



BHAVAN'S BOOK UNIVERSITY

**INTRODUCTION
TO
VEDANTA**

P. Nagaraja Rao

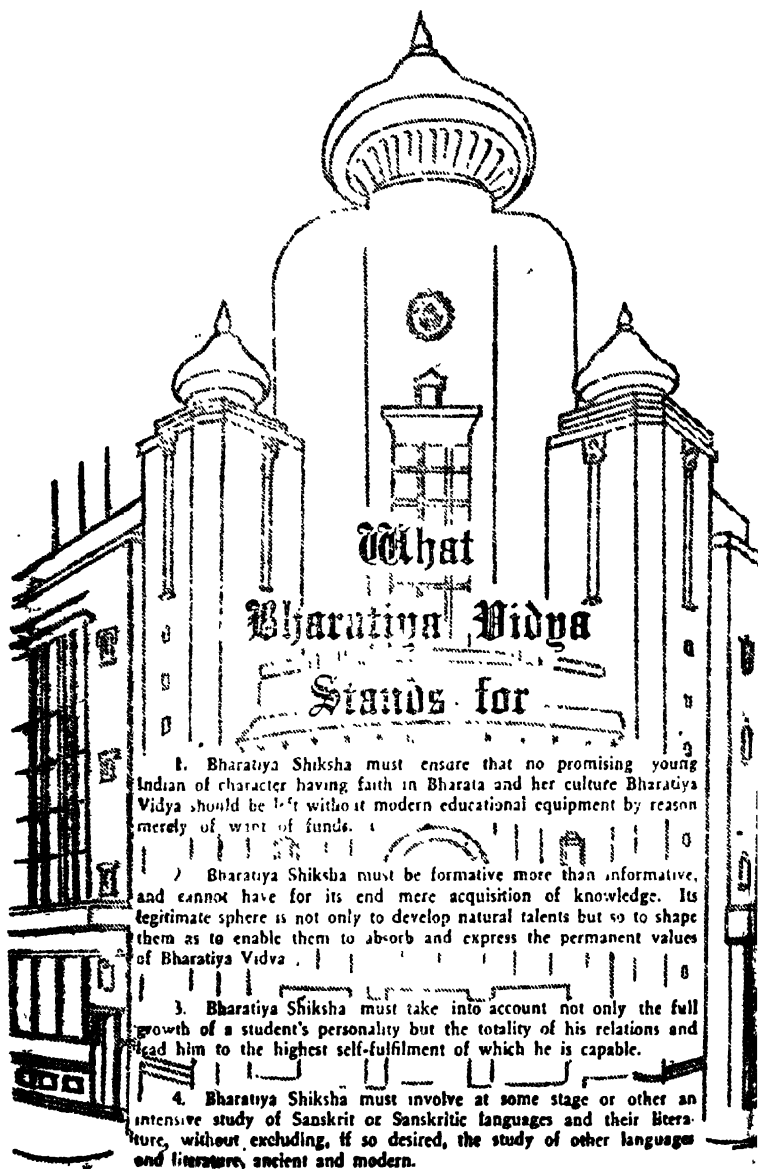
GENERAL EDITORS

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BHARATIYA ILYA BAVAN, BOMBAY



What

Bharatiya Vidya

Stands for

1. Bharatiya Shiksha must ensure that no promising young Indian of character having faith in Bharata and her culture Bharatiya Vidya should be left without modern educational equipment by reason merely of want of funds.

2. Bharatiya Shiksha must be formative more than informative, and cannot have for its end mere acquisition of knowledge. Its legitimate sphere is not only to develop natural talents but so to shape them as to enable them to absorb and express the permanent values of Bharatiya Vidya.

3. Bharatiya Shiksha must take into account not only the full growth of a student's personality but the totality of his relations and lead him to the highest self-fulfilment of which he is capable.

4. Bharatiya Shiksha must involve at some stage or other an intensive study of Sanskrit or Sanskritic languages and their literature, without excluding, if so desired, the study of other languages and literature, ancient and modern.

5. The re-integration of Bharatiya Vidya, which is the primary object of Bharatiya Shiksha, can only be attained through a study of forces, movements, motives, ideas, forms and art of creative life-energy through which it has expressed itself in different ages as a single continuous process.

6. Bharatiya Shiksha must stimulate the student's power of expression, both written and oral, at every stage in accordance with the highest ideals attained by the great literary masters in the intellectual and moral spheres.

7. The technique of Bharatiya Shiksha must involve—

- (a) the adoption by the teacher of the *Guru* attitude which consists in taking a personal interest in the student; inspiring and encouraging him to achieve distinction in his studies; entering into his life with a view to form ideals and remove psychological obstacles; and creating in him a spirit of consecration, and
- (b) the adoption by the student of the *Shishya* attitude by the development of—
 - (i) respect for the teacher,
 - (ii) a spirit of inquiry,
 - (iii) a spirit of service towards the teacher, the institution, Bharata and Bharatiya Vidya.

8. The ultimate aim of Bharatiya Shiksha is to teach the younger generation to appreciate and live up to the permanent values of Bharatiya Vidya which flowing from the supreme art of creative life-energy as represented by Shri Ramachandra, Shri Krishna, Vyasa, Buddha, and Mahatma have expressed themselves in modern times in the life of Shri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Swami Dayananda Saraswati, and Swami Vivekananda, Shri Aurobindo and Mahatma Gandhi.

9. Bharatiya Shiksha while equipping the student with every kind of scientific and technical training must teach the student, not to sacrifice an ancient form or attitude to an unreasoning passion for change, not to retain a form or attitude which in the light of modern times can be replaced by another form or attitude which is a larger and more effective expression of the spirit of Bharatiya Vidya; and to capture the spirit afresh for each generation to present it to the world.



आ नो भद्राः क्रतवो यन्तु विश्वतः .

Let noble thoughts come to us from every side

—*Rigveda*, I-89-i

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Karnatak College, Dharwar.

BHAVAN'S BOOK UNIVERSITY

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TO
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1958

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GENERAL EDITOR'S PREFACE

The Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan—that Institute of Indian Culture in Bombay—needed a Book University; a series of books which, if read, would serve the purpose of providing higher education. Particular emphasis, however, was to be put on such literature as revealed the deeper impulses of India. As a first step, it was decided to bring out in English 100 books, 50 of which were to be taken in hand almost at once. Each book was to contain from 200 to 250 pages and was to be priced at Rs. 2/-.

It is our intention to publish the books we select, not only in English, but also in the following Indian languages: Hindi, Bengali, Gujarati, Marathi, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam.

This scheme, involving the publication of 900 volumes, requires ample funds and an all-India organisation. The Bhavan is exerting its utmost to supply them.

The objectives for which the Bhavan stands are the reintegration of the Indian culture in the light of modern knowledge and to suit our present-day needs and the resuscitation of its fundamental values in their pristine vigour.

Let me make our goal more explicit:

We seek the dignity of man, which necessarily implies the creation of social conditions which would allow him freedom to evolve along the lines of his own temperament and capacities; we seek the harmony of individual efforts and social relations, not in any makeshift way but within the frame-work of the Moral Order; we seek the creative art of life, by the alchemy of which human limitations are progressively

transmuted so that man may become the instrument of God and is able to see Him in all and all in Him.

The world, we feel, is too much with us. Nothing would uplift or inspire us so much as the beauty and aspiration which such books can teach.

In this series, therefore, the literature of India, ancient and modern, will be published in a form easily accessible to all. Books in other literatures of the world, if they illustrate the principles we stand for, will also be included.

This common pool of literature, it is hoped, will enable the reader, eastern or western, to understand and appreciate currents of world thought, as also the movements of the mind in India, which, though they flow through different linguistic channels, have a common urge and aspiration.

Fittingly, the Book University's first venture is the *Mahabharata*, summarised by one of the greatest living Indians, C. Rajagopalachari; the second work is on a section of it, the *Gita* by H. V. Divatia, an eminent jurist and a student of philosophy. Centuries ago, it was proclaimed of the *Mahabharata*: "What is not in it, is nowhere." After twenty-five centuries, we can use the same words about it. He who knows it not, knows not the heights and depths of the soul; he misses the trials and tragedy and the beauty and grandeur of life.

The *Mahabharata* is not a mere epic; it is a romance, telling the tale of heroic men and women and of some who were divine; it is a whole literature in itself, containing a code of life; a philosophy of social and ethical relations, and speculative thought on human problems that is hard to rival; but, above all, it has for its core the *Gita* which is, as the world

is beginning to find out, the noblest of scriptures and the grandest of sagas in which the climax is reached in the wondrous Apocalypse in the Eleventh Canto.

Through such books alone the harmonies underlying true culture, I am convinced, will one day reconcile the disorders of modern life.

I thank all those who have helped to make this new branch of the Bhavan's activity successful.

1, QUEEN VICTORIA ROAD

NEW DELHI

3rd October 1951

K. M. MUNSHI

PREFACE

In the present work an attempt is made to state the fundamental tenets of the different Schools of Vedānta, in a connected manner; interpretation, comparison and criticism are not excluded. The aim of the book is to give a comprehensive account of the philosophical heritage of Vedānta in all its aspects.

In the first chapter the reader is introduced to a critique of Science, as a methodology and as the complex of values: Its limitations and merits are examined. Next, the nature and function of Philosophy as conceived by the West is explained. The third chapter is an account of the "Spirit and Substance of Indian Philosophy". Among the Hindus the philosophical and religious values are conveyed through systems of philosophy, which are associated with the names of the great ācāryas, Śaṅkara, Rāmānuja, Madhva, etc. Vedānta in one form or other is the living religion of the Hindus; hence, some of the general and common problems of the Vedānta system are discussed in chapter four. The chapters, that follow, present the systems of Śaṅkara, Rāmānuja, Madhva, Vallabha, Caitanya and Śaiva Siddhānta. The concluding chapter is a brief account of religion of Vedānta as conceived by Śaṅkara. There is some repetition in the different sections of the book and it is not avoided as it secures a certain completeness of presentation and unity to the systems. Every system is a living spiritual guide and represents a way of life.

In the preparation of this work, I owe more than I can ever express or assess to the writing and speeches of my Professor, Dr. S. Radhakrishnan. I thank all those who have in some manner or other

helped me to understand the spirit of the Vedānta texts. I am deeply thankful to the editors of the different philosophical journals for the permission to use and reproduce the material of the articles published in their journals. Professor V. M. Inamdar of the Karnatak College kindly read the proofs and saw the book through the Press, for which act I thank him.

My special thanks are due to the executives of the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan for publishing this volume in their Book University Series.

Dharwar
26th January 1958

P. Nagaraja Rao

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Inscribed to the two devotees of
Lord Pānduraṅga,
Sri Mysore Swami Rao
and
Srimaṭi Sant Saraswati Bai,
with love, respect and gratitude.

Chapter I

THE SCIENTIFIC OUTLOOK AND HUMAN VALUE

In the process of evolution through ages, the emergence of man marks a definite epoch. Evolution is automatic and blind at the inorganic and biological levels. The inorganic sector of reality is by far the greatest in extent and it comprises the overwhelming bulk of the cosmos, including the interstellar space and material aggregates we call stars. The rate of change at this level is slow and is due to *Physical Interaction*.

Evolution at the organic level, i.e., the biological sector, is confined to the surface of our small planet, the earth. The rate of change at this level is swifter than at the inorganic level. The general traits of life are nutrition, variation, growth, reproduction and repair. Nature does all the work for animals and plants. The mode of change at this level is *natural selection*.

To describe man as the highest product of evolution is a simple biological fact. Evolution becomes self-conscious at the human stage. 'The uniqueness of Man' is the most profound biological finding of our day. The rate of evolution is enormously accelerated. It is no longer automatic and blind. Man is described as the trustee of human progress. He stands at the cross-roads of evolution. It is for him to progress further or sink back into animal savagery. Nature does not help him to go on without his own effort. Men do not bloom like flowers or put forth fruits as trees do.

Evolution in biology stands for a particular type of orderly change, namely, the production of new

specific forms of life arising in the process of differentiation and integration through accumulated chance variations. The progress of human civilisation and culture is measured in terms of the rational criterion of value.¹

Man's uniqueness consists in his power of speech, imagination and conceptual thought. He has, in the words of Lewis Mumford, an extra-organic environment and a super-organic self. He has become increasingly independent of his environment. He has altered the face of the earth and gained enormous control over the forces of Nature. He has glutted the modern world with marvels.

The achievement of man is the result of his powers of speech and thought. The *word* and the *dream* are his great assets. Reason has enabled him to acquire knowledge, to build on it, to appreciate the significance of knowledge, to create values, to work out purposes, to incorporate social and ethical values into institutions. Language is the greatest invention of man. Reason is his fundamental asset.

Man's power of thought has most vigorously expressed itself in his scientific achievement. Science is not merely an instrument for man's material progress but is also a means for understanding Nature and man's place in the universe. It is one of the greatest achievements of man, the noblest activity and has given us boundless opportunities to lessen our drudgery. It has given inexhaustible material gifts which have added to the health and resources of the human community. In the vivid words of Professor Joad, "we can speak across continents and oceans, instal

1. Julian Huxley, *The uniqueness of Man*, pp. 1 to 21.

television sets in home, hear Big Ben striking in North Borneo; photographs speak and sing; x-rays are the windows through which we observe and snap-shot our insides; roads are made out of rubber; crops are ripened by electricity, hair waved by electric current; distance melts and aeroplane girdles the earth.⁴ Further, Science has given us cheap coal and cotton, revolutionised transport and in a hundred ways changed and ameliorated the life of man.

To the marvels of wireless, x-rays, are added the discovery of sulphonamide group of drugs and anti-biotic specifics like penicillin. The discoveries of the science of endocrinology and psychiatry prove that 'a wise conditioning and the proper supply of the secretions of the ductless glands can cure all the evils of life.' No longer do we believe that demons create diseases and priests cure them. The mentally deficient are advised and not condemned. Psychical abnormalities are cured through the methods of hypnosis, dream-analysis, electric-shock treatment and mental hygiene. The weak, the wounded and the over-strained souls turn for comfort to psycho-analysis. The therapeutic value of the process has given it the prestige of a science. It has banished the concept of sin from the ethical vocabulary.

It is the spectacular achievement of science and the marvels of technology that are responsible for the faith in the omnipotence of science. In the words of Russell, "one hundred and fifty years of science have proved more explosive than five thousand years of pre-scientific culture."²

Science has added to the three values, Truth,

2. Russell's *Scientific Outlook*, p. 9.

Beauty and Goodness, a fourth called the *Useful*. It has produced enough goods for man to live in comfort. The rapid advance of scientific technique has out-matched the necessary social wisdom and enlightened conscience to use them well. Nature for a very long time yielded small extensions of licence to him. In the words of Charles Morgan, "Man in all his fight with nature, though heroically defiant, was at root humble. He knew himself outmatched. It did not occur to him that she, the mighty, the powerful, the enduring and the stubborn would ever abdicate in favour of man all her powers."³ This has perplexed him to the most. The new dispensation of science is our trouble and man was not prepared for such a wind-fall. This has led to the dogmatic assertion that each development of man's power over nature is beneficent. The gifts of science and technology are not unqualifiedly good in themselves. We have so many undesirable elements wrapped up in the gifts of science.

Every addition to human power which science has put into the hands of man has the chance of misuse. We are like the new rich who have come into a fortune but too uneducated to spend it intelligently.⁴ Scientific knowledge is power. More than knowledge and power, we must know how to use it. Science produces all things: on the one hand poison gas and atom bomb and, on the other, penicillin and sulphadiazine. The question of ends is not the task of science; we need to know the ends to which they must be used. The knowledge of good and evil is another branch of

3. Charles Morgan, *The Burning Glass*, See Preface.

4. R. W. Livingstone, *Education and The Spirit of the Age*, pp. 65 to 109.

human study. We need that for the proper use of scientific power.⁵

Science has raised many problems, thrown our minds into confusion and exposed us to temptations which we are not equipped to withstand. We need, not only speed but a sense of direction also, if we are to progress. The soundness of a civilisation is to be judged by what man does with the gifts of science. Ruskin, the nineteenth century prophet of social justice, declared, "no changing of place at a hundred miles an hour, nor making of stuffs a thousand yards a minute, will make us one whit stronger, happier or wiser. There was always more in the world than men could see: they will see it no better for going fast. . . . As for being able to talk from place to place, that is, indeed, well and convenient; but suppose you have originally nothing to say! We shall at last be obliged to confess, what we should have long known, that the really precious things are thought and sight and not pace. It does a bullet no good to go fast and a man, if he be truly a man, no harm to go slow; for his *glory is not at all in going but in being.*"⁶

Science has placed us in the 'power predicament' as a result of its development through the last two centuries. We should equip ourselves with such knowledge as is necessary for a proper use of it. Plato and the *Upaniṣads* declare that the knowledge of good and evil are absolutely necessary for a proper use of

5. Leonard Da Vinci, *Note Books*, P. 96-97. He writes (speaking about submarines) "How by an appliance many are able to remain for some time under water. How and why I do not describe the method. . . . this I do not publish or divulge on account of the evil nature of men who would practise assassination at the bottom of the sea in their lowest parts and sinking them together with the crews."

6. John Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, III, P. 324.

scientific power. Plato writes, "It is not the life of knowledge, not even if it included all the sciences, that creates happiness and well-being, but a single branch of knowledge—the science of good and evil. If you exclude this from other branches, medicine will be equally able to give us health, shoemaking shoes and weaving clothes. Seamanship will still save life at sea and strategy win battles. But without the knowledge of good and evil, the use and the excellence of these sciences will be found to have failed us."⁷

Scientific technique to be properly used, therefore, requires social and spiritual wisdom.

We have so far examined the limitations of scientific technique. Science is not mere technique. It is an outlook on life which goes under the name of rationalism. As a mode of understanding the world, it is objective. "It is the result of man's gradual understanding, the kind of knowledge we can rely on in action. It is neither revealed by God, nor spun out of the head of Aristotle, but is come at by observation and experiment."⁸ It is not purely deductive thinking. It balances and checks deductive thinking by observation and experiment.

It is not dogmatic. It suspends its judgment and does not recklessly, repudiate when evidence is not there. The impulse to science first arose out of curiosity, the desire to know and understand Nature. Technology or the successful manipulation of Nature is a later product. What was a camp follower has assumed command of the forces today.

The scientific frame of mind is unruffled in any context. The scientist must be critical, impartial,

7. Plato, *Charmides*, 174.

8. Max Eastman.

free from likes and dislikes, disinterested, cautious, uncommitted, non-assertive and tentative. The scientific outlook declares that we can arrive at sufficiently probable truth and not always absolutely certain truths. The scientist is alert, nimble, patient to doubt, fond to observe, slow to assert and ready to reconsider.

Science with its definite instruments has measured a great deal of reality. It does not indent on the supernatural nor does it take into account those aspects of reality that are not measurable. It has nothing to do with those entities or values that are supersensuous, hyper-physical and time-transcending. The scientist⁹ abstracts a simplified private universe from the entire Reality. He arbitrarily chooses those qualities which his methods allow him to deal with successfully. The technique leads to astonishing success. "This success was intoxicating and, with an illogicality which, in the circumstances, was doubtlessly pardonable, made many scientists and philosophers to imagine that this useful abstraction is Reality itself."

We find that science leaves out a good deal. Its writ does not run in all the realms of life. It incompletely covers life. To many of our questions it has no answer. It tells us only how things happen and not why they happen so. It cannot explain values or the immortal creations of literature. Sir Richard Livingstone observes, "when we read Homer or Dante or Shakespeare, listen to a symphony of Beethoven, gaze at the Parthenon or the paintings in Sistine chapel, science has little light to throw on what we feel or why we feel it. More goes to produce the

9. Aldous Huxley, *Ends and Means*, pp. 265-280.

effect of Leonardo's Last Supper, than a wall surface, a variety of paint and the physical constitution of the human eye: Beethoven's symphonies are not merely the wood and metal, catgut and waves of air through which they pass into the audible sound."¹⁰

Further, science cannot tell us the way to properly use power in the right direction. It again and again tells us that we should entertain a rational outlook on life and give up our outmoded ways of life. The scientific outlook makes a fervent plea for reason. The powers of thought and reason are considered as greater than any other human power. But human experience of the moral situations of life point to the inefficacy of reason to help us to do the right and tread the straight path. In man, emotions, instincts, appetites and urges of the unconscious are very powerful. The man who knows how to reason well tells his lies more ingeniously and persuasively than the uneducated. Cardinal Newman declared, "Quarry the granite rock with razors or moor the vessel with a thread of silk; then may you hope with such keen and delicate instruments as human knowledge and human reason to contend these giants—the passion and pride of man."¹¹

Mere reason and science by themselves do not go a long way. There has to be a training which educates the emotions.

On the theoretical plane science lays great stress on the analytical outlook. It forgets the role of intuition. Great discoveries are the result of vision and intuition. Leslie Stephen observes, "Genius begins

10. Sir Richard Livingstone, *Some Tasks of Education*, p. 10-11.

11. John Henry Newman, *On the scope and the Nature of University Education*, p. 4.

where intellect ends; or takes by storm where intellect has to make elaborate approaches according to the rules of scientific strategy. *One sees Truth and another demonstrates.*"¹² The extreme method of analysis disables us from appreciating the work of art. A. N. Whitehead points out that "when we understand all about the sun, and all about the atmosphere, and all about the radiation of the earth, you may still miss the radiance of the sunset."¹³ For that, we need a deeper intuition of the human spirit. Hence, Whitehead recommends that we should urge sciences beyond their delusive air of finality.¹⁴

The rational scientific approach to life yields certain conclusions and points to a view of life which is strictly deterministic. The conclusions of mechanistic physics, biology and psycho-analysis make short work of the cherished values of man and do not give him the necessary ardent fervour for a moral life.

Freud in his *Introductory Lectures on Psycho-analysis* observes that "Humanity has in course of time to endure from the hands of science several shocks which undermine its prestige." Copernicus declared that our earth is not the centre of the universe and by this he abolished the primacy of our planet. The theory of evolution declared that man is not born, full, faultless and finished. He is one other complicated natural object. He is not constructed by Nature upon any new principle which she has not used in those less exalted achievements which we call animals.¹⁵ He is not compounded from any different elements.

12. Sir Leslie Stephen, *Hours in a Library*, Vol. III, p. 162.

13. A. N. Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World*, p. 285. See Wordsworth "our meddling intellect misshapes the beautiful forms of things. We murder to dissect".

14. A. N. Whitehead, *Adventures of Ideas*, p. 199.

15. McDougall, *Outline of Psychology*, p. 134.

He can be reduced to a few pounds of carbon, a few quarts of water, a little phosphorus and sulphur, a pinch of iron and silicon, a handful of mixed salts and all scattered and recombined.

The Hormic school of psychology declares that seventeen instincts 'are the prime movers of humanity'. Freud's discovery of the *Unconscious* and its function was the last of the shocks science administered to the grandiosity of man. The scientific picture of man is so narrow that it leaves out the subjective experience of the values that man cherishes. It confines itself purely to sense-experience and the mechanical conception of cause. It is subjective experience that discloses the true nature of man which explains the pursuit of the ideals. Man is not the mere observable personality, not an inefficient fertiliser. There is something in him deeper than his feelings, the very spring of instinct and intuition, the original unsilenceable whisper of the soul. Man in his essence is not an animal with effective volition, nor a mere instrument of material force, nor a plaything of blind fate. He is an immortal spirit with an effective will. But for this spirit many of man's acts remain a mystery to us. He propounds mathematical theorems in beleaguered cities, composes and conducts metaphysical arguments in condemned cells, cracks jokes on the scaffold.

Man's power, apart from his spirit, and its manifestations, the word, the dream, mind and reason, are insignificant and nothing when compared to the mighty forces of nature acting on him. Pascal urged that the minute human being who knows he is crushed is infinitely higher than the unknowing mass, however vast, which crushes him. It is man that has

given significance to life. The physical universe remained insignificant until man interpreted it. That is the uniqueness of man. It is his double nature, the combination of the ape and essence that makes him the greatest marvel of creation. The story of man is far more wonderful than all the wonders of physical science. "It is a mystery unsolved, yet it is a solid fact. It is divine, diabolic—in short, human."¹⁶ The proper study of man is man.

The scientific picture of the universe and the destiny of man, if it is not modified by other elements, makes us depressed. If the second Law of Thermodynamics is true, the prospects for humanity are not encouraging. "A time will come when the sun goes out, a catastrophe that is bound to be, mankind will long ago have disappeared. The last inhabitant of the earth will be as destitute, as feeble, and as dull-witted as the first. They would have forgotten all the arts and all the sciences. They would huddle wretchedly in caves in the sides of the glaciers that will roll their transparent masses over the half-obiterated ruins of cities, where now men think and love, suffer and hope. The last desperate survivors of mankind will know nothing of our genius, nothing of our civilisation. One day the last man, callous alike to hate and love, will exhale to the unfriendly sky the last human breath and the globe will go rolling on, bearing with it through the silent fields of space, the ashes of humanity, the pictures of Michaelangelo, and the remnants of the Greek marbles frozen to its icy surface."¹⁷

16. G. M. Trevelyan, *An Autobiography and other Essays*, p. 65.

17. C. E. M. Joad, *Guide to Modern Thought*, p. 48.

Such a prospect can hardly give any meaning or significance to human life or action.

Our age is an age of science. We are children of science and reason. The commitment is made once for all and we cannot retrace our steps. Science is necessary; its outlook and methods are useful in many matters. But, it is wise to recognise and foolish to ignore its limitations.

A purely empirical approach to problems does not give us any satisfactory answer. It is not possible to build a perfect science on the basis of pure empiricism. Albert Einstein declares that "every attempt at a logical deduction of the basic concepts and postulates of mechanics from elementary experience is doomed to failure."¹⁸ He writes, "the supreme task of the physicist is to arrive at those universal elementary laws from which the cosmos can be built up by pure deduction. Here is *no logical path* to these Laws; only intuition resting on sympathetic understanding of experience can reach them."¹⁹

Science is one great approach to the problems of life. It has some limitations in its outlook and technique. We need and should use science in the measure it can help us. "It is the mark of an educated man," observes Aristotle in *Nichomachean Ethics*, "to look for precision in each class of things just so far as the nature of the subject admits; it is evidently equally foolish to accept probable reasoning from a mathematician and to demand from a rhetorician scientific proof."

18. Albert Einstein, *The world as I see it*, p. 35.

Chapter II

THE NATURE AND FUNCTION OF PHILOSOPHY (The Western View)

It is as much the nature of man to seek the knowledge of human existence, the meaning of life, the nature and the destiny of man, the values that men and religions are in search of as to seek the biological needs—food, sex, raiment, shelter and medical aid. To wonder and reflect on his acts, “to look before and after and pine for what is not,” to praise and condemn are as natural to him, as to eat, drink and be merry. Man is an interrogating animal. He seeks not only bread but also understanding. He is not at peace with himself until he interprets the facts and gets the picture and meaning of life. He has been described variously as a ‘rational animal’ and a ‘metaphysical being.’ Hegel declared that “it is only animals that are not metaphysical.”

The desire to reflect and interpret, to question and answer the problems of life is called the philosophical activity. Philosophy is an adventure of the mind. It is an intellectual interpretation of Reality. It is a distinct approach to the understanding of Reality. It has its own specific methods. There is no use confusing it with other modes of apprehension such as Religion, Science and the Arts.

It is an attempt to think things out in a systematic way. It employs mostly the methods of perception and reason in its understanding and interpretation of Reality. A few make use of intuition. But it must not be forgotten that what is discovered by intuition is demonstrated by logic. Philosophy is

fundamentally an intellectual interpretation of Reality.

The aim and object of philosophy is *Truth*. In the words of Hegel "it is the thinking consideration of things." It does not differ from Science in its objective. The philosopher's conception of Reality is wider and includes all human experience in it. In the words of F. H. Bradley, philosophy is a quest "*to gain possession of Reality in an ideal form.*" Philosophical understanding does not aim at comfort, or salvation or *mokṣa* or escape from the troubles of the world but seeks Truth. It does not care for security or rest. It seeks to satisfy the intellect and not surrender it. It does not accept things on faith, or the revelation of any scripture. It seeks to know Reality with the help of reason. This attitude distinguishes it from religion and theology. Philosophy is not the dogmatic assertion of a set of beliefs. It is a body of "examined beliefs". It argues its case and does not simply assert. It is critical, in the sense that it seeks to examine the fundamentals of thought. It goes into the inquiry of the primary causes. Some of the postulates of Science, such as, Space, Time, Causation etc. are problems of philosophy. Before turning the telescope on to the sky, it examines it. Scientific truths are demonstrable and verifiable in a concrete sense. They can be repeated also. Philosophical truths are demonstrable and verifiable in a *logical sense*. They are tested by the criteria of consistency and non-contradiction. The deductions in philosophy are *logical* and are the work of pure reason. It seeks to understand the whole in terms of reasoning.

In the popular mind, there is a great deal of prejudice against philosophy, its nature and function.

This has arisen because of the ignorance of the significance of the term philosophy. This is responsible for the cheap jokes and revilement of philosophy. Some mistake philosophy for unintelligibility and so declare that 'when A talks to B, and B to A, if both do not understand each other, it is metaphysics. Others mistake philosophy for 'useless knowledge' and describe it as the search for a black cat in a dark room where it is not. Some mistake philosophy for an unimaginative outlook and describe it as Keats does, 'Do not all charms fly at the mere touch of cold philosophy? Philosophy will clip an angel's wings.' Some expect romance from philosophy and, when disappointed, cry out with Romeo, "Hang up all philosophy, unless philosophy can make a Juliet." A few others have identified philosophy with gloom and burst out with Dr. Johnson that "all his life he tried to be a philosopher, and cheerfulness breaks in and makes it impossible for him." They regard it as a kill-joy. Yet others have identified philosophy with a never-ending, inconclusive farrago of arguments leading us nowhere. Omar writes:

"Myself when young did eagerly frequent
 Doctor and saint, and heard great argument
 About it and about; but ever more
 Came out by the same door as in I went."

These men regard philosophy as a series of marches and counter-marches, where we traverse and retrace the same ground. A few regard philosophy as a matter of one's temper. The philosophy a man chooses, declared Fichte, "depends upon the kind of man he is." Some regard any kind of serious mood as philosophy.

The cheap gibes at philosophy are the result of ignorance. Philosophic spirit and knowledge are not things alien to man. It is man's distinguishing trait. Evolution has reached a very remarkable stage in man. Nature refuses to do anything for man. He has to make or mar his future. He is at crossroads and he is the "trustee" of human history, in the words of Julian Huxley. Man is instinct with philosophy. He needs to find the meaning of life. Aldous Huxley writes: "It is impossible for man to live without a metaphysics. The choice is not between some kind of metaphysics and no metaphysics; it is always between a good metaphysic and a bad metaphysic."

To think and reflect is the nature of man. To forbid it makes man non-human. It is impossible for man to cease asking questions or seeking answers, and to abstain from reflection and thought. The philosophical attitude is fundamental to man. It can be described as "the finding of bad reasons for what we believe upon instinct." Bradley retorts, "but to find these reasons is no less an instinct." Men do the philosophising in a confused, careless and slipshod manner. Philosophy requires them to do the job in a systematic manner. There is no point in asking us to philosophise but not fully. Bradley observes, "to reflect and ponder is human. We will only cease to do it when the twilight has no charms or man has ceased to be man."

Two principal objections are levelled by the enemies of philosophy. Some hold that philosophy and metaphysics are impossible. Others declare that it bakes no bread and is useless. It is a flight from the objectives of immediate living. It is escapism. It is a tempting, fruitless exercise of the mind of man.

It is the luxury of a lazy few. It is inconclusive in its results. It encourages the contemplative mood in us and weakens our action. It is absolutely unrelated to life. In the last analysis, it is practically no knowledge worth the name.

The objection that metaphysics is impossible, because our knowledge can never be complete and comprehensive is itself a rival theory of metaphysics. The declaration of the failure of metaphysics pre-supposes a knowledge of the criteria of Reality. So from this we cannot argue to the impossibility of metaphysics.

Philosophy is organic to the nature of man. To ponder, to reflect and to reason out is as much necessary for man as to love, hate and strive. To condemn philosophy is "to break with the noblest in the nature of man." To stop thought short of its final goal is to mutilate one aspect of human nature.

It is not true to say that philosophy has not advanced. The problems of philosophy have not remained the same. They have altered. The solutions to philosophical problems have been influenced by the general development of the sciences.

Some of the problems of philosophy are: (1) Is the universe a fortuitous collocation of atoms, or is it an embodiment of design? (2) Is the evolution of life and the world purposive or is it mere change? (3) Is there a soul? Is there God? Philosophy seeks to study the nature and function of values like Truth, Beauty and Goodness. In the words of Dr. Joad, philosophy "defends Reason and affirms values."

The philosophical outlook is not very different from the scientific. It includes a few super-sensible and hyper-physical values in its study. It is because

of this, Plato said, "that the noblest of all studies is the study of what man should be and what he should pursue." Philosophy expresses itself in two forms. It is employed by some thinkers to construct a coherent system of thought to interpret Reality. We have different systems of philosophy such as Idealism, Realism, Naturalism, Theism, Absolutism, Pragmatism, Instrumentalism, Materialism, and the philosophies of Evolution. Each system has its own fine shades and able exponents. Great names like that of Plato, Kant, Hegel, Bergson, Whitehead, Santayana, stand out in the panorama of western philosophy.

Understanding philosophical systems gives us a definite rigorous mental discipline of exact and careful thought. It gives us the joy of pure thought, untainted by any sordid concern for utility. In the words of Collingwood, the ideal philosopher is resigned to the contempt of fools and worldly men and their success. It strengthens the contemplative bent of mind in us.

The nature of a philosophical system has to be clearly understood. In the words of Prof. E. A. Burtt, "Philosophy has much in common on the one hand with *naive* reflections in which unsophisticated people engage; and on the other hand with abstract and exact inquiries of Science." "It seeks essentially to transcend the limitations of science while respecting the fundamental standards of intellectual attainment upon which science has come to insist. It is a queer hybrid in the realm of reflective inquiry produced through the fertilization of the spontaneous speculations of common sense about ultimate things by the responsible discipline of scientific logic. The philosopher is a child in his open-eyed wonderment at the

world and a man of mature research in a critical and rigorous fashion in which that wonderment is satisfied."

Philosophy lays bare to us the influence of ideas. "Man lives not in a world of hard facts to which thoughts make no difference, but in a world of thoughts. If you change the moral, political, economic, theories generally accepted on which he lives, you change the character of the world also." The influence of ideas and their power over the minds of men can never be disputed. Things first happen in the mind of man and then are translated into action.

A few positive-minded men do not see any good in philosophy. They declare that it is useless knowledge. They hold that politicians and scientific inventors decide and guide the fate of nations and not philosophers. This is an old charge. Marx gives pointed expression to it: "Philosophers have interpreted Reality and not changed it. The need is to change it."

The process of interpretation is not passive. "*To interpret is also to change.*" The philosophical outlook is not without its great benefits. It influences our thoughts and through it our actions. Its great value is that "it protects us from dogmatic superstition on the one hand, and from commonplace materialism on the other." It also makes us not to fall a prey to "stupid fanaticism and dishonest sophistry." Philosophy when genuinely pursued satisfies the mystical side of our nature. It is "not dull as crabbed fools suppose;" "it is sweet as Apollo's lute," is the verdict of Milton.

