

THE VOICE OF ŚĀṄKARA

Śāṅkara-bhāratī



Editor:

N. Veezhinathan

एषा शाङ्करभारती विजयते निर्वाणसन्दायिनी

*eṣā śāṅkara-bhāratī vijayate
nirvāṇa-sandāyini*

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

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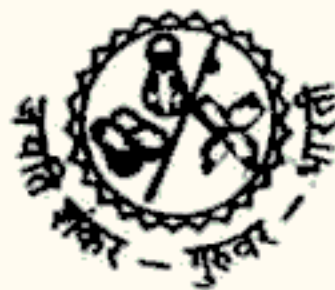
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1

HOMAGE TO ŚAṄKARA

॥ श्रीः ॥

अधिगभिदा पूर्वाचार्यानुपेत्य सहस्रधा
सरिदिव महीभेदान् संप्राप्य शौरिपदोद्भता ।
जयति भगवत्पादश्रीमन्मुखाम्बुजनिर्गता
जननहरिणी सूक्तिः ब्रह्माद्वैकपरायणा ॥

Victorious is the auspicious birth-destroying discourse (the *Sūtrabhāṣya*), which issues from the blessed lotus face of the Bhagavat-pāda, has for its sole purport the non-dual Brahman, and is diversified a thousand-fold on reaching the (numerous) ancient preceptors (who expounded it), in the same way as the river (Gaṅgā), which, issuing from the foot of Viṣṇu, is diversified on reaching different lands.

[Appayya Dīkṣitendra]

THE TEACHINGS OF ŚAṄKARA

Indian Philosophy is the magnificent effort to probe the inmost being of Man and Nature. The question as to whether the whole sphere of the objective including nature (jagat) and all selves (jīvas) is self-sustaining, self-maintaining and self-established; or, whether there is a "beyond" standing behind it, unifying it, inspiring it, and yet immanent in it has engaged the attention of all philosophers. Śaṅkara, basing himself on a critical, analytical study of the Upaniṣads, arrives at the conclusion that there ever remains a principle which is fundamental to nature and the selves, and which transcends objectification while, in itself, it is a condition of all objectifications. It is the first principle of philosophy and it is Consciousness which is the only real. It is above all imperfection because it not derived but original, not partial but complete, not subject to qualification as it is unlimited, and not dependent upon anything else because it is self-sufficient. It is beyond what appears to ordinary sense – experience; it is non-dual, bliss, and pure identity. It is the substratum of the appearances of Īśvara, jīva, and the world.

The principle that accounts for the appearance of the Self as Īśvara, jīva, and the world is avidyā or māyā which is inexplicable either as real (*sat*) or an absolute nothing (*asat*), or both. It is indeterminable or *mithyā* or *anirvacanīya*. Consciousness gets reflected in avidyā and its product, the psycho-physical organism of which the mind is the predominant factor. The reflected image (*pratibimba*) of consciousness in avidyā and the mind is the jīva. Consciousness which is pure and simple acquires, in relation to the reflecting media and the reflected image, the feature of being the original (*bimba*). As associated with this feature it is known as Īśvara. Thus, according to Śaṅkara, jīva is consciousness associated with the feature of being a reflected image (*pratibimbatva-viśiṣṭa-caitanya*) and Īśvara is consciousness associated with the feature of being the original (*bimbatva-viśiṣṭa-caitanya*). The consciousness-element (*caitanyāṁśa*) in both is real, while the adventitious features of *pratibimbatva* and *bimbatva* are non-real or *mithyā* as they are projected by avidyā. The Upaniṣads refer to the consciousness-element in the jīva as Ātman and that in Īśvara as Brahman. Śaṅkara in his commentary on the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*¹ states that the words “Brahman” and “Ātman” refer to one and the same principle, viz. Consciousness as the Upaniṣads use these words in appositional relation to each other. We shall use the “word” “Self” to represent both Brahman and Ātman. The world, on the other hand, is the transformation (*pariṇāma*) of avidyā or the transfiguration or the false appearance (*vivarta*) of Brahman. It is totally non-real. No part of it is real.

By interpreting the trinity — Īśvara, the jīva, and the world as apparent manifestations of a single spirit, viz. the Self, the Advaitin resolves the problem of the One and the Many. Viewed from the way of belief or opinion, Īśvara, the jīva, and the world are distinct realities. But, when judged from the way of Truth, they are mere appearances. It is on the basis of this vital distinction between truth and appearance that the epistemological and the soteriological inquiry in Advaita proceed.

Avidyā which is the limiting adjunct or the revealing medium of the Self has two powers – *āvaraṇa* and *vikṣepa*. The function of *āvaraṇa* is to conceal the true nature of the Self and that of *vikṣepa* is to project the world with all its diversity of names and forms. In its aspect of *āvaraṇa*, it is powerless over Īśvara. His true nature is never concealed from Him. Consequently, He is always aware of His identity with the Self and is, therefore, ever-released. He, however, sees the objective world which he manifests through the *vikṣepa* phase of avidyā. But he never misses its underlying unity and regards it as nothing more than an apparent diversification within himself. In the case of the jīva, the *āvaraṇa* aspect exerts its influence and obscures its true nature, viz. the Self. Accordingly, it forgets its essential nature, and this forgetfulness is the source of evil in the form of transmigration. It falsely identifies itself with the psycho-physical organism of which the mind is the predominant factor, regards the world of variety to be real, performs the prescribed deeds and commits the prohibited ones, and experiences their fruits by being involved in cyclic existence in an unending manner. It is endowed with the

characteristics of being an agent (*karṭṛtva*), an experient (*bhokṭṛtva*), and a knower (*pramāṭṛtva*). These characteristics, Padmapāda says, are harmful (*anartha*) to one's spiritual well-being:

*anarthaśca pramāṭṛtāpramukham karṭṛtva-bhokṭṛtvam.*²

In other words, these characteristics represent worldliness (*saṁsāritva*) in the *jīva* which we notice in ordinary experience.

Elsewhere Śaṅkara remarks:

As long as the *jīva* is associated with the adjunct, i.e. the mind, so long only is the *jīva*, a *jīva*. In reality, however, there is nothing like the state of being a *jīva* (*jīvatva*) apart from what is fancied to be such by reason of this adjunct. The relation of the Self to the mind has but the indeterminable *avidyā* as its source; and this *avidyā* cannot be removed by anything other than Self-realization, i.e. the direct experience of the true nature of the *jīva* as the Self. Hence, the relation with such a limiting adjunct will not cease so long as the *jīva* does not realize its true nature to be the Self.³

From this we gather that the annihilation of *avidyā* by means of Self-realization would necessarily bring about the removal of the relation of the mind and also the characteristics that comprise worldliness in the *jīva*. This means that the *jīva* will become free from the feature of being the reflected image (*pratibimbatva* or *jīvatva*) and remain in its true nature as the Self. This is liberation.

Liberation is only the Self free from the veil of *avidyā*.

The essential nature of the jīva being the Self, liberation is ever-attained; yet, through a mistaken notion of its being not attained owing to the formidable influence of avidyā, the jīva longs for it and attains it, as if it were unattained, through the removal of avidyā. Further, when avidyā is removed, Īśvara too will cease to be so, as he will be rid of the characteristic of being the original (*bimbatva* or *Īśvaratva*). In a telling manner, Śaṅkara says:

When the identity (between the true nature of the jīva and of Īśvara) is revealed in vision by *tat tvam asi* and other similar identity-texts, worldliness (*samsāritva*) in the jīva and causativeness (*sṛaṣṭṛtva*) in Īśvara will instantaneously be removed. ... For, the entire phenomenon of variety which springs from the indeterminable avidyā (*mithyājñāna*) will come to an end once and for all by the valid cognition of the Self.⁴

Thus, according to Advaita, the beings, viz. *Īśvaratva*, *jīvatva*, and the world are superimposed by avidyā upon the Self, the Pure Being. When avidyā is removed, all these three beings which veil the Being will be no more. The Being then reveals itself in all its spiritual splendour, and this is liberation (*brahmabhāvaśca mokṣaḥ*). Liberation, therefore, consists in unveiling the Being of beings. It is not something that is to be achieved by a series of actions (*sādhya*), but, being ever-attained, has only to be realized by the mind. It must be noted here that the Advaitin only speaks of the identity of Brahman and Ātman (*brahmātmaikya*) and not of the

jīva and Īśvara. The critics of Advaita pass over this fact without giving it due or sufficient attention and argue that there cannot be any identity between the jīva and Īśvara as the Advaitin thinks. The Advaitin does accept that the two as such are different from each other, and emphasizes that their essential nature is one and the same.⁵

The truth that avidyā is removed by Self-realization, Śaṅkara points out, is confirmed by the *śruti* texts which are as under:

1. *tvam hi naḥ pitā, yaḥ asmākam avidyāyaḥ
param pāram tārayasi.*

This text is from the *Praśna Upaniṣad*(6.3). Bharadvāja and other five sages have received instruction about the nature of the Self from their preceptor, Pippalāda and express their deep sense of gratitude to him in these words:

You are our beneficent father, as you (are gracious enough to get ourselves rid of avidyā by means of Self-realization which you have imparted, and thereby) have blessed us to have the vision of the Self which is free from the veil of avidyā and from which there is no return to phenomenal existence.

2. *śrutam hi eva me bhagavad-dṛṣebhyaḥ
tarati śokam ātmavit iti, so'ham bhagavaḥ
śocāmi, tam mā bhagavān śokasya pāram
tārayatu.*

This text is from the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (7.1.3). Here Nārada makes an earnest entreaty to Sanatkumāra thus: "I have learnt from venerable

sages like your goodself that he who has realized his true nature, i.e. the Self overcomes avidyā, the source of grief in the form of *saṃsāra*. I am grief-stricken. Pray, lead me to the Self which is beyond the range of avidyā.”

The concluding part of this section of the *Upaniṣad* (7.26.2) is:

*tasmai mṛditakaṣāyāya tamasaḥ pāram
darśayati bhagavān sanatkumāraḥ.*

Sanatkumāra imparts the knowledge of the Self to Nārada whose mind is cleansed of demerits. He, thereby, enabled him to be the Self which is freed from avidyā.

3. *etad yo veda nihitam guhāyām saḥ
avidyāgranthim vikirati iha saumya.*

This text is from the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* (2.1.10). The preceptor, Aṅgiras, having imparted the knowledge of the Self to his disciple, Śaunaka tells him that he who realizes the Self immanent in the heart destroys avidyā which is the tie that fastens the Self and the mind together.

It follows from the above that the view that Self-realization would remove avidyā is based on the *śruti* texts. Śaṅkara corroborates this by the authoritative statement of Gautama which is as follows:

*duhkha-janma-pravṛtti-doṣa-mithyājñānānām
uttarottarāpāye tadanantarāpāyāt apavargaḥ.⁶*

We shall explain this in some detail. *Mithyājñāna* is mistaking the physical body, etc. which are the not-self for the Self.

Doṣa consists of desire and aversion. *Pravṛtti* is activity involving performance of prescribed deeds and indulgence in the forbidden ones. *Janma* is birth, i.e. bondage of the *jīva* formed by its relation to the physical body. *Duhkha* is misery, i.e. worldliness of the *jīva*. In this series, each succeeding one is the cause of the preceding one. By the removal of the cause there would result the removal of the effect. This implies that the removal of *mithyājñāna* would ultimately result in the annihilation of misery in the form of bondage which is liberation (*duhkha-dhvaṁsa* or *apavarga*). According to Gautama, *tattva-jñāna* is the direct knowledge that the *jīva* is different from other categories accepted by the Nyāya school, and it is the annihilating factor of *mithyājñāna* which is mere erroneous cognition. But, according to Śaṅkara, *tattva-jñāna* is the direct experience of the true nature of the *jīva* as the Self, and *mithyājñāna* is the indeterminable *avidyā*, the cause of all erroneous cognitions. In spite of this difference concerning the nature of *mithyājñāna* and *tattva-jñāna* according to both, Śaṅkara has cited the statement of Gautama as authority just to emphasize the fact that false cognition whether erroneous, or its cause, *avidyā*, will be removed only by *tattva-jñāna* or valid cognition and not by activity, physical (*karma*) or mental (*upāsanā*). To this effect, Śaṅkara makes the significant observation: “*mithyājñānāpāyaśca brahmātmaikatva-vijñānāt bhavati.*”⁷



NOTES

1. Śaṅkara's *bhāṣya* on the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, 1.4.10.
2. *Pañcapādikā*, (Govt. Oriental Manuscripts Library, Madras), p. 25.
3. *Brahma-sūtra-bhāṣya*, (hereafter *BSB*), 2.3.30.
4. *Ibid.*, 2.1.22.
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Nyāya-sūtra*, 1.1.2.
7. *BSB.*, 1.1.4.



3

MY MISSION

JAGADGURU ŚRĪMACCANDRAŚEKHARENDRA SARASVATĪ
BHAGAVATPŪJYAPĀDĀḤ

I could have remained alone peacefully in any village offering *pūjā* and absorbed in meditation. But those charged with the duty of study of the Vedas should not leave the Vedic studies and they should do everything to preserve the Vedas. Veda is the cornerstone – root – of all our religious discipline and culture. The *Sanātana Dharma* enshrined in the Vedas should be maintained in its pristine purity for all time to come.

It is the duty of the Brahmins to do what all is necessary to maintain the glow of the torch of Vedic Dharma, not merely for the present but also for posterity. The superiority of Brahmins is a misnomer. It was never intended to pamper the ego nor to look askance at other communities as something inferior. The Brahmin who was a repository of

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Vedas was intended to cater to the spiritual and material welfare of the ENTIRE community; to lead an austere and simple life, have Adhyayana of Vedas, Vedāṅgas, (ancillary sciences – aids to interpret Vedas) and meditate on the Devatas (Cosmic centres of divine power) of Veda mantras invoking Divine grace for the welfare of others. This has to be one in a spirit of dedication without expecting any return.

People gather in thousands only in cities. Therefore, it enables me to talk to a large number of them directly, instead of remaining in a remote corner of a village and talking to a few and who, in turn, convey them to others. It is only on this consideration, I am coming to cities, although, Mutt discipline suffers considerably, causing inconvenience to you, to me and to one and all.

At enormous cost you complete in erecting shamiyanas and pandals from place to place and notwithstanding great personal inconvenience, you gather to listen to my speech. My mind does not, however, permit me to talk without touching on your faults, though it may upset your mind. After taking all your money, I feel it would be purposeless if I go away without telling you what I consider good for you, the country and the world. That is why, I am repeatedly telling you “persevere and protect” the Vedas and those who are making efforts for the same, namely Vedic families engaged in the traditional way with *ācāra* and *anuṣṭhāna* in Vedic studies, those who work for their continuance, and those who follow the ancient *Dharma*.

Whether I have the strength to make you do it or not, I have come at least to din it into your ears repeatedly “Do this, do this”.

You shower gold on me, you observe elaborately the festival to mark my ascension to the “*Pīṭha*”. Out of your affection you are taking pleasure in this activity. For this purpose, you elect committees, work day and night and make collections. But how can this shower of gold be a permanent feature for the “mutt”, for all future “Ācāryas”? If there is no Veda, where is the need for the “mutt” or for a Pontiff? Therefore, I ask you to direct this enthusiasm (in arranging the festival of showering gold – *kanaka Abhiṣekaṁ* to mark the ascension to *Pīṭha* by doing everything necessary for the preservation of Vedas, form committees, frame rules and arrange for funds for achieving this objective.

It does not matter, if the preservation of Vedas cannot establish a living for life today, but your work will certainly go down in the annals of history as a lifelong service for the generations to come. Under the auspices of a cooperative movement, from village to village, please start classes to impart one hour daily the *Adhyayana* of Veda - Mantras and their application in life, to boys commencing from their eighth year, for ten years. This is the real shower of gold for me, festival etc.

Nothing is possible without hard work. If we voluntarily take a job, do we not willingly bear all difficulties? If there is a possibility of getting a big post and earn more money on completing certain studies conducted by certain University in a certain continent, we immediately ask for the syllabus and make all arrangements to sit for the examination there. We do not mind the difficulties involved. Should we leave the Dharmas exclusively meant for us,

because there are difficulties? Work carried out under difficult conditions gives more benefits, more sense of achievement.

I am happy to see in the cities the tremendous developments in conducting Bhajans, services in temples and *pravacana* of “*Purāṇas*”. Yet if you allow their root i.e. the original, the Vedas, to decay, how long can the other activities survive? That the father as Guru, should impart Veda to his son has been the tradition. Because this duty has been forgotten, the religion has started shaking. Because the Brahmins have neglected the Adhyayana, there is so much strife, troubles, and opposition that we see in the world today.

High Ideals

I am not worried that casteism is dying out. What I am really worried is about the decline in the prosperity of the world. I am worried, if the Vedas and its repositories are lost, it would be impossible to create this generation again. “World prosperity” is not merely the gain out of chanting of Vedas or performing “*Yajñas*”. High ideals could be achieved by the study of Vedas, even by people of all countries. From these ideals, everyone attains spiritual upgradation. How did the people of other countries get the curiosity to read the Vedas? When they came to India they found a group devoting their entire life to the preservation of Vedas. They asked themselves, “what is this (Veda) which makes people to sacrifice everything and concentrate only on its study”.

They became curious to know about it and started

research. They learnt many things. They learnt from the researches particularly about the unity in the different cultures, all over the world. My opinion is that apart from being useful, in the beginning Vedic culture was prevailing over the entire world. A thorough research by others will lead to the same opinion. When it is known that there is one common bond serving to unite people, different in their ways and habits of dress, food and worship, there develops world unity and equality among different religions. In our very country if there is no separate group sacrificing every thing for the sake of Veda, how can others get a liking to it? If we too leave it as useless subject how can others get interested and try to understand its ideal? Because of our indifference, we become responsible for denying others the benefits that are given to humanity by the Vedas. For the sake, not only, of all communities in our country but also people of all other countries, it behoves on the present generation to ensure preservation of Vedas and the continuance of Vedic tradition. Without doing this, there is no gain in your showering gold on me.

You may then ask me why I agreed to the “*kanakābhiṣeka*”. Because I accepted it, all of you are gathering like festival crowds. I get many people to listen to me. It serves my purpose. That is why I agreed to fulfill your wishes.

If the prevailing hatred, ill-will and anger are to vanish, those who are born with the duty of preserving Veda, should show them by action, by a simple, peaceful living. Others may not understand the effect of it immediately. The

society may not see the difficulties if the study of the Vedas is forgotten in the same way as they see the difficulties when shops are closed due to "Hartal". But in fact the loss due to stoppage of Vedas is immeasurable. That the life-long sacrifice of some for the preservation of Vedas for the benefit of the society will be realised by all in course of time. It is the Veda which prescribes so much discipline as is required to raise man to his real stature. There are various disciplines for man alone, various disciplines for the society. Discipline means laying "Bunds". Can there be a lake without bunds? If the bunds are removed on the consideration that the flow of water should not be obstructed, all water will go waste; the village will be ruined. What is amazing is that our religion which has the maximum discipline has become one without any discipline whatsoever.

I am wandering from village to village and giving lectures ceaselessly with the object of converting to the discipline, those who ought to be the guides to the society.

In short, what do I want you to do? Śaṅkara before He left his body gave short pieces of advice through five verses. I am telling you what He uttered in the beginning of the very first verse "*Vedo nityam adhīyatām*". (Learn/Chant the Vedas everyday).

Instead of crying that everything has gone and that whatever is left will also vanish soon, it would be proper for us to start the habit of preserving the good things that remain and see that they grow further. If we act in that manner, even those, who are at present following the wrong path will take to the right path in course of time.

It is with this confidence I am putting into your ears about the ancient customs. I do not say it is superior because it is "ancient". But you should not discard it saying "it is useless", just because it is ancient. You should not consider one acceptable and the other not acceptable because it is "modern" or "ancient". Acceptance should be only after examining its usefulness. Let us accept the modern if it is good. Reject the old if it is bad. Similarly, let us reject the bad in the modern, take the good ones, from the old. Even Kalidāsa says so.

I gave lectures on other subjects. I have spoken about *Bhakti*, *Jñānam*, customs, etc. They are good subjects. Yet they are only like branches, flowers and fruits. Their origin has a root and that root is "*Veda*". Without the root there is nothing. There is no point in telling about other subjects leaving this subject of Vedas behind. If this ancient subject is to be discussed, shortcomings have to be told. After spending some days with you talking about other subjects and after having moved as one among you, even to me friendship and liberty with you, have developed. I need not therefore hesitate to point out your shortcomings.

I have therefore taken up the subject of Veda. Have I not come here mainly for this purpose? Still can I abruptly start talking about my mission? After you, who take considerable pleasure in welcoming me, finish your work, I can talk to you about my work, Preservation of the Vedas is that work.

I am asking you, like Vinobaji, to give me one "*Saṁpatti Dāna*". Everyone should study *Vedas* daily and

make your children do it – let this be on one side. It is no doubt an important duty. There is another work much more important than this i.e. Vedic Schools are slowly vanishing. You should, apart from preventing their closure, help them run *Veda Pāṭhaśālas* continuously uninterrupted. For this purpose, you should give financial help both to the students and the teachers. Further, you should establish many more schools to teach Veda, to teach their meaning and to conduct tests on these subjects. During the period of studies, the student should be given stipends. On passing examination, suitable prizes depending on marks obtained should be given. *Veda* can exist only if you do so. For all these, funds are necessary.

There are certain Trusts for this. Many have given lands separately. Like Vinobaji I received. Land ceiling Act has come. We cannot say what will be the title to the land. That is why I am asking for “*Samṗatti dāna*”. Every month on the day of your Birth star, put one Rupee* in a Savings Box, remembering me on your birthday add another five rupees*. At the end of the year send the accumulated amount to *Veda Rakṣaṇa Nidhi* Trust. *(Now this amount stands enhanced to Rs.250/- p.a/ because of steep increase in all costs).

You are spending a lot. You pay taxes. This is the tax I levy on you. For me you have to pay a rupee a month. Thus if everyone does this, just like the saying “Many drops make an ocean”, *Veda Rakṣaṇa Nidhi* Trust will become self sufficient.

OF ALL THINGS, THE ONE I CONSIDER THE MOST IMPORTANT IS THAT THE VEDAS SHOULD BE PRESERVED SOMEHOW OR OTHER, AND HANDED OVER CONTINUOUSLY TO THE NEXT GENERATIONS.

You may ask why there should be *Veda*?

Firstly, if the sounds from the chanting of Mantras and the Vedic Yajñas, and connected services, prevail in the world, there will be great prosperity for all.

Secondly, if unity and peace are to be established, people of all countries, will have to know that *Veda* was once a Universal religion. For this, there should be a group in our country dedicating their entire lives for the *Vedas*. In order, thus, to have prosperity and mental peace, now and for ever, not only in our country but also all over the world, I am emphasising that preservation of *Veda* is very important.

There should be no Brahmin in the next generation who has not studied Veda. Nowhere it is said that Brahmins are for controlling and for ruling others. For the sake of unity in this country as well as all over the world, I am asking that Brahmin should preserve the very ancient *Dharma* he is possessing.

It may be asked how the existence of a small group here in our country is going to cause prosperity to the whole world. Take a power house. Only four persons are working there. But the whole town gets light. If those four persons do not work, the whole town goes into darkness. Similarly it will be sufficient if there are only a few to hold the Vedic Flame for Universal prosperity.

What is the different between “For me” and “For you”. Both “you” and “I” are the same. My work is your work. If the Veda is saved, that is the work which gives the greatest credit to all. By doing it, you get prosperity.

OM TAT SAT



MOKṢA IN VEDĀNTA

T. P. RAMACHANDRAN

1. According to Advaita

To all schools of Vedānta, liberation consists in the *jīva* realizing Brahman. In what sense is this realization fulfilled is where they differ. Broadly speaking, there is a difference between Advaita and all the other schools of Vedānta, which are theistic in nature. To Advaita, Brahman is beyond qualities (*nirguṇa*) and the *jīva* in its real nature is non-different from Brahman. The *jīva* appears to be different on account of ignorance (*avidyā*). The world, including the bodies and minds of living beings, is an illusion (*mithyā*). The *jīva* falsely identifies itself with a mind and body and thereby imagines that it is different from Brahman and from other *jīvas* similarly situated. Hence release is possible only by *jñāna*. *Jñāna* in Advaita ultimately consists in the *jīva* experiencing its non-difference from Brahman.

The experience of non-difference could happen even while the body lives. This is called *jīvanmukti*. The released one is indifferent to the body. The body lives on only to the

sight of others who are still in ignorance. When the momentum imparted to the body at birth by the *karma* inherited from the previous life (*prārabdha-karma*) ends, the body falls off. The released soul is indifferent even to this. The separation of the body from the *jīvanmukta* is called *videha-mukti*, purely as a matter of courtesy. As the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* puts it, “the liberated one is liberated” (*vimuktaśca vimucyate*) (II, 2.1). *Jīvanmukti* is also called *sadyo-mukti*, because it occurs suddenly the moment *avidyā* is overcome irrespective of the body.

2. According to theistic Vedānta

For all Vedānta schools other than Advaita, Brahman is with qualities (*saguṇa*), the world is real, and the souls are different from Brahman, though related to him in one way or another. *Mokṣa* consists in the soul attaining intimate union – not identity – with *Saguṇa Brahman*, also called *Īśvara*. The chief means to *mokṣa* here is intense *bhakti* informed by the knowledge (*jñāna*) of the nature of *Īśvara*. And *Īśvara* can be worshipped in two forms, namely *Viṣṇu* and *Śiva*, and their respective manifestations. *Īśvara* pervades the whole universe (*sarvavyāpī*). He is also immanent in all souls (*sarva-bhūtāntarātmā*). Yet, to facilitate contemplation by the devotee, he resides in the highest of the fourteen worlds, namely *satya-loka*. Devotees of *Viṣṇu* call it *Viṣṇu-loka* and those of *Śiva* call it *Śiva-loka*. We have now to offer a clarification regarding *Brahmā* before resuming the main topic.

Brahmā, also called *Hiraṇyagarbha*, is traditionally associated with *Viṣṇu* and *Śiva* under the concept of the trinity of Godhead (*trimūrti*). Hence *satya-loka*, the abode of *Viṣṇu* and *Śiva*, is also called *Brahma-loka*. But it must

be remembered that Brahmā is not equal to Viṣṇu and Śiva. Unlike them, Brahmā has repeated origin and end. At the beginning of a *mahā-kalpa*, Brahmā emerges from Viṣṇu and carries out the task of creating the world. At the end of the *kalpa*, Brahmā, along with all that he had created, merges in Viṣṇu to lie latent till the beginning of the next *kalpa*. This is the reason why Brahmā is not regarded as an object of worship. He is similar to the devas, though superior to them. As in their case, there are acts of sacrifice (*yajña*) and meditation (*upāsanā*) to please Brahmā. But these efforts do not lead to liberation; they only earn for the practiser the status of a *siddha* by which he could stay in any of the worlds beyond *svarga*, from *mahaḥ* to *satyaḥ*, for a whole *mahā-kalpa*.

To come back to the main topic, we have said that, according to theistic Vedānta, liberation consists in the soul attaining intimate union with Īśvara. This state is called *sāyujya*. It is preceded by three earlier stages. They are called *sālokya*, *sāmīpya*, and *sārūpya* in that order. The four expressions mean: (1) entering the abode of God, (2) getting nearer to him, (3) acquiring his form, and (4) merging in him. The four stages stand for four decreasing degrees in the sense of difference which the soul always feels from God. Even in *sāyujya*, the sense of difference does not disappear; there is only the utmost intimacy with God. This kind of release happens only after death, the body being part of reality, though not permanent. So theistic Vedānta recognizes only *videha-mukti*. Wherever it uses the expression *jīvan-mukti*, it is only as a word of praise to the great devotee who, being on the verge of release, is as good as released.

The attainment of Īśvara is different from all other attainments after death. To make this clear, two paths for the soul after death are described. We shall state them briefly. One is called the southern path (*dakṣiṇa-mārga*). It is for all souls who have not secured the qualifications for release, but have earned merits (*puṇya*) in various degrees through good actions. There are three possibilities here. (a) Most souls, whose merits and demerits are balanced, go to the world of manes (*bhuvah*), and when their merits have been enjoyed, they are reborn as human beings on earth (*bhūh*) according to their remaining stock of *karma*. (b) Those who have pleased the celestials (*devas*) through sacrifices reach the world of devas (*suvah*). After enjoying their company for a long period, they return to the human world to be born under auspicious circumstances. (c) As we have mentioned earlier, those who have pleased Brahmā himself reach even the world of Brahmā and live there as siddhas but only to be reborn long afterwards along with Brahmā and all the rest. Thus there is no scope for liberation so long as there is a taste for enjoyment. (See *Bhagavad-Gītā*, VIII, 16).

In contrast to all those who take the southern path, there is a northern path (*uttara-mārga*) for one who desires nothing but liberation by realizing Īśvara. Led by deities starting from the sun, they gradually reach the abode of Īśvara (*sālokya*) and eventually merge in him (*sāyujya*). There is no rebirth for such a one. The Lord makes this absolutely clear to Arjuna in the eighth chapter of the *Bhagavad-Gītā*, especially in verses 21, 24, and 26.

3. Accommodation of the theistic view in Advaita

The attitude of Advaita to the theistic view of *mokṣa* is fully favourable and inclusive. Far from denying it, Advaita only goes beyond it. The soul which has attained *sāyujya* with Īśvara could subsequently attain *mukti* in the Advaita sense. This happens by the grace of Īśvara who bestows on that soul the experience that he is really non-different from Brahman, who is *nirguṇa*. This becomes possible because *bhakti*, unlike *karma*, has the capacity to be transformed into *jñāna* in the Advaita sense. *Karma* always involves the difference between doer, deed, and result. But the inner aim and urge of *bhakti* is to become one with the object of love. The possibility of *bhakti* fructifying into *jñāna* by God's grace is assured by significant passages like the following.

भक्त्या मां अभिजानाति
 यावान् यश्चास्मि तत्त्वतः।
 ततो मां तत्त्वतो ज्ञात्वा
 विशते तदनन्तरम्॥

“By means of (*parā-*)*bhakti*, the *bhakta* understands fully the truth of my nature. Having thus known me, he becomes non-different from me”. (*Bhagavad-Gītā*, XVIII, 55). Also see *Śrīmad-Bhāgavata*, III, 27, vv. 21-30).

In the scheme of Advaita, this kind of release is described as *krama-mukti*, because it involves stages. It is an accommodation done with due respect for those who are not yet ripe for *jīvan-mukti* but who are fully endowed with pure selfless devotion to Saḡuṇa Brahman. It is in this spirit that Ācārya Śaṅkara has offered the *phala-śruti* to

many of his hymns to the personal forms of Brahman. The fruit of singing these hymns is stated to be the attainment of the presence of God in these very forms in the highest of the worlds. Here are some instances.

लभेत् स्कन्दसायुज्यमन्ते नरः सः (*Subrahmanya-bhujāṅgam*)

स्यादीश्वरत्वं स्वतः (*Śrī Dakṣiṇāmūrtyaṣṭakam*)

शतायुरन्ते शिवलोकमेति (*Umā-maheśvara-stotram*)

विष्णुलोकं स गच्छति (*Gaṅgāṣṭakam*)

स गच्छेत्परमं पदम् (*Prāta-smaraṇa-stotram*)

The *phala-sruti* coming at the end of Śrī Śaṅkara's *Hari-stuti* says that this same poem will confer the two levels of *mukti* on two levels of aspirants. He who reads this poem with devotion but without understanding its deeper meaning (which is Advaita) will attain Viṣṇu-loka in the first instance. (Here is an instance of *krama-mukti*). But he who comprehends the deeper import will attain *jīvan-mukti* itself. The passage runs thus –

इत्थं स्तोत्रं भक्तजनेड्यं भवभीति-

ध्वान्ताकार्भं भगवत्पादीयमिदं यः।

विष्णोर्लोकं पठति शृणोति वृजति ज्ञो

ज्ञानं ज्ञेयं स्वात्मनि चाप्नोति मनुष्यः ॥¹

1. Vide N. Veezhinathan, *In Adoration of the Self* (The *Haristuti* of Śaṅkara with the commentary *Haritattvamuktāvalī* of Svayaṁ-prakāśayati): The Ādi Śaṅkara Advaita Research Centre, Chennai, 2001, pp. 106-07. The above verse (no. 44) has been added by the commentator. This is clear from the word "Bhagavatpāda" which is applied in reverence to Ādi Śaṅkara, the author of the poem.



SPIRITUALITY IN THE GLOBAL SOCIETY*

KARAN SINGH

We live in an age of tremendous turmoil and transition with the old collapsing and the new struggling to be born, and we find ourselves precariously poised between a disappearing past and an indeterminate future. The advances of science and technology have been truly extraordinary, including breaking of the Space barrier by Yuri Gagarin, Space travel, instant communications, unraveling the human genome, the large Hadron Collider, the Internet and the World Wide Web, which have transformed the texture of our lives in our very lifetimes. The inexorable pace of change appears to accelerate as we hurtle into the global society astride the irreversible arrow of time, and the crisis faced by Humanity is also deepening.

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The 20th century saw the end of Colonialism, Fascism, Marxism-Leninism and also heralded the collapse of unrestricted Capitalism, and Globalization has emerged as the new watchword. But while globalization has certainly brought tremendous benefits in many fields including trade, commerce, tourism and international cultural exchanges, it also has its darker side. Pandemics, the abominable practice of human trafficking, arms smuggling, drug trafficking, and terrorism have assumed global dimensions. Clearly, if humanity is to survive in a global society that is sane, secure and sustainable, the present hyperconsumerist, ultra-promiscuous and super-materialistic lifestyle will have to yield way to more holistic paradigm in which spirituality plays a pivotal role. I would like here to refer to the Earth Charter which was released in 2000 A.D. It is, to my mind, the most comprehensive articulation of ecological, social, interfaith and life-affirming values ever attempted, and I would urge that it should be revisited at the website <<http://www.earthcharter.org>>.

Our present societal milieu impels us to reflect deeply on how the entire concept of spirituality needs to be rearticulated in the light of the paradigms of the emerging global society. In this exercise, the first point is the relationship between spirituality and the world's great religions. Until recently both were considered to be closely interconnected, one flowing from the other, but of late there is a growing view that religion, in fact, can sometimes have negative and exclusivist connotations, whereas spirituality transcends barriers of race and religion, sex and sexual preference, language and nationality, and is, therefore, best

suited for the emerging global society. In my view what we need is not a wholesale rejection of religion but a reassertion of certain universal precepts that will enable us to cope with the challenges and hazards of globalization. Many of them are to be found in humanity's great religious traditions, but they need to be rediscovered, renewed and reaffirmed in the contemporary context. I will attempt to do so from the viewpoint of the world's most ancient continuing religion, Hinduism, and from India, the mother of spirituality.

The first such precept, and perhaps the most fundamental, is to accept that there are multiple paths to the divine. As the *Rg-Veda* says:

ekam sat viprāḥ bahudhā vadanti

“The Truth is one; the wise call it by many names”

It is *prima facie* the height of hubris to claim that any one religion alone holds the monopoly of Truth. Had this been the divine will, we would not have had more than a dozen major religions with hundreds of sects flourishing on the planet. Who are we, denizens of a tiny speck of dust in the infinite universe around us, to claim that the divine can appear only in this form, in this place and at this time? Steven Hawking, probably the greatest living scientist, has said that there are at least a hundred billion galaxies in the universe each containing tens of millions of stars with their own planetary systems. If that be so, then how can we know in what form and in what circumstances the illimitable divine has manifested itself elsewhere in the universe, and what levels of consciousness may have the development on other worlds.

In the Hindu tradition the universe itself is conceptualised as a manifestation of the divine, and Śiva Naṭarāja as the supreme creator whose eternal cosmic dance to celestial rhythms brings billions of galaxies into being, whose hands hold the promise of individual salvation, and in whose conflagration ultimately all manifestation perishes in the endless cycles of Time. Be that as it may, my point is that it is unacceptable for any one religion to claim a monopoly of Truth. I may proclaim that *my* religion is best, but that gives me no right to do violence to other religions, far less to attack and kill fellow human beings in the name of religion. The irony is that each religion considers *its* version of the divine to be benevolent and compassionate. I worship Lord Śiva, who is defined as *karuṇāvatāram*, the embodiment of compassion; Muslims begin their prayer with *Bismillahir Rahman ir Rahim—Allah*, the merciful, the beneficent. Christians believe that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, mounted the Cross to atone for the sins of humanity. But despite these beliefs, the history of mankind from its very dawn has been scarred with inter-religious conflicts that to this day cause distress and devastation around the world. Let us be clear, until there is harmony and understanding between religions there will never be peace on earth.

The Interfaith movement, with which I have been closely involved for several decades, has been working towards bringing about this harmony. Beginning in 1893 with the first Parliament of the World's Religions in Chicago and coming down to the fifth Parliament in Melbourne last year, there has been over a century of Interfaith activity

around the world. I recall that here in Moscow we gathered in 1990 to celebrate the thousandth anniversary of the advent of Christianity in this country, and there was an impressive Interfaith gathering in the Kremlin which was attended, among others, by Mikhail Gorbachev. Despite all these meetings, however, the Interfaith movement seems to remain peripheral to human consciousness, and this needs deep thought and effective action from a gathering such as this. If we are to usher in a new spirituality, its underpinning has to be the acceptance of the profound precept of multiple paths to the divine. We must also acknowledge that there may be millions who do not profess any religious belief at all, or at least rebel against any denominational or exclusivist doctrine.

The second precept, which is particularly appropriate in the global society, is that of the world as a family – *vasudhaiva kuṭumbakam* – enunciated many thousands of years ago in India. It is only now with the astounding breakthroughs in science and technology that this has come within the realm of possibility. Instant communication has literally knit the world into a global community, and the Internet has opened the gateways to human interaction transcending all barriers of space and time. However, here again we are up against a major problem. The Westphalian concept of fully sovereign nation-states may have served a useful purpose in the evolution of human society over a period of time, but now, when we are striving to move forward towards a seamlessly knit global society, this very concept seems to have become a hindrance. Even after the end of the Cold War there have been dozens of localized

conflicts which have claimed millions of lives and made refugees of many more millions around the world.

In fact the nation-states are now being transcended by regional associations, notably the European Union and ASEAN, and in such collectives the states, while retaining their individuality, have synergized their strengths and built upon their limitations to bring into being more cohesive and effective communities. In my view this is a positive path that opens new vistas with rich possibilities that nations need to seriously explore. Instead of two hundred or so nation states, we should move into a situation with about a dozen regional clusters, and those, in turn, could then develop into what has been eloquently described by the poet as "the Parliament of Man, the Federation of the World". The United Nations as at present constituted is frozen in a time warp and has remained inflexible for more than six decades. As a result, with the Security Council's permanent members representing well under half of the world's population, it is incapable of articulating the aspirations of a large segment of people and reflecting the vastly changed political situation since 1945.

Let it also be remembered, the "world as a family" is not the same thing as the "world as a market". The family is a supportive and humanising social entity, whereas the market is often manipulative and exploitative in nature. If we really aspire for a sustainable world order we will have to reorganize the global economy in a way that uplifts the one-third of the world's population living below the poverty line to a way of life where they receive at least the minimum inputs necessary for a decent human existence.

I have based my vision of the new spirituality on these three precepts – the essential harmony of religions, the world as a family and the imperative of eradicating poverty because, in my view, without addressing these complex issues any discourse on spirituality becomes an empty exercise. One of our great savants, Svāmi Vivekananda, used to say that preaching spirituality to someone who is starving is insulting him, feed him first and then give him your religion.

Accepting the premise of the “world as a family” also involves a radical shift in our attitude towards nurturing the planet. I had the privilege of being a member of the Indian delegation to the first UN Conference on the Human Environment held in Stockholm in 1972. Since then there has been an exponential increase both in public awareness regarding the hazards of environmental pollution, as also in the pollution itself, particularly carbon emissions, climate change and the rising of oceans. In the Hindu view we look upon the human race as part of nature, by no means enjoying dominion or the right to exploit and destroy the natural environment. The 63 verses of the Hymn to the Earth in the *Atharva Veda* several thousand years ago have an extraordinary articulation of ecological values, and clearly portray the reverence in which the Earth was held in those times, and which we have now to rediscover. I will quote only five of these verses:

“Earth, in which lie the sea, the river and other waters,
in which food and cornfields have come to be,
in which live all that breathes and that moves,
may she confer on us the finest of her yield.

Earth, in which the waters, common to all,
 moving on all sides, flow unfailing, day and night,
 may she pour on us milk in many streams,
 and endow us with luster.

Pleasant be Thy hills, O Earth,
 Thy snow-clad mountains and Thy woods!
 On Earth - brown, black, ruddy and multi-coloured.
 The firm Earth protected by Indra,
 On this Earth I stand, unvanquished, unslain and unhurt.

May Earth with people who speak various tongues,
 and those who have various religious rites
 according to their places of abode,
 pour for me treasure in a thousand streams
 like a constant cow that never fails.

Whatever I dig from the Earth,
 may that have quick growth again,
 O purifier, May we not injure Thy vital or Thy heart".

It is planet Earth, known as "Gaia" in the Greek tradition and "Bhavānī Vasundharā" in the Hindu, that has nurtured consciousness up from the slime of the primeval ocean to where we are today. Will we convert it into a burnt out cinder circling the sun unto eternity, or will we develop the wisdom and compassion even at this late hour, to save it from destruction. Any talk of spirituality, clearly has to include a renewed reverence for the Earth, and the creatures that inhabit it, whether it is the highly endangered tigers in Asia, or the magnificent whales in the Pacific. In 1986 a meeting was held in the Great Cathedral of St. Francis of Assisi in which representatives from various religions

prepared "*Declarations on Man and Nature*". I had the privilege of writing the Hindu Declaration. Reading those documents one is struck by the commonality of views between the various religions regarding Earth and the natural environment. Unfortunately, in our zeal for unplanned and reckless development we have inflicted serious damage upon the Earth in the last century, and unless there is a drastic reordering of our priorities this will continue to escalate in the years and decades ahead. The horrific oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, that will cause calamitous damage to human, ocean and plant life, is a dramatic example of how our obsessive search for oil has ended up grievously wounding the planet. This is far removed from the spirituality we seek in the global society.

We must now define what spirituality actually is. My definition would be that it is the attempt to access the deepest and highest power, whether we call it God, the Ātman, the Buddha, Nature or by any other name, and whether we consider it to be within our deeper selves or outside of us. This yearning for unity with the divine is the essential feature of spirituality. In a beautiful poem Francis Thompson has the following lines:

“Not where the wheeling systems darken,
And our benumbed conceiving soars!
The drift of pinions, would we hearken,
Beats at our own clay-shuttered doors

The angels keep there ancient places,
Turn but a stone and start a wing,
“Tis ye, ‘tis your estranged faces,
That miss the many-splendoured thing”.

It is the quest for "the many-splendoured thing" that represents the essence of spirituality, what the Bible calls "the light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world"; what the Sufis call "the Noor-i-Ruhani", what Buddhists call "the Bodhi-Citta", what the Hindu seer means when he exclaims "I have seen that Great Being shining like a thousand suns beyond the darkness". In every religious tradition there is this transcendent and luminous dimension of spirituality, the belief that each human being embodies a spark of the divine, and that fanning it into the shining fire of spiritual realization is the highest meaning and purpose of our lives.

In the Hindu tradition there are four major paths to bring about this union or "Yoga", a word that comes from the same root as the English word "yoke" and implies the ways of relating the divine within us with the all-pervasive divine without; God immanent with God transcendent, which inevitably involves altered levels of consciousness. These four great highways, of course, have hundreds of subsidiary paths and practices.

The first is what we call *Jñāna-Yoga* or the way of Wisdom. This is based largely on the teachings of the Upaniṣads and, in the West, would be somewhat akin to the Platonic dialogues, the effort to cleanse and control the fluctuating mind so that it is able to discriminate between the eternal and the ephemeral. The second path is known as the *Bhakti-Yoga*, the way of Devotion. While the *Jñāna-Yoga* does not necessarily need an anthropomorphic form, in the *Bhakti-Yoga*, which involves an overwhelming emotional relationship with the divine, such a form is consid-

ered necessary, whether that is Jesus Christ, or Lord Śiva or a Bodhisattva or any other. In this category come great saints who have literally fallen in love with the divine. India has had numerous such saints and, in the West, there have been people like St. Francis of Assisi, St. Theresa of Avilla and St. John of the Cross. In Islam there are the glorious compositions, the *Masnavi*, of Mewlana Jalal-ad-Din Rumi which he poured out in devotion to his spiritual guide, Shams-e-Tabrizi.

