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PART ONE

PROCEEDINGS OF THE SEMINAR
ON
REALITY AND THE CATEGORIES OF THOUGHT

Prilabhushan Chatterji

CATEGORIES:
A HISTORICAL AND
CRITICAL SURVEY

I

The function of thought involves certain fundamental notions or ideas that are organic to intelligence. These fundamental notions which are involved in our judgments of things and events are called categories. They are otherwise known as universal and essential predicates. It was Aristotle who is believed to have first used the term 'category' in a technical sense. In his small treatise *Categories* Aristotle held that things of the world fall in at least one of the ten classes: *Substance, Quantity, Quality, Relation, Where, (space), When (time), Position (situation), State, Action and Passion*: and every expression must involve one or more of these notions. Thus they involve not only features of thinking, but also of those that are thought of. As Joseph explains, "The Categories present a logical, but they present also a real distinction, i.e., a distinction in the nature of the reality about which we think, as well as in our manner of thinking about it."¹ The categories were set apart by Aristotle from the general run of concepts or universals. A universal or concept is a pattern or type which is repeated with variations in different individual or particular objects. A category is the highest type of concept which cannot be brought under any higher concept. It, in fact, constitutes the terminus reached in the subsumption of a lower order under a higher one. The Aristotelian idea that the categories are a class apart—that there are some features of the object of knowledge which are to be separated from others—seems to be Platonic in origin. In the *Theaetetus* while rejecting a purely sensationalist theory of knowledge Plato suggests that there are some characters which are not grasped by the special senses. But the categories were invested with a special status and dignity by Aristotle. His influence had its sway in the middle ages and the categories continued to hold their position of pre-eminence.

II

The Aristotelian frame-work broke down in the pre-Kantian philosophy. At the beginning of the modern period philosophers do not seem to have attached much importance to the 'discussion of categories as such. Hobbes and Descartes were not sympathetic to the Aristotelian scheme. This dissatisfaction appeared with greater rigour in Locke and Hume. Locke characterised 'substance' as an 'unknown' substratum of known qualities. Obviously essential predication and hence necessary truth become impossible with reference to the substances in the real world. If Locke argued that it is impossible to say anything about what a thing essentially is, Hume pointed out that it is equally impossible to know how one thing is necessarily connected with another. Hume however offered a psychological explanation of our belief in substance and categories — they are, in his opinion, matter of habit and custom.

But Kant gave a new turn to the problem of categories. The categories were once again put to their early position of glory and honour by him. Kant tried to answer Hume and he also modified the original Aristotelian position.

III

According to Aristotle every 'uncombined statement' refers to one or more of the ten categories stated by him; and 'uncombined statement' means an expression which can be considered apart from its association or combination with other expressions in a sentence. Thus what Aristotle was interested in was a classification of terms or types of predicates. But he did not try to clarify their nature and interrelations. It was otherwise with Kant. He framed his list of categories in the context of judgments which are 'combined statements', so to speak. In the Transcendental Deduction, categories are defined as "concepts of an object in general by means of which the intuition of an object is regarded as determined by one of the logical functions of judgment."² Kant wanted to have an *a priori* guarantee of the completeness and correctness of his list of categories. So he took recourse to what he called 'metaphysical deduction'. He deduced his categories from the concepts generally used in formal logic at the time of classifying judgments. In the formal logic of the Aristotelian tradition judgments are classified under four headings and under each heading a judgment is of three types. So there are twelve kinds of judgments and corresponding to them there are twelve categories. From the standpoint of quantity every statement is universal, particular or singular; from the standpoint of quality every statement or judgment is affirmative, negative or infinite; from the standpoint of

relation a judgment is categorical, hypothetical or disjunctive; and from the standpoint of modality a judgment is problematic, assertive or certain. Each of the twelve judgments corresponds to a function of the understanding and each such function involves a category or pure concept. Thus we have the categories of *unity*, *plurality* and *totality* under Quantity; categories of *Reality*, *negation* and *limitation* under Quality; categories of *inherence and subsistence*, *causality*, *dependence*, *community* or *reciprocity* under Relation; and categories of *possibility*, *existence-non-existence* and *necessity-contingency* under Modality. For Kant *Space* and *Time* are not the categories of understanding, but they are *a priori* forms of sensibility.

But these categories of understanding (and also the forms of sensibility), Kant repeatedly warns us, must not be applied to *noumena*, realities or things-in-themselves. The knowledge that we have with their help is limited to *phenomena* only. In other words, for Kant knowledge is a real possibility; but categorised knowledge has no access to the realm of things-in-themselves. Kant, however, does not regard his own assumption of *noumena* in a dogmatic fashion, but he looks upon the problem of *noumena* as problematical, which means that regarding *noumena* we cannot say that they are possible nor can we say that they are impossible. The *noumena* have got a negative meaning, viz., that they are non-temporal, non-spatial, problematical and beyond the domain of categories. We should therefore guard ourselves against 'subreption' *i.e.*, breaking through the boundaries of sense-experience.

IV

Kant's theory of knowledge is an epoch-making one. He may be said to have rehabilitated the categories to their old position of honour. Indeed, his treatment of categories renewed the interest of philosophers in categories, and various comments and criticisms followed.

Kant's scheme of categories has certain advantages over Aristotle's. Aristotle used the notion of category in respect of uncombined expression and so he could not draw a distinction between *common name* and *paronym*. Take the two statements 'Ice melts gradually' and 'Water becomes ice'. For Aristotle 'ice' in both the propositions is a substance and the change from 'water' to 'ice' as indicated in the second statement is a substantial change. But for Kant 'ice' in the second statement is a *paronym*, as it indicates that water as related to certain accidents is liquid and when those accidents change, water

becomes ice. As Aristotle took the categories in the sense of isolated or uncombined expressions, he had to explain every change as substantial change or change of one substance into another; but obviously change of water into ice is not of this type. But as Kant uses the categories in a judgmental set-up, it is easier for him to explain change in terms of accidents pertaining to a substance. In short, Kant's theory is superior to Aristotle's in so far as categories are extended to *relation* among terms and not simply confined to terms alone.

Further, Kant's list of categories is free from equivocation and there is therefore the least chance of mistaking one category for another or confusing one category with another.

In spite of his difference from Aristotle, Kant accepts the Aristotelian view that subject-predicate form is the basic form of judgment and that the categories supply the form, but not the content of cognitive discourse.

V

Kant has also tried to refute Hume. Though he was roused from his dogmatic slumber by Hume, he could not accept Hume's conclusions. As is well known, Kant has sought to effect a reconciliation between empiricism and rationalism in his critical approach. He holds that universal synthetic judgments are possible *a priori*, because mind converts the sense-impressions (which are the raw materials of knowledge) into coherent knowledge with the help of *a priori* forms and categories. Hume made a mistake when he enquired into the region of sense-experience to find the ground for establishing the validity of the categories of substance, causality, etc. The categories, Kant points out, are subjective and *a priori*.

But Kant's doctrine of categories has been challenged on various grounds. He speaks of the synthetic functions of the *a priori* categories. But it has been asked: "How do we get the knowledge of their synthetic functions?" "Can we have it *a priori*?" As Paulsen comments: "If we have no *a priori* knowledge of their functions...if we know of them only by experience, that is, by inner anthropological experience, then the fundamental propositions in which the form of these functions is expressed would have *empirical* validity only."⁸ In defence of Kant it may be argued that this type of criticism is unjustified inasmuch as Kant is not interested in the psychological origin of the concepts. What Kant holds is that the forms and categories are subjective factors (in the sense of being common to all similarly constituted human subjects) and as such they are universally and necessarily applicable to whatever becomes an object of knowledge for the

subject. But critics insist that Kant does not explain the *ground* of this assumption. If particular laws of nature like the law of gravitation, law of thermodynamics, etc., require experience, why does not the law of causality, for example, require experience? If it be granted that the law of causality has universal validity, it cannot be said that all generalisations of a science like physics have universal validity. They cannot shed altogether their problematic character — they have at best a *presumptive* universal validity.

Kant holds that universal synthetic judgments are possible in mathematics and the natural sciences (but not in metaphysics), inasmuch as such judgments involve real and pure truths *a priori* "needing no proof". But this involves the fallacy of *petitio principii*, a Humean might retort. When the apodictic propositions of geometry and trigonometry are applied, for example, to astronomical calculations, they turn out to be more or less hypothetical. The universality and necessity claimed in respect of mathematical sciences pertain to them only in so far as they state pure notions and definitions. Again, when Kant refers to physics as the ideal natural science, he means Newtonian physics. But modern physics has moved far from Newtonian physics, and it does not claim absolute universality in respect of its propositions.

The Kantian theory of knowledge falls into two parts — sensations which are particular and a synthetic arrangement of sensations which gives rise to knowledge. There is thus a break between the two parts and it is difficult to understand how the unity is brought about in the domain of sensations by something which *ex hypothesi* is purely intellectual and rational. Just as in Plato so also in Kant, a dualistic dilemma is the sore point. Neither 'eternal forms' nor temporal ones can explain the unity and synthetic character of knowledge.

Finally, the way in which Kant deduces the twelve categories is open to objection. It is based on the assumption that the list of twelve judgments as given in Aristotelian logic is exhaustive. But to fix the number of categories is to set a limit to the progress and advancement of knowledge which is dynamic in character. Indeed, to run after "an absolute correctness of a conceptual scheme as a mirror of reality" would be, as Quine comments, a "meaningless pursuit."⁴

VI

We have indicated above some of the criticisms levelled against Kant's doctrine of categories. But to criticise Kant is not to reject

him outright. Kant is a revolutionary and an original thinker and there have been diverse reactions to his view and philosophic thoughts moved in different directions. We may now refer to some of these reactions.

In the post-Kantian era the immediate reaction against the Kantian theory came from Hegel. He takes a new view of logic. For him logic is not a science of mere forms of reasoning cut off from content—rather it is concerned with dialectical processes in which form and content are inseparable. The dialectical process moves through the stages of thesis, anti-thesis and synthesis and these constitute the basis for inter-relating the various notions and categories. To be sure, the dialectical process is not a mere logical process or process of human thought. It is the process of the world as a whole—it is the means by which the Absolute Mind realises its own nature. Now, since the finite mind is a reproduction of the Absolute Mind, the essential laws and categories of human thought must be inherent in the nature of Reality. Thus Hegel bridges the gap between thought and reality which Kant created by his insistence on the view that human forms and categories cannot be applied to the *noumena*. Further, Hegel does not believe in any fixed set of categories as ultimate and final. Categories are many and their complete enumeration is not possible unless there is a full articulation or evolution of the reality itself. Thus Hegel gives a blow to the supreme dictatorship of a fixed set of categories. 'Category' now becomes the basic notion in any system of philosophy.

With Hegel the true reality of all things became their internality or mentality, for all objects were now converted into the ideal moments of the Absolute Mind. Thus Hegel turned empiricism inside out. Human mind seemed to be lost in the Absolute. As Prosch comments, "... the Absolute Mind, for Hegel, had become so absolute that it no longer was simply the instrument by which men knew what they knew ... It had instead become the total *nature* of everything."⁵

Lotze in his metaphysics argues that Hegel is not justified in regarding logical principles as objective principles of reality. The products of thought, *i.e.*, universals and their connections are artificial and subjective, and as such, they do not constitute objective facts.

Bradley expresses dissatisfaction at the dialectician's narrow world-view. He holds that human thought, as it moves in interminable relations, can never reach reality. The Real which is a coherent whole is to be grasped through sentient experience, some kind of trans-rational immediate intuition. Thought commits a 'happy suicide'

when we intuitively grasp the reality. The world, as we know it through judgments and categories, is an appearance. Bradley in his *Appearance and Reality* makes a painstaking analysis of the notions of primary and secondary qualities, space, time, change, causality, etc., and comes to the conclusion that they are all shot through and through with contradictions, and are thus mere appearances. Says Bradley in his *Principles of Logic*: "That the glory of this world in the end is appearance leaves the world more glorious, if we feel it is a show of some fuller splendour; but the sensuous curtain is a deception and a cheat, if it hides some ... unearthly ballet of bloodless categories."⁶

Charles Pierce, the father of Pragmatism, was not happy about the Kantian scheme of categories. He points out that the Kantian conception of categories is based on subject-predicate form of judgment, but as logic advances beyond this form, the inadequacy of Kant's theory becomes patent.

The pragmatists in general hold that man is basically an *active* being and they think that in the presence of problematic situations for solving the problem there are no 'categories of mind'—fixed and absolute—to fall back upon. There is nothing in our conceptual structure that is not subject to change in the face of continuing experience. Arguing this point C. I. Lewis, a modern pragmatist, says, "On the one side we have the abstract concepts themselves, with their purely logical implications...On the other side, there is the absolute brute-fact of given experience...In this middle ground of trial and error, of expanding experience and *continual shift and modification of conception*, in our effort to cope with it, the drama of human interpretation and the control of nature is for ever being played."⁷

The progressive nature of knowledge and hence of categories has also been emphasised by thinkers like Vaihinger, Poincare and others and in recent times by Karl Popper. Popper says, "We do not know where or how to start our analysis of this world. There is no wisdom to tell us. Even the scientific tradition does not tell us."⁸ So there is no infallible source of knowledge. He rejects the Cartesian doctrine of innate ideas as well as Humean empiricism. But he holds that we approach the world of experience with certain innate propensities which lead us to *expect* regularity. Here he seems to be influenced by Kant to some extent. But he goes beyond Kant when he contends that the progressive activity of mind in the acquisition and discovery of knowledge cannot be subsumed under any general law. Scientific knowledge is the product of free creation and not guided by any determination.

VIII

From the realistic standpoint Samuel Alexander seeks to establish that categories enter into every existent as its constituent factors. He holds that Space-Time (in the hyphenated form) is the matrix of the universe. He seems to follow Kant in holding that the world is apprehended first and foremost as a spatio-temporal manifold under the categories. Moreover, his list of categories has a close similarity with the Kantian list. But unlike Kant, Alexander holds that the categories are discovered within the world and they are not supplied by the mind from within. In other words, thought does not construct any conceptual scheme for understanding the world. When there is a compresence between a mind and an object, knowledge arises. Knowledge is contemplation of an object.

The chief objection against Alexander's position is why any and every mind compresent with the world would see just those all-pervasive categories which are enumerated by him. Unless Alexander can establish that the necessity of thought and objective necessity are intertwined, it is difficult to understand how, according to him, thought or mind would be able to discover the exact categories which are pervasive in nature.

IX

Edmund Husserl, the father of modern phenomenology, is greatly influenced by Kant. Like Kant, Husserl also does not question whether knowledge is possible, but he asks *how* knowledge is possible. Like Kant, he also believes that there are certain basic, fundamental, *a priori* notions which make knowledge possible. But Kant holds that the *a priori* notions are subjective, and here Husserl parts company with Kant. Husserl contends that the foundation of knowledge is constituted by certain *a priori* notions which are *objective* and he calls them 'essences' or 'phenomena'. 'Phenomena' for him are not appearances of some transcendent reality — they mean the essences which appear to consciousness when the subject is in a specially intuitive mood. Husserl's phenomenology is programmatic in character — it is more a methodology than a system. His methodology is broadly speaking a two-stage process — first, it involves suspension of judgment about reality (which he calls 'transcendental reduction' or 'epoche'), and secondly, eidetic reduction. It is in the latter the objective; universal, necessary and *a priori* essences are discovered as distinguished from the contingent, particular, accidental elements of sense-experience. But Husserl does not supply us with a list of categories after the Kantian tradition. Consciousness, he says, is always characterised by 'intentionality' (a term which Husserl borrows from Brentano) —

this means that consciousness is always directed towards objects. Husserl cannot conceive of any contentless state of consciousness. Hence we may discover the essences by looking into consciousness. Finally, Husserl also rejects the Kantian dualism between *noumena* or things-in-themselves and *phenomena* or appearances. In fact, Husserl is ontologically non-committed and he does not raise any question of knowability or unknowability of things-in-themselves or *noumena*.

But against Husserl the general complaint is that there is no guarantee that an individual will be able to develop that special type of intuition whereby the essences can be discovered. Moreover, in spite of all the ingenuity of his method the sameness and objectivity of the essences cannot be ensured.

X

From the standpoint of linguistic philosophy Gilbert Ryle takes up the problem of categories. He believes that the categories are numerous and unordered. He rejects the Aristotelian list of categories "as providing the pigeon-holes in or other of which there could and should be lodged every term used or usable in technical or untechnical discourse."⁸ He also does not lend his support to the Kantian view of categories as providing an architectonic of thought. Ryle argues that there cannot be any principle according to which categories can be ordered and arranged. There is, in other words, no theory of categories which can be justifiably developed. Strictly speaking there can be no subject-matter for a theory of categories, inasmuch as no generalization about all sentence-factors is possible. Ryle discusses sentence-factors instead of terms. A sentence-factor is "any partial expression which can enter into sentences otherwise dissimilar."¹⁰ These sentence-factors are different and their difference can be understood by trying them out in different sentences. Suppose we want to determine whether the sentence-factor 'Socrates' is on a par with factors like 'South Pole', 'Saturday' and 'Santayana'. We may start with the meaningful sentence, 'Socrates is in bed' and may then substitute the sentence-factors one after another in place of Socrates. When we say, 'Saturday is in bed' or 'South Pole is in bed', the sentence becomes meaningless; but when we say, 'Santayana is in bed', the sentence becomes meaningful once again. But how does the discussion help us in the field of philosophy? The discussion has its relevance, Ryle would say, in so far as confusion among categories or "category-mistake" is the sources of much confusion. Indeed, he devotes himself to the removal of category-mistake in his *The Concept of Mind and Dilemmas*.

In spite of the great importance of removal of confusion and the need for clarity of thought in philosophical discussion, it cannot be said these constitute the *only* task of philosophy. As Blanshard remarks : "...the discussion of words in philosophy is prefatory and preparatory only. How expressions are used is not a philosophical problem. How they ought to be used *is* a philosophical problem, but not primarily one about words at all, but about the character and relations of the objects talked about."¹¹

Among the language philosophers P. F. Strawson strikes a new note when he asserts that the meaning of a word does not consist in its uses only and, he shows that language has objective reference. In his opinion there are certain 'basic particulars' which are presupposed as logical subjects in all forms of knowledge. These are called 'basic' because they are prior to and presupposed by every other object. *Material bodies* and *persons* occupy a 'central position' among the particulars in general. Says Strawson, "...in our conceptual scheme as it is, particulars of these two categories are the basic or fundamental particulars, that the concepts of other types of particulars must be seen as secondary in relation to the concepts of these."¹² Any attempt to dislodge them will be met with utter confusion and anarchy in the domain of knowledge. His book *Individuals* where he develops the notion of basic particulars is 'an essay in descriptive metaphysics' and it seems to resurrect metaphysics as a 'respectable philosophical enterprise.' But it would not perhaps be wrong to say that it involves not simply the resurrection of metaphysics (even though descriptive), but a resurrection of categories under the camouflage of basic particulars. Such particulars are to play the logical role of the universals. We wonder if Strawson has been able to offer any satisfactory solution of the problem of relation between universals and his basic particulars.

XI

We now come to the end of our survey. It is a story of the rise and fall of categories. Categories rose to the height of glory in the systems of Aristotle and Kant ; but gradually their influence was on the wane. The categories were set apart by Aristotle from the ordinary concepts. But this very separation created a kind of barrenness which accounts for the decline of the influence of the categories. Gone are the days of dictatorship of categories ; and if they are to thrive, they must be progressive and must live in the community of concepts. As Ledger Wood says, "The true nature of the categories and their relations to one another and to other concepts are disclosed only if they are brought down from their exalted position and forced to mingle on terms of equality with the ordinary concepts. The cate-

gories, after the overthrow of the aristocracy of universals, are beginning to assume their proper places in a democracy of concepts."¹³

The most important question that arises in this connection is : "Do the categories fully reveal the reality ?" "Are the categories of reality the same as the categories of understanding ?" It is a stark fact that the mystery of the Real cannot be fully unravelled with the help of the categories. Why is it that so many theories of category—Aristotelian, Kantian, Idealistic, Realistic, Pragmatic, Phenomenological and Linguistic—ultimately fail ? The answer to this can be found if we turn to Advaita philosophy for light. The Supreme Reality is a pure unity which is devoid of every kind of difference. Hence the categories of human understanding which always presume some kind of difference can never finally reach the level of Reality. It is true that the only access to reality is through thought ; but thought as the self-positing reality posits objects as the other of itself. The so-called objective thinking is a case of self-alienation of thought—it is a case of false identification of thought with that which is other than thought. Hence objectivity, though not a mere void (*śūnya*) is indescribable in character. The objectivity which our categorised form of thought aims to explain eludes our grasp. Reality which is pure consciousness, never reveals itself completely through any empirical mode of cognition. "This explains," as Maitra says, "while objective thinking never reaches the goal of complete intelligibility, it aims at but appears as an endless progression moving from a greater to lesser unintelligibility, but never reaching the transparent unity of pure thought ... This is why no judgment is self-sufficient or self-justifying..."¹⁴

We have therefore to admit a dualism — it is the dualism of standpoint, of levels of existence, and hence of cognition. So far as the Absolute Reality is concerned, it is beyond the grasp of categories. For grasping the Absolute we must transcend the level of categories, the level of the subject-object relation. The categorised mode of cognition operates on what is called empirical (*vyāvahārika*) level. What should be our attitude to categories from the empirical standpoint ? The categories should not be regarded as self-existent reals dwelling in a world of their own, so to speak, after the manner of Plato's Ideas. The categories are convenient tools of understanding. We should not look upon the categories as foreclosing the results of knowledge. With the help of categories we interrogate the world of experience ; but this does not mean that we must not interrogate the categories themselves inasmuch as they are the conditions of interrogation. As we move from level to level of experience it may be that some categories prove themselves inadequate and so there may be need for modifying or enlarging the old concepts. We should not

therefore insist upon a fixed list of categories. We should develop a critical (or rather self-critical) attitude and should not cling to the empirical level and any set of categories of understanding as ultimate. We should also remember that much of our ignorance of reality is due to our confusion of thought, and we should therefore try to know the exact significance and limitation of every category that we may employ. We must not rest content with the correct use of language, but we should see how much correct insight into reality we gain when the limited character of our categories is revealed to us.

NOTES

1. H. W. B. Joseph, *An Introduction to Logic*, p. 48.
2. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B 128.
3. Friedrich Paulsen, *Introduction to Philosophy* (Eng. Tr. by Thilly)
4. W. V. O. Quine, *From a Logical Point of View*, p. 79.
5. Harry Prosch, *The Genesis of Twentieth Century Philosophy*, p. 313.
6. F. H. Bradley, *The Principles of Logic*, Vol. II, p. 591.
7. C. I. Lewis, *Mind and the World Order*, p. 272.
8. Karl Popper, *Conjectures and Refutations*, p. 129.
9. Gilbert Ryle, *Dilemmas*, p. 10.
10. G. Ryle, 'Categories' in A. Flew (Ed.), *Logic and Language*, Series II.
11. B. Blanshard, *Reason and Analysis*, p. 364.
12. P. F. Strawson, *Individuals*, p. 11.
13. Ledger Wood, *The Analysis of Knowledge*, p. 144
14. S. K. Maitra, *The Main Problems of Philosophy*, Part II, p. 107.

N. S. Dravid

REALITY AND
THE CATEGORIES OF
THOUGHT

The title proposed for the subject of the seminar is rather vague. It is general enough to cover almost all problems that are discussed in metaphysics or epistemology. In the space of a small paper it is not possible even to mention all these problems, let alone tackle a few of them. However, we propose, in the spirit of the conveners of this seminar to undertake the rather ambitious task of discussing the most important of all the problems concerning the relation of reality and the categories of thought, reviewing the different solutions proposed for it by eminent philosophers, pointing out their inadequacies and concluding with a simple solution, which appears to be suggested by the great Śaṅkara's polemics against the Vaiśeṣikas.

In passing, attention may be drawn here to a general and curious feature of almost all attempts of great thinkers to tackle this problem. Philosophy is usually professed by them as a rational endeavour aimed at understanding reality but what their arguments and conclusions seem to bring out is the thesis that thought, owing to its inherent categorising character cannot apprehend reality as such. As if this inconsistency in their profession and practice is not enough these thinkers start their philosophical inquiry by assuming some kind of non-rational awareness of reality to give sense even to their negative conclusion that reality cannot be given to thought. If reality is given only to some non-rational mode of knowing what would be gained by subjecting this givenness or objectivity, to rational analysis? Is reason competent enough to give an account of non-rational objectivity?

Another paradox engendered by philosophers' queer way of dealing with this problem is that while professing to explain the nature of reality it concerns itself mainly with the nature and function of thought. This is evident even from the titles of important works on philosophy like 'Critique of Pure Reason', 'Phenomenology of Reason', etc. If a psychologically-oriented critic were to object that this kind of philosophising is no other than some sort of functional analysis of cognitive mental states, the philosophical analyst of thought would be hard put to it to give a satisfactory answer. Perhaps this vagary of critical philosophers would have been condoned if they had shown equal concern for giving a positive account of reality and of the non-rational mode of apprehension—whatever it may be—to which alone it is supposed to be accessible. But it is quite proper that a majority of critical philosophers stop short of saying anything on this matter except to maintain that the real can only be realised in the medium of experiential immediacy. Bradley, the great idealist critic has no doubt devoted more than two thirds of his famous treatise to some kind of discussion of this subject but he has not realised that in so doing he has unwillingly made his position rather vulnerable. For, if his earlier criticism of thought is meant to be taken seriously the later exposition of reality and experiential immediacy propounded by him in his characteristically rational (or polemical) manner has to be ruled out as self-stultifying, unless we understand Bradley as expecting his rational account of experience to be itself enjoyed by his readers in their experiential immediacy. It is a standing joke of philosophising in all ages and climes that vigorous condemnation of reason and staunch advocacy of some kind of non-rational mode of apprehension are both carried on in it with the help of reason itself. Even a great modern thinker Wittgenstein who is keenly aware of this chronic vice of traditional philosophy has not been able to immunise his own thinking to it. The most proper way to uphold the claim of experience against reason to know reality is just to stop with the experience of it and not to philosophise about it or its experience.

The general pattern of all criticism of thought as an important means of cognising reality may be formulated in terms of the following two contentions: 1) Thought apprehends the real only by categorising it. The categories are however quite distinct in thought. For example quantity and quality are two distinctly conceivable and therefore distinct categories. But in the real these are found co-existing or even as identical. A piece of red cloth, for example, is

simultaneously the quality of redness inhering in (or even identical with) the quantity of cloth material. This experiential fact is inexplicable to thought for which it seems to be a basic principle that what is distinctly conceived must have a distinct occurrence in reality. 2) Some of the categories are regarded by thought as more basic than others or as the absolutely basic ones, to which the derivative categories are sought to be reduced. For example, Zeno's paradoxes of motion are consequences of seeking to construct motion out of an infinite sequence of static spatial points. Similarly the difficulties of the concept of relation pointed out by Bradley may be said to be the result of constructing the notion of relations on the analogy of the notion of terms.

One more source of philosophical puzzlement which has been fully exploited by critics of thought is the misapplication of categories which has been termed by Ryle as category-mistakes. Ryle's illustrations of these mistakes concern rather misuses of language which are easily set right. But the examples which philosophers like Kant have considered and which find expression in such questions as 'Does the world have a beginning in time?' are genuine sources of philosophical puzzles as they cannot be answered satisfactorily either affirmatively or negatively. The category of causality has relevance only to the characterisation of specific events or things in the world. It is not proper to apply it to the totality of all events and things which is the world.

We may now review the various solutions proposed to the main problem of this paper by eminent thinkers. Reference has already been made to the Kantian solution, that pure reality is only categorised by thought and as it is in itself it is transcendent to thought. Apart from the difficulty pointed out by post-Kantian philosophers in this solution there are two things to be said about it. First, what Kant has given us in his *Critique of Pure Reason* is only a functional analysis of the structure of thought. It cannot be taken as an account even of phenomenal reality when it is not known whether reality can be phenomenized or not. Second, Kant's criticism of thought as phenomenal gains significance only in the background of the assumed knowledge of reality obtained through what he terms as 'practical reason.' But what is the reality which practical reason may be supposed to apprehend? It is nothing but a formal principle of action in which pure reason is as much involved as practical reason.

As a matter of fact it is pure reason itself which finds expression in our practical moral behaviour. Ideas of the immortality of soul, God and rebirth are only presuppositions of morality. Even practical reason cannot be regarded as capable of intuiting these realities.

Hegelianism may seem to be free of these drawbacks of the Kantian doctrine inasmuch as the real is equated by it with the rational. A closer look into this philosophy would however reveal that in reality it is not the real that is equated with the rational but the rational itself is identified with the real by it. The logical relations of thought, which constitute it into an absolutistic system are not found to hold in the realm of the real nor is the incompatibility arising out of the fact of consciousness being self-conscious importable into the sphere of thought. So Hegelianism adopts the device of treating the categorical relations themselves as the relations of the real and getting over the above incompatibility by introducing somehow the element of hierarchy into them. Obviously the real is sought to be fitted into the straight jacket of the ideal in this school, which fact is responsible for the appellation, 'Objective Idealism, by which this school is usually known. But if our contention is correct, this school should rather be described as 'the objectisation of idealism.'

The main purpose of this criticism of Hegelianism is just to correct the general impression that the relation of thought and reality which was not clearly defined by Kant was made perfectly clear in this school. 'If the real does not conform to the categories of thought we need not bother about it. The categories themselves with their own relationships may replace the system of reals.' So seems to be the reaction of Hegelianism to the problem of the relation of reality to thought.

Advaita may perhaps be regarded as the only school which has firmly oriented itself to metaphysics and thus been able to view the relation of thought and reality in correct perspective. The real is for it the self-revealed. Thought with its categories has not only no means knowing reality but it is rather a cause of distorting it. This truth of the absolutely self-contained nature of the real is a primary intuition which is involved in all our experiences. Reflective analysis of thought leading to the realisation of its inherently conflicting character is prompted by this very intuition which however is not self-con-

scious. Advaitism thus reverses the Kantian trend of arriving at reality as the other and unattainable end of the categorising or schematising function of thought. Psychological analysis of the structure and function of thought is subsequent to the basic intuition of reality which in an unselfconscious form is the inspirer of all philosophical reflection according to Advaita. Further, the real as the self-luminous unity of Existence Consciousness and Beatitude is *ipso facto* not a mere empty form or principle of reason as Kant takes it to be, or just a system of logical implications of ideas as Hegel supports it. It is, as Kant hesitates to admit, a realisable, or more precisely an ever-realised content though not of thought but of a spiritual process that emerges subsequently to the dissolution of all thought.

Thus Advaitism has very appropriately emphasised the primacy of metaphysics in its consideration of the problem of the relation of reality to thought. What however appears puzzling in this philosophy is its utter rejection of thought with all its categories even to the point of maintaining them as absolutely non-existent (in the ultimate analysis.) Repudiation of thought as inadequate to, or as a distorter of reality is understandable but its total rejection as nullity is rather a bitter pill to swallow.

The wellknown Buddhist school of Śūnyavāda presents yet another approach to the problem of reality and thought. It maintains the peculiar view that the categories of thought appear to be not only distinct, but also incompatible, yet in the so-called real they seem to co-exist. For example an illusory datum like silver is identified with nacre, the so-called real locus of it — in the illusion of nacre as silver. This gives rise to one unitary epistemic content, nacre, 'nacre as silver.' Now, on the emergence of the so-called right cognition, if anything is supposed to be sublated it must be the whole content and not just a part of it. Even the sublating cognition cannot survive this wholesale elimination of contents as it is also indirectly implicated in the cognitive situation. Thus thought and reality both disappear after the empty phantasy of a thing (dissimulating another) gets cancelled.

Such a view cannot be taken seriously. It banks upon the mutual implication of the epistemic and ontic contents which means that it is not either metaphysically or epistemologically oriented. But

since the fact of the involvement of the epistemic content in the real is an epistemological fact, it cannot be taken as a proof against the independent metaphysical reality of the real.

Russell's attempt to uphold the independence of the real against its subversion by the categories of thought with the help of the postulation of the doctrine of types is perhaps the only serious and metaphysically-oriented way of tackling our problem. Russell has shown us how relations and other categories of the real can be saved by treating them as things of different types, against the idealist attack on them. However, all that the sophisticated versions of the doctrine of types given in his *Principles of Mathematics* amount to is the simple view that relations are relations and terms are terms and so the terms in which we talk about terms cannot be employed to talk about relations. This is alright. We may grant Russell the right to prohibit such a talk. But what are we to make of the coexistence of all these, in indivisible unity, in the real? A piece of red cloth is for example, a metaphysical unity of terms and their relations which cannot be got rid of merely by the arbitrary importation of the distinction of types among them.

Since the problem of the relation of reality to thought seems to baffle all attempts at a straightforward solution of it, it may be said that the modern formal logician seeks to construct a purely formal axiomatic system of uninterpreted symbols ignoring the realm of reality altogether. Of course there are also other purely logical motivations for such an attempt. But unless the faith that the world, with all its apparent bizarreness, has a neat logical or purely formal structure, is sustained, the formal logician would not have launched upon the impossible task of doing away with the real altogether in order to build a world of pure forms. On the main drawback of such logical innovations Prof. Quine has laid his unerring finger in a series of papers devoted to this subject written by him over the last twenty-five years. Quine seems to be of the view that the reals excluded from the formal system enter into it through the backdoor as the values of the variables without which the system cannot operate at all.

This rapid survey of the different solutions of our problem is not intended so much to give a historical account of them as to highlight the different types of approaches that are available for tackling the problem.

We may add our own approach to this list and wind up this rapid survey. We have taken the cue for this approach from a point made by Śaṅkara in his polemics against the Vaiśeṣika's doctrine of *Samavāya*. Śaṅkara says there that *samavāya* or the relation of inherence need not be regarded as different from its terms. Slightly modifying this suggestion we may say that relations and their terms need not be treated as incompatible at all. Whether each of them exists on its own and if so in what mutual relation to others are questions of fact which are to be answered only on a careful inspection of fact. The same must be said of the other categories also. To put this in other words, all categories must be regarded as those of the real. Thought should not be supposed to be constituted of certain categories of its own which it imposes on the real in the course of apprehending it. Even identity and otherness need not, on this view, be taken as thought-categories or as the most basic categories. If in the real we find identity and otherness somehow coexisting we must be ready to ignore their opposition as determined by thought. It is not thought that determines reality or is even essential to its being what it is. As Śaṅkara maintains in a different context it is the real in its variegated character which determines the thought that seeks to apprehend its complexity. (*jñānaṁ vastutantram*). It is likely that thought may get baffled in sorting out and then synthesising the different ingredients constituting the real. But this predicament of thought need not make us condemn the real as mere appearance although it is inexplicable to thought. If the real were inherently inexplicable, it would be a mystery which even non-intellectual cognition would be incapable of grasping. Such a view, even the staunchest critics of intellect, are not prepared to admit. In fact, thought is criticised by these thinkers only to highlight the competence of intuition to apprehend the real. Of course, intuition cannot yield a discursive knowledge of the real but on that account the real need not be regarded as ineffable. Even commonsense not subjected to reflective criticism may be supposed to be a faithful portrayal of the real in its internally synthesised diversity. Thought fails to picture such a real only because it seeks to impose its own artificial determinations on the former. This position

is quite different from that of naive realism which impoverishes both thought and reality in order to make the former a true representative of the latter. This is not the case with the view being maintained here, for, according to it, the real in its rich complexity transcends thought.

K. B. Ramakrishna Rao

REALITY AND THE
CATEGORIES OF THOUGHT

INTRODUCTION

Kant's Analysis of 'discursive understanding'

Any reasonable account of 'understanding Reality', should first concentrate on the meaning of the faculty of 'understanding'. It is this which made Immanuel Kant enter into a 'critique' of 'reason' or 'understanding', and arrive at a conclusion that *all understanding is limited to sensibility*. The analysis of Kant regarding the problem of understanding forms a welcome introduction to the topic on hand.

What does he mean by such a conclusion? He means by it that 'understanding', though a 'non-sensuous' faculty, and only 'indirectly' related to perceptual objects through the a priori conceptions or forms of space and time, is not far removed from sensibility. For, as he pointed out, unrelated to perceptions, conceptions become empty and lose all their objective value. The faculty of 'understanding', according to him, is the unitary or synthetic apperception of the varied perceptual objects rendered into a harmony of what otherwise would be a disarray medley of sensations. Because of synthetic apperception, we get the ideas of 'quantity' (unity, plurality, totality), 'quality' (reality, negation, limitation), 'relation' (inherence and subsistence, causality and dependence, community) and 'modality' (possibility and impossibility, existence and non-existence, necessity, and contingency.) These are the 'categories' of thought (and being), which bring order to things 'through knowledge', and therefore, form the very structure of what is called 'discursive understanding.'

Now, the problem is, does this mode of 'discursive understanding through the categories' directly take us to the 'Reality'? In answering this, we will have to distinguish between two things. To say that what is available to 'understanding' (as defined above) is 'Reality,' is one thing, and to ask if that is itself 'Reality,' is another.

Extending the enquiry into 'Reality,' Kant himself raises this question, and shows that 'Reality' is something, which he calls the 'thing-in-itself,' that passes beyond the grasp of the faculty of 'understanding,' with which human knowledge is necessarily bound, and so limited to the 'categories'. He is emphatic when he declares about them thus: 'they can never be employed transcendently, but only empirically.' He writes: 'The Transcendental Analytic has brought us to this important conclusion...that understanding cannot possibly transcend the limits of sensibility, beyond which no objects are presented to us. The principles of pure understanding are merely exponents of phenomena...' and 'categories are necessarily limited to phenomena'. If pressed to go beyonds ensibility, he says, they lead us to 'antinomies' and 'paralogisms'. What is not available to understanding or the categories he calls the 'noumenon'. And what is this? '...noumenon is not a special kind of object for our understanding, namely, an *intelligible object*; on the contrary it is problematic whether there is any understanding that could have such an object actually before it. Such an understanding would not know its object discursively by means of categories, but intuitively in a non-sensuous perception; and how this is possible we cannot have the faintest conception."

Does this smack of 'agnosticism'? Kant himself did not doubt the existence of the 'noumenon', but only said that it is unknowable through the 'forms of understanding' which are made use of for building up our knowledge.

It is evident that Kant has rendered great service by pointing to the limits of understanding and of rational methods of knowing Reality. It is a pointer to the truth, which can be expressed thus: 'the limits of reason or understanding are not 'the limits of *Being*.' The problem now is, how is that 'Being' (which is beyond the phenomena) 'known' or 'understood', if not by 'knowledge through understanding'?

The Indian answer to this is: It is '*pratibodhaviditam*'. That is, it is known by its own revelation to us as *our being as Consciousness*. (*Kena Upaniṣad* 4). As the Upaniṣad says: '... not that I do not know—I know and I do not know as well' (*Kena*. 2.2.) One knows it not through the mind, but as the principle which makes the mind know (*Kena*. 1.6).

One who does not know it (through mind) knows it; and one who says he knows (through thought) does not know! (*Kena*, 2.3). This is not playing with language, as it is an expression of utter helplessness to communicate the incommunicable. But that which is beyond and above the means of knowledge and understanding can only be 'experienced' by *other means than understanding through knowledge*. The Upaniṣadic seers are never tired of making such statements about this 'Reality, which one is: *'āyam ātmā brahma'*, *'tattvamasi'*. This one cannot understand through reasoning (*Kaṭhōpaniṣad*, 1.2.9), even as it is ungraspable by mind, and incommunicable by word (*Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, 2.4.1.)

'Via-negativa' or the 'Acosmic' method to intuit the Real:

The Indian seers knew quite well that discursive knowledge, wherein categories of thought operate, belongs to a realm of pure practicality ruled by a myopic and piecemeal view of reality' which otherwise is infinite and indivisible. By bringing in the analytical notion of the knower and the known, or subject, they introduce the idea of a dualism in the realm of being, which is in itself beyond dualism. All systems of philosophy and theology which speak in these terms serve only a limited purpose, as they are confined to the limits of rational understanding and sensibilities beyond which to imagine the shape of Reality would be wrong. This is 'cosmism' which grasps only the glimmer of the Infinite, which is the real, but not the whole of it. A rational system of Reality is of a limited kind either always trying to be 'reasonable' to man, or 'reasoned out' by man. However, following the vision of the Upaniṣads, Advaita stresses the importance of the 'acosmic' perspective, and with a humility directly proportional to the Infinity, which is Reality, takes it to be extra-ordinary, or as being an entity transcending all knowable possibilities of it. And so it indicates the knowability of Reality *via negativa*: *'neti neti.'* Is it positive? No. Is it negative? No. Is it positive-negative? No. Is it neither positive-negative? No. None of these is true in itself, none of these is false in itself. This is the meaning of the Upaniṣadic vision of Reality, which, it says, is 'beyond the known and the unknown'. One of the earliest systematisers of the Advaitic—acosmic vision of Reality, Gauḍapāda, said, it is beyond the *'catuṣkoṭi'* (the four modes of assertion) of the sort mentioned above (*Māṇḍūkya Kārikā*, 4—83—84). What can be said of it? Nothing positive, nothing negative, both being relative to our limited understanding. Expressing it through any formal proposition commits one to a discursive position, which is untrue of Reality. The Real is not a 'category' of our currency! And so, when Bādhva wanted to discuss and know

Brahman, Bashkali kept silent. (cf. Śaṅkara's *Brahma-Sūtra Bhāṣya* 3—2—17). The dialectics of 'acosmism' is fully vindicated by Śaṅkara when he said: 'a thing which is perceived by the senses can be taught to another through categories denoting class, quality and action. But Brahman is not possessed of these categories, viz., class etc. Hence, it is very difficult to convince the disciples about it through instruction'—*Kena Upaniṣad Bhāṣya* 1.3). It is with profound significance that the modern thinker, Wittgenstein (whose philosophic insight is yet to be understood) remarked: 'whereof one cannot speak, hereof one must be silent' (*Tractatus* 7). As per him the realm of 'what cannot be said', forces the language of silence on us. Sri Ramaṇa said, this 'silence' is indicative of the force with which Truth speaks to us with such immensity and intimacy that words lose their bearing and significance. And Gauḍapāda said: "yatra varṇā nā vartante, vivekastatra no'cyate" (where words do not function, wisdom does not speak, *Māṇḍūkya Kārikā*, 4.60).

The 'Self' as the foundational principle

Does this mean, then, that Reality is 'understood' by a 'mystic' or 'intuitive' or 'direct' apprehension, i.e., by a means other than thought and its categories? The perspective of the Upaniṣadic Vedānta seems to be that it is so. However, there is a difference which we perceive in their attitude: If the faculty of understanding through categories of thought cannot be employed transcendently to know or express the Reality, they point out, the reason is that we have put the cart before the horse. What makes understanding understood is the Reality, and so 'the knower cannot be known'. *How can the knower be known?* asks Yājñavalkya (*Brahadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, 4.5.15).

With such a formidable question, we are in the ontological field, leaving the epistemological far behind, with which Kant was primarily interested in his *Critique of Pure Reason*. Following Yājñavalkya, Śaṅkara declares: "The knower is presupposed even before the idea of the means of knowledge" (*Brahadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad Bhāṣya* 2.3.7), and points out that all philosophical attempts at knowing Reality are 'self-deceptions' (*avidyā* or *ajñāna*). They arise out of a 'false notion of Reality, by superimposition of the unreal on the Real, and vice versa' (*adhyāsa*) i.e., as something that we empirically see and know, like the body, mind, world etc., all of which require to be 'illuminated', whereas Reality is 'self-revealing' (*svaprakāśa*) on each occasion of awareness. Why? Reality is Awareness, which is eternally awake.

3. ADVAITIC MODE

Of Inquiry into the Real:

For the Upaniṣadic tradition—which Advaita assimilates and follows—philosophy should be distinguished from *anubhava*, or properly *aparokṣānubhava* i.e., ‘being the Truth directly’. If philosophy is ‘inquiry’, *anubhava* is ‘being’. Being what? Being one’s own true Self, which the Upaniṣads and Vedānta call ‘Ātman’ or ‘Brahman’, and mean to point out: philosophies about Ātman or Brahman may change depending on their reasoning about the ‘real’ nature of Ātman or Brahman, but Ātman or Brahman does not change depending on one’s reasoning, reasoning mistaken for ‘intuition’, and intuition for the result of ‘self-enquiry’, thus rendering the ‘subject’ to be the ‘object’ of enquiry. True to the vision of its tradition, Advaita does not ‘enquire’ about Brahman or Ātman, for none of these is accessible to inquiry, and shows that what is inquired into is a ‘lesser Reality’ or ‘no reality’. It marks a distinction between the ‘Transcendental, beyond the discursive reasoning’ and ‘what can be inquired into’, and with an avowed practical motive only entertains inquiry (*‘upadeśādayaṁ vādaḥ’*, as Gauḍapāda says. *Māṇḍūkya Kārikā*, 1.18), but orients its inquiry only to sift the material as ‘eternal and non-eternal’, ‘changing and unchanging’, ‘finite and infinite’ (*nityānitya vastu viveka*) as Śaṅkara calls it. *Brahma-Sūtra Bhāṣya*, 1.1.1), and presents to understanding—even as understanding may understand—that the Real is eternal, unchanging, infinite, principle of Being (*satyam*), Consciousness (*jñānam*) and Bliss (*ānandam*). While it does so, keeping in view the limitations of understanding and sensibilities, it distinguishes between ‘defining the Real’ and ‘indicating the Real’. Defining Reality, one cannot do, for it is *sui generis* and *summum genus*, but indicate one can.