The general influence of philosophy on the thought of man is liberal. It restores the perspective

we need. In the eloquent words of Bertrand Russell, "philosophy enables us to fight the triple evils of life, *error, hatred and strife*, with knowledge, love and service. In thought, philosophy enables man to rise above the life of the senses, seeking what is always general and open to all men. In desire and will, it aims simply at the good without regarding the good as mine or yours. The impartiality philosophy instils in us leads us to truth in thought, justice in action and universal love in feeling."

Philosophy may not produce goods. It gives us a clear understanding of the problems of life. It liberates the individual from the tyranny of narrow ideas and eager wishes. It has a quality of infinity about it. Its indirect effect on our outlook and on life is to make us feel how trifling and little are our conflicts and acerbities in comparison with the cosmos. Philosophy teaches us the spirit of toleration and forbearance.

In the recent UNESCO discussion on philosophy, five reasons are given as to why philosophy should be taught in our universities. (1) It supplies a basis for synthesizing knowledge as a whole. (2) It causes a student to reflect and judge and to think for himself. (3) It classifies and refines appreciation of humanistic values and establishes their universality. (4) It promotes respect for others, freedom, tolerance and deeper understanding of man. (5) It helps the individual to form ideas on all problems and to assume his proper place in society. Philosophers in the West have constituted imposing systems of thought by the use of critical methods. A particular branch of philosophy called epistemology enquires into the origin, nature, certainty and extent of human knowledge,

together with the grounds and degrees of belief. It also describes, as to how we come to acquire knowledge, the several sources of knowledge, the nature of knowledge and the criteria of truth and error.

Metaphysics in short is the science of the nature of Reality. Logic and Ethics assume the existence of values like Truth and Goodness. The task of logic is to know how Truth is to be attained. It does not ask the question, "Is Truth Possible?" That is the problem for metaphysics.

The great philosophers of the West have employed different methods in the building of the systems. The closest method to common sense adopted by the philosophers is the empirical method: *Empiricism* holds the view that all human knowledge comes from sense-experience and whatever cannot be verified by experience is not real. Locke, Hume and many modern Logical Positivists hold to the method of *empiricism*.

Some like Descartes have put forth the method of *Scepticism* for arriving at philosophical truths. The Cartesian method of doubt consists in doubting all things that are not clear and distinct. There are different uses to which scepticism is put in philosophy. Descartes doubted in order to arrive at a dogma. T. S. Eliot writes, "for every man who thinks and lives by thought, must have his own scepticism, that which stops at the question, that which ends in denial, or that which leads to faith." Humian scepticism is academic. It did not interfere with his life.

A third method of philosophy is the faith in reason and its workings. It is called *Rationalism* (not in the modern sense of the term). This school holds that the Real is rational and that thought construction

agrees with the actual world in which we live and move. Reality is open to the gaze of thought. Hegel upheld this view. He put forward the dialectic method.

A fourth method in Western Philosophy is *Intuitionism*. The anti-Rationalists did not believe in the efficacy of reason; so they declared that reason cannot give us the whole of Reality. It is a defective instrument and is incapable of grasping the flow of Reality. Bergson advocated the method of intuition to grasp Reality. He made it popular.

Some Idealists hold that Reality can be comprehended only in a transcendent mystical experience. They are critical of the intellect and have convicted the relational way of knowledge adopted in Logic as being contradictory. They hold that spiritual experience alone can make us know Reality.

Yet another method of philosophy, very popular in America is *Pragmatism* of James and Dewey. They hold the view that truth lies in successful willing and not in copying an Absolute. Pragmatism and Instrumentalism have paved the way for a secular Humanism. Their slogan is that "man is the measure of all things."

Some of the contemporary philosophers have built their imposing metaphysical systems on the conclusions of Physics and Biology. Whitehead, Eddington, Alexander, Morgan, Julian Huxley are some who have used Biology and Physics for their foundation. Western Philosophy has an impressive and powerful intellectual foundation.

Chapter III

THE SPIRIT AND SUBSTANCE OF INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

The term "Indian Philosophy" comprehends the groups of philosophical systems that have originated from the spiritual experience of the sages of ancient India, subsequently elaborated into systems of thought and explained in terms of reason and logic. They are called *darśanas*. They are not the fruits of mere intellectual speculation.

The antiquity of Indian philosophic thought has not remained a mere matter of history. It has had a living and growing influence on the thought and life of Indians through thirty centuries. It has preserved its spirit through the ages in spite of repeated invasions, social convulsions and frequent upheavals—through all the vicissitudes of India's fortune. The spirit of Indian philosophic thought has a strange vitality, a strong and sound instinct for life, which has made it *mṛityunjaya* (triumphant over death). In every age we have some representative of the philosophic spirit of India. No age is without its witness.

Indian philosophic thought has permeated all aspects of Indian life and literature. It has determined and coloured the themes of Indian drama, literature and art, the social structure and ethical ideals; and its influence is lasting. One of the living systems of Indian philosophy, the Vedānta, has become to some Western intellectuals a solace and a solution to the vexed problems of the world. They consider that it offers the central principles of the universal religion we need today.

Tradition divides Indian philosophy into two groups. The orthodox group (*āstika darśanas*), which consists of Nyāya, Vaiśeṣika, Sāṅkhya, Yoga, Mimāṃsā and Vedānta, believes in the authority of the Vedas and gives allegiance to it. Of this group of six systems, the Mimāṃsā and the Vedānta base themselves directly on the teaching of the Vedas and accept nothing that goes contrary to them. They make use of reason to explain the truths of revelation, i.e., the body of spiritual experience of the *Rishis*. The other four systems of the group are based more on independent grounds of logic and reasoning, but they too are not opposed to the scriptures. Not content merely to swear by the scriptures, they seek to confirm and reassure themselves of the contents of the scriptures through reasoning. The difference is in the distribution of emphasis.

The second group, including Buddhism, Jainism and the Chārvāka school, does not owe any allegiance to the Vedas, and hence these systems are called *nāstika darśanas*. They originate from the spiritual experience of prophets like Gautama the Buddha and Mahavira.

All these nine systems constitute Indian philosophy. Before attempting a detailed study of them, we should try to understand the general characteristics of Indian philosophy, its pervasive climate of thought.

Its range and variety are astonishing. All shades of opinion are there: Realism, Idealism, Pluralism, Monism, Dualism, Monotheism, Theism, etc. In the words of Professor Hiriyanā, "we have all the different shades of philosophic theory repeated twice over in India, once in the six systems and again in Buddhism."

Most of the philosophical systems do not make any reference to the personalities that set them forth. In the words of Max Müller, "of the philosophers hardly anything remains to us beyond their names." They cared more for the truths they expounded than for their names.

The Indian philosophical ideal is different from that of the West. The Indian systems seek to attain a state of existence called *mokṣa*. *Mokṣa* is the highest good, *parama puruṣārtha*. It is the ultimate value. All the other values of life subserve the realization of the highest good and result in it. The Indian outlook is synthetic, integrated and concentrated in the attainment of *mokṣa*.

To the question "Why seek *mokṣa*?" the answer is the need for the radical termination of the sorrows of life. All the systems begin with a reflective examination of the state of human life and find in it a good deal of sorrow. *Samsāra* is full of sorrow. Philosophy originated in India under the pressure of a practical need to overcome and destroy the threefold suffering to which man is heir. It is the master remedy for the ills of life.

Mokṣa is the master word in Indian philosophy according to Sri Aurobindo. It is a state of perfection beyond suffering. The ideal of *mokṣa* is not conceptual. It is the result of integral experience. Mere intellectual study will not enable us to attain it. It requires moral discipline also. It is a religious ideal. It is beyond logic and also beyond mere morality. It is not the mere acquisition of knowledge or mere self-culture, but a certain immediate experience resulting from both. In that state, all our doubts and disbeliefs are dispelled and our strife and tensions

are overcome. This practical and pragmatic motive is the dominant note in all the systems. This has made some describe Indian philosophy as purely religious.

The object of Indian philosophy is not merely to advance in knowledge or to find a correct way of thinking. It is more a right way of 'living. "It is a way of life, not a mere view of life." It is essentially a philosophy of values. The Indian philosophical ideal is a direct experience of Reality and not a mere intellectual mode of apprehending it.

The ideal is significant. *Mokṣa* is eternal. There is no lapse from it once it is attained, no return from *mokṣa* to *samsāra*. It is absolute, and never becomes a means to other ends. It is an end in itself. All the systems describe *mokṣa* as their ideal. The Nyāya declares that *mokṣa* results from knowing the true nature of Reality. The Sāṅkhya speaks of the destruction of the threefold misery (*duḥkhatraya*) as the consequence of the knowing of what the system takes to be the ultimate nature of *Puruṣa*. The Vedānta declares that the knower of the Self overcomes all sorrows, that in such knowledge alone perfection lies.

The ideal of *mokṣa* has over-shadowed the logical acumen of the systems. Yet an acquaintance with the polemical texts of the various systems will bear out their dialectical subtlety, logical analysis, formal precision and coherent inter-relation of concepts and doctrines. A study of these aspects will convince the student of the philosophical worth of each system. It will regale the most ardent admirer of metaphysics and pure thought, and the untrained may well feel baffled on occasions. Thus it is clear that there is no

want of logic in Indian philosophical systems. Reasoning and logic also are their methods.

Indian philosophical systems pay great attention to epistemology (*pramāṇas*). Max Müller observes that the very first question that every one of the Indian systems of philosophy tries to settle is: "How do we know?" The Mīmāṃsakas have formulated the dictum that "the establishment of cognition of a thing depends upon the instruments of knowledge." Every system has given us its theory of knowledge, its doctrines of truth and error.

This leads us to the exact place and function of reason in Indian philosophy. Philosophy is not, as in the contemporary West, a mere attempt to analyze and clarify concepts, beliefs and meanings of words. Philosophy is the search for an experience of Reality. The subject-matter of Indian philosophy, however, is not the entire Reality. It is more the true nature of the Self. One of the postulates of Indian philosophy is that the soul is in its intrinsic nature full of bliss. The realization of the true and native nature of the Self is another name for *mokṣa*. The Self to be realized is not the individual ego that we are aware of. We mistake the ego for the true Self and that is the cause of our suffering. The ignorance of the true nature of the Self, which is free from all impurities, sorrows, etc., is the cause of bondage. This ignorance is called by different names. Nyāya calls it *mithyā jñāna* (illusory knowledge). Sāṅkhya calls it lack of discrimination between *Puruṣa* and *Prakṛti*. Advaita calls it *māyā* (illusion). Self-realization is achieved either through self-culture, or as in some forms of Vedānta, through the Lord's Grace.

Every system attempts to demarcate the Self

from the not-Self. The Self is the supreme Reality. This is the reason for philosophy in India being called *adhyātma śāstra* and *ātma vidyā*. It is the science of the Self.

Philosophy in the West begins with the analysis of experience with the aid of reason. But the term experience is narrowed to the limits of sense experience. Indian philosophy takes the entire gamut of experience into account. It includes normal and super-normal (*laukika* and *alaukika*), waking, dreaming and deep-sleep (*suṣupti*) experiences. Experience has two sides to it: the objective and the subjective. The systems of Indian philosophy are more interested in the subjective aspects. There are exceptions to the main trends, of course, in both the West and the East.

In Indian philosophy the methods of perception and inference are made use of, but it is held that reason, by its very nature, cannot absolutely and completely comprehend Reality. Spiritual realization is a matter of experience. It is self-certifying and beyond reason. This experience is the ultimate authority. All others are valuable in the measure in which they lead to it. There is no demonstrative knowledge of Reality. The revelations that are set forth in the scriptures are *jnāpaka* (reminders) for us and not *kāraṅkas* (makers) of our experience. It is this aspect that has made Indian philosophy scientific. The final acceptance is not based on a second-hand report, or on an inherited authority, but on direct experience. It is hardly fair to describe such a position as dogmatic. The student of philosophy has only fixed a limit for the working of reason. He has no distrust of reason, but he has assessed its limitations. Reason

does not supply the premises for Indian philosophy. Revelation sets its working hypothesis, which is finally accepted after spiritual experience. Reason interprets, clarifies and works out the implications of the working hypothesis. The spiritual experience of sages is the premise for reason to work on.

Though the omnicompetence of reason is not accepted, it is made use of at every stage in the interpretation of the scriptures. It is one of the most important determinative marks of purport in finding out the meaning of the scriptural statements. The Indian philosophers' reliance on scripture is not authoritarian or dogmatic as it seems at first sight. They only tell us that the philosophic ideal of *mokṣa* is beyond the purview of perception and inference. Sense perception and reasoning do not exhaust Reality—"our reach exceeds our grasp." Revelation is the means of communication to us only in spiritual matters, matters beyond the reach of common experience. Further, the findings of reason are inconclusive. Reason can be refuted by better reason. Reason follows certain premises. Logic is called in India *anvikṣā*, i.e., "examination after." It is not an independent instrument of knowledge. Commenting on an important *sūtra*, Śankara observes:—

We see how arguments which some clever men have excogitated with great pains are shown by people still more ingenious to be fallacious, and how the arguments of the latter again are refuted in their turn by other men; so that on account of the diversity of men's opinions, it is impossible to accept mere reasoning as having a sure foundation. . . .

Logic has the intrinsic defect that it cannot comprehend the ultimate Reality or spiritual experience.

It can only work within the scheme of the network of relations. All our rational knowledge is relational. Spiritual experience of the Supreme Reality does not admit of divisions. *Relational* knowledge cannot give us immediate experience of the indivisible nature of Reality.

The validity of reason itself rests on something that cannot be demonstrated by reason. If it rests on some other reason, we shall have to go on from one truth to another, which lands us in an infinite regress. Such tests and criteria of truth as non-contradiction and coherence are not themselves obtained through reasoning. They are the presuppositions of reason. Hence it is that reason is given a limited place in Indian philosophy.

Let us sum up the issue. Spiritual experience alone can demonstrate the nature of Reality and the truth of scriptural declarations. Reason adduces the probability. It cannot give us absolute proof. Not all scripture is accepted. Only that which has purport is accepted. Śankara observes that "even if a thousand scriptural texts proclaim that fire is cold one is not bound to accept it." The Upaniṣads declare that there is no admittance into the shrine of philosophy for those who are intellectually indolent or cannot or will not think. The final position is: Scripture enunciates truths and philosophy seeks to establish them by arguments. Without the material supplied by scriptures and faith, logical reason will be mere speculation and fancy.

All the Indian philosophical systems exhibit a twofold unity of outlook. There is first the "spiritual unity" in their outlook. This is brought out clearly by the common philosophical ideal of *mokṣa*,

which is a spiritual experience, not an intellectual apprehension or an occult vision or a physical ecstasy. The second is the moral unity in outlook. All the systems, though they give differing accounts of *moṣka*, are at one in holding that it cannot be attained by mere intellectual study. The *Katha Upaniṣad* declares that "the Self cannot be attained by instruction or by intellectual power or even through much hearing" (*nāyam ātmā pravacanena labhyo na medhayā na bahunā ṣrutena*). The *Mundaka Upaniṣad* reiterates the same verse. The *Brihadāraṇyaka* laments the futility of mere intellectual learning: "Brood not over the mass of words, for that is mere weariness of speech" (*nānudhyāyād bahūn śabdān vacho vijalpanam hi tat*).

Intellectual study and reasoning must be accompanied by moral excellence and ethical virtues. There must be moral discipline before enlightenment. No spiritual realization is possible without a moral *sādhanā* (discipline). The insistence on *sādhanā* is common to all systems. The *Kathā Upaniṣad* is emphatic on the point: "Not he who has not desisted from evil ways, not he who is not tranquil, not he who is not concentrated in mind, not even he whose mind is not composed can reach the Self through right knowledge" (*nāvīrato duṣcharitān-nāsānto nasamāhitāḥ Nasānta-manaso vāpi prajnanenainam āpnuyāt*). The importance of the ethical life is insisted on in all the systems. The state of spiritual realization is not contra-ethical; it transcends the ethical. Śankara has put among the four requisites for the study of the Vedānta the acquisition of moral virtues. The other three are: discrimination of the real from the unreal; non-attachment to the fruits of earth and heaven; and

the desire for release. The scriptures cannot purify the man whose moral life is not pure. Some systems have insisted on a severe form of self-culture as the true preparation for spiritual realization. For example, Buddhism and Jainism appeal to no extraneous inducements or punishments, to no invocation to God. Referring to Buddhism, Whitehead observes that it is "the most colossal example in history of applied metaphysics." The Prabhākara school of Mimamsa has elevated the moral good as an end in itself. The author of the great epic *Mahābhārata* concludes his grand work with this agonizing cry:

"I cry with arms uplifted, yet none heedeth. From righteousness flow forth pleasure and profit. Why then do ye not follow Dharma?"

Ignorant and ill-informed critics at home and abroad declare that in the Indian philosophical systems spiritual realization frees men from moral obligations. This is hardly true if we take into account the lives and work of the *Jīvanmuktas* (those liberated while still in the body). Moral life implies a constraint in the unregenerate state of man's life. The agent is conscious of his obligations and fulfils them with difficulty. In the *Jīvanmuktas* there is no strife and tension. In the words of Professor Hiriyanna, "they are not realizing virtue but revealing it." Their words are wisdom, and their work is consecration. It is only in this sense, that their acts are spontaneous, that they are said to be above the ethical sphere. Only in this restricted sense is the remark true that Indian philosophy is beyond logic and beyond ethics. It certainly is not anti-rational or infra-ethical. Its close correlation of the moral and spiritual life has resulted in the unity of philosophy and religion in India.

The Indian philosophical systems insist on the necessity of getting spiritual instruction from a preceptor. All virile spiritual traditions have proclaimed the necessity of the *guru*. It is no formality or evasion of one's responsibility. The *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* declares, "He who has found a preceptor knows." An illumined teacher teaches a qualified aspirant the methods of realization. He does not broadcast the truth from housetops. He who wants gold must dig; the rest must be content with straw. The path is as sharp as a razor's edge. The aspirant must have a tranquil mind, utter detachment and a sharp intelligence.

The *sādhana*s outlined in the different systems are identical in many ways. The first stage is the life of morality lived in a society, discharging all duties and refraining from wrong. The path of ceremonial purity cleanses the mind, without which *mokṣa* is impossible. In the words of William Blake, "if the doors of perception were cleansed, everything will appear to man as if it is infinite. For man has closed himself up till he sees all things through the narrow chinks of his cavern." The discharge of moral duties and the leading of a pure life prepares the aspirant's mind for the message from the illumined teacher. Receiving it is known as *śravaṇa*. Reflection upon it is called *manana*. It is the process of convincing oneself through reflection upon the truth learnt by *śravaṇa*. After *manana*, the aspirant begins to meditate on the truth in an uninterrupted manner till he has a direct experience of the truth. This is called *aparokṣajñāna-upāsana* or *nidhidhyāsa*; it transforms mediate knowledge into immediate experience.

The Indian philosophical systems subscribe to a few common doctrines which are integral to their thought. They are: the doctrine of Karma and rebirth; the eternal, non-created, pure nature of the Soul; the beginninglessness of the world; and its moral nature.

The doctrine of Karma brings out a faith in the eternal moral order of the universe. The universe is not a blind unconscious force, nor is it a chance world. It is a moral theatre for the art of soul making. We are what we have made ourselves. We suffer for what we have done. We reap what we sow. The fault is not in our stars, but in ourselves. No act is private and nothing is unimportant. Everything works out its destiny. The doctrine of Karma does not imply that actions are uncaused. But they are determined by no external force. Karma is not caprice. It is being determined by one's own action. The doctrine of Karma and the outlook it has created in the minds of men have been responsible for the manner of Indians' lives. Faith in the law of Karma, in the absolute justice of the rewards and punishments that fall to the lot of men, makes people bear their lot without bitterness and hatred.

Closely connected with the doctrine of Karma is the doctrine of rebirth. One short life is hardly sufficient for man's spiritual development. Many rebirths are a spiritual necessity for the development of man. The doctrine assures us that the moral values and worth achieved in one life are not lost for ever. They are carried to other lives. The theory makes for the moral and spiritual continuity of man. Nothing good is lost; no moral effort is without its continued good effects.

Life in this world is regarded by all the systems as a preparation for the realization of *mokṣa*. "Saṃsāra is a succession of spiritual opportunities," says Dr. Radhakrishnan.

To awaken the spiritual in man and help him realize it, and thus to humanize man, is the supreme objective of all institutions, social and religious. Ill-informed critics are of the opinion that Indian philosophy is ascetic and other-worldly. They declare that it is world-neglecting, static and life-destroying. This is an overdrawn and partial picture. Indian philosophy is dynamic, pragmatic and is inspired by spiritual vision. It has taken note of the natural motives, instincts and passions of man and has regulated them. It aims at evolving a civilization which is naturally productive, socially just, æsthetically beautiful and spiritually integral. It is not a country without a capital, nor is it a formless lump of creeds with no central doctrines to hold it. It is a citadel with a ring of outworks, intricate but interrelated. The outworks are being added to from time to time.

(See Appendix)

Chapter IV

APPROACH TO VEDANTA

The dominant note that characterizes Indian culture and thought is its passion for religion¹ and philosophy. We should look for India's best contribution to world's thought in its religion and philosophy. Indian philosophy is not any and every kind of approach to the study of Reality. It is the acceptance of tested knowledge and examined beliefs in the light of not only the intellect but also integral experience, resulting in an enlightenment which puts an end to all sorrows and brings in abiding bliss. All the systems of Indian philosophy aim at the spiritual realization of the soul which secures it bliss.²

Some modern critics look upon the systems of Indian philosophy as not warring with one another but as constituting a whole, where each system supplements the other and all find their consummation and fulfilment in Vedānta.

Vedānta is regarded as the perfect system of the Hindus. Hinduism is the popular name for the religion of Vedānta. It stands out as the most significantly 'clear native Philosophy of India.' It is the most impressive attempt at system building made in India. It answers at once to the strict demands of metaphysics and the deep requirements of a sound religion, which does not surrender the claims of

1. Louis Renous writes: 'Religion is not an independent phenomenon in India. Religion is not conceived as a duty, or a problem facing every human being on reaching maturity. It is a heritage and a tradition. It is not an obsession of the human mind as it is constantly asserted.' (*Religions of Ancient India*, p. 48).

2. With the single exception of the Cārvāka school.

reason or the needs of humanity. Vedānta in one form or another has become a great contemporary spiritual force working for the good of humanity. It has attracted the great intellectuals of our age to its fold. Its influence on world's thought, particularly that of the West, is deep and widespread. Vedānta has influenced the personalities of Schopenhauer, Hartmann, Nietzsche and Keyserling in Europe. Its influence on the Irish renaissance is seen through the personalities of W. B. Yeats and G. W. Russell. Its great influence on American thought is most vigorous and is best illustrated in the works of Emerson, Thoreau, Walt Whitman, Aldous Huxley, Gerald Heard, Christopher Isherwood and Somerset Maugham.

Romain Rolland declared: "The only religion that can have any hold on the intellectual people is the rationalistic religion of Advaita Vedānta." Vedānta and its fundamental ideas pervade the whole of Indian literature.

There is a popular Sanskrit couplet³ that states, 'Like jackals in a wood, the various systems of philosophy will howl, so long as the lion of Vedānta, with mane ruffled, does not roar.' The words of Aldous Huxley about *Gītā* describe the philosophy of Vedānta also: Vedānta is "one of the clearest and most comprehensive summaries of the Perennial philosophy ever to have been made. Hence its enduring value, [is] not only for Indians, but for all mankind."

The system of Vedānta is twofold: Absolutistic and Theistic. The former is represented by Śankara's

3. 'Tāvad garjanti śāstrāṇi jambūka vipine yathā,
Na garjati jaṭākṣepād yāvad vedānta-kesari.'

Advaita and the latter by Rāmānuja's Viśiṣṭādvaita.

All of them build their systems on the authority of the Scriptures. Scripture is the source for the fundamental tenets of Vedānta. The Vedas are regarded as eternal (*nitya*) and not as the composition of any human being. They are the transcript and record of the revelations vouchsafed to the seers and sages of India. The Ṛiṣis are the media of the revelation at the beginning of each aeon. Each Veda is divided into four sections called Mantras, Brāhmaṇas, Āraṇyakas, and Upaniṣads. There are four Vedas called *Ṛig*, *Yajur*, *Sāma*, and *Atharvaṇ*.

The Mantras are hymns addressed to the various deities like Indra, Varuṇa, Agni. They exhibit great poetic qualities. They are the earliest poetry of the human mind. The Ṛiṣis of the Vedas are said to perceive the Mantras.⁴ In the words of Tagore, the Vedic Mantras are the

poetic testament of a people's collective reaction to the wonder and awe of existence. A people of vigorous and unsophisticated imagination awakened at the very dawn of civilization to a sense of the inexhaustible mystery that is implicit in life. It was a simple faith of theirs that attributed divinity to every element and force of Nature, but it was a brave and joyous one, in which fear of the gods was balanced by trust in them, in which the sense of mystery only gave enchantment to life, without weighing it down with bafflement.⁵

The Brāhmaṇas lay down the rules and directions concerning the performance of various sacrifices. They are prose passages. They do not have any philosophical thought worth the name. The Āraṇyakas mark the transition from the Brāhmaṇas to the Upaniṣads. They are composed in quiet forest hermitages,

4. '*Ṛiṣayo mantra-draṣṭārah.*'

5. *Hindu Scriptures*, ed. by Nicol Macnicol. Foreword by Rabindranath Tagore. Everyman's Library, 1938.

hence the name *Āraṇyakas*. They give us allegorical and mystic interpretation of some of the sacrifices. Certain forms of meditation are also suggested. The concluding portions of the Vedas are called the *Upaniṣads*. They are described as *Vedānta* for two reasons: they are the concluding portions of the Vedas and are also the quintessence of the Philosophy of the Vedas.

Every system of *Vedānta* declares that it derives its doctrines from three texts (*Prasthāna-traya*), namely, the *Upaniṣads*, the *Bhagavad-Gītā*, and the *Vedānta-Sūtras*. Each school holds that its interpretation of the texts is the only correct version and those of the others wrong. Thus we have the different systems of *Vedānta* being fastened on to one and the same text. This has been possible because of the presence of more than one way of looking at the texts. There is an inherent ambiguity in all these texts. They all do not speak with one voice. The text for *Vedānta* is the *Upaniṣads*. The other two though authoritative, are based on the *Upaniṣads*. The *Upaniṣads* are the *Śruti*, i.e., revelation, while the *Gītā* and the *Vedānta-Sūtras* are *Smritis*, i.e., human compositions embodying the meaning of the *Śrutis*.

Let us advert to the consideration of the *Upaniṣads*. The term *Upaniṣad* has been interpreted in different ways.⁶ The etymological meaning of the word is to sit close by devotedly (*sad-upa-ni*). It also means secret knowledge (*guhya ādeśaḥ*). It is applied to the key passages of the *Upaniṣads*. Śaṅkara interprets the term to mean that which destroys

6. The root *sad* yields three senses according to Sureshvara—to decay, to go or to know.

ignorance and leads to Brahman. There is a large number of treatises that go by the name of the Upaniṣads. Only some twelve are interpreted by the Vedāntins. They are ascribed to an age earlier than that of Gautama the Buddha.⁷

The American savant Thoreau¹ exhorted his countrymen not to read the *New York Times*, but to read the *Eternities*, meaning the Upaniṣads. The Spanish writer J. Mascaro described the Upaniṣads as the 'Himalayas of the Soul'.⁸ Just as that great mountain height determines the climate, the rainfall and the physical features of the peninsula, so do these heights of light and wisdom determine the scope and the quality of the spiritual life of the race that inhabits it. In point of popularity the Upaniṣads are second only to the great charter of Hinduism, the *Bhagavad-Gītā*.

Schopenhauer, after reading them exclaimed: "And oh, how thoroughly is the mind here washed clean of all early engrafted Jewish superstitions, . . . ! In the whole world there is no study . . . so beneficial and so elevating as that of the Upaniṣads. It has been the solace of my life, it will be the solace of my death!" Max Müller, who has translated the Upaniṣads, describes them as "the light of the morning, like the pure air of the mountains, so simple and so true if once understood."

All the Upaniṣads are not alike. They differ in their length and methods of exposition. Some are only a few verses and others are very long. Some are

7. Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan's article on Upaniṣads. *History of Philosophy, Eastern and Western*. Pp. 55-75. Edited by Dr. S. Radhakrishnan and others.

8. *Himalayas of the Soul* by J. Mascaro. The Wisdom of the East series. Edited by L. Cranmer-Byng and Allan W. Watts.

in verse and some in prose. Yet others combine both. In style and manner also they vary widely; sometimes we have simple concrete narrative, sometimes abstract metaphysical speculation, and at other times argumentative dialogue. The tone also fluctuates. There is in some passages high seriousness, and in others homely humour, and in yet others innumerable analogies.⁹

The philosophy of the Upaniṣads is the philosophy of the two Vedāntas. Each school, the Monistic and the Theistic, claims that it solely and completely represents the philosophy of the Upaniṣads. It is very difficult to adjudge whether the Upaniṣads are completely after the heart of Śankara or Rāmānuja. The Upaniṣads are the records of the intuitions of the great seers. They have reported their vision and experiences. They have not built systems of thought. They are not the works of a single author. They are the reports of the first-hand mystic experience of sages and not a dialectical and metaphysical discussion about Reality. They are "more poetic than philosophical." They take the forms of informal discussions, parables, and intimate dialogues. In the words of Śri Aurobindo,

The Ṛiṣis disclose what they have seen, they do not argue. The dialogue is often between a qualified aspirant and a sage. It is not a free broadcasting of truth. The Ṛiṣis imparted the truth to aspirants only after testing the sincerity and strength of the student's mind.

Heraclitus is reported to have said, "If men care for gold they must dig for it; otherwise they must be content with straw."

9. See *Breath of the Eternal* (an anthology of the Upaniṣads) by Swami Prabhavananda and Frederic Manchester (Published by Vedanta Society of Southern California, U.S.A.)

The Upaniṣads, like all great classics, have the power of self-renewal. They are neither old nor new. They are eternal. They are ageless. They are modern and topical in a sense. They have a message for all ages and specially for our own. "Modernity is not a question of date but of outlook". When we read and ponder over the passages in the Upaniṣads they re-emerge in answer to our present problems. They have the power to produce from age to age the necessary corrective to men's sense of values and conduct of life by recreating the spiritual ideal which gives them the vision of Truth.

The two schools of Vedānta claim that their philosophy is identical with the thoughts in the Upaniṣads, the *Gītā*, and the *Vedānta-Sūtras*. They do not agree with the modern scholars who hold the opinion that it is foolish metaphysical ambition to read one rigorous system of thought in this book of ancient wisdom, the Upaniṣads. The orthodox Vedāntin regards that a single system of thought is developed in all the three texts; hence they have commented on all the three texts and derived their doctrines from them.¹⁰

The other two texts which are the source books and authorities for Vedānta are the *Bhagavad-Gītā* and the *Vedānta-Sūtras*. These two are human

10. Max Müller writes: 'With us philosophy always means something systematic, while what we find here are philosophic rhapsodies rather than consecutive treatises. But that is the very reason why the Upaniṣads are so interesting to the historical student. Nowhere, except in India, can we watch that period of chaotic thought, half poetical, half religious, which preceded, in India at least, the age of philosophy properly so called.... And however unsystematic these relics of the childhood of philosophy may seem, *there is really more system in them than appears at first sight.*'

compositions. They derive their authority from their theme. Śankara treats the *Gītā* as one of the triple texts because the Lord Himself has delivered the message. The *Gītā* is the most popular Hindu scripture. It is enshrined in the *Mahābhārata* and is admired by all as the layman's Upaniṣad. Here too, both the schools of Vedānta claim that it embodies their philosophy of life and not their rival's. Though a completely objective approach is not possible, still one feels, taking the verses of the *Gītā* by and large, that it is more akin to theistic Vedānta than the absolutism of Śankara. There is very little support for Śankara's doctrines in the *Gītā* except for a few verses in Chapter XIII. Śankara strives hard to read his doctrines in the *Gītā*. The *Gītā* speaks in one voice unlike the Upaniṣads. It is predominantly theistic. It is the treasure-house for the method of devotion.

The philosophy of the *Gītā* is the philosophy of the theistic Vedānta. Its general importance is very great. It affirms the reality and validity of religious experience and man's imperative need for it. It presents unambiguously a complete and comprehensive ideal of true religion. It outlines a religion based on the philosophy of action. It declares that religion has no secrets which absolve us from right living. It asks each of us to take up the duty that is dictated by our *svabhāva* (talents) and *svadharma* (individual's norm of life). It does not force all men into one path or one vocation. Each grows to his best in his own way. All paths lead to God. There are not only many mansions in the Lord's Home, but there are many paths to it. The Lord of the *Gītā* pleads for the unity of religions and the Fellowship of Faiths.

Every faith is a path to God.¹¹ Tolerance is the chief article of the religion of the *Gītā*. It recognizes that formal renunciations of all actions is wrong. There is no freedom from action, but there is "only freedom in action."

The supreme secret of the *Gītā* is the path of devotion and surrender. The ideal man of the *Gītā* is called the Karma-Yogin. The dialogue form, the dramatic context, the charming personages, the universality of the message of the discourse and the resplendent demonstration of the *Viśvarūpa* to Arjuna, 'the close companion, the chosen instrument and the representative man' have all made the *Gītā* a world scripture.

The *Gītā* has attracted the attention of all the modern savants. Gandhiji, Dr. Tagore, Tilak, Sri Aurobindo and Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, have all found their inspiration in the *Gītā* and have written about it. The *Gītā* is the first Sanskrit work to be translated into English (1785).

Dr. S. Radhakrishnan's estimate of the *Gītā* sums up the nature and content of the scripture.

It sets forth a tradition which has emerged from the religious life of mankind. It is articulated by a profound seer who sees truth in its many-sidedness and believes in its saving power. It represents not any sect of Hinduism but Hinduism as a whole, not merely Hinduism but religion as such, in its universality without limit of time and space, embracing within its synthesis the whole gamut of the human spirit from the crude fetishism of the savage to the creative affirmation of the saint.¹²

Both the schools of Vedānta cite the verses of the

11. "Some run swiftly, some walk, some creep painfully, but everyone will reach the goal who keep on. Some seek a Father in Heaven above. Some ask a Human image to adore. Some crave a Spirit vast as life and love. Within Thy mansions we have all and more."

12. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan's *Bhagavad-Gītā*. See Introduction.

Gītā in their support. It is not difficult to see a certain unity of outlook in the *Gītā*. Even that is not agreed to by many. The *Gītā* has proved a source of comfort for millions of men throughout the centuries in their setbacks and successes in life. It has been the most powerful shaping factor in the renewal of the spiritual life of man. It is regarded on all hands as the best guide in life.

The status accorded to the *Gītā* as one of the triple texts on which Vedānta is based is not as fundamental as that of the Upaniṣads. Vedānta recognizes two types of scriptures—*Śruti* (the Upaniṣads) and *Smṛitis*. The *Smṛitis* lay down the laws of conduct in the light of the Vedas and guide individuals and communities in their daily life and apply the eternal truths of the Vedas to the changing conditions of our life. Their authority is derived from the Vedas. There are several such *Smṛitis*, e.g., that of Manu, Yājñavalkya, and Parāśara. The *Mahābhārata* is one such great *Smṛiti* and the *Gītā* is a part of it. The *Gītā* is given a special place because it is the directly delivered message of the Lord.

