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# FOUNDATIONS OF WORLD VISION

A GUIDE TO METAPHYSICS EASTERN AND WESTERN

V. FRANCIS VINEETH C.M.I.



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**FOUNDATIONS OF WORLD VISION**

**A Guide to Metaphysics Eastern and Western**

**V. F. VINEETH CMI**

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Bangalore-560 029

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## FOREWORD

Nobody, I think, has the right to lay the foundation of our world-vision. I do not dare do such an audacious thing through this small volume of metaphysical reflections. But I see that certain foundations of our world-visions are already laid, not by one or other individual, but by long surviving traditions of humanity. Though these can be further deepened or developed, explored or enriched, and even removed and re-established, they are now there as part and parcel of our history, tradition and culture. I am only trying to unveil certain aspects of these cultural and philosophical heritages of humanity which have served as some sort of foundations of world-visions in the East and in the West.

In this space age man who explores the untold dimensions of outer space is also called to enter into the unfathomable abyss of his own inner space. Both are equally infinite and immeasurable. Man's landing on moon is the outcome of his outward flights. Perhaps the ancient generations better succeeded in making explorations into the inner space. Man's landing on *Atman*, the abiding inner Self or Spirit, was the result of such an inward journey. These two typical achievements are very characteristic of the exploring spirit of the Eastern and Western man. The man who lands on moon explores further until he reaches the Beyond and the Boundless which ultimately he discovers within himself. So also the man who lands on *Atman* comes out of his inner cave as he realizes the very same *Atman* as absolute Transcendence and the ultimate cause of this universe. Man on moon thirsts for the awareness of the Spirit whereas man who has discovered the Spirit looks for a deeper meaning of

his relationship with this world. Thus, these two orientations of man, inward and outward as they may be called, differently explored and developed in different parts of the world and in different centuries of its life, are not to be considered as cultural monopolies, but as complementary resources of a common heritage. This book is only a very preliminary attempt to highlight certain aspects of this complementarity.

It was an ambitious desire of my heart for many years to bring in a new trend of philosophical training, especially in Indian seminaries. The students are to be given a world-vision combining the major contributions of the East and West. At the same time metaphysical study should be combined with prayerful reflections of what one studies. This was the method of training in all ancient religious centres. The separation of philosophy from theological and spiritual thinking and its reducing to mere abstract speculation is a distortion which came as a reaction against the over-dominance of theology and religion on philosophy. Though independence of philosophy is still to be safeguarded the main purpose of our philosophical training must be to provide a world-vision which would help to live one's faith and religion. Hence, through and through this work, reflections are made relating philosophical insights to life-situations and to the basic tenets of Christian and Hindu world-visions. However no exhaustive theological treatise is meant or presented.

The three suggested readings given in Appendix I are meant to set the study of and search for Reality in a correct perspective. The first one recalls to our mind the search for the Real in Indian cultural tradition. The ancient people, in spite of their limitations, had a splendid vision of real education. A glimpse of this way of learning will certainly bless us with new insights and inspirations. Education, however, is to be achieved in the total context of one's

religion and faith. The second reading presents the quest for the Real in the classical Indian, hence Hindu, tradition. The third reading is a reconsideration of the classical Christian world-view in the light of the Indian search. I hope these three readings will help students to get an over-all view of what is being treated part by part in several chapters of this work. I make use of this occasion also to thank Frs Thomas Manickam and Antony Kalliath, the contributors of the suggested readings.

The reflections presented in this book are the result of a continued search together with my students of Metaphysics. I gratefully remember all my students who are always a source of insight and inspiration for me. However these reflections would not have seen the light of day unless the dedicated services of Rev. Davis Thomas, Rev. Sebastian Chittilappilly and Sr. Maria Joseph Vallomkunnel F.M.M. reached me in time. Met with a minor accident and forced to spend a few days of my life in bed, this book is also 'a happy memoir' of my bed-ridden days. Sr. Maria Joseph typed out the major portion of this work as I dictated it from my sick-bed. With great care and concern Brothers Davis and Sebastian got them immediately ready for the press. Br. Jose Antony Palathingal, a young theologian of Dharmaram, has enriched this book with a suitable cover design. I thank them all most sincerely. The English translation of the Upanishadic texts quoted in this book is from *The Vedic Experience (Mantramajhari)* by Raimundo Panikkar, published by Darton Longman and Todd, London. The Biblical texts are from Collin's RSV edition. I am grateful to Professor Panikkar and the publishers concerned.

Finally, I place on record my indebtedness to the staff of Dharmaram press, especially to Fathers Theophane and Walter Thelappilly, and to all who have helped me to make this enterprise a success.

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10-2-1985

Francis Vineeth CMI



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## CHAPTER I

# METAPHYSICS AND THE FOUNDATION OF OUR WORLD VISION

Every one wants to lay a solid foundation for his world vision. This is a legitimate and a praiseworthy tendency in man. But how to lay a solid foundation for one's own vision? He who builds a house digs deep that he may lay a solid foundation for his house. If the house is built on solid foundation it can stand wind and rain, thunder and tempest. The Lord himself said us that we have to build our tower of spiritual life on solid foundation which is his everlasting Word (Lk 6. 47-49).

The world-vision we develop is a house we build. In this house our thinking dwells and reality manifests itself as knowledge, as logos, as consciousness. How to build this house of knowledge? As any man lays foundation for his house we too have to lay a solid foundation for the edifice of our world-vision. This foundation should be deep enough and for that reason should be on the rock of reality itself and not on any momentary or passing manifestation of the same. In our search for that which is real and all pervasive we come to the notion of being which we see in everything. Hence the foundation of our world vision is to be laid on our vision of being (*sat*) which alone is the true basis of every manifested form of reality. This search for being beyond its physical manifestation and operation takes us to *meta-physics*; to that which is beyond physics. Hence the search for foundations of our knowledge is really a study of what people today call metaphysics. This takes to the question ;

## 1. WHAT IS METAPHYSICS ?

Etymologically seen, the word metaphysics originates from two Greek components *meta* (beyond) and *physica* (physics). Metaphysics is that which is beyond physics. But what is physics? At the time when the word metaphysics was coined, physics stood for everything that was not mathematics and theology. It was Aristotle who divided the sciences into three categories such as theoretical, practical and poetical. The theoretical was further divided as mathematical, physical and theological. Physical therefore meant that theoretical science which does not deal with the length-breadth dimension of things (mathematics) and the unseen dimension of things (theology).

To contemplate the unseen dimension of the seen reality is the proper nature of metaphysics. It is always *meta-physica*, beyond the physical reality. The unseen dimension, however, can be the very existence of the particular thing or the Absolute Existence in which and by which everything exists. In mature metaphysical thinking the former leads one to the latter. Both the idea of existence and that of God are *meta-physical*. For Aristotle the theological science itself was the metaphysics.

Science	{	1. Theoretical-	{	1. Mathematical
				2. Physical
				3. Theological=Meta-physical
	{	2. Practical		
	{	3. Poetical		

Thus according to the scheme of Aristotle Metaphysics was one with theology. He called it also the primary science as it deals with the first problems of philosophy.

## 2. THE SCOPE AND AIM OF METAPHYSICAL STUDY

Metaphysics aims at the meaning of being. We want to get a sense of reality we encounter everywhere. The



origin of Metaphysics is therefore said to be from the sense of wonder we get from this world of variety and beauty. The rising sun, the shining moon, the star-lit sky, the flowing river, the mighty mountain and the amazing creature I myself am, all these engender feelings of wonder in us. Metaphysics dwells on this wonder and evolves it to a philosophy. The inquisitive mind of the baby is metaphysical in character. The baby wants to know what is the thing before him. Hence the chain of endless questions. The mind of a baby may later develop into that of a scientist seeking explanation of reality in physics. It may further proceed to give birth to a philosopher who meta-physically inquires the meaning of any being placed before him. Hence the scope of metaphysics is really very wide and practically unlimited. It embraces all being and attempts to have an integrated understanding of all reality. We encounter only individual beings. But we encounter many of such beings. This takes us to the problem : What is being? Metaphysics is an attempt to answer this basic question. As such it is not interested in any particular being, but analyses all particular beings in view of being in general which ultimately ends up in the Absolute, the sole foundation of every being. Being in general and its universal properties are the goal of metaphysics. Since everything including the metaphysician, is being, what metaphysics ultimately brings out is valid for all and serves as the foundation of the edifice of knowledge every man would like to build up.

### 3. NATURE OF METAPHYSICAL STUDY

The essential characteristics of metaphysical study is that it ever remains *incomplete*. The reason for this incompleteness is to be sought in the finitude of human intelligence incapable of fully understanding the inexhaustibility of being. Man with his limited intelligence is trying to understand unlimitedness of being, i.e., reality in all its

forms and even in its absolute formlessness. Everywhere there is being. Man sees it. But endowed with a finite intelligence he gets only glimpses of reality. These glimpses are true and reliable, but incomplete. Hence the right disposition to study Metaphysics must be *openness* to further revelation of being, as it manifests in organic or inorganic, animate or inanimate, human or divine being. Reality reveals itself through everything.

Accordingly we have to remain open to every revelation of being, ready to give ourselves to every claim of truth emanating from being. If we are not open enough and comfortably think that our study of metaphysics is over, we may easily turn out to be real fools who, perhaps innocently, think that beyond their vision there is no sound vision, when actually there will be magnificent vision outside. Such people are condemned to remain in the self-imposed boundary of their knowledge. Metaphysics does not impose such boundaries on anyone. On the contrary, ever keeping itself open to the revelation of being, it grows further and further. This does not however mean uncertainty or agnosticism. It means only unimpeded openness to the truth of being, which is metaphysical, beyond what is physical and in fact beyond all human articulations.

In the last analysis reality is God. Hence Metaphysics while saying 'yes' to reality or to the revelation of Being, is saying 'Yes' to God. We should have courage and openness to say 'yes' to reality, to accept the revelation of being in all its phases. This makes the evolution of metaphysics possible.

Reality is many-sided. It is to be understood from different angles. Thus different branches of science arise. Metaphysics as a basic science lays the foundation for further studies. Therefore study of this subject should create an attitude of openness to all sciences. This kind of

openness and understanding of being is needed to build up our systems of knowledge, and lead a life of integration and inter-disciplinary training. All systems are only attempted articulations. No human articulation is complete in itself. It has to express itself further. This is why metaphysics as a science of being ever remains unfinished, inviting us to deeper and deeper layers of being, revealing itself in and through time.

#### **4. METAPHYSICS AS SCIENCE OF BEING IS ONTOLOGY**

Metaphysics is a search beyond physics. What is beyond physics is being itself. Therefore metaphysics is a search into the notion of being itself. The Greek word for being is *on*. As a science of being metaphysics came to be known as ontology. The word ontology is derived from the two greek words *on* and *logos*. Logos literally means word and stands for what is being spoken to us by every being is its own meaning. Inquiry into meaning is science. Hence logos derivatively means, especially in its combinations, meaning or science. Ontology is inquiry into the meaning of being or science of being. By inquiring into the meaning of being we are laying the foundation of a science, namely the science of being. What do we understand by the expression "science of being" or ontology? Every science is said to have a material and formal object. Material object of different sciences can be the same. It is the formal object that determines the specific character of a science. Thus both psychology and sociology has man as the material object; but psychology analyses man from the point of view of psychic actions whereas sociology analyses the same man as a member of the society. The specificity of the sciences such as psychology and sociology is determined by the aspects in which man is studied. This particular aspect in which a material object is studied we call the formal object. The material object of ontology is simply being. But being can be studied in several aspects.

When we look at being as a living being it gives rise to the science called biology, when we focus on life in plants we have botany, when we study the human being we have different sciences of humanities, again depending on the particular aspect in which we look at the being which is man. We have already said that the material object of ontology is being. What is its formal object? The formal object is not any particular aspect of being, but the very consideration of being as being itself. Hence it is strictly meta-physical in character, because the particular aspects will be associated with something physical. Metaphysics is ontology and ontology is inquiry into being as being.

## 5. ONTOLOGY AND THEOLOGY.

Ontology begins with the explanation of any finite being. The search into the meaning of being continues until it reaches the ultimate ground of being which by nature must be the source of all being, the beyond and the boundless, without beginning and end, and thus the infinite. The science of being pertaining to the ultimate ground of all being is known as theology. Thus ontology necessarily turns out to be an onto-theology. As ontology is the science of being, theology is the science of God. This word theology comes from the two Greek words: *Theos* (God) and *logos* (science). Theology transcends the realm of finite beings and searches for the Supreme Being where finite beings could be ultimately grounded whereas ontology treats all sorts of beings including the Supreme Being. The theology to which ontology proceeds is often known as *theodicy* (literally God-talk) or philosophy of God. Thus every ontology, at least indirectly, serves theology and theology perfects ontology.

In the evolution of world cultures theology and ontology developed side by side. Hardly was there any distinction between both of them. But revelation in Jesus Christ

brought about a difference in the situation at least as far as Christians are concerned. Then onwards theology was considered as the science of the Ultimate Being either based on natural reason of man or based on the revelation in Christ. The former is called, as mentioned above, theodicy or philosophy of God, and the latter systematic or dogmatic theology. Dogma, as it means the official teaching of the believing community, is a word indicative of the commitment of the believer to the revealed truth. Once the Absolute Being is revealed to us in Jesus Christ, then Christ and his teachings become very central to our life. It controls our vision and characterizes our thinking. Those who believe in Christ now has a new vision, a theological vision or a christian vision. Christian theology, properly understood, is a way of looking at everything enlightened by this new vision. Though this distinction between metaphysics and theology is theoretically possible, in our actual and concrete vision we do not make distinction between metaphysics and theology. Our metaphysical vision gets strengthened by our theological vision or theological vision gets founded on the metaphysical. Thus in the really existing man the metaphysical and theological visions coalesce.

## 6. METAPHYSICS AND MYSTICISM

Metaphysics is trying to understand everything under the aspect of being. Thus metaphysics stands for unity in diversity. It is similar to mysticism because there we experience ultimate unity of everything in God. The mystic sees everything in God and God in everything. The Metaphysician sees everything in being and being in everything. Quest for 'one' is human exigency. This 'one' is experienced in philosophy, religion and mysticism. The nature of the study of metaphysics can be mystical as it leads us to the experience of the ultimate. But metaphysics differs from mysticism because of its scientific interest and methodology.

Metaphysics agrees with logic in its universality of interest or scope; but differs from it because logic is concerned with truth which is in the mind while metaphysics is preoccupied with truth which is present in the thing. Our saying 'yes' to the being is the truth in metaphysics.

The main objective of metaphysics is to develop a vision or to provide a *darsana*. In proper world-vision we have to base our thinking on some fundamental notions such as being, truth, goodness, beauty, value, God etc. These notions are metaphysical in character. These notions are intimately related to the meaning of things. Today there is a tendency to deny all these notions as fundamental. Of course metaphysics does not stand for a single angle of vision in life. But it does stand for a vision and meaning of life. Visions and prospects which tend to deny the ultimate meaning of life are to be considered as anti-metaphysical. The air of emerging anti-metaphysical tendency is especially visible in some of the novels, plays and films of today. Authentic values are often brought to human mind and heart through art. To evaluate a play or novel we need metaphysics. Our study of metaphysics is not just an intellectual exercise of contemplating reality in the abstract. It should help us to delve deep into the nature of reality enabling us to form value-judgements in our actual life situations. By its meta-physical character it should lead us beyond what is physical, visible and transitory to that is real, reliable and permanent. Metaphysics gives us meaning of things and takes us to meaningfulness of life.



## CHAPTER II

# THE APPROACH TO REALITY : EASTERN AND WESTERN

### 1. THE TWOFOLD APPROACH.

There are many ways of approach to reality of which we have chosen two: Eastern and Western. Both East and West have different schools of philosophy and their distinctive ways of approach to reality. However we have to do some selection in order to work out our approach to metaphysics. As (India is one of the leading countries in the Orient, an Indian approach is taken as a model of the Eastern approach) Of many Indian approaches we have chosen the classical Upanisadic approach. By (the western approach we mean here the scholastic christian approach to reality with its contemporary developments and interpretations.) The differences mentioned here are not to be understood as mutually exclusive. They only indicate aspects of greater emphasis in each approach.

(In his search for reality, the western man goes out of himself. The tendency is that of exteriorization.) On the contrary in India one enters into one's own being and try to understand the self. The (Indian tendency is therefore that of interiorization' or getting in touch with what is within.) We can't say which (approach) is better than the other, because each one has its own merits and demerits.) One can be corrected and complemented by the other. (In early days (1) christians had a feeling that they should follow the western approach as part of their christian faith since much of their theology had been developed through this (approach). But strictly speaking these two approaches have nothing to do with Christianity. They are just two parallel approaches.

*Approach*

*Eastern  
Western*

We have to develop our own way of approach to reality, learning from the traditions of the East and West.

(The Western method is *objective*) whereas the Eastern is *subjective*. (In objective method there is the analysis of objects) i.e. (I encounter not myself but the other and I evolve my philosophy out of this encounter). In subjective method on the contrary the analysis of the subject takes place. (I encounter myself and evolve philosophy). (We can discover being either in subject or in object). Accordingly the method will be objective or subjective. (The Indian approach to Reality makes India's philosophy very different from that of the west.) (In India philosophy is largely a process of realization of one's own being whereas in the west it remains rather on the speculative level.)

