



# Prabuddha Bharata

or

## Awakened India

VOL 93 NOVEMBER 1988





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# Prabuddha Bharata

Started by Swami Vivekananda in 1896

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# Prabuddha Bharata

VOL. 93

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No. 11

Arise! Awake! And stop not till the Goal is reached.

## VISIONS OF DIVINITY

### *The Man of Realisation*

Men of realisation have their food without anxiety or humiliation by begging, and their drink from the water of rivers ; they live freely and independently, and sleep without fear in cremation grounds or forests ; their clothing may be the quarters themselves, which need no washing and drying, or any bark etc ; the earth is their bed ; they roam in the avenue of the Vedanta ; while their pastime is in the Supreme Brahman.

The knower of the Atman, who wears no outward mark and is unattached to external things, rests on this body without identification, and experiences all sorts of sense-objects as they come, through others' wish, like a child.

Established in the ethereal plane of Absolute Knowledge, he wanders in the world, sometimes like a madman, sometimes like a child and at other times like a ghou, having no other clothes on his person except the quarters, or sometimes wearing clothes, or perhaps skins at other times.

The sage, living alone, enjoys the sense-objects, being the very embodiment of desirelessness—always satisfied with his own Self, and himself present as the All.

Sometimes a fool, sometimes a sage, sometimes possessed of regal splendour ; sometimes wandering, sometimes behaving like a motionless python, sometimes wearing a benignant expression ; sometimes honoured, sometimes insulted, sometimes unknown—thus lives the man of realisation, ever happy with Supreme Bliss.

Though without riches, yet ever content ; though helpless, yet very powerful ; though not enjoying the sense-objects, yet eternally satisfied ; though without an exemplar, yet looking upon all with an eye of equality.

Though doing, yet inactive ; though experiencing fruits of past actions, yet untouched by them ; though possessed of a body, yet without identification with it ; though limited, yet omnipresent is he.

*Viveka-Chudamani*

(538-544)

Shri Shankaracharya

## ABOUT THIS ISSUE

This month's EDITORIAL is on the epoch-making contribution of Shri Shankaracharya for the re-establishment of the Vedic religion. This year, 1988, happens to be the 1200 Birth Anniversary of the great epoch-maker.

THE SELF BEHIND THE BRAIN is based on a talk delivered by Swami Ranganathananda at the 37th Annual Conference of the Neurological Society of India, held at Hyderabad in December 1987.

THE YOGA OF DEVOTION is an impressive talk on the subject by Rabbi Asher Block of New York, U.S.A.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA: SYMBOLS AND IMAGES IN POETRY is a scholarly disser-

tation on the subject by Smt. Manjula of the Ramakrishna Ashrama, Guntur.

RABINDRANATH TAGORE: NATIONALISM AND INTERNATIONALISM is by Dr. Anil Baran Roy, Head and Professor, Dept. of Political Science, Burdwan University, West Bengal, and Smt. Mamata Roy.

THE ORIGIN AND HISTORY OF NAVYA NYAYA is by Dr. Sabita Mishra, a D. Litt. of the Calcutta University.

INDIAN HOLISTIC EXPERIENCE AND ANALYTICAL RATIONALITY is the concluding part of the paper presented by Dr. Raja Ramanna at the MIND AND NATURE CONGRESS held at Hannover, West Germany, in May 1988.

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## SHANKARA : THE EPOCH-MAKER

(EDITORIAL)

In the austere height of the transcendent Himalayas springs the Ganga that brings its holy water to the parched planes of India and gives it a seasonal rebirth. There above the icy regions of Badari, Vyasa composed the Mahabharata, and the Brahma Sutras. The highest Indian philosophy was born in the high Himalayas.<sup>1</sup> There at the Himalayan Badari the great master of Advaita Vedanta, Gaudapada, blessed Shankara, his disciple's disciple, and divined that he would enlighten the world with his immortal commentaries on Vyasa's aphorisms on Brahman or the Brahma Sutras. The blessings were prophetic. Shankara's own teacher, Govindapada, saw

that the young boy, the Incarnation of Shiva-Shankara, was destined to revive the Vedic religion, partially eclipsed and even threatened by heretic faiths like Jainism and Buddhism which denied God, or the Vedic Mimamsakas who made elaborate rituals for worldly gains, the summum bonum of religion, where God was felt unnecessary.

In this arid world of godless asceticism and selfish rituals, Shankara brought the bliss of knowledge and Self-realisation, the vision of Jivanmukti or liberation in life, the glory of discrimination and renunciation, and above all a spirit of intense devotion to gods and goddesses for whom the masses had lost credibility in the doldrums of religious confusion and competitive miracle-mongering.

The great Greek culture died once for

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1. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* (Mayavati Memorial Edn.) Advaita Ashrama, Cal-14, Vol. V, p. 306.



all because its philosophers refused to come down for the masses leaving their ivory tower. India's culture and religion were never left desolate for good, as it experienced periodical palingenesis when seers, prophets and epoch-makers like the great Shankaracharya revived the power and glory of the Eternal religion of the Vedas.

1200 years have passed since Shankara appeared like an intellectual colossus on the Indian scene and unified the holy land under the banner of the religion of Advaita Vedanta. Even today his hymns are chanted in temples and homes, and his commentaries illumine seekers of knowledge in *maths* and monasteries. Even today when one walks up the Himalayan path to Badari from Joshi Math, one feels the living presence of the undying Shankara.

\* \* \* \*

Tradition has it that Shiva, the all-renouncing god of knowledge, occasionally incarnates himself to dispel the darkness of ignorance. In the *Kurma Purana* it is said, "Lord Shankara, the blue-necked one, out of boundless love for the welfare of the living beings, will incarnate himself. He will re-establish the Vedic religion as propounded in the *Shrutis* and *Smritis*." In the *Surya Purana* it is said, "Shankara is the Lord Sun for us. He will write suitable commentaries on Vyasa Sutras to spread the right knowledge of the Vedas." In the *Lalita Sahasranama Stotra*, it is mentioned that Acharya Shankara will incarnate with four disciples to revive the knowledge of the *Rig Veda*.

Unfortunately, the historic life of Shankara is shrouded in mystery. There is wide controversy about the date of his birth. While some scholars take it to be 788 A.D., a new group of scholars take it to be 509 B.C. Some scholars even try to make Shankara a fictitious person who has been held up by monks for furthering their own self-interest. One such scholar wrote,

"Their organisation has portrayed the character of Shankara in such a way as to extol the virtues of being a sannyasin".<sup>2</sup> Dozens of *Shankara Vijayas* or conquests of Shankara, have been written, mostly in Sanskrit, giving different dimensions of the great life. *Brihad Shankara Vijaya* by Vishnu Sharma, a class friend of Shankara, is well known. And *Prachina Shankara Vijaya* by Anandagiri, who is said to be a disciple of Shankara, is not available in print although its name is mentioned in other books, and the *Madhaviya Shankara Vijaya* is stated to be its abridged version.

\* \* \* \*

Right from the childhood Shankara himself was conscious of his destiny. He knew that he was an extraordinary genius. In the Brahma Sutras (3-32) he writes that persons appointed by the Lord do whatever has been ordained for them during the period assigned to them. Like Jnaneshwara and like Christ himself, Shankara, too, had a short life and lived only 32 years.

Shankara's devotion to personal gods and goddesses was spontaneous. Even as a child, Shankara got the vision of the Divine Mother. Instantly he composed the celebrated *Devi Bhujanga Stotra*. Similarly, at the age of seven, he composed the hymn known as *Kanakadhara* on the Divine Mother. Shankara knew the value of wealth. His *Kanakadhara Stotra* is dedicated to goddess Lakshmi, who is still worshipped as Kanakamba in a small village in Kerala, where Shankara first had her vision. The small boy's fame spread around, and the King Rajashekhara of Kerala came to see him and offered him royal gifts. Shankara answered, "Your Majesty, I thank you very sincerely for the gifts you so generously sent me. However, to a person of my stature

2. S. D. Kulkarni (Ed.). *Adi Shankara: The Saviour of Mankind*, BHISMA, Bombay-400 062, 1987, p. 81.

these are of no use. You have some duties towards the society. Consider the welfare of your subjects as your own. Show respect to the learned. This will satisfy me." He knew that he was a born ascetic destined to live the life of a homeless monk, wandering and spreading the message of divinity everywhere. Yet he had a deeply human heart. His love for his mother is well known. Before leaving the house he promised her, "Be assured, my beloved mother, when you die I shall perform your last rites." He kept his word. Many years later at Badari when Shankara heard the call of his dying mother he went to her, and taught her the four-fold paths—*Sadhana Chatushtaya*—to God-realisation. And when she breathed her last, Shankara performed the last rites, even against the traditions of monasticism. Mother was his god. And the truth promised to mother was more important to him than traditions. This devotion to mother was later on expressed in his immortal hymns on the Divine Mother, like *Saundarya-Lahari*, *Ananda-Lahari*, *Bhavani-Ashtakam* and others.

\* \* \* \*

Shankara's first meeting with his Guru is wonderful. When the eight year old boy with his friend Vishnu Sharma, entered the Ashrama of his Guru at Narmada, Shankara, the born poet of the highest order, in order to receive the master's grace, recited the first verse of *Swatma Nirupana*: "Neither mother nor father nor sons nor other relatives are of any help to get beatitude. The foot of my teacher placed on my head is the highest boon for this purpose." Deeply impressed, the enlightened Guru asked, "Who are you standing there?" Shankara at once burst out in the most brilliant incantation he had ever uttered, *Nirvana Shatakam*: "I am neither mind nor intellect. I am neither ego nor the mind stuff. I am neither the ears nor the tongue, neither the nose nor the eyes. I am

neither the sky nor the earth, nor fire, nor wind. I am Shiva, the eternal consciousness and eternal bliss." Overwhelmed, the Guru accepted the Shiva-like disciple.

It is on the banks of the Narmada that Shankara composed his celebrated *Narmada Ashtakam*, *Pratah Smarana*, *Sadhana-Panchaka* and the *Yati Panchaka*. The day he was offered sannyasa, Shankara instantly felt the charm of this life, and felt the bliss of Atman in solitude (*Ekante Sukham Asyatam*). It is on the banks of the Narmada that he composed his masterly composition *Viveka Chudamani* (The Crest Jewel of Discrimination), the brilliant epic of 581 verses, where the first verse begins with an obeisance to his Guru, Govindapada.

In spite of his capacity to live on the non-dual plane, Shankara was an extremely devoted disciple of his master. "There cannot be any feeling of oneness when one remains at the feet of the master (*Na Advaitam Guruna Saha*)," he said. Later on he, the Shiva-Guru himself, deeply touched by the devotion, brought a transfigured life to his ardent disciples like Padmapada and Totaka.

It was Govindapada who took Shankara to his own Guru, Gaudapada at Badari Ashrama. When Shankara heard the *Karikas* (explanatory verses), explaining the doctrines of the *Mandukya Upanishad* from the mouth of the great Gaudapada, he decided to write a commentary on this. Later, he wrote the great commentary, a boon to the treasure of Advaita literature.

When they returned to Narmada, Govindapada reminded him that the time for the composition of his commentaries on the Vyasa Sutras, the Upanishads, the Bhagavad Gita, has come. He must proceed to Benares. Shankara felt that the epoch-making teacher in him was already awakened. Through the Vindhya mountains he made a long journey from Narmada to Benares along with his friend, Vishnu



Sharma. He was inspired and felt capable of accomplishing the great mission of his life. Wherever he would halt for rest, he would expound Vedanta to the people in their own language. At each discourse he would compose a new verse and explain it to the audience. These verses crystallised into *Shata Shloki*, a book of hundred verses. During this journey his Advaitic vision became more and more clear. In the *Patanjali Vijaya* this deepening mood of Advaita experience has been recreated. He was going through the forests, crossing a river and seeing the cities, mountains and villages, and meeting different types of people on the way. "He always realised that all this is a variegated show or a piece of jugglery presented by a deft juggler, the Brahman."<sup>3</sup>

Highest knowledge of the SELF would come out like tongues of fire from his lips. Seeing the young man Udanka who was trying to kill himself, Shankara brought him back to life and gave the message of the SELF in a single verse (*Ekashloki*) of four lines. When the great ritualist Mandana Mishra was defeated by him and became his disciple, Shankara gave him the principles of the new life in versified composition known as *Tattvopadesha*. Seeing the presence of Lord Nrisimha in his disciple Padmapada, Shankara instantly composed the *Lakshmi-Nrisimha Pancha Ratnam*.

\* \* \* \*

At Benares, Shankara now composed the great commentaries on the *Prasthanatraya*—the Brahma Sutras, the Upanishads and the Gita. The holy city of Shiva brought conflagration to the fire of knowledge in him. It brought equally a flood of devotion in his devotional mind. There he composed his celebrated hymns on Lord Vishwanatha, Annapurna, Ganga, Shiva, and

others. The writing of commentaries over, the incipient epoch-maker slowly felt the emergence of the epochal power in him. He now began to expound his own interpretation of Advaita Vedanta to the well-known scholars of this *Jnana-Pitha*, the seat of knowledge that is Benares. Pundits and philosophers came to meet this young boy of sixteen, expounding Advaita with a razor-sharp intellect, and a mystic intuition of the highest order. It is said that Vyasa himself in the guise of an old brahmin, came to testify his knowledge, and asked him questions on how the souls depart from their old bodies and where do they go. The debate continued for days. Finally Shankara felt the presence of a superior power before him and asked for his blessings.

In the holy city of Shiva, many saw Shiva Himself in the awe-inspiring youth, aged with the wisdom of all the ages. Probably such veneration inspired verses composed later in his praise, *Namami bhagavatpadam, Shankaram Lokashankaram*, (I bow down to Thee, Lord Shankara, who is Lord Shiva Himself incarnate for the welfare of humanity).

When his guru passed away, Shankara felt the master's mantle descending on him, and got inspired to move far and wide for the spiritual conquest in order to hold high the banner of the Vedic religion. And thus began the greatest chapter in Shankara's life—the period of Shankara-Digvijayam.

With a prophet's foresight Shankara now clearly saw the obstacles and the responsibilities before him. He must overcome the resistance of the Mimamsaka-ritualists, and convert the barons and kings following heretic faiths. With a prophet's compassion he felt he must sacrifice every moment of his life for helping man come out of the bondage of ignorance. With the vision of a champion of the Vedic religion, he also felt it was his duty to go down to the masses, and lift them up by his superhuman purity, knowledge and devotion. The old

3. Ibid., p. 123.

shrines and temples of India lay in ruins, in utter neglect in the heyday of godless nihilism, and equally godless rituals. The pilgrimages were ignored or neglected. He must revive them all.