If the *Jñāna-Yoga* is the way of clarifying the mind and *Bhakti-Yoga* the way of the heart, the third major path is called *Karma-Yoga*, the way of dedicated works. It is a powerful means of spiritual growth as it involves dedication of whatever we do to our chosen form of the divine. Work done with this attitude of mind brings us closer to our goal of *Yoga*. This is the path of good works epitomized by Martha in the Bible, by Mother Teresa's *Sisters of Charity*, the Ramakrishna Mission and other institutions dedicated to serving the poor, the needy and those in pain. However, it must be remembered that in the *Karma-Yoga* these tasks must be undertaken in a spirit of devotion and dedication to the divine, and not only for "doing good". The fourth path is the *Rāja-Yoga*, the royal path, and this involves the understanding of hidden powers within the human body that can be accessed through the process of *Hatha-Yoga*, which includes various physical and breathing exercises that, in the West, are generally referred to as "Yoga". It is believed that we can attain higher levels of consciousness with this type of *Yoga* that brings us closer to the divine. The teachings of Hermes Trimajestus, Meister Eckhart and

other great Western mystics are of great value in this context, as they point to the possibility of transformation of consciousness, as are the teachings of C.G. Jung leading finally to what Christians call the “*beatific vision*”, the Buddhists, *Nirvāṇa* and the Hindus, *Ātma-darśana*.

I would like to dwell for a moment on *Rāja-Yoga* and its implications for the transmutation of consciousness. In the Hindu tradition it is believed that there is a spiritual energy called the *Kuṇḍalinī* which resides coiled up like a serpent at the base of the spine. Under certain circumstance and special breathing and other exercises, this power can be aroused so that it moves up the spine, and as it does so it energises seven *cakras* or plexuses from the base of the spine right up to the brain. The awakening of these *cakras* involves attaining new levels of consciousness, until finally the power floods into the brain thereby leading the practitioner to the bliss of illumination. This whole process based upon Patañjali’s classical *Yoga-sūtras* has been widely expanded in many significant texts down to the present day.

The basic premise here is the same as the Keynote of this Conference, which is the Consciousness Revolution. Practicing *Kuṇḍalinī-Yoga* of course involves certain essential preliminary disciplines without which the whole procedure is dangerous and could have negative reactions. In recent times, there have been several consciousness altering procedures including drugs. Those who have taken LSD report encountering the most astounding dimensions of consciousness which are far beyond our normal mind. It is, therefore, clear that consciousness is not a static

concept, it varies from species to species, from person to person and within each individual from time to time.

The great evolutionary philosopher Śrī Aurobindo has pointed out that there is no good reason to believe that evolution has concluded with the advent of normal human consciousness. He asserts that in the same way as life evolved from mineral, vegetable, animal into human dimensions, the evolutionary process is bound to continue into the future. Man, in this view, is an intermediate creature, somewhere between the animal and the divine, a “work in progress” which needs careful attention. He holds that with the advent of Man, for the first time there is a species on earth which is conscious of itself, and therefore has the unique opportunity to co-operate with the forces of evolution and telescope what would otherwise take millions of years into a much shorter time span. He postulates many different levels of consciousness above the human, he speaks of the Overmind and then the Supermind, and his *yoga* revolves around an attempt to bring these forces down and fix them in the earth consciousness.

The core of the Transpersonal Psychology movement has revolved around consciousness research. It is a matter of great pleasure that my good friend Dr. Stanislav Grof, who can justly be called the father of Transpersonal psychology, is attending this conference along with his wife and collaborator Christina. Consciousness research, mapping the brain, studying the mind-body relationship, drawing upon rich material that comes to us in our dreams are all means that help us in reaching a deeper understanding of our spiritual quest, and represent the cutting edge of

science, philosophy and psychology. I have had the pleasure of attending several International Transpersonal Conferences in Mumbai, Davos, Prague and Kyoto. In each one there was a lively and creative dialogue between practitioners as well as laity, between veterans like Stan and novices like me, between scholars and gurus from around the world.

It is indeed fitting that this Conference is being held in Russia after the collapse of the restrictive and atheistic regime that ruled it for seventy years. Let me take you back half a century. In 1961 my wife, who regrettably passed away just a year ago, and I visited the then Soviet Union as guests of Nikita Khurshchev, General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. In the course of a small dinner he gave for us in the Kremlin I asked him whether it was possible to be a believer and also a member of the CPSU. He replied in the negative. He said that while they respected religious beliefs, to be a member of the CPSU it was necessary to be an atheist, as that was a cardinal principle of Marxism-Leninism. It is indeed amazing that despite three generations under an atheistic regime, when Russia celebrated the thousandth anniversary of Christianity there was a remarkable outpouring of religious fervour.

Another example of this phenomenon was Mongolia. The Marxist regime there broke the Buddhist temples, burnt the scriptures, killed and tortured their monks. Yet as soon as that regime was overthrown there was an incredible craving for Buddhism. The Indian Ambassador to Mongolia was Kushok Bakula, the venerated Head Lama of Ladakh,

who almost single-handedly re-established Buddhism there. I was witness to this when I visited Ulan Bator to inaugurate a school for Buddhist priests that he had established. These examples show how deep-rooted the religious impulse is. However, there is a real danger of the pendulum swinging too far towards the other side, towards fanaticism, fundamentalism and violence. What we need, therefore, and what spirituality can provide, is an approach that incorporates the best of our religious traditions without falling into the trap of dogmatism and exclusivist posturing.

Mahatma Gandhi who was deeply influenced, among others, by the great author Leo Tolstoy, preached throughout his life the path of non-violence, love and compassion. When followed to their logical conclusion, these clearly represent a transformation of consciousness. Gandhiji's thought not only enthused millions of people in India in their struggle for freedom, but also had worldwide ramifications as with Nelson Mandela in the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa and Martin Luther King, Jr with the civil rights movement in the United States, Gandhi's famous saying "an eye for an eye will make everyone blind", and "there is enough for everyone's need, but not enough for anyone's greed", have profound implications for the global society which is emerging before our very eyes. Representing practical spirituality at its best. Gandhi remains an iconic figure for lovers of peace around the world. In this hour of crisis, humanity would be well advised to take heed of the wisdom represented by a frail man in a loin cloth whose conviction and faith shook the world, and who finally fell to an assassin's bullet.

International terrorism in the name of religion is one of the most tragic developments of recent times. Whatever may be the provocations and historic grievances, of which there are many, recourse to violence targeting innocent men, women and children, as in terrorist attacks the world from 9/11 in New York to 26/11 in Mumbai, are totally unacceptable and have been condemned widely by religious leaders. One of the main challenges that the new spirituality will have to face boldly is the growing nexus between criminal elements around the world, including those based upon religious fundamentalism and fanaticism. These represent the antithesis of spirituality, the "shadow" as Jung would have it, which is being thrown by the glitter and glory of our technological civilization. The integration of the shadow is one of the most important challenges in post-Jungian psychology, and this is a matter upon which a gathering like this will have to ponder seriously.

Transpersonal Psychology provides an excellent methodology for steering our minds through the Scylla of nihilism and the Charybdis of fanaticism. It calls upon us to shed our prejudices and open ourselves to higher aspirations and powers. It is my sincere hope that this significant Conference which has brought together so many distinguished psychologists, scientists and scholars from around the world, will provide a fresh impetus to the Transpersonal Psychology movement, and at the same time help in bridging religious and cultural differences between the great civilizations of the human race. Humanity has to break out of the dark valleys of conflict in the name of religion and strive towards the sun-lit upland of a new spirituality, a new

paradigm of mutual understanding, wisdom and compassion that will help us to build a refulgent global society.

I am profoundly impressed by the breadth and depth of the programme that our Russian hosts have meticulously organized for us here. It is a veritable feast of intellectual, psychological and spiritual thought, in which outstanding thinkers and practitioners from around the world will surely produce a unique synergy for which I must warmly congratulate Vladimir Maykov and his team who have laboured for months to create this great event. I consider it a privilege to have been asked to inaugurate this important gathering, and I do so with an ancient Sanskrit verse that exhorts us to work together, to think together, to achieve together and to eliminate every shred of hatred that may exist between us:

सहनाववतु, सहनौ भुनक्तु,
 सहवीर्यं करवावहै, तेजस्विना वधीतमस्तु
 मा विद्विषावहै
 ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः॥



THE ABSOLUTE AND GOD ACCORDING TO ADVAITA VEDĀNTA

R. BALASUBRAMANIAN

1. *Overview*

The overview as well as the orientation of this paper can be brought out through a few preliminary observations. First of all, Advaita Vedānta speaks of the real, which is one without a second, as the Absolute and as God on the basis of the distinction between two standpoints – absolute and relative. From the absolute standpoint, the real is called the Absolute or the Ultimate; and from the relative standpoint, it is called God. It means that the terms “Absolute” and “God” are used with reference to one and the same entity from two perspectives. Secondly, though Advaita recognizes the importance of theism, it holds that theism is not final as it involves duality. The dualism of the theistic position must pave way to non-dualism which is the ultimate truth. Advaita, therefore, is trans-theistic and not anti-theistic. Thirdly, the real cannot be known through perception and other sources of knowledge. It can be known only through scripture. It

may be pointed out here that even scripture cannot describe it affirmatively as such-and-such; it can reveal the nature of the real only negatively, *via negativa*, as what it is not. Fourthly, since the ultimate is devoid of qualities and relations, names and forms, it can be spoken of as Nothing, as Void, not in the sense that it does not exist, but in the sense that it is no thing or phenomenon we are familiar with in our day-to-day experience. Fifthly, the real is transcendental, and so we have to search for it and discover it in our experience. The philosophical investigation, which is a cognitive enterprise, is transcendently grounded. Sixthly, the Ultimate which is non-relational and unoriginated and which is the ground of the world, is no other than the Self of the human being. Since the Self in man is limited by the mind-sense-body complex with which it is associated, it *appears* to be different from the Ultimate, even so the Self in man is no other than the Ultimate. Finally, according to Advaita to know the Self is to be the Self. Self-knowledge is unique. It is not knowledge *of* the Self involving subject and object relation. Knowing the Self is not like knowing the objects of the world through all kinds of relations. It is a special kind of knowing in which knowing and being are identical.

2. *Absolute and Relative Standpoints*

Man is in the state of ignorance (*avidyā*) during his empirical existence. Not knowing the real, he thinks of himself as a finite limited being thrown into the pluralistic universe of sentient and insentient objects. He knows that his knowledge as well as his power is limited; he also knows that he is subject to likes and dislikes and that his love for others is

restricted to a small group. He is ignorant not only of the things of the world, but also of himself. The redeeming feature in a man's life is the fact that he knows that he is ignorant.

Knowledge worth the name is knowledge of the Ultimate, because the Ultimate alone is worthy of knowing. That is why the *Upaniṣad* says that the Self (*Ātman*) should be realized – should be heard of, reflected on, and contemplated upon.¹ Śaṅkara in his commentary on this text says that the Self should be realized, because it is worthy of realization. The Self is worthy of realization for the reason that, when the Self is known, everything else which is *dependent* on it comes to be known.² “*Brahman*”, “*Ātman*”, “*Sat*” – these are the Upaniṣadic terms by which the Ultimate is spoken of. So long as a person does not know the Ultimate, even though he knows everything else, he is still ignorant. Nārada as portrayed at the commencement of the Seventh Chapter of the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* is a classic example in this regard. When Nārada approaches Sanatkumāra for instruction, the latter asks him what he knows so that he could teach him what he does not know. Nārada, therefore, enumerates the various disciplines in which he is proficient – the scriptures such as the Vedas and the epics, grammar, mathematics, and astronomy, logic, ethics, and politics, and so on. But still he is in sorrow, because he does not know the Self. And so he requests Sanatkumāra to enlighten him about the Self as the knowledge of the Self alone will help him to cross over sorrow. The knowledge which Nārada possessed when he approached Sanatkumāra for instruction is “lower knowledge” as it relates to everything

other than the Self; and “lower knowledge”, Śaṅkara holds, is ignorance. The point is that so long as a person does not know the Ultimate, he is in the state of ignorance. And when he knows the Ultimate, that is to say, when he attains Self-knowledge, he is in the state of knowledge. By way of contrast to “lower knowledge”, self-knowledge, i.e. knowledge of the Ultimate is called “higher knowledge”.

In the state of ignorance a person experiences a plurality of objects of various kinds including empirical dualities. As contrasted with this, in the state of knowledge a person who knows the Ultimate has no experience of plurality. As stated earlier, one who knows the Self, which is the Ultimate, the Infinite, remains as the Self; that is to say, everything has become the Self and so one does not experience plurality. The contrast between the state of ignorance and the state of knowledge is vividly brought out in many places in the *Upaniṣad*. Consider, for example, the following passage:

Because when there is duality, as it were, then one smells something, one sees something, one hears something....But when to the knower of Brahman everything has become the Self, then what should one smell and through what, what should one see and through what, what should one hear and through what....?³

In Advaita, the state of knowledge is called *pāramārthika*, whereas the state of ignorance is called *vyāvahārika*. The term “*vyāvahārika*” is comprehensive enough to include everything other than the Ultimate – the starry heavens above and the moral law within, the choir of heaven and

the furniture of earth, the cosmic order and man's triple states of experience, waking, dream, and deep sleep. Even God who, as the cause of the world, is related to the world, is brought within the realm of the *vyāvahārika*. The expression "absolute standpoint" refers to the state of knowledge called *pāramārthika*, and the expression "relative standpoint" refers to the state of ignorance called "*vyāvahārika*".

What distinguishes man from other animals is his competence for knowledge and eligibility for the performance of religious duties.⁴ The point to be noted here is that man, who is equipped with the mind,⁵ the marvellous instrument indispensable for the acquisition of knowledge of everything, has the ability for acquiring knowledge of the Ultimate through the study of scripture under the guidance of a competent teacher followed by rational reflection and contemplation on the content of scripture. When we speak of man's progress from less knowledge to more knowledge, it is progress within the state of ignorance. Strictly speaking, it is no progress at all, as it does not help him to overcome his sorrow. What is required is progress from the state of ignorance to the state of knowledge, from the *vyāvahārika* to the *pāramārthika*, from "lower knowledge" to "higher knowledge". At the *vyāvahārika* level, a person experiences plurality. He considers himself different from the objects of the physical world. Also, he is inclined to think that the physical world must have been created by God and that being finite and limited he is not only different from God, but is dependent on Him as well. In short, he accepts the pluralism of God,

man, and the world. However, when he knows the Ultimate, there is a change of vision in him such that he experiences unity in the place of plurality. Just as there is change of perspective with reference to the value system of our day-to-day life as we grow, even so there is change of perspective when there is transition from the *vyāvahārika* to the *pāramārthika*. Referring to the change of perspective following the dawn of knowledge, Gauḍapāda observes that all kinds of distinctions such as the teacher, the taught, scripture and its teaching, which are presupposed for the purpose of instruction to the disciple will disappear when the truth is known.⁶

3. Immanent Metaphysics

Making use of the distinction between immanent metaphysics and transcendent metaphysics, we can say that the metaphysics of Advaita is immanent metaphysics inasmuch as the Ultimate which is to be discovered is immanent in our experience. According to Advaita, metaphysics which is inquiry into the nature of reality must analyse the data of our experience with a view to discover the real in it. It means that the real which is immanent in our experience remains concealed in it. What prevents us from seeing the real is the false, which is not real; the real, that is to say, remains concealed by what is not real. Metaphysics, therefore, aims at *dis-covering* the real by removing the covering or the veil put up by the false. It means that the real cannot be discovered unless we are able to identify the false and discard it through inquiry. The discrimination of the real from the not-real can be done only on the basis of

the criterion of the real and of the false. Also, the criterion itself must be transcendently grounded, if it is to be accepted.

4. *The Absolute and God*

The purpose of definition is to distinguish the thing defined from everything else. There are two ways in which a thing may be defined. We may define a thing in terms of its *essential nature*, as when we say, "Man is a rational animal". Or, we may define a thing in terms of its *accidental attributes*, as when we say, "Man is a dress-wearing animal". The two kinds of definition are called *svarūpa-lakṣaṇa* and *taṭastha-lakṣaṇa* respectively. "That is the essential nature (*svarūpa-lakṣaṇa*) of a thing which is present in that thing so long as it lasts and distinguishes it from the rest."⁷ Whatever man is and does, rationality constitutes his essential nature; and we distinguish man from other animals with reference to his essential nature. "That is the qualification *per accidens* (*taṭastha-lakṣaṇa*) of a thing which remains in that thing only for a time and distinguishes it from the rest."⁸ Wearing dress or walking with the help of a stick are accidental attributes of man. Though they may help to differentiate man from others, they do not constitute the essential nature of man.

The *Upaniṣads* define the Ultimate in two ways – in terms of its essential nature as well as through its accidental attribute. Brahman, the Ultimate, the *Upaniṣad* says, is "the real, knowledge, infinite."⁹ This is definition of the Ultimate in terms of its essential nature. When the *Upaniṣad* says that Brahman is "that from which all beings come into

existence, that by which they live after coming into existence, and that towards which they move and into which they merge,"¹⁰ it defines Brahman in terms of its accidental attribute, because causality of the world is an external qualification or attribute of Brahman, which is meaningful only in the context of its relation to the world. It is not a definition of what Brahman is *in itself*; on the contrary, it is a definition of Brahman *in relation to* something else.

Thus from the twofold definition of Brahman we get two concepts of Brahman – Brahman-in-itself and Brahman-in-relation. The former is called Nirguṇa-Brahman or the Absolute, while the latter is called Saguṇa-Brahman or Īśvara or God. It means that one and the same reality is viewed in two ways or from two standpoints. When Brahman, the Ultimate, is viewed in itself, it is called the Absolute; and when it is viewed in relation to the world, it is called God. It means that God is the Absolute from the cosmic point of view, and the Absolute is God from the acosmic point of view. So long as we are at the *vyāvahārika* level, which is relative and relational, we cannot but speak of the Ultimate as God. We try to relate the world with the Ultimate as the cause of it. But the dualism of God and world which is inherent in the category of causality does not satisfy the demands of reason and has, therefore, to be transcended. It is for this reason that Advaita holds that the dualistic position of theism, even though methodologically significant and valuable, is not final. Unless the Ultimate is known in itself, there is no overcoming of the *vyāvahārika* realm of dualities. It follows that the metaphysics of Advaita, which is trans-theistic and not anti-theistic, is oriented towards the discovery of the Ultimate.

5. *Criterion of the Real*

Śaṅkara formulates the criterion of the real (*sat*) in different ways. The purpose for formulating the criterion is to distinguish the real from the non-real (*asat*) as well as from the false or the indeterminable (*mithyā* or *anirvacanīya*). One formulation of the real may be stated as follows: that is real which exists in itself. If the Ultimate, which is called Brahman or Ātman, is said to be real, it is for the reason that it exists in itself. There is the Upaniṣadic support for this criterion.¹¹ To Nārada's question, "Venerable Sir, on what is the infinite established?" Sanatkumāra's answer is "On its own greatness". The idea that is sought to be conveyed here is that the Ultimate which is infinite and which is real does not have a dependent existence. Conversely, anything that has a dependent existence is not real and therefore cannot be the Ultimate.

Applying this criterion, we can first of all exclude the non-real (*asat*) from our consideration. What is totally non-existent is non-real, e.g. the sky-flower. "Sky-flower" is a term by which we convey the idea of what is totally non-existent. Since there is no entity called "the sky-flower" even though we speak about it, the question whether it has dependent or independent existence is absurd. As distinguished from the real and the non-real, there is a third category comprising objects of our experience such as the table and the tree, the mountain and the ocean. Since these objects are cognized by us, they cannot be dismissed as non-real. However, they do not fulfil the criterion of the real, and so they cannot be called real.

A brief explanation is necessary to show why the objects of the world do not answer to the criterion of the real. The objects of the world have origination, because each one of them is an effect of some other object. It means that every object of this world has a dependent existence. A little reflection is enough to show that dependent existence is no existence at all in the strict sense of the term. Take for example two objects, A and B. Let us say that A is dependent on B, and B on A. If objects are mutually dependent, then no object really exists on its own; and we cannot answer whether A exists or B exists. Nor does it help us to explain these objects in terms of a causal series. If A is dependent on B, if B is dependent on C, if C on D, and so on, there arises the difficulty of infinite regress. Here also we cannot say whether any object exists on its own. Nor will it improve the matter if we come back to the first member in the causal series with a view to avoid infinite regress. If we say that A is dependent on B, B on C, C on D,....and X on A, then there is the difficulty of circularity. Once again it will show that objects which have dependent existence have no existence at all worth the name. According to Advaita, the idea of dependent existence will be intelligible only if there is something which exists on its own, something which is unrelated in itself, something which is unoriginated in itself. That which exists on its own, which is unoriginated and unrelated, is the Ultimate, and that is the real. The real, because it exists on its own, is the *ground* of all objects which are originated and which are relational. Therefore, the objects of the world are not real. Since they are neither real nor non-real, Śaṅkara

characterizes them as indeterminable (*anirvacanīya*), as different from both real and unreal (*sadasad-vilakṣaṇa*), as false (*mithyā*). The Ultimate which is real and the world consisting of originated and relational objects are related as the ground and the grounded.

6. *The Ultimate: One without a Second*

According to Advaita, the Ultimate which is real is one without the second. Objects other than the Ultimate, which have only a dependent existence, are not real. It means that there is no second reality besides the Ultimate. A text of the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* says that “in the beginning there was Being (*sat*) alone, one only without a second.”¹² One way of establishing duality is by proving the reality of difference. Difference is of three kinds. The first variety of difference is the one that obtains between two objects belonging to the same class, e.g. difference between two trees. This kind of difference is called *sajātīya-bheda*. Difference that obtains between two objects belonging to two different classes, e.g. a stone and a tree, is the second variety, which is called *vijātīya-bheda*. The internal distinction in a thing is the third variety of difference called *svagata-bheda*. For example, we analyse a tree, which is a whole, into its parts such as the root system, trunk, branches, and so on. Here we resort to internal differentiation in a given object. According to Advaita, there is nothing like or unlike the Ultimate. It means there is no plurality of reals. Also, the Ultimate is free from internal differentiation. It is neither a whole consisting of parts nor a substance possessing attributes. The three words in the *Upaniṣadic* text, “*ekam*” (one), “*eva*” (only), “*advitīyam*” (without a second), are intended to

deny the three kinds of difference in respect of the ultimate reality. So the Ultimate is one and non-dual, homogeneous, infinite, and without beginning and end.

7. *Objective-Subjective Approaches*

There are two approaches to the study of reality – objective and subjective. The objective approach consists in finding out the source of the world, the stuff out of which it is made, through the methods of analysis and synthesis of the things of the world. Very often this approach results in materialism. As contrasted with this, the subjective approach which consists in the analysis of man and his relation to the objects which are presented to him very often results in subjectivism, sometimes even in scepticism. Since the exclusive application of any one approach leads to the undesirable consequence of reductionism of some kind or other, Advaita makes use of what may be called the synthetic method, which combines both the objective and the subjective approaches to the study of reality. In several places the *Upaniṣad* itself provides the clue for the synthetic approach to the study of the Ultimate. For example, the *Upaniṣad* says: “He who is here in the human person and He who is there in the sun, are one.”¹³ The sun which is the source of energy for the entire world is singled out in a suggestive way for all the objects of the world. The idea that is sought to be conveyed here by this text is that the real which is immanent in the world is identical with the real which is immanent in man and that, therefore, we have to search for the one reality which is manifest both in man and in the world.

As stated earlier, the objective approach to the study of reality consists in the search for the source or cause of the world. Just as every object requires a cause, even so the world requires a cause. What, then, is the cause of the world? The search for the cause of the world must lead to that which is itself uncaused; otherwise there will be the problem of infinite regress. The uncaused cause alone must be real, for that alone, as stated earlier, has independent existence.

According to Advaita, the uncaused cause, or what is generally called the First Cause, responsible for the world must be an intelligent principle. Śaṅkara rejects the Sāṅkhya theory which holds that the world has evolved from a primal material stuff called *Prakṛti*.¹⁴ The order as well as sequence manifest in the world suggests that it must be due to an intelligent principle capable of planning and willing; and the alleged primordial material stuff, because it is insentient, cannot be credited with thinking, desiring, willing, and so on, which are all required for the creation of the world. A material stuff may be subject to change in course of time. But mere change itself is not evolution; and no material object ever reveals any conscious tendency to evolve. It is, therefore, necessary to hold that the cause of the world must be an intelligent principle. The Advaitin supports his position by citing the authority of scripture in this regard. The *Upaniṣad* says that Brahman or *Sat*, which was one only without a second in the beginning, thought: "May I become many, may I grow" and then "It projected Fire."¹⁵ The text of the *Upaniṣad* makes it clear that Brahman or

Sat, the First Cause of the world, was capable of thinking, desiring, and so on. So Brahman which is the Ultimate is the source of the world. The objection raised against the Sāṅkhya theory in this regard holds good in the case of other theories as well which trace the source of the world to matter in some form or other as the First Cause.

Brahman-in-self is neither the cause nor the effect of anything. If it is the effect of something else, then it has a beginning, and whatever has a beginning must have an end. It means that it will cease to be eternal. If it is the cause of anything, then it becomes relational. In that case it is no better than the things of the world, which are relational. If we leave out Brahman, there is nothing else which could serve as the cause of the world. The world requires Brahman, the Ultimate, as its cause; but the nature of Brahman is such that it cannot be the cause of the world. The Advaitin solves the difficulty through *māyā*, the creative principle.

Creation, no doubt, is a mystery. The mystery of creation, according to Śaṅkara, is rooted in the creative principle itself whose ontological status as well as functioning is a paradox. *Māyā* is not real like Brahman; nor is it non-real like the sky-flower. It has unique ontological status such that we cannot say that it is real or non-real. Being different from both real and non-real, it is indeterminable (*anirvacanīya*). It serves as a conditioning principle as it were of Brahman. What is really unconditioned becomes conditioned as it were by *māyā*. In other words, "Brahman-in-self" becomes "Brahman-in-relation" because of its association with *māyā*. According to Advaita, when the association between Brahman and *māyā* took place, no

one can say. So long as there is the world, there is *māyā*, the creative principle, in association with Brahman. The Advaitin holds that the relation between Brahman and *māyā* is beginningless (*anādi*).¹⁶ The point to be noted here is that from our perspective there is a climb down as it were in the status of Brahman due to its association with *māyā*, the creative principle. Though the association of *māyā* does not affect the nature of Brahman, it becomes conditioned as it were. And the conditioned Brahman is called Īśvara or *Saguṇa-Brahman* or God.¹⁷ So God is Brahman from the cosmic point of view.

A brief explanation of the causality of Brahman is necessary at this stage. We have already said that Brahman-in-self is not the cause of the world. In the same way, *māyā* by itself cannot function as the creative principle. Like the *prakṛti* of the Sāṅkhya school, *māyā* is material by its very nature, though unlike *prakṛti*, it is not an independent principle. It can function only when it is associated with Brahman. So Brahman and *māyā* together are the cause of the world. While Brahman which serves as the *ground* or the *substratum* (*adhiṣṭhāna*) of the world is the transfigurative material cause, *māyā* which is subject to change is the transformative material cause, of the world.¹⁸ The objects which are related as cause and effect cannot be totally different; nor can they be completely identical. It means that there must be identity as well as difference between cause and effect. Since *māyā*, the creative principle, is material like the world, there is identity between cause and effect. While Brahman is sentient, the world is insentient; and so there is also difference between cause and effect.

The relation between the Ultimate and the world is just like the relation between rope and snake. Just as the rope without undergoing any change is responsible for the appearance of the world, even so the Ultimate without undergoing any change is responsible for the appearance of the world. It is not necessary to go into the epistemological issues involved in the appearance of one thing as something else. In the rope-snake example, the rope is the substratum for the appearance of snake thereon; even so the Ultimate is the substratum for the appearance of the world thereon. Apart from saying that the Ultimate and the world are related as the ground and the grounded, as reality and appearance, we cannot spell out the relation that obtains between them. There cannot be any *real* relation between them, since the relata possess different ontological status. While the Ultimate is absolutely real (*pāramārthika*), the world is not real; the world, that is to say, is only phenomenally or empirically real (*vyāvahārika*); and so there cannot be any real relation between them.

God who is the cause of the world cannot be known through sense perception or reasoning. Though God is immanent in the world, we cannot perceive Him through any of our senses. It is true that God is the substratum of the world providing a *basis* for the existence of the things of the world. Nevertheless, we do not see the substratum because of the names and forms (*nāma* and *rūpa*) of the objects which are superimposed thereon. Nor can inference help us to know God. Though inference is a source of knowledge in respect of empirical or phenomenal objects, it is of no avail in the present case. If we argue on the

analogy of pot and potter, or house and builders, that there must be a creator of the world, we could at the most establish only a creator with limited knowledge and power, or a multitude of co-operative creators, not a single, omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent creator. Realizing the limitations of both sense perception and reasoning, the Advaitin holds that the nature of Brahman, both in its conditioned and unconditioned aspects, can be known only through scripture.¹⁹ God occupies an important place in the metaphysical system of Śaṅkara. Not only is God the creator of the world, but also He is the support and controller of the world and the dispenser of justice.²⁰ Of course, the interest of the Advaitin is not in establishing the theistic position as the final truth. His interest is in the non-dual Absolute whose realization will mark the termination of the bondage of empirical existence.

The analysis of the nature and the constituents of man occupies the central place in the subjective approach to the study of reality. The philosophy of man as worked out by Advaita is unique. Man as he is in empirical existence is a complex being consisting of the Self and matter. Without going into details we could say that the material component which serves as the outfit or vesture for the Self consists of the mind, the senses, and the body.²¹ The material component has the same ontological status of the objects of the world. For the sake of convenience we can say that anything other than the Self is not-Self (*anātman*). Advaita holds that the Self alone is real.

The material adjunct which is not-Self and which serves to limit the Self is not real; it is only phenomenal in the same way as the objects of the world are phenomenal.

With a view to establish the reality of the Self and the unreality of the material component, Advaita formulates the criterion of the real in another way. This criterion of the real, it should be borne in mind, is not inconsistent with the one formulated earlier. According to this criterion, that is real which is uniformly present in all our experience. Man has three states of experience – waking, dream, and deep sleep. In the waking state (*jāgrat*) he is conscious of the objects of the external world through the functioning of his mind and the senses. In the dream state (*svapna*), the mind alone functions and projects objects of its own. The mind as well as the senses do not function in the state of deep sleep (*susupti*) with the result that there is no awareness of anything, external or internal at that time. While the waking and dream states provide us with what may be called a knowledge situation the state of deep sleep is not a knowledge situation. While the mind and the senses are sometimes present and sometimes absent, only the Self which is consciousness is uniformly present in all the three states of experience. Advaita, therefore, holds that the Self alone is real.

Śaṅkara maintains that consciousness is one and indivisible. It will not be possible to prove that there is a plurality of consciousness. However, there is a plurality of mind-sense-body complex. Two persons differ not because of the Self or consciousness in them, but because of the mind-sense-body complex which qualifies consciousness. One and the same consciousness appears to be plural because of the plurality of adjuncts. Further, consciousness is not relational. However, it appears to be relational due to

the functioning of the mind. It is well-known that consciousness is intentional in the waking and dream states. There is consciousness of a tree or a table in the waking state; there is consciousness of various (dream) objects in the dream state. But in the state of deep sleep there is no consciousness of anything, external or internal. In other words, while consciousness is intentional in waking and dream states, it is not intentional in deep sleep. It is the presence or absence of the mind that makes consciousness intentional or not intentional. Consciousness by its very nature is not intentional; its intentionality is only adventitious. It follows that consciousness is not relational. Moreover, consciousness is not an object of knowledge. While everything else is known through consciousness, how is consciousness known? Not through another consciousness; for there is no second consciousness; and such an argument will result in the difficulty of infinite regress. Further, since consciousness is one and indivisible, it cannot be said that it is both the knower and the known in the same act of cognition. In view of these difficulties, the Advaitin maintains that consciousness is not an object of knowledge. Consciousness is self-luminous (*svaprakāśa*) in the sense that while it reveals everything else, it itself is not revealed by anything.

Considering the nature of the Ultimate which is the ground of the world and of the nature of the Self in man, Advaita maintains that the Ultimate which is called Brahman is no other than the Self (*Ātman*) in man. It is this identity of Brahman and *Ātman* that is taught as the purport of the scriptural teaching by the principal texts of the Upaniṣads such as "This Self is Brahman,"²² "That thou art".²³

Man is, indeed, the Self, though in empirical existence he is associated with the material adjunct. Though the Self is the reality in man, he does not realize this due to his ignorance (*avidyā*). Not only does he not know the Self in him, but also he identifies himself with the mind-sense-body complex and transacts his business of life. It is this identification with the mind-sense-body complex that is said to be the bondage of empirical existence. If the mind is controlled and stilled through ethical and spiritual discipline, one can achieve the state of the absence of mental modifications (*citta-vṛtti*). When the mind becomes a non-mind, the Self which is ever present remains in its natural state; a person who has come up to this stage of development *knows* or *realizes* the Self in him, and remains as the Self. It is a case where to know the Self is to be the Self. That is why the *Upaniṣad* says that the knower of Brahman remains as Brahman.²⁴ Such a person is the liberated-in-life (*jīvanmukta*).



NOTES

1. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, 2.4.5. See Śaṅkara's commentary on this text.
2. *Ibid.* Also see *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, 6.1.3. Śaṅkara's commentary thereon. Śaṅkara observes: "Even after having read all the Vedas and learnt all else that there is to be learnt, until one knows the Self, one's main purpose in life remains unfulfilled".
3. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, 2.4.14. See also *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, 7.24.1.
4. In the words of Śaṅkara, "*karma-jñāna-adhikāraḥ*". See Śaṅkara's commentary on the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, 2.1.1.
5. See *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, 4.4.19. "Only by the mind is it (i.e. Brahman) to be known."
6. Gauḍapāda, *Māṇḍūkya -kārikā*, 1.17-18.
7. T.M.P. Mahadevan, *The Philosophy of Advaita* (London: Luzac & Company, 1938).p. 104.
8. *Ibid.*
9. *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, 2.1.1.
10. *Ibid.*, 3.1.1.
11. *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, 7.24.1.
12. 6.2.1.
13. *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, 2.5.5.
14. See Śaṅkara's commentary on the *Brahma-sūtra*, 2.2.1-10 for a detailed discussion on this issue
15. *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, 6.2.2-3. See also *Aitareya Upaniṣad*, 1.1.1-2.
16. Advaita speaks of six things as *anādi*: (1) *jīva*, (2) *Īsvara* (3) the pure consciousness (i.e. Brahman), (4) the difference between *jīva* and *Īsvara*, (5) *avidyā* (otherwise called *māyā*), and (6) the relation between *avidyā* and consciousness.
17. See *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad*, 4.10: "Know that *prakṛti* is *māyā* and the wielder of *māyā* is the great Lord..."

18. In the technical terminology, *māyā* is the *pariṇāmi-upādāna-kāraṇa*, whereas Brahman is *vivarta-upādāna-kāraṇa*.
19. See Śaṅkara's commentary on *Brahma-sūtra*, 1.1.3.
20. See *Brahma-sūtra*, 2.1.34. and Śaṅkara's commentary thereon.
21. The detailed explanation of the material component should be given in terms of five sheaths (*pañca-kośa*) or three bodies (*śarīra-traya*).
22. *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad*, 2.
23. *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, 6.8.7.
24. *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*, 3.2.9.



A CRITIQUE OF SOME ADVAITA CONCEPTS
WITH REGARD TO THE NAIŠKARMYA-SIDDHI

N. VEEZHINATHAN

[I]

Balasubramaniam in the introduction to his edition of the *Naiškarmya-siddhi* observes:

Advaita Vedānta may be characterized as “transcendental phenomenology” and “metaphysics of experience”. These two characterizations suggest that Advaita is seized with five issues: a basic problem, a method for analysing the problem, a transcendental principle whose evidence is apodictic, a metaphysical thesis to which it is committed, and a plan of action.

He has addressed himself to the task of discussing these five issues relating to Advaita in his writings in a careful and elaborate manner and has justified his affirmation that Advaita

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Vedānta may be characterized as “transcendental phenomenology” and “metaphysics of experience”. In his edition of the *Naiškarmya-siddhi* with Introduction, English Translation and Annotation, Balasubramaniam has conclusively shown the doctrines of Advaita to be true by irrefutable arguments. In this paper, I shall deal with some aspects of Advaita as presented in the *Naiškarmya-siddhi* in the light of Balasubramaniam’s interpretation thereon.

The *Naiškarmya-siddhi*, which consists of four chapters, is partly in prose and partly in verse. Chapter I deals with the central problem of the work - liberation from cyclic existence. The focus of chapter II is on the distinction between the Self and the not-Self. Chapter III is devoted to the discussion of the locus and the content of avidyā. Chapter IV contains the summary of the first three chapters, and also the views of recognized authorities in support of what has been stated in the text.

The expression “*Naiškarmya-siddhi*” occurs in the *Bhagavad-gītā*.¹ The term “*Naiškarmya*” signifies the state of the true nature of the jīva wherein the obligation to perform karma is wholly transcended. The term “*siddhi*” means ascertainment. The expression as a whole means the ascertainment of the true nature of the jīva as transcending the obligation to perform karma. The present text which deals with the true nature of the jīva in this aspect is spoken of as *Naiškarmya-siddhi*.

[II]

It is almost a truism to say that, barring the Cārvāka school, all other schools of Indian Philosophy are *mokṣa*-oriented.

Mokṣa or liberation is freedom from the trammels of transmigratory existence, and, it is relevant in the case of the *jīva*. The concept of liberation varies from one school to another depending upon the conception of the *jīva* and its relation to the ultimate reality. The Advaita school maintains that the ultimate reality is consciousness, immutably homogeneous, infinite, and pure identity. It is “*advaita*” in the sense that it is the substratum of the absence of all duality (*na vidyate dvaitam yatra*). The world is admitted to be provisionally real and the *jīva*, to be non-different from consciousness. Consciousness, by being reflected in *avidyā* and its product, the psycho-physical organism attains the state of the *jīva* and undergoes cyclic existence. It performs activities, sacred and secular, and experiences the fruits of those actions. It is thus an agent and an experient. To be an agent, one must be a knower or the substratum of knowledge. If knowledge is considered as consciousness itself, then, being non-dual, it cannot have any substratum. If it is considered as mere mental state or the modification of the mind, then, being inert, it will not be efficacious to manifest any factor whatsoever. Hence it must be held that the modification of the mind inspired by the reflection of consciousness in it is knowledge. And consciousness which is supra-relational cannot be the substratum of knowledge of this nature, unless it is associated with the mind whose modification, by being inspired by the reflection of consciousness in it, is knowledge. It comes to this that the relation of the mind to consciousness is essential in order to view the latter as the knower or *pramātā*. Since the characteristics of being an agent and an experient are

dependent upon the characteristics of being a knower, and since the latter depends upon the relation of the mind to consciousness, it must be held that consciousness acquires the characteristics of being a knower, an agent, and an experient only by being related to the mind.

An analysis of the three states of waking, dream, and deep sleep confirms this view. In the state of deep sleep, the mind is not operative, and consciousness which exists along with avidyā alone is not experienced to be associated with the characteristics of being a knower, an agent, and an experient. But, in the states of waking and dream where the mind functions, these three characteristics are noticed. From this we could ascertain that the relation of the mind to consciousness is responsible for attributing agency, etc. upon the latter, thus reducing it to the state of the jīva. The relation between the mind and consciousness cannot but be non-real, as the former is inert and the latter, sentient. It must, therefore, be caused by avidyā. The latter is present in consciousness. Thus, in consciousness associated with avidyā, there is the false identification with the mind. The blend of pure consciousness and avidyā and the mind is the jīva which further identifies itself with the characteristics of the sense organs, the physical body and its characteristics. When the physical body falls off, the jīva associated with subtle body which is its "empirical home" reaches the other world to experience the fruits of its actions and comes back to this world to experience the fruit of that portion of its accumulated karma which is about to fructify. And this process goes on continually. It is based upon the fact of the jīva being associated with the characteristics of being a

knower, an agent, and an experient. These characteristics constitute what is known as *saṁsāra*. The *jīva* is the *saṁsārī*, and in its true nature it is *asaṁsārī*, i.e. the one free from the above characteristics projected by *avidyā*. Sureśvara states:

The agency of the unchanging (Self) is an illusion due to the "I"-notion, in the same way as the ascription of motion to the trees (on the banks of a river) is an illusion due to the movement of the boat.²

Śaṅkara in his commentary on the *Vedānta-sūtra* states:

As long as the *jīva* is associated with the adjunct, viz. the mind, so long only is the *jīva*, a *jīva*. In reality, however, there is nothing like the *jīva*-hood apart from what is fancied to be such by reason of this adjunct.³

He proceeds to point out:

The relation of consciousness, that is, the Self, to the mind (which has caused the notion of the *jīva*) has but the indeterminable *avidyā* as its source; and, this *avidyā* cannot be removed by anything other than the direct experience of the true nature of the *jīva* to be the Self. Hence the relation with such a limiting adjunct will not cease so long as the *jīva* does not realize its true nature to be the Self.⁴

Avidyā is the source of all evil, and its removal would necessarily bring about the removal of the relation of the mind and its qualities such as agency, etc. The *jīva* would

become free from the relation to the mind, when avidyā which is the cause of such a relation is removed. And avidyā would be removed only by Self-realization, i.e. the direct knowledge that the true nature of the jīva is non-different from the non-dual consciousness. Śaṅkara in his *Adhyāsa-bhāṣya* states:

In order that avidyā, the root-cause of this evil in the form of *saṁsāra* may be removed, the direct knowledge of the true nature of the jīva as identical with the Self (i.e. consciousness) is necessary. And, with a view to attain such a knowledge, the Upaniṣads are being studied and their import enquired into.⁵

Sureśvara identifies this as the main theme of his work in his Introduction to the first verse of the *Naiṣkarmya-siddhī*.⁶

[III]

The notion of avidyā will be complete only when its content (*viṣaya*) and locus (*āśraya*) are referred to. In the beginning of the Third chapter of the *Naiṣkarmya-siddhi*, Sureśvara sets forth his views on this. The content of avidyā is pure consciousness, the Self. This means that avidyā could conceal the Self only, as it alone is self-luminous. That is, avidyā gives rise to the empirical usages such as 'The Self does not exist', 'The Self is not manifest'. The not-Self cannot be viewed as the content of avidyā because, as Balasubramaniam points out, it is of the nature of ignorance. To say that the not-Self is the content of ignorance amounts to saying that ignorance is the content of ignorance, which is absurd. Further, the not-Self is a product of ignorance and that which is an effect of ignorance cannot be its content.⁷

Avidyā cannot be admitted to be concealing the not-Self on the following ground too: the fruit of concealment is only the obscuration of luminosity - the obscuration which gives rise to empirical usages such as "The object does not exist", "The object is not manifest". But luminosity is possible only in the case of consciousness, the only reality. It must be noted here that luminosity is not the attribute of the Self; it is its essential nature. If it is said that the not-Self is concealed by avidyā, then it amounts to admitting that it has luminosity. But the not-Self cannot have luminosity either by itself or on the basis of consciousness that serves as its underlying reality. Luminosity is not the essential nature of the not-Self, because the latter is insentient. It may be said that the not-Self acquires luminosity from consciousness delimited by it, and it is this luminosity of the not-Self that is concealed by avidyā. The result of this argument is that the not-Self also, being concealed by avidyā, may be viewed as the content of avidyā. This contention is untenable. It is because consciousness conditioned by the not-Self is Self-luminous. But, it is veiled by modal ignorance or *tūlāvidyā* which is a derivative of avidyā. Consequently, the object superimposed upon it also appears to be concealed. Thus, when we could explain the concealed nature of the not-Self by the concealment of its underlying consciousness by the derivative of avidyā, there is no need to assume that the non-Self receives luminosity from its underlying consciousness, and then it is concealed by avidyā. Hence, the content of ignorance cannot be the not-Self. It is the Self or consciousness only.

As regards the locus of avidyā, Maṇḍana in his *Brahma-siddhi* maintains that the jīva is the locus of avidyā which veils the true nature of the Self, and thus has consciousness as its content. Maṇḍana thus differentiates between the locus and the content of avidyā.⁸ Vācaspatimiśra also holds the view that the jīva is the locus of avidyā.⁹ Śaṅkara in his commentary on the *Vedānta-sūtra* states:

The root-cause of the world is of the form of avidyā; it is designated by the word *avyakta*; it is dependent on the Supreme Being (*parameśvarāśraya*); it is of the nature of māyā; it is the great sleep; And in it, the jīvas, not aware of their identity with their nature, rest.¹⁰

Herein Śaṅkara refers to the Supreme Being, i.e. the Self or consciousness as the locus of avidyā. But, Vācaspatimiśra, while interpreting the word, "*parameśvarāśraya*" in the above passage states:

The Self is said to be the *āśraya* of avidyā not in the sense that it is its locus, but in the sense that it is its content. It is because in the Self which is Self-luminous consciousness, the existence of avidyā is unintelligible.¹¹

Ānandagiri, however, interprets the word, "*parameśvarāśraya*" to mean that avidyā has consciousness as its locus.¹² Sureśvara too considers the locus of avidyā to be consciousness or the Self.¹³

The view that the jīva is the locus of avidyā does not wholly agree with the view of Sureśvara and others in his line of thinking. The way in which the jīva is taken to be the

locus of avidyā is inadequate chiefly rests on the fact that the conception of the jīva is based upon the conception of avidyā. But, the conception of avidyā does not depend upon the conception of the jīva. The relation of avidyā to the jīva is not the relation of cause and effect. It is the one known as *vyāpya-vyāpaka-bhāva*. Thus, as the jīva is not logically, if not temporally, antecedent to avidyā, it cannot serve as the locus of avidyā. Saravajñātman, the disciple of Sureśvara, emphasizes this view. He states:

Undifferentiated consciousness is the locus as well as the content of avidyā. The jīva and Īśvara whose notions are based upon avidyā and which are, therefore, logically subsequent to it cannot be its locus and the content.¹⁴

Another difficulty in holding the view that the jīva is locus of avidyā is as follows: the jīva is only the blend of consciousness and the mind. If it is said that avidyā is located in the jīva, it amounts to saying that it is present in consciousness and the mind. It is well known that the mind is an effect of avidyā, and as such, it is of the nature of avidyā. Avidyā cannot abide in itself, that is, the mind. It follows from this that avidyā cannot abide in consciousness associated with the mind, i.e. the jīva.