(There will be more *certainty* and *precision* in the objective method.) (But subjective approach takes us to mysticism.) Hence the Indian approach will be more *mystic*. (The objective approach will be more *scientific*.) (A scientific approach will eventually help progress in technology.) (A scientific attitude is good for research.) The mystic approach on the contrary will lead one to yoga and meditation and to the inner space of one's own self. This may not bring about so much scientific achievements as in the west. (Instead India leads us to self-realization by intense search.) Very often the Indian search becomes research objects in the west. This was very clearly seen in the case of transcendental meditation.

It was only recently that India developed transcendental meditation which was a search for realization. The West made researches on it and invented machines to find out what kind of brain waves the mind produces at the time of T. M. They discovered that more refined alpha-waves are produced when one has concentration and beta-waves when the mind is distracted. T. M. which was originally a search

for self-realization in India became a research project in the West. Of course in the West also it has its meaning of search and self-realization.

Psychologically meditation means concentration. The Indian people, by and large, are attracted to spirituality and there is still a meditative flavour in the Indian culture. In highly secularized culture the situation is different. A rational rather than spiritual, a speculative rather than mystical, a quantitative rather than qualitative approach dominate the life-style of the people. Sometimes people get bored in this all pervasive secularity and try to liberate themselves from it by way of interior meditation. This explains the flow of the West to the East. On the other hand India feels a thirst for technology and looks to the West for modern comforts and amenities of life. Yet any amount of quantitative progress will not make man qualitatively richer. For that man should turn to his own interiority. (The Indian thinking is by nature more intuitive. Hence the Indian's world vision will naturally end up in the experience and assertion of an immanent God. Rational approach on the contrary makes man to go out in search of an ultimate ground and takes him to a transcendent God who is "wholly other". The Immanent God is meditated upon whereas to the transcendent God man makes prayers and supplications.

(Naturally in its search for Reality India will speak about awakening and enlightenment from within (*Buddhahood*) and the West will present the doctrines of self-transcendence and union with the Divine.) The Indian approach, though subjective, is not with a superficial relativism; rather it expresses the Indian quest to experience and realize Reality in one's own authentic self. (Though Christians have a tendency to find God more transcendent), in reality God is both immanent and transcendent.

(Transcendent God is realized by *Bhakti* (devotion). Immanent God is realized by *Jnāna* (wisdom). But even in *Bhakti* India develops a tendency of interiorization.) The

Indian Bhakti reminds us of St Teresa of Avila who wrote the celebrated spiritual classic: *The Interior Castle*.

In short the Western approach is extrospective which results in objectivisation, research and scientific progress while the Eastern approach is an introspective search laying emphasis on interior identity of the spirit.

### Approach to Reality (Characteristic Notes)

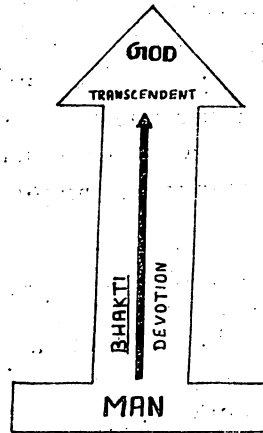
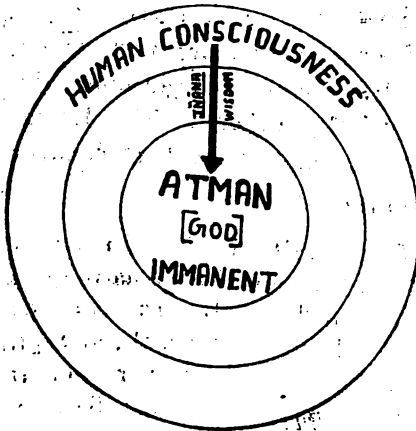
#### Eastern (Indian)

Interiorization  
Subjective  
Mystic (experience)  
Search  
Contemplative (thinking)  
Intuitive  
Qualitative  
Transcendent God

#### Western (Scholastic)

Exteriorization  
Objective  
Scientific (experiment)  
Research  
Calculative (thinking)  
Rational  
Quantitative  
Immanent God

Man's approach to God: Immanent and Transcendent



The immanent Atman is realized by *jañana* (contemplative wisdom.) Hence awakening or enlightenment takes place from within. The Indian mind rests in *Samādhi* (equanimity) translated by western authors as ecstasy: standing within.

The transcendent God is worshipped or adored in *bhakti* (devotion) Hence cults from below and the call of God from above. The Western mind is driven into ecstasy: standing outside.

## 2. EASTERN APPROACH TO REALITY.

The basic starting point of the Eastern (Indian) approach to reality is, as we have already seen, seeking reality in one's own self. (Reality is encountered in one's own consciousness. Consciousness means awareness of the self.) In the Indian tradition the word Atman or Self could mean the Individual self and the divine self. (Reality is encountered through the consciousness of the individual self and of the Eternal Self in the individual self.) The methodology of understanding, experiencing and interpreting the self is called interiorization.

The Individual self (jivātman) which is centred in consciousness is in a body which again exists in the world. The individual self together with its body is called a microcosm (miniature universe). In contrast, the Divine Self (paramātman) together with the whole universe is called macrocosm. The centre of this macrocosm is the paramātman who is Brahman whereas the centre of the microcosm is the jivātman. Since jivātman contains in itself the reflection of paramātman, in the last analysis Brahman is the ultimate centre of both macro and micro cosm.

This ultimate centre of consciousness cannot be proved but is to be experienced slowly by way of listening, pondering and realizing (*sravanam, mananam and nididhyasanam*). In the depth of this experience we are taken from *Jivātman* to *Paramātman*. Seen from the Christian perspective *Jivātman* is the image of the *Paramātman*. "God created man in his own image and likeness." (Gen 1:27). Man's ultimate content is God's own image. Image always indicates something original. *Jivātman*, when properly understood, leads man to the divine in himself. In short, understanding himself in depth, man understands God. But sin and distortion

hinder us from being aware of the interior content of our own consciousness. Mystics realized it in their innermost selves in the form of *Jyothi* or living flame. This changing universe rotates around the unchanging centre, the ultimate reality, the supreme consciousness. And we reach this consciousness in quiet and silence in the same way as we dive and reach the still bottom of a turbulent sea. To achieve this we have to silence all our senses and thus be free from all emotional conflicts. With this process of silencing a yogi becomes capable of remaining unchanged in the changing life situations. As in the macrocosm the changing universe rotates around the unchanging Brahman, so in the microcosm all the outer layers of consciousness which are rapidly changing will be centred on and guided by the steady consciousness of the yogi. Now the question is : How do we come to this consciousness of the self?

### The Approach to Consciousness

Reality or consciousness is known by a becoming process. To know reality is to become one with it. The *Mundaka Upanishad* 3, 29, explains thus : "He who knows Brahman becomes Brahman." What we meditate we become. So we have to meditate the inner self until we become aware of it. Only through concentration one can come to proper self-awareness.

Since the atman is very subtle and all pervading, it escapes all attempts of precise definition. The Upanishads describe the experience of the atman in different ways, through different similies and comparisons. Here are a few examples :

(1) *Kath. Up.* II. 22-24 :

Bodiless among bodies, stable among the unstable,  
the great and all-pervading *ātmān*  
recognizing him thus, the wise do not grieve.



This atman is not attained by instruction  
or by intelligence or by learning.  
By him whom he chooses is the atman attained.  
To him the atman reveals his own being.

The one who has not turned away from wickedness,  
who has no peace, who is not concentrated,  
whose mind is restless - he cannot realize  
the atman, who is known by wisdom.

(2) *Kath. Up.* III. 12 :

Hidden in all beings, the atman does not shine forth,  
but he can be perceived by those subtle seers  
by means of their fine and subtle intelligence.

(3) *Surya Up.* I. 15-16 :

As oil in sesame seed, as butter in cream,  
as water in hidden springs, as fire in fire sticks,  
so is the atman grasped in one's own self  
when one searches for him in truth and with fervour.

The atman pervades all, like butter hidden in milk ;  
he is the source of Self-knowledge and ascetic fervour.  
This is the Brahman-teaching, the highest goal !  
This is the Brahman-teaching, the highest goal !

(4) *Mund. Up.* II. 2, 5-8 :

In him are woven the sky, the earth,  
airy space, mind, and all sense powers.  
Dismissing all else, know him as the one  
true atman, the bridge to deathlessness.

Where the arteries merge like spokes in the hub  
of a wheel, there the atman moves within

in manifold forms. By the saying of "OM" meditate upon the atman. May you succeed in crossing to the farther shore of darkness ;

All-knowing is he, all-wise ; his glory expands through all the earth. He is established as the atman in the city divine of Brahman, in the space of the heart.

He consists of spirit ; he guides the life powers and dwells within the heart, being based upon food. Him do the wise perceive by means of wisdom, the immortal, the radiant, whose nature is bliss.

(5) *Br. Up.* IV 4 22 :

In truth, this is the great, unborn atman who is the spiritual element among the life powers. He dwells in that space within the heart, the Ordainer of all, the Lord of all, the Ruler of all. He does not become greater by good works or less great by bad works. He is the Lord of all, the Ruler of all beings, the Protector of all beings. He is the bridge that holds these worlds apart. It is he whom Brahmins desire to know through study of the Veda, through sacrifice and almsgiving, through ascetic fervour and fasting. The man who has found him becomes a silent monk. Desiring him alone as their world, ascetics leave their homes and wander about. Knowing this the men of old did not desire progeny. "What shall we do with progeny," they thought, "we whose whole world is the atman?" Having transcended the desire for sons, the desire for wealth, the desire for worlds, they go about as mendicants. For the desire for sons is the desire for wealth, and the desire for wealth is the desire for worlds; all these are nothing but desires. He, the atman, is not this, not this. He is ungraspable for he is not grasped, he is indestructible for he is not destroyed, he is free from attachment

for he does not attach himself (to anything); he is unfettered, he does not waver, he is not injured.

(6) *Br. Up. II. 4-5 :*

Yajnavalkya spoke to Maitreyi: "Being dear to me you speak dear words. Come, sit down, I will explain to you, and while I explain you should meditate on it."

Yajnavalkya said: It is not for love of a husband that a husband is loved, but rather for love of the atman."

"Nor is it for love of a wife that a wife is loved but rather for love of the atman."

"Nor is it for love of sons that sons are loved but rather for love of the atman."

"Nor is it for love of wealth that wealth is loved but rather for love of the atman."

"Then, O Maitreyi, it is the atman that should be seen, heard, thought about, and deeply pondered. It is only by seeing, hearing, thinking about, and deeply pondering the atman that all this is known."

Is the individual self different from or similar to divine self? Indian philosophy does not give a clear answer to this question. Yajnavalkya advises Maitreyi that love for its own sake is futile but for the sake of the realization of atman is meaningful. Atman is to be pondered over and meditated. This is exactly like a search of a Queen for ornaments just to find what gold is. She began collecting and collecting gold ornaments but was never satisfied. So she began the search for finding out the real nature of gold. Once she understood gold it was very easy for her to understand the nature of ornaments. In this way once we experience atman we know everything (*Br. Up. II. 4. 6-12*).

The experience of atman is a mystery. Atman is beyond all our conceptualization. What we have is knowledge and not reality itself. So one who says that he knows atman may not actually know it. But one who admitting the incomprehensibility of the atman remains in silence might have experienced it. This experience is beyond all articulation.

The story of the encounter between Kabir and Fakir has much to tell about the experience of atman. Kabir and Fakir were known for their holiness and were said to be men of self realization (*ātmasākṣātkāra*). Both had their disciples. As disciples insisted, a meeting of these two great men was planned. The disciples of both these gurus were eagerly waiting for them to see how these two great men would share their experience. But nothing happened. They embraced, wept and parted without speaking a word. When the disciples asked for reason it was told so: "Those who have experienced it know it even without a word. Those who have not experienced it do not understand even if any amount of words are spoken."

In the Indian approach this atman is realised through meditation, in the tranquillity and stillness of mind. India accepts also knowledge about atman and there are several *Pramānas* (valid means) of knowledge. They are four in number: *Prathyakṣha* (perception), *Anumāna* (inference), *Ūpamāna* (comparison) and *Sabda* (testimony).

But to experience atman as the Ultimate Reality the first three means are insufficient. Atman who is invisible cannot be an object of our eyes. Inference which is an activity of the mind comes only through perception. Even in mind it is only the idea of atman that we get through inference. Comparison also is not valid because atman, the invisible, cannot be properly compared with anything. The only possible means is the fourth one, i.e., *Sabda* or

testimony. The sharing of the experience of what the holy seers experienced is *śabda*. This experience may not be the same for all. But the experience of one can awaken similar experiences in us. *Vedas*, *Upanishads* and all revelations are considered to be *śabda*. Christians consider the Gospels and Epistles as the testimony of the experience of the apostles about Jesus Christ. We have to meditate on these *Sabda* and see whether their experience is also ours. Our mission is to realize this divine within our consciousness and to testify to it and not simply teach something about the atman or consciousness.

### The Role of the Mahavakyas in the Evolution Of Self Consciousness:

*Sabda* or testimony is as wide as an ocean. The process of interiorization is based on and confirmed by the *Vedas*. The *Vedas* are acknowledged as the *śruti*, what is heard, or the *śabda* par excellence. According to the ancient Indian tradition the ultimate reality is unfolded in the *Vedas*, especially in the *Upanishads*. Since *śabda* in its entirety is a vast sea of literature, Sankara chose four principles or sayings from among them. They came to be known as *Mahāvākyas*: the great sayings. The authenticity of these *Mahāvākyas* are not scientifically proved. Anyway these were supported and accepted by many. So in metaphysical studies they are given much importance.

The *Mahāvākyas* are as follows:

1. *Prajñānam Brahman*: Brahman is consciousness (*Ait. Up.* III, 5, 3).
2. *Ayam Atman Brahman*: This Atman is Brahman (*Bri. Up.* II, 5, 19).
3. *Aham Brahmasmi*: I am Brahman (*Bri. Up.* I, 4, 10),
4. *Tat Tvam Asi*: That thou art (*Cha. Up.* VI, 8, 7).

### 1. *Prajñānam Brahman* : Brahman is consciousness

All our knowledge is structured in consciousness. Our embodied self (microcosm) is ultimately centred on this consciousness along with its different layers of awareness. In the last analysis Brahman is that underlying consciousness around which the whole universe (macrocosm) revolves. Brahman is the unchanging centre of this changing universe. To realize Brahman (the unchanging centre) *Viveka* is very essential. It is the ability to distinguish between the changing and the unchanging, temporal and eternal, material and spiritual etc. Man is the embodied consciousness and thus is the starting point of inquiry into consciousness. From there one moves to the universal consciousness i.e., Brahman.

Why is Brahman consciousness? As the ultimate self Brahman is simply *sat*. *Sat* is 'isness'; pure 'isness' is also consciousness - *cit*. This self awareness of Brahman cannot be expressed completely by us because the more we try to explain it the more will be limitation put into it and it no longer remains pure *sat-cit*. In the beginning there was only *sat*, being. While it was pure existence it contained its own perfect self reflection. Hence there was always the unpolluted consciousness along with *sat*. Brahman is *sat* which at the same time is *cit*. Brahman is therefore said to be consciousness and is the gathering point of all that is created. This Brahman assumed *nāmarūpa* and became many giving birth to a universe. So this cosmos is centred around Brahman. He is the unchanging pivot around which this transient world turns. The nearest conception of Brahman we can have is that it is a state of consciousness beyond time.

The word 'Brahman' originally meant 'spell' or 'word' uttered in the magical formula. So is this word used in the *RgVeda*. By the time of the *Upanishads* the meaning of the word underwent great changes and then onwards it was



understood as the Absolute who is pure consciousness. Hence the expression *prajñānam Brahman*. However the original meaning is significant, especially so, if we want to look at it from a Christian perspective. Christians consider the Logos, the Eternal Word, as the ultimate consciousness and also the abiding foundation of the whole universe. Brahman as consciousness and as the ultimate ground of creation strongly points to the Christian Logos through whom "all things were made" (Jn 1.3).

In the Christian approach, the Logos, the Word, assumes flesh which we all share. Seen in a wider perspective, Christ, as the Logos made flesh, contains the whole of humanity and also the universe in which the humanity is placed. So in the Christian perspective the centrality of Christ is stressed more. Made in the likeness of Christ man is the visible image of the invisible God. The essence of man is the capacity of complete reflection which we call consciousness. This consciousness reflects the Logos, the Absolute. So the next mahavakya.

## 2. *Ayam Atman Brahman* : This Self is Brahman

Brahman is the all-transcendent Absolute. As abiding in everything the same Brahman is understood as atman. Atman in its pure state is supreme consciousness. This atman cannot be seen or touched, is above all distinctions, beyond thought and ineffable. "He is known in the ecstasy of an awakening" (Kena. II).

Where can we look for this atman? Why not in our own consciousness? Our consciousness is in possession of this atman who is Brahman. Only the "how" of this presence is disputed. Wherever there is consciousness there is Brahman. This individual self is consciousness. Therefore 'this self is Brahman'. The expression can however mean identity or similarity. On this point Indian schools differ.

One thing is true. It is only through experience one comes to reality, knows Brahman as the Absolute or the Infinite residing in the finite. The 'how' of this incomprehensible union is always a mystery.

*Bri. UP.* (II, 7, 20, 23) says :

He who dwells in the mind but is other than the mind, whom the mind does not know, whose body is the mind, who controls the mind from within, He is the atman within you, the inner controller, the immortal. He is the unseen seer, the unheard hearer, the unthought thinker, the unknown knower. There is no other seer than he, no other hearer than he, no other thinker than he, no other knower than he. He is your atman, the inner controller, the immortal.