With a heaven-sent dynamism he now geared himself up for this epoch-making task of a continental peregrination. From Himalayas and Kashmir he now moved to far South. From the Western Dwaraka to Eastern Puri, he now began to move like a meteor, not once but time and again. Conquest followed conquests. His meeting with the dying Kumarila Bhatta, the ritualist Prabhakara, his historic debate with the greatest Mimamsaka-ritualist Mandana Mishra who later on surrendered to Shankara as his disciple Sureshwara, his reinstallation of the Badari temple, his meeting with the Tantric Kapalikas at Shrishailam in the South—all have become legends today, which inspire deepest veneration for this great spiritual hero of India. "Our heroes must become spiritual," said Vivekananda. He had Shankara in his vision.

\* \* \* \*

The Brahmin, the man who has realised Brahman, is the ideal of humanity in India. And Shankara upheld this highest glorification of saints in the beginning of his commentary on the Gita where he says that the reason of Krishna's advent was for the preservation of Brahminhood.

In the commentary of the Vedanta-Sutras, Shankara held that "the non-brahmin castes will not attain to a supreme knowledge of Brahman".<sup>4</sup> Also in the same commentary Shankara applied the old logic of forbidding Vedic rituals to the Shudras. Probably he was treading the path of giving the right knowledge to the right kind of person, an *adhikari* or a recipient who is fit physically, morally and intellectually to receive and digest such a high philosophy as the Advaita.

4. C. W. Vol. IV, p. 117.

Probably it was necessary in an age of hideous Tantric rites. Like all true epoch-makers in India, Shankara was not destructive. He was one of those "great caste-makers", as Vivekananda said, who maintained the tradition of castes in order to provide scope to temperamental genius of individuals. Only when caste was accepted on hereditary basis, privileges cropped up and exploitation began. But, Vivekananda regretted, "for fear of the Tantras, for fear of the mob, in his attempt to cure a boil, he amputated the very arm itself".<sup>5</sup> Buddha opened the door of Nirvana for all, even for the women, the low castes like Upali, the barber, and the fallen ones like Amrapali. And for the first five hundred years after Buddha, India saw through the tremendous release of spiritual energies of countless individuals, a flowering of art, culture, education and religion. Shankara himself made of common men like Totakacharya, realised souls of high order. But the injunction laid by him, later on crystallised, giving primacy in religious matters only to hereditary Brahmins, keeping the vast mass away from the life-giving source of Advaita philosophy which teaches every man that he is Shiva Himself—the Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute.

Shankara's encounter with the Chandala in the lanes of Benares, is worth mentioning here. His hatred of the externally dirty man, and his attempt to shy away from this realised soul, resulted in a torrent of words of Knowledge—that to a knower of Atman there cannot be any feeling of separation, or superiority. Disillusioned, Shankara begged apology for his mistake, and immortalised this experience in the *Manisha Panchaka*, wherein he admitted, "One who has realised his soul, he is my guru whether he is a chandala or a twice-born man. That is the way I look at it."

\* \* \* \*

5. Ibid., Vol. VI, p. 227.



With deep respect Swami Vivekananda said, "The greatest teacher of the Vedanta philosophy was Shankaracharya. By solid reasoning he extracted from the Vedas the truths of Vedanta, and on them built up the wonderful system of Jnana that is taught in his commentaries. He unified all the conflicting descriptions of Brahman, and showed that there is only one Infinite Reality. He showed too that as man can only travel slowly on the upward road, all the varied presentations are needed to suit his varying capacity."<sup>6</sup>

The vast Vedic scripture of the Brahma Sutras, the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Gita, and the Mahabharata, all supposed to be composed or compiled by Vyasa, the first teacher of Indian philosophy, is a veritable forest of ideas, philosophies, rituals and worships. The dualists found the philosophy of Dualism as the finest flower of this forest, while the non-dualists found the Advaita as its crowning glory. "In the Upanishads the arguments are often very obscure... He worked out, rationalised, and placed before men the wonderful coherent system of Advaita," wrote Vivekananda.<sup>7</sup> When later Buddhism, "in the medley of Aryans, Mongols, and aborigines which it created" degenerated into "hideous Vama-charas", it is "Shankara and his band of sannyasins" who drove this degenerated Buddhism out of India.<sup>8</sup>

The mind of common masses was being influenced by godless philosophies of Jainism and Buddhism. In fact Kumarila, the greatest of the Mimamsakas, took the adventurous step of entering into the secrets of Jaina doctrines, and later on nullify them all by Mimamsaka philosophy and Vedic rituals. The Mimamsakas like Prabhakara and Mandana Mishra showed the efficacy of Vedic rituals, and thus revived people's

faith in the Vedas. But these rituals of Karma-kanda mostly catered to the three mundane aspects of life, *Dharma* (law), *Artha* (wealth), and *Kama* (legitimate enjoyment of desires).

Shankara brought the fourth dimension of life, *Moksha* (Liberation or Self-Realisation), and, as Vivekananda said, "firmly re-established the Eternal Vedic religion, harmonising and balancing in due proportions *Dharma, Artha, Kama, and Moksha*."<sup>9</sup> The Mimamsakas said that work and rituals purify the mind. Shankara declared that "all works, good and bad, are against knowledge", as they increase ignorance "because they tend to increase Tamas and Rajas".<sup>10</sup>

Nevertheless Shankara respected lower forms of religion like "work" and "worship" enjoined in the Vedas, which slowly lead the individual to Advaita Vedanta, the crowning glory of the Vedas.<sup>11</sup> Only by worshipping the SELF can freedom be won. That is why, Shankara defined Bhakti or devotion as "intense search after my own reality".<sup>12</sup>

In the Brahma-Sutra-Bhashya he even justified image worship from the standpoint of Advaita.

"Here in this way does Brahman become the object of worship, because He, as Brahman, is superimposed on the Pratikas, just as Vishnu etc. are superimposed upon images etc."<sup>13</sup> Bhakti is the best way for common men to realise the SELF (*moksha karana samagryam bhaktireva gariyasi*), he said. To him the essence of the Gita (*sarabhuta*) was the 55th verse of the 11th Chapter, "My devotee, unattached to fruits of action, who has absolute faith in Me, and who has no enmity towards anyone, reaches Me, O Pandava." At Badari where

6. Ibid., Vol. VIII, p. 6.

7. Ibid., Vol. II, p. 139.

8. Ibid., Vol. IV, p. 326.

9. Ibid., Vol. V, p. 454.

10. Ibid., Vol. VII, p. 39.

11. Ibid., p. 53.

12. Ibid., p. 57.

13. Ibid., Vol. III, p. 61.



he rededicated the broken temple ruined by the later Buddhists, he composed the famous hymn *Shatpadi* in praise of Lord Narayana, wherein he said, "O Lord, even though on the highest plane there is no difference between you and I, yet on the wordly plane I hail from you and not you from me. The waves emanate from the ocean, and, not the ocean from the waves." The masses cannot live on philosophy alone. They need myths and rituals. That is why he upheld the greatness of Smriti in his commentary on the Vedanta-Sutras where he cites the authority of the Mahabharata. "Shankaracharya had caught the rhythm of the Vedas, the national cadence", said Vivekananda.<sup>14</sup>

Shankara upheld Advaita Vedanta as the highest and the most rational philosophy, in all his great commentaries. And for this purpose he did not even hesitate to force his arguments by "text-torturing". Even then, his were the "Great commentaries", Vivekananda said, and to his disciples he emphatically said, "It is Shankara whom you should follow."<sup>15</sup> Vivekananda says, that according to Shankara, "the universe as it appears, is real for all purposes for everyone in his present consciousness, but it vanishes when the consciousness assumes a higher form...in the same way as the idea of silver superimposed on a shell or that of a serpent on a rope, is true for the time being, and in effect, is dependent upon a particular condition of the mind."<sup>16</sup> According to him God is both the material and the efficient cause of this Universe, through Maya, or nescience, but not in reality. Here is the supreme importance of the theory of Maya, or nescience in the philosophy of Shankara. What remains in the highest state of consciousness is the One indivisible reality, Brahman, which is also Existence

Absolute, Knowledge Absolute and Bliss Absolute. "Brahman is that which we can never drive out by any power of mind or imagination," said Shankara.<sup>17</sup> And the ultimate realisation is unspeakable. Shankara called it "*Aparokshanubhuti*".

Shankaracharya's teachings show the influence of Buddhism. His disciples perverted his teachings, and carried it to such an extreme point that some of the later reformers were right in calling the Acharya's followers as "Crypto-Buddhists". In the Tantra, Shankara himself has been called a "Crypto-Buddhist", as his views "perfectly tally" with the views expressed in *Prajnaparamita*, the Buddhist Mahayana scripture.<sup>18</sup>

Today the latest discoveries of quantum physics like Schrodinger's canon or the phenomenon of the observer-created reality, approaches the *Vivartavada* (or the progressive manifestation by unreal superimposition) taught by Shankara.

\* \* \* \* \*

By the time Shankara finally left the world at the Himalayan Kedar, the victorious banner of Vedic religion was hoisted over India. Shankara organised this epoch-making victory of Vedic religion and especially the victory of Advaita Vedanta over other philosophies, by establishing four Math centres for disseminating his doctrine, in four corners of India, and placed his chief four monastic disciples as their heads. Sureshvaracharya (earlier Mandana Mishra) was placed in charge of the Math at Dwaraka, Totakacharya in charge of the Jyotir Math, a little below Badari, Padmapada in charge of the Govardhana Math at Puri, and Hastamalaka in charge of the Math at Sringeri. He had also organised the Indian monastic life in ten different categories, defining clearly their ideals and the nomenclatures, etc.

14. Ibid., Vol. VIII, p. 278.

15. Ibid., Vol. VI, p. 397.

16. Ibid., Vol. V, p. 264.

17. Ibid., Vol. VII, p. 47.

18. Ibid., Vol. VI, p. 211.



What the Shiva-Guru Shankara left behind is the eternal treasure of the Vedic religion. His great commentaries on the obscure Vedic lore are still "wonders of the modern world". Through his short life of 32 years Shankara had already brought back the "Indian world to its pristine purity".<sup>19</sup> Above all, the epoch-making teacher left behind, as Vivekananda saw it, "a renascent India...led by a new philosophical impulse organised by Shankara and his bands of Sannyasins".<sup>20</sup>

At the awe-inspiring Himalayan confluence of Rudra-prayag, the two rivers

Mandakini, springing from Kedar-Shiva's icy home and Alakananda coming out, as it were, from the holy precinct of Narayana temple at Badari meet with a thundering clash, and then flow down as the Bhagirathi, whose life-giving water the compassionate Bhagiratha had once brought to the planes in order to give a new life to the cursed and dead beings of India. The epoch-making Knowledge of Shankara which had its birth one day in the Himalayan heights of Badari, flowed in compassion for men in bondage more than thousand years before. It still flows and reminds us of Shankara's "Wondrous evangel of the Self"—"I am Shiva, the embodiment of Infinite Knowledge, and Infinite Bliss."

19. Ibid., Vol. III, p. 265.

20. Ibid., Vol. VI, p. 163.

## THE SELF BEHIND THE BRAIN

SWAMI RANGANATHANANDA

Making a distinction between mind and the physical basis of mind, the great neurologist Sir Charles Sherrington says (Introductory to the *Physical Basis of Mind*, edited by Peter Laslett, p. 1):

"Knowledge of the physical basis of mind is making great strides in these days. Knowledge of the brain is growing, and our theme is almost equivalent to the physiology of the brain. Mind, meaning by that thoughts, memory, feelings, reasoning, and so on, is difficult to bring into the class of physical things. Physiology, a natural science, tends to be silent about all outside the physical. And so the study of the physical basis of mind suffers from falling between two stools."

Wilder Penfield, after many experiments of verbal communications with patients undergoing brain surgery, came to the conclusion that there is a mind behind the

brain of man. In his introduction to Penfield's book: *The Mystery of Mind: A Critical Study of Consciousness and the Human Brain*, the Director of the Montreal Neurological Institute, William Feindel, says (pp. xxv-xxix):

"Today, thoughtful men continue to debate question. ... How is the brain related to mind? Every reader will know that loss of brain produces loss of mind. But, as Sir Charles Sherrington noted, 'Mind, meaning by that thoughts, memory, feelings, reasoning, and so on, is difficult to bring into a class of physical things.'"

Dr. Penfield's present analysis derives from his accumulation of direct observations on the human brain in conscious patients. In that important sense, it transcends significantly all earlier studies, either those of physiologists, who argued



from a basis of experimental animal findings or of those of neurologists, psychologists, or psychiatrists, whose views were related to interpretations of the external motor and emotional behaviour of patients with focal brain disorders. Many readers will recognise that the research findings summarised here by Dr. Penfield, are fundamental to our understanding of memory, learning, language and behaviour. As one of his final conclusions, Dr. Penfield supports the proposition that there is something that characterises mind as distinct from physical brain. Opening his book with a reference to his teacher, Sir Charles Sherrington, Dr. Penfield says (pp. 3-5):

"On retirement from the Chair of Physiology at Oxford in 1935, at the age of seventy-eight, he turned from animal experimentation to a scholarly and philosophical consideration of the brain and the mind of man. ...

"In the end, he could only say that 'We have to regard the relation of mind to brain as still not merely unsolved, but still devoid of a basis for its very beginning.'"

In June 1947, he wrote a foreword to his book: *The Integrative Action of the Nervous System*, which was then being republished in his honour by the Physiological Society. The last paragraph of his foreword expresses his conclusion of it all:

"That our being should consist of two fundamental elements offers, I suppose, no greater inherent improbability than that it should rest on one only. ...

"Lord Adrian, who shared the Nobel Prize with Sherrington, spoke as a neurophysiologist in 1966 when he said: 'As soon as we let ourselves contemplate our own place in the picture, we seem to be stepping outside of the boundaries of natural sciences.'

"I agree with him; nevertheless, we must step across that boundary from time to time, and there is no reason to assume that critical judgement does not go with us."

Dealing with the patient's reactions during brain surgery, Dr. Penfield says (Ibid., pp. 55-56):

"Consider the point of view of the patient when the surgeon's electrode, placed on the interpretative cortex, summons the replay of past experience. The stream of consciousness suddenly doubled for him. He is aware of what is going on in the operating room as well as the 'flashback' from the past. He can discuss with the surgeon the meaning of both streams.