Keeping the distinction of the two realms clear from each other, the Advaitic tradition identifies thus: the ‘Real’ is *satyam*, *jñānam* and *anantam*, ‘*satyam*, *jñānam ānandam*’. Śaṅkara’s commentary on the *Taittiriya Upaniṣad* (2.1) makes a remarkably significant exposition of these ‘*svarūpa-lakṣaṇas*’ (indicatory marks), and shows how they point to the non-dual, indivisible, infinite Real. Writing on *Māṇḍūkya Kārikā* (4.1) he says that the splitting of the Transcendental Reality into the knower, known and knowledge is not to see the transcendental truth. It is ‘*jñāna-iñeya-jñātr rahitam, paramārtha tattvaṁ*’, as he calls it. To experience the ‘infinity’ (*‘bhūmā’*) where the ‘division is not’ is to attain bliss and immortality, as Sanatkumāra propounds, and Nārada aspired to be an ‘*ātmavit*’ (knower of the Self) by experiencing the ‘Infinite’ (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad*) 7. Yājñavalkya draws our

attention repeatedly to a state, when everything has become one's own Self, and asks us to find out if duality i.e., 'the split' could be in the realm of the Ātman. With a conclusion, which is a climax, he asks: "Him, with whose consciousness one understands all this, with what can one understand?" (*Brahadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 4.5.15). No wonder, here the discursive operations of understanding are frozen.

4. ADVAITIC CONCEPT

Of discursive thought:

On the foundations of the Upaniṣads, Advaita Vedānta recognises, no doubt, categories of understanding, but limits their use to the practical or empirical field. Śaṅkara calls discursive thought *buddhi*, and defines it as 'hiding within its bosom the categories of knowledge, knowable and the known' (*Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, 2.1), and says, whatever is known in this field, is done through the intellect by applying the forms of understanding such as space, time, cause, non-contradiction (*Brahma-Sūtra Bhāṣya* 3.2.3), class (i.e., the generic quality), specific quality and action (*Kena Upaniṣad Bhāṣya* 1.3; *Bhagavad Gītā Bhāṣya* 13.12). However, he points out, that to know the Real (i.e., the Self) as involved in this realm, is to know it in so far as it is represented in conformity with the forms of intellect, and so we find the distinction of the knower, known and the knowledge. Though the Real in itself is beyond these categories, and is the foundation of all knowing as its pre-supposition, being the principle of Consciousness and bereft of the distinctions of the knower and the known etc., yet it is described as the 'subject' with reference to things it knows, which are called 'objects', relatively (*Brahadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad Bhāṣya*, 2.1.16).

To give relevance to practical life and considerations, Advaita allows the distinctions of the '*tripuṭi*', but warns: to mistake what the empirical or rational inquiry reveals to be [the transcendental Self, is to reduce it to 'objectivity' and ultimate 'materiality.' The "Self-illuminating can never be illumined by others" is a maxim, which, according to Advaita, should shut away the possibilities of 'Self-knowing' or 'Self-awareness' through psychological introspection, which philosophies may put forth as theories of understanding the Self.

From all this, we may draw the position of Advaita regarding the Real, which is beyond the categories of understanding and thought. But the Self is not to be doubted, for the fact is that it forms the very

foundation of all our thinking — asserting and doubting as well. This Reality, which is the Ātman or Brahman is Existence, Consciousness and Bliss. It is Infinite. In its transcendental condition, it is not 'experienced' as we experience an object. And so, to call *anubhava* as 'experience' in the ordinary sense may not be proper. To be more proximate, we may say, that it is a 'state of no-experience', a 'state of not-thinking'. Empirically what we know is not the Real, and therefore the categories of knowledge can at best present an 'appearance' of Reality, as limited by the conditions of thinking. Even here, the *a priori* truth of self-existence is undeniable. Its indivisibility and infinity are to be grasped by 'wisdom' which unifies what the dichotomising intellect may sunder into different things.

Epistemological orientation to grasp the Real:

Thus the epistemological analysis of Advaita, which recognises the distinction of *pramāṭṛ*, *prameya* and *pramāṇa* for practical purposes has an orientation at the background, which should not be missed. The development of post - Śaṅkara dialectics loses much of its inner significance, if we do so. The recognition of the above three as forms of *Caitanya* (or 'Consciousness') as *pramāṭṛ-caitanya*, *prameya-caitanya* and *pramāṇa-caitanya* (cf. *Vedānta Paribhāṣā* Ch. 1) is a pointer to this. Advaita epistemology explains *jñāna* or 'knowledge' as overcoming the 'ontological split' between the subject and the object by the 'epistemological knowing'. Knowledge is a case of *abhedābhivyakti* or *āvaraṇābhībhava* (i.e., expression of the non-difference or cutting the veil of separation) between the knower and the known, as Madhu-sūdana Sarasvatī explains (*Siddhānta Bindu*, ch. 1; *Advaita Siddhi*). Even as per Śaṅkara 'true knowledge' i.e., *vidyā* is 'knowing a thing as it is' ('*tadvivekena vastusvarūpāvadhāraṇaṁ vidyām āhuḥ*'- *Adhyāsa Bhāṣya*). As Madhusūdana says, 'knowing a thing as it is, is to know the Brahman behind the object', or re-discovering one's identity or unity with Reality. It is a truism to say that no 'true' knowledge is possible if the subject and object are basically or ontologically distinct and different. The epistemological process of knowing has an ontological overtone of discovering the unity of being or non-duality of the real beyond the changing phases of the unreal. No doubt one who has this '*bodha*' or revelation exclaims '*tattvamasi*' or '*sarvaṁ khalvidaṁ brahma*'.

5. CONCLUSION

And a note of Comparison:

We may conclude with a note of comparison. Though Advaita, like Kant, speaks of the realms of the 'noumenon' and the 'pheno-

menon', unlike Kant—who does not comment on or stress about the unreality of the 'phenomenon', and does not enlighten us further on the nature of the 'noumenon' except that it is a 'check to the presumption of sensibility'—points out that all 'phenomena' is *false* but fakes itself *to be real* ('*bhāvarūpa mithyā*') till its falsity is sublated by the light of the 'noumenon', which is the undeniable ground of all experiences including the false appearance, a ground which is Existence, Consciousness and Bliss in one. In European philosophy, following Kant, Hegel took the 'phenomena' as *integral* to Reality, and built up his system of the Phenomenology of the Spirit, and F. H. Bradley accommodated the 'appearance' in the Real, without minimising the importance of the former. We have Indian parallels too to these phases in the theistic and realistic systems of Viśiṣṭādvaita and Dvaita, and of late in the system of Sri Aurobindo, which is called 'Integral Advaita'.

R. K. Tripathi

CATEGORIES IN NYAYA AND KANT

By taking up the question of categories in Nyāya and Kant our main object is to raise albeit in an oblique way, the issue between realism and idealism. Usually the main issue is taken to be the question whether or not objects are independent of knowledge. While the idealists hold that objects are wholly dependent on knowledge (as it is self-contradictory to point out anything outside knowledge), the realists insist that if objects are not independent, knowledge ceases to be knowledge and becomes one with imagination. It seems to us that if we put the problem differently, it may be easier to solve it. The problem may be advantageously formulated like this : "Is there or is there not any subjective element in knowledge ?" Kant addressed himself to this question and took the position that if the realist is wrong in taking the objects to be wholly independent i.e., in completely denying the role of the subject, the idealist is wrong in attributing everything to the subject and in not appreciating the role of the given or the qualitative difference between perception and thought.

Apparently Nyāya and Kant both seem to be talking about categories but their approach is fundamentally different. Like all realists, the Nyāya seems to be interested primarily in classifying things or objects without at first raising any question regarding the constitution of knowledge. This seems to be a dogmatic procedure, because before using our tools, i.e., the *pramāṇas*, it is necessary to examine them and find out what precisely they give us. Epistemology as examining the nature of knowledge, its validity, invalidity and its limits must precede metaphysics. But the Nyāya does not do so. The Nyāya not only fails to take epistemological questions

first but also commits another mistake, viz., depending too much on language. The term *pada* in *padārtha* though taken to mean 'object' literally means the meaning of a term. Kant on the other hand examines first the nature of perception and thought and is not misled by language.

The belief that language reflects the nature and structure of reality is very old. The Nyāya holds two doctrines which show its dependence on language. They are (1) everything is knowable. (2) whatever is knowable is nameable. (*Tad jñeyam tad abhidheyam*). In addition to these doctrines the Nyāya seems to take into consideration only the subject-predicate type categorical propositions and not relational and other propositions. The analysis of this type of proposition yields: (1) the subject as substance (*dravya*) (2) the predicate as quality (*guṇa*) (3) the relation (*sambandha*) between the two, (4) action (*karma*) when the verb is some kind of gerundial infinitive having *ing*. The category of universal (*sāmānya*) is based on the usage of abstract nouns while *abhāva* (absence) is the negation of these. These six categories therefore seem to be based on some analysis of language or usage but the category of *viśeṣa* has nothing to do with language or even experience and is a wholly speculative or dogmatic device. The Nyāya has no *a priori* way of showing that the list of categories is exhaustive. All that is said is that nothing can be pointed out which does not fall under one of the categories. In fact it has nowhere been shown as to how these categories are arrived at or which of the *pramāṇas* gives us this list though it is held that the knowledge of the knowable depends on a *pramāṇa mānādhi-
naṁ meyaṁ*). Some other systems of Indian philosophy give a different list of categories but they too fail like the Nyāya to tell us how they are known.

The Kantian approach is wholly different. For one thing, Kant does not just enumerate the categories as the Nyāya does; he tries to derive them by analysing the different kinds of judgments that embody our knowledge. His acceptance of Aristotelian scheme of judgments may be questioned but his method of deriving categories from the different types of judgments seems to be sound. For another, Kantian categories seem to be all of one uniform type and seem to be exhaustive as the division is based on some principle. This is not so in the Nyāya; the division is not on any principle. Thirdly for Nyāya, nothing is *a priori* while for Kant the categories are *a priori* though empirically they are as good as real. In other words, substance, relation etc., are not empirically known. Particular substances like clay and gold are known empirically but the idea

of substance as such is *a priori*. Fourthly, time and space for Kant do not come under any category; like categories they are also forms but they are forms of perception and not of thought. Finally, the categories of Kant are categories of thought and not of things: they are *a priori* presuppositions of thought as space and time are *a priori* presuppositions of perception. For the Nyāya the categories are categories of things. There is no attempt in the Nyāya to classify thought or to distinguish its different types.

It is thus obvious that Nyāya and Kant represent two extreme views. The former is not only a direct realist accepting no mediation between knowledge and reality, but also holds that not only substance but even relations are perceived. The latter holds not only that relations are incapable of being perceived but that even substance is not perceived; also that reality is not directly known but through the mediation of *a priori* categories. The categories of Nyāya are wholly objective; even knowledge is perceived by another knowledge like an object. The categories of Kant are universal but subjective, being *a priori*. Their being universal does not make them objective, because subjectivity can be individual as well as universal. The Nyāya would accept individual subjectivity but would not regard any perception as subjective and certainly would not accept universal subjectivity.

It seems to us that the Nyāya view that perceptions are never subjective and that there is no universal subjectivity is wrong. Without accepting the possibility of subjectively conditioned perceptions, cases of illusion cannot be explained. But leaving that aside, the Nyāya has to accept universal subjectivity also. The size of the moon and stars is never what it appears and it is a universal phenomenon. Even in the case of substance, the Nyāya tries to define substance in terms of qualities but is never able to tell us what the substance is in itself independently of qualities; nor does the Nyāya make a distinction between primary and secondary qualities. When the Buddhists point out that we do not see any such thing as wholes or substances or universals, the Nyāya answer is nothing but a dogmatic assertion that we do see them. Not that the Buddhist view that only the *svalakṣaṇa* is perceived is more satisfactory. The wholes and the universals also have a role to play in perception. But the question is whether the perception of the wholes and parts is of the same level. It is obvious what perceptions are of spatially and temporally localised objects and therefore it is not proper to hold that universals also can be perceived in the same manner as particulars. They must be taken to be from some other source and that

source must be universal. This is what argues for the acceptance of universal subjectivity. Specially in the case of relations and universals if they are said to be perceived, they should come under either substance or qualities but the Nyāya takes care to put them separately as neither. This shows that the Nyāya is aware of the peculiar nature of relations and universals but dogmatically asserts that they also are perceived and more dogmatically stipulates various kinds of *sannikarṣas* to explain their perception. One wonders how the *sannikarṣas* are known at all.

Apart from getting over the above difficulties the Kantian position has other advantages too. Of course, it explains the universality and the necessity of the categories. The categories forming the very constitution of the human mind, one cannot but see things in terms of them. If the categories were objective, it would not be possible to extend their use beyond the realm of perception or phenomenon. But the fact is that we do extend such use. What is more, this extended use involves us in all kinds of antinomies. In other words Nyāya is not able to explain the dialectical nature of *a priori* speculation. This is possible only if a deeper subjectivity or universal subjectivity is admitted. The natural disposition of the mind to try to go beyond phenomena coupled with its habit of using categories alone can explain the antinomial nature of *a priori* speculation.

But while the Kantian acceptance of universal subjectivity in the form of categories and forms of perception solves the above problems, it also gives rise to the problem concerning the knowledge of the unconditioned. The Vedānta also admits a deeper subjectivity called *avidyā* giving rise to all kinds of *nāma* and *rūpa*, i.e., appearance. It is called *avidyā* because it causes the ignorance of the thing-in-itself. But the peculiarity of Vedānta is that it admits not only the possibility of knowing the unconditioned but also shows a way of knowing it. Once the deeper subjectivity is taken to be *avidyā*, it is necessary to show how this *avidyā* is removed. Even as empirical ignorance is removed by knowledge the transcendental subjectivity or ignorance must be removable by knowledge.

N. S. S. Raman

REALITY OF THE SELF AND
THE CATEGORIES OF
THOUGHT

The problem of reality and its relation to categories of thought is an old problem, which can be traced to Aristotle himself, though the name of Immanuel Kant is associated with it, as the philosopher who highlighted this problem most. Hence it is quite appropriate that this seminar should take up the problem as the subject during the 250th anniversary of the great philosopher's birth. Kant himself clearly acknowledges the debt he owes to Aristotle¹ and regards the whole categorical scheme of the latter as "an enterprise worthy of an acute thinker like Aristotle to make search for these fundamental concepts. The epistemological bias in dealing with metaphysical problems is typically Aristotelian; for Plato before Aristotle did not realize the magnitude of the significance of probing into some of the fundamental assumptions of empirical knowledge; he had simply and without satisfactory explanation relegated the realm of experience to a secondary place in his world-view.² The tendency to ignore the epistemological in favour of the ontological is typically Platonic; on the other hand, the tendency to explain metaphysical problems in terms of the epistemological is typically Aristotelian.

Kant, like Aristotle was a product of science. Kant's problem relating to the of 'concept of pure understanding' (as he called the categories) is essentially a scientific problem, and may be regarded as the result of the Galilean-Copernican-Newtonian world-view (as E. A. Burtt would happily put it), and the immediate problem was whether what we observe out there in the world constitutes reality or not. Kant's account of the categories therefore was born out of a desire to discover the conditions of the possibility of such knowledge, and to set limits, if necessary, on the validity of such knowledge. One

of the many abiding contributions of Kant's philosophy was to replace the psychological method employed by his illustrious predecessors, by the critical method to formulate and examine philosophical issues. The method of philosophizing was what may be called 'scientific' in as much as they were interested in examining all matters of observation and experience. British philosophy till the eighteenth century was a development of the Baconian world-view, and resulted in total sensationalism in David Hume. They did not talk of categories as Kant later did, because they never thought of questioning the validity of empirical knowledge, till Hume roused not only Kant but all the empiricists themselves from dogmatic slumber.

Take the 'self' for example. The British empiricists treated the 'self' as though it were just another fact like any other object of experience, to be minutely analysed from the sensationalist angle. No wonder Hume could not discover any impression of the self; nor could he find an identity in a series of sensations—neither on the subjective side leading to an identity of the self, nor on the objective side leading to an identity of the object. In recent years Hume's ultra-empiricism has been revived by Russell (who talked of the 'self' being a logical fiction) and A. J. Ayer. Kant's contributions to philosophy lies in his clear-cut view that one must rise above narrow empiricism, and seek to discover the conditions of the possibility of knowledge. This meant treating phenomena not as such in their isolated sense, but in relation to self-consciousness, in which they have their origin (as forms of intuition, as categories, as ideas etc.) and outside which their existence is irrelevant. Whatever be the sources of our sensations (the 'thing-in-itself' being necessary for purposes of a theoretical analysis of the epistemological situation) do not matter, as what conditions objective existence is self-consciousness. Existence, for Kant, meant existence for self-consciousness. The self has a synthetic role to fulfil, and without this creative synthetic activity, the world is as good as nothing at all for us. But the other side of the epistemological picture as stated by Kant is equally true: Without this creative activity of the self, the self too is as good as nothing at all. Among Kant's idealist successors however, the effect was just the opposite. Kant's philosophy should have demonstrated the utter futility of metaphysics. Kant's distinction between appearances and reality and restriction of knowledge to appearances only, should have stopped metaphysical speculation once for all; but Kant's idealist successors went ahead to build a metaphysical superstructure with the very weapons which Kant had forged.

One may safely assert in this context that the most important effect of Kantian speculations in the *Critique of Pure Reason* and the *Critique*

of *Practical Reason* concerns the nature and status of the self. Dualism is the distinctive feature of this philosophy, and all forms of dualism in Kant may be said to arise from that fundamental division between the subjective and objective realms of enquiry; the former is governed by the moral law, the distinguishing character of which is freedom as opposed to the law of physical nature, which exhibits, in Kant's own phrase, a 'mechanical necessity.' The law governing man's internal nature (Kant unfortunately restricted it to the realm of the ethical only, though one may find expressions of it also in the spheres of the logical and the aesthetic) as well as the law of physical nature are both self-created by the activity of the self, even if there are qualitative differences between these two laws. From the pre-Kantian conception of the self as a passive something that receives impressions from an unknown beyond, there is in Kant a significant transition to the position that the self is an active entity. This activity is not merely synthetic or selective (as the *Critique of Pure Reason* would have us believe), but also creative. Apart from this activity of the self, there is in fact nothing at all to say about this self. Kant's analysis of the self in its various aspects, as the inner sense, as the 'I', the ego, the 'bare form without content,' as a unity of consciousness, as consciousness in general, as a substance, as a moral agent etc., do not touch at all even the fringe of the problem as to what this self really is. It is only in the *Critique of Practical Reason* that Kant is led to positive assumption about the noumenal self.

It is true that I, as the self, am in some sense, a part of the phenomenal world governed by the same causal laws that govern the objects of the external world, but the phenomenal object is not all that constitutes it. As Edward Caird in that forgotten classic on Hegel puts it: ³ I am not merely one object among the many other objects in the world of which I am conscious; I am the conscious self without which there would be no objects at all. That is to say, not only does the self exist as an object and becomes subject to the categories in the same way as other objects, but other objects exist because of it, the subject of all existence. The self then must occupy a unique position in reality, what is not-self being just a creation by the former.

From this it is clear that categories in the philosophy of Kant do not play a restrictive role as they do in the philosophy of Aristotle. They are the very basis of an epistemological enquiry. In the Vaiśeṣika system too, the categories (*padārthas*) play a limited role in knowledge, the knowledge of the subjective sphere being totally ignored by it. For it is not only the nature of our knowledge of the external world that is the main object of a philosophical enquiry, but also the nature of the knowing subject. This is not dealt with at all by the Vaiśeṣika think-

ers. Any account of reality which ignores the subject or fails to realise the uniqueness of the subjective in the system of reality could not be called adequate. In that sense, both Aristotle, the medieval logicians (e.g., Duns Scotus) and the Vaiśeṣika philosophy are inadequate as world-views. In that sense, Kant in Western thought and Mahāyāna metaphysics and the Advaita Vedānta restore the balance in favour of a more comprehensive world-view.

II

But is it necessary at all to accept the Kantian position without question? It is admitted that Kantian criticism is a possible solution to the contradictions involved in an extreme rationalist or an extreme empiricist position; it takes the wind out of the sail both the types of dogmatism. But is such a detailed analysis of the process of knowledge necessary? Bertrand Russell called Kant 'a mere misfortune' because Kant's working out an elaborate explanation of the process of knowledge is too artificial, and revolts against common-sense. If one tells me that my knowledge of the table before me arises because there are *a priori* forms of space and time in me, and that there are categories to be found *a priori* in me, I would only laugh at it, and would be satisfied in knowing that the object before me is called the table, no matter how I know it. The epistemological puzzles are created by philosophers' fancies. The *a priori* categories are just fictions, constructions of my speculative mind, which could just be ignored. After all the experimental physicist does not have to know what these categories are in order to study the external universe. It appears in the modern context therefore, that the importance of categories, and in fact of the whole of the Kantian epistemological analysis, have been over-rated. It is not just the categories, but also other conceptual constructions of Kant's epistemology that are called into question: the categories, the thing-in-itself, the noumenal self, and the so-called transcendental synthesis are all part of a grandiose intellectual construction that could easily be dispensed with.

It appears therefore that the importance of the categories has been over-rated in our knowledge of reality. And even with reference to Kant, in the interpretation of his philosophy, it is necessary not to over-emphasize it. I think that the emphasis that we now give to the problem comes out of studying only the epistemological or the metaphysical aspect of Kant's philosophy—the result of concentrating on the study of Kant's first critique only. The tendency to consider the first critique at the expense of Kant's other critical works is typical of the English-speaking philosophical circles, and this trend is deplorable. Even in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, the portions dealing with the categor-

ries form a part of the transcendental analytic only. There are portions in that work concerning the problem of reality that are equally valuable, which are unfortunately neglected. One may blame this on Hegelians, but are categories so indispensable as constructions of reality that they must occupy a central place in philosophical speculation? One is here reminded of the definition given of philosophy as a criticism of categories. W. H. Walsh puts the problem thus:

"The danger can be expressed as a two-fold one: the categories may turn out to be so pure that we do not succeed in saying anything by means of them, or so general in their application that we cannot use them to characterise anything in particular. Kant thinks he can guard against both possibilities by tracing a close connection between categories as they actually operate in human thinking and time, which is in his view the form of 'inner sense' and therefore applies to everything we experience. The connection with time at once restricts the scope of the categories by making them specific as opposed to entirely general...and in Kant's own phrase 'realises them by giving them reference to features of concrete experience.'"⁴

The chief shortcoming of the whole of Kant's thesis is that he does not anywhere define adequately what a category is and perhaps deliberately refrains from doing so. Perhaps he had good reason for doing so; we agree with N. Kemp Smith⁵ that his views were not ripe enough to be presented and would have surely landed him in difficulties. If he had been content to give a classification of judgments as he does (in A 70—B 95) it would have been enough for his purposes. But he seeks to discover the categories or 'pure concepts of understanding' as he calls them, and in this attempt he finds himself in difficulties.

Further, as Gottfried Martin has remarked,⁶ it must remain doubtful whether Kant succeeded in proving the completeness of the table of categories. Kant seems to base his conclusion on the assumption that his table of judgments (to which the categories correspond) is exhaustive.⁷ In fact his complaint against Aristotle had been that his list of categories was incomplete. Little did he realize that his own list was as incomplete as Aristotle's. Nor does Kant offer any proof for thinking that it would be impossible to add to his list of judgments.

III

One of the remarkable attempts by Kant in metaphysics is his attempt to map out, as it were, the entire field of experience. Pardon

me for using the metaphor of mapping etc., which is not mine, but Bosanquet's. Self-consciousness in Kant is a totality, and is reciprocal with the consciousness of the objective world. The realist (especially the British realist) would look down upon all attempts to 'transcendentalize' simple 'objective' entities. He would reject all the distinction which Kant laboriously makes between *a priori* and *a posteriori*.⁹ But there is another class of realists—the Platonic realists in general and phenomenologists in particular, who would accept that there is some sense in referring to a neutral content, which connects the self with the external world.⁹ If we leave out the thing-in-itself (or 'bracket' it as the phenomenologist would say) along with self-in-itself, then we are left with a 'field of consciousness,' to borrow a phrase from William James, in a similar context. It is this field of consciousness which the phenomenologist is interested in. Chisholm has clearly traced in this contexts the meeting point between Realism and Phenomenology. It does not consist of sensory elements alone, it would include above all the various logical forms which can be classified, and stratified into a structure. The conception of a stratified structure is typically phenomenological. Kant does not go so far as that, but he does indeed provide the starting-point. It is on this point also that some forms of neo-Hegelianism (e.g., as that of Bosanquet) might fruitfully reconcile themselves with Kant on the one hand and phenomenology on the other.¹⁰

We would then eliminate the Kantian dichotomy between 'phenomenon' and the 'noumenon' and between 'appearance' and 'reality' in certain forms of idealism. Whatever is given in knowledge should be regarded as indisputable. The ontological problem posed by Kant and his idealist successors is redundant. The 'I', the transcendental ego, would not be placed outside consciousness, but would be regarded as an essential element in the field of consciousness. Consciousness would itself represent not a broken series of sensations, as the empiricists mistakenly thought, but a synthetic unity. It would be the business of logic to explore this unity, this structure (if we use the phenomenologist terminology) and discover the logical forms that are the constituents of the structure. This would be a significant advance over the naive enquiry into a hypostatized mind or self. This is important in the Indian context because we have been used to talking about the self in this context. This would provide a new dimension to the study of categories, but in that case the sharp division which Kant makes between the table of judgments and the table of categories would have to be broken down.¹¹ They have to be identified with each other. One would not then ask the questions "Where are the categories?" and "How do we discover them?"

Indeed the meeting-points between transcendental philosophy and phenomenology need to be explored further. But first the sharp division which Kant makes between phenomenon and noumenon, and the duality of selves (self as an object and self as a subject) would have to be eliminated. The whole of the subject-object cleavage in Kant is one of his fatal weaknesses.

IV

It should be recognised as one of the achievements of post-Kantian transcendental philosophy and phenomenology to have turned away from the excessive importance given to categories in the Kantian system, to the subject itself. The shifting of emphasis from the merely objective to the subjective, to a 'descriptive study of consciousness', as Husserl called it, is a remarkable transition, which at one stroke removes the inconsistencies of the Kantian metaphysical speculations. So also the inconsistencies of the psychologist's or biologist's study of consciousness could be remedied. The starting point, in Husserl's own words, would be

"a phenomenology of consciousness as opposed to a natural science about consciousness" ¹²

In other words,

"Philosophy lies in a wholly new dimension. It needs an entirely new method of departure and an entirely new method of distinguishing it in principle from any 'natural' science" ¹³.

Kantian criticism of science is inadequate. He introduces elements which are inexplicable—like his conception of categories and noumena. The real nature of the *a priori* eludes him. He misses the true value of a conception of essences, or of eidetic truths: this is perhaps because he is too committed to a kind of Aristotelianism and anti-Platonism. Hence Kant's transcendental reduction is not rigorous; of a 'thing-in-itself' is an example of this inadequacy. Moreover Kant falls into the error of psychologism, in his doctrine of space and time; his doctrine of understanding shows the obvious influence of empiricism. ¹⁴

One achievement of the Kantian critique of metaphysics and of science is the turning of attention away from the world outside to the subjective. Of course, Kant is too one-sided when he expounds a critique only of objective knowledge. As a critique of self-knowledge and of the spiritual conditions of being, Kant is inadequate. In other words, Kantianism fails as a critique of a theory of knowledge of the inner world of consciousness: It is necessary therefore to go a step beyond Kant, and probe into the world of inner meanings. This

amounts to saying that the illusory search for a reality beyond should be abandoned. Perhaps the search for a 'reality' itself should be abandoned in our endeavour to look for inner connections. This means that in the development of a comprehensive world-view, the complex network of symbols at various levels plays a leading role. Perhaps the categories, and the things are a part though a very small part of this inner symbolism.

NOTES

1. *The Critique of Pure Reason*, trans., N. K. Smith (London, 1964), p. 113 (A 80-81—B 105) and p. 114 (81 B 107),
2. *The Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 310 (A 313 B 370): "Plato made use of the expression 'idea' in such a way as quite evidently to have meant by it something which not only can never be borrowed from the senses but far surpasses even the concepts of understanding (with which Aristotle occupied himself), inasmuch as in experience nothing is ever to be met with that is coincident with it. For Plato ideas are archetypes of the things themselves, and not, in the manner of the categories, merely keys to possible experience."
3. Edward Caird, *Hegel* (Blackwoods Philosophical Classics), 177.
4. W. H. Walsh, 'Schematism' in *Kant, A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed., Robert Paul Wolff, (Notre Dame, Indiana, 1968), pp. 79-80.
5. *Commentary on Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*, (London, 1931), p. 195.
6. *General Metaphysics, Its Problem and Method*, (London, 1968) pp. 258-259.
7. During Kant's time science and mathematics had not been developed so much as they are today. In the modern context Kant's claim cannot be sustained.
8. Here again, new philosophical theories based on new mathematics should be taken into account and under this, only mathematical propositions should be taken as *a priori* and they are tautological.
9. There are two writers who have described the doctrine of thing-in-itself as nonsensical, Nietzsche and Husserl.
10. Indeed Bosanquet was one of the first among the idealists in Great Britain to have been attracted by the philosophy of Edmund Husserl.
11. Some phenomenologist might object to this by asking: "Is not phenomenology an enquiry into those fundamental primordial form of human experience?"
12. "Philosophy as a rigorous Science", trans., Quentin Lauer in *Phenomenology and the Crisis of Philosophy* (New York, 1965).
13. *Idea of Phenomenology*, trans., Alston and Nakhnikian (The Hague, 1964) Last paragraph in Lecture 1.
14. Cf. Iso Kern: *Husserl and Kant: Eine Untersuchung über Husserls Verhältnis zu Kant und zum Neukantianismus*, (den Haag, 1964), pp. 55-134.

Margaret Chatterjee

REALITY AND THE CATEGORIES OF THOUGHT

The theme for our discussion, I must confess, thanks to the conjunction 'and', suggests a dichotomy. a lighthouse conception of our relation to reality which I would call a philosopher's myth. It puts me in mind of a man in wading-boots casting out nets of varying meshes and catching fish of various sizes, including giant monsters of the deep, and sometimes only tiddlers. Fortunately there have been many philosophers in the modern era who have protested against this picture. Kant from one point of view is a thinker who advocates par excellence the one-mesh net approach. His treatment of regulative concepts, however, is immensely important as a pinpointing of concepts which do not have a 'netting' function at all, but a beckoning one. There has been no dearth of philosophers to stress the inadequacy of thought in the lowest and highest reaches of experience, i.e., organic sensations at one pole and the ineffable at the other. Their assumption has usually been to invoke the intuitive as the only alternative to the discursive. Then there have been those who have stressed the incapacity of thought from a rather different angle. Nietzsche, for example, anticipates Merleau-Ponty's protest against the subject-object dichotomy which most philosophers since Descartes have taken as gospel truth. Nietzsche sees reality as the product of the commerce between the powers in man and the powers in things, with the body as the general due to each. Of the body he says "It is by far the richer phenomenon; and allows of much more accurate observation" (*Will to Power*, p. 532). As a philologist and psychologist Nietzsche saw both percept and concept as refinements of something far more basic and primitive. We are able to calculate and control nature, but, he goes on, this explains

nothing." The world is capable of infinite interpretation, "it may be interpreted differently, it has not one sense behind it, but hundreds of senses—perspectivity," (*Ibid.*, p. 481). One does not have to be an apostle of unreason to deny that conceptual thought has the run of the cosmos. But a preference for the categorial dies hard. The polymorphists among the linguistic analysts are conceptualists in disguise. They carve up the same territory with implements of a different order—a sentence-typology. Is there any alternative? What I shall try to suggest is that reality is not an undigested residuum recalcitrant to thought, nor shimmering fish caught in the net of a thought-system. In fact it is not something to which philosophers have any particular claim at all. Once the philosophical dust settles we can look once more and examine our experience afresh and I suggest we do just this. And then we find, I think, that our cognitive equipment, including what we have learnt, by no means exhausts what we bring to bear upon the situations we have to face. But before embarking on the more subversive part of what I have to say let us admit the relevance of categories of thought in their proper sphere.

I take it that categories of thought are tools used in the quest for knowledge. Those concerned with the various sciences use models, theories, hypotheses and so forth which the philosopher may like to describe as categories of thought used for investigating a particular aspect of reality. The concepts used by a cardiologist writing a paper on the cholesterol content of the blood in hypertensive patients in a certain age-group will be quite distinct from those used by a scientist working in the field of space research. To say that both are dealing with causes and effects (or sets of conditions) is not to say much. But metaphysicians have somehow hankered after a set of categories of thought which would be true of 'reality' as such, at which point they invoke a sense of the term 'reality' which is obscure both to the ordinary man and to the scientist. The ordinary man, and the philosopher too in his 'ordinary moments', always finds himself in some particular situation or other which for him *is* reality. The question arises whether there may not perhaps be something general that can be said about all such situations, for if so then we would have the general human orientations of man in-the-world. Because these have been neglected I shall refer to those which perhaps fall outside the rubric 'categories of thought'. I am interested, that is, in the reality that *concerns* man, be it what he may find in space-time in the course of his work, or what he may have an inkling of, through its mediumship. But first there is a respectable precedent for considering reality outside the context of thought categories and to this we will briefly turn first.

Kierkegaard was a thinker who, I should think, takes one of the most extreme positions possible on this question. In the *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* he makes it clear that by 'reality' he means the reality 'man'. More specifically: "The only reality that exists for an existing individual is his own ethical reality" (p. 280). His animus against Hegel appears in the following passage which occurs a little earlier in the same text: "Because abstract thought is *sub specie aeterni* it ignores the concrete and the temporal, the existential process, the predicament of the existing individual arising from his being a synthesis of the temporal and the eternal situated in existence." (p. 267). I am inclined to agree with Kierkegaard that there is no such thing as an "abstract problem of reality", but this does not of course mean that abstract thought is not itself legitimate (as in the 'symbolic' sciences of logic and pure mathematics), nor that the natural world cannot be pondered over. From Kierkegaard's point of view in so far as science and history deal with generalities and are embarked on from a disinterested point of view, they fail to be informative about reality. When he says that "All knowledge about reality is a possibility" we can cash this in terms of our contemporary jargon, putting it like this: scientific laws are cast in the hypothetical mode. But the case of human reality, he wants us to see, is very different. With Iago in *Othello*, each man can say "I am not what I am." The gap between thought and existence is inherent in man's condition. Jaspers was to express it later like this: "Existence is not a concept but an index which points to what is beyond all objectivity." We here come up against the modern form of the older metaphysical problem: the limitations of the subject and the transcendence of the object. This now becomes the problem of the nature of man himself in so far as he is a self-transcending creature.

Kierkegaard traces this self-transcending in its various forms—the ways in which *posse* can give way to *esse*. The assumption is that when man's consciousness in crisis becomes sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought, everything goes awry. Human reality in all its existential pathos is not to be found in rational reflection but in turning-point crucial decisions. This amounts, I think, not so much to a devaluation of thought as to an insight into its irrelevance in certain situations. The answers to some of life's profoundest crises well up from we know not whence. They do not fall under the

classificatory rubric of concepts but are the hard-won fruit of inwardness. We would now stress today that such crises take place in a context in which the natural world and other people are very much involved (take, say, the example of family crises over property). As far as the abstractness of the historian's task is concerned, the historian would be the first to admit that his approach to historical fact (human reality in the mode of time) is intrinsically approximative. But however much his work may involve an imaginative steeping in the period, a hypothetical charting of policy and intention, he *will* need in his excursions to make use of concepts like that of 'cause', 'intention' and the like, and to do this is part of his craft.

The *context* in which human decisions are made has been developed much further by Heidegger. In *Sein und Zeit* he states: "the domain of Being is ontologically far more difficult than that which confronted the Greeks" (p. 38-39). Since this is so, he advises, we need a "circumstantiality of concept formation". The traditional categories of metaphysics were designed to deal with *objects*. Even Kant's subject-centred categories deal with objectivity. Traditional grammatical forms have kept us locked in the subject/object distinction. Instead, Heidegger puts forward a distinction between 'categories' (dealing with the 'what') and what he calls 'existenzials'. This has the advantage of introducing a relational terminology which brings out the nature of man-in-the-world with all his cares and preoccupations. It can be noted here that in contrast to those who in recent years have argued for alternative conceptual systems on the basis of diverse forms of language and/or diverse cultures. Heidegger plots a general phenomenological ontology claimed to be true of the human condition as such. Even this, though, may not be enough. What we are in search of are the determining conditions of man's orientation to his 'world', for this 'world' is what he means by reality, i.e., what reality is for him, and this may well include what some refer to as Reality with a capital 'R'.

Common parlance often encourages two extreme uses of the word 'reality', that of the extremely unpleasant and that of the transcendently blissful. The sense of the imminence of death in a period of bombardment would be an illustration of the first and,

certain types of mystic experience would illustrate the second. Whatever we say when we philosophize about reality in all our pretentiousness, there should be a certain 'seemliness' as Heidegger would say, an attempt to be true to the varieties of experience as we find it. These varieties do include occasions when all thought categories seem blotted out and these occasions seem to the philosopher and non-philosopher alike revelatory in a way that the trivial round and the common task may not. But the intermediate territory of the everyday must also be taken into account. Let us therefore start again a little further back.

Man has vital needs, which include his need for health, work and love. To believe, to express and to know are ways in which he reaches out beyond himself. But in none of these is he cut off from his fellows. His peculiarly human traits such as speech, tool-using behaviour, his capacity to learn and imitate, involve him from day to day with others. We are moreover constantly brought into touch with a vision of how those who are no longer with us in the flesh experienced reality. The literate man may have this experience through the printed word. But the illiterate peasant also knows it through the shape and lie of the land tilled by his ancestors, the inscrutable smile of a deity gazing from a temple that he passes on his way to work. Social systems themselves reflect all these factors which the philosopher will easily note are not categorially all of a piece. We are washed by full tides which buoy us up and lift us off the ground. We are also left high and dry, scorched by the searing sun of circumstance. Thought categories alone cannot encompass the richness of vicissitude to which we are heir. Needs, beliefs, attitudes and aspirations are the core around which practices, activities and institutions cluster. An 'observance' (whether of food, dress or habit) as much indicates a man's orientation to reality as a 'thought category'. Traits such as a sense of humour also play their part in shaping a man's life-world.

Or let us take a different kind of example. Imagine the state of primitive man before the discovery of fire. The reality of cold was something to be endured. After the discovery of fire the lighting of fires becomes part of the reality which is winter. What has happened is a change in *practice*. The anthropologist may find that specific tribes are disposed to think in terms of process. This characteristic about them, however, may need to be set alongside a disposition to obey

elders and a resistance to social change. What we have at hand is a number of factors which go to make up men's view of reality and which seem to be related in an organic manner. What is meant by reference to the 'organic'? To revert to the philosophers' jargon, it would mean that a change in one factor would modify the nature of the others. For example the introduction of a school in a particular area i.e., a new institution, may gradually erode the authority of the elders. Or a man for whom acquisitive living loses its meaning may dress in a weird way, travel on foot from country to country and live off alms given by others. Here the instrumental factor has been a change in world-view which effects a transformation in behaviour.

The above examples illustrate *clusters* of factors which may make up a man's life-world. Imagine by contrast a man whose life is ebbing away as he lies in a hospital ward. Reality for him shrinks to the intense difficulty he has in breathing. Or it may expand to a whole vision of the past and hope of the life to come. For Ivan Illych in Tolstoy's tale, reality consisted of an acute awareness of the reactions and expectations of those around him. All this suggests that reality for any man *can* be dominated by any factor, be it the desire to bayonet an enemy before he is himself bayoneted, the fact of hunger in time of famine, the reality of the locked door in the prison cell. The life-world of man who is not in any crisis in particular will include his relationships to things especially things involved in his work and the economic relations therein involved, his relationship with people (with special weightage on kinship relations) and the framework of beliefs and other dispositions mentioned earlier which in turn have repercussions on all his relationships. It is especially these dispositional factors which come into play in determining what view a man may have of *Reality*. So much of this is non-conceptualised, even unconscious, that this is why many people are quite honestly unable to say what they believe. This is particularly the case in cultures where the religious component cannot (or can rarely) be voiced doctrinally. To explore this further would take us into the discussion of religion.

The approach sketched above introduces preliminary analysis of some of the determining factors of culture and of *Lebenswelt*. I have

not gone into the difference between the two except that one obvious difference will be the individual character of a man's *Lebenswelt* and the social character of culture. A *Lebenswelt* may of course signify a deliberate opting out from a particular cultural pattern. But then the fact that such opting out is possible is itself a feature of that particular culture. The material and behavioural aspects of cultural complexes may seem to be of more importance to the anthropologist than the philosopher, but the dispositional factor seem to me very much his concern. A belief, I hazard to say, (and here I am thinking of the sort of beliefs a field worker may uncover) seems constitutive and regulative in a way which the philosopher may well find a *scandalon*. It is their very non-heuristic character that makes them diagnosable as constitutive. And yet they have a directive function which seems to put them in the regulative basket. They even seem to have the flavour of Kantian intuitions, that is, they seem to be 'wholes', boundless and 'given'. Such a language does not strike one as inappropriate in the context of belief-patterns in traditional societies. Such is the framework of 'reality' as a man is familiar with it.

One of the advantages of the sort of approach indicated (and it is no more than an indication) is that it might get us over the philosopher's dichotomy between 'real' and 'unreal'. A culture-pattern or *Lebenswelt* may well contain elements which those 'outside' it will deem to be illusions. This does not at all affect the potency of those elements. I think that we can also find a way of breaking down another distinction beloved of many philosophers, that between reality and Reality. Let me explain. We are surrounded by aspects of material culture which transcend the level of biological existence. One can call to mind the beautiful way the Santhalis decorate their huts and the care which goes into the preparation of food in the simplest village home. The material is transformed by artistic consciousness, the serving of food by love and care, and behaviour transformed by felicity of gesture and grace of expression. The humblest activities become transformed by what can be seen as both influx and interior accretion. There is a profound sense in which we are in a homogeneous world. Shafts of light are already about us, fragmentary as they are. To close with a final image, instead of

having a dichotomous or hierarchical image of man-in-the-world it is possible to think of an oceanic circle of increasing participation where man is urged by his own needs (and these include the deepest flights of his being) and met by powers which beckon him to a life of fulfilment.

Fr. William Ruddy

SOURCE OF THE CLASSICAL CATEGORY OF RELATION IN WESTERN THOUGHT

Relations, according to classical Western ontology, are both mental and real. Mental relations are found in the mind and are operative through all the ten categories listed by Aristotle. Real relations are found in the real world and are placed thus in one of the categories only. Real relations only will be treated in this paper. We will try to find out what the ancients meant by their formal divisions, and childlike procedures of seeing the same identity from two different views. Accordingly we shall attempt first to describe the category of real relation and the two kinds of relation it contained, not from a modern view but as much as possible from within the traditional, ontological framework. By raising some critical questions and listening to how the ancients answered them we shall then try to show perhaps where the system failed. Finally we shall suggest some lines of thought which may help to reveal the actual source of real relations within ordinary human experience. But before describing the category of real relation itself, it would be helpful to review some general concepts which the ancient system professed in regard to categorical unity, act and potency and the general doctrine of relation.

In regard to the unity of the categories, the classical thinkers, on the realist side with which we are here concerned, would reject the Kantian idea that the unity of the categories comes from the mind only. Aristotle argues against Plato's pure, ideal forms by saying that if the unity of the category of relation were a mental unity only, then that which is relative would be greater than the substance of that which is absolutely real, and thus the relative would be greater than the absolute, which is absurd. Thus the unity of the

Aristotelean categories comes a lot less from the mind knowing reality and a lot more from that within reality itself which is most real.

In regard to the notion of act and potency, it must be understood that the childlike procedure of simply holding close to a reality, that was nevertheless able to be viewed from two sides, pervaded all of ancient reasoning up to the very highest of realities possible to conceive. Thus, act and potency were not two things, but closer to what Richardson calls "two disparate components in the *unity* of a single process." Thus even when we say that, for the ancients, act and potency were simply two ways of seeing the single, united reality of Being itself, this concept eventually was applied throughout the whole spectrum of experience. The action of burning, in regard to the active fire and the potential wood, was equally charged with this sheer procedural form, as were the highest acts of human reason. From the act side, mental actions were sourced in real persons in the real world. They were more real than the burning power of fire. But from the potency side, these self-same actions were not in the world at all and were even more mental than the ideal forms which they posited. The categories, therefore, simply cannot be placed correctly in the ancient system, unless we realize that all entities found in them were able to be viewed by this dual retention, in the mind, of the unity of a single process that passed beyond the mind entirely.