In truth the divine is within us. When our consciousness agrees with that divine we are happy and when it does not agree we are unhappy. The divine consciousness in us has to be awakened. When it is really awakened one is led to say the third Mahavakya.

### 3. *Aham Brahmasmi* : I am Brahman

This is an advanced stage of the realizing consciousness. In this state identity between Brahman and the individual self is ascertained. Yet it is not always understood by all as absolute identity. There is a quest to identify the individual consciousness with absolute consciousness. Brahman is understood to be the Ultimate Reality within us. In the Christian vision the individual self is never absolutely identical with Brahman, but our consciousness can be that of Brahman and be filled with Brahman. A Christian, when he gets the consciousness of Christ, becomes another Christ. All our religious performances are futile if our consciousness does not change. In this sense prayer is the

supreme knowledge which changes our consciousness. The way to know Brahman is to realize my rootedness in Brahman by awakening the Brahman within me. The knowledge of God is attained not by making him the object of our knowledge but realizing him as the subject of everything. The Infinite is ever in us, so in knowing Brahman we have to transform ourselves into Brahman. Real knowledge is self transformation. He who knows that (Brahman) becomes that. The supreme is the self of all of us. Man can become aware of it by deep search and meditation.

The individual consciousness, as it gets awakened, participates in the absolute consciousness because it is the ultimate source of all beings. The Mahavakya *aham brahmasmi* is an invitation for us to acknowledge Brahman as the ultimate agent in all of us. "I am the vine, you are the branches; without me you can do nothing" (Jn 15 : 5).

#### 4. *Tat Tvam Asi* : That Thou Art

The essence of the Upanishads in its attempt to unfold the Absolute Reality is summed up in the words *Tat Tvam Asi*: That thou art. If one has realized Brahman he has already become that. The guru who has realized Brahman in his atman now says to his disciple so that the disciple may realize it too. The disciple on his part should strive for the realization of the fact that within himself is that Reality to be realized. Brahman in his transcendence and immanence is in the spirit of man as the Supreme Self, as the depth of his consciousness. So Reality or God must not be sought as something far away from us but as the very innermost core of our being, as consciousness within us, yet above the limitations of our little self. In rising to the best in us we sink to the depth within us, to Brahman, to God himself. Brahman, to conclude, is at the same time immanent and transcendent, within all and above all.

### 3. WESTERN APPROACH TO REALITY

There is a great tendency in man to know things and what goes on around him. Man is naturally fond of knowledge. Knowledge is not more information. It is reflecting on what one encounters and relating to it in a meaningful and consistent way. What is encountered can be anything including the very subject. But in this approach subject will be reflected upon as the object of knowledge. In every encounter of being by man there is a 'presence' and every presence is a call. It is always an invitation to accept the presence of what is encountered, to say 'yes' to the call of being. In saying 'yes' to this call man comes to the assertion of 'what is' and thus arrives at the notion of being. Saying 'yes' to the presence of the real was technically known as judgement. Therefore it was told in western tradition that reality or being is known in judgement.

#### **Judgement and the Notion of Being**

Whenever we say any word on anything metaphysically we make a judgement. Judgement is an affirmation of being made by man. The basic function of this judgement is the assertion of the existence of any entity. Reality is encountered by man every where in the form of entities. Man is naturally drawn to them and tends to assert them as 'something' existing. In this sense human mind is responsive to reality and this responsibility is expressed in its unconditional assertion of what it encounters. Judgement is, therefore, the assertion of 'is' (existence), but always does in terms of entities.

Judgement always starts with our sense experience. St. Thomas says: "Nothing is in intellect except through senses." Senses are the door-way through which the cosmos is brought into one's mind. Hence our knowledge is conditioned by our senses. But mere sensation is not

judgement. Judgement implies intelligibility along with sensibility. Intelligibility is that which the sensibility manifests and at the same time hides. Every manifestation of being is also a hiding. Existence is hidden in entities and is manifested through the entities. It is a mystery and man perceives it. For example, let us examine the assertion "this is a flower." We perceive only the explicit qualities like colour, softness, fragrance etc. Any amount of such qualities put together cannot constitute a flower. Yet the flower is there and is perceived by the intellect. Qualities manifest the flower but the floweriness is hidden. Senses perceive the externalities such as colour, odour, softness etc. and the intellect perceives the essence. Judgement starts with our inclination to say 'yes' to reality revealed to us in sensibility and becomes complete when we combine intelligibility and sensibility and assert the reality of being unconditionally. So in the ultimate analysis judgement is the assertion of existence and this is done in terms of entities. Existence corresponds to intelligibility and entity to sensibility.

### **Original Judgement and Openness to Being**

Judgement is the assertion of being. Already before this assertion formally obtained in judgement man is drawn to being. Human essence is characterized by a fundamental openness to being. This makes him say 'yes' to reality in whatever form it reveals itself. This fundamental openness of man by virtue of which he is always ahead of himself in his orientation to being we call primordial judgement or *Urja* (a German word meaning 'original yes'). This primordial judgement is to be carefully distinguished from prejudice. Prejudice, as the word etymologically means, is a judgement already made, an opinion already formed, before the direct encounter with reality. Prejudice is closeness to

reality and addiction to unfounded opinions whereas primordial judgement is openness to reality, attention to every form of its manifestation. It is this tendency to acknowledge being that sets man in motion to assert existence finally and unconditionally in judgement. Prejudice is a kind of indifference to and even negation of reality. Primordial judgement on the contrary is man's spontaneous clinging to the revelation of being. This tendency of intellect is true by nature. In the traditional philosophy the scholastics said that the intellect is a 'necessary faculty' spontaneously giving in to the light of evidence. But, since man is free, it is still in his power to deny evidence and assert something even against evidence. This is called lie and hence detestable. To remain in prejudice against evidence is also something below the dignity of man. A great man remains faithfully open to all manifestations of reality. Metaphysics makes her students great persons keeping their minds always open to reality.

### **Human Knowledge and the Process of Abstraction**

Man knows drawing intelligibility from sensibility. How does man draw intelligibility from sensibility? This is done by a dynamic activity of the mind known as abstraction. Abstraction, as the word signifies, is a process of drawing from (ab-trahere). It is the drawing of the essence of a thing from its sensible data. Philosophically abstraction is defined as the consideration of one aspect of reality or being leaving aside other aspects unconsidered. Thus when I say 'man is a rational animal' I abstract what is common in all human beings I have encountered, but leave aside the particularities of each of them. This kind of abstraction in which the totality of the essence of a species is drawn from different individuals is known as total abstraction. Both what is abstracted and what is left aside are total. Total essence is abstracted; total individuality is left aside. Abstraction is said to be partial when it draws



only one aspect of a being. Thus in the sentence 'Rama is a good man' only the aspect of goodness is abstracted. Abstraction makes conceptualization possible. We form concept or idea of a thing by abstracting the intelligible content of that being leaving aside the particularities of the same. Such an idea or concept is called universal because it is universally valid for and applicable to all individuals of that species. Man, because he is composed of body and soul, knows by combining and separating intelligibility and sensibility. Beings that are not composed as man have their own distinctive ways of knowing. This takes us to the next section.

### **Different Ways of Knowing**

According to the nature of the knowing subject different ways of knowledge are distinguished.

#### *i. Perfect Intuitive Knowledge*

This is the knowledge by which God knows himself. Divine being knows everything in himself. Seeing himself he sees everything in himself as possible modes of participation. This profound vision of God is a perfect intuition which at the same time is a comprehensive knowledge of everything in himself.

#### *ii. Imperfect Intuitive knowledge*

This is the nature of the knowledge of the spiritual beings other than God. They have no senses nor do they need any abstraction. They see spiritual beings directly and material things indirectly.

#### *iii. Sensible Intuitive Knowledge*

This is the knowledge of animals. Devoid of intellect they do not reason nor do they go through the process of abstraction. They know things by direct sense perception.

On account of its immediacy this sensible knowledge is known as intuitive. Man, in so far as he is endowed with senses, participates also in this type of knowledge.

*iv. Rational or Sensitivo-intellectual knowledge*

This is typically the knowledge of man. Man's knowledge is known as rational because it is based on reason which includes syllogistic argumentations and a process from sensibility to intelligibility, from particularity to universality. Human knowledge always starts from sensibility and ends up in intelligibility. Therefore it is said that the proper object of human intellect is the essence of sensible things. This is equivalent to say that the intellect tends to see the invisible in the visible, the changeless in the change, the transcendent in the transient and the eternal in time.

#### **4. ATTEMPTS OF AN EAST-WEST SYNTHESIS**

Eastern and western approaches have their own characteristics and contributions. In course of time students of metaphysics will make their own synthesis of these in themselves. Every approach is to be perfected by the insights from others. This does not however mean a sort of eclecticism or gathering the good points from every thing. What is really meant is to remain in one's own approach and perfect it drawing inspiration from the other.

##### **A Method of Realization and Reflection**

East knows reality by realizing and the West by reflecting. A method of realizing and reflecting is complementary. Reflecting makes the metaphysician the contemplator of truth and realizing makes him its possessor. Truth is to be possessed as well as to be contemplated. In other words truth is to be judged objectively and incorporated into oneself subjectively. Pure judgement without personalization makes truth arid and abstract reducing it to a mere idea whereas personalization without reflection can deprive truth of its

objectivity and universality. A more perfect metaphysical approach should therefore take care of both reflection and realization, objective and subjective forms of truth.

**The Word as the Abiding Atman:**

**A Method of Indian Approach to Christian World Vision**

This book is written for students, many of whom are well conversant with Christian thinking. Christians believe in Jesus Christ as the Word who became flesh and dwelt among us. An Indian approach to Christianity is likely to understand the Word as the abiding Self (*Atman*) in human flesh, primarily in the flesh of Christ and consequently in the flesh of every man. In the biblical language the word 'flesh' stands for human nature.

India starts with the search for *Atman* (Self). *Atman* is to be discovered in the depth of one's own self. This very depth is the absolute *Atman* on whom the individual self with its psychosomatic adjuncts is founded. The individual self has to realize itself as rooted in and even as one with the absolute Self (*Atman*). In the Christian conception it is the Word who became flesh provided the ultimate foundation for all human beings. Flesh, as it is originally designed, is nothing but the expression of the Word. Christians believe that this expression was singularly manifest in Jesus Christ. Distorted though, this is also manifest in all human beings, because what was conceived in Jesus Christ from all eternity was shared to every member of humanity in time. In the fulness of time Jesus himself lived on earth with this flesh which was 'in everything like us except sin'. Therefore, as the expression contains the expressed, every human flesh contains the Word as its inner core and the ultimate centre of synthesis. Hence we say that every Christian is another Christ. The ultimate interiority of every man is the Word itself, the Word that was in the beginning and became flesh in the fullness of time. The Word is the abiding Self in every man,

**Texts :*****John 15. 4 - 5***

Abide in me and I in you.  
 As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself,  
 unless it abides in the vine,  
 neither can you, unless you abide in me.  
 I am the vine you are the branches.  
 He who abides in me and I in him,  
 he it is that bears much fruit,  
 for apart from me you can do nothing.

***John 1. 1 - 4, 14***

In the beginning was the Word,  
 and the Word was with God,  
 and the Word was God.  
 He was in the beginning with God ;  
 all things were made through him,  
 and without him not was anything made that  
 was made.  
 In him was life and the life was the light of men.  
 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us,  
 full of grace and truth ; we have beheld his glory,  
 glory as of the only son from the Father.

***Cel. I. 15- 20***

He is the image of the invisible God,  
 the first-born of all creation;  
 for in him all things were created,  
 in heaven and on earth, visible or invisible,  
 whether thrones or dominions or principalities or  
 authorities,  
 all things were created through him and for him.  
 He is before all things.  
 and in him all things hold together.  
 He is the head of the body, the church;

he is the beginning, the first-born from the dead,  
that in everything he must be pre-eminent.  
For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to  
dwell,  
and through him to reconcile to himself all things,  
whether on earth or in heaven,  
making peace by the blood of his cross.

This Word abiding in the depth of every man is to be heard, meditated upon and interiorized. Abiding in all human flesh, and thus in all human consciousness, 'he is the unseen seer, the unheard hearer, the unknown knower and the unthought thinker. He is the *Atman* within you, the inner controller, the immortal.' (*Br. Up. II. 7. 23, 20*). But how to hear the Word? The Word is to be heard in silence and solitude. In the Old Testament it is always presented as the Word of the Lord who loves you, saves you and guides you.

*Wisdom 18. 14-16*

For while gentle *silence* enveloped all things,  
and night in its swift course was half gone,  
thy all-powerful word leaped from heaven,  
from the royal throne,  
into the midst of the land that was doomed,  
a stern warrior carrying the sharp sword  
of thy authentic command, and stood  
and filled all things with death,  
and touched heaven while standing on earth,

*Lamentations 3. 26 - 30*

It is good that one should wait quietly  
for the salvation of the Lord.  
It is good for a man that he bear  
the yoke in his youth.  
Let him sit alone in *silence*  
when he has laid it on him

let him put his mouth in the dust,  
 there may yet be hope;  
 let him give his cheek to smitter,  
 and be filled with insults.

*Zacharias 3. 13*

*Be silent*, all flesh, before the Lord;  
 for he has roused himself from his holy dwelling.

In the New Testament the Word is the Wisdom of God transcending all speech and speculation, the very Spirit of God, revealed to us in Jesus Christ and abiding within us.

*1 Cor. 2. 6 - 12*

Yet among the mature we do impart wisdom,  
 although it is not a wisdom of this age  
 or of the rulers of this age,  
 who are doomed to pass away.

But we impart a sacred and a hidden wisdom of God,  
 which God decreed before ages for our glorification.  
 None of the rulers of this age understood this ;  
 for, if they had, they would not have crucified  
 the Lord of glory. But as it is written,

'What no eye has seen, nor ear heard,  
 nor the heart of men conceived,  
 what God has prepared for those who love him,'  
 God has revealed to us through his Spirit (*Atman*).  
 For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths  
 of God.

For what person knows a man's thoughts  
 except the spirit of the man which is in him?  
 Now we have received not the spirit of the world,  
 but the Spirit which is from God,  
 that we might understand the gifts bestowed on us  
 by God.

*Rom. 8. 9 - 11*

But you are not in the flesh, you are in the Spirit  
(*Atman*),

if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you.

Any one who does not have the Spirit of Christ  
does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you,  
although your bodies are dead because of sin,  
your spirits are alive because of righteousness  
(*Dharma*).

If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead  
dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the  
dead

will give life to your mortal bodies also  
through his Spirit which dwells in you.

Jesus himself, the human flesh which contained the Word  
without blemish, in whom the Word was the real and ultimate  
Self (*Atman*), during his short span of life on earth had con-  
stant recourse to silence, solitude and prayer. The flesh was  
continuously to be reminded of the Word, the consciousness  
of the Father.

*Mark 1. 35-38*

And in the morning, a great while before day,

he rose and went out to a lonely place,

and there he prayed. And Simon and those

who were with him pursued him,

and they found him and said to him,

'every one is searching for you.'

And he said to them, 'let us go on to the next towns  
that I may preach there also,

for that is why I came out.'

Though people were after him Jesus retired to a lonely place  
to pray before he started further preaching. He withdraws

from the noise and welcoming of a receiving crowd, takes refuge in silence and solitude, and then goes for further preaching.

*Luke 5. 15-16*

But so much more the report went abroad concerning him;  
and great multitude gathered to hear and to be healed of their infirmities.  
But he withdrew to the wilderness and prayed.

*Luke 6. 12-13*

In these days he went out to the mountains to pray ;  
and all night he continued in prayer to God.  
And when it was day, he called his disciples,  
and chose from them twelve whom he named apostles.

*Mathew 14. 22-23*

Then he made the disciples get into the boat  
and go before him to the other side,  
while he dismissed the crowds.  
And after he had dismissed the crowds,  
he went up on the mountains by himself to pray.  
When evening came he was there alone.

The Word is not only the abiding Atman in human flesh to be realized in silence and solitude. It is also the foundation of the Universe. 'All things were made through him and without him was not anything made that was made.' Hence the Word is being communicated also through the world. One may go out of himself and look at the world. Eventually this will take him to the same Word. While the East searches for the Word in the interior centre of human flesh, the West seeks the same Word above all creation as the transcendent foundation of the Universe.



## CHAPTER III

# SACCIDANANDA *VERSUS* ONE-TRUE-GOOD: THE TRANSCENDENTAL ATTRIBUTES OF BEING

(Approach to reality is a quest to understand the nature of being.) In this approach what we first come across is not being as such, but the different properties of being. Being is made manifest to us through its manifold qualities or properties. Certain qualities which are invariably seen, emerging from all beings, are called the transcendental qualities of being. Because these can be attributed to any being, these are also known as the transcendental attributes of being. Any attribute directly flowing from the very nature of being is a transcendental attribute. Hence the transcendental attributes are not restricted to any being, but extended to every being. Therefore a transcendental attribute, as it transcends all limitations, will be a notion that is most extensive, namely, universally applicable to all. A most extensive notion is bound to be less comprehensive because to the degree extensiveness increases, comprehensiveness decreases.