"The patient's mind, which is considering the situation in such an aloof and critical manner, can only be something quite apart from neuronal reflex action. It is noteworthy that two streams of consciousness are flowing, the one driven by input from environment, the other by an electrode delivering sixty pulses per second to the cortex. The fact that there should be no confusion in the conscious state suggests that although the content of consciousness depends in large measure on neuronal activity, awareness itself does not. ...

"The mind of the patient was as independent of the reflex action as was the mind of the surgeon who listened and strove to understand. Thus, my argument favours independence of mind action. ...

"One may ask this question: Does the highest brain mechanism provide the mind with its energy, an energy in such a changed form that it no longer needs to be conducted along neuraxones? To ask such a question is, I fear, to run the risk of hollow laughter from the physicists. But nonetheless, this is my question, and the suggestion I feel myself compelled to make."

Dealing with what the mind does, and its independence of the brain, he says (Ibid., pp. 75-80):

"It is what we have learned to call the mind that seems to focus attention. The mind is aware of what is going on. The mind reasons and makes new decisions. It understands. It acts as though endowed



with an energy of its own. It can make decisions and put them into effect by calling upon various brain mechanisms. This, it seems, could only be brought about by expenditure of energy. ...

"During brain action, a neurophysiologist can surmise where the conduction of potentials is being carried out and its pattern. It is not so in the case of what we have come to call mind-action. And yet the mind seems to act independently of the brain in the same sense that a programmer acts independently of his computer, however much he may depend upon the action of that computer for certain purposes. ...

"For my own part, after years of striving to explain the mind on the basis of brain-action alone, I have come to the conclusion that it is simpler (and far easier to be logical), if one adopts the hypothesis that our being does consist of two fundamental elements. If that is true, it could still be true that energy required comes to the mind during waking hours through the highest brain mechanism.

"Because it seems to me certain that it will always be quite impossible to explain the mind on the basis of neuronal action within the brain, and because it seems to me that the mind develops and matures independently throughout an individual's life as though it were a continuing element, and because a computer (which the brain is) must be programmed and operated by an agency capable of independent understanding, I am forced to choose the proposition that our being is to be explained on the basis of two fundamental elements. This, to my mind, offers the greatest likelihood of leading us to the final understanding toward which so many stalwart scientists strive."

#### *Footprints of the Atman on Experience*

It is at this stake of thought that a modern scientist can appreciate the philo-

sophy of the *Kena Upanishad*, the name of which itself—*Kena*, by whom?—indicates a question which is the theme of its opening verse, and the subsequent verse points to the Atman of the nature of pure Consciousness, as the one source:

"By whom desired and directed does the mind function? By whom directed does the Prana (bioenergy) move forward in advance? By whom desired does the sense organ of speech utter speech, and which luminous energy directs the senses of eye and ear?"

The *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* thus defines the functions of the mind (1.5.3):

"... (They say), 'I was absent-minded, I did not see it; I was absent-minded, I did not hear it.' It is desire, resolve, doubt, faith, want of faith, steadiness, unsteadiness, shame, intelligence, and fear—all these are but the mind."

The *Chandogya Upanishad* declares that the mind is matter, but in its subtle aspect (6.5.1):

"The food that is eaten, becomes divided three-fold; the grossest part becomes waste product; the middle part becomes flesh (and other parts of the body including brain and nervous system), and the subtlest part becomes mind."

The main concern of the modern Science of Neurology is the physical and psychic health of man, and this forms an ever-expanding segment of modern Western medical science. This is perfectly legitimate and welcome. But neurologists cannot forget that, in its aspect as pure science, its research in the field of the brain and nervous system can also open the door to the truth about the very nature of man and his destiny, apart from all such clinical applications. It is this trend that we see in Sherrington, Penfield, Grey Walter, and such other neurologists. Here neurologist, the scientist, becomes neurologist, the philosopher, as some nuclear physicists have become, and



increasing numbers of scientists in other fields also are now becoming.

When the scientist's mind is free from the dogma of materialism—scientific mind and dogmatic mind are poles apart—he or she will get intimations of higher dimensions of reality while investigating material objects and the physical body. He will find that the highest reality has left its footprints on them. There are deeper and deeper layers of reality which is the aim of scientific research to reveal. In this context, it is good for our neurologists in India to approach this subject from the integral point of view of their own country's tradition, which looks upon science as a continuous pursuit of truth about nature and man, from the gross to the subtle, from the physical to the super-physical, but not to the super-natural. There is no super-natural in Indian thought since its concept of nature is vast enough to include all aspects of nature, man, and the divine. Accordingly, that truth has left its footprints on human experience at the lower levels, says Indian thought. Only free minds can trace these footprints and discover the truth to which they lead. In this connection, the following passage of the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* will be found to be significant (1.4.7):

“This (Universe) was then (before creation) undifferentiated. It is differentiated verily into name and form—it was called such and such, and was of such and such form. So, to this day, it is differentiated only into name and form—it is called such and such, and is of such and such form.

“This Atman (Self, or the nature of pure consciousness) has entered into these bodies up to the tip of the nails—as a razor may be put in its case, or as fire, which sustains the world, may be in its source. People do not see it.

“For, (viewed in its aspects) It is incomplete. When It does the function of living, It is called Prana (or bioenergy); when It

speaks, the organ of speech; when It sees, the eye. When It hears, the ear; and when It thinks, the mind. These are merely Its names according to functions.

“One, who concentrates one's attentions (only) on each of this totality of aspects, does not know, for it is incomplete, (being divided) from this totality by possessing a single characteristic. Research should concentrate on the Self alone, for all these are united in It.

“Of all these, the Self alone is to be sought after, for one knows all these through It, just as it is well known, one may search out and find (an animal) through its footprints.”

Commenting on this, Shankaracharya says:

“...this universe is spoken of as both differentiated and undifferentiated to indicate the identity of the Self and the not-Self. ...

“The truth of the Atman (or Self) is really beyond the scope of the word and concept 'Atman'. ...

“Just as, in the world, one may get a missing animal that is wanted back, by searching it through its footprints—'foot' here means the ground with the print of hoof-marks left by a cow etc.”

Concluding his book on *Space, Time, and Gravitation*, Sir Arthur Eddington also refers to the footprint left by man, as the knower or subject, on the world, which is the known or the object:

“The theory of relativity has passed in review the whole subject matter of physics. It has unified the great laws which, by the precision of their formulation and the exactness of their application, have won the proud place in human knowledge which physical science holds today. And yet, in regard to the nature of things, this knowledge is only an empty shell—a form of symbols. It is knowledge of structural form and not knowledge of content. All through the physical world runs that unknown content which must surely be the stuff of our consciousness. Here is a hint



of aspects deep within the world of physics and yet unattainable by the methods of physics. And, moreover, we have found that where science has progressed the farthest, the mind has but regained from nature that which the mind has put into nature. We have found a strange footprint on the shores of the unknown. We have devised profound theories, one after another, to account for its origin. At last, we have succeeded in reconstructing the creature that made the footprint. And lo: It is our own."

### *Training of the Mind to Realise the Atman*

The capacity to know objects is present in the nervous system of men and, in varying degrees, of all living things; on investigation especially of man, the Upanishads found that this capacity does not inhere in the nervous or sensory system, or even in the mind, but belongs to the principle of intelligence which is the Atman or Self, which is the eternal witness of all the body-mind processes which appear to be intelligent, but which are only reflections of the intelligence of the Atman. The Upanishads investigated the body-mind complex of man and found it to consist of various layers, beginning with the gross muscular system at the external end, and subtle and subtler layers internally, the first such subtle dimension being the nervous system and the next the psychic system. In the words of Shri Krishna in the *Gita* (3.42):

"The sense organs are superior (to the sense objects), they say. Superior to the senses is the mind, and superior to the mind is the Buddhi or reason. What is superior even to the Buddhi is He the Atman."

Introducing a similar set of two verses in the *Katha Upanishad*, Shankaracharya says (3.10-11):

"Now the (highest) state (of universality) to be attained (by man)—It is to be rea-

lised as one's Inner Self, by discriminating the various layers of personality, beginning with the gross layer constituted by one's sensory system, and followed by the comparatively subtle and subtler inner layers—to teach this the Upanishad begins the next two verses."

And he explains the word "para" i.e. superior or higher to mean *sukshma*, *mahantashcha*, *pratyagatmabhutashcha*—subtle, immense (in range and energy), and inward as the Self. The muscle is gross and forms the outermost; its energy is limited; but it is the Self in relation to the external objects such as house, chair, etc. which are palpably not-Self; the nervous system is higher than the muscular system, because it is subtle, more immense in range and energy, and more inward as the Self; the Buddhi or reason is subtler still, more immense in energy and more inward as the Self. And these values of subtlety, immensity, and inwardness reach their highest consummation in the Atman, the infinite and immortal pure Consciousness existing in all beings, one and non-dual. And the *Katha Upanishad* says in the very next verse that this Atman, though unknown in man's state of ignorance, is not unknowable (3.12):

"This Atman is present in all beings, but hidden, and so is not manifest; but it can be realised by the sharp and one-pointed Buddhi (or reason) of those subtle seers who have trained themselves in perceiving subtle, and still more subtle, dimensions of Reality."

In the words of Sir Arthur Eddington (*Science and the Unseen World*, p. 24):

"In comparing the certainty of things spiritual, and things temporal, let us not forget this—Mind is the first and most direct thing in our experience. All else is remote inference."

And the Upanishad then gives the technique of that training of the mind called meditation, by which it is developed into its high frequency energy state, by which



it attains the power of inner penetration of the subtle and subtler layers and by which it realises the subtlest and innermost truth of the Atman (3.13):

“Merge the (energies of) speech (and of other sense organs) in (the energy of) mind, merge that in the (energy of) Buddhi, merge the (energy of) Buddhi in (the energy of) the cosmic mind, and merge that (into the energy of) the Atman which is all peace.”

Elucidating the description of the Atman as *Shanta* (peace), Shankaracharya says in his commentary:

*Sarvavishesha-pratyastamitarupe, avik-riye, sarvantare, sarvabuddhi-pratyaya-sakshini, mukhya atmani*—“in the real Self (all others like the body, the nervous and psychic systems etc. are, in the language of Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, only pretenders to Selfhood), in which all differentiations have been dissolved, as also all tensions, which is the innermost Self of all, and which is the witness of the modifications of the Buddhi of all beings.”

*The Vedantic Clarion Call of “Arise, Awake!”*

And in the next verse, verse 14, the Upanishad gives the bugle call to all humanity to march on to realise the Atman, and thus raise oneself from creatureliness to freedom and blessedness, from all tensions to peace and fulfilment:

*Uttishthata jagrata*

*Prapya varan nibodhata;*

*Kshurasya dhara nishita duratyaya*

*Durgam pathastat kavayo vadanti.*

“Arise! Awake! and approaching the great ones, enlighten yourselves; for that path is difficult to tread and hard to cross, like walking on the edge of a razor, so say the sages (who have trodden that path).”

Shankaracharya and Swami Vivekananda describe this luminous message of Vedanta as a summons to man to dehypnotize himself or herself from all finitude, weakness, and fear. Vedantic spirituality is not an opium to put people to sleep but a lion-roar, to awaken them to their inherent glory of freedom, fearlessness and peace. In the stirring words of Vivekananda (*Complete Works*, Volume-3, p. 193):

“Let us proclaim to every soul: *Uttishthata, Jagrata, Prapya varan nibodhata*—Arise, Awake, and stop not till the goal is reached. Arise, awake! Awake from this hypnotism of weakness. None is really weak, the soul is infinite, omnipotent, and omniscient. Stand up, assert yourself, proclaim the God within you. ... Teach yourselves, teach every one his (or her) real nature, call upon the sleeping soul and see how it awakes. Power will come, glory will come, goodness will come, purity will come, and everything that is excellent will come when this sleeping soul is roused to self-conscious activity.”



# THE YOGA OF DEVOTION

RABBI ASHER BLOCK

Yoga means yoke or union—union with God. And what separates us from God, that we want to have union with Him? It is our ego-sense, our I-sense. It is a mysterious thing. You cannot say it exists; you cannot say it does not exist. In Vedanta, it is said that this *maya* is existence and non-existence both. You cannot say this egotism or ego-sense exists, because you do not know what it is. You try to analyse it, and do not find it. But on the other hand, you cannot say it does not exist. A few harsh words and at once you flare up; you are disturbed for days together. So it exists, and it does not exist, too.

This mysterious entity is said to be something like a mirage. A mirage really does not exist, but you see it all the while. It is said the deer runs after the water of mirage; it runs and runs until it dies. It is the same case with us. We are moving at a great speed on ego-sense, and we run and run. We do not know what we run after or why we run. But we run; we are always busy. Ramakrishna used to say that all troubles will be over when this I-ness goes, when you can give up your sense of I, your attachment to I, your love for I. You are not a loser when you give it up, because you do not know what it is, you are not sure whether it exists. It is a mysterious thing.

Once I went on a tour of the western part of India. I knew that at a certain place was a mirage. Swami Vivekananda once saw this mirage, so I was particularly anxious to see it. I was alert so that I should not miss it. At a distance I saw some sprays of sparkling water rising up. I took for granted that it was an actual river. But I did not see any mirage. As I was coming towards the end of the journey, I asked someone, "Where is the

mirage?" He said, "There it is, right over there." I had thought it was a real river. So you see it, but it has no existence.

The same is the case with the ego-sense. All religions say in so many words: "Not my will but the will of the Lord; it is not I, but Thou, O Lord." When you can say sincerely, spontaneously, from your own realisation, from your own experience, "Not I, but Thou, O Lord," all troubles cease; you get the highest realisation. Swami Turiyananda, a disciple of Ramakrishna, said to one monk, "At a period the Mother altogether wiped out the I-sense in me. I could not think that this I-ness had any existence in me. It was altogether gone." That is realisation, that is the end of all our troubles. But we have this I-sense, and it won't go so easily. All our efforts are needed to find the end of it.

This ego-sense expresses itself in three different channels: I think, I feel, and I will. We all experience that; we all feel, we all think, we all will to do certain things. Now, if we can turn these things towards God we will go nearer and nearer to the realisation of the ultimate Truth. As for instance, if we can turn all our *feelings* towards God, if we can direct all our love towards God—if we can do this completely, we get the realisation. If all our *thoughts* go towards God we get the highest concentration; this is the object of meditation. To concentrate your thoughts and direct them towards God: that is the purpose and goal of meditation. In the same way, when you can turn all your *activities* towards God, when all your activities are dedicated to God, you get the highest realisation.