As for the *Smṛitis*, they are acceptable when they are in agreement with the *Śruti*, and are to be disregarded when they contradict the *Śruti*. They have only a derivative validity.¹³

The third important foundation of Vedānta is the *Vedānta Sūtras* of Bādarāyaṇa. It is variously called *Brahma-Sūtras* because its subject matter is Brahman, *Uttara-mīmāṃsa-Sūtras*, *Vyāsa Sūtras*, and *Śārīraka Sūtrās*. The *Sūtras* aim at a systematic working out of the teaching of the Upaniṣads. The

13. For a clear and full discussion of the topic see Śaṅkara's commentary on the *Vedānta-Sūtras*, II. i. 1.

Upaniṣads speak in different voices in different contexts. The Sūtras reconcile the apparent contradictions and set them in order. The various passages in the Upaniṣads are arranged under different topics (*adhikaraṇas*). The Sūtras aim at definiteness and coherence and seek to demonstrate that the teaching of the Upaniṣads forms a consistent whole, free from all contradictions. The *Sūtra* form is not self-evident. In the words of Thibaut, there is scarcely one single *Sūtra* intelligible without a commentary. The *Sūtras* are often concise to excess. They retain what is essential in a given phrase. They do not include all those aspects that can be supplied, with some strain, by the reflection and the memory of the reader. They rigidly exclude all words that can possibly be spared and they avoid all unnecessary repetition. They are like algebraic equations which we have to expand when we are to understand their implications.¹⁴

The exact number of the *Sūtras* is 535 according to Śāṅkara and 564 according to Madhva. The schools of Vedānta have all commented on the *Sūtras*. We have the commentaries from Śāṅkara, Rāmānuja, Madhva, Vallabha, Nimbārka, Nīlakanṭha, etc. The two schools of Vedānta are represented by the commentaries of Śāṅkara and Rāmānuja. Śāṅkara's commentaries are both philosophical classics and pieces of great literature. Śāṅkara belongs to the group of the great philosophical prose-writers which includes Śābara, Vācaspati, and the author of the *Mahābhāṣya*. Each of the school of Vedānta claims that their system alone is in complete

14. 'Svalpākṣaram-asandigdham sāravat vishvatomukham,
Astobham-anavadyaṅca sūtraṁ sūtravido viduḥ.'

accord with the *Vedānta-Sūtras*. Critical scholars like Thibaut opine that the Upaniṣads are after the heart of Śankara and the Sūtras after the heart of Rāmānuja. The avowed function of the Sūtras is to synthesize the Upaniṣads.

The reliance of Vedānta on the authority of scriptures, i.e. the triple texts (Upaniṣads, *Gītā*, and *Vedānta-Sūtras*) has been a target of attacks for critics at home and abroad. Certain European critics and their friends in India have regarded the Vedānta as religion and not as philosophy. Philosophy, according to the Western conception, is the pure intellectual interpretation of Reality. It is based on logic and inference. Reason is its guide and not revelation. In this sense Indian philosophy is not pure philosophy. It combines religion also. There is no pure logical approach to Truth as in science or philosophy. Things are taken on faith and trust and no proof is asked for them. The strongest belief of the Vedāntin is his faith in the infallibility and inerancy of the Vedas. Hence it is declared to be *unscientific, irrational* and *dogmatic*. The close association of religion and philosophy in India is held up to ridicule.

Further, some hold that Vedānta believes in a faculty called intuition. The intuition of the seers is dubbed as unreasoned. They say it is found in the depths of silence with a capital 'S'. Indian philosophy is said to work in the twilight zone of experience. Uninformed and unsympathetic critics regard Indian philosophy as a hotchpotch of "lofty ethics, low customs, subtle wisdom, superstitious ideas, profound thought, and priestly barbarism." The criticism boils

down to the point that the supreme authority claimed for scripture by Vedānta makes it unphilosophical, authoritarian and dogmatic. The criticism derives support from the Western conception of the term Philosophy.

The term Philosophy in the West has acquired a restricted sense. It is a purely intellectual interpretation of Reality. It makes use of reason and perception, i.e., sense knowledge. Reliance on intuition is considered as taking away the scientific value of philosophy. Intuition and scriptural authority do not brook the spotlight of reason. They are not germane to facts. They work, not in the region of the clear light of reason, but in the twilight zone of experience.

Thus we see that the primacy of the intellect or 'critical intelligence,' in the words of Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, is the characteristic of the Western systems of philosophy. There is close and rational alliance between science and philosophy in the West. Philosophy strives to become more and more scientific by adopting mathematical methods. Philosophy in the West is speculative. Reason is given the greatest place as the method of understanding Reality. Socrates urged the need for concepts and definitions and equated virtue with knowledge. Plato admitted none in his academy who had not a course and was not efficient in Geometry and Numbers. Socrates defined man as a 'rational animal', Plato as a 'social animal' and Aristotle as a 'political animal'. It did not occur to any of them to define man as a spiritual being. The philosophy of the Middle Ages is one long chain of the development of the Christian dogmas. Descartes, the father of modern philosophy,

declared, 'that which is clear and distinct is true'. His successor Spinoza sets forth his *Ethics* in geometrical fashion. He declared that "Truth will be eternally hidden from the human race, had not mathematics, which deals not with ends, but with the nature and properties of figures, shown to man another form of Truth." Leibnitz outlined his philosophy on the basis of symbolic logic and infinitesimal calculus. He declared that mathematics is our guide; "If we had it, we should be able to reason in metaphysics and morals in much the same way as in geometry and analysis. If controversies were to arise, there should be no more need for disputation between two philosophers than between two accountants. For, it would suffice to take their pencils in their hands, to sit down to their slates, and to say to each other (with a friend as witness if they liked) "Let us calculate."

Kant effected the Copernican revolution in philosophy by declaring that it is impossible to have a science of metaphysics. Metaphysics as a natural disposition is possible and not as a science. Hegel identified the real with the rational.

Thus we find that the logical consequence of interpreting philosophy in terms of pure reason has landed the West in logical positivism. The logical positivists declare that they are taking one step ahead of Kant. Kant declared the impossibility of metaphysics as a science. The positivists say that if metaphysics is not verifiable, it is nonsensical. They regard all the philosophical problems and propositions of traditional metaphysics and speculative philosophy as either tautologous or

nonsensical. Wittgenstein, the prophet of the school, writes that "the right method of philosophy be this, to say nothing except what can be said in terms of the propositions of natural science, i.e., something which has nothing to do with philosophy: and then always when some one wished to say something metaphysical, to demonstrate to him that he had given no meaning to certain signs in his propositions." Analysis, we are told, is the chief method and creed of this school. Propositions are analysed by them into two classes, the *analytic* and the *negative* and the negative again into the *empirical* and the *logical*. Such an analysis perforce excludes all value-judgments and does not commit us to any transcendental or metaphysical views or even meaningful ideas. The logical positivists hold the view that metaphysical terms like God, soul, immortality are unverifiable. Sensory verification is their great principle. They confine meaningful assertions only to matters of empirical fact which can be submitted to sensory verification. They hold ethical statements, as ejaculations of emotion. They declare that the acceptance of metaphysical categories and a deep analysis of them bring one up against logic, language and Truth which are pretty serious things to find oneself against.

Philosophical systems in the West, by unduly restricting the meaning of the term philosophy to a purely logical and rational interpretation of Reality, have landed themselves in logical positivism. In their anxiety to emancipate themselves from the apron-strings of theology and religion they have only succeeded in hanging on to the coat-tails of science and logic. It has resulted in the new slavery to science and semantics.

The Vedānta, like all other systems of Indian thought, interprets the term philosophy in its plenary sense and not as mere rational knowledge. This fact arises from several reasons and a proper understanding of all the arguments is absolutely necessary for an appraisal of Vedānta as philosophy. Indian philosophy, and Vedānta in particular, feels that the knowledge of ultimate Reality cannot be had by the exclusive use of man's instrument called Reason. The Vedāntins have submitted the faculty of reason to a thorough and critical examination in order to know its powers and limitations. They examined the instrument before they used it.

Reason is one of the recognized instruments of philosophy. Vedānta holds that reason cannot work in a vacuum. It is a mere instrument which cannot by itself lead us to any truth. It elaborates, explains and systematizes the basic spiritual experiences of the Upaniṣadic seers. We affirm and discover the Supreme Reality by immediate, direct spiritual experience and interpret it in terms of logic. When logic goes against the deliverances of the spiritual intuitions of seers, it is set aside. Śankara, in his commentary on the *Vedānta-Sūtras*, observes:

In matters to be known from *Śruti*, mere reasoning is not to be relied on. As the thoughts of man are altogether unfettered, reasoning which disregards the holy texts and rests on individual opinion only, has no proper foundation. One sees how arguments which some clever men had excogitated with great pains, are shown by people still more ingenious to be fallacious, and how the arguments of the latter are refuted in their turn by other men; so it is impossible to accept mere reasoning as having a sure foundation. Nor can we get over this difficulty by accepting as well founded the reasoning of some person of recognized eminence, whether Kapila or any one else, since we observe that even

men of the most undoubted intellectual eminence, such as Kapila, Kaṇāda, and other founders of philosophical schools have contradicted each other.

The scripture is self-valid. It does not need any proof. Its authority needs no support from anywhere. It is the direct evidence of Truth, just as the light of the sun is its own evidence and at the same time the direct means of our knowledge of form and colour. The authority of the Scripture is not invoked in all matters. What can be known by perception and inference is not to be learnt from Scripture. It is authoritative in respect of those facts that cannot be known by other *pramāṇas*.¹⁵ Nor can Scripture attain authoritativeness when it contradicts the experience of the sense knowledge of objects. A hundred scriptural texts declaring fire to be cold or non-luminous will not attain authoritativeness.

Spiritual realization, which is the goal of Vedānta, is immediate experience carrying its own validity with it. It is not a relational or mandate type of knowledge involving the subject-object relation. The faculty of reason works only when premises are supplied to it. The subject matter for reason comes only from experience. Western philosophers employ reason to synthesize sense-experience. They restricted the term experience to the world disclosed by the senses only and leave out all other forms of human experience. They confine their attention to the world of objects. They leave out the experiences of the subject. Vedānta takes the entire experience of man into account. It includes not only his sensuous waking experience but also his super-sensuous, dreaming,

15. 'Aprāpte sāstram-arthavat.'

sleeping experiences also. The entire inward experience of the 'subject is given prominence in Vedānta. It is 'Ātman-centric' in the words of Dr. P. T. Raju. Vedānta gives a synthetic view of all experience. Hence, it affords an integral view of Reality.

To regard the senses and reason as the only sources of knowledge is to restrict the significance of the term Reality. These two faculties tell us very little about Reality. The knowledge they give us is mediate and relational. The mere fact that the human mind is not aware of what is beyond the senses is not the same as saying that there is nothing beyond the senses. The Vedāntin agrees with the poet Browning when he says our reach should exceed our grasp. We have an earnest intimation of the transcendental spirit. We are half conscious of it. The Vedāntin does not, like the agnostic, declare that the transcendent is unknowable. He accepts the need for a separate means of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) for the realization of the extra-empirical. This is his justification for the authority of Scripture, i.e., revelation. The knowledge which we get from reason is not free from defects. It cannot give us immediate and certain knowledge. All relational way of knowing, in the last resort, is involved in contradictions. Hence the need to accept scriptural authority in respect of the Supreme. The Vedāntin posits the existence of the Supreme as a working hypothesis on the basis of Scripture. The postulation is an act of faith. Aldous Huxley sums up the issue in his saying, "Faith is a pre-condition of all systematic knowing, all purposive doing and all decent living." Referring to the need for a way of knowing higher and other than the intellect, A. E. Taylor writes,

It seems indeed as if the function of mere intellect were only that of a necessary and valuable intermediary between a lower and a higher level of immediate apprehension. It breaks up the original union of the *what* and the *that* of simple feeling, and proceeds to make the *what*, which it deals with in its isolation, ever more and more complex. But the ultimate issue of the process is only reached and its ultimate aim only satisfied so far as it conducts us at a higher stage of mental development to the direct intuition of a richer and more comprehensive whole in the immediate unity of the *that* and the *what*.

Vedānta proves the limitations of reason and so posits the existence of a Supreme Reality on the authority of the *Śruti*. In the last analysis, it is the first-hand immediate self-certifying spiritual experience that is the proof positive for the existence of the Spirit. The Vedāntic sages affirm what they accept as a working hypothesis on the authority of Scripture by their own spiritual experience. *Experience is the ultimate test for the existence of the Spirit. Such an attitude can hardly be called dogmatic and unscientific.* The Vedic sages talk of their experience of Reality 'I have heard', 'I have seen', 'I have enjoyed', 'I have drunk'. They do not speak from second-hand knowledge. They speak from direct experience. There is a striking unanimity in the experience of the spiritual seers of different ages and different climes. They shake hands with one another and proclaim the unity of all religions and the Fellowship of Faiths. The philosophical system built on the experience of the mystics is called Perennial Philosophy or Eternal Gospel.

The Vedānta is not dogmatic in any sense of the term, for it bases its ultimate faith on experience and not hearsay. Its acceptance of the authority of Scripture is *unphilosophical* only on the surface.

Scripture, by its very nature, is a collection of words. It has to be interpreted if we are to understand its meaning. Śankara, the representative of Advaita Vedānta, does not accept all the Vedas as authoritative. Only the purportful Scripture is authoritative.

The purport of the Scripture is determined by six determinative marks of purport called *tātparyā līngas*. They are the harmony of the initial and concluding passages (*upakrama* and *upasamhāra*) repetition (*abhyāsa*), novelty (*apūrvatā*), fruitfulness (*phala*), glorification by eulogistic or condemnatory passages (*arthavāda*) and intelligibility in the light of reasoning (*upapatti*).

Though reason (*upapatti*) is only one of the determinative marks of purport, on close examination we find that it is all in all. In fact, reason steps in at every stage. It is reason that has to decide which passage is the initial one and which the concluding one. It is again reason that points out which repetition is purportful and which is not. The really novel message has to be ascertained by reason. Thus we see that the role of reason is very prominent in the interpretation of the scriptures.

Vedānta does not minimize the importance of logic. Like all the other systems of Indian philosophy it makes epistemology the portal to metaphysics. In the words of Max Müller, "almost the first question which every one of the Hindu systems of philosophy tries to settle is, How do we know? They give *noetics* the first place. No object of knowledge can be established or known without the help of *pramāṇa*. The dictum of the Mimāṃsaka is '*mānādhīnam-meyasiddhih*'.

The Vedāntin does not belittle the power of

reason. He expects the student to be critical and not the dupe of appearances. He must have a discerning intellect and an inquiring frame of mind. The Upaniṣads declare that there is no admittance to the fold of Vedānta 'for those that are intellectually indolent, and cannot or would not think.'

The student of Vedānta is asked to examine and to think out the pros and cons of the message he receives from his Guru. He is not to accept blindly whatever his teacher teaches. It is neither blind faith nor blank acceptance. *Manana* or reflection has an important place in the Vedāntin's discipline. The discipline is partly moral and partly intellectual. Reason is acclaimed as the charioteer. Inquiry or *jijñāsā* is enjoined on the aspirant. *Jijñāsā* is research, in the words of Deussen. Philosophical inquiry is made the necessary preliminary for spiritual realization. All these point to the fact that logic was not discarded by Vedānta.

The Vedānta system is a spiritual guide. It is also an intellectual system with a rigour all its own. The system adheres to the strict rules of logic. The arguments are developed with perfect freedom, freshness and down-rightness. They follow logic rigorously without ever looking right or left. There is no trace of intellectual cowardice in the system. They show a strong and simple desire to abide within the strict limits of knowledge. The doctrines are elaborated with perfect freedom and ruthlessness. It is sheer ignorance to hold that Vedānta is positive throughout and is not argumentative, that it asserts and does not prove.

A glance at the method of Vedānta and the nature of the logical discussion carried on in the

commentaries reveals the place of reason in Vedānta. Max Müller remarks that "the teachers of Vedānta are working out mighty philosophical problems with unflinching love of Truth, and in an unimpassioned and truly philosophical spirit."

The method, in the hands of Śankara, affects one almost as a great physical act of courage. The boldness is astounding as the sonorous prose in which it is set is fascinating. In the words of Daniel H. H. Ingalls, "If one has a taste for grandeur, if one relishes, for example, the poetry of Lucretius with its 'flaming walls of the universe,' one cannot be unmoved by the sonorous prose of Śankara where these flaming walls tumble down."

The method adopted by Vedānta passes through three steps. First of all we get a presentation of the *prima facie* views. The Vedāntin states in full the tenets of other rival schools. They take up first that system which is remotest from Vedānta. Then follows a serious criticism of the other systems from the logical and scriptural standpoints. The rival systems are convicted of contradiction and inconsistency. The criticism of other views is called *khaṇḍana*. Lastly, there is the establishment of the final position as reasoned out doctrine. This is called *siddhānta*. In all this, Vedānta makes use of logical reasoning. Non-contradiction is the test of Truth, as unsublatability (*abādha*) the mark of Reality. The legitimate claims of reason are recognized by Vedānta. Vedānta is more than rational thought and not less than it. Spiritual intuition is neither infra-intellectual nor contra-intellectual. It rises above the intellect. "The death of the intellect is not a necessary condition for the life of the Spirit." Dr. S. Radhakrishnan observes,

“wisdom pure and transcendent is different from scientific knowledge but not discontinuous with it.” The dialectical method of Vedānta compels it to deal with the tenets of all other schools; this makes it a compendium of the entire range of Indian philosophy.

Śankara’s method of Advaita Vedānta is unique. It is critical and dialectical. It passés in review the positions taken up by other systems of philosophy and criticizes them in turn, one after another. In this process of criticism the Advaita Vedāntin never fails to note the varying fulness, the philosophical worth and the logical acumen of other systems. The lower category is criticized in the light of the higher in which it finds its fulfilment. In the words of Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, “In Vedānta, as in the Upaniṣads, there is progressive discovery of truth.”

To sum up, the Vedāntin’s insistence that the final testimony of Truth is first-hand spiritual experience makes it scientific. Others may teach us the truth, which they have reached, as well as the method by which they have done so, but unless we by ourselves get at those experiences, we cannot call it our own. The Upaniṣads declare that we should see the Spirit. It is variously described as *anubhava*, *darśana*, *brahma-sparśa*. Philosophy is not the mere discovery of Truth but its realization. Along with this insistence on spiritual experience there is the recognition of the function and the legitimate use of logic, which makes Vedānta acceptable to the contemporary votaries of science and reason. Hence, the charge against Vedānta that it is unscientific and purely based on faith is not true.

The distinguishing characteristic of Vedānta is its close association with philosophy and religion. The

close alliance of the two in Vedānta and in other systems is a dominant feature of Indian philosophy. The basic motive for philosophy, according to Vedānta, is to put an end to all the sorrows of human life and attain a state of existence called *mokṣa*. In *mokṣa* the individual has all his doubts and disbeliefs dispelled and all his strife and tension overcome. It is looked upon as the state of perfect bliss. The destiny of man is to attain *mokṣa*. In *mokṣa* he grows to his best and realizes his true nature. All arts and science should subserve the individual's aspiration for *mokṣa*. There is no such cry in Vedānta as 'art for art's sake'. Everything is for *mokṣa*'s sake. Vedānta originates in man's search for the highest good which will radically terminate all the suffering and limitations of human life. This practical motive is throughout present in all the systems of Indian philosophy. This basic practical motive has at times overshadowed the logical subtlety, depth and skill, the powers of analysis, the force of argument, the dialectical acumen, and the play of reason found in the Indian systems of philosophy which regales and baffles many an ardent lover of pure thought.

The motive force in Vedānta is not speculative as in the West. In the words of Bradley, 'Philosophy seeks to gain possession of Reality only in an ideal form.' The mission of the philosopher, Mackenzie, adds, terminates in the quest, rather than in any actions that may follow from it. Curiosity, intellectual restlessness, and the passion for finding Truth in terms of logic have spurred on Western thinkers to construct philosophical systems. They do not seek safety or consolation. The ideal philosopher is

described by Collingwood in his autobiography. He writes that

the Oxford Philosophers have excogitated a philosophy, so pure from the sordid taint of utility that they could lay their hands on their hearts and say it was of no use at all; a philosophy so scientific that no one whose life was not a life of pure research could appreciate it; and so abstruse that only a whole time student, and a clever man at that, could understand it. They were resigned to the contempt of fools and amateurs.

This brings out the intellectual and speculative nature of Western philosophy. Vedānta takes a different view of philosophy. It does not stop at the discovery of Truth but utilizes it for removing all the sorrows of life. Philosophy seeks *mokṣa*. It is a peace that passeth all understanding.

Reflective thinking and an analysis of the significance of human experience have convinced the Vedāntin of the presence of evil in human life. Life is found to be full of sorrows and has no permanent value. The evils of the world are classified under three distinct heads. They are (1) intra-organic, i.e., arising from psycho-physical causes like bodily and mental suffering, i.e., *ādhyātmika*; (2) troubles and evils arising from extra-organic cases such as from men, beasts, and birds, i.e., *ādhibhautika*; (3) evils arising from supernatural influences like spirits, ghosts, demons, elements, and planets, i.e., *ādhidāivika*. The radical termination of all these miseries is the function and purpose of philosophy according to Vedānta. Philosophy for the Vedāntin is not the luxury of the learned few, 'a parenthesis in the life of men, a tempting and fruitless exercise of the mind, a flight from the objects of immediate living'. It has an important part to play helping man to realize his destiny.

Philosophy is what matters most. It is not the mere advancement of knowledge. It is not an arm-chair study arising out of the instinct of wonder or curiosity. It is not the exhibition of dialectical skill or logical acumen. It does not merely seek intellectual clarity or mental perspicacity. It is an intense and an inner quest for a spiritual experience that terminates all ills and gives us permanent bliss. It is the full awareness of the ills, weariness, and the limitations of the world that makes the Vedāntin seek *mokṣa*. It destroys the radical unrest of life and its process. It begins in the perception of sorrows. There is the unmistakable initial pessimism staring us in the face. Analysis and reflection lay them bare to us. Most of the pleasures of human life are impermanent, and at every stage of our association with them, there is sorrow attached to them. In the pursuit of the things of the world like wealth, fame, etc. we become the inevitable prey of passions which distract and disturb ourselves. It produces tension and strife in us and makes us restless. When we pursue the objects of the world we expose ourselves to the strife and jealousy of men from whom we wrest the objects. After getting the objects of our ambition we are tortured by the fear and anxiety of their possible loss. Finally, we land ourselves in sorrow when we lose the objects.

Further, a psychological examination of the pleasures and passions of life reveal that a complete indulgence in them leads to sorrow. The normal appetites of men grow with what they feed on. Once we take to the indulgence of pleasures, we secure the ends we seek, provided our sense organs, which are the instruments of the pleasure, are in sound condition. With their decay the pleasures also decay. It is the

law of indulgence, that it wears away the vigour of sense organs. Even the pleasures derived from the sense organs do not always afford us the same satisfaction. What gave success and satisfaction in the case of one person, at one time, may not be so to another, or even to the same person, at other times. Further, there is the law of diminishing returns operating in the field of pleasures also. There is a peculiar law associated with the indulgence of pleasures. Men take to certain pleasures with the hope of satisfying their cravings. With every satisfaction the want increases and in course of time becomes a tyrant passion and also an obsessive craving. The craving gives you discomfort. Thus we see that the law of pleasures is self-defeating. This psychological law is not only true of minor passions but it is true also of major human passions like ambition, vanity, etc. A life of fulfilled ambitions goads us on to fresh adventures and their fulfilment still leaves the question, what if one has all this?

Lowes Dickinson points out that "too few of us surely attain the good even of which we are capable, too many are capable of too little; and all are capable for a short time." Sage Patañjali in a significant aphorism sums up the Indian philosophical attitude when he says, "to the enlightened all is misery." They cry with Hamlet, "how weary, stale and unprofitable are the uses of the world!"

The Vedāntin admits the existence of sorrow and does not despair. He finds that philosophy, i.e. *ātma-vidyā*, enables him to destroy the misery. 'He who knows the Ātman, fords across the ocean of sorrow' says the Upaniṣad. Vedānta begins, like all the other systems of Indian philosophy, with an initial

pessimism. The imperfections and miseries of life are the starting point. Their pessimism is not final. A strong optimistic note is struck that *mokṣa* destroys all sorrows and secures the plenitude of bliss. It is not right to characterize such an attitude as pessimistic.

Max Müller remarks that it is an unfair charge to call Vedānta pessimistic. The Vedāntins have derived their name for "the good" from a word which originally meant Being and Real, *Sat*. The removal of suffering is the function of philosophy. Pain and suffering are imperfect and in a perfect state they are annihilated. This is not the disposition we can call pessimism.

Vedānta seeks to journey from the world of dis-values to the world of values. It is essentially a philosophy of values. It is a system as well as a spiritual guide. It is not only a view of life but a way of life also. There is no divorce between theory and practice, between philosophy and life. Theory and practice, *ācāra* and *vicāra*, keep close touch. Vedānta does not believe in anaemic and un-lived knowledge. The philosophic experiences transform the man. It is this close alliance between religion and philosophy that has saved philosophy from becoming purely speculative. It is practical and has coloured Indian culture in all its aspects. Vedānta's approach to the nature of philosophy is distinct. It does not regard philosophy as a mere effort of the intellect to build a system of thought. It is primarily a spiritual guide. Philosophy is not a perpetual adventure in the world of ideas with no final solutions. Philosophy is not the disturber of man's peace. It is not a sedative that lulls us to sleep.

Many of the European philosophical systems are

intellectual efforts to study and state the problems. Huxley observes that 'anybody with the requisite wit and learning can write philosophy; the problem is to be a philosopher or lover of wisdom.' Heraclitus writes that 'much learning does not produce understanding.'

The Vedāntin's view is that the purpose of philosophy is not merely the discovery of Truth but its realization. It is not a second-hand or nth-hand acceptance of Truth. The final authority is self-certifying experience. The experience transforms life unlike the life of the intellectual. It is the common experience of men that

"one may stand very high in the intellectual scale, and yet be in complete opposition to spirit. Pride, self-centredness, attachment to one's own particular notions, may fill one's mind with continual agitations and anxieties. In one's study one may think like a spiritual man, and in the outside world behave like a carnal man. From thought to intention, from intention to will, and from will to action and conduct, the road is not smooth nor even continuous."

For the intuitive realization of the Truth, mere intellectual acuteness is not enough. It must be accompanied by a stern moral personal discipline. The realization inaugurates a new life. This does not mean that Vedānta abnegates its faith in inferential reasoning in respect of both its rules of generalization and its certification of fact and value. It transcends the rational mode and does not negate it. It is not geared on to any sectarian revelation. What is experienced intuitively is intellectually explained. The intellectual explanation is not the same as the intuitive realization. "Reading even the best cookery book is not equivalent to eating even the worst dinner."

When the Vedāntin says that *mokṣa* is attained'

by *Jñāna*, he means by *Jñāna*, *sākṣātkāra*, realization and not relational knowledge. The Vedāntic conception of man, particularly of the Śankara school, gives the clue to the relation between reason and religious experience. According to his reading of the Upaniṣads, each one of us is potentially universal consciousness and the mind at large. Men appear as a society of different island universes. The principle of individualism is the result and the function of reason and brain. It embodies and particularizes the spirit and gives us the feeling that we are unrepeatable unique individuals, with our incommunicable private sensations and feelings, interests, and fancies. This makes us compete with one another. The aim of Vedānta is to get back and recover the integral consciousness that we are. The universal consciousness which is the spirit is funnelled through the brain and the nervous system which results in individuality. The celebrated French philosopher Bergson has pointed out that the function of the brain in man is *eliminative* and *productive*. It leaves only a small and special section of our experience for us and shuts out the rest in the interests of our biological survival. The spirit-consciousness can and does know everything that is happening everywhere in the universe. The brain delimits the consciousness and knows only what trickles from the universal consciousness. The brain is the reducing valve. We cannot have a *science* of the working of this universal consciousness. Huxley writes:

We had better admit, then, that there will probably never be a completely adequate science of man. There are all sorts of useful partial sciences, dealing with generalities and averages—such as economics and actuarial statistics, sociology and

comparative religion and various brands of psychology. But there is no genuine anthropology, no full science of Man, in which the uniqueness of human beings takes its place along with their likeness, the irreducible diversities along with the unities. The art of life is still an art and is likely to remain one indefinitely.

The most distinguished para-psychologist of our age, Dr. Rhine, writes in his recent book, *New World of the Mind*, that "there is something operative in man that transcends laws of matter. . . . The universe differs, therefore, from what the prevailing materialistic concept indicates. It is one about which it is possible to be religious." Experiments in modern para-psychology conducted under the most stringent conditions point to actual facts of telepathy, clairvoyance, and precognition. They all go under the name of extra-sensory perception (ESP). These odd exceptional inexplicable facts, however trivial in themselves, are always the point from which the next great and fundamental advance in human knowledge is made. The facts of paranormal psychology have given us the alternative to the current fashionable determinist view of man, i.e. that he is just a collection of neural events embellished by a phosphorescence of subjective recognition.

The universal consciousness in man is to be liberated by definite mental habits, personality traits and spiritual discipline. In the words of Blake, "If the doors of perception are cleansed, everything will appear to man as it is, infinite."

The Vedāntic ideal for man is not mere contemplation for its own sake. The first road is the road of contemplation leading to God-union. Freedom from distracted existence, freedom from the lust of the eye, body and flesh are absolutely necessary. They secure spiritual regeneration. Pascal remarked, "the sum of evil would be much diminished if men could

only learn to sit quietly in their rooms.” Huxley significantly observes that “half at least of all morality is negative and consists in keeping out of mischief. The Lord’s Prayer is less than fifty words long, and six of these words are devoted to asking God not to lead us into temptation.” The Vedāntic discipline does not erect an insurmountable barrier between contemplation and action. It does not regard contemplation as the do-nothing attitude in life. It does not countenance a philosophy of life that negates action, the will to action and the very thought of action. “We must think like men of action and act like men of thought.” It is wrong reading of the ideal of *sannyāsa* to associate it with world-denial. The realized souls are the ‘active contemplatives’ in Eckhart’s phrase; they are ready to come down from heaven in order to bring a cup of water to his sick brother. They want to share their vision and experience with all. They ask us to climb the wall and see the vision. They are full of compassion. Their experience they want to share with all. They refuse to enter *nirvāṇa* or *mokṣa*. They are prepared to be born any number of times in any number of places to rescue mankind. “The *Jīvan-muktas* of the Vedānta are men in whom the sea flows in their veins...and the stars are their jewels.” When all things are perceived as infinite and holy, what motive can we have for covetousness or self-assertion, or for the pursuit of power and drearier forms of pleasure? “It is the contemplatives that keep the world disinfected. They are the salt of the earth.” They bring back enlightening reports of our transcendent consciousness. They are the conduits and channels through which a little light flows into our dark world

which is chronically dying for lack of light. "A world without the mystics is totally blind." The companionship with such men is the only way to fight against the attritions of our age. It is the message of the *Gitā* and the *Upaniṣads* that has reconciled the age-old debate between the *actives* and the *contemplatives*; we are to look into the inner world so that we may understand the outer. The outer world has its springs in the inner world. Contemplative life cleans the doors of perception. The life of contemplation is not easy for those that are unregenerate. It is not the result of learning, systematic philosophizing, that brings the experience. The *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* declares,¹⁶ "this Self cannot be attained by instruction, nor even by much learning. It is to be attained by one whom the Self chooses. To such a one the Self reveals Its own value." Swāmi Vivekānanda declared that Hinduism is the only religion that has boldly declared that Scripture alone cannot help us to attain realization. For spiritual experience one has necessarily to be ethically perfect. The way to God-realization is only through good life. There is no other way to it. "Not he who has not desisted from evil ways, not he who is not tranquil, not he who has not a concentrated mind, not even he whose mind is not composed, can reach this Self through right knowledge".¹⁷ Spiritual wisdom cannot be had without moral qualifications and the cleansing of our hearts. We can never obtain saving wisdom by bypassing moral life. Spiritual life does not grow like

16. *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, I. ii. 23.

17. *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, I. ii. 24. See *Muṇḍaka*, III. i. 5, III. i. 8; *Bṛihadāraṇyaka*, IV. iv. 21.

grass. It is a two-sided process. The effort of man is necessary.

The chief contention of Vedānta on the theoretical side is that verbal knowledge, discursive reason and systematic philosophizing cannot give us adequate description of the nature of spiritual Reality. Our education is predominantly verbal. Vedānta believes in a direct awareness of Reality, which verbal knowledge cannot give us. The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* warns us not to reflect on many words, for that is mere weariness of speech. "It is not wisdom to be merely wise," declared Euripides, the great dramatist. The Real cannot be known by vain and idle arguments. The rationalists of the world fear those facts that cannot fit in with the facts of life, and their measuring rods, and the neat systems of thought. It is no use calling the mystics of the world cranks, quacks, charlatans and amateurs.

Spiritual experience is of the infinite Reality, which passes all understanding and yet admits of being directly and in some manner apprehended. It is a transcendence of the dual consciousness. Our goal is to discover that we have always been. It is a making known and not a bringing something into being. This task becomes most difficult because of self-love, our habits of mind, and personality traits. Systematic reasoning confirms our egoism and insolence. The consciousness of reading all books is not spirituality. Egoism makes us confine to the here and now. The urge for self-transcendence is there at the heart of man. It is the divine irresistible urge in life. Such a self-transcendence becomes perfect only in spiritual experience. The God-surrogates, i.e., art, carnival, drugs, sex, etc. are the 'doors in the wall' to use

H. G. Wells's phrase. But all these soon tire out man and pronounce distress and depression. Goethe writes, "We talk far too much, we should talk less and draw more. I personally should like to renounce speech altogether and, like organic nature, communicate everything I have to say in sketches." Reality for the Vedāntin is the primary fact of experience.

Vedānta gives a verbalistic dress to the central spiritual experience in the form of systematic reasoning, something which the rational nature of man cannot possibly do without. Systematic reasoning gives us the symbols of the unfathomable mystery. But we should not mistake symbol as the actual substantial Reality. The chaff must not be mistaken for the kernel. Even those theistic schools that do not entertain the concept of an Absolute also feel that the Supreme Reality of religion cannot be intellectually apprehended and described in terms of discursive reason. One of the great mystics of the Christian tradition, St. John of the Cross, writes, "One of the greatest favours bestowed on soul transiently in this life is to enable it to see so distinctly and to feel so profoundly that it cannot comprehend God at all."

The *Kena Upaniṣad* declares that "to whomsoever it is not known, to him it is known; to whomsoever it is known, it is not known. It is not understood by those who understand it; it is understood by those who do not understand it." What satisfies the intellect is not complete understanding.

On the ethical side the Vedāntic tradition does not belittle the significance of our universe and life here. Vedānta requires and teaches us a way of life. It asks us to transform the institutions of the world

in the light of our vision. This effort of ours to save the world without authentic spiritual experience is bound to fail. It asks the God-realized soul not to conduct a sit-down strike and stay in his own room. He should go about his business with his vision and not be tempted by the dirty devices of the world. He should set an example for others in society. The *Kena Upaniṣad* declares that "in this human life, we would sustain a great loss if we failed to make an effort to raise ourselves to spiritual existence." The mystic poet Kabīr writes, "O friend, hope for Him whilst you live, understand while you live, for in life deliverance abides." Vedānta never encouraged intellectual indolence, nor disregarded free thinking. It never emphasized piety as against the intellect. Vedānta asks us to begin with a faith that inquires. We should start with a working hypothesis. Faith enables us to step out and break away from what is purely empirical. It releases us from the tyranny of the world of perception. Faith gives us the necessary humility which becomes the solid foundation of our life.