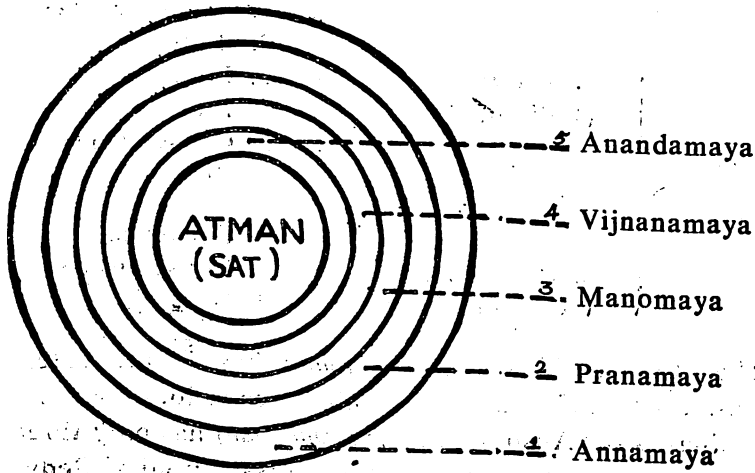
For example, the word 'being' can be considered as a most extensive notion. It can be attributed to any thing that exists. Thus it embraces the whole domain of being. However it does not say what kind of a being is in question. Any further information added to this pure notion of being contributes to the comprehensiveness of that particular entity. But to the degree, details of comprehensiveness

increase, the entity in question will be more and more singled out from the universal. Thus when I say the word 'man' the entity in question is a human being, which notion is naturally less extensive with regard to the whole domain of being, but contains more points of comprehensiveness.

← East and West have their own distinctive approaches to the transcendental properties of being. The western man analysing the entity he encounters, is very much aware of the properties of being, he objectifies, The eastern man on the contrary with his spontaneous reference to the *ātman* within, finds the embodied *ātman* characterized by different layers of self-awareness. Each layer refers to an attribute of reality within the innermost self.)

### 1. EASTERN APPROACH : ATMAN AS SAT-CIT-ANANDA

Bhrgu, the son of Varuna wanted to know *ātman* who is Brahman. He approached his father and said: "Venerable sir, teach me Brahman." To him his father said: "That, verily, from which these beings are born, that by which, when born they live, that into which, when departing they enter. That seek to know. That is Brahman." Bhrgu was earnest and determined. He practised *tapas* (austerity) in order to know this Brahman. *Tapas* was considered to be the means to the perception of Brahman (*Brahma-vijnāna-sādhana*). As a result of this austere discipline Bhrgu came to know that Brahman is matter. This was the outermost layer of Brahman. Bhrgu continued his *tapas*. He knew that Brahman is life. Steady continuation of *tapas* brought him to the further knowledge of Brahman as mind, knowledge and bliss (*Tait. Up.* III. 1. 1-6).



1. Annamayatan - Self characterized by body / world awareness
2. Pranamayatan - Self characterized by life awareness
3. Manomayatan - Self characterized by mind
4. Vijnanamayatan - Self characterized by consciousness
5. Anandamayatan - Self characterized by bliss

Bhrgu's story unveils several attributes of *ātman* which when considered as absolute is the Brahman. These attributes are different layers of consciousness in which *ātman* is both concealed and revealed. (The layers of consciousness are that of *anna* (body), *prāna* (life) *manas* (mind), *vijñāna* (consciousness) and *ānanda* (bliss). The innermost cave after the fifth layer contains *ātman* which is *sat* (pure being) by nature. Therefore along with the notion of *sat* we get six attributes of *ātman*. Of these the first three (body, life and mind) refer to *jivātman* alone. And the remaining three (existence, consciousness, bliss) belong to both *jivātman* and *paramātman*.)

<i>Atman</i>	}	1. <i>Jivātman</i> (Individual self)	}	1. Existence 2. Body 3. Life 4. Mind 5. Consciousness 6. Bliss
		2. <i>Paramātman</i> : (Absolute Self)	}	1. Existence 2. Consciousness 3. Bliss

Thus the individual self (*jivātman*) has six attributes, such as, existence, body, life, mind, consciousness and bliss, whereas the Absolute Self (*paramātman*) has only three attributes, such as existence consciousness and bliss. Body, life and mind are attributed to the Absolute Self only indirectly through the medium of the individual self. According to Sankara, even existence, consciousness and bliss are not to be considered as attributes but as essential characteristics (*svarupalakshāna*) of the Absolute Self. Whether as characteristics or attributes, these notions are predicated, both to *Jivātman* and *Paramātman*. Thus *sat* (existence), *cit* (consciousness) and *ānanda* (bliss) are seen as pertaining to the very nature of *ātman*, whether it be individual or absolute.

The *ātman* that is in the innermost core is pure being. It is simple and undivided unity. There is nothing to impede its identity with itself. Hence it is said to be one and non-dual (*ekam eva advādiyam*)

The *sat* that is in the innermost layer is itself  *jyoti* (light) and thus self-luminosity (*svayamprakāsatva*). Being (*sat*) illumined is truth (*satya*). To the extent we are related to our own inner core, to the internal centre of our being (*sat*), we are in truth (*satya*). Truth is nothing but the illumination of *sat* in our own being. The experience of *sat* in our innermost being is the supreme truth (*satyasya satya*) which is unchanging and everlasting.

Empirically, however, truth is described as lack of contradiction (*avirodha*) and non-sublatibility (*abāda*). Truth is the claim of being, which does not have a counter claim (hence *avirodha*) and by its very nature denies all possibilities of its own denial (hence *abāda*). Since it is a claim of being, it is rightly known as *vastutantram* (objective determination). Therefore to realize truth one has to conform to the objectivity of reality presented to him. This can be the being he encounters or *ātman* who abides within. When knowledge is related to the being he encounters, it is called lower knowledge (*apara-vidya*) and can be objectified. When, on the contrary, knowledge is realizing the *ātman* within, it is called higher knowledge (*para-vidya*) and refuses to be objectified. It is simply the experience of the *ātman* as the knower. It is the *cit* dimension of the *sat* which is *ātman*.

What is *sat* and *cit* will necessarily be *ānanda* (bliss). Pure identity and pure self-knowledge is pure bliss. Unbounded knowledge and absolute identity is perfect lovability and hence simply bliss. *Atman* is *sat*, *cit* and *ānanda* (being, consciousness and bliss).

## 2. THE WESTERN APPROACH : BEING AS ONE, TRUE AND GOOD

When reality is subjectively inquired into, it becomes the experience of the *ātman* as *sat*, *cit* and *ānanda*. On the contrary when reality is objectively looked at, it appears to be the knowledge of being as one, true and good. How does being appear to the one who contemplates it? First of all, any being is seen by man as a being. That is to say, it is being looked at under the aspect of its own oneness and unity. What is looked at is being understood by man. Being carries understandability. This quality of being by which being puts its claim on human intellect is known as truth. Once man knows a thing he can either love it or hate it.

This is because being appears to him as good or bad. Bad is nothing but the absence of good. Oneness, truth and goodness are the three basic aspects in which any being reveals itself to man. Therefore they came to be known as the transcendental qualities of being. Being is necessarily one, true and good.

### (1) BEING AND ONENESS

When we say being is one we do not here mean the absolute unity of all beings in one. Though the possibility of referring all these to the Supreme One is not denied, what the transcendental quality of oneness really denotes is only the internal synthesis of the being in question. Every being, whether simple or complex, has a unity in itself. This unity or internal cohesion which keeps a being as what it is, is known as the quality of oneness. Oneness is philosophically defined as that which is undivided in itself but divided or separated from others. The quality of oneness will always point to certain internal synthesis and external separation. For example, the Apostle John, the beloved disciple of Jesus, is one among the apostles. He is in himself undivided, but is distinct from all other apostles. In the same way the chosen race of Israel was *one*, though composed of many people, and as a nation was separated from all other nations. Thus, anything will be one only in this aspect of internal unity and external separation. In other words oneness positively means some fundamental quality in a being which makes it hold together in undivided unity and negatively points to the fact of its distinction from all other beings. Thus, for example, in a box of chalk each piece of chalk is one in itself, but distinct from all other pieces of chalk.

One is not the same everywhere. It can have different levels or grades. A piece of chalk has only very feeble oneness, a table has more, an animal has still more and in man still higher degree of unity or oneness is found, because, though his body is fragile, he is endowed with consciousness.

or soul which is beyond destruction. Pure spirit has still higher unity than man. In God there is the highest degree of unity because God is pure Being. He is pure existence. His essence is existence. In God there is no contradiction, no composition either in existence or in essence. So he is always the same. We call this degree of unity *simplicity*. God is the highest simplicity. God's simplicity is to be reflected in man. Such a man we call simple. He lacks duplicity. In him there is perfect synthesis of the internal and the external, of thoughts and their expressions. Such a man is loved by all, because he reflects the divine.

### **Different kinds of unity**

Man perceives unity in different ways. When we reduce different individuals to a universal concept of species or genus, it is called *logical* unity. For example, the concept of man. Man is a universal concept applicable to any human being. Unity is said to be *real* when it is realized in a concrete thing or being. A piece of chalk has its concrete or real unity of different molecules. Unity that is founded on conventional agreements or free options of different individuals is known as *moral* unity. A religious society, though composed of different members, has its moral unity because of the ideals and principles the members have accepted. The transcendental quality of oneness does not directly refer to any of this unity. It is that notion of basic unity or internal synthesis which we attribute to every being, whether logical, real or moral. Each of the above mentioned examples, such as the concept of man, the piece of chalk, the religious society, has its own internal unity and cohesion which keeps it identical with itself.

### **The Transcendental quality of oneness**

Every being in so far as it is a being is one. That is to say it is characterized by the unity of itself. A being or entity is that which has existence. The mode of existence

it receives decides its nature of unity. Therefore, the degree of unity differs in beings depending on the nature of existence they have received. The higher the unity of a being the superior the nature of its existence. However every being, whether high or low, has its own maximum or minimum degree of unity.

Being is either simple or complex. If simple, it lacks composition and therefore it is one in itself. If complex, it has parts that make it a complex being. No part of a complex being is to be considered as a separate entity when it is related to the complex whole. A class is composed of distinct beings like teacher, students, black board, chalk, benches, desks, etc. When we say 'class' all the above mentioned beings are looked upon as belonging to the same entity 'class', and not as distinct entities. So though distinct, in so far as they form one unit, they are one. Every individual unit has a distinct role, but it cannot remain distinctive as long as it is part of the whole and the whole should be capable of containing every individual unit. The greatness of a whole depends on its capacity to hold all in unity and to allow at the same time the potential distinctiveness of each individual unit. Thus, whether simple or complex, being by its very nature is one, characterized by its own internal unity and synthesis.

The judgement we make everyday with regard to being is yet another proof for this fundamental quality of oneness in every being. In the judgement "this is a flower" the verb *is* is an unifying element which unites all the multiplicity of experiences one has. Uniting all that can be seen or experienced in a flower the act of judgement tends to assert the claim of inherent unity the flower has over its own diversities. The word 'is' pronounced in every judgement is an implicit acknowledgement of the transcendental quality of oneness which every being has.



From the transcendental quality of oneness there follow the principles of identity and contradiction, and of uniformity of nature.

**i) The principle of identity and contradiction**

The transcendental quality of oneness keeps something as what it is. This itself is the principle of identity. Identity does not, however, mean unchangeability. A thing may change or evolve. But it is what it is. It is because of the principle of identity that we can rely on things and perform our actions. We naturally expect that everything will remain essentially the same, unless some external agents change them. If there is no basic unity and guarantee of the identity of being, life will be practically impossible.

The principle of contradiction is basically the same as the principle of identity, but expressed in a negative form. The principle of contradiction is formulated as follows; it is impossible for a being to be and not to be at same time in the same respect. There is contradiction when we assert and deny the same thing at the same time in the same respect; e.g., a square circle. A square cannot be at the same time a circle. But it may be possible in different times. Hence we say, the idea of a square circle is a contradiction, because one by its very nature negates the other.

**ii) The principle of uniformity of nature**

A follow up of the principle of identity and contradiction is the principle of uniformity of nature. Nature works according to the uniformity of law. This is because nature is uniform in its causality, unless something changes it. Because of the principle of identity, every being keeps to itself what it is. Hence, nature remains essentially the same. Because of the uniformity of nature the planets follow their course, seasons follow their rythm, things on earth keep their inherent qualities. People have an under-

standing of this rythm of nature. Hence, they calculate, plan and even dominate nature. Man's landing on moon is made possible because man could perceive the uniformity of nature and plan its course of action accordingly. Uniformity of nature is only a corollary to the principle of identity which again is based on the transcendental property of oneness of being.

## (2) BEING AND TRUTH

One of the most fascinating aspects of being is that from it emerges the notion of truth. Truth is nothing but the claim of reality on man. Metaphysics starts with saying 'yes' to the revelation of being. This very saying 'yes' is truth in its most primordial form. This is possible because being by its very nature is truth and demands to be acknowledged as it is. Therefore desire for truth *sathyāgrāha* becomes the value and norm of life of great men.

### Definitions of Truth

Truth is defined differently from different stand points. When our thinking corresponds to things outside we think that there is truth in our thinking. This agrees with our ordinary logic. Hence truth is *logically* defined as conformity of the intellect with the things or agreement of mind with reality outside. But logical truth does not say anything about the basic conformity the things should have to a designing intellect. The truth of their being ultimately depends on one who has conceived them and brought them into existence. Therefore truth is *ontologically* defined as the conformity of things or creatures with the divine intellect. The divine intellect is the great architect of all creation. "Everything was made by Him and without Him was not made anything that was made" (Jn 1 : 3). The beings in creation have to conform themselves to this designing intellect. It is said that the whole

universe conforms to this designing intellect. This is the rhythm of the universe. Only man, who is endowed with self-reflection, and hence free, stands in the way of this divine rhythm. As far as man is concerned this rhythm consists in the conformity of his action with his thinking and of his thinking with his own inner light. Such a norm of action pertains to the ethical or moral life of man. Hence truth is *morally* defined as the conformity of man's outward expressions with his own inner awareness. Moral truth is founded on the basic attitude of openness which metaphysics wants to foster. When this openness is manifested in man's thinking and doing, man is said to be morally true. His words and actions should conform to his thinking and his thinking to valid norms of truth.

Hence truth is

- 1. *Logical* : conformity of the intellect with the thing
- 2. *Ontological* : conformity of the thing with the divine intellect
- 3. *Moral* : conformity of thinking with words and deeds

### Presentation of the Problem of Truth

Problem of truth has been discussed by philosophers down through the centuries. Certain basic approaches and consequent stands philosophers have taken seem to have eclipsed truth sometimes. Though no system or school can claim totality of truth, the very notion of truth presupposes an intelligent mind capable of knowing being and a spiritual agent capable of transcending pure material realm of existence. Sceptics by the very fact they profess universal doubt are incapable of asserting truth of being. So also the agnostics who leave out the question of reality as something unattainable. Materialists who deny anything that is not

matter may find it practically impossible to explain the human experience of truth as a tendency to assert the invisible in the visible, to accept value judgements which are beyond the power of pure empirical experience. Truth is an inherent but invisible quality of every being. He who perceives truth rises above the level of purely material existence. In him the spirit is getting illumined.

### **The Transcendental Quality of Truth**

Metaphysics maintains that every being, in so far as it has being, is true. What it really means by this assertion is that every being, because it is endowed with existence, has a claim to be understood. This understandability, which is the claim of reality that is placed before us, is the essence of truth. Truth is therefore the agreement of the intellect to the claim of reality. This claim can be meaningfully made only to an intelligent being. The right and duty of man is to accept this claim and thus acknowledge the truth of being. We cannot say 'no' to the call of being. If we do so we become blind people, insensitive to the claim of reality. This is insincerity and therefore wrong. Existence means a claim and claim means a kind of a force emerging from being demanding our acceptance of it. Basically seen truth is nothing but the simple acceptance of the presence of reality.

Every being is a presence. Every presence is a call. Every call is a claim. Every claim is a claim of truth, if it is founded on existence. However, grade of intelligibility differs according to the grade of existence. Matter as such is not at all understandable. We have no idea about pure matter. What we understand is matter characterized by existence. The higher the existence the greater the possibility of understandability. Existence is the intelligible content which every being possesses. Human intellect, though characterized by its structural limitations, perceives

this intelligible content in every being and makes the emergence of truth possible as it says 'yes' to every hidden presence of existence.

We have already seen that the act of judgement gives us a clue to the understanding of the transcendental quality of oneness in being. The same act of judgement throws light on the truth-dimension of being as well. In every judgement man asserts being with absolute value. When I say, 'Rama is a man', I stand for the validity of the assertion I make. Even if the judgement is objectively false, as sometimes the case may be, the absoluteness of assertion obtained in judgement is an undeniable fact. Assertion of a being is possible only if it is accessible to the human intellect. The human tendency to assert being in judgement shows that being is intellectually accessible to man and thus characterized by understandability and therefore true.

### **The Principle of reason**

As from the quality of oneness there flow the principles of identity and contradiction, so from the quality of truth there emerges the principle of reason. The principle of reason says: "there is no effect without a cause" or "every effect should have an explanation." Since being is intelligible man has a right to understand it. Hence any being has to explain itself. If it is not self-explanatory, it points to another being which could explain it. The broken flower-vase on my table is a newly effected situation which needs an explanation. Several reasons may flash through my intellect, such as wind, any domestic animal or any unconscious action of my own body. The broken flower-vase points to one of these factors as an explanation for its present state of existence. Thus the effect points to a cause. The principle of reason says that every effect should take us to its cause,

and if that cause also is effected, to a further cause. Because being is true and hence understandable, this reference of effect to its own cause is natural to the claim of being. This principle once accepted, is applied in wider dimension. The whole universe with its marvellous rhythm of order is an effect which needs an explanation and thus points to an intelligent creator who has conceived it and brought it to existence.