Finally in regard to the doctrine of real relation, which seems so much an oddity to the modern mind, it was held that the act-side of the united process of Being could take the form of a pure, retentive character of a grounding act of reference for all relations able to be thought about or found in the real world. In terms analogous to motion, this grounding act was able to pass through both mental and real situations on its way to ground the relation itself within the extremes in which it was thereby grounded. It was due to this remarkable grounding act of reference that real relations were not *in* any thing so much as they were *toward* something else. For relation did not inhere directly in a real thing but only indirectly in the qualities and accidents of a real thing. And because the reality of an accident was proportioned to inherence, relation was thus the least real, and, by that fact, the most obscure of all the categories. Thus arose an array of midway qualities of the formal nature of relation. They posed paradoxes from the start, for the relation was a riddle of absolute particularity that could not be generalized, because it had no direct inherence from which to abstract. Thus a relation was more "toward" than "in", it did not move or change except if

one left it alone and saw instead its own base of inherent accident altering. And finally, and most remarkable of all, relation was the one case where the mind could enter no farther into the exterior mystery of Being. More strictly speaking, the mind could sustain no more of its own relations outward to bring to a better focus the real relation it saw, because, in the ancient view, to relate a relation to anything higher than itself, either mental or real, was to fall into the utter abyss of an infinite regress. It was thus at this ultimate edge of the real relation itself where mental relations were at last exactly distinguished from real relations, because the ancients held that mental relations were able to be endlessly formed off to infinity by the mind sustaining them.

Having thus provided ourselves with a brief glance at the general framework within which the category of real relation was placed, let us now proceed to inquire about the two kinds of real relations found in this category. One of them was real from both sides of the extremes, and the extremes were two real things in the world. The other was real from one extreme and mental from the other extreme, and the extremes themselves consisted of an act of the mind as really out toward the thing, and a real thing as only mentally related back toward the mind. Thus these two relations could be called mutually real and non-mutually real respectively. This whole complex state of affairs, which sounds so strange to our Kantian-influenced ears, was derived by the ancients from the act-potency character of the grounding act and occurred as follows. If the grounding act referred a real thing outward to something else by passing through an actual situation in the real world, the relation which it thereby grounded was doubly inherent in its extremes and was thus mutually real from both sides. On the other hand, if the grounding act referred something mental back toward the real thing by passing through a mental situation only, the act of the mind replaced one of the extremes, and the relation thus grounded was real as coming out from this real person to this real thing, but as coming back from the real thing the relation was finally recognized as including a general aspect not included in the thing at all. The real aspect of this self-same relation was simply and absolutely lost from view, and the relation was accordingly rediscovered in the mind as mental only. It was thus non-mutually real, and before we ourselves become equally lost in this ancient obscurity which the classical thinker feared, let us hasten to add that this second kind of real relation was relegated to the category along with the first only insofar as it was real; as mental it was viewed as a non-mutual mental relation and to that degree used freely, throughout all the categories as was any other purely mental relation. Now, we have at least

acquired a general idea of the two kinds of real relations, and it would be worthwhile to see more of the complex factors working in each case by taking them one after the other according to the classical examples usually given to explain them.

Mutually real relations: Let us suppose that an ancient philosopher is walking through a forest during a storm, and he sees a flash of lightning strike a tree in front of him and start a fire. However an after thought of the mind may come to view what occurs, it seems beyond doubt that a new relationship has now come into being, stemming forth like a flower from the lightning and the tree, and centering itself between that which has now arisen between the fire and the wood itself. Recalling the pervasion of childlike wonder for the way the mind retains the same unity of process from two different views, and how the ancients saw this as a reflection of how similar events in the world actually took place, we can then imagine how our man in the forest sees the same burning as both that which is burning in the fire and that which is being burnt in the wood. He then according to his own expression sees a mutually real relation between fire and wood. In other words whether he looks at the fire being related toward the wood or the wood being related toward the fire, he in both cases views an absolutely non-generalizable towardness of fire and wood to each other. And though he would tell us that it is minimally real, because it is directly speaking neither in the fire nor in the wood but an unchanging feature of the burning process itself, he would remain convinced that he has not merely formed this relation in his mind, but actually found it as mutually real in reality. If we ask where it came from he would give us the traditional formula as follows: A grounding act of reference working by means of the real situation of burning has now referred the fire and the wood beyond themselves to each other and thereby grounded a mutually real relation doubly inherent in both fire and wood. Furthermore, this grounding act is not the burning itself, because, in the ancient system no act can use itself as a means for action. If we follow his reasoning thusfar, we would then ask if it were the lightning. We are closer to what the ancient thinker would say, and have but one final step to take. As we retained the identity of burning in the seen duality of the struck tree, so we must pass infinitely beyond and retain the entire identity of the real situation itself. The classical thinker would put it in the following formula: The grounding act is the pure act of Being upon the relative potency of finite reality itself. More informally put: the grounding act is not only the lightning, but the tree, the lightning, the man, the storm, and even the forest itself. This solution to the problem seems so thoroughly formal to our modern mind as to be beyond our usual sense of constructed proof. In the

ancient mind all real things in the world were already there only as moved and ordered endlessly outward to the highest real of that which was wholly knowable from one view and wholly real from another. Let it be noted that the paper is not concerned with such entire ontologies, but simply with the question of whether such systems are able to explain the primal source of real relations themselves. Let us therefore withhold all final critical questions for the present and turn to the other kind of relation, the non-mutually real relation.

Non-mutually real relations: In order that the second example may register its full effect, let us imagine that we have been transported back in time to the ancient city of Athens. As we are walking down a street, we turn and, without becoming unduly conscious of it, simply notice that there is a large pillar of stone situated over to our right. Even the commonest use of terms permits us to say that our direct act of awareness has entered into some sort of relation with the pillar itself. We get the feeling that we are involved in some sort of "real" state of affairs. Let us assume that the farthest thing from our intention is to propound a perceptual theory there in the street; we are simply here and the pillar is over there to our right. It suddenly occurs to us that we may be able to see the same situation from two points of view and we forthwith begin a more general closer look at the pillar, and ask ourselves if we are then standing on the pillar's left. We then become aware not only that the pillar has no aspect left in it at all, but also that our previous act of awareness has not in the slightest, affected the reality of the pillar itself. The relation thus involved, that is, the unified relation spanning both our mental awareness and the pillar in the manner just indicated is real from our side but merely mental from the pillar's side, and is what the traditional school would call a non-mutually real relation. Where, then, did it come from? The ancient system gives us the following formula: a grounding act of reference has passed through the mental situation of our turning to the pillar, referred our mental act of awareness toward the pillar in such a way that our mental act becomes one of the extremes of a relation of which the other extreme is the real pillar. Insofar as the grounding act is thereby passing through this real person and this real pillar, the relation thus grounded is real. Insofar as the self-same mental act involved also possessed the aspect of a purely general act not inhering in the world at all, the grounding act is thus also passing through a general act only and the self-same relation is thus also being grounded as mental, as occurring in the mind alone. The asymmetrical form of this relation wherein it really joins us and the pillar in unreflective awareness, and mentally distinguishes us

from the pillar in reflective awareness, was considered to be one single relation by the ancients. Its unity comes only indirectly from ourselves and the pillar and first and primarily from the grounding act of reference. We may then legitimately ask, what then is this grounding act? As in the case of the burning tree, the ancients would reply the grounding act works only by means of the mental situation of our turning to the pillar. The grounding act is not ourselves but that which passed through our act of awareness of the pillar, or, more strictly speaking, passed through the entire mental situation from which the awareness arose. Thus the grounding act involves not only our own mind and the pillar, but also the whole lived-through experience of here and now turning toward the pillar, together with all of the mental by real and personal factors left precisely and exactly as they actually are. Incredible as it may seem to our own subject and object way of thinking, the ancients would hold that the grounding act is that which has actualised, originated and sustained the whole dual-sided state of affairs. Stated in the traditional, ontological form, this means that the grounding act of reference is so much a pure act of Being Itself, that even the highest acts of the human mind are a lower correlative potency to such a higher act, at least up until the point when we become aware that such is the case. After that we more or less assume the character of this grounding act and thus no longer see the real aspect of the relation but rather its mental aspect only. In other words, in all that we have so far described, the towardness or, if you wish, the betweenness of the relation involving ourselves and the pillar was all the time being sustained by the grounding act and thus was not in the slightest, altered or changed. Purely and simply we are actually seeing the pillar which is actually over there to our right. Without this changing, we may, if we wish, suspend ourselves from this underlying grounding act, assume our own position as the extreme of the relation, the real aspect of it vanishes, all we have left is the pillar, we find no actual inherence of our mental act in the pillar, the same relation is now being seen from the mental side only. We see the pillar over there to our right, we have found the relation here within our mind alone.

Critical questions: As briefly as possible we have tried to show what the ancients meant by the category of real relation. Still remaining in this ancient frame of reason, let us pose two questions only and see if the classical system can answer them. First, how is it possible that the category of relation can include such diverse elements in a single unity? To this the ancients would answer: The unity of the categories stems first from things and from the ultimate reality of that which is most real outside our mind. Both mutual

and non-mutual relations at least involve things whether they be fire and wood or simply man and pillar. Because it makes all things to be real, the grounding act of reference can also make relations to be real, and it is only insofar as this comes to pass that we are permitted to include them both in a single category. Thus, far the ancient answer. But a second question still bothers us. How can a non-mutual relation be said from the mind's side to inhere in a real thing, if from the thing's side there is no real inherence? To this the ancient would give a surprisingly direct answer; a relation is not a relation because it inheres but because the grounding act of reference has already referred it outward toward its extremes, such that to ask about inherence in such a case would be meaningless.

Now since both of the above solutions base themselves, it is here alone where we must look for a final answer and it is precisely here where the traditional system fails. For it is not made clear whether the grounding act is a mental or a real act. It seems to be neither, since it passes through both mental and real situations; but even the ancients would admit that an act is either real or mental or it is nothing. At this point the classical clincher has always been that that which is mental and that which is real are identifiable within the pure act of Being Itself. But this cannot be used for the special argument we have raised here because such a concept involves a mental relation of identity. To explain real relations in terms of mental relations involves, as the ancients themselves pointed out, the fallacy of infinite regress. Multiplying mental relation in our mind can tell us nothing about where real relations themselves come from. It would be better to simply put in suspension all these higher modes of thought and attempt to return to the roots of the real relations within the realm of primary human experience. By doing so, we do not leave ourselves entirely in the dark. We have already found out some essential characteristics of the grounding act itself. We know, for example that it seems to involve two distinct levels of dynamic, reference a relative level of determining a relation as real, and a higher level of the absolute presence of the relation itself as such, wherein the relation cannot be further determined as either mental or real. In the given instance of seeing a fire or a pillar, these two levels were not directly available within experience, but they certainly were being lived through as two components of a dynamic union of referred extremes. Following thus this more immediate line of approach, we may ask, "Is there any deeply lived-through experience in ordinary life wherein this profound continuity of referred forms can be found

in such a way that the real relations sustained can be openly and finally seen from the deep root of their source in the grounding act of reference? Can there actually be any daily lived-through events of human life that possess the unfolding power to originate from the double-levelled ground all possible real relations able to be experienced? Recent research in existential phenomenology seems to have discovered something akin to such a profound force in the phenomenon of what they call Being-face-to-face. At least in regard to the quality which a human face has of presiding over the most intricate relational configurations of grounded form in the world, the face can surely be said to perform a function of absolute presence of not yet determined ordering out to a corresponding extreme. Let it be noted here that when I use the phrase, *being-face-to-face* I'm not referring to objective spatial position as when we say that one wall faces another or that a house is face-to-face with another house across the street. Nor am I speaking of the abstracted form of the face as if it were now included among many other pure forms of experience in a vast system of personalism which I now wish to expound. It is exactly mental wandering that obscures what we are most looking for in regard to the source of real relations themselves. And finally I am not speaking of some new anthropological theory of kinship relations based on empirical research, for during the whole course of our life we rarely if ever offer our daily experience of being face-to-face as an isolated object for science to study. It is rather the deeply lived-through phenomenon of being face-to-face itself which has now caught our attention and we wish now to describe as it actually passes through and sustains all relative forms of experience. We wish to uncover this phenomenon now as the sole source of the grounding act of reference. Hints toward such a philosophical truth can only be given here in an outline fashion, and it should be understood that much painstaking work needs to be done in this direction before such a truth can be made firm with adequate philosophical clarity. The following statements are a sketch toward such an attempt.

First of all, Being-face-to-face seems to bring forth and sustain the continuity of real relations to such a degree that their solitary experience appears to be of an altogether lower order. One need only refer to the example of a father talking to his son to see this with trenchant clarity. The real and lived-through relation involved as a decisive continuity of physical generation and social affinity manifests itself as even more real than the burning power of fire.

A mother's power in a family often is less felt as an interior force and resides more in the lived-through way in which her face cherishes the faces of her children. Face-to-face speaking and listening bears perfect witness both to the paradox of absolute presences that cannot be further determined as either mental or real, as well as to the bringing forth of real relations of the most complex imaginable kind which are nevertheless immediately understood. The problem of mutually real and non-mutual real relations thus seems to be held and solved in a single look. Even the sometimes solitary actions of working and eating, which as real relations seem less bound to the phenomenon in question, are, while yet being done alone, still reside in a lower modal form of being face to face, within what might be called being absent from a face which is most loved. A very good case can be made for eating, for example, for there is something in the solitary experience which awaits the being taken up and held close, the way in which the face-to-face phenomenon seems to be able to sustain the towardness involved. And even when we set aside the relative level of the grounding act of reference, and consider the more philosophical problem involved at the higher level of an absolute presence where the relation sustained can no longer be determined as either mental or real, there seems to be something in the actual way in which face-to-face encounters unfold themselves that presides from the realm of a height before it comes down to speak, and whatever it is, and prescinding from whether it can ever be made philosophically clear, it at least appears to correspond with that which has not yet determined itself further as either mental or real. A somewhat direct proof for this can be given as follows: What is involved in Being-face-to-face is the object "I" that is looking and the object "This person," "He who is looking at me." What actually takes place can never be accurately described as if there were two isolated mental systems unfolding their mental relations outward into a third and higher level of relations that can never be further described. Rather, the pure opposite is the case. We always enter into a relationship of being face to face with the notion that if I do not let him speak, then what he says will be absolutely lost once and for all. There can be no third final spectator to this experience as it is actually lived through. Whenever I try to view myself and the other person as objects of a higher system of clarity, then the entire

phenomenon vanishes, because it is no longer I, right here and now who am looking at him, nor he this person here and now who is being seen. The case stands I think as finally proven as a philosophical truth that cannot be controverted: The grounding act of reference that originates and sustains all possible real relations able to be experienced is nothing other than the actual phenomenon of Being face-to-face.

S. Shankar Raju Naidu

SUPREME SOUND THE ULTIMATE REALITY:

"Sound has created three worlds and the entire universe. From sound has emanated the endless illusion. Glory of sound cannot be adequately described ...Realise that sound is the beginning and end of all." So proclaims Soamiji Maharaj, the Great nineteenth century mystic saint of India (*Sar Bachan* IX—2, 3). This view is further explained by his successor as follows :—

"Sound has spread the Light everywhere. It is the creation and the Creator" (*Prem Bauji*—Part III : IV—21-1). Bible under the Gospel according to St. John in the *New Testament* begins with this very significant statement : "In the beginning was the word and the word was with God, and the Word was God."

According to *Sanatana-Dharma*, *Śabda-Brahma* or *Nāda-Brahma* i.e., the Supreme Sound, is said to be the beginning, the middle and the end of all that exists and is said to be the ultimate Reality.

This introduction is just a pointer towards the title of my paper 'Supreme Sound : the Ultimate Reality'.

I

One of the gems of human thought categorising the various levels of the manifestation of the Supreme Reality glitters as follows :

"God sleeps in stones, wakes in plant, walks in animals and thinks in man." It may well be stated in explanation of the same that God manifests Himself as sleeping stones or inorganic entities, walking plants or organic entities, walking animals or living entities and thinking men or conscious and self-conscious entities. It may be inferred that the subtlest faculty of God-manifestation is 'thought', with which one can realise, to a certain extent, the Reality—Reality being "what is unvarying in and constant in the midst of what are varying

and inconstant.”¹ It is this ‘thought’ which has given us a scientific or intellectual ratiocination called epistemology to understand the theories of knowledge. One may take to ‘Authoritarianism’ and accept the great classical statements of ancient personages and works, trusting them to be the ‘voice of God’ due to continued faith of people. Another may adopt the theory of ‘Empiricism’ depending on experiences and observation of a series of sensations either internal or external. Yet another may turn to ‘Scepticism’ entirely denying or doubting the credibility of knowledge taking this too earnestly as a reliable method to realise the truth. Some may regard ‘Pure Reason’ as the only source of knowledge and adhere to ‘Rationalism’ stipulating a formula ‘*Cogito, ergo sum*’ i.e., ‘I think therefore I am’ and holding that senses not only are incapable of positive efficacy but have a negative value in the determination of the validity of knowledge. These and various other theories have quenched the thirst for knowledge only to a certain extent. There is, however, yet another way of getting the knowledge of the real—a direct and a secret method. It is said to be mysterious, and hence called ‘mysticism’. Here occultism plays an important role not excluding the former modes of epistemology, as they too largely depend upon direct awareness or experience, the only aim being the realisation of the ‘self, God or substance, viz., that supernatural entity which transcends the phenomenal world’. The mystic endeavours to approach the ultimate Reality through proper understanding, persistent concentration, pointed contemplation and unadulterated conviction with internal meditation as the chief means.

It is termed *asparśa yoga* in Vedānta, *bhāvana mārṅa* in Buddhism, Sufi Cult in Islam, ‘*ajapa jap*’ in Sikhism and *śabda-yoga* in the religion of saints. With mysticism, “a sympathetic contact with things for an understanding of their real nature” is also adopted, which is the basis for ‘Intuitionism’, because Reality is “essentially a process, and everywhere manifesting unique wholeness which cannot be understood in terms of parts.”² Consequently mystics and intuitionists believe in a ‘direct, face to face and heart to heart contact with the dynamic reality’, and await the knowledge and realisation to ‘spontaneously flow’ so that both *phenomena* and *noumena* get clarified.

II

According to the various systems of epistemology of the orient and the occident, “each experience or observation is true in its own place”,³ notwithstanding the fact that the Supreme Reality is one and only one. Reality should have and therefore has manifested in various levels differing in expression and potentiality. As already stated, for a stone, sleeping and only sleeping is the reality. Waking and sleep-

ing are for plants, whereas walking, waking and sleeping are the three realities for animals. The abilities to think and to know to reason out and to meditate are given only to man to enjoy. This is evident also from the fact that evolution has taken its strides gradually, the order again being stone or earth i.e., mineral kingdom, plant or vegetable kingdom, animal or organic kingdom and the human kingdom. Consequently, reality and its effects change according to situations and areas, yielding to various gradations or stages of (God) manifestation.

(A) In the area of art, there are two divisions — Utilitarian arts and fine arts. The former is gross in nature and the latter is subtler. Fine arts are further divided into two categories — visual and auditory, the latter being subtler. Among the auditory fine arts literature and music, music is subtler as its *modus operandi* for expression is only sound. All arts aspire towards the condition of music, so says Waler. Peter. Here Reality exhibits its true nature in an evolutionary process starting from architecture and rising gradually to sculpture and painting, blossoming in literature with language as the means and finally culminating in music.

(B) Water is an indispensable thing of daily usage for survival. It becomes a solid in ice, and a gas in vapour. So Reality, it may be stated, manifests itself in solid, liquid and gaseous forms in the same thing which, if further divided, would yield two atoms of hydrogen and one atom of oxygen in every one of its molecules. Oxygen is a life-giving agent and hydrogen yields dangerously destructive bombs. The atoms are further divided not only into protons and electrons but finally into waves of electrical energy. In each stage, the same reality expresses itself in ever-varying forms and effects.

(C) Sodium and chlorine individually are poisons to men and living organisms, by nature. But if the two combine in the ratio of 23.3 and 35.5 atomic weights forming NaCl i.e., sodium chloride which is only common salt, it becomes an essential ingredient of our food. So Reality is also relative inasmuch as the parts of the same thing may be poisonous and the compound of two parts may be indispensable for the existence of men. Reality changes in expression and effect according to stages and situations.

(D) It is common knowledge that the meaning of a sentence cannot be arrived at by adding the meanings of the words which constitute the sentence.⁴ But at the morphological level, the word or morph is certainly meaningful and real as is 'phone' at the phonological or phonetic level and taxeme at the syntactic level. That is why J.F. Stall

has rightly stated, "The mental representations of reality themselves are different, for the language structure segments reality in a different way in each case."⁵

(E) A tree consists of roots, trunk, branches, leaves, flowers, fruits all having come from a small seed. All these aspects are manifestation, of the same reality with differences in name, form and qualities i.e.s āma, rūpa and guṇa.

Several such examples can be given to justify that Reality manifests in multifarious stages and ways adopting and adjusting itself to environments.

III

While Reality manifests itself in multifarious stages and ways, it is but proper to observe, analyse and thus search for the Ultimate Reality and its nature as the various theories of knowledge do. This is an ntological problem.

Very many thinkers observe that the ultimate stuff or Substance was *One* either in some material entity like water, air, fire, energy or in some psychical or spiritual entity like idea, spirit. The former is called *materialistic monism* and has been postulated by philosophers like Thales, Democritus, Lucretius and Haeckel, stating that the world is reducible to material elements and their laws. The latter is called *Idealistic or spiritualistic monism* and has been postulated by philosopher like (a) Plato, 'with his moral striving after ideals and higher values (b) Berkeley, implementing subjective idealism suggesting that the "world itself is a cluster of perceptions", (c) Leibniz with his *principle of pre-established harmony* establishing a new theory of infinite number of eternal monads under inorganic, organic, animal and human categories taking God as the Supreme Monad, (d) Ward, Paulson, Strong and others with pan-psychism asserting the universal presence of the mind, (e) Kant, Schopenhauer and others who reasoned that a universal and an Absolute will was the ultimate Reality, designating their theory as voluntaristic idealism. (f) Fichte, Schelling, Hegel and their followers who took Reason as Essence, as the the Reality or God or Logos and the Ultimate Goal', (g) Green, Bosanquet, Royce, Mary Calkins and other taking to spiritual rational, intellectual reasoning' with some kind of organic harmonious unity in the apparently visible diversity. This again seems to be the modern English and American idealism—leading to personalism.

There are also a few more theories of idealistic monism but all are based on the specific understanding that what we are able to observe are only phenomena or appearances and not noumena, i.e. things-in-them-

selves. All our experiences, they maintain, are only 'through our mind's own glasses'. This corresponds to the Advaita Siddhānta or non-dualistic school of Indian philosophy, established by Gauḍapāda Śaṅkara and others. Some thinkers are led to infer that it is not one but two that ultimately and eternally exist—mind and matter—and that these two are totally irreducible, fundamental realities, but one influencing the other. Descartes called it metaphysical dualism in his famous work *Meditations*, stating that the essence of matter was extension, that of mind was thought. He believed that soul and mind are the two names of the same thing. Later, Malabranche stressed the same theory but with a different connotation calling it Occasionalism and stating that 'mental activity was an occasion for a physical activity and vice versa, with the intervention of God.' This to a certain extent, falls in line with the Supreme-Monad theory of Leibniz, but differs from it in essence because in Leibniz, every one of the monads of each category has the potency to realise, reflect and finally raise itself to the Supreme level, whereas the two are eternally distinct and irreducible in dualism. Dualism, to a large extent, corresponds to the Dvaita Siddhānta or dualistic school of Indian philosophy propounded by Madhva and others.

Epistemology leads us to another unique theory called Neutralism which was advocated by Spinoza, the follower of Descartes. Neutralists maintain that ultimate reality consists of a stuff which is common to mind and matter and reflecting the two eternally. He calls this stuff *Substance* and explains his theory with an arc which has the convex and the concave in itself as inseparable modes of manifestation. Mind and matter, according to Spinoza, cannot be separated from the Substance just as the concave and the convex sides cannot be separated from the arc. He however, admits that 'mind and matter are appearances or aspects of this original substance which is the One, the First and Final Reality.' It is God, Arc, who manifests as matter and mind simultaneously as two different aspects of the universal Reality. This theory is also called 'double aspect theory' or 'identity hypothesis'.

There is yet another school of thought which partly agreed with the 'double aspect theory' and regarded that mind and matter never meet but run parallel to each other eternally, and called it *psycho-physical parallelism*. This school of thought maintains that 'with every psychosis goes a neurosis and *vice versa*', and the two simultaneously exist and just exist without a third force coming into play.

Though this theory of identity hypothesis' does not in any way come near the Śaiva-Siddhānta school of *Paśu-Pati-Pāśam*, as explained by very many Śaiva saints including Meikkaṇḍār in his *Śivaiṇāna*

Bodham, it does show some similarities as God, soul and matter as three eternal entities are concerned. The relationship between God and soul is very intimate in the Śaiva-Siddhānta system. 'This intimate relationship is not at all contemplated in the identity hypothesis or any other school, dualism or pluralism.

There are quite a number of philosophers who consider that many entities really exist eternally and any of them can never be merged with any other entity. They believe in the ultimate existence of the plurality of original things, irreducible to one another. Some consider these things to be material in nature and are known as materialistic pluralists whereas those who consider them to be psychic are known as idealistic pluralists.

Empedocles took earth, water, fire and air as ultimately irreducible elements, distinct from each other. Even in Indian philosophy a school of thought believed in the five elements including ether with the above four as the final stuff. Even Democritus took the physical atoms of his 'only final matter' as irreducible and as such comes under materialistic pluralism also.

On the other hand, Plato with this theory of eternal 'ideas and patterns, independent of each other', is regarded as belonging to the school of idealistic pluralism. Even Leibniz because of his different monads and the Supreme Monad, each independent of the rest, may be considered to be an idealistic pluralist. Truly speaking, he is, because of his 'principle of pre-established harmony', a 'numerical pluralist and qualitative monist.' William James, basing his logic on the well established theory of evolution, is led to conceive of a 'pluralistic universe', or a 'block-universe' with 'irreconcilable attributes and activities of things and minds'. Bringing in a reconciliation therein Badley explains his pluralistic conception as 'many in one and one in many', as the seed yielding roots, trunk, branches, leaves, flowers, fruits and seeds, which again yield the same things in a cyclic order.

There is yet another theory called neo-realism under pluralism, which considers the final entities subsistences rather than as 'existences', and takes them to be neither mental nor physical. Patrik, as a strong protagonist of this theory, feels convinced about the 'processes of reason, based on logical principles, and states that entities like numbers, space, time, justice, beauty, truth etc., cannot be reduced to One, and also that at each level of evolution, more and more of such entities will go on increasing'. According to Patrik it is needless

and impossible to arrive at a considered view of final reality. He is of the firm belief that New Realism frees us from the tyranny of matter, of evolution and of God.

Finally modern physics also offers its opinion on an empirical study and states that 'the floor is, in reality a cloud of dancing electrons but on the outside it appears to us all a solid body.' This is in tune with the latest theory of behaviouristic epiphenomenalism of mind and brain matter.

We can observe, from what has been stated above regarding various categories of thought and theories of Reality, that each is acceptable to a certain extent from the standpoint of its own epistemological enquiry. However, there are certain gaps which need to be understood and then filled in. The primary gap is between the inorganic and the organic entities of life, and suggests the problem of the emergence of life. The gap between the conscious animal and the thinking man is more mysterious. Here it is worth mentioning that man has greater faculties than mere intellection as has been subjectively realised and demonstrated through occultism. There are ever so many regions of consciousness apprehended by great many mystics of India and outside; they point to the still greater and subtler gaps which are beyond normal human cognition.

Now Reality is certainly that which is not unreal. As I have explained earlier, reality changes in name, form and effect according to situations and stages. Judged from this point of view, nothing is unreal, however absurd in conception. Lord Krishna says in the *Bhagavadgītā*, "I am the gambling of the gambler." We may however say that "the fourth angle of a triangle is unreal. But this is merely a loose use of the term unreal."⁷ It reminds one of the fallacy underlying the question to a gentleman, "Have you stopped beating your wife?" So also when a man mistakes a rope for a snake, he labours under a fallacy. Thus, Reality is not that which it appears to be. Real gold is and appears to be real gold, and artificial gold is artificial but appears to be real gold. During day light the snake disappears and we find only the rope, even as a touch-stone brings out the genuineness or artificiality of the gold. Only the real exists in the beginning, middle and end too. The real never changes and continues to exist for ever.

Just like the above mentioned philosophers, there have also been mystics who, after direct observation, analysis and synthesis of internal and external things, physical, mental, intellectual and spiritual, have given out their personal experiences. The expositions of such mystics go

a long way in helping us to contemplate, understand and realise the reality or *noumena* or things-in-themselves, setting aside the *phenomena*. From their utterances, we can try to get the knowledge of the real, as has been tried from what has been said by the philosophers mentioned earlier. It must, however, be understood that the category of mysticism stands on an entirely different footing. The mystic bases his observations and views more on mystical intuition than on physical, mental and intellectual 'premises'.

According to mysticism, Reality can be realised only when one leaves the unreal. The more one gets away from the unreal, the more will he have the perception of the real. To realise the source of a tree, one must, for the time being of course, forsake the tasty fruit, the odourous and beautiful flower, the cool green leaves, the beneficial wood and dig at the root of it and go further to arrive at the desired aim. So also, to realise Reality, say the saints, one must dig deep into his own self, correlate the inner with the outer and arrive at the real thing-in-itself. The *Kena Upanisad* in its fourth verse of Part II says, "...The knowledge of the pure form of the spirit cannot be obtained through the mind. It is only the Ātman that can know itself."

After an extensive search outside and a deep research inside, both oriental and occidental mystics have come to the conclusion that the entire creation has come into being by the power of 'Sound' or *nāda* or 'word' and that *śabda* or 'Sound' is the cause, sustainer and end of the whole creation⁷. But mysticism accepts that this sound which contains in itself all the faculties of all the species, high and low, organic and inorganic, is ever reverberating in various magnitudes in things, seen and unseen, intelligence being its inherent quality. It is this that is specifically mentioned in the 6th chapter of the *Maitri Upaniṣad* as 'Śabda Brahma'. So also Hazrat Maulana Sheikh Mohammad Akram Sabiri states in his renowned work, *Iqtabāsul Anvar* that spiritual sound manifested itself within prophet Mohammad from the age of 25⁸, and later the Sufi mystics followed the same Sultan-Ul-Azkar or *Śabda-yogī*. Again in the *Toṇḍya Brāhmaṇa* of the *Sāma Veda* it is stated, "All the wealth of Prajāpati consisted only of sound. If he had a second, it was none other than the Sound. He thought that he should bring forth or create the sound. It would then manifest all his nature. Having thus decided he manifested the Sound."⁹

The *Satapātha-Brāhmaṇa* considers Gods as 'merely sound'; *Gopātha Brāhmaṇa* refers to Sound as a Deity; the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* regards Sound as a womb or the source of Creation and the *Brahadāranyaka*

Upaniṣad says—"He (Death or Kāla Puruṣa) at the beginning of creation wished that his second body might be created, and then, he brought forth Sound from inside himself and took and loved it as his wife.... Then Death turned towards it and opened his mouth and the latter (sound) uttered the sound *bhā*. The same was sound."¹⁰

In Vagambhrinīya Sūkta of *Ṛg Veda*, the importance of sound is very forceful. The sound itself expresses, "All the deities have their abode in me: I am supporting them all; it is I who am moving the whole creation; it is I who am imparting impulse to everything that is going on; all knowledge, all actions, are being inspired by me." It further adds, "It is I who created all the spheres of creation and all the bodies of living beings and it is I who am permeating the bodies of their vital force and the whole world like the air everywhere in a special and complete manner. And it is I who living beyond the sun etc. and also beyond this earth, i.e., existing from before the creation of these, by virtue of my great power of *mahat śakti*, am now manifesting myself in a complete manner after giving shape to Creation on such a large scale."¹¹

It is on the personal observation and experience that the same sentiment has been expressed with conviction without any element of doubt as follows by the Master Saint Soamiji Maharaj of the 19th century:—

"Sound has created the entire Triloki,
From sound has endless *Māyā* emerged.

.....

Sound has produced the Jīva and Brahma,
From Sound have sprung the Moon and the Sun.

.....

Sound fills everything and nothing is without it,
Sound is filling all space and all places;
Glory of Sound cannot be adequately described."¹²

His fifth successor, Sir Sahabji Maharaj further states that Sound is the 'Supreme Reservoir of spirituality' and that 'every manifestation of energy is accompanied by sound'¹³. He also points towards the 'Law of Harmony of Sounds' due to which God-manifestation emerges itself at various levels with various names, forms and effects.

Madam Blavatsky one of the founders of the Theosophical society also refers to the sound in several categories. She says—"Before thou set'st thy foot upon the ladder's upper rung, the ladder of the mystic sounds, thou has to hear the voice of the inner God (the Higher self)

in seven manners",¹⁴ the seven being those of Nightingale, Cymbol, Shell, Vīṇa, flute, trumpet and seventh thunder¹⁵, followed by the 'Soundless sound or the voice of the silence, the spiritual sound or Nāda'. She mentions that 'the seventh swallows all the sounds'. She also states, "Thou art the light in the sound and the sound in the light."¹⁶ She explains it as "the voice unbroken, that sounds through eternities exempt from change, from sin exempt, the seven sounds in one the voice of the silence." *Tirumandiram* of Tirumūlar, the ancient Tamil mystic also refers to the *daṣa nāda*, the ten sounds.¹⁷ It may be worthwhile to mention here that every one of the higher sounds absorbs within itself the lower sounds and at the end of the seventh, all the seven sounds are absorbed into one to yield the 'voice of the silence', just as the quick combination of the seven colours of the rainbow, when swiftly rotated in a Newton's disc, yields the 'colourless colour', white.

The sound and sounds about which we have been talking of, are not sounds of the physical or even the mental type. Sounds are of two varieties. *Ahat* and *Anahat*. *Ahat* is that which is produced by striking one thing over the other, like the sound of speech, earthly music or any other sounds that we hear with ears ordinarily in our day to day life. *Anahat* is that which manifests itself automatically without any striking and by resounding by itself, is capable of being heard only by the inner ear. Again, sounds can be categorised into two classes based on their effects:

- (1) the spiritual sound, which has an inward tendency.
- (2) the material and mental sound whose tendency is of an opposite character.¹⁸

The sounds that could be heard by the inner ear belong to the *anahat* and spiritual cadre. This sound in its supreme form, which is truly formless, infinite and unlimited, is the essence of the Creator and Protector of the entire creation. It is this sound which, 'at some stage, assumed colour, form and outline and then, downwards from there, the creation of forms began and has continued and much further down, a great variety of forms appeared.'¹⁹ It is Sound which is responsible for good qualities like love knowledge, intelligence, understanding and faith and again it is sound itself which produces jealousy, opposition and other evil tendencies too.²⁰ Thus it is clear that according to mysticism it is the Supreme Sound which is the beginning middle and end of all that exists, truly or otherwise.

We shall now endeavour to arrive at the true ultimate sound. It is certainly true that even a sound of a bell cannot be reproduced by a human vocal organ exactly like the original. We simply denote it as ding-dong of the bell or tintinnabulation of the ringing. Therefore it is indispensable to use certain representative characters for imitating such sounds to the nearest, in articulate speech. The Supreme Sound being the Word with God, and the God Himself wherefrom all creation manifested, should have, as the mystics say, two phases — centrifugal, the outgoing or creative and centripetal, the incoming or the attractive.²¹ Truly this sound, which in essence, is a current composed of vibrations, is resounding everywhere at all times.

When we analyse the attributes of this Sound, it is evident that it should be a 'Word' or 'Supreme Nāda' containing all the sounds in itself. It should be a consolidated sound of all sounds, a composite 'Word' outside which no sound could exist. Such a word, it can be easily concluded, should begin with that sound which has the 'most pronounced vibration' among all that could possibly be articulated, particularly because it is initial and centrifugal in nature. The sound with which the 'Word' should finish should be that which has the minimum of vibrations, possibly a zero vibration.

By a careful study of all the sounds it can well be observed that "the sound 'R' is one which is produced by the most pronounced vibration of the tongue." Consequently "this letter-sound must be used in the first place for the purpose of imitation in articulate speech of the sound accompanying the action of a spirit current at any point which is one of tremor."²²

The word, as already stated, becomes the 'voice of the silence' at the end and hence the 'Word' should end with that sound which has the least vibration in articulate speech. Out of all the sounds it is only the bi-labial 'M' which is expressed with the mouth completely closed. So it is but proper that we conclude that the 'Word' should begin with 'R' and end with 'M'. Surprisingly Kabirdas, the greatest of mystics of the 15th century, has specifically mentioned such a name or Word with the above qualities and stated that it is a secret of secrets. He has pronounced the Name 'Ram' with a vowel 'A' in between the two for easy articulation.

It may be argued further that the complete 'Word' should offer a representative sound to express that stretch of current which spreads with

a blast and comes into contact with all the creation or throws the entire creation into existence. This should be the second and final phase of the centrifugal current before it returns to its original centre. Such a sound in articulate speech, also should have the same features. When we analyse all the articulated sounds of our speech, we observe that it is 't' which has the maximum contact of the tongue with the palate at the point of articulation. This sound, being still contrifugal, should also contain the maximum vibration and force. When 't' is attributed with these two features, i.e., voicing and aspiration as they are termed in linguistics, it becomes 'd' and 'dh' respectively. Thus it is but accurate if 'R' is followed by 'Dh'.

Coming again to the centripetal aspect of the 'Word', we can easily conclude that this great blast of sound should return in two stages. It should represent, at its first stage, through the nearest articulate speech, that aspect which draws the entire manifestation inwardly and ends in silence, as already stated with M. In order to find out that sound which is produced by the inward attraction, we can experiment by forcefully despatching pressurised air through a small hole, say, in a thick glass plate, and listening to it from the opposite side. We will then clearly hear a hissing sibilant 'S'. So if we decide that 'S' should follow 'Dh', it will be only proper. This sound 'S' produced after R and Dh finally merges into original centre with a sound, the representation of which has already been considered to be M.

Thus, a stretch of sounds in the order of R, Dh, S and M "are accordingly the nearest approach in articulate speech of the subtle accompanying the action of the spirit current."

This is also in consonance with the famous statement of Kabir wherein it is specifically and categorically mentioned "Kabir saith, the true spiritual guide has shown the current (*Dhara*) of the Inaccessible, transpose it (as Radha), affix it to 'SOAMI' and then go on repeating the 'Word' so formed. Here, necessary vowels have been aptly added to each, according to their nature.

If may be observed that 'SOAMI' (SO + AM + I) which is the word representing the entire centripetalcurrent is an extension of 'OM', the 'śabda Crahma' mentioned in *Maitrī Upanisad* and 'SOHAM' is said to have been heard by great mystic like Kabir Sahab, Guru Nanak and others in the highest of spiritual regions during their meditation. So also 'RADHA' is the word representing the entire contrifugal

current and is an extension of the 'Rīnkāra' sound mentioned by the same mystics in the same manner. Hence Somaji Maharaj proclaims without any shadow of doubt or confusion—"Ra-DHA-SOA-MI is a name with such an infinite potentiality that no one is aware of its secret...This alone is the True Name of the Supreme Being."²⁴

Thus the Supreme sound in its complete form is RA-DHA-SOA-MI' and is the Ultimate Reality.

"Beyond all is this Reservoir of Sound (RA-DHA-SOA-MI) with its four essential attributes which is the cause of spirit and of the entire creation and has the form of Highest Caitanya, greatest Bliss and Perfect Love."

"This sound (RA-DHA-SOA-MI) is self-existent, all Intelligent and ever Blissful."

NOTES

1. T. M. P. Mahadevan, 'Values and Reality: A Comparative Study' in *International Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. VI. No. 1, March 1966, p. 28.
2. P. M. Bhambhani, *Manual of Metaphysics*, p. 238.
3. 'satyam iti yadrūperā'—Sri Śaṅkara.
4. J. F. Stall, 'Philosophy and Language' in *Essays in Philosophy* (Madras : Ganesh & Co.,) p. 15.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 14.
6. G. R. Malkani, *A Study of Reality*, p. 13.
7. Somaji Maharaj, *Sar-Bachan*—ix 2, 3.
8. Sri Sahabji, Maharaj. *Yathartha Prakast*, p. I, p. 39.
9. *Tondya Brāhmaṇa*, 20, 14, 2.
10. *Bṛahadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, 1, 2, 4.
11. 8th Mantra of *Vagambhriniya Sūkta* Rg-Veda 10. 125 : *Atharva-Veda*, 4, 30.
12. *Sar-Bachan*, ix 2'3.
13. Sri Sahabji Maharaj, *op. cit.*, ch. 6.
14. H. P. Blavatsky, *The Voice of the Silence*, p. 24.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 180.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 37.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 39.
18. Maharaj Sahab, *Discourses on Radhaswami Faith*, p. 37.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 59.
20. Huzur Maharaj, *Prem Patra*, pt. V. p. 20.
21. Sir Sahabji Maharaj, *op. cit.*, pt. I, echs. 6 & 7.
22. Maharaj Sahab, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

PART TWO

PROCEEDINGS OF THE SEMINAR
ON
SOUTH INDIAN MYSTICISM

K. Seshadri

MYSTICAL DIMENSIONS OF
ANDAL'S TIRUPPĀVAI

Mysticism has scaled heights and plumbed depths that are inaccessible to ordinary human understanding and common sense-perception. The mystics have helped not only in deepening and heightening human awareness and sensitivity but also in the expansion of human consciousness, revealing ever-fresh horizons across the boundaries and leading the soul into the infinite vastnesses of the spirit. The *Tiruppāvai* of Āṇḍāl, a classical composition of thirty stanzas in chaste Tamil, occupies a significant place in the mystical literature of South India and would provide excellent specimens of these as well as other dimensions of mystical thought and expression. Āṇḍāl is reckoned as one among the great ālvārs, described as “divers” in the waters of God-experience, and the *Tiruppāvai* is part of the “Divya Prabandhas” which are spontaneous song-effusions flowing from the purity and plenitude of the Spirit. The mysticism of the *Tiruppāvai* is rich with esoteric symbolism and insightful profundities of traditional religion.

The roots of religion lie deep in experience. This is true not only of the dawn of religious consciousness in man, when, responding apparently to the beauty and splendour of Nature, man felt the presence all around of a Divine Power and Grace, but also of the most profound and intimate experience (or “imperience”) of the spirit. Religious experience is essentially spiritual experience, whether the initial impact

is from without or from within ; and it is characterised by a spontaneous overflow of powerful feeling, which accounts for the poetic sublimity of all mystical expression. The plenitude and spontaneity of the experience renders expression of some kind or other urgent and irrepressible. Song and ritual are prominent among such forms. Other forms are less obvious and more occult or subtle, having hardly emerged from the subjective-conceptual level. The mystic, who has had "an encounter with life's most august secret" and "speaks the disconcerting language of first-hand experience", employs a variety of such forms of expression and relies for the most part on symbol and metaphor in order to embody in words the pith and substance of his experience. The symbol may suggest, but does not prove. Its purpose seems to be to induce an experience, similar to that which inspired it. It is an invitation to share in the experience rather than a demonstration of its authenticity. The expression is at best a testimony. The real test is in the experience itself. "Oh! taste and see"—the mystic would say.

Āṇḍāl's *Tiruppāvai* is at once an experience and an expression. It is an experience of the soul, sought to be conveyed symbolically through a song, whose purport lies initially in an invitation extended to fellow-devotees, kindred souls,—indeed, to one and all—to come and share in the delight of the hour of divine dawn. "நீரடப்போதுவீர் போதுமினே" is how it is addressed. It is an unconditional call to all, who may feel the longing for it. The longing, the aspiration, is the only condition or qualification. Being a 'diver' herself in the deep waters of God-experience, and knowing well the delights of shared experience Āṇḍāl sends forth the call as a universal invitation, for it is most natural for the soul to long for a union with the Over Soul, which is described generally as *Bhagavadanubhava*. And hence Āṇḍāl feels that no one should be precluded from a share in it. The *Nīrāttam* for which the call goes forth, and which ordinarily means a refreshing or exhilarating bath, or an immersion in the sacred waters for purificatory purposes, has a deeper significance in the present context. It signifies here not a mere cleansing of the body or a purification of the mind, but a profound experience of the soul. "Mārgaḷi Nīrāttam" is verily *Bhagavadanubhava*. It is through and through God-experience. Mārgaḷi indicates the season as well as its sanctity. It is the month with which the Lord identifies himself expressly in his teaching to Arjuna. As the early hour before dawn is the chosen time for the "nīrāttam", so is

the month of Mārgaḷi (*Dhanus*) the chosen season, when the sun passes through the Zodiacal sign, *Sagittarus*. “மார்கழித்திங்கள் மதிநிறைந்த நன்னாளால்” explains Āṇḍāl.

The auspiciousness of Mārgaḷi as the month par-excellence especially signifies the ascendancy of *sattva* over the other *guṇas* of nature. It is eminently suited to the practice of every kind of *sādhana* or spiritual discipline, together with austerities and vows which may have a preparatory relevance to the discipline or form part of it. The dominance of *sattva* in external or physically manifest nature indicates the provision of a favourable environment for the ascendancy of *sattva* in human nature and constitution. The world without is thus attuned to the world within. Āṇḍāl's call is an appeal to man to avail of the rare opportunity of a favourable atmosphere in the physical environment coupled with a pre-disposition of the mind in tune with it. As Mārgaḷi is unique among the months of a year, so the early hours that precede the dawn are precious among the hours of the day. Āṇḍāl sings of the superlative excellence of such an hour in the stanza that opens with the words, “சிறற்றஞ் சிறு காலே.” If “காலே” means morning and “சிறு காலே” specifies the time or the hour immediately preceding the dawn of the day, “சிறற்றஞ் சிறு காலே” pointedly signifies the time that *precedes even that early hour preceding the dawn*. That is the hour when the *sattva-guṇa* in the constitution of man is purest and uncontaminated by any trace of association with the other *guṇas*, *rajas* and *tamas* while in “காலே” and “சிறு காலே” the rise of *sattva* is limited and qualified by its association with the other *guṇas*, the absolute purity of the *sattva* is assured as a pre-condition for fruitful spiritual experience in “சிறற்றஞ் சிறு காலே”.

