* is an object of visual perception. Pratyaksvarūpa raises the objection

that this view is against the conclusive view of Advaita that *tamas* is an object of the witness-self (*sākṣī*) and holds that Citsukha shows his power of reasoning (*yukti-vaibhava*) here.

Of all the concepts of Advaita, the concept of *avidyānivṛtti* is the most difficult one to understand. The *Tattva-pradīpikā* deals with this. Three theories are prevalent in Advaita, and they are: (i) *Avidyānivṛtti* is identical with Brahman. (ii) It is different from Brahman; but it is not real in the sense in which Brahman is, nor unreal in the sense of an absolute nothing, nor real and unreal at once. It is also not *anirvacanīya* because *avidyā* is *anirvacanīya*, and so its removal must be something other than *anirvacanīya*. So *avidyānivṛtti* is a fifth kind. (iii) It is of the nature of the intuitive knowledge of Brahman that annihilates *avidyā*. All these three theories are advocated by Vimuktātman. Maṇḍana prefers the last view.

"vidyaiva vā' dvayā śāntā
tadastamaya ucyate."²

Pratyaksvarūpa, while commenting on this section, sets forth an argument to prove the soundness of the last view. He says that annihilation of a particular thing as a separate category is neither seen nor intelligible except the rise of the annihilating factor. Knowledge of Brahman is the annihilating factor of *avidyā*, and *avidyānivṛtti* is identical with the knowledge of Brahman: *na hi virodhyudayam antareṇa virodhinivṛtirnāmānyā dṛśyate yujyate vā*.³

Pratyaksvarūpa wrote only one work and that too a commentary. But this commentary can be considered to be an independent treatise on Advaita. And thus he occupies a unique place in the history of Advaita.

NOTES

1. *Tattva-pradīpikā*, Nirnaya-sagar press, 1915, p. 361.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 381.
3. *Ibid.*

BHAGAVAD-GĪTĀ AND CONTEMPORARY CRISIS

Kireet Joshi*

The *Bhagavad-gītā* has this uniqueness that, unlike other great religious books of the world, it does not stand apart as a work by itself. It is given as an episode in an epic history of nations and their wars, and men and their deeds. This episode focuses on a critical moment in the soul of one of the leading personages of this epic history, *Mahābhārata*. It is also a moment of the crowning action of his life, where he faces a work which is terrible, violent and sanguinary. And he is confronted with a critical choice when he must either recoil from it altogether or carry it through to its inexorable execution. The criticality of the situation forces this great leader, Arjuna, to raise some of the deepest questions that compel an answer at the deepest level. The answer that we find in the *Bhagavad-gītā* is therefore important not merely in the light of general philosophy or ethical doctrine, but it has also a bearing upon a practical crisis and the application of the highest knowledge to human life.

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The reason why the *Bhagavad-gītā* reads almost as fresh and still in its real substance as quite new even today is because it is directly connected with the questions of highest importance in human life and attempts to apply the most absolute and integral realization to the outer actualities of man's life and action. The relevance of the *Gītā* has been in a sense perennial right from the time it first appeared or was written into the frame of the *Mahābhārata*. But considering that humanity is passing today through a grim and unprecedented crisis, we are bound to look into this great book with fresh eyes and compelling concern. It has been said sometimes that all we need to do is to be found in the *Gītā* today. This is, we must say, an exaggeration, and if we took that view too literally, it would encourage the superstition of the book. The highest truth, we might say, is infinite and cannot be circumscribed in that manner. While approaching the *Gītā* or any other similar great work, we must be ready to accept that Truth is everywhere and cannot be the sole monopoly of one single book. It will also be dogmatic to declare that the truth that this book gives is *the* supreme knowledge, while some similar other books have missed it or only imperfectly grasped it. Our approach should be impartial and our concern should be to look for the actual living truths that the *Gītā* or any other similar work contains, to extract from it what can help us or the world at large. As students of life and as seekers of the science and art of life, we should avoid academic disputation or assertions of mere theological dogma.

An impartial study of the *Gītā* will show that it contains a very rich and many-sided thought, that it manifests a synthetic grasp of different aspects of the ethical and spiritual life, and that it takes us to some of the highest possible experiences of which human psychology is capable. It can even be said that it contains most of the main clues of the secret of the reconciliation of the supreme states of consciousness and dynamic demands of the battles of life in which we find ourselves all the time, but particularly, at critical moments.

The settings in which the teaching of the *Gītā* emerges is typical. The setting is that of Kurukshetra, the field of battle, which is also the battle of life, the battle that we face in our life, visibly or invisibly, in our own times. Arjuna, the leading hero of the battle, is the representative man of the great world struggle, and he typifies the human soul of action brought face to face through that action in its highest and most violent crisis. And the crisis itself is ridden with the problem of human life where all standards of action fail and where a new basis of the action must be found at any cost. As we all know, the crisis that gripped Arjuna can come upon any one of us, and if we examine the contemporary situation, we can clearly see how we ourselves are gripped by that crisis. Perhaps, the dimensions of our crisis are even deeper and vaster.

It has sometimes been suggested that the crisis of Arjuna arose because, confronted with his duty, he felt compulsion of emotions and ideas which induced him to escape from his duty and to take resort to the gospel of renunciation of worldly pursuits and actions. This is a misreading of Arjuna's crisis. It cannot be said that Arjuna did not know his duty as a Kṣatriya or as a warrior whose aim was to ensure the rule of the right and justice. But his crisis arose from the fact that he saw an inextricable clash of the various related conceptions of duty; one concept clashing with another concept; one level of perception clashing with another level of perception. In other words, Arjuna's crisis arose from the collapse of the whole intellectual and moral edifice erected by the human mind. Arjuna knew that his duty was to fight, but what happens when that duty becomes to his mind a terrible sin? He knew that he had right on his side, but that does not and cannot satisfy him because, as he argues, the justice of his legal claim does not justify him in supporting it by a pitiless massacre destructive of the future of a nation. He feels that he must refrain from what his conscience abhors, though a thousand duties were

shattered to pieces. And yet, who knows or how to know whether one should follow one or the other, the first alternative or the second alternative? Is there, it is effectively asked, a possible compromise or a radical solution?

There are several possible answers, and we find them all presented during the course of the answer that Śrī Kṛṣṇa presents. One answer is that of the performance of the social duty imposed by the creed of the Aryan fighter. Another answer is that of spiritualised ethics, which insists on *ahimsā*, on non-injuring and non-killing. According to the argument of this answer, the battle, if it is to be fought at all, must be fought on the spiritual plane and by some kind of non-resistance or by refusal of participation. It may also advocate participation in the battle by taking recourse to non-violence and to soul resistance. (Non-violence has been considered by Śrī Kṛṣṇa as one of the divine gifts in Chapter 16. 2). It may be that the soul resistance does not succeed on the external plane and the force of injustice conquers; even then, the argument would be that the individual would still have preserved his virtue and vindicated by his example the highest ideals. In a third possible answer, one may advocate a more insistent extreme of the inner spiritual direction, passing beyond this struggle between social duty and an absolutist ethical ideal; one would then favour the ascetic turn which points away from life and all its aims and standards of action declaring that not here in this world of dualities, but somewhere in celestial or supra-cosmic stage, one can find an effective exit from the problem. The *Gītā* rejects none of these things in their place; it insists on the performance of social duty, the following of the dharma for the man who has to take his share in the common action; it accepts *ahimsā* as part of the highest spiritual-ethical ideal; it recognizes also the ascetic renunciation as an effective way, if not by solution of the problem, yet as a way of coming out of the problem. But the *Gītā* goes boldly beyond all these conflicting positions. It

justifies all life to the spirit, and asserts the compatibility of a complete human action and a complete spiritual life lived in reunion with the highest states of knowledge and consciousness.

Let us state clearly Arjuna's arguments.

In the first place, Arjuna argued that he would like to reject that aim of life which seeks enjoyment and happiness. Secondly, he declared that he would reject the aim which seeks to attain victory, rule, and power, and government of men—the aim that was described in the Indian dharma for the Kṣatriya, the man of power and action. Thirdly, he rejected the ethical element that was the main spring of the entire preparation for the war. His arguments in this connection could be summarized as follows.

(a) What exactly is "justice" involved in fighting the war that was about to commence? Was it not, he asked, interest of himself, his brothers, and of his party for possession, enjoyment and rule? And even if it be granted that these aims were justified, he raised the question as to what would be the means for securing that justice. Would it not mean, he asked, the sacrifice of the right maintenance of social and national life which in person of the kin of the race stood before him opposing him in the battle-field?

(b) Turning to another line of argument, Arjuna felt that even if happiness and life were desirable, they were so only if they were shared with all others, particularly with "our own people". But here, Arjuna argued, "our own people" are to be slain, and who would consent to slay them for the sake of all the earth and even for the kingdom of the three worlds?

(c) At this stage, Arjuna formulated even a more fundamental objection. He declared that slaughter is a sin, and mutual slaughter is a heinous crime, in which there is no right and no justice. And further, the sin became graver when those who were to be slain were objects of love and reverence.

(d) Formulating this ethical argument further, Arjuna conceded that the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra were guilty of grave offenses, of sins of greed, and selfish passion, but he argued that they were

overpowered by ignorance and they had no sense of guilt. On the other hand, would it be right, he asked in effect, to enter into a sinful act voluntarily with a clear knowledge that sin was to be committed?

(e) Once again, Arjuna brought in another ethical consideration. Even if a sin was to be committed, and even if that could be justified in one way or the other, how could it be justified if that leads to the destruction of family morality, social law, law of the nation? Arjuna declared that the family itself would be brought to the point of annihilation, morals would be corrupted, race would be sallied, laws of race, morality, and family would be destroyed. And who would be responsible for these crimes? Indeed, those, in particular, who would enter into the war with the knowledge and sense of guilt and sin.

These arguments led Arjuna to declare that he would not fight. The most salutary thing that Arjuna did was, however, to turn to Śrī Kṛṣṇa with deep humility for advice. Like a pupil, he sought from Kṛṣṇa some decisive word by which his confusion could be dispelled and he could be enabled to act in the right way. And Kṛṣṇa's help was unailing.

Kṛṣṇa perceived clearly that behind the refusal of Arjuna was a mixture and confusion and that there was a tangled error of ideas and impulses of the sāt̥tvic, rājasic and tāmasic ego. He also perceived that Arjuna was overcome by the fear of sin and its personal consequences and that his heart had recoiled from individual grief and suffering. Further, he noticed that Arjuna's reasoning was an attempt to cover his egoistic impulses by self-deceptive specious pleas of right and virtue.

In the first brief reply, Kṛṣṇa referred to the highest ideas of the general Aryan culture in which Arjuna had been educated. In that context, Kṛṣṇa pointed out, "There is no greater good for a Kṣatriya than a righteous battle and if thou dost not this battle for the right, then thou hast abandoned thy duty and virtue and thy glory, and sin shall be thy portion."

With reference to Arjuna's appeal to the consequences of action, Kṛṣṇa pointed out that if he (Arjuna) were to be slain in the battle, he would win heaven and if he were to be victorious, he would enjoy the earth. "*Therefore arise,*" asked Kṛṣṇa, "*resolved upon battle.*"

Kṛṣṇa was, however, aware that this answer would not satisfy Arjuna, for he was thinking of the slaughter of the battle as a cause of sorrow and sin. Kṛṣṇa, therefore, asked Arjuna to rise to a higher and not sink to a lower ideal. In doing so, Kṛṣṇa distinguishes the path of renunciation which leads to inaction and that path of renunciation which leads to inner freedom even in the midst of performance of action. While admitting the effectivity of the first alternative, Kṛṣṇa explains why the latter is preferable. In that context, Kṛṣṇa told him:

Know thyself, and source of thyself; help man and protect Right; do without fear or weakness or faltering thy work of battle in the world. Look not at thy own pleasure and gain and profit, but above and around, above at the shining summits and around on this world of battle and trial in which good and evil, progress and retrogression are locked in stern conflict. Destroy, when by destruction the world must advance, but hate not which thou destroyest, neither grieve for those who perish. Know everywhere the one Self, know all to be immortal souls and the body to be but dust. Do thy work with a calm, strong and equal spirit; fight and fall nobly or conquering mightily. For this is the work that God and thy nature (*svabhāva* and *svadharma*) have given to thee to accomplish.

This higher answer of Kṛṣṇa consists of three steps: (a) Realize that one has the right to action, but not to consequences; hence one should give up desire for the fruits of action; (b) Realize, in a larger vision of the world, that even in regard to action, there is a mutual giving and receiving, and all action must be a part of one's sacrifice to cosmic powers, who in return, sacrifice themselves for the production of action; (c) Sacrifice done with knowledge is the highest sacrifice and that alone brings the perfect working.

It is at this stage that one begins to realize that one should do one's action, but not by impulsion of desire and ego-sense; one should discover the impersonal will that is at work behind the universe, a will that does not proceed from desire to acquire and possess, but which proceeds from inner fullness of being as an expression of inner unity. The will that proceeds from inner unity manifests unity in the outer world; the unity of the world is *loka-saṅgraha*, holding together of the people.

The solution that Kṛṣṇa presents has three layers; at each layer, Kṛṣṇa presents a secret, a secret not of outward conduct or of any belief which can be easily, but vainly practised by the ethical or religious mentality, but of a living transformation of consciousness attainable by application of the truths of higher possibilities of psychology. The first secret, *guhyaṁ rahasyam*, is to find out how the field of circumstances in which one is placed can be apprehended or comprehended and mastered. This secret is the knowledge or the distinction between the field of circumstances and the knower of the field, *kṣetra* and *kṣetrajña*. There is behind and above the field of circumstances the secret consciousness that can be experienced as a silent witness, *puruṣa*, or as a transcendental immobility, Brahman, or as the controlling and ruling giver of sanction and master, *anumantā* and *Īśvara*. One of these experiences, or all of them together, can provide a sure basis of freedom from the tangles of the problems that the field of circumstances and the battle of life present to us by means of an interplay of the three *guṇas* of nature, *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. But at this level of experience, although there is here freedom *from* action and its problems, one does not as yet have the key to the freedom *of* action, freedom *in* action and freedom to disentangle the knots of the problems and their gripping difficulties. For that, we need to have a deeper secret, *guhya-taraṁ rahasyam*, the secret of the origin of nature in a higher Nature, the origin of *aparā prakṛti* in the *parā prakṛti*, where is also to be found the origin of multiple individualities which are the centres of the

supreme Self, Puruṣottama, who at once reconciles and synthesises the status of Puruṣa, Brahman and Īśvara. And the knowledge of this higher Nature not only liberates us from the tangles of nature, but gives us also the capacity to harmonize various threads of nature which would even allow the transmission of the dynamic and creative action that would resolve the knots and problems of all our activities of life. This is the knowledge by which the cognitive, affective and conative powers of our psychology can be perfected and integrated. This is the secret by means of which synthesis of *karma-yoga*, *jñāna-yoga* and *bhakti-yoga* can be effected. But there is still a culmination of this deeper secret, there is still the deepest secret, *guhya-tamaṁ rahasyam*. This secret is that of the possibility of the transmutation of lower nature by higher nature, of the attainment of *sādharmyam*, where human law of action is substituted by the divine law of action. And the secret method is to move at a stage where all that one is or one has is reposed unconditionally in the hands and in the being of the Supreme, as a result of which all that flows through the individuality is the incorruptible breath of the Supreme which unites the Truth, Beauty and Goodness, and constantly creates conditions suitable for the unity and harmony of the people, *loka-saṅgraha*.

In terms of our dealings with action in the process of rising out of the human into the higher and highest planes, there are three great steps. In the first step, there is insistence on renunciation of desire and a perfect equality even when works are performed; but works have to be done as a sacrifice, *yajña*. In the second step, there is not only the renunciation of the desire of the fruits of actions, but also the renunciation of the claim to be the doer of works in the realization of the Self as the equal and the immutable principle and of all works as simply the operations of universal force of the prakṛti. In the last step, the supreme Self is to be seen as the governor of prakṛti, both lower and higher, of whom the individual self is a partial manifestation, by whom all works are directed, in a perfect transcendence through nature. Here the whole

being has to be surrendered to the Supreme and the whole consciousness so that the human soul may share in his divine transcendence and act in a perfect spiritual liberty.

Sri Aurobindo sums up the entire core of the teaching in the following words:

The first step is *karma-yoga*, the selfless sacrifice of works, and here the *Gītā*'s insistence is on action. The second is *jñāna-yoga*, the Self-realization and knowledge of the true nature of the Self and the world, and here the insistence is on knowledge; but the sacrifice of works continues and the path of works becomes one with, but does not disappear into, the path of knowledge. The last step is *bhakti-yoga*, adoration and seeking of the supreme Self as the Divine Being, and here the insistence is on devotion; but the knowledge is not subordinated, only raised, vitalized and fulfilled, and still the sacrifice of works continues; the double path becomes the triune way of knowledge, works and devotion. And the fruit of the sacrifice, the one fruit still placed before the seeker, is attained, union with the divine Being and oneness with the supreme divine Nature.*

The solution that is offered by the *Gītā* can be found applicable also to the contemporary crisis, if not fully in all details, but still by employing all the clues that are given here. Whereas the *kṣetra* of the *Gītā* was the local field of a large but still local battle, the present world has become, since the outbreak of the First World War, a global field of global war, whether that War breaks out in world-wide physical conflagration, or it remains simmering in conditions of a cold war, or else burning in the minds of men, as it is today, with huge piles of nuclear warheads that have the potentiality of destroying the world many times again and again. The *kṣetra* of today is also great battle with the entire nature and environment which is being constantly eroded and, as it is feared, which might endanger the survival of various species including the human species.

Just as Arjuna was the leading personage of *kṣetra* desirous of protecting and establishing the claims of the right and justice, even so, each one of us is, if not a leading personage, but a partici-

pating soldier in the army of men and women all over the world who are filled with aspiration to uphold the causes of survival, peace and unity, and also engaged in one way or the other in the battle to fulfil that aspiration.

Just as Arjuna felt gripped by the sense of crisis, we too feel gripped by a sense of crisis. We belong to that stage of human progress which stands today intellectually sceptical, morally weakened and spiritually bankrupt. We started with the Renaissance with the affirmation that truth can be discovered by pure reason and that truth can be known with certainty. After numerous experimentations, we are still debating the notion of the truth and the only certainty we have is that all knowledge is only probable in character. We began at that time with the idea that human life can be lived in harmony with effectivity and fruitfulness because both the individuals and the collectivity can be harmonized by the ethical and social principles of liberty, equality and fraternity. Today we find increasing force of the idea that morality is a matter of emotional responses and that there is no rational justification for one set of moral values against the other. Again, after various experimentations, we have found that, when liberty is promoted, equality has to be sacrificed; and when quality is to be promoted, liberty requires to be strangulated; and fraternity has, as yet, no chance of flowering except in terms of sovietic comradeship or capitalistic association of interests. As far as spirituality is concerned, while India has the knowledge, but lost it and compounded this loss by neglecting life and matter, in spite of the fact that for a long period it had cultivated to great heights material and cultural efflorescence. The West has the knowledge of matter and life, but in spite of having a powerful tradition of spirituality, neglected spirit; as a result there is today deplorable spiritual poverty or even bankruptcy. The total result is that of uncertainty, confusion and incapacity to answer the dilemmas of life. There is a collapse of the edifice of standards

of action, and one does not know in what direction and how we should move forward.

There is still a deeper aspect of the contemporary crisis. Time has come when it is perfectly possible for humanity to develop a comprehensive and integral culture where both spirit and matter can join together and create a spiritualized society that can at last answer to the perennial aspiration of humanity expressed in terms of a new earth and a new heaven, of the City of God and of the Kingdom of God on the earth. But precisely at this time, the crisis can be seen acutely in the fact that rational powers, which can be a powerful lever to uplift humanity from its lower aims and pursuits to higher heights of ethical and spiritual objects, are today gripped by the currents of skepticism and disabling compromises that build up arguments against the upward effort to break the limitations of the modes and structures of life that have been built up. The major difficulty of the present modes and structures of life is the machinery of standardization, mechanization, and dehumanization. A structure has been raised up in the services of the mental, vital, physical claims and urges, and this structure has become so huge that it is unmanageable; it is a structure of great complexity meant to provide political, social, administrative, economic and cultural machinery; and its focus is on providing collective means for intellectual, sensational, aesthetic and material satisfactions. This system of civilization has become too big for the limited mental capacity and understanding and the still more limited spiritual and moral capacity; it has become a too dangerous servant of the blundering ego and its appetites.

At a time when an upward effort towards the ethical and spiritual perfection is both possible and imperative, just at that time, means have been made available readily to humanity enabling it to create and sustain machineries which can keep it arrested by the downward gravitational pull of animal desires and satisfactions.

What is needed is the transition of humanity from the pulls of lower nature towards the liberating powers of higher nature, the transition from *aparāprakṛti* to *parāprakṛti*, to use the suggestive words of the *Bhagavad-gītā*. The solution that has been suggested by the *Bhagavad-gītā* by means of which the needed transition can be effected is directly relevant to it. It is true that, while the *Bhagavad-gītā* has described in full the path, but the perfect fulfilment, the higher secret, is hinted rather than developed. For, the fulfilment is, in any case, a method of experience, and no teaching can express it. It cannot be described in a way that can really be understood when we have not yet entered into the portals of the effulgent transmuting experience. And yet, the *Gītā's* secret of dynamic, and not only static identity with the inner presence, its highest mystery of absolute surrender to the Divine Guide, is the central secret. It is by pursuit of this secret that the needed change can be effected, and it is by the pursuit of this path that the crisis of humanity can be resolved.

Fortunately, what is needed is a decisive turn in humanity and even if the major changes that we expect can take a long time before fruition, if we are moved by the conviction that it is for the upward movement whereby human life can be transformed, we shall have contributed to the decisive beginning that is of capital importance. Fortunately, again, the aspiration to move upward seems to be gathering the force of burning fire, and both in the East and in the West, experiences of the new realms of spiritual and supramental manifestation seem to be breaking a new ground. Therefore, even though the path is difficult and obstacles are formidable, we need not fear to aspire and to work for the triumph of the divine will in securing for the earth a life of liberty suffused with the spirit of fraternity and designed for equal upliftment of all members of the human society.

At the same time, we need to underline the imperative need of constant effort of research in a constant enlargement of horizons

of knowledge. Knowledge is always power, and it is the constant journey of developing knowledge that will give us increasing powers to break our limitations which would enable us not only survival, but also arrival at the highest goals that humanity can conceive.

We stand today at the head of a new age which is bound to be marked by a very vast synthesis. A mass of new material is flowing into us. We are required to assimilate the influences of the great theistic religions of India and similarly of the great theistic religions of the world; we have also to recover the sense of the meaning of Buddhism; relevance of Jainism has also to be underlined. We have also to take into account the potent, though limited revelations of modern knowledge and seeking. A fresh and widely embracing harmonization of our gains is both an intellectual and a spiritual necessity of the future. In the task of this comprehensive harmonization, the understanding of the *Gītā* as well as its contemporary relevance is perhaps one of our major needs.

Let me close with a Vedic prayer which inspires discovery of new knowledge: "*yuge yuge vidadhyāṁ grīṇadbhyo'gne rayiṁ yaśasaṁ dehi navīyasīm*" (Found for those who, from age to age, speak the word that is new, the word that is a discovery of knowledge, O Fire, their glorious treasures.)

* Sri Aurobindo, *Collected Works*, Vol. 13, Centenary Edition, Pondicherry, p. 35.

 THE DEVI STOTRAS OF ŚRĪ ŚAṄKARĀCĀRYA

N. Raghunathan*

In the beautiful and instructive tale with which the *Kena Upaniṣad* reinforces the need for humility, especially in those in high places, it is Umā Haimavatī who enlightens Indra as to who the mysterious "Yakṣa" was who had made the chiefs of the gods realize their impotence. "It was Brahman," she said, "and the victory over the *asuras* on which you gods preened yourselves was his victory." Commenting on the text "स तस्मिन्नेव आकाशे स्त्रियम् आजगाम बहु शोभमानाम् उमां हैमवतीम्" Śrī Śaṅkara observes that because Indra, unlike Agni and Vāyu, had not gone away, but remained there and was meditating on that Unknown who had eluded his vigilance, "Vidyā" was pleased with his devotion and appeared before him to enlighten him. "It is quite appropriate," says the Ācārya "that she should be described as supremely lovely: 'like one bedecked with gold', for this saving Knowledge (Brahma-vidyā) is the fairest of fair things." Having said this, the Ācārya, the bed-rock of whose faith is the Veda, offers the alternative explanation that the Upaniṣad might also mean that it was Umā, the daughter of Hīmavān, who showed

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herself to Indra, and that the latter approached her for enlightenment from the conviction that She, "the inseparable companion of the omniscient Īśvara, should of a certainty know" who the Great Unknown was. Thus he equates Umā with Brahma-vidyā. The view that Brahma-vidyā is not different from Brahman itself is implicit in his extended (*Vākya*) commentary on the same Upaniṣad, where he elucidates the words "*tasminneva ākāśe*" as meaning "on the very spot in the sky (space) in which Brahman had appeared and disappeared." This emphasis, taken together with his observation that Brahman had vanished from view not merely to humble Indra, but also from the desire to bless the chastened ruler of the gods, seems intended to suggest that Brahman itself appeared before him again, this time as Brahma-vidyā, '*Cid-rūpiṇī*', "in order to awaken him to the truth," अभिप्राय-उद्बोध-हेतुत्वात्. And the *ākāśa* where Brahman and later Umā appeared may well have been the *hr̥d-ākāśa* (the space in the heart) where the yogins contemplate on the Lord, as Indra did.

Anandagiri in his gloss says that "Vidyā" referred to here is सत्त्वप्रधानशक्तिः चित्-तादात्म्यापत्त्या बोधहेतुः. Sattva is a quality of māyā, the inscrutable power (energy) of Brahman, which comes into play in the world process. While Vidyā in this sense leads to Brahman by removing avidyā, both are negated when the identity of the Self with Brahman is realized; hence the saying that "having prised out the thorn of ignorance with the thorn of knowledge, one throws both into the fire."