One more argument may be advanced to prove that the jīva cannot be the locus of avidyā. On coming back to the waking state from that of deep sleep, one has the recollection of the form "I slept happily, and I did not know anything when I was asleep". This involves reference to avidyā, bliss, and also deep sleep. Since recollection is

invariably based upon prior experience, we must admit that there was the experience of avidyā, of bliss and also of the state of deep sleep when one was asleep. In the state of deep sleep, only the pure consciousness and avidyā exist; the instruments of cognition including the mind have provisionally merged in avidyā. In spite of the absence of the instruments of cognition and the mind, there is the manifestation of avidyā; and, it must be due to its relation to pure consciousness, the Self. It may be added here that the experience of the bliss-form of the Self, i.e. consciousness, of the state of deep sleep, and of avidyā are only the modes of avidyā (*avidyā-vṛtti*) inspired by the reflection of consciousness in them. And the consciousness reflected in the modes of avidyā is known as *sākṣi*.¹⁵

That avidyā exists in the state of deep sleep along with consciousness, Sureśvara explains in the Third chapter of the *Naiškarmya-siddhi*. He states that if avidyā were not present in the state of sleep, what exists then is pure consciousness which, according to Advaita, is liberation. Thus, one will attain liberation then, and there is no possibility of one coming back to the waking state. Hence, the existence of ignorance in sleep has to be accepted.¹⁶ The point that is of importance here is that in the state of deep sleep there exists pure consciousness with avidyā only. The mind does not exist then in its gross form. Since the blend of consciousness and the mind is the *jīva*, the latter, in the absence of the mind, is not distinctly manifested. And even in the absence of the manifestation of the *jīva*, avidyā is manifested then. Its manifestation must be solely due to its relation to consciousness only. It is on this ground we have to conclude that consciousness alone is the locus of avidyā.

In regard to the contention that consciousness is the locus of avidyā, Balasubramaniam identifies five possible objections; and they are:

1. consciousness and avidyā are mutually exclusive; and so avidyā cannot be located in it;
2. consciousness is without a second, and so it cannot be the locus of avidyā which is different from it;
3. Since the relation of the locus (*āśraya*) and the contained (*āśrayi*) involves difference, it is incompatible with the non-dual nature of consciousness;
4. Consciousness is the source of valid knowledge which removes avidyā; and so it cannot be the locus of avidyā; and,
5. Consciousness by its very nature is supra-relational; and is ever-free. There cannot be any blemish in it. So, avidyā which is a blemish cannot be related to it.

All the above objections are answered thus: the Advaitin makes a distinction between knowledge *as* the Self and the knowledge *of* the Self. The former is termed *svarūpa-jñāna* and the latter, *vṛtti-jñāna*. The Self *as* knowledge or consciousness is the witness of avidyā. It is not opposed to avidyā. On the other hand, the knowledge *of* the Self is opposed to avidyā, and it is not its witness. Hence, there is no unintelligibility in viewing consciousness as the locus of avidyā. It would be clear from this that the first and the fourth objection are untenable.

The other three objections are answered in terms of avidyā. The latter is superimposed on consciousness. And being so, it does not have any independent existence apart from consciousness. It is indeterminable either as real (*sat*) or an absolute nothing (*asat*). Its existence - non-real it is - will not in any way contradict the non-dual and the supra-relational nature of consciousness. The relation of consciousness, the locus, to avidyā which is present in it, is identity caused by the superimposition of the latter upon the former. Hence the relation of the locus and the contained does not involve any difference here. Thus the view that consciousness is the locus of avidyā is free from any defect.¹⁷

It may be argued at this stage that Śaṅkara and Sureśvara hold the view that the jīva is the locus of avidyā. In his commentary on the *Bhagavad-gītā* Śaṅkara, in response to the question as to whom does this avidyā belong to, states that it belongs to the one by whom it is perceived.¹⁸ To the next question regarding the one by whom it is perceived, Śaṅkara replies that the question by whom it is perceived is pointless because when avidyā is perceived, then the one to whom it belongs too must also be perceived.¹⁹ And, in his commentary on the *Vedānta-sūtras*, he says:

If it is asked: “Whose is this avidyā?”, we say: “You who ask are the one to whom it belongs”. [It may be said]: “It has been stated in the scripture that I am identical with the Supreme Being”. [We say] : “If you have realized this truth, then avidyā belongs to nobody at all”.²⁰

Again in his commentary on the *Bhagavad-gītā*, he observes:

The *kṣetrajña* (i.e. the *jīva*) is not at all defiled in any way by *avidyā*, misery, etc.²¹

These references go to show that Śaṅkara advocates the view that the *jīva* is the locus of *avidyā*. In his *Vārttika* on Śaṅkara's *bhāṣya* on the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, Sureśvara says:

Just as the ignorant ascribes blue colour to the space, in the same way, the *jīva*, who (by being associated with *avidyā*) is immanent in the mind, and whose sense organs are drawn outward, falsely imagines *avidyā* and its effects in itself. From the stand-point of its true nature, there is no such assumption.²²

It is clear from this that Sureśvara too admits that the *jīva* is the locus of *avidyā*. Further, while proving that *avidyā* is related to consciousness only in the state of deep sleep, we referred to the recollection of the form "I slept happily; and I did not know anything when I was asleep" which one has on coming back to the waking state from that of deep sleep. Now, it is argued that an analysis of this recollection forces one to conclude that the *jīva* is the locus of *avidyā*. We shall explain this in some detail.

The recollection of the form "I slept happily; and I did not know anything when I was asleep" involves reference to the "I" or the *aham -padārtha* which is the *jīva*. Since there could not be recollection of an object that is not experienced earlier, and since there is recollection of "I" or the *jīva* at the state of waking, it must be held that the *jīva* also is experienced at the state of deep sleep. Otherwise,

one cannot explain the fact of the *jīva* being recollected at the moment when one comes back to the waking state from that of deep sleep. The result of this argument is that there is the experience of the *jīva* at the time of sleep, and it could very well serve as the locus of *avidyā*.

It is not difficult to answer the objections contained in the foregoing paragraphs. *Avidyā*, though present in the pure consciousness, is revealed in the form "I am ignorant" by the mind which is the revealing medium of the *jīva*. It is well known that the nature of a revealing medium is such that what is revealed through it appears as though present in the medium itself. The individual 'cow' reveals the universal, 'cowness' (*gotva*) as present in itself. The mirror which reflects the face appears to contain the face. The point that is of importance here is that the revealing media reveal the things to be revealed as present in themselves. In the same way, the mind which reveals *avidyā* that is located in consciousness reveals it as present in itself, and consequently in consciousness reflected in it, viz. the *jīva*. Hence there is the experience "I am ignorant".

The mind does reveal *avidyā*. For, in its absence in the state of sleep, *avidyā*, though present in consciousness, is not determinately perceived in the form "I am ignorant". Sureśvara explains this by citing the example of the distinct manifestation of the *jīva* as "I" in the waking state. The *jīva* or "I" (*aham*) is present in the waking state. And, it is distinctly manifested only when there is the triune perception of the form "I know the pot", and not otherwise. This presupposes the functioning of the mind. In the same way, in the state of deep sleep, *avidyā*, although present, is not

manifested in the form “I am ignorant”, because of the absence of the functioning of the mind. This is what Sureśvara says:

Just as “I” is not manifest in the absence of the modes of the mind in the form of external objects in the waking state, even so avidyā is not manifest in the absence of the functioning of the mind (in sleep).²³

From this it follows that avidyā along with consciousness is present in the state of sleep. When one comes back to the waking state, the mind is superimposed upon the consciousness-element. It reveals the consciousness element and avidyā, and while doing so, it reveals as if they are present in itself. The blend of consciousness and the mind is the jīva or “I”, and so there is the distinct manifestation of avidyā in the form “I am ignorant”. In his *Vārttika*, Sureśvara states:

Prior to (the waking state wherein there is) the manifestation of the jīva as the knower (because of its association with the mind), consciousness, not being related to the mind, is manifested, by its self-luminous nature, as associated with the avidyā.²⁴

It has been said that the jīva must be admitted as the locus of avidyā, in view of the fact that the recollection which one has in the form “I did not know anything when I was asleep” involves reference to the “I”, and this presupposes the experience of “I” or the jīva in the state of sleep. In his *Advaita-siddhi*, Madhusūdana explains the Advaitin’s position

by pointing out that in the state of deep sleep, there is only the manifestation of pure consciousness along with avidyā. The mind is not present in its gross form. Hence there is no possibility of the manifestation of the jīva or "I" being experienced then. It is only when one comes back to the waking state, the mind is superimposed upon consciousness, thus forming a blend in the form "I" or the *aham-padārtha*. It comes to this: there is recollection of the consciousness-element and avidyā only. In the case of the inert element, i.e. the mind which is an object of experience in the waking state and which has formed a blend with the pure consciousness, resulting in the manifestation of the *aham-padārtha*, there is only the false notion that it too is the object of recollection.²⁵

It would have become clear from the above discussion that avidyā is located in the pure consciousness only and not in the jīva. It is experienced so in the state of sleep. The mind which is the revealing medium of avidyā reveals it as present in itself and consequently in the consciousness delimited by it, i.e. the jīva. Hence there is the experience "I am ignorant". It is in this sense that the statements of Śaṅkara and Sureśvara that the jīva is the locus of avidyā must be understood.

It is this avidyā known also as māyā that is the source of evil in the form of transmigration. In his commentary on the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, Śaṅkara describes avidyā thus:

Alas! this nescience is of abysmal depth baffling all attempts to explain it. It excites wonder. For man, being in reality one with the Self, does not recognize, although he is instructed to be so. But,

even without being instructed, he mistakes his body, etc. which are the objects of perception and which are therefore, the not-Self to be his Self, and spontaneously thinks that he is such and such, the son of so and so, etc. Indeed the whole world revolves around thus deluded, by being subject to this nescience that abides in the Self.²⁶

Sarvajñātman in his *Samkṣepa-śārīraka* says:

O, King! man has a unique enemy and that is avidyā. It is equalled by none. Being enveloped by this, he is deluded, i.e. loses sight of his identity with his true nature and commits dreadful and horrible acts.²⁷

Avidyā has a twofold power, the power of veiling (*āvaraṇa-śakti*) and the power of revealing (*vikṣepa-śakti*). By the former power, it conceals the nature of consciousness, and by the latter, illusorily projects it as Īśvara, the jīva, and the world.

[IV]

In his *Vārttika*, Sureśvara explains the nature of Īśvara and the jīva as reflections of pure consciousness in avidyā and the mind respectively. The reflected image of pure consciousness in avidyā is Īśvara and in the mind, is the jīva. And the reflected image, according to Sureśvara, is not real but is indeterminable.²⁸ Madhusūdana Sarasvatī in his *Siddhānta-bindu* and *Brahmānanda* in his commentary *Nyāya-ratnāvalī* thereon identify Sureśvara as one who advocates the theory that the reflected image is non-real.²⁹

The reflected image is held to be non-real because it is different from the original. And the difference between the two may be explained as follows:

1. the reflected face, for example, is seen inside the mirror, while the original one, on one's neck. The two, therefore, must be different;
2. the reflected face is directed towards the original one. If the two are identical, then there is no possibility of one facing the other;
3. the difference between the original and the reflected face is clearly noticed in ordinary experience; and,
4. in the prototype face certain parts like eyeballs, etc. are not directly perceived, while in the reflected face all these factors are directly comprehended.

An entity, i.e. the original face wherein certain parts are not directly perceived must be different from an entity, viz. the reflected face wherein those parts are directly comprehended. On these grounds, it is ascertained that the reflected image is different from the original. Therefore, the *jīva* and *Īśvara*, being the reflected images of the pure consciousness, must be different from the latter. According to the basic position of Advaita, everything that is different from consciousness is non-real. Hence the *jīva* and *Īśvara* are non-real.

It might be said that the non-real nature of the reflected images, namely, *Īśvara* and *jīva* would preclude the possibility of viewing the former as having the characteristics of being the cause of the universe, the internal ruler, etc. and the latter as having the characteristics of being a knower,

an agent, and an experient. Sureśvara gets over this difficulty by pointing out that the reflected consciousness in avidyā and in the mind are falsely identified with consciousness that serves as the prototype, and this accounts for viewing Īśvara, the reflected consciousness in avidyā as the creator of the universe, and the jīva, the reflected consciousness in the mind as a knower, an agent, and an experient. The view that the jīva and Īśvara are reflected images, and being so they are non-real, is characterized as *ābhāsa-vāda*. And Sureśvara is an *ābhāsa-vādin*.³⁰

The reasons adduced to prove that the reflected image is different from the original are not tenable. For, in the case of the reflection of a face, for example, one can maintain that all parts of the original face are fully comprehended, and it is on this face that is comprehended, the state of reflection (*pratibimbatva*) consisting of the three properties, viz. presence inside the mirror, facing the prototype, and difference as the prototype and the reflected image are superimposed, owing to the defect of the proximity to the mirror. When the sense of sight comes into contact with the mirror, rays of light, which proceed from the eyes of the observer, are turned back by the reflecting medium and reach the prototype face and comprehends all parts of it fully. It is on the prototype face thus comprehended fully, there is the superimposition of the properties set forth above, owing to the defect of the proximity to the mirror. When the defect, viz. the proximity to the mirror is removed, the state of reflection presented upon the face on one's neck too will be removed. What remains then is the mere face. The point that is to be noted here is that in the face on one's neck, the

state of being a reflection (*pratibimbatva*) is superimposed, owing to the defect in the form of proximity to the mirror. Not only this. The face on one's neck too, in relation to the reflecting medium and the reflected image, acquires an adventitious feature, viz. the state of being the original (*bimbatva*). In other words, in one and the same face, the states of being a original and a reflected image are falsely presented. The face as such is real, while the state of being a reflected image and that of being a original are non-real. Thus, according to this theory, the reflected face is a blend of the face and the state of being a reflection (*pratibimbatva*). While the face-element is real, the feature of *pratibimbatva* is non-real. This theory is known as *pratibimba-vāda*. In the history of Advaita Vedānta, this view is identified as the one advocated by Prakāśātman in his *Vivaraṇa*. It may be added here that Sureśvara too, as we shall presently see, subscribes to this view. Brahmānanda in his *Nyāya-ratnāvalī* explains the distinction between the *ābhāsa-vāda* and the *pratibimba-vāda* thus:

The theory that the reflected image is wholly non-real is known as *ābhāsa-vāda*. And, the theory that the object reflected is real, and the state of reflection is non-real is characterized as *pratibimba-vāda*.³¹

According to this theory, Īśvara and the jīva are the reflected images of the pure consciousness in avidyā and the mind respectively. Both are complex entities. Īśvara is the pure consciousness associated with the state of being a reflected image (*pratibimbatva*) in avidyā. The jīva is the pure

consciousness associated with the state of being a reflected image (*pratibimbatva*) in the mind. While the consciousness-element in both Īśvara and the jīva is real, the states of being a reflected image in avidyā and the mind are non-real.

It must be noted here that those who advocate the *pratibimba-vāda* makes out a case for maintaining that all parts of the original are comprehended by stating that the visual rays are turned back by the revealing medium, viz. the mirror, reach the original face and comprehend every part of it fully. This view is advocated by Sureśvara in his *Vārttika*. He says:

The visual rays are turned back by the revealing medium, pervade the entire face, and shows it in an inverse manner.³²

From this it seems that Sureśvara is inclined to believe that the reflected face is the same as the prototype with certain features adventitiously presented upon the latter. This is *pratibimba-vāda*, and Sureśvara subscribes to it. We may, therefore, take that Sureśvara who holds that Īśvara and the jīva as reflected images in avidyā and the mind respectively treat them not as non-real entities, but as real in so far as the consciousness-element in them is concerned. It may be added here that Sarvajñātman adopts this view.³³ The view that Īśvara is the reflected image of the pure consciousness in avidyā is faced with one difficulty. The nature of a revealing medium is to present its characteristics upon the reflected image. Avidyā, the revealing medium of Īśvara, has the power of concealing the true nature of consciousness. It would therefore conceal from Īśvara, the reflected image in

it, His true nature which is consciousness. As such, Īśvara will not be aware of His identity with consciousness, and He will be reduced to the state of the jīva. Sarvajñātman feels this difficulty, and so he favours the view that the reflected image of consciousness associated with avidyā and the mind is the jīva.³⁴ And consciousness that transcends the revealing medium, by being related to it, and to the reflected image therein acquires the characteristic of being the original (*bimbatva*). Since Īśvara is not a reflected image, He will be free from the influence of avidyā. He will always be aware of His identity with the true nature. But the characteristic of being the original (*bimbatva*) is no doubt caused by avidyā. And this in no way would conceal His essential nature. Thus, according to this view, Īśvara is consciousness associated with the characteristic of being the original (*bimbatva-viśiṣṭa-caitanya*), and the jīva is consciousness associated with the characteristic of being a reflected image (*pratibimbatva-viśiṣṭa-caitanya*). The characteristics of *bimbatva* and *pratibimbatva* are not real. Thus we see that there are three theories advocated by Sureśvara and others in his line of thinking. They are:

1. Īśvara and the jīva are reflected images and they are totally indeterminable;
2. Īśvara and the jīva are reflected images and the consciousness-element in them is real; and,
3. The jīva alone is the reflected image of consciousness, and Īśvara is consciousness that serves as the original.

The jīva, having lost sight of its identity with its essential nature, i.e. pure consciousness undergoes cyclic existence. It must realize its true nature as pure consciousness which is the Self.

[V]

The formulation of Advaita in close alliance with the doctrine of avidyā has paved the way for the Advaitin to hold that knowledge is the sole means to liberation. The latter is only the true nature of the jīva which is pure consciousness. It is ever-attained. Yet, under the mistaken notion of its not being attained, the jīva longs for it and attains it as it were unattained, through the removal of avidyā, by the direct knowledge of its true nature as pure consciousness. This direct knowledge is known as Self-realization.

According to Sureśvara, the great sayings of the Upaniṣads constitute the instrumental cause of Self-realization. His view is based upon the theory that a sentence gives rise to the mediate knowledge of an object, if the object is mediate, and it would give rise to the immediate knowledge of the object, if the object is immediate. Here, since the true nature of the jīva, viz. pure consciousness is always immediate, the Upaniṣadic texts give rise to the immediate knowledge of it.

We shall set forth now the process through which the logical significance of the texts like *tat tvam asi* is arrived at. Īśvara is the primary sense of the term *tat*, and the jīva, of the term *tvam*. According to one view of Sureśvara, both are indeterminable entities. The terms *tat* and *tvam*, through exclusive secondary signification, totally abandon their primary

meanings -Īśvara and the jīva and give rise to the recollection of consciousness with which their primary meanings are falsely identified.³⁶ According to the other view of Sureśvara that Īśvara and the jīva are the reflected images, each one consisting of the sentient-element of consciousness and the insentient-element of avidyā and the mind respectively, the terms *tat* and *tvam* through exclusive-cum- non-exclusive secondary signification discard one part, viz. avidyā and the mind, and give rise to the recollection of the other part, viz. the sentient element which is pure consciousness.³⁷

Sureśvara is also of the view that signification based on the relation of qualities (*gaunī-vṛtti*) may be adopted in the interpretation of the texts like *tat tvam asi*. The word *tvam* primarily conveys the jīva who is inward. It secondarily signifies the pure consciousness which is taken to be possessing the quality of inwardness; and, this signification is based upon the common feature of inwardness present both in the jīva and in the pure consciousness. In the same way, the word *tat* primarily conveys Īśvara who is all-pervasive. It secondarily signifies the pure consciousness which is taken to be possessing the quality of all-pervasiveness; and this signification is based upon the common feature of all-pervasiveness present both in Īśvara and in the pure consciousness.³⁸ It may be added here that the pure consciousness is free from any quality. Inwardness and all-pervasiveness constitute its essential nature. Yet, they are, by courtesy, spoken of as its attributes; and, it is on the basis of these attributes, the words *tat* and *tvam* convey, through signification based on the relation of the qualities, the sentient element in both Īśvara and the jīva. The logical

significance of the text *tat tvam asi* is the identity of the sentient element in both Īsvara and the jīva. Madhusūdana Sarasvatī in his *Vedānta-kalpalatikā* characterizes this view of Sureśvara as *prauḍhi-vāda*.

According to Sureśvara and others in his line of thinking, there arises first the direct experience of the jīva as identical with the pure consciousness. But, it is not effective in dispelling avidyā, because the mind of the aspirant who has attained such an experience is confounded by doubt regarding the validity of the teachings of the Upaniṣads (*pramāṇā-sambhāvanā*), contrary notion as regards the import of the Upaniṣads (*prameyāāmbhāvanā*) and an unconscious reassertion of old habits of thought such as “I”, “mine”, etc. (*viparītabhāvanā*) incompatible with the truth since learnt. According to the prevalent view in Advaita, *śravaṇa*, *manana*, and *nididhyāsana* are intended to remove the above three impediments respectively. When the mind of the aspirant becomes free by an earnest pursuit of *śravaṇa*, etc., the direct knowledge of the Self arisen from the Upaniṣads becomes effective in removing avidyā.

It is necessary at this stage to refer to the views of Maṇḍana and of one, Brahmadata in regard to the nature and the function of the great sayings like *tat tvam asi*, etc. Balasubramaniam has given a clear account of the views of these preceptors as given by Jñānottama in his commentary on the *Naiṣkarmya-siddhi*. These preceptors hold that the innate nature of a sentence is to give rise only to the mediate (*parokṣa*) and relational (*saṁsrṣṭa*) knowledge. The texts such as *tat tvam asi* and the like, in view of their being sentences, could give rise to only a mediate and relational

knowledge. And such a knowledge cannot refer to the Self which is non-relational (*asaṁsr̥ṣṭa*) and immediate (*aparokṣa*). And so, the knowledge imparted by the Upaniṣads has to be transmuted into immediate and non-relational kind through *bhāvanā* and *prasaṅkhyāna*. Balasubramaniam draws pointed attention to the difference between the view of Maṇḍana and that of Brahmadaṭṭa, although both advocate the need for meditation upon the content of the Upaniṣads known through study (*śravaṇa*) and reflection (*manana*). While Brahmadaṭṭa makes meditation itself the means to liberation, Maṇḍana admits a different type of knowledge distilled out of meditation as the means to liberation. In this context, both Maṇḍana and Brahmadaṭṭa assert that the central teaching of the Upaniṣads is to be found in injunctive statements like *ātmetyeva upāsīta*³⁹ to which aseertive propositions like *tat tvam asi* are subsidiary. The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* text — *vijñāya prajñām kurvīta*,⁴⁰ these preceptors feel, lends support to their view. Balasubramaniam gives the interpretation of this text according to these preceptors thus:

Vijñāya means “knowing Brahman in a relational way” (*saṁsr̥ṣṭarūpam brahma avagamya*). *Prajñām kurvīta* means “should attain the direct knowledge which is non-relational” (*sākṣātkāra-lakṣaṇām asaṁsargātmikām sādhayet*).⁴¹

Probably by way of rejecting this view, Sureśvara in his *Vārttika* interprets *nididhyāsana* contained in the expression *nididhyāsītavyaḥ* in the sense of the knowledge of the Self, and emphasizes that there is no injunction in regard to it. He says that *śravaṇa* and *manana* may be viewed as mental activities in the form of inquiry into the import of the Upaniṣads and arguing within oneself respectively.

*śravaṇādikriyā tāvat kartavyeḥa prayatnataḥ.*⁴²

He proceeds to say that immediately after attaining the ascertainment of the secondary senses of the terms *tat* and *tvam* from *śravaṇa* and *manana*, there results the immediate knowledge of the Self.

*śrutvā matvā atha taṁ sākṣāt ātmānam pratipadyate.*⁴³

The word *nididhyāsana* stands for the direct knowledge of the Self which does not and cannot depend upon human effort.

*aparāyattabodhaḥ atra nididhyāsanam ucyate.*⁴⁴

In the case of one who has attained the knowledge of the Self from the text - *tat tvam asi*, etc. with the aid of *śravaṇa* and *manana* nothing remains to be attained.

ananyāyattavijñāne śravaṇāderūpāyataḥ

*jāte nāpekṣate kiñcit pratīco ānubhavāt param.*⁴⁵

It must be noted here that according to Sureśvara, the *viparītabhāvanā* is removed by *manana* itself, and not by *nididhyāsana* which is the direct knowledge of the Self.

Sureśvara's interpretation of the word *nididhyāsana* in the sense of the knowledge of the Self is based on the authority of the Upaniṣad. Yājñavalkya in his instruction to Maitreyī contained in the second *adhyāya* of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* says :

*ātmā vā are draṣṭavyaḥ śrotavyo mantavyo nididhyāsitavyaḥ.*⁴⁶

And, while concluding he states :

*ātmano vā are darśanena śravaṇena matyā vijñānena idam sarvaṃ viditam.*⁴⁷

Again, in his instruction to Maitreyī contained in the fourth *adhyaīya*, he declares:

*ātmā vā are dṛṣṭavyaḥ śrotavyaḥ mantavyaḥ nididhyāsitavyaḥ.*⁴⁸

And, while concluding, he remarks :

*ātmani khalu are dṛṣṭe śrute mate vijñāte idam sarvaṃ viditam.*⁴⁹

Thus, we see that in his concluding statement Yājñavalkya uses the word *vijñāna* in the place of *nididhyāsana*. The question arises as to why Yājñavalkya has chosen to use the expression *vijñāna* in the place of *nididhyāsana*. Sureśvara answers that there may arise the doubt that the word *nididhyāsana* means meditation, and in order to dispel such a doubt, Yājñavalkya has used the word *vijñāna* in its place.

*dhyānāśaṅkānivṛttyartham vijñānena iti bhāṣyate nididhyāsanaśabdena dhyānaṃ āśaṅkyate yataḥ.*⁵⁰

It may be said that there is nothing wrong in taking the word *nididhyāsana* in the sense of meditation itself. Sureśvara replies that when there has arisen the ascertainment of the secondary senses of the terms *tat* and *tvam* from *śravaṇa* and *manana* pursued with earnestness, the knowledge of the identity of the two senses ensues as a matter of course, and so there is no scope for meditation at all. This is what Sureśvara affirms :

*vijñānotpattihetutvam dhyānādeḥ prāg-avūdiṣam.*⁵¹

It is against this background of Sureśvara's teaching, Balasubramaniam gives the interpretation of the text — *vijñāya prajñām kurvīta brāhmaṇaḥ*⁵² thus: knowing that Brahman (i.e. the Self) is the purport of the Vedānta text, one should attain the immediate knowledge of Brahman from the text itself.⁵³ In this connection he makes reference to Jñānottama's commentary wherein it is said:

*vijñāya - vedāntavākyapratipādyam brahma iti
vijñāya prajñām - aparokṣabrahma-vijñānam
vākyaḍeva kuryāt.*⁵⁴

Thus, we see that according to Sureśvara, the direct experience of the Self results directly from the Upaniṣads. There is no need for meditation or *prasaṅkhyāna* in achieving this. The direct knowledge of the Self will remove avidyā which would end in the removal of the relation of the mind to the jīva. The jīva then would be freed from the characteristics of being an agent, an experient, and a knower that constitute *saṁsāra*. He is now a realized soul or *asaṁsārī*. The Upaniṣads, the *Vedānta-sūtras*, and the *Bhagavad-gītā* are characterized as *śārīraka-mīmāṁsā*, i.e. they are devoted to a reverential enquiry into the nature of the jīva. The text *Naiṣkarmya-siddhi* too, by addressing itself to the discussion regarding the nature of the jīva in all its details, is treated on par with Śaṅkara's commentaries on the above texts in the illustrious tradition of Advaita.

[VI]

Balasubramaniam has attained mastery in the field of Advaita Vedānta. He has to a great extent advanced knowledge in that field and has exhibited consistently high standards in

the appraisal of his own and other's works. His scholarly pursuits are characterized by great care for accuracy and exactness. His erudition has enabled him to elucidate and interpret the original sources authentically. To him - a perfectly logical, straightforward and an unprejudiced thinker and writer, I offer my respectful salutations.



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27. *SS*, 1.319.
28. *BUBV*, 3.7.43, 53.
29. *Siddhānta-bindu* (hereafter *SB*) with *Nyāya-ratnāvalī* (hereafter *NR*), Kashi Sanskrit Series, Banaras, pp.219-224; *NR*, p.221.
30. *Ibid.*
31. *SB*, p.224.
32. *BUBV*, 1.4.618.
33. *SS*, 3.277-278.
34. *Ibid.*
35. *NS*, p.51.

36. *SS*, 1.169; *SB*, p.221.
37. *SS*, 1.160.
38. *Ibid.*, 1.170; *NS*, pp 164-165.
39. *Brhadāranyaka Upaniṣad* (hereafter *BU*), 1.4.7.
40. *Ibid.*, 4.4.21.
41. *NS*, p.67.
42. *BUBV*, 2.4.218.
43. *Ibid.*, 2.4.220.
44. *Ibid.*, 2.4.217.
45. *Ibid.*, 2.4.221.
46. *BU*, 2.4.5.
47. *Ibid.*
48. *Ibid.*, 4.5.6.
49. *Ibid.*
50. *BUBV*, 2.4.233.
51. *Ibid.*, 2.4.234.
52. *BU*, 4.4.21.
53. *NS*, p.67.
54. *Ibid.*



8

THE ĀTMAVIDYĀ-VILĀSA
PART - II

[A Spiritual Autobiography of
Sadāśiva-Brahmendra-Sarasvatī]

TEXT WITH TRANSLATION

C. MURUGAN

[21]

या चित्रभा त्वमिति मेयविभासयित्री
यत्संक्रमात् घटपटाद्यवभासिका धीः ।
आब्रह्मकीटमहमित्यवभासमाना
या सैव संविदिति चिन्तय सन्ततं त्वम् ॥

Always meditate upon the truth that you are the self-luminous consciousness which illumines the objects that fall within the range of the notion "thou",¹ by whose presence there result the cognitions that reveal pot, cloth, etc.² and which shines forth as "I"³ in all beings from Hiraṇyagarbha down to an insect.

1. The objects are said to have for their sphere the notion of "thou" (*yusmad*), and not the notion of "this" or "that" (*idam*), in order to mark their absolute distinction from the subject or the self (*asmad*). Language allows the co-ordination of the pronouns of the first and the third person; for example, *ete vayam, ime vayam āsmahe*, etc., but not of the co-ordination of the pronouns of the first and the second person.

Cf: *yusmadasmadpratyayagocarayoḥ viṣaya-viṣayiṅoḥ* etc. *Adhyāsa-bhāṣya*.

2. Knowledge or cognition of the object, pot (say), according to Advaita, is only the mental state or the modification of the mind in the form of pot inspired by the reflection of consciousness in it.

See *Vedānta-paribhāṣā*, ed. with English Translation by S.S. Suryanarayana Sastri. The Adyar Library and Research Centre, Chennai, 1984, p.8.

3. That which manifests as "I" or *aham-padārtha* is a blend of consciousness and the psycho-physical organism.

[22]

जाग्रन्मुखत्रिविधधामसुसाक्षिणी या
 जाग्रन्मुखत्रिविधधाम विलक्षणा या ।
 स्वप्नाद्यनुस्मृतिबलात् सततैकरूपा
 सैवाहमस्मि चित्तिरित्यवधारय त्वम् ॥

Consciousness is the witness of the three states of waking (dream and deep sleep); it is distinct from these three. On the strength of recollection (in the waking state) of what has been experienced in the states of dream and deep sleep, it is ascertained to be uniform by nature. Have a clear decision of the form "I am of the nature of consciousness".

Notes:

cf:

जाग्रत्स्वप्नसुषुप्तिमूर्च्छिततनू निष्क्रान्त्यवस्थासु य
 चैतन्यं व्यभिचारिणीषु- अनुगतं तत्सत्यमेवात्मनः।
 यत्किञ्चिद्व्यभिचारि तन्ननु मृषा स्रक्सर्पदण्डादिवत्
 नानुस्यूतचिदात्मवस्तु वदितुं शक्यं मृषा रज्जुवत्॥

The Self which is consciousness and which is uniformly present in the states of waking, dream, sleep, swoon, and death which are variable is real whichever is variable is indeterminable like garland, snake, and stick (that appear on the rope). The Self which is present in all there states like the rope cannot be treated as indeterminable. (It is the Real). *Samkṣepaśārīraka*, 3-139.

[23]

नोदेति नास्तमपयाति न वृद्धिमेति
 नैवोपयाति परिणाममपक्षयं वा ।
 स्वाध्यस्तसर्वजननादिविकारसाक्षि-
 ण्येषा हि संविदिति चिन्तय संततं त्वम् ॥

Always meditate upon the truth that consciousness (i.e. your true nature) does not come into existence from any source; nor does it cease to exist at any point of time. It does not undergo growth, modification, and decay. It is the witness of the origination (existence, growth, modification, decay and destruction) of the world of objects superimposed upon it.

[24]

मच्छेषतां समबलम्ब्य सुतादि सर्वं
 येन प्रियं भवति तेन सुखस्वरूपः।
 देहेन्द्रियादिविषयप्रलयैकसाक्षी
 यस्मात् ततः सदिति मे निजरूपमास्व॥

Have the firm belief of the form: "My essential nature is bliss, as the sons and others are dear in reference to my¹ self and it is real as myself is the sole witness of the dissolution of the objects such as the physical body, sense organs, etc."

1. The Self which is the true nature of the jīva is inculcated as bliss in the *Maitreyī Brāhmaṇa* section of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*. Therein Yājñavalkya instructs his wife Maitreyī thus: "Verily, not for the good of the husband is a husband dear, but for the good of the Self is he dear; verily not for the good of the wife is a wife dear, but for the good of the Self is she dear; verily, not for the good of the sons are sons dear, but for the good of the Self are they dear"; and after some more statements of similar import, he concludes thus: —

“Verily, not for the good of anything is anything dear, but for the good of the Self is it dear. It is the Self that is fit to be realized, that should be learnt, that should be understood, that should be meditated upon, O Maitreyī; when the Self is realized, is learnt understood, and is meditated upon, all this world becomes known”.

[*Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, 2. 4; 4.4.]

According to Śaṅkara, since everything in the world is stated here to get its worth in reference to the Self, it is the Self that is the sole object of Love and hence it is bliss.

Vide: सर्वं यदर्धमिह वस्तु यदस्ति किञ्चित्
परार्थमुञ्जति च यन्निजसत्तयैव।
तद्वर्णयन्ति हि सुखं सुखलक्षणज्ञाः
तत्प्रत्यगात्मनि समं सुखतास्य तस्मात्॥

[*Samkṣepaśārīraka*, I. 24]

Experts describe happiness or bliss as one, with reference to which all objects in the world are ancillary and which by its very existence gives up the state of being an ancillary to anything else. This description is equally applicable to the Self. Hence the Self is of the nature of bliss.

[25]

आदौ त्वमेव सदभूरविशेषरूप-
स्त्वत्तोदितं जगदिदं सविशेषजातम्।
त्वय्येव तिष्ठति तथा त्वयि चावसाने
संलीयते जलनिधाविव बुद्बुदादिः॥

In the beginning, i.e. prior to creation you alone existed in the form of *sat* by being free from name and form¹. It is from you this entire world differentiated by name and form has arisen. It abides in you (i.e. it derives existence and manifestation from you). And, at the time of dissolution it lapses into you like bubbles, etc. in the ocean.²

Vide: सदेव सोम्य इदमग्र आसीत्, एकमेव अद्वितीयम्,

[*Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, 6.2.1]

Vide: यतो वा इमानि भूतानि जायन्ते, येन जातानि
जीवन्ति, यत्प्रयन्त्यभि-संविशन्ति,

[*Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, 3.1.1]

In the verse, the pronoun “*tvam*” stands for the true nature of the disciple, i.e. the Self which is pure consciousness.

[26]

व्यापित्वहेतुबलतो न दिशास्ति मेऽन्तो
नित्यत्वहेतुबलतश्च न कालतोऽन्तः।
सार्वात्म्यहेतुबलतश्च न वस्तुतोऽन्तः
तस्मादनन्तमिति मे निजरूपमास्व॥

Have the firm belief of the form: “My true nature is not subject to limitation by space as it is all-pervasive; is not conditioned by time as it is uncaused and unending; and, is not bound by objects as it is the Self of every object; and, so it is infinite.

[27]

एवं निरन्तरसमाधिवशान्निराधि-
 ज्ञानाग्निदग्धसहकारणजन्मबीजः।
 आविर्भवन्निजसुखानुभवैकतृप्तो
 ब्रह्मैव नूनमिह संभवसि ध्रुवं त्वम्॥

By ceaseless meditation upon your true nature as the Self, there will arise Self-realization. You will become free from the torments of conscience.¹ Your accumulated merits and demerits which would serve as the cause of future birth will be removed along with its cause, *aviyā*². You will remain contented with a deep sense of beauty resulting from the manifestation of your intrinsic nature which is bliss. And [when the psycho-physical organism falls off]³ you will doubtless remain as Brahman, the Pure Being.

Notes:

1. Vide: एतं ह वाव न तपति। किमहं साधु नाकरवम्, किमहं पापम् अकरवम् इति, *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, 2.9.1.

स य एवंविद्वान् एते साध्वसाधूनि... परमात्मभावेन पश्यति इत्यर्थः। Śaṅkara's *bhāṣya* on the above text.

The realized soul would regard these two, viz. non-performance of good deeds and perpetration of interdicted ones as of the nature of the Self.

2. When the aspirant realizes his true nature as the Self, the *āvaraṇa* phase of *avidyā* – the tie that has bound the Self with the mind and other factors – is removed.

Further, the *sañcita-karma* comprising the merits and demerits which the aspirant has accumulated in his previous lives and also in this life prior to attaining Self-realization and which have not yet fructified are dissolved.

The realized soul, being free from the *āvaraṇa* phase of avidyā that veiled his true nature is fully cognizant of the fact that he is not an agent, nor an experient. As such he cannot engage himself in any activity with the sense of agency. Consequently no merit or demerit would accrue to him subsequent to his attaining Self-realization.

The force of Self-realization would render ineffective only the *sañcita-karma*, but not the portion of it which has fructified and begun to bear fruit and which is known as *prārabdha-karma*. This is as it should be; for, it is the *prārabdha-karma* that has given rise to the present body by abiding in which the jīva has attained Self-realization. It is thus obvious that Self-realization is fully dependent for its rise upon the *prārabdha-karma* which is a live force. When such is the case, its acquired momentum like that of the wheel of a potter, or of a discharged arrow, must exhaust itself out as nothing could prevent its functioning in the intervening period. Such a one who is free from the *sañcita-karma* that has not yet fructified, and who is living out only his *prārabdha-karma* which has fructified is called a *jīvan-mukta* – one who is liberated and yet alive. The factor that sustains the *prārabdha-karma* in the case of a realized soul is the *vikṣepa* phase of avidyā. Since he is free from the *āvaraṇa* phase of avidyā, he is ever aware of his identity with the Self which is non-dual bliss. The world of duality projected by the *vikṣepa* phase of avidyā would,

however, appear to him. But he would no more take it to be real and would not be deluded by it.

3. When the fructified merits and demerits are exhausted by the experience of their fruits, the psycho-physical organism of the *jīvan-mukta* would fall off and he would remain as Pure Being, that is, Brahman. This is *videha-mukti*.

See Śaṅkara's *bhāṣya* on the *Vedānta-sūtra*, 4.1.13-15.

[28]

इत्थं गिरा विमलया परसौख्यदात्र्या
 वाचा गुरोर्विमथिताखिलसंशयौधः।
 शिष्यः समाधिपरिशीलन तीक्ष्णदिव्य-
 ज्ञानासिखण्डितभवाख्यविषद्रुमोऽभूत्॥

Thus, with the instruction of his preceptor which is perfectly clear in significance and which affords spiritual felicity, the disciple has become freed from all forms of doubt. Then by the steady pursuit of meditation he attains Self enlightenment which is not impeded by any false notion and which is likened to a sharp-edged sword. And with this he cuts off the pernicious tree of the form of phenomenal existence.¹

Notes:

1. The direct knowledge of the true nature of the *jīva* as the Self would arise from the great sayings of the Upaniṣads like *tat tvam asi*, etc. It is, however, not efficacious in dispelling *avidyā*, as the mind of the aspirant who has

attained such a knowledge is clouded by the false notions that the Upaniṣads do not teach the non-dual Self and the Upaniṣadic truth is stultified by perception and other *pramāṇas*, and also by the view-points of the schools that are opposed to Advaita. These two kinds of false notions are respectively known as *pramāṇāsambhāvanā* and *prameyāsambhāvanā*. *Śravaṇa* or inquiry into the import of the Upaniṣads which results in the ascertainment that the Self, the non-dual reality is their ultimate logical significance removes the *pramāṇāsambhāvanā* and *manana* which consists in examining by presenting arguments pro and con for the sake of ascertaining the validity of the import of the Upaniṣads dispels *prameyāsambhāvanā*. The mind of the aspirant which has become free from these two kinds of false notions is yet associated with oppressive old dispositions of thought such as "I" and "mine" with reference to the psycho-physical organism and its characteristics known as *viparīta-bhāvanā*. This is removed by *nididhyāsana* which consists in long and uninterrupted meditation on the Upaniṣadic truth. When the mind of the aspirant becomes free from the intellectual bond, viz. *pramāṇāsambhāvanā*, *prameyāsambhāvanā* and *viparīta-bhāvanā*, the direct knowledge of the true nature of the *jīva* as the Self which has already arisen from the great sayings of the Upaniṣads becomes effective in dispelling *avidyā*.

[29]

स्वानन्दमप्रतिहतं परिभुज्य हर्षा-

दश्रुप्रपूर्णनयनः पुलकाङ्गिताङ्गः।

शिष्यः सगद्गदमुवाच गुरुं घृणाब्धिं

नत्वा तदङ्घ्रियुगलं विनयोपयुक्तः॥

With tears glistening in his eyes and body horripilated owing to the intense joy resulting from the unimpeded experience of his true nature which is bliss, the disciple prostrated in submission at the feet of his preceptor, the ocean of compassion, and expressed his thoughts in a tone of voice choked with the feeling of endless gratefulness.

[30]

स्वामिन् ! भवद्वचनदिव्यसुधाभिषिक्त-
 स्वानन्दमञ्जुनगरे विहरामि नित्ये ।
 अज्ञानदुर्हृदमतीव शितेन सम्य-
 ग्ज्ञानासिना परिविलूय सहानुजातम् ॥

O Preceptor! Anointed by your nectar-like spiritual instructions, I am revelling in the City Beautiful, i.e. My true nature which is eternal and which is unconditioned bliss, after cutting asunder, by the finely sharp-edged sword in the form of the intuitive knowledge of my true nature as the Self, the foe, viz. nescience which is associated with me since time immemorial.

See Notes on Verse 27.

[31]

गच्छामि कुत्र ? किमहं करवाणि ? किं वा
 गृह्णामि ? किं परिजहामि ? मयि प्रपूर्णे ।
 निर्व्याजसौख्यजलधौ परिदृश्यमानं
 फेनादिकं जगदिति स्थिरनिश्चयो मे ॥

I feel with irresistible certitude that like foam, etc. which appear on the surface of the sea, the world given in

perception appears in Me, the ocean of bliss which is seamless and which is my intrinsic nature. Where shall I go? What could I do? What could I adopt? and, What could I discard? (as there is nothing apart from me).

See Notes on Verse 27.

[32]

मायाभिधो जलधरः जगदाख्यमम्बु-
वर्षत्वनेन मम चिद्रूपः क्षतिः का।
लाभोऽपि वा कः? इति सन्ततमात्मरूपं
सञ्चिन्तयन् स्थिरमतिः विहरामि नित्ये॥

Let the cloud, māyā send forth rain in the form of the phenomenal world. The latter is neither harmful nor beneficial to my essential nature of consciousness. Being thus free from any doubt regarding the truth of my nature, which is eternal, I revel in it by meditating upon it always.