The formal setting of *Tiruppāvai* is in the performance of a *vrata*, the observance of a vow, described as “Mārgaḷi nonbu”. It is the occasion of a pastoral ceremony, in which a rural congregation of teen-age cowherdresses participate by way of observance of a *vrata*. The back-ground is a prosperous pastoral life. Hence the *Tiruppāvai* is often described as a pastoral poem as well as a song of the dawn. It is recited with meticulous regularity by the pious Vaiṣṇavites of South India in the early hours before dawn every day of the month of Mārgaḷi, perhaps as an adaptation of Āṇḍāl's own observance of the *vrata*, to accord with the Vaiṣṇavite faith, which recognises the intrinsi-

cally "feminine" nature of the soul in its relation to the Over Soul, the only *Puruṣa* in the ultimate sense being the *Puruṣottama* or the *Parama Puruṣa*. *Āṇḍāl*, for her part, loses herself in the love of the Lord, identifies herself with one of the cow-herdresses of the Gokulam of Sri Krishna's remote times and invites the others to join in the worship of the Lord Krishna. This is the mystic leap across the barriers of space and time.

The *Tiruppāvai* is verily the song of the dawn even as it is the song of the season. It breathes from beginning to end the spirit of the freshness and purity of the approaching dawn, the dawn of promise for the aspiring soul. The dawn does symbolise the advent of a new day in the spiritual life of a seeker-devotee. It signifies the dispelling of darkness, within and without, and the ushering in of an eternity of awakened consciousness. It is indeed the hour of awakening in a profound sense, the great hour of universal "Suprabhātam". One, who has awakened to the necessity and urgency of a transformed life in God, of a life of love in union with God, proceeds to awaken the others that are yet in a state of the soul's sleep. It gives the signal for those who have awakened in the purity of their sātṭvic nature, to lose no time in awakening the others, who may be lethargic or slothful in their tamas or charmed by the blinding momentary flashes of false dynamism of their *rajas*.

The aim of *Tiruppāvai* is the experience of God,—not in the isolation of one's own self-absorption but in an enriching participation with a community of kindred souls ; not in a passive state of contemplation but in one of alert *kaiṅkaryā*, dedicated service. The alertness of the state implies a heightened awareness of one's own *svarūpa* in relation to God. [cf., the Viśiṣṭādvaitic concept of *Śarīra-Śarīri* relation]. The vision of God and the all-absorbing experience of His infinite excellences, accompanied by the delight of dedicated service in the constant awareness of His universal presence, would seem to be the highest *puruṣārtha* as revealed in the *Tiruppāvai*. This, indeed, is the real meaning of the term *Paṇai*, by a reference to which the *Tiruppāvai* opens and, with a similar reference to the same it virtually closes. "நாராயணனே நமக்கே பறை தருவான்" is the first stanza of the poem, and "இற்றைப்பறைகொள்வானன்று காண், கோவிந்தா" is the last but one. All interpretations agree in that the deeper meaning

of *Parai* is the supreme *puruṣārtha*, which is the delight of God-experience through dedicated service. But this meaning lies occult in the first reference cited above, and becomes obvious in the final, when *Āṇḍāl* explicitly protests that it is not just a "sounding instrument" that she meant when she articulated her aspiration at the outset. Although *Parai* would signify in its gross sense an instrument for use in the ritual of a *vrata*, the whole purpose of the *vrata* in terms of a final fulfilment of the highest aspiration is what is implied in the mystic levels of the meaning of *parai*. *Āṇḍāl*'s appeal is to *Nārāyaṇa*, the Supreme Lord, and for that which He alone can give, for it is in effect an appeal for God-experience, which is God himself, the *Nārāyaṇic* consciousness, which is non-different from *Nārāyaṇa*. "எற்றைக்கும் ஏழேழ் பிறவிக் கும் உன்தன்னோடு உற்றோமேயாவோம், உனக்கே நாம் ஆட் செய்வோம்." *Parai* is the central concept of the whole poem, and its emphasis at the beginning in a superficial sense as a necessary instrument for the performance of the *vrata* and at the end in its deepest sense as a *puruṣārtha* would serve well to suggest that the poem as a whole moves from the gross to the subtle in the development of the dimensions of its meaning.

It is obviously in the light of an intimate and indissoluble union between man and God, as implied in the key-concept of *Viṣiṣṭādvaita* in terms of *Śarīra* and *Śarīrin*, that the *Tiruppāvai* is regarded as presenting a frame-work of the doctrine of the five essentials, the *arīha-pañcaka* of a philosophy of religion. The *Tiruppāvai*, as the commentaries on it point out, treats of the nature of the Supreme Being (*Paramātma-svarūpa*), the nature of the individual self (*Sva-svarūpa*), the means to be adopted by the individual for the attainment of the Supreme (*upāya*), the obstacles in the way of attainment or the factors that militate against it (*virodhi*) and the final state of consummation or fulfilment (*puruṣārtha*). The Supreme is *Nārāyaṇa* in all his manifestations, the Eternal Ruler of all the worlds and all (sentient and non-sentient). The individual forms an *aṁśa*, an integral part of the Supreme, who is the Soul of all souls and the Self of all selves. The *upāya* to be adopted is constant and unbroken awareness of the immediate presences of the Supreme as the *Antaryāmin*, through spontaneous, dedicated service to sustain it. The primary factors that militate against the attainment are *ahaṁkāra* and *mamakāra*, counterfeit egoity and narrow, futile possessiveness. The goal, as already indicated, is

the delight of God-experience in and through *kainkarya*. The ideae of *Bhakti* as both the means and the end, which is part of the teaching of Viśiṣṭādvaita, is also brought out, for devotion inspires dedicated service initially and sustains it subsequently.

Recognising Nārāyaṇa as the Supreme Being, Āṇḍāl leaves us in no doubt as to the identity of the Kṛṣṇa of her explicit and proximate devotion with the Supreme Nārāyaṇa, and sings of Him and His glory as revealed in “the doctrine of five forms” in the tradition of Śrī Vaiṣṇavism, viz., the *Para*, the *Vyūha*, the *Vibhava*, the *Antaryāmin* and the *Arcā*. As the first, He is the Lord of the *Parama Pada*, the transcendental (Eternal) Realm, and the God of Gods. In the second aspect, He is seen in the mystic vision of yogis and munis as reclining on the great serpent-couch in the spaceless vastness of “the ocean of Milk”; witness “வெள்ளத்த ரவில் துயிலமர்ந்தவித்தினை உள்ளத்துக்கொண்டு முனிவர்களும் யோகிகளும் etc., of the stanza, along with “பாற்கடலுள் பையத்துயின்ற பரமனடி பாடி” of the second stanza. The same Lord manifests Himself in a third aspect (that of *Vibhava*) through the divint incarnations like Trivikrama and Vāmana, Rāma and Kṛṣṇa. The glories of these incarnations are successively sung by Āṇḍāl in the *Tiruppāvai*. Expressions like “ஓங்கி உலகளந்த உத்தமன்,” “மாயனை மன்னு வடமதுரை மைந்தனை” and “தென்னிலங்கைக்கோ மானைச் சென்ற மனதுக்கினியானை,”—to mention a few at random—show that Āṇḍāl’s devotions implied or admitted no real difference between one manifestation or incarnation and another. That she recognised the fourth aspect of the *Antaryāmin*, as well, could well be seen in the very lines cited earlier to illustrate the *Vyūha* aspect. This is further emphasised in the concluding lines of the sixth stanza already referred to : “மெள்ள எழுந்து அரியென்ற பேரரவம் உள்ளம் புகுந்து குளிரந்தேலோ ரெம்பாவாய்.” It is not so much the verbal articulation of the Lord’s perennial name, or His limitless glory, that really matters. It is the miracle wrought by its “soft entry” into the recesses of the mind and heart of the devotee and its profoundly soothing pervasiveness that is of paramount importance. This, indeed, is an unmistakable accent on inwardness, which is the primary secret of the mystic way. As for the fifth aspect of *Arcā*, the entire poem takes its rise from the “வடபெரும் கோயில் எம்பெருமான்.” and the whole course of its flow is sustained by an undercurrent of relevance to the presiding deity in the local shrine of Srivilliputtur, the birth-place of Āṇḍāl and the earthly scene

of Āṇḍāl's life of devotion and dedication. The five principal aspects of Divine manifestation are fully comprehended in the *Tiruppāvai*;—sometimes, it is a particular aspect that is brought to the forefront in a certain stanza, sometimes it is two or more of these aspects; but Āṇḍāl's spiritual moorings are well-defined and firmly rooted in the ontology and metaphysics of Viśiṣṭādvāita and in the theology of Śrī Vaiṣṇava tradition, though as a mystic of superior inspiration and excellence her utterances would very well accommodate other approaches from other moorings, as well.

The *Tiruppāvai* has also been appropriately described as a poem of arousal or awakening alongside the description of it as a song of the season or a poem of the dawn. The arousal reveals a movement of consciousness from the outer to the inner dimensions. The advance is through a series of concentric circles and from the periphery to the centre. The psychic centre of man is in the soul, which supports from within both mind and body. Viśiṣṭādvaita's special emphasis is on a deeper centre in a further dimension, and it is this that is identified as God, as Kṛṣṇa and Nārāyaṇa by the mystic devotee, Āṇḍāl. The awakening or arousal reaches down to these depths in the light of the *antaryāmitva* of the Soul of souls. And as the Soul of souls is also the Self of all selves, the approach to the realisation of the *Antaryāmin* in the in-most depths of one's own being would be of special significance and utmost relevance to the core and essence of the message of *Tiruppāvai*. The role of arousal or awakening (“*துயிலெழாய்*,” அறிவுருய்”) is seen in two dimensions—first, when Āṇḍāl, having issued the clarion call follows it up with a round of personal persuasion from friend to friend, from devotee to devotee, moving literally from house to house, so as to draw everyone in the vicinity into the swelling stream of devotion flowing God-ward; and next, having reached the very precincts of the abode of Śrī Kṛṣṇa pursues the process by a progressive arousal of the guard at the threshold (“*நந்தகோபனுடைய கோயில் காப்பானே*” and “*மணிக்கதவம் தாள் திறவாய்*”), then Yaśoda described as “*எம்பெருமாட்டி*” then “*உம்பர்கோமான்*” Baladeva, the brother of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, then Nappinnai, the Lord's spouse and finally the Lord Himself. This is the movement, which I would identify as a progress towards the Centre through a series of concentric circles, securing a deepening of consciousness and a concentration of it in the Centre marking the union of the soul and the Over Soul or a final self-

awakening of the soul in the centre of Being. I shall not venture to develop this idea further within the limited compass of the *Tiruppāvai*. I shall be content to say that the *Tiruppāvai* as a spontaneous outpouring of an aspiring soul would satisfy the standards of mysticism, judged from any angle, and testify to the fitness of the claim that mysticism offers itself as a clearing house of faiths and philosophies. The reach and range of Āṇḍāl's mysticism is far and wide; and with it as a starting point one may well take off on a flight through the realms of world mysticism.

S. S. Raghavachar

RAMANUJA AND MYSTICISM

I

It is good to start with a working definition of mysticism. We may provisionally define it as a type of experience in which an immediate experience of a transcendent reality takes place. As it is immediate, it is to be distinguished from a speculative construction of a transcendent over of being. As it pertains to a transcendent reality, it is to be separated from the world of sense-experience, which though given in immediate experience, does not transcend the sensory realm of being. This two-field demarcation is inherent in all characterisations of mystic experience.

In the history of Indian philosophy and religion, at least three types of mystic experience have been affirmed as the goal of spiritual endeavour. We have, to start with, the type of self-realisation described in Patañjali's *Yoga-sūtra*, which consists of the immediate attainment by the self, the *puruṣa*, of its own super-physical spiritual essence emancipated from its mundane entanglement and identification with the empirical ego, constituted of the body and mind. This is the *samādhi* of the conventional *yoga* of Patañjali. It may be named soul-mysticism.

Much depends upon the conception of the Self or Soul whose attainment or recovery constitutes this *Samādhi*. If the *puruṣa* is a particular individual centre of consciousness admitting the separate reality of other similar centres and the realm of physical reality, we have just the Sāṅkhya-Yoga version of *Samādhi*. If the *puruṣa* is taken as the supreme, universal and absolute Self and the physical order is

sublated in the yogic process of Self-realisation, then *Samādhi* would consist of an achievement of an immediate insight into the integral and non-dual spiritual reality described as the Absolute or Brahman. This is the non-dualistic version of *Samādhi* and it forms the core of Advaitic realisation. There is a third variety of mystic experience spoken of in all the Purāṇas, the theistic schools of Vedānta and in the devotional philosophy of a large number of saints such as Caitanya Mahāprabhu. This is supposed to be a direct perception of the Supreme Being. In simpler words, it is the vision of God, the Supreme reality. This view does not abrogate realism with regard to the world, and does not discard the pluralism of finite selves but posits a transcendent and Cosmic Spirit, all-surpassing and all-sustaining. This is the mysticism characteristic of theism. It is to be noted that the soul-mysticism of Sāṅkhya-Yoga does not have a continuing vitality in the Indian tradition, however much its technique of *aṣṭāṅga-yoga* may prevail and it is somewhat subsumed under the non-dualistic and theistic mysticism. We may characterise the remaining two types as Vedāntic mysticism bearing in mind, the two versions of Vedānta, absolutistic and theistic as they have come to be designated in the histories of Indian philosophy.

II

In our consideration of South Indian mysticism, it has to be remarked that these two types of Vedāntic mysticism occupy the field. There are about four important mystical movements in South India. There is first of all, the mystical tradition characteristic of the Śaivite Tamil saints and Śaiva-Siddhānta. It is a striking feature of this tradition that its pioneers were the god-intoxicated saints, the *nāyanmārs*, and its theologians succeeded them giving a finished shape to the doctrinal frame-work of this saintly movement. The later systematizing work is carried out consistently in the Tamil medium, though the older Sanskrit schools of thought are dealt with in the polemical writings. It is also distinctive of the system that no elaborate attempt is made to rest the doctrines on the Upaniṣads, the *Gītā* or *Brahma-Sūtras*, the fundamental classics of Vedānta. The Āgamas figure prominently as the source-books. Somewhat linked with this movement by way of initial inspiration is the Veera-Śaiva movement of Karnataka. All the major personalities in Veera-Śaivism are the mystical seers and its doctrinal articulation either in Kannada or Sanskrit does not rise to the stature of the original mystical impetus. In the *Śaṭ-sthala Siddhānta* a kind of provisional Dvaita is offered and it is made to culminate in an eventual Advaita. There is considerable opposition to the Advaitic *māyā-vāda*. The term Śakti-Viśiṣṭādvaita has come to be adopted as descriptive of the philosophy of the school. All the mystical and saintly movements in medieval India championed the humanitarian ethics of social equality in some measure and this tendency reaches its

zenith in Veera-Śaivism. Modern writings are not wanting which compare Basaveśvara to the Buddha and what is more remarkable, even to Karl Marx. This anti-caste trend expresses itself in furious onslaughts on the conventional *varṇa-dharma*.

In the Dvaita tradition, the speciality is that the pioneers were the system-builders such as Madhva, Jayatīrtha and Vyāsa Rāya, who based themselves on the Vedas, Upaniṣads, *Gitā*, *Brahma-Sūtra*, *Mahā-bhārata* and *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa*. The great devotional potential is there in the original Sanskritic formulation of the system but it rose to its full actuality in the later history of the movement in such Karnataka saints as Śrī-pāda Rāya, Vyāsa Rāya, Vādi Rāya, Purandara Dāsa and Kanakadāsa. The theoretical frame-work preceded and conditioned the mysticism of what came to be named Daśa-kūṭa.

III

The Viśiṣṭādvaita of Rāmānuja must be viewed in the background of South Indian mysticism. In it, as in Śaiva-Siddhānta, and unlike Dvaita, the age of the saint-mystics preceded that of the Ācār-yās, who gave the thought implicit in the sacred songs of the Āḷvārs a complete philosophical structure. Its philosophy is equal to the mystical foundations unlike the case in Veera-Śaivism. In the finished philosophy there is amplitude and a strong trend is there to found the new school on the Upaniṣads, the *Gitā* and *Brahma-sūtra*. The major philosophical works are both in Sanskrit and in Tamil, the venerated medium of the Āḷvārs. There is no conflict between theology and mysticism, and as Vedānta Deśika claims, issues unsolved in Vedāntic theology are resolved through the illuminating insights of the Āḷvārs. In other words theology does not condition the mystics adversely.

The problem of this paper is to consider Rāmānuja in relation to the rich mysticism he inherited and the mystical tradition that proceeded from him.

We may confine our remarks to three features that marked his spiritual heritage and inheritance.

(a) He learnt from the Āḷvārs the tradition of describing the Supreme Reality as Nārāyaṇa, Viṣṇu and Vāsudeva. This tradition was no mere cult for him. The Vaiṣṇava conception of the Deity focuses on the protective aspect of God and it looks upon creation and destruction as passing and subsidiary expressions of the redeeming compassion of God. This is the central import of Vedānta Deśika's *Dayāśataka*. In the devotion to Viṣṇu, the occult, the Tāntrik and the esoteric elements are masterfully subordinated to the spirit of *bhakti*. (c) In the delineation of the glory of the God-head a large measure of the aesthetic attitude

is incorporated. But this is done in a philosophically discriminating manner, and the dangers of anthropomorphism are averted through a continuous awareness of the transcendent magnitudes of Divine beauty. Under the influence of this tradition characterized by these Vaiṣṇava *bhakti* and aesthetic learnings, Rāmānuja, propounded his school of Vedānta in powerfully drawn outlines in the *Vedārtha Saṁgraha*, the *Śrī-Bhāṣya* and the *Gītā Bhāṣya* appropriating abundant materials from the Sanskrit and Tamil spiritual literature. He is a metaphysician and dialectician of weight and his writings reveal great clarity of understanding and grandeur of style. He grappled with antecedent and contemporary schools of philosophy and theology with a compass of vision and acuteness of logic. No wonder he is hailed as the master-mind of the tradition. The structure of thought he built constitutes a theistic view of reality, looking upon God as the Supreme Reality and the world of finite existence consisting of finite selves and the physical order as real but adjectival to the Supreme. He combined in his final metaphysics Divine Transcendence and Divine Immanence in a unique way and advocated the pathway of love and adoration as the supreme means of God-realization. This realization is the consummation of spiritual life

IV

Now the problem is to consider the *darśana* of Rāmānuja in so far as it is contributory to mysticism. Does he in any way enable us to solve any of the crucial problems of mysticism? The contention of this paper is that he does. I will indicate three elements in Rāmānuja's philosophy that strengthen the mystic's approach remarkably.

I. There is the problem of upholding the validity of mystic experience as against the deliverance of empirical thought. There is one tempting line of escape from this conflict. It is to regard the world disclosed to sense-experience and reasoning based upon it as ultimately unreal, however pressing it may appear to our mundane and pragmatic outlook in life. This is the line of solution favoured by many mystics of the past and the transcendental philosophers. The case of this solution is largely illusory. It introduces a radical epistemological dualism which is harder to support than any metaphysical dualism. Does the realistic outlook stand condemned by its own logical processes or is it condemned by the verdict of the other experience? In the former case, not all non-mystical intelligence is deceptive as it is self-critical and in the latter, the truth of the mystical experience should not be taken for granted before the independent demonstration of the falsity of the opposite realm of experience. Two exclusive orders of knowledge and experience pose an untenable bifurcation and neither of them can score a final triumph. The higher cannot just cancel the

lower, except on an inclusive basis comprehending even its opposite. It has to accommodate it within its own larger range of affirmation and make provision for its positive content and negating only its negations. All effective negation is of the nature of the negation of negations. From this perspective, the affirmation of the Divine Reality requires the conversion of the mundane and the empirical into the status of a partial manifestation of the Supreme. Mysticism succeeds in so far as it can include and transmute the non-mystical in its comprehensive scope. Rāmānuja's metaphysics of Brahman achieves this kind of epistemological integration. For him '*Neti, Neti*' does not represent the final truth but is preparatory to the final glorification of Brahman as "*satyasya satyam*" and "*sarvasya vasi, sarvasyesanah, sarvasyādhipatiḥ*". (*Brahadāranyaka Upaniṣad*).

(2) Rāmānuja's conception of the pathway to the vision of the Supreme is something distinctive. It is, no doubt, knowledge but knowledge rendered possible by a 'god-ward' conduct of life. Again it is not knowledge in the restricted sense of cognition, but contemplation or meditation arising from cognition through *śravaṇa* and *manana*. In reality it is *nididhyāsana*. Further it is meditation of the nature of love, from the fact that the object meditated upon is of the nature of *Ānanda*. Brahman is *Ānanda* in the sense that it imparts the character of *Ānanda* to the contemplation directed to it. It is this factor of joy in contemplation that renders it *bhakti*. *Bhakti* is loving contemplation, a joyous process of practising the presence of God. Rāmānuja asserts on the strength of the *Gītā* that *bhakti* calls up instantaneously the self-revelation of God to the seeker. *Bhakti* marks the initiation of the process of divine revelation. The range of revelation is in proportion to the measure of *bhakti*. But there is no *bhakti*, however preliminary, which is just aspiration and no attainment. So, in substance all *bhakti* is mystical as it carries a necessary element of divine self-disclosure. The way of the love of God constitutive of *bhakti* contains another element. It involves the commitment or dedication of the subject to the subject. It is adoration in which the worshipper offers himself to the object of worship (*Ātma-nivedana*). This is the volitional aspect of *bhakti*. *Bhakti*, thus, is contemplation, rapture and self-offering.

This totality of commitment has a singularly effective bearing on the authentication of mystic experience. An experience has a chance, a sure chance, of being tested decisively when the experient commits himself to it and does not stand aloof and watch it with unconcern. A perception may be an illusion and may go uncorrected if the percipient is detached and does not have any stake in it. Commitment to it is a fundamental way of its pragmatic vindication or otherwise. An error

acted upon eagerly is sure to break down in the crucible of consequent experience. In making the approach to God a commitment of this nature, Rāmānuja introduces into it a mechanism for the determination of its truth-value. Pseudo-mysticism cannot survive this hard test of life.

(3) *Prapatti*, as a complete pathway to the Supreme experience, is a distinctive concept in Rāmānuja. It stands for the total liquidation of self-effort in the final venture to God-realization. It is an achievement of passivity, so that the ever-waiting redemptive grace of God may come into unimpeded operation. The emergent experience of the Highest is a wholly object-determined consummation (*vastu-tantra*) uncontaminated by the subjectivising mediation of individual volition or intellection. Auto-suggestion or ego-generated hallucination is thereby ruled out. The object floods the recipient with its illumination and carries him into the summit of ecstatic vision. This fruition is not conditioned by the merits of the aspirants but flows in accordance with the object of aspiration. All the merit in the context, if merit it be, is *Bhagavat pravr̥tti-virodhi-svapravṛttiniṣṛ̥tti*. All the great writers on mysticism have noted this element of passivity in the peak of mystic experience. It characterizes, in fact, all the leaps of genius in all fields of human endeavour.

Adverse writers on mysticism from the psychoanalytical fold, such as Leuba, fix upon this passivity and point out triumphantly that this element of passivity is found in all pathological phenomena such as hypnotic hallucination and drug-mysticism. One wishes that the case were as simple as all that. There are surely levels of passivity. There is the passivity of the unregenerate ego which gives occasion to the underground hosts of subconscious to come to the open and take the citadel of personality, which phenomenon was noted by Plato long ago. There is the passivity of the sublimated ego, which has undergone strenuous and radical self-cleansing through *karma*, *jñāna* and *bhakti* and burns with the smokeless flame of integrated spiritual aspiration. If at the height of this aspiration, the finite self makes a realistic assessment of its own resources of personality and the infinitude of the end and surrenders, in this enlightenment, personal effort, so that the initiative of the Infinite may accomplish its infinite end, this is passivity in the region of the sublime. The resulting experience may be the working of the subconscious but this subconscious is so profoundly basic and creative that it would be wrong not to name it the super-conscious also. The conventional sub-conscious in the cause of psychic disorder and disintegration, whereas the superconscious is curative of the maladies of finitude through an exalting and vitalizing force of integration. Superficial similarity of *tamas* and *sattva* is well-known to all the commentators of the *Gītā* and it is worthwhile remembering it frequently. Wakeful and enlightened

renunciation of one's spiritual burdens to God for Him to work out the redemptive grace in unconstrained abundance is the birth of decisive objectivity in religious experience. Affirmation of this factor is a signal contribution to the vindication of mystical experience.

Thus in the philosophy of Rāmānuja, the idea of Brahmanas inclusive of the Cosmos, *bhakti* as involving a process of pragmatic verification and *prapatti* as contributory to the objectivity of the resulting experience of the Divine, constitute the foundation of mysticism.

V

Only one question remains to be considered. Apart from this philosophy furnishing the basis for soundness in mysticism, was Rāmānuja himself a mystic? Was not his exegetical, theological and philosophical engagement too much of a non-mystical labour for him to be personally the recipient of mystic experience, a blessedness reserved for simple and less sophisticated souls? This is a biographical question and can admit of only an imperfect answer. Indian saints and sages are not given to autobiographies. His immediate disciples report that all his manifold life was actuated by the single passion of love of God. His intellectual work was for purposes of strengthening devotion. Parāśara Bhaṭṭa claims that he annihilated Kali with the single talisman of *bhakti*. Kūreśa, than whom there was no greater disciple of Rāmānuja, says that his master was endowed with three excellences. He was infatuated (*vyamoha* is the word used) with his God, Achyuta. In consequence of this, all other values were as straw to him, worthless and paltry. He was an Ocean of Compassion. There are perfections characteristic of mystics at their best. On his own theory infatuation is the other side of immediate spiritual experience. Such is the indirect evidence at our disposal. There is one piece of his writing, his inspired prose-poetry, which purports to record his devotional self-surrender to the Supreme and the redemptive assurance he received. This is the *Śaraṇāgati-gadya*. It is no doubt true, this writing contains the quintessence of his entire philosophy and carries unmistakable hints of his spiritual heritage. But yet the personal note of the 'alone' taking refuge with the 'alone' is the over-mastering spirit of the composition. The revelation it embodies of an authentic response, exalted communion and compassionate assurance of redemption form the core of mystical experience. Dissipation of doubt and anguish is the burden of the last words "*Nissamśayaḥ sukhamāśva*". That this record set the pattern for all subsequent surrender-hymns in Śrīvaiṣṇavism is a tribute to its grandeur and cannot take away its accent of overwhelming veracity. Embarror Govinda seems to have satisfied himself thoroughly that this

was an authentic experience and no fabrication of devout frenzy. As a record of aspiration, vision and factual inauguration of salvation it stands supreme in the spiritual history of Śrīvaiṣṇavism. All that Rāmānuja achieved converged in this recorded experience, and the transcendent reality was therein an immediate presentation to him.

Lester

ASPECTS OF THE VAIṢṆAVA
EXPERIENCE : RĀMĀNUJA
AND PILLAI LOKĀCĀRYA
ON HUMAN EFFORT AND
DIVINE GRACE

In the history of the Śrīvaiṣṇava Saṁpradāya a radical transition takes place during the one hundred and fifty years between Bhāṣyakāra, Rāmānuja (c. 1017 - 1137) and the founder of the Tengalai, Pillai Lokācārya (c. 1213 - 1309). The key theological issue in this transition is the role of divine grace and human effort in the *mokṣopāya*.¹ My concern in this paper is to clarify the relationship between Rāmānuja and Pillai Lokācārya and elaborate the special contribution of Lokācārya to the development to Śrīvaiṣṇava faith and practice.

Rāmānuja is justly recognised as one of the earliest systematic exponents of *bhakti-mārga*. As is well-known, he seeks to establish that the Vedānta teaches the highest Brahman as *saguṇa*, Supreme Person (*paramapurusa*), the individual soul and the non-sentient universe as the body of the Supreme (*śarīraśarīribhāva*), the three (*Īśvara*, *cit* and *acit*) being related in a non-twoness of that which is internally differentiated (*viśiṣṭādvaita*). Of considerable import in the development of the Śrīvaiṣṇava Saṁpradāya is Rāmānuja's teaching that the *jīvātman* is *śeṣa* to the Supreme Ātman, who is *śeṣi*. As Rāmānuja uses the terms, *śeṣa* is one who exists solely for serving the purposes of another ; *śeṣi* is one for serving whose purpose all else exists.

Following the Vedānta, Rāmānuja's practicum of *mokṣa* is *śravaṇa*, *manana*, *nididhyasana*. The goal is the experience or enjoyment of the Lord (*bhagavadanubhava*), and, in a word, the means is knowledge (*jñāna*). But this knowledge is not the dry, simple know-

ledge of the meaning of texts, as Rāmānuja ascribes to the Advaitin, but "...knowledge called upasana which has reached the form of *bhakti* and which is characterised by a direct perception of Brahman" (*ityupāsanaṅkhyam brahmasākṣātkāralakṣaṇam bhaktirūpāpannam jñānam*). In *Vedārthasaṁgraha*, Rāmānuja gives us a very precise statement :

*brahmaprāptiyupāyaśca śāstrādhigata tattvajñānapūrvaka
svakarmānngṛhita bhaktiniṣṭhasādhvānavadhikatiśaya
priyaviśadatama pratyakṣatāpanna anudhyānarupaparabhakti
eva ityuktam | (91)*

And the only means to obtain Brahman has been stated to be intense devotion which has the form of continuous meditation which has reached the state of vivid perception, immeasurably and overwhelmingly dear, accomplished by firm adherence to *bhakti* supported by one's own *karma* based on knowledge of the real obtained from scripture.

There is one further, and crucial consideration. To obtain Brahman one must be chosen. *Upāsana* or *dhyāna* simply generates devotion by means of vivid mental perception—there is no actual experience of the Brahman through meditation—and responding to intense devotion, the Lord chooses the self, i.e. graces the self with attainment. Rāmānuja's chief text in this stipulation is *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* 2:23, *nāyam ātmā pravacanena ...*, commenting on which he says :

He whose remembrance, having the form of vivid perception, is extremely dear in itself by the fact that the object of remembrance is extremely dear, we say he only is chosen by the Highest Self and, as is stated, by him alone is the Highest Self obtained. (*Sribhāṣya* - Laghu Siddhānta)

Thus, Rāmānuja has a doctrine of grace ; but grace is not utterly free ; rather, it is co-operative, responsive. This co-operation characterises the entire relationship between Paramātmā and *jivātman*. *Seṣaśeṣibhāva* necessitates that the Lord is ultimately in control, but He controls as *anumantṛ*, Permitter or Consenter—the Lord permits those who are well-disposed toward Him to increase in *bhakti* and He permits those ill-disposed to go their own way :

The inwardly ruling highest Self promotes action in so far as it regards in the case of any action the volitional effort made by the individual soul, and then aids that effort by granting its favour or permission ; action is not possible without permission on the part of the highest Self. In this wayinjunctions and prohibitions are not devoid of meaningthe Lord, wishing to

do a favour to those who are resolved on acting so as fully to please the highest Person, engenders in their minds a tendency towards highly virtuous actions, such as are means to attain to Him ; while on the other hand, in order to punish those who are resolved on lines of action altogether displeasing to Him He engenders in their minds a delight in such actions as have a downward tendency and are obstacles in the way of the attainment of the Lord. (*S'ribhāṣya*, 2. 3. 41)

We may say that Rāmānuja holds human effort and divine grace in tension with each other—a position not altogether satisfying to the intellect, but perhaps borne out by human experience.

Tradition says that Rāmānuja publicly proclaimed the secret teachings that all people might attain the Lord ; but his comments on the *Apaśūdrādhikaraṇa* of the *Brahma-Sūtras* explicitly deny the possibility of the *śūdra* obtaining Brahman. Even where Śaṅkara allows that the *śūdra* may come to knowledge through Itihāsa and Purāṇa, Rāmānuja disallows this.

Rāmānuja is a Vedāntin, a *bhaktiyogin*, quite traditional as to such matters as *varṇāśramadharmā*. His chief texts are the Upaniṣads, the *Bhagavad-Gītā* and the *Viṣṇu-Purāṇa*. He does not refer to the Ālvārs or the *Pāñcarātrāgamas* and quotes very sparingly from the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata* (other than the *Gītā*).

The doctrines of Supreme Person and *śeṣaśeṣibhāva* unite Rāmānuja and Pillai Lokācārya, but these are the only major points at which we can say there is kinship. Lokācārya is a *bhāgavata*, a *prapanna*. He writes in Tamil rather than in Sanskrit, albeit with a liberal sprinkling of Sanskrit words ; he relies heavily upon the hymns of the Ālvārs ; and, in his *Śrīvacanabhūṣaṇa*, from which I shall draw my major points for discussion, he takes the Itihāsa-s, *Mahābhārata* and *Rāmāyaṇa* as his chief texts. That Lokācārya is an innovator is indicated in a story told by Maṇavāla Māmuni, the commentator of *Śrīvacanabhūṣaṇa*. According to Maṇavāla, a man from Maṇapākkam (no personal name is given), near Kanchipuram, had a dream in which Varadarāja, the Lord of Kanchi revealed to him certain secret teachings and then told him to go to Srīraṅgam. Arriving at Srīraṅgam, this man discovered that Pillai Lokācārya was teaching the very same teachings that had been revealed to him by Varadarāja. After having become Lokācārya's disciple, the man had yet another dream in which the Lord Varadarāja instructed him to request that Lokācārya commit these teachings to writing as they had not been written down heretofore.

Without openly criticising Rāmānuja, Lokācārya dissolves Rāmānuja's tension between human effort and divine grace. In a number of different ways, he says, in effect, that if *mokṣa* is by grace, then, indeed, it is by grace—if human effort has any effect then grace is nullified.

According to Lokācārya, the principal function of the *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Mahābhārata* is to reveal that the Lord, Himself and only, is the *upāya*, and that the Goddess is *puṣākāra* or mediatrix between *jīvātman* and *Pāramātman*. In numerous instances, the Lord as Rāma and as Kṛṣṇa, shows Himself as *upāya*. Sītā reveals in herself the qualities necessary to *puṣākāra*-hood, namely mercy, dependence on the Lord and not being subservient to another other than the Lord.

The problem of human life is set by the fact that the *jīvātman*, on the one hand, has accumulated numerous defects from which it cannot get free, and the Lord, on the other hand, is committed by His own will to reward and punish *karma*. The Lord desires communion with the soul but cannot accomplish it; the soul (by essential nature *śeṣa* to the Lord) desires communion with its Lord but cannot rise above its *karma*. Thus, mediation is a necessity—the Goddess steps between the judging Father and the errant child, exposing what is going on between the soul and the Lord and making it possible for the soul to relax, to surrender pride and self-effort. Lokācārya is emphatic that there is nothing the *jīvātman* can do to commend itself to the Lord. Merit is not the basis of grace; on the contrary, it is the very demerit of the *jīvātman* which commends it to grace. If this were not the case, we would not speak of grace.

The *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Mahābhārata*, as well as the Vaiṣṇava tradition are full of examples of those such as Vibhīṣaṇa, Dharmaputra, Draupati and even Arjuna, who, though destitute of virtue, even deserving to be destroyed, were graced by the Lord when they surrendered at His feet. This *prapatti*, however, is not a means—the Lord refuses those who beg (such as Bharata) and takes those who do not (such as Guha). *Prapatti*, says Lokācārya, is simply natural knowledge and non-denial. That which is natural to the soul is knowledge of its *śeṣahood*, which, significantly, Lokācārya now defines as *dāsyatva* or *adiyān*.

While the *jīvātman* is servant, even slave to the Supreme, the Lord's concern for its welfare knows no bounds. Though surrounded with splendour in *Vaikuṇṭha*, the Lord is without pleasure as His mind is always with those in bondage. Unable to bear the divorce between Himself and souls, He gives them bodies and organs of understanding and communication; He goes and dwells within them, embracing

them like a mother embracing her sleeping child. To the soul, He may seem indifferent, but in actuality, He is trying every means of rescue, searching for one defect that can be exaggerated into a virtue, taking any opportunity to even imagine some small goodness which may excuse His grace. Perchance a woman going to a market happens to pass the temple, or a farmer chasing his cow, accidentally goes around His shrine, a gardener watering flowers unintentionally drops water on a *tulasi* plant. Over the course of many births of souls, the Lord collects these unintentional good deeds (*yādṛcchika sukṛta*) and magnifying them ten-fold uses them as His excuse for rescuing the *jīvātman*. (* SVB 380)

Aiding and abetting the *prapatti* of the *jīvātman* requires the easy accessibility of the Lord (*saṁlabhya*). To this end, forgetting his perfection and independence, He comes tangibly into the midst of souls through *arcāvatāra*. In his *para*, *vyūha* and *antaryāmi* forms He is inaccessible like the waters surrounding the earth, those of the milk-ocean or those deep in the earth; His *vibhavas*, such as Rāma and Kṛṣṇa, are like waters in flood having long ago receded; but the *arcāvatāra* is easily accessible at all times like the water of the deep pools out of the mainstream of the river.

Lokācārya's doctrine of *arcāvatāra* is intimately related to his teaching of *prapatti*; but more important yet to the eternal welfare of the soul is the *ācārya*. The grace of the Lord is mediated to the *jīvātman* above all through the good offices of the *ācārya*:

“...the soul's essential attributes arise not from ourselves nor from others but by the grace of the Lord which comes by means of the grace of the true *ācārya*...” (SVB 243)

The *ācārya* lifts the burden of pride and self-effort from the *jīvātman*.

“...There is no way except the affection of the *ācārya* (*ācāryābhimāna*) for him whose self-conceit blocks the affection of the Lord.” (SVB 443)

The *ācārya* transmits the *Tirumantra*, the *Aṣṭākṣara*, *Om Nama Nārāyaṇāya*.

“...from having reached the *ācārya*, the holy *mantra* comes within one's reach; from having reached the holy *mantra*, the Lord comes within one's reach and from having reached the Lord, the land of attainment (*Vaikuṇṭha*) comes within reach...” (SVB 97)

Here is another key to Lokācārya's Vaiṣṇavism—the importance of the *mantra* as embodying the true knowledge and power to salvation ; (of course, only in the hands of the *ācārya*).

The essential posture of the *prapanna* toward the *ācārya*, as toward the Lord and the Lord's people, the *bhāgavatas*, is unflagging, affectionate service (*kainkarya*). For Lokācārya, all of the duties, disciplines and rituals which others may perform as necessary to *mokṣa*, the *prapanna* or *bhāgavata* undertakes, not as *upāya*, but as service in grateful response to the Lord's grace. As far as *upāya* is concerned the *prapanna* refrains not only from what is prohibited by scripture, but also from what is prescribed. Scripture at first prescribes a *mokṣopāya*, such as *upāsana*, as a concession to the ignorant and fearful, to encourage their trust in the sacred word ; having become trustful, having turned however slightly away from the world and toward the Lord, and in addition, having become frustrated by attempting to faithfully and perfectly follow what is prescribed, they are then ready to comprehend that the Lord Himself is *upāya*, through the *ācārya*. We may even say that other *upāyas* negatively prepare the *jīvātman*—for grace, much as some see the role of the Lord in His Buddhāvātāra.

Although *mokṣa* requires no self-effort, Lokācārya does not discard *varṇāśramadharmā*. It is only that for the *prapanna* these duties are performed with a transformed attitude, a new sense of freedom, as *kainkaryas* rather than prescriptions for *mokṣa*. There is one matter of traditional *dharma* which *bhāgavatas* must discard, however, and that is, any sense of superiority by caste (i.e., by birth). The *bhāgavata*'s name is *dāśya* or *adiyān*, not that of a particular caste, family or village. Scripture is full of examples of persons of low-caste or even non-human being graced by the Lord (witness Vidura, *Dharma-uyādha*, Śabari, Chinta-yanti, and Jaṭāyu). The Lord Himself has more than once manifested Himself in a low-caste form—Lokācārya does not explicitly say so, but his brother Aḷagiya Maṇavāla Perumal Nāyanār points out, obvious examples are Kṛṣṇa, a cowherd and Nammālvār, a *śūdra*. Lokācārya expends a number of *ślokas* decrying and condemning those, especially brahmins, who cast aspersions upon or mistreat *bhāgavatas*. The *bhāgavata* is equal to the *ācārya* and superior to even the Lord. Tradition records that there were those in the Vaiṣṇava community of Lokācārya's time who objected to the high status he had given to such persons ; however, the Lord of Srīraṅgam Himself vindicated Lokācārya.

The life of a *bhāgavata*—is not easy—the grace of the Lord does not promote laxitude in His servants :

Considering that he himself is the soil in which is produced the sensuality which is the effect of pride, which is the cause of ruin in every way, the *bhāgavata* should see himself as an enemy. He should fear, realising that pride, wealth and *karma* make for disrespect toward good company and attachment to bad company... Resolving that the soul's essential attributes cannot be taken as arising either from himself or from others, but that they arise from the grace of the Lord which comes by means of the grace of the true *ācārya*, he should go on making progress in : 1) disregard toward the body; 2) eager regard for the soul; 3) renouncing the thought of the enjoyment of materialistic things; 4) believing that the maintenance of the body is accomplished by the *prasāda* acquired by worship; 5) being glad if he suffers affliction, whether by *karma* or by grace; 6) giving up the thought of self-practice as a means; 7) earnestly desiring the knowledge and practice of distinguished persons : ..(*SVB* 245)

Lokācārya's illustrations and analogies show him to be in touch with the common life. For instance, speaking of the Lord's acceptance of the *jīvātman*, defects and all, he takes situations of human lovers as analogy—lovers embracing do not mind sweat and dirt on the body. This kind of analogy is all the more interesting in the light of the fact that Lokācārya himself never married and specifically legislates against sexual relations even within the bounds of *dharma*.

There is a basic consistency in Lakācārya's theology. And, although his conclusions may not always satisfy the intellect, he does not draw back from the difficult issues posed by a doctrine of salvation by sheer grace. He shows awareness of the logical difficulty in stipulating the Lord only as *upāya* and then prescribing the necessity of an *ācārya* and a rather rigorous discipline for the *bhāgavata*. His conclusion is that all that which appears to require self-effort, self-assertions, is in actuality the action of the Lord—the entire drama of bondage and liberation is the Lord's own doing and enjoyment. The *Ājvārs* pose a problem in this regard, as they appear to strive toward the Lord; but, again Lokācārya notes that this is only the Lord moving them to greater heights of devotion and service. A more difficult issue arises when one asks : "If salvation is by grace alone, why is it only for certain souls at certain times? Why not for all souls at one instant?" Part of the answer to this query is simply that the salvation of the soul is the Lord's enjoyment and the Lord enjoys as He wills. But here also, Lokācārya brings into play the notion of *yādṛcchika sukṛta* (unintentional good deeds)—the Lord looks for an ex-

cuse. What this really amounts to is to say that the matter is beyond our understanding. We should look to what is before us (water in the hand), namely the *arcāvatāra* and the *ācārya*, rather than that which is far removed (water in the clouds or rivers), namely the Lord. Trying to relate directly to the Lord is difficult indeed.

The Ālvars pose other problems for Lokācārya's argument. First, they, on numerous occasions, bless the Lord or seek to protect the Lord with *mangalasnāna*, an action which would seem inappropriate for a *śeṣa*. Here, Lokācārya points out that there are numerous examples of such protectiveness, such as Guha and Lakṣmaṇa attempting to protect Rāma, and, it is no more than the natural, spontaneous outpouring of one who seeks the continued welfare of the Lord upon whom his life so crucially depends. Another difficulty posed by the experiences of the Ālvars is the fact that these *prapannas* speak of moments of mutual love between the soul and the Lord—equality in embrace, even loss of essential identity as *śeṣas* in the ecstasy of experiencing the divine. Lokācārya's conclusion is that, indeed, at a certain stage, even *śeṣatva* becomes restrictive like the ornaments of a lady seeking to embrace her lover. *Śeṣaśeṣi* is transformed into fully mutual enjoyment and this is not to be considered as perverse or detrimental to the well-being of the soul. In any case, the Ālvars are exceptional individuals.

I conclude with some observations of comparison between the orientation of Rāmānuja and that of Pillai Lokācārya. There is kinship between the two, but across several generations of times; the basic spirit of the two is quite different. Lokācārya is inspired by Rāmānuja's *śeṣaśeṣibhāva*, but for him the logic of it is that salvation is by grace alone. *Śeṣatva* becomes *dāsyatva*; *bhakti-yoga* gives way to *prapatti*;² vivid mental perception of the Lord gives way to the actual presence of the Lord in the *arcā*; instruction in the Vedas gives way to the *mantra* and the *ācārya* as *puruṣakāra*; enjoyment of the Lord (*bhagavadanubhava*) gives way to service of the Lord (*bhagavadkaiṅkarya*), primacy is given to the Lord's enjoyment rather than to the soul's enjoyment of the Lord;³ Rāmānuja's *mokṣopāya* favours the householder, whereas that of Lokācārya favours asceticism. It is Lokācārya rather than Rāmānuja who opens Vaiṣṇavism to the masses.