These preliminary observations seemed desirable because of the general scepticism with which the world of modern scholarship views the attribution to Śrī Śaṅkara of the authorship of a large number of devotional poems. While a few of these may have been the work of later writers, possibly of one or other of his successors on the great monastic foundations he established, there is no justification for questioning the authenticity of such poems as the *Saundarya-laharī* or the *Bhaja-govindam* for instance. These have been known and loved for centuries as the

inspired outpourings of the great Ācārya; and some of them (notably the *Saundarya-laharī*) are among the basic texts of important cults. The authority of this oral tradition is reinforced by the fact that neither in the philosophical ideas that they present nor in the warmth of emotion with which they are suffused, will the careful reader of the *Bhāṣyas* of Śrī Śaṅkara on the Upaniṣads and the *Brahma-sūtra* find anything that could strike him as odd or incongruous. His advocacy of *Saguna-upāsanā* as the gateway to liberation, his unquestioning faith in all that the Veda says, as for example about the hierarchy of gods, their functions as helpers of mankind, and so on, his acceptance of the doctrines of other *darśanas* which are not contradicted by the Veda, and the glowing love of humanity that one senses behind the austere intellectual in every one of his well-known major works, are all reflected in these poems. They exhibit, too, the same catholicity of outlook and incandescent piety, along with a feeling for intellectual beauty which has rarely found expression in European literature after Plato and Dante.

Keeping these facts in mind, we may turn to a consideration of Śrī Śaṅkara's hymns devoted to the glorification of the Great Mother, Umā Haimavatī, the Consort of Īśvara, the Lord who is supreme over the Trimūrtis, Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Rudra.¹ These latter are responsible for the creation, the preservation and the destruction of the worlds respectively. They have their consorts, Sarasvatī, Lakṣmī and Pārvatī. But Īśvara is Brahman itself in its saguna aspect, which comes into play when he manifests the phenomenal universe, employing his unique power of māyā and acting as both the efficient and the material cause of creation. There are more than a score of these poems which are traditionally regarded as the Bhagavat-pāda's work. The *Saundarya-laharī* is by common consent the most important of these. It is a favourite of His Holiness Śrī Candraśekharendra Sarasvatī Swamigal, the Jagadguru of the Kanchi Śrī Śaṅkarācārya Pīṭha, who has often discoursed on it with profound insight and moving eloquence.

This hymn is, along with the *Lalitā-sahasranāma*, the chief authority for the cult of Parāśakti in its *samaya* form.

The *Samaya* doctrine, according to Bhāskara-rāya, the great Śākta commentator on the *Lalitā-sahasranāma*, is not at variance with Advaita in its basic tenets. But the special importance of the *Saundarya-laharī* lies in its reflecting as in a mirror the many-sidedness, as well as the ineluctable residuum of mystery at the heart of the Principle which the great Ācārya strikingly describes as "*para-brahma-mahiṣī*" (Queen and Consort of the Supreme Brahman) in the *Saundarya-laharī*, and again in the shorter poem, the *Ānanda-laharī*. Some literalists have felt scandalized at what seemed to them anthropomorphism with a vengeance and contended that the great apostle of Advaita could never have been guilty of such a solecism. But let us examine the word in its context. Verse 97 may be rendered as follows:

Those who are well-versed in the āgamas speak of Thee variously as the Consort of Brahmā, the Goddess of Speech, as Lakṣmī, the Consort of Hari, and as the Daughter of the Mountain, Hara's Spouse. But Thou, Queen of the Supreme Brahman, art really the transcendant Fourth that baffles the understanding, the Great Deluder of limitless glory that keeps the worlds in thrall.²

The word "*Turiya*", so strikingly reminiscent of the "*Caturtham*" of the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad*, which is the Ātman, the eternal Witness of the three states, is, as Kaivalyāśrama points out, none other than the *Cit-śakti* inseparable from Brahman, and so spoken of metaphorically as *Para-brahma-mahiṣī*.

The *Saundarya-laharī* falls into two parts. The first comprising forty-one verses, and known as "*Ananda-laharī*" or Waves of Bliss (different from the shorter poem of the same name) is regarded not as a human composition, but as revealed by Lord Śiva himself to the Bhagavat-pāda. The special sanctity attached to it is obviously due to the transcendental truths of the *Mantra Śāstra*, and in particular the principles and methods of *Kuṇḍalinī-yoga*, with which it deals. But here, as in the Second Part, the

emphasis is on the descent of grace, and self-surrender as the surest means of obtaining it. How ready the Mother is to meet the loving devotee more than half-way is picturesquely expressed in a verse that is not easily translated, because the point is made by a double-entendre exploiting a grammatical form. "Bhavānī" is one of the names of the Devī, and it is also the form of the first person singular, imperative mood, of the verb "bhū" (to be or become).

Hardly has the man said the words "O Bhavāni, may I be (of) Thee..." Thou, without waiting for him to complete the sentence by saying "the recipient of a loving, compassionate glance" conferest upon him the blessed state of union with Thee, before Whose feet the blazing crowns of Mukunda, Brahmā and Indra are abased.³

The two words "*Bhavāni tvam*" (I shall become Thee), being of the same purport as the *Mahāvākyas*, "*Aham brahmāsmi*" and "*Tat tvam asi*", produce their effect, Advaitic Self-realization, even though the speaker had not had that meaning in mind, because the grace of the Goddess acts instantly. Equal to the grace is the self-forgetful absorption of the devotee who prays:

May all that I am, and say, and do, be received by Thee as tokens of my surrender at Thy feet—my words Thy *japa*, the work of my hands, the *mudras* invoking Thy protection, the movement of my feet, Thy circumambulation, the food that I eat, oblations made into the fire, the act of lying down, my prostration before Thee, my enjoyments and pastimes, the ritual of Thy worship.⁴

The second part of the *Saundarya-laharī* to which the name of the poem (which means "Waves of Beauty") is specially appropriated, contains about sixty verses, most of which are devoted to a detailed description from head to foot of the charms of the Goddess. Of this genre, Śrī Śaṅkara is credited with quite a few pieces, celebrating among others, Śiva and Viṣṇu. Conventional notions of beauty differ from clime to clime. The charm that "married eye-brows" held for the Greeks is inexplicable to us. Our poets' praise of eyes extending to the ears, of heavy hips and

tenuous waists, puzzles other peoples. The old Indian, like the old Greek, avowed a frank delight in the perfection of the human anatomy in which there was no hint of prurience. And in dealing with the divine personality, religious poetry, like iconography, aimed at suggesting a mental image that would serve as a support for meditation. In the *Saundarya-laharī*, Śrī Śaṅkara describes the beauty of the Devi in terms that never allow us to forget that she is the great Goddess, Mother of gods and Consort of the All-Highest. And as gods are the children of light, she is the Supernal Light, the "knowledge that surpasseth all in beauty" of the *Kena Upaniṣad*. While apologizing for bringing his rushlight to wave before her shrine, he prays that, being lit in the blaze of her glory, it may burn for ever as a testimony:

O Thou That art the support of all that lives! O Lady of the ever-smiling countenance and the limitless virtues, O Fountain of justice, O knowledge indefeasible That dwellest by choice in the hearts of the devout who are ruled by the Veda, but Thyself acknowledgest no law, O Thou That the Upaniṣads exalt as the eternal sanctuary from which all fear flees, seal Thou with Thy approval this panegyric of mine.⁵

The "*Prajñānam brahma*" of the Upaniṣads is of far more profound import than the "Sophia" of Plato or the "Gnosis" of the Neo-Platonists. But Plato made his Socrates say that "wise" is "a great word that belongs to God alone." And of the beauty of wisdom he said, "Her loveliness would have been transporting if there had been a visible image of her." An English poet steeped in Platonic ideas pictured Sapience as "the sovereign darling of the Deity" seated in His bosom. And, with a stylized imagery that is almost iconic, Edmund Spenser went on to speak of the Divine Wisdom as

Clad like a Queen in royal robes most fit for so great power and peerless majesty, And all with gems and jewels gorgeously Adorned, that brighter than the stars appear, And make her native brightness seem more clear."

But this transcendental wisdom—Brahma-vidyā in our terms—may, as the Greek philosopher said, be seen only with the inner

eye. Śrī Śaṅkara conveys this truth in a highly poetic way, implicitly in verse 95 of the *Saundarya-laharī* (beginning with the words "*Purārater-antahpuramasi*") and more explicitly (in the following verse) from the other *Ananda Laharī*:

The savour of ghee and the sweetness of milk and honey and of the juice of the grape cannot be described; they can only be enjoyed. How then can the tongue of man utter the praise of Thy beauty, which is for the eyes of Parameśvara alone. Thou, Whose glories numberless baffle even the Vedas' powers of expression?⁶

As Spenser said, the only means open to us to behold the Divine Majesty is to look on his works:

To read enregistered in every nook,
His goodness which His beauty doth declare,
For all that's good is beautiful and fair.

And what grater good can there be for man than to feel the eye of Providence turned on him with maternal solicitude? As the very first verse of *Saundarya-laharī* points out, when Śiva, the supreme Brahman, actionless, passionless and self-sufficient, is not united with his Śakti (*mahāmāyā*), he cannot so much as lift a little finger (as the saying goes); but when he looks upon her with desire (*sa aikṣata*, as śruti has it), then are the worlds born. She is the matrix of the worlds, and the jīvas are eternally beholden to her for providing an arena wherein they may wrestle with themselves and win liberation. To cite another verse:

O Daughter of the Mountain-King, the wise ones say that the creation and the dissolution of the universe are done by the opening and the closing of Thy eyes. That is why, I am sure, Thou art careful never to close those eyes, lest the worlds that owe their existence to Thy Grace should be destroyed.⁷

Here what, in view of the belief that the gods have unwinking eyes, may be normally regarded as a pretty poetic conceit, becomes charged with emotion when we recollect that the Mother's unwinking eyes second her unsleeping concern for humanity.

After thus acknowledging her solicitude for all creatures, the ardent devotee begs her, with the illogic of the impo-rtunate child, to bestow a special glance of love and pity on him, the lowest of the low, "out of the corner of those beautiful eyes, cool like the half-open water-lily; thou wilt lose nothing by that, Mother—does not the moon shed her gentle radiance impartially on the thorny thicket and the mansion-terrace?—but it will make all the difference in the world to me."⁸ The music of her voice, says the poet—and here we must remember that the Veda speaks of her as *vāk*, and esoteric wisdom regards Umā as the Praṇava, the essence of the Veda—silences Sarasvatī's *vīṇā*:

When, pleased with the melodies which she plays, celebrating Paśupati's exploits, Thou openest Thy mouth to utter a word of praise, Thy voice throws into the shade even that heavenly music, and Sarasvatī quietly puts the *vīṇā* away out of sight packed in its case.⁹

The notice of this great hymn of praise may fittingly conclude with the verse in which the devotee prays that it may be given to him to remain absorbed with all the strength of his mind and his five senses. Like the six-footed honey-bee in the flower, "in adoring contemplation of those feet of Thine, which are lovely as a bunch of *mandāra* flowers; they grant the humble all that the mind can desire, and deluge the world with a flood of beauty."¹⁰

Among the shorter poems, some deal with the esoteric worship of different manifestations of the Devī, such as Lalitā Parameśvarī and Tripurasundarī; some celebrate her favourite shrines like Srisailam and Kalahasti, or special aspects of her bounty, as when she, Annapūrṇā, gives food both for body and soul to her children, who comprise all creation. And some, like the *Ambāṣṭakam*, dwell upon her unconventional moods, which add to the rich ambiguity by which *māyā* defies definition. Śrī Śaṅkara's poetic diction is as a rule simple and euphonious, and the verses have an easy flow and rhythm. The *Ambāṣṭakam* of eight verses is an exception, in that it freely uses dictionary words

and resorts to verbal artifices such as alliteration and assonance. But there is an *elan* in the spring and swing of the verses, which matches the youthful exuberance of the sentiment and the homely realism of its pre-sentiment of her as Kālī who does not inspire dread.

Drumming softly on the human skulls her beloved wears strung in a garland, and jauntily sticking a screw of palm leaf in her ear in place of the gold earring, she, who scatters the fears of her devotees as the sight of the mongoose scatters serpents, and the shining dust of whose feet the sages love to take on their heads, plays with her mates. May that Kālī of the black curls and the bright *tilak*-mark make my mind dwell on her lotus feet like the bee.¹¹

The following verse in the *Ānanda Laharī* (a short poem of 20 verses) brings her before our eyes in another mood, by the triumphant use of "the elaboration of a figure of speech" which, as T.S. Eliot pointed out, was one of the characteristic devices employed by the English metaphysical poets; it is a typical instance, even to the point of making the crucial comparison hinge on a pun.

This gentle vine, which is known as *Cit* (sentience) and which confers bliss, grew on the mountain of snows; she has hands for shoots and pearls for flowers, with bees in the guise of black ringlets hovering over them; She leans for support on her tree (Sthānu, the Rock-like, one of the names of the Lord Śiva); and she bends gently under the weight of those fruits, Her breasts; the sap of wisdom rises high in her. And ah! She walks, busy in Her ministry of love for the suffering.¹²

Unforgettable is that picture of sweet innocence and engaging modesty, and worthy of her to whom the scriptures accord unique veneration as *Satī* and *Ambā*. The imagery of the running vine, clinging to its stout support and sending out tendrils of affections into the circumambient ether is great poetry as well as true metaphysics representing the unique relationship between Īśvara, māyā and jagat. We shall take leave of Śaṅkara, the world-teacher and *jīvan-mukta*, who, become as a little child again,

appeals with confiding faith to the Mother of Mercy, and in doing so speaks for all frail humanity: "Thou hast many children, Mother, who are good men and exemplary sons. I am the lone black sheep among them. I showed myself lacking in my love and duty to Thee. But shouldst Thou give me up for lost? There might be a bad son; but who ever heard of a bad mother?"¹³

NOTES

1. This is according to Śaivite theology. The Vaiṣṇavites look upon Nārāyaṇa (Viṣṇu) as the Supreme.
2. गिरामाहुर्देवीं दुहिणगृहिणीम् आगमविदो
हरेः पत्नीं पद्मां हरसहचरीम् अद्रितनयाम् ।
तुरीया कापि त्वं दुरधिगम-निःसीममहिमा
महामाया विश्वं भ्रमयसि परब्रह्म-महिषि ॥
3. भवानि ! त्वं दासे मयि वितर दृष्टिं सकरुणाम्
इति स्तोतुं वाञ्छन् कथयति भवानि त्वमिति यः ।
तदैव त्वं तस्मै दिशसि निजसायुज्यपदवीम्
मुकुन्द-ब्रह्मेन्द्र-स्फुटमकुटनीराजितपदाम् ॥
4. जपो जल्पः शिल्पं सकलमपि मुद्राविरचना
गतिः प्रादक्षिण्यक्रमणम् अशनाद्याहुतिविधिः ।
प्रणामः संवेशः सुखमखिलम् आत्मार्पणदृशा
सपर्या-पर्यायस्तव भवतु यन्मे विलसितम् ॥
5. निधे नित्यस्मेरे निरवधिगुणे नीतिनिपुणे
निराघाटज्ञाने नियमपरचित्तैकनिलये ।
नियत्या निर्मुक्ते निखिलनिगमान्तस्तुतपदे
निरातङ्के नित्यं निगमय ममापि स्तुतिमिमाम् ॥
6. घृतक्षीरद्राक्षामधुमधुरिमा कैरपि पदैः
विशिष्यानाख्येयो भवति रसनामात्रविषयः ।
तथा ते सौन्दर्यम् परमशिवदृङ्मात्रविषयः
कथङ्कारम् ब्रूमः सकलनिगमागोचरगुणे ॥

7. निमेषोन्मेषाभ्याम् प्रलयमुदयं याति जगती
तवेत्याहुः सन्तो धरणिधरराजन्यतनये ।
त्वदुन्मेषाज्जातं जगदिदमशेषम् प्रलयतः
परित्रातुं शङ्के परिहतनिमेषास्तव दृशः ॥
8. दृशा द्राघीयस्या दरदलितनीलोत्पलरुचा
दवीयांसं दीनं स्नपय कृपया मामपि शिवे ।
अनेनायं धन्यो भवति न च ते हानिरियता
वने वा हर्म्ये वा समकरनिपातो हिमकरः ॥
9. विपञ्च्या गायन्ती विविधमपदानम् पशुपतेः
त्वयारब्धे वक्तुं चलितशिरसा साधुवचने ।
तदीयैर्माधुर्यैरपलपित-तन्त्रीकलरवां
निजां वीणां वाणी निचुलयति चोलेन निभृतम् ॥
10. ददाने दीनेभ्यः श्रियमनिशम् आशानुसदृशीम्
अमन्दं सौन्दर्यप्रकर-मकरन्दं विकिरति ।
तवास्मिन् मन्दारस्तवक-सुभगे यातु चरणे
निमज्जन् मज्जीवः करणचरणः षट्चरणताम् ॥
11. यालीभिरात्मतनुताली सकृत्-प्रियकपालीषु खेलति भय-
व्यालीनकुल्य-सितचूलीभरा-चरण-धूली-लसन्मुनिवरा ।
वालीभृति श्रवसि तालीदलं वहति याऽलीकशोभि-तिलका
साऽलीकरोतु मम काली मनःस्वपद-नालीक-सेवन-विधौ ॥
12. हिमाद्रेः सम्भृता सुललितकरैः पल्लवयुता
सुपुष्पा मुक्ताभिर्भ्रमर-कलिता चालकभरैः ।
कृतस्थाणुस्थाना कुचफलनता सूक्तिसरसा
रुजां हन्त्री गन्त्री विलसति चिदानन्दकलिका ॥
13. पृथिव्याम् पुत्रास्ते जननि बहवःसन्ति तरलाः
परं तेषां मध्ये विरल-तरलोऽहं तव सुतः ।
मदीयोऽयं त्यागः समुचितमिदं नो तव शिवे
कुपुत्रो जायेत क्वचिदपि कुमाता न भवति ॥

THE HINDU IDEA OF GOD*

S. Radhakrishnan

Religion as a human institution is a living organism. It possesses the same kind of unity and self-identity which organic things have, the unity of a continuously changing life as against that of an unchanging creed. Its spirit is to be found not in what it was in a past stage, nor even in what it is now. Religion requires to be interpreted "according to its meaning and not according to its lispig expression", even as Empedocles was expounded by Aristotle (*Metaphysics* I, 985 a 3). If we survey the successive stages of the history of a religion, we get an idea of something deep and fundamental, which is ever expressing itself anew, though never finding perfect expression. This growing ideal, this operative principle, which is inadequately expressed in any specific stage, is the real spirit, the meaning or the idea which informs the whole historical movement.

If we ask for the spirit of the Hindu religion, it is to be found in its insistence on the reality of spiritual experience. We are at grips with reality in the inner depths of the soul. This

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insistence on the inwardness of religion, its subjective or experimental character is maintained throughout the history of Hinduism. When the Hindus look back to the Vedic period as the epoch of their founders, it means that the Ṛṣis were the pioneer spirits, the first researchers in the realm of spirit. The Sanskrit word "Ṛṣi" is from the root "dṛś" to see. Religion is sight, vision, experience. The truths announced by the Ṛṣis are evolved not as the result of logical reasoning or systematic philosophy, but are the products of spiritual intuition, *dṛṣṭi*, vision. The Ṛṣis are not so much the authors of the truths registered in the Vedas as the seers who were able to discern the eternal truths by raising their life-spirit to the plane of universal spirit. Their utterances are based not on transient vision, but on continuous experience of resident life and power. *Sadā paśyanti sūrayaḥ*. If the Vedas are regarded as the highest authority, it is because the most exacting of all authorities is the authority of facts. God is not the ideal we cherish, but the Real we apprehend. Spiritual experience is not a species of imaginative thinking, but is the closet communion with Reality.

The saint who knows God by acquaintance and not simply by hearsay does not want a definition of God. Doubt and disbelief are impossible for him. Nothing can disturb his sense of certainty, strange and simple. But for the sake of ordinary human beings, who are religious at second-hand, who wish to enjoy the consolations of religion without undergoing the labour of being religious, who wish to be guided by myth and ritual in the path of religion, we require imagery to clothe the vision. Besides, the only way to impart our experience to others, elucidate its implications, defend its validity against hostile criticism is by means of logic and language. Hinduism offers us a graduated scale of interpretations from the most impersonal to the crudely personal.

When the individual who has had the insight attempts to interpret his experience in the light of logic and common sense, he adopts an attitude of faith which is urged by its own needs to

posit the transcendent Reality. He knows that the soul has dealings, intimate, direct and luminous, with a plane of being, different from that with which the senses deal, more resplendent but not less real than the conventional one which the understanding presents. Reason, revelation and spiritual experience alike bear witness to the reality of a Being, spiritual in its essence, which is the ground of all that is, "whose shadow is immortality and death." *Yasya chāyā-amṛtam, yasya mṛtyuḥ* (*Rg-veda*, X, 121). Ineffability is the most striking feature of spiritual experience. When we seek to define the experienced reality, we are compelled to use forms and conceptions, but the real exceeds the most comprehensive of them. Buddha admits the reality of spiritual experience, but refuses to interpret it as the revelation of anything beyond itself. For him, the view that spiritual experience gives us a direct contact with God is an interpretation and not an immediate datum. Buddha attempts to keep close to the given, and is content with the affirmation that a deeper universe of spirit penetrates the visible and tangible world. Śaṅkara, the great Hindu philosopher and theologian, argues that all forms contain an element of untruth and the Real is beyond all forms. The Upaniṣads, Buddha and Śaṅkara and his followers admit that the pure luminous Spirit, without division or duality, unique, existent beyond, or rather, within the world of multiplicity and change, is an unconditioned existence, beyond all possibility of adequate expression by thought or description by speech. We confess without confession that the glory of God is inexplicable, beyond the reach of speech and mind. "It is other than the known and above the unknown." (*Kena Upaniṣad*, I, 3) "The eye goes not thither, nor speech nor mind." (*Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, III, 8, 8) There is, however, a danger in this intellectual modesty and spiritual humility. Buddha's reticence on the question of the Absolute exposed him to the charge of atheism. By denying all attributes and relations we seem to be reducing ultimate reality to bare existence, which is absolute vacuity. Śaṅkara urges that only the feeble-minded will confuse

the negation of empirical qualities with the negation of all being. The negative accounts are intended to convey the soul's sense of the transcendent majesty of the Absolute, that it is the "wholly other", of whom nought may be predicated save in negations.

Hinduism is not content with this negative account. The three noteworthy features of spiritual experience are reality, awareness, and freedom. If some parts of our experience come to us with these characteristics, it implies the possibility that all experience is capable of being received in the same manner. The consciousness to which all experience is present in its own immediacy, revealedness, and freedom from anything which is not itself, is the divine consciousness, that which is our ideal. In the divine status, reality is its own immediate witness, its own self-awareness, its own freedom of complete being. There is nothing which is not gathered up in its own being, nothing which is not revealed in it, and there is utter absence of all discord. It is perfect being, perfect consciousness, and perfect freedom, *sat*, *cit* and *ānanda*. Thought and its forms, will and its expressions, love and its harmonies are based on it. These human counterparts involve duality, tension, strain. Hence the inadequacy of the human and finite categories to the perfection of the divine. The Supreme is real, not true—is perfect, not good. Its freedom is its life, its essential spontaneity.

While the fulness of spiritual being transcends our categories, its nature is still akin to the highest kind of being we are aware of in ourselves. If the real were utterly transcendent to the Self of man, it would be impossible for us to apprehend even dimly its presence. We would not be able to say that the Supreme is wholly other. There is in the Self of man, at the very centre of his being, deeper than his intellect, something which is akin to the Supreme. There is a real ground in man's deepest being for the experience of reality. God's revelation and man's contemplation seem to be two sides of one fact. The consubstantiality of the spirit in man and God is the conviction fundamental to all

spiritual wisdom. It is not merely a matter of inference. In the spiritual experience itself, the barriers between the self and the universal spirit drop away. We belong to the real, and the real is reflected in us. The great text, *Tat tvam asi*, That art thou, is the simple statement of an experienced fact. The Biblical saying: "So God created man in his own image; in the image of God created He him" (*Genesis*, I, 27) asserts that in the soul of man is contained the true revelation of God. "The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord." (*Proverbs*, XX, 27.) According to Plato, man is potentially a participator in the eternal mode of being which he can make his own by living in detachment from the fleeting shadows of the earth. "I and My Father are One" is Jesus' way of expressing the same profound truth.

God is the infinite spirit who is both in us and out of us. If God were not in us there would be no sense of need; if God were not out of us, there would be no sense of worship. If we emphasize the transcendence of the Supreme to the human Self, our religion becomes devotional. Our highest knowledge of God is only partial. There always remains something which is unknown and unspoken. The specifically religious consciousness insists on the sense of communion with a higher than ourselves with whom it is impossible for the individual to get assimilated. There are many degrees in this personal relationship ranging from the feeling of utter humiliation in the presence of the Divine Majesty to the communion with a Supreme Love on whose grace the worst sinner can count. To compare the Supreme with the highest kind of being we know, is nearer the truth than to compare him with anything lower. The religious devotee envisages the supreme reality in the form of a personal God who is the source, guide and destiny of the world. The difference between the Supreme as absolute Spirit and the Supreme as personal God is one of standpoint and not of essence. It is a difference between God as he is and God as he seems to us. Personality is a symbol, and if we ignore its symbolic character, it shuts us out from the truth.

Hinduism is the symbol of India's spiritual vision. It is based on the intuition of the oneness and wholeness of supreme spirit. On the belief that human life everywhere and always is a part and parcel of the divine being, it has cultivated a sort of religious hospitality. It recognizes that more than one reading of the experience is possible. If a number of us watch a sunset in summer, our experiences in the world of thought and feeling may not be identical, and our articulations of them are bound to vary. But this variety of interpretation need not be used as a support for scepticism.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE SOUL IN ŚRĪMAD-BHĀGAVATA*

T.P. Ramachandran

1. Introduction

The goal of religion is the soul's complete and permanent liberation from the ills of life. Religion teaches also the means by which the goal could be realized. Indian philosophy is closely allied to religion. Hence the central question for Indian philosophy also is the soul—its nature, the reason for its bondage, its prospects for release, and the means to release. All other aspects of inquiry, whether they relate to the ultimate reality, the physical world, the means to correct knowledge of reality, or the values other than liberation, become significant to Indian philosophy only by virtue of their bearing on the soul's liberation. That is why Indian philosophy is specially called *adhyātma-vidyā*—the knowledge relating to the soul. "Of all branches of knowledge, I am the philosophy of the soul" (*adhyātma-vidyā vidyānām*), says Śrī Kṛṣṇa (*Bhagavad-gītā*, X, 32.). The present work, which is based on *Śrīmad Bhāgavata*, is oriented to the soul.

* This work will be published in series in the *Voice of Śaṅkara*.