Cf.

मायामेषो जगन्नीरं वर्षत्वेष यथा तथा।
चिदाकाशस्य नो हानिः न वा लाभ इति स्थितिः॥

[*Pañcadaśī*, 8.75]

[33]

वाक्कायमानसभवं सकलं हि कर्म
प्रोक्तं शुभाशुभमयं न ततोऽस्ति भिन्नम्।
वागादिसाक्षिणि कथं मयि निर्मले स्या-
त्कर्मद्वयं तदुदितं जननादिकं वा॥

Merits and demerits resulting from the performance of prescribed deeds and from the perpetration of interdicted actions through the means of body, mind, and speech have no independent reality apart from the Self. How could these two, viz. merits and demerits and also birth, etc. resulting from them pertain to Me who am pure consciousness by nature and who am the witness of the sense of speech, etc.?

[34]

व्यावृत्तरूपमिदमेव जगद्विभिन्नं
 ज्ञानं तु अभिन्नमनुवृत्ततयाखिलेषु।
 ज्ञानं च भिन्नमिति चेत्, जडतादिदोष-
 प्राप्तिर्भवेच्छ्रुतिशिरांसि न तं सहन्ते॥

The objects comprising the world are characterized by difference and are variable. Consciousness, however, is uniform by nature and it pervades them. If it is said that consciousness too is diverse by nature, then there would arise the unwelcome position of viewing it as insentient, etc. And this will be against the teaching of the Upaniṣads.

Notes:

If consciousness is diverse by nature, then it must be held that one consciousness is revealed or manifested by another consciousness. That which is revealed by consciousness is invariably insentient and ultimately not real.

[35]

नैवेन्द्रियाणि विषयेषु नियोजयामि
 प्राग्वासनावशत एव हि तानि यान्ति।
 स्वान् गोचरान् प्रति ममास्ति न साक्षितापि
 सा साक्ष्यभेदकलिता खलु सोऽप्यसत्यः॥

I do not direct the sense organs towards their respective objects. They function purely on the strength of the latent impressions (born out of the experience of objects prior to my attainment of Self-realization). The state of being the witness of the objects of the senses does not constitute my essential nature. For, it is dependent upon the relation to the objects witnessed and hence is not real.

Notes:

According to Advaita the characteristics of being the cause of the world (*kāraṇatva*) and witness (*sākṣitva*) do not constitute the essential nature of the Self on the ground that they are indeterminable by being dependent upon something else. The nature of being the cause of the world cannot be thought of except in relation to the effect, and the nature of being a witness becomes intelligible only in relation to the objects witnessed. And whichever is dependent upon something else is not real; and, so the nature of being the cause of the world and the nature of being a witness cannot be the essential nature of the Self. The conception of the "witness" or the "*sākṣin*" is thus relative; and the *sākṣin as such* is not therefore the Self.

Vide: ऐश्वर्यं कारणत्वं च साक्षित्वमपि चात्मनः।

सता ईशितव्य कार्यार्थसाक्ष्यार्थेनास्य संगतेः॥

Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Vārttika, 4.3.354.

Vide also: यत्सापेक्षमिहेक्षितं भवति तन्मायामयं स्वप्नवत्

तस्मादीश्वरतादि कल्पितवपुः स्वीकुर्महे न्यायतः

Samkṣepaśārīraka, B. 193.

[36]

भेदोऽपि साक्ष्यगत एव न साक्षिणो मे

भेदस्य साक्षिणि कथं प्रभवेत् स भेदः।

भेदो न सुप्तिसमयेऽनुपलम्भनाच्च

सन्नास्तिता न इह दृष्टतया वाच्या॥

Difference exists in the objects revealed and not in Me, its witness-consciousness. How could difference exist in the consciousness that reveals it? Reality should not be ascribed to difference on the ground that is manifested at the time of waking and dream. For if it were real then it must manifest always. But at the time of deep sleep it is not manifested (and so it is not real).

[37]

विश्वं सदेतदिति कार्यकरत्वहेतोः .

यद्यस्य सत्त्वमिह साधयितुं यतेथाः।

तर्ह्यत्र रज्जुभुजगाद्यपि सद्बलात्स्यात्

सत्यत्वहेतुरिदमाहुरबाधितत्वम्॥

If you attempt to prove that the world is real on the ground that it is practically efficient, then on the very same

ground the snake that erroneously appears in a rope has to be admitted as real. [But it is not so]¹. The criterion of reality, the Upaniṣad states, is unsublatability in the three divisions of time (past, present and future) and not practical efficiency.

Notes:

The snake that appears in a rope is not real; yet, it is practically efficient in the sense that it causes fear and trembling.

[38]

कीदृग्विधं जगदये वद सत्त्वचित्या-
 द्याकारहीनमिति पृष्टवतेऽस्ति मह्यम्।
 प्रत्युत्तरं किमिति ते, तव मौनमेव
 प्रत्युत्तरं भवति मां प्रति, गच्छ जालम्॥

O Preceptor! Pray, explain to me the exact nature of the world which is said to be devoid of reality and sentience. I wonder what would be your response to my submission. I think it will be a pregnant silence. It is expressive of the sense. "It is imprudent of you to make such a submission. Move away from here".

[39]

ज्ञानाग्निदग्धमपि भाति जगद्विचित्रं
 यच्च ध्वनिभ्रमवतः सविशेषबोधात्।
 तस्मिन् भ्रमे विमथितेऽपि तथैव भाति
 दिग्बल्यथो मम च तद्वदतो न सत्तत् ॥

One hears the echo and mistakes it for the original

sound. When instructed by a trustworthy person he is freed from the false notion that it is the original sound. Yet, he may hear it again (but would not take it for the real sound as before). Similarly, in the case of the realized soul, the world of duality, although burnt by the fire in the form of the knowledge of the Self would appear in all its variety. (But he would not take it to be real) as before. The world that appears is, therefore, not real.

Notes: See Notes on Verse 27.

[40]

भूमिं जले तदपि तेजसि तच्च वायौ
 तं व्योम्नि तत्त्रिगुणया सह मय्यनन्ते।
 पूर्णे विलाप्य परिशिष्टमखण्डसंवि-
 त्स्वानन्दरूपमनुभूय रमेऽहमद्य॥

Ascertaining that earth does not have any independent existence apart from water, water from fire, fire from air, air from space, space from avidyā consisting of the three strands of *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*, and avidyā from my true nature which is thus the substratum of the negation of the entire world, and which is unconditioned consciousness and bliss, I enjoy felicity by experiencing it.

[41]

अज्ञातन्निरसने मयि बोधरूपे
 स्यातां कथं तिमिरतद्विरती इवार्के।
 बन्धश्च मोक्ष इति कल्पनमप्यसत्यं
 भ्रान्त्यैव भाति अखिलसाक्षिणि नित्यमुक्ते॥

There is no possibility of the existence of darkness in the sun. Hence the question of its removal therefrom does not arise. Similarly, there is no likelihood of any (real) relation of avidyā to my true nature which is consciousness. So the question of its annihilation does not merit any consideration. Bondage and liberation are not real in the case of the Self which is ever-released and which is the witness of everything. They are fancied by avidyā.

[42]

आरब्धकर्मणि च भोगत एव नष्टे
 प्राणादयोऽपि मम नोत्क्रमितुं समर्थाः।
 तप्ताग्निनिष्ठजतुवन्मयि पूर्णबोधे
 लीना भवन्ति न पुनर्जननादिकं स्यात्॥

When the fructified merits and demerits are exhausted by experiencing their fruits, my vital air, breaths, etc. are not capable of moving out of the body¹. They are absorbed in my true nature, the seamless consciousness, like lac which gets dissolved in the blazing fire.

1. Vide: i) न तस्य प्राणाः उत्क्रमन्ति, *BU*, 4.4.6.

ii) अत्रैव समवनीयन्ते, *Ibid.*, 3.2.11.

See Notes on Verse 27.

[43]

आम्नायमस्तकसुसंकृतवैभवोऽहं
 व्योम्नोऽपि पूर्णतममूर्तिरहं स्थिरोऽहम्।
 सर्वालयोऽहमहमाद्यवभासकोऽहं
 वागाद्यगोचरसदोदितसौख्यकोऽहम्॥

I have attained spiritual greatness as my mind has become freed from the intellectual bond by the pursuit of the means (viz. Vedāntic study, reflection, and meditation) set forth in the Upaniṣads, the crown of the Vedas. When compared with space, I am the absolute. I am immutable, the substratum of everything, and the revealing principle of the notion of "I", etc. I am bliss by nature all along. And I do not fall within the range of speech and the mind.

Here ends the text

Ātmavidyāvilāsa

Composed by Śrī Sadāśivabrahmendra Sarasvatī



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

HILTRUD RUSTAU

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

*Courtesy: Perspectives of Śaṅkara, Edited by R. Balasubramaniam and Sibajiban Bhattacharya. Department of Culture, Govt. of India, 1989.

reformer and a philosopher with great intellectual capacities. Under the presupposition that philosophy is to be understood as the endeavour to rationally grasp the world in its totality, to fathom its development, to recognise the position of man in the world, his ability of realising the world and his behaviour in society and to systematically explain the results of this endeavour, Śaṅkara justly can be called a philosopher. He rationally gives the reasons for his concept of the final identity of the world as well as the individual soul with Brahman, the non-dual all-comprehensive, eternal and unchangeable absolute. In deduction of this he gives the status of dependent existence of the phenomenal world and also the multiplicity of individuals to māyā. He outlines the process of the development of the phenomenal world and develops a gnoseology containing thoughts on the means of cognition founded on the assumption of two steps of truth in dependence of the chosen point of view of the empirical world or of the absolute. Avidyā as an uncorrect or false cognition of the true essence of the world plays a decisive role in his gnoseology. Further, Śaṅkara developed concepts on the rules and the importance of moral behaviour. Thus we find systematically explained reflections on all the three essential parts of philosophy, viz., ontology, gnoseology and ethics, the philosophical importance of which consists mainly in the manner in which he interprets and synthesizes earlier developed philosophical conceptions and in his new constructions in trying to solve philosophical problems derived out of this. In this connection we have to mention, above all, not only the concept of the unity of everything existing and of the two-graded truth, but also the under-

standing of the philosophical process of development gradually leading from materialism as the lowest step to the absolute monism of Advaita Vedānta, taught by Śaṅkara, as the ultimate step. Important sources of Śaṅkara's philosophy can be seen mainly in the ideas of Yājñavalkya and in the teachings of Gauḍapāda, but he fell back also on Uddālaka's cosmogony giving it an idealistic interpretation, as well as the theory of development of the Sāṅkhya philosophy. Besides these roots, the post-Buddhistic Upaniṣads and Buddhist concepts like those of Nāgārjuna, especially those of the Vijñānavāda have played an important role in shaping his philosophy. We can find also some elements of logic and gnoseology developed by Nyāya and Mīmāṃsā as well as elements of Patañjali's Yoga. Thus we can draw the conclusion that Śaṅkara in its full extent has used the philosophical knowledge of his time, and he himself enriched the philosophical discussion very much by arguing comprehensively with all the important systems of that time.

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

The time Śaṅkara lived in is often called a dark one, a period of decline following the so-called Golden Age of

the Guptas. But mostly it has been a formative time, a time of change in which feudal trends of social development got stronger and regional dynasties gained strength. National languages and popular cults developed. In the south of India the process of assimilation of the Dravidian and the North Indian culture was continued. The rule of the Pallava dynasty undoubtedly can be seen as a climax of this development. The Cheras of the Malabar coast Śaṅkara by tradition is linked with (3, p.40) were closely connected with the Pallavas (4, p. 172). Temples as well as individual Brahmins were given big land grants. The cultural climate of those days was characterised by the decline of Buddhism and Vedic ritualism in the South, the evolution of Hinduism into the religion of the masses with a large variety of directions and the inclusion of new cults of the not yet Hinduized population into Hinduism and above all an active philosophical life. There was a contradiction between the religion of the ruling elite, based on the Brahmanical orthodoxy, and the multiformed popular cults, mostly centred around the devotion to a personal God. At the same time, notwithstanding the political decentralisation, there already developed a more or less cultural unity of the upper strata all over the country. Sanskrit, pushed back by the national languages to the position of a scholarly language only, spread all over India; and by this it became the linguistic base of the cultural unity.

The endeavour of the ruling classes was towards the integration of the many different popular religious faiths into the ruling ideology in order to strengthen the process of political consolidation of the feudal states by ideological

means. For the same reason it was at the same time necessary to bridge the contradictions contained in the authoritarian Vedic tradition which the orthodox Brahmins relied on and to synthesize this tradition with the popular cults. It was mainly due to Śaṅkara that the Brahmin orthodoxy could successfully adjust itself to the new conditions of the feudal development in India.

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

Śaṅkara effectively influenced the further philosophical development. His commentary on the *Brahma-sūtras* was in the centre of a philosophical discussion lasting beyond the centuries. This discussion similar to that in Europe in those days was mainly focussed on the relation among God, man, and the universe. In this dispute new philosophical and theological concepts arose. The criticism of Śaṅkara was mainly centred on his devaluation of the world's reality, the strong individualism on the stress he laid on the privileges of *dvijas*. The greatness of Śaṅkara's conceptions first of all has to be evaluated with the demands of his time. His philosophy was elitistic and its

social background was formed by orthodox Brahmins being the ideologists of the ruling classes. But on the other hand his philosophy also included many implications which were of interest also to the feelings and hopes of the broader masses.

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

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

made regarding the South and Kashmir, where Śaiva Siddhānta and Śaivism respectively were flourishing. When in the beginning of the 19th century the development of Indian early bourgeoisie started, a philosophy was needed which could correspond to the demands of the new social development. What was asked for was a philosophy of liberty, equality and brotherhood, backing the demand for releasing human creativity and the development of personality and a rationalist world view, a philosophy which was in line with the natural tradition of the country in order to be effective. The demand for justice and equality had to put off its abstract character, for it was included into the dispute with the colonial rule. At the same time the widely spread religiosity of the population had to be taken into account, and in order to strengthen the new social development a religious reform became necessary. Thus the developing modern Indian philosophy was confronted with a whole bundle of tasks coped with in Europe by Renaissance, Reformation, Enlightenment and Romantics. First of all, philosophical penetration of social problems had become necessary. Nyāya philosophy mostly concentrated on logic and gnoseology, whereas the different directions of Vedānta were well suited to the further development and re-interpretation according to the new demands. For the first time these new philosophical endeavours took shape in Ram Mohan Roy's considerations. He was the first who on modern times made effective the humanistic implications of the Vedānta philosophy by developing out of its structure the philosophical explanation of the equality of man and the demand for charity as well as for active social

work. But he also on a theoretic basis gave explanations for the unity of the world and the supremacy of reason.

If Ram Mohan Roy belongs to a tradition which goes back to Rāmānuja's Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedānta, Ramakrishna was mostly influenced by Śaṅkara's Advaita Vedānta, although some influence of the Bhakti movement can be seen too. Ramakrishna in the form of an indirect protest against the colonial rule stresses the equality of religions. In putting forward this claim he essentially relied on Śaṅkara. Ramakrishna's teachings can be summed up in four points. (1) All religions essentially are true, they have to be looked at as only different ways leading to God. On the one hand, this concept was opposed to sectarianism of the Hindu society and was meant to create harmony among all religions in order to unite the Indian people notwithstanding the religious differences. On the other hand, he stressed the equality of the Indians and their religions thus rejecting the activities of the Christian missionaries, this being important for the maintenance of cultural identity. (2) God is pervading everything; he has to be recognised also in every human being: jīva is Śiva. Service to man not only has to be seen as a way to God, but is itself already service to God. (3) Following Śaṅkara, Ramakrishna looked at the different philosophical systems as steps on the way to the supreme philosophical knowledge, i.e., that of the Advaita Vedānta. (4) In the field of ethics Ramakrishna stressed the necessity and value of action which according to the *Bhagavad-Gītā* should be done free from selfish motives.

Whereas in the teachings of Ramakrishna only an indirect protest against the colonial rule found its expres-

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

In Vivekānanda's teachings we can find two main aspects, the demand for equal rights for men as well as for nations and the endeavour for the development of the personality. Vivekānanda took over Śaṅkara's concept of the finally sole existence of Brahman and the only relative reality of the phenomenal world, but he emphasized that the time had come for practically using this knowledge, i.e., applying Vedānta to the everyday life of the common man. According to the demands of his time, Śaṅkara was mainly concerned with proving the all-comprehensive existence of Brahman, by which the determination of the universe as māyā was included, and explaining the essence of salvation and the way to this goal. Vivekānanda very much admired Śaṅkara who "...had caught the rhythm of the Vedas, the national cadence...his whole life's work is nothing but that, the throbbing of the beauty of the Vedas and the Upaniṣads." (9, VIII, pp. 278-279). But at the

same time he criticized Śaṅkara's detachment from the world and his exclusiveness: "Śaṅkara left this Advaita philosophy in the hills and forests, while I have come to bring it out of those places and scatter it broadcast before the work-a-day world and society". (9. VII, p. 160). Mostly he criticised that Śaṅkara did not feel with the masses, that, although he had a great intellect, he had no great heart (9, II, p. 265). Vivekānanda felt with the suppressed masses of his mother country, recognising at the same time that, without including them, it would not be possible to overcome colonial suppression and to open the way to a new flowering time of India.

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

It is not surprising that Vivekānanda's protest against social inequality found continuation in the concept of an ideal society drawn up by him, where lower strata of society

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

humanist social philosophy responding to the demands of his time. Svāmi Vivekānanda, called by Jawaharlal Nehru a bridge between India's past and present, has been one of the first who outside India appeared before the public articulating the national awakening of his country, and he has been the very first who outside India proclaimed the equality of men and by this also the necessity to overcome every form of colonial suppression backed by the philosophy of Advaita Vedānta. Vivekānanda's Practical Vedānta quickly became widespread, and many people at present take it for granted that Śaṅkara has to be understood by the interpretation given by Vivekānanda.

Also Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak in his philosophical views has been influenced by Śaṅkara's Advaita Vedānta, although at the same time we cannot overlook a strong influence of Rāmānuja and Jñāneśvara, too, on him. Śaṅkara in the eyes of Tilak used to be an important authority whom in order to strengthen his point of view he again and again appeals to. He admires Śaṅkara: "The Ācārya was a superman and a great sage and he had by his brilliant intellectual power refuted the Jain and the Buddhist doctrines which had then gained ground on all sides and established his own Non-Dualist (*advaita*) doctrine..." (10.I.p.18). But at the same time Tilak criticises Śaṅkara's interpretation of the *Bhagavad-Gītā* as teaching renunciation. "Therefore, we must say that the first attempt to deprive the *Gītā* of its Energistic form and to give it a Renunciatory doctrinal form was made by the *Śāṅkara-bhāṣya*". (10.I.p.20). According to Tilak, Śaṅkara's teaching contains two different aspects, namely first the knowl

edge of non-duality, combined with *māyāvāda*, and secondly the way of renunciation. Whereas he affirms the first aspect, he rejects the second one (10.II.p. 701), viz., that body, senses, etc. as well as the external world are transient, and that is the reason why they have to be looked at as *mithyā*, though this transient world of name and form is based on something eternally permanent. Therefore, Vedānta philosophy has laid down the doctrine that there is, under the ever-varying (that is, illusory) appearance both of the physical organs and of the external world, "some permanent (*nitya*), i.e., real (*satya*) substance." (10. I. p.305).

That means Tilak accepts the real existence of the external world, a concept which has to be seen in correlation with his philosophy of action. The demand of the *Gītā* for unattached fulfilment of one's own duties concentrated on social prosperity (*lokasaṅgraha*), was, for Tilak, closely linked to the demand for active participation in the national movement.

Another outstanding representative of modern philosophical thinking in India, Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, can also be mentioned in this connection. We can recognise the direct influence of Śaṅkara's Advaita Vedānta on him to a much greater extent than in the case of Tilak. Similar to Vivekānanda, Radhakrishnan connected the ideals of the French Revolution—liberty, equality and fraternity—with the divine nature of everything existing. Besides the equality of men he stressed the equality of religions, an idea which, from Ramakrishna onwards, constitutes an important ideological aspect of the Indian freedom movement. In addition to the stress laid on the unity of the world, the concept of

māyā also belongs to the fundamental thoughts of Radhakrishnan's philosophical views. Like Tilak, he interprets it as expressing the transiency of the world in contrast to the unchangeability of Brahman. Radhakrishnan does not doubt the real existence of the world. As Radhakrishnan sees it, the fundamental reflection of Hinduism is in the formula of Uddālaka Āruṇi of the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, "Tat tvam asi". This is to say, Radhakrishnan holds that all people are children of the eternal which implies the demand for active charity in Hinduism. But the relevance of Radhakrishnan's interpretation of *Advaita Vedānta* does not primarily lie in this field, but in his efforts to connect these ideas with a global view of the world. Radhakrishnan comes to the conclusion that all peoples of the world are part of a universal community. As early as 1926 he develops, in line with this idea, his ideal of the brotherhood of free nations living together harmoniously and maintaining their cultural particularities (11, p. 54). Again and again he repeats the demand for creating a genuine universal community; and this demand comes to the fore in the nineteen-fifties and sixties when Radhakrishnan sees the further existence of the human civilisation threatened by nuclear weapons. He thinks that nations are only intermediate stations in human development and that the nation state is not suitable to the modern world and finally does not correspond with the fundamental unity of the universe. His main aim is to overcome the isolation and the inner conflicts of the individuals as well as its selfishness and to spread the consciousness of human solidarity everywhere. If the world cannot see itself as a unity, he said, chaos

would be the result. Thus Radhakrishnan finds out two prominent features in our time: the increasing unity of the world through interdependence and the danger of its total annihilation. Starting from this knowledge he becomes an active supporter of the policy of peaceful co-existence, since for him this policy of peaceful co-existence is the logical conclusion following the spiritual unity of the world, the universality of Brahman. Therefore, this policy is not a temporary compromise, but a fundamental need of mankind founded in its nature. Radhakrishnan can claim the credit for having applied the fundamental philosophical elements of Advaita Vedānta to the most decisive problems mankind today is confronted with: the avoidance of all wars, the prevention of a nuclear war and the realisation of the policy of peaceful co-existence among nations.

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

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

its contribution to unity, understanding, peace and prosperity of mankind.

By way of conclusion it has to be mentioned that Śaṅkara's view of course can be interpreted in different ways. It means that regressive social forces also refer to him. However, this paper only aims at making evident the most important philosophical tendencies connected with Advaita Vedānta in the course of Indian philosophical development. These are tendencies which in our day display the humanistic potentiality contained in Śaṅkara's Advaita Vedānta as a philosophy of humanism. We can recognise a shift of accent in Advaita philosophy during its course of development following the philosophical and religious turn to the world in modern times. Instead of discussing the essence of Brahman and salvation, modern humanistic Advaita Vedānta is centred around equality of men and the fundamental unity of the world as a consequence of which men are liable to live together peacefully and to give up war and violence.

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



NOTES

1. *Upadeśasāhasrī*, Unterweisung in der All-Einheitslehre der Inder von Meister Shankara, Übers. v.P. Hacker. In: *Religionsgeschichtliche Texte*. Bonn 1949.
2. H. v. Glasenapp. *Der Stufenweg zum Göttlichen. Shankaras Philosophie der All-Einheit*. Baden-Baden 1948.
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ĪŚVARA AND JĪVA IN THE KṚTIS OF ŚRĪ MUTTUSVĀMI DĪKṢITA

R. ASHA (SIVASREE)

(continued from the previous issue.....)

In the previous issues, the concepts of Brahman and māyā as incorporated in the kṛtis of Śrī Muttusvāmi Dīkṣita were dealt with. The present article focusses upon the concept of Īśvara and jīva as handled by him.

Advaita Vedānta maintains that it is Brahman which appears as Īśvara, jīva and the world.

Brahman associated with māyā is called Īśvara. As Dīkṣita puts it,

1. मायाशबलितब्रह्मरूपः (in श्रीनाथादि)
2. शबलीकृतसर्वज्ञस्वभाव (in श्री मूलाधारचक्रविनायक)

Some Advaitins make a distinction between māyā and Avidyā. Vidyāranya in his *Pañcadaśī* maintains that māyā, the pure

sattva predominant *prakṛti* is the adjunct of Īśvara and *avidyā*, the impure *sattva* predominant *prakṛti* is the adjunct of the *jīva*.

चिदानन्दमयब्रह्मप्रतिबिम्बसमन्विता।
तमोरजः सत्त्वगुणप्रकृतिर्द्विविधा च सा॥
सत्त्वशुद्धयविशुद्धिभ्यां मायाविद्ये च ते मते।
मायाबिम्बो वशीकृत्य तां स्यात्सर्वज्ञ ईश्वरः॥

(*Pañcadaśī*, I.15,16)

From the *tamas*-predominant *prakṛti*, the five great elements i.e., ether, air, fire, water and earth spring forth.

तमः प्रधानप्रकृतेस्तद्भोगायेश्वराज्ञया।
वियत्पवनतेजोऽम्बुभुवो भूतानि जज्ञिरे ॥ (Ibid. I-18)

Echoes of these can be found in the following phrases of Dīkṣita —

1. विशुद्धसत्त्वगुणाकराय (in सिद्धेश्वराय)
2. नित्यशुद्धसत्त्वगुणं (in कायारोहणेशम्)
3. सत्त्वगुणोपाधिसहितसदाशिवं स्वाविद्यासमेतजीवोद्भवं तत्त्वं
तामसयुतविश्ववैभवम् (in मानस गुरुगुहरूपम्)

Thus, it is the one and the same Brahman that appears as Īśvara, *jīva* and the world. (Dīkṣita- जगज्जीवेशाकरम् – अगस्तीश्वरम्).

To explain how Brahman appears as Īśvara and *jīva*, Śaṅkara uses analogies like the reflection of a person in a mirror, the sun in water and limiting the space by vessels like pot etc.⁵⁴ Post-Śaṅkara Advaitins developed these into three theories which are as under:

- (i) the *pratibimbavāda*;
- (ii) *avaccheda-vāda*; and,
- (iii) *ābhāsa-vāda*.

A brief note on them will not be out of place as it will help in understanding how Dīkṣita has effectively indicated briefly but brilliantly some of these concepts in his *kṛtis*.

(i) Pratibimba-vāda

This view is advocated by writers like Padmapāda and Prakāśātman. According to this view, Brahman, the pure consciousness is reflected in avidyā, just like the reflection of a face in a mirror. The consciousness which serves as the prototype (*bimba*) for its reflection is called Īśvara and the reflected image, the jīva. The reflecting medium is avidyā in the case of *eka-jīva-vāda* and intellects in the *aneka-jīva-vāda*. Īśvara is above the defects pertaining to the reflecting medium while the jīva, the *pratibimba* (reflected image), is influenced by them. Explaining this in a slightly different manner, Sarvajñātman holds Īśvara and jīva to be the pure consciousness reflected in avidyā and mind respectively.⁵⁵ The reflected image is considered identical with the prototype and so is real. It is the reflection in the limiting adjunct that is not real.

(ii) Avaccheda-vāda

This view is favoured by Vācaspatimiśra. He maintains that there could not be any reflection of Brahman which is formless. According to him, Brahman limited or conditioned by māyā is Īśvara and Brahman limited or conditioned by the intellect is called jīva. This is like the all-pervasive ether conditioned by a pot.

(iii) Ābhāsa-vāda

This view is advocated by preceptors like Sureśvara. It is similar to the *pratibimba-vāda* except that the reflected image is considered not identical with the prototype and is indeterminable as either real or unreal, i.e., the reflection is illusory.⁵⁶

There are references to the *pratibimba-vāda* and *ābhāsa-vāda* in the compositions of Dīkṣita.

(i) For example, he refers to Lord Tyāgarāja as the reflection of Bliss as in a mirror —

मुकुरबिम्बप्रतिबिम्बितसुखस्फूर्तये (in त्यागराजाय नमस्ते)

(ii) Elsewhere, he sings of Devī as reflection of consciousness or Ātman:

a. चित्प्रतिबिम्बे (in श्रीमातः)

b. आत्मरूपप्रतिबिम्बा (in अभयाम्बा)

c. चित्बिम्बप्रतिबिम्बेन्दुबिम्बा (in श्री कमलाम्बा) etc.

(iii) In the *kṛti* हाटकेश्वर, he sings—

हंसरूपचिद्विलास कोटिकोटिचिदाभास गुरुगुहमानसोल्लास।

Five Sheaths, Three bodies and Three States of the jīva:

The jīva is said to be characterised by five sheaths, three bodies and three states. These are but adjuncts which are superimposed on Ātman.

Vedānta lays down a logical enquiry into these through the method of discrimination to finally arrive at the true nature of one's Self (Brahman-Ātman) as the Absolute transcending all these.

The Five Sheaths of the jīva

The jīva is encased in the five sheaths, namely, the sheath of food (*annamaya-kośa*), the sheath of vital air (*prāṇamaya-kośa*), the sheath of mind (*manomaya-kośa*), the sheath of intellect (*vijñānamaya-kośa*) and the sheath of bliss (*ānandamaya-kośa*). Enclosed in these, the jīva undergoes transmigration.⁵⁷

Śaṅkara says that by analysing and rejecting these five sheaths as illusory, one arrives at the innermost Self which is eternal and not subject to modification, as beyond all these, just as one reveals the inner grain of *kodrava* rice by removing successively it's various husks.⁵⁸

These sheaths which obscure the real nature of the jīva (empirical self) are variable. They do not persist throughout the three states of the jīva. The sheath of food is sublated in the dream state and the sheaths of vital air, mind and intellect are not manifest in sleep. The sheath of bliss which persists in sleep does not exist at the state of super consciousness (*samādhi*), where only the pure Self is manifest.⁵⁹

These sheaths have different modal existence and variations and are inert. Each of them is shown to be unreal for it's own special reason. *Annamaya-kośa* is unreal because it does not exist before birth or after death. *Prāṇamaya* is unreal because though it activates the entire body, yet it is not the Self because it does not have consciousness. *Manomaya-kośa* is unreal because it is subject to changing passions and moods. This it will not be if it were the real Self. The *vijñānamaya*, too, is not the Self because it is absent in deep sleep. Nor is *ānandamaya* the Self as it is

occasional and sporadic (*kādācitkatvataḥ*).⁶⁰ Thus, it is the Self which is arrived at in the end is real, which is Self-luminous and ever-existent and which is the substratum or basis (*puccha*) of the negation of all falsely imagined plurality.⁶¹ This Absolute Self (Brahman) is the same as the inner Self (Ātman) of the *jīva*.

Dikṣita refers to these concepts as

1. पञ्चकोशव्यतिरिक्तेन (in आनन्देश्वरेण)
2. परब्रह्मपुच्छ (in नरसिंहागच्छ).

The Three Bodies of the *jīva*

Jīva is considered as possessing three bodies, the gross (*sthūla*), subtle (*sūkṣma*) and the causal (*kāraṇa*). The causal body is nescience (*avidyā*) and *jīva* qualified by that body is called *prājña*. It is called *kāraṇa-śarīra* because it is the cause (*kāraṇa*) of the subtle and gross bodies and is destroyed (*śīryate*) by knowledge.⁶²

The subtle body (*sūkṣma-śarīra*) consists of seventeen factors, namely, the five organs of sense, the five of action, the five vital airs, mind and intellect. The *jīva* identified with it is called *taijasa*.⁶³ This is what transmigrates from birth to birth.

The gross body (*sthūla-śarīra*) is the physical frame composed of the quintuplicated elements and the *jīva* identified with it is called *viśva*.⁶⁴

Mentioning these three bodies, Dikṣita says that the supreme Self stands apart from them—

1. देहत्रयविलक्षणं आनन्दलक्षणं (in जगदीश)

2. शरीरत्रयविलक्षणसुखतरस्वात्मानुभोगिन्याम् (in श्री कमलाम्बिकायाम्).

The Three States of the jīva

The three states of the jīva are the waking (*jāgrat*), dream (*svapna*) and the deep sleep (*susupti*). The Self as Consciousness is present constantly and uniformly through these states as their witness (*sākṣi*) and support but is totally unaffected by them.⁶⁵

As Dīkṣita puts it—

अवस्थात्रयसाक्षिणा अतिशुद्धेन in आनन्देश्वरेण

(cf. अवस्थात्रयसाक्षीसन् निर्विकारो निरञ्जनः

Śaṅkara in his *Viveka-cūḍāmaṇi*, 213)

Dīkṣita interweaves the *sākṣi* concept elsewhere too using beautiful alliterations.

For example नीरजाक्षि निजरूपसाक्षि (in श्रीअभयाम्बा), अखिलभुवनसाक्षि कटाक्षि (in अन्नपूर्णे).

The gross body is the sheath of food; the subtle body comprises the sheaths of vital air, mind and intellect and the causal body is the sheath of bliss. Further, the gross, subtle and causal bodies correspond to the waking, dream and the state of deep sleep respectively.

(To be continued)



NOTES

54. आदर्शे इव प्रविष्टः पुरुषप्रतिबिम्बो जलादिष्विव च सूर्यादीनाम्। — *Chāndogya-Upaniṣad-bhāṣya* of Śaṅkara 6.3.2.
यथा घटकरकाद्युपाधिवशात् अपरिच्छिन्नमपि नभः परिच्छिन्नवत् अवभासते, तद्वत्। *Brahma-sūtra-bhāṣya.*, 1.2.6.
आभास एव चैष जीवः परस्वात्मनो जलसूर्यकादिवत्प्रतिपत्तव्यः। Ibid.
55. See Introduction to *Samkṣepaśārīraka*, p.- 104.
56. Ibid. pp.101-105. See also *Vedānta-Paribhāṣā.*, pp. 266-268.
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58. *Taittirīya Upaniṣad-bhāṣya.*, 2.2-3.
59. *PD.*, I. 38-41.
60. Ibid. III. 3-10.
61. ब्रह्म पुच्छं प्रतिष्ठा - *Taittirīya Upaniṣad.*, 2.5. and Śaṅkara's commentary thereon.
62. *PD*. I. 17.
63. Ibid., I. 18-24.
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ADVAITA VEDĀNTA*

ARTHUR ISENBERG

I shall not hide from you the fact that I was both pleased and embarrassed when our learned Chairman, Professor Raghavan, invited me to talk to you tonight about Vedānta and Śaṅkarācārya. *Pleased*, because without becoming a Vedāntist I have come to admire the system known as Advaita Vedānta and the lonely spiritual giant who has given it a cohesion and clarity unknown to most, if not all, other philosophical systems. *Embarrassed*, because my credentials as a lecturer on Vedānta are so imperfect as to be almost entirely wanting. I am not a Sanskrit scholar, merely, a lover and beginning student of that ancient language; as for philosophy: once again I am not a scholar but merely one who agrees that “the unexamined life is not worth living”, one who has read, perhaps widely, but certainly unsystematically.

* An address delivered at the Śaṅkara Jayanti Celebrations, Śaṅkara Gurukulaṁ, Abhiramapuram, Madras. 18th May, 1956.

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If, then, there be anything of value in what I am about to say to you it might well be this, that it may be interesting to you to learn how certain concepts of Advaita Vedānta appear to a sympathetic and interested layman from the Western World. And I know that I can count on your generous indulgence if my words betray my ignorance, for, as students of Śaṅkara, you are of course familiar with the great importance he attaches to avidyā.

I have often been struck by a strange fact: our ignorance about the lives of so many of mankind's wisest members. We do not know with certitude when Li Pe-jang better known as Lao-Tsu was born or when he died. We do not know when Gautama the Buddha lived. We are not sure of the years of birth and death of Socrates, Jesus Christ, Mahāvīra, the Tīrthaṅkara. These men have somehow managed to remove their egos from the scene and to live on in their thoughts. Perhaps we have here one of the laws of spiritual eminence: that the great spiritual teacher must – and I should emphasize “must” – be *self* effacing.

Be that as it may, Śaṅkarācārya shares with those already mentioned the mystery that veils their personal lives. Tradition places his birth somewhere in the second century B.C. Modern scholarship moves the event nearer to our own times, to the seventh or eighth century, with perhaps a preference for the year 788 A.D. All agree that he died young, in his early thirties. We are told that he was born in Kālāḍi, in Cochin, in a family of Nambutiri Brahmins; that he wandered all over India, from Cape Comorin to the Himalayas, engaging the learned men of his time in

philosophical discussion; that he founded a number of *maths*; and that he died near one of them – Badrinath – in the Himalayas. Most of the rest of what we are told of his life is legend and anecdote and need not detain us now, for, after all, mankind has always felt compelled to surround with legends and anecdotes – they are usually remarkably similar whether told in China, India or Greece – the lives of its greatest sons. We are told that they could and did revive the dead, heal the sick, tame the wild, and so on and so forth. The kernel of philosophical truth in all this, it seems to me, is that the lives of our greatest are symbols and symbols are inexhaustible for those who ponder thereon.

But what of the lofty system of thought reared by the man whose birthday we are commemorating? If I have rightly understood it, it might be summed up – inevitably over-simplified – somewhat as follows:

Only one Entity is ultimately real: the *Nirguṇa Brahman* of which nothing positive can be predicated, since to do so would be to limit It. Of It, we can only say “*neti, neti.*” It cannot be described; but it can be experienced.

From this Ineffable Entity everything else is *derived*. The entire Cosmos, the phenomenal universe, including our egos (the “*aham*”) but not the self (the *Ātman*) is derived “like the spiderweb from the spider”. This is the result of *Māyā*.

Māyā is—what? We see the word often translated as “Illusion”. Properly qualified or understood “illusion” may serve. The danger is that many people do not distinguish between “illusion” and hallucination” and whatever *Māyā*

may or may not be, it is not hallucination. The universe has more reality content in Vedānta than the snakes seen by an acute alcoholic out of nothing. Śaṅkara himself has given us many analogies: the snake which turns out to be coils of rope; the silver which turns out to be mother-of-pearl; the thief who turns out to be a post; etc. Please note that in all these analogies Māyā is portrayed as a creative misinterpretation of something real rather than a total creation out of nothingness. Good logician that he is, Śaṅkara does not violate the doctrine, "*ex nihilo nihil fit.*"

But what, then, is Māyā? I propose to translate the word by the phrase "artistic creativity". Māyā is the power which enables a Kālidāsa to seize a number of words and ideas—mere words! and arrange them into an enchanting Śakuntalā. Māyā enables a Rembrandt to fling pigments of dyestuff on to an empty canvas and to create a *Nightwatch*. And looking at a good painting we are so carried away that we do not, fortunately, realize that the beautiful landscape, the charming woman, the playful child are none of them *really*, there, that all is colour pigments cunningly grouped and arranged to make us forget the raw materials out of which the work of art itself is wrought.

Let us stay with the analogy of the painting a little longer.

Suppose that we had before us a painting of an old man, say one with a white beard. If I invited you to gaze at it, you could easily do so. If I asked you to pick up the painting of the old man, you could do that, too. If I asked you, "What do you see?" you would tell me: "An old man". And if I pressed you and asked: "Is it really a picture

of an old man?", my persistence might puzzle you, but you would reply: "Yes, Of course it is".

But now I ask another question: "This painting of an old man: will you not agree that it is really just a clever arrangement of pigments?" I take it, you would agree. I might pursue our discussion and ask you: "Will you not agree that the pigments are *really* just mixtures of chemical compounds and can be separated?." Having secured your concurrence, I should continue the enquiry by asking you whether, "in reality," the chemical compounds were not "really" just configurations of atoms; and whether the atoms were, in reality, not merely groupings of electrons and protons.

Let me, at this stage, propose a definition. Let us agree to call that of two things more relatively real which has greater independent duration. Perhaps an example will make the meaning clearer. Suppose that a potter is asked to fashion a pot out of clay. Clearly, there can be no pot unless there *first* be clay. The clay existed before the pot and the pot can be squashed out of existence again without any loss of clay. In other words, the clay is a necessary antecedent for the pot. The clay can go on being clay without ever once being shaped into a pot. The pot owes its very existence to the clay, but not *vice-versa*. Using the proposed definition, I would say that the clay in our example is more relatively real than the pot.

Let us apply this definition to our painting of the old man. We discover a hierarchy of relative realities, the least relatively real aspect being that of the painting as such,

followed in ascending order of relative reality, by the pigments, the compounds, the atoms, the electrons and protons.

I beg leave to invite your attention to two features of this analysis: First: there is nothing mystic, let alone mysterious, in our definition and concept of relative reality. Second: we are led to the perhaps astonishing conclusion that the more relatively real something becomes the more abstract and intangible it grows. The painting of the old man you can handle. Pigments you can still see and hold in your hands. Molecules may still be rendered visible through an electron microscope. But electrons and protons can be rendered perceptible only through their effects. And this is the place to note that we are, after all, dealing only with an analogy: for the electrons and protons are not the end of the line, even in physics. They are regarded as congealed energy. This leads me to suspect that since matter is now regarded as merely another aspect of energy, congealed energy, that energy itself may be merely another aspect of yet another something; congealed mindstuff, for instance.

But we are not yet through with our painting of the old man. If we look at the painting through a microscope, the painting will literally disappear. In fact, we may say without fear of contradiction, that on the level of electrons and protons the painting simply does not exist at all. On the other hand, we may see and say that to a person absorbed in the painting as painting, there are no electrons and protons simply because on that level they are irrelevant.

This explains why so few of us, absorbed as we are in the business of living, pause to think of Māyā, of the fact (if our definition was right) that the phenomenal universe

represents merely a relative or a derived reality. It is hard to tear oneself away from the contemplation of what is pleasing or at any rate fascinating and, in a sense, to destroy it in order to uncover a deeper, let alone the ultimate, reality. It is to Śaṅkarācārya's everlasting glory that he did just that. Let us note just one more lesson which the painting analogy can teach us, and we shall be done with it. To say that the Painting Level is *un-real* because it is relatively less real than, say, the pigment level, is to talk nonsense. Of course it is real! But it *becomes* unreal as we proceed to levels of progressively greater reality.

Similarly, the universe in which we live is real enough. But, if Advaita Vedānta is right, it becomes progressively less real as we grope toward levels of greater reality; and when we are once more back in ultimate reality – in *Nirguṇa Brahman* the phenomenal universe will then and *only* then, become totally unreal. Here, too, we may say with an Italian scientist: "It is the scale of observation which determines the phenomena."

We have spoken at some length of *Māyā*, the creative, transforming power which orders the progress from one level of reality to another. We must now speak of another key concept of *advaitavāda*: *avidyā*.

Avidyā, as is well-known, is ignorance. But what kind of ignorance? I think that in the strictest sense, *avidyā* is not just any form of ignorance but a necessary concomitant of *Māyā*, *creative* ignorance. Śaṅkara declares that the *Nirguṇa-Brahman* is the only ultimately real entity and that it is both immanent and transcendent. It is inactive, yet responsible somehow for all activity.

This raises a question to which there can be no certain answer, only speculative reasoning. The question: why this Brahman-activity at all? What is the motive? Let us hear how Śaṅkara answers this – perhaps the ultimate – riddle. He says:

We see in every-day life that certain doings of princes or other men of high position who have no unfulfilled desires left have no reference to any extraneous purpose but proceed from mere sportfulness, as, for instance, their recreations in places of amusement. We further see that the process of inhalation and exhalation is going on without reference to any extraneous purpose, merely following the law of its own nature. Analogously, the activity of the Lord also may be supposed to be mere sport, proceeding from his own nature, without reference to any purpose. For on the ground neither of reason nor of scripture can we construe any other purpose of the Lord. Nor can his nature be questioned. Although the creation of this world appears to us a weighty and difficult undertaking, it is mere play to the Lord, whose power is unlimited.

This, as many of you will have recognised, is taken from Śaṅkara's *Bhāṣya* on the *Vedānta-sūtras* (second Adhyāya, First *pāda*, *sūtra* 33) the one which says:

But (Brahman's creative activity) is mere sport, such as we see in ordinary life.

What has all this to do, you may ask, with avidyā? I think

the answer could well be this: if Brahman is the only entity that *really* is, its sporting must of necessity proceed with itself. But what sport can there be in an activity which is exclusively self-created and self-conscious? Since neither the *Vedānta-sūtras* nor Śaṅkara disdain drawing on “ordinary life” for an analogy in this difficult task of assessing the ultimate motive, let us make bold to follow their example.

Suppose you go to the theatre to watch a play. Surely you can derive no entertainment, no “sport”, if you remain at all times fully conscious that you are watching mere make-belief. To enjoy the play you have no choice but somehow to manage to forget for a while that what you are watching is not *really* real; that the end of the play already exists; that the heroine is not really a suffering queen – is not a queen at all – but just an actress. If at all time you kept thinking, “Oh well, it is all make-belief!” you could not enjoy the play.

Or take your dreams. In them, you participate in strange doings, now enjoyable, now frightening, always interesting. You are not, as a rule, aware of the obvious fact that you yourself are the dreamer, the playwright, the actor, the designer of the stage set. If you were aware of these facts, you could no longer “sport” in your dream. In other words and this is the point – there can be no “sporting” without *avidyā*. To remember, to gain “*vidyā*,” is to end the dream, to end the enjoyment of the play. Hence: *avidyā*.