Lokācārya has resources before him which Rāmānuja did not have or which he chose not to rely on, namely the hymns of the Ālvars and the *Pāñcarātrāgamas*. One must conclude that of these two the Āgamas were a primary influence on Lokācārya, since the Ālvars had early been interpreted as bhaktiyogins and only later as *prapannas*—

the early commentaries to the *Tiruvāimoli* declare Nammāḷvar a *bhaktiniṣṭha*, whereas the later commentators, like Lokācārya, pronounce him a *prapanna*.

Finally, the fundamental difference in spirit between Rāmānuja and Lokācārya may be captured by reference to their respective interpretations of *Bhagavad Gītā* 18.66. For Rāmānuja, 18.66—*sarva-dharmān parityajya*...is Kṛṣṇa's concluding comment on *bhakti-yoga*; for Lokācārya, it is Kṛṣṇa's final word (*carama śloka*), declaring the Lord as *upāya* after having explained all other *upāyas* and set them aside.

Gītābhāṣya offers two interpretations :

- 1) Performing, according to ability, with intense love, as worship of Me, all dharmas, which have the form of *karma-yoga* etc. *jñāna-yoga* and *bhakti-yoga* and which are the means to supreme felicity, renouncing by giving up the fruit, the action, the doership, etc., in the manner heretofore stated, reflect on Me alone as the doer, the object of worship, the goal and the means.
- 2) Renouncing all *dharmas* which have the form of expiations with regard to the infinite and various kinds of sins accumulated during beginningless time which are obstacles to the commencement of *bhakti-yoga*, resort to Me alone as refuge in order to effect the commencement of *bhakti-yoga* ; I will release you from all sins, sins which are obstacles to the commencement of *bhakti* which has the essential nature described.

Lokācārya offers no convenient summary ; I excerpt from his *Mumukṣupādi* :

Certain ways of achieving salvation were stated in the previous portion of the *Gītā*. Considering these difficult of accomplishment and opposed to one's essential nature Arjuna was grieved. Therefore, Sri Kṛṣṇa revealed this final means, which has no superior ..

The first half treats of what the person who is qualified to resort has to do. The second half deals with what is done by the Lord who is the means.

"All dharmas" means : *karma-yoga*, *jñāna-yoga*, *bhakti-yoga*, knowledge of the secret of incarnations, the science of the highest Person, residence in holy places, uttering His divine names, lighting lamps, offering garlands and other such works that are done with the belief that they are the means.

Tyāga is the giving up of other means with the conviction, 'We regarded these that are not means as the means, like those who see silver in the shell and those who walk in a direction opposite to what they want.'

These are not merely not the means, but they also stand in the way...

The means (the Lord) do not need any external help, because they stand opposed to all these other means.

Even the acceptance of seeking refuge by the soul has proceeded from Him.

Because the soul is a sentient being, it has a sense of grateful remembrance. But this remembrance cannot be included in the means.

Even the *prapatti* that is done out of mental confusion with the idea that it is the means, is equivalent to sin.

"I have pardoned your sins and regarded them as meritorious virtues."

All karmas are done hereafter as service.

For the attainment of God, what is wanted is refraining from obstructing as well as passivity.

The persons, who are qualified for this will inevitably follow it. (M.B. Narasimha Iyengar, trans., E. Pub. House, Madras, 1962)-

NOTES

1. There is also a sociological factor in this transition, namely the communication of *śrīviṣṇavism* to the non-Brahmin masses of South India.
2. Rāmānuja employs the term *prapatti*, even apart from where it occurs in the text upon which he is commenting, but he uses it sparingly and either in the broad sense of 'turning toward the Lord in order to undertake *bhakti-yoga*. i.e. giving all of one's attention to the Lord; or simply, as the equivalent of meditation (*upāsana*).
3. Rāmānuja speaks of *sevā*, rather than *kainkarya*, and it has the form of *bhakti* (*bhaktirūpā sevā*) and applies only to the state of *samsāra*, not to the state of release.

R. Balasubramanian

SOME PROBLEMS IN IDENTITY MYSTICISM

I

Professor Zaehner's *Mysticism, Sacred and Profane*¹ is one of the valuable and scholarly works in the area of comparative study of mysticism, Eastern and Western. Zaehner is undoubtedly one of the authorities on Christian mysticism; and his interpretation of Christian mysticism must, therefore, be given due consideration by any one who is interested in it. Three chapters in *Mysticism, Sacred and Profane* entitled "Some Hindu Approaches," "Monism *versus* Theism," and "Theism *versus* Monism" are extremely relevant to a consideration of some problems in identity mysticism. The title of the Chapter "Monism *versus* Theism" or "Theism *versus* Monism" is significant as it clearly indicates Zaehner's standpoint on this problem. To Zaehner monism and theism cannot go together. Zaehner's sympathetic interpretation of Christian mysticism is understandable. But his interpretation of Indian mysticism in general and Hindu theistic mysticism in particular is not satisfactory; and his presentation of Advaita and identity mysticism is unfair. Professor Stace in his important book *Mysticism and Philosophy*² examines the nature and characteristics of the two types of mysticism, the extrovert and the introvert, and discusses some of the issues connected with identity mysticism with sympathy and understanding, though he holds the view that the monistic Vedānta of Śaṅkara leads to absurdities in the same way as a dualistic position lands its supporter in difficulties.³ The issues raised by Stace are so important that Professor H. D. Lewis finds it necessary to devote a full chapter called "Mysticism and Monism" in his book *The Elusive Mind*.⁴ Lewis pays special attention

to the problem of the dissolution of individuality in mystical experience which Stace discusses in the context of introvertive mysticism. I shall discuss in this paper some general issues connected with Indian mysticism and certain specific problems bearing on identity mysticism raised by Zaehner, Stace, and Lewis.

II

When we say that some one is a mystic, we mean that he is one who has mystical *experience*. A mystic, whether Eastern or Western, Christian or Hindu, extrovertive or introvertive, is one who has *direct* apprehension of the transcendent reality resulting in *unitive experience*. in whatever way the expression "unitive experience" is interpreted. Zaehner admits that mysticism implies, among other things, these two essential features, *viz* direct apprehension and unitive experience.² Nevertheless, he holds the view that Indian mysticism is not the record of actual experience. He says: "When we come to discuss Indian mysticism, we will no longer be speaking entirely in terms of recorded experience. The Hindu mystical classics are not autobiographical and are not the record of actual experiences undergone by given individuals." A statement of this kind, if it comes from any other person, may safely be ignored. But coming as it does from no less an authority than Zaehner, it merits consideration.

There are mystics in Hinduism who speak of God-experience attained by them all on a sudden or as a result of the pursuit of a rigorous discipline. Ramakrishna Paramahansa and Ramana Maharshi, to mention only two, are outstanding examples of mystics in modern times who speak of their God-experience. There are also cases of mystics who speak of their God-experience even in the pre-natal condition when they were lying in the womb. Poygai Ālvār is one such gifted soul to have not only the experience of God while lying in the womb, but also the extraordinary power to recollect that experience. This is how Poygai Ālvār speaks of his experience of God: "Even then (before birth) when I was lying in the womb did I worship with the hands united in the direction of the Lord who has taken his abode at Śrīraṅgam, and saw Him. Even for a moment I have not forgotten the Lord whose colour is like that of the ocean full of waves. O ye poor! How can I forget Him now?"⁷

It is necessary to note first of all the tone of certainty with which the Ālvār speaks of his experience of God. He says that he worshipped the Lord, and as a result of worship *saw* Him even while he was lying in the womb. There is no reason to think that the Ālvār misreports his experience. Another feature to be stressed here is that the Ālvār did not attain the direct knowledge of God through any

process of reasoning. His condition when he was in the womb was such that he had neither a developed mind nor the instruments of knowledge fit enough for action at that time. Nevertheless, he recollects the God-experience he had at that time, and claims that he was in touch with a reality outside and beyond himself. Though his experience is subjective, the object of his experience is trans-subjective. It is, therefore, wrong to treat the mystical experience of God which Poygai Ālvār, and also other mystics, had as an emotional state and nothing else than that. The experience he speaks of is the direct experience of God. He is more certain about the *presence* of God which he has experienced than we are of the things of the external world in our normal waking consciousness. It is just like Wordsworth's claim, "I have felt a presence.....a spirit that impels all thinking things, all objects of all thought, rolls through all things."

Peyālvār goes into raptures in his description of the divine form of Viṣṇu, which he experienced. Instead of just declaring "I saw God", he gives details of what he witnessed in his mystic experience. In a hymn of matchless beauty, unsurpassed vividness, and inspiring declaration, he says: "Today, in the Lord who is of the colour of the sea, I saw *Śrī*: I saw the body shining like gold; I saw the luminous light like that of the sun; I saw the lustrous disc which displays its supremacy in the battlefield; I saw the conch."⁸

Like the Ālvārs, Saint Māṇikkavācakar too speaks of his God-experience. He says: "Behold Him who is manifested in the forms of the male, the female, and the neuter. Note that I too saw Him with my eyes. Behold God-Ambrosia yielding grace in abundance. Note that I saw the greatness of His grace."⁹

It is necessary to invite attention to three important features in this declaration of Māṇikkavācakar's. First, it expresses the view that the transcendental reality appears in different forms such as male, female, etc., echoing what has been stated in a text of the *Svetāśvatara Upaniṣad*, IV, 3: "You are woman. You are man. You are the youth and the maiden too..." Second, it emphasizes that God is the embodiment of grace. Third, it is a record in no uncertain terms of the authentic God-experience which Saint Māṇikkavācakar had.

It should not be thought that Poygai Ālvār, Peyālvār and Māṇikkavācakar are just isolated cases. There are quite a few mystics in Hinduism. Every mystic in the Hindu tradition, as in the case of other traditions, has his or her authentic God-experience. There is a long, continuous succession of mystics in the Hindu tradition right from the time of the Vedic seer who declared, "I know this great *Puruṣa* shining

like the sun beyond the darkness. He who knows Him thus becomes immortal in this life. There is no other way to immortality."¹⁰ So there is no justification for Zaehner's view that Indian mysticism is not the record of actual experience undergone by the concerned individuals.

III

I shall now consider another problem raised by Zaehner. According to Zaehner, monism and theism are opposed to each other. With reference to Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Zaehner writes: ("Ramakrishna) was torn between two doctrines, between the Vedānta which he officially professed in its extreme non-dual variety on the one hand, and an intense devotion to a personal God, usually conceived of as Kālī (the Mother) on the other."¹¹ In another place he says that for a monist "any theistic experience would have to be written off by him as ultimately illusory, since personal gods are little more than convenient fictions."¹² Lewis refers to the same problem in another way by joining issue with Stace. Though Stace does not accept the monistic position, he nevertheless holds the view that God is both personal and impersonal. Lewis thinks that it is a contradiction to think of God as both personal and impersonal and that only if the contradiction could be allowed Stace could hold the view that God who is personal as an object of worship is also impersonal as an undifferentiated unity. But the contradiction, according to Lewis, cannot be admitted as true.¹³ It will be of interest to refer to Zaehner's observation in this context. Zaehner says: "On the question whether God is personal or impersonal, it seems to me that a great deal of nonsense has been talked."¹⁴ What emerges clearly from the views of Zaehner and Lewis is that according to both of them monism and theistic mysticism cannot go together. Let us consider this issue.

According to Śaṅkara, one and the same reality, Brahman which is the Absolute, is viewed in two ways as what is associated with the distinctions of name and form arising because of the adjunct and as that which is free from every adjunct.¹⁵ It may be stated here that according to Śaṅkara there are not, numerically speaking, two Brahman—Brahman as *nirguṇa* and Brahman as *saguṇa*. From the relative standpoint conditioned by *avidyā*, we view the undifferentiated, non-dual, non-relational reality as differentiated, dual, and relational, and bring in distinctions such as the worshipper and the worshipped. It may also be noted that the numerous gods and goddesses of the pantheon, according to Advaita, are the manifestations of one and the same reality, and that the question of hierarchy among these gods and goddesses is, therefore, meaningless, though it is legitimate and signifi-

cant to accept the concept of personal God (*iṣṭa devata*), which is a remarkable feature of Hinduism. Advaita admits the need for the worship of God and provides an important place for it in the scheme of discipline leading to the attainment of liberation (*mokṣa*). Theism which involves the concept of personal God and the worshipper-worshipped relation is an important stage in the life of a spiritual aspirant. According to Advaita, the goal to be attained is Brahman, the non-dual, non-relational reality. It is a state of unity devoid of distinctions and relations which constitute empirical existence. It can be attained by means of right knowledge alone. It is spoken of as the state of enlightenment (*vidyā*) with a view to contrast it with the state of empirical existence which is referred to as the state of ignorance (*avidyā*). So the real position is that Advaita is not anti-theistic, but trans-theistic. It means that the alleged conflict between monism and theistic mysticism can be reconciled, according to Śaṅkara, in terms of the difference between absolute and relative standpoints, the former being the standpoint of *vidyā* and the latter that of *avidyā*.

It must be borne in mind that Śaṅkara is not the only person to make such a distinction between the state of enlightenment and that of ignorance to solve the problem of the one and the many. The distinction which Meister Eckhart introduces between the level of understanding and the level above understanding corresponds to the distinction between the relative and absolute standpoints (i.e. states of ignorance and enlightenment) spoken of by Śaṅkara. According to Eckhart, when a person sees one thing as different from another, he is at the level of understanding; but when he intuits the oneness of all things, he is at the level above understanding.

Let us consider the testimony of Saint Kumaraguruparar who, though born dumb, got the power of speech when he was five through the grace of God at Tiruchendur, one of the six *paṇḍai-viṭṭus*. Kumaraguruparar's *Kandar-kali-venḇā* which is full of philosophical and mystical significance is a devotional hymn of great importance. It explains the nature of the transcendent reality both in its essential nature (*svarūpa-lakṣaṇa*) and accidental attributes (*taṭastha-lakṣaṇa*). It speaks of the goal and the way thereto. Kumaraguruparar says: "The absolute is eternal bliss and knowledge without beginning, middle, and end; it is of the nature of supreme knowledge without any limitation. Being free from name, attribute, and form which are associated with it by the *jīva*, it is the all-pervasive Śiva. It is beyond comprehension by the intellect. It transcends the fivefold function, It is beyond the reach of mind..."¹⁷ Kumaraguruparar who gives the *svarūpa-lakṣaṇa* of the Absolute in the above passage describes it in the sequel most vividly in its manifestation of *Subrahmaṇya* from head to foot. He also describes the spiritual rule

of the Lord giving an account of His "ten limbs". The standpoint of Kumaraguruparar is relevant to the problem of the relation between monism and theism which we are considering here. It testifies to the fact that there is no conflict between monism and theism, between the conception of the Absolute as one and non-dual, as undifferentiated, as devoid of name, form, and distinctions on the one hand, and its conception in a differentiated form with name and qualities on the other.

Since every form of God is a manifestation of the One, it is wrong to think of one form of God as superior and another as inferior. Śiva and Viṣṇu which are manifestations of the Absolute are one, though it is open to a devotee to worship any one of these two forms, or both, or any other, according to his inclination and training. Poygai Āḷvār testifies to the oneness of the Absolute, the supreme Being, manifested as Śiva and Viṣṇu. He says: "Hara is the name of the one, and Nārāyaṇa that of the other. Bull is the vehicle for the one, and the white-headed kite for the other. (Śaiva) Āgama is the source of our knowledge of the one, and the *Veda* that of the other. The (Kailāsa) mountain is the abode of the one, and the milky ocean that of the other. While the one performs the function of destruction, the other that of protection. The one is armed with the trident, and the other with the disc. The form of the one is like the glowing fire, while that of the other is like the dark cloud. The body of both is one."¹³ In this passage there is an implicit reference to the concept of *Saṅkara-nārāyaṇa*, i.e. to the idea that Śiva and Viṣṇu are one, because they are manifestations of one and the same reality. Peyāḷvār explicitly refers to this concept in one of his hymns. It is a great wonder, declares Peyāḷvār, that the Lord of Tirumalai appears uniting the two forms of Śiva and Viṣṇu.

Gifted as they are with mystical intuition, Poygai Āḷvār and Peyāḷvār are able to realize the oneness of Śiva and Viṣṇu. Though Śiva and Viṣṇu are distinct at the level of understanding, they become one at the intuitive level of mysticism which is above the level of understanding. Blades of grass, wood, and stone are no doubt different when we view them through reason. But they become one to a mystic like Eckhart at the level of mystical intuition. Distinctions cease to exist, and opposites coincide in mystical experience. This may appear to be absurd and untenable to us at the level of understanding; and so we fail to see the truth realized by Eckhart and the Āḷvārs. We will see only distinctions, when we look through the many coloured glass of reason which is stained by *avidyā*. To realize oneness which the Āḷvārs and other mystics experienced, one must rise to the level of mystical intuition which is a medium altogether different from reason. One, therefore, fails to

see how there can be any conflict at all between monism and theism, or between oneness and difference, which are assigned to different levels.

IV

I shall now consider the problem of the dissolution of individuality in mystical experience. Every mystic speaks of union with God. What does this expression "union with God" mean? Theistic mysticism and identity mysticism answer this question differently. According to theistic mysticism, union with God does not mean identity of the released soul with God. For example, Viśiṣṭādvaita, which is a theistic system, explains *sāyujya* or oneness with God, which the soul attains at the time of release, in terms of experiential unity between the released soul and God; union with God does not annul their entitative difference. The liberated soul is only united with God, and there is inseparable union between them (*viśiṣṭa-aikya*). The soul does not become God; and so there is no absolute identity (*svarupa-aikya*) between them. Since there is existential difference between the liberated soul and God, there is no loss of the individuality of the soul even in the state of release.

According to Stace, the nucleus common to all kinds of mystical experience is the experience of unity or oneness. He maintains that, though the mystic experience does not point to duality of soul and God, it is nevertheless interpreted dualistically by philosophers who belong to theistic tradition. He is of the view that the mistake lies in the interpretation. It may be stated here that Stace does not support the standpoint of Advaita, and that he is interested only in defending the position that there is the dissolution of individuality in mystic experience.

Lewis joins issue with Stace on the question of the dissolution of individuality in mystic experience. Committed as he is to the theistic position, Lewis considers that the individuality or the separate identity of the mystic is not dissolved in the so-called union with God, though there is the appearance of its elimination at that time. The mistake, according to him, lies in the interpretation of the experience. He says that the mystics in the rapture and intensity of their consciousness of God to the exclusion of all other things from their consciousness, "could genuinely feel, as no doubt many of them did, that their own being, at the very core of it, had been wholly taken up into the being of God. In this they (the mystics) would be quite mistaken, there could hardly be a greater mistake. But it is a mistake which we can easily understand."²⁰ In another place he says that "there seems to be a

case for maintaining that oriental mystics are misrepresenting their case"²¹ when they talk of their oneness with God.

Lewis gives the following arguments in support of his position. First, a sound view of the transcendent as well as finite being seems to preclude from the start any possibility of our being strictly identical with God. The claim that we are so is bound to be mistaken whatever the mystic may feel or experience. Second, a mystical experience is hard to describe; and the peculiarly distinctive character of the mystical experience will make a mystic reluctant to modify the terms in which he describes his experience. But a careful examination of the mystic experience, Lewis argues, will convince us that the mystic is wrong in his interpretation of the experience of oneness with God. But this is not to question, he says, the "merits and importance of mystical experience." Third, the Western mystics have a sounder view of what the experience in all its forms is bound to be in essentials."²²

None of the arguments given by Lewis are convincing. The first argument proceeds on a presupposition which is questionable. On the assumption that his view of the transcendent and finite beings is sound, Lewis denies the identity of the soul with God in mystic experience. One may, however, hold the opposite view that the individual soul in its essential nature is identical with God, and claim that this view which is sound is corroborated by the experience of the mystics. Mystic experience is not irrelevant to the consideration of the issue whether the individual soul is identical with God or not. So the first argument given by Lewis will not avail him. Nor does his third argument hold good. In fact it is no argument at all, but only an assertion for without any supporting arguments Lewis holds the view that the Western mystics have a sounder view of the essentials of the mystical experience. Lewis does not give us any criterion for deciding the soundness of the essentials of the mystic experience, Eastern or Western.

We are now left with only the second argument. Lewis admits the validity and importance of mystical experience. It is true, as he himself states it, that it is hard to describe mystical experience. Though he does not question the authenticity of the mystic's experience, he questions the mystic's interpretation of his experience. The mystic, according to Lewis, is wrong in his interpretation of the experience of his oneness with God.

Though it is hard to describe mystical experience, it does not follow that it cannot be or has not been described, however inadequate the description may be. If mystical experience is important, one has

to accept the mystic's account of his experience as given by him without questioning his account and interpretation of it. Since we cannot have access to the experience of a mystic, which we consider to be important and authentic, we have to accept the account which a mystic gives of his experience.

We may refer to the description of mystical experience drawn from two different sources. The *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* (VII) gives the following account of the mystical experience of the transcendent reality: "The wise say that the Fourth is unseen, beyond empirical dealings, beyond the grasp of the organs of action, uninferable, unthinkable, indescribable. It is pure, unitary consciousness. It is free from the phenomenal world. It is ineffable peace. It is the supreme good. It is non-dual. It is the Self." According to this description mystical experience is the experience of oneness without distinctions and plurality. It is free from subject-object relation, I-thou relation, and so on.

Let us now consider how Saint Māṇikkavācakar describes the nature of God-experience in his *Tiruppaḍaiyāṭci*. In the state of union with God, the divine Fisherman, there is no longer delight in the vision of His anklet-girt feet, no association with the life of the *jīvas*, no worship of the Lord's feet, no scope for dance and song, no room for grace, no fear in respect of merit and demerit, no association with the good, no distinctions of caste, no notions such as good caused by *māyā*, no thought that we are slaves of His slaves, and so on. Only some of the things which Māṇikkavācakar speaks of as absent in mystical experience are stated above. The list which the Saint himself gives is only illustrative, not exhaustive. In fact, it cannot be exhaustive at all. The point which Māṇikkavācakar wants to drive home is that in the mystical experience of union with God, there is no scope for subject-object relation, I-thou relation, worshipper-worshipped relation and so on. In that state, there is the absence of the mind; consequently the sense of individuality, the notion of 'I', what Rāmānuja would call *ahamārtha*, cannot persist at that time.

Either one accepts the authentic character of mystical experience or rejects it as spurious. It makes no sense to say that the interpretation of one's own experience given by the mystic is wrong and cannot be accepted while at the same time admitting the authenticity of mystical experience. It is not for others to say that the mystic is wrong in the interpretation of his experience of oneness or union with

God. No one who does not have the mystic's experience is competent to sit in judgment on what the mystic says about his experience.

Does the loss of individuality or personal existence in the state of release mean the annihilation of the Self? Rāmānuja, for instance, argues that it does, in the course of his objection against the standpoint of Advaita.²³ Advaita holds the view that the loss of individuality or the sense of "I" when the individual soul (*jīva*) attains liberation does not lead to the annihilation of the Self. According to Advaita, the individual soul in its essential nature is no other than Brahman, the ultimate reality. But on account of ignorance (*avidyā*) it thinks that it is different from Brahman, and is involved in the empirical existence. For realizing its identity with Brahman all that is required is the removal of *avidyā* which has caused the status of individuality (*jīvabhāva*). When *avidyā* is destroyed by the right knowledge, the individual soul realizes its essential nature as Brahman, i.e. it remains as Brahman. In this explanation there is scope for both endeavour and attainment. There is the endeavour to remove the *jīvabhāva*, the false role which the Self plays due to ignorance; and consequent on the removal of the *jīvabhāva* there is the attainment of the original status from which there has been a lapse. It means that identity mysticism can account for both destruction (*fana*) and survival (*baqa*) which are considered to be important features in God-realization according to theistic mysticism.²⁴ What is annihilated is *avidyā* and the false status of individuality (*jīvabhāva*) caused by it. What abides is the ever-existent Brahman-Ātman in its true form. It may be stated here that Advaita does not explain the attainment of oneness with Brahman by the *jīva* in terms of the "merging" of the *jīva* in Brahman as Zaehner seems to think.²⁵

V

One more issue to be considered relates to the role of the mystic in society. C.E.M. Joad is of the view that a mystic, though a precocious child, is an "unprofitable servant" as he withdraws himself from society. He has a specific charge against the Eastern mystics. While the Western mystics realized the importance of the world of affairs "looking upon mysticism not as a permanent vocation but as the joy and refreshment of a life of effort and endeavour", the Eastern mystics, according to him, have either missed or deliberately ignored it.²⁷

Zaehner has objections specifically against the identity mysticism of Advaita. He remarks that, while there is place for love in theistic

mysticism, in the identity mysticism of Advaita there is absolutely no place for love. His point is that identity mystics to whom non-dualism is the ultimate truth do not care for the welfare of the world and that they do not endeavour to remove the misery of the people through social reform. Further, there is, according to Zaehner, a theoretical difficulty in the position of Advaita in the case of a mystic helping others in society. He says: "It does much credit to the heart of the ultra-monet Vedāntins that they have always been ready to help others to wards liberation; it does very little credit to their head, for what logic can there possibly be in seeking to free from illusion a person who, from the point of the would-be liberator is by definition illusory? Moreover, it is contrary to the quite logical advice of Gauḍapāda that one 'should behave in the world like an insentient object'".²⁸

What Joad says about mystics in general and Eastern mystics in particular is untenable. It is not true to say that mystics in India have been, and are, indifferent to the problems of others in society. Consider the case of Ramana Maharshi, one of the mystics of our own time. The gracious look of the Maharshi has been a solace to those who have met them. What is true of Ramana Maharshi is equally true of other mystics. The greatness of a mystic is not to be judged exclusively in terms of moral and social activities. Moral and social activities are not the only ways through which a mystic has to outwardly show his concern for others. By his thought and word, by his benign look and gentle touch, and also by his "eloquent silence" a mystic comforts the agonized mind and soothes the aching body of those who seek his guidance. Ramana Maharshi used to say that only those who have realized the Self can serve others. Moral activity, social reform and community service undertaken by the rest are more often than not much propaganda and little service.

While Zaehner's bias for theism is understandable, his criticism of identity mysticism is unfounded. It is anything but truth to say that great mystics like Śaṅkara, Ramana Maharshi, and others withdraw from society with a view to enjoy the emotional ecstasy of bliss all by themselves. What a mystic speaks and does is at once an example and an inspiration to others. In his commentary on the *Bhagavad-gītā*, III, 25, Śaṅkara observes that a person who has realized the Self should work for the welfare of others, though for himself he may have nothing to do.

"Who can rescue whom?" is the most important question to be considered in order to answer the logical difficulty raised by Zaehner.

The wise man alone who has realized Brahman-Ātman, who is liberated-in-life (*jīvanmukta*), can rescue one who, because of ignorance, is in bondage. Gauḍapāda whom Zaehner has quoted refers first of all to the qualifications of the person who realises the non-dual reality. He says: "This Self, which is trans-phenomenal and non-dual, which is free from all imagination, is realized by the wise versed in the *Vedas* and unafflicted by desire, fear and anger."²⁰

Gauḍapāda himself answers the question in the next verse from which Zaehner has quoted. He says: "Therefore, after knowing it thus, one should fix one's attention on non-duality. Having realised the non-dual reality, one should behave in the world like an insentient object."²¹ What does Gauḍapāda mean when he compares the behaviour of the liberated-in-life (*jīvanmukta*) to that of an insentient object? In his commentary on this verse, Śaṅkara says that a *jīvanmukta* will not broadcast his realization to the world; he will behave as though he has not known the truth; he will not tomtom to others what he is and what he has attained. Zaehner seems to think that a *jīvanmukta* will remain inert like a stone, and that he cannot, therefore, go to the help of others in bondage. It is obvious that Zaehner has misunderstood the point of Gauḍapāda.

The individual (*jīva*) who is to be rescued is one who, without knowing his real nature, is subject to illusion, and suffers from various wrong notions about himself. Advaita does not say that the *jīva* is illusory. On the contrary, it says that what the *jīva* thinks of himself is illusory; i.e. his status as a finite individual (*jīva-bhāva*) is illusory. A prince, not knowing his real status, thinks of himself from his childhood as a hunter and behaves accordingly. While his status as a prince is real, his role as a hunter is illusory. One who knows the truth cures him of the illusion he suffers from by telling him the truth that he is not a hunter, but only a prince and thereby rescues him. Likewise, a God-realized person, i.e. a *jīvanmukta*, out of compassion for one who suffers from wrong notions due to *avidyā*, tells him in the same way as Uddālaka instructed Śvetaketu that he is not a *jīva*, a limited and finite being, but only Brahman which is "real, knowledge, and infinite."²² So Zaehner's question, "What logic can there possibly be in seeking to free from illusion a person who, from the point of view of the would-be liberaor, is by definition, illusory?" betrays lack of understanding of the standpoint of Advaita.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. R. C. Zaehner, *Mysticis, Sacred and Profane* (Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1957).
2. W. T. Stace, *Mysticism and Philosophy* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1961).
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 237 and 240.
4. H.D. Lewis, *The Elusive Mind* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1969).
5. *Op. cit.*, pp. 31-32.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 130.
7. *First Tiruvantādi*, verse 6.
8. *Third Tiruvantādi*, verse 1.
9. *Tiruvandāppakuti*. 57-60
10. *Puruṣasūktam*.
11. *Op. cit.*, pp. 131-132.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 189.
13. *Op. cit.*, p. 318.
14. *Op. cit.*, p. 149.
15. See Śaṅkara's commentary on the *Brahma-sūtra*, I, i, 12, at the beginning of the *ānandamayādhikaraṇa*.
16. Stace, *Op. cit.*, p. 64.
17. Saint Kumaraguruparar, *Kandar-kalivenṇbā*, 11, 4-10.
18. Poygai Ālvār, *First Tiruvantādi*, verse 5.
19. Peyālvār, *Third Tiruvantādi*, verse 63.
20. Lewis, *Op. cit.*, p. 309.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 314.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 314.
23. See Rāmānuja, *Śrī-bhāṣya*, I, i, 1.
24. See Zaehner, *Op. cit.*, p. 150.
25. Zaehner, *Op. cit.*, pp. 139-140. The examples of the juices constituting honey and the rivers merging in the ocean given in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, VI, ix — x, in the context of *sat-sampatti* are mentioned by Zaehner in support of his view. He says that this portion of the *Chāndogya* is the *locus classicus* of the non-dualist Vedānta. The passages mentioned by him in this connection do not lend support to his conception of "merging" of the *jīva* in Brahman. Had he taken into consideration the issues that are raised in the context

and the answers to them contained in these illustrations, his conclusion would have been quite different.

26. C. E. M. Joad, *Matter, Life, and Value* (London : Oxford University Press, 1929), p. 409.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 410.
28. Zachner, *Op. cit.*, p. 164.
29. Gauḍapāda, *Māṇḍūkya-kārikā*, II, 35.
30. *Ibid.*, II, 36.
31. *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, II, i, 1.

Fr. Ignatius Hirudayam

MYSTIC EXPERIENCE OF
THE TAMILS AS THE BASIS
FOR INTER-RELIGIOUS
DIALOGUE

The Tamils are mystics by temperament. The most ancient Tamil literature is apparently secular poetry dealing with the interior love-life of people and their external social relations. But it treats of the noumenal experience of a mysterious love-life as T. P. Meenakshisundaram has pointed out in his *History of Tamil Literature* and not of the datable and placeable sex-drama manifesting the vital sex impulses of rational animals. The paradigmatic schedule of the *ainthinaï* with its union, parting, pining etc., in the Saṅgam poetry and the grammar of the love-drama that arose from it have resulted finally in the creation of several *kovai* lyrics. The best of these is *Tirukkovaïyār* which is attributed to Māṇikkavācakar, and in it every item and aspect of the human love-event is seen *sub specie eternitatis* as symbolizing the aspects of the Divine-human love-dialogue. Thus the *Iyarkai-p-puṇarchi* or spontaneous union of a nameless but ideal couple consists of the following eighteen items each indicating a *pērinpa-k-kiḷavi* or mystical significance.

The first is *kāñchi* (காட்சி) or “first sight”, and it suggests the first sight of the *Tiru meni* (sacred body) of the *guru* who is indeed the epiphany of Divine Love. The *guru* is signified by the lady-love. Next *ayyam* (ஐயம்) or doubt arises in the lover whether this *mēni* is the epiphany of the Lord or merely a human individual. *Theḷital* (தெளிதல்) or clearing of doubt is the assurance that arises on recognizing the presence of Divine Grace in the eyes of the *guru* and the certainty that it is indeed the epiphany of the Lord.¹ *Nayappu* (நயப்பு) or desire is the hope that one can obtain final bliss of union through this epiphany. *Uḷkōḷ* (உட்கோல்) is the assurance that the Lord reciprocally bears love towards one, an assurance conveyed by the glance of the *guru*. *Deivattai*

makiṭṭal (தெய்வத்தை மகிழ்தல்) is the joy that one has been found fit for this great boon. *Punarchi thūnital* (புணர்ச்சி துணிதல்) is the daring to approach the Lord's feet. *Kalavi uraittal* (கலவி உரைத்தல்) is the speaking out of the bliss obtained by the contact with the Lord. We may here mention that the biblical meaning of the word "to know" is also rich in mystical significance; it includes the concept of complete merging of the knower and the known, symbolized by the marital act. *Iruvayinottal* (இருவயினைத்தல்) is the realization that this divine love never cloys. *Kiṭṭavi vēttal* (கிளவி வேட்டல்) comes next i.e., the soul that has experienced sight, thought and contact now yearns to have the joy of hearing the voice and words of the Lord. *Nalam Punainturaittal* (நலம் புனைந்துரைத்தல்) is praising the Lord for the bliss He granted. *Pirivu unartal* (பிரிவு உணர்தல்) is realising that this mystic experience is not the eternal union but a transitory foretaste of it. *Paruvaral arital* (பருவரல் அறிதல்) means realising that the Lord too suffers at the fact that this experience is temporal and not eternal. *Arut-kunam uraittal* (அருட்குணம் உரைத்தல்) is proclaiming that though the temporal experience is transitory, yet the ontic union with Grace is a lasting one. *Ādidat-tuittal* (ஆடிடத்துய்த்தல்) is realising that Grace and the Lord are identified. *Sivam* is symbolized by the lady-love and Grace by her companion. *Arumaiyarital* (அருமையறிதல்) is wondering whether this experience was true and this wonder is due to the consciousness of one's own unworthiness. *Pāṅḡiyai Arital* (பாங்கியை அறிதல்) stands for the recognition that the experience is indeed a miracle of the Lord's Grace. It is the recognition of the presence and action of Grace through the revelation of *Sivam*.

Tirukkōvaiyār then passes on to a lengthy treatment of *Paṅgar-kūṭṭaṇ* under thirty items, too long to translate here. *Paṅgan* is the friend of the lover (groom's friend) and is said to be the symbol of the natural intelligence (அறிவு) which can bring some kind of analogical knowledge of God but can never supply the direct experience of the Absolute. This direct experience can be had only by means of God's grace which is a free gift. The Upaniṣadic assertion that He can be attained only by one whom He chooses by His own divine and free choice is repeated down the centuries in Hinduism. It has got parallels in Christianity and Islam. "Unless seen by means of His Grace as our eye, His form, nature and beauty can be described by no one," sang *Tirunāvukkaracar* :

“அவனருளே கண்ணாகக் காணினல்லால்
இப்படியன் இந்நிறத்தன் இவ்வண்ணத்தன்
இவன் இறைவன் என்றெழுதித் காட்டொணாதே.”

And *Thāyumanavar* sang: "By Grace behold all things, said He. Not understanding it, by my intelligence I beheld discriminating.

What did I see but darkness? I saw not even me the seer. What is this, my friend?"

“அருளாலே எவையும்பார் என்றான் ; அத்தை
அறியாதே சுட்டினன் அறிவாலே பார்த்தேன் ;
இருளான பொருள்கண்டதல்லால், கண்ட
என்னையும் கண்டிலேன், என்னேடி தோழி.”

“Do not send me any more messengers.” complains the bride in St. John of the Cross’s Spiritual Canticle. “They cannot tell me what I must hear. All who are free tell me thousand graceful things of You. All wound me more and leave me dying of—ah, I-know-not-what behind their stammering. May my eyes behold You, because You are their light and I would open them to You alone. Reveal Your presence and may the vision of beauty be my death.”

After *Iṛarkai-puṇarchi* and *Paṅgar-Kūttam*, *Tirukkōvaiyār* proceeds with *Idam Thalaiṇṇādu* (இடம் தலைப்பாடு) and *Mathiyudampaduttal* (மதியுடம்படுத்தல்) etc. These are also understood and explained as the symbols of a trans-temporal and trans-historical modes of relations between the Ātman and the Paramātmān. In certain places of *Tirukkōvaiyār*, the commentator notes that spiritualization is somewhat far-fetched: e.g., under 24 of *Paṅgar kūttam* இங்ஙனம் உரையாக் கால் இக்கிளவி பொருந்துமாறில்லை.”

So much, in brief, about *akam* or love poetry in ancient Tamil literature. But even in the *puṇam* literature, I should like to submit there are aspects and techniques that are more spiritual than secular. For example, the techniques of *ārṇruppadai* (ஆற்றுப்படை) where a destitute poet who has experienced the munificence of an extraordinarily generous patron points to the way in which a similar destitute person might find his destination where his liberation from want and suffering may be attained. This has resulted in the great *Tiru Murugārṇruppadai* in praise of God Muruga, and His six great shrines. This concept could easily develop into the doctrine of the *Guru* in the Śaiva Siddhānta economy of Salvation (Cf. *Siva-Jñāna Botham*, Sūtram 3) and in the various Hindu *mārgas* in general.

Such a rich mystical tradition is the only explanation for the apparently sudden and prodigious outpour of śaivite and Vaiṣṇavite bhakti mystic literature after the dark ages of the Kalabra interregnum.

Disciplinary Prerequisites :

The preliminary requisites for entrance into the mystical path are not absent from the Śaivite and Vaiṣṇavite literature.

The very first virtue is *viveka* or *nityānitya vastu viveka* which is the discernment between the real and the unreal, the permanent and the non-permanent, between *Ātmā* and *Anātmā*. It is asserted as having been merited by past deeds and at the same time as dawning in the soul as the free gift and grace of the Almighty. (Cf. *Pañcadaśī: Vivekā Pañcaka*). “நெறியல்லா நெறிதன்னை நெறியாக நினைவேனை...” “A way that was no rightful way I followed, deeming it the way...” (*Tiruvācakam*)

Viveka is the sword of wisdom, *Jñāna vaḷi* of the *Tirupadaiyeḷucchi* (*Tiruvācakam*). We may affirm that *viveka*, like the fear of God, is both the beginning of *Brahmavidyā* as well as its crown. The *Jñāna Vāsiṣṭam* of Ālavantār Mādavapattar (of Virai near Vembattur, Madurai Dt.), *Kaivalya Navanēdam*, *Olivil Odukkam* and other Vedāntic works in Tamil describe *viveka* as well as *vairāgya*, *śama*, *dama*, *ūparati*, *titikṣa*, *śraddhā* and *mumukṣutva*, though not systematically. The prerequisites of yogic meditation viz., *ahimsā*, *satya*, *asteya*, *aparigraha* and *brahmacharya* are also inculcated in *Tiruvācakam*, *Thāyumānavar* and others.

Yoga works in the second limb of *niyama* deal with *sauca*, *śantoṣa*, *tapas* and *svādhyāya* and then in passing mention *Īśvara-praṇidhāna* as being useful as a means. But Śaivite and Vaiṣṇavite works give the central importance to this practice of religion, which is the offering up to God of all one's actions. *Saraṇāgati* in Vaiṣṇavism is paralleled by what *Māṇikkavācakar* describes as *adaikkalam*: “Master, I Thee my refuge make (உடையாய் அடியேன் உன் அடைக்கலமே,)” Again in *Kulaittapāttu*, he sings: “That very day, my soul, my body and every thing pertaining to me, didst Thou not take away as Thine own when Thou madest me Thy slave?”:

“அன்றே என்றன் ஆனியும் உடலும் உடைமை யெல்லாமும்
குன்றே அனையாய் எனை ஆட்கொண்ட போதே கொண்டிலையோ?”

And Thāyumānavar says: “I have surrendered everything to Thee. Actions of mine have I none; My body, possessions and soul are all Thine. Remove but the darkness of my soul; My Lord, give Thy grace as Thou wilt;”

“எனக்கெனச் செயல் வேறில்லை யாவும் இங்கொருநின்
தனக்கெனத்தரும் உடல்பொருள் ஆனியும் தந்தேன்
மனத்தகத்துள அழுக்கெலாம் மாற்றி எம்பிரான் நீ
நினைத்ததெப்படி அப்படி அருளுதல் நீதம்.”

The Prayer of St. Ignatius of Loyola is known by heart to most Catholics: “Take, O Lord and receive all my liberty, my intellect, memory and will. All that I have and possess, Thou hast given to me. To Thee I restore them all and give away to be governed by Thy will.

Give me but Thy grace and Thy love and I shall be sufficiently rich and shall not desire anything more."

We also know the poem of Rabindranath Tagore : "Let only that little be left of me whereby I may call Thee my Lord, let only that little of my freedom be left whereby" etc.,

All these parallel texts show that complete surrender to God is the common path of all mystics.

We are therefore wisely warned that we should not set any value to the attainment of the *aṣṭa siddhis* if we are keen on real union with the Absolute as our goal.

Mantra Yoga Sādhana:

The use of mantras for the attainment of meditative union is also common to all religions. The *Gāyatri* mantras have the three key words : *vidmahe*, *dhimahi* and *pracodayāt*. Meditation therefore starts with something visible and then proceeds in interiorization progressively till the Lord intervenes and gives His own illumination. The *japa* technique is taught in all religions. And that should make one think there is no magical power in the number or kind of letters that compose the *japa*. It is the *bhakti* content in the *japa* and its power to transfer the reciter into the very meaning of the *japa* that matters : *tad japaḥ tad artha bhāvanā*. Meditation on *aum* is effective because it is the *triekākṣaram* of asseveration ; it is saying amen or yes to God. By this yes one knows Brahman.

Dhyāna Methods :

1. The *neti neti* method :

Affirmative or cataphatic theology seeks to find in God qualities existing in the created world though in a "more eminent way." Thus the very first stanza of Nammālvār's *Tiruvāimoli* addresses his soul in these words :

"Who is He that has the highest good,
Who is He that has granted wisdom to dispel darkness;
Who is He that is the Lord of deathless heavenly beings.
His resplendant feet that deliver us from evil, adore and rise,
O my soul."

"உயர்வற உயர்நலம் உடையவன் யவன் அவன்
மயர்வற மதிநலம் அருளினன் யவன் அவன்
அயர்வறும் அமரர்கள் அதிபதி யவன் அவன்
துயர்அறு சுடரடி தொழுதெழு என் மனனே."

Māṇikkavācakar in his *Kōiṟṟiruppadikam* prays: "Perfect fulness, flawless ambrosia, mountain of endless flaming light, etc."

“குறைவிலா நிறைவே கோதிலா அமுதே
ஈறிலாக் கொழுஞ்சுடர்க் குன்றே.”

Again in *Porṟittiruvakaval* he praises the Lord thus: "O Friend, *Pōṟṟi*, O Comrade *pōṟṟi*, My joy, my treasure, *pōṟṟi* etc."

“தோழா போற்றி துணைவா போற்றி
வாழ்வே போற்றின் வைப்பே போற்றி.”

All the *sahasranāmas* are cataphatic.

As opposed to this affirmative theology, *apophasis* (negation) has given rise to a negative theology in Hinduism and in Catholicism. It is the *cloud of forgetting* which the unknown author of the *cloud of unknowing* asks us to place between us and the world and its ideas and concepts before facing up the *cloud of unknowing* that lies between us and the *Absolute* which is our goal. "God is better known by saying what He is not than by saying what He is," says Thomas Aquinas. We can quote copiously from Thiru Muṟai and from Divyaprabandam examples of this *neti neti* method.

"Equal He has none, Nor is He one,
of one place He is not, Nor of comparison aught."

“ஒப்புடையன் அல்லன் ஒருவன் அல்லன்
ஒருன் அல்லன் ஒருவமன் இல்லி.”

—Appar.

"Thou art all and not."

"Thou art the Beginning,
the End and the Middle,
and not any of them."

"Thou art being
and non-being."

"Thou art not anything".

“யாவையுமாய் அல்லையுமாய்,”

“ஆதியனே அந்தம் நடுவாகி அல்லானே,”

“உண்மையுமாய் இன்மையுமாய்,”

“ஒன்று நீ யல்லை.”;

— Māṇikkavācakar.

"It is not Hari, nor is It Śiva but beyond the beyond;
It is not big, nor is it small; hold, hold fast;
Infinitely far far far above the *turiya* state."

“அரியமல்ல அரனுமல்ல அப்புறத்தில் அப்புறம்
பெரியதல்ல சிறியதல்ல... பற்றுமின்கள் பற்றுமின்
துரியமும் கடந்து நின்ற தூர தூர தூரமே.”

— Sivavakkiyār.

Thāyumānavar's “*nirguṇa, nirāmaya, nirañjana, nīrālamba, nirviṣaya*” etc., also are examples of the *neti neti* method.

We may give parallels in Christian literature. For instance, Gregory of Nazianzen's Hymn to God sings: “You who are beyond beyond all, what other name befits you? Alone You are ineffable Alone You are unknowable ... You are one, You are all, You are none.” “Bearer of all names, how shall I name You ... You alone are the Unnameable ... You are beyond beyond all! No other name befits You.”