Its test of spirituality is the increase in spiritual values. An ordered society based on spiritual values grounded in morality is the ideal of Vedānta. The Vedāntic ideal is perfect rest and peace amidst ceaseless toil and incessant activity. It does not ask us to indulge in the natural appetites, nor does it ask us to suppress them, but urges us to utilize them to build the spiritual life. It neither negates the world nor affirms its autonomy, but only judges it in the measure it is useful to us to live our spiritual life.

Chapter V

ŚANKARA'S ADVAITA

The system of Vedānta popularised by Śankara is called the Advaita. True to the traditions of the Vedānta, Sri Śankara declares that he has derived the doctrines of his system from the synthesis of the *triple texts*. The glory of this system is that it can stand the test of the most severe logic. Hence, it can be viewed as an independent system of philosophy, like those of Kant, Hegel and Plato. It is also possible to see in it the Indian version of the *perennial philosophy* advocated by the great mystics of the East and the West.

The initial authority for the doctrines of the Advaita Vedānta is the scripture. Purportful scripture alone is taken into account. The purport of a scriptural passage is determined by several marks of purport. Of the marks of purport, *reason* (Upapatti) is the most prominent one. The authority of the scripture is invoked not in respect of those facts that can be known from inference and perception. Where they fail, scripture steps in. Scripture is not taken as authority in the determination of facts that can be known from other sources of knowledge. It describes the two great philosophical ideals *mokṣa* and *dharma* and the proper means to their realisation.

Reason is not ruled out completely. Nor is all reason declared indecisive. It can indicate probability and not demonstrate completely. The *Śāstras* are only *jñāpaka* and not *kāraṅkas*.

For an intellectual understanding of Advaita we need sharp understanding. It is not for the intellectually indolent. The Advaitin believes that mere senses

and reasons cannot exhaust Reality. To understand the spirit and realise it we need experience. Spiritual experience is the final authority in matters of religion. It is not occult vision or physical ecstasy. Spiritual experience transcends the intellect, but is not contra-intellectual. It is not an instinct. Henri Poincare observes: "Logic alone is not enough, the science of demonstration is not the whole of science, and that of intuition must still act as a complement, I must almost say as a counter weight or antidote to Logic."

Śankara explains his doctrines with the help of logical reason. He sets forth to explain in terms of logic what he has spiritually experienced himself. Spiritual experience, 'anubhūti', is the supreme authority. That type of reasoning which nullifies what is taught by scripture is declared invalid. We find the Spirit by experience and explain it with the help of logic.

The doctrines of Advaita Vedānta can be briefly stated in a few propositions. (1) Brahman is Reality (2) The World has *apparent* (mithyā) *reality* (3) The soul is non-different from Brahman.

Śankara is a Monist. He believes and posits the reality of only one category. He calls that entity Brahman. There is nothing besides Brahman. All that is, is Brahman. It has no second to it. The Absolute is non-dual. Śankara seeks to establish the nature of Brahman on the authority of *Śruti* and Logic. In the words of William James, Śankara's system is "the paragon of all monistic systems."

Reality is Brahman. "It alone was in the beginning," say the Upaniṣads. It is not related to anything for there is nothing else to relate it with. It

is a homogeneous non-composite spirit. It is devoid of all internal and external relations. It is *Śuddha caitanya*. There is nothing like it. Nor is there anything real other than it. Śankara's Brahman is not *brute-matter*. It is not a substance but is the spirit. It is not a personality with eyes and hands. It is not a system with several parts rich in content like the Absolute of Hegel. Nor is it an organism with several limbs working in co-operation, to keep the organism fit.

It is not an object of thought. It is Perfection, Reality and Existence. It cannot be defined in terms of any categories, for there is nothing beside it. It is not the result or product of any activity. It is self-caused and the root cause of all. It is an absolute contrast to, and is fundamentally different from things that are. It can only be expressed negatively in terms of what it is not.

Here are a few Upaniṣadic descriptions of Brahman. In a celebrated passage the *Māndukya* describes Brahman, "It is unseen, incapable of being spoken of, ungraspable, without any distinctive marks, unthinkable, unnameable, the essence of the knowledge of oneself, that into which the World is resolved, the peaceful, the benign and the non dual."

In another passage of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*, Yājñavalkya describes Brahman to his persevering pupil Gārgi, "That which the Brāhmanas call the imperishable *akṣara* is not gross, not fine, not short, not long, not glowing, not adhesive, without shadow, without darkness, without air, without space, without stickiness, odourless, tasteless, without eye, without ear, without voice, without wind, without energy, without mouth, without breath, without personal or family

name, unaging and undying, without fear, immortal, stainless and not uncovered, not covered, without measure, without inside and without outside." Thus we see that Śāṅkara's Brahman is beyond the sphere of all predications. It cannot be truly designated in positive terms.¹

The negative description of Brahman is not the result of Śāṅkara's caprice or whim. There are certain logical difficulties in the attempt to describe Brahman in positive terms. It is these difficulties that make Śāṅkara stick to the negative description of Brahman.

The logical difficulties are many. To describe a thing is to relate it with some other thing than itself. In the case of Brahman there is nothing besides it to relate it with. Further, description presupposes some measure in terms of which we describe a thing. Brahman is the measure of all. It is the Reality and ground of all things. We cannot measure the measure itself. We cannot light the candle to see the sun. We can only describe Brahman as not this, as not that. Being the basis of all things, it cannot be described. In a memorable passage the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* describes the difficulties. "For where there is duality as it were, there one smells another, there one speaks to another, there one thinks of another, there one understands another." . . . "Where verily, everything has become the self, then by what and whom should one smell, then by what and whom should one see, then by what and whom should one hear, then by what and whom should one speak, then by what and whom should one understand?" . . . "By

1. Eckhart cried out, "Wouldst Thou be Perfect, do not yelp about God." The Tao says, "Cease holding opinions about It."

what should one know that by which all this is known? By what, my dear, should one know the knower?"

Brahman is not an object of knowledge. The logic of definition is beset with difficulties. The attempt to define Brahman lands us in contradictions. Definition is a form of relation. It presupposes three factors, the two relata and the relating process. The predicate of a proposition is supposed to say something about the subject by relating it to it. Several factors are brought to our notice. There is the question whether the predicate is different from the subject or not. If it is identical and non-different from the subject, it fails to serve its purpose. If it is something different, it ascribes to the subject what it is not. The difficulty does not end there.

The nature of relating which connects the subject to the predicate is discrepant. The question—is relation a quality separate from the subject and predicate or not—is not easy to answer without involving ourselves in contradictions. If it is not a separate quality, it is identical; so it cannot connect the subject and the predicate. It fails in its purpose of relating. If it is regarded as a separate quality, it needs in its turn another relation to relate it with, that in its turn requires another. Thus, the process ends in *infinite regress*. If it be contended that there is no need for connection between the subject and the predicate at all, then the category of relation becomes superfluous. Relation is the most important form for the functioning of all logical categories e.g., Substance and Attribute, Cause and Effect, Agent and Action, etc. Without

the category of relation, they do not become intelligible. On sharp analysis, the category of relation turns out to be self-discrepant. All descriptions presuppose relation and its work.

Thought cannot work without the scheme of relation. The relational way of knowing things cannot give us the knowledge of Brahman. Relational knowledge can only give us the appearance of things. Relational knowledge helps us to know about a thing and not the thing as such. It is mediate knowledge and not realisation of the nature of a thing. Bradley clinches the issue about the nature of relations. He writes, "The conclusion to which I am brought is that a relational way of thought—any one that moves by the machinery of terms and relations—must give *appearance* and not *truth*. It is a makeshift, a device, a mere practical compromise, most necessary but in the end most indefensible."

Brahman is above all the relational ways of knowledge.² It is an impersonal transcendent Being that is unthinkable in terms of predicates. It is the seer of objects. The sights are many, but the seer is one. It has no genus (jāti), not quality (Guṇa). It is not a product (kriyā). It is above all relational ways of thinking. It is pure consciousness. It is eternal and does not suffer any change (vikāra). It is not an existent. It is existence itself. Not being limited by any objects it is infinite. It is identical with the self of all beings. It is neither a substance with the quality of consciousness, nor is it an ever-changing stream of

2. Eckhart writes: "God is unlike to anything and like to nothing. He is above being. He is naught." "God is Being itself, without a second, unchangeable, without quality, without form, neither this nor that."

consciousness. It is not even a subject of consciousness related to its object. It is pure consciousness, that is neither a subject nor an object, not even the unity of the subject and the object. It is an unchanging indeterminate and subject-objectless consciousness. Śankara in his commentary on the *Vedānta Sūtras* writes that when Bahva asked by Bakṣita to expound the nature of Brahman he kept silent. He prayed again, 'teach me sir.' The teacher kept silent, and when pressed a second and a third time he said, "I am teaching you, you do not follow. The self is silent." The Upaniṣad declares that words and mind returned back not attaining Brahman. They declare that Brahman is not attainable through discursive thought.

"Outside the spirit there is not and there cannot be any Reality and the more anything is spiritual, so much more it is veritably real." To say that Brahman cannot be described does not mean that it does not exist. It is not non-existence. It can be known indirectly and realised directly through spiritual experience. The negative description of Brahman has irritated the critics of Śankara at home and abroad. They equate Śankara's Brahman with absolute Non-existence. They declare with Hegel and the Nyāya school that pure being is no being at all. Śankara knew his critics well in advance. He has remarked in his commentary on the *Chāndogya* that Brahman which is bereft of space, time, quality, genus, fruit, etc. and of all differences is the secondless Reality. It appears as absolute Nothing to men of feeble intellect (manda buddhi). Śankara's Brahman is self-luminous, unconditioned existence, unexcellable bliss. It is the Reality of the world. It is the *real* of all *reals*.

Though Śankara does not believe that Brahman can be known by the instruments of knowledge, still he does not leave us without sufficient methods for understanding the nature of Brahman. He formulates two types of definitions called *Svarūpa lakṣana* and *Taṭastha-lakṣana*. The first definition states the essential nature of Brahman. Brahman is described as Existence, Knowledge, and Bliss (*Sat, cit* and *ānanda*). These are not so much qualities of Brahman as his nature. The description has to be negatively interpreted. Brahman is not unreality, ignorance, and sorrow. They have to be interpreted in the light of an appositional construction, it would mean Brahman that is Knowledge, Brahman that is Existence and Brahman that is Bliss. There is no distinction between the quality and substance in Brahman. The three qualities, *sat, cit*, and *ānanda* are not distinct.

Brahman is described indirectly by scriptures. In fact, strict students of the Advaita school believe that all descriptions are forms of indirect knowledge.

'*Taṭastha-lakṣana*' demarcates an object from the rest by indicating some accidental qualifications. For example, we may indicate a particular house to a stranger who is in search of it by pointing out to the crow that is perching on the roof. The crow is not an essential characteristic of the house. It only serves to distinguish the object while not being originally related to the defined object. Śankara takes many of the scriptural statements in this light.

The concept of Existence and its relation to Reality is conceived by the Western philosophers differently from that of Śankara. By Reality the idealist philosophers like Bradley mean that which is free from contradiction and is a self-consistent whole.

By existence they mean that which is and is self-contradictory. Existence is self-contradictory. Reality is above it. "Existence is not Reality, and Reality is the appearance of the Real. For Sankara the Reality must Exist... Existence is in other words a form or is above all distinction.

Sankara accepts the Reality of Brahman as a working hypothesis on the authority of the *Śruti* at the first instance. The *Gītā* clinches the issue in a well known verse, "Of the Real there is no Non-existence and of the Unreal no existence." What is posited on the authority of the *śruti* is explained through logic and affirmed by spiritual experience.

The central problem of philosophy is to explain the relation between the One and the Many in terms of human reason to the satisfaction of man's intelligence. Sankara posits the reality of Brahman and has to explain the world of matter and the world of souls in terms of it. In fact, he has to explain the relation between the pluralistic Universe of Souls and Matter to Brahman. He holds that the pluralistic Universe is the appearance of Brahman.

The indeterminable nature of Brahman is a big stumbling block in the process of explanation. Sankara cannot adopt the theist's creationist hypothesis to explain the emergence of the world of matter and of souls as in Christianity or Islam. The conception of creation requires an agent, a purpose and a material cause to create with. All these are not provided for in the scheme of Advaita metaphysics.

The creationist hypothesis is based on the law of causation. The law of causation involves a relation between cause and effect. Analysis reveals that the

logical category of cause is self-discrepant. The nerve of the argument is as follows: Is the effect different from the cause, or is it not? If it is not different, then there is no meaning in calling it a cause; if it is different, it needs a relation to connect it. We have already seen and shown that the category of relation though very useful is in the end logically indefensible. Hence Śankara could not accept the creationist-theory.

The Nyāya school holds to this theory. They declare that the Lord creates the world of things from Atoms (*paramāṇus*). The concept of atoms is not free from contradictions. They declare that, to begin with, Atoms are of no magnitude. When two atoms are combined, they hold that magnitude is present. One fails to see how what is originally without any magnitude can produce magnitude by merely combining with other atoms.

Further, the Nyāya god is described as devoid of any activity. Activity presupposes some connection with matter. It is difficult to envisage any type of relation between the atoms and god. The relation cannot be conjunction, for both matter and god are infinite. Infinite substances cannot be connected. If inherence (*Samavāya*) is said to be the relation, there is the doubt *which* inheres in what. Nor can we see any purpose in Lord's creation. The problem of Evil has been the most difficult pill for the atheist to swallow. If it is argued that the Lord creates the things of the world according to the *karma* of the individuals, there is the difficulty of the supremacy of *karma*. From the supremacy of *karma* to the superfluity of the Lord is an easy step. The problem of Evil and the mad and monstrous contrasts in life

cannot exempt the Lord from responsibility if he is its sole creator. To admit that Lord has purpose in creation is to convict him of imperfection. He is said to be perfect and free from all wants. He has no desires or unfulfilled purposes to achieve. Activity is a mark of imperfect souls. So it cannot be attributed to the Lord without whittling down his perfection and glory.

When we examine the creationist hypothesis we are intimately involved in understanding the real nature of causation as such. Causation is a central category of science and logic. It is the soul of all investigation. In fact, all science is the investigation of the cause of the things. The Nyāya school is true to its pluralistic metaphysics in looking upon cause and effect as two different things. They regard the relation between cause and effect as mechanical. No two things are alike for them. They are radical pluralists. They argue that if cause and effect are not two different things we need not call them by distinct names. Further, one who wants the pot is not satisfied with the clay or one who wants cloth is not satisfied with thread. The pragmatic test points to the difference. The effect is a new product; it is a *de novo* creation. It was not in existence before its production. It has come into being as a new creation from its prior non-existence. This doctrine is called *Ārambha-vāda*.

The Nyāya view of the cause-effect relation is mechanical. They regard change as a total process and the essence of the cause is change. They ignore the connection element which is the essence of causation. Cause is not intelligible except in the background of an identity. Absolute difference is not

intelligible except in the background of identity. All difference is difference-in-identity. Causation is identity-in-difference.

The Sāṅkhya theory of causation is organic. It is a step in advance of the Nyāya view. They regard that causation is the manifestation of what is latent into an active operation. The effect is already found in the cause in the potential form. They hold that the change is understandable only in the light of an unchanging element. They oppose the Nyāya school and hold that cause and effect are related states and not distinct things. They criticise the Nyāya view severely. If a thing can be produced *de novo* from non-existence, it amounts to saying that anything can be produced from anything. Such a conclusion is contrary to and falsified by human experience. It will be impossible to determine any relation between cause and effect if the effect is absolutely a new entity. How could a cause be related to a non-existent effect? Relation can only exist between two existents and not between one existent and another non-existent. Further, in our life and experience, we always seek an appropriate cause for an appropriate effect. He who wants curds seeks milk and not water. He who wants oil seeks seeds and not sands. The cause itself gets transformed into the effect. This transformation is effected by the causal operation. What is potentially present is manifested. The effect, though existent in the cause, is still in an unmanifest form prior to the causal operation. The causal operations take on two forms: It removes the obstruction to reach an object like the lamp revealing the post in the dark. It does not give it shape.

The Sāṅkhyan theory is closest to the theory advocated by the Advaitins. It is the preface to Śankara's theory of causation. It is the Pūrva Bhūmi to Vivarta-Vāda. A little analysis lays bare the self-discrepancy involved in the concept of cause and change. The Advaitin brings out the discrepancy in the concept of change and causation.

The concept of change is as old as the concept of permanence. Let us take an example of the concept of change.

A the cause becomes B the effect. If they are identical there is no becoming. If they are absolutely different we cannot call them cause and effect or the changed object. If change is regarded as partly identical and partly different, the difficulty is not overcome. This fares no better at the hands of the resourceful Advaitin. In so far as the identity element is concerned there is no becoming; in so far as they are different there is no relation possible between them. The concept of identity-in-difference is self-discrepant. Though in life the concept of identity-in-difference is accepted, it cannot be logically sustained. The mere fact of their being together is not the guarantee of their validity. Śankara declares that the identical is that which does not change. And yet change must be of the identical. That is the paradox of causation. The cause and effect are identical, now appearing as cause and now as effect. Identity is a basic concept. Difference presupposes it. Identity does not pre-suppose difference.

In the light of the Advaita theory of causation we can see Śankara's difficulties in not accepting (1) the creationist-hypothesis and (2) the transformation

hypothesis put forward by the Nyāya and the Sāṅkhya systems of philosophy.

Brahman neither creates the world nor is he transformed into the world. Brahman is an impartite (akhaṇḍa) entity. He cannot be transformed into anything. He is immutable *aparīṇāmi* and *kūṭastha*. The Prakṛiti of the Sāṅkhyas cannot account for the world. There are several difficulties in accounting for the evolution of the world, the liberation of Puruṣa, the gradation of the 23 evolutes, the bondage of the Puruṣa, the cessation of the evolution etc. The Sāṅkhyan arguments are mostly analogies highly fanciful and romantic. They do not stand the test of logic.

If Brahman is to be transformed into the world of things, we are up against a number of difficulties. In the process of transformation, Brahman perforce has to experience all the imperfections of the world. Such a contingency goes against the perfection and the glory of God. God and the World will become identical. God minus the World will be zero. Such an account will make Advaita a variety of pantheism. If it be contended that God is immanent and transcendent and that a part of God gets transformed into the world and another part remains unchanged the position becomes open to all the previous questions directed against the concept of God. A later Advaitin compares such an answer to the act of one who takes one half of a fowl for cooking and the other for laying eggs. It is the innumerable difficulties of *Ārambha Vāda* and *Pariṇāma Vāda* that led Śankara to formulate his famous *Vivarta Vāda*.

The Advaita theory of causation is called the *Vivarta Vāda*. It has striking resemblance to

Pariṇāma Vāda and has also its own distinctness. The cause and the effect alike are real according to Sāṅkhyans. They both belong to the same order of Reality. According to Advaita, cause and effect belong to two different orders of Reality. Brahman is the cause of all things. The world of things and souls does not have an independent existence. They have for their cause Brahman. Brahman is the reality of the world. Brahman cannot be the efficient cause of the world, for there is nothing beside it which can be moulded into form. Brahman being an unchanging principle cannot undergo transformations. Yet Brahman is the cause of all things.

Vivarta vāda explains the unique relation between the world and Brahman. The cause is independent of the effect. But the effect is dependent on the cause. The cause suffers nothing by the faults, foibles, and taints of its effect. The cause appears as the effect. Brahman appears as the world of matter and souls. Śankara observes in his commentary on the *Chāṅdogya Upaniṣad*, "that the multiplicity of creatures existing under name and form when viewed as self-dependent is not true, but when viewed as having the Real as its substrata it is true" (*sadātmanāeva satyam, svatastu anṛtam*). The effect has no organic relatedness to the cause. Vācaspati the great commentator of Śankara clinches the issue in precise logical terms. The effect is asserted to be non-different from the cause (*tadnanya*). When the *Vedānta sūtra* declares that the cause Brahman is non-different from the effect i.e., the world, we must clearly understand the implications of the description. It means that Brahman is the ground of the world. If there is no Brahman there is no world.

The non-existence of the world will not affect Brahman in any way. There is the invariable negative concomitant relation (*Vyatiraka Vyāpti*) between the non-existence of Brahman and the non-existence of the world. When Śāṅkara asserts non-difference between Brahman and the world, he does not mean identity but he only negates the otherness. What is aimed at, in this way of describing the causal relation, is the denial of the reality to the effect apart from the cause.

The effect and the cause differ in several respects. The effect is particular, finite, inert etc., the cause is infinite, eternal and of the nature of consciousness. The effect falls short of Reality and is not absolute unreality. It is not real. If it were real it would have independent Reality. It is not unreal for it is cognised by us. We live and have our being in it. It cannot be real and unreal at the same time for such a position violates the law of contradiction.

Vivarta Vāda is a one-sided type of causal relation envisaged by Śāṅkara to explain the connection between Brahman and all other things. It is a relation between Brahman and its appearances. The Ground of the appearance is Brahman. Brahman appears as the world, soul and *Īvara*. This appearance is due to the working of *Māyā*. The doctrine of *Māyā* is the explanation for the world of appearance.

Next to Brahman, the doctrine of *Māyā* occupies the central place in Advaita Metaphysics. *Māyā* is responsible for all the appearances of Brahman. Besides Brahman, Śāṅkara accepts *Māyā* as another philosophical category.

Māyā is a quality which pertains to sentiment

beings. It is a *cetana dharma* and is found only in souls. It is a type of ignorance. It is beginningless. It requires a locus and a content. Ignorance must belong to some and must be of something. Its locus is Ātma. It has a positive nature. Though it is beginningless yet it is not eternal like Brahman. It is destroyed at the time of Brahman realisation.

The function of Māyā is two-fold. It suppresses and conceals the real nature of the object and shows up in its place some other object. These two powers of Māyā are respectively called *āvaraṇa* and *vikṣepa*. It conceals Brahman and shows up in its place the universe and world of souls. It not only makes us not apprehend Brahman but creates some other thing in its place. It projects something in the place it conceals. Hence it is considered as a positive substance. (Bhāva rūpa).

The functioning of Māyā makes the Absolute appear as the empirical world. The world is empirical; Brahman is real. We must grasp the correct significance of the term Māyā for properly understanding the philosophy of Śankara. Professor Hiriyanna observes that "the unity of the Absolute of Brahman may be compared to the unity of a painting, say, of a landscape. Looked at as a landscape, it is a plurality; hill, valley, lake and streams; but its ground, the substance of which it is constituted is one, viz., the canvas. It is rarely that analogies in philosophy admit of extension, but this one does, in one particular. The canvas appears not only as hill, a valley and a stream, but also as the garment of the shepherd that may be figured on it. Similarly, the Absolute which is of the essence of sentience, manifests itself not only as insentient objects but also as sentient subjects."

Māyā before it functions, being a *cetana dharma* requires a locus as well as a content. If we say that the locus of Māyā is the jīva and the content is Brahman, there is the question as to how prior to the functioning of Māyā there are jīvas (souls). Without the existence of souls there will be no *loci* for Māyā. Thus there is the defect of reciprocal dependence i.e., for Māyā to function we require the existence of souls, and for the existence of souls there is the necessity for the functioning of Māyā. To avoid this defect the Advaitin declares that Māyā is beginningless. Māyā is existent but not Real like Brahma. It is not eternal. It is not coeval with Brahma. It is destroyed by Brahman realisation. So there are no two ultimate categories in Advaita. Brahman is both *sat* and positive. Māyā is positive but not *sat*. The positive nature of Māyā indicates that it is *objective* and not *real*.

The locus of Māyā is described differently by the different Advaita thinkers. Some hold that Brahman itself is the locus and also the content of Māyā. (*āśraya* and *viśaya*). This view regards that all is pure and simple illusion, that things exist only when they are perceived and dissolve into nothing as soon as we cease to perceive them. This school of thought has not the sanction of Advaita tradition. Further, Brahman is described in scriptures as pure and so it cannot become the locus of Māyā which is impurity i.e. ignorance. Ignorance cannot be attributed to Brahman.

Scripture declares that there are two types of souls, bound and the released. The theory of one soul goes against the scriptural declaration of many souls. Śankara's view is that the individual soul is the locus of Māyā. Ignorance is in us. Its content is Brahman.

With the onset of Brahman-knowledge, *Māyā* is destroyed in us. If *caitra* drinks the poison *Maitra* does not die. For world appearance Brahman and *Māyā* are the causes.

Some regard Brahman as the material cause for the world, for there is no other second entity. The followers of the Vivaraṇa school hold that Brahman associated with *Māyā* is the cause of the world. A third view maintains that the world is the *pariṇāma* of *Māyā* and the *vivarta* of Brahman.

Śankara in his description of Reality envisages a distinction between three states of existence. The first is the *Pāramārthika* state. It is the absolutely real state. It is never sublated. The second state is *Vyāvahārika* state. It is objective, positive but not ultimately real. It is relatively real. The world of nature belongs to it. The third state is called *Prātibhāsika* state. The world of dreams and illusion covers this state. All these three states of existence differ in their degrees of reality. The first alone is absolutely real and the other two are relatively real. There is a core of realism in the logic of Śankara. He never dissolves the things of the world into ideas as the *Vijñāna vāda* school of Buddhism. He accords reality to the objects of knowledge and grades them. Among the objects of the world some are absolutely real. They are *sat*. Some are absolutely unreal. They are *asat* e.g., barren woman's son, sky-lotus. Yet other things are real and unreal.

The world of object is declared by Śankara to be *mithyā*. It does not mean that the world is absolutely unreal like the horn of a hare or a sky-lotus. *Māyā-vāda* is not *asat vāda*. The critics of *Māyā-vāda* are legion. They hold that there is no middle ground

between the Real and the Unreal. For them what is other than the Real is Unreal. When Śankara declares the world as *mithyā* he means that it is different from the Real and also different from the Unreal. It is not Real because it is not eternal or perfect like Brahman. It is not Unreal because it is cognised. It is not Real and Unreal at the same time. Such a position violates the law of contradiction. Śankara describes the world as indescribable or indeterminable in terms of the Real and the Unreal. It is *anirvacanīya*.

When the world is described as *mithyā* it does not mean that it is non-existent and has no worth in it. In fact, all qualities and action belong to the world of nature. The law of causation i.e. karma, holds good only in the world. The concepts cannot apply to Brahman. "Causal rigidity in the empirical world is consistent with its denial in the transcendental realm." In fact, the world is the training ground for the art of soul making. It is the place where we work for our moral and metaphysical desires. The world is not categorisable as Real or Unreal.

It is difficult to give an intellectually satisfactory account of the doctrine of Māyā. The Advaitin himself admits that there is a core of unintelligibility associated with the doctrine. With remarkable clarity Śankara explains the nature and the working of Māyā in his celebrated *Adhyāsa Bhāṣya*. He writes, Māyā is coeval with life. We do not know how or when we got into it. Nobody walks into an illusion consciously. We can only know how to get out of it. It is the result of a false identification of the Real and the Unreal. It may be asked as to how it is possible to identify the Real which is Perfect, Infinite, and Bliss with the temporal, the finite and the imperfect.

How is it possible to mistake light for darkness? In spite of all these questions, Śankara points out with great persuasive skill and a charm or style that the confusion between the self and the not-self is in the very nature of man's experience. It is *svābhāvika* and *naiṣargika*. When the body is ill or well, one says I am ill or well; when the body lacks the sense of sight or hearing one says I am blind or deaf. We know too well that the senses are material and belong to the category of the not-self. Still we identify ourselves with them.

Śankara further argues that without Māyā no human activity is possible. All intellectual, religious, moral and social activities presuppose Māyā, unless one identifies oneself with the sense organs. One cannot become the knowing subject. He must think that the eyes through which he sees are his. Everyone of our activities is the work of Māyā. Swami Vivekananda has put the whole issue in very simple language. "Māyā is a simple statement of facts, it is what we are and what is around us."

Post-Śankara thinkers like Vācaspati, Chitsukha, Śrīharsa, Madhusūdana and Appayya have laboured very hard to establish with the help of pure logic the doctrine of Māyā. They have tried to establish with the help of inference the nature of Māyā. The dialectics of post-Śankara thought is a glorious chapter in Indian Logic. It can regale the most ardent lover of metaphysics and also at times baffle the expert. In point of comparison, they do not compare unfavourably with the dialectics of Hegel, Bradley, Plato, Kant and others.

The doctrine of Māyā is opposed by the Realists with the dilemma: "If Māyā is real, then there is a

second Reality besides Brahman; and if it is not Real, then, the world which is due to Māyā cannot be Unreal. It becomes Real." The Advaitin's answer is very simple. He does not admit the ultimate reality of Māyā. He admits that in the ultimate analysis there is a core of unintelligibility in the doctrine of Māyā. Śankara suspends judgment about the nature of the world. He does not recklessly repudiate without evidence. By the very use of the logical categories Śankara builds his powerful opposition to Nyāya. The great lesson of Advaita logic is that it exposes the clayfooted nature of Nyāya logic. In the words of Rangaraja "the Advaitin is not out to demonstrate this or that position. He points out that every other position held by the opponent is untenable. The positive definitions and poofs attempted by Advaitins are only a concession to the dualistic mode of expression."

But this does not mean that Śankara ends his philosophy with a sceptical note. He did not despair. He believed in the existence of Brahman. Prof. S. Suryanarayana Sastry describes that Śankara's scepticism is of a more rational type than the one of which Bradley subscribed. Bradley writes "I mean by scepticism the mere denial of any known satisfactory doctrine, together with the personal despair of any future attainment." Śankara is a Brahmvādīn and not a sceptic or an agnostic.

The doctrine of Māyā appears to some as a veiled confession of one's inability to describe the nature of the world and its relation to Brahman. But such an inability is inherent in human knowledge. Prof. A. N. Whitehead observes, "It is no doubt true that

curiosity is the craving of reason, that the fact discriminated in experience he understood. It means the refusal to be satisfied with the bare welter of facts."

The mystery element in the world is not anything that discredits the intelligence of man. In a grand description Prof. Bradley has indicated the truth of it. He says that "to show how and why the universe is so, that finite existence belongs to it, is utterly impossible; that would imply the understanding of the whole, not practicable for a part." Again in the words of Whitehead "All effort of human thought only dimly discerns it, misdescribes and wrongly associates things." It is interesting to note that Bertrand Russell concludes his Volume, *Human Knowledge: Its Scope and Its Limits* with an observation that is highly relevant to our context. "All human knowledge is uncertain, inexact and partial. To this doctrine we have not found any limitation whatever. It is only an examined life that leaves no wonder to us. A completely rational explanation of the world is not within the scope of man's intellect."

Closely allied with the doctrine of Māyā is the nature of the world we live in. Ignorant critics declare that Śankara is an illusionist and that the world according to him is a dream and a delusion. They make Śankara a mentalist who regards the world as a series of ideas. Nothing is farther from truth than this accusation of Śankara. The world is not an empty dream nor is it a delirium. It is not a bundle of ideas with no substance behind it. *Māyāvāda* is not solipsism. Śankara is opposed to *Vijñāna Vāda*, i.e. mentalism. There is a strong realistic element in Śankara's theory of knowledge. He analyses knowledge into two parts. (1) The physical adjunct i.e., *antahkaraṇa* and (2) the

awareness element i.e. *Sākṣin* which is psychical in its nature. All knowledge points to an object external to itself as it does to a subject. There is no knowledge which does not imply this double reference.

The world of object is not to be treated as a dream. It is objective: it is not the creation of the individual's fancy. It has a common objective reference. It is *the world* and not *many worlds*.

The world of objects is not on par with dreams. The dream world is private and personal. The world of experience is public, and has an objective reference. It also satisfies the pragmatic test. All of us refer to the world as "the world." If it is contended that it is a collective illusion shared by all of us, we have only to say that it is more than a dream. The objects of the world are not our creations. We cannot choose or argue away their existence. The world is not a shadow-show nor an unreal phantasmagoria. We live in the world and undertake our spiritual quest here. *Samsāra* is not a barren place. "It gives us a succession of spiritual opportunities to realise the best in us" in the words of Dr. Radhakrishnan. "Unreal the world is; illusory it is not."

Some critics regard that the doctrine of *Māyā* is not found in the Upaniṣads and is the creation of Śāṅkara. Prof. Ranade answers the critics with a wise observation: "The doctrine of *Māyā* is neither a fabrication of Śāṅkara nor merely the outcome of Buddhist nihilism nor found full-fledged in the Upaniṣads. The Upaniṣad felt the mystery of creation. They saw that the world cannot be real at the level of Brahman. And what they felt and saw, they expressed in their own way. Their ideas are given a

systematic form by Śankara and his followers. But on one point all the Upaniṣads are almost unanimous, namely, that ultimate Reality is of the nature of consciousness.”

The concept of Māyā has great significance. It is the material cause of the world in conjunction with Īśvara. It enjoys the same function as that of the prakṛti of the Sāṅkhya school. Dr. Radhakrishnan sums up the significance of the term Māyā as follows: (a) the world is not self-explanatory; it shows its phenomenal character. This is signified by the term Māyā. (b) The incomprehensibility of the relation between ultimate reality and the world of plurality is signified by the term Māyā. (c) It is the power through which Brahman manifests as Īśvara. The significance of the term Māyā is very wide; it is responsible for all creation. Brahman is regarded as the material and efficient cause of the world.

The efficient cause is non-different from the material cause. Brahman is the *abhinna-nimitto'pādāna kāraṇa* of the world. Primal nature by itself cannot create the world nor can matter conform to activity when there is no sentient being guiding its activity. So the world is the result of Māyā and Brahman and is not the creation of the individual souls or of his dream.

Let us advert to the consideration of the nature of the soul. In Advaita the souls are many in their appearance. They are appearances of Brahman. The status of the soul is on a higher level than that of the world of matter. It has a special status. There are three different views put forward by Advaita thinkers about the nature of the relation between the soul and Brahman. Some are of opinion that Brahman

as reflected in *māyā* appears as *Īśvara* and Brahman as reflected in *avidyā* appears as the soul (*jīva*). This view is called *ābhāsavāda* advocated by *Sureśvarācārya*.

The second view is called *pratibimbavāda* or the reflection theory. This theory holds that *Īśvara* is the reflection of Brahman in *Māyā* and that the soul (*jīva*) is the reflection of Brahman in *avidyā*.

The third view is called *avacchedavāda*. This is the limitation view. This school finds it difficult to accept the reflection theory; for, how can a formless Brahman be reflected in *Māyā*? So they hold that when *Māyā* conditions and limits Brahman, the *jīva* appears. The *jīva* is the locus of *Māyā* and *Īśvara* is content. The content is in no way affected by *Māyā*. Thus we see that there are various ways of looking at the relation between the Brahman and the soul.

Sankara's conception of the soul is unique. It is not a simple substance. It is a complex of the *sākṣin* and *antaḥkaraṇa*. These two elements with the co-operation of the senses function in the waking life. In dream experience the *sākṣin* and the *antaḥkaraṇa* are there, but there is not the co-operation of the sense organs. But there is only the sense of immediacy and new creation.

In the state of deep sleep the *sākṣin* alone exists with its *avidyā*. The *antaḥkaraṇa* is merged in the *avidyā*. In this state there is the concealment of the one but not the projection of the many. Individuality still persists. After waking up we are able to recollect the experience of the happiness of the sleep.

The souls are not many. The empirical egos are many. The transcendental self is one. Atman is for all (*ātmā sarvasya ātmā*). In its essence it is Brahman.