Let us quote Śaṅkara once more. I think he is, as usual, unambiguously clear on this point. He says:

“As clay is the cause of the pot, so is ignorance

declared by the Vedānta to be the cause of the Universe. When that ignorance itself is destroyed, where then is the universe?.....When the ultimate reality is realized, the universe vanishes.” (The quotation is taken from Śaṅkara’s “*Aparokṣānubhūti*”).

I cannot resist the temptation to digress for a moment.

I happen to think that one of the finest artistic and philosophic conception ever created by the mind of man is that of the Dancing Śiva, Śiva Naṭarāja. To me, it sums up the essence of Śaṅkara’s conception of the world. We find in it a representation of the universe as an emanation of Śiva, the sporting deity. Many of the symbolic features of the work of art are well-known and well explained: how the material universe (represented by the *tiruvāṣi*, *Prakṛti*) springs into existence as vibrations emerge from Śiva’s drum; how the universe will end, temporarily, through the fire, held in Śiva’s hand; the gesture of “have no fear!”, the pointing to the auspicious foot – all that I learned long ago. But it was until after some six years of thinking about the Naṭarāja concept from time to time, that yet another meaning implied in the symbol suddenly struck me:

Most of the Naṭarāja statues, as you know, show Śiva dancing or trampling on a dwarfish figure. This figure is, of course, none other than our old friend, Ignorance, *avidyā*, although it has many other names including “EVIL” or “Sin”. But I like to think of it as *avidyā*. Śiva stamping out Ignorance! I liked that thought. Until it occurred to me that if Śiva is stamping out ignorance, it is equally true that

Ignorance provides the only footing for Śiva. Look at the statue of Natarāja; remove the figure of Ignorance and what will Śiva have to stand on? Literally nothing. And thus we see again how right Śaṅkara is when he declares: “when the ultimate reality is realised, the universe vanishes.”

It is Śiva’s destiny to help man overcome ignorance. His own end is implicit in the success of that mission. For, as Śaṅkara says, end ignorance and you end the universe, including Śiva- What is left is only *nirguṇa Brahman*, ultimate reality,

I do not find in this awesome edifice of thought much consolation, unless it be the affirmation, by a ruthlessly honest and profound thinker, that there is, there exists an ultimate reality at all. But if the thought-edifice is stark, it has the tremendous virtue – at any rate I so regard it – of being completely self-consistent. I know of no other system so free from internal contradictions. To have been the architect of so flawless a building is an achievement that must leave us lesser men breathless and awed.

There may be more consolation in the philosophic and religious systems of others, particularly of those who assure us that the purpose of the universe is the eventual triumph of good over evil. I frankly admit that I find it personally impossible to reconcile my experience of the universe with the notion of the supremacy of morals at the core of creation. I reckon it an advantage, not a flaw, in Śaṅkara’s system that it leaves morals wholly and entirely within the realm of man’s responsibility. You will derive no authority from Śaṅkara for any attempt to saddle the ultimate

deity with responsibility for man's good and evil deeds. Morals are of the utmost importance to us as mortal men and women. We – and we alone – must bear the responsibility in this sphere. No ultimately real God can ever be used as a scape-goat by us for the evil we bring into the world. This may be a harsh sentence. But it lends significance to our lives: we are not someone's marionets.

Progress along those lines may be painfully slow. But can we afford to disagree with the words of a German poet, Rueckert, who said:

“Whither we cannot fly, we must go limping.
The scripture saith that limping is no sin”.

One final remark; I believe that it is not an accident that among the world's outstanding theoretical physicists of the Western world so many – I am speaking relatively – should have been attracted to Vedānta. The reason is, I think, quite easy to see: Advaita Vedānta provides a complete philosophical and conceptual framework within which the findings of advanced modern physical science can be placed without stress or tear. Monism seemed unattractive as long as scientists had to believe in the separate natures of matter and energy. But now that matter and energy have been proved to be equivalent aspects of one underlying something, the appeal of monism has become far greater, if not indeed irresistible.

It is an interesting fact that Eastern and Western thought should in our century, for the first time, find themselves arriving at similar conclusions after journeying through the centuries in diametrically opposite directions.

For times was when the East said, in effect: “Our external environment is purely phenomenal. No approach to ultimate reality can be made by its observation and manipulation. The road lies through introspection.” While the West, at least ever since Galileo, said, in effect: “We can make progress toward an understanding of reality only through controlled, repeatable manipulation of our environment, that is, through experiments. All other roads are not to be trusted, are purely subjective and without probative value”. And for a while – throughout the nineteenth century – it looked as if the Western approach would lead to a universe based on nothing more complicated than levers and gears, a gigantic but perfectly orderly mechanism. This dream came to an abrupt end with the discovery of the phenomenon of radioactivity and its following of a non-mechanical set of laws. The end of materialism in science was not long-delayed. One by one, mechanical and material models had to be given up. But to me the most surprising thing about this state of affairs was the realisation that the thought structure reared by men like Śaṅkara was fully capable of accommodating the perplexing new insight of the men of science of the West.

The scientists – or at any rate some of them – are aware of these changes. Says Sir Arthur Eddington:

“We are no longer tempted to condemn the spiritual aspects of our nature as illusory.... We have travelled far from the standpoint which identifies the real with the concrete.... Our system of philosophy is itself on trial.” (*Science and the Unseen World*).

India today is benefitting in many ways from Western Science – a science no doubt greatly enriched by the many contributions of Indian scientists, men like Raman, Bose, Chandrasekharan. This is as it should be. But the Western world too is beginning once more to benefit from the deep voyages of exploration into the nature and role of man undertaken by Indian explorers no less intrepid and infinitely more lonely than the men who braved Mount Everest. A growing number of people in my own country, the United States, are delving into the treasure of your philosophy. A recent translation of the *Bhagavad-Gītā* found more than two and a half lakhs of readers in the United States within less than one year. I envy my fellow-countrymen the intellectual excitement which will be theirs when they first discover the writings of men such as the one whom we have gathered to honour today.

Or let us, more truthfully, say that in honoring the memory and work of Śaṅkarācārya we are just honouring ourselves.

Thank you.



PERCEPTION: ITS NATURE
ACCORDING TO ADVAITA

V. M. ANANTHANARAYANAN

(continued from the previous issue.....)

Seventh Objection

Vyāsatīrtha puts forward another maxim known as *bahubādhā-nyāya* which too is derived from the *Pūrvamīmāṃsā-sūtras*. According to this maxim, when a particular subsidiary factor (*aṅga*) is applicable to more number of rites comprising a group, then the subsidiary factor that is enjoined with reference to a small number of rites of that group must be given up. And in respect of the small number of rites too, the subsidiary factor of the large number of rites must be applied.

The above maxim may be explained as follows: the sacrifice by name *Pañcadaśarātra* consists of fifteen rites the performance of which extends to a period of fifteen days at the rate of one rite a day. Of these, the first one to be performed on the first day is known as *agniṣṭut*. The

three rites to be performed successively during the next three days are known as *jyotih, gauḥ and āyuh.* The next eleven rites to be performed successively during the remaining eleven days are modelled upon the sacrifice – *dvādaśāḥ.* At the time of the performance of these rites, it is enjoined that one should perform a subsidiary rite by name – *Upasad.* This one is a rite wherein ghee is offered as the sacrificial substance. At the time of the performance of the rite – *Upasad* it is further enjoined that one should recite the *mantras* designated as *Subrahmaṇyā;* and these *mantras* belong to the *Yajur-veda.* Of these, one group of mantras relates to Agni; and, another, to Indra. Accordingly the former group is designated as *Āgneyī-subrahmaṇyā* and the latter one, as *Aindrī-subrahmaṇya.* On the basis of the similarity in names – *agniṣṭut and āgneyī-subrahmaṇyā* it is considered that at the time of performing the rite – *Upasad* as the subsidiary to the rite *agniṣṭut* on the first day, the mantras designated as *Āgneyī-subrahmaṇyā* must be recited to invoke Agni. During the successive three days when the rite – *Upasad* is performed each day as the subsidiary to *jyotih, gauḥ* and *āyuh* respectively, the mantras designated as *aindrī-subrahmaṇya* must be recited to invoke Indra. The remaining eleven rites, as we have said above, are modelled upon the rite *dvādaśāḥ,* wherein it is enjoined that one should recite the *mantras, aindrīsubrahmaṇyā* at the time of performing the rite – *Upasad.* On the basis of the general rule that a modelled sacrifice (*vikṛti-yāga*) must be performed like the model sacrifice (*prakṛti-yāga*), the subsidiary feature, namely, the recitation of the mantras, *aindrīsubrahmaṇyā* is applied as the subsidiary to the rite

Upasad that is performed each day in respect of the eleven sacrifices. It comes to this that on the first day only, the *mantras æ āgneyī-subrahmanyā* must be recited at the time of performing the rite *Upasad*; and, on all the remaining days, the *mantras – aindrī-subrahmanya* must be recited.

The question now arises as to whether one should recite the *mantra – āgneyī-subrahmanyā* on all days or the *aindrī-subrahmanyā* on the first day too. Jaiminī is of view that since the recitation of the *mantra aindrī-subrahmanyā* is applicable to the large number of rites and since the recitation of the *mantras – āgneyī-subrahmanyā* relates to only one rite, it is but proper to hold that the subsidiary of the large number of rites must be applicable to the small number of rites too. Here the subsidiary is the recitation of the *mantras – aindrī-subrahmanya* relating to the rite – *Upasad* on all fourteen days; and it must be taken as a subsidiary to the rite – *Upasad* on the first day too. The principle involved herein is that which is applicable to a large number of rites of a group cannot overrule that that which is applicable to a small number of rites of the same group.¹

On the basis of the above maxim Vyāsātīrtha contends that the reality of the world is essential so that inference could function, the sacrificial rites perscribed in the ritualistic section of the Vedas could be performed, the texts that speak of the creation of the world may be treated as valid, and meditation upon God as endowed with all attributes could be pursued. If the world were treated as non-real, then the large number of the above-mentioned facts should

have to be overlooked. And it is against the maxim of *bahubādhā-nyāya* explained by Jaiminī. Hence in order that the secular and sacred activities may be carried, and in order that the ritualistic section of the Vedas, the texts that speak of the creation of the world and prescribe meditative exercises on God may be treated as valid one must accept that world given in perception is real. And, verbal testimony which, according to the Advaitin, speaks of the world to be non-real must be re-interpreted in such a way as to accommodate what is given in perception.²

Reply to this Objection

Madhusūdana Sarasvatī points out that the application of the *bahubādhā-nyāya* is relevant only in those cases where the validity of the two factors which are noticed to be opposed to one another is either undecided or decided. If one of the two factors is ascertained to be valid and if the other lacks certitude then there is no need for the application of this maxim at all; for, the sublation of the one that lacks certitude by the one whose validity is certain would ensue as a matter of course. In the case of the *mantras* – *āgneyī-subrahmaṇyā* and the *aindrī-subrahmaṇya* there arises doubt as to which one is to be adopted as both are valid and each one is opposed to another. Herein the *bahubādhā-nyāya* becomes relevant; and, by applying it, it is decided that one of the two is to be adopted. But in the case of perception and verbal testimony consisting of the *mithyātva-śruti* and the texts like *tat tvam asi*, the latter is decided to be valid while the former is not so. Hence, although perception has reference to many factors, yet it cannot invalidate the

mithyātva-śruti and the texts like *tat tvam asi*, etc., on the basis of the *bahubādhā-nyāya*.

Further the cognition that the body is the self arises from perception of the forms "I am fair-complexioned", "I am a human being", etc., and also from inference and secular statements. The point that is to be emphasized here is that the cognition of the body to be the self arises from many sources although these sources are not valid but have a semblance of possessing validity (*pramāṇābhāsa*). Yet, it is sublated by the cognition arising from a single *pramāṇa*, namely, the *śruti* text that signifies the self to be different from the body.³ If the *bahubādhā-nyāya* is to be applied, then one cannot have the cognition of the self as different from the body and one would continue to have the false notion of the body to be the self which is derived from the sources each one of which having a semblance of a *pramāṇa*.

It might be said that perception, the *śruti* texts that teach performance of karma and also meditation upon God are to be treated as valid; for, otherwise these activities cannot be pursued.

Madhusūdana Sarasvatī answers this objection by saying that the world given in perception is admitted to be real and the texts referred to above are held to be valid till there arises the knowledge of Brahman. And so the criticism referred to is not sound.⁴

It comes to this: perception cannot be considered to be valid and powerful on the basis of the maxim known as *bahubādhā-nyāya*.

Eighth Objection

Vyāsatīrtha argues that just as the *śruti* is considered to be more powerful than the *smṛti* on the ground that it is the sustaining factor (*upajīvya*) of the latter, in the same way, perception is the sustaining factor of the other *pramāṇas* and so it is more powerful than the latter. That perception is the sustaining factor of the other *pramāṇas* especially inference and verbal testimony, Vyāsatīrtha explains as follows:

Inference and verbal testimony depend upon perception; and, their dependence lies in the fact that perception provides the essentials for their effective functioning. Hence if what is arrived at through inference and verbal testimony is noticed to be in conflict with what is known through perception, then the former must be treated as invalid. For example, the inferential argument—

“Pot is all-pervasive;
because it possesses the universal *sattā*;
like the ether”

seeks to prove the all-pervasive nature of the pot. The latter which is the subject of inference (*pakṣa*) is comprehended by the sense of sight (*pratyakṣa-pramāṇa*), which, while doing so, comprehends it as a limited entity (*paicchinna*). Hence the cognition of all-pervasiveness that is sought to be established (*sādhya*) is sublated by the cognition arising from perception. Here the inferential argument functions by depending upon the perceptual cognition of the pot through the sense of sight. The latter is the *upajīvya* of inference by providing the cognition of

pakṣa or the subject of inference. And when it gives rise to the cognition of something that is opposed to what is known through perception – its sustaining factor, it is invalidated by the latter.⁵

Verbal testimony too depends upon perception. The *śruti* text – *neha nānāsti*, for example, which is admitted to give rise to the cognition of the non-reality of the world, in order that it may function so requires the auditory perception of its form. Further, the text after having come within the range of auditory perception depends upon the perceptual cognition of *ākāṅkṣā* or verbal expectancey, of *yogyatā* or cogruity, of *sannidhi* or proximity. *Ākāṅkṣā* consists in a word not being capable of conveying a complete judgement in the absence of another word. *Yogyatā* consists in the sense being not stultifiable. *Sannidhi* consists in the articulation of words without undue delay. The cognition of all these is essential in order that the text may give rise to the cognition of its sense, Moreover, the cognition that arises from the text is comprehended by the *sākṣi* or the witness - cognition. The latter while revealing the cognition of the sentence-sense reveals its validity also. Witness-cognition is perceptual in nature. Vyāsatīrtha points out that a sentence which is the *pramāṇa* known as verbal testimony in order that it may give rise to the cognition of its sense depends upon perception so that there may be the cognition of its essential form (*svarūpa*), of the accessories that lead to the rise of the knowledge of the sentence-sense and also of the validity of the latter. The perceptual cognition of the sentence and other factors belongs to the class of the perceptual cognition of pot, etc., which is visual in nature

as both have the common feature of being a perceptual cognition (*pratyakṣatva*). When such is the case if the Advaitin contends that the *śruti* text – *neha nānāsti kiñcana* conveys the sense of the non-reality of the world, it invalidates the cognition of the reality of the world derived from perception. This amounts to negating what all that is known through perception. The result of this argument would be that the cognition that arises from the text would invalidate the auditory perception of its form, the cognitions of *ākāṅkṣā*, etc., and the validity of the cognition of its sense. It may be noted here that all these factors are the sustaining ones (*upajīvyas*) and if they are invalidated, the *śruti* text itself would stand negated and cannot function.

From the above it follows that since perception is the sustaining factor (*upajīvyā*) of both inference and verbal testimony, it is more powerful than the two. Hence the cognition that arises from perception cannot be invalidated by the cognition that arise from inference and verbal testimony.⁶

Reply to this Objection

Madhusūdana Sarasvatī rejects the above contention by stating that it is true that the sentence *mithyātva-śruti* in order that it may give rise to the cognition of its sense depends upon the perceptual cognition of its form that arises from the sense of hearing. And the content of the perceptual cognition, namely, the form of the sentence has the characteristic of being unsublatable during phenomenal existence (*vyavahāra-kālābādhyā*); and not the characteristic of being unsublatable for all time (*trikālābādhyā*). Now the

sustaining factor (*upajīvyā*) of the *mithyātva-śruti* is the perceptual cognition of its form that has the characteristic of being unsublatable during phenomenal existence. And this aspect is not at all sublated or invalidated by the verbal cognition that arises from the *mithyātva-śruti* that what is given in perception is not real. What is sublated by the verbal cognition is the aspect of unsublatability of the content of the cognition at all time. And this aspect is not the sustaining factor of the *mithyātva-śruti*.⁷

Exactly similar consideration applies to inference also. Inference depends upon the perceptual cognitions of the subject of inference (*pakṣa*), the ground of inference (*hetu*), and the thing that is sought to be established (*sādhya*). Here too the contents of the perceptual cognitions have the characteristic of being unsublatable during phenomenal existence. The sustaining factor (*upajīvyā*) of inference is the perceptual cognition of its constituents that have unsublatability during phenomenal existence. And this aspect is not at all invalidated by the cognition that arises from inferential argument that the world is not real. What is sublated by the cognition arising from the inferential argument is the aspect of unsublatability of the content of the perceptual cognition at all time. And this aspect is not the sustaining factor (*upajīvyā*) of the inferential argument.

Madhusūdana Sarasvatī further proceeds to state that Vyāsatīrtha is of the view that that which is depended upon by inference and verbal testimony is the sustaining factor of the latter. The perceptual cognition of the subject of inference, etc., and that of the essential form of the sentence,

etc., are being depended upon by inference and verbal testimony respectively. As such they constitute the sustaining factor of both. The reference to their unsublatability during phenomenal existence has no relevance at all. The result of this argument is that the cognitions arising from inference and verbal testimony would invalidate their sustaining factor itself.⁸

The above contention is wrong. It is because the sublating cognition “This is not silver” may be viewed as dependent upon the erroneous cognition “This is silver”. This is as it should be; it is because the sublating cognition of the form “This is not silver” arises with reference to the counterpositive of its content, namely, the silver which is presented in the erroneous cognition “This is silver”. The latter being the sustaining factor of the sublating cognition would preclude the possibility of the rise of the latter.⁹

Ninth Objection

The Dvaitin might contend that in respect of the cognition of the non-existence of pot (say), the cognition of the counter-positive (*pratiyogin*) – pot in the present case is the cause. But the cognition of the counter-positive need not be a valid one. It is because even from the erroneous cognition of a counter-positive there arises the cognition of its non-existence. Hence it must be held that the cognition of the counter-positive, in its aspect of being the cognition of the counter-positive (*pratiyogi-jñānatva*) is the cause of the cognition of its non-existence.

Now in respect of the sublating cognition “This is

not silver”, what is required is the cognition of silver in its aspect of being the silver (*rajatatva*). The cognition of silver in its aspect of being silver (*rajatatva*) may arise in silver where it is actually present or it may arise in a shell where it is not present. Of these, the first one is the cognition that has silver as its substantive feature (*viśeṣya*) and silverness as the adjectival feature (*prakāra*). If such a cognition arises, then there is no possibility of the rise of the cognition “This is not silver”. The second one is the cognition that has shell wherein there is the absence of silver as its substantive feature and silverness as its adjectival feature. This cognition of silver in its aspect of being the silver (*rajatatva*) is the cognition of the counter-positive in its aspect of being the cognition of the counter-positive (*pratiyogī-jñānatva*). And it is the sustaining factor of the sublating cognition. But the sublating cognition, although it depends upon the erroneous cognition, does not depend upon its validity. In other words, the *upajīvyā* of the sublating cognition is the erroneous cognition and not its validity. The sublating cognition merely sublates the validity of the erroneous cognition which is not its *upajīvyā*.

Madhusūdana Sarasvatī points out that in that case the Dvaitin more or less adopts the line of the argument of the Advaitin that inference and verbal testimony depend upon the perceptual cognition that has reference to the constituents of both proofs as having unoblatability during phenomenal existence. This aspect which is the *upajīvyā* is not at all invalidated by the cognition arising from inference and verbal testimony. The characteristic of being unoblatability

at all time is sublated and it is not the sustaining factor.¹⁰

Tenth Objection

Vyāsatīrtha in order to obviate the difficulty in viewing the erroneous cognition as the *upajīvyā* of the sublating cognition defines the concept of *upajīvyā* in a different manner. An *upajīvyā* is that on whose validity something else depends in order that its validity may be ascertained through the removal of the false notion that it is not valid. Recollection, for example, in order that its validity may be ascertained through the removal of the false notion that it is not valid depends upon the validity of experience from which it has arisen. And, the valid experience is the *upajīvyā* of recollection. This may be explained in a syllogistic form thus:

“This recollection is valid;

it is because it has the characteristic of being a recollection born out of valid experience”.

When viewed in the above light, Vyāsatīrtha argues that the erroneous cognition of the form “This is silver” cannot be the *upajīvyā* of the sublating cognition “This is not silver” as it is devoid of validity. In other words, the sublating cognition in order that its validity may be ascertained and the false notion that it is not valid may be dispelled cannot depend upon the erroneous cognition which is devoid of validity.¹¹

Reply to this objection

Madhusūdana Sarasvatī points out that if the concept of *upajīvyā* is understood in the above manner, then the

cognition of the invariable relation (*vyāpti*) between the ground of inference (*hetu*) and the thing that is sought to be established (*sādhya*) which is well-known to be the *upajīvyā* of the inferential cognition cannot be considered to be so. It is because there arises the inferential cognition that the mountain has fire on the basis of the erroneous knowledge of the cloud or dust as smoke and as invariably related to the fire. By chance if fire exists there then the inferential cognition is valid. But since the cognition of invariable relation is erroneous, the inferential cognition for the ascertainment of its validity cannot depend upon the validity of the invariable cognition as the latter is erroneous. Hence the well-known fact that the cognition of the invariable relation is the *upajīvyā* of the inferential cognition would be overruled.¹²

Eleventh Objection

Vyāsatīrtha adopts yet another mode of describing the concept of *upajīvyā*; and, it is this: an *upajīvyā* is that without which one cannot have the knowledge of something else.¹³ When viewed in this light, the erroneous cognition "This is silver" is the *upajīvyā* of the cognition "This is not silver". It is because the latter requires the cognition of the thing that is to be negated and the substratum wherein it is to be negated. Both these factors are presented by the cognition "This is silver". Hence the latter is the *upajīvyā* of the cognition "This is not silver".

The question now arises as to how the cognition "This is not silver" could sublate its *upajīvyā*, the cognition "This is silver". Vyāsatīrtha answers this by saying that a factor merely because it is an *upajīvyā* cannot be considered

to be powerful and therefore not subject to sublation by the factor which it sustains. On the other hand, an *upajīvyā* becomes powerful only when it is ascertained to be valid on careful examination by verifying that what is signified by it conforms to what is known through other proofs of its class and the cognition derived from it leads to fruitful activity. When viewed in this light, the erroneous cognition "This is silver" although it is the *upajīvyā* of the sublating cognition "This is not silver" cannot be considered as powerful. It is because it does not conform to the cognition "This is silver" which has silver as its content and which has arisen due to the identification of the actual presence of silverness in it. Further it does not lead to any fruitful activity. Thus it is not powerful and so it can be sublated by the subsequent cognition "This is not silver".

The perceptual cognition of the form "The pot is real" conforms to the cognition of the same form that arises subsequently through perception and it is adapted to practical needs of life. Hence it is valid. And the proof - perception which gives rise to the valid knowledge is also valid and powerful. Being the *upajīvyā* of inference and verbal testimony, it cannot be invalidated by the cognition, arising from the latter. Perception is thus more powerful than inference and verbal testimony.¹⁴

Reply to this Objection

Madhusūdana Sarasvatī agrees with Vyāsatīrtha that the validity of a cognition arising from perception must be ascertained by careful examination on the lines indicated by him. As a result of such an examination what would be

known is that the content of the perceptual cognition conforms to that which is actual, is adapted to the practical needs of life, and is not sublated at the time and the place of such an examination. The validity of the perceptual cognition lies in this that its content is unsublated during phenomenal existence. The cognitions arising from inference and the *mithyātva-śruti*, however, point to the fact that the content of perceptual cognition, that is, the world of objects does not have the characteristic of being unsublated for all time. We have already stated that inference and verbal testimony depend for their effective functioning upon the perceptual cognition of their respective constituents which are unsublatable during phenomenal existence; that is, which are empirically real. And inference and verbal testimony which depend upon the perceptual cognition of their respective constituents give rise to the cognition that the latter are not unsublatable for all time. It comes to this that the perceptual cognition that the world is real is valid in so far as it points to the unsublatability of the world during phenomenal existence; and, it is not valid in respect of unsublatability of the world at all time.¹⁵

Twelfth Objection

If perceptual cognition of the world to be real were held to be invalid, then, Vyāsatīrtha argues, the following difficulty would arise. The invariable relation between the *hetu* and the *sādhya* is known through perception. If perceptual cognition is not valid, then the invariable relation also which is the content of perceptual cognition is not valid. In that case the inferential cognition that arises from

the cognition of invariable relation and also the content of inferential cognition cannot be valid. The invariable relation, the inferential cognition and also what is inferred – all these must have the same level of reality. If this position is not held, then from the vapour mistaken for smoke there may arise the valid cognition of fire. In the same way, the essential form of a sentence, and also *ākāṅkṣā*, *yogyatā* and *sannidhi* which constitute the cause of verbal cognition – all these come within the range of perceptual cognition. If perceptual cognition is not valid, then these factors also are not valid and so there would arise the unwelcome position of the cognition of the sentence-sense that arises from the sentence becoming invalid. On these grounds, the perceptual cognition of the world as real must be treated to be valid.¹⁶

Reply to this Objection

Madhusūdana Sarasvatī points out there is no unalterable rule that the invariable relation between the *hetu* and *sādhya* on the one hand and the inferential cognition and the thing inferred must have the same level of reality. It is because it is noticed that by chance there arises the valid inferential cognition of the *sādhya* in the *pakṣa* from the invariable relation that lacks correspondence. Moreover, according to the Bhāṭṭa school of Mīmāṃsā, the letters (*varṇas*) are eternal and all-pervasive. And the features of being long and short are adventitiously presented upon them. These features belong to the tone (*dhvani*) which reveals the letters; and, they are presented in the latter that are revealed. As associated with these features the letters are not real. Yet the cognition arising from the group of

such letters is taken to be valid. Vācaspati Miśra in his *Bhāmatī* states that the features of being long and short which belong to something else (that is, the tone) and which are attributed to the letters do serve as the cause of valid cognition.¹⁷ Moreover in the inferential argument –

“The pot which has the antecedent non-existence of smell possesses smell; because it belongs to the class of earth”

there exists the valid invariable relation between the *hetu* and the *sādhya* in the form “whichever belongs to the class of earth, has smell”. And from this there arises an invalid inferential cognition of the presence of smell in the pot which has the antecedent non-existence of smell. In the same way, the reflected image is the same as the original with the state of being a reflection (*pratibimbatva*) falsely presented upon it. As associated with the state of reflection the reflected image is a false one; and, yet it gives rise to the valid cognition of the existence of the *bimba*.

From the above it emerges that there is no unalterable rule that the instrument of a cognition on the one hand and the cognition and its content on the other must have same level of reality. It comes to this: that the perceptual cognition of the invariable relation, of the form of a sentence, and of *ākāṅkṣā*, etc., may be invalid; yet, there could arise valid inferential cognition and verbal cognition from these factors. The validity of these cognitions, however, rests on the empirical reality of their respective contents.¹⁸

Thirteenth Objection

Vyāsatīrtha argues that if perception is not powerful then the cognition that arises from it is not valid. This means that the validity of perceptual cognition is false. As a result its content also is false. This is noticed in the case of the erroneous cognition of shell as silver. This cognition is not valid; that is, the validity of this cognition is false. When such is the case, the content of the cognition is also false. The perceptual cognition of Brahman which arises from the *śruti* texts, being a perceptual cognition, must be treated to be not valid. In that case the content of the cognition, namely, Brahman is to be considered as false and not real.¹⁹

Reply to this Objection

Madhusūdana Sarasvatī points out that the perceptual cognition “The pot is real” is considered to be valid in the sense that it has for its content – the pot which is unsublatable at the time of its comprehension and not as unsublatable at all time – past, present and future. It is because perception is not efficacious enough to comprehend the relation of pot to the past and the future. Hence the validity of the perceptual cognition “The pot is real” is restricted to the reality or unsublatability of pot at the time of its perception. Since it is noticed that pot is not sublated subsequently, it is ascertained that it is unsublatable during the time of phenomenal existence. And unsublatability during the time of phenomenal existence is termed empirical reality. The validity of the perceptual cognition “The pot is real” is thus only empirical validity.

The perceptual cognition of shell as silver is not valid as its content – the silver and also its cognition are subject to sublation subsequently. The silver in the shell-silver illusion appears to be real at the time of its perception only. Hence it is apparently real. And the validity of the erroneous cognition “This is silver” is only apparent validity.

The perceptual cognition of Brahman that arises from the *śruti* texts like *tat tvam asi* and the like is the mental state in the form of Brahman inspired by the reflection of Brahman in it. Its content is Brahman which is real or unsublated at all time. Brahman, the true nature of the soul cannot be sublated at any point of time, as he who attempts at sublating it himself is Brahman.²⁰ Hence the validity of the perceptual cognition of Brahman is absolute validity.

It may be added here that the perceptual cognition of Brahman being the mental state or the modification of the mind is not real. But its content is real. This is analogous to the complex cognition “The person with the stick” (*daṇḍī puruṣaḥ*). Here even when the adjectival feature, namely, the stick is taken away, the substantive feature, namely, the person remains unchanged. In the same way, in respect of the perceptual cognition of Brahman which is the mental state inspired by the reflection of Brahman in it, Brahman – the content remains unsublated while the relation of the mental state inspired by the reflection of Brahman in it is sublated.²¹

Fourteenth Objection

The nature of the *sat* – element which is manifested in the perceptual cognition “*ghataḥ san*” (The pot is real)

is subject to close analysis by Vyāsatīrtha who after considering the several ways in which it could be viewed has finally come to the conclusion that it is the same as the essential nature of Brahman as admitted by the Advaitin. The several ways in which the nature of the *sat* – element may be viewed are recorded by Vyāsatīrtha as follows:

- i) it has the state of being the content of valid knowledge (*pramāviṣayatva*);
- ii) it has the fitness to come within the range of valid knowledge (*tadyogyatva*);
- iii) it has the state of not being the content of erroneous knowledge (*bhramāviṣayatva*);
- iv) it has the state of being the content of valid knowledge which does not have *asattva* – the characteristic of being not an absolute nothing as its adjectival feature (*asattvā-prakāra-kapramāviṣayatvam*);
- v) it has the state of being the content of valid knowledge that has *sattva* as its adjectival feature (*sattvapra-kāra-ka-pramāviṣayatvam*);
- vi) it is not the counter-positive (*pratiyogin*) of its absence in the substratum in which it appears (*svasamānādhikaraṇa-sva-samānakālinanīṣedhā-pratiyogitvam*);
- vii) it has the universal *satta* (*sattājātiḥ*);
- viii) it is that which is practically efficient (*arthakriyā-kāritvam*);

- ix) it is something different from *asat* (*asadvailakṣaṇyam*);
- x) it has the state of being different from *asat* and at the same time not fancied to be something else (*asadvilakṣaṇatve sati anāropitatvam*);
- xi) it is the content of valid knowledge that has for its content – existence (*astitvaprakāraḥ pramāṇam prati kadācit sākṣādviśayatvam*);
- xii) it has the state of being related to time (*kālasambandhitvam*);
- xiii) it has the state of being not conditioned by time, space and objects (*aparicchinnatvam*); and,
- xiv) it is different from *asat* which is the counter-positive (*pratiyogi*) of the absence at all time everywhere (*sarvadeśīyatraikālikaniṣedhapratiyogitvam asatvam, tadabhāvaḥ sattvam*).

Having thus stated the above as the plausible definitions of the concept of *sat*, Vyāsatīrtha maintains that none of these would hold good. We shall set forth his points of criticism:

The first definition is that *sat* is that which has the state of being the content of valid knowledge. This is wrong. It is because a proof (*pramāṇa*) cannot function with reference to an absolute nothing like a flower sprung from the sky (*gaganakusuma*). It could function only with reference to a real entity (*sat*). This means that the *sat*-element is that which is responsible for making the sense-organs function in respect of it. It follows that in order that

a *pramāṇa* may function to give rise to the valid knowledge what is required is the *sat*-element. And to define *sat* as that which comes within the range of valid knowledge involves the defect of interdependence (*anyonyāśraya*). To get over this difficulty if it is admitted a *sat*-element prior to the rise of valid perceptual knowledge, we have to assume two kinds of *sat*-elements, one that which activates the sense-organs to function to give rise to a valid knowledge and another as the content of valid knowledge.

Further the definition of *sat* as the content of valid perceptual knowledge is wrong on the ground that even *asat* or an absolute nothing, according to the Nyāya school comes within the range of valid perceptual knowledge. It is thus: according to the Nyāya school, the theory of error is known as *anyathākhyāti*. That is, in the erroneous cognition of shell as silver of the form "This is silver", the "this" - element of the shell is an object of perceptual cognition. The cognition of the glittering aspect of the "this"-element revives one's latent impressions of silver and gives rise to the recollection of silver. It is recollection that serves as a contact between the sense of sight and the object in front and presents the latter as silver. The relation between the 'this'-element and silver is not a real one. And that which is not real is *asat* or an absolute nothing according to the Nyāya school. Thus in the erroneous cognition of shell as silver, the 'this'-element is real, so is the silver-element. But the relation between the two is an absolute nothing. It is the relational factor which is an absolute nothing that comes within the range of the perceptual cognition when there is an *anuvyavasāya* or after-cognition of the form "I

know this to be silver". The *anuvyavsāya* is a valid one. It has for its content the "silver"-element, the "this"-element which are *sat* and the relation between the two which is *asat* or an absolute nothing. Thus since even *asat* comes within the range of valid perceptual knowledge, to define that that which comes within the range of perceptual knowledge is *sat* is not sound.²²

The second definition, namely, that *sat* is that which has the fitness (*yogyatā*) to come within the range of valid knowledge. This also is wrong. It is because according to this explanation the fitness to become the content of valid knowledge must be provided by the 'sat'-element only. The cognition of fitness which is given as the definition of the 'sat'-element depends upon the cognition of the latter. This involves the defect of interdependence.²³

The third definition, namely, that *sat* is that which does not come within the range of erroneous cognition too is wrong. It is because every object in this world in the ultimate and final analysis will become the object of erroneous cognition, namely, that it is momentary by nature according to the Yogācāra school of Buddhism or is void according to the Mādhyamika school.²⁴

The fourth definition that *sat* is that which is the content of valid knowledge that does not have *asattva* or the characteristic of being not an absolute nothing as its adjectival feature is also wrong. It is because in order to identify that *asat* does not constitute the adjectival feature of a valid knowledge what is required is the knowledge of the *sat*-element; for, *asat* is only the absence of *sat*. Thus

the cognition of the element of *asat* depends upon the cognition of the element of *sat*. And the cognition of the element of *sat* as the content of valid knowledge that does not have the element of *asat* as its adjectival feature involves dependence upon the cognition of the element of *asat*. Thus there is the defect of inter-dependence.²⁵

The fifth definition that *sat* is that which is the content of valid knowledge that has *sattva* as its adjectival feature is not correct. It is because *sattva* being the essential nature of *sat* could be identified only when we have the cognition of *sat*. And the cognition of *sat* according to this explanation involves reference to the cognition of *sat*. Thus this explanation involves the defect of self-dependence (*ātmāśraya*).²⁶

The sixth definition is that *sat* is that which is not the counter-positive of its absence in the substratum wherein it appears. The silver that appears in the shell, for example, is not present in the shell in which it appears. Hence it is the counter-positive of its absence in the shell wherein it appears. It is not *sat*.

But this definition is not applicable in the genuine case of the quality – *saṁyoga*, which is *sat*. And hence it is associated with the defect known as *avyāpti* or inapplicability in a genuine case. It is thus: in the upper part of a tree there is the contact of monkey (*kapisāṁyoga*). And in the same tree in the trunk part of it there is its absence. Thus “contact” which is admitted to be *sat* is the counter-positive of its absence in the substratum wherein it exists. Hence this definition must be given up.²⁷

The seventh definition is that *sat* is that which has the universal known as *sattā-jāti*. The Advaitin admits it as present in all the objects invariably and considers that it is in no way contradictory to the non-reality of the objects shown by inference or the *mithyātvaśruti*.²⁸

The eighth definition is that *sat* is that which is practically efficient. The Advaitin contends that pot which is given in perception as real or *san* is practically efficient and this practical efficiency is not in any way in conflict with the non-reality of pot.²⁹

The ninth definition is that *sat* is that which is different from *asat*. *Sat* of this nature is admitted by the Advaitin too who contends that it does not preclude the possibility of viewing pot, etc., which has *sattva* of this nature to be non-real.³⁰

The tenth definition that *sat* is that which is different from *asat* and which is not fancied to be something else is wrong in view of the fact that everything is fancied to be momentary or void by the Yogācāra and the Mādhyamika school of Buddhism.³¹

The eleventh and the twelfth definition describe *sat* as the one that is the content of valid knowledge that has reference to existence or relation to time. The perceptual cognition of the form "The pot is here and now" (*gaṭaḥ iha idānīm asti*) has for its content the existence of pot related to a particular place and time. The Advaitin who advocates that the objects of the world are non-real on the basis of *mithyātva-śruti* and inference does not deny in the case of pot, etc., its spatial and temporal relation. The

point that is of importance is that even if *sat* is defined in the above manner it is not in conflict with the concept of non-reality of the objects which are known to be *sat*.³²

The thirteenth definition of *sat* is that that which is not conditioned by time, space and objects. This too is not correct because an absolute nothing is not *sat* but it is not conditioned by time, space and object.³³

The fourteenth definition of *sat* as the one that is different from *asat* which is the counter-positive of the absence at all time everywhere. Vyāsatīrtha argues that this definition of *sat* would pertain to Brahman as well as the world. He proceeds to point out that the characteristic of being *sat* which the Advaitin admits as the essential nature of Brahman pertains to the world too.³⁴

Thus we see that Vyāsatīrtha having framed several definitions of the *sat*-element has discarded all of them excepting the last one as he has felt that some of them are riddled with logical inconsistencies and some others are not opposed to viewing the world of objects to be non-real from the stand-point of Advaita. The last definition he favours and he is of the view that the world given in perception is as real (*sat*) as Brahman and it cannot be proved to be non-real by inference and the *mithyātva-śruti*. The Advaitin cannot, therefore, maintain that what is given in perception of the form "The pot is real" is invalidated by inference and the *mithyātva-śruti*.

Reply to this Objection

Madhusūdana Sarasvatī points out that Brahman – the ultimate reality according to Advaita is non-dual, self-

luminous consciousness and is real (*sat*). And, reality (*sattva*) is unsublatability at all time; and, unsublatability is absence of sublatability which is of the nature of Brahman. This *sattva* which constitutes the essential nature of Brahman is verbally expressed as the feature of Brahman. Vyāsatīrtha argues that the *sattva* which is admitted by the Advaitin as belonging to Brahman is admitted by the Dvaitin as belonging to the world too.³⁵ Madhusūdana Sarasvatī argues that the *sattva* which is viewed as the feature of Brahman cannot be admitted as the feature of the world which is inert as the *sattva* that belongs to Brahman is identical with consciousness. Hence it must be admitted that the *sattva* of Brahman which is consciousness, which is different from the inert world and which is opposed to the inertness of the world is *falsely identified* with the world that is inert and is thereby viewed as the feature of the latter. It must be noted here that there is a distinction between viewing Brahman and the world as having *sattva* as their features. In the case of Brahman, the *sattva* constitutes its essential nature and it is falsely imagined to be its feature. In the case of the world, however, *sattva* is different from it and is falsely viewed as its feature. The result of this conclusion is that just as the silver is admitted to be falsely presented upon the shell on the ground that the reality as well as the “this-ness” that belong to the shell is attributed to the silver, in the same way, the world must be admitted to be falsely presented upon Brahman as the *sattva* that belongs to Brahman is held to be attributed to the world. It comes to this that Vyāsatīrtha when he states that the *sattva* that belongs Brahman is present in the world which is inert is thus

forced to admit that the world is a false presentation upon Brahman. In other words the world is non-real, that is, it is not unsublatable at all time. This is the conclusive view of the Advaitin.³⁶

Conclusion

The inferential arguments and the *śruti* texts prove the world given in perception to be non-real in the sense that it is not unsublatable at all time. The cognition arising from the two proofs – the inference and verbal testimony thus invalidates the perceptual cognition of the world to be real or *sat*. Vyāsatīrtha, however, has attempted to prove that perception is more powerful than the other two proofs referred to on the basis of the maxims derived from the Pūrvamīmāṃsā-sūtras. Madhusūdana Sarasvatī has examined his views and has proved them to be wrong.



NOTES

1. *Pūrvamīmāṃsā-sūtra*, 12.2.22.
2. *Nyāyāmṛta* (hereafter *Nmr.*), pp. 124-125.
3. *Kaṭha Upaniṣad.*, 2.22.
4. *Advaita-siddhi* (hereafter *AS*), p.125.
5. *Nmr.*, pp. 126-127.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 126.
7. *AS.*, pp.127-128.
8. *Nmr.*, p. 127.
9. *AS.*, p.128.
10. *Ibid.*, pp. 128-129.
11. *Nmr.*, p. 129.
12. *AS.*, p.129.
13. *Nmr.*, p. 129.
14. *Ibid.*, pp. 129-130.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 131.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 128.
17. *Bhāmatī*, p.7.
18. *AS.*, pp.131-132.
19. *Nmr.*, p. 129.
20. *nā ayam ātmā nirākartum śakyaḥ, ya eva nirākartā tasyaiva ātmatvāt*, Śaṅkara's *bhāṣya* on the *Brahma-sūtra*, 1.1.4.
21. *AS.*, p.133.
22. *Nmr.*, pp. 96-97; *AS.*, pp.96-97.
23. *Ibid.*
24. *Ibid.*

25. Ibid.
26. Ibid.
27. *Nmr.*, p. 97.
28. *AS.*, p.97.
29. Ibid.
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid.
32. *Nmr.*, p. 101; *AS.*, p.98.
33. Ibid.
34. *Nmr.*, p. 99; *AS.*, p.99.
35. *Nmr.*, p.98.
36. *AS.*, pp.99-100.

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GAUḌAPĀDA

T.M.P. MAHADEVAN

1

Gauḍapāda, like most of the classical Indian thinkers, lives in our memories mainly through his work. Tradition regards Gauḍapāda as Śaṅkara's *paramaguru* (preceptor's preceptor). A verse which contains the succession list of the early teachers of Advaita gives the names of those teachers in the following order: Nārāyaṇa, the lotus-born Brahmā, Vaśiṣṭha, Śakti, his son Parāśara, Vyāsa, Śuka, the great Gauḍapāda, Govinda-yogīndra, his disciple Śaṅkarācārya, and then his four pupils Padmapāda, Hastāmalaka, Troṭaka and Vārtikakāra (i.e. Sureśvara).¹

From this list we learn that Gauḍapāda was the preceptor of Govinda who was Śaṅkara's *guru*. The first teacher is Nārāyaṇa, the Lord himself; and the line of succession,

Courtesy: *Preceptors of Advaita*. Samata Books, Chennai.

which is from father to son upto Śuka, consists more or less of mythical persons. The first teacher of whose historicity we may be sure is Gauḍapāda; and from him onwards we have the rule of *sanyāsins* succeeding to the Advaita pontificate. With him commences, according to tradition, what may be called the *mānava-saṁpradāya* in the present age of *Kali*; he was the first *human* preceptor to receive the wisdom of the One and impart it to his pupils. Ānandagiri in his gloss (*tīkā*) on the *Māṇḍūkya-Kārikā-bhāṣya*, says that the teacher Gauḍapāda in those days spent his time in Badrikāśrama, the holy residence of Nara-Nārāyaṇa, in deep meditation on the Lord, and that the Lord, Nārāyaṇa, greatly pleased, revealed to him the Upaniṣadic wisdom. Bālakṛṣṇānanda Sarasvatī (17th Century A.D) writes in his *Śārīrakamīmāṃsā-bhāṣya-vārtika* that there was in the country of Kurukṣetra a river called Hīrarāvātī, on whose banks there were some Gauḍa people (people of Gauḍadeśa, the modern North Bengal); that the pre-eminent of them, Gauḍapāda, was absorbed in deep meditation beginning from the Dvāpara age; and so, as his proper name is not known to the moderns, he is celebrated by the class-name of the Gauḍas.