What is revealed in the Bible is the unknowableness of God. This unknowableness and His transcendence is what constitutes His Holiness before which man has to fall in adoration. But in falling in adoration man really rises and ascends. *Thoḷutu eḷu en maname*,” Nammālvār says. “Adore and rise, O my soul.”

It is precisely because God is beyond all forms that He is behind and within every form. Because He is *arūpa*, He is worshipped as *sarva-rūpa*.

“To Him, Who hath nor name nor form.
A thousand sacred names sing we ...”

“ஒரு நாமம் ஒருருவம் ஒன்றுமில்லாற் காயிரம்
திருநாமம் பாடி.”

— Tiruvācakam.

2. *Sākṣi* Method :

This method makes one separate oneself from the *vṛttis* and watching them as a perfectly indifferent witness. Poets like Thāyumānavar have sung about this method. “It was Thy Grace that granted me to cling to the state wherein the heart stands as witness while things come that should come and things that should not come do not ... it was Thy Grace that granted me to know that this false body is not lasting ...” (*Paripūraṇānandaṁ*).

“You are not one of the elements; think;

You are not the senses inner or outer;

Search, you are spirit; so said the Lord:

His love-filled word was bliss, dear.

“ பாராதி பூதம் நீ அல்லை, உன்னிப்
பார் ; இந்திரியம் கரணம் நீ அல்லை ;
ஆராய் உணர்வு நீ என்றான் ஐயன்
அன்பாய் உரைத்தசொல் ஆனந்தம், தோழி.”

“ O Light that soaks all things, yet
stands unsoaked by any !”

“ தோய்ந்தும் பொருளனை த்தும் தோயாது
நின்ற சுடரே !”

—Kambar.

3. The *Laya Cintana* method :

This method leads one to consider the involution of all effects into their causes, till finally Brahman alone is left. This is similar to the *dāsakārya* method of the Śaiva Siddhāntin wherein *tattva-rūpam* leads to *tattva-darśanam* and then to *tattva-śuddhi*. *Ātma-rūpam* leads to *Ātma-darśanam* and them to *Ātma-śuddhi* ; And finally Śiva rūpavam leads to *Śiva darśanam*, *Śiva yogam* and finally to *Śiva bhogam*. Ignatius of Loyola proposes meditation of all things coming forth from God, and the Great Return of all things to their Source.

“ தத்துவம் போய்க் கேவலம் போய்த் தான் போய்
அருள் கழன்று
சுத்த பரையாய்த் தன் சுதந்திரம் போய்ச்—சத்தி
ஒழிவிலே போதம்போய் ஒன்றாகா ஒன்றின்
அழிவிலே இன்ப ஆதீதம் ” (ஒழிவிலொடுக்கம் :
நிலையியல்பு).

“ மாய நட்போரையும் மாயா மலமெனும் மாதரையும்
வீய விட் டோடி வெளியே புறப்பட்டு மெய்யருளாம்
தாயுடன் சென்று பின் தாதையைக் கூடிப் பின்
தாயை மறந்து
ஏயுமதே நிட்டை யென்றான் எழில் கச்சி ஏகம்பனே
(பட்டினத்தார்)

Jan Van Ruysbroeck (1293-1381), the great Dutch mystic has said: “Finding God is nothing but the flowing back into His nature where we have been from all eternity.” We could also speak of a Vaiṣṇavite contemplation wherein *aniruddha* involves into *Pradyumna*, the latter into *Sankarṣana* and all finally into *Vasudeva*, finally leaving the *Para* state alone.

Such Vedāntic methods produce one or the other of the following vidyas or wisdoms :

Dahara-Vidyā :¹

Dhara-vidyā is the knowledge that accrues from concentrating on the presence of the Supreme in the very heart of every being as *sarva bhūta*

eguhavam. We must, however, hold both ends as the *Īśāvāsya Upaniṣad* teaches : *tad antarasya sarvasya*, it is within all this and at the same time *tad sarvasya u sarvasya bāhyataḥ* it is also beyond all this. It is so intimate to the most intimate part of our being that it is superior to the most superior reach of our being (Cf. *Confessions of St. Augustine*).

Māṇicavācagar expresses the same truth repeatedly in various places. It is the *leit motif* of Māṇikavācagar in all his poems.

“Light unseen that lurks within the souls that sought Thee not.”

“Eye of the minds that see by keenest glance of wisdom true,
Hard to be eyed ! Subtle understanding none can scrutinize !”

“See, He dwells after where thought goes not.”

“See, mingling with all beings, each one He cherishes.”

“ஓராதார் உள்ளத்து ஒளிக்கும் ஒளியானே !”

“கூர்த்த மெய்ஞ்ஞானத்தாற் கொண்டுணர்வார் தம் கருத்தில்
நோக்கரிய நோக்கே ! நுணுக்கரிய நுண்ணுணர்வே !”

“சித்தமும் செல்லாச் சேட்சியன் காண்க.”

“மருவி எப்பொருளும் வளர்ப்போன் காண்க.”

“Light of lights, ‘Beyond the Darkness’ It is called (true) knowledge, what should be known, accessible to knowledge, established in the heart of all.”

Jotiṣaṁ api taj jyotiḥ tamasaḥ paraṁ uchyate ; jñānaṁ jñevaṁ jñāna gamyaṁ hr̥di sarvasya dhiṣṭitaṁ (*Bhagavad-Gītā* XIII : 17).

“The inner light, past speech, the Worthiest entered within my soul...”

“உரை மாண்ட உள்ளொளி உத்தமன் வந்துளம் புகலும்.”

—*Tiruvācagam*

“...set in the cavern (of the heart) beyond the firmament, that splendour into which the saints pass...” (*Kaivalya Upaniṣad*), *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* III. 13.7

MadhuVidyā

To take an over-all view of the concatenation of causes and effects is considered the honey of the gods available to human contemplation. St. Ignatius of Loyola proposes a similar scheme of contemplation to obtain God's love.

Udgīta-Vidyā is to meditate on the presence of *aum* within oneself.

Māṇikavācagar sings : “*Uyya en uḷḷattu! Omkāramāy ninra Meyya—*
(உய்ய என் உள்ளத்துள் ஒங்காரமாய் நின்ற மெய்யா)

“O Truth ! as the Ongaram dwelling in my soul,
That I may ‘scape.’

Thāyumānavar says:

“Knowing Thee who stands as the soul of my soul without ceasing, I must rest without resting; is there any bliss for me other than this? O, indivisible *Parāśivam* who created the world by the five lettered *Oṅgāram* and rules it benignly.”

“நீங்காதுயிருக் குயிராகி நின்ற நினையறிந்தே
தூங்காமல் தூங்கின் அல்லாதே எனக்குச் சுகமுண்டோ
ஓங்காரமாம் ஐந்தெழுத்தால் புவனத்தை உண்டுபண்ணிப்
பாங்காய் நடத்தும் பொருளே அகண்ட பரசிவமே.”

In the *Book of Revelation*, Christ is named the *Amen* of God. *Amen* is the word of asseveration parallel to *Aum*. He is the yes of God to man and at the same time the yes of man to God; thus He is the existential dialogue between the *Ātman* and the *Paramātmān*. In him as this dialogue everything was created and without Him nothing was created that was created. In Him again all things are held together. (Col. I. 15-20)

Śaiva Siddhānta therefore claims to be a *jñāna-mārga* and a pure Advaita in its philosophical basis and in its ultimate goal. But it proposes four paths to its followers, viz. *dāsa mārga*, *satputra mārga*, *sakha mārga* and *san mārga*. They respectively correspond to the practices of *carya*, *kriya*, *yoga* and *jñāna* expounded in the traditional four Pādas of each Āgama.

The *Dāsa mārga* and *Satputra mārga* with their practices of *carya* and *kriya* are equivalent to the Vedic and Vedāntic *Karma mārga*. They serve as processes of interiorization through the *sādhana*s of cultic rites and recitation of mantras. And some have reached very high mystical heights through these processes. The practice of *yoga* and *jñāna* constitute the *san mārga*. *Sakha-mārga* is, in fact, *Bhakti-mārga*.

Its *bhakti* is indeed the *Anuraktir* Īśvare of Sāṅḍilya. The Vaiṣṇavaite *bhakti* recorded in and inculcated by the *Divyaprabhādam* hymns corresponds to the *sakha mārga* of the Śaivites. The bridal mysticism of Nammālvār and Tirumangai Ālvār parallels Śrī Āṇḍāl's mystic marriage: “I dreamt that my beloved Madhusudhan came and grasped my hand amidst the resounding music of drum and conch-shell under a canopy of garlands and pearls.. I dreamt that my beloved lifting my foot with His lovely hands placed it on the grinding stone.”

“மத்தளம் கொட்ட வரிசங்கம் நின்றாது
முத்துடைத் தாம நிரைதாழ்ந்த பந்தர்க்கீழ்
மைத்துனன் நம்பி மதுகுதன் வந்தென்னைக்
கைத்புலம் பற்றக் கனாக்கண்டேன் தோழிநான்.”

“இம்மைக்கும் ஏழேழ் பிறவிக்கும் பற்றுவான்
நம்மை யுடையவன் நாராயணன் நம்பி
செம்மை யுடைய திருக்கையால் தாள்பற்றி
அம்மி மிதிக்கக் கனாக் கண்டேன் தோழிநான்.”

These have their parallels in the Mystic Marriage of Christian saints like St. Catherine of Sienna, St. John of the Cross taking his cue from the *Song of Solomon* sings :

“One dark night, fired with love's longings urgent,—ah sheer grace,

I went out unseen, My house being now all stilled.
In darkness and secure/By the secret ladder, disguised...
With no other light or guide
Than the one that burned in my heart...

To where He waited for me...in a place where no one else appeared.

“O night more lovely than the dawn
that has united the Lover with His beloved
Transforming the beloved in her Lover.
He wounded my neck with His gentle hand
suspending all my senses.”

Again he sings in *The Living Flame of Love* :

“O living flame of love that tenderly wounds my soul
In its deepest centre...Now consummate ! If it be your will
Tear through the veil of this sweet encounter.
O delightful wound !... That tastes of eternal life...
In killing, You changed death to life.”

St. Teresa of Avila gives the doctrine of the Mystical Marriage, distinguishing it from spiritual betrothal and spiritual union. She says, “The Lord appears in the centre of the soul, not through an imaginary, but through an intellectual vision. just as He appeared to the *Apostles*, without entering through the door, when He said to them : *Pax vobis* (Jn XX. 19, 21)... for He has been pleased to unite Himself with His creature in such a way so that they have become like two who cannot be separated from one another : even so He will not separate Himself from her. Spiritual betrothal is different : here two persons are frequently separated as is the case with union, for although by union is meant the joining of two things into one, each of the two can be separated. (In Spiritual Marriage) the soul remains all the time in that centre with its God.”

According to this doctrine, the dark night of separation about which Hindu and Christian mystics sing so piningly cannot take place in the

state of Mystical Marriage but only in the state of spiritual union or in Spiritual betrothal. St. John of the Cross mourns: "Where have You hidden beloved and left me mourning after wounding me? O woods and thickets... Tell me, has He passed by you? Pouring out a thousand graces He passed these groves in haste/And having looked at them with His image alone clothed them in beauty...When You looked at me Your eyes imprinted Your grace in me;...You, my Life, will give me what You gave me on that other day."

Māṇikkavācakar :

"Thou Kuyil small, that does frequent the grove with
sweet fruit rich, hear this!

The Gracious One who left the heavens, enter'd this
earth, made men His own;

The Only-one, despised the flesh, entered my soul
and fills my thought :-

The Bride-groom of the Fawn-eyed-one that gently
rules, Go hither call!"

“தேன்பழச் சோலை பயிலும் சிறுகுயிலே இதுகேள் நீ
வான் பழித்து இம்மண் புகுந்து மனிதரை ஆட்கொண்ட
வள்ளல்
ஊன் பழித்து உள்ளம் புகுந்து என் உணர்வது ஆய
ஒருத்தன்
மான் பழித்து ஆண்ட மெல் நோக்கி மனாளனை நீ வரக்
கூவாய்.”

The Soul's search for the Beloved whom it has enjoyed and has
lost a while is sung by Māṇikkavācakar thus :

"Splendour of Grace ! Well ripened luscious Fruit unique !

King of ascetics stern of all prevailing power !

Science of meanings deep ! Delight transcending praise !

Of mystic sacred musings' Fulness blest !

Thou enterest Thy servants' thought and all is clear !

My wealth of bliss ! O Śiva-Perumān !

In each dark hour, I've seiz'd Thee fast !

Whither will Thou go leaving me sorrowing ? "

“அருளுடைச் சூடரே ! அளிந்ததோர் கனியே !

பெருந்திறல் அருந்தவர்க் கரசே

பொருளுடைக் கலையே ! புகழ்ச்சியைக் கடந்த

போகமே ! யோகத்தின் பொலிவே !

தெருளிடத் தடியார் சிந்தையுட் புகுந்த

செல்வமே ! சிவபெருமானே !

இருளிடத் துன்னைச் சிக்கெனப் பிடித்தேன்,

எங்கெழுந் தருளுவ தினியே ?

“Thy slave in foul decay—merest earth ;
 Within a very nest of worms I lay
 Thou madest me Thine...
 at last . O God, O mighty Sea of Grace !
 I have seized Thee fast,
 Where will Thou go hence — leaving me sorrowing ? ”

“முடைவிடாது அடியேன் முத்து அற மண்ணாய்
 முழுப்புழுக் குரம்பையிற் கிடந்து
 கடைபடா வண்ணம் காத்தெனை யாண்ட
 கடவுளே கருணைமா கடலே
 இடைவிடாதுன்னைச் சிக்கெனப் பிடித்தேன்
 எங்கெழுந் தருளுவதனியே ?

All these lamentations of mystics in all religions witness to the fact that they had enjoyed a foretaste of the eternal bliss which now they have lost for a while. The Mystical Marriage which St. Teresa speaks as involving an inseparable union is sung by Tirukkōvaiyār in places like Poḷil Kaṇḍu Maḱiṭal (பொழில் கண்டு மகிழ்தல்) : “Souls see the epiphany of the Lord in all things.” (எல்லாப் பொருள்களிடத்தும் இறைவன் தோற்றத்தை உயிர் காண்டல்) This state is understood as the divine-human union in terms of marital union which is called *nirvikalpa* union or *samādhi*. In this place the Commentary quotes *Sivajñāna Siddhiyār* Supakkam 311 :

“Those who have had a vision of *Paraṁ* by means of *Parajñānaṁ* will be only looking for *Paraṁ* and will not see anything else.”

“பரஞானத்தால் பரத்தைத் தரிசித்தோர் பரமே
 பார்த்திருப்பார், பதார்த்தங்கள் பாரார்.”

Tirukkōvaiyār (No. 22) in its commentary on *Taḷarvu t akanṟ uraittal* (தளர்வகன்றுரைத்தல்) says :

“திருவிகாரமாய் நிலைபெறல் கண்டது : இறைவன் எல்லாம் தன்னுடையாகவும் எல்லாம் தன்னடிமையாகவும் எல்லாம் தன்னுடைய செயலாகவும் அவற்றால் விகாரம் எய்தாமல் தான் எப்போதும் தனிப் பொருளாகவே இருத்தலை உயிரானது உணர்தல்.”

“Attaining to the *Nirvikāra* vision : God takes all things as His possession and all actions as His own and yet remains unaffected by them. The realization of this by the soul is called *Taḷarvu Akanṟu Uraittal*.”

Tiruvācagam (*ānandattu aḷuntal*) puts it as:

“புணர்ப்ப தொக்க எந்தை என்னை ஆண்டு பூண நோக்கினாய்
 புணர்ப்ப தன்றி தென்றபோது நின்னோடென்னே
 டென்னிதாம்

புணர்ப்பதாக அன்றிதாக அன்புநின் கழற்கணை
புணர்ப்பதாக அங்கனாள் புங்கமான போகமே.”

(திருச்சதகம் ஆனந்ததமுந்தல் 284)

“Sire, as in union strict, Thou madest me thine; on me didst look,
didst draw me near,
And when it seemed I ne'er could be with Thee made one - When
naught of Thine was mine
And naught of mine was Thine,—me to Thy feet Thy feet Thy love
In mystic union joined, Lord, of the heavenly land”—Tis height of
blessednes.)

(*Tiruccatahain* 284)

In his *Puṇarcchipattu*, Māṇikkavācakar uses ten different phrases but they do not suggest any systematic or progressively deeper unions :

புடைபட்டிருப்பது,

போற்றி நிற்பது, பூண்டு கிடப்பது, புல்லிப் புணர்வது, புகழப்
பெறுவது, புரிந்து நிற்பது, புனையப் பெறுவது, புக்கு நிற்பது, பாதப்
போதாய்ந்து அணைவது, பாதப் பூப்போதணைவது.

It is in Thāyumānavar's *ānandakkaḷippu* as in Māṇikkavācakar that we find the mystic nuptials blending with advaitic experience of the highest degree :

“The words that He spake how can I tell? Cunningly seating me in solitude, with no ‘Thou’ before me, health filling to my brim He grasped and hugged me.”

“சொன்ன சொல்லேதென்று சொல்வேன்—என்னைச்

சூதாய்த் தனிக்கவே சும்மா இருத்தி

முன்னிலை ஏது மில்லாதே—சுக

முற்றச் செய்தே எனைப் பற்றிக்கொண் டாண்டி.” (1)

“Away with other clingings, cling but to Me within, said He. What I received as I clung to Him how can I tell? He spake things that are never spoken, dear.”

“பற்றிய பற்றற உள்ளே—தன்னைப்

பற்றச் சொன்னான் பற்றிப் பார்த்தவிடத்தே

பெற்றதை ஏதென்று சொல்வேன்—சற்றும்

பேசாத காரியம் பேசினான் தோழி.” (2)

“holding down the senses and tearing them away, I poured my love on the *meni* that is He. Into Himself He tucked me, dear, He blended with me so. I lost the power of speech.”

“அடக்கிப் புலனைப் பிரித்தே—அவ

னுகிய மேனியில் அன்பை வளர்த்தேன்

மடக்கிக் கொண்டான் என்னைத் தன்னுள்—சற்றும்

வாய்பேசா வண்ணம் மரபு செய்தாண்டி.” (4)

“Cast away all that your heart sees as real or unreal ; thus saying, He made me Himself” ...“ Lo I knew myself. I died to thought.”

“ உள்ளதும் இல்லதும் ஆயமுன்
உணர்வதுவாய் உன் உளங்கண்ட தெல்லாம்
தள்ளெனச் சொல்லி என் னயன் என்னைத்
தானுக்கிக் கொண்ட சமர்த்தைப் பார் தோழி.” (8)
“ என்னைத் தான் அறிந்தேன்—மனம் தான் இறந்தேனே.” (9)

“ Of Me and thee think not in thy heart as two, Stand as not-two. How can I tell the bliss that welled up at this word?”

“ என்னையும் தன்னையும் வேறு—உளத்து
எண்ணுத வண்ணம் இரண்டற நிற்கச்
சொன்னதுமோ ஒரு சொல்லே — அந்தச்
சொல்லால் விளைந்த சுகத்தை என் சொல்வேன்?” (14)

“ There thought was born, there thought died and turned pure. All states of bliss are there.

There I the seer and the Seen are not-two.”

“ சிந்தை பிறந்ததும் ஆங்கே — அந்தச்
சிந்தை இறந்து தெளிந்ததும் ஆங்கே
எந்த நிலைகளும் ஆங்கே — கண்ட
யான் தான் இரண்டற நிருந்தும் ஆங்கே!” (20)

It may be the German *Brautmystic* of a St. Gertrude and *Mechtild* of Hackeborn of the 13th century and the other mystics of Helfta (near Eisleben) or the Spanish Bridal Mysticism of St. Teresa of Avila, St. John of the Cross and others or the Italian spiritual nuptials of Catherine of Sienna and others. They all end in an inward gaze into the depths of the soul and by the same token beyond the soul, to God. It is an unwavering gaze where looking is always hearing and hearing of the love offer of an infinitely free Person, who from the depths of His infinite freedom is able to give Himself in a manner ever new and unexpected and unpredictable. That is why the Word of God or *Para Vāk* is never something static but something that is generated ever anew. To the lover this is evident. The experience of *Ahaṁ Brahmāsmi* is simultaneous with the experience of *Ahaṁ asadosmi Taittiriya Saṁhita*. This generates joy, *ānanda*, of being fulfilled (*pūrṇam adah, pūrṇam idam*) in itself, fulfilled by something infinitely greater than oneself, and for that reason completely fulfilled and more blessed so that one can sing of oneself: “*Pūrṇam adah pūrṇam idam pūrṇāt pūrṇam udacyate.*” Even Spratt (*Hindu Culture and Personality*) cannot call this a narcissistic mysticism because the mystic forgets himself and finds himself in God.

In the Low Countries and Rhineland and in other places there were also schools of abstract or speculative spirituality ending in the contemplation and what we would call *sāyujyam* of the "Resplendent and completely calm Trinity and Unity of the Godhead."

For instance, Ruysbroeck in his *Spiritual Espousals*, speaks of the souls deification as follows: "Quietism is wrong and Dualism is false... He must give to God and receive from him, speak and be silent, act and suffer, if he is to find God as he ought. And finding God will be nothing else than a flowing back again into that divine nature in which he has eternally existed." In certain places Ruysbroeck will sound purely Advaitic in his expressions.

Appar had sung:

“தன்னில் தன்னை அறியும் தலைமகன்
தன்னில் தன்னை அறியில் தலைப்படும்
தன்னில் தன்னை அறிவின ஆயிதில்
தன்னில் தனனையும் சார்தற்கு அரியனே.”

When the mystic comes up to the surface from the *turiya* or *turiyātita* state and wishes to communicate his experience with other mortals, he is at the mercy of the vocabulary or symbols of his own clime and culture and philosophy.

Whether Tauler or Teresa or others in the West or a Siddhānta Vedānta Samarasavādin like Thāyumānavar speaking of *Samprajñāta Samādhi* and its several stages and *Asamprajñāta Samādhi*, or *Sivabhogam* these theoretical and almost didactic expositions of their experiences can at best only point towards a personal experience waiting for us if we but dare and try.

There is a peculiar aspect of Tamil mysticism called Vātsalya bhāva which has yielded a rich crop of literature under the name of *Pillai-Tami*. It consists in treating God as a parent treats the growing child according to its various phases. This has no parallel in Christian mysticism in the West though a few under the influence of the tender devotion to the Holy Infancy have attempted in Tamil to write *Pillai-Tami* addressed to the Infant Jesus.

Basis for Dialogue:

Mysticism is the name of the organic process which involves the perfect consummation of the Love of God or it is the art of establishing his conscious relation with the Absolute. There is about mystical utterances a certain eternal unanimity. East and West and other differences vanish here. It is therefore supremely useful in inter-religious dialogue that we make more use of these mystical utterances which lead us to the *Hymn of Silence* which is, as Thāyumānavar says, *The seed of mukti*.

A layman understands mysticism as a philosophy which cannot be systematized as a unitary and a rational thinking process which baffles ordinary human experience. This may be true with Western mysticism but South Indian mysticism presents a rational approach to God-experience. The Ālvārs and the Nāyanmārs, the great mystics of South India, themselves being great devotees of either Sri Nārāyaṇa or Parameśvara, practised devotion and recommended it as a safe and sure means of god-experience for people caught up in the quagmire of *saṁsāra*. With the appearance of the Ālvārs and Nāyanmārs on the scene, Indian philosophy came to have two parallel streams—an intellectual approach and an emotional approach to god-experience. With the passage of time the intellectual philosophy itself came to have an emotional slant.

Sri Rāmānuja, the principal teacher and expounder of the Viśiṣṭādvaita philosophy, developed his view-point relying not only on the *Prasthāna-traya*, but the teachings of the Ālvārs as well. The fact that he gave importance to the Pāncarātra texts is only to give a broader base to the emotional philosophy of the Ālvārs. There are many internal and external evidences to prove that the teachings of the Ālvārs became popular long before the time of Rāmānuja. It may not be out of place to mention here that the practical philosophy of Viśiṣṭādvaita (otherwise known as Śrī Vaiṣṇavism) is very much enriched by the commentaries on the hymns of the Ālvārs and by the traditions—oral and written. Rāmānuja states clearly in his *Śrī Bhāṣya* and *Vedārthasaṅgraha* that knowledge aided by supreme devotion (*bhaktirūpāpānañjānaṁ*) is the means of god-experience. In his three Rhapsodies (the *Gady traya*) which clearly breathe of the fervour and the flavour of the Ālvārs,

Rāmānuja lays stress on the Grace of the Lord, and the mediation by the Goddess, as steps to god-experience (It will be an extravagance for this paper at the moment to answer the critics of the *Gadyātraya*). Suffice it to say that the concept of the Body-and-soul-relationship (*śarīrasarīribhāva*) and of the total allegiance of the soul to the Lord (*seṣaseṣa bhāva*) and the concept of Divinity as *Śriyaḥpati* (The consort of Goddess Śrī) are but the results, of the impact of the emotional outpourings of the Ālvārs.

Among the Ālvārs, Nammālvār is a mystic of a high order. He records how he got himself lost in the untrammelled flow of Divine Grace and how the Lord conferred on him perfect knowledge (*matinālam*) after removing his ignorance.² This is a favour (*anugraha*) by the Lord. Sometimes we see an imitation (*anukara*) of the Lord in this saint, when he sings that he is the omnipotent Lord.³ On other occasions he offers surrender to the Lord, the consort of Goddess Śrī and he is also confident of the Grace of the Lord, thanks to the kindly mediation of the Goddess on his behalf.

The Ālvārs sung the glory of Śrī Nārāyaṇa whose inseparable companion is Goddess Śrī and as such their experience is always of the Divine Couple (*mithuna*). Sometimes the Ālvārs stressed devotion as the means for the *jīva*'s god-realisation and there are occasions when total surrender is recommended as means of god-experience. The next stage is when the Lord is considered as both the means (*upāya*) and the end (*upeya*). The final stage is when the Lord with an abundance of concern for the *jīva* showers His grace on him to bring him into His fold. In all these stages the Lord should be taken as accompanied by the Goddess so that the *jīva* is blessed with god-experience in a full measure.

The various steps to god-experience⁴ have been treated extensively in the commentaries on the hymns of the Ālvārs and in a number of philosophical treatises which attained the status of esoteric texts. In fact after Rāmānuja the philosophy of Viśiṣṭādvaita got reshaped by such emotional approaches to god-realisation. It is needless to say that the doctrine of *bhakti* is an emotional approach to god-experience. The doctrine of surrender with all its ramifications has a greater emotional base and the practical philosophy of Viśiṣṭādvaita saw a steady growth through the later developments in the intellectual and emotional fronts.

The modern American philosopher George Santayana remarks "Religion is human experience interpreted by human imagination." This view comes very near that of the teachers of the philosophy of Viśiṣṭādvaita, especially after Rāmānuja. The ordinary experience of

the father being a task master and the mother being full of compassion is projected onto the Divine Couple, the universal parents. The father is always stiff with a wayward son whereas the mother is so kind as to be blind to his faults. She tries to cajole the son to correct his bad habits simultaneously coxing the father not to be harsh. Similarly the soul in bondage errs and errs continuously and miserably. The Lord is normally a disciplinarian awarding prize or punishment commensurate with the *karma* of the *jīva*. But thanks to the kindly intervention of the Goddess, the Lord overlooks the defects of the *jīva* and bestows His Grace on him provided he does not spurn it.⁶ In essence the helplessness and the defects of the *jīva* help him earn His Grace. But for the mediation of the Goddess on behalf of the *jīva*, his uplift appears impossible.

This concept of mediation is very well supported by Nammālvār.⁶

“ Even if He lets me go, He cannot separate from Him,
anymore my good mind that has accepted service to the
Lord, the oldest of the age old divine beings, and
taking delight in the company of the Goddess
Nappinnai of shapely shoulders.”

Though the Lord enabled the Ālvārs to win Him, He being highly independent could disown the Ālvārs. But he could not do so for the simple reason that his god-realisation was effected through the mediation by the Goddess. Had it not been for the mediation the self-willed Lord would have withdrawn His Grace and disowned the Ālvār.

In another poem the Ālvār expresses his inability to lose the company of the Lord after having obtained it through the Grace of the Goddess.⁷

“ O my love, the darling of the lady of the beauteous flower !
O my master, you becoming a beautiful boar comparable to a
lofty bluish mountain holding two crescents, lifted the
earth on the tusks ! O the one that churned the ocean
turned blue ! Can I afford to lose you, having obtained you
already.”

The Ālvār becomes the Lord's favourite, because he is already favoured by the Goddess. The Lord cannot but take the *jīva* under His fold once he earned the favour of the Goddess. The Ālvār is always grateful to Her for Her fruitful mediation in the absence of which his god-experience would have become impossible. Śrī Rāmā-

nuja also, in his *Śaraṇāgati Gadya* supplicates to the Goddess straightaway before addressing his prayer to the Lord, to make Him eligible for the glance of the Lord.⁸

What is this mediation? Is it sporadic or is it a constant factor in the process of god-realisation? Can this mediation be performed by any one other than the goddess? What happens to the *jīva* in the absence of mediation? All these questions are answered by Pillai Lokācārya, a 13th century philosopher, who wrote as many as eighteen monographs on the various aspects of the practical philosophy of Viśiṣṭādvaita.⁹ In many of these he underlines the importance of mediation (*puruṣākāra*), as propounded and practised by Āṭvārs.

The term *puruṣākāra* which normally means 'human effort' is used in a technical sense of mediation in the Srivaiṣṇavite literature. Curiously this term implies the negation of human effort. This concept of mediation is necessitated by the fact that the Lord cannot be obtained by the mere efforts of the *jīva*. The Upaniṣads lay stress on the choice of the Lord in the matter of the *jīva's* god-experience. The choice is influenced by very many factors like the independence of the Lord, the qualifications of the soul, its keen desire to be protected by the Lord, its ultimate dependence on the Lord and the mediation by the Goddess. Of all the above factors, the last is considered very effective and less strenuous.

Lokācārya is of the opinion that Goddess Śrī is only finite as contrasted with the Lord who is infinite. She is omnipresent through Her miraculous powers. It is only consistent then that the Goddess is only a mediatrix and not the sole power to confer beauty on the *jīva*. By quoting from the hymns of the Āṭvārs and by citing instances and situations from the great Epic as negative and positive illustrations Lokācārya provides a firm foundation for the doctrine of mediation.

While discussing the *Aṣṭākṣarī* Lokācārya gives the connotations of the components of the *Praṇava*—*a, u, m*. Though the letter '*a*' simply denotes the Lord it has to be assumed that the Goddess is also included in its scope for the following reasons:¹¹ (1) The Divine Couple is always an integrated unit and so the *jīva* should always seek the grace of the *Mithuna*. (2) At the time of offering protection to the *jīva* the presence of the Goddess is very much necessary. Analysing the formula of *vayaṁ* he states that the goddess is instrumental in the *jīva's* winning the fruit. She does not directly dispense the fruit but the Lord will not react favourably to the *jīva* in the absence of Her mediation.¹² Two situations from the *Rāmāyaṇa* are cited, one as a positive and the other as a negative illustration for the effectiveness or

Mediation.¹³ When Jayanta disguised as a crow did Sītā a mischief, Rāma, discharged a missile to punish the offender. When the mischief-maker stood helplessly before Rāma, he offered a punishment for less than what he deserved, thanks to the presence of Sītā, the embodiment of compassion. Rāvaṇa, on the other hand, could not save himself from the wrath of Rāma obviously because Sītā was not present then.

What is the relationship of the Goddess vis-a-vis the Lord and the *jīva*? The term *Śrī* has been interpreted in six ways. Of these, the active and the passive derivations are considered important because they bring out the essential nature of the Goddess.¹⁴ *Śrayate*. This is the active form of the root *Srin*. It means she is dependent (on the Lord). Compassion, dependence on the Lord and non-allegiance to another are the qualities necessary for a mediator.¹⁵ Since these are found abundantly in the Goddess and since She is the beloved spouse of the Lord She is an effective mediator.¹⁶ *Śrīyate*. This is a passive derivation. This means "She is served by all" the *jīvas*. As Mother the Goddess receives the service of the *jīvas* and as a spouse She enjoys the affection of the Lord. These qualities are complementary and compatible even in the case of a lady who is both an affectionate wife and a dutiful mother. The *jīvas* gain sustenance through the Goddess and She gains it from the Lord.¹⁷ And it is for Her sake that the Lord forgives and favours even the worst offender. Moved by the sufferings of the *jīvas* She softens the Lord on one side and encourages the *jīvas* to so conduct themselves as to deserve His Grace. She never withdraws Herself from mediating between the two parties in spite of the absolute independence of the Lord and the incalculable wrongs of the *jīvas*.¹⁸ Lokācārya substantiates this point by citing an instance from the *Rāmāyāṇa*.¹⁹ Sītā who could soften even Hanūmān when he was rough and ready to destroy the demonesses in Laṅkā, should find it easy to soften Her beloved consort.

The Goddess continues to mediate on behalf of the *jīva* when She is in the company of the Lord and when She is separated from Him.²⁰ While in union with the Lord She influences Him to be generous towards the *jīva*. While in separation, She exhorts the *jīva* to seek the protection of the Lord.²¹ When She fails to convince both through Her counsels, She corrects the *jīva* by Her Grace and brings the Lord round through Her charm.²² Mediation appears unique in the sense

that the lack of merit and the presence of defects are treated as effective passports to acceptance by the Lord.²³ For example the demoneses in Laṅkā were saved from being harmed by Hānūmān at the intercession of Sītā and Kriṣṇa threw His weight on the side of the Pāṇḍavas on seeing the defects of Arjuna—these being his failure to discharge his duties as soldier and as a husband committed to uphold the honour of his wife, Draupadi.²⁴

This Doctrine of mediation gets an emphasis when Lokācārya lays down that, for Surrender, to be effective, at least some one graced by the Goddess, if not the Goddess Herself, should mediate. The self-surrender of Hanūmān and Vibhīṣaṇa to Rāma in the absence of Sītā is justified on the ground that both of them were indirect recipients of the Goddess' Grace earlier.²⁵ This act of mediation is there so long as *jīva* is in the process of God-experience but stops at the end of the process.²⁶ Mediation is a must for the ignorant, the wise and the devout in their *prapatti* adopted either as a means or as an end in itself.²⁷

Lokācārya goes one step further to say that mediation is necessary for the Lord also. Once He gets the *jīva* into His fold He spares no pains to please the *jīva*. This attitude is called dependence unto the supported-Āśritapaṛatantrya. The Lord who is said to be very much after this dependence, gets it through the mediation by the Goddess.²⁸

Both the Lord and the *jīva* are dependent on *Karma*—the former taking it as a guiding principle and the latter taking it as a governing principle. This dependence on *karma* is brought to an end by mediation when both of them are brought together. The Lord and *jīva* stand to gain thus.²⁹ At this point the combination becomes a stable triangle with the Lord, the *jīva* and the mediatrix as the three arms. One is a witness for the other. The Mediatrix is a common witness for both. So the Lord and *jīva* cannot disown each other after coming together.³⁰ Nammālvār is highly confident that he cannot be disowned by the Lord because there is the Goddess in whose presence and by whose mediation he sought the Lord. Lokācārya is careful in saying that the mediation stops at a particular stage. Otherwise the Goddess also would appear as infinite as the Lord and the independence of the Lord would have lost its meaning.

The keen desire of the Lord to get the *jīva* into His fold and the motherly urge coupled with the wifely remonstrance of the Goddess are the twin processes of god-realisation. Between the pull of the Lord and the push of the Goddess the *jīva* cannot drift and his final beautitude in the form of god-experience is assured and to put it in other words, the *jīva* has few chances to escape from the grace of the Lord. Naturally this doctrine of mediation appears a condition precedent for the Divine Grace which in turn enables the *jīva* realise his ambitious god-experience.

NOTES

1. *Bhavatu mama parasmin remui bhaktirūpā* (salutary verse of *Śrī Bhāṣya*)
Parbhaktirupapannameva vedanam tattvataha bhagavatprāptisādhanam. (*Vedārthasamgrahaṁ*)
2. *Tiruvāimoḷi*, 1-1-1
3. *Ibid.*, 5-6-1 to 10
4. *Bhakti* as a means and *bhakti* as an end, *prapatti* as a means and *prapatti* as an end, mediation by the Goddess, firm adherence to a teacher are some of the important steps to god-realisation.
5. Pillai Lokācārya, *Śrīvacanabhūṣaṇam* 63.
6. *Tiruvāimoḷi*. 1 7-8
7. *Ibid.*, 10-10-7.
8. *Akhilajaganmatāram asman motāram asaranyasaranyām ananyasaraṇṇha saraṇam aham prapadya* *bhagavaccaraṇāravinda saraṇāgatiḥi.*
Yatharthavastyita avirata astu me (*Saranāgatiḥadya*)
9. These are collectively known as *Ashtadasarahasya*, the important of which are *Mumukṣupadi* and *Śrīvacanābhūṣaṇam*.
10. *Nāyamātma rrvacanena labhya na medhaya na bahuna srutena Yamevaisha vēṇuta tena lobhyastasyaisha atma viṇvute tanum svam* (*Kathopanishad* II-23).
11. Pillai Lokacarya *Mumukṣupadi* 40.
12. *Ibid.*, 118 & 119.
13. *Ibid.*, 135
14. *Ibid.*, 124: *Śrīvacanabhūṣaṇam*, 158.
15. *Śrīvacanabhūṣaṇam*. 7.
16. *Mumukṣupadi*, 128.
17. *Ibid.*, 125.
18. *Ibid.*, 132 ; Pillai Lokācārya *Navaratnamālā* 8.
19. *Mumukṣupadi* 129.
20. *Śrīvacanābhūṣaṇam*, 9.

21. *Ibid.* 10.
22. *Ibid.*, 11 and 13.
23. *Ibid.*, 15.
24. *Ibid.*, 18, 19 and 20.
25. *Ibid.*, 151.
26. *Ibid.*, 268.
27. *Ibid.*, 159.
28. *Ibid.*, 153.
29. *Ibid.*, 155.
30. *Ibid.*, 56.

Govind A. Jalihal

NIJAGUṆA ŚIVAYOGI—A
VEERAŚAIVA MYSTIC
FROM KARNĀTAK.

INTRODUCTION :

Nijaguṇa Śivayogi is, by common consent, one of the greatest mystics of the Veeraśaiva faith. He is thought to have lived around 1500 A.D. at Kollegāl in the Mysore district of Karnatak. There are, in all, three Nijaguṇas in Kannada literature. The first Nijaguṇa belongs to the 12th century A. D. He composed 'Vacanas' (the philosophical verses in the rhythm of speech) under the 'ankitam' the poetic seal of the saint-composers) of "Nijaguṇa Yoga." The second Nijaguṇa is our present mystic who belongs to the 15th century A.D. and whose 'ankitam' is "Śāmbhu liṅga." The third Nijaguṇa flourished about the middle of the 17th century. He is the author of the Advaita Rāmāyaṇam, in Kannada. Our Nijaguṇa i.e., Nijaguṇa Śivayogi is the author of (i) *Anubhavasāra*, (ii) *Aravattu Mūvara Tripadi* (iii) *Kaiśalya Paddhati* (iv) *Paramānubhava Bodhe* (v) *Paramārtha Gīte* (iv) *Paramārthā Prakāśike*, and (vii) *Vivekacintamaṇi* in Kannada. He is also said to have authored (i) *Darśana Sāra* and (ii) *Tarka Cintāmaṇi* in Sanskrit. But these sanskrit works are not available. A true ascetic or *virakta* that Nijaguṇa was he has nowhere in his works spoken about himself. We do not even know whether Nijaguṇa Śivayogi was his real name or a pen-name or a title conferred upon him. Nijaguṇa, who was a scholarly saint and a mystical ascetic, was also a good poet and a composer. He has composed hundreds of beautiful philosophical poems in Kannada in a variety of metres under the 'ankitam' of his Iṣṭa-devatā Śāmbhu Liṅga.

NIJAGUṆA SIVAYOGI IN THE GALAXY OF OTHER GREAT MYSTICS

Among the mystics of Karnataka who, says the late Prof. R. D. Ranade (himself a philosopher and a mystic of international repute), "hold a very high position among the mystics of the World, Nijaguṇa Śivayogi occupies a very high and honoured place." Ranade calls him "the great Karnataka mystic philosopher." Let us now proceed to have some glimpses of his mystical and philosophical greatness as revealed through his philosophical and poetical works. As you know, all philosophers are not mystics, nor are all mystics philosophers in the intellectual or the ratiocinational sense. For example, the great mystic like Śrī Ramaṇa Maḥarṣi and Śrī Rāmakriṣṇa Paramahansa were not philosophers in the intellectual or scholastic sense. And, a great majority of academic and non-academic philosophers cannot be regarded as mystics. But Nijaguṇa Śivayogi was both a philosopher in the intellectual and in the Śāstric sense and also a mystic of great spiritual originality. The fact that Nijaguṇa is the author of such eminently Śāstric philosophical works as the *Anubhava Sāra* and the *Paramārtha prakāśike* clearly proves that he was a post-master of the traditional philosophical lore. In this brief paper on the mysticism of Nijaguṇa Śivayogi it is neither necessary nor possible to examine the contents of his philosophical, especially the Śāstric works at length. As such I shall very briefly indicate the nature and the quality of his philosophical writings in Kannada through a couple of samples drawn from the *Anubhava-Sāra*, one of his major philosophical works, and then proceed to consider his mystical contributions.

NIJAGUNA, THE PHILOSOPHER :

Anubhava-Sāra,¹ like the majority of the works of Nijaguṇa, is written in verse-form. In this, as also in its dialogue-form, *Anubhava-Sāra*, resembles the Upaniṣads whose teachings, along with the teachings of the other two prasthānas, namely the *Brahmasūtra* and the *Bhagavadgītā*, it purports to expound in simple, intelligible Kannada. Its modern commentator, Śrī Śivaputra Swamiji of Śāntāśram, claims that no one before Nijaguṇa Śivayogīndra had written such a comprehensive Vedāntic work in Kannada. This claim might be historically quite true considering the fact that the other major Vedāntic writers and philosophers from Karnataka such as Śrī Madhvācārya, Śrī Jayatīrtha, Śrī Vidyāraṇya and others who preceded Śrī Nijaguṇa Śivayogīndra wrote mostly—almost exclusively so far as the exposition of the śruti-texts, proper, was concerned—in Sanskrit and not in Kannada. The same commentator further says that the title of the work, namely *Anubhava-Sāra* is a very fitting one, because the work, besides containing the essence of the teaching of

the Upaniṣads, the *Brahmā Sūtra*, the *Bhagavad Gītā* and of the celebrated commentaries of Śrī Śaṅkarācārya thereon, contains also the quintessence of the great Yogi's personal mystical insights. *Anubhava-Sāra* is composed in *tripadī* (a Kannada metre) and contains 535 stanzas. The work is divided into eight *sandhis* (sections) by the author himself. Here, just for sample, I shall present the teaching contained in a couple of his philosophically rich tripadis. In the 2nd Sandhi, when the disciple asks the *Guru* to explain to him how and where Śiva and Jīva reside, the *Guru* replies :

(“Śiva and Jīva, both together, are residing in the petals and at the bottom of the Hridaya-Kamala, the lotus of the psyche”). On hearing this the disciple asks the *guru* as to how Śiva and Jīva, both of whom are described as formless (*nirākāra*) and non-different (*abhinna*), appear in one place as two different persons. The teacher replies :

“Just as the sky that is reflected in a pitcher full of water and the sky that was already there in the pitcher together exist at one and the same place, the *jīva* and Śiva exist together at one and the same place.”

In the next few stanzas of the same sandhi Nijaguṇa explains how *pratibimba* (reflection) is possible even for a *pūrṇa* (absolute) and a *nirākāra* (formless) *vastu* such as the Brahman. These stanzas are followed by some of the very mystical stanzas of the *Anubhava-Sāra* wherein Nijaguṇa gives a very beautiful description of the hridaya-kamala in which Śiva and *jīva* reside together. Therein he speaks of the seven kamalacakras at the seven places of our body, of their *akṣara-rūpa*-petals of specified number and of the central white-lotus, which has for its eight petals the eight mahā-siddhis such as *aṇimā*, *mahimā*, etc. These mystical stanzas are further followed by a few highly philosophical stanzas in which Nijaguṇa considers very briefly, but in a masterly manner, the three celebrated vādas within the Advaita, namely the *Bimba-Pratibimba-vāda*, the *Ābhāsa-vāda* and the *Avacchēda-vāda*. There Nijaguṇa agrees with the view of Śrī Vidyāraṇya that the words *pratibimba* and *ābhāsa* connote one and the same process. So much about the philosophical (in the sense of the Śāstric) samples from the *Anubhava-Sāra*.

Nijaguna, the Mystic :

Although Nijaguna was a past-master of the traditional philosophical lore a—fact of which we get sufficient evidence in his works — he is remembered today in Karnatak more as a great mystic and saint than as a great philosophical scholar and expositor. Nijaguna's deep mystical insight was expressed through several of his philosophical songs in Kannada. To begin with, I shall briefly consider the content of his famous philosophical song in Kannada, *Kogile Calva Kogile*. In this poem Nijaguna compares his mind (and through it the mind of the *sādhakas* in general) to a *muddu Kogile* ('deer Cuckoo') and exhorts it coaxingly to proceed onwards in the path of the spirit leaving behind the path of the flesh. He says: "Oh my mind, thou art like a deer, beautiful and wise Cuckoo. Formerly, when the mind of Śiva was affected by *kāma* (lust) on seeing the enchantress, the Supreme Soul let off Śiva scot-free, but killed the God of love. Thou slowly winnest to thyself even those whose minds are affected by beautiful women" In this very beautiful and sublime poem Nijaguna demonstrates to us poetically the method of winning over and transcending *Śṛṅgāra* through *kāntā-sammitatā* itself. This, I think, is a very rare *modus operandi* of the process of sublimation.