It is said that with love and feeling you can realise God much more easily than by following other paths. It is true; because



we can go faster on the wings of love than in the "conducted tour of reason". To go by reason is something like a conducted tour: you halt and think, you halt and see. It is a halting race. But when you go emotionally, you go faster. You go with the speed of lightning—and it is smooth sailing. You have not to stop and think. So it is said, if we can turn all our feelings towards God we get greater speed in our spiritual life.

But there is danger also. Emotion has great speed, but it may run both ways. It may run upstream or downstream; it may run forward, it may run backward. You have to chasten your emotion. So Yoga of Devotion means that you must have control of your emotion; rather, you must chasten it. The power is there; direct it in the right channel. If the direction is correct, then you are safe.

It is said in a poem of Wordsworth: "...When love will be an unerring light and joy its own security." In our early life joy is *not* our security; we are not secure in our joy, we ordinary persons. But when emotion has become chastened, then joy is security. Then you cannot find joy in things which are not right for your spiritual life; you have no attractions to things which do not bring you spiritual light, or which darken your spiritual outlook. So when emotion has been sublimated, has been chastened, has been directed in the right channel, you get "eternal light". Then joy is its own security!

Now, what is that kind of love which is an "unerring light"? The scriptures on *bhakti* say: when all our feelings of love, of supreme love, are directed towards God, it is called *bhakti* or devotion. Supreme love—it must be intense; there should be nothing left behind. Ordinarily our love is divided; we give divided love to all things. But it should be supreme, undivided love, which we give to God.

There is a beautiful poem in Bengali:

"O Lord, let all my feelings go to Thee, and to Thee alone." Not that in order to be religious you must be a "forpyned ghost". In Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* there is a line describing a monk: "He was not pale as a forpyned ghost" (meaning tormented ghost). You should be a fullblooded personality, with fullblooded emotion. You should not be a dry desert. But that fullblooded emotion should be directed towards God: "O Lord, may all my feelings go to Thee, and to Thee alone."

And what is the outcome? When you reach that state you become immortal. Then death has no meaning for you. Immortality does not mean simply that we shall live eternally. What does it matter if you live five years, ten years or eternally, if you suffer, if you are always in terror. But immortality means that even death cannot frighten you. What does it matter if death comes, if our **minds are fixed on God**, if all our feelings of love have gone to God? When you have felt the touch of the love of God, what terror has death for you?

When one becomes immortal one does not long for anything else; he has got the supreme object, by getting which all other things seem meaningless, insipid. He has no other attraction. He neither grieves that he couldn't get this or that; nor does he rejoice in anything else; nor does he feel enthusiastic for any other world. He has got something because of which he is perfectly satisfied within himself! He has reached the goal of his journey. He has found abiding peace. The restless soul has found its own shelter, where it is completely at peace. That is real love.

This experience cannot be communicated. Ramakrishna says, "Everything has been 'defiled' but the knowledge or love of Brahman." It is something like the experience of a dumb person. He has tasted some good things but he cannot express how those good things tasted. In the same way you feel the intensity of love, you feel



the intensity of joy, but you cannot express that joy, you cannot communicate it to others. Everyone has to experience that joy for himself.

It is said that in religious life nobody can help you ; you have to help yourself. Yes, others can give you indirect help. Buddha said that Tathagatas—preacher monks—can give suggestions ; but you have to work these out for yourself, to get that peace and joy. So Buddhism stresses self-effort so much ; because, after all, one has to try to get that experience oneself.

But simply because it cannot be communicated, simply because you cannot understand it, does not mean that it does not exist. It does exist! The history of religion proves that. There are innumerable saints who say the same thing. They say that they get that ineffable joy which cannot be expressed. They have crossed the ocean of maya and they are eager to share that experience with others. But you will have to walk the distance, you will have to undergo that journey yourself. Without undertaking that journey no one experiences that joy.

It is something like climbing a mountain peak. It is good to look at the mountain peak melting away in the distant height, but how do we reach that ? We feel that it is so far away. Many become scared. Many do not dare. Some long for it but have not the courage to undertake the journey. But the mountain peak is there. The Gita says about the highest spiritual experience: Some speak about it, some have feelings about it ; wonderful is that experience about which they speak, wonderful the vision which they see... Rama-krishna would say that some have heard of the existence of milk, some have seen what milk is like, but only a few persons have tasted milk (milk was sometimes rare). So, some have heard of the wonderful experience of spiritual life ; but few—at

least not many—have got that experience by themselves.

Can we undertake this journey at all ; can we reach the goal ? Let us see. What are the means available to us ? How should we undertake that journey ? What are the helps we are likely to get and from what quarters ? What are the precautions that should be taken ?

The first common thing is: you must have the right outlook on life. Buddhism says, in the Eightfold Path, that the first thing is *right outlook*. Most of us have not the right outlook on life. We are going just like dumb, driven cattle following the beaten track, eating, drinking, earning money, spending it or accumulating it, and getting a little fame and name. That is all—the culmination of man's ambition. The same beaten track we all follow. We have not the right outlook. We have not the courage to think in terms of our past, in terms of our future. What is the right outlook ? Find out. Just think: where do we come from ?—and where will we go ? And what is the value of our material possessions ? What is the actual result we get through our activities ? What permanent value have these things ? That is the right outlook. To have the right outlook you must discriminate always as to what is wrong, what things have permanent value and what only ephemeral value.

But discrimination alone, just thinking in an armchair, won't do. You must have the *right resolve*. As soon as you find what is right you must try to put it into practice. So Buddhism says (and all religions say essentially the same thing), you must have the right outlook, and you must have the right resolve. And *right conduct*, *right practice*, and so on. Usually we cannot do that, because we cannot get the inspiration. Yes, a few great souls do that ; barring those exceptional cases, ordinary persons go by habits. They cannot change their



habits, not even the habits of their thinking.

Real religion means going upstream! The mass of humanity follows one path which, you say, is not right. So, even if you fail, try to go against the path they have followed ; go up the stream. Naturally there will be few who will follow that path. But how can we get the inspiration to go up the stream, to follow the current in the opposite direction ? That can be done only when you come into contact with persons who have realised the goal, who have reached it by going up the stream and who indicate to us that it was not at all the wrong decision they made. They have explored that unknown land, and from their experience they say that it has real existence ; one *can* go there. So the scriptures insist that you must have right discrimination, and you must try to contact saints or holy persons who have reached the goal of life.

It is said that contact with a really great saint, even for a moment, will change the whole course of your life. Because you came into direct contact with a blazing fire, in spite of yourself you feel the warmth. Just to see a holy person is a great blessing. It happened in the life of Ramakrishna that persons would come to him and the lives of many were thereby changed. One, a great scholar, who saw Ramakrishna only once, said, "What I could not understand by studying scriptures for my whole life I could understand by seeing him." One interview was enough. So it is said that the effect of association with a saint is instantaneous. At once, if you understand, you get something. And even if you do not get the effect then and there, it is bound to have its effect on you in time, because he has been able to show you something. But it is rare opportunity. You don't get it very often.

The next thing is: *read* the lives of holy men, as a practical proposition. You cannot just go about searching for holy men. Once, in the city of Benares, I was passing through from our monastery in the Himalayas and was quartered there for a short period. Some Swami came to me and said, "Here is a lady from America. She wants to talk to someone." So I asked her to come. And I said, "What are you seeking ?" She said, "I am in search of a holy man." I said, "You cannot find a holy man just by searching for one in the streets of Benares. There you will find many persons who will not have any hesitation to cheat you. You might find many cheats, but not holy men, that way." The best thing then is to remain where you are, and read the scriptures, read the lives of holy men. You can get inspiration from them, and that is a much safer thing. It is said that when you read the scriptures and meditate on those thoughts, that practice will gradually transform your life. At least, that reading will make a great impression on your mind and your thoughts will begin to change.

Thus when you cannot find a holy man, just read the scriptures, and think and meditate. And as soon as you are convinced that something is true, try to put that truth into practice. In the scriptures it is said that we should meditate on the scriptures and follow into practice what they say. Simply reading won't do. It is only intellectual luxury. It does not produce anything except a little intellectual excitement, and the ability to argue with people. Otherwise, reading without the attempt to put anything into practice is useless. So one should read the scriptures, the lives of the saints, and try to follow in a humble way what one finds to be true and right.



# SWAMI VIVEKANANDA: SYMBOLS AND IMAGES IN POETRY

SMT. MANJULA

Every idea we have in our mind has a counterpart in the word. The concept of word and thought, is inseparable. While the external part is word, the internal part is thought. But the connection between thought and word would prove valid if there is a link between the thing signified and the symbol. Thus a symbol is the manifest of the thing signified.

Symbols have greatly influenced the human mind. In fact, the making of symbols is innate to man. To transmit culture and religion, myth and related motifs, symbol is an essential mode. By concealing yet revealing, it aids human consciousness in concretizing the abstract. Throughout the world man has been trying to grasp the abstract through symbols or thought forms, and anything that appealed to him took a concrete image of the abstract. According to Vivekananda:

“Symbols are of great help, and we cannot dispense with the symbolical method of putting things before us. ... In one sense we cannot think but in symbols; words themselves are symbols of thought.”<sup>1</sup>

By the law of mental constitution every man has tried to associate his idea of infinity either with the image of the blue sky or the calm waters or he tried to connect his idea of holiness with the image of a temple, a church or a mosque. Thus different forms and images came into being. As Vivekananda says:

“The Hindus have associated the idea of holiness, purity, truth, omnipresence, and

such other ideas with different images and forms.”<sup>2</sup>

According to Vivekananda there are two words in Sanskrit for the worship of symbols and images. They are “Pratika” and “Pratima”. Pratika is the worship through certain forms and symbols, while Pratima is the worship of images of saints.

Vivekananda very often quoted the first two lines of *Kumarasambhavam* of Kalidasa as the finest expression of poetic symbol for the Absolute:

*Asti uttarasyam disi devata.ma  
Himalayo namo nagadhirajah  
Purbaparau Toyanidhi vagahya  
Sthitah prithivyam iva manadandah.*

(In the north stands the Himalayas, the king of mountains, with the soul of God. Stretched between two oceans on the east and the west it stands out as the spiritual column of the whole earth).

There comes the function of true literature which leads man through such symbols to the realisation of the spirit of religion. Vivekananda says:

“Religion is a long, slow process. ... We are all spiritual babies... We shall have to begin now in the concrete, through forms and words, prayers and ceremonies; and of these concrete forms there will be thousands. ... Some may be helped by images, some may not.”

In his own poems and prose, the mention of the Himalayan mountain brings deeply mystical feelings for Vivekananda. In his Almora speech, he held out the symbol of the Himalayas in a language which is intensely poetical:

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1. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Advaita Ashrama, 1972, Calcutta, Vol. I, p. 72.

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2. *Ibid.*, p. 16.



"As peak after peak of this Father of Mountains began to appear before my sight, all the propensities to work, that ferment that had been going on in my brain for years, seemed to quiet down.... the mind reverted to that one eternal theme which the Himalayas always teach us... renunciation!"<sup>3</sup>

In his poem *Song of the Sannyasin*, the same mountain image as the symbol of supreme bliss emerges out:

"Wake up the note! the song that had its birth...

In mountain caves, and glades of forest deep..."<sup>4</sup>

Pratikas and Pratimas are substitutes and symbols for God, "the many pegs to hang the spiritual ideas on". As Swahananda has pointed out:

"Symbolization is the basic principle of all manifestations. The abstract idea of feeling requires some symbols or symbolic actions for self-expression. While symbolism can be traced everywhere, it is more manifest in religious practices. Hinduism specialised in the use of this art of symbology. Even its highest philosophy is surcharged with this idea."<sup>5</sup>

But they do not lead us to salvation and freedom. They help the growing plant of spirituality.

"The word Pratika means going towards ; and worshipping a Pratika is worshipping something as a substitute which is, in some one or more respects, like Brahman more and more, but is not Brahman."<sup>6</sup>

The same idea apply to the worship of the Pratimas:

"If the image stands for a God or a saint, the worship is not the result of

Bhakti, and does not lead to liberation ; but if it stands for the one God, the worship thereof will bring both Bhakti and Mukti."<sup>7</sup>

Vivekananda's lyrical song on Shiva may be mentioned as a Pratima, inviting human mind to reach sublime heights through Shiva Tandava, Shiva's dance of cosmic destruction and cosmic creation:

Lo, the God is dancing  
—Shiva the all-destroyer  
And Lord of creation,  
The Master of Yoga and the  
Wielder of Pinaka.<sup>8</sup>

All over the world, people adopted images and symbols in some form or the other. Christians thought of God in their scriptures as a dove ; Jews imagined their idol in the form of a chest with two angels sitting on it, and a book on it ; the Moham-medans tried to form a mental image of a temple with the Kaaba, the black stone in this. These were indeed the necessary steps for the realisation of Oneness. Thus the employment of various external aids develop the faculty of man.

Vivekananda's writings are full of images and symbols of ultimate reality. The images of fire and horse are the dominant features in Shakespeare's "Antony and Cleopatra". These two images are symbols of passion and war. Coleridge's poems abound with the images of moonlight, which is a symbol of the supernatural. Tagore's most celebrated poem, *The Golden Boat* (Sonar Tari), has the image of a broad and extensive river, fading into the infinite, and a lonely boatman riding with the harvest of golden crop. These two images reflect the poet aspiring through his creations, to touch the infinity.

Vivekananda's poems basically comprise of such images which lift and direct our

3. Ibid., Vol. III, p. 353.

4. Ibid., Vol. IV (1972), p. 392.

5. Swami Swahananda, *Hindu Symbology and Other Essays*, Madras, Shri Ramakrishna Math, (1983), p. 10.

6. *The Complete Works*, Vol. III, (1973), pp. 59-60.

7. Ibid., Vol. III, p. 61.

8. Ibid., Vol. VIII (1971), p. 171.



mind to the search and realisation of the ultimate Reality.

In his poems, *Kali the Mother*, *To a Friend*, *The Cup*, *And Let Shyama Dance there*, and *The Song I Sing to Thee*, have one common basic theme—the realisation of God through intense struggle and self-sacrifice. This idea has been expressed through a number of symbols in all these poems. The dominant image in *Kali the Mother* is that of a tempestuous dark night, stormy sea and a catastrophic storm all ending in the final vision of Kali, the Mother.