Gauḍapāda, after he was blessed with the intuitive wisdom of the Absolute, must have taught those who gathered round him the truth he had discovered and embodied it in a work which came to be called the *Āgamaśāstra* or *Gauḍapāda-kārikā*. It is an exposition of a short but important Upaniṣad called the *Māṇḍūkya*, which is counted as one of the principal Upaniṣads by all the schools of Vedānta. Besides the *Māṇḍūkyakārikā*, other works are also attributed to Gauḍapāda. They are: a *vṛtti* on the *Uttaragītā*, a *bhāṣya*

on the *Sāṅkhyakārikā*, a commentary on the *Nṛsimhottara-tāpinyupanīṣad*, a *bhāṣya* on *Durgāsaptasatī* and two independent Tāntric treatises, viz., *Subhagodaya* and *Śrīvidyāratnasūtra*. Since nothing definite can be said regarding the authorship of these other works, we shall here attempt a study of the philosophy of Gauḍapāda as it is set forth in the *Māṇḍūkyakārikā*.

2

Gauḍapāda's *Kārikā*, which is more than a verse commentary on the *Māṇḍūkya Upanīṣad*, contains the quintessence of the teaching of Vedānta.² The work consists of 215 couplets arranged in four chapters. Following the *Upanīṣad*, the first chapter, *Āgama-prakarāṇa*, analyses the three *avasthās*, waking, dream, and deep sleep, and finds that the Self which is referred to as the Turiya underlies and transcends these changing states. The second chapter, *Vaitathya-prakarāṇa*, seeks to establish the illusoriness of the world of plurality, on the analogy of dreams, and through a criticism of creationistic hypotheses. The third chapter, *Advaita prakarāṇa*, sets forth the arguments for the truth of non-dualism, gives citations from scripture in support thereof, and discusses the path to the realisation of non-duality, called *Asparśa-yoga*. The last chapter, *Alātaśāti-prakarāṇa*, repeats some of the arguments of the earlier chapters, shows the unintelligibility of the concept of causality through dialectic, explains the illusoriness of the phenomenal world, comparing it to the non-real designs produced by a fire-brand (*alāta*) and pressing into service modes of Buddha reasoning, and establishes the supreme truth of non-duality

which is unoriginated, eternal, self-luminous bliss.

3

The central theme of Gauḍapāda's philosophy is that nothing is ever born (*ajāti*), not because "nothing" is the ultimate truth, as in *Śūnya-vāda*, but because the Self is the only reality. "No jīva is born; there is no cause for such birth; this is the supreme truth, nothing whatever is born."³ From the standpoint of the Absolute there is no duality, there is nothing finite or non-eternal. The Absolute alone is; all else is appearance, illusory and non-real. They are deluded who take the pluralistic universe to be real. Empirical distinctions of knower and object known, mind and matter, are the result of *Māyā*. One cannot explain how they arise. But on enquiry they will be found to be void of reality. If one sees them, it is like seeing the foot-prints of birds in the sky.⁴ The Self is unborn; there is nothing else to be born. Duality is mere illusion; non-duality is the supreme truth.⁵

4

Gauḍapāda expounds his philosophy of non-origination or non-birth in several ways and through many an argument. The reality of the non-dual self he first establishes through an enquiry into the purport of the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad*. Though extremely brief, the *Māṇḍūkya* contains the essentials of Vedānta. For the liberation of those who desire release, says the *Muktikopaniṣad*, the *Māṇḍūkya* alone is enough.⁶ The *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* begins with the equation "Om=all=Brahman=Self" and proceeds to describe the three states of the self, waking, dream and sleep, as well as the fourth (*Turīya*) which is not a state alongside the others but the transcendent nature of the self—the non-dual

peace, the self *per se*. Gauḍapāda makes this declaration of the Upaniṣad the basis of his metaphysical quest and seeks to show through reasoning that non-origination is the final truth.

Viśva, Taijasa, and Prājña are the names by which the self is known in the three states, waking, dream, and sleep. Viśva is conscious of the external world, enjoys what is gross and is satisfied therewith. Taijasa is conscious of what is within,⁷ enjoys what is subtle and finds satisfaction there. Prājña is a consciousness-mass without the distinctions of seer and seen; its enjoyment and satisfaction is bliss. The three, Viśva, Taijasa, and Prājña, are not distinct selves. It is one and the same self that appears as three.⁸ To show that all the three aspects are present in waking, Gauḍapāda assigns localities to them. Viśva has its seat in the right eye; Taijasa in the mind; and Prājña in the ether of the heart.⁹ And the three should also be thought of as identical with the three cosmic forms of the self, Virāṭ, Hiraṇyagarbha, and Avyākṛta or Īśvara. It is to indicate this identity that the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* describes the Prājña-self as the lord of all, the knower of all, the controller of all, the source of all, the origin and end of beings.¹⁰ The recognition of Viśva, Taijasa, and Prājña in the waking state, and the identification of the three individual forms of the self with the three cosmic forms, are for the purpose of realising non-duality.

The non-dual reality is the Turiya. It has no distinguishing name; hence it is called "the fourth" (*turiya*).¹¹ It is the self-luminous self, changeless, non-dual, one without

a second. The states that change and pass, with their words and enjoyments, are illusory, products of *Māyā*. *Māyā* is two-fold in its functioning; it veils the one and projects the many. Non-apprehension of the real (*tattvā-pratibodha*) and the apprehension of it otherwise (*anyathā-grahana*). For the Prājñā in the state of sleep there is non-apprehension alone, and not misapprehension. It knows neither the self in its real nature nor the not-self. The Turīya is free from both the aspects of *Māyā*. It is consciousness *per se*, without even a trace of ignorance. It is unfailing light, omniscient sight.¹² The metaphysical implication of sleep is that it hides the true, and of dream that it projects the untrue. Viśva and Taijasa are associated with dream and sleep; Prājñā is associated with dreamless sleep; for the Turīya there is neither dream nor sleep. Real awakening comes with the realisation of the Turīya, with the transcendence of *Māyā* in its double role of veiling the real and showing up the non-real. When the jīva wakes from the beginningless sleep of illusion, it knows its true nature as unborn, as that in which there is neither sleep nor dream nor duality.¹³

In the *Alātaśānti-prakaraṇa*,¹⁴ Gauḍapāda teaches the same theory of the three *avasthās*, employing Bauddha terminology. Waking, dream, and sleep are there called *laukika*, *śuddha-laukika*, and *lokottara* respectively. The difference between the first two is that while in the former there are external objects (*savastu*), in the latter there is none (*avastu*); but in both there is consciousness of duality (*sopalambha*). In the *lokottara* there is neither the external world of things nor the internal world of ideas, and consequently there is no apprehension of duality; ignorance, how-

ever, persists. It is only he who knows these three as non-real states that knows the truth. For him there is no duality, nor ignorance, the seed of duality. When the real is known, there is not the world of duality.¹⁵

As a result of the inquiry into the *avasthās* it must be evident that the pluralistic world is illusory, as the self alone is real. That the world which we take to be real in waking is illusory, Gauḍapāda seeks to establish in the *Vaitathya-prakarāṇa* on the analogy of the dream-world. Judged by the standards of waking, it will be readily seen that the world of dreams is unreal. A person may dream of elephants and chariots; but on waking he realises that all of them must have been illusory because they appeared within him, within the small space of his body.¹⁶ The dream-contents do not form part of the external world which we take to be real in waking; and so they are illusory. Nor do they conform to the laws of space and time which govern the waking world. In a trice of waking time one may travel far and wide in dream. There is no real going to the place of dream, for on waking one does not find oneself there. Nor are the objects experienced in dream real, for when the dream-spell is broken one does not see them.¹⁷ Because chariot, etc., seen in dream are not-existent, they are illusory.¹⁸

The world of waking is in many respects similar to that of dream. The objects of waking are *perceived* as the dream-objects are; and they are evanescent as well, like the contents of dream. What is non-existent in the beginning and at the end, is so even in the present.¹⁹ That is real which is not conditioned by time. *Per contra* that which is condi-

tioned by time cannot be real. Just as the dream-objects are experienced in dream alone neither before nor after, even so the objects of waking are experienced in the state of waking alone. A difference between the two states cannot be made out on the ground that, while the objects experienced in waking are practically efficient, those seen in dream are not; for even the objects of waking experience are fruitful in practice only in that state and not in dream; and the dream-objects are useful in their own way in the state of dream. It is true that the dream-water cannot quench actual thirst. But it is equally true that the so-called actual water cannot quench the dream-thirst either.²⁰ It may be argued that the contents of dream are unreal because, unlike the objects of waking, they are strange and abnormal. But when and to whom do they appear abnormal? To him who has returned to waking after a dream. In the dream state itself the contents are not realised to be strange. With perfect equanimity the dreamer may watch even the dismemberment of his own head. We are told that the denizens of heaven have their own peculiarities which to us are all abnormal. Similarly; from the side of waking the dream-contents may seem abnormal; but in themselves they are quite normal.²¹ That there is an essential similarity between the contents of dream and the objects of waking may be shown by a closer scrutiny of the two states. In the state of dream, the dreamer imagines certain ideas within himself and sees certain things outside; and he believes that, while the former are unreal, the latter are real. But as soon as he wakes from the dream, he realises the unreality of even the things which he saw in dream *as if* outside. Similarly in waking, we have our fan-

cies which we know to be unreal, and we experience facts which we take to be real. But when the delusion of duality is dispelled, the so-called facts of the external world will turn out to be illusory appearance.²² Therefore it is that the wise characterise waking as a dream.²³ Just as the dream-soul arises and perishes, the souls of waking come into being and pass away.²⁴ It is the self that posits the dream-contents as well as the external world. The things created in the mind within and those posited in the world without—both these are the illusory imaginations of the Ātman. The difference between the two sets of things is that while the dream-contents last only till the mind of the dreamer imagines them (*cittakālāḥ*) and are peculiar thereto, the objects of the external world are perceived by other subjects²⁵ as well (*dvayakālāḥ*), and are cognised through the sense-organs. Illusoriness (*vaitathya*), however, is common to both.²⁶ In dream as well as in waking it is the mind that moves impelled by *Māyā*, and creates the appearance of plurality. As identical with the self the mind is non-dual; but owing to nescience duality is figured and there is the consequent *saṁsāra*.²⁷

Illustrations for illusoriness are to be found even in the state of waking. Just as in the dark a rope which is not determinately known is imagined to be a snake or a streak of water, the self is imagined to be the world through nescience. And as when the rope is known as rope the posited snake, etc., vanish, so also when the self is known as non-dual, that pluralistic world disappears.²⁸ Like the Palace city of Fairy Morgana (*gandharva-nagara*), the universe is seen but is not real.²⁹ The things of the world are

believed to exist because they are perceived (*upalambhā*) and because they answer to certain practical needs (*samācārāt*). But these two reasons cannot make them real; for even the objects like the elephant conjured up by the necromancer are observed and are practically efficient but are not real.³⁰ One more illustration Gauḍapāda gives in the fourth chapter, viz. the *alāta* or fire-brand. When a fire-brand is moved, it appears to be straight, or crooked, and so on; and when the movement stops, the appearances vanish. They do not really come from the fire-brand in motion, nor do they enter into it when it comes to rest. The motion, nor do they enter into it when it comes to rest. The patterns of fire that appear with the movement of the fire-brand are illusory; they have no substance whatsoever. Similarly, consciousness appears in manifold forms due to *Māyā*. These do not come out of it, in reality, nor do they return to it; for they are naught.³¹ There is no dissolution, no origination; no one in bondage, no one who desires release, no one who is released—this is the supreme truth.³²

6

The establishment of the non-reality of the world by Gauḍapāda does not mean that the great teacher subscribes to the view of ontological unreality (*śūnyavāda*). We have already seen how in the *Āgama-prakarāṇa* he expounds the meaning of the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* and shows through an inquiry into the nature of the three *avasthās* that the Self (*turīya*) is the sole reality. That this is so Gauḍapāda argues through reasoning in the *Advaita-prakarāṇa*, and cites in support the evidence of passages from other scriptural texts as well.

The Self is unlimited like ether, undivided and the same throughout. The jīvas are apparent distinctions therein, as pots, etc., produce in ether divisions as it were. We speak of a plurality of souls and a multiplicity of material objects, even as we speak of pot-ether, pitcher-ether, and so on. The one Ātman appears as the many jīvas, as the same ether seems divided, enclosed in the different things. When the things are destroyed, the distinctions in ether too vanish; so also when the jīvas are realised to be manifestations due to *Māyā*, the self alone remains. There is no contingency of the defects of one jīva being occasioned in the other jīvas or the defects of the jīvas defiling the purity of the self. It must be noted that Gauḍapāda's theory is not *eka-jīva-vāda* but *ekātma-vāda*. Since the empirical plurality of jīvas is recognised, there is not the contingency of the defects of one jīva being occasioned in the others or the experiences of one being confused with those of the rest. And by the defilements of the jīvas the self is not affected, as dust, smoke, etc., present in the pots or pitchers do not make ether foul. Forms, functions, and names differ from object to object; but there is no difference in ether. Similarly, the jīvas vary in their physical make-up, mental and moral endowment, in station and status; but the self is unvarying, formless, functionless, and nameless. Just as children attribute wrongly dirt, etc., to the sky, the ignorant superpose on the unsullied self defects like birth and death, pleasure and pain. But these are changes that are not real and do not touch the self. The birth of the jīvas and their death, their coming and going, do not alter the Ātman. They are not products of the self, nor are they parts thereof. The non-dual reality is

partless; it neither causes anything, nor is caused by anything.³³

Scripture in many places proclaims the non-duality of the self and deprecates the delusion of duality. Through an inquiry into the five sheaths (*kośas*) that cover the soul, the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*³⁴ exhibits the self as the non-dual bliss, not to be confused with the mutable coverings. In the “Honey section” of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*³⁵ the principle behind the cosmic elements is identified with the self which is the substrate of the body and its functions. What is without is within as well. The same “honey” pervades all beings. It is immortal, the self, Brahman, the all. As the spokes are fixed in the nave of a wheel, so are all beings centred in the self. Thus scripture declares the non-difference of the *jīva* from the self and denounces plurality. Difference is illusory; the one appears as many through *Māyā*. “There is no plurality here”.³⁶ “Indra through *māyās* assumes diverse forms”.³⁷ “Though unborn he appears variously born”.³⁸ The *Īśāvāsyā*³⁹ denies birth of the self, and the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* asks, “Who indeed could produce him?”⁴⁰ Of what is real birth is incomprehensible; and what is unreal cannot even be born.⁴¹

It is true that in some contexts scripture speaks of creation. Through the illustrations of clay, metal, sparks, etc., creation of the many from the one is described. But this is only to enable those who are dull-witted and middlings to understand the fundamental unity of reality. Śruti declares creation in some places, and non-creation in others. The two sets of passages cannot have equal validity. That teaching should be taken as the purport of scripture

which is ascertained through inquiry (*niścitam*) and is reasonable (*yukti-yuktam*). If birth is predicated of the real, it must be in the sense of an illusion, and not in the primary sense. The self is unborn, sleepless and dreamless, nameless and formless, self-luminous and all-knowing.⁴²

7

That the self is unborn and that nothing else there is which is born, Gauḍapāda seeks to demonstrate through a dialectical criticism of the causal category in the fourth chapter. Causation, like other relations, falls within the realm of nescience, because on analysis it turns out to be unintelligible. There are two rival views on causation which are totally opposed to each other. The Sāṅkhya theory is that the effect is pre-existent in the cause and is not produced *de novo*. The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika view is that the effect is non-existent prior to its production. On either of these hypotheses there will not result causation. If the effect is already existent, there is no need for any causal operation; it is meaningless to say that what is existent is born. If the effect is non-existent, it can never be produced; what is non-existent like the barren woman's son is not at any time seen to take birth.⁴³ Even without their knowing the two rival schools, *satkārya-vāda* and *asatkārya-vāda*, are thus seen to support the view of non-creation or non-origination.⁴⁴

Of what is really unborn the disputants predicate birth. But this is a flagrant violation of the law of contradiction. How can that which is unborn and therefore immortal become mortal? The immortal cannot become mortal, nor the mortal immortal; for it is impossible for a thing to change

its nature. If what is by nature immortal were to become mortal, then it would cease to be changeless, and attain artificiality, illusoriness. But this is impossible for what is immortal by nature. The Sāṅkhya thinks that the unborn and beginningless Prakṛti evolves itself into the manifold evolutes that constitute the universe. But this view cannot be justified by any canon of logic. If Prakṛti *becomes* the world, it cannot be unborn (*aja*) and eternal (*nitya*). Even to admit that there is a first cause is to confess the failure of causation as a principle of explanation. To add to the confusion the Sāṅkhya says that the effect is non-different from the cause. Now, is the effect born or unborn? If it is born, it cannot be non-different from the cause which is unborn. If it is unborn, then it cannot be called "effect", as the effect is that which is *produced*. And if the effect is produced and is non-different from the cause, the cause cannot be permanent or unchanging. There is no illustration that could be instanced to prove the production of the effect from the unborn cause. If to avoid this difficulty it be said that the cause too is born, then there should be a cause for that cause, a still further cause for that other cause, and so on *ad infinitum*.⁴⁵

The Mīmāṃsakas maintain that the cause and the effect are reciprocally dependent. Merit and demerit are responsible for producing the body; and the body occasions merit and demerit. The chain of causes and effects is without beginning, each alternating with the other, like the seed and the sprout. Here again we meet with insuperable difficulties. If the antecedent of a cause is its effect and the antecedent of an effect is its cause, then both cause and

effect are begun. How can they be beginningless? Moreover, there is a paradox in the very thesis that is proposed. To say that the antecedent of the cause is its effect is like saying that the son begets his father.⁴⁶ There must be some definite sequence recognised as between cause and effect. It is no use believing that the two are reciprocally dependent. If the cause and the effect can be indifferently antecedent or consequent, there would be no distinction whatever between them, and to call one a cause and the other an effect would be entirely arbitrary and void of meaning. Now, there are three possible ways of stating the sequence. It may be said that first there is the cause and subsequently the effect takes place (*pūrva-krama*); or it may be held that the effect is followed by the cause (*apara-krama*); or it may be thought that the cause and the effect are simultaneous (*saha-krama*). None of these alternatives is intelligible. That the cause cannot produce the effect we have shown already. If the cause is unborn, it cannot change and therefore cannot produce; if it is born there is infinite regress. The reverse order too is impossible; for, as we said, it is just like making the son antecedent to the father. The effect by definition is that which is produced by the cause; and if the cause is not there before the effect, how can the effect be produced? And from the unproduced effect how can the cause come into being? The third alternative also is untenable. If what are simultaneous be causally related, there must be such a relation between the two horns of an animal. But as a matter of experience it is well known that the two horns are not so related. This, then, is the crux of the problem. Without settling the sequence, the distinction of cause and effect

would be unintelligible. And it is impossible to settle the sequence. In despair, appeal might be made to the illustration of seed and sprout. But a little thought would reveal that these—seed and sprout—cannot serve as illustration. It is only when the causal sequence has been settled that the relation between seed and sprout would become intelligible. Since the latter is a particular falling under the wider relation of cause and effect, it cannot be used as an illustration. It is, in short, *sādhya-sama*, still to be proved.⁴⁷

A thing is not produced either from itself or from another. A pot is not produced from the self-same pot, nor from another pot. It may be urged that pot is produced from clay. But how is pot related to clay. Is it non-different, different, or both different and non-different from it? If pot is non-different from clay, it cannot be produced, since clay is already existent. If it is different, there is no reason why it should not be produced from another pot or a piece of cloth which are also different. And it cannot be both different and non-different, because of contradiction. Similarly, neither the existent nor the non-existent nor what is existent and non-existent can be produced. It is meaningless to say that what exists is produced. The non-existent cannot be produced even because of its non-existence. The third alternative involves us in contradiction.⁴⁸

It is true that empirical distinctions are observed between knower and known, pain and the source of pain, etc. From the standpoint of reasoning based on relative experience (*yukti-darśanāt*), there is difference as also causal relation governing the different. But from the standpoint of the Absolute (*bhūta-darśanāt*) there is no difference and the concept of cause is unintelligible.⁴⁹

8

Gauḍapāda admits creation in the sphere of the empirical. But creation, according to him, is neither *de novo* nor transformation of an original stuff. It is of the nature of *Māyā*, illusory manifestation or transfiguration. The world is not related to the self either as a piece of cloth to the threads or as curds to milk. In fact, no relation is intelligible. The one reality somehow appears as the pluralistic universe through its own *Māyā* (*ātma-māyā*). The complexes that constitute the world are projections, like the dream contents, effected by the illusion of the Ātman.⁵⁰ Things are said to be born only from the standpoint of empirical truth (*samvṛtti-satya*); they have therefore no permanence. Just as an illusive sprout shoots from an illusive seed, all things arise from *Māyā*.⁵¹

There are several theories of creation. Some philosophers favour materialistic origins for the world. For example, there are thinkers who attribute the origination of the universe to Time. Theists, however, regard God as the first cause of things. Some of them ascribe to Him efficient causality alone, others both efficient and material causality. The former say that creation is the mere volition of the Lord, while the latter hold that it is His expansion. Some maintain that God creates for the sake of His enjoyment. Others urge that creation is His sport. But how can desire be in God who is *āpta-kāma* and has no end to achieve? In our ignorance we must content ourselves with saying that creation is His nature or *Māyā*. Like dream and magic it is illusory.⁵² The non-dual is imagined to be the manifold

world. The latter is neither different from the self nor identical therewith. Hence it is declared to be indeterminable.⁵³

The philosophers of the different schools characterise the real in different ways and give their own schemes of categories. Each emphasises one particular aspect of reality and holds on to it as if it were the whole. The self has been variously conceived as life, elements, constituents of Primal Nature, things, worlds, Vedas, sacrifice, what is subtle, what is gross, what has form, what has no form, and so on. According to the Sāṅkhyas, there are twentyfive *tattvas* or principles. To these, the followers of the Yoga system add one more, viz., God. In the view of the Pāśupatas there are twenty-one categories. There are others who make the categories endless in number. All these theories are but the imaginations of their respective advocates.⁵⁴ There is only one self which appears as many through self-delusion as it were.⁵⁵ First the *jīvas* are imagined and then the various things, external and internal. The world of souls and things is an appearance super-posed on the self, as the snake-form is imposed on the rope-substance in the dark.⁵⁶

The teaching of creation has no final purport. As has been shown already, what is real cannot be really born. If it is said to be born, it must be in the sense of an illusory appearance.⁵⁷ Ordinarily it is stated that *saṁsāra* which has no beginning comes to an end when release is attained. But this is figurative language. If *saṁsāra* had no beginning, it could not have an end. If release is attained, it is liable to be lost again.⁵⁸ If the universe really existed, it would be destroyed. As we have observed, duality is *māyā-mātra*, mere illusion. Removal of *saṁsāra* and attainment of *mokṣa* are

figurative. These have to be taught in language which needs must relate to duality. When the real is known, there is no duality whatever.⁵⁹

9

True to its character as an *upadeśa-śāstra*, the *Gauḍapāda-kārikā* contains practical teaching at the end of each chapter. The purpose of a *śāstra* is to enable the aspirant to cross the sea of *saṁsāra* and reach the shore of blessedness which is the highest human goal (*parama-puruṣārtha*). The vicious circle of empirical life dependent on the law of cause and effect is evil (*anartha*). This, however, as has been shown above, is a product of *avidyā* or *māyā*. As long as there is an obstinate faith in causality which is illusory (*āvidyaka*), the chain of birth and death will not cease. When that false belief is destroyed through knowledge, *saṁsāra* is removed.⁶⁰ The cause of birth and death is ignorance as regards the ultimate truth which is causeless. When this is realised, there is not further cause for metempsychosis, and we attain release which is freedom from sorrow, desire, and fear. Attachment to the non-real is responsible for the illusory wanderings in the wilderness of *saṁsāra*. When one become non-attached through knowledge, one turns back from the false pursuit of the non-real, and reaches the non-dual reality which is homogeneous and unborn.⁶¹

The real bliss is veiled and the non-real sorrow is projected on account of the perfection of illusory plurality. Enshrouded by the darkness of ignorance, those of immature knowledge (*bālīśah*) dispute about what they consider

to be the nature of reality. Some say, it is; some, it is not; others, it is and is not; yet others, it neither is nor is not.⁶² All these are *krpaṇas*, narrow-minded, who see fear in the fearless,⁶³ and follow the way of difference, getting themselves engrossed therein. Opposed to these are the great knowers (*mahā-jñānāḥ*) who are settled in their wisdom about the unborn, unchanging reality.⁶⁴

The knowledge which saves is not that which remains a mere theoretical comprehension, but that which has become a direct experience. Study of scripture, ethical discipline, detachment from objects of sense and intense longing for release—these are essential for realising the self. The aspirant should learn the purport of the Veda and acquire freedom from passions like attachment, fear, and anger (*vīta-rāga-bhaya-krodhaḥ*); and he should fix his thoughts on the non-dual reality.⁶⁵ Gauḍapāda teaches two methods of concentrating the mind on the non-dual, *Prāṇava-yoga* in the first chapter and *Asparśa-yoga* in the third. These are to serve as auxiliaries to the knowledge of the Absolute, methods to loosen the cords of ignorance.

Asparśa-yoga is the yoga of transcendence, whereby one realises the supra-relational reality. *Saṅkalpa* is the root of activity and bondage. The mind contemplates objects and gets distracted and shattered with the result that there is no peace or happiness. Acceptance and desistance are motivated by the centrifugal tendency of thought-process. The out-going mind should be called back and controlled. Controlling the mind is difficult, indeed, as difficult as emptying the ocean drop by drop by the tip of *kuśa* grass. But it is not an impossible task; only it requires relent-

less effort. If the mind is restrained through discrimination, the end will certainly be reached. One must remember first that all is misery and turn back from desires and enjoyments. The mind that moves out must be brought to unity. But in this process care must be taken that it does not fall into sleep. When the mind goes to sleep, it must be awakened; when it tries to go out, it must be calmed. When the stormy mind is stilled, there is the thrill of quietude. But one should not revel even in this *yogic* trance. Anything that is enjoyed must belong to duality; it cannot be unlimited or lasting happiness. The mind must become non-mind (*amanībhāva*); the relations of subject and object, enjoyer and enjoyment must be transcended. This will come only through the knowledge of the non-dual self. Knowledge and the self are not different. Knowledge is the self or Brahman. Hence it is said that through the unborn (knowledge) the unborn (Brahman) is known.⁶⁶ Self-established, the unborn knowledge attains its natural equanimity or sameness. This is called *asparśa-yoga*, the yoga which is pleasing and good to all beings, and which is beyond dispute and contradiction.⁶⁷

The same end may be reached through meditation on OM (*praṇavayoga*). "Om" is the term indicative of the Brahman-self. It consists of three *mātras*, *a*, *u*, *m*, and a soundless fourth which is *amātra*. *A* stands for Viśva, *u* for Taijasa, and *m* for Prājña. Meditation on the significance of the three sounds respectively will lead to the realisation of the three aspects of the self. The sound "om" proceeds from and is resolved in the soundless *amātra*. Similarly, the Turiya is the absolute which is unchanging and non-dual,

but which appears as many and changing. When the meaning of the soundless culmination of Om is realised, there is leading to or attainment of anything; for the Turiya is no other than real and only self. Thus the Praṇava is to be meditated upon and known. It is the beginning, middle and end of all things. It is the lord established in the heart of all beings. There is nothing before it nor anything after it, nothing outside it nor anything other than it. Understanding the Praṇava in this manner, one attains the supreme.⁶⁸

Mokṣa or release is not a *post-mortem* state; it can be realised even here (*iha*), while in embodiment.⁶⁹ To speak of it as an attainment or realisation is but figurative. It is the eternal and inalienable nature of the self. He who knows this is released, he is a *jīvan-mukta*. Because he has attained full omniscience and is free from the delusion of duality, there is nothing for him which he can desire.⁷⁰ He is not elated by praise nor depressed by blame. He does not offer obeisance to any, nor does he perform any rite. He has no fixed home, and subsists on what comes his way. He lies like a non-conscious being, and lives as he likes.⁷¹ Though he has no obligations, his conduct can never be immoral. Virtues like humility, equanimity, calmness, and self-control are natural to him.⁷² His is the immortal state which is difficult to be seen, very deep, unborn, ever the same, and fearless.⁷³ He sees the truth everywhere. He delights in the truth and does not swerve from it. He is the truth.⁷⁴

10

From the account of Gaudapāda's philosophy given above it will be clear that this great teacher was an Advaitin, the earliest known to us—who in his *Kārikā* laid the foundations of a philosophy which was to become a glorious

edifice through the immortal work of Śaṅkara. While making use of logical reasoning and the dialectical method, he does not deviate from the teaching of the Upaniṣads. Even where he employs Bauddha terminology, he takes care to point out that his system should not be confused with Buddhism. While denying absolute reality to the world, he is firm in proclaiming that the non-dual Brahman-self is the supreme truth. He has no quarrel with any system of philosophy because, in his view, all systems if properly understood are pointers to non-duality. While the dualists oppose one another, the doctrine of non-duality does not conflict with them.⁷⁵ *Ajāta* or the unborn reality is the final goal of all metaphysical quest.



NOTES

1. *nārāyaṇam padma-bhuvan̄ vasīṣṭham śaktim ca tat putra parāśaram ca vyāsam śukam gaudapādam mahāntam govinda-yogīndram athāśya-śiṣyam, śrī-śaṅkarācāryam athāśya padmapādam, ca hastāmālakam ca śiṣyam, tam troṭakam vārtikakāram anyān āsmad-gurūn santatam ānatosmi.*
2. The commentator on the *Kārikā* says: *vedāntārtha-sārasaṅgraha-bhūtam.*
3. III, 48; IV, 71. *na kaścij-jāyate jīvaḥ sambhavo'sya na vidyate, etad-tad-uttamam satyam yatra kiñcin-na jāyate.*
4. IV, 28.
5. I, 17, *māyā-mātram idam dvaitam advaitam paramārthataḥ.*
6. *Muktikā*, I, 26.
7. The distinctions of "within" and "without", it must be remembered, are from the standpoint of waking experience; for it is in this state that inquiry is possible.

8. I, i. *eka eva tridhā smṛtaḥ*.
9. I, 2. See commentary.
10. *Māṇḍūkya*, 6.
11. Here again it must be noted that the real is called "the fourth" from the empirical standpoint; in truth, the category of number is inapplicable to it.
12. I, 12. *turīyaḥ sarvadṛk sadā*.
13. I, 13-16.
14. IV, 87, 88.
15. I, 18. *jñāte dvaitam na vidyate*.
16. II, i; IV, 33.
17. II, 2.
18. II, 3; see *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*, IV, iii, 10.
19. II, 6; IV, 31. *ādāvante ca yan-nāsti vartamānepi tat tathā*.
20. II, 7; IV, 32.
21. II, 8.
See J. A. C. Murray, B.D.: *An Introduction to a Christian Psycho-Therapy* (T. & T. Clark) p. 252; Waking consciousness is, after all a limited affair, narrowed by the immediacies of the five senses, and concentrated at every moment on but one moving point. In dreams, we seem to enter a wider kingdom, freed from the fears and restraints of normal life, a field where earthly forces and laws are set at naught, and where the whole immensity of the sub-conscious can have freer speech, and like a rising tide, submerge the petty logics of our daily life.
22. II, 9 & 10, IV, 63-66.
23. II, 5.
svapna-jāgarite sthāne hy ekam āhur manīṣiṇaḥ. An ancient Chinese sage said: "Last night I dreamt that I was a butterfly and now I do not know whether I am a

- man dreaming that he is a butterfly or a butterfly dreaming that he is a man".
24. IV, 68.
25. Who are also positions of the supreme Self.
26. II, 11-15.
27. III, 29, 30; IV, 61, 62.
28. II, 17, 18.
29. II, 31.
30. IV, 44.
31. IV, 47-52.
32. II, 32.
- na nirodho na choṭppattir na baddho na ca sādhaḥ
na mumukṣur na vai mukta ityeṣā paramārthatā.*
33. III, 3-9.
34. Second vallī.
35. II, v.
36. Bṛh. Up., IV, iv, 19; Kaṭha Up. IV, 11.
37. Ṛg. Veda, VI, 47, 18; Bṛh. Up., II, v, 19.
38. Tait. Ār. III, 13, 1.
39. Iśa, 12.
40. III, 9, 28.
41. GK, III, 11-13, 24-26.
42. III, 14-16, 23, 36.
43. IV: 4. *bhūtam na jāyate kiñcid abhūtam naiva jāyate.*
44. IV, 3-5.
45. IV, 6-8, 11-13.
46. IV, 15. *putrāj janma pitur yathā.*
47. IV, 14-18, 20.
48. IV, 22.
49. IV, 24, 25.

50. III, 10. *saṅghātāḥ svapnavat sarve ātma-māyā-visarjitāḥ.*
51. IV, 57-59.
52. I, 7-9.
53. II, 33, 34.
54. II, 20-29. For details see *The Āgamaśāstra of Gauḍapāda*, edited by Vidhushekhara Bhattacharya, pp. 30-37.
55. II, 19. *māyaiṣa tasya devasya yayāyam mohitaḥ svayam.*
56. II, 16, 17.
57. III, 27. *sato hi māyaya jnama vijayate mohitaḥ tattvataḥ.*
58. IV, 30.
59. I, 18.
60. IV, 56.
61. IV, 78-80.
62. IV, 82-84.
63. III, 39, *abhaye bhaya-darśinaḥ.*
64. IV, 94, 95.
65. II, 35, 36.
66. III, 33. *ajenā-'jam vibhudhyate.*
67. III, 31-46, IV, 2.
68. I, 19-29.
69. IV, 89.
70. IV, 85.
71. II, 36, 27.
72. IV, 86.
73. IV, 100.
74. II, 38.
75. III, 17.



ĀNANDĀNUBHAVA*

V.R. KALYANASUNDARA SASTRI

Ānandānubhava has written three valuable treatises on Advaita Vedānta. The *Iṣṭa-siddhi-vivarāṇa*, as the name indicates, is a commentary on the *Iṣṭasiddhi* of Vimuktātman. The *Nyāyaratnadīpāvali* and the *Padārtha-tattva-nirṇaya* are his independent works. In addition to these Advaita works, he has also written a commentary on the *Nyāyasāra* of Bhāsarvajña. Ānandagiri has written a commentary, *Vedāntaviveka*, on the *Nyāyaratnadīpāvali*. The *Padārtha-tattva-nirṇaya* has been commented upon by Ānandagiri and Ātmasvarūpabhagavān.

In the colophon of the *Nyāyaratnadīpāvali*, Ānandānubhava is described as a pupil of Nārāyaṇajyotis. We come across in this work references to Kumarila, Prabhākara, Viśvarūpa, Maṇḍana, Vācaspati, Sucaritamīśra, Ānandabodha, and others. Ānandabodha, a celebrated

*Courtesy: *Preceptors of Advaita*. Samata Publishers, Chennai.

teacher of Advaita, has written the *Nyāyamakaranda*, the *Nyāyadīpāvali* and the *Pramāṇamālā*. It is believed that Ānandabodha must have lived about 1100 A.D. Ānandānubhava has written a commentary on the *Iṣṭasiddhi* of Vimuktātman. The latter is assigned to the period between 850 A.D. and 1050 A.D. From these it is clear that Ānandānubhava must have lived after Vimuktātman and Ānandabodha. Citsukha in his *Tattvapradīpika* refers to Ānandānubhava. The date of Citsukha is said to be 1220 A.D. And so, Ānandānubhava could not have been later than Citsukha. Most probably, he must have lived in the second half of the twelfth century A.D.

The *Padārtha-tattva-nirṇaya* seeks to refute the categories of the Vaiśeṣika system and also the views of the Bauddhas, the Sāṅkhyas, the Mīmāṃsakas and others. The work is divided into two chapters. The prima-facie view (*pūrva-pakṣa*) is cogently explained in the first chapter, while the final view (*siddhānta*) is established in the second chapter. Ānandānubhava vindicates the Advaita view that Brahman alone is real and that the phenomenal world of diversity is just an appearance.

The *Nyāyaratnadīpāvali* is one of the authoritative, polemical treatises on Advaita Vedānta. Ānandānubhava establishes the fundamental standpoint of Advaita not only on the authority of the *Upaniṣads* but also by reasoning. According to Advaita, Brahman or the Self which is the ultimate reality is one only without a second (*ekameva advitīyam*). The real nature of the non-dual Brahman is missed due to the beginningless *avidyā*. Coming under the spell of *avidyā*, we look upon the pluralistic world as real;

and we are deeply attached to it. Bondage is our attachment to the non-real. If the ignorance of the real is responsible for our bondage, it can be removed only by the knowledge of the real. In other words, liberation can be attained only by the knowledge of Brahman. It is wrong to think that Advaita Vedānta which maintains that *mokṣa* can be attained by the right knowledge of the Self belittles the importance of *karma* and *upāsana*. *Karma* purifies the mind and the knowledge of the Self is manifested in such a pure mind. It cannot directly lead to *mokṣa*. The function of *karma* is restricted to the *preparatory stage*. Control of intellect, external senses, etc. (*śamadamādi*), have to be practised, as they are also useful to the attainment of the knowledge of Brahman. While the help of *karma* is indirect, that of practices like control of intellect, external senses, etc., are direct to the attainment of the knowledge of Brahman.

Following the arrangement of chapters in the *Brahma-sūtra* of Bādarāyaṇa, Ānandānubhava has divided the *Nyāyaratnadīpāvali*¹ into four chapters. The first chapter begins with the discussion about the validity of the Vedic testimony. By means of elaborate discussion, Ānandānubhava establishes the view that the Vedas, which are *apauruṣeya* are a source of valid knowledge. This is followed by a discussion about the validity of knowledge. After refuting the views held in other systems, Ānandānubhava establishes the Advaita view that (i) truth is intrinsic, and that error is extrinsic and that (ii) the validity of knowledge is due to conditions which are intrinsic to knowledge itself. In the course of the discussion of the causality of the universe, Ānandānubhava maintains the view that the blend of pure

Brahman and *māyā* (*māyā-śabalīta-brahman*) is the material cause. By elaborate arguments, he proves that the Self is of the nature of existence (*sat*), knowledge (*cit*) and bliss (*ānanda*).

On the model of the second chapter known as *avirodhādhyāya* of the *Brahma-sūtra*, Ānandānubhava shows in the second chapter of the *Nyāyaratnadīpāvali* that the so-called scriptural contradictions do not exist with regard to the Vedāntic view and that all other views are incorrect. There is an elaborate discussion of the different theories of error. After refuting the views of others, he establishes the soundness of the *anirvacanīyakhyāti* of Advaita. His discussion of the *paramāṇuvāda* of the Vaiśeṣikas is important as well as interesting, for he proves in the course of the discussion that atoms must have parts.

The third chapter of the *Nyāyaratnadīpāvali* is mainly concerned with the means to the realisation of Brahman. He argues that *karma* is not directly conducive to the attainment of liberation, and that the combination of knowledge and action (*jñāna-karma-samucchaya*) is untenable. In this chapter, the scriptural sanction with regard to *sannyāsa* of the *ekadaṇḍin* type and of the *tridaṇḍin* type is also discussed. Ānandānubhava points out that *śruti* and *smṛti* texts lend support to the *sannyāsa* of the *ekadaṇḍin* type followed by Śaṅkara.

Ānandānubhava discusses in the fourth chapter the nature of liberation, the removal of *avidyā* and *jīvanmukti*. Though like other Advaitins he admits *jīvanmukti*, he points out that from the ultimate point of view even *jīvanmukti*

must be considered to be *māyā*. Brahman which is non-dual can never be said to be born or destroyed. In the absence of creation and destruction, there is no bondage; and in the absence of bondage, there is no seeker after liberation, and there is none free from bondage. In support of his stand he quotes from Gauḍapāda's *Māṇḍūkya-kārikā*:²

न निरोधो नचोत्पत्तिर्न बद्धो न च साधकः।
न मुमुक्षुर्न वै मुक्तः इत्येषा परमार्थता॥

In the remaining part of this paper let us consider in detail Ānandānubhava's explanation of the locus of *avidyā* (*avidyāśraya*) and of the removal of *avidyā* (*avidyā-nivṛtti*).

The post-Śaṅkara Advaitins take sides in answering the question regarding the locus of *avidyā*. While Prakāśātman holds the view that Brahman, the pure impartite consciousness, is the locus of *avidyā*, Vācaspati argues that the *jīva* is the locus. Ānandānubhava follows the standpoint of Prakāśātman, which has come to be known as the *Vivaraṇa* view.

The four possible alternatives that one might think of with regard to this question are: (i) that Brahman is the locus of *avidyā*, (ii) that Īśvara who is omniscient, etc., is the locus of *avidyā*, (iii) that an insentient object is the locus of *avidyā*, and (iv) that the *jīva* is the locus of *avidyā*. By showing the untenability of the last three alternatives, Ānandānubhava maintains the view that Brahman, the pure consciousness alone, is the locus of *avidyā*.³

Īśvara who is omniscient cannot serve as the locus of *avidyā*, for Īśvara Himself comes into being as a result of the association of *avidyā* with the self-luminous consciousness.

Since *avidyā* is posited even prior to Īśvara, the latter cannot be the locus of the former.

It may be argued that Brahman or the Self cannot be the locus of *avidyā*, as the two are diametrically opposed to each other. Brahman is of the nature of knowledge; and *avidyā* is just the opposite of it. If so, how can Brahman be the locus of *avidyā*? Ānandānubhava answers this objection by pointing out that there is no opposition between the self-luminous Brahman and *avidyā*. It is only the knowledge which arises from *pramāṇa* (*pramāṇajñānam*) which being opposed to ignorance (*avidyā*) removes it. The Self which is self-luminous consciousness is not only not opposed to it, but reveals it, as a lamp reveals the existence of an insentient object, say, pot. Ānandānubhava cites the case of deep-sleep to show how *avidyā* can co-exist with the self-luminous consciousness (*svarūpa-jñāna*).

The view that an insentient object can serve as the locus of *avidyā* is untenable. For one thing, there is no *pramāṇa* which reveals the existence of *avidyā* in an insentient object; nor is it made known through *sākṣin*, as there is no relation between consciousness and the insentient. Secondly, the positing of *avidyā* in an insentient object does not serve any purpose. The two-fold work of *avidyā* is concealment and projection: that is to say, *avidyā* conceals the true and projects the false. What is by its very nature insentient and therefore does not reveal itself need not be concealed. So it is impossible to think of an insentient object as being the seat of *avidyā*.

Let us now consider the view that the *jīva* is the locus of *avidyā*. There are two reasons which contribute to the plausibility of this view. First, the *jīva* is sentient, and so while an insentient object cannot be the seat of *avidyā*, the *jīva* can. Second, the experience of "I am ignorant" shows that the *jīva* is the seat of *avidyā*. Ānandānubhava argues that this view, too, is not acceptable. The *jīva* is what it is because of the association of the internal organ (*antaḥkaraṇa*) which is itself a product of *avidyā* which is therefore earlier, be the locus of *avidyā*? Further, those who uphold the view that the *jīva* is the locus of *avidyā* must clearly specify whether the *jīva* as qualified by the internal organ (*ahamkārādi-viśiṣṭa-jīva*) is the locus or the *jīva* as indicated by the internal organ (*ahamkārādi-upalakṣita-jīva*) is the locus. The *jīva* is a complex of consciousness and internal organ. The former view considers the relation between the two as that of the qualified and the qualifier, similar to the relation between rose and the red colour. The latter view takes the internal organ as a mark (*upalakṣaṇa*) indicating consciousness in the same way as a crow serves to indicate the house on the top of which it is perched. Ānandānubhava argues that the former view is untenable, for it seeks to rest *avidyā* on the internal organ too, which qualifies consciousness, and this amounts to maintaining that the cause, viz., *avidyā* is seated on its own effect, viz., the internal organ.

It may be argued that *avidyā* and its product, viz., the internal organ, form a series in such a way that the one is preceded by the other alternatively constituting a continuous chain backwards like the seed-sprout series; and so the difficulty of the cause (*avidyā*) resting on its own effect (internal organ) does not arise. And also the objection of

infinite regress is not possible, since the series is *anādi*. This argument, according to Ānandānubhava, overlooks an important point of difference between the two. In the case of seed-sprout series, there are individual differences (*vyakti-bheda*) with regard to seeds and sprouts. But this is not possible in the case of *avidyā*. It is true that erroneous cognitions and their impressions are many; but all of them are the product of *avidyā* which is one and the same.