Incidentally I might mention here that this poem, which is one of the popular poems of Sri Nijaguna Śivayogi in Karnatak, has inspired no less a person than the veteran Kannada poet, Dattātraya Rāmachandra Bendre, the winner of the Jñānāpēṭha Award for Literature, last year, to compose a poem on its model. The poem of Dr. Bendre, which he composed quite some years ago, also begins with the same lines as those of the poem of Sri Nijaguna and at the end of his poem Dr. Bendre has openly acknowledged his spiritual indebtedness to the great saint Nijaguna.

In our brief consideration of the above song we had a glimpse of Nijaguna's beautiful approach to the moral preparation for the ultimate mystical experience. Now we shall take up for consideration a couple of his more philosophical and mystical songs which throw light both on his wonderful grasp of the Upaniṣadic philosophy and on his deep, *āgama*-inspired mysticism of great originality. In his

song, *Nija Uhisabaradu Saṁpanna* ('Oh, Saṁpanna, the accomplished one), we should not merely speculate regarding the *nija* (the Truth or the Reality). Nijaguṇa Śivayogi shows an intimate acquaintance with the central teaching of the Upaniṣads concerning Reality. Explaining the subtle philosophic import of this poem of Nijaguṇa Śivayogi the late Prof. R. D. Ranade writes: "In the first place, he says, reality cannot be reached by words and by mind (*manas*). Now *manas* includes both thought and imagination. This is exactly what the Upaniṣadic texts have said; *avāṅgmanasaṅgo-Cara*, 'not understandable by word or mind'. If you have carefully followed the poem, you will find that these are [the very words which Nijaguṇa Sivayogi uses. He says, *vacanake gocaramalleṇdu, manasige Viṣayamalleṇdu*, 'not knowable by words nor an object of mind'. So that is one point in regard to the nature of Reality."² "The second point", Prof. Ranade goes on to point out, "is also a very important one, namely, *nitya jñāna paripūrṇa dṛśyavilakṣaṇa*, 'eternal, perfect in knowledge, unique in appearance'. Reality is infinite in both ways, in space as well as in time. and *dṛśyavilakṣaṇa* it is entirely unique, i.e., different from what can be either seen or heard or sensed. Now look at the word *vilakṣaṇa*, (unique). That is the word upon which Bādarāyaṇa has laid so much stress."³ "I wish I could follow Prof. Ranade's masterly analysis of the poem more closely and in greater detail. But, unfortunately, my time does not permit me to do so. As such I shall straightaway pass on to Prof. Ranade's summing up of the philosophy contained in that great little poem of Nijaguṇa. "Now, what is the support for this doctrine which Nijaguṇa Śivayogi asserts?" asks Prof. Ranade and proceeds to give Nijaguṇa's answer to it as follows: "He says that all the Śrutis together (*Śrutigaḷa motta*) have made this collaborative assertion in regard to the nature of Reality *Motta* means *samūha* (collection). The collection of all śrutis i.e. all the śrutis together have enabled us to understand the nature of Reality in this manner."⁴ "Those of you," says Prof. Ranade, "who have read Bādarāyaṇa's Sūtras, or even the first four sūtras, will see that he uses almost equivalent words: *Śāstra yonitvāt* (i) 'The Scripture being the means of right knowledge (about Brahman), *Tattu samanvayāt*, (ii) 'because it is the main purport

(of all Vedānta texts), What is *Śāstra*?"⁵ continues Prof. Ranade, but I stop its consideration at this point.

The next and the last poem of Nijaguṇa, which I now take up for consideration, dwells on the meditation on the three liṅgas, the *Iṣṭa-liṅga*, the *Prāṇa-liṅga* and the *Bhāva-liṅga*. This mystical poem, which begins with the line: *Nāda śravaṇa viśaya paramanādave* is regarded by the late Professor Ranade as one of the most difficult passages in Kannada philosophic literature. The salient philosophic points of this poem, according to Prof. Ranade, are as follows: To begin with, the characteristics of the *Iṣṭa-liṅga*. "The *Iṣṭa-liṅga* is, of course, a phenomenal liṅga. *Bindu*, *nāda*, and *kalā* are represented in the *Salunka*, the *Pindi* and the *Gomukha* of the liṅga. It is regarded as the seed, the root, and the branches of the tree of existence. Two other philosophic points are made by Nijaguṇa as regards the *Iṣṭa-liṅga*. It is *bodhamātra*, that is to say, it is identical with pure consciousness. Whether it is self-consciousness or not we do not know. It may be so. In European philosophy there has been a good deal of discussion regarding consciousness and self-consciousness"⁶ Another point made by Nijaguṇa in this poem regarding the *Iṣṭa-liṅga* is that 'it is the support of itself' (*Tanage Tāne Ādhāravā-girpa*). Prof. Ranade compares this aspect of the *Iṣṭa-liṅga* of Nijaguṇa to Spinoza's concept of Substance. He says: "If you regard Spinoza, you will see that he defines substance as that which is in itself and can be conceived by itself. The liṅga may, therefore, well be compared with what Spinoza calls 'Substance.' In regard to *Prāṇa-liṅga* (which Prof. Ranade calls "a mystical liṅga") Nijaguṇa speaks of four characteristics. In the first place it is identified with the supreme *Nāda* or *Anāhata-Nāda*. Secondly, it is identified with the streaks of light that issue from the holes of a pitcher, in which a lamp is enclosed. Just as a lamp inside a pitcher, which has many holes, throws out its light through the holes, similarly the *Prāṇa-liṅga* also throws its light through the holes of the body. Thirdly, it pervades all the different cakras, and, in fact is pervasive of the whole body. Thirdly, it pervades all the different cakras, and in fact, is pervasive of the whole body *deha kara nikara mukhadoḷu*. Fourthly it sends out all the different colours, namely *keṃpu*, *miṇcu*, *ranna*, *cinna soḍaru*, *canalatāgni*. Thus the *prāṇa-liṅga*, according to Nijaguṇa, has these four characteristics: it is luminous, it has harmonious

nāda inside it, it is full of colours and it pervades the bodily system. This is *prāṇa-liṅga*. The third *liṅga* that Nijaguṇa speaks of in this poem is the *bhāva-liṅga*. It is the subtlest of the *liṅgas*, Just as *bhāva* or feeling is the subtlest of our psychical characteristics, the *bhāva-liṅga*, says Nijaguṇa, is all-pervasive. It shines, as it were through the other two *liṅgas*. The concept of *bhāva-liṅga* is the supreme concept in the mystical philosophy of Nijaguṇa. He calls it the *Mūla-kāraṇa*, the original cause. It is *causa sui* as philosophers would say. Explaining this aspect of the *Bhāva-liṅga* Prof. Ranade says: "It is the highest *kāraṇa* of which the so-called *kāraṇas* and *kāryas* and *karmas* are mere manifestations."⁸ Secondly, Nijaguṇa describes the *Bhāva-liṅga* as *Akhila-sākṣika māda*, i.e., 'the one which is the witness of all existence.' Thirdly, he calls it *sātidorada triptimayavāda*, i.e., the one which is full of bliss that has no parallel. Summing up these characteristics of the *Bhāva-liṅga* of Nijaguṇa Prof. Ranade says: "It is *causa Sui*, it is the spectator, and finally, it is beautification. These are exactly the terms in which European and Indian philosophy have described their Absolute"⁹

In the same poem there is one more important point which Nijaguṇa Śivayogi makes. What is the ultimate state to be reached? Nijaguṇa answers this question by saying that it is a state of absolute tranquillity that is generated in the Kṣīrasāgara after the process of churning by the Mandarācala mountain has stopped. Explaining this symbolic point in the poem Prof. Ranade says: "The Mandarācala churned the ocean for a long time; now it has ceased to do so. There is perfect tranquillity in that ocean. It is that kind of tranquillity which ought to be the aim of man. The highest ideal, therefore, is to attain to that kind of tranquillity where all mental and physical churning (activity) has stopped."¹⁰ Thus the the highest aim of meditation, according to Nijaguṇa, is to attain to the ultimate state of tranquillity. This tranquillity, of which Nijaguṇa so very beautifully speaks here, says Prof. Ranade, "is a higher conception than either the *apathia* of the Stoics or the *ataraxia* of the Epicureans which are moral conceptions. The conception of tranquillity in Indian philosophy is higher than these conceptions as it transcends an supervenes upon an already achieved state of the highest spiritual realisation."¹¹

NOTES

1. Nijagaṇa Śivayogi: *Anubhava-Sāra*, Shivaputra Swami's Commentary (Hubli: Śantāśrama, 1953)
2. R. D. Ranade, *Pathway to God in Kannada Literature* (Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1970), pp. 213-214.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 214.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 215.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 215.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 209.
7. *Ibid.*
8. *Ibid.*, p. 211.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 211.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 211.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 212.

P. *Thirugnanasambandhan*

MYSTICISM OF ST. MANIKKAVACAKAR

Mysticism is the attitude of mind which consists in the spiritual quest of man for union with God culminating in unitive experience. It is spiritual in intent and universal in character as testified by the experience of mystics be they Hindus or Christians or Sufis or others. Mystics like St. Māṇikkavācakar, St. Augustine and Jalal-ud-din Rumi, to mention a few, testify to the above statement. In his spiritual quest man ascends from sensuality to spirituality and thence to godliness. Conduct of man at the mundane level is marked by reflection and analysis, emotion, action and reaction whereas the conduct of a mystic is marked by direct experience of an intuitive kind. The mystic transcends sense experience and reason and consequently the perceptual, conceptual and even spiritual levels of experience when he is face to face with God. The ultimate direct experience of God in the form of Divine love may be described as the soul-sight of God or *darśana* par excellence.

The mile-stones on the mystic way according to Western writers are (1) purgation (2) contemplation and (3) unitive experience. This is largely true of all mystics though the language used may vary.

Transcendental or pure mysticism is sought to be distinguished from religious mysticism. Religious mysticism has much concern with the personality of God, whereas pure mysticism is concerned with the inward enjoyment of God in essence, the *Brahmarasāsvāda* or *Sivānanda* as it is called by Saivites.

The mystics may follow either an active life or a contemplative life but they move towards the same goal of mystic unity with God.

St. Francis of Assissi and St. John of the Cross, St. Appar and St. Māṇikkavācakar, Kulaśekharālvār and Āṇḍāl may be taken to typify by and large this two-fold approach.

The mystic movement in South India is traceable more vividly to the utterances of Śaiva Nāyanmārs and Vaiṣṇava Ālvārs, though its existence cannot be denied in the earlier phases of South Indian history. We find running through their utterances more or less the same strain as we do in the recorded experience of mystics of different times and climes.

It is possible to trace elements of mysticism and the various approaches to the final goal of mystic experience of unalloyed bliss in union with Divine Love such as *karma*, *bhakti*, *yoga* and *jñāna* in Sanskrit and Tamil literature from their beginnings.

The Ṛg Vedic seer prays to Rudra, 'Where, O Benign Rudra is that merciful hand of Thine which is healing and cooling? As remover of injury coming from the Gods, do Thou O Mighty God, be compassionate towards me' (ii-33.7). The Upaniṣad says, '*Raso Vai saḥ*', '*Rasam labdhvā ānandi bhavati*! This *Rasānubhava* is had when the love of the soul and Divine love coalesce.

Nakkīrar, the author of *Tirumurugārṟuppaḍai* refers to the devotees of Muruga worshipping him, the son of Śiva and Pārvatī, a great warrior and Head of the learned, the ever-youthful God who hastens to remove the affliction of the distressed and is eager to fulfil the desires of the devotees in response to their prayer. He appears before them in a youthful form exuding beauty and divinity, cheers them with the words, 'I know your arrival, fear not' and then bestows his grace and confers mukti (*peralarum parisil*).

Paripāḍal is replete with devotion to Tirumāl, Murugan etc.

நின்னைத் துன்னித்துன்னி வழிபடுவதன் பயன் இன்னும் அதுவே ஆகுத

The devotees are free from any sense of discrimination as 'he is my kinsman, the other is my enemy' (இவர் பகைவர் இவர் நட்போர்.).

Kāraikkāl Ammaiār (5th cen. A.D) believes firmly that the Supreme God is not anywhere yonder in heaven or *Svarga*, the abode of Gods as some people aver and declares unequivocally, "He of the form of *jñāna* is surely in my heart" (*Arputattiruvandādi*, 6). To the person that is able to visualise God, the Eternal, in his own inner recess he appears in the form of light (17). He is all-pervasive as

Aṣṭamūrti and yet he is truth in essence (21). The agnostic asks 'Where is God?' He is not to be seen? *Kāraikkāl Ammaiyaṛ* poses the question, 'How can you see the God who is covered by me with a warm blanket of love and kept concealed in my heart ?

St. Tirumūlar who identifies love with *Śiva*m makes it clear that 'except to those whose hearts melt with love for him, the gem of God is not accessible. The loving and the compassionate alone will have the vision of the pair of feet of Lord *Śiva*'. cf ஈசனோடாயினும் ஆசை அனுமின்கள் ('*Anbodu uruhi aham kuṣaivārkkiruṇi, En pol maṇiyinai eita oṇṇāde*'). '*Kanindavar Iśan kaḷaladi kāṇṇar*'). He strikes a personal note when he says 'Dancing and singing, weeping and sobbing I searched and found the magnanimity of *Śiva*' (1816). He placed His golden feet on me the wayward soul, He entered me, purified me and gave me the sweet nectar (of immortality) to my great surprise. What a wonder.' (v. 1820). Body and the senses are instruments in God-realisation. cf- *Sariram ādyam khalu dharma-sāadhanam*.

The *Gītā* exalts *bhakti-yoga* in the verse, 'By devotion to me alone I may thus be perceived and known and seen in essence and entered, O Arjuna.'

*' Bhaktyā tvananyayā śakya aham evamaidho' rjuna
jñātum draṣṭum ca tattvena praveṣṭum ca parantapa*

Ch. XI. 54

Again he declares, 'By devotion he knoweth me in essence, who and what I am, having thus known me in essence he forthwith enters into the Supreme.

*' Bhaktyā mām abhijñānāti yāvān yaścāsmi tattvataḥ
Tato mām tattvato jñātvā viśate tadanantaram.'*

(Ch. XVIII, 55)

அருளொளி

ஆடியும் பாடியும் அமுதும் அரற்றியும்
தேடுயும் கண்டேன் சிவன் பெரும் தன்மையை
கூடியவாறே குறியாக் குறிதந்தென்
ஊடு நின்றானவன் தன்னருளுற்றே
புறமே திரிந்தேனைப் பொற்கழல் சூட்டி
நிறமே புகுந்து என்னை நின்மலனாக்கி
அறமே புகுந்து எனக் காரமுதீந்த
திறமேதென் நெண்ணித் திகைத்திருந்தேனே

—3

—7

Svetāśvatara declares how the Supreme God who is beyond the reach of words and mind is still capable of being perceived by one who makes persistent efforts to meditate on him in one's own mind. 'Just as oil is got by pressing sesamum seeds, butter by churning the curd, water by digging deep and fire by friction of sticks, so the supreme God can be perceived by meditation.' (*Svetāśvatara Upaniṣad* I, 15.)

It is interesting to note that St. Tirunāvukkarasar uses more or less identical imagery when he says, 'One must churn his mind with the churning stick of devotion to God entwined with the string of true knowledge. If so done, Lord Śiva the great gem of immense luminosity who remains concealed in the heart of everyone, will present himself in the same way as fire in the stick or ghee in the milk appears when churned.

The South Indian mystics underlined the idea of the Supreme Spirit, the *Saccidānanda* that dwells in the inner heart of every being pervading the entire cosmos of 'sat' and 'asat' as did the ancient seers of India.

As *Svetāśvatara Upaniṣad* puts it 'The all-pervading being about the size of the thumb, that indwelling soul which abides in the heart of all beings having encompassed the earth on all sides rises above it by the measure of a span':

Aṅguṣṭhamātrah puruṣo 'ntarātmā
Sadā janānām hṛdaye sanniviṣṭhah
So bhūmim viśvato vṛtvā
Atyatiṣṭhat daśaṅgūlam (*Svetāśvatara Upaniṣad* III-13, 14)

The *Kaṭhōpaniṣad* speaking on similar lines about Brahman describes it as 'smaller than the smallest elemental particle and greater than the greatest. 'Aṇor anyān mahato mahiyān'. (II, 20)

அண்டத்தில் உள்ளது பிண்டத்தில்.

The Upaniṣadic seer in *Brahadāraṇyaka* prays, 'Asato mā sad gamaya', 'Tamaso mā jyotir gamaya' 'Mṛtyor mā amṛtam gamaya.' 'Lead me on from the evanescent to the Eternal, from darkness to Light, from mortality to Immortality'. St. Māṇikkavācakar prays on similar lines to the Lord of Perundurai thus, 'O God the undiminishing plenitude (Pūrṇam the Eternal), the endless light of all lights

the Bliss of pure nectar (the *Sat-cit-ānanda*).—‘*Kuraivilā niṛaive, Kōdila amude, Īrila Koḷunevḍark kunre*’. (*Koīl Tiruppadiram*, 5).

St. Māṇikkavācakar like several other saints, passes through moments of hope and despair, darkness and illumination, till he is able to secure for ever companionship with the supreme Godhead Śiva after persistent efforts on his part and the advent of grace of Śiva.

The *Pauṣkarāgama* says, ‘Never does a person attain *mukti* by his own skill ; by no means other than the grace of Śiva, the dispeller of everything that is evil, is such an attainment possible.’ Fr. Michael, a writer on mysticism observes that the ‘Supernatural grace is a free and gratuitous gift of God’. According to Hindu faith however loving grace is reciprocal ; one has to deserve it by exerting himself on the path of *karma*, *jñāna* and *bhakti*.

Bhakti or *Īśvara Parānurakti* (supreme love towards God) as it is called by Śāṇḍilya aided by discerning knowledge is the gateway for liberation from the worldly bonds one is heir to and enjoyment of Divine bliss. Madhusūdanasarasvatī in his *Bhaktirasāyana* says that as a result of various religious observances, the mind becomes supple and flows like a stream into God. The state of mind thus attuned to God is ‘bhakti’

‘*Drutasya bhagavad-dharmāt dhārāvahikatām gatā*’.
Sarveśa manaso vrttiḥ bhaktirityābhidhīyate

The soul which is prone to remain in *advaitabhāva* with matter leans more and more with God and attains *advaitabhāva* with God by cultivating *bhakti*. The period of transition from one to another is long and arduous. These are made clear in the outpourings of St. Māṇikkavācakar about which Rev. G. U. Pope says, ‘No one can read the sage’s verses without profound emotion. Scarcely ever has the longing of the human soul for purity and peace and divine fellowship found worthy expression.’

As Sir S. Radhakrishnan puts it, ‘*Tiruvācakam* depicts in beautiful hymns, the progress of the soul from the bondage of ignorance and passion into the liberty of light and love.’

Māṇikkavācakar deplores his leaning towards matter, the source of evil and misery, in several places and implores God to extend his grace. For example, he appeals in v. 3 of *Nittal Viṇṇappam*,

'Rooted in sensual delights, I stand
Like a tree thriving on the banks of a river.
Leave me not in this world of allurements
In grace should thou not succour me!'

In *Tiruccatakam* he repents, for his earlier despicable state and his foolhardiness in slipping the opportunity he had once when Lord Śiva in human form descended to earth and presented himself before a host of blessed souls all of whom thenceforth chose to pursue the path of spiritual progress and succeeded but he alone miserably failed as he was bereft of goodness. He bemoans in *Tiruccatakam* thus—

'False is the play of my heart and my mind too.
False alas, is my love that springs from it.

As *guru* thou came—

Those that felt the impact offered their mite of love and enjoyed the sanctity of unison in love, saintly lovers all who attained thy Bliss of Truth. From eternity in lowly light of grace, in mortal form thou came, and I too saw Thee, but depraved still, hardened in my heart, I groped in the dark and nether realms. (V. 90, 91)

திருச்சதகம்—ஆனந்தபரவசம்

90 யானே பொய் என் நெஞ்சம்

பொய் என் அன்பும் பொய்

91 மாறிலாத மாக்கருணை வெள்ளமே

வந்துமுந்தி நின்மலர் கொள்தாளினை

வேறிலாப் பதப்பரிசு பெற்ற நின்

மெய்ம்மை அன்பருள் மெய்மை மேவினார்

ஈறிலாதீ எளியையாகி வந்து

ஒளிசெய் மானுடமாக நோக்கியும்

கீறிலாத நெஞ்சுடைய நாயினேன்

கடையன் ஆயினேன் பட்டகீழ்மையே.

This Śiva of Tirupperundurai is the God not only of South India but of all lands. (தென்னாடுடைய சிவனே போற்றி, எந்நாட்டவர்க்கும் இறைவா போற்றி.)

Māṇikkavācakar may be said to represent mysticism of the Middle Ages. R. D. Ranade, discussing the difference between the Upaniṣadic mysticism and the mysticism of the Middle Ages, says: 'the former was merely a tidal wave of the philosophy of the ancient seers while the other was the natural outcome of the heart, full of piety and devotion, the consciousness of sin and misery and final desire to assimilate with the divine.' The above passage from *Tiruccatakam*

will bear this out. As we pass from the Upaniṣadic mysticism to the mysticism of the Middle Ages, we see 'the spiritual life brought from the hidden cloisters to the market place'.

This is not to say that Māṇikkavācakar reveals something different from the teachings of the mystics of the earlier period.

Māṇikkavācakar at a later stage emerges as a man whose dogged pursuit of divine grace appears to bear fruit slowly. He clings to the feet of Śiva with tenacity having failed once to convert the opportunity of beholding the Divine Guru at Tiruppe-rundurai to further his spiritual enrichment. He prays in *Pōṛṛi Tiru-akaval*, lines 66—79.

கசிவது பெருகி கடலென மறுகி
அகங்குழைந்து அனுகுலமாய் மெய்விதிர்ந்து
சகம்பே யென்று தம்மைச் சிரிப்ப
நாணது ஒழிந்து நாடவர் பழித்துரை
பூணதுவாகக் கோணுதலின் றிச்
சதுரிழந்து அறிமால் கொண்டு சாருங்
கதியது பரமா அதிசயமாகக்
கற்ற மனமெனக் கதறியும் பதறியும்
மற்றோர் தெய்வம் கனவிலும் நினையாது
அருபரத் தொருவன் அவனியில் வந்து
குருபரனாகி அருளிய பெருமையைச்
சிறுமையென்றி கழாதே திருவடியணையைப்
பிறிவினை யறியா நிழலதுபோல
முன்பின்கு முனியாதத் திசை.

.....with pure ceaseless love
Swelling, overflowing, tossing sea-like,
Heart softening, body quivering,
The world at me as a mad man laughing.
Lost to shame, the town's ridicule my ornament,
unswerving, of appearance heedless,
Eager with yearning to know my goal,
the Supreme wonder —
In pain and wilderment, like calf for its mother crying
Even in dream, thinking not of other God.
Not making light of the gracious coming on earth.
Of the supreme peerless one as teacher,
In Love, His holy feet I cling like shadow
Inseparably going before and after, and
For ever looking towards the peaceful one.

'The mystic realisation that God loves the soul as much as the soul craves for union with god is expressed in several places. St. Māṇikkavācakar exclaims—

'He filled me with a frenzy of love.
He bound me to his holy feet.
I was tied up like the meek cow
Then the Lord fed me with the nectar of bliss.'

St. Saṭhakopa proclaims in a similar strain—'He himself out of love conquered my mind, wilful though it is and has entered into me residing within my body and has inseparably united with it.'

Depending on one's knowledge, culture and environment the pathway to godliness varies. The way of approach may be one akin to a servant (*dāśya āsakti*) or friend (*sakhya āsakti*) or son (*vātsalya āsakti*) or wife (*kāntā āsakti*) or a combination of one or more at different stages.

Māṇikkavācakar may be taken to represent by and large the last one. St. Bernard says, 'I think the chief reason which prompted the invisible god to become visible in the flesh and to hold converse with men, was to lead carnal men, who are only able to love carnally, to the healthful love of His flesh, and afterwards little by little to spiritual love.'

This beloved-lover relationship between soul and God is seen among others in the thoughts of St. Saṭhakopa and St. John of the Cross. *Tirukkōvaiyar* of St. Māṇikkavācakar is replete with image-ries of this type.

Dealing with the separation of lover, the god, the lady in love tells her friend that even though she is aware of the truthfulness and fidelity of the Lord from his past utterances, still her love for him is so intense that her heart will not stand the strain of separation from the Lord of Tillai and she does not have the strength of will to conceal the signs of separation and that it is likely that her life will be extinct from her body. She reflects whether it was due to her past evil deeds or the order of Time. We find the irrepressible longing for god or what may be described as the soul-hunger of god.

By sustained efforts on the spiritual path, the soul ultimately gets united with God and enjoys the ineffable joy, the symptoms of which are described in the language of carnal pleasure.

St. John of the Cross in his poem 'The Dark Night of the Soul' sings about the self-effacing rapture of the mystic union of the Lover and the beloved in the following lines:—

Upon my flowery breast
Wholly for him and save himself for none,
There did I give sweet rest
To my beloved one.

St. Māṇikkavācakar in verse 366 of *Tirukkōvaiyār* describes the mystic union in which 'the bride's rosy lips quiver and the dark eyes whirl; she embraces the divine and loses her identity as 'I' due to the consuming and graceful love of the bridegroom'.

Ecstasy increases with self-effacement and it does not therefore involve the abolition of personality.

Jalal-ud-din Rumi expounds the intimacy of this divine love in the following lines:

'Thy love has pierced me through and through,
Its thrill with bone and nerve entwine
I rest a flute laid on thy lips;
A lute, on thy breast reclide.
Breathe deep in me that I may sigh;
Yet strike my strings, and tears shall shine'.

This bridal mysticism gives a foretaste of the eternal blissful life to follow.

Divine grace plays an important role in bringing about the intuitive blissful experience. It is only on the onset of Divine grace bestowed by him at his will at the right moment that Divine love enters into human love and deifies it and human love (*anbu*) expands into Divine love (*aru!*) resulting in nondual ineffable joy. St. Thyāumānavar expresses his "deep longing for Divine union thus: "Which is that blessed day, God, when I shall quench my thirst by quaffing the flood of *Sivanada* that surges in the heart of the liberated"— (*Ennat Kanni, Ānanda iyalbu* 9).

உள்ளத்தினுள்ளே தான் ஊறுஞ்சிவானந்த
வெள்ளந்நினைந்து விடாய் தீர்வதெந்நாளோ.
this ultimate experience is incommunicable
(பேச்சு முச்சில்லாத பேரீன்பம்) பேசா அனுபூதி.

At the right stage God takes upon himself the task of Ārumagam uplifting the soul and making it in his own image. The thirst for God is instilled in the mind of the soul by presenting himself before

the soul as *Guru* and then he leads him step by step to the final goal which is none other than himself, the *Sat-cit-ānanda*. It is in this sense that he is described both as an '*upaya*' the means and '*upeya*', the end.

St. Māṇikkavācakar surrendered himself in utter humility to Śiva's grace and he was bathed in divine grace and love. He describes himself in several verses as one immersed in the ineffable and fecunditive ecstasy.

Love opens the floodgates of the infinite bliss of unitive life to all that seek it and made fit for the same. Like a river that flows into the sea, the freed soul, the *Sidāna* flows into the ocean of divine bliss and becomes *Śivaikarasa* as *Rauravāgama* would put it and continues to enjoy the *ananyabhāva* with Śiva in divine communion or *sāyujya*.

Dehapāte cidānandam Śivaikarasatām vrajet na punar bhedam
āyāti sarit toyam ivāmbudhau—*Rauravāgama*

This experience is described by Sri Gurujñānasambanda thus, 'with the impurities of the soul set at naught the soul exults in the flood of bliss that Śiva is and becomes non-different from him.'

T. P. Meenakshisundaram

SOUTH INDIAN MYSTICISM
AS
EXEMPLIFIED IN
ARUṆAGIRINĀTAR

The mysticism of South India including that of the saints of Maharashtra, Karnataka and Andhra, unlike some other kinds of mysticism, is not too much emotional in its expression. Instead of making abstract generalisations it may be much more clarifying, if one tries to be concrete by taking up one particular mystic as exemplifying South Indian mysticism. Being a Tamilian, a Tamilian mystic poet, naturally comes to my mind.

This happens to be the sixth centenary year of Saint Arunagirinatar of the *Tiru-p-pugal* fame, when the Government of India is participating in this celebration by releasing a stamp bearing the figure of this mystic poet. Therefore, he may be taken up for study for our purpose. He mentions in one of his poems *Praudha Deva Raya* of the XIV Century of the Vijayanagar kingdom which represents the South India culture attempting to safeguard the Indian culture by purifying itself and also by adopting the purifying influences of the new culture threatening it. Aruṇagirinātar is thus a representative of this purified and ever-growing culture which expresses itself in the mystic poetry of this great saint.

Aruṇagirinātar is naturally more akin to the Tamil school of mystics like the Saṅgam poet Nakkīrar about whom I have spoken elsewhere, like Karaikkāl Ammaiyār, Thirumūlar, *Thevaram* poets and Māṇikkavāsagar and the great *Ālvārs*. The great Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja as well as Uyya Vanda Deva Nāyanār, Meykaṇḍār and Umāpathy Śivaṁ and others belong to the ancient Tamil country which then included the modern Kerala. Therefore he may be expected to be true to the Tamil tradition as a whole, though there are slight variations even therein.

a

I should also explain another point about my approach. Books on mysticism by Miss Underhill and others are good as far as they go.

But I like to follow the traditional approach of Indian philosophy, taking the word 'mystic' to mean an *Anubhūtimān*, one who has achieved self-realisation or God realisation or Truth-realisation. For the sake of convenience I shall follow the recent explanation of this experience by Maharishi Mahesh Yogi since that explanation is in terms of the modern language of science and is validated as far as possible, by experiments carried on with reference to this in nearly 200 research institutions all over the world.

The first important thing to note is the universal and all-pervasive nature of this experience, harmonising what seem to be at the surface level conflicting theories. In Tamil land, the ancient Tamil poet Kānian Pūṅṅunāṇār sang the line which has become very popular after the first World Conference of Tamil "Every village is my native place, and every one my kith and kin." Saint Sundarar falls at the feet of every God-realised soul not only of his land and his times but also preceding him and—what is important, of all those coming even after him, here in his own country and be it noted—elsewhere in this universe, uniting them all in that experience of love, transcending time and space. The Epic poets in Tamil—Kāmbār and Śekkiḷār begin their works with the significant and all-pervasive phrase in all the world. True to this tradition, the mystic poet whom I have chosen speaks of "the great one in every temple of worship all round the world"—*Ulaku engum mēviya Devāliyam dorum perumāle*. In keeping with this harmonious experience, he explains all the conflicting Purāṇic stories as centered around Muruga—the loving child of Lord Śiva of the Śaivites and Śakti of the Śāktas; the endearing son-in-law of Lakshmi and Viṣṇu of the Vaiṣṇavites, the beloved brother of Ganesha of the Gāṇapatās.

He avoids all references to any conflict whatsoever. But there are always the interpolators, some of whom have introduced a discordant note; but on literary grounds these interpolations could be easily sifted out. This warning has to be given with reference to every point. I shall be making in this paper, though this is not the place for going into that question.

The universal harmony as an experience was also necessary from a pragmatic point of view in those critical times when the revived Hinduism had to put up a united front against the onslaught of an aggressive culture.

Maharishi speaks of the age-old technique of Transcendental meditation whereby allowing the mind to hold on to a sound without any meaning—will bring the mind to swim on the surface—

consciousness—giving thus an opportunity to the mind to dive deeper and deeper to transcend its own layer after layer to become subtler and subtler as the sound becomes fainter and fainter till the sound is transcended and the mind gets itself expanded into the infinity within. This is *Collarutal*, the phrase Aruṇagirinātar uses. He also speaks of *oru-vacanam* the one-word (571) and of *mauna vacanam* “The silent word” (591). The other aspect of this technique is to do nothing on our part except to start thinking about the sound, while allowing the mind itself to proceed as it likes, spontaneously and automatically, motivated by its own nature following the advice “Be quiet without any effort on your part” (*Summā iru*) as quoted by Saint Aruṇagirinātar. He sings *Summā iru collara enṛalumē Ammā Poruḷ onum aṛintilanē*. At first the significance was not clear to him but slowly when the transcendence began everything became crystal clear in his experience as we shall presently see.

When mind transcends in meditation, according to Maharish, the transcendental consciousness arises. The knower or the Subject, the smaller self realises itself—the Self with the small ‘s’ becomes the infinite, the Self with a capital ‘S’. This is self-realisation.

But there are further revelations and developments, if one may use that word. For one thing, the object is not there when one sees with his eyes closed in this meditation. When one wakes up into the world, the newly born experience disappears; however, with incessant practice, our nervous system becomes cultured enough to sustain this new born experience all through, by the constant swinging back and forth of our nervous system to the transcendental consciousness and to the waking consciousness. In this way is born cosmic consciousness that which continues all through the three changing states of our ordinary consciousness, namely, the sleeping, dreaming and waking consciousnesses—all different consciousnesses in giving different patterns of brain waves as proved by the electro-encephalo graph. In meditation, the brain waves proceeding from the left and right hemispheres from the front and back portions of the brain and from cortical and sub-cortical regions get synchronised and coherent, thus showing an all-round harmonised development of all aspects of personality and life, further showing a deep rest along with alertness, this being also proved by the brain-wave patterns, all establishing the reality of *ari tuyil*. The subject is but a witness, watching all these activities including those emanating from him, for there he feels he is not the actor.

Another development begins to unite the subject and the object thus sundered. The Tamil word *anbu* roughly translated as *love* but

according to Tirumūlar goes to the extent of encompassing God himself, is really the divine principle of his heart which begins now to operate for bringing about this new development of unity.

The object — the phenomenal world — is now seen in all its artistic beauty, scientific significance and moral grandeur. This may be called Nature-mysticism when one is enchanted by this vision at every level sub-particle level, electronic level, atomic level, molecular level and further grosser levels, organic level and other complex levels. The question arises within, who is the Supreme artist responsible for this wonderful art. The artist at this stage naturally reveals himself or herself to the reverential admirer of this great art, as the Creator or God. God-consciousness thus develops. First there is a sudded vision which then recedes; for our nervous system has to be cultured to sustain this consciousness all through.

The experience of light, of the dark chamber and the complete enlightenment continuing all through our activities — all of these are usually spoken of as mysticism and belong to this period of development. There is such an amount of *prema* or love unable to bear separation from this light and love. The mystics speak in terms of men and women. Here is the mysticism of love. Some speak of the love of the love of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa and of erotic mysticism and sometimes of extra-marital love as in the case of gopis or *ṛṣi patnis* of Daruka Vana. The Tamil mystics, true to their literary tradition coming from the Saṅgam age, speak of the pre-marital love, blossoming into bridal mysticism. There is a union where, as is often pointed out, Rādhā loses herself, identifying herself completely with Kṛṣṇa.

Maharshi calls this development from the God-consciousness as the united consciousness. The object becomes thus the Infinite, revealing within layers, infinite glory, where the person is able to use successfully at any one level, this phenomenal world. The erstwhile opaque veil slowly becoming more and more translucent between the object and subject, finally disappears and the knower experiences the known as the very infinite of the Self. The two infinities thus merge.

Then follows the Brahman-consciousness where the parts are no more emphasised. The house is more than the bricks, the cement, the timber, iron and all the adornments. The whole is greater than the parts transcending them all. Aruṇagirinātar as already explained, had the call come up to him to be quiet and effortless so that the sound can transcend and disappear.

Summā iru Collara—this was the advice. Is it an inner call? The poet also sings *Aṛivai aṛivatu poruḷ ena aruḷiya perumāḷe*: Oh! the Great

one! you have blessed me with the truth that real wisdom is to realise that which knows everything" (550). This is self-realisation.

The stages of the further development are explained by Arunagirinātar, in another important poem (615) *Sīva Odukkam*. *Sīva Odukkam* is the shrinking or involution of the *jīva*, the small self, i.e., its dissolution into the bigger Self or *Sīva*. This marks the first stage of Transcendental consciousness. This smaller self is really the essence of *Sīva*. This is realised when the I disappears (238).

Next comes in the object which is then realised as the infinite, this is referred to as *Pūda odukkam*, the withering away of the elements, the phenomenal world becomes dissolved into the infinite beauty when the God-consciousness arises. The various poetic descriptions of nature, in and around temples the poet visited reveal the deeper appreciation of the significance and beauty of Nature. These need not be quoted. But it has been mentioned that the poet sees everywhere, the blissful dance of the Joy of the Lord reflected in the dance of the all the creative impulses (*devās*) of the Cosmic life including the joyful dance of the heart of the King Praudha Deva Maharāya.

Then arises the realisation of God in terms of intense *prema* or love. There are a number of verses where the poet gives expression to the *nāyaki bhāva*. The symbolic significance of such verses in Tamil has been beautifully explained in *Acārya-Hṛdayam*, though with reference to Nammālvār. One verse of Arunagirinātar may be mentioned here. "Two *karmas*, the three *malas*, death and birth—all these are no more, you and I are unified, as though in tight embrace, in that unique enjoyment of the Transcendental." (868)

The further development of the sense of non-dualism is referred to in the following words; *Nivērenādirukka nānvē renādirukka* "When I am not different from you and you are not different from me" (221). At this stage the Seer and the seen as two infinities are realised as one whole of an infinity. The Knower knows and realises everything, as something springing forth from the experiencing knowledge:

As a development of this unity-consciousness of the whole (transcending the parts,) arises, that consciousness where the knower and the known get dissolved into what is above and beyond, transcending everything, it is the supreme knowledge - *para jñāna* - the great light. *Sīva Odukkam Pūta odukkam tōṇṇa udikkum para gñāna dīpa viḷakkam* (615).

When the goal is reached the path is no more relevant or even a reality. The whole process upto the goal and excepting that,

appears as the play of the Lord. But the poet speaks of the path and the world at the end as something which does not exist. "You have placed me inside the *māyā* which is non-existing but you could not bear with my ignorance and yet you adorn. Your wrestling shoulders with my garland of words." This is thus the experience of monism which does not lose any of the joy of the creation and evolution — a seeming contradiction resolved only in that experience of the mystic. Perhaps the theory of the *māyā* alone could explain the contradictions but we are not concerned with the philosophical implications.

*Illē enum māyyaiyil ittanai nī; pollē naraiyīmai ppourttilaiye
malle puri panniru vāhayil encollē punaiyum suḍar vē levanē;
(Kaṇḍar Anubhūti).*

We may come back to the beginning. The mind and the nervous system are interconnected as the inner and outer organs so to say. However, human nervous system alone sustains the supreme experiences and that is why human birth is considered necessary for salvations. Our body as such is therefore as sacred as a temple, as Tirumūlar will have it. Consequently, Aruṇagirinātar is very much concerned, when he finds people wasting their lives specially those, who in those troubled days, forget their miseries in the poisonous company of the worst kind of scheming prostitutes. The tradition is that he himself spent the earlier part of his life that way, but through God's grace, calling upon him to meditate effortlessly as already stated, he made the diseased and abnormal nervous system whole and normal so as to reflect completely and in a pure manner, the infinite within him and bring out the full potential to fruition — a position which is also taken by Maharishi. The poems of Aruṇagirinātar are not therefore condemnations of women in general or of the married life.

A mystic is not necessarily a recluse—transcendental consciousness where infinite is located becomes a sustaining and permanent reality, only through activity interspersed with meditation. The white cloth dipped in the yellow colour has to be exposed to the sun and again dipped into the yellow colour alternatively till the yellow colour becomes fast without fading away any more in the sun. Activity is like exposing the yellow of meditation to the sun. Meditation is for the perfection of life. Activity is never to be given up nor as the *Gītā* emphasises *can* it be given up. Mystics, as Maharshi observes reaps 200% benefit. He reaps 100% of material benefit and 200% of spiritual benefit. Aruṇagirinatar therefore sings with joy of the everlasting comfort whence spring all the majestic greatness and good fortune of all kinds of wealth. (The so-called material benefit)

along with the transcendental state, full of real freedom (the spiritual benefit) all arising from God's grace (214).

Having established in the strong-hold of the depth within, everything is done by the very laws of nature; in the cause of evolutionary progressive cosmic purpose every act is successful and moral, without any attempt on our part. Aruṇagirinātar was an active force in the resonance of the Vijayanagar movement, paving its way to the glorious period of Krishna Deva Raya.

He has shaped — we may even say created — a new kind of poetry, *Tiruppugāḷ*, for giving expression to the new found harmony full of musical rhythms and great for its varieties of *laya* or *tāḷa*. However, he himself is certain that it is the Absolute which he calls Muruga, that makes him sing and the songs by implications are not his.

At that stage everything desired is achieved almost effortlessly as though through the Grace of God. Desire in itself is not bad. The real defect is the inability, as Maharishi points out, to fulfil the desire. When one therefore gets frustration and suffering. Desire is really the spur to action. But when the ability to fulfil is absent, our desire, instead of being translated into achievement and fulfilment, continues to be, but an Alnasher's castle and what little is achieved takes us deeper and deeper into the endless quagmire of the cause and effect of *karma*. Desire thus becomes a fetter. But when there is the ability to fulfil, desire plunges into successful activity where one does not any more merely dream of the result. The student desiring to pass the examination plunges into his studies without worrying himself about the result at that stage. It is in this sense, according to Maharshi, that activity and not the result is our duty and concern. As already stated, once established in the infinity within, every act becomes an achievement—and fulfilment true to the direction of the *Gītā*.

Desire, when there is ability to fulfil, is an inspiration to action and achievement—without this ability, people but dream and think millions of things, knowing not how to live—thus says one *Kuṛaḷ*; “but those who are strong with this kind of ability achieve successfully everything they desire” says another *Kuṛaḷ*. This is true of the mystic—the true *Karma-Yogi*. Aruṇagirinātar sings that whenever the bhaktas desire any enjoyment, they get it fulfilled without any effort, even without praying for it. This is the skill in action-(*karmasu kauśalam* of the *Gītā* achieving success without effort. Therefore *Anāsakti-yoga* is not to get rid of desire, but to get rid of the inability to fulfil the desire. It is this fruitless day-dream of desires, that should be cut away. “Hold on to that Absolute which does not depend

on anything and that way get yourself along from mere hankering after anything" says Tiruvaḷḷuvar. When firmly established in the Absolute, desire is no more a fetter, The fetter of the erstwhile desire breaks to pieces. Nature itself takes up your actions. You are no more the actor, you have thus transcended the vicious circle of cause and effect. You are then the silent witness; you act, but in reality, you don't act. You remain unperturbed. In the Pacific Ocean we have the circling storms of typhoon. The clever navigator knows that there is a silent center within it, and straight he sails there, to enjoy the terrible dance of Nature. Similarly we transcend the vicious circle of *karma* by going straight to the inner silence.

Aruṇagirinātar sings:

āśā nikalaṁ tukalākiya pin

peśā anubhūti pirandatuve

"The fetters of desire are broken to pieces and the experience of the 'great silence was born.'"

It is in this way that the twin *karmas*, the three *malas* along birth and death no more affect the mystic. Therefore in *Kandar Alankāram*, Aruṇagirinātar playfully throws out a challenge to Death just to come within the poet's reach to see what happens. The *jīva* is really of the form of the absolute *Śiva* and one has thus to realise this to get rid of the small 'I', thus sings Arunagirinātar.

For, "the self in reality is something which elements like the wind can never put out" thus sings Arunagirinātar, reminding us of the *Gītā*. "It is also something which cannot be heard of in the Vedas nor can be seen with the help of any knowledge" (987). "Then" sings the poet, "arises the life, wheret he light or enlightenment goes on ever brightening up, and that is indeed the state of *Śiva*, the Absolute—when the truth of *soham* "I am he" is realised and we are saved."

"There the *jīva* and the world are left behind. Pure *jñāna* alone is there, realising in itself the infinite whole of the Absolute which has nothing else transcending it, and in this mystic experience what all he imagined are fulfilled through His Grace."

As Maharshi assures us, this is now simple and easy, through the technique of Transcendental Meditation, the natural and effortless way of allowing the mind to go seated on the sound, to the source of happiness within—what Arunagirinātar refers to in the line.

Summā iru sollara

PART THREE

SPECIAL ARTICLES

S. Gopalan

SRI AUROBINDO AND THE
CONCEPT OF SOCIAL
EVOLUTION

Even an acquaintance with Sri Aurobindo's philosophy of evolution reveals how he has delved deep into the reaches of man's being to comprehend the glorious heights which can be attained. So to preface the paper is not to undermine the complexities in his analysis of the *human situation* nor to overlook the subtleties and the finer points of synthesis that we find in his exhortations for 'truly being human' but to emphasize that his reflections on evolution are at once comprehensive and intensive, yielding us a philosophy of society and a psychology of the individual welded together in such fineness that the concept of social evolution discernible in his system can either be approached from an analysis of society understood as a concrete reality or from the point of view of the individual subjectively considered. Conceding the validity of both the approaches is especially significant of Sri Aurobindo's theory of social evolution and hence references will be made to both aspects of the question in the sequel.