It is darkness vibrant, sonant,  
In the roaring, whirling wind  
.....  
The sea has joined the fray,  
And swirls up mountain-waves,  
.....  
Dance in Destruction's dance,  
To him the Mother comes.<sup>9</sup>

In the poem *To a Friend*, the images are of drought, plague, death, dissension, and dissoluteness about life—all ending finally in the realisation of Brahman. The last two lines of this poem have been oft-quoted, from the entire range of his poems:

These are His manifold forms before thee,  
Rejecting them, where seekest thou for God?  
Who loves all being without distinction,  
He indeed is worshipping best his God.<sup>10</sup>

Similarly in his famous poem, *And Let Shyama Dance There*—similar images of terror and suffering burst forth in mighty torrents:

The Pralaya wind angrily roaring;  
In quick bursts of dazzling splendour flashes  
.....  
Piercing the ground, stream forth tremendous  
flames.  
Mighty ranges blow up into atoms.<sup>11</sup>

But these images also end in the hero's vision of the ultimate:

Awake, O hero! Shake off thy vain dreams,  
Death stands at thy head—does fear become  
thee?

.....  
And let Shyama dance there.<sup>12</sup>

Thus the sound symbols and various images play a prominent part in Vivekananda's works leading us sometimes to a stormy realisation of God. The power of the words itself is a great force in higher philosophy as well as in common life. Vivekananda's words are charged with the force and power of one who has conquered the universe. Most of the images have a spirit of intense dynamism, action and struggle. All these bring one's mind to the feeling that intense external and internal struggle is the only way to man's "ultimate Realisation". And again in another set of images we find it is all sublimity, all peace, all transcendence. His poems *Hymn of Creation* and *Song of Samadhi* or *Peace* belong to this category. There the images are of silence, profound depth, the great oblivion, unspeakable bliss and the imminent unity merging everywhere.

This projection whence arose,  
Whether held or whether not,  
He, the ruler in the supreme sky, of this  
He, O Sharman! knows, or knows not  
He perchance!<sup>13</sup>

Art represents the beautiful, and its value depends partly upon its capacities of expressing enduring ideas. When there is no expression of any sublime idea, it cannot be styled as true art. India always emphasized the triple structure of values which its thinkers styled Truth, Goodness and Beauty (*Satyam*, *Shivam* and *Sundaram*). These values, its thinkers held, should in-

9. Ibid., Vol. IV (1972), p. 384.

10. Ibid., Vol. IV, p. 496.

11. Ibid., p. 507.

12. Ibid., p. 510.

13. Ibid., Vol. VI (1972), p. 179.



form any work of art, if it is to be of help and use to the development of human consciousness. From this point of view, Vivekananda felt that India not only achieved distinction in arts but in certain respects this was worthy of emulation by the entire world. He spoke of the beauty and splendour of Indian arts which cradled its ethics, philosophy, science etc. He observed:

“When the real history of India will be unearthed, it will be proved that, as in matters of religion, so in fine arts, India is the primal Guru of the whole world.”<sup>14</sup>

Vivekananda had all praise for ancient Indian art, which had enlightened the people then. India led in music, drama and sculpture.

“I had the opportunity of seeing the beauties of art of nearly every civilised country in the world, but I saw nothing like the development of art which took place in our country during the Buddhistic period. During the regime of the Mogul Emperors also, there was a marked development of art—and the Taj and the Jumma Masjid etc. are standing monuments of that culture.”<sup>15</sup>

The ancient artists evolved original ideas from their brains and tried to express them in a basically spiritual manner:

“The very soul of the Asian is interwoven with art. The Asian never uses a thing unless there be art in it. Don't you know that art is, with us, a part of religion?”<sup>16</sup>

At the deeper level, this seemingly simple sentence is a negation of the popular but sterile, dilettante theory of “Art for art's sake”. Art, for Vivekananda, is always oriented towards an ideal, the best ideal being self-realisation. This is not, according to Vivekananda, the only significance of Indian Art. He felt that artistic tempera-

ment is reflected in every feature of Indian rural life:

“Have you seen the farmers' homes in our villages?...Have you seen their granaries for keeping paddy? What an art is there in them? What a variety of paintings even on their mud walls! And then, if you go and see how the lower classes live in the West, you would at once mark the difference. Their ideal is utility, ours art.”<sup>17</sup>

Vivekananda had a broad universal vision of Art, and to him an artistic representation was not mere colours, shade or light, but an expression of some idea—the supersensual ideal.

Like all art-critics he held that “nature” is the basis and source of all artistic imitation. Vivekananda, being a gifted artist in areas like music and literature, knew this truth intuitively and not merely in a cerebral way. But he also knew the basic difference between the Orient and the Occident in the matter of artistic mimesis. He felt that the latter confined itself to the mimetic potential of nature while the former extended it beyond what is sensuously perceptible. He pointed out that this difference is related to the basic philosophy of life or the world-view, animating the culture. He pointed out:

“People who are very materialistic take nature as their ideal, and try to express in art ideas allied thereto, while the people whose ideal is the transcendent Reality beyond nature try to express that in art through the powers of nature. With regard to the former class of people, nature is the primary basis of art, while with the second class, ideality is the principal motive of artistic development.”<sup>18</sup>

Indian art belonged to the second category. Art was to Vivekananda a vehicle for reinterpreting nature in its true spirit and

14. Ibid., Vol. V (1972), p. 421.

15. Ibid., Vol. VII (1972), pp. 200-01.

16. Ibid., Vol. V, pp. 372-73.

17. Ibid., p. 289.

18. Ibid., Vol. VII (1972), pp. 202-03.



not merely describing it in its outward expression or form. This view is very succinctly recorded in the following lines which make clear the distinction between Indian and Greek art-ideals:

“The secret of Greek Art is its imitation of nature even to the minutest details; whereas the secret of Indian Art is to represent the ideal. The energy of the Greek painter is spent in perhaps painting a piece of flesh, and he is so successful that a dog is deluded into taking it to be a real bit of meat and so goes to bite it.”<sup>19</sup>

According to Ananda Coomaraswamy:

“Our attitude towards an unknown art should be far from the sentimental or romantic, for it can bring us nothing that we have not already with us in our hearts: the peace of the Abyss which underlines all art is one and the same, whether we find in Europe or in Asia.”<sup>20</sup>

It is also highly significant that Vivekananda was the earliest and the most vehement critic of the then widely held view regarding the heavy Greek influence on Indian art. As Bhupendranath Dutta has pointed out:

“... in 1900 at the Congress of the History of Religions held in Paris, Swami Vivekananda protested against the then accepted theory of Greek influence on Indian arts. He argued that it was natural to have cultural intercourse between the both through historical association. As the Greeks had learnt good many things from India, likewise the Indian artists have received something from the Greek artists; but it is not true that the soul of Indian art was overshadowed at any time by the Greek influence.”<sup>21</sup>

19. Ibid., Vol. V, p. 258.

20. Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, *The Dance of Shiva*, Revised Ed., New Delhi: Sapar Publications (1963), p. 97.

21. Bhupendranath Dutta, *Swami Vivekananda: Patriot and Prophet*, Calcutta (1954), p. 301.

Vivekananda, however, admitted that too much absorption in the ideal often made Indian Art unreal in the shape of grotesque or unnatural figures.

“The Indian tendency, on the other hand, to represent the ideal, the supersensual, has become degraded into painting grotesque images.”<sup>22</sup>

Now-a-days, art seems to be merely an attempt at imitation, wherein originality ceases to exist, and the individuality of the artist is deteriorated. Vivekananda says:

“It is nearly the same everywhere. Originality is rarely found.... pictures are painted with the help of models obtained by photographing various objects. But no sooner does one take the help of machinery... one cannot give expression to one's ideas.”<sup>23</sup>

According to Dr. Bhupendranath Dutta, Vivekananda could paint, he could sing, and he could even act. We read in his biography that in Poona, he actually criticised Ravi Varma's style of painting, at a time when this painter's fame was at its highest, for introducing a new technique. To Vivekananda, art should make people forget the material world and transport them to a new ideal world.

“The great Indian religious artist places himself face to face with the object he wishes to represent in the attitude of a ‘Yogi’ in search of truth, to him the object becomes the subject.”<sup>24</sup>

Art, like religion, should address itself towards the spiritual and eternal. Hence Vivekananda rebuked Ranada Prasad Das Gupta, the founder and Professor of the Jubilee Art Academy in Calcutta, for the unnaturalness in paintings and instructed him to reflect the ancient ideals:

“The paintings from your art school

22. *The Complete Works*, Vol. V (1973), p. 258.

23. Ibid., Vol. VII, p. 202.

24. Romain Rolland, *The Life of Vivekananda & the Universal Gospel*, Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta (1975), p. 227 (Footnote 2).



have got no expression, as it were. It would be well if you try to paint the objects of everyday meditation of the Hindus by giving in them the expression of ancient ideals".<sup>25</sup>

Sister Nivedita's appreciation of the ideals of Indian art and her passion for its revival were derived from Vivekananda. She believed that the rebirth of the spirit of Indian art was essential for the remaking of the nation. Nivedita became one of the chief critics of the theory of the Hellenic influence of Indian Art.

The great protagonists of the modern Indian school of painting like Abanindranath Tagore, Asit Haldar and Nandalal Bose were in turn influenced by Nivedita. Nandalal Bose observed:

"To the artists, the ideal of Swamiji acts like the backbone of the art, without which

25. *The Complete Works*, Vol. VII, p. 203.

art becomes weak and lifeless. Swamiji's method of understanding aesthetic was through 'Jnana' (Knowledge), while the Thakur (Ramakrishnadeva) arrived at the realisation of knowledge through aesthetic. Both of them fully realised the aesthetic and knowledge, only the path of progress was different."<sup>26</sup>

Vivekananda was indeed optimistic in his view that a real art would never suffer from want of appreciation in this world. Today the Indian folk art, ancient temple sculptures, and the traditional art of India are getting more appreciation and honour in the various fairs than the surrealist and bizarre paintings by Indian painters which are in fact imitations of decadent tendencies of modern Western art.

26. Bhupendranath Dutta, *Swami Vivekananda: Patriot & Prophet*, Calcutta (1954), pp. 310-11.

## RABINDRANATH TAGORE: NATIONALISM AND INTERNATIONALISM

SHRI ANIL BARAN ROY AND SMT. MAMATA ROY

A nation is generally understood to mean a people having a sense of nationality plus political consciousness towards the formation of the state. And nationalism is usually taken to mean the political expression by the nation through the state of its patriotism, of its sense of unity and of its sense of distinctive separateness as a nation from other nations. It is through the organization of the nation-state that a nation seeks to realize political aims such as freedom, unity and excellence or superiority of the nation. Nationalism may therefore be succinctly defined as the political manifestation of the sentiment and objectives of the nation through the orga-

nization of the nation-state. Nationalism, so to say, is basically a political doctrine.

The purpose of providing the general definitions of these terms is to make it very clear at the outset that Rabindranath did not understand or use these terms in the generally accepted meanings of these terms. His value system made him look at these concepts and the issues they raise from the moral and human perspectives. The Machiavellian power-approach had no place in his scheme of thinking. Politics was not an immoral thing to him. He was rather like Plato and Gandhi in his moral conception of politics than like Machiavelli and Kautilya in this regard. He stood for



moral values such as justice, purity, freedom, harmony, beauty and creativity of the human soul. It is his "humanism", as one writer puts it, "which is the substratum, the bed-rock, of all his political views and writings".<sup>1</sup> To quote another writer, "The political philosophy of Rabindranath proceeds from his deep spiritual humanism. In place of transcendentalism, Kantian formalism and intellectualism, it posits the value of the creative experiments and artistic jubilation of the human being who is a replica of the supreme eternal activity. His condemnation of power, his bitter denunciation of nationalism and his stress on a social organic living based on cooperation and fraternity necessarily proceed from this fundamental humanism".<sup>2</sup> It is against the basic humanistic background of Rabindranath's thoughts that one has to analyse his views on nationalism and internationalism.

## I

The debate is endless as to whether nationalism is good or bad. As a matter of fact, it is neither good nor bad in itself. Its justification or otherwise depends upon its functionality. When it uses itself properly in the interest of national freedom and national unity in a spirit of non-exclusiveness, then it might be said to be an ideal, complimentary to other ideals such as equality and fraternity and as such a promoter of civilization. On the other hand, when nationalism assumes a narrow, exclusive and aggressive form, and uses the doctrine of sovereignty to deprive other nation or nations of their freedom, then it becomes a perverted ideal or one might say

that it becomes an ideology menacing the civilization and its values of liberty, equality and fraternity. Aggressive national sentiment, greed, and the desire to establish the national superiority or dominance over nations turns nationalism into imperialism. Looking at such perversion of nationalism, Tagore in his book *Nationalism*<sup>3</sup> observed that nationalism was antagonistic to civilization, stood for its negation and as such was a great menace to civilization.

One can discern a self-contradiction in the transformation of nationalism into imperialism. On the one hand, nationalism eulogises national freedom and sovereignty. On the other hand, it produces antagonism and hatred towards other nations and acts as a provocative force trampling on the freedom and sovereignty of other nations. It is on account of such double-standard, self-contradiction, narrow selfishness, parochialism, non-cooperation, excessive greed, racial pride and the desire to establish the dominance of nation over other nations, that world-philosophers like Rabindranath had looked upon nationalism as a menace to civilization, culture, and progress.

It should be stressed here that Rabindranath had no objection to patriotism. Patriotism, that is, love for one's country and fellow-feeling for one's countrymen which inspires men to make sacrifices and sometimes supreme sacrifices for the sake of his country, was a noble virtue in the eyes of Tagore. The way he came forward to lead the patriotic movement of his countrymen in the wake of the Curzon-made partition of Bengal in 1905, is a well-

1. Hiran Kumar Sanyal, "Rabindranath Tagore" in Atulchandra Gupta (ed.), *Studies in the Bengal Renaissance*, (Jadavpur: The National Council of Education, Bengal, 1958), p. 137.

2. V. P. Varma, *Modern Indian Political Thought* (Agra: Lakshmi Narain Agarwal, 1967), p. 98.

3. The book contains the lectures delivered by Tagore in Japan and the United States in 1916-1917. According to C. F. Andrews, "The Poet's whole inner nature was in revolt against the violently aggressive spirit of the age. All this is brought out in his book called *Nationalism*, the first Chapters of which were written in Japan, at a white heat." See *Letters to a Friend* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1928), p. 69.



recorded fact of history. Describing Rabindranath Tagore "as the most picturesque personality of the period", Hiran Kumar Sanyal observes:

He ceremoniously tied *rakhi* (a band of coloured thread), as symbol and pledge of comradeship in the national struggle against partition, round the wrists of his compatriots and led processions singing his patriotic songs, some of the most inspiring ever composed by him... Speaking at a mass meeting on the day of the *Vijaya* following the partition, Rabindranath said: "For the first time the Bengalis realize today that they are one people." That was how he felt and that was how he made others feel.<sup>4</sup>

But if patriotism is a noble human virtue, nation-worship is an entirely different thing. The psychology which is at the root of nation-worship is perverted in that it works as a complex and seeks its release in the form of dominance or efforts towards dominance over other nations. Such complex makes a nation think that there is no other nation like that nation, no other culture like the culture of that nation, no other language having the beauty of the language of that nation, and no other literature having the quality of the literature of that nation. This kind of perverted psychology works as a double-edged sword. It makes a nation, on the one side, vain-glorious about its superiority over other nations and on the other side, racially hateful and antagonistic towards other nations. From these two sides of the same mentality, comes the desire to dominate and even rule the weaker or so-called inferior nations, which, in turn, is nothing else than undiluted imperialism.