It is not different from Brahman. Creatureliness, finitude, ignorance and misery are only the conditioned state and not the permanent nature of man. They are adventitious and not native to the soul. Man is not a fallen creature tied to a body of lust and sin with no glimmer of divinity in him. He is divinity concealed. He is of the same substance as of Brahman. Śankara's doctrine of the consubstantiality of man and god is unique. "The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord." The *Chandogya Upaniṣad* repeats that man and God are identical in essence. Śvetaketu is instructed about this final truth by his father a number of times. "That which is the subtle essence, this whole world has for itself. That is the true, That is the self. *That art thou Śvetaketu*". Spinoza said "We feel and know that we are eternal." The divinity of man is one of the fundamental doctrines of Śankara.

Prof. Hiriyanna in his *Essentials of Indian Philosophy* brings out the difference between the soul and the world. He observes that at the moment of Brahman-realisation the world is negated completely whereas the soul is not negated but only its finitude, separateness, ignorance, misery etc., are destroyed. Hence, the soul is on a higher level than the world in its relation to Brahman. We are all as it were in an egg. The senses are bad witnesses. They hide the Real from us. Man is a many-levelled being. The innermost core of his life is his Self and it is one with Brahman. The identity between the individual soul and Brahman is not actual but potential. Hence the need for moral effort and spiritual meditation.

The personal God of Śankara is called the Īvara. It is a very important concept and has to be carefully understood. There is a good deal of misunderstanding

and uninformed criticism about Śankara's God. The Īśvara of Śankara and the souls are not on the same level. Īśvara is the appearance of Brahman in Māyā. He is not affected by Māyā. Ignorant critics argue that Śankara's Īśvara is not as real as the Brahman and so need not be worshipped. Tradition holds a different opinion. They believe that the worship of Īśvara is necessary for Brahman-realisation. Yet others are of the opinion that the concept of God in Advaita is a concession to the masses who are not competent to contemplate the impersonal absolute.

The criticism against the concept of Īśvara has to be understood with great caution. Advaita tradition and practice have accorded a very important place to Īśvara. While it is true that the absolute alone is the ultimate reality and not Īśvara or souls it should not make us forget that the individual souls differ from God.

Śankara's God is not a second metaphysical category. There are no two or multiples of Brahman in Advaita. The existence of Īśvara is assumed on the authority of scriptures. Īśvara is Brahman in relation to the world. Brahman that transcends the world is impersonal (nirguṇa). Śankara does not admit that primal matter or Prakṛti can be the cause of the world. Māyā is the power of Īśvara and is his energy. He is the energiser. There is non-difference between Śakti and Śaktimat. Brahman is non-different from Īśvara.

There are distinctions between Īśvara and the Soul. The Jiva i.e. the soul is only the enjoyer of the world and not its creator. Īśvara wields Māyā and is not deluded by it. He is the Māyin. The individual soul can only create his private universe. He

cannot give rise to the objective world. He has helplessly to experience them as they are given to him by God. He cannot condition them. On the other hand, Īśvara is the cosmic subject with the world as his object. He is not only the creator but is also the sustainer and destroyer of the world. The relative reality and objectivity of the world are due to him. Its regularity and law-abiding nature are due to him. If the world is *the world* and not the dream world, this is due to Īśvara. The God of Śankara lasts as long as there is even a single finite soul. He is co-eval with all souls and the world. Māyā is the interpolating principle between Brahman and Īśvara and in fact between all that exists and Brahman. Śankara's God is the Absolute in the world context. He is the supreme from the cosmic end. He is the logical highest as Īśvara and Brahman is the intuitive highest. Brahman is the philosophical ideal, Īśvara is the religious goal. We can never realise Brahman by denying and eschewing God. Only by realising and transcending him, we can have Brahman realisation. God is a necessary step in the Advaita discipline for Brahman realisation.

Further, Advaita thinkers have said that without the grace of God the desire to walk the path of Advaita will not occur to the individual. Professors Datta and Chatterjee have clinched the issue in their excellent manual on Indian Philosophy. "Śankara is sometimes accused of atheism. This charge stands or falls according as God is taken. . . . If God connotes among other things the Supreme Reality, Śankara's theory is not surely atheism, but the logical perfection of the theistic faith. Indeed, whereas atheism, believes only in the world and not at all in God, and

ordinary theism believes in both, the world and God, Śankara believes only in God and God only. For him God is the only Reality. Rather than denying God, he makes most of God. . . . If this type of faith is to be distinguished from ordinary theism (or belief in personal God) the word for it should be, not atheism, but rather *super-theism*."

Śankara's conception of God is a part of the living Advaita tradition. . . . Worship of Īśvara is insisted on as the step to the fuller realisation. Īśvara is the highest symbol of Brahman. Symbols are indispensable means for the communication of Truth. The Brahman of Śankara cannot be described. The human mind cannot but resort to symbols to express its highest thoughts. Thomas Aquinas says that all language about God must be necessarily analogical. Professor A. N. Whitehead writes "Symbolism is no mere idle fancy or corrupt degeneration; it is inherent in the very texture of human life. Language is itself symbolism." Symbol is the only way open to man to express what is beyond the power of words. God is the highest logical symbol.

Like all the systems of Indian Philosophy Advaita Vedānta too looks upon Mokṣa as the great spiritual ideal that man should seek. The ideal of Mokṣa must be distinguished from another ideal called *abhyudaya*. *Abhyudaya* indicates the welfare ideal which is temporary and not eternal. Examples of this ideal are the attainment of Svarga (Heaven) or the enjoyment of the goods of life. Men are forced to return to Saṁsāra once the merit accrued is expended. Mokṣa is a permanent state from which there is no return to saṁsāra. It is called *niśreyas*.

The concept of Mokṣa implies that men are in a state of bondage in the world. Bondage is due to ignorance. Different systems of Indian philosophy give different names to ignorance which is responsible for human suffering and bondage. All are agreed on the point that ignorance is the cause of bondage. They variously call it ajñāna, avidyā, māyā, karma, mithyājñāna. In the state of bondage, man is subject to all types of suffering and sorrow. Human life is a vale of tears. Three kinds of pain characterise the lives of men. The first arises from intra-organic causes like bodily and mental disorder and anxieties. This includes all our ailments, somatic and mental. The second source of sorrow arises from natural causes like beasts and fellow-men. It includes murder, snake-bite, poisoning, etc. The third source of suffering arises from supernatural causes, such as demons, ghosts, etc. All these three sources are together called *tāpatrayas* (three-fold suffering). Mokṣa is a way out of these troubles. It is the highest human value. It is the destiny of man. It is eternal and there is no lapse from it once we attain it. It is an absolute intrinsic value and not a means to any other further value. It is the highest *puruṣārtha*. It frees man from all the troubles and turmoils of life. It stands for the peace of the spirit. To attain it is the prime function of philosophy and not the vain pursuit of truth. It is at once the religious and the spiritual ideal of the Hindus. The peace that results from Mokṣa dispels all our doubts and disbeliefs and enables us to overcome moral strife and tension.

The nature of Mokṣa and the way to attain it differ widely from school to school in Indian philosophy. But all of them are agreed that bondage is

due to ignorance and realisation is due to knowledge. The way to Mokṣa is *jñāna*. Two things clearly stand out: bondage is due to ignorance and Mokṣa is the result of *jñāna*.

The Indian systems of philosophy have submitted the goods of the world to a thorough rational examination and have found them transitory and imperfect. They declare that all the things of the world are full of pain. They would agree with Hardy's description of the world as a "universal drama of pain" in which joy is only a passing episode. They point to the experience of men. Too few of us attain the good of which we are capable; too many are capable of too little and all are capable for a short time. The quest for Mokṣa arises from this initial pessimism. The grand note of optimism is struck by the concept of Mokṣa. Mokṣa aims at a radical termination of all suffering. It is not an intellectual experience but a spiritual realisation. It is not discursive knowledge but immediate vision. It is not mental perspicacity but spiritual illumination. Mokṣa is total transformation.

Śankara's conception of Mokṣa is unique and has no parallel in other systems. Mokṣa is a form of self-realisation. It is a discovery of the true nature of the self i.e., Brahman. Brahman and the self are identical in essence. It is the function of *māyā* that is responsible for the appearance of the world and the souls. With the onset of Brahman realisation the world is negated. The ontological status of the world is not the same as that of the souls. In the case of the soul what is denied, with the onset of Brahman realisation, is not the soul as such, but its finitude and ignorance. The individual soul is treated with great

respect by Śankara. Mokṣa is the realisation of the oneness of the soul with Brahman. Māyā is responsible for the separatist feelings. The separatist view (bheda buddhi) is at the root of all egoistic impulses and desires. It veils the truth that all is Brahman. The moment we feel that we are separate and different individuals, competition and hatred arise in us. We try to outdo others and regard our pleasure as entirely different from that of the others. This brings about the evils of an acquisitive society. The fundamental oneness of all is forgotten because of Māyā. The realisation of the fundamental oneness of reality leads to the fellowship of men. Religion in the words of Vivekananda is the manifestation of divinity in man.

Divinity is not external to man. It is his birth-right. We are all eternal and immortal. We are like the fabulous musk-deer that hunts for the fragrance which exudes from its own body. Mokṣa is native to the soul of man and is not derived. It is one's spiritual birth-right. It is making known what is already there in man. It is not bringing in something which is not. It is like the finding of the forgotten golden ornament which is all the time on our person. It is not a gift from above but an inward realisation.

The soul of man is obscured by the thick layers of unreality in the form of Māyā. Once it is cleared we see the true nature of the self. Śankara in his commentary on the *Vedānta Sūtras* observes "as long as the soul is associated with the adjunct of *buddhi*, so long only is the *jīva* a *jīva*. In reality however there is nothing like *jīvahood* apart from what is fancied to be such by the reason of this adjunct." Mokṣa

is the realisation of the true nature of man. It is not a product, *utpādyā*. It is eternal. If it is regarded as a product brought into being by grace or as the result of *Karma*, there is the contingency of its destruction. The simple law that what is born is destroyed is true in all cases. Hence, Śāṅkara argues that Mokṣa is eternal and not produced. Neither is Mokṣa a transformation of something into another entity. We have already seen how clearly illogical and self-discrepant is the concept of change. Hence, Mokṣa is not *vikārya* or *samskārya*. Mokṣa is not an attainment to a state after death. It is a realisation which can be had here and now. The realisation of Mokṣa in an embodied state is called *jīvanmukti*. One can realise the true nature of the self even in his very life. The Upaniṣads declare "that art thou" and not "thou wilt become that". Mokṣa is a realisation like the one that the prince of the legend experienced. He was brought up from his infancy as a hunter among huntsmen. He suddenly discovered that he was a prince. It is an integral, immediate realisation attained here and now.

The concept of *jīvanmukti* has strengthened the metaphysics of Advaita. The *jīvan mukta* is the competent teacher who speaks from experience. These spiritual seers stick to their cosmic office and discharge their duties. Some of them are psalmists absorbed in the glory of their realisation. Others return to the world and crusade for the fulfilment of their vision. They drive the rest of humanity to attain the vision and the experience they had. The *jīvan muktas* are the great exemplars of the Advaitic realisation. They experience no conflict. They are spontaneously virtuous. "In them impulse and desire

are one. In the words of Professor Hiriyanna they do not realise virtue but reveal them. They have no narrow selfish love. Their love is universal. In the words of the Upaniṣads they are not troubled by thoughts like "Have I done the right? Have I done the wrong?" They are above all sense of duality and moral conflict. They do not feel the constraint of obligation, the struggle with temptations, the distinction between rights and duties. The words of the *jīvanmukta* are wisdom, his work is worship, his conduct is consecration. The restraints of social obligation are replaced in him by the spontaneity of love. This does not mean that they are immoral or take a holiday from morality. They do not experience the strain and stress of morality. The morality of the *jīvanmuktas* is open morality. The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* declares that "evil does not overcome him; he overcomes all evil. Free from evil, free from impurity, free from doubt he becomes a knower of Brahman."

Prof. Hiriyanna in an important article on the *ethics* of the Upaniṣads argues that the morality of the *jīvanmukta* is neither egoism nor altruism. Both altruism and egoism are correlates and necessarily imply each other. It is possible to be altruists only when we perpetuate the particular and affirm our ego and have the flattering feeling that we are denying ourselves happiness for others' sake. The moral agent feels that he has benefited the world. In the last analysis such an activity affirms the ego of man. The *jīvanmukta* rises above this state. He is utterly unselfish. He has realised the true metaphysical nature of reality. So he regards the whole world as his family. Having realised the divinity of men, he loves all.

Śankara's conception of the divinity of man has made Advaita a universal religion. We find echoes of the same in all great mystics. Meister Eckhart writes: "The knower and the known are one. Simple people imagine that they should see God as if he stood there and they here. This is not so. God and I are one in knowledge." He adds "To get at the core of God at his greatest, one must first get into the core of himself, at his least, for no one can know God who has not first known himself. He asks us to go to the depths of the soul, to the root, to the heights, for all that God can do is focused there." Hugo St. Victor adds "The way to ascend to God is to descend into oneself."

Śankara's conception of Mokṣa is not the peculiar privilege of some alone. He does not divide souls into the fallen and elected ones. He speaks of salvation as universal. Speaking about universal salvation the European mystic William Law writes: "There is but one salvation for all mankind and that is the life of God in soul. That is God's gift to all Christians, Jews and heathens. There is not one salvation for the Jew and another for the Christians and a third the heathens. Know God is one. Human nature is one and salvation is one, and that is the desire of the soul turned to God!"

The two Advaita doctrines of Universal Salvation and *Jivanmukti* speak of its catholic outlook and make for its wide application. They distinguish Advaita from all other sectarian, denominational and prophetic cults which make for religious fanaticism and conversion.

We have so far examined the content of the intellectual beliefs of Śankara's Advaita. His philosophy

is not a mere theory of Reality set forth in rational terms for the satisfaction of the intellectual pursuits of man actuated by the love of knowledge for its own sake. The Advaita is a spiritual guide and not merely a system of philosophy. It is a way of life that helps man to achieve spiritual realisation. Philosophy does not stop for Śankara with the discovery of truth. But it ends only with the realisation of it. To attain Mokṣa we need a hard discipline. It is like walking on a razor's edge. The path is hard to cross and difficult to tread. Its realisation is not merely a matter of intellectual gifts. It requires moral and ceremonial purity also.

To realise Mokṣa we have to go through a hard and ethical training. The goal is not achieved except by treading this way. This aspect of the training is treated in Advaita religion and ethics. Śankara lays down that the spiritual aspirant should qualify himself before he undertakes the quest. Śankara in his independent treatises (prakaraṇas) gives us a clear picture of the way to achieve the goal. Man is at the crossroads of evolution. Nature leaves him to take care of himself. He is distinguished from animals by his power of thought and his knowledge of good and evil. He is free to make his future or mar it. He can climb heaven high or sink back to animal savagery. He has the power of choice in him. Śankara writes that the importance of man consists in his capacity for thought and action. Man is no longer nature-directed. He is self-conducted and not nature-directed. Hence he has to make the choice and remove the ignorance that clouds his vision. Ignorance is the cause of all ceaseless activities. The ego

of man longs desperately to be happy, it seeks freedom and security in all its activities. Man searches happiness in the finite things of the world where it is not.

Ignorance is destroyed by self-knowledge. Self-knowledge is achieved not by mere learning. *Katha Upaniṣad* declares "The self cannot be attained by instruction or by intellectual power or even through much hearing. It is to be attained only by the one whom the self chooses. To such a man the self reveals his nature." It is an experimental understanding of the reality. It is not a blank acceptance nor blind obedience to the Vedas. It is not an inherited authority. It is not as if the teacher expounds the truth, declares the ultimatum and the pupil has only to accept it in its entirety. It is not the result of clever argumentation or sharp logic. The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* declares that the repetition of scriptural passages and words is mere weariness of speech.

Intellectual knowledge does not by itself result in Mokṣa. In the celebrated dialogue between Nārada and Sanatkumāra we see the futility of much learning. The encyclopaedic knowledge of Nārada did not put an end to his sorrows. It only augmented his sadness. So, he sought spiritual instruction from Sanatkumāra. So was Dr. Faust of Goethe. Faust says:

"I have studied now philosophy
and jurisprudence and medicine
and even, alas theology,
with vision keen, from end to end
and yet poor fool, with all my lore
I am no wiser than before".

In similar words Nārada confesses his sadness. He declares that he was only learned in *mantras* and

did not know anything about the Ātman. So he sought that knowledge of the Ātman which puts an end to all sorrows alike.

Earthly possessions like wealth and strength do not give us Mokṣa. The sage Yājñavalkya declared to his intelligent wife that of Mokṣa, however, there is no hope through wealth. Ceremonial purity and ethical training are the indispensable necessities for spiritual realisation. The path to the goal is clearly worked out in the *Upaniṣads* and the *Gītā*. The average human being has to face the choice between the way of life and the way of death. In the language of the *Upaniṣads* everyone of us is presented the two goals, the good and the pleasant. "Different is the good and different indeed is the pleasant." "These two with different purposes bind a man. Of these two, it is well for him who takes hold of the good, but he who chooses the pleasant fails of his aim." "Both the good and the pleasant approach man; the wise man, pondering over them, discriminates; the wise chooses the good in preference to the pleasant. The simple-minded, for the sake of worldly well-being, prefers the pleasant."

It is not in the power of man to evade the choice. He has to make the choice. The choice is the result of rational reflection and the faith in spiritual values. These alone make man choose rightly. It is the right choice that leads men from the world of disvalues to the world of values. "From the unreal to the real, from darkness to light, from death to immortality" is the progress of the pilgrim. The choice involves a form of faith to begin with. The more firm the faith, the greater the chance of its being realised. Aldous Huxley remarks that "faith is the pre-condition

of all systematic knowing, all purposive doing and decent living." "Faith," our poet Tagore adds "is the bird that feels the light and sings when the dawn is dark." To begin with, ethical discipline in the form of self-control is absolutely necessary for spiritual life. The natural life of man is a state of distraction. We are an animal organisation and require constant stimulation. The stimulation always comes from outward excitements such as drugs, alcohol, sex, etc. The stimulation is not supplied by reason, nor is it easy for the will to control it.

Human activity is mostly prompted by impulses and the overpowering passions govern it. The bell of reason is not heard. The impulses are strong, irresistible and ungovernable. It is painful to control them. The prospect of evil consequences of the act of indulgence, does not deter the indulgence. Reason, the slave of passions, argues that the consequences can be bypassed. It is at this stage that the will or self-control comes to play its part.

Self-control is the control of the impulses and their proper direction in the light of some strongly desired ideal. It involves faith, intelligence, foresight and skill. Self-control is an antidote to mechanical repetitive living. In the words of Dr. Radhakrishnan, self-control is freedom from routine. It is conscious goal-directed activity. It is a false psychology which holds that we can overcome our temptations by indulging in them. Manu wrote long ago that there cannot be the quelling of desires by indulgence. It would be like attempting to quell the flames of the fire by pouring ghee into it. Marcus Aurelius declared: "The desires of the senses draw us hither

and thither, but when the hour is past, what do they bring us but remorse of conscience and dissipation of the spirit?" He adds that man can never subdue his desires by the power of enjoyment. "Hopedst thou perhaps to subdue desire by the power of enjoyment; but thou wilt find it impossible for the eye to be satisfied by seeing, or the ear to be filled with hearing. If all visible nature could pass before thee in review, what would it be but vain vision?"

Self-control is the first step in the ethical training of man. It keeps us vigilant. Sloth must be overcome. It is the great enemy of all efforts. It is the inspirer of cowardice, irresolution and self-pity. It is sloth that makes the body resist the will to sabotage by alarming the unconscious urges. Wakefulness is absolutely necessary for effective self-control. Heraclitus writes: "Those who are wakeful have one common world; those that are sleeping, each a different world." Gautama the Buddha devotes a whole chapter to vigilance in his *Dhammapada*. Vigilance is the path of eternal life; thoughtlessness is the path to death. Diligence and unremitting inner fight is necessary for spiritual life. The Upaniṣads exhort us to "arise and be awake." Further, the senses are so constructed as to look out and the will of man must redirect them and reverse their process and look in. We must not allow nature to work its own way. We must fight nature hard and bring about an inversion of the natural orientation of our consciousness. Lack of self-control leads to attachments and aversions which in their train bring us grief and trouble. In inimitable language the *Gītā* describes the chain of reactions thus:

Thinking about sense objects
 Will attach you to sense objects
 Grow attached, and you become addicted
 Thwart your addiction, it turns to anger;
 Be angry, and you confuse your mind.
 Confuse your mind, you forget the lesson of experience.
 Forget experience, you lose discrimination.
 Lose discrimination, and you miss life's purpose.

Thus we see that *viveka* leads to *vairāgya*. Self-control must be quiet and sane and not a process of fanatical self-punishment. The body must not be brutally beaten but must be handled firmly as a gallant rider treats his horse sparingly using the spurs. The images employed by the *Katha Upaniṣad* and Plato are picturesque and powerful. They declare and ask us to "Know the self as the Lord of the chariot and the body as the chariot, know the intellect as the charioteer and the mind as the reins." The senses are the horses, the objects of the senses are the paths; the self, associated with the body, the senses and the mind, is the enjoyer. "He who has no understanding, whose mind is always unrestrained, whose senses are out of control, has wicked horses for a charioteer." "He, however, who has understanding, whose mind is always restrained, senses under control is like a charioteer who has good horses."

Courage is the soul of self-control. It is the basis of all virtues. Fear is the most degrading of all vices. It destroys our mind and corrupts our morals. Faith, hope, charity and all the rest of the virtues become virtues only when you have courage to express them. Courage takes on two forms: (1) physical courage and (2) moral courage. Physical courage makes a man risk injury or death for a cause. But moral

courage enables an individual to face coolly, stake his all for what he thinks to be right. Fearlessness (abhaya) is the result of philosophic knowledge. The perception of spiritual truth is in proportion to the degree of moral perfection we have attained. Without courage and self-control it is not possible to be bold. Ceremonial purity and ethical excellence cleanse the mind of all impurities.

Spiritual courage makes us self-confident. It enables us to get up and to go to our work and remove the obstacles. It prevents us from lying down under obstacles and indulge in self-pity.

Ethical training and self-control tame the animal in us. It enables us to hold back and not throw ourselves into the fray. It builds moderation in our ways of life. It makes us avoid the extremes, choose that golden mean, that safe middle course between opposing extremes. It enables us to hesitate, halt, weigh the pros and cons, resist the sway of passions and the pressure of circumstances. We must banish hurry and avoid senseless movements and cultivate the *poise*. The *Ġitā* lays down the eternal law of spiritual development when it says "There is no happiness for those who have no peace." It describes the middle path as Yoga. "Yoga is not for him who eats too much or abstains too much from eating. It is not for him who sleeps too much or keeps awake too much." "For a man who is temperate in food and recreation, who is restrained in his actions, whose sleep and waking life are regulated, there ensues the discipline which destroys all sorrows."

It is Yoga that enables us to obtain a stable and steady mind governable by our will and frees us from animal cravings. It enables us to achieve a

resolute single-mindedness (vyavasāyātmikā) without which we would all be infirm of our purposes. Single-mindedness gives us a commanding position over the actions in life. In the words of Charles Morgan, "singleness of mind can be achieved only when the will of man is in union with one idea." Without self-control, in the words of Gandhiji "we will all be mental voluptuaries at the hand of chance desires and undisciplined impulses." The mind must attain "the steadiness of a lamp that flickereth not in a windless place."

All these ethical efforts pre-suppose the freedom of man's will. Self-effort is necessary to overcome passions. The *Gītā* might speak of self-surrender as the great ethical value. But the Master of the scripture has throughout exhorted Arjuna to overcome passions with self-effort. Śrī Kṛṣṇa describes the passions as veiling wisdom and deluding us. Hence the exhortation to control the senses and to slay the constant enemy of the wise. In the words of Blake: "If the doors of perception are cleansed, everything will appear to man as it is, infinite." In the words of Buddha "no heaven is too high for those to reach, whose passions sleep subdued." Shakespeare expresses the same thing:

Blessed are those
 Whose blood and judgment are so well commingled
 They are not a pipe for fortune's fingers
 To sound what stop she please
 Give me that man, that is not passions' slave
 Ay, I will wear him in my heart's core,
 Or in my heart of heart.

With self-control starts the performance of moral duties. Life according to Dharma is possible only for

those that have tamed the ape and the tiger in them. The Dharmic life serves two purposes, the welfare of society and the individual's spiritual progress. Dharma is the operating force for integration and coordination. It is the mediating and corrective principle in the cosmic mechanism. Dharma supports or upholds the world of living beings. 'It is the conscious adoption of the principles of perfect life in the world. Dharma is not an abstract ideal. It is not a mere set of rules. It is the universal law. It sustains society, it permeates all. What is contrary to it perishes. It is unethical to transgress Dharma. It restores spiritual harmony. It is the kingdom of God on earth.

To live the Dharmic life the Vedāntin enjoins on man a scheme of duties. Through the discharge of different duties man fulfils his Dharma and grows to his perfection. There should be no divorce between practice and precept. Moral life does not grow like grass. It involves a strict discipline. The practice of certain virtues is enjoined on all. These virtues are called Sādhāraṇa Dharmas. They are common human virtues. They must be practised by all.

Besides these duties, every individual is asked to practise some additional virtues which belong to him on account of his station and temperament (āśrama and varṇa).

Individual and social morality are fitted into the scheme of training to enable the individual to attain spiritual realisation. The role of *karma* in Advaita is directed to achieve two purposes, social welfare and the cleansing of the individual mind of all selfish desires. It removes all those instinctive tendencies in man that make him yield to selfish desires.

Social duties are a great check on the unbridled selfishness of man. The scheme of social morality which differs from individual to individual and also differs in the different stages of man's life is of great psychological value. All are not asked to follow the same discipline. Temperamental differences and intellectual maturity are given due consideration in the prescription of duties. The *varṇāśrama dharma* is an educational formula devised with a view to securing the sound upkeep of social organisation and civic cohesion. It takes into account the differences in the temper and the talents of men and does not force all into one way. It has provided ample room for the differences in the aptitudes and the abilities of man. It aims to secure the highest degree of co-ordination and avoids social waste. It stands for ordered freedom. It envisages a society which is neither capitalistic, governed by unregulated free enterprise, nor regimented. It does not stand for class domination as it is often misunderstood by our Communist friends. It is not a camouflage for domination and exploitation of others.

Ethical life is an indispensable step for spiritual realisation. The good life can never be bypassed. Spiritual realisation is not for him who has not acquired moral excellence. The *Katha Upaniṣad* declares: "Not he who has not desisted from evil ways, not he who is not tranquil, not he who is not concentrated in mind, not even he whose mind is not composed can reach the Self through self-knowledge."

The pursuit of Vedānta is to be undertaken by the aspirant after acquiring certain preliminary virtues. Śāṅkara outlines the preliminary discipline. It

consists of the control of the mind and control of senses (*śama* and *dama*). They stand for temperance of thought. Renunciation of acts follows in a spirit of fortitude (*uparati*) and (*titikṣā*). These indicate a form of courage in enduring pain and pleasure. The fifth characteristic is a certain degree of concentration on the ideal. It is called *samādhāna*. The last of the characteristics is the Faith in the philosophical ideal imparted in the *Śāstras*. It is called *śraddhā*.

The spiritual aspirant must learn the Vedāntic teaching from an enlightened and illumined *guru* and not through self-study. The Upaniṣad declares "he that has a *guru* knows." "And to know the truth the aspirant must approach the *guru* that is wise and devoted to Brahman with fuel in his hands." The acceptance of the *guru* is obligatory on all. All verile spiritual traditions have proclaimed the necessity of a *guru*. It is not a convention or a formality or an evasion of responsibility. Śankara reiterates it in his commentary on the above cited passage. "He must necessarily approach the *guru* who is characterised by composure of mind, self-control, love, etc. *Even one that is well-versed in the śāstras should not set about seeking Brahman by himself.* That is the force of the affirmative particle *eva* in the word *gurumeva* in the above passage."

What is learnt from the *guru* through *śravaṇa* might not impress us. We have to debate within ourselves and reflect on it. This is called *manana*. The teaching must become our own. Others teach us the truth they have reached as well as the method by which they did so. We have to use our own reason to repeat successfully the process described by the *guru* and re-discover the truth for ourselves.

Rational reflection is necessary to get to the depth of conviction. We will have to argue out the opposing views that assail our conviction. Personal reflection assists the aspirant in fighting contrary positions and helps him to realise the great truth of Advaita. It overcomes all those tumults and lusts that give fierce battle to the central truth of Advaita. *Manana* or reflection is the name given to that mental operation by which reasons are thought out and the discords between the Vedānta teaching and other modes of testimony are removed. Reflection burns the truth into the aspirant's mind. It makes the external opinion we get from the *guru* inwardly clear.

The intellectual conviction is still mediate knowledge. It is not the direct experience of ultimate reality. By constant meditation it has to be transformed into a vision. The theory must become an experience (anubhava). It must be a *sākṣātkāra*, i.e. a direct realisation. To this experience the process called *nidhidhyāsana* leads us. It is the meditation of the truth of Advaita till it is transformed into a direct experience. The intellectual conviction is likely to be disturbed by old habits and unconscious urges. Meditation overcomes them.

Nidhidhyāsana is the way to realisation. The author of the *Vedānta Paribhāṣā* describes it. "It is that operation by which we fix our mind on self, drawing it away from all worldly concerns towards which it is attached by a beginningless habit."

The Vedāntin prescribes a number of *upāsanaś* for transforming the mediate knowledge of Advaita into actual realisation. Śāṅkara defines *upāsana* in his commentary on the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*. "It means reaching by the mind the form of a deity or something else

as delineated in scriptural passages relating to meditation and concentrating the mind on it—uninterrupted by secular thoughts—until identity with that deity or other thing is realised in the same degree in which identity is now realised with our body.”

Upāsana involves concentration and sympathetic imagination. First of all the mind is abstracted from everything except the object of meditation. Secondly, union with the object meditated is established. It enables us to fix a continuous flow of thought about a thing without any interruption by other cross-currents of the mind. It is also described as the constant memory (*dhruva smṛti*).

The meditation when intensely practised brings about the realisation. The great sayings of the Upaniṣads that declare the identity of the individual and Reality open our eyes and behold the truth. With the onset of this experience we no longer feel that we are banished strangers and little men but divinity itself. We realise the truth of the saying that we are Brahman. Such an experience makes us Godlike in our apprehension and ways of life i.e., the manifest destiny of men, the ground and the goal of human life. The mystics of the world have such an experience. They have brought the knowledge of their experience to all of us.

More than any aspect of Advaita Vedānta, the ethical philosophy of Śankara has been the target of attack from the moderns. The attack takes on more than one form. Ethical life has no autonomy of its own and is made the hand-maid of religion by Śankara. Further, the spiritually perfected individual is beyond good and evil. Above all, there is no room for

individuality, its growth, development or perfection. The individual is absorbed in the Absolute.

Dr. Schweitzer holds the view that the ethics of Vedānta and Buddhism are one of perfection. The Vedāntin regards all activity, in the opinion of the learned doctor, as the result of ignorance. Non-activity is the mark of the spiritual man. So, the Vedāntin preserves himself from impurity of action. The desire for perfection and not compassion is at the root of Vedānta morality. That is the finding of Dr. Schweitzer. Further, he fails to see how the world-negating philosophy of Śāṅkara can inspire individuals to be morally active. Morality is possible only if we have "reverence for life." If we look upon the world in which we live as a huge nightmare and a delusion we would always dissociate ourselves from everything including existence upon earth. The doctrine of *māyā* is interpreted by the great humanist doctor as furthering the denial of life.

The ethical philosophy of Śāṅkara does not result in indifference. It is not inhuman or selfish as described by the critics. It is not the cold shunning of everybody and every human interest for the working out of one's own salvation. Śāṅkara makes the ethical perfect through spiritual experience. Ethical values need spiritual sanction. Without spiritual experience ethical virtues remain as mere habits. True humanism is based on spiritual experience. Secular morality has no sanctions and does not inspire us to pursue values in the face of opposition. Śāṅkara does not belittle ethical virtues. He delves deep into the nature of human love. Human love is not a mere transitory fancy. It is there because of the fundamental oneness of reality. Our love is exclusive and

limited because we have a separatist view of reality. It is again ignorance of the universal oneness of reality that makes our love conditional and purposive. Spiritual experience makes us realise without a shadow of doubt the brotherhood of man. We know that we are all one. Such a realisation can never result in indifference to others. Morality becomes perfected and spontaneous through spiritual realisation. Narrow selfish love flowers into universal compassion. Hence, Advaita ethics is to be regarded as not ruling out the ordinary virtues of human life.

The philosophy of Śankara can best be described as the best type of spiritual humanism. It is rationalistic in its approach to the problems of philosophy and experimental in its confirmation of the truth. It is the only religion that has the chance of being accepted by our generation who are children of science and reason. As religion it is least dogmatic, most universal and least sectarian. It is at once a philosophy of values and a grand metaphysics. Śankara's imposing and inspiring system of metaphysics is the greatest contribution of India to world's thought and religion. Through his devotional poems and grand philosophic prose and supreme organisational powers he stands as the greatest of India's philosophers for all times.

Chapter VI

RĀMĀNUJA'S THEISTIC VEDĀNTA

The term Vedānta does not merely apply to the system of Śankara's advaita. It is the general name for all those systems that have for their authority the three texts:—*Upaniṣads*, *Gītā* and *Vedānta Sūtras*. The *Gītā* and the *Vedānta sūtras* express, explain and systematise the message of the *Upaniṣads*.

The very fact that the opposing schools of Vedānta like those of Śankara and Rāmānuja quote texts from the *Upaniṣads* as their authority, discloses the fact that the *Upaniṣads* are all not of one view. There are two distinct currents of thought in the *Upaniṣads*, one a strong current of Absolute Idealism that is after the heart of Śankara. The statements in the *Upaniṣads* that describe the concept of Nirguṇa Brahman, the cosmic view, the doctrine of *māyā*, and the identity and merger of the individual soul with Brahman represent the first view. Śankara regards them as the true view and so he sets aside the second view.

The theistic schools of Vedānta have for their inspiration the second current of thought in the *Upaniṣads*, which looks upon Reality as a Supreme Person, an adorable object, as the true and loving God of religion. "He is absolute in the fullest sense of the term. He is the denial of all denials, the real of all reals. God is the Protector of all beings, is the Lord of all, and dwells in the heart of man; that seeing Him as he is, and everywhere is eternal bliss and this is to be attained by contemplation and the purification of the soul and in that blissful condition the individual soul attains to a perfect similarity with the supreme

soul." (Mun. III. 1.3). The supreme Reality manifests Himself into various forms as *avatārs* i.e., incarnations. The concepts of immanence and the transcendence of God are found in the Upaniṣads. The doctrine of *upāsanas* is the source for the Bhakti doctrine of the latter-day theistic schools of Vedānta.