We shall begin with the real and the empirical state of the soul and then analyse the causes and conditions of bondage. Then we shall pass on to the study of liberation and the qualifications required for a soul to pursue liberation. Finally, we shall discuss the various means to liberation, namely *karma-yoga*, *dhyāna-yoga*, *jñāna-yoga*, and *bhakti-yoga*. Since the *Bhāgavata* gives special importance to *bhakti-yoga* in the context of *kali-yuga*, we shall present this point also at the end. At each stage, the gist of relevant passages from the *Bhāgavata* will be given in support of the thesis.

2. The Jīva

1. The real nature of the jīva

Though in large measure, the philosophy of the *Bhāgavata* is theistic Vedānta, its final teaching is that of Advaita. According to Advaita, the ultimate reality, or Brahman, is free from duality. It is beyond the distinction between substance and attribute. Hence it cannot be described in terms of any positive category. It is *nirguṇa*. But, owing to *avidyā*, it appears (to the *jīva*) as the personal God (Īśvara), the individual soul (*jīva*), and the physical world (*jagat*).

Though all the three are appearances, they are not equal in status. *Jagat* is totally illusory. When the basic reality of Brahman is realized, nothing of the physical world remains. But Īśvara and *jīva* are not illusory in this sense. The essence of both is the same, viz. Nirguṇa-Brahman. When Brahman is realized, Īśvara and *jīva* do not disappear; they reappear as Nirguṇa-Brahman. There is also a difference between *jīva* and Īśvara. The *jīva* regards itself as different from Īśvara and also as different from other *jīvas* only as a result of its own ignorance (*avidyā*). *Avidyā* belongs to the *jīva*, and not to Īśvara. This is evident from the fact that the *jīva* recognizes the supremacy of Īśvara over itself and the world. Hence the term *māyā* is more appropriate in the context of Īśvara

than the term *avidyā*, though the two concepts are basically the same as the principle by which the non-dual reality appears as the realm of diversity. Both Īśvara and *jīva* perceive the world, but while Īśvara is not deceived by the experience, the *jīva* is. Consequently, bondage and release also pertain to the *jīva*, but not to Īśvara. Thus, though *jīva* and Īśvara are in essence non-different from Nirguṇa-Brahman, or Ātman, to distinguish the *jīva* from Īśvara, the former is called *jīvātman* and the latter Paramātman.

Ignorance (*avidyā*) is typical of the *jīva*. When that which is pure spirit (Brahman/Ātman), forgetting its real nature, happens to associate itself with a physical body, which is itself illusory, it takes on the name of *jīva*. The term *jīva* literally means "that which lives." So long as *avidyā* persists, birth, life, and death seem to be real and constitute the state of bondage. Consequently, there is also the urge for liberation. It is natural to ask *when* ignorance originated. But the question cannot be solved so long as we are in ignorance. The phenomenon of ignorance includes also ignorance about its origin. This is the real significance of describing ignorance as "beginningless" (*anādi*). What really matters is that ignorance is not endless. It comes to an end when the *jīva* attains right knowledge, i.e. direct experience about its true nature. The attainment of such knowledge is the end of bondage, otherwise called liberation. Hence the only worthwhile effort of the *jīva* is to strive for that knowledge which liberates.

2. The empirical constitution of the *jīva*

Birth and death properly belong to the body, which is material. The spiritual element as such, i.e. the Ātman, is really unaffected by these phenomena. But in so far as the spirit is associated with the body, i.e. as the *jīva*, it is said to pass through birth and death. To understand the sense in which the *jīva* is said to undergo birth and death, we have to consider the exact scope of what is called the "body" (*śarīra*).

The term "body" (*śarīra*) commonly applies to the physical frame, which is made up of gross elements. This is called *sthūla-śarīra*. But the term "body" is applied also to factors other than the gross, physical body. Under this head, there are what are called subtle body (*sūkṣma-śarīra*) and causal body (*kāraṇa-śarīra*). A little explanation of these concepts is desirable before we resume our discussion of bondage.

The subtle body consists of nineteen factors, which may be roughly described as "psychical", because they are distinct from the physical body. These are the five organs of action (*karmendriya*), the five organs of knowledge (*jñānendriya*), the five forms of energy, or vital air (*prāṇa*), *manas*, *buddhi*, *ahaṁkāra*, and *citta*. The karmendriyas and jñānendriyas cited here are not physical organs like hands and feet, eyes and ears. The terms represent the functions, or powers, operating through the physical organs. Thus, motion and work are represented by the limbs, sight and hearing are represented by the eyes and the ears, and so on. Similarly, *prāṇa* is the energy in the body operating through air (*vāyu*). It is of five kinds. The first of them, also called *prāṇa*, stands for inhalation. *Apāna* stands for exhalation. *Vyāna* is the vital air pervading the body. *Udāna* is the departing breath; it goes upward from the throat and enters the head. *Samāna* is the vital air that maintains digestion. Finally, *manas*, *buddhi*, *ahaṁkāra*, and *citta* are the four functions of what is called the internal organ (*antaḥkāraṇa*), which is the seat of feeling and thought. The four functions of the internal organ are as follows. *Manas* stands for desire and doubt. *Buddhi* is certitude about objects. *Ahaṁkāra* is sense of oneself. *Citta* is remembrance.

The entire subtle body, consisting of these nineteen factors, is made up of subtle elements (*tanmātra*)—elements as they existed before becoming gross. The five subtle elements are space (*ākāśa*), air (*vāyu*), fire (*agni*), water (*ap*), and earth (*pṛthivī*). These become gross by a process called *pañcīkaraṇa*, or quintuplication. First, each subtle element divides itself into two halves.

Then, one half of each element divides itself into four parts, each of which is one-eighth of a whole element. Then, one-eighth of each element combines with one-half of every other element. The result is a gross element, which is one-half of its subtle form plus one-eighth of every one of the other four subtle elements. For example, gross earth consists of half subtle earth plus one-eighth each of water, fire, air, and space in their subtle form.

We shall now turn our attention to the causal body. The two bodies described so far are both material—one gross and the other subtle. But the causal body does not belong to matter. It is called a "body" in a secondary, or figurative, sense purely for identification. The association of pure Ātman with ignorance (*avidyā*) is described as the causal body (*kāraṇa-śarīra*) to show that this association is the starting point or basis of bondage. Its presence is known indirectly from the state of deep sleep (*susupti*).

In the waking state, our consciousness extends upto the physical body. In dream, consciousness withdraws from the physical body and is confined to the subtle body. That is why we do not perceive external objects, but perceive only objects created by the internal organ using the impressions of waking life. In deep sleep, consciousness withdraws even from the subtle body and locates itself in the causal body. Deep sleep is not a state of no consciousness. Consciousness is present in sleep as a witness to the absence of the experiences of waking and dream. That is why, when a person wakes up from deep sleep, he says: "I slept happily; I did not know anything." There are two implications in this statement. (1) There is experience of pure bliss in sleep. From this we are to conclude that in deep sleep, a person experiences himself as pure Ātman, which is of the nature of bliss. (2) This experience does not mean that the person has been liberated in sleep. *Avidyā* persists, and that is why the person returns to waking life with all its activities and experiences. The presence of *avidyā* is evident from the statement "I did not know anything." Since *avidyā* persists in deep sleep, the bliss experienced by a sleeper

is not the bliss of Ātman as such, but only the bliss of Ātman *as reflected in avidyā*. The reflection of Ātman in *avidyā* is what is described as the causal body, or *kāraṇa-śarīra*.

Thus, there are three "bodies." Another mode of representing the same idea adopted by Vedānta is the form of five sheaths (*kośa*). This is done by analysing the subtle body into three layers. The physical body is called *annamaya-kośa*, or the sheath of gross matter. The causal body is called *ānandamaya-kośa*, or the sheath of bliss. The subtle body is said to consist of three sheaths: *prāṇamaya*, *manomaya*, and *vijñānamaya*. (1) The *prāṇamaya-kośa* is an association of the five *prāṇas* with the *karmendriyas*. This sheath represents energy and action. (2) The *manomaya-kośa* is an association of the *manas* with the five *jñānendriyas*. This sheath represents consciousness of objects. (3) The *vijñānamaya-kośa* is an association of the *buddhi* with the five *jñānendriyas*. This is the sheath of self-consciousness, or the notion of oneself as knower, doer, and experient. The correlation between the mode of three bodies and the mode of five sheaths may be represented as follows.

gross body	...	sheath of matter
subtle body	...	{ sheath of vital air sheath of consciousness sheath of self-consciousness
causal body	...	sheath of bliss

We have so far analysed the empirical constitution of the *jīva*. The significance of this analysis is this. At the time of death, the *jīva* divests itself of the gross body and, at the next birth, it takes on a new gross body according to its *karma* in the previous life. The subtle body remains with the *jīva*, taking it from one birth to another. It is the store-house of all *karma*. The *jīva* becomes free from the subtle body only at the time of liberation. During liberation, the causal body also becomes absent, because

liberation implies the conquest of *avidyā*, which is the cause of the notion of a *jīva*.

GIST OF RELEVANT VERSES

1. The real nature of the *jīva*

I, 3, 32. The *jīva* is the result of superimposition of a body on Brahman.

I, 3, 33. When the superimposition is removed by *jñāna*, there is Brahman-experience.

IV, 28, 52–65. The *jīva* and Brahman are not different. The *jīva* imagines itself to be different because of *avidyā*.

VI, 16, 4–11. Implored by Nārada, the *jīvātmā* of a dead young person declares to grieving relatives its real nature thus:- The *jīva* passes through a variety of lives, and so all relationships are temporary. In reality, the *jīva* is free from the feeling of "I" and "mine." It is eternal and self-effulgent. It is the basis of everything. Being identical with Brahman, all worldly changes are the play of its own *māyā*. It is the witness of these changes and is unaffected by them.

X, 47, 31. The Ātman is different from *māyā* and its products. It is pure knowledge. It is different from the insentient *prakṛti* and the many *jīvas*. It is above change and is pure. It is untouched by qualities. Waking, dream, and sleep are only modifications of *māyā* and do not belong to Ātman.

X, 54, 44. The Ātman is one. It appears as many by false association with upādhis, like the sun appearing as many in reflections.

X, 54, 45. The world of many is superimposed on the Ātman which is one.

X, 54, 46. The world has no existence apart from the Ātman.

X, 87, 31. The *jīva* appears as many and separate from *prakṛti* and Īśvara through mutual superimposition between *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*.

X, 87, 38. The *jīva* is Brahman itself, but, through *avidyā*, comes to regard itself as separate.

XII, 7, 19. One of the marks of a Mahāpurāṇa is that it teaches the real nature of the *jīva* (*apāśraya*). The *jīva*'s real nature is Brahman (Ātman). It is this real essence that passes through the three states of waking, dream, and sleep, which are products of *māyā*.

2. The empirical constitution of the *jīva*

III, 31, 43. The *jīva* travels from birth to birth with the help of *liṅga-śarīra*, which persists till liberation.

III, 31, 44. The subtle body lasts till liberation. The gross body is the field of worldly experience. The two bodies cooperate in life and separate at death.

III, 31, 47–49. Therefore a *mumukṣu* should live without attachment to body and mind.

IV, 29, 66–67. *Manas* remembers the past and retains *vāsanās*. It indicates future births. It also indicates the possibility of *videha-mukti*. In dream, it mixes the impressions of the past and shows strange pictures.

V, 11, 9–12. The five senses of action, the five senses of knowledge, and the ego (*ahaṅkāra*) together with their objects are the modifications of the *manas*. And these modifications are based on the Ātman, but the Ātman is not based on them. Hence Ātman is the ground reality, and these are illusions superimposed on it.

3. Bondage

1. The nature of bondage

Of the two bodies which are material, one gross and the other subtle, it is only the gross body that falls off from the *jīva* at the time of death and a new one acquired at the time of the next birth. The subtle body remains with the *jīva*, carrying the impressions of one life into the next life which awaits the *jīva*. At the time of liberation, the subtle body also separates from the *jīva*. The causal body also disappears at the time of liberation in the sense that *avidyā* is overcome. The so-called *jīva* is then pure spirit, free from all association with matter.

Whether the *jīva* passes through one life or many lives is a point of difference between the traditional Indian religions (Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism) and the Western religions. The Indian tradition believes in innumerable lives for the *jīva* until it is liberated. The reason behind this assumption is that in no other way can we explain the differences and inequalities between one *jīva* and another at the same period. In the first instance, there are plants, animals, and human beings as basic forms of life. Even among human beings, there are differences in equipment, physical and mental, and also in experiences. There is no point in dismissing these differences as mere accident. They cannot even be ascribed to God's will, for it would amount to questioning God's perfection. The only explanation available is to assume a previous life which must have prepared for the present life. Every moral deed, good or bad, has its appropriate and adequate requital in the form of pleasure or pain. *Karma* is the basis of transmigration. The previous birth determines the present life of an individual. One cannot escape the punishments and rewards due for actions done in a life. Some results may accrue even in the same life, but not all. The majority of actions will remain unrequited in the same life. To experience them, there

ought to be an after-life. Thus, a person earns the nature of his life by virtue of his deeds in a previous life. In this manner, the *jīva* has a chain of lives.

Apart from argument, there are also other indications for the presence of a past life. Some people, strangely enough, are able to recall events in their previous life. They tell others where they were born and who they were. They are even able to identify the house where they lived and name their relatives. These reports also come to be corroborated by elders in that place. Again, the discipline called astrology (*jyotiṣa-śāstra*) indicates a person's past life and its connection with his present life. The horoscope of a person, charted on the basis of the position of planets at the time of his birth, is a revelation of the nature of his past life. That is the ground on which the astrologer explains the rationale of his present dispensation and even indicates how the rest of his life would shape. Yet another mode of indication is that great yogins who have acquired extraordinary powers (*siddhi*) are able to identify the nature of the life spent by a person previous to the present and also forecast his future in general terms.

To cite the inexorable hand of past *karma* in determining a person's present life does not amount to admitting the absence of freedom in action. Determinism is confined to past actions. What has been done cannot be reversed. Results of past actions are bound to determine a person's present life. But as regards the actions to be done in the present life, the individual has perfect freedom of choice. Even if the tendencies acquired from a past life pull his mind in a particular way, he has freedom to resist and overcome those tendencies and persist in his chosen actions. He can thereby shape his future life.

At this stage, a doubt may arise. Animals and plants are outside the pale of morality. Moral considerations apply only to the actions of human beings. How, then, will the *jīvas* occupying plant and animal bodies have any chance of taking human births? The answer is that those *jīvas* have taken these non-human lives

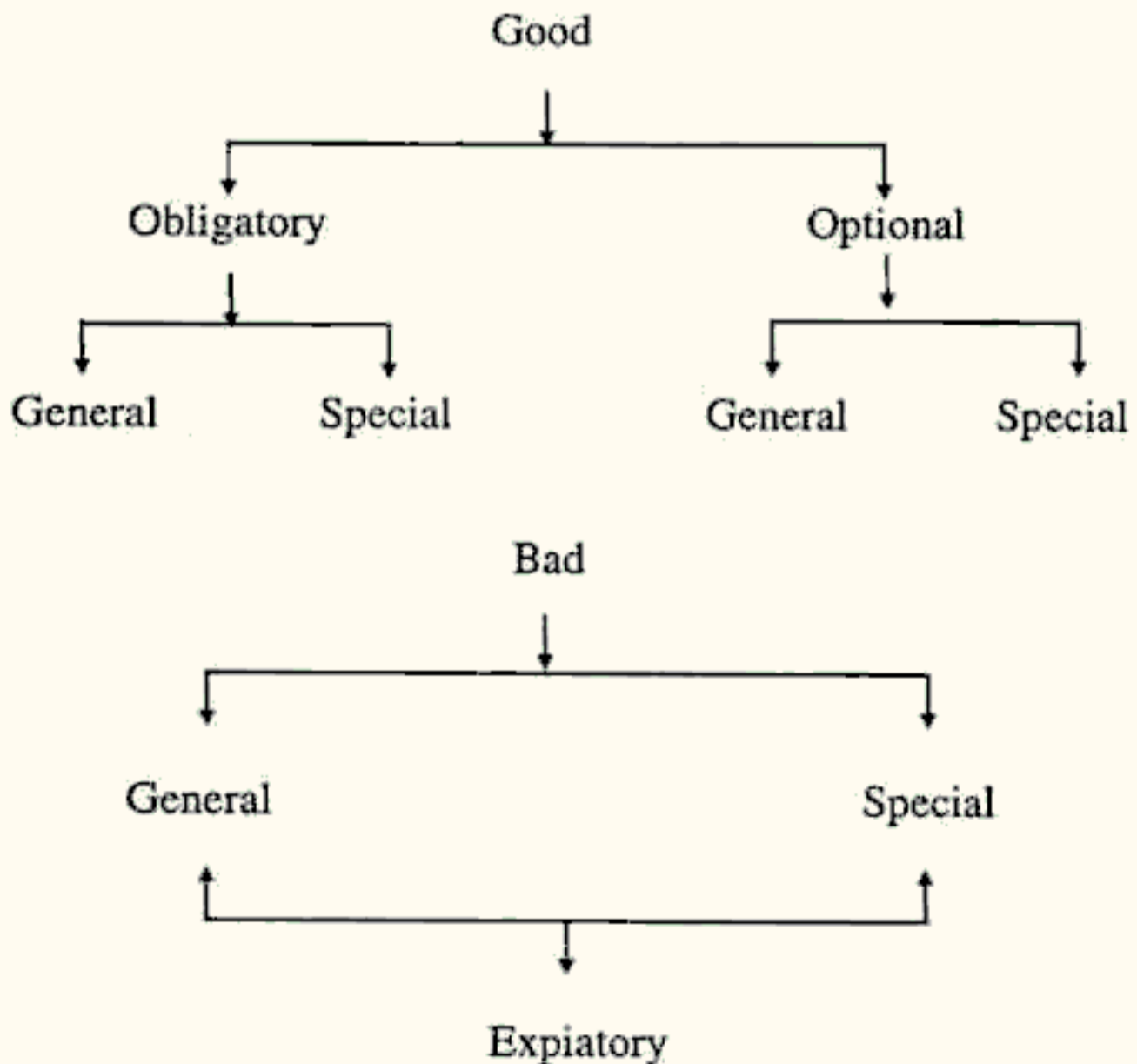
because of some sin in a past human life. When they have fully paid for that sin by undergoing this punishment, their own good actions in an earlier human life, the fruit of which lies dormant, will lead them back spontaneously to a human birth. The same reply will be relevant in the case of mentally disadvantaged human beings, who are incapable of moral sense. Lunacy is a punishment for some past sin. As soon as the period of retribution has ended, a deranged person's own good actions done in some normal past life will lift him back to a normal life either within the same life-span or in the next.

Thus, there is sufficient evidence to show that there is more than one life for the *jīva*. Action (*karma*) leads to rebirth, and rebirth to further action in repeated turns. The cycle of births and deaths is called *saṁsāra*. The word comes from the root *saṁsar*, which means "to recur." To be involved in *saṁsāra* is the *jīva*'s bondage (*bandha*). The goal of a *jīva* is liberation from *saṁsāra*. Neither bondage nor release is real, because the very notion of the *jīva* is born out of ignorance (*avidyā*). Brahman is the only reality and is the true essence of what imagines itself to be *jīva*. Nevertheless, as long as *avidyā* persists, we cannot afford to ignore the facts of life—a sense of "I" and "mine", birth, action, experience of pleasure and pain, death, and the hope or despair of future births. Thus, bondage and release are taken to be real till release.

2. The role of karma in bondage

To arrive at the relation between action and rebirth, we have to examine the types of actions. The basic distinction is between good actions and bad actions. Good actions earn merit (*puṇya*) and bad actions demerit (*pāpa*). Among good actions, there are many which are obligatory (*kartavya*). There are also some which are optional (*kāmya*); they could be done for the fulfilment of any specific desire. Among obligatory actions, or duties, there are some which everybody irrespective of station

and stage in life has to observe (*sādhāraṇa-dharma*). There are others which are special to each class of society (*varṇa*) and each stage in an individual's life (*āśrama*). The same distinction occurs among optional deeds also. Bad actions are prohibited by scripture (*pratiśiddha*) and condemned by society (*niśiddha*). They should be avoided. But if they do happen and if the doer regrets them, there are deeds prescribed for expiation from sin (*prāyaścitta-karma*). As in the case of good actions, in bad actions also, there is a distinction between what should be avoided by all (*sādhāraṇa*) and what should be avoided specially by particular classes and stages. Correspondingly, expiatory acts are also either general or special. The whole scheme may be represented as follows.



It we make a further distinction between temporal (*laukika*) actions and religious (*vaidika*) actions, and apply this distinction to the classes of actions represented above, the finding will be somewhat as follows. (1) All actions under *sādhāraṇa-dharma* are bound to be temporal. Otherwise, they would not apply to all at all times. (2) Actions under *varṇāśrama-dharma* are either *vaidika* or *laukika*. The *vaidika-karma* will apply mostly to the first three varṇas in varying degrees. And there are different *vaidika* actions for the different āśramas also. (3) Among *kāmya-karma*, there are actions recommended by scripture for achieving desired results. And there are also others which are suggested by practical wisdom (*laukika*). Prohibited actions are either violations of the rules of scripture (*vaidika*) or transgressions or ordinary expectations in behaviour (*laukika*). Acts of expiation are also either *vaidika* or *laukika*, corresponding to the nature of the prohibited deed done. The details of such a scheme with examples will be a subject by itself. In this treatise, our special purpose is only to examine the significance of *karma* for bondage and release.

In general, good actions lead to good births and bad actions to bad births—on the principle that every action has an appropriate and adequate reaction. If bad actions predominate, one is reborn as an animal or a plant or even as an insignificant creature like a mosquito or a flea. If good actions predominate, one has the good fortune of being born as a human being under circumstances more or less favourable. These possibilities are within the earth (*bhūloka*). But Hindu tradition believes in other worlds also to which the passage of the soul is possible after death, depending upon its stock of fruits from *karma*. There are fourteen worlds in all. Seven of them starting from this world are in an ascending scale of excellence. The higher the world reached, the nobler is the life reaped by the soul. There are also seven worlds beneath the earth in status, and they are in a descending scale of merit. All the fourteen worlds could be represented as follows.

satyaḥ	...	abode of Brahmā
tapah janaḥ mahaḥ	} ...	abode of siddhas
suvaḥ	...	abode of devas
bhuvah	...	abode of pitṛs
bhūḥ	...	abode of plants, animals, and human beings
<hr/>		
atalam vitalam sutalam rasātalam talātalam mahātalam pātālam	} ...	abode of demons and nāgas

Those who have a preponderance of bad deeds to their discredit, if they are not destined to be born on earth in non-human forms, go to the nether worlds and, attaining the status of demons, endure the punishment due to their sins. Similarly, those who have a preponderance of good deeds to their credit, if they are not destined to be born on earth as human beings, reach higher and higher worlds according to their merit and enjoy varieties of super-human states of life.

In respect of good deeds, there are three possibilities. (1) Most souls, according to their merit (*puṇya*), attain the status of ancestors (pitṛs) in the world called *bhuvah*, also called *candra-loka*. The path by which the soul is said to travel is called *pitṛyāna*, or the path of manes. It is also called the southern path (*dakṣiṇa-mārga*) and the path of smoke (*dhūma-mārga*). When the soul's credentials to *pitṛloka* are exhausted, by virtue of its remaining stock of *karma*, it is reborn on earth (*bhūḥ*) as a human being.

(2) The same southern path could lead also to the next higher world called *suvaḥ*, which is the abode of the devas. This world is reached by those who perform sacrifices (*yajña*) with the intention of pleasing the devas. There, they enjoy long leases of life in the company of the devas. But even this status is not permanent. When the fruits of their labours are exhausted, these souls return to earth to be born as human beings under auspicious circumstances.

(3) The third possibility is for those who undertake special forms of discipline like *yoga* and *tapas* and also for those who perform their duties without desire for fruits (*niṣkāma-karma*). In all these cases, the souls, in spite of these disciplines, may not have attained *jñāna* relating to their true nature as Brahman. All these souls with high discipline but without *jñāna* reach the worlds beyond *suvaḥ* from *mahar-loka* to *satya-loka*. The path by which they travel after leaving a human body on earth is called *devayāna*, or the path of gods. It is also called the northern path (*uttaramārga*) and the path of light (*arci-mārga*). These souls become semi-divine beings called siddhas and enjoy the company of other siddhas in *mahaḥ*, *janaḥ*, and *tapah* worlds and the company of Brahmā himself in *satya-loka*, also called *brahma-loka*. At the time of *mahā-pralaya*, they are absorbed into Īśvara along with Brahmā and the entire universe. It by then they attain *jñāna*, they are released for ever from the cycle of *samsāra*. This kind of release is called *krama-mukti*, or liberation by stages, to contrast it with the instant release (*sadyo-mukti*) obtained by a human being who has attained *jñāna* here on earth. But if the siddhas had not attained *jñāna* even in *brahma-loka*, they are reborn in any of the upper worlds as siddhas themselves at the time of the next creation.

The point to be noted here is that rising in the scale of birth from earth upto even the world of Brahmā does not by itself constitute release. It is simply an elevation in status within the realm of bondage and is called *abhyudaya*. To contrast *abhyudaya*

with *mokṣa*, the former is described as *preyas*, or what is merely pleasurable, while the latter is described as *śreyas*, or *niḥśreyasa*, which means what is really worthwhile. The foregoing account was intended to show how wide the range of *saṃsāra* is according to Hindu tradition.

GIST OF RELEVANT VERSES

1. The nature of bondage

V, 11, 4–6. So long as one's mind is not free from *guṇas*, one spontaneously engages in action. Prompted by *vāsanā*, sense, and *guṇa*, the mind regards plurality as real and engages in action which lifts or sinks a *jīva*. The mind is a product of *māyā*. It is responsible for the *jīva*'s entanglement in *saṃsāra*.

VII, 7, 47. The *jīva* regards the subtle body as the *Ātman* and engages in action. Action leads to rebirth, and rebirth to action.

XI, 3, 6–7. The *jīva* experiences the sweet and bitter fruits of his good and bad actions. In this manner, the *jīva* undergoes repeated births and deaths until *praḷaya*. This is God's *māyā*.

XII, 5, 7. So long as *karma*, *manas*, *śarīra*, and the false association of consciousness with them last, *saṃsāra* will last with the three *guṇas*.

2. The role of karma in bondage

II, 6, 20. There are two paths for the soul after death. One is the southern, for the enjoyment of those who do good deeds with desire for enjoyment (*pitṛyāna*). The other is the northern, for those who do good deeds without desire. This is for their gradual emancipation (*devayāna*).