### **The problem of error**

Absence of truth in one's mind is error. If the idea in mind does not correspond to the object outside it is said to be false. Error is possible because human assertion of truth depends on the conformity of the mind to the thing. Reality is to be ascertained as it really is and not as one fancies it to be. When we assert reality as we think it to be and not as it really is, we are in error. Therefore great men always critically analyse their thinking, persuasions and prejudices. Understanding truth is a noble right and privilege of man. But it is also a great obligation to be faithful to the revelation of being. Error exists in the mind and not in the thing affirmed or denied.

### **(3) BEING AND GOODNESS**

Goodness is the third transcendental property of being. When we see a thing we accept it as one and true. What is seen is then loved if it is found good. Only known thing could be loved. The force of love corresponds to the intensity of knowledge. For the complete explanation of a being we have to analyse that quality of being which makes it the object of our love. This we call goodness, an inherent property of every being.

Goodness cannot be properly defined. It is described as conformity of one's appetite with the thing. Appetite is



Inclination and fruition together make appetite. In the first stage of inclination we long for something and move towards a goal. Hence there is restlessness. Once we get what we long for we are happy. This is the second stage of fruition. First stage is of seeking and the second stage is of finding. In this treatise we understand appetite including both stages.

Appetite can be understood as conscious and unconscious. Conscious appetite is the appetite which follows knowledge or consciousness. Unconscious appetite is that which is in the natural rhythm of being and does not depend on a preceding knowledge. Deeply rooted in the very structure of being every being has got unconscious appetite to live, to exist. Conscious appetite is further divided into sensible and intellectual appetite, as they follow sensible or intellectual knowledge. Animals have sensible appetite and with a natural rhythm they follow their own instinct. But in man an appetite follows also intellectual knowledge and thus happens to be an elicited appetite. An elicited appetite is an appetite which expresses itself as a will or a determination to pursue a goal which is judged to be good. Thus man may opt for hardships even if it is not sensibly appealing. Sensitive appetite will take us only to sensible good. Man cannot find his perfection in possessing sensible good alone. He is called to possess intellectual and even divine dimensions of life. Accordingly man moved by his knowledge or led by the spirit elicits intellectual or spiritual appetites over and above his desires of the senses. Corrupted as they are, sometimes our sensitive appetite will force us to forgo the intellectual and spiritual dimensions of our being. This will make us live in superficial consciousness or in the outer layers of our being. India called this state of mind *avidya*, ignorance. The enlightened one follows the path of intellectual and spiritual appetites and thus brings about the fulfilment of his total personality.



The decision to live a life of complete dedication to God or to the poor is certainly the result of an elicited appetite. Thus Buddha left his royal palace because his mind thirsted for enlightenment. Meerabai refused to marry because her heart longed for Krishna. St. Francis of Assisi left his home and relatives because he opted Christ of the Gospel whom he discovered as the poor of the Lord. Great appetites took them to great decisions and great decisions made them great people. An elicited appetite, though difficult at the beginning of eliciting, can become a natural habit in man, if he keeps it alive in his heart for a long period of time. Thus for example the idea of embracing a leper was very repugnant to the natural taste of St. Francis of Assisi. But once he overcame the tension by an elicited appetite it was easy for him for the rest of his life.

The rich fool of the Gospel was fully led by lower appetites. The Lord condemned him because he lacked depth or was not conscious of his own higher appetites. The prodigal son in the first stage of his existence was totally led by sensual appetites. But when awakening came to himself he was led by intellectual and spiritual appetites. We need a well integrated and balanced state of appetite, comprising the sensual, intellectual and spiritual. Appetite, irrespective of its nature and status, is always related to good. Since man is attracted by good and any being is potentially capable of attracting man, metaphysics says that every being is good.

#### **The transcendental quality of goodness**

Every being in so far as it is a being is good. Being is good because it promises perfection to man. Promising perfection it answers the appetite of man. For example, if I want to write, the pencil placed before me promises the possibility of writing. The pencil appeals to me because I find it a useful means to realize my possibility, the possibility of writing. Thus my inclination to write is answered. Being

answers the appetite of man because by virtue of its existence it is capable of satisfying his need. In other words being agrees with the appetite of man. This nature of being which makes it agreeable to human appetite is called goodness. Therefore being is good.

The goodness which being contains and consequently the perfection which it promises vary according to the nature of its existence. Every being does not and cannot promise the same perfection. It is left to the discretion of man to choose the right perfection at the right moment. Man may make a wrong selection but this is entirely left to the responsibility of man who is free and not to the nature of being which is always good.

### **Goodness and sin**

Selection of goodness is to be understood in terms of the total goodness of man. Total goodness means the perfection and flowering of the whole man. Man, as we have already seen, is a complex entity with sensual, intellectual and spiritual appetites. Selection of goodness done by man should look into all these appetites and their proper order, rhythm and fulfilment. Selection of a momentary or apparent good discarding the total and real goodness is what we call sin. Sin is nothing but self-contradiction. Self-contradiction, because it posits and denies the self at the same time, is to be avoided. The remorse or guilt we feel in ourselves after a sinful action is the awareness of the self-contradiction that is within us. Man naturally tends to get rid of this poignant feeling of contradiction which expresses itself in repentance. Repentance is an attempt to return to authenticity eliminating the self-contradiction from within. All these could also be seen from a different angle in which we see God as the supreme goodness whose reflection we are. In this vision sin becomes separation from my own inner self which bears the image of God and thus deviation from God. What is

separated is to be reunited. Hence repentance becomes reconciliation and reunion. Since man is created as the image of God and God is the supreme good, only in the possession of God will man find his ultimate and lasting happiness.

### **Goodness and value**

Man is led by values. It is value-judgement that has made men of great decision. Goodness and value are closely inter-related. Any good perceived by man as good is a value. Therefore value always refers to a perceiving intellect. Goodness is in the thing whereas value is in the mind. However value is ultimately founded on goodness and goodness on existence. Different circumstances may make different impact of value on us. Thus for a thirsty man in a desert, a glass of water is more important than a piece of gold. This is because life is more important than the adornment of life. However circumstances alone should not be the norm of value-judgement. There are philosophers who have advocated that the norm of decision of man totally depends on the given situation. According to them what makes value is the very decision of choosing, the exercise of freedom in a given situation. This theory is known as *Situation Ethics*, the ethical counter part of Sartrean existentialism. Because situation ethics reduces value to pure subjectivity, it is not considered to be an acceptable theory.

### **Goodness and goal**

The good which I see as a value often becomes the goal of my life. Good and goal are deeply inter-related. Goal is defined as that for the sake of which something is ordained. The possession of the desired goal makes a being happy. Only that which is judged as good can become a goal. Both good and goal refer to appetite. But they differ in the sense that the goal includes the purposiveness of the subject whereas good is that which makes the

purposiveness possible. Goal is always value. But all values need not be set goals. Goal in so far as it moves us is also a cause. This is known as final cause. As the Latin dictum says *finis est bonum plenum*, goal is the fullness of goodness.

### **The principle of finality**

As from the property of oneness there arise the principles of identity and contradiction, and from that of truth the principle of reason so from the property of goodness there emerges the principle of finality. The principle of finality says that every being acts for the sake of an end. Finality is the inner orientation of every action. No action is possible without an orientation or inclination to its own inherent goal. An indifferent action is never a reality. This inherent goal-orientation is unconscious in all beings devoid of consciousness. But in man it can be consciously accepted and integrated to the rhythm of life which he wants to live.

### **The problem of evil**

We have seen that every being is good. A spontaneous question arises in our mind: if every being is good why is there evil in this world? The experience of evil is a fact. Hence the question what is evil? Though we experience evil, evil as such is not a positive entity. There is nothing which is evil. The notion of evil is always an absence rather than a presence. It is defined as the privation or negation of a necessary good. For example sight is a necessary good for man. Blindness, the negation of sight is evil. Absence of any good in any subject is not necessarily evil. Mahatma Gandhi was a prolific writer and a freedom fighter. But Gandhi was not a poet. Not to be a poet is not an evil with regard to man because all men are not necessarily called to be poets. Evil is the lack of a necessary perfection.

Evil can be either physical or moral as the absence is in the field of physical or moral perfection. Thus lack of good health is a physical evil and lack of truthfulness or sincerity is a moral evil. Though all things are good they could exist with certain privations. Things affected with privations are said to be evil. But strictly speaking evil as such, does not exist. Distorted or defective things do exist which give us the experience of evil.

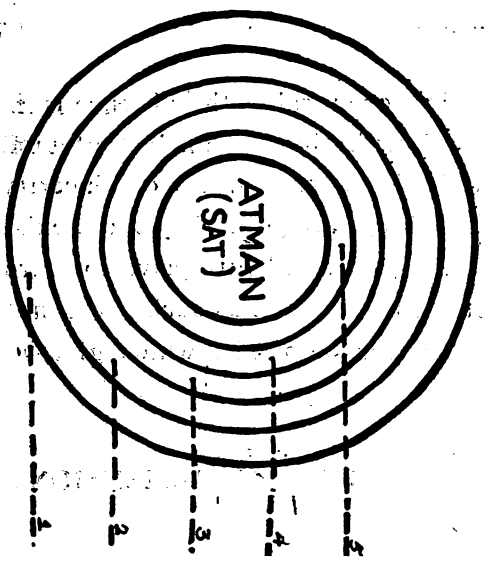
### 3. THE SUBJECTIVE AND OBJECTIVE DIMENSIONS OF THE ATTRIBUTES

*Atman* is subjectively experienced as *sat*, *cit* and *ananda* – being, consciousness and bliss. Being is objectively seen as one, true and good. Reality has both these subjective and objective dimensions. East and West are really complementary in developing the subjective and objective dimensions of being respectively.

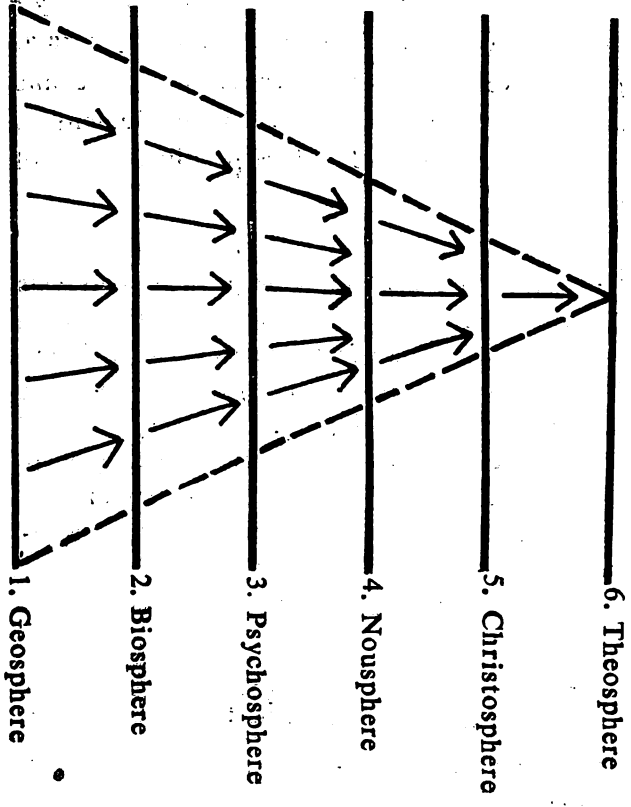
The property of oneness is the experienced synthesis as well as the established solidarity of a being. *Atman* which is surrounded by different layers of awareness is the ultimate unit of internal synthesis. Every man is called to work out this synthesis in himself, integrating all the outer layers of his being in his innermost centre which is the *atman*. This is done by *yoga*. *Yoga*, as understood in India, is primarily a spiritual discipline of integration. By practising concentration and meditation one brings about this much-aspired integration in life. *Yoga* makes man unified. The unified is said to be one and non-dual. The layers of consciousness or self-awareness through which *ātman* proceeds to his own interiority is strikingly parallel to the levels of consciousness to which man rises according to the Christian vision of Teilhard de Chardin.

The Indian vision of the inward synthesis in *Atman*.

- 1. *Annamaya*
- 2. *Prāṇamaya*
- 3. *Manomaya*
- 4. *Vijnānamaya*
- 5. *Anandamaya*



The Chardinian vision of evolving synthesis in God through Christ.



The four lower grades of consciousness are almost identical in both cases. Naturally in the Christian vision the ultimate synthesis is brought about in God through Christ. Christ, being the divine Word in whom and through whom humanity and the whole universe have been conceived, is the experienced synthesis of all, of all humanity and divinity in one. The Indian vision, though it does not speak of Christ, does stand for this cosmo-theandric synthesis to be realized in every man. The final level of this consciousness is simply bliss (*ānanda*) as it nears and unites with the divine self. Christ is the Word in whom the greatest synthesis of all creation has taken place. From the Indian standpoint what happened in Christ should take place in every man. Every man is a unit of a cosmo-theandric synthesis. Does not Christianity say that every Christian is another Christ? However Christ can be seen subjectively and objectively, as an experience in each one of us and as a fact in history. In reality Christ is both. Similarly the attribute of oneness can also be looked at as a subjective experience of man or as an objective quality of being.

What is said about the attribute of oneness is valid also about truth. Truth, subjectively experienced, is the awakening of consciousness and objectively seen it is the conformity of the mind with the thing. Naturally India speaks of Buddhahood and enlightenment while the West speaks of conformity and scientific precision. Objective truth can easily be reduced to an idea or an article of faith which one possesses. Subjective truth is the incorporation of the objective truth into the subject. It is the living of the truth rather than the proclaiming of it. Sanctity is never the academic knowledge of truth but the actual realization of truth in one's own life. For a balanced life we need truth subjectively experienced as well as objectively contemplated.

It is subjective truth that makes martyrdom possible. Once we start living the truth our very being get characterized by it. The truth becomes our life. Then to deny truth and to maintain life is impossible. One prefers to do away with life than to deny the truth which he lives. He is a martyr who testifies truth with his own life.

Recent existentialist reactions in the West show an awakened interest in the subjective dimension of truth. Thus Soren Kierkegaard considers truth as pure subjectivity. Heidegger revived the original sense of truth as *alatheia* (unveiling). Truth for Heidegger is the emergence of being from the veil of entity. This is essentially a pre-reflexive, non-objective experience of man who is drawn to beings by his inner nature of transcendence. The idea of conformity is very secondary in the Heideggerian concept of truth.

The awakened consciousness is a liberated state of existence. India speaks of *mukti* (liberation) as the goal of life, a state of ultimate unity, consciousness and bliss. *Ananda* or bliss is the result of one's own self-realization. Self-realization is discovering the authentic self liberating it from the clutches of the inauthentic desires. The third attribute is therefore *ānanda* discovered in the divine depth of one's own self. In the western tradition, on the contrary, the being is looked at as good and what is good is to be possessed. The ultimate state of happiness is the possession of all goods rather than the liberation from all desires. Quite naturally the West sets its goal as *pleroma* (fullness) of all perfections, and the East aspires for *mukti* or *nirvāna*, namely absolute unconditional transcendence. The highest *pleroma* however is to be understood as the possession of the divine which is the absolute, undivided simplicity. So also the ultimate discovery of the authentic self is the discovery of the divine simplicity in the core of one's own being. Thus in the subjective approach integration (*yogā*), awakening (*jnāna*) and liberation (*mukti*) are of paramount importance whereas in the objective approach we see unity, conformity and *pleroma* instead.



## CHAPTER IV

### BEING AND BEAUTY

Beauty is the combination of all the three transcendental qualities of being: one, true and good. Therefore beauty is also said to be transcendental. When we look at a flower what strikes us first is that it is beautiful. In the experience of beauty we find a deep synthesis of various aspects of that entity we look at. It appeals to our sensible and intellectual vision and promises fulfilment to our appetites. The beautiful contains in itself the synthesis of oneness, the intelligibility of truth and the lovability of goodness. Experience of beauty is a pre-reflexive experience of one, true and good. At the moment of admiration we see all these three qualities integrated in one which makes the being beautiful.

When we reflect over our experience of beauty we see that these three fundamental qualities split and manifest themselves as one, true and good. In beauty these three are intermingled as to give one aesthetic experience. Reflection over the beautiful takes us to the philosophical experience of the one, true and good. In the aesthetic experience there is the mixing of different aspects of the object and the melting of subject in the object. In the philosophical experience there is the separation of the subject from the object and the analysis of the different aspects of the object contemplated. Aesthetic experience demands a total blending of the sensible and intellectual vision as well as that of sensible and intellectual pleasing. When intelligibility and sensibility unite in truth and goodness we have the experience of beauty. Beauty, experienced in time, is an invitation to the dawn of perfect beauty which we have not yet experienced but are expecting to be realized in the fullness of time. This

happened in the realm of religion. In religious experience man proceeds from the finite experience of beauty to the unbounded experience of the infinite. Here vision becomes faith and appetite becomes hope and the union of the visualised and the hoped for is charity or love. We look for the day when everything and everyone will be reunited in that one in whom all these were conceived and who "is all in all". Aesthetics takes us to eschatology.

### **Beauty and Trinity**

The study of the transcendental qualities, one, true and good, though derived from the analysis of particular being, leads us to the notion of most Holy Trinity. The transcendental qualities reflect the Trinitarian nature of God. God is infinite existence which is consciousness and love. This Trinitarian dynamism of God-head is reflected as one, true and good in all creation which is his work. Every creature because it is one, true and good reveals to us indirectly the divine nature of ultimate existence which is unity, consciousness and love. The quality of oneness points to that one from whom all existence originate. The quality of truth which is the understandability of being carries us to the *Logos*, the original uttering of divine self-awareness. The quality of goodness reminds us of the ineffable love which God is. God is undivided existence, absolute self-awareness and inexhaustible love. The three attributes of being—one true and good—are only remote reflections of this Trinitarian dynamism of divine existence.