## II

Bankimchandra characterised such mentality as fattening of the self by the plunder-

4. Hiran Kumar Sanyal, *op. cit.*, p. 133.

ing and undoing of others, and it is this kind of mentality which Rabindranath designated as Nationalism. The definition that Rabindranath has provided of the term "nation", bears testimony to his views on nationalism:

What is the Nation? It is the aspect of a whole people as an organized power. This organization incessantly keeps up the insistence of the population on becoming strong and efficient.<sup>5</sup>

A nation, then, according to Rabindranath, is an organisation of power, bent on acquiring more and more physical strength, and efficiency from that point of view with the sole aim of self-aggrandizement by hook or by crook and obviously at the cost of others. "The ideal of the Nation", to quote Rabindranath, "like that of the professional man, is selfishness... Every nation which has prospered has done so through its career of aggressive selfishness either in commercial adventures or in both."<sup>6</sup>

Conflicts are inherent in the very nature of selfishness. The inevitable result of exclusive nationalism is, therefore, wars and crises which, in turn, are bound to endanger humanity and civilization. If we take into account the political history, especially of the last seventy-five years of the present century, we get to realize fully the significance of Rabindranath's observations about the evil side of nationalism. The "idolatry of primitive instincts and collective passions"<sup>7</sup> could not but produce crises to civilization and humanity. Since Rabindranath wanted the abandonment of such instincts, indeed, of the predatory psychology which is at the root of nationalism, he declared that he was totally against

5. *Nationalism* (London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd., 1937), p. 110.

6. *Creative Unity* (Calcutta: Macmillan and Co. Ltd., 1959), pp. 148-150.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 153.



all ideas relating to Nation and Nationalism. To quote him, "I am not against one nation in particular, but against the general idea of all nations".<sup>8</sup>

We must understand Rabindranath in perspective. He was not against patriotism which was a constituent element of nationalism. He was against the mentality of nation-worship which was the kind of nationalism which implied "the training of a whole people for a narrow ideal".<sup>9</sup> The growth of this kind of nationalism, he rightly believed, made man "the greatest menace to man"<sup>10</sup>.

That patriotism represents the nobler side of nationalism, is a viewpoint which we find systematically developed for the first time in the writings of the nineteenth century Italian patriot and thinker, Mazzini. His writings served the purpose of unification of Italy. He had shown for the first time that Italy, divided into several small states at that time, was nevertheless, a nation because Italians were bound together by the same history, culture and traditions and by the same corporate feeling of oneness. The theory that he preached in this connection was that each nation possessed certain "talents" which, taken together formed "the wealth of the human race"<sup>11</sup>. By looking upon the human race as the creative combination of different nations of the world, Mazzini held that it was only through "patriotic" nationalism that a nation was capable of developing her special talents. As a vehicle for the development of special talents of nations and as a "live and let live" philosophy<sup>12</sup>, nationalism

enriches the humanity and the world as a whole and does not become a menace to civilization and culture of the world.

On the other hand, the "menacing" side of nationalism found chauvinistic expression in the writings of the German philosopher Fichte. He preached the theory of the superiority of the German race, of the supremacy of the German nation and of the God-ordained destiny of the German people to lead the rest of the world. To him, "German birth" and "excellence" were the same thing and that a German, by virtue of his very birth, was superior to any other man in the world. It is this kind of thinking and bragging about the race and the nation that leads inevitably to imperialism.

By way of comparison we can point out that Rabindranath had no quarrel with the Mazzini-kind of thoughts on nationalism which viewed nationalism as the producer of "the wealth of the human race" (as distinct from the exclusive increase of the wealth of the nation alone) through means such as cooperation, peaceful combination, and creative development. Fichte-type of thoughts on nationalism were, on the other hand, anathema to Rabindranath. His sensitive soul singing the songs of *harmony* could not bear any thought about the inherent superiority of any nation to lead other nations. To him, such thoughts were insulting to humanity. As one who stood for "the gain of all humanity"<sup>13</sup>, he could not but ask for the replacement of inhuman and anti-human nationalism with internationalism which represented international understanding and cooperation.

8. *Nationalism*, p. 110.

9. *Creative Unity, op. cit.*, p. 148.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 146.

11. Mazzini, *The Duties of Man*. See also Christopher Lloyd, *Democracy and Its Rivals*.

12. It is interesting to note that the theory of Mazzini found fuller expression in the writings of Swami Vivekananda. To quote Swamiji: "Each nation ... has one theme in this life, which is

the centre, the principal note round which every other note comes to form the harmony... If any one nation attempts to throw off national vitality ... that nation dies and ... each must assimilate the spirit of the others and yet ... preserve his individuality and grow according to his own law of growth."

13. *Greater India* (Madras: S. Ganesan, 1921), p. 82.



## III

Rabindranath considered nationalism and internationalism as mutually antagonistic consciousnesses. Mutually antagonistic because exclusive, perverted, and aggressive nationalism finds expression in high-sounding claims to superiority and antagonism towards other nations. Internationalism, on the other hand, transcends the narrow confines of the state and the nation, and pleads for the development of the whole human race and the world society. Aggressive nationalism seeks only its own aggrandizement. Internationalism stands for the development of the whole as much as the development of the part on the basis of values such as equality, mutual respect and fraternity. It seeks to create an international atmosphere conducive to mutual cooperation and wants the states to follow the common rules of civilised conduct as expressed in international law. Internationalist philosophers like Rabindranath, averse to taking the State as the last word in the evolution of human society, were disposed to thinking that the course of political growth of the human society should gradually lead to the establishment of a world community, a society of states, eventually with its own compelling legal imperatives. If man can sacrifice a part of his freedom in the interest of his fellow-beings and accept some social control over his individual life, then why should not the nation-states surrender some rights of their sovereignty in the interest of the world community or the society of States?

Putting limits to sovereignty of states does not mean their sacrifice of individuality or national identity. It does not mean that they will cease to control matters of local reference. It only means that in matters of common world concern they will be guided by interests beyond and the ideal of "harmony and cooperation between the

different peoples of the earth"<sup>14</sup>. Even from a practical point of view, the international cooperation based upon some limitation of sovereign rights of states is necessary because the world has become so inter-dependent today, especially in the fields of transport and communication, science and technology, economics and finance. And this inter-dependence means that "an unfettered will in any state is fatal to the peace of other states"<sup>15</sup>. In the context of the undoubted facts of global inter-dependence today, to stick to the undiluted right of state sovereignty is to ignore the Spirit of the New Age. In the words of Rabindranath:

From now onward, any nation which takes an isolated view of its own country will run counter to the Spirit of the New Age, and knows no peace. From now onward, the anxiety that each country has for its own safety must embrace the welfare of the world.<sup>16</sup>

Echoing similar sentiment, the eminent political scientist, Professor Laski wrote:

Our world is a different world. What impresses us is not national separation but international dependence, not the value of competition, but the necessity for cooperation. ... In our position, therefore, the natural approach to the problems of politics is to view the state as a province of the great society.<sup>17</sup>

## IV

Now, the question is: are we prepared to pay the price for all that internationalism involves and calls for? For, so long as we do not learn to think of internationalism

14. Rabindranath Tagore, *Letters to a Friend* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1928), p. 134.

15. Harold J. Laski, *An Introduction to Politics* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1961), p. 76.

16. *Ethics of Destruction* (Madras: Tagore & Co., n.d.), p. 32.

17. Laski, *op. cit.*, pp. 85-86.

as a creative adventure, so long as we are not prepared to make the sacrifices for the sake of righteousness, we won't be able to turn the world for the better. What is, therefore, most required for the control of exclusive nationalism and for the transformation of nationalism into internationalism, is the change in the psychology of man or indeed the transformation of man, of the "material" man into Spiritual Man and of the "parochial" man into Universal Man, believing that he owes a duty and an obligation not only to his nation-state but indeed to the whole humanity. Stressing this ultimate need, Rabindranath wrote in his inimitable poetic language:

We are apt to forget that all systems produce evil sooner or later, when the psychology which is at the root of them is wrong. The system which is national today may assume the shape of international tomorrow; but so long as men have not forsaken their idolatry of primitive instinct and collective passions, the new system will only become a new instrument of suffering. ... Therefore I do not put my faith in any new institution, but in the individuals all over the world who think clearly, feel nobly, and act rightly, thus becoming the channels of moral truth.<sup>18</sup>

Rabindranath knew that the path of the Spiritual Man was not strewn with roses. But he was all the same convinced of the ultimate victory of the Spiritual Man. Expressing this faith, he wrote to his friend, C.F. Andrews:

The Spiritual Man has been struggling for its emergence into perfection, and every true cry of freedom is for this emancipation. Erecting barricades of fierce separateness, in the name of national necessity, is offering hindrance to it. Therefore in the long run it is building a prison for the nation itself. For the only path of deliverance for nations, is in the ideal humanity.<sup>19</sup>

18. *Creative Unity*, pp. 152-153.

19. *Letters to a Friend*, *op. cit.*, pp. 134-135.

It bears repetition to point out that by the ideal of humanity Rabindranath meant the larger humanity "that makes us one going across the barriers of political labels and divisions."<sup>20</sup>

That Rabindranath did not pay lip-service to the ideal of humanistic internationalism and that he meant to fulfil himself the task of international understanding, could be seen from his educational experiment at Santiniketan and from his founding of Vishva-Bharati whose motto is the most expressive of his ideal of humanistic internationalism: *Where the World makes home in a single nest.*

To sum up, Rabindranath's approach to the issues of nationalism and internationalism is basically moral and human. His definition of Nation as an organization of power might not have been scientific<sup>21</sup>; even the views expressed in his book, *Nationalism* might have been one-sided<sup>22</sup>.

20. *Poet to Poet*—Correspondence between Yona Noguchi and Rabindranath Tagore on Sino-Japanese Conflict (Pamphlet No. 5, published by the Sino-Indian Cultural Society, Nanking and Santiniketan, n.d.), p. 7.

21. *Manchester Guardian* (September 24, 1917) pointed out that the poet made a confusion of "nation" with "state". Even C. F. Andrews held the same view. The poet, however, continued to argue that he meant "nation" and not "state". For the sake of fairness to Rabindranath it must be pointed out that he meant by nation not so much any physical entity as "a spirit of greed and acquisition". See Maitraye Devi, *The Great Wanderer* (Calcutta; Grantham, 1961), p. 47.

Further, if the poet had made nationalism synonymous with predatory imperialism, it was because he had been a witness to the worst expression of imperialist nationalism in the First World War. It should not be forgotten that his *Nationalism* was written during the Great War.

22. V. P. Varma, *Modern Indian Political Thought*, *op. cit.*, p. 99:

"While society is at the root of our Hindu civilization, politics represents the root of the European civilization. Man can attain greatness by social as well as political achievements. But if we think that the nation-formation on the



Yet the fact remains that through his writings, speeches and pronouncements, he kept the ideal of internationalism "always in the forefront of his countrymen's consciousness. His influence on Indian political thought was in this way truly profound"<sup>23</sup>.

European model is the only destiny of civilization and the only aim of humanity then we will be misunderstanding things" ('Eastern and Western Civilization', *Rabindra Rachanavali*, Birth Centenary edition, vol. 12, pp. 1060-1061. Translation ours).

<sup>23</sup>. Sasadhar Sinha, *Social Thinking of Rabindranath Tagore* (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1962), p. 51.

And as to how Rabindranath Tagore's vision affected the thinking of leading personalities of India, the best authority to quote is Jawaharlal Nehru:

Rabindranath Tagore has given to our nationalism the outlook of internationalism and has enriched it with art and music and the magic of his words, so that it has become the full-blooded emblem of India's awakened spirit.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>24</sup>. *The Golden Book of Tagore* (edited by Ramananda Chatterjee and published by the Golden Book Committee, Calcutta, 1931), p. 183.

## THE ORIGIN AND HISTORY OF NAVYA NYAYA

DR. SABITA MISHRA

The origin of the Nyaya and Vaisheshika systems of philosophy has not yet been properly explored. Nyaya system of thinking is supposed to be originated from Maharshi Gautama of approx. 600 B.C, whose disciple is the traditionally known Vedavyasa, the composer of the Mahabharata. The first trace of the Nyaya philosophy can be noticed in the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*. Rishi Yajnavalkya uttered, "The Self is fit to be experienced, heard, known by reason and also retained by meditation." Here the statement viz. the Self is fit to be known by reason i.e. *Manana* (rationalisation) is very significant. Because the Nyaya philosophy is concerned with Inference which is nothing but a kind of *Manana*.

This *Manana* can be accomplished in two different ways. First it can be done taking the Vedas as the authority, or the process may go absolutely independently of anything else. Those who start reasoning accepting the Vedas as the authority are called Astika, while the proponents of the other school are known as Nastika.

Astika philosophy is of six systems and Nyaya Shastra is one of them. By Nyaya Shastra we mean such works as the aphorisms of Nyaya by Gautama, Commentary on those aphorisms by Vatsyayana, Vartika by Udyotakara, and Tatparyatika of Vachaspati Mishra, etc.

The Nyaya philosophy accepts Liberation as the cessation of existential suffering (*Atyantika dukkha nivritti mokshah*). It accepts the phenomenal reality as made of categories. The Navya Nyaya or the newly developed system of Nyaya thinks that external reality is composed of seven categories like substance (Dravya), qualities (Gunas), function (Karma), inherence (Samavaya), generality (Samanya), particularity (Vishesha) and negation (Abhava). This philosophy analyses every external reality to its core, and ultimately establishes its evanescence or meaninglessness so far as freedom from suffering or liberation is concerned. The Buddhist philosophy of Kshanika-vada thinks that the entire process of the beginning, duration and end of our

sense perception of an object takes only one single second. The Nyaya system thinks that this process takes three seconds. In the first second it is the birth (utpatti) of a perception, the next second is the duration (sthiti) of the object, and the third second is the stage of its dissolution (laya). With this system Madhusudana Saraswati interpreted the evanescence of all sensate objects in his book *Advaita Siddhi*, and established the Advaita Philosophy. This philosophy (Navya Nyaya) believes that true renunciation of the objects comes when the seeker analyses the reality thoroughly and then rejects it finally after experiencing its fruitlessness and momentariness.