Ānandānubhava brings out the difficulty involved in this view in another way also. If it be said that the *jīva* qualified by the gross body (*sthūla-śarīra-viśiṣṭaḥ*) is the locus of *avidyā*, then the gross body differs from birth to birth, and so it will result in different centres of consciousness. Such a consequence is undesirable, for there will not be any continuity between one life and another life; and in the absence of continuity, one will not reap the consequences of the deeds done in the previous birth and one may get certain good or bad results, without being the merit of the earlier deeds. If, on the other hand, it be said that the *jīva* qualified by the subtle body (*sūkṣma-śarīra-viśiṣṭaḥ*) is the locus of *avidyā*, the destruction of the subtle body in the state of liberation will also involve the destruction of consciousness of the individual. If it is argued that the subtle body is not destroyed in the state of liberation, then there is no difference between liberation and bondage. For all these reasons, the view that the *jīva* qualified by the internal organ is the locus of *avidyā* is untenable. The view which considers the internal organ as a mark (*upalakṣaṇa*) will lead to Ānandānubhava's standpoint; for the internal organ as a mark is separated from consciousness which it serves to

indicate, and so *avidyā* is seated only in consciousness.

After refuting the explanation of the nature of liberation given by the Naiyāyikas, the Sāṅkhyas and others, Ānandānubhava sets forth the Advaita view that the removal of *avidyā* (*avidyā-nivṛtti*) is liberation. He states the possible objections against the view, criticises them and finally establishes the soundness of the Advaita view of liberation.

The critics are interested in proving the untenability of the very conception. They argue that *avidyā-nivṛtti* cannot be said to be real (*sat*) or unreal (*asat*) both (*sadasat*) or indeterminable (*anirvacanīya*). If it be said to be real, is it other than Brahman or identical with Brahman? If it is other than Brahman, it will give rise to dualism which is not acceptable to the Advaitin. The other alternative, so the critics argue, fares no better. In what sense can it be said to be identical with Brahman? There are two possible alternatives here: either *avidyā-nivṛtti* gets itself merged in Brahman or Brahman gets itself merged in *avidyā-nivṛtti*. If the former, then it is eternal in as much as Brahman is eternal, and so knowledge (*jñāna*) is not required; if the latter, Brahman has to be treated as a negative entity in as much as *avidyā-nivṛtti* is negative. Can it be said to be unreal (*asat*)? Even this possibility is ruled out by the critics. If it is unreal like the sky-flower, there arises again the futility of knowledge. If it is unreal, it cannot be brought into being. If it be argued that it can be brought into being then sky-flower, etc., which are unreal can also be brought into being; and this is absurd. It cannot be both real and unreal at the same time, as it goes against the law of contradiction. Since *avidyā* is said to be *anirvacanīya*, *avidyā-nivṛtti* too cannot be *anirvacanīya*.

The critics further point out that it is not possible to explain *avidyā-nivṛtti* as a fifth mode (*pañcama-prakāra*) as other than the four possibilities mentioned above. First, there is no *pramāṇa* which would justify it. For the sake of argument let us suppose, so the critics argue, that there is *avidyā-nivṛtti* which is a fifth mode. It is incumbent upon the Advaitin to say whether it is removable or not. It cannot be removed by *jñāna*; the latter can remove only *ajñāna*; and there is no other means available to the Advaitin to bring about its disappearance. There is also another difficulty here. The disappearance of *avidyā-nivṛtti* will mean the re-emergence of *avidyā*, which is not desirable. The other alternative, viz., that it is not removable, may now be considered. The question that arises here is whether it is knowable or not. If it be said that *avidyā-nivṛtti* which is not removable (i.e. which is eternal) is knowable, the Advaita view that "whatever is perceived is illusory" has to be given up. If *avidyā-nivṛtti* is said to be eternal and also is knowable, the world also which is knowable may be said to be eternal. It is not open to the Advaitin to formulate the *vyāpti* as "whatever is perceived other than *avidyā-nivṛtti* is illusory". To the Advaitin there is no real other than *avidyā-nivṛtti*. If it be said that it is not knowable, then no efforts need be taken for attaining it. The critics, therefore, argue that it is impossible for the Advaitin to show that the conception of *avidyā-nivṛtti* is intelligible and tenable. The untenability of the conception of *avidyā-nivṛtti* will, according to the critics, undermine the central thesis of Advaita, viz., that the Self is non-dual and that the world which is a product of *avidyā* is illusory.

Ānandānubhava argues that the explanation of *avidyā-nivṛtti* as a fifth mode (*pañcama-prakāra*) is quite sound and that the critics have not really shown the conception to be unintelligible and untenable. Since *avidyā* is indeterminable, its removal has to be explained only as a fifth mode. It cannot be real, for in that case *avidyā* too will become real. Since it has *avidyā* as its *pratiyogī* and also since it is brought into being, it cannot be unreal like the sky-flower. Nor can it be both real and unreal as it amounts to breaking the law of contradiction. It cannot be indeterminable (*anirvacanīya*), since *avidyā* is indeterminable. So it has to be explained as a fifth mode, as something other than all the four mentioned above.

It is true, says Ānandānubhava, that *avidyā-nivṛtti* is different from real and unreal in the same way as *avidyā* is different from real and unreal. But that is no reason for characterising it as *anirvacanīya*. If *avidyā* is said to be *anirvacanīya*, it is not because of its being different from real and unreal (*sadasat-vilakṣaṇa*), but because it is removable by knowledge. In other words, *anirvacanīya*, according to Ānandānubhava, is to be explained in terms of removability by knowledge (*jñānanivartyatva*).⁵ *Avidyā* is *anirvacanīya*, because it is removable. But *avidyā-nivṛtti* is not removable by knowledge. On the contrary, it is brought into being by knowledge. It is knowable in as much as it falls within the scope of experience. It is wrong to think that it is not removable. Only if it is maintained that it is not removable, it will be prejudicial to the inference by which the Advaitin proves the illusoriness of the world. Ānandānubhava cites the authority of Scripture to show that *avidyā-nivṛtti* too is removable. The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* text says: "In it there is no diversity".⁶ The purport of this text is to show that there is nothing else,

either positive or negative, other than Brahman; and in this total denial *avidyā-nivṛtti* is also included. Ānandānubhava takes pains to show that his stand-point is quite consistent with the view of Vimuktātman, the author of the *Iṣṭa-siddhi*. The explanation of *avidyā-nivṛtti* as a fifth mode (*pañcama-prakāra*) is acceptable to Vimuktātman,⁷ as he himself adopts this mode of interpretation in the *Iṣṭa-siddhi*. It is true that he equates *avidyā-nivṛtti* with the non-dual Self subsequently in the same work.⁸ Ānandānubhava's elucidation of Vimuktātman's position makes it clear that any suggestion that Vimuktātman is vacillating between these two explanations and that he is not consistent is unwarranted. Since there is nothing else, either positive or negative, other than the Self, *avidyā-nivṛtti* cannot be given a permanent standing as a negative something coeval with the Self. If Vimuktātman seeks to equate *avidyā-nivṛtti* with the Self, it is to show that the Self, indicated by *avidyā-nivṛtti*, is bereft of everything, positive as well as negative.

NOTES:

1. Critically edited with Introduction by V. Jagadisvara Sastrigal and V.R. Kalyanasundara Sastrigal (Madras Govt. Oriental Series No.CLXVI, 1961). This work will be referred to hereafter as *NRD*.
2. ii, 32.
3. *NRD*, pp. 344-346.
4. *NRD*, pp. 382-386.
5. This is also the standpoint of Vimuktātman.
6. IV, iv, 19.
7. *Iṣṭa-siddhi* (Gaekwad Oriental Series, Baroda), p. 85.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 371.



THE VEDĀNTACŪĻĀMAṆI

TEXT WITH TRANSLATION

M. PARTHIBAN

The Work *Vedāntacūḷāmaṇi*

About the author of the present work - *Vedāntacūḷāmaṇi* little that is definite is known. From the Introduction in Tamil to the commentary on the text by Aruṇācala svāmī we could gather that one Nijaguṇayogī wrote a philosophical treatise in Kannada Language entitled *Vivekacintāmaṇi*, a section of which is entitled *Vedāntapariccheda*. The latter one was translated into Tamil by Śrī Kuppusvāmi Rāju of Thanjavur and it was published in the year 1906. Our author Śrī Śivaprakāśasvāmi of Turaimaṅgaḷam rendered the Tamil version of the *Vedāntapariccheda* into verse form in the present work *Vedāntacūḷāmaṇi*. This work published along with the commentary of Aruṇācala Svāmī in the year 1908 at Madras, consists of 185 verses and is divided into two sections – *Dṛg-Viveka* and *Dṛśya-Viveka*. The following is a brief account of the teaching contained in this work.

After offering salutations to God for the successful completion of the work he has undertaken, our author makes a brief reference to different branches of learning with a special emphasis upon *Uttaramīmāṃsā* system and then sets forth the aim of his work. The qualifications which a disciple must possess before entering upon the Vedāntic study, the different types of preceptors and disciples, the *pramāṇas* or the source of knowledge according to different schools including that of Advaita, the nature of reality and its classification into Brahman, God, *Kūṭastha* and the soul, the nature of witness-self, the cosmic and the individual forms of reality – all these are discussed in the first part of the text in 55 verses.

In the second part, our author discusses the nature of *prakṛti* in its two-fold aspect of *māyā* and *avidyā*, the origination of the world of objects from the latter, the relation of God to the world and the relation of soul to sense-organs, mind and physical body and also to the state of waking, dream and deep sleep, the discipline that is essential for self-realisation and the state of *jīvanmukti*. This part consists of 130 verses.

சிறப்புப்பாயிரம்

[INTRODUCTION]

Invocation

(1)

தருணமா துமைமுகத் தாம ரைக்கெழு
மருணனா மெனவுதித் தடியர் பாற்புரி
கருணைமா மதமெனக் காட்டு மாமுகன்
சரணவா ரிசமலர் தலையிற் கொள்ளுவாம்.

I place my forehead with reverence upon the lotus-feet of the elephant-faced Lord Vināyaka. He is like the sun that causes the lotus-like face of the Goddess – the ever-young Pārvatī bloom. And the ichor that profusely flows from His face is of the form of abundant compassion toward His devotees.

Notes:

In order to dispel the impediments that stand in the way of successful completion of the present treatise that is commenced, the author offers his obeisance to Lord Vināyaka.

Cirappu-pāyiram signifies introduction to a work giving some of the following particulars:

- (i) Name of the author;
- (ii) mode of treatment;
- (iii) extent;
- (iv) name of the work;
- (v) metres used;
- (vi) subject-matter;
- (vii) the persons to whom the work is addressed;
- (viii) aim;
- (ix) date of the work;
- (x) place of its composition; and,
- (xi) its source.

See *Tamil Lexicon*, Vol. III, p.1455 (b).

The Present work – Its Title and Source:

(2)

சீர்கொண்ட வருமறையின் முடிமணியைத் தெய்வ
 சிகாமணியை யடியவர்தங் கண்மணியை மாயைப்
 பேர்கொண்ட விருளிரிக்குந்த தினமணியை முக்கட்
 பெருமணியை யகத்தினுக்கோர் விளக்காக விருத்தி
 யேர்கொண்ட விவேகசிந்தா மணியெனுநா லதனு
 ளெடுத்தியம்பும் வேதாந்தப் பரிச்சேதப் பொருளை
 நேர்கொண்ட தமிழ்விருத்த யாப்பதனாற் றெரிய
 நிகழ்த்துவன்வே தாந்தகுளாமணியென் றொன்றே.

The true import of the celebrated Upaniṣads is the gem, that is, Brahman – the pure consciousness which is the crest-jewel of Gods, which is intuitively realized by the wise ones as immanent in their hearts, which is like the sun that destroys the darkness designated as māyā and which is the essential nature of God Śiva – the three-eyed one. I shall meditate upon this incomparable Light that shines within my heart; and, with a view that the teachings contained in the section entitled *Vedāntapariccheda* that forms part of the work *Vivekacintāmaṇi* may easily be understood by all, I present this treatise *Vedāntacūlāmaṇi* in Tamil language in verse form.

Notes:

Our author, following Śrī Vidyāraṇya, makes a four-fold classification of the ultimate reality into four, namely, *kūṭastha*, Brahman, *jīva* (soul) and *Īśvara* (God). The ultimate reality is the substratum of the gross and the subtle body and as such it is conditioned by the latter two. This

conditioned reality is known as *kūṭastha*. The subtle body consists of seventeen factors, namely, five senses of knowledge, five senses of action, five vital airs, mind and intellect (see *Vedātasāra*, p.4). The reflected image of the *kūṭastha* in mind which is a constituent of the subtle body is *jīva*. The reality that transcends the subtle and the gross body is known as Brahman wherein *māyā* which is constituted of the three strands of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* is present. The reflected image of Brahman in *māyā* is known as *Īśvara*. The latter is three-fold as *Brahmā*, *Viṣṇu* and *Śiva*, in accordance with the preponderance of the *rajoguna*, the *sattvaguna* and the *tamoguna* in it respectively. The point that is of importance here is that the true nature of *Īśvara* is Brahman – the pure consciousness and that of *jīva* is *kūṭastha* which too is pure consciousness. The text *tat tvam asi* conveys, through secondary signification, the identity of the two or the non difference of the one from the other.

For details see verse 33 of the present text.

Different Branches of learning and the
Pūrvamīmāṃsā system:

(3)

வேதமொரு நான்கு மாறங்கமு நன்னியாய
மீமாஞ்சை யொடுமிருதி புராணமுமீ ரேழா
வோதலுறும் வித்தைகளா மிவற்றுண்மீ மாஞ்சை
யுயர்ந்ததா யைந்நான்கத் தியாயமா யருத்த
பேதமுற விருகூறா மவற்றுண் முதற் கூறே
பிறங்குமருட் சைமினிசூத் திரரூப மாகிப்
போதுமீ ராறத்தி யாயமாய்க் கரும்ப்
பொருளுணர்த்திப் பூருவம் மாஞ்சையெனப் படுமால்.

The four Vedas and their six auxiliaries,¹ the *Nyāya*, the *Mīmāṃsā*, the *smṛtis* and the *purāṇas* – all these constitute the fourteen branches of learning.² Of these, the *Mīmāṃsā* is pre-eminent and it consists of twenty chapters. It is classified into two taking into consideration the difference in the subject-matter treated in them. The first part composed by Jaimini – the compassionate one in the form of aphorisms is in twelve chapters. It sets forth the details regarding ritual-actions and it is designated as *Pūrvamīmāṃsā. śabdakalpadruma*,

Notes:

1. शिक्षा कल्पो व्याकरणं निरुक्तं ज्योतिषं छन्दः, *śabdakalpadruma*,
Vol. IV., p. 389 (b).
2. अङ्गानि वेदाः चत्वारः मीमांसा न्यायविस्तरः।
धर्मशास्त्रं पुराणं च विद्यास्त्वेताः चतुर्दशः। Ibid.

Commentaries on the *Pūrvamīmāṃsā-sūtras*

(4)

சாற்றியவச் சைமிநிகுத் திரத்திற்கு மிக்க
சாபரமென் றொருபாடி யம்புரியப் பட்ட
தூற்ற மீ மாஞ்சைக்கு மதம்பாட்ட மென்ன
வொன்றுபட்டா சாரியனா லுரைத்திடவந் தென்றும்
போற்றுமவன் சீடனா கியபிரபா கரனாற்
புகழ்பிரபா கரமெனவோர் மதாந்தரநன் கமைய
வாற்றியவச் சாபரபா டியமதற்கு விளங்க
வாக்கப்பட் டுலகமெலா மறிந்திடநின் றதுவே.

A commentary well-known as *Śābarabhāṣya* was composed by Śabara upon the *Pūrvamīmāṃsā-sūtras* of

Jaimini referred to above. It is praised by the wise one and it has been commented upon by Kumarila Bhaṭṭa.¹ Prabhākara, a devout desciple of Kumarila Bhaṭṭa², wrote a commentary on the *Śābarabhāṣya* interpreting it from a stand-point different from that of Kumarila. These two commentaries together constitute an abiding monument to the *Śābarabhāṣya*.

Notes:

Kumarila Bhaṭṭa's commentary on the *Śābarabhāṣya* is in three parts –

- 1) the first one called the *Śloka-vārttika* on the first part of the first chapter;
- 2) the second entitled *Tantra-vārttika* on the rest of the chapter one and on chapter two and three; and,
- 3) the third called *Tuṭṭikā* upon the remaining nine chapters.

2. For details see Ganganatha Jha, *The Prabhākara School of Mīmāṃsā*, pp. 8-10.

The *Uttaramīmāṃsā* System

(5)

உரைத்தவிரண் டாங்கறு பிரமமுரைப் பதனா
 லுத்தரமீ மாஞ்சையெனப் பட்டருள்கூர் வியாதன்
 றெரித்தகுத் திரவடிவ மாகியிரு நான்கத்
 தியாயமா மவற்றுண்முத னான்கத்தி யாயம்
 விரித்தலுறு தேவதா காண்டமெனப் பட்டு
 விளங்குறுதெய் வதவிலக் கணம்பலபத் திரனா
 னிரைத்துரைசெய் யப்படுமே னான்கத்தி யாய
 நிகழ்பிரம காண்டமென வேநிகழ்த்தப் படுமால்.

The second part of the *Mīmāṃsā* is known as the *Uttaramīmāṃsā*, as it deals with the nature of Brahman. It is graciously composed by Vyāsa in the form of aphorisms in eight chapters. Of these, the first section consisting of four chapters is well-known as *devatādhyāya* or *San̄karṣa-kāṇḍa* and it deals with the nature of deities [in Vedic sacrifices].¹ It has been commented upon in a systematic manner by Balabhadra.² The remaining four chapters constitute what is known as *Brahma-kāṇḍa* (or *Śārīraka-mīmāṃsā-sūtras*).

Notes:

1. Our author is of the view that the *sūtras* that constitute the *San̄karṣa-kāṇḍa* are composed by Vyāsa. But Śabara in his *bhāṣya* on the *Pūrva-mīmāṃsā-sūtra* – XII.2.11 states: *iti san̄karṣe vakṣyati*. This proves that the *San̄karṣa-kāṇḍa-sūtras* are composed by Jaimini himself. See Ramaswami Sastri, V.A: *The Tattvabindu*, Introduction, p. 13.

2. About this Balabhadra nothing definite can be said. In the history of the *Pūrva-mīmāṃsā-sūtra*, there is a reference to one Balabhadra as the preceptor of the king of Benares who gave the title – Paṇḍita Śīromaṇi to Rāmakṣṣṇa Bhaṭṭa [1700 A.D] – the author of the *Yuktisnehaprapūraṇī* – a commentary on the *Śāstradīpikā* of Pārthasārathi Miśra.

See Ramaswami Sastri, V.A: *The Tattvabindu*, Introduction, p. 139.

In the history of Sanskrit Literature, there are more

than 50 authors bearing the name of Balabhadra. But none of them is known to have commented upon the *Saṅkara-kāṇḍa*.

See NCC. Vol. XIII, pp. 235-238 (a).

Śaṅkara's commentary on the *Brahma-sūtra* and the Sub-commentaries thereon

(6)

அப்பிரம காண்டத்துட் சிவமொடுயி ரயிக்க
 மறைதலாற் சங்கரா சாரியானாங் குருவா
 லொப்பரிய பாடியமென் றொன்றுரைக்கப்பட்ட
 துரைத்ததற்கு விவரணா சாரியென் பவனாற்
 செப்பரிய விவரணமாக் கூறப்பட்ட டதுவே
 தெரியின்வே தாந்தநூ லென்றுரைக்கப் படுமா
 விப்பெரிய வேதாந்த நூற்பொருளி னகல
 மெங்ஙனமென் றிடினுரைத்து மியம்பியநூன் முறையே

The non-difference of the soul from Brahman is expounded in the *Śārīrakamīmāṃsā-sūtras*. And an incomparable *bhāṣya* has been composed on it by the preceptor Śaṅkara. Padmapāda, a direct disciple of Śaṅkara wrote his commentary *Pañcapādikā* on Śaṅkara's *bhāṣya* on the first four aphorisms. And, Vivaraṇācārya (Prakāśātman) wrote a commentary *Vivaraṇa* (on the *Pañcapādikā*). The views set forth in the celebrated text, *Vivaraṇa* (have been explained in the section entitled *Vedānta Pariccheda* comprising the treatise *Vivekacintāmaṇi*; and, they) are explicated in the present text too.

Notes:

In the history of Advaita Vedānta, Vācaspatimiśra and Prakāśātman stand out as prominent preceptors. The former wrote a commentary on Śaṅkara's *bhāṣya* on the *Brahma-sūtra* known as *Bhāmatī* and the latter wrote a commentary – *Vivaraṇa* on the *Pañcapādikā* of Padmapāda which too is a commentary on Śaṅkara's *bhāṣya* on the first four aphorisms of the *Brhama-sūtras*. These two preceptors hold divergent views on some of the important concepts of Advaita; and, the line of interpretation of Advaita Vedānta by Vācaspati is known as the *Bhāmatī* – tradition, and the one by Prakāśātman is known as the *Vivaraṇa* – tradition. Vidyāraṇya who is the author of the *Vivaraṇaprameyasāṅgraha* – an epitome of the *Vivaraṇa* is also the author of the *Pañcadaśī* wherein he accepts the foundations laid by Prakāśātman and yet makes improvement on them. There are marked differences in the view-points set forth in the *Vivaraṇa* and in the *Pañcadaśī*. The doctrines of Advaita as expounded in the present work are largely based upon the *Pañcadaśī*. Yet, since Vidyāraṇya comes in the line of *Vivaraṇa* – tradition, our author states herein that the present work too is based upon the *Vivaraṇa* – tradition.

The Author of the Present work

(7)

அருமறையின் பொருடெரித்த விவேக சிந்தா மணியதனு
 ளாவே தாந்தப்
 பொருளினை முந் நீர்வரைப்பி னுலகறியச் செந்தமிழாற்
 புனைதல் செய்தான்
 பெருகுசுவை நறவொழுகு செஞ்சொன்மல ராற்புனைபாப்
 பெருந்தண் மாலை
 கருமிடற்று வானவற்கே சாத்துசிவப் பிரகாசன்
 கவிஞர் வேந்தே.

The text *Vivekacintāmaṇī* explains the import of the renowned scriptural texts. A section therein is entitled *Vedānta-pariccheda* which deals with the logical significance of the great-sayings of the Upaniṣads. In order that the teachings of the latter work may be understood by scholars and laymen in this world surrounded by sea, the prince among the poets who bears name – Śivaprakāśa, the appellation of the blue-throated God composes this work *Vedānta-cūḷāmaṇi* which is like a garland in the form of verses strung with flowers in the form of choice words and which affords gratifying feeling to the aspirants by pouring forth in abundance the essence of the Upaniṣads in an uninterrupted sequence.

பொதுப்பாயிரம் General Preface

(8)

வாய்த்தநூன் முகத்துரைக்கு மங்களா சரண

வாழ்த்துவணக் கொடுவத்து நிர்ந்தேச மெனமுன்
றார்த்தபதம் பதப்பொருளே வாக்கியயோ சனையே
யறிவினா விடையிவையைந் துரையினிலக் கனமாங்
கோத்துரை செய் விசேடவிசே டியங்கருத்தா கருமங்
கொள்கிரியை யிவையைந் தன்னுவயவிலக் கனமாஞ்
சாத்து மனு பந்தசதுட் டயநூற்கு விடயஞ்
சம்பந்தம் பயனதிகா ரிகளெனநான் கறியே.

In treatises of great value, there is invocation at the beginning which consists in either invoking the blessings of God, or offering obeisance to him or setting forth the subject-matter to be dealt with. And, commentary (on the trea-

The theme to be expounded is the identity between the soul and Brahman. The relation is that of what is to be made known to the instrument of making known; and, this exists between the identity and the Upanisads. The aim is the attainment of bliss through the removal of misery in the

விடயம்தி சிவதீர் சமதேகக் திவமாமம்
 விமலமொடு நிற்குமையப் படலறையநித்தனமை
 யடைத்திறி சம்பந்தம் பயனறியர லாநீத்
 தானந்த பகம் பெறுதல் சாதனநான குணைய
 முடையவையெ யகுகாநி யென்றைவ ரறிஞ
 நரைக்கச்சா தனதிடய நித்த வநித்தப
 படுபொருளின ளிவெகமுக பரபொக ளிரகம்
 பழிப்பரிய சமையுட்கத்வமென்படுமால்.

(9)

Preliminary considerations and the Four-fold Aid

Notes: See the following verse.

and the person qualified to study.

Understand that treatises have four preliminary con- siderations which are specified by wise men; and, they are, the theme, mutual relation, end to be attained by the study

passage or verses).

constitute the function of fixing the grammatical order (of a the qualifying attribute and the substantive that is qualified predicate of a sentence and also of the words that stand for fication. Further, identification of subject, the object and the fication on the sentence-sense, and answers providing clari- ings, construction of sentence-sense, questions seeking clari- tises) consists of words of the commentator, their mean-

form of transmigration. Wise men say that the person qualified to study is the one who possesses the four-fold aid.

The four-fold aid referred to (now) consists of:

- a) *nityānityavastuviveka*;
- b) *ihāmutrārthaphalabhogavirāga*;
- c) *śamādi-ṣaṭka-saṃpat*, and,
- d) *mumukṣutva*.

Notes:

The knowledge of the theme, person qualified to study, mutual relation between the text and the theme and the end to be attained by the study are regarded as essential before the study of any subject is seriously undertaken. These four factors – theme, person qualified to study, mutual relation and the end to be attained by the study – constitute the preliminary requisite or *anubandha-catuṣṭaya*.

(10)

நித்தியமான் மாவே பொய் விடயமெலா மெனத்தே
 நிலைதருநித் தியாநித்திய வத்துவிவே கம்பின்
 மெத்திவரு மிகமுடனுத் தரத்தில் வரு போக
 விராகமிம்மை மறுமையுள விடயநுகர் வனைத்தும்
 பொய்த்தழியு மிடும்பையென மனம்விடுத லாகும்
 புகழ்சமையே முதலாய சட்குணங்கள் பெறுதல்
 வைத்தசமை யியல்பாய முத்திவிருப் பதுவே
 வயங்குமுமூட் சுத்துவமென் றறிந்திடுக மதித்தே.

[Among the four traits mentioned above], *nityānityavastu-viveka* is discernment that Brahman alone is eternal and the world of objects along with its cause – *māyā* is non-eternal. The trait that is mentioned next is *ihāmutrārthaphalabhogavirāga*. It is total withdrawal of mind from objects of enjoyment – here and in a hereafter with a deep conviction that they appear to be pleasant but ultimately would end in evil. Next one is *śamādiṣaṭkasampatti* which stands for the acquisition of the celebrated six ethical excellences such as *śama*, etc. *Mumukṣutva* which is the factor mentioned next is desire for liberation that consists in remaining in one's essential nature.

(11)

சமைதமையே திதீக்கையுப ரதிரத்தை சமாதி
 சமை முதலா மறுகுணங்க ளுட்கரண மடக்கல்
 சமைதமைதான் புறக்கரண மடக்குதல்கா மாதி
 தணித்திடுகை திதீக்கைகரு மங்களனைத் தினையுஞ்
 சமையெனவே விடுதலுப ரதிகருதி குருவைத்
 துணிவினா னம்புமதே சிரத்தைகுரு மொழிநெஞ்
 சமை வுறவே திட்பமுறல் சமாதியிச்சா தனஞ்சே
 ரதிகாரி செயங்குருசே வையினையெடுத் தியம்பில்.

The six ethical excellences are: *śama*, *dama*, *uparati*, *titikṣā*, *śraddhdā* and *samādhāna*.¹ Of these, *śama* is restraining the mind from proceeding toward external objects. *Dama* is the control, by the power of one's will, of the senses of knowledge and of action from functioning toward their respective objects. *Titikṣā* is subjugation of desire, anger, etc. *Uparati* is renunciation of all prescribed

acts by regarding the latter as a heavy burdern upon one as of no value. *Śraddhā* is faith consisting in complete trust or confidence in the teaching of the preceptor and of the Upaniṣads. *Samādhāna* is centering of the attention on the teachings of the preceptor to the exclusion of everything else.

The different forms of service which the aspirants possessing the above traits render to their preceptor is explained [in the following verses].

Notes:

1. The *Kānva*-recension of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (4.4.2) does not make mention of *Śraddhā*, while the *Mādhyandina*-recension of the same *Upaniṣad* does not refer to *samādhāna*. But these two texts are taken together and we have thus the six factors beginning with *śama*, etc.

Service rendered by the one who possesses the four-fold aid and different types of aspirants

(12)

ஆத்தமுட னங்கமே தானஞ்சற் பாவ
 மாமவற்றுட் குருபரனுக் கனுகூல விருத்தி
 யாத்தமுயர் குருபரன்குற் றேவலே யங்க
 மருட்குரவற் குரியமனை நிலமுதலா மவற்றைக்
 காத்தலது தானமாஞ் சற்குருவே மெய்யாய்க்
 கண்டசிவ மெனநம்பு மதுவேசற் பாவ
 மேத்துகரு மம்பத்தி மிகுஞான காண்ட
 மெதுமிவற்றான் மூவதிகா ரிகள்வேறு முளரால்.

The service rendered to the preceptor is of four kinds: 1) *āpta*, 2) *aṅga*, 3) *dāna*, and, 4) *sadbhāva*. Of these, the form of service known as *āpta* consists in conducting one-self in complete agreement with the wishes of the preceptor. *Aṅga* involves act of worship expressing unquestioning honour by prostrating at the feet of the preceptor. *Dāna* stands for safeguarding the house, estate, etc., of the compassionate preceptor by taking protective measures against any attack. *Sadbhāva* is the state of mind of the aspirant who feels sure that his preceptor remains in his true nature as Brahman as he has intuitively realized the latter.

Apart from this type of aspirant [who possesses the four-fold aid and who serves his preceptor in the manner mentioned above], there are three kinds of aspirants, namely, those who are devoted to the performance of ritual-actions set forth in the ritualistic section of the Veda, those who pursue meditative exercises upon the conditioned Brahman set forth in the Upaniṣads and those who are rooted in the knowledge of Brahman.

(13)

உடம்பினையும் வருகுடும்பந் தனையுமியா னெனதென்
 றுளன்கரும காண்டியெலாக் கிரியையும் சற்கே
 திடம் பெறநின் றாக்குமவ னேபத்தி காண்டி
 செய்க்கரும மனைத்தினுக்குங் கரிதானென் றிருப்போன்
 மடந்தவிரு நன்ஞான காண்டியென லாகு
 மற்றுமுள ரைவரொரு வர்க்கொருவ ருயர்வா
 யடைந்தவதி காரிகளாங் கருமிமுமுட் சுவினோ
 டறையுமப்பி யாசியனு பவியுடனா ஞுடன்.

Of these, the aspirant who is devoted to the performance of ritual-actions is the one who has the sense of "I" in the body and through that the sense of "mine" in the house, etc.¹ The person who pursues the path of devotion or meditation is the one who performs every action of his as an offering to God.² He who is free from the veil of ignorance and who remains as the witness of all actions – vocal, physical and mental is the one who is rooted in the knowledge of Brahman.³

Aspirants may be classified into five in yet another fashion as, *karmī*, *mumukṣu*, *abhyāsī*, *anubhavī* and *ārūḍha*. Of these each succeeding one surpasses the preceding one.

Notes:

1. Such a one would realize, in due course, that the fruits of actions are not eternal; and, he would resort to a preceptor with a view to learn the means to attain the supreme human end, that is, liberation which is eternal. He would pursue *karma* without any attachment toward its fruit and would attain thereby what is known as "cleansing of heart". Then, by pursuing *śravaṇa*, *manana*, and *nididhyāsana*, he would attain the knowledge of Brahman after several births. See *Bhagavad-Gītā*, 7-19.

2. One who pursues one's *karma* by offering its fruits to God is known as *karma-yogin*. Such a one is referred to as *bhakti-kāṇḍin* in this verse and is identified as *mumukṣu* in the following verse. He would pursue then *śravaṇa* and attain the knowledge of Brahman in due course by pursuing *manana* and *nididhyāsana*. If he pursues *manana* too in this life he would attain the intellectual conviction that the world is similar to a dream. He would pursue meditative exercises upon the condi-

tioned Brahman with a view to attain concentration of thought without which pursuit of *nididhyāsana* would be impossible. The one who pursues *manana* and meditation upon conditioned Brahman is identified as *abhyāsin* in the following verse.

3. The one who has attained the knowlege of Brahman could not be rooted in the state of *samādhi* owing to the force of the fructified deeds. He will be the witness of all actions projected by his fructified deeds. He is an aspirant in the sense that he makes out conscious effort to withdraw his sense-organs which have come out owing to his fructified deeds. Such a one is refferred to as *jñānakāṇḍin* in this verse.

(14)

மூடமொடு தன்சாதி கருமமே பற்றி
முத்தனா மவதூறு பிறப்பினிலொன் கருமி
நீடுலக முன்மையென நினைந்துபுறக் கரும
நிட்டனாய் முப்பிறப்பின் முத்தனாமவனே
நாடறிய முமூட்கலகங் கனவெனக்கண் டுள்ள
நற்கருமஞ் சேர்ந்துபிறப் பிரண்டினிலப் பியாசி
வீடுலக விவகார நினையாமல் விவேக
மேவியோர் பிறப்பினா முத்தனது பவியே.

Of these, the *karmi* is well-known as the one who, under the influence of *māyā* adheres to the pursuit of *karma* relating to his class of life and who would thereby attain the state of *jīvanmukti* after several births.¹

The *mumukṣu* is the celebrated one, who, with the intellectual conviction that the world which is projected in a variegated manner and which is subject to destruction is not

real on any ground, engages himself in Vedāntic study which bears no relation to ritual-actions and who would attain the state of *jīvanmukti* after three births.²

The *abhyāsin* is one who sees the world as if it is a mere abstraction within himself like a dream, who pursues blemishless meditative exercises upon the conditioned Brahman and who would attain the state of *jīvanmukti* after two births.³

The *anubhavin* is one who would attain the state of *jīvanmukti* in his next birth by attaining the direct knowledge of Brahman and who has a commendable aloofness from the latent impressions born out of the experience of the world which he had already renounced.⁴

Notes:

1. See Note No. 1 on the previous verse.

2. See Note No. 2 on the previous verse.

3. Ibid.

4. The aspirant who pursues *nididhyāsana* – the important constituent of *jñāna-yoga* would attain, according to our author, the knowledge of Brahman in the next birth.

(15)

உலகநிலை தோன்றாமற் றன்றிகழ்ஞா னத்தா
 லுண்மை முத்த னாமவனே யாருடன் மற்று
 முலகமுத வியாதெனத்தேர் வொடுகுருவை யடைந்து
 முடம்பாதி பொய்யெனக்கண் டருட்குருவை யடைந்து
 முலகிலொரு குரவன்றன் மகற்குபதே சஞ்செய்

துறக்கேட்டு முயர்தருளு னிகளாகி முத்தி
யுலகுதொழு விவேகமொடு விரத்திதெய்வ கதியா
ஒற்றிடுவ ரிவர்வேறு மூவதிகா ரிகளாம்.

Ārūḍha is the one who is liberated here and now by the knowledge of Brahman the self-luminous one and who is free from the cognition of the world.¹

There is yet another group comprising three types of aspirants:

(a) he who resorts to a preceptor, inquires with his aid into the nature of the cause of the world and identify it to be Brahman;

(b) he who, after ascertaining the world of objects beginning with body, etc., to be non-real, is convinced that secular or sacred efforts are useless and is despirited thereby resorts to a preceptor and with his aid discerns that Brahman is eternal (and it alone is fit to be realised); and,

(c) he who attains the knowledge of Brahman by the grace of God by listening to sacred episodes in the Upaniṣads recording the instructions of a father to his son or a preceptor to his disciple.³

Notes:

1. The one who has attained the knowledge of Brahman and also the *nirvikalpikasamādhī* by continued effort to maintain the knowledge of Brahman will be free from the cognition of distinctions of one who contemplates, the object contemplated and the act of contemplation. Such a one is known as *ārūḍha*.

2. Aspirants of this type and the following one have only intellectual curiosity to ascertain the nature of the world and its cause. In case they put forth laudable efforts in the pursuits of the means of liberation, they *may* attain the knowledge of Brahman.

3. Aspirant of this type is of average intellect. He could not comprehend the teachings of the Upaniṣads and identify their import. He simply meditates upon Brahman as instructed by a preceptor; and, he would attain the knowledge of Brahman by the grace of God. See *Bhagavad-Gītā.*, 13-25.

Types of Preceptors

(16)

சாதகர்க ளாஞ்சீடர் பேதத்தாற் குரவர்
 தாமும்போ தககுருவே முதலாக விருநாற்
 பேதமடை குவரவரிற் போதகன்முன் னூலிற்
 பெரும்பொருள்கூ றிடுபவன்றத் துவந்திகழ்த்து பவனே
 வேதகனல் வசியாதி யாலிம்மை யின்பம்
 வெந்துயரங் குதவுமவ னிகிதகுரு வறத்தைப்
 போதகஞ்செய் திருமையினு மின்பமருள் பவனே
 புகழ்தருகா மியகுருவென் றறைகுவர்மூ தறிஞர்.

Wise men are of the view that preceptors are of eight types in accordance with the varied nature of disciples. Of these, he who imparts the knowledge of the celebrated meaning of the great-sayings of the Upaniṣads is known as *bodhakācārya*. He who enables his disciples to identify the reality by instructing them on the nature of *prakṛti* and its evolutes is known as *Vedakācārya*. He who, by the application of the eight forms of spell or incantations with a view to bring another person under one's control and the like,¹

makes one experience (seeming) happiness here and grief in a hereafter is known as *nihitācārya*. The one who instructs on the nature of ritual-actions dealt with in the ritualistic section of the Veda and thereby aids one to experience material prosperity here and in a hereafter is known as *kāmyācārya*.

1. The eight forms of spell or incantations are respectively practised 1) to bring another person under one's control, or, 2) to enrapture, or, 3) to stupefy, or, 4) to entice, or, 5) to displace one, or 6) to cause enmity, or, 7) to bring in separation between two persons, or, 8) to destroy a particular person.

(17)

சூசகனாம் விவேகத்தாற் சமைமுதலாங் குணங்க
 டொசூப்பவன் பொய் விடயமென வான்மலிருப் பருள் வோன்
 வாசகனாஞ் சிவசீவ ரைக்கிய ஞானத்தை
 வழங்குமவன் காரக னையந்தவிர்த்து நிலைத்த
 வாசகலு முத்தியருள் பவன்விகித குருவா
 மதிகாரி யிவராசு மென முன்னர்க் கூறு
 நேசமுறு சீடர்தம்மு ளொருவன்முத் தாப
 நெருப்பினால் வெந்துசிந்தா குலமுடைய னாகி.

Sūcakācārya is the one who blesses his disciple to acquire six ethical excellences through discernment of what is eternal and not eternal. *Vācakācārya* is one who by his instruction makes his disciple ascertain that the world of objects is non-real and thereby enables him to develop a sense of detachment toward it and to have a longing for the knowledge of Brahman. He who grants the knowledge of

Brahman to his disciple is known as *Kāraṅkācārya*. He who blesses his disciple by dispelling the doubts lingering in the mind of the latter to attain liberation is known as *Vihitācārya*.

Among those who are specified as fit aspirants, the one who is afflicted by the three-fold misery¹ and thereby is of distressed mind (draws nearer to one's preceptor).

Notes:

1. Misery is three-fold as caused by intrinsic influences, bodily or mental, such as the predominance of bile or desire or anger and so on (*ādhyātmika*), by extrinsic natural influences, such as other men, beasts and birds or inanimate objects (*ādhibhautika*) and by extrinsic super-natural influences such as spirits and so on (*ādhidaivika*).

Submission of the Disciple to the Preceptor

(18)

நானாரிப் பவமெனக்கு வந்தவா நென்கொ
 னசிப்பதெவ ராலெனவாய்ந் தலர்கரங்கொண் டேசி
 யானாநற் கல்வியயி வடக்கம்வை ராக
 மாதியாங் குணமுடைச்சற் குருவையடைந் தெதிர்மண்
 ணானாரப் பணிந்தெழுந்தன் பாற்கரங்கள் குவித்து
 வறவமுத்தி யருட்குருவே யென்பாசத் தழிவு
 தானாமெத் திறத்தினா லெனவினவல் சீடன்
 றனதுவிதி வத்துபசல் னத்துவமா மன்றே.

Deliberating within himself as to "whom am I"? "whence have I been associated with transmigratory process" and "how could it be removed", resorting with flow-

ers in his hands to a preceptor – who is conversant with Vedāntic texts, who has attained the knowledge of Brahman and is thereby possessed of eminent qualities such as humility, detachment and the like – lying prostrate before him in homage upon the ground, rising up when bidden to do so by the preceptor, and uttering hymns in praise of him with profound respect mingled with devotion, the aspirant asks him thus: Oh, my master! whence could take place the removal of my ignorance? This submission is known as the act of resorting to a preceptor in accordance with the scriptural injunction.¹

Notes:

Vide:

तद्विज्ञानार्थं स गुरुमेव अभिगच्छेत् समित्पाणिः श्रोत्रियं
ब्रह्मनिष्ठम्। *Mundaka Upaniṣad*, 1.2. 12.

Mode of Instruction by the Preceptor

(19)

அனையவன ததிகாரந் தெரிந்தருளா னோக்கி
யஞ்சலோம் பென்றபய கரஞ்சிரத்தி லிருத்தி
புனையவருஞ் சுருதியுத்தி யாலவ னனான்ம
புத்தியினை யொழித்துத்தா தான்மியவாக் கியத்தா
னினைவரிய வெருபிரம நீயேயென் றுள்ள
நிலையையுணர்த் துதல்குரவ னுபதேச மாகு
மினையவுப தேச முறை யுத்தேச முடனே
யிலக்கணஞ்சோதனையெனுமுன் றினையுமுடைத் தாமால்.

Noticing the competence of the disciple who has submitted himself thus seeking instruction, the preceptor

initiates him with his penetrating vision, places his palm, that guarantees fearlessness, over his head by stating “There is nothing to be afraid of and keep sound and unimpaired the instruction I give”. He then, with the aid of the scripture which is exalted owing to its pleasing accents and of reasonings (that are in conformity with the teaching of the scripture) removes the false notion (lingering in the mind of the disciple) that body, etc., constitute the self and instructs him with the help of the great-sayings of the Upaniṣads which speak of the identity of the true nature of the soul with Brahman thus: “You are Brahman – the incomparable and the inconceivable one”. This instruction of the preceptor comprises *uddeśa*, *lakṣaṇa* and *parikṣā*.¹

Notes:

1. See the following verse.

(20)

அறியவுணர்த் துறுபொருளை நாமமாத் திரையா
யறைந்திடுத லுத்தேச மாங்களகம் பளமாங்
குறியுடைய தானெனல்போ லப்பொருளிற் சிறந்த
குறியுரைத்த விலக்கணமவ் விலக்கியமாம் பொருளிற்
செறிவுறுமவ் விலக்கணமுண் டோவிலையோ வென்னத்
தெரிந்திடுதல் பரிட்சையோர் பொருளறிந்து பெறற்குப்
பொறியுறல் செய் காட்சியா மளவை முதலாகப்
பொருந்துபிர மாணங்க ளெட்டுளவா மன்றே.

Uddeśa means enunciation of a thing by its name – (the thing which is to be further discussed and explained by the preceptor to his disciple). *Lakṣaṇa* is identification of

the thing by a characteristic mark that is exclusively present in it, as is noticed in the sentence – “A Cow is that which has dewlap”. *Parīkṣā* or examination consists in analyzing as to whether the characteristic mark set forth in respect of the object is actually present therein or not.

In order to arrive at the knowledge of objects, there are eight kinds of *pramāṇas* or means of knowledge beginning with perception which gives rise to sensory-perception and ending with tradition.

Notes:

1. नामधेयेन पदार्थमात्रस्याभिधानम् उद्देशः, (न्यायभाष्यम् पृ.15).
2. उद्दिष्टस्य तत्त्वव्यवच्छेदको धर्मो लक्षणम्, Ibid.
3. लक्षितस्य “यथालक्षणमुपपद्यते न वा इति प्रमाणैरवधारणम्” परीक्षा, Ibid.

[To be continued]



TRANSFORMATIVE METAPHYSICS:
ADVAITA AS A MODEL*

B. R. SHANTHA KUMARI

REVISIONARY AND DESCRIPTIVE METAPHYSICS

Strawson distinguishes two types of metaphysics, descriptive and revisionary, because he is not interested in metaphysical entities which cannot be perceived by the ordinary man through his senses. According to Strawson, metaphysical entities must be such that they can be accommodated in the spatio-temporal framework; they must be public particulars—material bodies and persons so that they can be identified and re-identified by both the speaker and the hearer. Therefore, material bodies and persons constitute the basic particulars of the spatio-temporal framework. They are ontologically prior in our conceptual scheme because they serve as the reference point of a discussion and facilitate speaker-hearer identification.

*Courtesy: *The Tradition of Advaita*, Ed. by R. Balasubramaniam, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd, Delhi, 1994.