III, 10, 8–9. *Bhūḥ*, *bhuvah*, and *svah* are for the enjoyment of *jīvas* who have desire. The next four worlds are for those who do good without desire.

III, 11, 25. During *śṛṣṭi*, *jīvas* take to bodies appropriate to their residual *karma* (in the previous *kalpa*).

III, 32, 1–4. Those (householders) who are given to desireful actions and thus distance themselves from God engage in sacrifices to please *devas* and *pitṛs* with faith. So at death, they go to *candra-loka*, and after enjoying the fruits of their sacrifices, return to earth. During *praḷaya*, even the worlds attained by these desireful householders get absorbed in God.

III, 32, 8–10. Those who are desireless but meditate on *Hiraṇyagarbha* (*Brahmā*) reach *satya-loka* and remain there till *Brahma*'s period ends (i.e. till *prākṛta-praḷaya*). Till *praḷaya*, these souls retain their subtle bodies and, through them, their sense of agency. At the time of *praḷaya*, when *Brahmā* withdraws the whole of *prakṛti* into himself and is himself absorbed in the Supreme Being, these souls shed their subtle bodies and are absorbed first into *Brahmā* and, with him, into the Supreme Being himself.

III, 32, 12–14. Even great *ṛṣis* and *yogis* who retain a sense of agency after merging in *Brahmā* during *praḷaya*, reappear in their original form at the time of *śṛṣṭi*.

IV, 9, 32. Even *devas*, after enjoying heaven, fall away from *svarga*.

V, 12, 9–13. The body belongs to the material world and is *māyā*. Therefore *karma* (*vaidika* and *laukika*) cannot by itself lead to *mokṣa*. Only *bhakti* can.

V, 26, 2–3. Men reap fruits appropriate to their *karma*. People who indulge in prohibited deeds attain different kinds of hell according to the types of their misdeeds.

V, 26, 37. Evil-doers go to hell. Those who do good actions go to *svarga*. Both experience the fruits of most of their actions. With the remaining fruits (*puṇya* or *pāpa*), they both are reborn on earth.

VI, 1, 7. To avoid going to hell, one should do *prāyaścitta* for the sins of the past in this very life.

VII, 13, 24. *Puṇya* leads to *svarga*. *Pāpa* leads to birth among animals, birds, etc. And both kinds of births may be followed by human birth. Absence of *puṇya* and *pāpa* leads to *mokṣa*.

X, 49, 21. *Karma-phala* is non-transferable. One is born alone and dies alone. A person experiences the good and bad results of his own actions.

X, 54, 38. The pleasure and pain one experiences is the result of one's own *karma*, not of any other cause.

XI, 10, 30. Even Brahmā has life only for a kalpa (*dviparārdha*).

4. Liberation

The concepts of bondage and release are relevant only to the *jīva* and not either to the world or to Brahman. The essence of bondage is that the *jīva*, out of beginningless ignorance, identifies itself with limiting factors like the physical body and the subtle body. As a result of this identification, it considers itself as a finite individual in contrast to Īśvara and as separate from the physical world and other *jīvas* similarly situated. In this state, it engages itself in good and bad actions, undergoes a series of births according to its *karma*, and experiences pleasure and pain appropriate to those births. Therefore release consists in overcoming *avidyā* and realizing non-difference from Brahman, and thus experiencing eternal and perfect bliss. Since *avidyā* is the root cause of bondage, the direct means to release is *jñāna*, which is nothing but direct experience of one's non-difference from Brahman. The preparation for *jñāna* lies through other disciplines like *niṣkāma-karma*, *upāsana* on Saguna Brahman, and disinterested *bhakti* towards Īśvara.

The foregoing conception of release is from the point of view of Advaita. The *Bhāgavata* fully subscribes to it and presents it as such in many places as its final teaching. At the same time, it presents the idea of release in a theistic way as a state where the soul merges in Īśvara, never to be born again. *Jñāna* is recognized as the ultimate means to *mokṣa*, but *bhakti* is given a place hardly different from that of *jñāna*. *Bhakti*, according to this view, not merely prepares the ground for *jñāna*, but also merges in *jñāna*. So far as the *Bhāgavata* is concerned, this mode of presenting the idea of *mokṣa* and its means is substantially identical with the former presentation from the Advaita point of view. It has also its special attraction, especially in *kali-yuga*. The idea of Nirguṇa Brahman and of the non-difference of the *jīva* from it is too abstruse for a person born in *kali-yuga*, which is riddled with distractions and disturbances to spiritual practice. The idea of Saguṇa Brahman, or Īśvara, and of loving devotion to him easily carries the mind away from worldly concerns and creates intense longing for liberation. This is the reason for the presence of many passages representing the theistic point of view, which in no way conflict with those passages which are offered from the Advaita point of view.

We now come to another contribution from the *Bhāgavata*. Advaita recognizes what is called *sadyo-mukti* or *jīvan-mukti*. This is the release attained instantly (*sadyaḥ*) by a person when he has direct experience of non-difference from Brahman. The existence of the gross and subtle bodies is of no consequence to such a person. By virtue of *jñāna* and the destruction of *avidyā*, his false association with these bodies would have been completely severed. Hence *sadyo-mukti* is also called *jīvan-mukti*, or liberation while yet alive. When, at the time of death, the body of a *jīvan-mukta* falls off, he is said to have attained *videha-mukti*, in a special sense, which requires to be clarified.

With reference to the fruits of one's actions, *karma* is classified under three heads—*āgāmi*, *sañcita*, and *prārabdha*. The

fruits to be experienced through future actions are called *āgāmi-karma*. To the knower of Brahman, they become non-existent, since *avidyā*, which leads to action, has itself been annihilated. The fruits acquired and accumulated through actions done in the past (both in previous lives and in the present upto the moment of *jñāna*) and which have not yet begun to be experienced are called *sañcita-karma*. These results are in store, waiting to be experienced. Even these are wiped out by the onset of *jñāna*. But a portion of *sañcita-karma* would have begun to operate from the moment of birth by way of producing the present life. This is called *prārabdha-karma*. Having begun to operate, *prārabdha-karma* is bound to work itself out until the time of death. But the *jñānī*, the *jīvan-mukta*, would in no way be affected, either favourably or unfavourably, because he has substantially no connection with the body. When the body of a *jīvan-mukta* drops off by the exhaustion of *prārabdha-karma*, the state is called *videha-mukti*. It is no new liberation, since liberation has already been secured. But with reference to the body, which is observed by other people, the state is figuratively called *mukti*. It is as good as saying that the liberated one is liberated. (*vimuktaśca vimucyate: Kaṭha Up. II, 2, 1.*)

The above is the position of Advaita. Theistic schools of Vedānta hold that liberation is possible only after death. This is *videha-mukti* in the literal sense. They sometimes use the expression *jīvan-mukti*, but only in a figurative sense to stand for the state of a person who, by virtue of his high attainment in spiritual practices, is as good as one who is released. Such a person is on the threshold of release, though not actually released. The *Bhāgavata*, however, speaks of *jīvan-mukti* in the Advaita sense.

With reference to *videha-mukti*, the theistic schools, again, conceive of four stages. They are entering the realm of God (*sālokya*), attaining nearness to him (*sāmīpya*), acquiring the form of God (*sārūpya*), and becoming one with God, i.e. attaining

intimate connection with him (*sāyujya*). The *Bhāgavata* recognizes *videha-mukti* in these four stages also, especially in narrating the lives of great men. There is no contradiction in this to its commitment to *jīvan-mukti* in the Advaita sense, if only we could remember that the *Bhāgavata* has in mind the difficulties of the aspirant for *mokṣa* in *kali-yuga*. It is important to note that, according to the *Bhāgavata*, those who have attained *sāyujya* with Saguna Brahman never return to the cycle of births and deaths even as the one who has attained *jīvan-mukti* by realizing non-difference from Nirguṇa Brahman.

In the previous section (Bondage) we have referred to the concept of *krama-mukti*. It is the possibility of liberation by stages for one who merely practises meditation on Brahmā and performs *karma* without desire, but fails to attain *jñāna*. After death, such a one attains the status of a *siddha* and reaches *brahma-loka*. He attains liberation during *mahā-pralaya* only if he attains *jñāna* during his prolonged stay in *brahma-loka*. Otherwise, he is reborn as a *siddha* during *mahā-sṛṣṭi*. On account of this circuitous and contingent manner of release, the *Bhāgavata* actually disfavours this. Its description of this path is only to expose its limitations and exhort the aspirant to practise *bhakti* and attain *jñāna* here on earth.

GIST OF RELEVANT VERSES

III, 32, 23. Devotion to Bhagavān Vāsudeva produces without delay dispassion towards the world and that knowledge which is of the form of direct experience.

III, 32, 24–26. In substance, all objects are equal as manifestations of God. Hence once a person is able to view everything in an equal manner, it is then clear that he experiences his self as Brahman itself. Such a one is of the essence of consciousness. He is non-different from Brahman, who manifests himself as everything.

IX, 19, 25. Direct experience of the Ātman destroys the subtle body, which is made up of the three *guṇas*, and secures release.

X, 14, 25–29. *Samsāra* is illusory. *Jñāna* alone is the means to release. Both bondage and release are illusory. They are products of *ajñāna*. Though we are identical with Brahman, we think of ourselves as different. When Brahman is realized, the world disappears. All other knowledge only prolongs the world experience.

X, 82, 48–49. Out of pure love, the gopis realized God even while living. And they prayed that even while immersed in their household duties, they should not lose this experience of God.

X, 88, 26. Those who reach Vaikunṭha do not have to return to *samsāra*.

XI, 11, 1–4. Whether one is bound or released depends on his *guṇa*. And *guṇa* is part of *māyā*. So there is really neither bondage nor release for the Ātman. Dream is merely the creation of the mind, not real. Similarly, both birth and death and all worldly experiences are creations of *māyā* and are not real. Both *avidyā*, which causes bondage, and *vidyā*, which is responsible for release, are God's beginningless powers. They arise from *māyā*. Really neither exists. The so-called *jīva*, which is the subject of activity, is indeed a manifestation of Brahman. When it realizes its true nature, it is said to be liberated and, when not, it is said to be bound. And since *ajñāna* is *anādi*, bondage is also said to be *anādi*.

XI, 11, 8. That *jīva* who has attained *jñāna* is free. Though seated in the gross and subtle bodies, he does not see any connection of himself with them. But the ignorant one identifies himself with these bodies.

XI, 11, 9. The contact of senses with objects is merely a contact of *guṇa* with *guṇa*. Hence in renouncing contact with objects, the *jñānī* feels no vanity at all.

XI, 11, 14. Breathing, sensation, thinking, and feeling happen without our willing them. So the *jñānī*, though he resides in a body, regards all bodily and mental activities as not his, but of the *guṇas*.

XI, 11, 15. Even if bad people trouble him or good people worship him, the *jñānī* is subject to neither sorrow nor pleasure.

XI, 11, 16. He does not praise those who do good actions or speak well; nor does he condemn those who do bad actions or speak ill.

XI, 11, 17. The *jīvan-mukta* does not do either good or bad action, nor does he speak either well or ill. Nor does he hesitate. He merely carries on his ordinary routine and is immersed in *ātmānanda*. He even wanders like a mad man or a fool.

XI, 13, 36–37. The *jīvan-mukta* is totally unaware of and unconcerned with the body. Whatever the body does or does not is simply by *prārabdha*. He will have no relationship with his body and with whatever and whoever is connected with his body.

XI, 28, 30. One who has gained *ātma-jñāna*, even when he lives in the world and carries on his duties, is not affected by like and dislike, pleasure and pain.

XI, 28, 31–32. In fact, such a one is not even aware of what happens to the body (in *samādhi*). Even when he perceives the body and its vicissitudes (in *vyutthāna*), he is not deluded, because he is established in the *Ātman*.

XI, 28, 33–36. Disconnection from the body occurs not by bodily acts, but only by destruction of *avidyā*, which falsely links the body with *Ātman*. Thus, *mokṣa* is not an acquisition or production, but only a revelation of what already exists, namely Brahman. That is why mind and speech fail to describe it. It is only in a distorted and false manner that mind and speech understand and describe it for practical purposes.

THE EMPIRICAL SUBJECT:
A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF NYĀYA AND
ADVAITA VEDĀNTA THEORIES

Sibajiban Bhattacharyya*

1. Introduction

By "Advaita Vedānta theories" I shall mean here not merely the theories of Śaṅkara and his followers, but also the theories of Gauḍapāda. The empirical subject is that which cognizes objects, feels pleasure and pain, desires to obtain or avoid objects, acts morally or immorally. It is the unity of thinking, feeling and willing. I shall first explain some features of the Nyāya theory.

2. The Nyāya Theory

1. According to Nyāya, the empirical subject is a substance, a finite self (*jīvātmā*) to which cognition, feeling and willing belong as qualities. There are infinitely many selves which are

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all eternal substances, and all of them are different from the supreme self, i.e. God.

2. Because the finite empirical subject is an eternal substance, it remains identical with itself in dream, dreamless sleep and even in liberation.

3. According to Nyāya, the finite self has fourteen qualities, five of which it shares with inanimate objects. So self and matter are not contradictory to each other.

4. Although the remaining nine qualities belong only to a finite self-substance, still they are not known in the same way. According to Nyāya, consciousness or awareness is identified with cognition, the other eight special qualities of the self are unconscious qualities. Thus pleasure and pain, desires and aversion, mental effort, etc. are all unconscious qualities although belonging to the self. One can be aware of them only by knowing them in a subsequent state of the self which is, of course, inner perception (*mānasa pratyakṣa*). Even though cognition is identified with consciousness or awareness, it is awareness of objects, but not of itself. A cognition as a state of the self has to be itself cognized in a second-order cognition (*anuvyavasāya*). The second-order cognition, again, can be known or cognized only by a third-order cognition and so on.

5. Consciousness, according to Nyāya, is momentary (*kṣanika*). But momentariness of cognition in Nyāya is different from the momentariness of the Buddhists. According to Nyāya, a cognition as a quality of the self has three moments—one moment of origination (*utpatti-kṣāna*), a moment of duration, and the next moment of cessation. According to the Buddhists, on the other hand, an object is momentary if and only if it has two moments—a moment of origination and the next moment of cessation. Thus according to the Buddhists, a momentary object cannot have any moment of duration, cannot endure even for a moment.

6. The reasons for the Nyāya conception of momentary cognition enduring for one moment are the following. We have

seen that according to Nyāya, cognition is awareness of objects. To be aware of the cognition another cognition having the first cognition as its object has to follow. Now, this higher order cognition is inner perception and so the object-cognition has to be present when the higher order cognition originates. As, according to Nyāya, two cognitions cannot originate at the same moment, the object-cognition has to *endure* when the *anuvyavasāya* originates. So every cognition has to endure at least for one moment.

7. According to Nyāya, the empirical subject, i.e. the finite self is a substance of which consciousness or awareness, feeling and willing are all adventitious qualities. In deep dreamless sleep, there is no consciousness in the self, the vital functions of the body being carried out by the force of *adr̥ṣṭa*.

8. According to Nyāya, the inner sense (*antahkaraṇa*) consists of *manas* alone which is atomic in size. The I-sense is identical with the awareness of the self. Every finite self is different from other finite selves all of which have their I-sense built into them.

9. The *manas* being atomic, there cannot be any images of objects, any modes or transformations of the *manas*.

10. According to Nyāya, all consciousness is directly internally perceived by a higher order consciousness or cognition. So the Nyāya theory of consciousness may be regarded as a surface theory of consciousness, having no inner unexplored depths.

11. The finite self is not omniscient or omnipotent, but is omnipresent in the sense that all objects of limited size are in contact with it. A finite self is omnipresent in the same sense as the infinite self, i.e. God. No *vibhu* can be located anywhere, hence God cannot be immanent, an indwelling reality.

12. The infinite self or God is again a self-substance having eternal, immediate knowledge of all objects, past, present and future. God is omnipotent in the sense that he creates everything

that is created, not in the sense of having the power to create everything. According to Nyāya, the atoms, space, time, etc. are all as eternal as God himself.

13. Liberation does not mean transcending the world of appearance or ignorance, the self being *vibhu*, being omnipresent, cannot move from place to place, cannot transcend the world. To be liberated is to be free from sorrows for all time to come. But to attain this state, the self need not transcend the world, but being incapable of movement, remains where it always is, i.e. everywhere. To be liberated, therefore, the self has to stay in itself and not be related to the *manas*, to the body, to karma or to any of the qualities which are destroyed for good if they are non-eternal; otherwise although they exist, the self is not related to them. Thus liberation in the sense of destruction of all present sorrows and avoidance of all future sorrows, is achieved by the destruction of the *relation* of the self to not-self, not by the wholesale destruction of the not-self.

3. The Advaita Vedānta Theory

(a) According to the Advaitins, the empirical subject is pure infinite consciousness illusorily cognized as finite. There are three different theories about how this unreal appearance is caused—(i) *avaccheda-vāda*, (ii) *ābhāsa-vāda*, and (iii) *prati-bimba-vāda*.

(i) According to the first theory, the empirical subject, i.e. the *jīva*, is pure consciousness illusorily restricted by *antaḥkaraṇa*, which is constituted by *manas*, *buddhi*, *citta* and *ahaṅkāra* (the I-sense or the ego). When there is an awareness of doubt or vacillation, it is the function of *manas* as an element of the *antaḥkaraṇa* (the inner sense). When there is awareness of certainty it is the function of the element of *buddhi* of the inner sense. The I-sense, which is present in every cognition in the form "I cognize", is due to the element of *ahaṅkāra* (ego) of the

inner sense. Recollection or memory is due to the element of *citta* of the inner sense. As a matter of fact, the inner sense is a unity which does not contain these four factors, but which only functions in four different ways in an epistemological context. Because of this functional difference, the one *antaḥkaraṇa* is called by four names.

Now according to the *avaccheda-vāda*, this *antaḥkaraṇa* is different in different individuals, and so the individuals also are different. This theory is usually explained by a metaphor. Space is one and infinite; yet it is restricted by things like rooms, etc. In a room, space inside is restricted by its walls, yet this space so restricted is not really a part cut off from the infinite space, but is identical with the infinite space which is not affected by being bounded by the four walls of the room. Yet, one may say that rooms of different sizes enclose different portions of the infinite space; so also the different empirical subjects are really partial manifestations of the infinite consciousness.

If we accept this theory, then we can easily distinguish between finite selves and the infinite pure consciousness and so can explain how a finite self can meditate on the infinite consciousness. For, meditation or contemplation requires a difference between that which contemplates and that which is contemplated upon. The contemplator and the contemplated cannot be identical as that would identify the subject of the act with the object which would make the action impossible (*kartr-karma-bhāva*).

(ii) According to the second theory, finite selves are so many reflections of the one infinite pure consciousness in the different *antaḥkaraṇas*. This theory also is explained with the help of a metaphor of the sun reflected in different pots of water. The reflected pure consciousness is the empirical subject (*ābhāsa eva ca, Brahma-sūtra 2.3.50*).

Now the question arises whether the reflection and the reflected are one or different. According to Sureśvara, the *bimba* (the original object) and the *pratibimba* (the reflection) are diffe-

rent. The *pratibimba* is the shadow (*chāyā*) or *ābhāsa* of the *bimba*. But the shadow is not real; it is *mithyā*. Hence the finite selves, being *pratibimbas*, i.e. shadows, cannot be real.

(iii) According to the third theory, the *bimba* and the *pratibimba* are not really different, their difference is the product of *ajñāna* and is, therefore, itself *mithyā*. The face reflected in a mirror and the face itself are not really two objects. According to Vidāyaraṇya, if the *bimba* and the *pratibimba* are really different, then there cannot be any relation of reflection between them. One object cannot be a reflection of an altogether different object. According to the *ābhāsa-vāda* explained above [in (ii)], it is only the reflection which is illusory. But this theory cannot be accepted, because if it were illusory, then it would have been cancelled by a true cognition of the form "This is not the face;" but this cognition never arises. Hence it cannot be said that the reflection of the face in the mirror is illusory. It is, of course, true that one realizes that there is no face in the mirror, but this realization cancels not the face itself, but only the relation of the face with the reflection in the mirror. As a matter of fact, what one recognizes is that this face reflected in the mirror is my face, which shows that the *bimba* and the *pratibimba*, the object and its reflection, are not different, that they are really one.

There are some Advaitins who try to conceive the reflection as a copy or imprint of the object. But this interpretation of the relation between the reflection and the object reflected cannot be accepted. For the imprint, say, of a seal on a wax is of the same size and shape as the object itself, yet the face reflected in a small mirror is smaller in size than the face itself. So the reflection cannot be regarded as an imprint of an object as on wax.

According to others the face reflected in the mirror is not the face which is on the body of the person. The reflection is a different face. But this theory, too, cannot be accepted. If the face in the mirror is a different face, the question, then inevitably arises: Where does it come from? What produces it? There cannot

be any satisfactory reply to such questions. Moreover, everyone recognizes that his face which is on his body is reflected in the mirror, which shows that they are identical.

Against this theory, it may be objected that, if the face on the body and the face reflected in the mirror are one and the same, then how is that the reflection is seen in the mirror? The reply to this objection is that the face seen as reflected in the mirror is the function of *ajñāna*. This *ajñāna* wrongly reveals one object as another, one object located here as the object located there, and so on. When the face on the body is mistakenly cognized being in the mirror, this wrong cognition is the reflection.

According to some philosophers, there is no such thing as reflection. It is an illusion that we seem to see the reflection of our face in the mirror. When we look at the mirror, the light rays are reflected back on our face and therefore the eyes see the face itself. Unless the light rays are reflected back on to our face, we cannot see our face. This reflection of the light rays requires the presence of a mirror and that is why we cannot see our face except in the presence of a mirror. Hence it is an illusion to see the reflection of the face in the mirror.

Against this theory it is pointed out that what we see in the mirror cannot be the real face, because in the mirror the image is inverted. If what we see in the mirror is the real face, then this inversion of the image becomes inexplicable. Hence it has to be admitted that the face and its reflection have different locations, and this difference in location can easily explain the inversion of the image.

We can easily explain how pure infinite consciousness can be the indwelling spirit of the *jīva*. This cannot be explained on *avaccheda-vāda*.

In any case the Advaita Vedānta theory of the empirical subject is fundamentally different from the Nyāya theory. For, according to Nyāya philosophers, consciousness is a quality of the self whereas according to Advaitins consciousness is the Self.

Moreover, according to Nyāya, the finite selves are infinite in number and are all eternal substances whereas according to Advaita Vedānta the finite selves are unreal.

(b) While, according to Nyāya philosophers, the self and matter are not contradictory to each other, according to Advaita Vedānta they are as opposed as light and darkness. Philosophy begins with the realization of the mystery that an impossible unity of two contradictory realities is yet an actual fact, namely, the unity of body and soul in the person of every individual. The whole of Advaita philosophy is an attempt to explain rationally how the impossible can yet be actual.

(c) According to Advaita Vedānta, there cannot be unconscious inner states. According to Nyāya, even a cognition of an object has to be cognized by another higher order cognition (*anuvyavasāya*), and so on *ad infinitum*. The Advaitins avoid this infinite regress by postulating that inner states are directly revealed to the witnessing consciousness. There is no need for introspection in the Nyāya sense.

(d) According to Advaita Vedānta, consciousness is unchanging, and remains ever identical with itself. Contents of consciousness are not contents *in* consciousness. The rapid succession of ideas, impressions and other mental states are states of the *antaḥkāraṇa*, a plastic material substance which assumes forms of objects. This *antaḥkāraṇa* of the inner sense is not consciousness, but belongs to the world of objects revealed by consciousness.

(e) The self is not conscious, as in Nyāya, but *is* consciousness. Even in deep dreamless sleep, the witnessing consciousness remains ever awake and directly reveals the state of sleep. If sleep were not directly experienced, there can be no proof of its existence. Its existence cannot be validly inferred from bodily well-being of the person when he wakes up from sleep.

(f) The self which is pure consciousness is devoid of the ego according to Advaita Vedānta. The ego is one function of the material *antaḥkāraṇa*, and hence the difference among persons

cannot belong to consciousness. Consciousness cannot be mine or yours; "my consciousness" literally is meaningless, for consciousness is the ultimate owner; it cannot be owned by anything else.

(g) The *antaḥkaraṇa* assumes forms of objects, which are its modifications. The modes of *antaḥkaraṇa* are like mental images of objects. This also explains how two cognitions can arise simultaneously in the *antaḥkaraṇa* which is as it were a spread-out plastic matter. All awareness of outer objects (*pramā*) is due to the *vṛttis* of the *antaḥkaraṇa*.

(h) But the awareness of the *vṛttis* themselves cannot require further *vṛttis*; for this will lead to infinite regress. So the *vṛttis* themselves have to be known directly without *vṛttis*. This direct awareness is the awareness which is the witness. Thus there are different senses of consciousness according to Advaita Vedānta. At the surface level, there is *vṛtti-jñāna*, i.e. awareness of outer objects through images etc., then behind this awareness there is the witnessing consciousness which directly reveals the surface awareness.

(i) As has been already explained, the finite selves (*jīvas*) are not real, but mere appearances. Really there is only one consciousness which is universal and is the foundation of the empirical world including the finite selves. There is no question of finite selves being *vibhu*. According to Nyāya, all *vibhu padārthas* as well as atoms are eternally real, and there is an infinite number of them. This is an extreme form of pluralism. According to Advaita Vedānta, however, the concept of many realities is self-contradictory. There cannot be different realities, because the very concept of *manyness* involves self-contradiction. If, for example, we want to say that there are two things, then the two things have to be both different and non-different at the same time. If there is one table here and another table there, we may say that there are two tables. But if there is one chair and one table, we cannot say either that there are two tables or two chairs. We shall have to find out a feature in which the two things are

not different. We may, therefore, say that there are two pieces of furniture. But if there is a table and litre of milk, we cannot say that there are two tables or two litres of milk. We shall have to rise higher or go deeper to find out in what respect they are non-different. We may say that there are two measurable objects, for the table can be counted and the milk measured. As counting itself is one kind of measure in the technical mathematical sense, both the chair and the glass of milk are measurable objects. This shows that to be able to say that there are *two* realities, we must show in what respect they are different and in what respect they are non-different. This shows again that every object has many aspects and the problem of relating them again into the unity of the object will arise, and so on ad infinitum. Thus the concept of duality is logically inconsistent. Hence Advaita Vedānta is non-dualistic.