Rāmānuja was the first to present a systematic school of theistic Vedānta. His line of interpretation is opposed to that of Śaṅkara. The system outlined by Rāmānuja is called *Viśiṣṭādvaita* Vedānta. He derived the doctrines of his system from the triple texts, *Bhāgavata*, *Pāñcarātra Āgamās*, and the mystical writings of a number of god-intoxicated men called *Ālvārs*. These *Ālvārs* lived between the 7th and 9th centuries and wrote about their mystical experiences in their mother-tongue, Tamil. Their songs, are over four thousand in number. They are commented on by a number of authors and a huge literature in the regional language has grown round them. These songs are recited in all the Vaiṣṇava temples. They are the foundations of Indian theism in the South. Students of Tamil literature regard the songs as great literary productions. Rāmānuja records that prior to him there were ancient teachers like Dramida, Taṅka and Guhadeva. Rāmānuja has commented on the *Gītā* and the *Vedānta sūtras*. As for the Upaniṣads he has taken the crucial and disputed passages and commented on them in his book on *Vedānta Saṅgraha*. There have been several able exponents of this school subsequent to Rāmānuja. Among them the most prominent is Vedānta Deśika whose dialectical skill and logical acumen are directed most forcibly against the Advaita of Śaṅkara.

Rāmānuja's philosophy has for its source and

authority the triple texts and also the religious experience of the Āḷvars. He gives us a conception of the Absolute united to a type of personal theism. His exposition of the relation of the *world of matter* and the *world of souls* to God is influenced by the Bhāgavata religion and the mystical experiences of the Āḷvars. The elements that go into the making of Rāmānuja's system are "the influence of the *upāsana* section of the Upaniṣads, the Bhāgavata literature reinforced by Prābhakara epistemology and the jīva doctrine of the Jaina Psychology."

His conception of Reality is that of a complex whole that is organic. Reality for him is not a homogeneous, non-composite consciousness. "Its unity is like that of a living organism, one element predominates and controls the rest." The predominant and controlling element is God. *The world of souls* and the *world of matter* are subordinate elements and stand in the relation of adjectives (Viśeṣaṃas) to the Lord. These cannot by hypothesis exist by themselves separately. The complex whole (viśiṣṭa) in which they are included is described as a unity. Hence the name *viśiṣṭādvaita* (*viśiṣṭasya viśiṣṭa-rūpeṇa advaitam*).

Rāmānuja's conception of the Absolute is best understood when we compare it with that of Śankara. Śankara's Absolute is regarded by Rāmānuja as a metaphysical monster. Such a conception is declared as no better than void. We can say nothing about it. It is ever inaccessible to us. It can never be absolute in the positive sense of the term. It is neither a demand of the head nor of the heart. The Absolute is the real of all reals. It is the denial of all denials. Rāmānuja believes that Reality is a

supreme, adorable, personal and loving God. The Upaniṣadic statement that “neither the mind nor speech can describe Brahman” does not mean that Brahman is unknowable. It means that with our finite intellect we cannot completely know all about the Lord. Our knowledge of Him is always bound to fall short of completeness. The negative descriptions of Brahman declare that the Lord has none of the imperfect virtues or the characteristics of the world. There is the complete absence of all undesirable *guṇās* in Him. Rāmānuja regards the Supreme as the home of infinite number of auspicious qualities (*ananta kalyāṇa guṇa paripūrṇā*). God’s very nature is *aprākṛta* i.e. not of the *prakṛti* that is of the world. He is a person not in the finite sense of the term that we all are. It is only by analogy we call him a person. The materials that constitute the abode of the Lord and his personality are not made of *Prakṛti*. It is made of *śuddha Sattva*. The supreme personality of the Lord is the most distinguishing feature of Rāmānuja’s system. The unique relation he envisages between the Lord and the world of matter and the world of souls is the distinctive mark of his system.

The fundamental authority for Rāmānuja’s conception of Ultimate Reality is the Upaniṣads. The roots of Rāmānuja’s monotheism can be traced back to the Vedas. In the Upaniṣads there is a warm current of theism and a personalistic conception of Reality. Supreme Reality is described as *Nārāyaṇa*. He is referred to as being immanent and also transcendent. He is referred to as the creator, sustainer and destroyer of the world.

The *Taittirīya* defines Brahman as that verity

from which these beings are born, that by which when born they live, that into which when departing they enter. That which we seek to know. That is Brahman."¹ Supreme Reality is not exhausted in his creation. It is not pantheism. God is not merely the world. God minus the world is still God. For the pantheist, God minus the world is zero. Nor is Rāmānuja's system a type of deism. God does not create the world and leave it as a mechanic leaves a machine. The immanence of God in the external world and in the heart of man is the essential truth. It is perfectly consistent with the belief in God's transcendence, His being distinct from the world and man and being above them, influencing them, controlling them and listening and responding to their prayers. The God of Rāmānuja does not exist merely apart from the cosmos but also dwells in it. He is more than all his manifestations. God is not exhausted in the world, but he also exists separately. The pantheism of Rāmānuja is not the same as that of Spinoza.

A particular section of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* brings out the immanence of God very clearly. It is called the *antarayāmi brahmana*. "He who is dwelling in the earth is distinct from it, whom the earth does not know, whose body the earth is, and who, being inside, controls the earth, is indestructible controlling soul".² The same statement is made about water, fire, sky, wind, the sun, the moon and the stars, the quarters, the lightning, thunderbolt, all the worlds, all the Vedās, all sacrifices, all beings, the vital breath, speech, the eye, the ear, the mind,

1. Taittirīya, III. 1.

2. Br. III. 7. 3.

the skin, light etc. The Lord is distinct from the objects of the world; still he resides in all objects and uses them as his body, controls them from inside.”

The *Bhagavad Gītā* and the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* bring out the two characteristics of supreme Reality as being transcendent and immanent. It is a personality without the limitations of the human significance of the term. From the transcendence and immanence of the Lord, two other qualities follow, namely, His nearness and love (*saulabhya* and *sauśilya*).

The world of souls, matter and Īśvara constitute a complex. They are distinct but held together. Rāmānuja is averse to a concept of Reality as the Absolute. He thinks of it as a conscious mind and supreme person. He says that it is illogical and difficult to have concept of God as substance. In the words of Prof. Stace: “If you think of God as a supreme person or a mind—however much you realise the inadequacy of the words, the difficulties wrapped up in the personalistic concept of God, however much you may try to avoid their ordinary crude meanings as applied to human beings—you cannot help being anthropomorphic. In short, the idea of God is incurably and necessarily anthropomorphic.”³

The human mind always thinks and can only think analogically. The God of Rāmānuja has a peculiar type of relation with the world of souls and of matter. It is called *aprthak siddhi* relation. Souls are distinct and eternal; so is matter. God does not create them out of nothing as in Christianity. They are also regarded as substances but in the complex unity envisaged by Rāmānuja they are treated as the

3. W. T. Stace, *Religion and the Modern Mind*, Pp. 9-10.

attributes of the Lord. The two categories, souls and the world, are as real as God but they are dependent on the Lord and do not exist without Him. All three exist as a complex wherein souls and matter form the body of the Lord. The unity is the close fellowship of the three categories. They are not in the relation of *Samavāya* i.e., "an external relation between two inseparables which are distinct reals." The concept of *samavāya* is criticised in *Vedānta Sūtra* and a logical analysis of it leads to the fallacy of infinite regress. So Rāmānuja abandons it and gives a new name to the relation between the three entities. It is an organic relation which obtains between substance and attribute, part and whole, body and soul, between substances. It is a vital relation. It brings out the intimate relation between God and other categories. The relation expounded by Rāmānuja brings out the two central doctrines of religion, namely: (1) that the worlds of matter and souls are sustained and supported by the Lord (2) that they subserve the purposes of the Lord. Matter and souls exist for the Lord. God is the sole cause of all. In the words of Prof. Hirianna, "the world and the individual souls are real and distinct, the Absolute in which they are included is one. They are eternal with God but not external to him." The distinction is not discerned but at the same time organic unity of the whole is affirmed. We must note the fact that the souls are not modal transformation of the God as in Advaita. They are accessories to Him to subserve his purposes. They are not identical with Him. When Rāmānuja refers to them as his body, "the 'body' is that which is controlled, supported and utilized for its purposes by a soul."

The intimate relation between the Lord and the souls is expressed in a number of ways by Rāmānuja. God is regarded as substance (Prakāri) and souls are the outer attributes (Prakāra). God is the (niyantā) i.e., the controller and we are the controlled (niyāmya). He is the supporter and we are the supported i.e. (ādhāra and ādheya). We are the parts, He is the whole (amśa and amśi). We are the means and He is the end (śeṣa-śeṣi). Rāmānuja has for his support the *Svetāśvetara*. "The eternal which rests in the Self should be known. Truly there is nothing beyond this to be known. By knowing the enjoyer, the object of enjoyment and the mover of all, everything has been said. This is the threefold Brahman."

Rāmānuja's conception of God is intimate and it answers the purposes of religion. God is with us. He is close to us and works in our lives. He is seated in the heart of men. The conception of God as an abstraction chills us. The God of Rāmānuja is neither an intellectual abstraction that is inoperative in the behaviour of men nor is it a conventional and barren verbal formula that we keep on repeating because it is our habit. Nor is the God of Rāmānuja the God of the deists, the first cause who created the world and left it there like Paley's watch-maker. Nor is God a hypothesis that explains how the world originated and has no import in the daily affairs of our life. The remoteness and the non-concern of God to the world has destroyed the force of religion. The God of Rāmānuja is the God of the *Gītā*; "he is the enjoyer of all sacrifices and austerities, the great Lord of all the worlds, the friend of all beings." God is described in the *Bhāgavata* as the beloved, the self, the son, the friend, the teacher and the relative and

the desired deity. He is not the mere distant world-ruler; He is the intimate friend who heralds light and imparts wisdom in the dark days. He takes on *avatāras* to help men and show the way of life and truth.

Metaphysical gods like those of Aristotle and Whitehead may give us truth, but as Pascal writes "we make an idol of Truth, for Truth without charity is not God, but his image and idol which we must neither love nor worship."

Rāmānuja speaks of a five-fold manifestation of God. He has a transcendent form called *Nārāyaṇa* or *Vāsudeva*. *Vaikunṭha* is His abode. He is the inner-ruler of us all called *antaryāmin*. He takes on the incarnations as Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, Buddha in his *vibhava* form. He is also manifest in some temples in the form of idols. The various forms of *Nārāyaṇa* are called *Vāsudeva*, *San̄karṣaṇa*, *Pradyumna* and *Aniruddha*. Thus the God of Rāmānuja is the example of a perfect religious concept. He is described as being responsive to the wishes of the devotee, sensitive to his needs and akin to his spirit. He is the Creator, Sustainer and Destroyer of the world.

Rāmānuja's God and his conception of soul both alike involve change and permanence. Both are substances having their own inseparable attribute called *dharmabhūta jñāna*. The attribute changes and not the substance. The God of Rāmānuja does not Himself change into the various forms but only his *dharmabhūta jñāna* changes. The attributive element alone changes. There is no direct change for the Lord. The changes of the Lord into various forms is mediated through the *dharmabhūta jñāna*. Such an explanation wards off all the possible objection against the

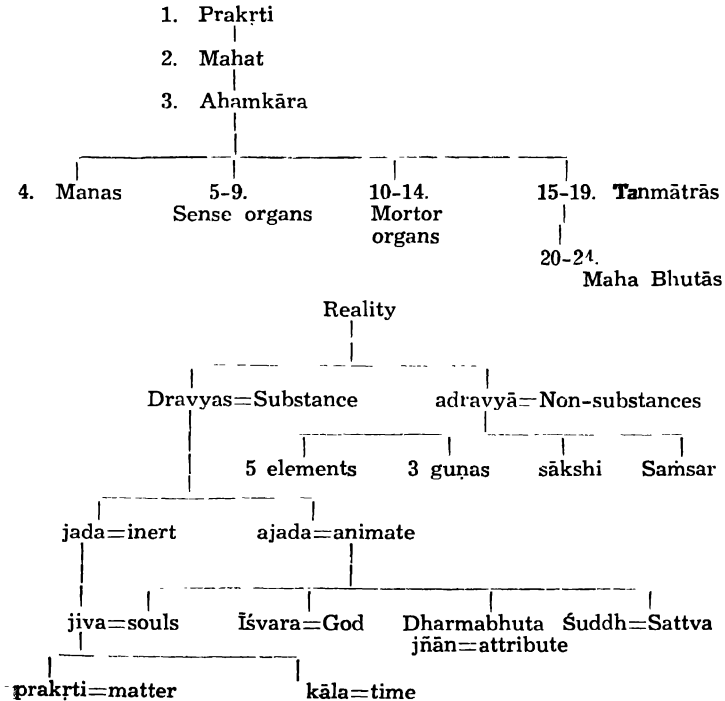
change of the Lord (*Pariṇāma vāda*) into the various forms. The attributive element i.e., the *dharmabhūta jñāna* is in inseparable relation with its substance, the Lord. God does not suffer bondage or sorrow in taking on several manifestations. It is only the attributive element that changes. Further, bondage, sorrow and such experiences are the result of the individual's Karma but the Lord is the Lord of Karma and He is not affected by it. This distinction between substance and attribute is intended to meet the possible objections against *Pariṇāma vāda*.

The nature of the individual soul is conceived by Rāmānuja as atomic. It has also its own *dharmabhūta jñāna*, the attributive element. It comprehends in saṁsāra objects in a limited manner. When the soul attains salvation its knowledge expands to all things and almost becomes omniscient. The souls are eternal and infinite in number and beginningless. It has an organic inseparable connection with the Lord. It is His attribute. The soul is a free agent, an active purposeful being (*kartā* and *bhoktā*). But the Lord is the inner-ruler immortal of the souls. After liberation the soul becomes free but subordinate only to the Lord. He is just like the Lord his maker, except for the difference of not being the creator of the world and its sustainer.

Prakṛti for Rāmānuja is as eternal as the Lord. It is the abode of the soul of man as well as of the Lord. It is one of the triple categories. It has three characteristics, *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. Prakṛti with its *guṇas* is made use of by the Lord for his creation. It is not infinite, though it is eternal. It is still under the sway of the Lord. It is in inseparable relation with the Lord on one side and the souls on the other.

The evolution of the Prakṛti into 24 categories is the same as in Śāṅkhya. Prakṛti does not touch the Lord. The limbs of the person of the Lord and his abode Vaikuṅṭha is made out of a substance called *nitya vibhūti*. It is like Prakṛti but without its two *guṇas*, *rajas* and *tamas*. It is pure *sattva* (*śuddha sattva*).

We have so far examined the various philosophical categories of Rāmānuja's system. The following table gives us at a sight the different categories and their relation to others:



Let us advert to the study of Rāmānuja's method of God realisation. He is the fountain-head of Indian Theism. The individual soul on account of its own Karma gets bound to *samsāra*. Bondage is ignorance of the omnipresent nature and goodness of the Lord. The tragedy of the individual soul is its feeling that it can do all the things of the world. Affirming his own autonomy and self-sufficiency is the sin of man. It is self-pride. The illusion of self-pride is smashed in the God-created world and thus man realises that he is just a creation of the Lord on whom depends his whole life. This realisation does not easily dawn on man. It is first of all based on faith. Faith is as much a faculty of man as reasoning. It enables us to step out and break free from what is purely empirical. It releases us from the tyranny of the world of things. Faith in the message of the scripture, as learnt from the master, is the first step. The *Gītā* declares that he "who is ignorant and has no faith and is ever doubting, perishes." We need an unwavering faith to love the Lord. In the words of Huxley, "faith is the pre-condition of all systematic knowing, all purposive doing and all decent living." The faith in the Lord is everything and is necessary for the soul to love the Lord. Faith is summed up in the first mantra of the *Īśa Upaniṣad*. "Know all this, whatever moves in this moving world, is enveloped by God." Gandhiji's comment on this verse brings out the force of the mantra. "The mantra describes God as the Creator, the Ruler and the Lord. The seer to whom this mantra or verse was revealed was not satisfied with the very frequent statement that God was to be found everywhere." He went further and said: "since God pervades everything, nothing belongs to

you, not even your own body. God is the undisputed, unchallengeable Master of everything you possess. If it is universal brotherhood—not only brotherhood of all human beings, but of all living things—I find it in this mantra. It is unshakable faith in the Lord and Master—and all the adjectives you can think of—I find it in this mantra. If it is the idea of complete surrender to God and of the faith that He will supply all that I need, then again I say I find it in this mantra. Since He pervades every fibre of my being and of all of you, I derive from it the doctrine of the equality of all creatures on earth and it should satisfy the cravings of all philosophical communists. This mantra tells me that I cannot hold as mine anything that belongs to God and that, if my life and that of all who believe in this *mantra* has to be a life of perfect dedication, it follows that it will have to be a life of continual service of fellow creatures.”* Faith in the Lord is the result of the knowledge of his greatness, power and love. Faith is the beginning of *bhakti*. The knowledge or *jñāna* of the Lord's qualities leads to its contemplation. That grows into the full love of the Lord.

Rāmānuja's conception of the Supreme as a person makes the concept of Bhakti easy. Bhakti is of the nature of love (Prema). When it is directed to different individuals, it takes on different names, such as the parental love, sensual love, friend's love etc. The emotion of love is universal and the most potent factor in man. It is man's nature to love. Pascal declared “The human mind naturally believes, and the human heart naturally loves.” Love is man's effort to fly from loneliness. It is almost

* Harijan, 1937.

instinctive in man. If he cannot find a God in heaven, he will fall down before a God on earth and deify some idols of his own making, be it a nation, a class or party or an ideology. Man needs to transcend his self to be truly human. This urge to transcend himself is expressed in his love. Men are prepared to make all sorts of sacrifices for those that they love and they in their turn love them also. It is a universal human mode of communion. So men find it easy to take to it.

Human love with all its warmth when dedicated to the Lord is called *bhakti*. It is all consuming and does not keep back anything. It is a total giving. It is complete self-effacement. In the words of St. Paul it is self-emptying, without which there is no divine filling. "Not I, Christ lives in me. Vāsudeva is all that is."

The most difficult thing in the world to give up is self-love and other little loves. The real devotee through discriminative wisdom realises his creaturli-ness and finds no hope for him except through the Lord's grace. He realises that fellowship with the Lord is his supreme destiny. Love of God is the supreme spiritual ideal, and the great secret to attain it is to love God more than all the objects in the world. *Bhakti* is that kind of attachment to the Lord based on a complete understanding of the supremacy of the Lord, which transcends the love of one's self and possessions and which remains unshaken in death and difficulty. The surrender which the devotee makes to the Lord is conscious and is done in joy and not in a mood of despair or disgust. It is not submission to the force or terror which threatens to destroy. It is the joyous giving up of all, with the

faith that is the consummation devoutly to be wished for. It is not the stoic attitude of acceptance of a fate which is above us as depicted by Hardy in his novels.

There is a joy in the life of the God-centred souls before which all other pleasures stand no comparison. The devotees are not able to describe their joy fully. They speak in symbols and their language often borders on that of passionate lovers. The thirteen Pre-Rāmānuja Ālvārs represent a very strong school of Bhakti which melts our hearts. One of them, a woman saint, Āndāl has given the exquisite outpouring of her heart which stand for the typical bridal mysticism. The Lord is loved with all the heart.

The term Bhakti comes from the root, meaning 'to serve' or 'to resort to' and signifies service or resorting to another for assistance. "It is turning to God for protection completely turning ones self to his for protection completely turning one's self to his service and sacrifice for God, and God's reciprocal love of man and the blessed communion between God and man. Bhakti brings order and beauty into the confused and tangled facts of our life.

Nārada the great sage has given us an excellent text explaining the path of devotion and its characteristics. The great *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* illustrates the function and the efficacy of Bhakti as seen in the lives of several devotees. It is the veritable treasure-house of devotional literature. Rāmānuja and other theists draw freely on the *Bhāgavata* for the doctrines of their faith.

Nārada defines Bhakti as intense love of God and says: "A man who loves God has no wants or sorrows. He neither hates nor joys nor strives with

zeal for any ends of his own. For through Bhakti is he moved to rapture, and through Bhakti does he attain peace and is happy in spirit." "Love of God is ineffable. It is as if a dumb man had tasted a delicious food and could not speak about it. It would be revealed only to the chosen few. For it is an experience pure and selfless, subtle, unbroken and ever-expanding. A man who has once experienced God-love will see that alone and speak of that alone, for he ever thinks of that alone."

God's response to man's devotion is called grace, and *prasāda*. The theistic schools believe that man's salvation is dependent on God's grace. It is derivative and not native to the soul of man. It is not the birthright of the soul. It is a gift from God. "The high and the best way thither is run by desires and not by the feet. For he may be loved not thought. By love may he be begotten and holden but by thought never" says the great unknown author of *The Cloud of Unknowing*. The spirit bloweth where it listeth. Many are called but few are chosen. The *Katha* declares, "the ātman cannot be attained by the study of Vedas, nor by intellect nor even by much learning; by him it is attained whom God chooses." Let us listen to what the *Gītā* has to say on this topic: The Lord declares "it cannot be attained either by the Vedas or by austerities or by gifts or sacrifices. But by unswerving devotion to Me, I can be known truly, seen and entered into. So he who does work for me, he who looks upon me as his goal, he who worships me, free from attachment, who is free from enmity to all creatures, he goes to me. But those who worship me with devotion, they are in me and I am also in them." The Lord further says: "The devotees

fix their thought in Me, their lives are wholly given up to me; enlightening each other and ever conversing of me, they are contended and rejoicing in Me. They are constantly devoted and worship me with love. I grant them the wisdom by which they come to me. Out of compassion for those same ones, remaining within my own true state, I destroy the darkness born of ignorance by the lamp of wisdom."

The Lord in another context says that he is responsible for the well-being of those individuals that are his devotees and those that throw themselves on Him for grace. "The virtuous ones who worship the Lord are of four kinds, the man in distress, the seeker after knowledge, the man who is after wealth and the man of wisdom." "Of these the wise one, who is ever in constant union with the divine, whose devotion is single-minded, is the best. For I am supremely dear to him and he is dear to me."

The irrevocable promise of the Lord according to the Mahatma is (XI. 22) that "those who worship me and meditate on me alone, to them who ever persevere I bring all attainment of what they have not and security of what they have."

The Lord declares that his devotees never perish. Towards the end of *Gītā* the Lord gives us in full his final opinion on Bhakti as the most important means to attain him. The Lord says, "Through devotion the devotee comes to know Me, what my measure is and who I am in truth; then having known Me in truth, then, he forthwith enters into me." Doing continually all actions taking refuge in me, he reaches by my grace the eternal and the everlasting abode."

Thus, we find that the *Gītā*, the great scripture, is

predominantly theistic and proclaims *Bhakti* as the most important means for God-realisation. The question that is generally raised in connection with *Bhakti* is whether morality is essential for it. It is essential, is the verdict of all scriptures. There can be no godly life without good life. The good life is indispensable to religion. "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God" says the Bible. *Bhakti* involves the knowledge of the Lord and, in the words of Rāmānuja, it is constant remembrance of the Lord (*dhruvānusmṛti*). And it also involves a particular way of life. Mostly *Bhakti* is for a supreme personal God. The Upaniṣad declares "not he who has not desisted from evil ways, not he who is not tranquil, not he who has not a concentrated mind, not even he whose mind is not composed can reach this through right knowledge."

The cleaning of one's moral being is absolutely necessary. "If the doors of perception are cleansed" in Blake's words, "everything will appear to man as it is, infinite. In all religions the individual has the consciousness of a divine being who is the controller of all things, towards whom man feels a sense of awe, —the magical attitude. These are God-fearing and not God-loving religions. The religious attitude is not the same as the magical attitude. It is born out of a complete understanding of the Lord. A genuine love and worship of the Lord is possible only when we know his true, infinite excellences. It is the *jñāna* or knowledge that God is Love that makes the individual surrender himself to God. *Bhakti* includes love of God through the knowledge of his nature. The knowledge becomes perfect and absolute when we surrender

to him completely out of *anurakti* which means love that arises after a knowledge of God's goodness and accessibility. Bhakti is fearlessness, *abhaya*.

The popular view that Bhakti is the path meant only for the ignorant and that it is attained through passive virtues such as humility and meekness, is not correct. The unqualified submission to another is not so easy. Self-hood and self-love are almost unconquerable in man.

A selfless self-giving without any question is Bhakti. In Bhakti there is the emphasis not on the self but on the object sought. Devotion is the natural relationship between the Lord and the Soul. The complete love of God and surrender to Him is the best way of knowing the Lord. The only way to know God is to love Him, and the way to love Him is to know His infinite love for us. In religion we cannot separate knowing and doing. Love of God is not an arid constructive virtue that men have to practise it from a sense of duty or with an eye to profit. Nor is it a mere whim of men. It is a response to the lovable. The lovable alone can be loved. This love of God deepens the love of God and it grows from strength to strength. Bhakti makes us surrender our ego to the will of the Lord. We say, "Thy will be done."

The actions that a *bhakta* does are dedications to the Lord. This is called in the language of the *Gītā karma yoga*. The God-lover does the will of the Lord, without waiting for any reward or thanks. Secondly, according to Rāmānuja, the devotee does not love merely the Lord but loves his entire creation. He regards himself as the servant of the Lord and desires and strives to establish the kingdom of God on earth. He is called the *kiṅkara* of the Lord.

Love of God results in the love of humanity, for humanity is a glorious manifestation of the Lord. So the devotee forswears retaliation and loves all. The grace of the Lord which saves us is not the result of any condition. It is unconditional love (*nirhetuka kaṭākṣa*).

There can be no salvation without the grace of the Lord. The grace of the Lord is not a contract between the soul and the Lord. It is his free gift which he bestows on us not because we deserve it, but because it is an overflowing love. There is nothing that can buy the grace of the Lord except a total giving up. Religion is not the activity of one individual. It is the work of God and of man. The human being has the free will to set aside the grace of the Lord. The wisest father cannot go on talking if the child will not listen. We cannot just create any love for God in ourselves just by wanting it. "We cannot create a plant out of nothing, nor force a seed to grow, contrary to its nature. We can give the plant the soil, the manure, the water, the light which will enable it to grow. That is all our moral effort can do and nothing more. The conditions can be determined, but the conditioning agent is free to bring about the event or not."

The Vaishṇava religion of Rāmānuja like Christianity lays a great deal of emphasis on social work and on humanistic ethics. It is to be undertaken as Lord's duty. The devotees of the Lord are of two types: those that are lost in the mystic rapture of admiration of the Lord and keep on in His Presence and do nothing. They are the psalmists or the contemplatives. The others are the active mystics, that are not satisfied with the vision of the Lord, but go

out into the world beckoning others to go up the wall and see the vision. They do the will of the Lord. There are these types, the way of Martha and the way of Mary.

Rāmānuja regards the world as the creation of the Lord. It is the manifestation of the māyā of the Lord. Māyā is not here used in Sankara's sense of the term, but as the power of the Lord. For Rāmānuja, the world is the real and rational creation by the Supreme Self's power and intelligence. It is neither the mechanical product of atoms nor the evolution of nature. Above all it is not the illusory projection of māyā.

A follower of Rāmānuja called Rāmānanda migrated to northern India and spread Vaishṇavism through his disciples. Rāmānuja was the first among the *ācāryas* to build a system of Vedānta not exclusively on Sanskrit texts, the Upaniṣads and the *Gītā*, but also on the Tamil works. This is the reason for describing his Vedānta as Ubhaya-Vedānta (using both Tamil and Sanskrit texts). His Absolute sets forth a unique relation between the God, world and souls. It brings out the intimacy as well as the dependence of the categories. It is called *apṛthak siddha* relation. He affirms the reality of the world. He speaks of the uniting experience of all souls as similar. Above all, his doctrine of the complete surrender to the Lord; *Prapatti*, is the most significant method outlined for God-realisation opened to all without distinction of caste, class, creed, age and sex. He throws open the gates of the temple to all alike. He regards that the Lord requires nothing but a contrite heart.

The doctrine of *Śaranāgati* (Surrender) brings out the conception of God as Love to the forefront.

The individual soul who is not able to live aright and lapses from the divine commands feels miserable, helpless and lost. This utter sense of unworthiness and helplessness creates a feeling of sorrow. The Lord declares to such a man that he would redeem him if he surrenders to him. That is the assurance of the Lord of the *Gītā* towards the end of the gospel. The aspirant has to follow the will of the Lord and give up whatever goes against Him. He is to keep absolute faith in the Lord and His saving grace. He is to feel that he has to be saved in spite of himself. He should seek consciously the grace of the Lord as the only remedy open to him. The last act of the aspirant is to throw himself upon the grace of the Lord. This act of completely flinging oneself on God's compassion is called *Saraṅgati*. It is the resignation of one in extreme distress. "Man's extremity is god's opportunity," said William James.

The doctrine of complete self-surrender is the *sine qua non* of godly life. Rāmānuja respects the individuality and personality of the human soul, its distinctness and does not sacrifice it. This does not prevent him from placing his finger on the chief disease of man, namely, his ego, his selfishness, his self-centredness and his crude individuality. This has to be given up for spiritual regeneration. The real obstacle to spiritual life is selfishness and not personality. The acme of godly life is absolute self-suppression and the readiness to be a willing instrument of the Lord's purposes. This is the final stage of *Bhakti*. Whatever course of discipline one might follow, they all must end in this act of self-surrender. In the words of Sri Aurobindo this is the law of living. It goes beyond all creeds, religious beliefs

and personal aims of conduct. It is the crowning word, it is not merely the essence of Bhakti, it sweeps out all, and further breaks down every limit and rule, canon and formula and opens out a wide, vivid and illimitable spiritual experience. When we compare this process to Bhakti, we see that it has none of the restrictions and laborious processes of training. This method is open to all and it is the most direct means to salvation.

This method, Rāmānuja holds, leads to immediate deliverance. The Lord though He has no shadow of sentimentality and is impartial to all is not without a soft corner for the *Prapanna* (the soul that has surrendered). He endures the ignorant and the stupid if they have a contrite heart. In the matter of human sin and folly, seen from his infinite height, the Lord is not upset by or squeamish about the depth of degradation. If he hears once, the shrill and moving cry for deliverance arising from the depths of the heart, the Lord answers and sustains the devotee with his everlasting arms. The evidence for this experience is the life of all the God-lovers described in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*. A single, serious moment of self-surrender is considered enough by Sri Ramachandra in the *Rāmāyāna*. Rama declares: "This is the law of my ruling to give refuge and security to all beings, who say once at least, 'you are my refuge'." The doctrine of *Prapatti* is the cornerstone of Vaishṇavism. It has been responsible for the social uplift of all classes. It is road royal to the Lord. To be driven from the Church is not to be driven out of God's home. The immense possibilities of Vaiṣṇavism in the hands of orthodox thinkers have

tended to become sectarian. The Lord belongs to all and none has an exclusive claim on Him.

The philosophy of Rāmānuja spread the love of God to all classes and made use of the regional languages free and did not confine itself to the use of Sanskrit. The wave of Vaishṇavism spread all over India.

Chapter VII

THE PHILOSOPHY OF ŚRĪ MADHVA

The philosophy of Śrī Madhva is called *Dvaita Vedānta*. Like the other systems of Vedānta, Madhva too bases his system on the authority and the doctrines derived from the *triple texts*. He reads an entirely different meaning diametrically opposed to the system of Śankara's Advaita in the texts. *Dvaita Vedānta* is a realistic, theistic and pluralistic system. It is the most powerful attack on the monism of Śankara. Its realism, in its logic and metaphysics, is more radical than that of the Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika systems.

The philosophy of Madhva is the religion of a prophet who interprets the mind of the Lord to his followers. A *threefold faith* is insisted on by Madhva, as the pre-requisite for attaining salvation. First, faith in the triple texts: The *Upaniṣads*, *Bhagavad Gītā* and the *Vedānta sūtras*. Secondly, the faith that Madhva's interpretation of the texts is not only the correct interpretation but also that all other interpretations like those of Śaṅkara, Rāmānuja, Nimbārka are all wrong and against the spirit of the texts. Thirdly, the faith that Madhva's interpretation arises from his mission entrusted by God.

With the strength of a burning conviction, born of authentic religious experience, Madhva writes often in his commentaries that he has been divinely commissioned by Lord Viṣṇu to correctly interpret the triple texts and lay the pathway to God for men to tread.

Tradition holds the view that Madhva is the

third incarnation of Vāyu, the first two being that of Hanūmān and Bhima. In all, Madhva has written some 37 works. He wrote commentaries on the *Vedānta Sūtras*; one in the form of verses called *Anuvyākhyāna*, and the other is the *Sūtra-bhāṣya*. He has two commentaries on the *Gītā* too and has commented on all the ten Upaniṣads. Further, he has given ten independent philosophical tracts called *Prakaraṇās* each dealing with a particular doctrine and topic of his system. (A very profound exposition in English of these ten works is made by Dr. R. Nagaraja Sarma of Madras. The work is his doctoral thesis, a labour of love and great scholarship. It is a fighting exposition of the philosophy of Sri Madhva by one of his fervent advocates.) Besides the commentaries, Madhva has several devotional hymns to his credit. The best of them is the *Dvādaśastotra*.

The philosophical works of Madhva are very terse and they do not yield any meaning without the commentary of the greatest post-Madhva thinker, Jayatīrtha. He has commented on almost all the works of Madhva. It was his mission in life to reveal the thoughts of the master. His commentary on *Anuvyākhyāna* is considered as the great book of Madhva's system. It is the famous *Nyāya Sudhā*. Though the work is designated by the unassuming name of a *tīkā* or commentary, in reality it is a first-rate philosophical classic. Judged by the brilliance of his style and logical acumen, the work ranks with the great makers of philosophical classics and the writer belongs to the ranks of great philosophical stylists like Śabara, Śaṅkarā and Vācaspati.

Two other names stand out as the great exponents of Madhva's thought, Vyāsarāya and

Rāghavendra. Vyāsarāja was a great logician and he has attempted with great force to refute logically the Advaita doctrines in his *Nyāyāmṛta* and the Nyāya doctrines in his *Tarkatāṇḍava*. They are the best specimens of polemical philosophical writing. He defended the category of *difference* against its assailants in his *Bhedojjivana*. Rāghavendra has commented on all the works of Jayatīrtha. A great poetic writer of the school is Vādirāja. His works are highly persuasive, particularly his *Yuktimalikā*, a collection of logical arguments in favour of the Dvaita system and against other systems.

The philosophy of Madhva is theistic to its core. It in no way compromises the glory of the supra-personal God. He conceives the greatest philosophical Reality after the manner of a supreme person. He calls him Nārāyaṇa. The Lord is not an abstract Absolute like the Brahman of Śankara. He is the home of all auspicious, infinite attributes. He is described as the *Independent One*. All the other categories, souls and matter, are dependent on Him. Independence in the philosophical language of Madhva means 'one who does not derive his existence (*sattā*), his knowledge (*pramīti*) and activity (*pravṛtti*) from others. The Lord is self-contained and perfect in Himself every way. The existence of the Lord and his nature is established on the authority of the scriptures. Madhva takes the Purānas, Mahābhārata, the Pāñcharātra Āgamas and the triple texts as authorities. He reconciles all the terms as denoting Lord Viṣṇu as the greatest truth. He is the creator, sustainer and destroyer of the world.

The independence of the Lord is in no measure mitigated by the existence of the world of souls or

matter *i.e.* Prakṛti. Matter and souls are not independent philosophical substances as the Lord is. They are dependent on Him for their sattā (existence), knowledge (pramīti) and action (pravṛtti). There is nothing impossible for the Lord. If He chooses to destroy the existence of *substance, souls, time, space* etc., he can do so. He has the power necessary for it. If He does not do so, the cause for it is *His nature*.

The glory of the Lord is established unconditionally. Omnipotence is not interpreted here as in Leibnitz. It is a capacity to do anything he likes. That He does not do it is his choice.