In divine dynamism we find one existence with three subsistences which are understood by Christians as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In finite beings the reflection of these three subsisting 'persons' becomes three attributes such as one, true and good. What is mysterious with regard to the Holy Trinity is the reality of three subsistences in one existence.

Three subsistences are in fact three relations or three oppositions among which the divine reality finds itself always realizing and realized. In the Christian tradition these subsisting distinctions or relations are known as persons. The word 'person' however does not denote any limitation structure but only intellectual nature attributed to the relations distinctly subsisting in one divine existence. As the three persons of the Holy Trinity subsist in one existence so in every being three transcendental qualities—one, true, and good—coexist in perfect harmony and rhythm which makes it beautiful.

(When the West understands being as one, true and good the East understands *Atman* as *sat*, *cit* and *ānanda*. *Saccidānanda* is a name used by Indian philosophers to designate the ultimate reality) The idea of *saccidānanda* might have been derived from *Taittiriya Upanishad*, Chapter I, which designates *Brahman* as *satyam*, *jnānam*, *anantam*. *Brahman* is truth, consciousness, and infinity. *Satyam* (truth) is founded on *sat* (being) and that which is *anantam* should also be *ānandam*. Therefore *satyam*, *jnānam*, *anantam brahman* can easily be designated as *saccidānanda*.

*Sat* is the ultimate ground of all existence. *Sad-eva-agra-āsīt, ekam - eva - advādyam*: in the beginning there was only being, one without a second (*Chāndogya Up. VI.2.1*). The *sat* corresponds to the notion of one, the primordial transcendent attitude of being. Every being is one because the absolute one is reflected in everything.

That which is pure *sat* is experienced as pure *cit*. *Cit* is understood as consciousness. Pure *sat* or being is by nature *svayam-prakasatva*, self luminosity. In other words it is its own self-reflection. This is known as *cit*. *Cit* as illumination of being becomes truth which is reflected in every being conceived by the absolute *cit*, the Logos, the divine self

reflection. Every being is true because the designing intelligence of divine *cit* is reflected in everything.

What is *sat* and *cit* will necessarily be *ānanda*, namely bliss. Unimpeded merger of being and consciousness is simply bliss. It is subsisting love. And out of this love proceeds the whole creation as the outpouring of its internal content known in Christian tradition as participation. Every being born of the love-dynamism of the divine existence is necessarily lovable and hence good. Every being is good because it reflects the ineffable goodness of God which is blessed simplicity and inexhaustible love.

In the history of human thinking philosophers have often attempted to lay greater emphasis on any one of these aspects of reality, sometimes even to the extinction of others. Great systems are born as philosophers approach reality through one of these aspects. Thus monism (*advaita*) and realism stress the *sat* which is one, whereas rationalism and idealism concentrate on the *cit* dimension of reality. Voluntarism and pragmatism lay greater emphasis on the *ānanda* aspect of reality which implies a will that loves and goodness that is relished. Reality, however, is *sat*, *cit* and *ānanda* which is reflected in every being as one, true and good. Since the combination of the three transcendental qualities makes the being beautiful, beauty can finally be described as reflection of Trinity in creation. God is *saccidānanda* and the reflection of *sat-cit-ānanda* in creation is one, true and good.

## CHAPTER V

### MAYA AND ANALOGY

#### THE PROBLEM OF ONE AND MANY

(Is reality one or many)? This was a problem which philosophers of different times and places faced again and again. If reality is one and non-dual how to explain the multiplicity of beings which we experience everyday? If, on the contrary, reality is multiple what about the ultimate unity of all in one? Various schools of philosophy or *darsana* developed in East and West as philosophers opted one side of these possible explanations. Thus the *Advaitins* in the East and the monists in the West held that reality is uncompromisingly one. Sankara is the champion of the *Advaita* school of *Vedānda*. He maintains that *Brahman* alone is the ultimate reality. He alone enjoys *paramārthika satya* (absolute truth). Every other being, though practically real to our everyday experience is devoid of ultimate reality and reliability. Hegel from the western tradition advocated another form of idealistic monism. He maintained that reality is idea or pure consciousness. The whole universe is only the expression of this idea struggling to realize itself through the dialectics of history and progress.

The *Samkhyans* of Indian thought and Atomists from the West maintained that reality is pluralistic by nature. The *Samkhyans* considered reality composed of two basic principles, a spiritual male principle called *Purusha* (person) and a material female principle called *Prakrti* (nature). *Samkhyans* also admitted the existence of many *Purushas* (spirits). The Atomists maintained that reality is composed of different atoms which are basic units of being from all eternity.

In between these schools of monism and pluralism there appeared a middle path of mitigated monism which acknowledges the One along with the co-existence of many. Thus Rāmanuja's *Visishtādvaita*, qualified non-dualism, acknowledges *Brahman* as reality along with the universe which is the attribute of *Brahman*. So also Thomism and Scholasticism of the West acknowledge God as the ultimate source of all beings and the world as originated from and sustained by him.

The problem of one and many was to be solved. Different schools gave different explanations. The East approached the problem with its spontaneous awareness of *Brahman* who is the *Atman* residing within. They came to the notion of *māyā*, a mystic word, which tends to explain the unsolved riddle of one and many. The western world formulated a theory of analogy which accepted the co-existence of beings in two different levels and thus attempted to solve the problem of one and many.

### 1. THE EASTERN APPROACH : *MAYA*

(From the Indian stand point exploration of the divine content is the real philosophy. Reality is pure being, fullness of all perfections and as such incomprehensible. This is known as *Brahman*. *Brahman* however did express himself in manifoldness.) Assuming name and form (*nāmarūpa*) he became all this universe. The question is the validity of this universe which is the manifestation of *Brahman*. On this issue Indian schools differ. However an explanation can still be attempted in the line of Indian thinking not committing ourselves to any of these schools.

(The key word used for explaining the manifested aspect of *Brahman* is *māyā*.) The word *māyā* has many meanings. Basically it is the manifestative power of *Brahman*. What is manifested is also said to be *māyā*. *Māyā* is therefore both the creative power of *Brahman* and the creation he has produced. In so far as *māyā* reveals *Brahman* it is a projection of

*Brahman* (*vikshēpa*). Since what is thus projected is not *Brahman* but only a *nāmarupa* (name and form) of *Brahman*, projection inevitably conceals *Brahman*. Hence *māyā* is also known as the *āvarana* (veil) of *Brahman*. *Māyā* is therefore described as *āvarana-vikshēpa*, the concealing-revealing dynamism of God. God always reveals concealingly. Therefore what is revealed is only a means to understand what is not yet revealed. *Māyā* is this divine spell, the vibration of which we see in the whole creation, in all beings which makes them real to our experience yet pointing to a reality which is beyond and boundless. That which is the beyond and boundless is one, the infinite, inexhaustible existence. The plurality of beings is understood as the expressions of that one revealing and concealing the same in all its manifestations.

Since *māyā* is *āvarana* and *vikshēpa*, concealing and revealing at the same time, it is said to be *sat* and *asat*, real and non-real. • *Māyā* is the sum total of the universe. In so far as *māyā* manifests *Brahman* and thus contains *Brahman* it is said to be real. But in so far as *māyā* conceals *Brahman* and points to that which is really real, it is said to be unreal. Therefore *māyā* is defined as *sat-asat-anirvachantya*, an indefinable complex of being and non-being. So according to the *māyā* theory *Brahman* is pure *sat*. The universe is a combination of *sat-asat*. Both *Brahman* and the universe are accepted as real but not in the same level of reality.

## 2. THE WESTERN APPROACH : ANALOGY

The word *Atman* was an ambiguous term in the history of Indian thought. This ambiguity was the main reason for the rise of different schools. Is *Atman* the Absolute Self or the individual self? Or does the individual self reflect the Absolute Self? Or should the individual self merge into the Absolute Self? What is the reality of the individual self and the universe along with the reality of the Absolute Self? All

these were problems which needed explanation. *Māyā* which accepted (*sat*) and denied (*asat*) the reality of all that is not the Absolute Self, was one way of answering the problem.

In the West the self was not a problem. The knowing subject was not the real issue. The known object was critically analysed. Naturally the word 'being' came to the forefront of philosophy as an ambiguous term. What does the word 'being' mean? It could point to the infinite or to the finite, to the creator or to the created, to spirit or to matter, to perfect or imperfect being. Hence, really the meaning of the word was ambiguous. As the East tried to solve the problem of one and many by the concept of *māyā*, the West came forward to solve the same problem with a philosophical device known as analogy. Being is analogous, said the West. Analogy says that reality or being is to be understood in two or more different levels that our predication of a word to many beings can be true though they are not identical. We predicate the word 'being' to several entities. We also know from our experience that these entities are not identical. However we hold that our predication is true and valid. Thus we say: 'Rama is a being, this flower is a being, this house is a being.' Being is used with different connotations but not with entirely alien significance. (Being is a word ambiguous by nature, undetermined in itself, the precise notion of which is to be understood from each instance of predication. This particular nature of being which keeps its basic significance but allows itself to be predicated in a variety of altered meanings, we call analogy.)

This takes us to the problem of understanding the terms we use everyday. Do we understand a term in the same sense or in an entirely different sense or in a combination of senses? It is said that a term can be understood either univocally or equivocally or analogically. Accordingly a word is said to be *univocal*, *equivocal* or *analogical*. A term is *univocal* when it is predicated to many with the same



significance. Practically there is nothing that can be univocally understood. However, universal concepts, such as abstract definitions, are said to be univocal, e.g., the concept of man as a rational animal. This concept can be univocally applied to all human beings, though the really existing man will be different from one another. When a term is predicated to many with entirely different significance it is said to be *equivocal*. There are few words in different languages which spell and sound in the same way but mean differently. Thus, for example, when I say 'I am *well*' and 'there is a *well* in my house' the word *well* is used in entirely different meanings. A term is said to be *analogical* when it is predicated to many with a significance which is partially same and partially different. Most of the words we use in our common language are analogical. Thus for example, the word *love* is a much commonly used word but understood differently in different circumstances. We have experienced the love of parents, friends and even of domestic animals. The same word 'love' is used but certainly with different significance. However the significance is not entirely different because a basic attitude of relationship is ascertained in all these examples. We may also extend the use of the word 'love' to signify God's love for us. The nature of divine love is obviously different from that of human love. However, the word 'love' is used in both cases. Love is to be understood analogically; that is to say, with a significance partially same partially different.

Analogy is a literary device which makes metaphor or comparison possible. Metaphor is the life-stream of poetry. Thus we say 'a smiling meadow' or 'a wailing nature' though neither smiling nor wailing is really present in meadow or nature. The words 'smiling' and 'wailing' are analogically understood. When we say 'his strength of mind surpasses his strength of muscles' the word 'strength' is applied to mind and muscles with a sense which agrees and disagrees.

Therefore the word 'strength' is said to be analogical. Analogy is a clue to understand the variety and multiplicity of beings, distinct in themselves, yet related to and founded on being.

Analogy is understood as analogy of attribution and proportionality. Analogy is of attribution when a term is applied to different subjects in such a way that it is predicated to one with proper meaning and to all others with a secondary meaning which is founded on their relation to the one with proper meaning. Thus the word 'healthy' is predicated to man, food, colour and medicine, in the sentences such as man is healthy, food is healthy, colour is healthy and medicine is healthy. Really health resides only in man. All other things are said to be healthy because of their relation to man as result, cause, condition etc. That to which the term is applied with proper meaning is said to be the primary analogate. Thus in the given example man is the primary analogate. Food, colour and medicine, which are said to be healthy on account of their relation to man, are called the secondary analogates.

Analogy is of proportionality when a term is predicated of several analogates to express some proportional similarity between them. For example when we say, "my dog loves me, my friend loves me, my God loves me" the word 'love' is used as an analogous term expressing realizations of love in different proportions. In the analogy of proportionality what is predicated will be intrinsically real. Analogy of proportionality is further divided into that of proper and improper proportionality. Improper proportionality is the same as metaphor in which a term is applied to the analogates not in the literal meaning. When Jesus said, "I am a good shepherd", the word 'shepherd' was attributed to Jesus, not because Jesus was actually a shepherd tending his flock, but because he was that reality to mankind which a shepherd

was to his sheep. The purpose of the metaphorical predication or of the improper proportionality is to express a genuine similarity in function or action between two different kinds of beings, though actually each subject functions according to its own true nature. Therefore in the analogy of improper proportionality or in metaphor no proportion of identical quality, cause or relation is expected. Instead a vivid and striking similarity is brought about into expression. Analogy is of proper proportionality when intrinsic similarity between analogates is expressed by a term that is applied to many though in different proportions. Many words we use describing actions of different subjects are analogical with the analogy of proper proportionality. Thus the word 'love' in the given example: my dog, my friend, my God loves me.

#### **Analogy by participation**

Of all the words, the word 'being' is the most analogous. It is the paradigm of all analogous concepts. Being speaks of existence and all that has existence is called being. Therefore the word 'being' is an analogous term with the analogy of proper proportionality declaring the intrinsic presence of existence in all its analogates. When this touch of existence in every being is referred to that fundamental source of existence from which all have participated, we come to the notion of the analogy by participation. The Supreme Being shared its existence in different levels to different creatures. This made the whole creation and everything in it characterised by the intrinsic presence of being. The notion of being thus became the underlying bond of unity embracing and enveloping the manifoldness of creation. Because this participated existence, though of different proportions, is present in all beings of creation, different words we use to express their actions also become analogous. The notion of being is the root and foundation of all analogical concepts. Since being is ultimately and

absolutely realized in God and in God alone, God is said to be the primary analogate in the analogy of attribution when applied to being. All creatures are beings in so far as they participate in the being of God. They are secondary analogates. But since all creatures really participate in the being of God in one way or other, this analogy between creator and created is also an analogy of proper proportionality. What varies is the proportion in which existence is realized in creator and creatures.

### 3. *MAYA* AND THE ANALOGY BY PARTICIPATION

St Thomas developed the notion of analogy by participation drawing inspiration from Aristotelian and Neo-Platonic Greek thought. It was Plotinus (270 A. D.) who maintained that the one who is the Absolute Good reflects in all creation in successive levels of participation. Thus the divine reflection is seen in every level of being but in different proportion of realization. This reminds us of the *Brahman* surrounded by different layers (*Kośas*) of existence. The farther the layer the lower is the presence of *Brahman*. But *Brahman* is really present also in the farthest. Thus Bhrgu came to know that *Brahman* is the universe, which represents all bodily things including his own body. *Brahman* was then seen as life, mind, consciousness and bliss respectively. Ultimately *Brahman* was seen in the innermost chamber of one's own existence. *Brahman*, remaining in the centre, yet manifesting himself in all layers and levels of existence, is the real *māyā*. *Māyā* is the appearance of *Brahman* but in non-*Brahman* forms (*nāmarupa*). Hence *māyā* assumes a variety of meanings in Indian thinking. *Māyā* points to the divine power, that internal dynamism in *Brahman*, which makes revelation possible. It is the unfolding (*vivarta*) of the reality that is *Brahman*. Thus *Brahman* becomes manifested. Since what is manifested is not *Brahman* but indication to *Brahman*, *māyā* is real only in so far as it points to *Brahman*. *Māyā* confounds human intelligence with its

semblance of reality and can lead man to a thorough misunderstanding which tempts him to accept the phenomenal as ultimately real. Therefore *māyā* is also known as the root cause of all ignorance or misapprehension of reality. *Māyā*, however, has its own conditional and non-permanent reality which is characterised by being and non-being (*sat-asat*). The *māyā*-power of *Brahman* by which one becomes many, though one alone is really real, and the *māyā*-character of the universe by which many appears to be real, though they are ultimately unreal, make the understanding of being in two different levels possible. In both levels there is being realized. But they differ greatly in the proportion in which they are realized. Both *Brahman* and *māyā* are beings. *Brahman* is pure being (*sat*) and hence really real (*satyasya satya*) and *māyā* is being with non-being (*sat-asat*). *Brahman* is the source. *Māyā* is being by the unfolding of *Brahman* (*vivarta*), a notion closely akin to being by participation.

In the modern Christian theology, creation is understood as related to the unfolding or the exteriorization of the Word in the form of human flesh and is known as the incarnational theory of creation. Of course Christians believe that the flesh the Word has become is real and will ever remain real. This does not mean that the flesh of Christ, in its pure nature, is not a combination of being and non-being. Flesh by its very nature is subject to limitation and thus is associated with non-being. Because of this reason, death, though not a necessity, was a possibility in Jesus. Since the flesh was wholly integrated in the Word and was sustained by it, the flesh of Christ could overcome death by resurrection. From the Christian point of view *māyā* would, therefore, ultimately mean the power of the Word manifested in the glory of resurrection.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE PHENOMENON OF CHANGE

Enquiry into *Atman* or being has taken us to the notion of transcendental attributes whether they be *sat*, *cit*, and *ānanda* or one, true and good. We have also seen that both these notions of *ātman* and being are ambiguous and hence are to be understood analogically. One phenomenon that we constantly encounter in our search for *ātman* or being is the fact of change. Change is an experienced reality which cannot be denied. Man experiences change within himself as well as in the world that surrounds him.