(j) According to Nyāya, liberation is due to cancellation of ignorance about the nature of the self and other specific objects. When this ignorance gets removed, it does not follow that the whole world is realized as a false appearance. The world which has been known correctly and truly through perception, inference and other *pramāṇas*, remains unaffected by the removal of ignorance about specific objects. The self, by attaining liberation, transcends the world only in the sense that it escapes the beginningless cycle of birth and death. It does not transcend the world in the sense of going beyond the world; it remains very much as an item of the real world.

In achieving this sort of liberation, the finite self being devoid of all its connections with its body and *manas* becomes totally unconscious. A moot point which arises here is whether liberation, in the sense of becoming unconscious for all time to come, can ever be a *puruṣārtha*, something of prime value for the individual.

Advaita Vedānta avoids this absurdity by postulating that the self is essentially consciousness which it cannot lose even in

liberation. The self by attaining liberation transcends the world by realizing that the world is a false appearance. This is attaining the highest or the deepest level of consciousness as when one realizes the utter unreality of his dreams when he wakes up. As there is a passage from dream to waking consciousness, so also there is a passage from empirical consciousness to transcendental consciousness. But when one attains this state, one realizes that one was never bound and limited, never suffered any pain, and so on. Thus it is not merely that the whole world is cancelled and realized as unreal, but it is also cancelled with retrospective effect. This may be explained by our experience of disillusionment. When, for example, we mistake a piece of rope for a snake, and then immediately afterwards realize our mistake, we know not merely that there is no snake now, but that there was no snake even when I perceived it. Thus cancellation of illusion of this type is always with retrospective effect.

4. Analysis of Dream

The Nyāya analysis of dream is radically different from the Advaita Vedānta analysis for various reasons. We first explain the Nyāya theory as propounded by Gautama and his followers.

A. THE NYĀYA THEORY

The Nyāya theory of dream has the following main points: (1) Dreaming is not recollecting or remembering; it is a direct experience, is perceptual in nature. (2) Dream, however, presupposes memory, and has many similarities with it. (3) Dream experience is radically different from waking experience, and presupposes it. It cannot be said meaningfully that all our life is a dream. Dream is one kind of illusory perception. (4) As dream is illusory experience, it shares all features of illusory experience. Now we explain these points in some detail

1. Dream experience is direct experience, not memory. This is proved by the immediate awareness of the dream experience on waking. In Sanskrit, as in many vernacular languages in India, the idiom is "I *saw* an elephant in a dream" and not that "I remembered an elephant in a dream."¹ Whether this linguistic idiom is correct or not, our immediate awareness of dream experience is of a direct experience.

2. Yet dreaming is not possible without past experience leaving its trace, or the trace remains inactive. Just as recollection is not possible without traces of past experiences being activated, so also dream is impossible without them. In this respect dreams are similar to memory.

It may be argued that often we dream about things which we have never seen or directly experienced. Sometimes we dream about wholly novel objects, sometimes we dream about objects or events which it is impossible for us to have experienced. For example, one may dream that one is beheaded, an event which it is impossible to have experienced before. So it is not correct to say that in all *cases dreams are caused* by memory traces of past experiences.

To answer this objection it is necessary to examine what causes dreams. There are various types of causes for various types of dreams. (a) There are some dreams which are caused by the intensity of traces of thoughts, desires etc. When an angry man goes to sleep thinking continuously and deeply about his enemy, then all these thoughts and the chain of memory impression produce perceptual awareness in dream. (b) Physiological disorders may cause some types of dreams. For example, one may dream of flying if one is suffering from excess of gases, or may dream of falling into water if one feels cold when asleep, and so on. This type of dream usually does not depend on impressions or memory traces. (c) One may dream of pleasantly riding horses if one is happy, i.e. the dream is due to accumulated merits (dharma), or one may have unpleasant dreams of evil omen

because of demerits. This type of dreams is not due to either memory impressions, or physiological disorders, but due to merits and demerits. One may dream of things already experienced, or of wholly novel things in this case. One may dream about objects totally unknown to him owing to merits or demerits. For example Damayantī dreamt about King Nala even though she had never seen him before.

Now the cases (c) which are allegedly not caused by memory impressions are shown by Gautama to be reducible to case (a). On this point there is a fundamental difference between Praśastapāda who distinguishes among the three cases, and Gautama who accepts only the first type of dreams. Thus the case of Damayantī may be explained by pointing out that although she had not seen King Nala, still she had heard about him, and known many details about him. It is the memory impressions of this knowledge which are the real causes of the dreams. Even in case (b), the details of the dreams vary from person to person having the same type of disorders. This shows that the physiological disorders really activate memory impressions which, then, cause the dreams. Thus, according to Gautama, recollection and dream are similar in this that both are caused by traces of previous knowledge.

3. Dream is illusory perception: so analysis of dream is dependent upon an analysis of illusory perception. One problem is to show whether all our life is a dream. Now it may be pointed out that waking consciousness is different in kind from dream experience. So it cannot be reduced to dream. The other argument is to show that all dream is illusory; so also all waking experience is illusory. Waking experience is *often* mistaken; one may generalize and say that it is *always* mistaken. As Descartes has argued, it is not "*prudent*" to trust that which has deceived us even once. And it is established that many things seen even in waking experience are non-existent; for example, sometimes one sees a whole city in the sky, or is deceived by mirage, and so on.

The reply to this type of argument is that mere examples of illusory perception in waking experience cannot prove that whatever is known in waking experience is non-existent. For that, a cogent reason has to be adduced. In the absence of any such reason, the thesis that waking experience is always deceptive cannot be established. Now, what reason is there for holding that all dreamt objects are non-existent? One reason is that one cannot find them on waking. This absence of knowledge of object which in the dream was present shows that they are unreal. Now if it be asserted that even if objects found to exist in waking experience are, nonetheless, non-existent, then absence of knowledge cannot be a cogent reason for their non-existence. If objects of dream not found on waking are non-existent, and if objects known in waking experience, too, are non-existent, then not-finding cannot be a cogent reason (or even relevant) for proving non-existence of objects of dream. For, whether the objects are found or not-found in waking experience, they would be, in any case, non-existent. To make non-finding of objects of dream on waking a cogent reason for their non-existence, it has to be admitted that if objects are found in waking experience, then they are real. Objects which are *only* not found in waking experience are non-existent.

Moreover if all things are unreal, then there cannot be any cause of the rich variety of dreams—some dreams are pleasant, some are terrifying nightmares, and so on. Moreover, dreams have a beginning; they also end even before a person wakes up, or when a different dream begins. There cannot be such difference in the beginning, the end, and duration of dreams without causes. But if everything is unreal, then there can be no causes of dreams, their variety, their beginning or end. So everything cannot be proved to be unreal on the ground of dream objects being unreal.

Now, are the objects of dream utterly unreal? Can we say that they did not exist in the past, do not exist now, and will never exist? If the objects of dream are non-existent at all times,

still it would be wrong to say that they are unactualizable, i.e. *cannot* be actualized and hence impossible. To say that something *does* never exist is not to say that it *can* never exist. Even in Western traditional logic, many logicians made a distinction between inseparable accident and property. The mere fact that some attribute *is* present always does not prove that it *has* to be so present. So the Indian concept of *alīka* is not the concept of an impossible object, but of an object which happens to be always non-existent. That objects of dream are not utterly unreal, follows from the fact that the objects have to be first known in the waking state in order to have their impressions on the self, which produce dreams. Unless the objects were real, they could not have been known, and if they were not known, their impressions could not be present in the self, and no dreams could occur. Moreover, the dreamer must be the identical person who knows the objects in the waking state. Thus the self must be real and be an enduring subject.

It may be argued: if the objects of dream be real objects, then how can dream be illusory? That objects of dream are unreal is admitted by all. In reply, it may be pointed out that it is enough to hold that the dreamt objects do not exist where and when they are dreamt to be present in order to explain how dream is illusory. It is not necessary to suppose that they do not exist anywhere or at any time.

Now it may be argued that it is not necessary to postulate that a person has to *know* objects in waking experience in order to explain how he can dream about them; it is enough to hold that he has impressions (ideas) of the objects, which he can get even from illusory experience. Illusory experience of objects causes impressions on the self as much as veridical perception. This argument is not tenable, for if all waking experience is illusory and so also is all dream experience, then there cannot be any distinction between waking and dreaming. But then the argument

to prove waking experience to be illusory on the analogy of dream experience becomes unfounded; for, now, there is only one type of experience which is dream experience. Then there can be no question of waking experience at all.

Nyāya philosophers further strengthen their case by an analysis of illusory perception. In illusory perception, something real is mistaken for something else. Thus, when a shell is mistaken for a piece of silver, one knows "This is a piece of silver". Now, although the silver is non-existent there, the "this" is real. That is, in every illusory perceptual experience the subject is real, although the predicate is not. So every illusory perception involves a veridical perception of the subject. Hence the subject has to be real. According to Nyāya, the so-called hallucinations which do not have any real subject are really cases of illusion.

Now, it may be objected that if dreams are caused by true impressions, then how can one dream that one is beheaded? From the nature of the case, one could not have any veridical perception of this event. The method followed by Nyāya philosophers here to reply to this objection is the general method of conceptual analysis of the dream content. One must have a veridical experience of one's own head, and must have a veridical experience of what it is to be cut; in the dream one combines these two ideas of one's own head, and something being cut, to form the complex content of one's own head being cut off. Thus all the simpler elements of the dream are real objects.

Moreover, Nyāya philosophers argue what waking experience cancels is only the dream experience, but not objects of dream experience. True cognition contradicts false cognition, but not objects of false cognition. For if the objects be contradicted, they would be unreal, but as has been shown above, every illusion presupposes true cognition of the subject. If the object of illusion were utterly unreal, then everyone ought to have illusion about that object. But a person from a distance may perceive water in

a desert when there is no water, and have an illusory perception of water there, but a person standing near will not have that illusion. If everything is illusory in this world, if all experience is dream experience, then it remains an inexplicable mystery why some persons have a particular illusion while others do not have it. So also those who see a whole town in the sky must view the sky from a particular point of view; others who are placed differently do not have that illusion. These facts prove that illusions have special causes which produce them. Only a real thing can have causal efficacy; an utterly unreal thing like a sky-lotus can have no causal efficacy.

Thus, according to Nyāya, dreaming proves the reality of the dream, of the dreaming which is the object of internal perception and also of all the elements of the dreamt object. The subject who dreams is the subject of waking experience.

B. GAUḌAPĀDA'S THEORY

That dream objects are unreal is admitted by everyone even though the dream may be very vivid. Gauḍapāda gives the following reasons for regarding dream objects as unreal.

Dream objects are unreal because they are seen within the body in a very limited space. Mountains, chariots, etc. seen in a dream cannot possibly be accommodated in the small limited space occupied by the body of the dreamer. So they must be unreal or imaginary.

It may be objected here that the mountain, etc. are not within the body; the dreamer may be actually travelling to those regions, in which case things seen in a dream may be regarded as real. The reply to this objection is that it is impossible for the dreamer to actually travel to the regions within the short period of time he is dreaming; the dream hardly lasts, say ten minutes or so; how could he be travelling thousands of miles during that period?

Secondly, many a time the dreamer awakes suddenly, but he does not find himself, when awake, in the regions which he had visited in his dream. All these show that the objects seen in a dream are within the body itself; the dreamer does not go out to see them.

Kalidas Bhattacharyya has interpreted Gauḍapāda as holding that not merely the dream objects, but also the dream experience, and indeed, the dreamer, himself are *mithyā* just as, according to Advaita Vedānta, in the case of illusory perception, not merely the snake is unreal, but also the perception of the snake is unreal. When the illusion is corrected, we realize not merely that there was no snake at all to be seen, but also there was no seeing of a snake at all. As there was not snake, there could not have been any perception of snake also. The same is true about dream objects and dream experience. Both are equally unreal—the objects as well as the dream.

Not merely the dream objects and the dreaming are unreal, but also the dreamer, too. Bhattacharyya gives the following three reasons for holding the dreamer to be unreal. (i) The dreamer is not accepted as identical with the subject of waking experience. The person who dreamt these absurd things is felt as alien and foreign to me when I wake up. I have an immediate awareness that the person who dreamt these objects could not have been myself. (ii) We dream not merely about objects, but also about persons who are equally unreal. Now, if the persons that I dream about are unreal, and as I myself as the dreamer am one among them, then the dreamer should be equally unreal as they. (iii) There cannot be any intelligible relation between me as a waking subject and me as a dreamer; for, the dream experiences of the dreamer and the waking experiences of myself cannot be related at all, are not integrated into my life-history, nor do I want them to be integrated into it. The realm of experiences and also the dreamer, stand out from me as an altogether different individual totally unrelated to me. The dreamer and his experience hang

completely unsupported by me. Hence the dream objects, dream experiences and the dreamer belong to a region which floats without any connection to my world, my experiences and myself.²

Gauḍapāda, however, goes further and reduces waking experience to dream. According to him, the world of waking experience is as unreal as dream objects from the ultimate point of view. This does not, however, mean that there is only one experience which can be called indifferently dream experience or waking experience. Although dream experiences and waking experiences are fundamentally of the same kind to persons who have attained knowledge of the ultimate reality, still, from the empirical standpoint, they are different. Gauḍapāda points out the following similarity and dissimilarity between them.

(i) Dream experiences and waking experiences are equally experiences, i.e. inner states of the individual. Yet, dream differs from the waking state because dream objects are within the mind (the subtle body), whereas objects of waking experience are outside. But this difference between location of entities cannot mean a difference in their ontological status. For, both these types of objects come into being and pass out of existence. "What is not at the beginning and at the end, cannot be also in the present." As dream objects and empirical objects are not eternal, they are equally unreal.

(ii) If dream objects are contradicted by waking experience, so also waking experiences are contradicted by dream experience. The hearty meal that a person takes in the dream is of no avail in the waking state where he has to satisfy his hunger by having another meal. Now exactly the same is the situation about objects in the waking state. The dreamer goes on eating in a dream as though he had never eaten in the waking state. So objects of waking experience stand on the same level as the objects of dream in that each is contradicted in the other state.

It may be objected here that objects of waking consciousness can contradict or be contradicted by dream objects if we had the same objects always in dream and waking experience. But many a time the dreamer sees in a dream quite abnormal, fantastic and novel objects which he has never seen in his waking state. Are we not, therefore, justified in saying that the dream is an entirely unique state having no correspondence to the waking state?

The reply to this objection is as follows. It is true that the dream objects are novel. But this novelty is characteristic of the dream state. An ordinary person, when anointed as king, comes to possess extraordinary powers. Similarly, the dream is a privileged place. To us in the waking state the things seen or done in a dream may appear impossible or abnormal, but the dreamer considers them as just ordinary, routine, and they are real to the dreamer only. The reality or unreality of things does not depend upon whether the things are normal or abnormal, but upon whether they are capable of being belied in another state.

(iii) Even in dream we sometimes distinguish between the real and the unreal, between a person speaking the truth and a person telling a lie, just as we do in waking experience.

(iv) Dream objects are objects within, staying as long as the dream lasts. Objects without, which are the objects of waking consciousness, are dependent upon or correlated to two factors—the internal and external. The outer objects can be perceived by the self only by means of external sense-organs. But in spite of this difference, all objects, whether within or without, are imagined objects. It is true that objects within are not distinctly experienced while those without are distinct, but this distinction between the two is caused merely by the difference in the means of their cognition. This does not imply any ontological difference between them. Thus according to Gaudapāda, the empirical world, the empirical subject and his experiences are as unreal

as those in dreams. As a matter of fact, spiritually gifted persons do have immediate awareness of the world as a dream world. Wittgenstein, for example, once wrote, "Our life is like a dream. But in our better hours we wake up just enough to realize that we are dreaming. *Most of the time, though, we are fast asleep.*"³

NOTES

1. This idiom is foreign to English. In English one says, "I dreamt that there was an elephant." But I am told that in Greek, at least in classical Greek, one says "I see a dream," whereas in English one says, "I dream" or at most, "I dream a dream."
2. *Māṇḍūkyaopaniṣader kathā* (in Bengali), University of Calcutta.
3. Anthony Kenny, *Wittgenstein*, Harvard, 1973.

VEDĀNTA IN TEN VERSES*
Daśaślokī of Śaṅkara

T.M.P. Mahadevan and N. Veezhinathan

[7]

न शास्ता न शास्त्रं न शिष्यो न शिक्षा
न च त्वं न चाहं न चायं प्रपञ्चः ।
स्वरूपावबोधो विकल्पासहिष्णुः
तदेकोऽवशिष्टः शिवः केवलोऽहम् ॥

Neither preceptor, nor scripture (there is), neither pupil nor instruction; neither you nor I, nor this universe. The awareness of one's nature does not admit of alternatives. That one which remains (after the sublation of all else) that auspicious absolute (Self) I am.

The Upaniṣadic texts like "That thou art" teach the identity of Brahman and the Self. Now, the *pūrvapakṣin* asks: who is instructed in such a way? If it is said that Brahman is instructed, then the instruction is futile, as Brahman is always identical with the Self and what is an established fact need not be instructed. It

* Concluded with this number

may be said: The Self (jīva) is, of course, identical with Brahman. Yet, it loses sight of its identity with Brahman owing to avidyā. And the intuitive knowledge of Brahman arising from the Upaniṣadic texts like "That thou art" removes avidyā and thereby jīva realizes its identity with Brahman. So the jīva is instructed about its identity with Brahman.

The *pūrvapakṣin* urges that this contention is untenable on the ground that the nature of removal of avidyā is unintelligible. If the removal of avidyā is different from Brahman, then there will be left another entity apart from Brahman and this goes against the spirit of Advaita that Brahman is non-dual. On the other hand, if it is maintained that the removal of avidyā is identical with Brahman, then it always exists, and there is no need for the teaching of the Upaniṣads with a view to remove avidyā. It follows from this that there does not arise any fruit from the Upaniṣadic teaching.

Now, it is asked whether there is absence of any fruit from the standpoint of reality or even in appearance. Śrī Śaṅkara holds that the first alternative is acceptable. The preceptor (*śāstā*), the scriptures (*śāstra*), the disciple (*śiṣya*), the act of teaching (*śikṣā*), yourself—the hearer (*tvam*), myself—the speaker (*aham*), the body, senses, etc., which are given in perception—all these effects of avidyā appear in Brahman like a serpent in a rope, and as such they neither existed, nor exist, nor will exist from the standpoint of reality. Hence their removal along with their cause—avidyā which is said to be the fruit of the Upaniṣadic teaching is only figurative and not real. But the second alternative does not hold good, as from the intuitive knowledge of Brahman there does appear the fruit in the form of experience of supreme bliss (*svarūpāvabodhaḥ*) in the case of one who is liberated and yet continues to live (*jīvan-mukta*). This, being an experience, does not admit of any doubt (*vikalpāsahiṣṇuḥ*).

The śruti texts like "Verily, in the beginning this was Brahman. That became conscious of itself only in the form of

'I am Brahman'" (*Br. Up.* 1.4.7) show that the Self which was always of the nature of Brahman becomes of the nature of Brahman through knowledge.

[8]

न जाग्रत् मे स्वप्नको वा सुषुप्तिः
 न विश्वो न वा तैजसः प्राज्ञको वा ।
 अविद्यात्मकत्वात्त्रयाणां तुरीयः
 तदेकोऽवशिष्टः शिवः केवलोऽहम् ॥

Neither the state of waking nor that of dream nor that of deep-sleep is for me; neither the Viśva nor the Taijasa nor the Prājña (am I). Since the three are of the nature of nescience, I am the Fourth. That one which remains (after the sublation of all else)—that auspicious absolute (Self) I am.

Of the two categories, *dr̥k* (knower) and *dr̥śya* (knowable), the knower is pure consciousness which is real and one. Although it is of the same nature always, yet on account of limiting adjuncts, it appears as the supreme lord (*Īśvara*), the individual soul (*jīva*) and the witness Self. The pure consciousness, when associated with *avidyā*, is the supreme Lord; and when associated with *avidyā* and intellect in its gross and subtle states, it is individual soul. The consciousness that underlies both *Īśvara* and *jīva* is the witness-self.

The *jīva* is threefold, owing to the difference in its limiting adjunct, as *Viśva*, *Taijasa* and *Prājña*. The *jīva*, when associated with *avidyā*, the intellect and the gross body, regards itself as conscious of the waking condition and in this aspect it is termed "*Viśva*". And the same *jīva*, when associated with *avidyā* and intellect, feels itself as conscious of the dream state, and in this aspect it is called "*Taijasa*". And when associated with *avidyā* and intellect in its subtle state, the *jīva* considers itself as conscious

of the deep-sleep state, and in this aspect it is termed "Prājña". The waking state (*jāgradavasthā*) is one in which the direct apprehension of the various objects is simultaneous with the functioning of the sense organs. And this state is experienced by the *jīva* as *Viśva*.

When the meritorious or non-meritorious deeds which gave rise to the experience during the waking state are exhausted and when the deeds which cause the experience of the dream state begin to function, the belief in one's identification with the gross body is removed by a *vṛtti* of "*tamo guṇa*" called sleep; and thereupon all the senses become absorbed by their ceasing to function. And thereupon the *Viśva* is also spoken of as having been absorbed. Then begins the dream state (*svapnāvasthā*) in which the knowledge of things is acquired without the functioning of the sense organs and is due to the latent impressions present in the mind. And this state is experienced by the *jīva* as "Taijasa".

When the deeds which caused the dream state also are exhausted and when the intellect together with its latent impressions merge in *avidyā*, there appears the state of deep-sleep, the resting place of the *jīva*, which is exhausted on account of its experience of both the waking and dream states. Deep-sleep or *susupti* is the cognition of *avidyā* only in the form "I did not know anything." One who has awakened from deep-sleep recollects, "I slept well; I did not know anything." This recollection is impossible unless there was such an experience. It is clear that in the deep-sleep state there is the experience of bliss and also of *avidyā*. And this state is experienced by the *jīva* as "Prājña".

By eliminating all the limiting conditions and by the knowledge of the pure Self there results liberation. The three aspects of the *jīva*, viz. *Viśva*, *Taijasa* and *Prājña* together with the three states of waking, dream, and deep-sleep are of the nature of "*avidyā*" and therefore not real. The absolute consciousness which is constant in, and also the witness of, the three states is the fourth (*turīya*) and it is transcendent and real. And the pure Self which

is the basis of the cognition "I" is non-different from this. All the three states and the three aspects of the jīva are relevant before the rise of the true knowledge of Brahman and cease to be so thereafter.

[9]

अपि व्यापकत्वाद्धि तत्त्वप्रयोगात्
 स्वतःसिद्धभावादनन्याश्रयत्वात् ।
 जगत्तुच्छमेतत्समस्तं तदन्यत्
 तदेकोऽवशिष्टः शिवः केवलोऽहम् ॥

Because that (the Self) is all-pervasive, the true goal, of self-established nature, and not dependent on anything else, this entire universe which is different from that is unreal. That one which remains (after the sublation of all else)—that auspicious absolute (Self) I am.

The śruti text, "All else than this is misery" (*Br. Up.* 3.4.2) declares that the whole universe, including the three states together with the three aspects of the jīva, which is seen and is different from the witness-self is unreal (*anirvacanīya*). The witness-self, however, is real; for, it is beyond all contradictions, as it persists after all else is contradicted; it is the substrate of delusion and there is none to comprehend its sublation. All this which is not mentioned in the verse is intended to be conveyed by the word "api". The "śruti text—whatever is limited is mortal" (*Ch. Up.* 2.4.1)—affirms that limitation and unreality are co-extensive and so by denying limitation, the unreality would also be denied. Śrī Śaṅkara says that the witness-self is unconditioned (*vyāpaka*). It is not limited by space, time, and objects, because the śruti text: "verily this whole world is Brahman" (*Ch. Up.* 3.14.1) declares that it is the essence of all. The witness-self exists at all times and it is eternal. It is *hitatva-prayoga*, taught as the supreme human end by the śruti texts like "This Self is dearer than the son, dearer than wealth, dearer than all else, since this

Self nearer" (*Br. Up.* 1.4.8), and "That which is the infinite is bliss" (*Ch. Up.* 7.23.1). And this witness-self is *svatassiddha*, of the nature of self-luminous consciousness. Although during the world-appearance, its true nature is veiled by *avidyā* and so it is not manifest in its true nature as supreme bliss, yet when *avidyā* is annihilated it manifests by itself as the highest bliss because it is self-luminous knowledge. It is the substrate of all things and as such it is *ananyāśraya*, not dependent on anything. Thus, the witness-self is unconditioned and is taught as the supreme human end. It is self-luminous consciousness and is not dependent on anything else. The whole world other than this is limited and as such *mithyā*.

[10]

न चैकं तदन्यद्द्वितीयं कुतः स्यात्
 न वा केवलत्वं न चाकेवलत्वम् ।
 न शून्यं न चाशून्यमद्वैतकत्वात्-
 कथं सर्ववेदान्तसिद्धं ब्रवीमि ॥

That (Self) is not even one; how can a second, as different from that, be? There is not (for it) absoluteness, nor non-absoluteness. Neither the void nor the non-void is it, because it is the non-dual (reality). How can I describe that which is established by all the Vedāntas?

This self is not connected with the numeral expressing the idea of oneness (*na ca ekam*). It is also not connected with the numeral expressing the idea of two-ness which is generated by a presupposition of the first. It may be objected that oneness of the Self is established by the śruti text, "one alone without a second" (*Ch. Up.* 4.21). As to this, Śrī Śaṅkara says, *na vā kevalatvam*. *Kevalatvam* means the quality of oneness. It is excluded because it is the outcome of *avidyā*. It may be said that, if oneness of the Self is not established, then its manifoldness should be accepted.

And this contention is rejected in the words, *na cākevalatvam*. *Akevalatvam* means "manifoldness". And the śruti text "There in this is no diversity" (*Br. Up. 4.4.19*) denies manifoldness in Brahman. If it is argued that in that case, owing to the denial of everything, Brahman would be void, the reply is: *na śūnyam* (nor a void). It is so because the Vedic texts such as "Brahman is truth, knowledge and infinitude" (*Taitt. Up. 2.1*) establish the reality of the Self. It is not void because it is the substrate of all delusions.

If it is said that in that case the Self must at least have been possessed of the attributes of being truth and being knowledge, it is replied: *na cāśūnyam*. That is so because the word "only" in the Upaniṣadic text—"one only without a second" denies the relation of attribute and the possessor of the attribute. The reason for all these denials has been stated in the phrase, *advaitakatvāt*. This means: It is of the nature of one in which there is the absence of duality in the form of the universe and the mutual relation of the universe and Brahman. If it is said that in that case the existence of such a Self may be established by pointing a finger at it, Śrī Śaṅkara says, "How can I speak of it?" (*katham bravīmī*). Being the basis of all proofs, it cannot be explained by words. And the Upaniṣadic texts are authoritative in this that the knowledge arising from them removes avidyā veiling the true nature of Brahman. On the removal of avidyā and consequently of all misery brought into existence by it, one, having become of the nature of the highest bliss, has one's purposes in this life achieved.