The most prominent figure in the new school of Nyaya is the great scholar Gangesha Upadhyaya who wrote the book entitled *Tattvachintamani* on Navya Nyaya. In the book Gangesha declared himself as teacher of philosophical decision (Siddhanta Dikshaguru).

Four proofs—Perception, Inference, Upamana (analogy), and Shabda (Scriptural evidence)—have been admitted in Navya Nyaya. These have also been mentioned in the aphorisms of Gautama.

The style and technique of discussion introduced by Gangesha brought a new era in the doctrine of Nyaya Philosophy. Since then, Nyaya has been divided into two sections—old and new. In the old school all the categories relating to emancipation have been discussed. There is thus a prominence of spiritualism in the old system. In the modern or Navya school, Pramana or the means of Knowledge, and some related topics have been mainly discussed. It will not be correct to hold that old Nyaya is known as philosophy and Navya Nyaya is not, because in the latter there are discussions regarding soul, sense organs, and mind which form contents of spiritual study. Prior to Gangesha, two other scholars, Manikantha and Shashadharacharya who wrote on Nyaya failed miserably on the

fundamental points though they paved the way for Gangesha and his followers who became concerned with what precisely is the argument for and against a problem. Gangesha's studies, as he himself stated, were confined to the Nyaya and works of the Prabhakara School, which had once dominated higher studies in Mithila.

About the date of Gangesha, there is conflict of opinion among the scholars. From the evidence available we can conclude that Gangesha cannot be placed before 1200 A.D. by any means.

There are many commentaries on *Tattvachintamani*, the primary work on Navya Nyaya. Amongst them *Didhiti*, the commentary made by Raghunatha Shiromani holds a very prominent position. In later days many commentaries have been composed on the book *Didhiti*, of which the commentaries known as *Jagadishi* and *Gadadhari* are famous.

Besides Raghunatha Shiromani there are other commentators such as Yajnapati Upadhyaya, Pragalbhacharya, Shrinatha Bhattacharya, Pakshadhara Mishra, Vasudeva Sarvabhauma, etc. Now-a-days, all the discussions on *Tattvachintamani* are going on in the line of *Didhiti*. It is heard that *Didhiti* was composed on all books, but at present *Didhiti* is available on Pramanyavada and also on some other topics.

*Didhiti* is a famous commentary. In this commentary Raghunatha Shiromani has not only refuted the opinion of former Naiyayikas but also established his own opinion firmly.

Mathuranatha, a later Naiyayika, has composed a commentary named *Rahasya* on *Tattvachintamani*. It is very simple and lucid. Though it is easier to understand the original book *Tattvachintamani* through the commentary of Mathuranatha, the Naiyayikas follow the commentary only in order to study Prakaranas like *Vyapti Panchaka*, *Tarka*, *Paramarsha*, etc. Gangesha deals with only the first and foremost of sixteen



topics of Gautama, viz. Pramana. The next section on Pramanya divided into three sub-sections: Jnapti (Knowing), Utpatti (Origin), and Pramalakshana (Signs of knowing), really forms the introduction to the whole book. The next section on Anyathakhyati or Error also belongs to the general introduction, being a corollary to the previous section. The views of the opponents of Prabhakara School who advocate their Akhyativada (that no knowledge is an Error), have been examined in this section. The Anupalabdhi (non-perception) which is regarded as a separate means of valid knowledge by the Vedanta and Bhatta schools, is rejected from Nyaya standpoint under which Negation is perceptible through the senses. The next section Anuvyavasaya (apperception) deals with Nirvikalpa (without form) and Savikalpa (with form) perceptions.

The four-fold division of Pramana is discussed in *Tattvachintamani*. First chapter deals with perception, Anuvyavasaya (apperception), and two more kinds of perceptions: Nirvikalpa and Savikalpa.

Second chapter is Anumana khanda. This is the most important chapter of this book. The following topics have been discussed in Anumana:

*Vyaptipanchaka, Simha Vyaghri, Vyadhikaranadharmavacchinnabhava, Purvapaksha, Siddhanta Lakshana, Samanya Vyapti, Vishesha Vyapti, Tarka, Pakshata, Paramarsha, Kevalanvayi, Kevalavyatireki, Avayava and Hetvabhava.*

Ishvaravada of Gangesha which is the last portion of this chapter is now lost.

Third chapter of *Tattvachintamani* is Upamana (Analogy). This portion of Gangesha has been quite out of date for a very long time.

The fourth chapter of *Tattvachintamani* deals with verbal testimony and is called Shabda Khanda. The following discussions have been done: Akanksha (Expectancy), Yogyata (Fitness), Sannidhi or Asatti (Proxi-

mity), Tatparya (Meaning). This portion of verbal testimony establishes the four types of cognitive instruments after refuting the validity of Aitihya (Tradition), Janashruti (Rumour), Arthapatti (Implication) and Anupalabdhi (Non-apprehension).

Both Anumana Khanda and Shabda Khanda became popular and various commentaries were written on them.

The work of Gangesha became very popular. The influence of this school was spread even outside India. The *Tattvachintamani* established a school through the works of Gangesha's son and disciple Vardhamana. Later authors refer to him as 'Upayakaraka'.

#### *Pre-Gangesha age*

We first come across the name of Udayanacharya who creates a bridge between the old and the new world of Nyaya Philosophy. Udayana's *Parishuddhi* forms the last part of the older school of the Nyaya popularly known as the quadruplet or the four points of Nyaya philosophy. Two scholars Vachaspati (II) and Shankara Mishra refer to the older classics as *Chaturgranthi* consisting of Bhashya-Vartika-Tatparya and Parishuddhi.

At present we shall mention the names of the books of Udayana available in print.

(1) *Lakshanavali*—A Vaisheshika manual. Its authenticity is proved by a reference in the *Sarvadarshana Sangraha* (Abhyankara's Edition, p. 221).

(2) *Lakshanamana*—This Nyaya manual of Udayana has at last been discovered and published (Journal of Oriental Research, Madras, XIX. I. pp. 44-52).

There is one work of the same name ascribed to Shivaditya Mishra. But we can affirm that *Lakshanamana* was written by Udayana as the first verse is identical with that of the *Guna Kiranavali*.

(3-4) *Atmatattva Viveka* or *Bauddhadhikara* and *Nyayakusumanjali* both publi-

shed with commentaries in various editions.

(5) *Nyayaparishishta* or *Prabodha Siddhi*, a separate commentary on the 5th ch. of the Nyaya Sutra.

(6) *Nyaya-Vartika-Tatparya-Parishuddhi*, better known as the *Nibandha*.

All these six works of Udayana are complete.

(7) *Kiranavali*—A commentary on the *Prashastapada-Bhashya*. Though it is incomplete yet it forms a vast literature which flourished in Mithila and Bengal.

Udayana's name was precisely admired by his successors. The celebrated line of *Kusumanjali*, '*Paraspara virodhe hi tuna prakarantarasthiti*'—"there cannot be any alternative between two opposed elements"—is accepted as an Universal maxim.

Chinnabhatta recommended the *Kusumanjali* on the question of Upamana (Reference to other similar objects) as a separate means of valid knowledge.

Vardhamana in his several commentaries on Udayana had indicated the problems where his father Gangesha excelled in arguments.

As a matter of fact, Gangesha himself displayed his veneration for Udayana by quoting his words in almost every section of his large work. Among the predecessors of Gangesha by far the largest number of references belong to Udayana. In the very first section (Mangala Vada) of the Pratyaksha part, there is an exact quotation from the *Dravya Kirana* of Udayana (B. I. ed., p. 72) vide *Kiranavali* (Chowkh ed., p. 3).

In the next section (Pramanyavada), a well-known Karika of *Kusumanjali* (IV. 1) on the definition of Prama is cited and it is interesting to note that Udayana is given the flattering epithet of 'Tantrika' here. In the same section there is a quotation from *Bauddhadhikara* (p. 424). There are three references to 'Acharyah' towards the end (pp. 750, 834, & 845). Gangesha's regard for Udayana is revealed in the section on Nirvikalpa (pp. 834-38), where after citing

and refuting the views of Shivaditya, Gangesha formulated his final views on the topic under discussion on the basis of an exact quotation from the *Guna Kiranavali* (Chowkh. ed., pp. 201-02) which he fully explained in the manner of a regular commentator. In the *Anumana* (Inference) part it is well-known that Udayana's definition of the term *Vyapti* (expansion) and its component *Upadhi* (Adjuncts) has been explained by Gangesha in the Purvapaksha section (pp. 77-79. vide, *Kusumanjali*, 111-12). Udayana's definition of *Upadhi* is also critically reviewed under Upadhivada (pp. 312-13). Udayana could not be superseded by Gangesha at all in the *Ishvaravada* and *Upamana* part. In the *Shabda* part we need only refer to the long and important passage of Udayana with which Gangesha concludes the section on Vidhivada (pp. 184. off).

Shri Vallabhacharya is the author of the *Nyayalilavati*. It is one of the few original classics of the Navya Nyaya. The discussion on the six categories of the Vaisheshika system plays an important part in *Nyayalilavati*. Shri Vallabha, however, displayed his originality by adding three small chapters—such as difference of properties (Vaidharmya), community of properties (Sadharmya), operation (Prakriya).

The *Lilavati* was by far the best Vaiseshika treatise in the medieval period. It is the most intricate one. Like the works of Udayana on the one hand, and that of Gangesha on the other, the intricacy of the *Lilavati* attracted the best intellects of Mithila even before the times of Gangesha and it enjoyed the privilege of being the only post-Udayana work before Gangesha, to rank among the immortal classics of Neo-Logic.

Next we come across the name of Shivaditya Mishra who now lives through his elementary treatise *Saptapadarthi*.

Another Naiyayika is Keshava Mishra, the author of *Tarkabhasha*. We have come



to know that *Tarkabhasha* was driven out of Mithila and became popular in Varanasi from where it circulated in other parts of India.

There is also Mahamahopadhyaya Chandra; the name of this Naiyayika is referred to by Gangesha. Both Chandra and his work *Amritabindu* were cited also in the *Shabdlokodyota* of Vahinipai Bhattacharya (Sarvabhauma's son).

Divakara Upadhyaya is well-known as the supreme authority in the Nyaya-Vaisheshika literature of Mithila.

Another well-informed scholar of Bengal, Pundarikaksha Vidyasagara refers to Divakara. Divakara's date can now be definitely fixed between 1200-1250 A.D.

Prabhakara Upadhyaya's name is recorded as one of the greatest pre-Gangesha scholars of Nyaya-Vaisheshika philosophy. Another Nyaya-philosopher, Sondada was only just senior to Gangesha.

Mathuranatha, in his commentary on Gangesha, has cited two passages of Sondada Upadhyaya.

Sondada's date can be safely placed about 1300 A.D. as he was regarded as a 'recent' scholar by both Manikantha and Gangesha.

Manikantha Mishra is one of the greatest and latest authorities of Nyaya consulted by Gangesha who seems to have been influenced by him. The only treatise by him is named *Nyayaratna*. Some evidences prove conclusively that Manikantha is preceded by Gangesha.

Shashadharacharya is one of the authorities consulted by Gangesha.

Then there is Murari Mishra. Gangesha in the *Pramanyavada* refuted the views of Prabhakara, Bhatta, Mishra. Vardhamana, in the *Kusumanjali Prakasha*, mentioned the full name as Murari Mishra.

Jagadguru is another unknown scholar who appeared before Gangesha.

Another scholar is Jivanatha Mishra, the eldest brother of Shankara Mishra's father,

Bhavanatha Mishra. Shankara Mishra achieved all his success in Shastras through his father Bhavanatha and Bhavanatha learnt from Jivanatha.

We also find the name of Gangaditya, a commentator on the text of Gangesha, in the *Chintamanivivechana* of Vidyanivasa Bhattacharya.

The mention of Gangaditya's name along with that of Vardhamana, proves that Gangaditya was an author and commented on Gangesha's work.

Jayadeva alias Pakshadhara Mishra is the only scholar of the post-Gangesha period in Mithila who succeeded in setting up a new school of Navya Nyaya. He was writing in the latter half of the 15th century A.D. His immortal work is the *Aloka*, a commentary on the 3 parts of Gangesha's work. It dominated Nyaya studies throughout India. Pakshadhara was a famous dialectician.

There is almost an universal tradition in Mithila and Bengal that Jayadeva was a student of Yajnapati Upadhyaya.

Padmanabha Mishra (in the latter half of the 16th century A.D.) wrote a commentary on the *Aloka* named *Pakshadharoddhara* in which he met the arguments of Narahari, son of Yajnapati.

Vachaspati Mishra (II) wrote a commentary on the Nyaya Sutras of Gautama known as *Tattvaloka*. The *Tattvaloka* is one of the earliest attempts to explain the Nyaya Sutras under the new light of Gangesha's epoch-making work *Tattvachintamani*. Whole chapters of the *Chintamani* have been summarised by Vachaspati (II) under different Sutras.

Vachaspati (II) also commented on *Tattvachintamani*. There is a unique manuscript of the *Pratyaksha* chapter of the *Chintamaniprakasha*.

Vachaspati (II) chronologically stands at the top of a galaxy of Navya Nyaya scholars of Mithila and Bengal. Vachaspati (II) preceded both Jayadeva and Pragalbha-

charya. Jayadeva (1460-75 A.D.) was preceded by his teacher Yajnapati (1450 A.D.) who came after Vachaspati (II).

Shiromani's teacher Sarvabhauma was preceded by Pragalbhacharya who was slightly senior to Jayadeva.

Yajnapati Upadhyaya is the author of a commentary named *Prabha* on the three parts of Gangesha's work. *Prabha* superseded all previous commentaries on Gangesha's work and placed a solid foundation upon which the latest phase of Navya Nyaya studies upon Gangesha flourished.

The *Prabha* created quite a sensation in the learned world. Shiromani also accepted reading of Yajnapati and wrote his brilliant thesis *Sangati* where Upadhyaya's views were not ignored.

#### Concluding Remarks

On the basis of the opinion of M.M. Gopinatha Kaviraja, conclusion is drawn that there are three lineages of Navya Nyaya starting from Gangesha-Mithila-Bengal and South India.