Meditation on change led him to the awareness of an underlying permanence in all impermanent tide of things. This was the eastern angle of vision. Change took man also to the mystery of the very change, namely the intrinsic combination which every change necessarily contains. Thus the western man, analysing change, came to the conclusion that every thing that changes is composed. Change however is a wonderful phenomenon calling our attention in several ways. The very idea of time in which we live is based on the notion of change. Time was classically defined as the number of movements following an order. History which man creates is the changes he brings about in course of time. Progress is change in the sense of acquiring higher or better state of existence. Evolution is change as it speaks of changed states of organic development. When change in socio-political situation is suddenly brought about we call it revolution. Thus change is an all pervading phenomenon of our life. Both the East and the West contemplated on this phenomenon of change. They have their distinctive ways of approach.

## 1. THE EASTERN APPROACH : CHANGE AND PERMANENCE

Once upon a time two students came to Prajapati to get instructions on *Atman*. One of them, Indra by name, was a representative of the *devas* (godly men) and the other, Virocana, was a representative of *asurās* (demons). Both of them were requested to live thirty two years of apprenticeship which was a test of their sincerity and constancy in search. Afterwards the first lesson was given. Prajapati asked them to fill a tub with water, put on costly garments and look into the water in the tub and see their own reflection. "One who sees his own reflection in the water or in the mirror or in other man's eye sees the *Atman*," said Prajapati. Virocana was perfectly satisfied with this theory and went away to the demon world to inform them about the new and easy doctrine of knowing *Brahman*. "The bodily self is the real self," said Virocana, "and that alone needs to be made happy." But Indra was not satisfied with this doctrine. On his way back to his heavenly dwelling he was miserably overcome by doubts. "How can this body," he thought, "which can be affected by injury and decay be the real and permanent *ātman*? That which so rapidly changes and is devoid of all lasting reliability cannot be the ultimate *Atman*." Therefore Indra returned to Prajapati. Once again he had to undergo thirty two years of apprenticeship as a preparation for the next instruction. This time *Atman* was identified with the soul in the living state. Since soul was also subject to change Indra returned to Prajapati for the third time. Indra was not satisfied with the answer now also because he could trace traits of change and non-permanence in what was presented to him as *Atman*. Lastly Prajapati imparted to him the real wisdom about *Atman* which is the unaging and deathless spirit in man, the immortal.

✓ Contemplation on change took the Indian man to see reality beyond all changes. Naturally instead of looking into the mystery of change itself he looked for the mystery that is beyond all changes. (*Atman*, the real Self, is declared to be the changeless permanent reality.) Change is to be understood as the *māyā*-power of *Atman* through which *Atman* reveals and conceals itself.

Buddha contemplated change and saw change as the root cause of *dukkhah* (suffering). Everything is changing. Nothing is permanent. Nothing is reliable. This radical unreliability of beings really made human life sorrow-bound. Therefore for Buddha change and *dukkhah* were inter-related. To overcome *dukkhah* it was necessary to overcome change. Since every mode of existence denotes change, Buddha declared *nirvāna*, the cessation of being, as the final state of overcoming change and *dukkhah* at the same time. When Buddhism tried to solve the problem of change eradicating all forms of change and thus all forms of being, Hinduism sought after that which is permanent in the impermanent sea of beings. This was declared to be the *Atman*, the Immortal, the Absolute.

## 2. WESTERN APPROACH : CHANGE AND COMPOSITION

(The western man, outgoing as he is, looks at the universe of change/ Everything in this world changes/ A flower blossoms, a plant grows and in the case of human being a child grows into adulthood, middle age, old age and finally he dies and disappears from the face of the earth. Hence the question : What is change?

Change is a transition from one state of being to another state of being. When change is applied to the internal spheres of our living change is transition from one state of



awareness to another. When applied to body change becomes transition from one form to another form. When applied to cosmos in general change manifests itself in the seasons of the year, in the movements of the planets and in all sorts of vibrations of life. Change is invariably a movement from one state of perfection to another state. (Change shows that the thing which undergoes change is in capacity to acquire a new perfection. This capacity is technically known as potency. And the perfection which it acquires is known as act. Therefore it was concluded that change presupposes the composition of two principles, act and potency, in the changing subject. Everything that changes is composed of act and potency.)

When a bud becomes a flower the potency of the flower that was preserved in the bud is realized as a new act. Bud in itself is a perfection, but it can become a flower with another mode of perfection. Thus the reality of bud is a combination of a perfection that is in the mode of bud and a possibility of becoming a flower. What is actually realized is called act and what is to be realized is called potency. Thus the phenomenon of bud blossoming into flower speaks to us the hidden truth that every bud that blossoms is a composition of act and potency. (Change shows that everything that changes is composed of act and potency.)

In the strict sense it is difficult to define an act. However act is described as any perfection, any act of being, that is in any being. Potency is the capacity to produce or to house any mode of perfection in a being. In the combination of a being act plays the role of an active agent and potency that of a passive agent. A changing thing, by the very fact it presupposes a state of potency from which it moves to a state of perfection, speaks to us a basic combination of act and potency in that being. (Since everything

except the Absolute Being is subject to change it follows that everything except God is composed of act and potency.

### Priority of Act over Potency

Act is the simplest notion of perfection to which potency is ordained. Potency as such never exists without an act. Hence logically speaking act is prior to potency. Always perfection is nobler than capacity for perfection. Since act is a perfection which already is, and potency is only a capacity for perfection which is yet to be realized, act has its supremacy over potency. All created beings are combinations of act and potency. That being which is devoid of potency should be the fullness of act which was classically known as "Pure Act". Such an act of perfection should be unlimited as it does not have any structures of limitation determined by potency. It should be only one, the unbounded perfection of all which we call God.

### Potency as the principle of limitation and multiplication

In this universe everything we see is limited. Where does limitation come from? The theory of act and potency gives us a clue to the right understanding of the limitation structure of every being. Beings are composed of act and potency, but as we have already seen, act is a simple perfection, namely simple positivity. A perfection cannot deny itself. Asserting and denying itself at the same time in the same respect will be a contradiction. However limitation which is a denial of perfection beyond its limits of realization is a reality which cannot be ignored. Since limitation cannot come from act which is perfection, it is to be concluded that the passive principle of potency which decides the mode of perfection is responsible for the limitation structure in every being. As a principle of limitation potency is a form of non-being (*asat*) and act is the reality of perfection (*sat*). Every being, except God, is a combination of being and non-being.

This universe is full of beings. The variety and the multiplicity of beings is that which strikes us when we look at the universe. Multiplicity, by the very fact it implies plurality of beings, speaks to us about limitation. If there are two entities each one is limited in so far as one excludes the other. Beings in this world are limited. The principle of limitation, as we have already seen, is potency. Since multiplication is made possible because of limitations, potency is the real cause of multiplication. Act cannot be the principle of multiplication because everything that exists in a state of multiplicity is necessarily imperfect and limited in its being. Act, as we have seen above, is a simple perfection unlimited and undivided in itself unless characterised by potency. Hence potency which determines the limits in which act is realized is the principle of multiplication.

## CHAPTER VII

### ESSENCE AND EXISTENCE

The phenomenon of change has taken us to the abiding permanence in all beings as well as to the intrinsic composition of the changing being. The abiding permanence is the *antaryāmin*, the divine indweller, who is the Supreme Atmān. Atmān who is Brahman has manifested himself through *māyā* bringing into existence this universe of variety and beauty. How did they really come to be is still a question that can be explored. To this great question the Upanishads gave this classical answer! It was by assuming names and forms (*nāmarūpa*) that the absolute Atmān brought about the multiplicity of beings. *Nāmarūpa* was the key answer to the basic forms beings received. The western man contemplating change perceived that everything is composed. What is the nature of composition that pervades all created existence? The answer was that everything that exists is a combination of an act of existence and a mode of existence. The act of existence was called "existence" and the mode of existence "essence". Hence it was concluded that every being is composed of essence and existence.

#### 1. EASTERN APPROACH: *ATMĀN* AND *NĀMARŪPA*

Nārada approached Sanatkumāra for instruction on reality. "Let me know what you already know," said his teacher Sanatkumāra. Nārada said, "I know all the Vedas, all ancient stories, all the rituals of ancestors, philosophies, sciences, astrology, philology and the science of stars and celestial beings." Nārada was really proud of his vast knowledge. But Sanatkumāra said to him, "All that you have been saying is nothing but name. Reality is not contained in any name but is that which is beyond all names" (*Chandogya Upanishad* VII, 1. 1-3).



This story gives us a clue to the understanding of the manifoldness of creation which expresses in names and forms that which is nameless and formless. Brahman is beyond all names. He can be rightly designated only as 'not this', 'not this' (*neti, neti*), says the Upanishad. However, this Brahman manifests himself in names and forms. "In the beginning was this world only Atman in the form of a purusha. He said to himself: 'I will become many'. Then assuming names and forms (*nāmarupa*) he became many."

According to the Upanishadic theory, therefore, every creature is a combination of Brahman and *nāmarupa*. Brahman is pure existence but he is limited by *nāmarupa*. *Nāma* or name stands for the essence of a thing. We give names as to distinguish one from the other. Name points to the stuff, the content and the nature of a particular thing. In other words name is a designation of particularity. The absolute is said to be nameless because it is by nature pure existence. Name is always associated with form. Form is the mode in which a particular being is realized. This form will always be a limited one. The absolute unbounded infinite existence in association with names and forms appears to be limited particular beings. Thus everything that we see here is existence combined with *nāmarupa*.

Brahman manifests himself in a variety of forms, of which two are especially mentioned in the Upanishad. "There are two forms of Brahman: the embodied and the bodyless, the mortal and the immortal, the stable and the moving, the tangible and the intangible" (*Bṛihadāranyaka Upanishad* II, 3.1). Therefore according to the Upanishadic teaching, all beings including the non-material beings, are combinations of being and *nāmarupa*. The principle of *nāmarupa* is all-extensive and reminds us of the combination of essence and existence from the western stand point.



Though *nāmarupa* does not contain Brahman, it does point to Brahman. Thus in Indian pedagogy the name of God is used as an aid to reach the nameless, as in the case of *mantrās*, and the form of God to reach the formless as in the case of *ishtadevata*: one's favourite deity of concentration.

## 2. THE WESTERN APPROACH: BEING AND THE MODES OF BEING

Every being is a composition of act of existence and mode of existence. In finite beings existence will be in a definite mode. This mode limits and determines being. Being as such is determinable and the mode is determining. The determinable factor is existence and the determining factor is essence. Hence being is said to be the composition of act of being (*actus essendi*) and its own mode of being (*modus essendi*) by which the former is determined.

Existence answers the question: Is there a being? Essence answers the question: What is that being? When I say "Rāma is", I assert the existence of Rāma. When I say "Rāma is a rational animal", I speak about the essence of Rāma. Essence and existence are two intrinsic principles deeply inter-related that one will not exist without the other. In all finite beings existence will always be combined with essence. Essence is the basic limitation structure in which existence gets realized. Existence is act and essence is potency. The doctrine of essence and existence is only an application of the principles of act and potency.

Existence is dynamic and is always in the process of realization. But it can realize itself only in the frame work of an essence, the basic determination of being. Essence is something immutable and therefore basically the same in every instance of its realization. This does not mean a being composed of essence and existence is absolutely determined as no more growth is possible. A being may grow

and express itself in different ways. Yet, constituted as it is, it will have to remain in the large framework of its own essence. Thus a baby grows into an adult and then to an old man but always remaining in the same essence of manhood. Essence keeps him basically the same whereas existence allows him to unfold himself in a variety of expressions.

In the history of philosophy philosophers have stressed the existence or essence dimension of man. Accordingly they produced a dynamic or a static image of man. If we lay emphasis on the existential aspect of man, the resultant vision of man will be dynamic. This is because existence as an act of perfection is by its very nature dynamic. On the contrary if we lay emphasis on the essence of man, the concept of man we arrive at will be a static one. This is because essence, being immutable, is bound to be the same in all its applications. Thus the idea of man (rational animal) remains the same though applied to many individuals. But the actual existence of man is different in each case. Essence is that which is common in several individuals and is obtained by the intellectual technique of abstraction. In abstraction what is common to all individuals is taken and what is personal or particular is left out. When essence speaks of what is common and universal, existence takes us to what is concrete and particular. The essence is always realized in a particular being. But existence is determined by the essence. Within the essence existence remains as a dynamic force striving to express itself more and more. When the stress on essence takes man to make universal laws and norms applicable to all men, the emphasis on existence demands freedom of expression and individual authenticity. In the static concept of man, derived from the common essence, conformity to structure becomes a great value while in the dynamic understanding of man, which is based on realizing

existence, personal fulfilment and authenticity becomes the highest value. The rational-idealistic trend of thought which determined the western philosophy up to the end of 19th century was very much essence-bound. Naturally the picture of man they produced was more static than dynamic. This basic philosophical frame was reflected in rules and regulations of political and ecclesiastical governments and power structures of that time. The existential reaction of the 20th century is a move from static to dynamic man, from the essence dimension to the existence dimension of man. Since man is a composite of essence and existence emphasis on one aspect of his being ignoring the other will not help to strike a balanced rhythm in life. He needs a happy synthesis of the essential and existential aspect of man, the static and dynamic dimensions of his being.

The phenomenon of change tells us that in every finite being there is a real distinction between essence and existence. This can be shown from the very notion of contingent being. A contingent being is a being which exists today and may not exist tomorrow. Its notion of existence does not include permanent existence. Impermanency is the very nature of a contingent being. If essence and existence were identical the idea of a contingent being would have been impossible. This is because essence is immutable and therefore is bound to remain always the same. If existence in the finite being were one with the essence the existence should remain the same as the essence. This makes contingency impossible. But the fact of contingency is an everyday experience. Therefore in every created being, since they are contingent, essence and existence are really distinguished. The fact of limitation and multiplicity also speaks to us the real distinction between essence and existence. We see things multiplied and limited. If essence and existence were one and the same neither limitation nor multiplicity would ever be possible. We have already seen that existence is a



perfection which cannot deny itself. It is limited by potency which is equivalent to essence. If essence is same as existence we rule out the source of limitation and consequently also of multiplicity. But limitation and multiplicity are undeniable experiences of man. Therefore it follows that all that is limited or multiplied is really composed of an active and a passive principle known as existence and essence.

### **Composition and the Principle of Causality**

The idea of a real composition in every finite being points to the principle of causality. If being is composed of existence and essence the question remains who has composed it. We have already seen that beings are composed. The composition speaks of an intrinsic causality which allows the being to be in that particular shape and form. But it also points to a composer who designed the form and allowed existence to be realized in that particular form. This composer plays the role of an extrinsic causality. A being, because it is finite and has a received perfection, does not explain itself. It points to the one from whom it has received the act of perfection as well as the mode of its being. The one who combined them is the great architect who designed the universe in all its forms of variety and beauty. The universe, with its multiplicity of beings which are composed, proclaims to us the existence of this intelligent composer, the principal cause of all the effects we see here. This principle by which the effect is understood and explained by the cause is known as the principle of causality which, as we have already seen, is defined so: Every effect should have a cause.

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### **3. NAMARUPA AND THE ESSENCE OF THINGS**

The eastern man looked at everything as a combination of the divine existence and *nāmarupa*. The western man looked at the same thing as a combination of existence and

essence. But even in the western tradition existence was finally considered as the participation in divine existence. The West starts with the analysis of the finite and reaches the infinite. The East starts contemplating the infinite and reaches the finite. The finite is the result of *māyā* by which the divine expresses itself in names and forms. Everything is therefore characterized by a divine touch. All is sublime. Hence it was said in the *Iśa Upanishad*: *Iso vāsyam idam sarvam*-this whole universe is enveloped by the Lord (*Is Up.1*). *Nāmarūpa* is the basic essence-structure which every being received in the process of its actualization as existence participating in the infinite source of being.

In the Christian world-view the humanity of Christ is the basic *nāmarūpa* which the Word received. The Word became flesh. Here flesh stands for the humanity of Christ. The flesh was the original design (*nāmarūpa*) of divine self-expression. What was thus designed was shared to the whole humanity. Thus every man participates in the same humanity of Christ. The humanity, thus conceived, was placed in the universe. The universe was conceived together with the flesh as its receptacle, as the outermost layer of the flesh which the Word has become. The whole universe is therefore centred on the Word who is the divine indweller in (*antaryāmin*) every being.

## CHAPTER VIII

### SUBSTANCE AND ACCIDENTS

The world of changes impresses man in several ways. It invites him to contemplate the changeless permanence abiding in all changes and to analyse the basic principles of composition which make change possible. The changing flower in my garden still invites me for further thinking and new discoveries of reality. The bud of yesterday is a blossomed flower today. Tomorrow it fades away and gets disintegrated in the earth. I perceive two kinds of changes here. The first change is that of a bud becoming a flower. The second is the flower turning to be the earth. The flower is only an enhanced expression of the bud. Basically the bud contains the flower. The difference is only of a stage of development. But the flower, when it becomes one with the earth, loses all its inherent qualities of floweriness. It changes totally and assumes the nature of an entirely different substance. Accordingly man distinguishes two kinds of changes which are called substantial and accidental change. When change is from one substance to another substance it is called a substantial change, as the change in the flower when it becomes the earth. When change is only from one level of existence to another level in the same substance it is called an accidental change, as the change of the bud to a flower. Change takes us to the notion of a kind of composition in being, namely that of substance and accident. It was in the West that a clear-cut distinction between substance and accident developed. The eastern thought had its own way of understanding substance and other categories of being.