SUPERIMPOSITION AS PRESENTED BY
ŚAṄKARA AND VIDYĀRĀṆYA

S. Balakrishnan*

"*Adhyāsa*" translated as superimposition is an aspect of Advaita Vedānta. This is well presented by Śaṅkara in his introduction to his *Bhāṣya* on *Brahma-sūtra* as a separate chapter called "*adhyāsa-bhāṣya*". This topic is quite well known in Advaita literature, and Śaṅkara makes use of this phenomenon to explain several contradictions in the perceptible world, which he proves as unreal or only apparently real, as compared with Brahman, the only reality. All his commentaries and teachings are so closely linked with the theory of *adhyāsa* that the opponents of Advaita blame him that *adhyāsa* is only an imagination of his fertile mind, just as they call him "*māyā-vādin*". They affirm that there is no direct mention or proof in the scriptures to validate the theory of *adhyāsa*. But they overlook many Upaniṣadic statements, which convincingly show that such a phenomenon alone can properly explain the existence of the world. It is true

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that the word "*adhyāsa*" is not actually spelt out in the Upaniṣads; but there are many unmistakable clues in the Upaniṣads to arrive at the views presented by Śaṅkara.

Vidyāraṇya, however, presents the same phenomenon in an ingenious and convincing manner in Chapter IV of the *Pañca-daśī* called "Dvaita-viveka". As Śaṅkara's presentation of the theory of *adhyāsa* is rather well known, this article makes an attempt to present the same phenomenon in Vidyāraṇya's words which is less widely known. In the *Pañca-daśī*, which is a simple and comprehensive treatise on Advaita, Vidyāraṇya divides all creations into two, to begin with. He says that there is one creation by God and another created by the human being. He calls them *Īśvara-sṛṣṭi* and *jīva-sṛṣṭi* respectively. The entire world consisting of the five elements, the various living organisms including men, animals and plants and the immovable objects like mountains, rivers, etc., are all creations of God. Vidyāraṇya defines *jīva* as a complex consisting of the internal organ (*antaḥkaraṇa*), reflected awareness (*cidābhāsa*) and the awareness (*cit*), following the definition given in the scriptures. After creating the *jīva*, Paramātman entered into it as explained in many Upaniṣads as "*anupraveśa*" or "the entry".

The mischief by the *jīva* begins thereafter, which alone is the cause for all misery and bondage. Vidyāraṇya describes *jīva-sṛṣṭi* at some length after briefly mentioning *Īśvara-sṛṣṭi*. *Jīva* creates several objects for his enjoyment. He enters into various relationships with others and interacts with fellow-beings. He gets married, thus inviting hosts of "in-laws" and other relations into his fold. This contributes to his bondage, at times pleasant, but most of the time miserable and unpleasant. Striking examples are given to show that the creation by *jīva* is only an error or projection in his mind which alone is termed *adhyāsa* by Śaṅkara. Vidyāraṇya gives the illustration of a woman innocently created as an ordinary human being by God, but transformed in the human

mind in several forms, depending upon the perceptions of different persons around her. God's creation is "*māṁsa-mayī*", one in flesh and blood, but the *jīva* makes many "*manomayī*" forms out of her. One and the same woman appears as wife to her husband, daughter to her father, daughter-in-law to her mother-in-law, sister or sister-in-law according to the corresponding relations who look at her. The mental picture of each one of them is different from the other's. Each one has his or her own private notions and impressions about her which alone engenders pleasure, hatred or indifference in their minds. This is the cause for bondage. If these mental forms are wiped out as in the case of a *sannyāsin*, who was related to a woman in his *purvāśrama*, he will not have any more mental aberrations, and there will not be any cause for bondage.

Vidyāraṇya develops this idea further and gives two striking examples. Supposing someone's son is living abroad, and he receives some false news that he is dead in an accident; great grief will grasp his mind whereas his son will be happily enjoying in a party; the living son is God's creation, and the dead son is *jīva*'s creation, i.e. *jīva-sṛṣṭi*. On the other hand, suppose the son has really met with an accident and has passed away, and the father is unaware of the tidings for some days (in olden days when communication was not so fast), he will carry on with his activities normally and will continue to enjoy his life. In this case, God's creation is the dead son, but the father's mind goes on creating his living son.

This mental contrivance or *adhyāsa* has to be corrected only by right knowledge that, whatever is imagined by us, is false. Vidyāraṇya adds that even the *Īśvara-sṛṣṭi* is unreal, but it can continue to exist as long as we have the knowledge that it is not real and that we do not complicate the same with our own addition of mental projections. Moreover, the duality of the world is useful as a stepping stone to teach us non-duality which is the ultimate base (*adhiṣṭhāna*) for all dualities.

Further, in order to help the less mature persons (*mandadhikārins*) to overcome the error due to *jīva-sṛṣṭi*, Vidyāraṇya subdivides the same into two: the dualities sanctioned by the scriptures and those prohibited by scriptures. The former are useful; and they are such as: the *guru* and *śiṣya*, the process of *śravaṇa*, etc. These must necessarily continue until we gain knowledge, and thereafter we can falsify them also. Even after knowing that the world is nothing but a word (*nāma-rūpa*), it can and will continue as a wise man can happily do transactions and be in non-duality in spite of duality. A verse says:¹ Duality deludes one before one gain's knowledge; but after gaining knowledge from the teaching, the duality superimposed for *pūjā* can, indeed, be more beautiful than non-duality.

But the dualities not sanctioned by scriptures have to be completely eschewed. In order to help the seeker to gradually progress towards his goal, Vidyāraṇya further divides this duality also into two categories: those which are less harmful and those which are seriously harmful. (*mandam* and *tīvram*). The dualities that are very harmful must be tackled first and eliminated. These are the evils produced by desire, anger, greed, etc. In other words, even before commencing the study of scriptures, it is necessary to acquire qualities such as mind-control (*śama*), sense-control (*dama*), equanimity to accept pairs of opposites (*titikṣā*), a certain amount of withdrawal from worldly pleasures and attachments (*uparati*), integration of mind (*samādhāna*) and faith in the words of the scriptures and the instructions of the teacher (*sraddhā*). Swami Dayānanda defines *sraddhā* very aptly as "*āstikya buddhi*", i.e. one who accepts śruti and teacher's words as *pramāṇa*. These values, when cultivated, will do away with worldly desires, attachments, anger, jealousy and other negative traits. Vidyāraṇya here quotes the *Bhagavad-gītā* texts, 2.62 and 63.² This conquest over the evil traits must be made before commencing the study of scriptures and must continue during the study and maintained

even after gaining knowledge. They are permanent enemies to knowledge, and Lord Kṛṣṇa calls them "highway robbers".

The less harmful dualities not sanctioned by scriptures are, according to Vidyāraṇya, mental projections or distortions termed "*vikṣepa*". As long as these projections occupy the mind, it is preoccupied and cannot absorb, or much less retain, knowledge. Vidyāraṇya suggests the practice of yoga and meditation to rid the mind of such wanderings (*manorājyam*). In the *Bhagavad-gītā*, Lord Kṛṣṇa tells Arjuna that, though it is difficult to control the mind, it is possible to make the mind integrated by practice and by developing dispassion.³

In a recent Vedāntic treatise called *Vicāra-sāgara* by Niscalā Dāsa, this wandering of the mind and its remedy are described with a nice analogy.⁴ The author compares the mind and the thoughts of a meditator to a restless sparrow seized with fear. It flutters inside and outside its nest. Outside, it is afraid of cats and other enemies, but inside the nest also, it feels insecure. It hurries outside again and is tossed up here and there by grief and fear. The human mind is also restless and does not find solace in external objects which are only sources of sorrow. Due to lack of firm knowledge, it is unable to settle down calmly inside. This fickle nature of the mind is called *vikṣepa*. Vidyāraṇya suggests that such a seeker must resort to solitude and practise *Omkāra-japa* to overcome these wanderings of the mind.

Thus Vidyāraṇya succeeds in explaining the creation of the world as the primary superimposition, which need not and cannot be eliminated; but its status of reality can be sublated by knowledge, whereas the duality created by jīva, the secondary superimposition, has to be totally eliminated, if bondage is to be liquidated.

Coming back to Śaṅkara's description of this phenomenon in his *adhyāsa-bhāṣya* and in many other contexts, we find that the popular example of rope-snake, shell-silver, etc. are secondary

superimpositions (*prātibhāsika*); and the world is taken as primary superimposition. The two examples of rope-snake and shell-silver illustrate respectively *adhyāsa* born out of fear and that born out of desire. The *adhyāsa* illustrated by mirage-water is also useful, because, just as the world continues to be, even after its reality is negated, we continue to see a mirage even after knowing that we cannot go there to quench our thirst.

Let us now look for authority or support for superimposition in śruti and smṛti. The opponents say that there are none; but this is not true. The *Gītā* text,⁵ and the enlightening commentary on this by Śaṅkara are adequate to clearly bring out the theory of *adhyāsa*. The significance of the word, meaning, and the association between *kṣetra* and *kṣetrajña* are elaborately analysed by Śaṅkara.⁶ Whatever object, movable or immovable, we see in the world is an effect born of association between *kṣetrajña*, meaning Brahman, and *kṣetra*, the inert *prakṛti* or *māyā*. Śaṅkara analyses the nature of this association between the real Brahman and an apparently real or unreal *prakṛti*. As they are in two different planes of reality, the tie-up between them cannot be as between a rope and the neck of a pot, which is called *saṃyoga*, because Brahman is partless. It cannot also be that between cause and effect, e.g. between threads and cloth, which are related by *samavāya-sambandha*; for, Brahman-in-itself is above cause-effect relation; it is neither the cause nor the effect of anything. The relationship can only be compared to that between snake and rope. How is snake related to the rope in which it appears? Here there is no actual relationship, and that is how *adhyāsa* is the only answer to signify a false or apparent relationship. This apparent relationship born of an error in the mind causes misapprehension out of the non-apprehension. This theory of *adhyāsa* alone is capable of explaining all nuances of Advaita, and Lord Kṛṣṇa concludes⁷ saying that one who understands this false relationship alone is liberated from all bondage. Just as one who

clearly sees the rope cannot see even a semblance of a snake, even so one who sees Brahman everywhere sees nothing else.

Let us now look for śruti support. Śaṅkara quotes many mantras from the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, and brings out the nature of *adhyāsa* in his commentaries on these mantras. Wherever duality is condemned and non-duality is glorified, we can infer that *adhyāsa* alone is the cause for duality. The most important śruti statement to prove this point is in the Upaniṣadic text which states that the Self appears "as though" meditating and "as though" moving.⁸ Vidyāraṇya successfully explains this mantra in his work called *anubhūti-prakāśa*.⁹ The nature of identity between the mind and Ātman is so intimate that mutual superimposition of *dharmi* and *dharma* takes place as in rope and snake. The travel of the mind is superimposed on Ātman, and the all-pervading Ātman appears as though travelling. In another mantra of the same Upaniṣad,¹⁰ it is said that Ātman is "as though" dual in which state alone one can see another, speak to another, listen to another, etc. When there is nothing other than Ātman, who is to see whom, speak with whom, etc.? The same idea is repeated in several mantras not only in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*, but in many other Upaniṣads as well. Thus by using the most significant word "iva" meaning "as it were" or "apparently", the Upaniṣad gives wide scope for a very favourable interpretation that, what the Upaniṣad wants to convey is a false identity between Self and the not-Self, which alone is termed *adhyāsa*.

Paul Deussen in his famous book, *The Philosophy of the Upaniṣads*, states "strictly speaking, such an 'as it were' or 'iva' should be supplied to every page and every line in which the Upaniṣads are concerned with something other than Ātman.

We can therefore conclude that Vidyāraṇya and Śaṅkara speak the same language while presenting the theory of *adhyāsa* through different words.

NOTES

1. द्वैतं मोहाय बोधात् प्राक् प्राप्ते बोधे मनीषया ।
पूजार्थं कल्पितं द्वैतं अद्वैतादपि सुन्दरम् ॥
2. *Bhagavad-gītā* (hereafter *BG*), 2. 62–63.
3. *Ibid.*, 6.35.
4. *Vicāra-sāgara*, p. 332, # 480.
5. *BG*, 13. 26.
6. See Śaṅkara's commentary on *BG*, 13. 26.
7. *BG*, 13. 34.
8. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, 4.3.7.
9. *Anubhūti-prakāśa*, Chapter 18, 71–81.
10. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, 2.4.14.

THE ULTIMATE REALITY ACCORDING TO
RĀMĀNUJA

K.R. Sundararajan*

There are three major schools of Hindu philosophy which developed between the eighth and the fourteenth centuries of the Christian era, called the schools of Vedānta, meaning the end "end of Veda". These are based on the teachings of the Upaniṣads, which constitute the end-section of the Hindu scripture called the Veda, meaning "knowledge". The three schools of Vedānta are Advaita ("not-two", non-dualism), Viśiṣṭādvaita ("qualified not-two" or qualified monism) and Dvaita ("two", Dualism). The chief exponent of Advaita Vedānta is Śaṅkara (eighth century A.D.), of Viśiṣṭādvaita, Rāmānuja (twelfth century), and of Dvaita, Madhva (fourteenth century A.D.). All the three schools of Vedānta deal with questions of the nature of ultimate reality, and its relationship with the human world. For both Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja the ultimate reality is non-dual but in different senses. For Śaṅkara, it is absolute non-dualism where the experienced world of multiplicity is ultimately illusory (māyā), whereas the non-duality

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of Brahman for Rāmānuja, is only *functional* and therefore non-dual only in a *qualified* sense. According to Madhva, the teachings of the Upaniṣads do not establish non-duality, but affirm differences between Brahman, the supreme Self and Ātman, the individual self. Madhva goes on to state that there are differences not only between the supreme Self and the individual self, but there are differences in respect to the nature of individual selves themselves. Yet Śaṅkara, Rāmānuja and Madhva, all claim to base their philosophical formulations on the teachings of the Upaniṣads. In addition to the Upaniṣads, they also claim that their philosophical formulation is in accordance with the teachings of the *Bhagavad-gītā* and the *Vedānta-sūtra*, a work attributed to Bādarāyaṇa. These three become the primary "scriptural" sources for Vedānta. However, since Vedānta is a philosophical system (*darśana*) it also relies on the support of perception and reasoning. All the schools of Vedānta, therefore, claim to be based on scriptural testimony as well as on perception and reasoning.

We can expound the nature of the ultimate Reality in Rāmānuja only with reference to his criticism of Śaṅkara's Vedānta of absolute non-dualism (Advaita), where all duality and multiplicity are considered as ultimately illusory (*māyā*). On the other hand, one has to keep clear of the position of the Bhedābheda school of Bhāskara, which, in contrast to the position of Advaita, holds that all multiplicity is real, and one Brahman is transformed into plural world of things and beings. Rāmānuja, in contrast to Śaṅkara, would hold that the world is *not* illusory, and, in contrast to Bhāskara, would deny the *real* transformation of the supreme Being, Brahman. In his functional non-dualism, Rāmānuja holds that Brahman is not the absolutely unqualified, non-dual Brahman of Śaṅkara, but Brahman qualified by Ātman, primordial principle of selfhood, and prakṛti, primordial matter. However, these three principles are eternal, though their status is not equal. Both Ātman and prakṛti exist for the sake of Brahman, the supreme Principle, "as the body exists for the sake of the soul." It is the transformation

of Ātman and prakṛti at the initiative of Brahman, that account for varied kind of living beings and multiple kinds of material things. Hence, this diversity is real and not illusory. However, it should be noted that Brahman itself is not subject to change. Based on the (total) dependent relationship of Ātman and prakṛti on Brahman, one could speak of Brahman as one, but from an ontological point of view there are three principles and not one unqualified, supreme Principle. "The three function as one," and this is the basis for the description of Rāmānuja's Vedānta as "functional non-dualism."

There are statements in the Upaniṣads to the effect that what truly exists is one only, and all multiplicity is unreal. It is such statements that support Śaṅkara's non-dual Vedānta (Advaita). However, there are also many other statements in the Upaniṣads affirming the eternal nature of individual self (Ātman) along side of Brahman. In order to deal with this situation, Śaṅkara distinguishes between "primary statements" and "secondary statements" of the Upaniṣads, and places the statements that affirm the non-dual nature of Brahman (*abheda*) in the category of primary statements, and the others which stress ontological duality and differences (*bheda*) in the category of secondary statements. For him, the secondary statements have only provisional validity, and the real intention of the Upaniṣads is to affirm non-duality. Hence there are two levels of reality, the highest, (*pāramārthika*), and provisional (*vyāvahārika*). Rāmānuja rejects the distinction between primary and secondary statements and the two levels of reality of Śaṅkara, and argues that all statements of the Upaniṣads are to be given equal validity. For him, scriptural passages stressing ontological dualism are to be taken as seriously as scriptural statements stressing ontological non-dualism. His formulation reverses the solution of Śaṅkara: the non-dual statements are to be understood in the context of dualistic statements. This is to be done through *functional non-dualism*, and not through *absolute non-dualism*, where dualistic or pluralistic ontological principles

function as One. By doing so he would claim that there is no real conflict between those scriptural statements that stress ontological duality or multiplicity (*bheda*) and statements that stress ontological oneness (*abheda*).

Rāmānuja would go on to argue that non-dual awareness cannot be supported on the basis of perception as Śaṅkara would claim. Śaṅkara makes a distinction between *nirvikalpaka-pratyakṣa* and *savikalpaka-pratyakṣa*, indeterminate perception and determinate perception respectively. Rāmānuja in turn argues that all perceptions are indeed perceptions of something, hence determinate, and there is no "objectless, indeterminate perception." If a perception looks at first indeterminate, it is because the subject of perception is not clear, and not because there is no such subject of perception. Therefore, the claim of non-dual consciousness, or "objectless awareness" cannot be supported on the basis of day-to day experiences.

Three Eternal Principles—Brahman, Ātman and Prakṛti

For Rāmānuja, the scriptural sources establish clearly three eternal principles (*tattvas*) which are Brahman, Ātman and prakṛti. They are related in the following manner: Ātman and prakṛti are totally dependent on Brahman. Rāmānuja describes these relationships as body-soul (*śarīra-śarīrī*), controlled-controller (*niyāmya-niyantā*), and owned-owner (*śeṣa-śeṣi*). Of these, body-soul is taken in a literal sense. This relationship is eternal, and there was never a "time" when Brahman existed without Ātman and prakṛti as its body. Though we could speak of Brahman as one or non-dual, since Ātman and prakṛti are totally dependent on Brahman, ontologically, there is Brahman qualified by Ātman and prakṛti.

Rāmānuja's emphasis on Brahman being qualified has its implications for the "salvational" state in his theology. The principle of subjectivity, what is called "I-ness" (*aḥam*) exists,

he would claim, even in the state of salvation, mokṣa, where one is freed from karmic, saṁsāric existence. For Rāmānuja, "I-ness" is different from "egoity" (*ahankāra*). Egoity is attributing consciousness to the body, which is matter, but matter by its nature is inert. Therefore, egoity represents a state of ignorance, whereas I-ness is intrinsic to the very nature of Ātman, which is "self-consciousness". Rāmānuja writes in his major work, *Śrī-bhāṣya*:

This 'inward' Self shines forth in the state of final release also as an 'I'; for it appears to itself...Now the 'I' constitutes the essential nature of the Self... But if the 'I' (*aham*) constitutes the essential nature of the Self, how is it that the Holy One (Kṛṣṇa) teaches the principle of egoity (*ahankāra*) to belong to the sphere of objects...the principle...is called *ahankāra*, because it causes the assumption of egoity on the part of the body which belongs to the not-self...Such consciousness of the 'I', therefore, as it is not sublated by anything else, has the Self (Brahman) for its object; while, on the other hand, such consciousness of the 'I' as has the body for its object is mere nescience. In agreement with this, Revered Parāśara has said, 'Hear from me the essential nature of nescience; it is the attribution of selfhood to that which is not the Self.'

Therefore, one of the arguments of Rāmānuja against Śaṅkara's non-dual awareness is the continuation of self-awareness even in the state of mokṣa. In other words, the Ātman does not lose its identity even at the highest level of experience.

The Divine Form

Based on the assertion that Brahman is qualified with Ātman and prakṛti as its body, and also on the strength of scriptural passages such as the *Īśāvāsyā Upaniṣad*, where it is stated that Brahman has the most beneficial form, Rāmānuja argues that Brahman has a transcendent form which is, however, not material (*aprākṛta*). Rāmānuja writes in the *Śrī-bhāṣya*:

The highest Brahman, whose nature is fundamentally antagonistic to all evil and essentially composed of infinite knowledge and

bliss—whereby it differs from all other souls—possesses an infinite number of qualities of unimaginable excellence, and, analogously, a divine form suitable to its nature and intentions."²

Thus, the form that Brahman has reflects its auspicious qualities. Though Rāmānuja in his *Vedārtha-saṅgraha* describes this supreme form essentially in terms of a human form, it is important to note that he cautions us by pointing out that the form of Brahman is supersensible, and can only be seen by direct, mystical experience.

...inherent and natural is the form of the creator. But it is not perceptible to the eye. It is perceptible only to the purified mind equipped with the other spiritual means. The Vedic text lays down, "He is not apprehended through the eye. He is not within the reach of speech. But he is apprehended through a pure mind (*Mu.III.8*)."³

Bhagavān Dvaipāyana says, "His form does not fall within the range of perception. No one sees him with his eyes. He whose mind has been brought to the state of *samādhi* by determined effort, sees him who is of the nature of knowledge, through *bhakti* (devotion)". The meaning is that one who by determined effort fixes his whole mind on the supreme Puruṣa (Being), sees him *through bhakti*. Here 'seeing' means direct perception, and 'direct perception' means attainment.⁴

For Rāmānuja, the Supreme Being who has a celestial form, is Viṣṇu. This identification of Brahman with Viṣṇu is to be seen in his philosophical writings, *Vedānta-dīpa*, *Vedānta-sāra*, *Bhagavad-gītā-bhāṣya*, *Vedārtha-saṅgraha* and *Śrī-bhāṣya*. Viṣṇu is also called Nārāyaṇa, Bhagavān, Īśvara, Puruṣottama (Supreme Person), Paramātman (Supreme Self), and Vāsudeva by Rāmānuja.⁵ It should also be noted that Rāmānuja speaks often of Viṣṇu and Śrī, a divine duality of male and female. For instance, in the following verses, Rāmānuja refers to Viṣṇu as the Lord of Śrī.

I bow unto Viṣṇu, who has as his body all the sentient and non-sentient beings, who is the self of all objects, who is associated with Śrī and who is the ocean of bliss untainted with impurity.⁶

May mind be devoted to the service at the lotus feet of him who is the first of primeval Being, the Lord of Śrī, the immeasurable, the abode of excellent qualities, the destroyer of all evil, the dweller of *Paramapada* (Vaikuṅṭha) and who is beyond the reach of speech or mind, but within the range of the vision of his devotees.⁷

The Lord of Lakṣmī, he who is the opposite of everything that is evil and the sole seat of all auspiciousness: who is distinguished from all things other than him; who is infinite, and is solely of the nature of knowledge as bliss: who is the vast ocean of countless auspicious qualities, each unbounded and unsurpassed, such as knowledge, strength, sovereignty, valour, power and glory that are of his own nature.⁸

Based on this emphasis on the Śrī component of the divine, the two South Indian schools of Vaiṣṇavism have come to be called schools of Śrī-vaiṣṇavism. Whereas in one Śrī-vaiṣṇava school, called the "Northern school", (Vaḍakalai), Viṣṇu-Śrī represent the eternal dual form of the divine, in the other Śrī-vaiṣṇava school, called the "Southern school" (Teṅkalai), Śrī is not eternal, but one eminent among the created, a human being who has been elevated to the status of the consort of Viṣṇu.⁹ While looking at the functions of Viṣṇu and Śrī from the point of view of Vaiṣṇava piety, the role of Śrī is that of the "Divine Mother" whose help is needed in order to gain freedom from the world of *samsāra*. Vedānta Deśika, a theologian of the Northern school of the post-Rāmānuja period writes:

Īśvara is with his consort in all situations as stated in passages like: "Lakṣmī (Śrī), the mother of the world, is eternal and inseparable from Viṣṇu"In this context we have to understand a difference in their activities or division of labour, as it were: For the Lord is concerned with the punishment (of the evil-doer) and Lakṣmī with pleading to him for mercy on behalf of the sinner.

This is the conclusion arrived at in the following śloka of the *Śrīgūṇaratna-kośa*: "Youth and other attributes are common to both of you; however, the Lord has manly qualities, like independence, conquest of foes, firmness and the like; you have such feminine qualities as existing solely for the husband, compassion and forgiveness. Thus you two have taken diverse qualities."¹⁰

The Doctrine of Creation—Viṣṇu as playful creator

It is Brahman/Viṣṇu who creates. Creation is real and not illusory as in Śaṅkara's Advaita. In Rāmānuja's theology, there are two stages: (1) the "original creation" which is the expression of divine play (*līlā*) and (2) the creation of a cyclical world, due to *karma*, which is a human creation. Though none of the Vaiṣṇava theologians deal explicitly with these two stages, I believe that starting with the concept of playful creation, one could speak with justification of these two stages.

Brahman is both the material cause and the efficient cause of everything created. Creation is a process where "the one becomes many". Prakṛti through an evolutionary process becomes the manifold material world, subtle and gross. Ātman in its turn becomes the manifold selves (*jīvas*) assuming subtle and gross bodies. Brahman is, thus, the material cause of all things created, since these are transformations of its body.