Madhva's God is not the Brahman of Śankara. Madhva believes that Śankara's Brahman is non-different from the-Śūnya of the Buddhist. He calls him an atheist and Buddhist in disguise. However, advanced students of Buddhism maintain that the Śūnya of the Buddhist is not an absolute non-existence and that it is positive. Madhva regards Advaita as a non-desirable religion (*heya mata*). He is always polemical in his writings and states clearly and in an uncompromising manner his position. Madhva's God is not bound up with other entities. All others depend on him, he on none. Madhva's admission that there are other categories like souls and matter does not make his system dualistic like the Sāṅkhya. For, in Śāṅkhya neither the *puruṣas* nor *prakṛti* can be derived from either. Each is ultimate in itself. In his system all are dependent and the Lord alone is independent. Nor is Madhva's God like the God of the Nyāya system who is dependent on atoms for creation. Madhva's Nārāyaṇa is not a deistic God who creates the world

and leaves it, but he sustains it. He is immanent and also transcendent. He is the only free agent. Our freedoms are what he accords to us. The terms freedom, independence, have a plenary significance only in respect of Him. They are applied to others in a restrictive sense. The dependence on the Lord is the common characteristic of all the categories.

Madhva does not envisage the relation between the Lord, and souls and matter as Rāmānuja does. The relation between the body and the soul is not admitted by Madhva. It cuts both ways. The soul too is dependent on body for manifestation as body is for its sustenance. The Lord according to Madhva is non-dependent. The dependence is unilateral and not reciprocal. Madhva does not brook any limitation to the power of the Lord. The Lord is the bestower of *mokṣa* to the soul through his grace. The Lord is not to be approached directly, but only through the prophet Madhva. His intercession is absolutely necessary.

The soul according to Madhva is different from the body. They are infinite in number, uncreated but they are all dependent on the Lord. They are eternal, imperishable and cannot be destroyed. They are atomic, not in the material sense of the term. They are like the monads in the philosophy of Leibnitz. They are energy centres. Their association with appropriate bodies is called birth and their separation is called death. The souls transmigrate according to the Law of Karma. Each reaps what he sows. The Lord puts the Law of Karma into action. It does not work by itself. The purpose of the soul's series of rebirth is to perfect itself and achieve *mokṣa*. It is not possible in a single life.

Mokṣa is a state of bliss and spiritual experience where the individual soul sees its true nature and the vision of the Lord. The experience puts an end to all human sorrows, overcomes all strife and tension and dispels all doubts and disbeliefs. After the experience, which is secured by the grace of the Lord through the instrumentality of Madhva, there is no return to *samsāra*.

In the ordinary state the individual soul is held in bondage. This bondage is the result of two factors. The soul's real nature is hidden from itself and also the nature and the form of God. God alone knows the true nature of the self. He is in possession of the Truth. He alone can reveal the true nature of soul to the soul. The immediate realisation and perception of the nature of one's own soul is called mokṣa. This can be secured only by the grace of the Lord. On the part of the individual soul, he can only do all that the Lord requires of him and be ready to receive the grace.

The soul has none of the impurities intrinsically; they are all the results of his Karma. They are like the rust of the copper which has come in due to Karmic associations. There was no time when the soul was without any Karmic association. It is *anādi*, beginningless, though it can be removed. To the question as to when the soul began its first life or why it did so, to the objection that there should have been no Karma prior to the first life—for Karma accrues only as a result of life—there is no rational answer. The event of the associations of soul with Karma is without a beginning in time.

Madhva admits that the Lord is responsible for the bondage of the soul and the removal of it also

depends on his grace. He conceals the true nature of the soul by His *tirodhāna* power. Thus we find the problem of evil makes its appearance. That God permits its existence and has the power to destroy it raises many questions. It is a great philosophical truth that theism has its thorns in the problem of evil. No theism has been able to explain to the children of science and reason the rationale of the problem of evil. There is no theism without the problem of evil. Roses have thorns.

Madhva explains that evil has a positive role. It is necessary for the moral perfection of the soul. The Lord has chosen to fulfil Himself only this way, that is by permitting evil and enabling us to overcome it. The Law of Karma explains all evil—except the original evil. Such inexplicable points are found in each system to which we have no answer. The Karmic bondage of the soul is real. It is natural to finite souls. It is not an illusion. The bondage of the soul is real and not a super-imposition as in Advaita. The real need not be indestructible. The bondage though real is not permanent. Its destruction by the grace of the Lord does not militate against its reality. The Lord is the *bandhaka* and the *mōcaka*. Madhva too admits like Śankara that there is an original *ajñāna* which is responsible for the bondage of the soul. He also admits that it is positive. But he holds that it is real. It is *satyarūpa bandha* and not an illusory one.

Madhva does not believe that man can be saved by his own efforts. Only the grace of the Lord can lift him out of the bondage. In a famous verse Madhva puts forth his arguments for the existence of God. 'If there was no God (Hari), how could we explain the

existence of the world? If it be contended that we created the world, then how is it that we are not making ourselves eternally happy?" The limitations and ills to which human life is open argues to the fact that we are not the creators of the world. Like Pascal of France, Madhva again and again points out the misery of man without God and the necessity for the faith in the Lord, prophet and the scripture. Faith enables us to step out and break from what is empirical. Faith gives us the necessary humility which becomes the solid foundation of our life. "Faith" in the words of Aldous Huxley "is the pre-condition of all systematic knowing, all purposive doing and all decent living." Madhva declares that there is no use trying to do good; by ourselves we are too sinful, and we always need God.

Madhva believes that the grace of the Lord can be secured by devotion to him and by the performance of scripture-ordained duties. Karma purifies the mind of man. Bhakti can result only from the knowledge of the glory of the Lord and his infinitude. Bhakti is defined by Jayatīrtha as "that kind of attachment to the Lord, based on a complete understanding of the supremacy of the Lord, which transcends the love of one's own self and possessions, which remains unshaken in death and in difficulty."

In the state of mokṣa the individual souls realise their nature that was hidden from them in *saṁsāra*. The enjoyment of bliss in Heaven is not the same for all. There is difference, distinction and gradation (*ānanda-tāratamya*) in bliss enjoyed by the liberated souls. This difference in grades of bliss is a deduction from the difference in the nature of the souls. Mokṣa is the revelation of the *svarūpa* of

the soul. *Ānanda-tāratamya* is the corollary of *svarūpa-vaicitrya*. The individual souls differ in their intrinsic nature. This inequality does not militate against the joy in Mokṣa. Dr. Krishnamurti Sarma argues that "inequality by itself cannot reduce the state of mokṣa to the level of our own world. It is jealousy and other bad passions that lead to strife. Inequality by itself cannot lead to strife. We have instances where men are heartily jealous of their equals, and cannot tolerate the idea of another man being their equal in wealth or fame." Rāmānuja admits equality of the bliss-experience among the released souls. But they do not enjoy the function of cosmic creation. Madhva affirms the difference in the enjoyment among the released souls.

Madhva relies on scripture and gives us a graded hierarchy of deities. Lord Viṣṇu is the first of them, Lakṣmi, his consort, the second, and the third is Prophet Vāyu. The Lord is to be approached only through Vāyu and not directly. The Lord refuses to take anything that does not come through Vāyu. The place of Vāyu is similar to that of Jesus in Christianity. This hierarchy is called the *tāratamya*. It is insisted on by Madhva that worships must be conducted with regard to the place of the deities in the order. If the deities are worshipped in a confused manner, violating the order, it leads the devotee to hell. *Upāsana* must be according to *tāratamya*.

Lord Viṣṇu, though represented as the highest perfection of personality, is still looked upon as a homogeneous substance. Madhva does not admit any difference between the Lord and his limbs or attributes or different incarnations. He is *svagata bheda vivarjita*. He is the efficient cause, and prakṛti is the

material cause for the creation of the world. He does not agree to the atomic theory of matter or the evolutionary theory of prakṛti put forth by the Nyāya and the Sāṅkhya schools respectively. He is also opposed to the theory of God transforming Himself into his creation. He is opposed to the *Brahma-pariṇāma-vāda* and it is needless to say that he is opposed to the *māyā vāda* of Śaṅkara.

The world according to Madhva is real and not illusory. The real is not the permanent. All that exists is, for Madhva, *real*. That which is in contact with space and time is real. God has created the world. It is the theatre for the soul to evolve and work for its mokṣa. Nature obeys the laws of the Lord. The world is an objective fact and datum. Madhva argues that if the world were unreal, its creator, God, must be no better than a juggler. The glory and greatness of Lord is affected if we take the world to be unreal. Madhva and many of his followers have used a good deal of their logical skill and dialectics to refute the Advaitin's conception of the world as Māyā. The Advaitin's characterisation of the world as "neither real nor unreal, nor real and unreal, nor non-real and non-unreal" is subjected to the most severe criticism by most of the post-Madhva thinkers. The Lord of the universe is identified with Viṣṇu and Nārāyaṇa. He is declared to be the home of all auspicious attributes, the ground and the goal of human existence.

Further, the philosophy of Madhva puts forth a scheme of five-fold differences. Being a realistic school, it regards object as existing independent of the human mind. Objects are not mind-dependent. Madhva posits an infinite number of eternal things.

No two things are alike. Everything is different from every other thing. Difference is not only a fundamental category in the philosophy of Madhva but is foundational to his thought. The five-fold differences are (1) the difference between Jīva and Īśvara, (2) the difference between Jīva and Jīva (3) the difference between jada (matter) and jada (4) the difference between jada and jīva (5) the difference between jada and Īśvara.

The fivefold difference is one of the important tenets of Madhva's philosophy. Madhva invokes the authority of scripture for his classification of souls into three divisions called (1) *mukti योगyas* (2) *Nitya-samsārins* (3) *Tamo योगyas*. He is of opinion that the intrinsic nature of the soul is unalterable and settled once for all. The first class of souls are destined to get mokṣa. They are eligible for it. It is a question of time and they are bound to reach heaven. The second type of souls are tied down to *samsāra*. They have to oscillate between birth and *samsāra*. They have to oscillate between truth and death perpetually. The third class are doomed to eternal damnation.

Mokṣa in Madhva's philosophy is not open to all. There is no *sarva mukti* here as in Śankara. It is derivative and not native to the soul of man. A crowd never gathers at the gate. Many are called but only a few are chosen. It is the gift of the Lord. Those whom it pleases the Lord to save are saved. The depressing note here is that a few souls are eternally damned. They have no hope of moral improvement or spiritual regeneration.

Madhva quotes the *Gītā* XVI—19.20 and says that the children of darkness (asuras) are hunted

into the wombs of demons by Lord Kṛṣṇa who assuredly says they never and do not attain him at all. It is difficult to reconcile here as in Christianity as to how God can be represented as Love and still find it possible to condemn some souls to eternal damnation. Madhva unlike Śankara regards all the parts of the Vedas as equally important. Karma is necessary for all to secure purification. Bhakti results from *jñāna* of the Lord. It is the way or the preparation for salvation and with the onset of grace man attains salvation. The picture of heaven and the pleasures indulged in by the released souls are described vividly as in Rāmānuja's philosophy.

The philosophy of Madhva is bitterly opposed to that of Śankara. It makes out a charge-sheet against Advaita. Its contention against advaita is that (1) the advaitin's Brahman is non-different from the Śūnya of the Buddhist (2) the world of souls and matter are real (3) the individual soul is not identical with Brahman. It is a creature and the Lord is a creator. The creature can never become the creator. (4) The soul is for ever dependent on and different from the Lord (5) Brahman is not an attributeless (*nirguṇa*) but is the abode of infinite auspicious attributes. Lastly, Madhva affirms that Advaita is not the true import of the scripture.

The Vedānta philosophy of Madhva is more of the nature of a theology. Its reliance on scripture is cent per cent. It is also a prophet's religion. The individual soul has to grow in a set atmosphere, within a church. It does not brook any liberal interpretation. It is an uncompromising sectarian theology, influenced by the Love of God and built on the foundations of the Upaniṣads and the *Gītā*.

Chapter VIII

VALLABHA'S PHILOSOPHY

The philosophy associated with the name of Sri Vallabha is called *Śuddhādvaita*. It is a variety of Advaita, but not that type which Sri Śankara set forth. The adjective *śuddha* i.e. pure, is intended to mark off Vallabha's monism from that of Śankara.

Śankara explains the world of apparent plurality by invoking the principle of *māyā*. *Māyā* suppresses the real nature of Brahman and shows off in its place the world of souls and things. The identity i.e. *advaya bhāva* asserted by Śankara is not between the world of plurality as it is and Brahman. It is the unconditioned and non-delimited consciousness in objects and souls that is identical with Brahman. *Ātman* in the plural is not real whereas Vallabha asserts identity between souls and Brahman without employing the principle of *māyā*. In his view the doctrine of *māyā* makes Advaita impure.

Like all great *āchāryas*, Vallabha too has a commentary on the *Brahma sūtras* called *Aṅubhāṣya*. He has an important commentary on the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* called *Subodhinī*. His commentary on the *Brahmasūtras* is not complete. It covers only the first three chapters, two *pādas* and 33 *sūtras* and his second son Viṭhalanātha completed it. His great commentary on the *Bhāgavata* too is not complete. It covers the first three *skandas*, a part of the fourth, the tenth and a part of the eleventh. He has not given us independent commentaries on the *Gītā* and the *Upaniṣads*. He has some treatises dealing with various topics. A special manual of the system is Ācārī's *Śuddhādvaita mārtaṇḍa*.

The system is based like all the schools of Vedānta on the authority of the *śruti* i.e. revelation. The four basic authorities for the system are (1) The *Upaniṣads* (2) The *Gītā* (3) *Brahma sūtra* (4) The *Bhāgavata*. In the words of Prof. G. H. Bhatt of Baroda, a great scholar and a lucid exponent of the system, the *Bhāgavata* occupies a very important place in Vallabha's Philosophy. It is considered to be the treasure house of devotion, the fruit of the Vedas, and its language is the language of meditation.

The system of Vallabha is popularly called the *puṣṭi mārḡa*. It emphasizes the importance of divine grace as the most powerful and unfailing means for the attainment of salvation. Salvation is possible only through grace and not through self-effort. The word *puṣṭi* means His grace (*poṣaṇam tadanugrahaḥ*). The system is an attempt to give a prominent place to devotion and still stick to a system of monistic metaphysics.

Like all great prophets Vallabha too has god-vision. He lived for some time in Vṛndāvan and Mathurā, Prof. R. G. Bhandarkar writes that "about the same time it is alleged that Gopāla Kṛṣṇa manifested himself on the Govardhana hill by the name of Devadamana, also called Śrī-Nāthaji. God asked Vallabha in a dream to come and see him. Vallabha went and saw Devadamana or Śrī Nāthaji. Śrī Nāthaji commanded him to erect a shrine for himself and to promulgate the method of worshipping him, without which a man would not be admissible to the *puṣṭi mārḡa*, or the path of divine grace, which Vallabha had founded."

Vallabha connected his system into a particular manifestation of Kṛṣṇa called *Śrīnāthaji*. Some

hold the opinion that Vāllabha's system is influenced by the theory of one Viṣṇuswāmi. But there is no conclusive evidence for it.

The central category in the philosophy of Vallabha is Brahman. He is an independent reality. His nature is *sat*, *cit* and *ānanda*. He is himself perfection and there is nothing besides Him independent. All the things in the world are his *real* manifestations. Brahman is viewed under different aspects by Vallabha. The most perfect aspect is that of a Supreme Personality. The concept of *puruṣottama* is the highest one. Here we do not have the *nīrguṇa Brahman* of Śankara. The supreme reality is described as the most perfect person. He is existence, knowledge and bliss. He is the best of beings. He is the very image of *rasa* sweetness. That is His form. He is no other than Lord Kṛṣṇa. It is the divine form of Brahman. He is omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent. Through His power which is called *māyā* he can become anything he likes. He has many powers e.g., knowledge, action, evolution and involution. He sometimes combines contradictory qualities. There is nothing impossible for Him. The entire creation of the world is His real manifestation.

Vallabha believes in *pariṇāma vada* i.e., the doctrine of transformation. The cause and the effect both are real for Vallabha. The transformation here is not of the prakṛti which is insentient. Nor is the transformation illusory (*vivarta*) as in Śankara. According to Śankara the cause and the effect do not belong to the same order of reality (*samānasattā*). The effect is an illusory manifestation of the cause. Nothing that happens to the effects affects the cause.

The cause and the effect are non-distinct but not identical for Vallabha. God is the material and the efficient cause. The effect is dependent on the cause. It is real. Speaking about His nature Lord Kṛṣṇa says, "this māyā of mine is divine, it is impossible for one to extricate oneself from it, but the man who reaches me will get over it." The Upaniṣad refers to the Lord as the great *māyin*.

While the Lord undergoes all the transformations he is not affected. Vallabha's doctrine is called "*avikṛta parināmavāda*." Vallabha's concept is based on the *Mundakā* analogy of the spider and its self-drawing web and the blazing fire and the multitude of sparks which spring from it. The *puruṣottama* is declared by the *Gītā* as being higher than the *kṣara* and *akṣara*, i.e. perishable and the imperishable. He is full of *ānanda* and *rasa* i.e., sweetness and joy. He is in fact the undivided mass of bliss.

The second aspect of Brahman is his immanence. Vallabha's theism is not deism. God is not external to the world. He does not create it and leave it there as a mechanic does a machine. God is not an important outsider who is brought in to inaugurate the world and is not expected to attend to its daily workings. God is not only above us, but is with us and in us. It is not true to think that God's august majesty has very little connection with the petty concerns of petty human beings. God, according to Vallabha, is manifest as the inner-ruler, *antaryāmin*, of the souls of men. A whole section of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* explains the immanence of the Lord (III.7). "He who dwells in all beings, is yet within all beings whom, no beings know." The *Gītā* too again and again

refers to this aspect. The Lord says that "he is seated in all beings." He is the drive in all men. The Lord is not witnessing the drama of life from the wings of the stage. "He is the enjoyer of all sacrifices and austerities, the great Lord of the world, the friend of all beings (*suḥṛdam sarvabhūtānām*). He is actively with us, sustaining us.

This does not mean that Vallabha's system is a type of pantheism which makes God one with the universe as a whole. God and the universe are not equated. God minus the universe is not zero. It is still God. Pantheism and deism do not leave any room for prayer or miracles or freedom of will. Vallabha's God is not that vague something of which Wordsworth speaks.

"Something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of the setting suns,
And the round ocean and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man."

It is immanent as well as transcendent. Besides the two aspects of Brahman as *Puruṣottama* and *antaryāmin*, there is a third one which is the specific contribution of Vallabha. It is called the *akṣara* Brahman. It is from this that all objects manifest themselves like sparks from the fire. It is meditated on by the devotees. It is considered as the first aspect of Lord Kṛṣṇa. It is variously called *paramadhāman*, *vyoma* and *charana*. The *akṣara* Brahman appears as Akṣara, time, action and nature. These four eternal principles are one with God. The aspect of Brahman is described as *avyakta* in the *Gītā* and the *Upaniṣads*. It is lower than *puruṣottama*. The whole universe is the manifestation of this principle. Valla-

bha explains his metaphysics with the help of 28 *tattvas* (categories) and in the three inseparable principles and different forms of the Lord i.e. Kāla, Karma and Svabhāva. The categories are not the same as in the Sāṅkhyan system. They have different significance for Vallabha.

The universe and the souls are the real manifestations of the Lord. They are not the products of nescience or *māyā* as in Śankara's philosophy. The Lord becomes, as pointed out in the Upaniṣads, many in order to sport. The whole creation is His *līlā*, i.e. the *sub-specia-temporis* view. What is responsible for our ignorance, dependence, inferiority, suffering of all miseries, is ego-sense (*mamatā* and *ahaṁtā*), attachment to the things of the world and the consequent round of births and deaths. The individual soul's failure to see God is the cause of bondage.

All the souls are not of one type. They are classified under three heads. The first class of souls are those, who are perfect clods of earth untouched by the spirit! They are those that "do not look before and after," but live in the perpetual perishing particular present. They are given to worldly pursuits and mundane aspirations. They are not awakened to the existence of the Lord or His glory. Such souls are called the *Pravāha* type.

The second type of souls is better in its moral and spiritual stature. They are correct in their behaviour. They are followers of the Vedic path. They need nothing more than the laws laid down by the Vedas and Dharma Śāstrās (Law books of morality). They walk in that path. They follow the letter of the Lord. They live their divine life in an orderly manner. They perform all the scripture-ordained duties. The

souls are atomic, eternal, real, and non-different from the Lord. They are *aṁśas* (parts) of the Lord in the language of the *Gītā*. The soul's connection with the body is called its birth and its separation death. The conscious principle in the body is the soul i.e., a part of God. It is the agent getting knowledge. It is the principle of intelligence acting according to its Karma.

The purpose of the cosmic drama is the pleasure of the Lord. It is intended to serve the enjoyment of the Lord and the liberation of the souls. For these assumptions faith and revelation are the ultimate authority. Logic can never get the better of faith here.

The souls are all not of one variety. They are all atomic. In them all the six excellences of the Lord are suppressed. The element of *ānanda* is not present. This leads the soul to bondage. Bondage is the result of wrong knowledge. The souls do not see "Vāsudeva in all the objects of the Lord." They do not see the real *jagat* or the universe as the real non-different manifestation of the Lord. They look upon the world as consisting of things and different souls as independent entities. They have a scientific view of things. They do, what Spinoza calls, the duties according to true specification. They do the obligatory duties (*nitya karma*) and keep away from the prohibited ones (*niṣiddha*) of their class and station (*varṇa* and *āśrama*). They stick to the doctrine of *śvadharmā*, as indicated by their birth. They worship the Lord in the manner prescribed. They treat the Lord as one of great majesty and approach him with all respect and form. They keep to forms and observe all the rituals. They acquire ceremonial

purity and ethical perfection before they begin to worship the Lord. Theirs is the path of *Bhakti*. It is called by Vallabha as the *maryādā mārga*.

The path of *Bhakti* enjoins the observance of a number of restrictions. It is not open to all classes. It is a graduated path, where the aspirant has to secure at each stage his eligibility for the next step.

The *bhakta*, devotee, experiences an awe in the presence of the Lord. The *Bhāgavata* speaks of nine types of *Bhakti*. The boy devotee Prahlāda says, "This I consider the best lesson, worthy to be learnt; man should practise devotion to the Lord, marked by nine characteristics, (1) listening to the Lord's song, (2) singing of it, (3) contemplation of it, (4) worshipping, (5) falling at His feet specially, (6) saluting Him, (7) serving Him like a servant, (8) moving as friend and (9) self-dedication. These stages are in the ascending order and the conclusion of it is God-Love. This pathway to God secures the union with the Lord. This attainment is considered by Vallabha as the supreme one.

He outlines a unique path-way to God-realisation called the *puṣṭi mārga*. It is open to all. God in his sweet will elects some to play with Him. He brings some souls from Himself and gives them a divine body like His and sports with them. This is called *nitya-līlā*. The souls enjoy *svarūpānanda* or the *bhajananda* of the Lord.

Puṣṭi or grace of the Lord is His gift. Some souls enjoy it. They are God-intoxicated. They abandon themselves to the divine in all aspects of life. They have no ego or purpose of their own. They become perfect instruments of the Lord for working out his

purposes. There is not even the least element of self-hood in them. They do not care to observe caste-rules or minute scripture regulations as and when it interferes with their Love of God. They are the mystics of the world. They live in this world on a different plane. They look upon the Lord as the supreme *rāsa* and they actually enjoy His company. Their Love has no sensuality. It is *Prema* and not *Kāma*. They want to delight the Lord. All their activities are dedicated to the Lord. They look upon the Lord as their Master.

Vallabha regards the Love of the Gopis of Vṛndāvan as the best type of devotion. They are the ideal and typical *bhaktas* of the Lord. Their's is a total and integral surrender to the Lord. The Gopis are regarded as the spiritual teachers of the *puṣṭi mārگا*. They regard themselves as the brides of the Lord. They speak the language of passionate love. God is regarded as the great lover and the human beings as his bride. This type of bridal mysticism has given rise to very fine literature in the world. The *rāsa līlā* described in the *Bhāgavata* must not be misunderstood. The *svarūpānanda* realised by the Gopis is regarded by Vallabha as superior to Brahma nanda. The true God-Lover can never bear separation from the Lord. The misery of separation makes the devotee think of Him all the time. The devotee's love of the Lord is supreme.

Those who follow the *puṣṭi mārگا* offer everything they do to the Lord. One who follows the *puṣṭi* path aspires to be a Gopi and worships the Lord. The *puṣṭi mārگا* of Vallabha has warmed the love of God in all of us. It has introduced the human element

in religion. It has stressed not only the divinity of man but also the humanity of God.

Tagore in many verses of his immortal *Gītānjali* expresses this type of love for God. He sets out in great detail God's love of man in his Herbert lectures on the Religion of Man. The celebrated songs of Mīrā are an illustration of his type of *bhakti*. One has to guard oneself from the touches of sensuality in such an approach.

Vallabha regards the final union with the Lord as *mokṣa*. He distinguishes several degrees in it. He asks the perfect devotee to partake of the Lord's *līlā*, and regards that as the perfect form of realisation. Such an attitude leads to a respect for creation and tends to a fine type of humanism.

The *puṣṭi mārga* is the most exalted state of human beings' love to the Lord. The genuine God lovers in the first two phases of their adventure, seeking of and separation from the Lord, experience the full play of all the fine human emotions. They have a painful intense longing (*autsukya*), a dependency (*nirveda*) arising from long drawn out fulfilment. They then fall into deep dejection (*dainya*). Again they wake up to anger towards the object they love (*amaṛṣa*). In the language of Sanskr̥t poetics the devotee experiences all the *sanchāri bhāvās* of love.

When the seeking of the Lord and the separation are ended, there is the great union which lifts the soul beyond all joys. He is elated with joy. It is the stage of *māda*. He feels gratified (*dhriti*). In the language of the *Bhāgavata*, "this overpowering joy fills the eyes of the devotee with tears, his voice gets choked, he breaks down, laughs, sings, and dances." In another

verse the author of the *Bhāgavata* asks us: "of what use is any Bhakti in which your voice does not break, eyes do not moisten, hairs do not horripilate, and you are not able to proceed? If one good devotee could go about in this divine madness, now weeping, now laughing, without any shame, sing and dance, verily such a bhakta will sanctify the whole world."

Vallabha's theism brings out that particular form of bhakti which is based on love. He has ample support for his position in the *Bhāgavata purāṇa*. His system makes an attempt to set forth a type of monism without the māyā doctrine. The system affords full play to all the aspects of devotion to the Lord. The system gathers all the fine points and merits of a full-blooded theism. Its monistic metaphysics is pressed into the service of his theism. It is difficult to say whether a perfect logical reconciliation between a monistic metaphysics and a personalistic theism is possible.

Chapter IX

THE PHILOSOPHY OF SRI CHAITANYA

Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, the great religious reformer and the supreme example among God lovers, established a powerful school of theistic Vedānta in Bengal at the same time as Vallabha. He did not comment on any scripture or write any books. He spoke from his deep and abiding religious experience. He believed in the reality of the world and conceived ultimate reality as the perfect supreme personal God, Kṛṣṇa. He also did not believe in the identity between the Lord and the soul, like the Advaitin. He viewed the relationship between the soul and the Lord as one of identity-in-difference. The relationship is indescribable. It is an *acintyabhedābheda*. Some regarded Chaitanya as a close follower of the dualistic philosophy of Madhva. It is partly true to say so. He has his differences with Madhva's system. Dr. Sushil Kumar Maitra in his splendid article on Chaitanya makes out that the system is "a type of idealistic monism which reconciles all contradictions and dualities in a super-logical unity or in a whole that surpasses, strict logical comprehension."

Chaitanya refutes *māyā vāda* and also Śaṅkara's conception of a Nirguṇa Brahman. The conception of the Lord as the supreme personality i.e., Kṛṣṇa has some significant aspects to be noted. The Lord and his consort are not viewed as majestic and with reverence. There is no aloofness between the Lord and the soul. There is an intimate personal relationship with the Lord. Chaitanya and to some extent Vallabha seek to realise not the glory and greatness of the Lord but his *sweet intimate personal relationship*

called the *mādhurya rūpa*. The Lord takes on the human form and lives and sports among human beings. This type of fellowship with the Lord is regarded as the highest by Chaitanya. The ideal spiritual aspirant is Rādhā. All of us who hope to realise the intimate fellowship with the Lord should aspire to the condition of Rādhā. What is sought to be realised is not the *aiśvarya rūpa* of the Lord but *mādhurya rūpa*.

Chaitanya brings out the passionate longing of man for God-realisation. The Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa concept gave him the necessary emotion for preaching the concept of God-love. He preached *prema-bhakti* and adopted the method of singing with his disciples. He took to the method of *kīrtan* and *bhajan*. He developed the emotional side of men and drew the hearts of men to God by fervently singing the songs about the love of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa in his *kīrtans*. He drew large numbers from all sects including Muslims and women. He cried down the hide-bound rituals of the high-born Brahmins. He condemned all caste distinctions. He went on pilgrimage to several shrines.

Chaitanya who is also called *Gauraṅga* because of his fair body married twice and after sometime took to saṅnyāsa. With the help of his brother Nityānanda, and a former teacher of his Advaitācārya, he spread the doctrines and founded mutts all over India, particularly in the North. The last 18 years of his life he spent at Puri and died there.

Chaitanya believed, like the majority of the Hindus, in the power of the name of the Lord. The name of the Lord is considered as all powerful in its potency. It works miracles. The doctrine of speaking out the name of the Lord and singing it out is the great

spiritual heritage of all the mystics of India that wrote in their own regional languages. It has a definite place in the writing of all the mystics and saints. It is found in Tulsi, Kabir, Tukārām, Jñanadev, Eknāth, Mīrā, Narsi Mehta, etc.

The love of uttering the name of the Lord silently is called *japa* and doing it loudly is *Kirtana*. The name of the Lord is not a nonsensical sound. A word and its meaning are closely associated. A name represents the qualities of an object. If we persevere in our repetition of a word, it leads us to meditation on it. We cannot keep on repeating any word, without thinking about the reality it represents.

Distraction is the normal and the natural state of the unregenerate mind of man. We are rarely capable of consecutive thought about any one problem in all our waking life. All the time our minds are in a state of reverie—"a mental fog, disconnected sense impressions, irrelevant memories, nonsensical ideas from books etc. The constant, continued repetition of the name of the Lord brings us to think about the Lord. The utterance of the name is like a gentle plucking at our sleeve, demanding back our attention. Sometimes it is done with rosary."

It is sheer intellectual perversion to regard the repetition of Lord's name as a mechanical, thoughtless occupation of the simple folk. Nor is it a useless, trifling and dreary occupation. The name sinks down into our life and becomes powerful. The devotees regard that the best thing a man can do is "to take refuge in His name." The Christian testament declares: "The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it and is safe." The repetition of the holy word is a great comfort to the distressed

and violently disturbed mind of man. It has a real and literal significance for those who believe in the Lord. The significance of the Lord's name is the seed for the true growth of *bhakti*. Every name of the Lord is based on some attribute or other of the Lord 'Yāni nāmānī gauṇānī' declares the *Viṣṇusahasranāma*. Every name of the Lord marks off some exploit or action or quality of the Lord. The names of the Lord are recited even today in many temples.

'The thousand names of the Lord' (sahasranāma) is a very important chapter of the *Mahābhārata*. The pathway to God in our iron age (kaliyuga) is declared to be the name of the Lord. In the *Bhāgavata purāṇa*, off and on it is declared, "in Kali, the name of the Lord alone is the means; there is no other path." The Prince of patience, the chief of the Pandavas, listens to all the dharmas and does not feel satisfied. He asks Bhīṣma "of what do you consider to be the greatest dharma of all dharmas. By reciting what, there will be liberation from the cycle of births and deaths? Bhīṣma replied that the repetition of the thousand names of the Lord is superior to all dharmas. That is the way *Viṣṇusahasranāma* is given to us.

Most of the great Vedāntic ācāryas like Śankara, Madhva etc. have commented on the *Viṣṇusahasranāma*. Śankara, the Prince of monistic metaphysics, brings out the unique nature and excellence of the nāma in his commentary. The adoration and the recital of the name of the Lord injures none. It is called an *ahimsā yoga*. We need no material goods or great learning sincerely to recite the name of the Lord. It is open to one and all. The *Bhāgavata* is full of the glory of His name. Chaitanya-mahaprabhu

regards the name itself as the Lord. Hence the importance of *bhajan* and *kirtan*.

I have endeavoured to explain the importance the Lord's name at such length only to lay bare the psychological foundations of the path. The swing-armchair speculative philosopher and the irreverent sceptic and nihilist can see no good in the recitation of the Lord's name. God help them!

A collection of ten basic verses (*daśa-mūla-śloka*) attributed to Chaitanya gives us the precise account of his philosophy. The system, like other Vedāntic systems, believes in the authority of the Vedas. Reasoning and Logic are accepted when they do not conflict with the Vedas.

The supreme spiritual Reality is called Hari. He represents the whole Reality. His nature is a combination of six essences, *Beauty, Majesty, Strength, Glory, Detachment* and *Perfect Intelligence*. (*śrī, aiśvarya, vīrya, yaśas, vairāgya* and *jñāna*). Of these, beauty is the fundamental one and others are subsidiary. Other aspects of the perfect i.e. the indeterminate nature of Brahman and Paramātman are only aspects of Hari. Hari is the only completeness and perfection. Others are only fractions of Him.

Hari as pointed out is a duality in unity of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. Besides the three Upanishadic attributes of *sat, cit* and *ānanda*, Hari is full of *rāsa* and is a *rasika* (enjoyment and enjoyer). God creates the world out of his *māyā śakti*. It is his creation. This *māyā śakti* makes the individual soul forget its true nature and acquire a taste for the sweets of life.

Hari besides the *māyā śakti* has a power called the *chit śakti* or the *svarūpa śakti*. This power has three aspects *sandhini, samvit* and *hatāḍini*. By

the use of these qualities the Lord sports and enjoys his and other being's pleasures. He sports with his *suddha* (pure body) *sattva*.

The *jīvas* (souls) attain their union but not unity with the Lord through *prema bhakti*. The love of God, *prema*, is not lust, *kāma*. Lust or *kāma* seeks its satisfaction. *Prema* seeks the Lord's satisfaction. The relation between the individual soul and the Lord is described as the relation between the sparks and the fire. The Love of the Lord is regarded as an end in itself. It is called the supreme human ideal. The various powers of the Lord are unthinkable. The Lord does not in his substantial aspect undergo any transformation. His powers undergo a good deal of transformations. It is a sort of *śakti pariṇāma vāda*.

Chaitanya's system does not give us a logical account of the relation between Brahman and the soul. It merely describes it as the incomprehensible relation of difference and identity (*acintya-bhedābheda*).

Chapter X

THE PHILOSOPHY OF ŚAIVA SIDDHĀNTA

The theistic interpretation of Vedānta has taken on two forms. The schools of philosophy that have followed Rāmānuja have regarded Viṣṇu or Lord Nārāyaṇa as the ultimate Reality. We have examples of this in the schools of Madhva, Vallabha and Chaitanya.

The theistic Vedānta has taken on a second form in South India called *Śaiva-siddhānta*. This system along with other types of śaivism looks upon Śiva as the ultimate Reality. They call their ultimate Reality as Rudra, Śiva, Śankara, Mahādeva, Hara, Īsvara etc. Śaivism has taken on three forms. (1) The *Śaiva-siddhānta* of South India. (2) The rigorous type of Śaivism called *Viraśaivism* found in North Karnataka and Mysore (3) The Pratyabhijñā school of Śaivism prevalent in Kashmir. This school has great affinities with the Advaita of Śankara. The first two schools are pluralistic, realistic and theistic in their outlook and identify the supreme Reality with Śiva.