#### Navya naiyayikas in Mithila:

- (1) Gangesha Upadhyaya
- (2) Vardhamana
- (3) Pakshadhara Mishra
- (4) Vasudeva Mishra
- (5) Ruchidatta Mishra
- (6) Raghupati
- (7) Bhagiratha Thakkura
- (8) Mahesha Thakkura
- (9) Jivanatha Mishra
- (10) Bhavanatha Mishra
- (11) Shankara Mishra
- (12) Vachaspati Mishra (II)
- (13) Madhusudana Thakkura
- (14) Devanatha Thakkura
- (15) Gopinatha Thakkura

#### South-India Lineage:

- (1) Chenna (Chinna) Bhatta
- (2) Dandi Swami Narayana Tirtha

- (3) Kaunda Bhatta
- (4) Mathava Deva

#### Bengal Lineage:

- (1) Maheshwara Visharada
- (2) Vasudeva Sarvabhauma
- (3) Ratnakara
- (4) Haridasa Nyayalankara
- (5) Janakinatha Bhattacharya Chudamani
- (6) Raghunatha Shiromani
- (7) Mathuranatha Tarkavagisha
- (8) Bhavananda
- (9) Ramabhadra Sarvabhauma
- (10) Jagadisha Tarkalankara
- (11) Raghavendra Sarasvati Tirtha
- (12) Gaurikanta Sarvabhauma
- (13) Harirama Tarkavagisha
- (14) Jayarama Nyayapanchanana
- (15) Vishvanatha Nyayapanchanana

These are ordinarily the names of the Navya Naiyayikas. Originally, as we have seen, Nyaya philosophy began with Maharshi Gautama as a search into external reality, in order to know the essential evanescence of all matters, and thus attain liberation from the desires of these perishable realities. Gradually with the development of Navya Nyaya, intellection rather than discrimination of reality, gained primary importance. Dr. Radhakrishnan has rightly pointed out this new aspect of Navya Nyaya:

"The modern Nyaya with its exclusive interest in the theory of knowledge, forgets the intimate relation between logic and life. The ancient Naiyayika had a more adequate idea of logic and metaphysics. The modern Naiyayika devotes great attention to Pramana or the means of knowledge, and the theory of definition, and discards altogether the question of Prameyas or the object of knowledge."<sup>1</sup>

1. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy* (Vol. II), George Allen and Unwin, (Reprinted by Blackie and sons, Calcutta, 1985, p. 42).



# INDIAN HOLISTIC EXPERIENCE AND ANALYTICAL RATIONALITY

RAJA RAMANNA

*(Continued from the previous issue)*

*The vedantic view: (Shankara, 8th cent.)*

A holistic appreciation of the Universe has not been fashionable in recent centuries. This is because of the great benefits that the scientific method has bestowed on mankind. In view of the successes of Science in explaining the A-CHIT set, it is not unreasonable to assume that every aspect of the Universe can be explained by its methods. It is, however, important to separate the material usefulness of theories and their universal validity in discussing philosophical matters. One must also avoid even deducing too much from symmetries covering smaller regions of knowledge. An example of the latter is the interpretation of the new discoveries in Molecular Biology. The biologists would have us believe that their results confirm the fact that the CHIT set is but a sub-set of the A-CHIT set and the DNA molecule would explain all aspects of life and consciousness in due course. Our comment is that the break between the two sets is a more fundamental one than what Biology can offer us as solutions. The problems under consideration refer to the limitations of Quantum Mechanics and no symmetries observed in bio-processes can bypass these fundamental questions.

We have seen in the last half century, how new discoveries in the sciences have altered our thinking. It is now time to examine whether the altered path is turning us back into the past, even if it be only to have a new look at the older deductions in the hope that it could lead to new methods of investigations.

The criticism of the older methods has been on the grounds that they are (1) not based on measured data; (2) based on verbal testimony; and/or (3) mystical. As mentioned earlier, (1) may be the very restriction of science, restraining our understanding of all knowledge. (2) and (3) may be partly true, but such views have come about due to unsympathetic translations and other historic reasons.

Shankara, whose 12th birth centenary is being celebrated this year, was a logician, highly influenced by Buddhist thought. From Alexander's time, the Buddhists had been in close contact with Greek civilization, as many Buddhist areas came under Greek rule, specially Bactria in Afghanistan. While they were deeply influenced by Greek sculpture, the Indians did not completely accept either their mathematics or philosophy. For example, the Hindus never accepted the supremacy of geometry and preferred analysis and number theory. In spite of Greek mathematical inputs, philosophy in India gave great, if not more, importance to things which were beyond measurement as possessing the ultimate truth. However, that Shankara had an objective approach to these matters is clear from the following Shloka<sup>5</sup>:

“This universe does not exist apart from the sense of perception; and the perception of its separateness is false like the quality of the blueness of the sky. Has a superimposed attribute any meaning apart from

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5. Shankara, *Viveka Chudamani* (Verse 235): Trans. Swami Madhavananda, Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, Almora, Himalayas.

its substratum? It is the substratum that appears like that due to delusion.”

The Vedantic view insists that it is the A-CHIT set which is the sub-set of the CHIT set. It is consciousness that perceives the Universe to the extent it can be observed. If there was no consciousness in man, he would not be able to observe its existence or communicate with others to ask what is its structure or purpose. Search for reality is that which makes one see in things that were not visible at first sight. Our consciousness appears in various states and what we observe in the normal waking state may not be the reality<sup>6</sup>. Yoga (not as exercise) and meditation could improve one's perception.

This Vedantic interpretation of the Universe implies that there must be an unchanging Supreme Brahman. It is described as something of having a symmetry of symmetries—remote and pure. It is only from the departures from this symmetry, do the laws of the observable Universe begin to exhibit themselves. The departures are said to arise from Maya, the one that screens us from the Supreme Reality. Creation is thus considered as a fall from an otherwise perfection, which either “was” or “will be” but never “is”.

Shankara has been criticised over the centuries, not for his logic, as much as for the fact that his perception of Brahman is one that is remote, unresponsive and sterile. If we compare the Supreme-Symmetric Brahman of Shankara with the “Unification” proposals of modern physics, both show similarities. They both claim that it is the departure from symmetry that leads one to the laws of the measurable world. Given the necessary flexibility in interpreting an ancient exposition to compare with modern technical language, the parallel is striking.

6. R. Ramanna: *Logic, Shankara & Subramanya Iyer*, Prof. Murty 60th Birthday Volume 1986, Motilal Banarsidas, Delhi.

Both refer to a Supreme Origin of Symmetry, which takes no moral responsibility for what it can create.

The comparison between Shankara and modern physics is made not because it is the intention to show that everything of modern science had been understood in the past by intuition, but just to indicate that there are other methods of thinking to arrive at generalities, in much the same way the works of the great Indian Mathematician, Srinivasa Ramanujan, whose birth centenary is being celebrated this year, demonstrates in the field of mathematics. He could arrive at theorems in the forefront of mathematics for which often he would give no proofs at all. Even to this day, proofs are being supplied by others for which they have had to use developments in mathematics, which just did not exist in Ramanujan's time. That this is possible in a field like mathematics suggests greater possibilities in the realm of philosophy.

*The vedantic view (Ramanuja 12th cent.)*

The person, who criticises Shankara is another Indian philosopher, Ramanuja (12th cent.)<sup>7</sup>. His criticisms are not so much on Shankara's logic as on the grounds, he created an Ishwara set which is absolute, remote, unchangeable and sterile and, as has been observed, a sterile set can never create. It can only project and hence comes the concept of Maya as an illusion. A sterile unchangeable entity can project only by illusion. Further, the laws of the Universe come about on defects and departures from Absolute Symmetry.

Ramanuja's contention is that the Ishwara set, if it is to be responsible for the creation

7. K. S. Narayanachar: *The Concept of Relation in Visistadvaita*—Quarterly Publication “God and the World”, Pathway to God, Ranade Institute, Belgaum, India.



of the Universe, has to be by a process of achieving order from chaos—"The blossoming up of Reality from initial chaos"—in much the same sense that modern non-equilibrium thermodynamics would have it. Further, a study in systematic terms of chaos suggests that even in systems having a few parameters, imperfect knowledge of the initial conditions can lead to elements of order in chaotic systems and phenomena. Can we say that this is an echo of "beauty in the eye of the beholder?"

Ramanuja holds that since creation is derived order from disorder, it also implies that the ever-changing Supreme Brahman "cares" for that which It has created. The use of humanitarian language may upset people who have been brought up only in the scheme of science, forgetting that humanitarian impulses are as much a part of the physical world as any of the laws of thermodynamics.

We have seen that the successes in explaining the A-CHIT set  $S(A)$  is based on measurability. It has been so successful that one is tempted to believe that this is all that we have to know of the Universe. But from within measurability itself, it speaks of its limitations, much as a scientist would not like it to be so. The Uncertainty Principle is a limit to the measurement attitude towards all knowledge. Godel sets a limit to what can be done with the assistance of mathematics. The very null type of resolutions to the problems of Quantum Mechanics would indicate that there is a break between knowledge based on measurement and things immeasurable, i.e., life processes and consciousness. While we

may never be able to demonstrate the Supreme Symmetry to which all knowledge lead us, that departures from it can lead us to a branch of knowledge known as Science that is not inconsistent with scientific ideas.

There is perhaps also a break between the Ishwara set and the CHIT set which represents a break between purely life processes and those leading to the unique feeling for the concern for human welfare, in much the same way as there exists a break between the A-CHIT and CHIT sets through Uncertainty etc. Ramanuja's criticism of Shankara may be the break between the CHIT set and the Ishwara set. He argued for this status nearly a thousand years ago. It is unlikely that methods other than holistic experience has the key to the understanding of this problem. Ramanuja's ideas have either not been studied or not known to the Western world. It is possible that revaluation of Shankara and Ramanuja may lead to new pathways in the study of all knowledge.

My thanks are due to Prof. N. Mukunda, Professor of Theoretical Physics, Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, and Prof. K. Narayanachar, Professor of English Literature, Karnataka University, Dharwad, for many useful discussions on these difficult issues. I am grateful to them for bringing to my attention the latest considerations, as well as the important conclusions of the past, buried as they are in time.

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8. Gaudapada: The Mandukya-Karika, Trans. Swami Gahbirananda, 1987, Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Trichur, Kerala, India.

# PRACTICAL HINTS FOR SPIRITUAL LIFE

## *Meditation*

1. As you sit down to meditate, think of the cravings and desires of the mind as mere dreams. See them as unreal. They can never attach themselves to the mind. Feel that you are pure. Thus purity will gradually fill your mind.

—*Swami Brahmananda*

2. Q: Does meditation mean thinking of the form of the Deity ?

A: It is thinking of the Divine, both with form and without form.

—*Swami Brahmananda*

3. If you meditate on God with form, He Himself will reveal to you His real nature. ... It is very difficult to meditate on the formless. ... There is no question of inferiority or superiority in this; it is a question of temperament. Whatever appeals to one is the best for him. ... God is both with form and without form, and again beyond both. ... Everything is He. It is the same Ganges that you have at Kalighat, Dakshineswar, Allahabad, and Hardwar.

—*Swami Shivananda*

4. God should be imagined as vast and infinite. To bring this idea of vastness within, one should see the Himalayas or the ocean, or gaze at the sky.

—*Swami Brahmananda*

5. Before you meditate think of the Master. If you do that you will see that whatever you do will yield good results. ... Think that he is in everything and everywhere—that you are, as it were, immersed in him even as a pot is immersed in the ocean.

—*Swami Saradananda*

6. Q: How should I meditate on the Chosen Ideal ?

A: First make your salutations at his feet, and then proceed.

—*Swami Brahmananda*

7. First think of a blissful divine form. This will have a soothing effect upon your nerves. Otherwise meditation will become dry and tedious. Think of the form of your Chosen Ideal, smiling and full of joy. ... think that your Chosen Ideal is luminous and that his light is lighting everything. Think of him as living and conscious. As you continue meditating thus on the form of the Chosen Ideal, the form will gradually melt into the Formless, the Infinite. Then will come a vivid sense of the living Presence.

—*Swami Brahmananda*

8. In the heart one has to meditate on one's Chosen Deity as sitting on a red lotus with twelve petals, and in the head on the Guru as seated on a white lotus with a thousand petals.

—*Swami Shivananda*



PRABUDDHA BHARATA: 90 YEARS AGO

Arise! awake! and stop not till the goal is reached! Katha Upa. I. iii. 14

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Once the late Mr. Keshubchunder Sen, the leader of the Brahma Samaj asked our Master: "Since there is only one God how is it that there are so many sects quarrelling with one another?" To which the Bhagavan replied: "You see, my dear boy, people always quarrel over their lands, properties and sundry other things of the world, saying: this land is mine, and that is thine, and, in this way divide this earth in various ways by drawing lines of demarcation to distinguish their respective properties; but no one ever quarrels about the open space that is above the earth, for that belongs to none, as there can be drawn no lines on it to mark out one's property from that of another; similarly when the mind of a man rises above all worldly concerns he can have no occasion for quarrel, for then he reaches a certain point which is the common goal of all." When a man realises God he cannot quarrel, but when he is below the right mark, that is, when he is distant from God, is more or less given to quarrelling. Try to rise up to that height without quarelling, although you may have many occasions for it and thus at last end all these disagreements by realising universal harmony and agreement which are only to be found in God, who is both within and without you. Let us hear what a great Bengali devotee of yore named Sri Ramaprasad had ever been singing sweetly to all people. This great devotee never sat down to compose his songs but when the feeling came he sang extempore most exquisitely beautiful songs redolent with the love celestial. These immortal songs are believed by many to have come from the Eternal Mother herself who sat enthroned in the bosom of her child Sri Ramaprasad and prompted him to sing. He sings: "Worship the mother, Oh my mind, in whatever way you like, never forgetting to remember the mantram which your spiritual father has given to you; know that you prostrate yourself before the holy Mother when you stretch yourself to rest; know yourself to be in deep meditation when you sleep; know that you offer oblation to the holy fire when you eat. Know that every sound you hear is the holy mantram of the mother for all the fifty letters of the alphabet are her different names. Sri Ramaprasad announces to all with great joy that the Mother Divine is in every being; and so, Oh my mind, when you walk in the streets know for certain that you are simply going round that Divine Mother." Here the song ends. Can such a man have any quarrel with any of his fellow brothers? Such a man is a true Sannyasin.

*Swami Subodhananda*

*Lecture delivered at the Young Men's  
Hindu Association, Madras, 1897*