Therefore, Brahman itself is the effect as it exists having for its mode the configurations consisting of prakṛti, individual selves, *mahat*, *aḥāṅkāra*, *tanmātras*, elements, senses and the product of these...The knowledge of Brahman in its causal state leads to the knowledge of all. The idea of the knowledge of "one" leading to the knowledge of all, becomes, thereby, perfectly intelligible. Through a consideration of the principles like causation, the great truth that Brahman is the self of all, as all sentient and non-sentient entities are its modes, is propounded.¹¹

Commenting on Rāmānuja's theory of causation, John Carman writes:

Rāmānuja's understanding of causality (*kāraṇatva*) is affected by his acceptance of the doctrine of *sat-kārya-vāda*, which, in brief, is the view of the transformation of the causal substance into a new form, but not into a new and different substance...Consequently, the causal relation in the strictest sense is not, as we might expect, between God as the cause and world as the effect, but between Brahman in his causal state as the cause and Brahman in his effected state as the effect. In

both states, souls and matter form part of Brahman as his body and his modes. Causation is what is responsible for the universe in its present state, not for its absolute origination, since finite selves and the fundamental non-intelligent substance underlying material objects are coeternal with Brahman. While, strictly speaking, it is Brahman with his cosmic embodiment who is the effect, the essential nature of Brahman is unchanged in the latter state.¹²

He is also the efficient cause, since all creation is for the sake of Brahman. Vedānta Deśika highlights this aspect when he writes:

Īśvara is said to be the *śeṣin* (owner) of all things, because they exist solely for the fulfillment of his purposes. They are his *śeṣas* (owned). Sentient beings and non-sentient beings exist not for their sake but for the fulfillment of God's purposes. Their nature is ever to exist for somebody else, i.e. the Lord. In using them for his own purposes, his glory is manifested.¹³

The question that should be raised at this point is the purpose of creation. Why should Brahman/Viṣṇu create? Is there any unfulfilled purpose which is being fulfilled in creation? Rāmānuja would point out that there is no need on the part of Viṣṇu to create. Creation is an expression of divine joy and something that issues forth spontaneously. It is an expression of divine "playfulness" (*līlā*).

The motive which prompts Brahman—all whose wishes are fulfilled and who is perfect in himself—to the creation of the world comprising of all kinds of sentient and non-sentient beings dependent on his volition, is nothing else but sport, play. We see in ordinary life how a great king, ruling this earth with its seven *dvīpas* [continents], and possessing perfect strength, valour, and so on, has a game at balls, or the like, from no other motive than to amuse himself; hence there is no objection to the view that sport only is the motive prompting Brahman to creation, sustentation and destruction of this world which is easily fashioned by his mere will.¹⁴

According to one of the modern writers on Rāmānuja, *līlā* should be seen as 'purposeless purpose.'

as it is the expression of joyousness and super abundance of energy on the part of Brahman, and it must be distinguished from conscious volitional effort. The creation follows the mere will, or free choice of Brahman. It is also to preserve the supreme perfection of Brahman that the Sūtrakāra (Bādarāyaṇa) has given *līlā* as the motive for creation.¹⁵

Rāmānuja by using the term "play", while expressing the spontaneity of divine creation, is also eager to avoid the charges that Brahman is "partial" since the created world has a hierarchy of beings. From the point of view of Rāmānuja, though the act of creation was sportive and hence joyful due to the karmic action on the part of the created beings, the world has become hierarchical. This is the second stage of creation where the purposeless world becomes purposive. In the "playful world" there is *variety*, but there is *no hierarchy*, since all things are created for the sake of divine play. In the playful creation, perhaps, the role of the individual selves is to *witness or behold* divine creativity. Instead, the individual selves, attracted by the world, appear to have created their own personal, separated worlds, and hence have become responsible to the world. Here, the purposeless, playful world becomes a "purposive" world with one's personal responsibility determined by the law of karma, and consequently the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth. According to Vedānta Deśika, "sunk in the sleep of beginningless māyā, puruṣa (the embodied person) has fallen into wilderness of matter, thereby losing the primary aim of existence and the splendour of its real nature."¹⁶ The state of such a "fallen puruṣa", according to Vedānta Deśika, is similar to that of a prince who was lost and later brought by huntsman.

A certain king went out hunting with the women of the harem and was keenly absorbed in the sport. The little prince lost his way even before he knew who he was and was brought up in a hamlet by tribesmen who found him wandering about (helpless). As he grew older, he identified himself with the people who brought him up and thought that he, too, was a savage tribesman, learnt their language as if it were his own, like their sons, ate their food and lived their lives.¹⁷

Having failed to take part in the divine play by playing his/her role in the created world, the individual ends up in a world where he/she is subject to the cycle of birth and death, a world which is itself subject to the cyclic process of origination and destruction. It is with reference to such individuals and in order to redeem the humans, Brahman assumes the role of a saviour, moved by compassion and condescending love. As Viṣṇu, he comes to possess innumerable auspicious qualities such as power (*bala*), prowess (*vīrya*), overlordship (*aiśvarya*), sweetness (*mādhurya*), compassion (*karuṇā*), mildness of disposition (*mārdava*), affection (*vātsalya*), generosity (*audārya*), excellence of disposition (*sauśīlya*) and easy accessibility (*saulabhya*), among many others.¹⁸

Viṣṇu as Merciful Protector and Saviour

In this role, first Viṣṇu is a moral governor, governing the world in accordance with the principles of morality determined by the law of dharma and also the law of karma, rewarding good and evil actions with appropriate results. The observance of dharma is very important to Rāmānuja since dharma is divinely ordained and its observance is pleasing to the Lord. Rāmānuja understands the good as that which pleases God, and evil as that which displeases him. Therefore, at no stage should a devotee act in such a way as to "displease" God. By emphasizing the role of a moral governor, Rāmānuja is rejecting the view of Mīmāṃsā school of Hindu philosophy in which the law of karma functions by itself without anyone to enforce it. According to Rāmānuja, the law of karma, which rewards the good and punishes the evil, functions under the will of God. Rāmānuja writes: "... nothing other than the Lord's pleasure or displeasure which then brings either happiness or suffering, as the case may be, to the individual who has done this action."¹⁹ The second significant role that Viṣṇu plays in this purposive karmic world is that of a saviour.

Here Rāmānuja highlights the divine quality of easy accessibility (*saulabhya*). This easy accessibility of Viṣṇu is expressed in his divine manifestations, especially in his incarnations (*avatāras*).

Divine Incarnation—Avatāra

Incarnation, *avatāra*, is defined as "descent (of Īśvara, [God] among beings) by means of forms similar to that genus."²⁰ It is considered as an instance of divine accessibility where God assumes a form, human or otherwise, and thus makes himself easily accessible to those caught up in the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth, and hence in the firm hands of the law of karma. These incarnations are many, and they occur both at the human and non-human levels. Keeping in mind the statement of Rāmānuja that the hierarchy of beings, such as gods, human, animals, etc., are due to one's karma, we could presume that there are souls in bondage at these levels. Hence the traditional listing of the *avatāras* of Viṣṇu includes some at the human level and some at the subhuman level. The major incarnations of Viṣṇu are stated to be ten. These include his manifestation as *matsya* (fish), *kūrma* (tortoise), *varāha* (boar), *Narasimha* (man-lion), at the subhuman level, and Vāmana (dwarf), Paraśurāma, Rāma, Balarāma, Kṛṣṇa and Kalki.²¹ Of these ten primary incarnations, Rāmānuja mentions only Rāma and Kṛṣṇa in his *Śrī-bhāṣya*²² The doctrine of divine incarnation is stated by Kṛṣṇa in the *Bhagavad-gītā* which has been commented on by Rāmānuja. Kṛṣṇa says in the *Bhagavad-gītā*:

Though I am unborn and inexhaustible in My own nature,
 though I am the Lord of all beings, yet abiding in My own nature
 I am born of My own free will.
 For whenever of the right
 A languishing appears, Son of Bharata,
 A rising up of unright,
 Then I send Myself forth.
 For the protection of the good,

And for the destruction of evil-doers,
To make a firm footing for the right,
I come into being in age after age.²³

S.S. Raghavachar, a modern scholar of Vaiṣṇavism, comments:

Divine incarnation is not due to the force of karma, as is the incarnation of individual souls, but is due to the spontaneity of Divine will. Not the necessity of karma, but free resolve transcending the law of karma is the ground of Divine incarnation. The time at which the descent of the Divine takes place is the time of moral crisis in the world in which righteousness tends to wane and unrighteousness is in ascendancy. The purpose of incarnation is the moral regeneration of the world.²⁴

However, in Rāmānuja's commentary, more than the decline of moral order, it is the yearning of the devotees to "behold" God directly which "necessitates" divine incarnations. The reason is that whereas the decline of moral order could be set right by the exercise of Divine will, without taking specific human or non-human forms, in order to satisfy the yearnings of the devotees to experience the presence of God directly, God has to appear on earth by assuming a "suitable form." Thus the re-establishment of dharma is only incidental to the task of satisfying the spiritual needs of the devotees. Furthermore, for Rāmānuja, Śrī, the divine mother principle, accompanies and appears along side of Viṣṇu's *avatāras*. In the *Vedārtha-saṅgraha*, Rāmānuja quotes with approval the following passage from the *Viṣṇu-purāṇa*:

This Śrī, the Mother of the universe, is eternal and knows no separation from Viṣṇu. Even as Viṣṇu is all-pervading, she is all pervading. When he becomes a deva, she assumes a deva form. When he becomes a man, she too becomes a human being. She makes her form conform to the form of Viṣṇu.²⁵

According to Rāmānuja, the body which is assumed by God during a divine incarnation is not material (*prākṛta*) in kind marked by the three qualities (*guṇas*) of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* as are all material things, but is non-material (*aprākṛta*) in nature. The material things composed of these three qualities are "impure"

and Viṣṇu is not to be associated with any impurity even in his "incarnational state." Rāmānuja writes in the *Śrī-bhāṣya*:

The highest Brahman, whose nature is fundamentally antagonistic to all evil and essentially composed of infinite knowledge and bliss—whereby it differs from all other souls—possesses an infinite number of qualities of unimaginable excellence, and, analogously, a divine form suitable to its nature and intentions, i.e. adorned with infinite, supremely excellent and wonderful qualities—splendour, beauty, fragrance, tenderness, loveliness, youthfulness, and so on. And in order to gratify his devotees, he individualizes that form so as to render it suitable to their apprehension.²⁶

Cosmic Manifestation of Viṣṇu-vyūha

Rāmānuja situates divine incarnations (*avatāras*) in the broader context of other divine manifestations. He mentions three kinds of divine manifestations, namely *para* (Vāsudeva), *vyūha*, and *vibhava*. These three manifestations are part of a "fivefold manifestation" of Viṣṇu mentioned in the *Pāñcarātra Āgamas*. These are *para*, *vyūha*, *vibhava*, *antaryāmi* and *arcā*. Here *Para* is the Supreme manifestation of Viṣṇu as Para-Vāsudeva, *vyūha*, as four cosmic manifestations, *vibhava* as ten primary divine incarnations, *antaryāmin*, as the innermost being in every life-form, and *arcā* as the divine presence in the icons installed in temples. The cosmic manifestations are said to be of four kinds: as Vāsudeva, Saṅkarṣana, Pradyumna and Aniruddha. Regarding these cosmic manifestations (*vyūha*), Rāmānuja writes in the *Śrī-bhāṣya*:

the highest Brahman, there called Vāsudeva, from kindness to those devoted to it, voluntarily abides in a fourfold form (*vyūha*), so as to render itself accessible to its devotees. Vāsudeva, Saṅkarṣana, Pradyumna and Aniruddha are thus mere bodily forms which the highest Brahman voluntarily assumes. Scripture already declares, "Not born, he is born in many ways," and it is this birth—consisting in the voluntary assumption of bodily form, due to the tenderness towards its devotees—which the system asserts.²⁷

God as the Inner Presence—Antaryāmin

The third form of divine manifestation is called the *antar-yāmin*, inner presence. In this form God is said to reside in every embodied life-form as their innermost being. For Rāmānuja, by this presence, God also maintains his sovereignty over these living beings. This *antaryāmin* is the "power source" without which no action of any kind is possible, whether it be wise or unwise acts in the case of human beings. However, Rāmānuja would hasten to add that, though God in the form of *antaryāmin* provides "the energy" for actions, he is not responsible for the kind or consequence of these actions, as otherwise God could be accused of being cruel.²⁸ The notion of *antaryāmin*, while stressing on the dependency on the divine, paradoxically, also stresses on human freedom and choice. As V.S. Suktankar points out:

No action is indeed possible without the assent (*anumati*) of the inner Soul; but in all volitional efforts there is the volitional effort (*prayatna*) made by the individual soul; the supreme Soul, by giving it assent carries out the action.²⁹

There is an advantage in having God as our innermost being. It is the same *antaryāmin* that gives assent to the creation of our karmic world, also gives assent when we decide to abandon our karmic world by giving up the notions of being an independent and free agent. The *antaryāmin* is waiting for us, so to speak, to turn to its help for release from the trap of *saṃsāra*, a trap into which we have let ourselves through the exercise of freedom and self-will. As one of the modern commentaries on Vedānta Deśika's *Mummaṇikōvai* says: "Just as a mother rushes to help her child when the child calls 'Mother', so also God as *antaryāmin* rushes to help us the moment we turn our face in his direction looking for help."³⁰

Divine Presence in the Icons—Arcā

The presence of the divine in the form of icons (*arcā*) particularly in the temples is very important to the piety of the

Vaiṣṇavas. Rāmānuja does not refer to *arcā* (iconic) manifestations explicitly in his major, philosophical writings. It should, however, be noted that *arcā* plays an important role in the life of the Ālvārs, the Vaiṣṇava mystics of South India, and also in the post-Rāmānuja Vaiṣṇava theology. John Carman points out that Rāmānuja, in his commentary on the *Bhagavad-gītā*, seems to hint at *arcā*, while commenting on verse IV.11 when he paraphrases the statement of Kṛṣṇa thus:

Although My nature is beyond the grasp of speech and thought even for the yogis, I adapt Myself to those who follow My ways, in such a way that they may not only see Me, but also may enjoy Me with all their senses.³¹

It is interesting to see that the tradition has always seen Rāmānuja as an ardent devotee who worshipped Viṣṇu at various temples dedicated to Viṣṇu. In a collection of songs on Rāmānuja, called *Rāmānuja Nūrśrśantādi*, attributed to a contemporary of Rāmānuja, Tiruvaraṅgattu Amūdanār, we read:

In every place where do gather men of true learning and God love,
On every place where is heard the sweet music that breathes
Tiruvāymozhi's fragrance,
And in every place where shines the Supreme Lord, with
Lakṣmī, enthroned in his bosom,
There does go and stand Rāmānuja, the flower of our race,
who shines with qualities like cloud.³²

It should be noted that, one of Rāmānuja's independent (non-philosophical/theological) works, called *gadyas*, is addressed to Lord Raṅganātha, the presiding deity at the Vaiṣṇava shrine in the town of Śrī Raṅgam in South India. As said earlier, in the post-Rāmānuja Vaiṣṇava theology, where the *Pāñcarātra* scheme of fivefold manifestation has been adopted, *arcā* plays an important role.

Arcā is defined by Śrīnivāsadāsa, a seventeenth century Vaiṣṇava theologian, as

that special form which, without remoteness of space and time, accepts for its body (any) substance chosen by the devotees, and 'descends'

into it with a non-material body; (He) becomes dependent on the worshipper for bath, food, sitting, sleeping, etc.; (He) bears everything and is replete (with knowledge and other attributes); (He) is present in houses, villages, towns, sacred places, hills, etc. He is fourfold, because of the differences as *svayamvyakta* (self-manifest), *daiva* (consecrated by divine beings), *siddha* (consecrated by sages) and *mānuṣa* (consecrated by human beings).³³

According to the Vaiṣṇava theology, in the consecrated icons, there is a real or actual presence of God, and not symbolic presence, and it is for that reason that Śrīnivāsadāsa points out that God comes to reside in that special form, with a non-material body (*aprākṛta-śarīra*). It is as if he fills the form of the icon for the sake of his devotees. At the same time, out of love (*vātsalya*) and condescending grace (*sauśilya*), he comes to assume human needs, such as bathing, food, sleeping, etc, so that the worshipper could render service to God through the icon. This service rendered to God by a Vaiṣṇava, could include things such as collecting flowers for worship (*pūjā*), bringing water for ritual bathing of the image, etc., actions which are considered very privileged and spiritually meritorious. Here one plays the role of a *śeṣa* (servant) of God, which is indeed the true relationship between the individual selves and God. The *arcā* form is considered as the supreme expression of God's accessibility, as here, God comes to reside in the icons at the request of the devotees, after the icon is properly consecrated. Whether the material is clay or stone, God transforms it by residing in it. Hence the icons are used by the Vaiṣṇavas at home as well as in temples. While one could at best meditate on the divine incarnations, or try to make their presence alive by imitating the role of mother, father, etc., as did some of the Ālvār mystics with regard to Rāma and Kṛṣṇa, for most Vaiṣṇavas *arcā* provides a direct access to the divine, as his presence in the consecrated image is real. The *arcā* intensify the devotion of the Vaiṣṇavas, and it is a presence of the divine that they could directly handle, in contrast to divine manifestations that happened during the second and third cosmic age (*yugas*) of

the Hindus, or the *antaryāmin* which is difficult to realize as we are steeped in *samsāra* and our identification with the body-ego (*ahankāra*) is strong.

In the context of karmic, *samsāric* life, the manifestations listed above such as cosmic manifestations (*vyūha*), divine incarnations (*vibhava/avatāra*), inner presence (*antaryāmin*) and iconic presence (*arcā*) are meaningful and important. They express from the side of God the qualities of mercy or compassion (*dayā* or *kāruṇya*), generosity (*audārya*), gracious condescension (*sauśīlya*), and protecting and forgiving love (*vātsalya*). While these qualities emphasize the theme of divine accessibility, the notion of non-material body (*aprākṛta-śarīra*) of the divine, point to its supremacy. From the side of those in bondage, these manifestations provide incentives to free oneself from the *samsāric* cycle of birth-death-rebirth. There is something enticing about *samsāric* experience, in spite of its being a source of suffering and pain. One could not free oneself from it, without the help from "outside".

Nature traps the soul in many forms, as the object of enjoyment, as the body, as the senses and the subtle forces operative in less cognizable ways. *The principal consequence of this enslavement is the loss of the vision of God.* This is what turns embodiment into a blindness, into a sleep, nay, into spiritual death itself. Awareness of God is real life, and to be deprived of it is death in the most substantial sense. Prakṛti in this capacity is called *māyā*. *Māyā* is not illusion but a tremendous power whose effects are wonderfully, variegated and one of its effects may be of the nature of illusion. Nature is not an illusion, but by virtue of its immense fecundity, it generates all the illusions of mortals....The power belongs to God...This fact of its belonging to God renders it unconquerable without a special technique adequate for the purpose. It binds the souls with its three-fold potencies of the *guṇas*, which seem designed for effecting their bondage.³⁴

NOTES

1. George Thibaut, *The Vedānt-sūtras with the commentary of Rāmānuja*. Motilal Benarsidas, Delhi, (Reprint 1984), The Sacred Books of the East, Series, XLVIII, pp.70-2.

2. Ibid., 1.1.22. p. 240.
3. *Vedārtha-saṅgraha*. # 223, p.175.
4. Ibid., # 252, p. 192.
5. For a discussion of the names of Vishnu see: John B. Carman, *The Theology of Rāmānuja: An Essay in Interreligious Understanding*. Yale University Press, New Haven, 1974, chapter 12, pp. 158–66.
6. *Vedānta-sāra of Bhagavad Rāmānuja*, ed. V. Krishnamacharya with tr. M.B. Narasimha Ayyangar. The Adyar Library, Madras, 1953, p. 1.
7. *Vedānta-dīpa of Rāmānuja*, tr. K. Bhasyam. p. 1. Sanskrit text and English translation. Tamil translation by Uttamur Viraraghavacharya. 2 vols, Ubaya Vedānta Granthamālā, Madras, 1957–59.
8. *The Gītābhāṣya of Rāmānuja*, tr. M.R. Sampatkumaran. Ananthacharya Indological Research Institute, Bombay, 1985, p. 1.
9. For an understanding of Vaḍa-kalai point of view see: Vedānta Deśika, *Śrīmad Rahasya-traya-sāra*, tr. M.R. Rajagopala Ayyangar. Agnihotram Ramanuja Thathachariar, Kumbakonam, 1956, Ch. 5, pp. 68–9. There are 18 points of difference between Vaḍa-kalai and Teṅ-kalai schools. For a brief statement of the differences see: Krishna D. Bharadwaj, *The Philosophy of Rāmānuja*. Sir Shankar Lal Charitable Trust Society, New Delhi, 1958, pp. 234–6.
10. *Rahasya-traya-sāra*, p. 68.
11. *Vedārtha-saṅgraha*, # 87, pp. 70–71.
12. *The Theology of Rāmānuja*, 1974, p. 115.
13. *Rahasya-traya-sāra*, chapter 3, p. 25.
14. *Rāmānuja's commentary on the Vedānta-sūtra*, 2.1.33, p. 477.
15. S.R. Bhatt. *Studies in Rāmānuja Vedānta*, Heritage Publishers, New Delhi, 1975, p. 99.
16. *Rahasya-traya-sāra*, chapter 1, p. 13.
17. Ibid.
18. For a detailed list of the attributes, see Krishna Bharadwaj, *The Philosophy of Ramanuja*, chapter V.
19. *The Theology of Rāmānuja*. p. 177.

20. Śrīnivāsadāsa, *Yatīndra-mata-dīpikā*, ed. with translation and notes by Swami Adidevananda. Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras, 1949, IX.22.
21. *Ibid.*, IX. 23, pp. 137–8. *Yatīndra-mata-dīpikā* goes on to point out that there are indeed infinite modes in each of the ten *avatars*. It mentions thirty-six as most important. But these are only partial and temporary manifestations. Besides, some one could be "possessed" by the divine and hence for all practical purposes considered as incarnations. However, from a Vaiṣṇava point of view, the ten listed are the primary incarnations. See. IX.24
22. 2.2.42, p. 525.
23. *The Bhagavad-gītā*, IV.6–8. tr. Franklin Edgerton. Harper New York, p. 23.
24. *Śrī Rāmānuja on the Gītā*. Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Mangalore, 1978, (Second Impression), pp. 48–9.
25. *Vedārtha-saṅgraha*, # 217, p. 171.
26. 1.1.21, p. 240.
27. 2.2.42, pp.525–6.
28. See *Vedārtha-Saṅgraha*, # 123, p. 95.
"The following criticism may be raised: Now you have held that all creatures are governed by the Supreme and the Supreme is the inner controller of all. If that is the case, there appears to be no one to whom the scriptural injunctions and prohibitions could apply."
29. V.A. Suktankar, "Teachings of Vedanta According to Rāmānuja," *Vienna Oriental Journal*, Vol. XXII–3, 1909, p. 302.
30. *Mummaṅikkōvai of Śrī Vedānta Deśika* with commentary in Tamil. Sahridaya Samiti, Mylapore, 1948, p. 57.
31. *The Theology of Rāmānuja*, p. 181.
32. cited in A. Srinivasa Raghavan, "The Greatness of Archa," *Srimad Anadavan Sashtiaptapurti Souvenir*. Madras, 1967, Srimadandavan Sashtiapta purthi Mahotsva Committee, p. 103.
33. *Yatīndra-mata-dīpikā*, IX. 27–8, p. 139.
34. S.S. Raghavachar, *Śrī Rāmānuja on the Gītā*. Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Mangalore, 1979, pp.87–8.

THE ART OF DISCOURSE:
THE MAHĀSVĀMĪ'S WAY — I

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The tradition of religious discourse may be said to have begun from the time when Sūta Paurāṇika started narrating *Śrīmad Bhāgavata* to the sages led by Śaunaka at Naimiṣāraṇyam. This tradition, like the Kāverī in its course, has enriched itself over time down the centuries. It has taken various forms—from the *purāṇa-kathā* of the villages to *kathā-kālakṣepam* and *upanyāsam* of our times. From a mere recital of the epic and Purāṇic verses with a little explanation of the meaning, the art of discourse has embellished itself with the elements of music and dance, wit and humour, anecdote and allusion. If the Indian culture, like a steady flame, has been burning bright over centuries, it is not a little due to religious discourses in various forms.

The *upanyāsa*, pure and simple, when handled by men of learning and merit—those who stick to *ācāra* and *anuṣṭhāna*—not only makes a deep impression on the mind but promotes piety and devotion. Such men, especially during and since the Bhakti

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movement, have been legion in India. One thinks of three of them who blazed the trail in Tamil Nadu in the twentieth century—Thēdiyūr Subrahmania Sastrigal, Sēngālipuram Anantarama Dikshitar and Tirumuruga Kripananda Variar. *Upanyāsa* becomes *upadeśa* when a saint, who is looked upon as a *guru*, chooses the medium of discourse to expound the basic principles of a faith known in ancient times not by any name but just as an eternal faith—*sanātana-dharma*.

The *guru*, by definition, dispels the darkness of ignorance of his disciples—ignorance of things, small and big—in matters religious and spiritual, through his *upadeśa* or by the light of his life; it is an exemplary life by the world's standards, righteousness being its characteristic nature, and spirituality its essence. Such a one was the Mahāsvāmī of Kāñcī, Sri Chandrasekharendra Saraswati (1894–1994), the 68th Pontiff of the Sri Kanchi Kamakoti Peetham. Of this Guru, who was with us till recently—his life spanned over almost a century—a distinguished scholar, who was also an ardent devotee, brings out the uniqueness of the Mahāsvāmī's discourse in the following passage in his article, "Beacon-light to the Millions", which has been reproduced in numerous publications:

The millions who regard him as an *avatāra-puruṣa* are content to gaze at him, to see him at worship, to feel exalted in the sunshine of his smile, and to treasure that memory. The charm of His Holiness' presence is for them, like that of music, a wordless charm. But the sensitive minds among the fortunate few who have heard at Madras and elsewhere his after-the-pūja talks, lasting from a few minutes to more than an hour, should have often felt that it was thus that the Upaniṣadic sages must have sought their way into the mystery of Brahman." (N. Raghunathan).

The analogy to the "Upaniṣadic sages", far from being hyperbolic, seems appropriate considering the tenor of His Holiness' life—one of *ātma-vicāra* (self-inquiry) and *īśvara-dhyāna* (meditation on God) besides, of course, of *paropakāra* (being helpful to others)—the utter transparency of His actions

and the manner of His speech, which is balsam to the lacerated hearts. All these have their source in what has been widely acknowledged as *svānubhava*, experience of the Divine within oneself.

The Mahāsvāmī's discourses in book-form began appearing (in Tamil to start with) from the late 'fifties of the last century. The Kalaimagal Kāryālayam of Chennai, with its four volumes, was the pioneer in this regard. Like a stream that gathers strength and volume from its tributaries, the publications, in several languages, have grown in number over the years. And, if one may continue with the figure of the stream, it seems to have found its sea in Rā. Gaṇapati's seven-volume *Deyvattin Kural*, published during 1976–2000 (over about a quarter of a century). The volumes, which run into 7634 pages, are comparable in their range and depth, to the *Studies of World's Civilizations* by Will Durant (1885–1981) and Arnold Toynbee (1889–1975).