The Śaiva-siddhānta is the popular religion in the South. It is a form of personalistic theism that makes devotion to the Lord the supreme means to attain Him. The grace of the Lord is essential for mokṣa. The system has given rise to an excellent body of devotional literature in Tamil, the regional language of South India. It is poetry, mysticism and religion combined into a unity.

Unlike the theistic schools of Vedānta that look upon Nārāyaṇa as ultimate Reality, this school has for its basic texts not the Upaniṣads or the *Gītā* but

the mystical writings of the great Śaiva saints. Tradition enumerates the names of 63 saints. They are called *nāyanars* or *aḍiyars* i.e. the servants of God. The out-pourings of these God-intoxicated saints is the chief *pramāna* for south Indian Śaivism. These saints correspond to the *Āḷvārs* of the Rāmānuja's school. They were from all communities. Religion was not confined to those who knew only Sanskrit. The language of the masses became the language of religion. Of these saints five are very prominent. The earliest of them is one Tirumūlar, and his work *Tirumandiram* is the great classic of Śaivaite mysticism. In a celebrated verse he has declared the identity of love and God after the manner of St. John. "God is love, and whoso loveth not, the same knoweth not God." He writes "ignorant people distinguish between God and Love and wisdom lies in identifying the two (Śiva and aṅbu).

There are four other saints who have written two collections of hymns. The *Tevāram* is the collection of hymns of Appar, Śambaṅdar and Sundaramurti. The *Tiruvācakam* is the work of Mānikka Vācakar. The last mentioned work is the treasure house of devotional poetry, giving out the yearnings of the human soul and its relation to the Lord. He declares that surrender to the Lord is the process of regeneration; "the days of unsundered existence are as good as being unborn." St. Augustine declared: "If I am not in thee, I am not all." St. Paul adds "Whether we live or whether we die, we are in the Lord."

Besides these mystical writings, the philosophical basis in a systematic manner is developed in the writings of Meyanḍadeva, Arulnandi-Sivācārya and

Umāpati. The basic literature consists of the 12 sūtras in Meykanda's work *Śiva-jñāna-bodham*. Other works of importance are *Śiva jñāna-siddhiyar* (a detailed systematic treatise) and *Śiva-prakāśam*. Independent treatises in English are mostly the doctorate theses on the systems. We have excellent accounts of the system in the articles on the system by Prof. S. Suryanārāyaṇa Sastri and Dr. T. M. P. Mahādevan.

There are three important philosophical categories in the system. God (pati) souls (paśu) and the bondage (pāśa). The religious basis of the system is completely theistic.

God is the central independent category. He is no other than Śiva. He is superior to the other gods Viṣṇu and Brahma. He is also identified with Rudra. He is not the indeterminate Absolute of Śankara. He can be known, for he has infinite auspicious attributes. He is not completely knowable. His nature does not partake of the three guṇas of prakṛti. He is *aprakāṣa*. He is transcendent as well as immanent. Śaiva-siddhānta is not a form of *pantheism*. God minus the world is still God.* This system does not accept the concept of *avatāra*. Śiva has never any direct touch with Prakṛti. They admit that Śiva takes on several forms to protect his disciples. The forms he takes are of the nature of his *grace* and not material forms.

Śiva as the ultimate Reality is conceived under two aspects. There is, his *being* i.e., *Sat* and his power *Śakti* which is inseparable from him. He is referred severally in all the three genders as *Śivaḥ*, *Śivā* and *Śivam*. He has eight attributes: (1) independence, (2) purity, (3) self-knowledge, (4) omniscience, (5) freedom from impurity, (6) boundless benevolence,

(7) omnipotence and (8) bliss. The supreme Lord Śiva is more than the universe. In respect of the creation of the world Śiva is only an operative cause and is not an instrumental cause. The instrumental cause for the creation of the world is Śiva's power or *Śakti*. *Māyā* or *Prakṛti* is the material cause. Śiva does not directly act upon it. The evolution of the world does not affect him in any way. He does not undergo transformations. He is immutable. He has five functions to discharge. They are the usual three, creation, preservation and destruction. To these three two more are added, obscuration and grace.

The entire creation is the manifestation of Śiva's power. It is his sport. The purpose of the universe is to save the souls from bondage through his grace. The world is the moral theatre for the soul to attain the grace of Śiva. The individual souls who are infinite in number need physical accompaniments and the material basis for their life. *Māyā*, which is the material cause for all things, evolves bodies, organs, worlds and objects of enjoyment for the soul. *Māyā* evolves as many as 36 categories. They are of two orders: (1) certain evolutes are from pure *māyā* (2) others are from impure *māyā*.

Śiva directly acts on the pure *māyā* and produces the five Śiva tattvas i.e. categories. The other categories are derived from impure *māyā*. It is acted on by Śiva's power. All the other categories are material after the manner of the Śāṅkhyans. All the entities are explained as coming from *Māyā* in its two aspects. The souls in this system are infinite and are in their true nature omniscient. They are infected in the stage of bondage by the three types of impurities.

They are respectively called *anava*, karma and *māyā*. The first is responsible for deluding the soul from a true conception of its real nature. It produces in the soul the delusion that it is atomic. It screens Reality from the souls and gives it a distorted view. The second impurity results from the deeds of the soul and its results. The third type of impurity endows the soul with physical adjuncts and a psycho-physical organism. Another distinguishing character of soul in this system is that it takes on the nature of the entity with which it is associated. Its activities reflect the impurity with which it is in touch. The three impurities are like the bran, husk and the sprout of the paddy. The individual soul is like the body of the Lord. It is in inseparable relation with God, but yet it is distinct. The soul is never identical with the Lord: It is always distinct even in release. There is an unmistakable pluralistic strain in the system. The system describes the relation between the Lord and souls as one of *advaita*. It does not signify identity or oneness as in Śankara. It only means that Śiva is non-separate and inseparable, but yet distinct and different from the souls.

The souls are in three states in their existence. At the time of *pralaya*, i.e., the dissolution of the world, the soul exists without bondage of *māyā*. This class of souls is called *pralayākala*. With the advent of evolution as the result of karma the soul gets bound by all the three types of impurities. This class of souls is called *Sakala jīva*. With the effort of spiritual discipline, some souls get rid of the two impurities and await the grace of the Lord which removes the third. This secures them *mokṣa*. This class is called *Vijñanakala* souls.

The conception of mokṣa in Śaiva-siddhānta is graded and each stage corresponds to a particular discipline. The supreme method is the conscious unreserved, total surrender to Śiva as the sole protector. Bhakti has several stages, different forms and many steps leading to different grades. The name of the Lord is to be uttered. A certain type of discipline called the *caryā mārga* asks us to engage ourselves in the activities that are helpful to people to worship the Lord. With the unquestioning single-mindedness of a devotee, the aspirant engages himself in securing flowers for the Lord, cleanses the temple, fetches water, prepares food etc. This is the path of the faithful servant i.e., *dāsa mārga*. This discipline leads the soul to the residence of the Lord (sāloka). A perfect humility and an unconquerable faith in the saving grace of the Lord is necessary for this type of quiet self-effacing devotion. The mystical writing of Appar is the example of this path.

A second type of discipline regards the Lord as the parent and expresses an intimate affection for the Lord. This path also consists in activities of an external nature; but the activities are not done in a spirit of awe, but with a warmth of feeling. The path is that of the dutiful son who does the will of the Lord. This is called the *sat putra mārga*. This leads us to the nearness of the Lord *Sāmīpya*. The mystic Sambandhar gives expression to this type of God-love.

The third form is the treatment of the Lord as a close friend. There is the sweet, human and personal touch in this kind of devotion. It is called the *sakhya bhāva*. It makes us God-like (sārūpya). The

mystic Sundarar has sung of this type of devotion in his hymns.

These three paths prepare us for the ultimate form of God-realisation called the *san-mārga*. This leads us to Reality straight. It is called *Sāyujya* i.e., union with God. Mānikkavācakar exemplifies this type of *bhakti* at its best.

The student of Indian theism finds close parallels to these types of devotion in the theology of Rāmānuja, Vallabha etc. The Siddhānta lays stress on all the three aspects of spiritual discipline: ceremonial purity, ethical excellence and spiritual love of God. It is within the reach of all. The system envisages the possibility of realising God's grace even in this life. Such souls are called *Jivanmuktās*.

Chapter XI

VEDĀNTA—THE RELIGION OF THE SPIRIT

The secular and spiritual savants of humanity are agreed that the present world order is defective to the core and if it is not set right and pulled out of the slough, it means not merely the downfall of our present civilisation and its cherished values but also the extermination of the human race itself. The secular prophets are divided in their opinion and are in different minds about the prognosis they suggest for the regeneration of our civilisation.

The Marxians stand up for a classless society and plump for the emergence of international communism. The anti-Marxians declare that a few bombs dropped on Kremlin would establish a new social order. This is the fairy tale at the core of the military armaments programme. A few plead for the control of the atomic energy. Yet others believe that if we give up our outmoded ways of thinking and living and employ large-scale scientific techniques, paradise would be round the corner. The latest gospel is science. The emergence of a new social order is expected to result from a few waves of the scientific wand.

There are the pessimists and the alarmists who tell us that disaster is certain and that all human effort is of no avail. They make the morbid assumption that we are the victims of a fate over which we have no control. There is the optimist and the ostrich. One looks to chance and hopes that something will turn up and the other does not face facts and hides his head in the dug-out.

The conflict between expert opinions and the

clash of ideologies create a crisis in men's mind. The division among the instructed nullifies their authority and the average individual finds it difficult to follow any. In the words of A. N. Whitehead, "Slow drift is accepted but, when for human experience quick changes appear, human nature passes into hysteria. In such times, while for some heaven dawns, for others hell yawns open." But most of the secular leaders do not admit the efficacy of religion.

Fenelon writes in his letters: "There is practically nothing men do not prefer to God; a tiresome detail of business, an occupation utterly pernicious to health, the employment of time in ways one does not dare to mention, anything rather than God." Oscar Wilde exclaimed on reading the Bible: "when I think of all the harm that that book has done, I despair of ever writing anything equal to it." The contemporary indifference and challenge to religion is based on two grounds. The findings of religion are declared to be dogmatic and opposed to the spirit of reason and scientific inquiry. The practical results of religion have been horrible. They have added to the misery of men, defended class-interests and at times have tried to justify social injustice in terms of the will of God. Men of religion fly away in the face of social agonies and seek their individual salvation. A host of men has exploited the masses in the name of religion. George Eliot declared, " 'Heaven help us,' said the old religion, the new one from the very lack of that faith teaches us all to help one another." In the words of Nicholas Berdyaev, "Men set themselves to hate in the cause of love, to use compulsions in the name of freedom and to become practising materialists for the inculcation of spiritual principles." Lucretius sums up the

case against religion for the moderns. In his view religion is a disease born of fear and is the source of untold misery to the human race.

The contemporary challenge touches only the wrong type of religions that are dishonest. Militant atheism is the right answer to dishonest religions. The mysticism of Śankara is at once scientific and humanistic. It alone has the chance of being an effective universal religion. The mysticism of Śankara takes up the challenge and lays the unshakable foundation for spiritual religion.

He shifts the centre of gravity in religion from authority to experience. Brahman-realisation is the direct and immediate consciousness of Reality. It is not a dogmatic declaration that we have from a second or tenth hand. First we posit Brahman as a working hypothesis and affirm it with all our being in our spiritual experience. It is empirical in the plenary sense of the term. 'Experience' is not merely to be confined to what the senses report. It is not only objective but subjective also. The philosophic intuition that is *sākṣātkāra* enables us to realise Brahman. Such a realisation is the ultimate test of the existence of Brahman. The realisation is not an external revelation as in dogmatic and prophetic religions. Here there is no need for the thunder or the burning bush of Moses, or the revealing tempest as in Job or the angel Gabriel of Mohammed. The kingdom of God is within. 'That thou art' declared the Upaniṣad. It is not the base rapture of the slave before the mighty that has overawed him for ever. It is not a product. It is the realisation of the essential non-composite universal nature of man. It affirms the fundamental oneness of Reality. Ātman is universal

and one. Man attains to such an experience through intense *Jñāna*. All other modes help us only indirectly. *Mokṣa* according to Śankara is not *derivative*. It is *native* to the soul of man. It is the birthright of man. It is merely making known what is essential in man. It is for all and everyone. Śankara's religion stands for *sarvamukti*. He is a spiritual democrat. Here we do not have the conceptions of eternal damnation or the pleasures of the paradise. Nor do we have distinctions of the elect and the damned. Here we do not have the need for an intermediary between God and man.

Śankara does not regard man as a fallen creature tied down to a body of lust without any glimmer of divinity. There is no hiatus between God and man, as in dogmatic theologies. The two, God and man, are con-substantial. It is all one spirit that vivifies all. Thus, Śankara affirms the dignity and divinity of man by his conception of Brahman and its affirmation through spiritual realisation.

This realisation is not to be at a distant date or in a different place. It is transformed life. It can be had here and now in the human body. Those who have it in the physical frame when they are alive are called *Jivanmuktas*. Spiritual experience is trans-intellectual and not instinctive. It is a non-relational way of knowing. Śankara does not condemn reasoning but wants us to use it where it is applicable. He declared that he criticised other doctrines to enable men to reject false views and not out of interest in discussion as such.¹ Śankara condemns *kutarka* and not helpful Logic. He often defends his metaphysical position not from mere quotations from

1. *Praśna Bhāṣya*, IV, 3.

scriptures, but also with arguments from reason.² He declares in one place that the statement “intellect stands condemned” must be established by intellect itself.³ He never asks us to accept any scriptural truth that goes against the deliverances of perception. He writes that even if a hundred *śrutis* declare that fire is cold and without light, we cannot accept it.⁴

Further, we find in pre-Śankara, Śankara and post-Śankara Advaita dialectics, the logical refutation of the absolute validity of the categories of relational and mediate knowledge. The categories like cause-effect relation, substance, attribute, inherence, relation are convicted of self-contradiction and other logical fallacies.⁵

It is the spiritual realisation of the *fundamental oneness* of Reality that makes us feel effectively the truth of the fellowship of men. To the Advaitin the concept of the brotherhood of man is not a social exhortation nor a mere doctrine. It is proved on his pulse. It is only men who have this experience that can be real humanists. Others who talk about it have no roots for their feelings. It becomes merely a convention or a habit with them. At the end of his Indian tour Dr. Paul Deussen said to a gathering at Bombay: “The gospels quite correctly establish as the highest law of morality, ‘love your neighbour as yourselves’”. But why should I do so, since by the order of nature I feel pain and pleasure only in myself not in my neighbour? The answer is not in the Bible. but it is in the Veda, in the great formula ‘that art thou’

2. *Sūtra Bhāṣya*, II, 2, 1.

3. *Ibid* II, II, 1.

4. *Gītā Bhāṣya*, Chap. XVIII, V. 66.

5. See Maṇḍana, Vācaspati, Śrī Harṣa, Citsukhācārya and Madhusūdana.

which gives, in three words the combined sum of metaphysics and morals. You shall love your neighbour as yourself because you are your neighbour."

The men who have had the spiritual experience work for the good of the world. They alone can. Other guides would be like the blind leading the blind. The *Jīvan-muktas* alone can work effectively. Śankara hints⁶ at his own life as an example of the work of the *Jīvan-mukta*. So it is sheer uninformed criticism to say that the Advaitin cares only for individual salvation. In fact every *Jīvan-mukta* sticks to the task of cosmic governance and does his allotted duty. Thus, we see that Advaita stands for *spiritual humanism*. Śrī Śankara holds the view that the joy we get from the things of the world and the love we give our wife and children are at bottom the real love of the spirit, Brahman. Pleasure finds its source as well as its transcendent bliss in the Ātman. In all our deeds of loving kindness, the happiness that is derived is but a reflection of the bliss of Brahman. The Upaniṣad declares, "On a particle of the bliss of Brahman is the world of living beings sustained."⁷ It is only in Brahman realisation that joy infinite can be had. The result of Brahman realisation is *abhaya*. Fear results from a second.⁸ The monistic faith and its realisation abolishes the scope for fear. Brahman is the supreme value. It is described as *sat*, *cit* and *ānanda*. It is not brute existence or Matter. It is all that is. "Outside of spirit there is not, and there cannot be

6. See Śankara on *Vedāntasūtras*, IV, 1.15 and Vācaspati's *Bhāmatī* thereon.

7. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*, IV, 3, 32.

8. *Dvītiyād vai bhayam bhavati Br. Up. I, 4, 2.*

any reality, and, the more anything is spiritual, so much the more is it veritably real.”⁹

The central doctrine of Advaita Vedānta, namely, the concept of Nirguṇa Brahman, has great significance and far-reaching implications for a universal religion. Most of the dogmatic theologies and religions give us sharply defined and fully described conception of the ultimate Reality. They make for the definiteness of conceptions and differences in religion. Thus we get at descriptions of God, prophet and revelations rigidly and exclusively defined. This accentuates differences. Denominational theologians claim exclusive and complete disclosure of truth to themselves. They say, they alone possess the truth. They declare “Thou shalt have none other God but me. Thou shalt have no other prophet but me, no other text, no other church than the one I declare to be true.” Every prophet of denominational religion abrogates the truths of previous revelations and holds to the inerrancy of his word, person and institution. He tolerates no other rival and approves of no other approach. This leads to religious wars, inquisitional methods and conversions. This brutalises men and makes stones of their heart. Each religion revels in the art of competitive indoctrination of the tenets of their creed.

Śankara declares that Brahman cannot be described in any positive terms. It is absolutely indeterminate in terms of any predicate for the simple reason that there is nothing beside it. Further, all relational knowledge is self-contradictory in the last analysis. Description and predication are relational modes of knowledge. Hence Brahman is indeterminate.

9. F. H. Bradley: *Appearance and Reality*, p. 489.

This does not mean that it is absolute nothing. In the words of Śankara, men of slow wits (*mandabuddhi*) regard it as *asat*. All the descriptions in the scripture are like the pointing finger to the moon. We must not mistake the pointing finger for the moon. One of the Zen masters advises "Do not hunt after the truth, but only cease to cherish opinions." The *neti-neti* method leads to it. It is, "*āvacanena prōvāca*" as the Upaniṣad puts it.

The description of Brahman in a negative manner leaves room for its manifestation in different ways. The existence of the spirit is the absolute truth. The intellectual manifestations of the same in different creeds is relative. They do not conflict with one another. There is room for all. "The truth is one, sages call it by various names." "The one that exists is conceived as many." "The one glory manifests itself in many ways."¹⁰ The relative formulations are due to differences of temper and outlook. They do not go against Advaita.

Śankara's advaita is no creed. It is not in conflict with any other system. It recognises the measure of worth in each system. The existence of the spirit is absolute and their creedal manifestations are relative. So there is no need to wrangle about them. Hence we look upon all creeds as fellowship of faiths.

Śankara's mysticism is not abstract. It is not only a sound system of metaphysics but it is also a humane philosophy of religion. He reconciles the God of religion with the Absolute of philosophy. Whenever men have to think about God, they do so only in terms of human analogy. All language about divinity is

10. Ekam sat viprāḥ bahudhā Vadanti |
 Ekam santam bahudhā kalpayanti |
 Ekam jyotiḥ bahudhā vibhāti |

symbolic. Professor A. N. Whitehead writes, "Mankind, it seems, has to find a symbol in order to express itself. Indeed, expression itself is symbolism. Symbolism is no mere idle fancy or corrupt degeneration. It is inherent in the very texture of human life. Language is itself symbolism."¹¹ Symbols suggest but do not express. They provide the support for experience which lies beyond the power of words.

The God of Advaita metaphysics is a necessary stage for man. Śankara's mysticism is super-theism and not atheism. The descriptions given in religion of the Absolute are in the words of Bergson, "crystallisation brought about by the scientific process of cooling, what mysticism had poured white hot into the soul of man. Through religion all men get what a few privileged souls possessed in full."¹²

From the above survey of some of the doctrines of Śankara we see that his mysticism represents the pure spiritual religion for which the world is yearning. It is a unique type of mysticism which regards spirit as the basis of Reality. From the point of logic the Absolute of Śankara is unique. It is not like the Western Absolutes of Hegel, Bradley etc. nor is it like the Absolute of Nāgārjuna. Adapting the words of Lowes Dickinson we can assert that the real anti-thesis in the world of philosophy is not between Indian philosophy and European philosophy, but between Śankara's Advaita on the one hand and all other systems of philosophy on the other.

The Advaita of Śankara accepts the current challenge to religions by its insistence on spiritual experience. Śankara takes his stand on verifiable

11. A. N. Whitehead, *symbolism*, p. 23.

12. *The Two sources of Morality and Religion* p. 227.

truth and not on creedal declaration. "It is not opposed to science or reason. It is not contingent on any events past or future. No scientific criticism or historical discovery can refute it as it is not dependent on any impossible miracles or unique historical revelations. Its only *apologetic* is the testimony of spiritual experience".¹³ It is not dogmatic. The element of humanism in it is perfect. It is the future religion of the world acceptable to us who are the children of science and reason.

13. S. Radhakrishnan, *Eastern Religions and Western Thought*, pp. 294-295.

Appendix to Chapter III

A NOTE

The opinion that all the systems of Indian philosophy believe in the existence of a soul or *ātman* has been contested. Dr. Radhakrishnan and several other scholars are of the opinion that Buddhism too accepts a permanent transcendent Self and only denies the empirical ego. They hold that the Buddha is a continuator of the Upanishadic tradition and not an innovator.¹

This view is not accepted by all the Vedāntins. They hold that Buddhism represents a different tradition in Indian philosophy. According to Dr. T. R. V. Murti, there are two traditions² in Indian philosophy: the *ātman* tradition represented by all the schools except Buddhism and the *anātman* (no-*ātman*) tradition represented by Buddhism alone.

The *ātman* tradition is blazened forth in the Upanishads and they exhort us to realize the true nature of the Self, *i.e.*, Reality. For the Buddha the *atta* is the root cause of all bondage. It is a “primordial wrong notion” to be got rid of through enlightenment. The nature of the *ātman* is, for the *ātman* tradition, consciousness and bliss (*viññānam ānandam*). For the Buddha it is not a positive entity. Selfhood is the greatest enemy of man. On this doctrine a striking unanimity exists among all the followers and the different schools of Buddhism. The Buddha always considered himself as opening up a new path

1. S. Radhakrishnan: *Gautama the Buddha*, p. 33; *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. III, p. 690.

2. T. R. V. Murti: *The Central Philosophy of Buddhism* (George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1955), pp. 3-35.

never trodden before. In the *Brahmamaajāla Sutta* and the *Sāmannaphala Suttas* he reviews several current philosophical theories and rejects them all. In modern philosophical terminology, Buddhist metaphysics represents the *modal* view of Reality and the other systems represent the *substance* view. Professor Stcherbatsky too inclines to this distinction. In the light of the development of Buddhism and its doctrines it is urged that Buddhism is not a restatement of the Upanishadic doctrine—with a new emphasis, or another version of Advaita Vedānta. It would be doing full justice to the spiritual stature of the Buddha to regard his system as representing a bold original tradition arising from his spiritual experience and different from the Upanishadic tradition. Such an acceptance does not detract from the value of Indian philosophy. Buddhism is not a modified form of the Upanishads or a mere ethical theory, or the agnostic metaphysics of a rationalist as some suppose. It is a distinct, virile, *spiritual* tradition in Indian thought.

GLOSSARY

- Ābhāsa Vāda* : Theory of reflection.
- Abhaya* : Fearlessness.
- Abhyudaya* : Attaining Heaven, it is not the same as Mokṣa.
- Abhyāsa* : Repetition, one of the six determinative marks of purport in the interpretation of Vedic passages.
- Ācāra* : Practice of religion.
- Ācārya* : One who instructs, acts, and shows the way.
- Acintya-bhedābheda* : Incomprehensible, difference and non-difference.
- Ādhibhautika* : Misery due to external influences such as other men, beasts etc.
- Adhikarana* : It is a topic in Vedānta sūtras comprising one or a number of sūtras.
- Ādhidaiivika* : Misery due to supernatural influences.
- Adhyāsa bhāṣya* : The introduction to Śaṅkara's commentary on Brahma Sūtras.
- Adhyātma-Vidyā* : The science of the Self i.e. Vedānta.
- Ādhyātmika* : Misery due to intrinsic influences bodily or mental.
- Aḍiyār* : Devotees (a Tamil word).
- Advaita* : Non-dual.
- Advaya-bhāva* : Non-dual consciousness.
- Āgamas* : Theological treatises and manuals of worship.
- Aiśvarya* : Lordship.
- Ajñāna* : Ignorance.
- Akhaṇḍa* : Non-relational cognition.
- Akṣara* : Immutable.
- Alaukika* : Extraordinary.
- Ālṣārs* : Mystics of South India that inspired Rāmānuja.
- Aṁśa* : Part.
- Anṛtam* : False.
- Ānandaṁ* : Bliss in Mokṣa.

- Anirvacanīya* : The doctrine that 'world' is indeterminate either as 'real' or 'unreal' or a combination of them.
- Antahkaraṇa* : Internal organ.
- Antaryāmi Brāhmaṇa*: The 7th Section of the 3rd Chapter of Bṛhadāranyaka which describes the Lord as the inner controller of all.
- Ānvikṣikī* : Science of Logic, Nyāya.
- Aparināmi* : Immutable.
- Aprākṛta* : Not of the nature of Prakṛti.
- Aprthak-Siddhi* : The inseparable relation between God, souls and the universe according to Rāmānuja.
- Apūrvata* : Novelty, one of the six determinative marks of purport.
- Ārambha-Vāda* : The theory that the effect is a new creation held by the Nyāya School.
- Āranyaka* : They deal about the meaning of the mystic teaching of the sacrificial religion in the Vedas.
- Arthavāda* : One of the marks of interpretation for the Vedic passages. It is of two types (1) glorification of the topic by eulogistic praise and (2) condemnation of the opposite by deprecatory words.
- Asat-Vāda* : The doctrine that all things have Non-existence for their origin.
- Āsrama* : Stages in the life of a Hindu e.g. Brahmacharya, Gārhastya, Vānaprastha and Saṅyāsa.
- Āstika* : Orthodox systems which believe in the authority of the Vedas.
- Atharva-Veda* : The fourth Veda.
- Avaccheda-Vāda* : The view that the soul is delimited Brahman.
- Āvaraṇa* : Power of veiling.
- Avatārs* : Incarnations of the Lord. Ten of them are very important e.g. Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, etc.
- Avidyā* : Nescience, which veils the Real and projects some other thing in its place.

- Avyakta* : Unmanifest stage.
- Bhāva rūpa* : Positive nature.
- Bhoktā* : Enjoyer.
- Brāhmaṇas* : Parts of the Veda that give us the rules for the performance of Sacrifices.
- Cārvāka* : The Indian Materialist.
- Dama* : Restraint.
- Darśana* : A system of Philosophy born out of spiritual experience.
- Dharmabhūtajñāna* : Knowledge regarded as an attribute of the soul and of God in Rāmānuja's system.
- Guṇa* : Quality, the Sāṅkhyan system describes that all things are a complex of three Guṇas i.e. Sattva, Rajas and Tamas.
- Jigñāsa* : Inquiry.
- Jīvan mukti* : Liberation in an embodied state while one is alive.
- Kalyāṇa* : Welfare.
- Kartā* : Agent, one who acts.
- Khaṇḍana* : Refutation.
- Kiṅkara* : Servant of God.
- Kūṭastha* : Immutable.
- Kṣara* : That which perishes.
- Lilā Vāda* : The theory that the Universe is Lord's play.
- Manana* : Reflection.
- Mantra* : Hymns of the Vedas.
- Māyā* : The principle which produces illusion.
- Mithyā* : Illusory.
- Mṛtyunjaya* : Immortal.
- Nāstika* : Systems that do not believe in the authority of the Vedas.

- Nididhyāsanam* : The operation by which we fix our mind on the Self drawing it away from all worldly concerns.
- Nihśreyas* : Mokṣa i.e. final liberation.
- Nirhetuka Kaṭākṣa* : The unconditional grace.
- Nirvāṇa* : The Buddhist concept of liberation.
- Nitya* : Eternal.
- Nitya-Karmas* : Compulsory duties prescribed by the Vedas.
- Nitya-Vibhūti* : The eternal glory of Nārāyaṇa.
- Niyāmyā* : The controlled.
- Niyantā* : The Lord who commands.
- Paramāṇus* : atoms.
- Parināma-Vāda* : The theory of transformation.
- Paśu* : The soul in bondage is regarded in Śaiva-Siddhānta as Paśu.
- Pati* : Lord Śiva.
- Phala* : The fruit of an action, one of the determinative marks of purport.
- Prākāra* : The outer part, mode.
- Prakṛti* : The Unmanifest universe.
- Pramāṇas* : Instruments of knowledge; Six are recognised by Vedānta.
- Prapatti* : Self-surrender to the Lord that does not ask for the regulations which Bhakti imposes.
- Prasāda* : Grace of the Lord.
- Prasthāna-traya* : The triple texts of Vedānta i.e. Upaniṣads, Gītā and Vedānta Sūtras.
- Prātibhāsika* : Illusory or of the nature of dreams.
- Prati-bimba-Vāda* : Reflection theory.
- Puruṣārthas* : The four ends desired by men—artha, dharma, kāma and mokṣa.
- Puṣṭi-Mārga* : Way of grace.
- Sādhana* : Spiritual discipline.
- Sākṣātkāra* : Immediate spiritual experience.
- Sākṣin* : Witness consciousness.
- Śama* : Calmness.
- Samādhāna* : Concentration.

- Samskārya* : Achieved through effort.
Samavāya : Intimate relation.
Sāmīpya : Vicinity of God.
Samvit : Knowledge.
Śaraṇāgati : To take refuge in the Lord.
Sārūpya : Realising the form of God.
Sarva-mukti : Liberation for all.
Saulabhya : Lord's quality, accessible to all.
Sauśilya : His goodness.
Sāyujya : Absorption in God.
Śeṣa-Śeṣi : The relation of the whole and the part.
Siddhānta : Established conclusion; Every system refers to itself as Siddhānta.

Smṛti : Secondary scriptures based on Śruti.
Śraddhā : Faith.
Śravaṇa : Hearing a Vedāntic text from a Guru (not independent self-study).

Śruti : Vedās.
Śuddha Caitanya : Pure Consciousness.
Śuddha-sattva : The material of which Nārāyaṇa's abode is made according to Rāmānuja.

Suṣupti : Sleep.
Svadharmā : The duty of one's station in life.
Svarūpa Lakṣaṇa : The definition of Brahman as Existence, Consciousness and Bliss.

Taṭastha Lakṣaṇa : Qualification per accidens. "The attribute of a thing which remains only for some time in it and distinguishes it from the rest.

Tātparyā liṅga : The six determinative marks of purport.
Tattvas : Categories.
Titikṣā : Forbearance.

Ubhaya-Vedānta : The system of Rāmānuja is called so because it uses both Tamil and Sanskrit texts for its authority.

Upakrama : The initial passage.
Upapatti : Intelligibility.
Uparati : Renunciation.
Upasamhāra : The concluding passage.

<i>Utpādyā</i>	: That which arises.
<i>Vairāgya</i>	: Renunciation.
<i>Vibhava</i>	: Glory.
<i>Vicāra</i>	: Inquiry.
<i>Vijñāna</i>	: Knowledge.
<i>Vikārya</i>	: The transformed.
<i>Vikṣepa</i>	: Power of Projecting.
<i>Viśeṣaṇa</i>	: Attribute.
<i>Vivarta-Vāda</i>	: The doctrine of Śankara i.e. The Theory of Phenomenal appearance.
<i>Viveka</i>	: Discernment.
<i>Vyatireka-Vyāpti</i>	: Negative pervasion.
<i>Vyāvahārika</i>	: The relative standpoint.

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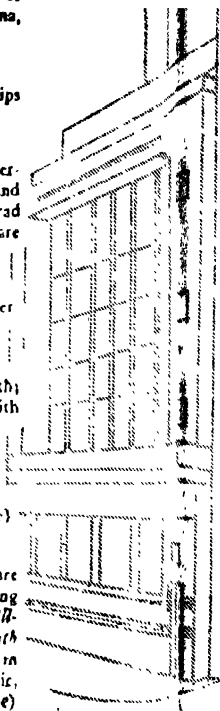
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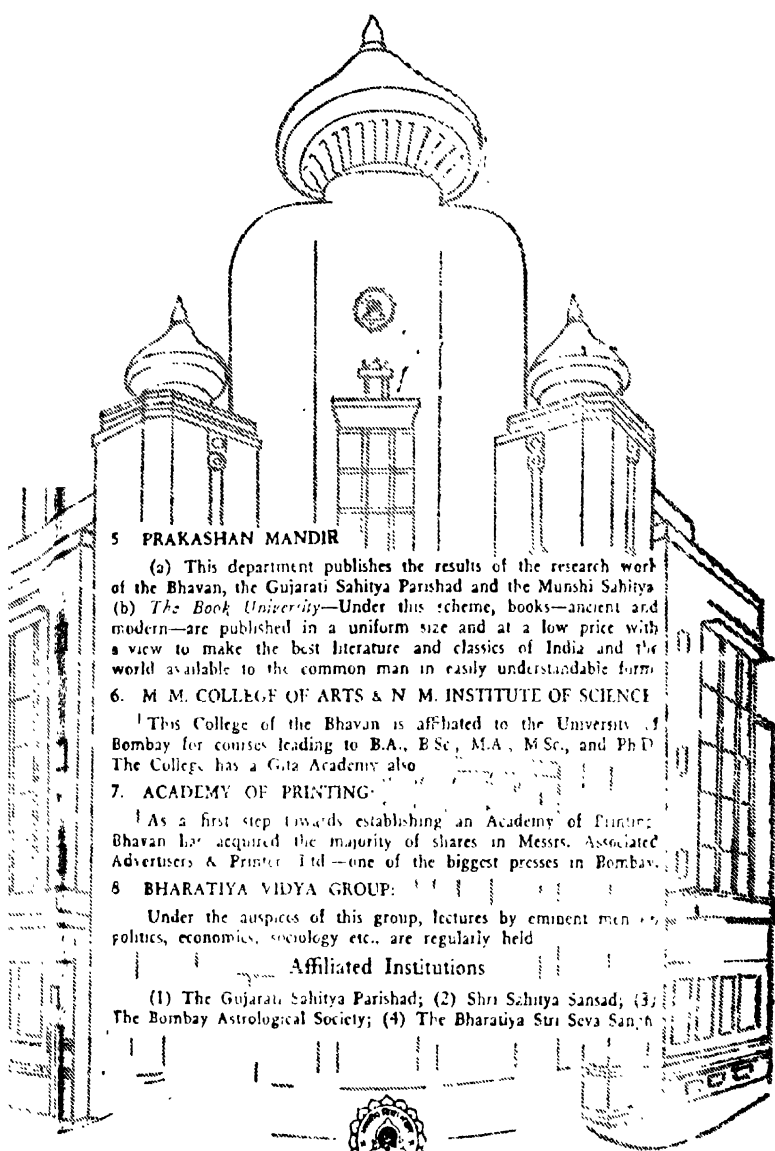
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