According to Strawson, descriptive metaphysics describes the actual structure of our thought about the world, whereas revisionary metaphysics strives to produce a better structure. Revisionary metaphysics seeks the unseen and the unknown reality underlying the perceived phenomena. It upholds that standard language is incapable of articulating reality. It, therefore, formulates new concepts to discuss reality, e.g. the metaphysics of Descartes, Leibniz, and Berkeley. Descriptive metaphysics is a critique of revisionary metaphysics. It accepts things as they are and affirms that the right way of thinking is already existent in ordinary language, and seeks to disclose it, e.g. the metaphysics of Aristotle and Kant. Although there are no new truths to be discovered in descriptive metaphysics, still there are “old truths to be rediscovered.”¹ Its method involves a critical discussion of human consciousness and the grammar of ordinary language.

Since Advaita exhibits features of both revisionary and descriptive metaphysics, it cannot be categorized exclusively under either. It is revisionary because it affirms that Brahman is trans-empirical (*alaukika*), imperceptible by the senses (*aprameya*), trans-rational, and hence, trans-linguistic (*anirvacanīya*). It upholds that the ineffable Brahman is unamenable to communication through ordinary language. It is also descriptive because it seeks to reveal the inherent reality trapped in the body-sense-mind complex by disclosing the soul’s essential nature through linguistic analysis of the major texts (*mahāvākyas*) embedded in the scripture (*śruti*), and help the soul “become” one with Brahman. But Brahman transcends the spatio-temporal framework of

descriptive metaphysics. In the words of Debabrata Sinha, Advaita can be characterized as “descriptive metaphysics” with a “revisionary motive”².

SYSTEMATIC AND EDIFYING METAPHYSICS

Richard Rorty divides metaphysics into two main categories:

(a) systematic philosophy representing the mainstream of Western philosophy which, according to Rorty, has lost its vitality and (b) edifying philosophy which is deconstructive, and which is described by Rorty as the rightful heir of the tradition and as the philosophy of the future.

Systematic or traditional philosophy, according to Rorty, has no new vision to offer. Rorty opines that epistemology or systematic philosophy suggests that we all “know” the same things and that there is only one way to know the world. Systematic philosophy “seeks to present us, once and for all, with a fixed truth; to disclose “essences” and “objective” matters of fact which will practically impose themselves on us and compel universal agreement”.³ It claims that knowledge obtained by direct or immediate experience of objects has greater certitude than knowledge arrived at through inference and reasoning.

Rorty wants to replace traditional or systematic philosophy by edifying philosophy, which is negative or deconstructive. Its advocates have no view of their own and avoid taking views. “Objective” knowledge which fascinates systematic philosophers is, for an edifying philosopher, nothing more than knowing things in accordance with the norms and conventions of the day. Edifying philosophers assert that there are different ways of knowing the

world and that there is no ultimate view of the way things are. Therefore, they do not standardize knowledge, but seek to make us aware of new realms of discourse, besides the normal to which we have become accustomed. They exhort us to outgrow our old selves and become new beings, e.g. Dewey, Heidegger, Wittgenstein, Sellars, Quine, et al.

Advaita contains aspects of both the above types of philosophy. It is systematic because its epistemology affirms that knowledge obtained by immediate experience (*aparokṣajñāna*) has higher certitude than that obtained through inference (*anumāna*) and other means of knowledge (*pramāṇas*); the latter yield only mediate knowledge (*parokṣa-jñāna*). Advaita affirms that all of us can know Brahman, provided we satisfy the stipulated spiritual prerequisites. Śaṅkara is like edifying philosophers because he is primarily not an epistemologist or, to use the expression of B.K. Matilal, a “*pramāṇa-theorist*.” He discusses epistemology only to the extent that it is helpful in clarifying the nature of reality. All the five means of knowledge except scripture, are called “sources of knowledge” only for the sake of courtesy (*upacāra*). They have only empirical validity (*vyāvahārika-prāmāṇya*). For Śaṅkara, scripture too is ultimately illusory, although it has transcendental validity (*pāramārthika-prāmāṇya*), because anything other than Brahman is illusory or non-real. That Advaita is edifying philosophy becomes explicit when it asks us to abandon all knowledge (*jñāna*), the means of knowledge, knowership (*jñātrtva*), finally even the desire for liberation, and remain as a witness (*sākṣin*) to both the internal and the external worlds. This attitude of a witness (*sākṣi-bhāva*) helps the

soul (*jīva*) overcome its finitude (*jīvatva*) and attain infinitude (*brahmatva*). Unlike edifying philosophers, Śaṅkara has his own unique view of Brahman.

TRANSFORMATIVE METAPHYSICS: ADVAITA AS A MODEL

According to some philosophers, philosophy is a search for higher states of consciousness rather than a search for true ideas. These philosophers proclaim that the "lived" sensory world is illusory and an appearance of the real. They exhort us to overcome ignorance, awake from dream and enliven the faculties of knowledge to effect a transition from the ordinary to a new and resplendent higher state of consciousness. Taber calls them as transformative philosophers, e.g. Śaṅkara and Fichte. Transformative philosophers affirm that there are other realms of consciousness, in addition to the ordinary, which are capable of disclosing new truths and thereafter investing ordinary experience with a new significance. They uphold that the intentionality or duality of ordinary consciousness can be transcended and a higher state of consciousness attained where the knower (*jñātā*), the known (*jñeya*), and knowledge (*jñāna*) become identical. Transformation involves a total restructuring of consciousness through a profound change in one's relation to the external world of objects and people around oneself as well as the internal world of one's own perceptions and feelings. It is an irrevocable change in the life of the individual and a union with the Absolute. The claims of transformative philosophy are made on the basis of experience and not on the basis of the possibilities or impossibilities of reason. Transformative philosophers emphasize the need for a trained spiritual faculty for the actualization of the transformation in one's own life.

The practical and soteriological value of transformative philosophers has been recognized, according to Taber, but attempts to view them from the angle of transformation have been meagre. Taber, therefore, expounds transformative philosophy because erudition overlooks the transformative aspect of philosophical systems, unless it is so obvious that it cannot be ignored. It is so, says Taber, because transformative philosophy “calls into question the methods of academic scholarship. It presents itself as a humanistic phenomenon which cannot be understood by the uncommitted, theoretical mind.”⁴ To him, transformation is a characteristic not only of religious philosophy, but of the truly philosophical as well. He, therefore, seeks to “establish the transformative pattern as a distinct type of philosophy,” and discuss some of its unique problems—the subjective mystical attitude of the thinker and its advantage; appealing to “intuitive knowledge; mystical experience—which provide it with a certificate of authenticity that traditional, formal metaphysics, in its attempt to extend reason beyond its proper scope, does not have”.⁵

THE CONSTITUENTS OF TRANSFORMATIVE PHILOSOPHY

Taber identifies the following criteria as constituents of transformative philosophy.

(a) *Experience*: For the system of transformative philosophy to be meaningful and intelligible, the individual must possess a higher level of consciousness as a preliminary. According to Advaita, purity of the mind (*cittaśuddhi*) is essential if the aspirant is to grasp the subtle purport of scriptures and intuit Brahman.

(b) *Praxis*: It consists of procedures to be followed in practice for attaining the required higher consciousness. Advaita stipulates that the study of scripture (*śravaṇa*), rational reflection (*manana*) on it, and contemplation (*nididhyāsana*) on its import (*tātparya*) constitute the intellectual exercise (*sādhana*) for developing consciousness.

(c) *Knowledge*: It comprises a set of doctrines which form the main theses of the system and articulate the experiential component. The approach to reality in Advaita is a synthesis of the objective and the Subjective approaches. The objective approach consists of an inquiry into the nature of the five great elements (*pañca-mahābhūta-vicāra*) and the elementals constituting the empirical phenomena of the physical world (*jagat*). The subjective approach consists of an inquiry into the five sheaths (*pañcakośa-vicāra*) or the three bodies (*dehatraya-vicāra*) and the three states of experience (*avasthā-traya-vicāra*). The five sheaths or the three bodies cloak the Self (*Ātman*), and constitute its “empirical dress”, or the psychophysical complex in which the soul is imprisoned during the finite empirical career. The waking (*jāgrat*), dream (*svapna*), and deep sleep (*susupti*) states experienced by every ordinary individual in daily life provide the subject matter for the inquiry into the three states of experience. The purpose of all inquiry and analysis is to distinguish the Self from the not-Self (*anātman*). The differentiation is made to help the soul realize that its presumed finitude is illusory and that it is immortal and identical with the supreme reality in its essential nature. Advaita affirms that this identity with the supreme Brahman (*jīva-brahma-aikya*) can be attained here and now through Self-knowledge (*ātma-jñāna*).

(d) *Transformation*: It consists of a thorough and profound change and a dramatic uplifting of consciousness that occurs with an insight into reality. According to Advaita, when mediate knowledge is converted into immediate experience, through the knowledge of the one (*eka-vijñāna*), the soul attains the knowledge of all (*sarva-vijñāna*). The transition from sentential knowledge (*vākyārtha-jñāna*) to non-sentential knowledge (*avākyārtha-jñāna*) marks the transformation of a bound one (*baddha*) into a liberated one (*mukta*), of the soul into Brahman. The knower of Brahman “becomes” Brahman (*brahmavid brahmaiva bhavati*).

Taber is of the view that all these four elements can be discerned in the philosophy of Śaṅkara and Fichte. These criteria are identified by him to facilitate a better understanding of transformative philosophy; they should not be treated as features for classifying systems of philosophy.

Transformative philosophers emphasize the need for a trained spiritual faculty for understanding their views and comprehending reality. Fichte compares those who lack this special faculty to blind people listening to a discourse on colours. If a blind man asserts that he is able to understand what is being described, then he is a mighty pretender because his imagination only conjures up an absurd caricature of what is being portrayed. Hence, every transformative philosopher demands that transformative philosophy must be lived if its propositions are to effect the claimed transition. Merely uttering “honey” cannot sweeten one’s tongue. Honey must be tasted and experienced; so too must philosophy be lived if it is to validate itself. Transformative philosophers delineate practices to be observed for develop-

ing the spiritual faculty through which to intuit reality and actualize the transformation in experience.

THE ASSERTIONS OF TRANSFORMATIVE PHILOSOPHY

The assertions of transformative philosophy, as mentioned earlier, are made on the basis of experience and not on the basis of the impossibility or possibility of reason. Śaṅkara's declaration that Brahman alone is real, that the world is illusory, and that the soul is identical with Brahman (*brahma satyam, jagan mithyā, jīvo brahmaiva na aparah*), is the conclusion arrived at through an analysis of the whole gamut of physical phenomena and human experience. Hence, the reason why Advaita is called "a metaphysics of experience", or "a critique of experience." It furnishes concepts for understanding familiar experience and shows a new relation between "facts" and experience. Basic differences in the response of individuals to reality arise from varying degrees of mental purity or clarity of consciousness. The greater the degree of clarity, the more easy it becomes for the individual to perceive truth.

According to transformative philosophy, spiritual preliminaries must be fulfilled prior to undertaking inquiry. Śaṅkara stipulates that the eligible aspirant (*adhikārin*) is one who possesses the fourfold qualification (*sādhana-catuṣṭaya*)—(a) discrimination between the eternal and the non-eternal (*nityānitya-vastu-viveka*), (b) dispassion (*vairāgya*), (c) the six virtues (*ṣaḍ-sampatti*)—*śama, dama, titikṣā, uparati, śraddhā*, and *samādhāna*, and (d) an intense desire for liberation (*mumukṣutva*). He propounds his philosophy for such of those who satisfy the stipulated

prerequisites and are fit enough to live up to them. The possession of the above qualities coupled with the practice of the recommended intellectual and spiritual exercises confers mental purity which is conducive to transforming mediate knowledge into experience.

The transformative philosopher's demand that the prerequisites be satisfied radically divides the seekers into those gifted with insight (*jñāni*) and those lacking insight (*ajñāni*). Therefore, the seekers are not placed on an equal footing. Acknowledgement of this basic inequality in one's access to truth constitutes the core of transformative philosophy. Hence, Śaṅkara speaks of two different levels. (1) The empirical or pre-transformative level (*vyāvahārika*) can be understood as the precognitive level relating to the path to enlightenment. Here, distinctions (*bhedas*) such as the seeker-seeking-sought (*sādhaka-sādhana-sādhya*), doer-deed (*kartā-karma*), enjoyer-enjoyed (*bhoktā-bhogyā*), God-soul (*Īśvara-jīva*), etc., reign supreme; they are "real" and meaningful until the dawn of Self-knowledge. (2) The trans-empirical or post-transformative level (*pāramārthika*) relates to the goal, viz., Brahman where all distinctions—seeker-sought, teacher-taught, God-soul, etc., are thrown overboard, and one abides in the knowledge that one is Brahman. According to Advaita, bondage (*bandha*) is illusory; because, if it were real, then liberation (*muktī*) would be impossible, for what is real cannot be sublated. Advaita interprets bondage as ignorance of one's true nature (*svarūpa-ajñāna*). Adopting the *kaṇṭhakoddharaṇa-nyāya*—that one thorn can be removed only by another thorn—Advaita argues that what is unreal can be overcome

by a remedy which too is unreal. At the transempirical or post-transformative level, a knower (*jñāni*) realizes that action (*karma*), devotion (*bhakti*), meditation (*dhyāna*), etc. are illusory; but these are the very means by which the seeker arrives at this grand conclusion. Passing through the portals of the non-real, the seeker arrives at the real. According to Advaita, attaining the knowledge of the Self is not gaining anything new; it is only overcoming ignorance of one's true nature. Transformation is not becoming; it is only figurative; it is in fact being, abiding in one's own true nature (*svarūpa-sthiti*).

Like edifying philosophers, and unlike systematic philosophers, transformative philosophers do not assume a context in which all people will agree. We all live in the same given world, but differ in our approach to the "setting", our interpretation of it, and the meaning we glean from it. To the ignorant man, the world is real (*vāstavi*); to a philosopher or a logician, it is indescribable (*anirvacanīya*); and to the seer, it is void (*tucchā*).⁶

The difference in views is due to the mental "set" or the limiting adjunct (*upādhi*)—the mind through which the world is perceived. The mind possesses different degrees of purity among different individuals. The soul is essentially identical with Brahman, but its plurality is due to its adjunct, an evolute of *avidyā*. The soul is real, but its finitude (*jīva-bhāva*) is false. Therefore, upholding the doctrine that the souls are many (*nānā-jīva-vāda*), while maintaining that the Self is one without a second (*ekātma-vāda*), is not incompatible with, or detrimental to, the non-dualistic philosophy of Advaita, which declares that there is no plu-

reality whatsoever (*na iha nānāsti kiñcana*) and that Brahman alone is real (*brahmaiva satyam*).

If transformative philosophy is revisionary, then it is admittedly so in the sense that it revises not only our thoughts, but our perception as well. It changes our views on what we regard as “facts” or concrete states of affairs. After transformation, what was earlier seen as a whole, and in isolation, is now seen as a part of, and as dependent on, a greater reality from which it derives its apparent existence. A transformative philosopher throws new light on familiar objects and their inter-relation, helps us discover new realms of consciousness, and the hitherto unknown aspects of the known. The novelty of Advaita lies in Śaṅkara’s proclamation that the soul is, negatively speaking, not the finite doer, knower, and enjoyer who is born, and will die and transmigrate; but is, in positive terms, in its essential nature Brahman, which is immortal, immutable, infinite, etc. The plurality perceived in terms of the sentient (*jīva*) and the non-sentient (*jaḍa*) phenomena are mere name (*nāma*) and form (*rūpa*) superimposed on Brahman, just as a “snake” is superimposed on a rope, or pictures on a canvas. Therefore, empirical “facts” become only relatively real in contrast to the highest reality which, through intuition, becomes an immediate fact of experience. When mediate knowledge consummates in direct experience, there is a profound transformation of the individual. There is no more plurality for the mystic (*jñāte dvaitam na vidyate*)⁷ who perceives everything as Brahman (*sarvam khalvidam brahma*).⁸ The knower of Brahman becomes Brahman, and is liberated forever from the miseries (*duḥkha*) of life and the travails of

transmigration (*saṁsāra*). There is no more return (*punarāvṛtti*) for a knower into empirical existence because the knower has annihilated ignorance, its root-cause (*mūla-kāraṇa*). Such a person is indifferent to, and undeluded by, the tinsel and glamour of name and form, because he knows that they are only illusory superimpositions (*kalpita*) on Brahman and that they have no existence, reality or independent status of their own other than that of their substratum (*kalpitasya adhiṣṭhānameva svarūpam*). Since the knower is convinced about the unreal nature of the not-Self, this certitude (*mithyātva-niścaya*) eliminates the volition (*pravṛtti*) to acquire objects; e.g. a person who has realized the illusory nature of a mirage (*mṛga-trṣṇā*) will not try to quench one's thirst from its "water". A knower is, therefore, free from, and undisturbed by, the anxiety to acquire, possess, and preserve, just as a man who is satisfied and content after drinking nectar (*amṛta*) will not care to taste lime-water. Unruffled by the empirical botherations, the mystic is rooted in the bliss of Brahman (*brahmānanda*) and sports in the Self (*ātma-kṛīḍa*). The knower neither seeks nor rejects things, but takes them for what they are worth. His/her suffering is only seeming or apparent because pain and pleasure belong to the mind, and s/he is one who has transcended the mind. The mystic's experience of the Self is apodictic. As descriptive statements, the propositions of transformative philosophy are self-validating.⁹

A transformative philosopher claims that there are other modes of consciousness in addition to those experienced in daily life. In these modes the subject-object dichotomy is transcended. Śāṅkara distinguishes between

finite cognitions (*khaṇḍa-vṛttis*) and infinite cognition (*akhaṇḍākāra-vṛtti*). Finite cognitions are individual “mental-episodes”. They are temporary, finite, object-laden or intentional, and two-term relational states, i.e. involve a cognising subject (*jñātā*) and a cognised object (*jñeya*). The modifications of the mind (*antaḥkaraṇa-vṛttis*) which account for valid knowledge (*pramā*) and the modifications of ignorance (*avidyā-vṛttis*) which account for error (*bhrama*) come under the category of finite cognitions. Infinite cognition, as the name suggests, is infinite, because the object or the content (*viśaya*) of that cognition, i.e. Brahman, is itself infinite (*akhaṇḍa*). It is in and through this infinite cognition in which the subject-object duality or intentionality is transcended that Brahman can be intuited. In this cognition, the cognising subject and the cognised object become identical. Knowing becomes being, i.e. knowledge becomes being. In this respect, transformative philosophers differ from scientists who discover new phenomena, but still interpret them and approach them from the standpoint of the senses. A scientist will scoff at a philosopher who tells that the object known and the knowing subject are essentially identical with each other. Modern philosophers may refuse to recognise that there are extraordinary modes of consciousness. But experience, and experience alone, can serve as the sole criterion for judging whether the claimed modes are possible or not. According to Vidyāraṇya, all doubts in philosophy are due to imperfect understanding of scripture and incomplete investigation of experience. Any critic guilty of indulging in these mistakes can be accused of abandoning or misquoting what is said (*śrutahāni*) and positing what is not

said or intended (*aśrutakalpanā*). No unqualified person—who has not lived philosophy—can pass authoritative judgments on the validity of philosophy. Philosophy is for all, but this does not invest one with the right to pronounce authoritatively on it, or confer on one the ability to formulate philosophy, or the capacity to appreciate its content. All this demands a committed and incisive mental set to grasp the subtleties of reality and see phenomena “in unusual lights.” It is wrong to make claims about what must be the case on the basis of what is usually the case.¹⁰ Therefore in the absence of sufficient inquiry, a transformative philosopher’s claim to other modes of consciousness cannot be brushed aside arbitrarily on the basis of what is habitually or ordinarily the case. Philosophy is not “a dead piece of furniture” to be accepted or rejected according to one’s likes and dislikes.

In some ways a transformative philosopher is systematic, but she is not a mere epistemologist or a “pramāṇa-theorist”. She talks about the absolute truth, but this does not mean that she is a systematic philosopher, because she is mainly concerned with the transformation she ushers in consciousness and not in its content. She seeks to explain “the whole of life” and “from the first cause to the last effect”; problems pertaining to knowledge and perception are accounted for in accordance with their degree of relevance to the main theses. With regard to matters epistemological, the Advaitins are in the company of the Bhāṭṭas (*vyavahāre bhāṭṭa nayah*). But the Advaitin chooses to differ where such unanimity becomes detrimental to his metaphysics, because epistemology justifies metaphysics;

and epistemology, it may be noted, is the methodology of metaphysics. For the sake of courtesy, the Advaitin accords empirical validity to perception, inference, comparison, postulation, and non-cognition. Scripture alone is assigned transcendental validity. Like the Bhāṭṭas, Śaṅkara affirms that in matters trans-empirical, scripture alone is the final authority. He dissociates himself from the Bhāṭṭas when they declare that the knowledge-section (*jñāna-kāṇḍa*) of the Vedas has no independent status and that it is subordinate to the ritual-section (*karma-kāṇḍa*) because knowledge (*jñāna*) and not action (*karma*) is the direct cause of liberation, according to the philosophy of Advaita. According to Śaṅkara, scripture too is ultimately illusory because anything other than Brahman is non-real. He proclaims that Brahman alone is real; it is not only the sole reality, but also the whole of reality. Since philosophy proceeds from the known to the unknown, Śaṅkara uses dream and deep sleep experience to explain the nature of the world, Brahman, and liberation. Just as a lion which was "real" in a dream, vanishes on waking and is understood as illusory, so too when the individual moves from bondage to liberation, the pluralistic world is understood as illusory, as a mere appearance of Brahman. In deep sleep, the world of name and form perceived in the waking and dream states ceases to exist, but the non-perception of these is endorsed by an entity which persists in sleep as the witness thereto. To know oneself as the witness is very difficult in the waking and dream states due to the wrong identification (*adhyāsa*) with the psycho-physical complex. Through an analysis of deep sleep experience, the soul is able to discern itself as

different from the sense-mind-body complex in which it is imprisoned. This inquiry affords it the knowledge that it is not the doer, enjoyer, knower, etc., but that these are falsely ascribed to it due to ignorance. In the state of bondage, the fleeting bliss enjoyed in sleep provides a foretaste of the bliss (*ānanda*) which is to be experienced permanently in liberation. It also serves as a source of inspiration and as an incentive to the soul to strive for liberation.

A transformative philosopher not only informs us about reality, but also helps us experience it. Śaṅkara's philosophy is not only theoretical, but also practical; "it is meant to effect a concrete, irrevocable change in the life of the student, an actual union with the Absolute it depicts."¹¹ The change in consciousness is made possible by changing the relation between the knower and the known and not by introducing new objects to consciousness. When the suggested practices or intellectual exercises are followed, there is an elimination of misconceptions and latent impressions (*saṁskāras*), which is accompanied by a simultaneous unnoticed maturation of consciousness, which is to be finally recognised as liberation. Just as the affirmation that what is seen is not a snake, but only a rope, annihilates the "snake", so too the mere knowledge that one is pure, partless, and immortal, destroys the ignorance that one is born, acts, suffers, enjoys, etc. Mediate knowledge of the Self can be equated with having an object which an individual is seeking. The individual has it on one's own person, but is not aware of the fact. The object is, therefore, both known and unknown.

Having already achieved union with Brahman on a precognitive level, the explicit statement that one *is* Brahman is all that is needed to precipitate a clear consciousness of that union and bring it into being as such for the first time.¹²

For example, there is the well-known parable of the tenth man to illustrate this.

THE NATURE OF THE ASSERTIONS

The propositions of transformative philosophy are neither prescriptions nor descriptions. They are not prescriptions because they do not depict the world as it should be or according to one's hopes and wishes; and they are not descriptions either for the seeker or the philosopher concerned. The seeker lacks a prior apprehension of reality through which he can judge the description as accurate or inaccurate. "Since the possibility of misdescription is precluded..., the notion of description cannot apply."¹³ The propositions do not involve an explanation of the states they portray. Hence, they are not descriptions for the philosopher who formulates them. For want of a better word, Taber, like Śaṅkara, prefers to call them definitions whose purpose is to distinguish a phenomenon from others. For example, the definition of Brahman in terms of its essential nature (*svarūpa-lakṣaṇa*) as existence, knowledge, and infinite (*satyam jñānam anantam brahma*); and the definition *per accidens* (*tatastha-lakṣaṇa*) which defines Brahman as the source, support, and end of all phenomena (*yato vā imāni bhūtāni jāyante*), distinguish Brahman from all that is illusory or non-real. The assertions of transforma-

tive philosophy are definitions to the philosopher and the seeker. The metaphysician who formulates them gives just sufficient data for the object to be identified and nothing more. They are definitions to the seeker, because the seeker is ignorant of the fact that such a definiendum exists until it is defined for the aspirant by the philosopher.

THE LANGUAGE OF TRANSFORMATIVE PHILOSOPHY

The language used by a transformative philosopher can be (i) inherited from tradition, as in the case of Śaṅkara, or (ii) be formulated by the philosopher, as is with Fichte. Śaṅkara affirms in his *Brahma-sūtra-bhāṣya* that his philosophy is not a view concocted afresh by him, but that it has been already expounded in the Vedas. An orthodox philosopher like Śaṅkara is mainly concerned with imparting knowledge, keeping alive the tradition and carrying it forward. According to Taber, an unorthodox philosopher also conveys truth, but in addition is concerned with acquiring that truth for himself. The unorthodox metaphysician conceptualizes experience “for himself *and* his students; in talking about it he is getting a firm grip on it himself.”¹⁴ He holds that the source of a transformative philosopher’s language—whether it is traditional or not—determines his aim.

Irrespective of the source of his concepts, a transformative philosopher puts forward rational arguments to show that he is not engaged in idle speculation. The arguments show that his views are not subjective and arbitrary. He introduces new concepts of understanding for use in empirical life. He does not strive to know, through reason, “objects that lie beyond the field of possible experience; he

activates regions of experience hitherto unappreciated by supplying concepts pertaining to them."¹⁵ A transformative philosopher displays before us a new vista through language. He teaches language for areas of experience that our parents neglected to teach us about when we were young... transformative philosophy corresponds to the growth of a precognitive or subconscious impulse...The transformative philosopher appropriates this area of experience and charts it for us so that we can live more consciously in accordance with it.¹⁶ His assertions are self-evident truths according to Taber.

Transformative philosophers differ among themselves in the role they assign to reason (*yukti*). For Śaṅkara, reason and logic (*tarka*) are subservient to scripture. Through such reason which accords with scripture, inquiry into the real nature of the Self is to be undertaken. Ignorance and wrong identification are undeniable patent facts of experience for any ordinary man. The Self is the invariable factor pervading all experience (*anubhava*), and is the basis of all cognition (*jñāna*)—erroneous (*viparyaya*), doubtful (*saṁśaya*), and true (*saṁyag*). It is the core of what Perry calls "the ego-centric predicament." It evades apprehension because of false identification with the body (*deha*), the senses (*indriyas*), and the mind (*antaḥkaraṇa*). When an individual outgrows this habitual (*naisargika*) mode and constantly abides in the thought that one is other than the body, mind and senses, s/he becomes fit to intuit the Self which is self-revelatory (*svaprakāśa*). The individual's experience of the Self is apodictic, the certainty of all certainties (*satyasya satyam*).

A transformative philosopher's language is "abnormal". According to him, ordinary language is incapable of expressing what he has in his mind. His views can be expressed through standard vocabulary only in a paradoxical form. To be intelligible, his language defines objects in a way similar to that of a parent's language, which through ostensive definition, teaches the child and introduces new things to it through wider and wider generalizations of a more abstract nature. For example, a parent places a tomato in front of the child and says, "tomato", to teach the child what it is. The tomato is then placed beside an apple, and the parent says, "red". Then, the tomato and apple are placed next to a plantain, and the parent says, "fruits". Therefore, the child is made to get acquainted with abstract concepts systematically and gradually. Likewise, scripture also teaches the seeker to identify the real which is enmeshed in experience, which remains concealed in name and form. For example, scripture tells:

(a) Consciousness is Brahman (*prajñānam brahma*),¹⁷

(b) Brahman alone is real (*brahmaiva satyam*),

(c) You are that (*tat tvam asi*),¹⁸

(d) That which is in man, and that which is in the sun are one (*yaśca ayam puruṣe, yaśca asau āditye sa ekaḥ*).¹⁹

In this way, the aspirant is introduced to a preliminary framework for interacting with reality. The chances of error are minimized because ostensive definition limits the object so that the object necessarily accords with the way in which it is characterized. The individual who defines is mainly concerned with naming, i.e. relating words and things, rather than describing things or relying on conventional connec-

tions, e.g. “Brahman” means “big”, “great”; “Ātman” means “all-pervading” (*yacca āpnoti...tasmāt ātmeti kathyate*).

Śaṅkara affirms that Brahman is trans-empirical and also trans-linguistic. It cannot be comprehended by the senses and the mind, and also by language (*yatho vāco nivartante aprāpya manasā saha*).²⁰ Due to its built-in or inherent limitation, language can capture only the empirical—substance (*dravya*), attribute (*guṇa*), action (*karma*), name (*saṃjñā*), and relation (*saṃbandha*). But Brahman transcends all these categories. This does not mean that language and mind can be dispensed with; for, they are necessary, but not sufficient. They cannot directly yield the knowledge of Brahman, but only indirectly by distinguishing the Self from all that is not-Self, which is illusory. The definition of Brahman in terms of its essential nature and its adventitious attributes must be interpreted negatively to distinguish Brahman from all that is illusory (*anṛta*), material (*jaḍa*), and finite (*paricchinna*). Proceeding from the known to the unknown, Śaṅkara employs the method of superimposition (*adhyāropa*) and subsequent negation (*apavāda*) to help the seeker understand his acosmic point of view (*adhyāropa apavādābhyām niṣprapañcam prapañcyate*). That the physical world is sublated through self-knowledge, is illustrated to the seeker through the analogy of dream objects which cease to exist on waking. From the metaphysical standpoint, the dawn of Self-knowledge alone characterizes real awakening; until then the individual wallows in ignorance and convulses in delusion.

That is why the *Bhagavad-gītā* says that what is day to the ignorant is night to the wise; and what is day to the

wise is night to the ignorant.²¹ Similarly, the view that Brahman is unaffected by, and uninvolved in, empirical changes, that its nature is blissful, etc. are substantiated by deep sleep experience. In sleep, the Self is a witness to the absence of objects (both empirical and phenomenal) and the mind. When the impediments to its manifestation get eclipsed, the blissful nature of Brahman reveals itself temporarily to the bound soul. When a seeker reposes faith in the assertions of a transformative philosopher and follows his directions, e.g. undertaking the inquiry into the five sheaths, or the three bodies, and the three states of experience, which serve as a preliminary framework for identifying reality, the individual chances upon the treasure of truth. One realizes oneself as identical in essence with the supreme reality, which is basically the same in all phenomena, both conscious and non-conscious, and that differences (*bhedas*) are due to the degree of its manifestation in the media of name and form. Endowed with this unifying knowledge the individual sees the world through new eyes and perceives on the canvas of creation the same reality underlying the varied phenomena and the diverse forms of life, e.g. a dog, a cow, an elephant, an outcaste, and a learned man, and so on, like a thread which runs through multi-hued flowers, and unites them to form a garland. That the entire creation is one family (*vasudaiva-kuṭumbakam*) is vindicated for the individual because all phenomena exhibit "family resemblance"—in that they are all mere appearances, mere name and form superimposed on the immutable substratum, viz. Brahman. This saving knowledge (*tāraka-jñāna*) redeems the individual from ignorance, transforms the ignorant one into a knower, and enacts the union of the finite and the Infinite (*jīva-brahma-aikya*).

CONCLUSION

According to Taber, transformative philosophy displays features of both descriptive and revisionary metaphysics, but cannot be reduced to either of them. Like revisionary metaphysics, transformative philosophy is dissatisfied with the categories of ordinary experience because "the mode of experiencing that concerns it does not correspond to them".²² It is, therefore, not descriptive. Similarly, like descriptive metaphysics, but unlike revisionary metaphysics, it feels that there is no need for a "conceptual change that is not immediately justified by the present situation, in which the experience in question is already at hand. Even when it evokes an experience it only makes concrete an experience that is in a sense already there."²³ According to Taber, since transformative philosophy suggests techniques to be practised for cultivating consciousness, it is open to verification, and hence immune to the criticisms made against revisionary metaphysics.

Transformative philosophy, says Taber, includes and transcends both systematic and edifying philosophy. Like a systematic philosopher, a transformative philosopher talks about an absolute truth. As discussed earlier, this does not mean that he must reduce all his philosophy to standard language and be rejected as a systematic philosopher, because the absoluteness of transformative philosophy is the transformation it initiates in consciousness and not in its content. The transformative philosopher's demand for a spiritual faculty divides the seekers into those possessing insight and those lacking it. Therefore, all cannot "know" the same truth, according to transformative philosophy,

whereas systematic philosophy affirms that we all know the same things. Hence, transformative philosophy is different from systematic philosophy.

Transformative philosophy differs from edifying philosophy in the following respects

<i>Edifying Philosophy</i>	<i>Transformative Philosophy</i>
1	2
<p>1. It has no view of its own, being without a view is an end in itself; it is deconstructive in principle, because it wants to eliminate the view that knowledge is an accurate representation of objects, and emphasizes that we all cannot “know” the same things.</p>	<p>It is deconstructive due to necessity, because it wants to rid the mind from philosophical ideas to enable consciousness to grow and expand.</p>
<p>2. It pursues novelty for its own sake. An edifying philosopher dreads nothing more than “the thought that (his) vocabulary should ever be institutionalized, or that (his) writing might be seen as commensurable with the tradition”.²⁴</p>	<p>Abnormality of language is a means to depict reality which is inexpressible through standard language in a non-paradoxical form; e.g. apparent contradictions in Śāṅkara’s exposition of consciousness pertain to the unsuitability of conventional language for articulating his views. “He has in mind a different word which has a different meaning although it happens to have the same phonetic shape.”²⁵</p>

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| <p>3. The absence of a common ground among edifying philosophers precludes a tradition of edifying philosophers.</p> | <p>It has scope for establishing a tradition of like minded philosophers.</p> |
| <p>4. The status of an edifying philosopher as a philosopher is contextual. Since he is a detractor, he is a philosopher only as long as systematic philosophy exists. Therefore, in the absence of systematic philosophy, he will only be a cultural anthropologist, a poet, or a scholar, says Taber affirming Rorty's view.</p> | <p>A transformative philosopher's position as a philosopher is unconditional, i.e. not determined by the presence of other systems of thought.</p> |
| <p>5. An edifying philosopher seeks to transform the individual.</p> | <p>The transformation sought by a transformative philosopher is more profound.</p> |
| <p>6. According to Taber, an edifying philosopher only restates differently what was already known, and is mainly verbose.</p> | <p>Introduces a new dimension to experience, changes the individual's relation to the world and the other people around him, helps consciousness to expand and experience reality.</p> |
| <p>7. Edifying philosophy deals mainly with man and his relations with art, science, society, morality, etc., i.e. deals with man's relation to other beings.</p> | <p>A transformative philosopher bypasses these issues.</p> |

To conclude, just as natural science validates itself in its pragmatic value, so also does transformative philosophy validate itself when translated into practice. Information becomes significant only when one knows the inter-relation between "facts" and experience. Experience must be explored and its potentialities discovered. The hypotheses of philosophy must be conscientiously adopted in life to discover our own Self and unravel the unknown aspects of the known. Just as the nature of an organism is studied by introducing it into new environments, so too must we investigate our true nature by living life in new ways. The argument from respectability believes that a time-honoured system of thought cannot be nonsensical. We must abandon our accustomed ways of life and start afresh along paths outlined by seers if we are to experience that blessed state here and now, in this life itself.



NOTES

1. P.F. Strawson, *Individuals-An Essay in Descriptive Metaphysics*, University Paperbacks, Methuen: London, 1974, p. 10.
2. Debabrata Sinha, *The Metaphysic of Experience in Advaita Vedānta*, Motilal Banarasisidass, Delhi, 1983, p.xxii.
3. John A. Taber, *Transformative Philosophy*, University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, 1948, p. 131.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 66.
5. *Ibid.*, p.3.

6. *Pañcadaśī*, VI. 130.
7. *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad*, 1.7.18.
8. *Chāndogya Upaniṣad.*, III.14.1.
9. John A. Taber, op.cit., p. 99.
10. Ibid., p.102.
11. Ibid., p.54.
12. Ibid., p.55.
13. Ibid., p.98.
14. Ibid., p.100.
15. John A. Taber, op. cit., pp. 100-101.
16. Ibid., p.99.
17. *Aitareya Upaniṣad*, III. 1.1.
18. *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, VI. 8.7.
19. *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, II. 8.5.
20. Ibid., II. 9.1.
21. *Bhagavad-gītā*, II. 69.
22. John A. Taber, op.cit., p. 98.
23. Ibid., p. 98.
24. Richard Rorty cited by John A. Taber, op.cit., p. 129.
25. John A. Taber, op.cit., p. 51.



THEORY OF SUPERIMPOSITION

J. KRISHNAN

It is almost a truism to say that barring the Cārvāka system all other schools of Indian Philosophy are *mokṣa* – oriented. *Mokṣa* or liberation is freedom from the trammels of transmigratory process; and, it is relevant in the case of the souls. The concept of liberation varies from one school to another depending upon the conception of the soul and its relation to ultimate reality. The Advaita school maintains that the ultimate reality is pure consciousness – One without a second. It further holds the world to be provisionally real and the soul to be non-different from the pure consciousness. The latter, by being identified with *avidyā* and its product – the psycho-physical organism attains to the state of the soul and undergoes transmigration. The soul performs activities – sacred and secular and experiences the fruits of those actions. It is thus an agent and an experient. And to be an agent one must be a knower or the substratum of knowledge. If knowledge is considered as pure consciousness itself, then being non-dual, it cannot have any substratum. If it is

considered as mere mental state or the modification of mind, then being inert it is not efficacious in manifesting any factor whatsoever. Hence it must be admitted that the modification of mind inspired by the reflection of consciousness in it is knowledge. And pure consciousness which is supra-relational cannot be the substratum of knowledge of this nature, unless it is associated with the mind whose modification, by being inspired by the reflection of consciousness in it, is knowledge. It comes to this that the relation of mind to pure consciousness is essential in order to view the latter as the knower or *pramātā*. Since the characteristics of being an agent and an experient are dependent upon the characteristic of being a knower, and since the latter depends upon the relation of mind to pure consciousness, it must be held that pure consciousness acquires the characteristics of being a knower, an agent and an experient only by being related to mind. An analysis of the three states of waking, dream and deep sleep confirms this view. In the state of deep sleep mind is not operative and the pure consciousness which remains along with *avidyā* alone is not experienced to be associated with the characteristics of being a knower, an agent and an experient. But in the states of waking and dream where mind functions, these three characteristics are noticed. From this it is ascertained that the relation of mind to pure consciousness is responsible for attributing agency, etc., upon the latter thus reducing it to the state of the soul. And the relation between mind and pure consciousness cannot but be non-real, as the former is inert and the latter, sentient. It must, therefore, be caused by *avidyā*. The latter is present in the pure consciousness.

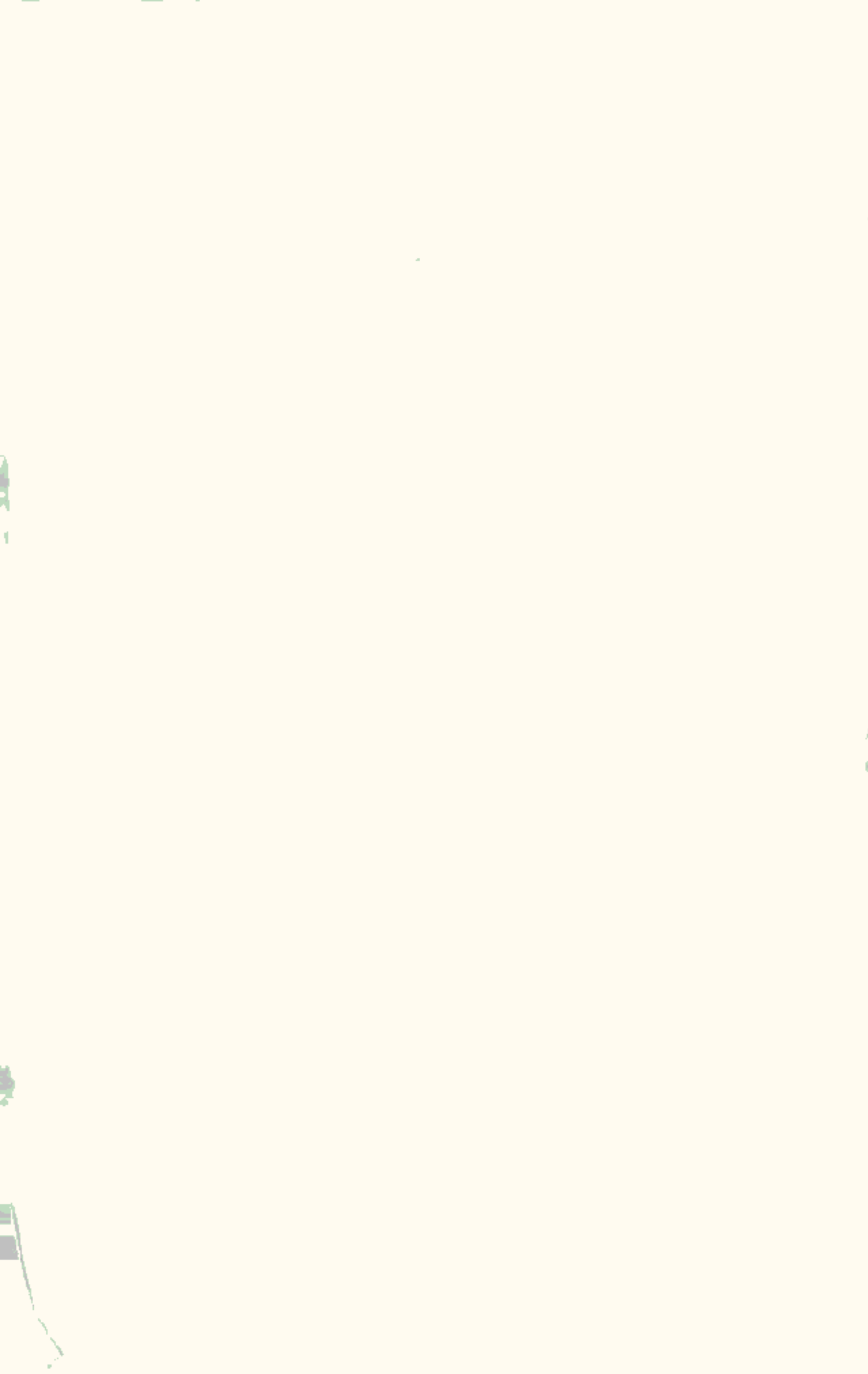
Thus in the pure consciousness associated with avidyā, there is the false identification of the mind. The blend of pure consciousness and avidyā and mind is the soul endowed with the characteristics of being an agent, an experient and a knower. Such a soul further falsely identifies itself with the characteristics of sense-organs, physical body and its characteristics. When the physical body falls off, the soul associated with the subtle body reaches the other world to experience the fruits of actions and comes back to this world to experience the fruits of that portion of its accumulated *karma* which is about to fructify. And this process of transmigration goes on continually. It is based upon the fact of the soul being associated with the characteristics of being a knower, an agent and an experient.

Transmigratory process is a succession of spiritual opportunities. The soul is to realize its non-difference from its true nature which is pure consciousness. Or, more strictly it is to non-realize the not-self, namely, its relation to mind, sense-organs, the physical body and their characteristics. The root-cause of such a relation is avidyā. The latter has for its content the non-difference between the true nature of the soul and pure consciousness. It would be removed only by the direct knowledge which refers to the non-difference between the true nature of the soul and pure consciousness. And such a knowledge would arise from the major-texts of the Upaniṣads when their import is ascertained by detailed enquiry, followed by careful reflection and intense meditation upon that import. And the knowledge that ensues from the major-texts would remove avidyā; and, consequently, the

relation of mind, etc., to the consciousness-element involved in the conception of the soul would be removed. The soul ceases to be a soul; it remains in its true nature of pure consciousness. And it is liberation.

Thus we see that philosophical investigation or enquiry into the import of the Upaniṣadic texts, according to Advaita, becomes relevant only in the context of the false identification of mind, etc., and their characteristics with pure consciousness – the only reality. The problems connected with this theory thus serves as the prolegomena to the Philosophy of Advaita and they have been set forth by Śaṅkara in his celebrated introduction to his commentary on the *Brahma-sūtra*.





ABOUT THE PUBLISHERS

The Ādi Śaṅkara Advaita Research Centre was established in 1975 under the guidance and with the blessings of His Holiness Jagadguru Śrī Śaṅkarācārya of Kāñcī Kāmakoti Pīṭha. The main objectives of the Centre, among other things, are:

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

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

*saṁsārādhvani tāpabhānukiraṇaprodhbhūtadāhavnyathā-
 khinnānām jalakāṅkṣayā marubhuvi bhrāntyā paribhrāmyatām
 atyāsannasudhāmbudhiṁ sukhakarāṁ brahmādvayaṁ darśaya-
 ntyeṣā śāṅkara-bhārati vijayate nirvāṇa-sandāyini.*

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.