The Mahāsvāmī's purpose, if one may say so inferentially, was to ensure the preservation of the Vedas, the dhārmic tradition based on them, the code of conduct and the *samskāras* contained in the smṛti texts, through his *upadeśa*, not to speak of his personal example of saintliness, transparency in conduct and observance of austerities to the point of self-denial of even the elementary means of comfort. He combined in himself *tyāga* and *sevā* in a measure that would enable him to evolve spiritually without prejudice to his concerns for social welfare, reconciliation of sectarian conflicts within the Hindu fold, religious harmony, national unity, and universal peace. Some of these ideals he gave expression to in the song he composed, "Maitrīm Bhajata," perhaps the only one he composed.¹

The Mahāsvāmī's discourses cover a wide range relevant to the purpose he had set for himself. Unlike the "outlines", "primers", "essentials", and so on, which deal with Hinduism in a tabloid form, His Holiness takes us on a cruise, as it were, along the Gaṅgā from its source on the Himalayas to the sea, allowing

us on the way to stay at the holy spots and contemplate on God, our Father. Thus we are told about: the Vedas, the Vedāṅgas, the Upāṅgas, the Upavedas; the epics and the Purāṇas; the Dharmaśāstras; the *saṁskāras*, the deities and their shrines; the theological schools and the philosophical systems; savants, saints and sages; the great preceptors and their works. In telling us about all these and more, the Mahāsvāmī brings to bear on his subjects his vast erudition which (as has been brilliantly brought home to us by a writer) would have made Anatomy Burton envy its "abundance, strangeness and glitter."

The distinctive features of the Mahāsvāmī's discourses are, among others: (1) Directness and simplicity in a colloquial tongue that leaves no one in doubt about the meaning; (2) Use of anecdotes, allusions, analogies and figures of speech, notably the simile; (3) References to classical poetry to illustrate, or explain, or reinforce a theological doctrine or a philosophical concept; (4) Refreshing insights into the modes of worship of deities, ritual practices, and social customs; (5) Creative use of tradition; and (6) Maintaining a high moral tone without lapsing into trivia.

As it is not possible to cover the entire range of the Mahāsvāmī's thought (rather, exposition of ethical and spiritual values) in a single article, examples are given here mostly from the topic of "Aspects of Religion".

(1) Books on Hinduism speak of it as one without a founder or just pre-historic. No author, eastern or western, has been bold enough to say, as the Mahāsvāmī has done, that this religion without a name, called only as Sanātana Dharma or the eternal religion, was at one time the only religion in the world. Incidentally, he tells us how new religions arose in the world with a founder or a prophet. Citing inscriptions, texts, and customary practices in different parts of the world to support his view, His Holiness says:

All these evidences serve to show that our religion was once prevalent throughout the globe. It is possible that for causes which we are not able to ascertain, the tenets and practices of our religion began to decline

in other parts and their prevalence came to be confined to the land of their origin, originally known as Bhārata Varṣa (India). When it went into oblivion in other countries and when, due to lack of any religious consciousness, the people became godless and unethical, there arose in those lands great prophets who brought to light one aspect or another of this forgotten religion. They declared themselves to be founders of *new* religions and came to be revered as such. But it must be noted that the fundamental moral principles underlying these *new* religions only emphasized some feature or other of the universal Vedic religion with certain theological variations.²

This is an example of scholarship combined with insight.

(2) Saints rarely talk about themselves and the Mahāsvāmī was no exception. In one of the rarest of the rare moments of self-revelation, he contributed a piece, "What Life Has Taught Me," at the request of Dr. K.M. Munshi, to the *Bhavan's Journal*. Apart from citing two incidents, one revealing his unquestioned trust in the goodness of the people and another his deep sympathy for all creatures of God in distress, even as a boy, he has said but little about himself. But he has spoken at length on *sannyāsa* and the ideal *sannyāsin*. He became a *sannyāsin* at the age of thirteen almost in a trance as it were, utterly unaware of what he was "sacrificing" at a tender age. But once proclaimed a *sannyāsin*, he lived up to his own conception of an ideal *sannyāsin*. As one who preached "*paropakāra*", he held the view that, by depending on others for his sustenance and taking to the *nivṛtti-mārga*, the *sannyāsin* is a "*lokopakārin*." He explains this as follows:

There is a wrong view that *sannyāsins* are parasites of society because they do no productive work.³ It is said that they do not contribute to national wealth and like beggars, they prey upon society. . . . A true *sannyāsin* is the one who gives up his wealth and position, not the one who seeks to escape from the responsibilities of family. . . . A real *sannyāsin* is a spiritual stalwart spending his time in contemplation of the supreme and in instructing others in the way of dharma. . . . A true *sannyāsin* lives in communion with the spirit, acquires *śānti* (peace) and sets the tone of the spiritual life of the community. He is the exemplar of the highest values of life and as such is an asset to

society. . . It is his life mission to purify himself steadily and gradually and throw himself completely into the quest and experience of the ultimate Truth, namely God.⁴

Here is an example of "directness and simplicity", with the ring of authenticity.

(3) The symbol of Śiva, the *liṅga*, is still an enigma to many Hindus, including ardent devotees. They tend to believe, as the Western savants (some of them in good faith) have encouraged them to do, the *liṅga* as symbolizing the phallus— "image as a symbol of the generative power of nature." The Mahāsvāmī, with his refreshingly original insight, dispels this absurd notion of the sacred being associated with the generative organ. The oddity of this notion is that, in the conception of the Trinity or Trimūrti, Śiva is the *saṁhāra-mūrti* and Brahmā (with the aid of the Vedas), the *sr̥ṣṭi-kartā*. His Holiness, with a striking illustration, explains:

The word "liṅga" means a symbol. Any symbol which points to an inference is known in Sanskrit as "liṅga". When we hear a peal of thunder, we conclude from it that there is a mass of clouds in the sky which has produced it. The noise known as thunder is a "liṅga" which indicates the presence of the clouds. Likewise, smoke is the "liṅga" of the unseen fire. The universe of the myriad created objects may be considered as a "liṅga" of the Almighty. Our Śāstras have prescribed the "Liṅga" of the Almighty, the sight of which will make us think of God.

His Holiness proceeds to explain the appropriateness of the *liṅga*-symbol and concludes by saying: "The *liṅga* has, as it were, a formless form and is intended to lead the worshipper's mind to the contemplation of the formless attributeless, supreme Reality or Brahman."

(4) In *Śrī Rudram* (also known as the *Śatarudrīyam*, *Rudropaniṣad*), there is a *mantra* which says: "This hand of mine is God. Nay, greater than God." (*ayaṁ me hasto bhagavān-ayaṁ me bhagavattaraḥ*). This puzzling *mantra* suggesting that "the hand is greater than God" is interpreted by the Mahāsvāmī thus: "This hand is Bhagavān. No, no, greater than God. Why? Does not the hand worship God? Is not the hand used in the worship of

God? Does not this worship secure mokṣa for me?" Keeping this in view, His Holiness tells the story of the encounter of a Cōla king with Kūrattālvān. The king was a staunch Śaivite, and Kūrattālvān, a Vaiṣṇavite. The king made the Viṣṇu devotee say there is none greater than Śiva (*Śivāt parataram nāsti*). Kūrattālvān replied: "Droṇa is greater than Śiva" (*Droṇamasti tataḥ param*). (Droṇa is a bigger measure than the measure called Śiva). His Holiness, however, wants to give the credit to Kūrattālvān that he would never associate divinity with small things like the measure. His Holiness says: "I prefer to think that, when he mentioned "Droṇa", he had in mind the *tumbai* flower." (Droṇa also means the *tumbai* flower which is offered in worship to Śiva) "This is an instance of the Mahāsvamī's creative use of tradition," says N. Raghunathan in his article referred to earlier (*Beacon-light to Millions*): "It is this glory of sudden illumination, this creative use of tradition, this masterful way of impressing all modern knowledge in the elucidation of subtle doctrine that surprises the listener at every turn."

(5) Is there an order and purpose behind the inanimate phenomena of Nature? Posing this question, His Holiness, through an impressive analogy, establishes the point that plants, trees, mountains, seas, the worlds, the stars and the planets move, according to a definite pattern, towards the fulfilment of various purposes. There is both *order* and *purpose* in the universe. Here is a paraphrase of one of his interesting discourses. Pointing to the plank which served as his seat, he says: Here is a plank, a rectangular one, serving a purpose—as my seat. Yonder is a branch of a tree, knobbly and rugged. We know that a carpenter had made the plank; in the case of a fallen tree-branch, no such thought occurs to us. The "order" seen in the plank is not found in the fallen tree-branch. Similarly, when mangoes lie helter-skelter under a mango-tree, we take it that they had all fallen by themselves. But when they are found in heaps, we know that someone had been at work and that he would have done it with a purpose

—to carry them home, to sell or just distribute them free to people. Generally, when we find order and purpose in the phenomena of Nature, we assume the presence of an agency or Force. (There could be instances of disorder with a purpose. Thieves, for example, ransack the almirahts and throw the contents pell-mell, taking with them what is valuable; they have thus a purpose. So long as the branch formed a part of the tree, the life-giving sap flowed through it from the root and the branch let off silken shoots at its knobs. And the tree was growing. There was a perfect order in that flow, as blood through the human veins. Similar is the case with the leaves; there was order as well as purpose, to wit, the creation of chlorophyl. Soft flowers appeared on the rugged trunk and branches.

There are two types of plants—the flowering and the fruit-bearing ones. The flowers are either colourful and fruit-yielding, or just colourful alone. The colourful and the colourless both reveal an order as well as a purpose. They attract bees which suck the honey and carry the pollen dust and thereby help the species to grow. There are flowers with fragrance and without it. There are others that bloom only in the night, but are distinguished by their colour. All these have an order as well as a purpose. Is there a secret behind this? Is there someone behind it? Nature is infinite in her variety—there is "*kāvya-buddhi*" at work here. Men get sweet fruits from a variety of trees. The fruits contain seeds, big and small, which grow from the earth's bosom. There is order as well as purpose here.

Thinking along these lines, we realize that inert Nature cannot do anything by itself. Behind the plank there is a carpenter, and behind the tree (from which the plank was made) there is another carpenter, who is behind the scenes, who creates wonderful things and yet makes no open demonstration of his intelligence as we do when we achieve something. Let us ponder a little more. When man does not eat the fruit of the neem (*margosa*) tree, the Great One creates the crow. The crow not only eats the fruits, but

deposits the seeds far away in the roots of trees and other places beyond the shadow of the tree that has yielded the fruits.

Plants and trees inhale the carbon dioxide that we exhale. They give us in turn their flowers and fruits. We eat the fruits and, with the waste that is thrown, provide the manure needed for their growth. Thus we see interdependence everywhere, links forged on the anvil of the Creator.

Endless is the variety in Nature. Yet the inert and the living are knit together closely by the hidden One. This is an example of analogy from nature carried to perfection. There is an order in the narration, and the purpose of instruction (*upadeśa*) is easily achieved.

(To be continued)

NOTES

1. The song is in the nature of an exhortation to the people of the world. It is in two parts—(1) *what* we should do and (2) *why*. "Cultivate friendship, look upon others as thyself, renounce war, forswear competition, give up aggression, restrain yourselves, give, be kind. (2) Mother earth will grant all (your) desires and the Lord, our Father, is compassionate."
2. *Aspects of Religion* (English rendering of some discourses of the Mahāsvāmī). Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Mumbai, 1988 (fourth edition).
3. "Holy parasitism" is the derisive term used by a Western critic.
4. *Aspects of Religion*, pp. 33–5.

JIJÑĀSĀDHIKARĀṆA*
(Fourth Varṇaka)

N. Veezhinathan

Earlier we have said that inquiry into the import of the Upaniṣads on the basis of the *Vedānta-sūtra* is to be undertaken by the aspirant who is desirous of having the direct knowledge of the Self. This desire is founded on the knowledge of the form "The knowledge of the Self is the means to the desired end, i.e. liberation." The origination of the knowledge of this form depends upon "the knowledge of the Self" which is the adjectival factor. Further, the knowledge of the Self could arise from the Upaniṣads alone. Now, it is asked as to whether the Self is known from the Upaniṣads or not. If it is said that it is known, then, since it is known, there is no need for any inquiry into the import of the Upaniṣads with the aid of the *Vedānta-sūtra* to ascertain its nature. For, inquiry has for its aim the uncovering of the facts and the establishment of the truth; and this aim, in the present case, is achieved through the Upaniṣads themselves, not entailing thereby the need for inquiry. In order to facilitate inquiry

* Continued from the previous number.

into the import of the Upaniṣads, if it is said that the Self is not known through the Upaniṣads, then, the Self cannot be an object of inquiry. For, inquiry which is a search for knowledge or information about an object is not at all possible in the absence of any idea of the object. The result of this argument is that inquiry into the import of the Upaniṣads preceded by the desire to have the knowledge of the Self is impossible. So the text, viz. the *Vedānta-sūtra*, which aims at inquiry into the import of the Upaniṣads need not be commenced at all. This is the *prima facie* view taken up for examination in this varṇaka.

Śaṅkara concurs with what has been stated by the *pūrvapakṣin* that no inquiry is possible in reference to something that is not known. However, the Self, he says, is not unknown. It is known as the significance of the word, "*brahma*" that is found in the śruti text, "*satyaṁ jñānam anantam brahma*"⁶¹ and in the sūtra, "*atha ataḥ brahma-jijñāsā.*" These texts are authoritative, and so every word used therein is significant. The aspirant desirous of having the knowledge of the Self is the one who has studied the Veda along with its auxiliaries. He gets at the knowledge of the meaning of the word "*brahma*" in accordance with the rules of grammar. This word is derived from the verbal base "*br̥hi*" by the addition of the suffix "*manin*". The verbal base carries the meaning of "greatness" (*vṛddhi*). It is not qualified by any word restraining its usage in the sense of greatness limited either in duration or extent. So, the sense of greatness conveyed by it is immeasurable in nature, or without known limits. It is *niravadhika-mahattva*. For the sake of simplicity, we shall refer to this feature by the term "*br̥hattva*." The meaning of the suffix is "to be in possession of". The word, therefore, means "that which has *br̥hattva*", or "that which is *br̥hat*". It is the Self. From this we gather that the feature, "*br̥hattva*" is the *pravṛtti-nimitta* or the ground for the use of the word "*brahma*" in the sense of the Self. This feature implies freedom from limitation by time, space, and objects. Limitation by time is the state of being present at a parti-

cular 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. This state of being so is known as limitation by time (*kālataḥ paricchinnatvam*). Again, a pot which exists at a particular place is non-existent at another place. There is thus its absolute non-existence (*atyantābhāvaḥ*), and it is its counter-positive. The state of being so is known as limitation by space (*deśataḥ paricchinnatvam*). Further, a jar does not exist in the form of a cloth through the relation of identity. This is ascertained on the basis of the cognition and the corresponding expression of the form, "A jar is not a cloth." The jar is thus the counter-positive of reciprocal non-existence (*anyonyābhāva*). This state of being so is known as limitation by object (*vastutaḥ paricchinnatvam*). The absence of these three kinds of limitation, as has been said above, constitutes the feature "*brhattva*". The Self which is signified by the word "*brahma*" through this feature is thus known to be free from the three kinds of limitation. It is all-pervasive (*vibhu*) as it is not circumscribed by space; it is uncaused and unending (*nitya*) as it is not conditioned by time; and it is non-dual (*advitīya*), as it is not limited by objects.

The point that the Self is free from limitation by objects needs explanation. The world which is differentiated into names and forms and is of variegated nature has beginning and end. It is an effect, and so it must have a material and an efficient cause. If any principle other than the Self were admitted as the material and the efficient cause of the world, then the Self would be subject to limitation by that principle. In that case, it would cease to have "*brhattva*"—the significance of the verbal base "*br̥hi*". This cannot be a welcome position, as it is against the rules of grammar. To overcome this impasse, we must hold that the Self itself is both the material and the efficient cause of the world. This implies

that the Self is endowed with omnipotence (*sarva-śakti-samanvitatva*) and omniscience (*sarvajñatva*). Furthermore, if the world given in perception were real, then the Self will be subject to limitation by it. So it cannot be considered as *bṛhat* in the sense that it is free from limitation by object. To get over this difficulty, we must admit that the world is non-real, and so the relation of the Self to the world is one of superimposed identity and not real. The world is characterized by non-eternity or non-reality, impurity, i.e. defilement by avidyā, kāma, and karma, insentience, and absolute dependence upon avidyā. The Self which is free from any real relation to it is eternal or real, pure, sentience by nature, and ever released. Thus, on the basis of an analysis of the significance of the word "*brahma*", we get to know that the Self is *bṛhat*, i.e. it is free from any relation to phenomenal elements, and also is endowed with omniscience and omnipotence. In other words, the Self is known as *nirguṇa* and *saguṇa*. This is the significance of the following *bhāṣya* text of Śaṅkara:

*asti tāvat brahma nitya-śuddha-
buddha-muktasvabhāvaṃ sarvajñam
sarvaśaktisamanvitam; brahma-
śabdasya hi vyutpādyamānasya
nityaśuddhatvādayaḥ arthāḥ
pratīyante, bṛhateḥ dhātoḥ arthānugamāt.*⁶²

The knowledge of the Self in this way is enough to activate the aspirant toward inquiry into its true nature by the study of the Upaniṣads aided by the *Vedānta-sūtra*.

Śaṅkara proceeds to say that, according to Advaita, the inquiring subject is the subject of inquiry. The *jīva* is the inquiring subject. It is only the Self that has attained to the state of the *jīva*. It is manifested in cognitions such as "I exist". Hence it is known, and inquiry into its nature is possible.

It may be said that, if the *jīva*—the subject of inquiry—is known in this way, then no inquiry is needed in regard to it.

Śaṅkara says that inquiry is essential as there are conflicting views relating to its particular nature.

The Cārvāka says that the gross body is the Self, because there are scriptural statements such as "That verily is the Self which is made of the essence of food" (*sa vā eṣa puruṣo 'nnarasa-mayaḥ*),⁶³ and also because of direct experience like, "I am stout," "I am lean," etc.

A second type of Cārvāka holds the view that the senses are the Self, because there are scriptural statements like "The gods asked the sense of speech, "Chant the Udgītha for us." It agreed and chanted for them" (*te ha vācam ūcuḥ, tvam na udgāya iti; tathā iti tebhyaḥ vāk udagāyat*).⁶⁴ Moreover, even if the body exists, there is no cognition of colour, etc. in the absence of the functioning of the sense of sight, etc.; and the senses are noticed to be the substrate of the cognition "I" in direct experience such as "I am one-eyed," "I am blind," "I am dumb." Each one of the senses is the Self. The body, by being the substrate of the senses which are the Self, is figuratively spoken of as the Self, i.e. the substratum of the cognition "I". And so the body is not the Self.

A third type of Cārvāka says that the mind is the Self, because of śruti texts like "The mind chanted the Udgītha for the gods" (*manaḥ udagāyat*)⁶⁵ and also because of direct experience such as "I desire," "I doubt." He further says that, in the state of dream, it is only the mind that functions and is noticed to be the substrate of the cognition "I".

The Vijñāna-vādin argues that the stream of momentary cognition (*vijñāna*) constitutes the Self, because of śruti texts like "The Self is identified with the intellect and is in the midst of the sense organs; it is the light within the heart" (*yo ayam vijñāna-mayaḥ prāṇeṣu hṛdi anatarjyotiḥ puruṣaḥ*);⁶⁶ and also because of direct experience such as "I act," "I enjoy." The mind cannot be the Self as it is only the general cause of the functioning of the senses. It is only the *vijñāna*, the stream of cognition, that is the agent, and hence is the Self.

The Mādhyamika is of the view that absolute nothing (*asat*) is the Self, because of the śruti texts like "This world, prior to creation, was verily an absolute nothing" (*asadeva idam agre āsīt*).⁶⁷ *Vijñāna* or the stream of cognition cannot be the Self as it is not noticed in the state of deep sleep.

The views presented above are advocated by the schools which do not believe in the authority of the Veda. Yet, each one cites a śruti text as evidence of one's view in the hope that it will convince others of its truth or validity. We shall now show that the śruti texts mentioned by these schools do not support their views.

The text "*sa vā eṣa puruṣaḥ annarasa-mayaḥ*" occurs in the *Brahma-vallī* section of the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*. It is not intended to identify the body as the Self. Its aim is to lead the spiritual aspirant to the Self step by step from the sheath of food, i.e. the body, which is outward to that which is inside it. It gives an account of the step-by-step progress by which the spiritual aspirant must discard, one after another, the sheaths of food (*annamaya-kośa*), of vitality (*prāṇamaya-kośa*), of consciousness (*manomaya-kośa*), of self-consciousness (*vijñānamaya-kośa*), and of bliss (*ānandamaya-kośa*) as not constituting the Self, and finally identify the substratal principle (*puccha*) of the sheath of bliss as the Self. The texts, "*vāk udagāyat*," and "*manaḥ udagāyat*," do not refer to the sense of speech and the mind as the Self, for they are insentient and are only instruments of cognition. The words "*vāk*," and "*manas*" stand for the deities identified with the sense of speech and the mind. In the same way, the text, "*yo'yaṁ vijñānamayaḥ prāṇeṣu...*" does not allude to the stream of momentary cognition as the Self; for, such a view of the Self is in direct conflict with the teaching of the subsequent text, "Consciousness which is of the nature of the revealing principle, the Self, will never be lost" (*na hi draṣṭuḥ drṣteḥ viparilopo vidyate*).⁶⁸ The text, "*asadeva idam agre āsīt*," does not convey that this

world given in perception was, prior to creation, an absolute nothing. The passage complementary to this text is: "*tat sat āsīt.*"⁶⁹ The word "*tat*" in this text makes reference to the significance of the word "*asat*" in the earlier text and identifies it as "*sat*" or "real". From this we discern that the word "*asat*" does not mean absolute nothing, but only the real, i.e. the Self associated with the world in its unmanifest form. Hence, the text, "*asadeva...*," means: "prior to creation this world existed as *sat* identified with the world in its unmanifest form." Thus we see that the views that the body, etc. constitute the Self are not approved of by the śruti texts.

The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika and the Pūrva-mīmāṃsā schools hold that the Self is other than the body, the senses, the mind, cognition and the void. It is a permanent and a transmigratory being. It is an agent of actions and the experiencer of the results of actions. The characteristics of being an agent and an experiencer that pertain to the Self are real. The Sāṅkhya-Yoga school admits that the Self is other than the body, etc. It is not an agent, but only an experiencer. Agency pertains to the intellect (*buddhi-tattva*), and the Self, by being reflected in the mode of the intellect, is the experiencer (*bhogaḥ cidavabhāsamānatā*). According to this school, bondage appertains to the intellect, while liberation, to the Self. The Advaitin holds that the Self is different from the body, etc. It attains to the state of the jīva by being associated with the body-mind complex through avidyā. The characteristics of being an agent and an experiencer are not real.

Śaṅkara has thus shown that the Self is known in the general form as "I", and also as the significance of the word, "*brahma*". It is not wholly unknown. So, inquiry into its nature is possible. The Self is the content of the knowledge arising from the Upaniṣads. But this knowledge is only *āpāta-jñāna*, i.e. it is clouded by doubt and false notions. In order that these may be removed, what is needed is reverential inquiry (*mīmāṃsā*) into

the nature of the Self—the content of the Upaniṣads—through the *Vedānta-sūtra*. This is the summary account of the teaching of the fourth varṇaka.

NOTES

61. *TU*, 2.1.
62. *VSB*, 1.1.1.
63. *TU*, 2.1.
64. *BU*, 1.3.2.
65. *Ibid.*, 1.3.6.
66. *Ibid.*, 4.3.7.
67. *CU*, 3.1.1.
68. *BU*, 3.2.3.
69. *CU*, 3.19.1.

THE WORLD AND US

T.P. Ramachandran

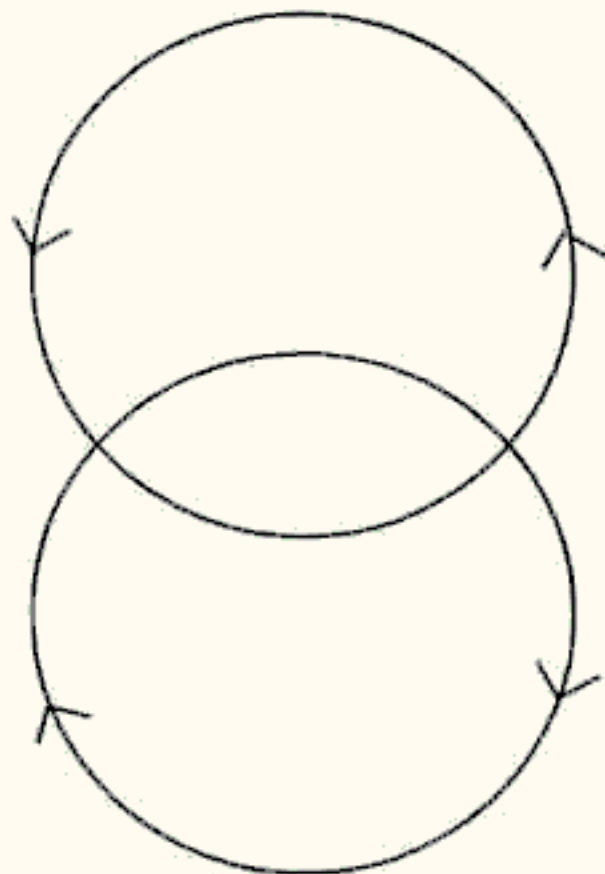
How pitiful we think we belong to the world,
When we are but life members here,
Whose exit the world will not care.
Life after life, we flit into this domain
And out of it, like birds on a moving boat.

Craving for things that will not be ours,
We dare to fashion the world after our dreams,
When it has its own course in God's great hands.
Nothing material lasts for ever, we know;
The world is apparent too, say the sages of old.

Wisdom is to use the world while we live,
Not to pamper again the ego and its likes,
But to know and be the Spirit, our true essence.
Coursing with dispassion the means taught of yore,
Let us find that Eternal Peace we forgot for long.

The soul's
journey

The world's
process





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

*saṁsārādhvani tāpabhānukiraṇaprodhūtadāhavyathā-
khinnānām jalakāṅkṣayā marubhuvi bhrāntyā paribhrāmyatām
atyāsannasudhāmbudhiṁ sukhakaram brahmādvayaṁ
darśayant-
yeṣā śaṅkarabhārātī vijayate nirvāṇasandāyinī.*

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.