Sri Aurobindo's theory of social evolution is, in an important sense, an extension of the theories of evolution put forward in the field of biology and applied later on to society by certain thinkers. If the concept of evolution is approached as exemplifying man's attempt at understanding Nature and its workings, 'the origin of species' represents, indeed, an important aspect of Nature's working. Since social reality is an integral aspect of Reality itself, attempts to see whether human society also lends itself to a similar treatment are but natural and hence to be expected. This line of thinking suggests that problems encountered and difficulties experienced in understanding society by merely applying the biological theory can be solved by a type of approach which does not aim merely at applying a particular theory to social reality, nor at extending a line of thinking but at integrating them all to comprehend the complexity of Nature's

working. It is in this sense that the biological theory and the viewpoint of the social evolutionists become significantly important in understanding Sri Aurobindo's theory of social evolution.

In biology the term *evolution* is used to refer to a certain mode of orderly change, viz., that whereby new specific forms have arisen by a process of differentiation from the old or as Darwin puts it, by 'descent with modification'. It also points to a hypothesis regarding the way in which these changes might have come about, viz., that of *natural selection*. The process of heredity and the struggle for the means of subsistence wherein the fittest alone survive offer us some insight into evolution, here understood purely in the biological sense.

An aspect of the theory which is significant in the context of our theme in this paper is that evolution in its higher reaches *cannot* be automatic, that it is by consciously aiming at and consistently working towards it that averting the situation of being thrown out altogether is possible. Sri Aurobindo writes: "The animal is a living laboratory in which Nature has, it is said, 'worked out man. Man himself may well be a thinking and living laboratory in whom and with whose conscious cooperation she wills to work out the superman, the god, or shall we not say, 'rather to manifest god'."

"Evolution can be understood only in terms of a past with its fundamental results still in evidence, a present in which the results it is labouring over are in the process of becoming, a future in which still unevolved powers and forms of being must appear till there is the full and perfect manifestation", opines Sri Aurobindo. Evolution upto the animal stage has been unconscious, and at the human level it is becoming self-conscious and holds immense possibilities for the future. That is, making or marring the future is entirely in man's hands and man's responsible nature thus opens out the possibility of progress as well as retrogression.

The biological theory of evolution does not merely stand for a descent from a common source but also stands for an ascent, in some sense, from 'lower' to 'higher' forms or in Darwin's phrase, 'advancement in organization'. This aspect of evolution has important implications for Sri Aurobindo's theory. We are not having in mind the concept of ascent used by him here, but the other equally important though less apparent element in a theory of social evolution truly to be so called, the suggestion that the subject of analysis when we consider social evolution is mankind as a whole and not a parti-

cular society with the corollary that hierarchically arranging the various societies in the world is most inappropriate.

The reason for such a predicament is that human societies cannot meaningfully be considered as 'isolated' or 'autonomous' units. They do contain elements derived from one another. Evolution in this sense has reference more to an advancement in civilization, to the achievement and progress of mankind as a whole rather than to the 'superior mode of existence' of any one particular society. Sri Aurobindo uses the term civilization in a different sense from the way it is ordinarily used. As he himself points out: "In its ordinary, popular sense, civilisation means the state of civil society, governed, policed, organised, educated, possessed of knowledge and appliances as opposed to that which has not or is not supposed to have these advantages. In a certain sense the Red Indian, the Basuto, the Fiji islander had their civilization; they possessed a rigorously, if simply organised society, a social law, some ethical ideas, a religion, a kind of training, a good many virtues in some of which, it is said civilisation is sadly lacking; but we are agreed to call them savages and barbarians, mainly it seems, because of their crude and limited knowledge, the primitive rudeness of their appliances and the bare simplicity of their social organisation. Formerly men...expressed their standpoint by stigmatising all peoples different in general culture from themselves as barbarians. The civilisation so used comes to have a merely relative significance or hardly any fixed sense at all. We must therefore get rid in it of all that is temporary or accidental and fix it upon this distinction that barbarism is the state of society in which man is almost entirely preoccupied with his life and body, his economic and physical existence...while civilisation is the more evolved state of society in which to a sufficient social and economic organisation is added the activity of the mental life in most if not all of its parts..."²

We have thus a clear suggestion in Sri Aurobindo that social evolution is more a result of mental evolution rather than the consequence of growth in the organic/physical sense of the term with the unambiguous implication that the human situation warrants very much more than a biological approach. It should however not be forgotten that the biological evolutionists have noticed the mental evolution as accompanying evolution from the lower animals to man.

There is thus an easy transition from the biological to the social theory of evolution,—to the application of the evolutionary theory to society. We need refer to only two thinkers who have applied the

idea of evolution as consisting in a passage from homogeneity to heterogeneity based on *integration* (by which all parts of the evolving whole are coherently held together) to society since they are immediately relevant to our thesis.

Herbert Spencer writes: "Societies show *integration*, both by simple increase of mass and by coalescence and re-coalescence of masses. The change from homogeneity to heterogeneity is multitudinously exemplified; up from the simple tribe, alike in all parts, to the civilized nation full of structural and functional unlikeness. With progressive integration and heterogeneity goes increasing *coherence*..... Simultaneously comes increasing definiteness. Social organization is at first vague; advance brings settled arrangements which grow slowly more precise; customs pass into laws, which while gaining fixity, also become more specific in their applications to a variety of actions; and all institutions, at first confusedly intermingled, slowly separate at the same time that each within itself marks off more distinctly its component structures. Thus in all respects is fulfilled the formula of evolution. There is progress towards greater size, coherence, multiformity and definiteness."³

Similarly R. M. McIver holds that evolution is a process in which the potentialities of a thing gradually become actualized. He seems to define evolution in terms of structural and functional differentiation.⁴ According to him differentiation manifests itself in a greater division of labour, an increase in the number and variety of functional associations, and in greater diversity and refinement in the means of social communication...⁵

The difficulty with the Spencerian theory can well be stated in the words of a friend of his, Mr. Potter who told his daughter, Mrs. Beatrice Webb, a collaborator of Spencer: "Words, my dear, mere words. Experience tells me that some businesses grow diverse and complicated, others get simpler and more uniform, others again go into the Bankruptcy Court. In the long run and over the whole field there is no more reason for expecting one process than the other. Spencer's intellect is like a machine racing along without raw material."⁶

The same difficulty can be raised against the theory of McIver. While the process of increasing differentiation can be conceded with certain reservations, the other aspect, viz., increasing integration is difficult to concede. The social tensions witnessed and the tendency to disintegrate that we do see in the various parts of the world seem to falsify the theories of social evolution in at least one important

respect. No wonder, therefore, we find an extreme view that "sociology should relinquish every attempt at discovering origins and form of evolution."⁷ All the same we also find the view that in spite of its difficulties the concept of evolution still retains its usefulness. S. F. Nadel writes: "The truth of the matter is that evolution belongs to those all-embracing concepts which, though inescapable, are too remote from the concrete problems of empirical enquiry to be of much use in solving them. We need the concept of evolution... but the 'laws' of evolution are of too huge a scale.....Perhaps indeed there are no particular 'laws' of evolution, but only one 'law' or a postulate if you like - that there is evolution."⁸

In the light of the difficulties regarding the empirical study of evolution and in the light of the importance of the concept, a deeper analysis is necessary, an analysis which concedes the important points made by the social evolutionists but which also overcomes the difficulties inherent in them. In Sri Aurobindo's theory we do find such a 'solution' but it is interesting to record here that even some sociologists concede the extra-empirical aspects of evolution by way of anticipating the subtler analysis we do find in Sri Aurobindo—the extra-empirical aspects of evolution.

Morris Ginsberg implies that evolution is a process of change⁹ culminating in the production of something new but exhibiting an orderly continuity in transition."¹⁰ The implication here of a continuous change in which every phase develops from the preceding one is supported by another sociologist who writes: "The main support of this view in our opinion is the presence of man in society whose basic exigencies and potentialities through time and space constitute the *thread of identity* which runs throughout the most varied episode of history. In this sense social evolution would be the evolution of man in society with all its conquests, reversal and stagnation. From this concept of evolution we cannot derive a ready-made norm to measure the march of society or to find solutions for complicated problems, theoretical or practical; but it will surely provide us with a firm field of investigation, enriched by the wisdom of the students of human nature in all ages, and with a practical goal - namely, the uplift and perfection of man *qua* man—towards whose attainment all the endowments of the social scientist and the social worker must turn."¹¹

Thus man *qua* man is considered to be the subject of investigation and object of reflection for comprehending the concept of social evolution. We see the centre of interest shifting gradually from the

biological conception to the social and then on to the individual-in-society without overlooking the significance of the stages already passed.

We are suggesting that Sri Aurobindo's theory of social evolution is illustrative of such an integrative-evolutionary approach to man-in-society. Sri Aurobindo's theory of the *infra-rational*, *rational* and *supra-rational* or *spiritual* stages in social evolution clearly reveal that he was appreciative of the social as against the biological 'mode of life' more because the social was indicative of the great possibilities of further evolution than because it represented a higher stage of evolution than mere 'biological existence'.

His own words in regard to the three stages of evolution may be quoted here. "The first is a condition in which the forms and activities of the communal existence are those of the spontaneous play of the powers and principles of its life. All its growth, all its formations, customs, institutions are then a natural organic development, the motive and constructive power coming mostly from the subconscious principle of the life within it. In this stage the people are not yet intelligently self-conscious, but live according to...their first mental renderings."^{1 2}

"The second stage of...society is that in which the communal mind becomes more and more intellectually self-conscious, first in its more cultured minds, then more generally, first broadly, then more and more minutely and in all the parts of its life. It learns to review and deal with its own life, communal ideas, needs, institutions in the light of the developed intelligence and finally by the power of the critical and constructive reason."^{1 3}

The third stage, the culmination stage in social evolution, will be reached "when man in the collectivity begins to live more deeply and to govern his collective life neither primarily by the needs, instincts, intuitions welling up out of the vital self, nor secondarily by the constructions of the reasoning mind but first, foremost and always by the power of unity, sympathy, spontaneous liberty, supple and living order of his discovered greater self and spirit in which the individual and the communal existence have their law of freedom, perfection and oneness."^{1 4}

Sri Aurobindo deals in detail with the characteristics of the three stages, with the process of transition-integration that characterizes social evolution, with the 'problem of relapse' that society, at every stage of its evolution is seized with and also consequently with the

peculiarity of man's being which defies understanding when approached in a physical-organic-mechanical way. we need to focus our attention here only on the subjective nature of man so predominantly emphasized by Sri Aurobindo, for it not only explains the process of social evolution as conceived by the evolutionists but also clears the way of the difficulties experienced by them in understanding the phenomenon of social evolution.

In explaining the transition from the infra-rational to the rational stage Sri Aurobindo maintains that the intensity in the working of the rational faculty of man-in-society makes possible even the common man of society capable of intelligent thinking and proper application of it to life and its problems. It is obvious, such a development cannot take place in society as a whole and in one sweep. It is first realized only in a few exceptional individuals who are critical-minded.

Progress is not continuous, for society either loses its initial impetus and gets encrusted in the infra-rational forms or suffers a setback due to conflict with the opposing infra-rational forces. It is relatively easy for the light of reason or spirituality to establish its reign over a few exceptional individuals or classes, and through them to diffuse its pale glimmer upon the infra-rational mass for some-time.¹⁵ This may even seem to dominate the life of a whole nation as in Athens or Aryan India but, "these early dawns cannot endure in their purity, so long as the race is not ready."¹⁶

The ascent from the rational to the spiritual stage is governed by the same principle of social evolution which is responsible for the progress from the infra-rational to the rational stage. Here also the process of spiritualization sets in in a few exceptional individuals from whom it spreads through increasingly larger groups and transforms the whole of humanity. Possibilities of relapse during this transitional stage are even more than in the previous one for, the conflict between the new light gained and attempted to be spread, and the established ideas is more intensive in character.

It is obvious, evolution can take place only when two conditions are present in society, viz., the few pioneering individuals who are able to realize the spirit and re-create their life in its light and the capability of society receiving and assimilating the new spiritual light transmitted. According to Sri Aurobindo the failure of all the past spiritual movements to make an enduring foundation in human life has been due to the fact that both the necessary conditions were not simultaneously realized.

The idea of subjectivity, sometimes also referred to as individuality in a special sense ¹⁷ that we find in Sri Aurobindo here explains the difficulties in inwardization and the consequent failure to uninterruptedly progress that we witness in society today. He writes : "We must find out that the true individual is not the ego, but the divine individuality which is, through our evolution, preparing to emerge in us."¹⁸ Lest we may mistake that he disregards society, he writes : "Humanity is of prime importance, since intensity of consciousness in the *individual* leads to eventual *mass* awareness. The aim of human life and of the race is not 'escape' but a transformation of ourselves and our world." ¹⁹ Aurobindo insists on the true emergence of individuality first. He is critical of outside force being resorted to to develop unity : "There has been a rude set-back to this development in totalitarian states whose theory is that the individual does not exist and only the life of the community matters."²⁰ The need for subjectivity in achieving social evolution is clearly brought out by him when he writes : "... all the old general standards have become bankrupt and can no longer give any inner help ; it is therefore the individual who has to become a discoverer, a pioneer, and to search out by his individual reason, intuition, idealism, desire, claim upon life, or whatever other light he finds in himself, the true law of the world and of his own being."²¹

The healthy synthesis that needs to be found to effect social transformation which was only implicitly evident in the two 'requirements' stated above is explicitly stated by Sri Aurobindo when explaining the concept of 'subjectivism'. The two main needs in every 'individualistic age' are : (1) there must be found a general standard of Truth to which the individual judgment of all will be inwardly compelled to subscribe without physical constraint or imposition of irrational authority ; and (2) it must reach, too, some principle of social order which shall be equally founded on a universally recognized truth of things..."²² The synthesis can be effected by subjectively dwelling on the individual and his relationship to society. He points out : "It must become apparent that the physical world is not the whole of knowledge, it must appear that man is a mental as well as a physical and vital being... Therefore to find the truth of things and the law of his being in relation to that truth he (man) must go deeper and fathom the subjective secret of himself and things, as well as their objective forms and surrounding."²³

Concerning true subjectivism Sri Aurobindo writes : "...true subjectivism teaches that we are a higher self than our ego...that we are, in our life and being not only ourselves but all others ;

for there is a secret solidarity which our egoism may kick at and strive against, but from which we cannot escape. It is the only Indian discovery that our real 'I' is a Supreme Being which is our true Self...which it is our business to discover and consciously become...that Being is one in all, expressed in the individual and in the collectivity."²⁴

The true law of social evolution thus consists in man's potentiality to turn the searchlight on himself and into his depths, for in this man gets back to himself, back to the root of his living and infinite possibilities, and the potentiality of a new and perfect self-creation begins to widen before him. This must of necessity be an individual undertaking with personal responsibility for self-development."²⁵

But Sri Aurobindo has also visualized how difficult the synthesis is to effect, for he writes. " (Man's) cycles are circles of a growing, but still imperfect harmony and synthesis, and she (Nature) brings him back violently to her original principles, sometimes even to something like her earlier conditions so that he may start afresh on a larger curve of progress and self-fulfilment."²⁶

Social evolution is thus possible only by the subjective turns that man takes in history. The 'warning of doom' and the 'vision of the future' we see in Sri Aurobindo's concern for social evolution is clearly brought out by Le Cocq when he writes: "If man's acts, individually and in society, do not conform with Nature's higher evolutionary purposes—i.e., in developing a higher race, eventually—then Nature can ruthlessly destroy, not merely by 'natural disaster' but by nature *in* man. It is for example a truism that all twentieth century scientific discoveries can be utilized for the advance of mankind—or its destruction. Sri Aurobindo might say that the choice lies in whether the majority of human beings remain identified with their physical, vital or even mental beings—or whether they make the advance to the spiritual."²⁷

We may conclude then that Sri Aurobindo has, in his view of social evolution, not merely extended the principle of evolution as understood by the biological and social evolutionists but has also pointed out that the way to true social evolution consists in man's realizing integration of his whole being not merely in the sense of establishing a 'working harmony' between him and society around but in the sense of deepening his commitment which is not fully realized in his day-to-day rational living as a member of a civic community but experienced due to his subjective turning and reflections as a true individual-in-society.

NOTES

1. *The Life Divine* (Pondicherry : Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1960), Vol. I, p. 4.
2. *The Human Cycle* (Pondicherry : Sri Aurobindo Ashram Press, 1949), pp. 102-104.
3. Herbert Spencer, *Principles of Sociology* (London : Williams & Norgate, 1895), Vol. I, p. 585.
4. *Vide Society: An Introductory Analysis* (London : Macmillan & Co, Ltd., 1962), p. 262.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 527.
6. Beatrice Webb, *My Apprenticeship* (Middleses : Penguin, 1938), Vol. p. 42
7. Claude Levi-Strauss, 'French Sociology' in *Twentieth Century Sociology*, ed. by G. Gurwitsch & N. N. More (New York : The Philosophical Library, 1945), p. 536.
8. S. F. Nadel, *The Foundations of Social Anthropology* (London : Cohen & Est. Ltd. 1951), p. 106.
9. See *Essays in Sociology and Social Philosophy* (London : William Heinemann Ltd., 1961), p. 238.
10. The two factors considered important in this view of evolution are (1) that there is something *permanent* and (2) that there is something *new*. That is, we have evolution when the series of changes that occur during a period of time appear to be, not a mere succession of changes, but a *continuous process* through which a *clear thread of identity* runs.
11. Pascual Gisbert, *Fundamentals of Sociology* (Madras : Orient Longmans, 1957), pp. 366-367.
12. *The Foundations of Indian Culture* (New York : The Sri Aurobindo Library Inc, 1953), p. 381.
13. *Ibid.*
14. *Ibid.*, p. 383.
15. See Kishore Gandhi, *Social Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo* (Pondicherry : Sri Aurobindo Society, 1965), p. 106.
16. *The Human Cycle*, p. 234.
17. See Rhoda P Le Cocq, *The Radical Thinkers* (Pondicherry : Sri Aurobindo Asram Press, 1972), pp. 48-55.
18. *The Human Cycle*; p. 53.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 51.
20. *Ibid.*
21. *Ibid.*, p. 14.
22. *Ibid.*, 20.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 31.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 55.
25. R. P. Le Cocq, *op. cit.*, p. 98.
26. *The Human Cycle*, p. 98.
27. *op. cit.*, p. 54.

Herbert Herring

LEIBNIZ AND KANT ON
THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

There are certain problems which permanently keep the human mind in a fruitful unrest, and among these the question whether there is a supranatural Being which has to be considered as the origin and final aim of the universe and everything being, is perhaps the most important one. Many an attempt has been made to prove the existence of such a supreme and absolute Being along the lines of a philosophical argumentation, based on the evidence of the senses and logical discourse, but none of these so-called proofs can claim to have solved the problem, for reasons that will be discussed in my paper in dealing with Leibniz' and Kant's approach to the matter.

In the first part of this paper I shall deal with Leibniz' criticism of the main traditional patterns for proving God's existence, opposing them with a proof based on his thesis of the pre-established harmony of all worldly things. In the second part I shall show how Kant tackles this problem and why he comes to the conclusion that it cannot be solved at all by means of theoretical reasoning or pure reason alone.

In the very first sentences of the *Monadology* and the *Principles of Nature and of Grace* (which is but a more popular version of the *Monadology*) Leibniz argues thus: Because there are complex beings there must be a simple being or a substance marked as being without any parts and thus indivisible; for complex beings are but aggregates of simple beings, or multitudes of them. But although multitudes, these complex or concrete beings (the natural things, so to speak) are nevertheless of a simple and unique structure, because they are constituted according to a teleological principle. They are not simple

or unique by origin or by their essence, but as harmoniously organised structures of a multitude. The complex being, however, is only existent through the simple being which is its substantial origin. Every being is either without any parts and thus indivisible and as such a perfect being or it is metaphysically determined, dominated by this indivisible and simple being, to a certain extent perfect in its way but when compared to the most perfect Being it will reveal its deficiencies. Thus Leibniz states in a letter to Arnould, dated 30.4.1687 :

"The one which is not actually a *simple* being
is not actually a *being*."

This statement I consider the basic principle of Leibniz' entire philosophy.

A world which thus is the well-organised aggregate of finite beings (*aggregatum rerum finitum*) refers to a first and final originator who has created the multitude of unities as a unified multitude. What and in which way is the Monad of Monads (the Greek *monad* is Leibniz' term for a simple substance), this creator and rector of the whole universe? According to § 7 of the *Theodicy* (1710), wherein Leibniz gives a brief outline of the complexity of the problem to demonstrate, with logical stringency, the existence of God, the first and supreme principle of Being must itself be an absolute, metaphysical or apodictical necessity, - contrary to the worldly or natural things which are characterised by their being contingent or relative existences. The absolute Being could not be, and it could not be otherwise than it really is.

This distinction between contingent and absolute necessity or, in other words, truths of fact and truths of reason lies at the root of Leibniz' dealing with the problem of God's existence; it forms not only the corner-stone of the *a posteriori* arguments but also of the famous ontological proof which Leibniz already refers to in a letter to Eckard, dated 18-4-1677: "One has to purify" thus he writes Descartes' ontological argumentation, a purification which would amount to the following statement :

"God is the necessary Being and that means a Being
involving existence. Therefore God exists."

Even this early statement shows Leibniz' critical objection to the ontological argument, for he realises that this so-called *a priori* proof is but a *petitio principii* in the shape of a vicious circle, in so

far as the *terminus ad quem* already presupposes the *terminus a quo*. This is clearly marked in his *Reflections on Knowledge, Truth, and Ideas* (1684). In this discourse on the qualities of every clear, distinct, adequate and intuitive, in short of every scientific cognition, Leibniz warns us from being trapped by an insufficient analysis of concepts which would unavoidably lead into fallacies; and as typical example for such a fallacy he cites Descartes' version of the ontological argument as follows :

"Whatever follows from the idea or definition of a thing . . . is predictable of the thing itself. Now existence follows from the idea of God as the most perfect or greatest possible Being. For the most perfect Being includes all perfections within itself, and existence is one of them. Therefore, we can predicate existence of God."

But then he continues with a very important critical remark :

"In truth, however, this argument permits us only to conclude that God's existence follows if his possibility is already proved. For we cannot use definitions in an argument without first making sure that they are real definitions or that they contain no contradictions."

Similarly, Leibniz states in § 23 of the *Discourse on Metaphysics* (1686) that one could not have an adequate concept of a thing unless one is assured of its possibility and that means of its being possible without any contradiction.

Now, in his latest and perhaps most mature work, the *Monadology* (1714), he seems to refrain from his previous negative approach to the ontological argument. However, on investigating his standpoint more carefully one notices that he now links up this argument with the cosmological one (§§ 36—45): If God is possible, then he must be real, his essence involving his existence; for nothing can prevent that from being possible which involves neither limitation nor negation and therefore no contradiction, which is in other words perfection as such! and this alone would suffice to prove the existence of God *a priori*. *A posteriori*, Leibniz continues, his existence had already been proved by referring to the existence of contingent beings, having their final and sufficient reason in a necessary Being which bears in itself the reason for its existence. What the *a priori* arguments could finally not prove, namely the real possibility of God, is now expected from the *a posteriori* arguments.

Let us first consider Leibniz' version of the cosmological proof which is based on the principle of sufficient reason.

".. as the ultimate origin must be in something which is metaphysically necessary, and as the reason of the existing can only be from the existing, there must exist some one Being metaphysically necessary, or whose essence is existence; and thus there exists something which differs from the plurality of beings or from the world, which is not metaphysically necessary."

In *Monadology* (§§ 31—39) and *Principles of Nature and of Grace* (§§ 7 and 8) we find this argument developed and finally more strictly formulated, the concluding sentences reading thus :

"...the sufficient or final reason must be outside of the sequence or this variety of contingencies, however infinite it may be. And thus it is that the final reason of things must be found in necessary substance, in which the variety of changes exists only eminently, as in their source; and this substance we call God."

This conclusion from the effect to the cause, from the causes to a first uncaused cause, from the existence of beings to the existence of a supreme Being shows very clearly how Leibniz—and this is typical for his way of philosophising—starts off from a critical observation and investigation of nature before proceeding to the metaphysical reasons of the physical. Very often we find sentences like these: "Modern research has taught us and reason confirms us...." (*Principles* § 6), or "Thusfar we have spoken merely as pure physicists, now we must rise to metaphysics..." (*ibid.*, § 7).

But in addition Leibniz' version of the cosmological argument shows something else, namely that he deduces from the idea of a harmonious interconnection of all things the idea of a one and unique creator who, according to his own absolute perfection, has created the world in a most perfect way. And at this point the cosmological argument meets with the physico-logical one which also rests upon the principle of sufficient reason.

Leibniz makes use of this argument in several of his writings; in its final form it appears in *Monadology*, § 48, wherein Leibniz states in God exist power, intelligence and goodwill in their highest possible manifestation. Since God is the most perfect Being he cannot but act in a perfect way, for acting in a less perfect way than one is capable of would be tantamount to acting imperfectly; this however would mean to act in contradiction to one's own essence.

Therefore, this world is, for logical reasons as well as for metaphysical ones, the only world possible and as such—since originating from God as the highest perfection—the best of all possible worlds.

We have seen so far how Leibniz makes use of the main traditional proofs for the existence of God: but instead of accepting the one or the other uncritically, he tries to improve them according to conviction “that almost all the means which have been employed to prove the existence of God are good, and might serve if they were improved.” (*New Essays*, 1704).

By his theory of a pre-established harmony of the universe he pretends to give the last possible improvement and perfection of those proofs. The key concept to understand this, at first sight, somewhat artificial theory is that of spontaneity: Every simple substance or Monad exists spontaneously and is therefore not being influenced directly by any other being. Every Monad is a world in miniature, so to speak, and as such a microcosmic mirror of the macrocosm. It must, therefore, derive this outstanding qualification from an original cause, which is the same for all Monads; and this Monad of Monads must necessarily be of infinite wisdom and highest power, for without omniscience and omnipotence such a universal harmony would be impossible. Leibniz [proudly expresses the conviction that this proof from the pre-established harmony of the universe meets all requirements for a real proof and does, moreover, not violate the principles of natural science; it is, on the contrary, based on them, especially on the principle of motion. (With this he refers undoubtedly to Aristotle's thesis of God as the one and only immovable mover of everything.)

The theory of the pre-established harmony states that every single Monad, every substance, all beings are once and for all harmoniously interrelated. This unity in plurality is the characteristic of the pre-established harmony of the universe. It describes on the one hand the world as the universal realm of meaningful processes, on the other hand it defines the world as the indefinite and infinite explication of the absolute unity which is identical with the Being of every thing being, with Being as such. Leibniz is convinced (see - *Theodicy* Introd., § 44) that it needs no religious belief in order to become aware of a unique principle of perfect wisdom and goodness; reason could prove such a principle sufficiently.

Let us now see, in the second part of this paper, how Kant deals with the problem of God's existence and whether and to what extent according to him, reason meets this challenge.

Because of the time limit we cannot deal with this problem in the writings of the "pre-critical" Kant meaning his position before the *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781). But it should be mentioned that even at that time Kant utters serious doubts about the reliability of the *a priori* proofs, and he rejects the ontological argument very strictly. The cosmological argument is also rejected, whereas he seems to be in favour of the physiological and the teleological arguments. What is most important, however, is his restriction of the principle of sufficient reason to contingent, worldly things, thus defining the absolute or necessary Being or God as a limiting concept for all human reasoning.

We now turn to the *Critique of Pure Reason*, especially to its 3rd part, The Transcendental Dialectic, book 2, wherein Kant discussed and criticises the traditional proofs for the existence of God. The basic idea can easily be grasped by distinguishing between the constitutive and the regulative use of concepts, i.e., the distinction between the application of a concept to things as they appear to us in space and time on the one hand and its application to things as such or—as in the case of an extra-mundane Being—to the idea of God. Concepts can only be applied legitimately in the constitutive sense to appearance (phenomena). Applying a concept constitutively to an extra-mundane Being would make God an object of sense-experience, and this would obviously mean to neglect the limits of all possible human knowledge:

"Notwithstanding this urgent want of reason to presuppose something, as a foundation for the complete determination of the concepts of the understanding, reason nevertheless becomes too soon aware of the purely ideal and fictitious character of such a supposition to allow itself to be persuaded by it alone to admit a mere creation of thought as a real being unless it were forced by something else to seek for some rest in its regressus from the conditioned, which is given, to the unconditioned which though in itself and according to its mere concept not given as real, can alone complete the series of conditions followed up to their causes." (A 583 f./B 611 f.)

(Quotations from *Critique of Pure Reason*: A = 1st ed., 1781; B = 2nd ed., 1787.)

Whence the desire for proving the existence of a supreme Being by rational arguments.

After having criticised the traditional proofs in sections 3 to 6 of this chapter, Kant gives his "Criticism of all theology based on speculative principles of reason" in section 7. According to him all

the so-called proofs for the existence of God may be reduced to two basic methods: the *a priori* and the *a posteriori*, meaning that one either deduces from the concept of a most real Being the existence of such a Being or one induces from the necessary existence of something a certain concept we constitute of it.

In criticising the ontological argument Kant agrees with Leibniz: The mere thought of a most perfect and most real Being does not imply its real existence; for "existence is not a real property of a thing or a concept of something that can be added to the concept of a thing. It is merely the admission of a thing or of certain determinations in it." (A 598/B 626). Therefore the proposition "God exists" is an analytical judgment and thus a mere tautology. In the following quotation Kant employs almost Leibniz' terminology when commenting on the fallacious presuppositions of the ontological proof:

"A concept is always possible, if it is not self-contradictory. This is the logical characteristic of possibility, and by it the object of the concept is distinguished from the *nihil negativum*. But it may, nevertheless, be an empty concept, unless the objective reality of the synthesis, by which the concept is generated, has been distinctly shown. This, however,...must always rest on principles of analysis (this principle of contradiction). This is a warning against inferring at once from the possibility of concepts (logical) the possibility of things (real)." (Footnote to A 596/B 624.)

Kant's version of the cosmological argument runs as follows:

"If there exists anything, there must exist an absolutely necessary Being also. Now I, at least, exist. Therefore there exists an absolutely necessary Being." (A 604/B 632).

This conclusion from the effect to the cause, from the conditioned to the conditioning, from the creature to the creator is only valid within the realm of appearances but not for the realm of things as such where there is no sense-experience as the necessary condition for the realisation of concepts.

"The proof then proceeds as follows: The necessary being can be determined in one way only, that this, by one only of all possible opposite predicates! It must therefore be determined completely by its own concept. Now there is only one concept of a thing possible, which *a priori* completely determines it,

namely that of the *ens realissimum*. It follows, therefore, that the concept of the *ens realissimum* is the only one by which a necessary Being can be thought and therefore it is concluded that a highest Being exists by necessity." (A 605 f /B 633 f.)

And here we see, as Kant convincingly points out, that the nucleus of the cosmological argument, is again the ontological argument which should be supported by the cosmological one, an undertaking which for reasons mentioned above proved itself a failure. Kant comments on such speculative undertakings thus :

"It may be allowable to *admit* the existence of a Being entirely sufficient to serve as the cause of all possible effects simply in order to assist reason in its search for unity of causes. But to go so far as to say that *such a being exists necessarily*, is no longer the modest language of an admissible hypothesis, but the bold assurance of apodictic certainty; for the knowledge of that which is absolutely necessary must itself possess absolute necessity." (A 612/B 640).

These proofs must necessarily fail because "a regulative principle has been changed into a constitutive principle, which substitution becomes evident at once because, as soon as I consider that highest Being, which with regard to the world was absolutely necessary ... that necessity cannot be conceived and can therefore have existed in my reason as a formal condition of thought only and not as a material and substantial condition of existence." (A 620 B 648)

But why are we always trapped by those fallacies? Because our desire for knowledge (and this is a natural qua essential constitution of our mind) makes us always ask from the conditioned to the conditioning, upto the first and final unconditioned. Thus we are always tempted to ignore the limits of our understanding and instead of using the categories or basic concepts of our understanding, immanently, i.e., for the knowledge of objects in space and time, to misuse them in applying them to transcendent things, i.e., things in themselves which, as such, cannot become objects of our knowledge.

If, therefore, it is not possible to proceed from *any* given object or *any* object of our senses to a transcendent supreme Being, then the question might arise whether this would perhaps be possible on the basis of a particular observation or experience. This is the supposition of the physico-logical or teleological argument which, although according to Kant, is the oldest, most distinct and most adequate to human reason, is just as little a strict proof as the ontological and cosmological arguments.

Thus Kant comes to the conclusion that a speculative-theoretical proof of God's existence is impossible, and by speculative he means a theoretical knowledge "if it relates to an object, or such concepts of an object, which we can never reach in any experience. It is opposed to our knowledge of nature, which relates to no other objects or predicates of them except those that can be given in a possible experience." (A 634 f./B 662 f.). Such a proof is impossible because what is to be postulated as a regulative principle of reason only, is mistakenly hypostasised as a constitutive principle of our knowledge.

If thus, a scientific, rational or speculative theology is not possible, it is nevertheless possible and legitimate as branch of a metaphysics which realises itself as "science of the limitations of all human understanding." In the *Critique of Pure Reason* Kant only shows that the existence of a supreme Being is not inconsistent with the principles of our knowledge and that it is therefore possible; the reality and necessity of such a Being, however, can only be proved by practical reasoning, and that means definitely not along the lines of any scientific procedure.

Concluding this part of the Transcendental Dialectic, Kant writes:

"...the supreme Being remains, no doubt, an ideal only but an ideal without a flaw, a concept which finishes and crowns the whole of human knowledge, and the objective reality of which, though it cannot be proved, can just as little be disproved in that way." (A 641/B 669)

It would need another lecture to deal with Kant's proof of God's existence in his *Critique of Practical Reason*, a train of thought which is not based on reason and experience but on morality and religious belief.

Summarising the positions of Leibniz and Kant concerning speculative theology, we may state the following: Leibniz rejects the traditional proofs for the existence of God because they are lacking in logical stringency. He pretends to substitute all of them with his thesis of a pre-established harmony of all beings. But one should ask whether he himself really considers this proof a strict demonstration. According to the statements we have quoted and so many others, this seems to be the case. But still, considering the fact that a basic principle of Leibniz' thinking is that of *analogia entis*, i.e., of a universal affinity of everything being in relation to a unique and common origin, and if we furthermore consider

that, according to Leibniz, the ontical distinction of a being lies in its specific way of perception, then we may be permitted to conclude that man thinks and imagines the supreme Being according to his particular way of perception, namely apperception, i.e., analogously to his own privileged state of Being by means of the ways of negation and eminence (*via negationis* and *via eminentiae*). Thus Leibniz' proof from the pre-established harmony is not really a demonstration but—to quote from Hegel's first lecture on the proofs for God's existence—the rational explanation of the “thinking elevation of the mind towards God”; since for Leibniz it is uncontestably certain that “no creature, however privileged, is capable of an infinite...perception or comprehension.” (Letter to Des Bosses, 7.11. 1710.)

Refraining from investigating Kant's criticism of all speculative theology in detail and with regard to its logical stringency, we may call it his special merit to have pointed out the impossibility of a rational-discursive proof of the infinite out of the finiteness of worldly beings, including man, and to have transferred this whole problem in its complexity to the realm of practical reasoning for which the idea of God becomes the perennial core of thinking and acting. Thus the concept of an un-conditioned necessary Being is for him the “most unavoidable and yet the most inaccessible one”, whose existence I may think of or even be essentially compelled to think of but cannot be proved by any means or methods of theoretical reasoning, because it cannot be verified or falsified by any sense-experience. Therefore the concept of such a supreme Being will always remain an empty concept, i.e., it can never be made an object of rational knowledge (*Reflexion* No. 6282).

I would like to end this paper with another quotation from Hegel who stated, when concluding his comments on the ontological argument in his *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* (1831) :

“We have to consider the idea from a purely speculative point of view and to justify it against the understanding...which revolts against all contents of religion in general. This content is called mystery, because it is hidden from the understanding, for (the understanding) never reaches that process which is the unity and unification (of the subjective and the objective) : thus everything speculative is a mystery to the understanding”,

and as such, as we may add, an everlasting challenge to the understanding but never — and this conviction Leibniz and Kant have in common — an object which can be known for certain by means of sense-experience and rational-discursive thinking.

P. K. Sundaram

AKHAṆḌĀRTHA

In Advaita, the experience (*anubhūti*) is not different from one who experiences (*anubhavitr*). Hence, this *anubhūti* is infinite as there is nothing that is different from it or over and above this. This can be shown as follows: If *anubhūti* is the very nature of one who has that, then both are the same. If different, the so-called experiencer will be not-self (*anātman*) and hence will no more be the experiencer.¹ Or, Experience itself, for the reason of this infinitude, is the supreme and that which is infinite is also bliss. The scripture has declared that only the *Bhūmā* can be bliss, not the finite. It follows that Reality is Existence, Consciousness and Bliss.

It is argued by some that the expressions, *vijñāna* and *ānanda*, in the scripture are non-synonymous; that they have their own senses like the words, 'pot' and 'cloth'. Or else, the word, *ānanda*, must be taken in the secondary sense of "absence of pain", if the impartite sense tenaciously is clung to. But certain non-synonymous words can have impartite sense as in the case of the words "difference:" and 'that which is different' (*bheda* and *bhedin*). In these words there is no such distinction as in the case of 'pot' and 'cloth', though they are non-synonymous. In fact such is the view held by the *svārūpabheda-vādins*. If it were contended that on the *svārūpabheda-vādin's* view the words "pot" and "different" are synonymous, it cannot be so because we find expressions not merely as "pot is different" but also "cloth is different" which clearly show that "pot and cloth cannot both be synonymous with "different". Otherwise, by the same reckoning, "pot" will be synonymous with "cloth" both being synonymous with "different".

Nor, on the contrary, can it be said, as the *Dharmabhedavādin* does, that difference is not constitutive of the object but is only attributive of its locus and as such different from it. For, in the expression "difference is different" (*bhedobhinnaḥ*) the two words cannot be said to be non-synonymous. Otherwise there will be infinite regress, difference having difference and so on.

For the same reason, the doctrine that it is both synonymous and non-synonymous also stands refuted. As the fear of infinite regress haunts the difference for difference, there can be no real difference either, between difference on the one hand and non-difference on the other (*i. e.*, between difference and its substrate).²

If it were contended that the term "non-difference" is negative in its intent as it refers to negation of difference and that, therefore, the above example of difference and non-difference will not be appropriate in the case of *viññāna* and *ānanda* which are positive, it need not be the rule that non-difference (*abheda*) is always with regard to removal of the notion of difference. In ordinary usage, it refers to two positive attributes. If by the expression "difference", a difference in the pot, for instance, is first mentioned and by the expression "non-difference" this difference is rejected, then why these two expressions 'difference' and "non-difference"? The one word 'pot' will do, not "difference and non-difference". And hence, 'pot' and "non-difference" will be synonymous, as difference is denied in pot. And pot is pot. If 'non-difference' is different from 'pot', it cannot be the attribute. And also there will be infinite regress.

There it is seen that the expressions 'pot', 'different' and 'non-different' are non-synonymous; yet have the same meaning. Thus there is *ākhaṇḍārtha*.

If it were said that this is so not in all cases but only peculiarly in the case of expressions "difference", "non-difference" and the substrates that have them as attributes, other instances also could be pointed out. For example let us take the sentence: "The sun is most luminous" (*prakṛṣṭaḥ prakṛṣṭaḥ savitā*). Here the attribute is one with object. The superlative degree refers to only one individual. Here it is identity of the object that is conveyed by the sentence; not the relation of luminosity to the sun.³ This sentence itself is in answer to the question: "Which is the sun?" So the self-identity of the sun is meant to be given.

Indeed, luminosity and excellence are not different in the sun. Otherwise it will be excellent but may not be luminous. If it were

said that sun is not merely brightest but is also hot, even that it is not the meaning of the word "excellence" because we find expressions such as "the moon is the brightest". Yet words "excellent" and "luminosity" are not synonymous because we find usage such as "exceedingly dark" (*prakṛṣṭam tamaḥ*).⁴ Whenever the word 'exceedingly' has been used along with another word like 'luminosity' or 'darkness' it acquires that non-difference of sense without being synonymous, as in the case of *bheda* and one that has the *bheda*. Try as one may, that which is not luminous viz., "excellence" cannot be the attribute of luminosity so much so that the words '*prakṛṣṭa*', '*prakāśa*' and '*prakṛṣṭa-prakāśasavitā*' become non-different in meaning though they are non-synonymous. Hence here at least there is an instance where the words, though non-synonymous, carry the identity of sense. Therefore the words '*jñānam*' or (*viññānam*) and "*ānandam*" also can similarly convey an impartite sense though non-synonymous.⁵

Apart from this instance which proves that there is no rule that non-synonymous words should always convey only partite sense, there is evidence from scripture which cannot be contradicted.⁶ The texts like: *prajñāna-ghana eva* tells us that Reality is of one essence or *ekarasa*. Moreover, several terms are used to indicate Brahman in the scripture and if these terms are different in their sense because of being non-synonymous, Brahman would have to be taken as manifold.

And the term, *ānanda*, cannot be taken to mean "absence of pain" because that is not the primary sense. When primary sense is intelligible, there is no need for straining the sense. And, absence of pain is not derived by the etymology of the word *ānanda*, which connotes something that is positive. Absence of pain, however, is indicated directly by other explicit texts like: *na liṅyate lokaduḥkkena bāhyaḥ*. It does not expect the expression, *ānanda*, to convey it. And more indirectly the expression, *anantam*, conveys the absence of pain by excluding all sense of limitation and finitude either by magnitude or space or time. Finally, if we accept even the non-primary sense of the word *ānanda*, it will not give us impartite sense but only sense of difference. Hence the argument that in order to get the impartite sense, the word *ānandam*, should be interpreted by the non-primary sense is profitless.

If it were suggested: the term "*satyam*" and "*jñānam*" for instance, remove the contrary notions of unreality and inertness and thus this removal is not of real entities but only of the superimposed notions; therefore there is no conflict with the impartite

sense of these words ; and the word *ānandam* also, in a similar fashion, removes the notion of pain and yields an impartite sense, this is not repugnant to the Advaitin, if removal of a contrary notion by a word is the determinant of a unitive sense.

The primary sense of the word *ānandam* is determined to be Brahman because it is used so as to convey such a sense of Brahman as in "*ānando brahmeti vyajānāt*", "*ānandādध्येवा क्खलु इमāni bhūtāni jāyante*" etc. This is also further confirmed by the examination of the contextual statements. For instance, in the text "*tasmād vā etasmād ātmana ākāśas-sambhūtaḥ*" the expression "*tat*" in (*tasmāt*) signifies Brahman found in the text "*brahmavid āpnoti param*", and as of the nature of inner self in "*yo vedanīhitam guhāyām*" by "*etasmā*" (in "*etasmād ātmanaḥ*" etc). Using the term "Self" (*Ātman*) for the same Brahman, showing for this Brahman-Ātman the causality for the world ; in the end identifying *ānandam* and Brahman by the text directly "*ānandam brahmeti vyajānāt*" shows that such a Brahmanānda is the cause of the world by the text "*ānandādध्येवा क्खलु इमāni bhūtāni jāyante*", thereby establishing the oneness of references in Brahman-Ātman-Ānandam. Any difference seen here due to illusions is only instrumental to a fall from truth. The non-difference here is to be conceived either on the analogy of pot-ether and hall-ether and all-pervasive ether or of the sun and its reflection in water, which instances are not those of substance and attribute, but only of identity. Therefore, it is clear that even the primary sense of the word, *ānandam* yields only impartite sense. Hence there is no need to interpret it by non-primary sense for this purpose.

NOTES

- (1) The inference that seeks to prove that *anubhūti* is different from the *anubhavitṛ* is as follows :

anubhūtiḥ ātmano bhinnā ;

tadāśritatvāt, ajñānavat.

When *anubhūti* is described as constitutive of the experience it is an explanation of the *tvam-padārtha*. When it is described as one with the Supreme, it is an explanation of the *tat-padārtha*.

- (2) as in "*bhinno-bhinnaśca ghaṭaḥ*".
 (3) *prakāśa-vyaktireva eka lakṣyate*, *J. V. I. S.* p. 408.
 (4) *pravṛtti-nimitta-bhedāt*, *J. V. I. S.* p. 409.
 (5) It will be interesting to mention here the theory of descriptions which Russell developed to solve some linguistic muddles: According to this theory when a statement containing a phrase of the form "the so-and-so" is rightly analysed the phrase "the so-and-so" disappears. For example, take the statement "Scott was the author of *Waverley*". The theory of descriptions would

interpret this statement as "One and only man wrote *Waverley* and that man was Scott." This can be more fully expressed as "There is an entity *C* such that the statement "X wrote *Waverley*" is true if *X* is *C* and false otherwise ; moreover *C* is Scott."

According to this theory "existence" can be asserted of descriptions. We can say that "the author of *Waverley* exists" but to say "Scott exists" it bad syntax.

Similarly we can also, say "Brahman exists is bad syntax" We can only say according to the theory of descriptions, that *satyam jñānam, a nantam* exists. That is to say : There is an entity (such that "*Satyam, jñānam anantam* which are X) is true if X is C.

Again, the expression "*satyam jñānam anantam*" refers to only one individual reality like the expression : "The present President of the United States" where the terms are non-synonymous and yet convey by description one and only individual.

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