#### 1. THE EASTERN APPROACH: *PADARTHA*-THE CATEGORIES OF BEING

It was the *Vaiśeshika* system founded by Kanada which

developed the notion of categories in the Indian thinking. We have already seen that Brahman by assuming *nāmarupa* expressed himself in a variety of forms. What has been expressed was considered to be the *māyā* of Brahman. The *māyā*-power of Brahman with the help of *nāmarupa* made categories possible. Thus all theistic systems reduce all categories of reality ultimately to *māyā* and to Brahman. *Vaiśeshika* however, at least in the initial state of its development, did not acknowledge a Brahman who is responsible for *padārtha* which alone they considered as the reality that is to be analysed and understood. *Padārtha* literally means the meaning of a word (*pada* + *artha*). Since the meaning or sense of a word is derived from the thing it represents, *padārtha* really stands for a thing in its specific nature which will always be a category of being. The East did not divide being into two main categories such as substance and accident. If at all they thought of dividing being into two basic categories, it was the imperishable and the perishable being, the changeless and the changing. The *Vaiśeshika* categories are only with regard to the changing beings. They are beings simply conceived in different modes of realization.

The *Vaiśeshika* system presents seven categories of which the last one is a later addition. Some authors present also *dik* (place) and *kāla* (time) among the *Vaiśeshika* categories. Thus we have nine categories of being. They are:

1. *Dravya* - Substance
2. *Guna* - Quality (4 in number)
3. *Samavaya* - Necessary relation, not accidental relation
4. *Karma* - Action
5. *Sāmānya* - Universality
6. *Viśeṣa* - Particularity, properties in the western thought
7. *Abhāva* - Non-existence
8. *Dik* - Place
9. *Kāla* - Time

Though Indians did not mention the names of substance and accident the idea of substance and accident was already there. *Dravya* is substance, the substratum to which actions, qualities etc. inhere. All other *padārthas* are in one way or other related to *dravya*. *Abhāva* is a special category in the Indian tradition. It is not a positive entity. It denotes the negational aspect of reality: what reality is not. Categorization is ultimately based on different modes of the realization of reality and serves the metaphysical function of classifying being and its manifold forms of appearances and the logical purpose of predicating the right word to right thing.

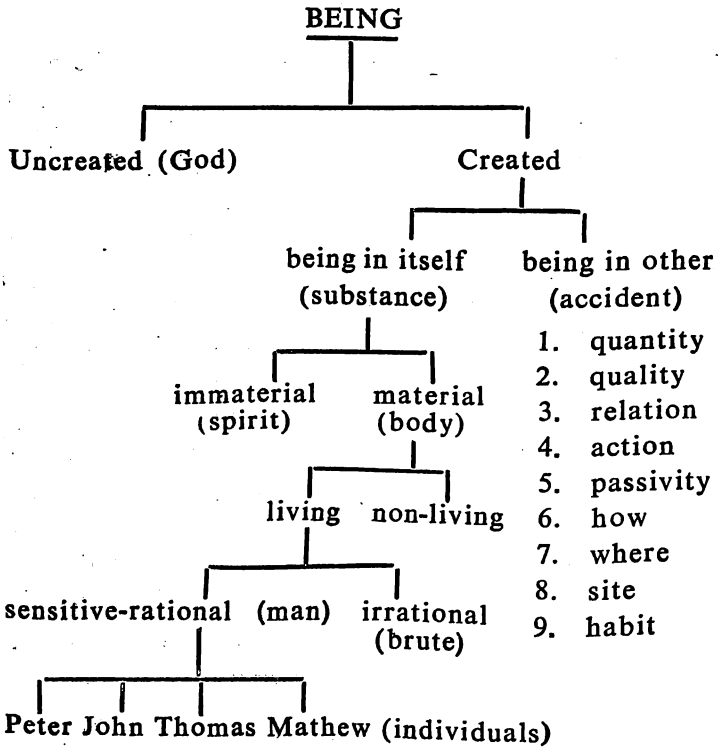
## 2. THE WESTERN APPROACH: BEING IN ITSELF AND IN ANOTHER

To the analysing mind of the western man the phenomenon of change showed something basic on which the changes take place. This substratum on which all changes ultimately depend was called substance. Substance is defined as that which has existence in itself. The word 'substance' is derived from the Latin *substare* which means "to remain beneath". Substance is that which lies beneath all changes and provides the basis for changes. Thus the flower-ness which is the substance of the flower houses the changing qualities of the flower such as colour, smell, smoothness and flavour. These changing qualities are of the flower and in the flower. They cannot remain without the substratum which is the flower. In other words they have their being not in themselves but in the flower. These qualities are called accidents. An accident is that which is bound to have existence in something else namely in a substance. The phenomenon of change tells us that everything that changes is composed of substance and accidents.

We do not have substance as such realized anywhere. Whenever it exists it will be in some definite form such as

body or spirit and will be naturally associated with several accidental qualities. Aristotle divided beings into substance and accidents based on the nature of their existence which is in itself or in the other. He further divided the accidents into nine. They are quantity, quality, relation, action, passivity, the how (*quanta*), the where (*ubi*), site and habit. These accidents are different modes, qualities, actions, relations or situations which affect the substance. None of the accidents will exist in itself. They are always found together with the substance which they modify in one or other way.

Here below is given the tree of being, realizing itself in various modes of its existence.



We come to the notion of substance and accidents from our internal and external experience. I find myself as someone who thinks, acts, and moves about. All the same I know I remain essentially the same in all my actions. Thus unchanging I that survives all through the changing action for myself is the real substance of my self and the action which I perform are accidents. They depend on myself and they are attributed to myself. Self is the substance whereas actions and affectations are accidents. In the same way when I look out I see changes outside. Change is a transition from one mode of being to another mode of being. That is to say, something that changes undergoes transition. The fact of transition presupposes that something remaining essentially the same puts on new modes of existence. That which remains although the stages of transition is called substance. The modes of existence which it allow to be, are called accidents. Everything that changes is composed of substance and accidents.

### **3. TRANSUBSTANTIATION AND THE MYSTERY OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST**

The Church has tried to explain the presence of the Lord in the Blessed Sacrament by this highly sophisticated word 'transubstantiation'. It means the changing of substance. Christians believe that Christ is wholly present in the Blessed Sacrament. The visible bread is no more considered as mere bread but that by which the Lord is made present. The how of this presence is a mystery and as such is a matter of faith. However, a philosophical attempt is made to understand the mode of this presence under the species of bread. To our sense experience it is still the ordinary bread with its natural colour, shape and taste. All these are accidents. Accidents do not normally exist without its proper substance. The accidents of bread demand the existence of the substance of bread that they may remain in it. Thus the colour, shape and taste of the bread are bound to have their

existence in the substance of the bread to which they naturally belong. But the faith of a believing Christian says the bread in the Blessed Sacrament is replaced by the body and blood of Christ. How is this replacement explained? It was suggested by St Thomas that this replacement is made possible by transubstantiation. Transubstantiation here means the change of the substance of the bread into the substance of the body and blood of Christ and the retaining of the accidents of the bread without its own proper substance. Here a question arises: How these accidents remain the same without their own proper substance? How forceful and necessary is the principle that accidents can not exist without their own corresponding substance? At least in the case of Blessed Sacrament accidents of bread do exist pointing to the presence of Christ in a very special way, not necessarily depending on the substance of the bread. This is further explained in the Thomistic tradition with the help of the notion of quantity which is the primary accident on which other accidents may rest or depend. In transubstantiation the qualities of the consecrated bread are retained on the quantity of the bread, though the substance of the bread is replaced by the substance of the body and blood of Christ. Obviously the divine intervention is called for.

Transubstantiation is an attempted explanation of the mystery of the presence of the Lord in the Eucharist. It does not mean that we explain or understand the mystery fully. The presence of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament is certainly a presence in mystery, to be contemplated and relished than to be analysed and categorized. Moreover the concept of transubstantiation demands the distinction between substance and accidents which may not be found in all philosophical traditions. Different philosophies may have different approaches to the understanding of the inexhaustible mystery of the presence of the Lord in the Blessed Sacrament.



## CHAPTER IX

### THE INDIVIDUAL AND PERSON (ATMAN AND AHAMKARA)

In the world of change, variety and beauty we see only individual beings. Some of the individuals are known to be persons. Individual existence endowed with the power of self-reflection is called a person. The contemplation of the individual beings which with their spontaneous rhythm and harmony make this universe so wonderful, takes us to the question: "What is the principle of individuation? How is this manifoldness of beauty made possible by such a richness of individual beings?" East and West had their own approaches to this basic question of individuality and person.

#### 1. EASTERN APPROACH: ATMAN AND AHAMKARA

Reality for India is Atman. Atman is also known as Brahman and *Purusha*. Everything that has come to being has to come into existence from this Atman which is Brahman. Hence all individualities should ultimately be referred to the Absolute Self which alone is the real, undeniable Self. So thought the *Vedantins*. But in order to explain the development of individuality the *Vedantins* had recourse to the *Samkhya* philosophy which developed the notion of *ahamkāra*, the individual *ego*.

School of *Samkhya* maintained a dualistic or even pluralistic theory of reality as it accepted the eternal co-existence of two ultimate principles, *prakriti* (material nature) and *purusha* (the spirit). Because *Samkhya* also stood for the multiplicity of individual *purushas* reality for *Samkhya* is said to be pluralistic. *Samkhya* holds that *prakriti* is endowed with three *gunas* (*sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*) which in their turn are the constituent elements of the things in the universe.

These *gunas* remain in their undifferentiated and unmanifested state, keeping the *gunas* in their perfect equilibrium, until the *purusha* reflects on *prakriti*. As the power of *purusha* falls on it the *prakriti* begins to evolve. Various states of modification and evolution of *prakriti* begins to take place. The first stage of manifestation is called *Mahat*, the great principle of cosmic intelligibility. With the reflection of *purusha*, *prakriti* assumes basic intelligibility. *prakriti*, as pure matter undifferentiated and unmanifested, is something unintelligible. It should assume some form and thus transcend its state of absolute equipoise that it may be understood. Once it becomes associated with *purusha* and begins to evolve, it opens up the way for individuality.

In other systems *purusha* is replaced by the Atman-Brahman reality which is pure consciousness. Reflection of *purusha* is equivalent to the unfolding of Brahman which produces the *prakriti* and remains the inner principle of it. The reflection of *purusha*, however, makes matter characterized by consciousness. Thus the great principle *mahat* is born. It is also called *buddhi*, the cosmic intelligence. Divine consciousness which is *purusha* reflected in *prakriti* (matter) is the primordial unit of *ego*, the *ahamkara*. Individuation begins with the fusion of *purusha* with *prakriti*. This primordial reflection of *purusha* (*âtman*) in a unit of *prakriti*, subject to evolution and growth and thus to the process of life, is what we call *Jiva* or *Jivâtman* (the individual self). It is in *sattva* that the *purusha* reflects. *Sattva* which with the impact of *purusha* turns out to be *buddhi* is the core of the individual self. But individuation demands also the roles of operational and material dimensions added to the unit of consciousness. This is supplied by *rajas* and *tamas*, the two other ingredients of *prakriti*. The *sattva* is responsible for intelligibility, *rajas* for activity and *tamas* for materiality. *Sattva* corresponds to existence which makes a thing intelligible. Once there is existence naturally there begins

operation. The primordial operation of any being is "to be itself". All activities rising from this basic unit of being is attributed to *rajas*, the principle of action in *prakriti*. The thing that exists becomes such and such a thing on account of *tamas* which provides its material stuff. *Tamas* stands for pure matter. The word *tamas*, which literally means darkness, designates that unintelligible stuff that is in every material being. Matter is not intelligible when it is not characterized by *sattva* which is existence. However, *sattva* and *rajas*, which are responsible for intelligibility and operation, do not make an individual unless *tamas* supplies the matter-stuff which ultimately sets the limits of the individual. Hence it could be said that the principle of individuation according to Indian philosophy is *tamas* which makes *prakriti* quantified in its process of evolution.

### Jivatman

The question of person as such does not arise in Indian philosophy. What is produced is *Jivatman*, the individual self which is reflection of *purusha* or the absolute self (*paramātman*). Associated with matter *Jiva* is equivalent to what we call person. According to *Samkhya* from *ahamkāra* there develops *manas* (mind). *Manas* is an evolute of *prakriti* where the intellectual nature of the primordial unit of *purusha* and *prakriti* is specifically manifested. By further evolution *prakriti* supplies to *manas* internal and external organs and objects appropriate to these organs. *Manas* together with its notes of individuality is responsible for the phenomenal man which we call person.

## 2. THE WESTERN APPROACH: THE INDIVIDUAL AND PERSON

This vast universe is full of individual beings. The idea of analogical participation made it clear that the infinite could share its existence to many in different forms.

But we see several individuals participating in the same basic form. Thus we see Peter, John, Thomas, all participating in the same nature of man. Hence the question: How the same species or form can be multiplied as individuals?

Every material being is constituted of matter and form. Man in so far as he has a body is also a composition of matter and form. Since we see several individuals in the same basic form which we call species this form cannot be the reason for individuation. The individuation should originate rather from that element which is particular to each individual. This is the matter-dimension that is in every man and not the reality of existence or humanity which is common to all. Of course existence participated or realized in a particular unit of matter will have its own specific characteristic notes. But the reason for individuality, which makes it possible to design the particular in a definite way is matter which makes it quantified and therefore designatable. A particular being comes to be when matter is divided into definite form in which it realizes itself. Matter is that which has parts beyond parts. This quality of matter we call extension. Extension arises from quantity which is the primary accident with which any material thing begins to exist. Quantity which is the primary accident with which any material thing begins to exist. Quantity by the very fact it includes extension is divisible. From the divisibility of the quantified matter there arises the possibility of individuation. Matter will never exist unless quantified. The so called prime matter, matter without any form, is not an actuality. Matter exists always united with form. In the actual union of matter and form, matter necessarily becomes quantified. By its very nature matter is designed to be quantified and house the form to which it is ordained. This nature of matter which quantitatively designs it for definite forms, makes individuation possible. Hence it is said that the principle of individuation is matter quantitatively designed.

**Person**

Certain individuals are endowed with reason and do follow a different pattern of behaviour. These individuals are called persons. Philosophy has tried to delve deep into the essential nature of person. Boetius defined person as "individual substance of rational nature". This definition was modified by St Thomas Aquinas as "distinct subsistence of intellectual nature". What led Boetius was the idea of human person which was an individualized substance characterized by rationality. St Thomas was not satisfied with this definition of Boetius because he wanted to apply the definition of person also to the divine persons in the Holy Trinity. In the Trinitarian dynamism persons are not individual substances. Nor are they characterized by evolving rational thinking. The divine persons are simply subsistences in one and the same existence which is its own spontaneous and total self-reflection. Its nature is more intellectual than rational. Intellectual in its oppositon to rational means the capacity to penetrate into the inner nature of things without a process of rationalization. Human reasoning proceeds from rationality to intellectuality. Hence man's knowledge can rightly be called intellectual. But divine knowledge can never be called rational. Person is, therefore, that distinct subsistence, whether divine or human, which is endowed with intellectual nature.

Intellectuality presupposes the capacity of complete self-reflection. Therefore, person is any existence capable of complete reflection. Since matter is quantified and thus extended is incapable of complete and total self-reflection. The idea of person presupposes the presence of a spirit whose essential nature is consciousness. Any spiritual subsistence with a capacity of complete reflection is of intellectual nature and therefore is a person. Person is that subject to which every action of that particular entity is referred. This is because intellectuality as a capacity of self-reflection makes person responsible for his action. Responsibility is

the ability to respond to the call of being. We have already seen that being calls us continuously and consistently. It is the privilege of man that he can respond to the call of being. This makes him a responsible person. Of all creation man alone is endowed with responsibility. This is on account of his self-reflexive character which makes him something unique in the whole nature, namely a person.

### 3. ATMAN AND PERSON

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (Jn 1: 1). This Word which St. John presents to us in the prologue of his Gospel is the person par excellence. “Everything that was made, was made by him and for him” (Jn 1: 3). This is the clue to the understanding of creation which John gives us. “In him was life and the life was the light of man” (Jn 1: 4). Mankind according to the Christian way of thinking, has received light from this eternal source of light which is the Word, the *Logos*, Consciousness par excellence. Every human being is a person in so far as he reflects this Divine person. The inner nature of consciousness is complete self-reflection. In so far as man is capable of this complete and total self-reflection he reflects the divine consciousness in himself. He becomes a person.

From the Indian stand point Atman who is Brahman is the supreme Self. He is pure consciousness. However the name ‘person’ is not attributed to God at least in some of the Indian systems. This may be to avoid confusion between the divine and human selves. Usually the word ‘person’ is used in relation to human persons and thus is characterized by structures of limitation. To designate the ultimate reality which is beyond all limitations with such a word was considered to be improper. Therefore the idea of a personal God had only an accommodated position in the system of strict *vedanta*. Thus Sankara who maintains the supreme

transcendence of the absolute accomodates a personal God (*Saguna Brahman* or *Isvara*) only in a lower level of knowledge. Rāmānuja, however, maintains that Brahman is personal because he is the one who gives *śāstrā* (instructions) for our observance. The very fact that it is given to be observed shows that the receiver also has intelligence and the power of discrimination. Hence, according to Rāmānuja both the giver and the receiver of the *śāstrās*, namely God and man, are persons.

The West defined man as rational animal and called him a person. India never called man a rational animal rather designated him as *ātman*, a word which it also used for designating God or Brahman. The definition 'rational animal' places man in the family of animals and distinguishes him from it by the gift of rationality. Rationality, of course, reflects the Divine and man becomes a person as he participates in the divine nature of self-reflection. In the Indian vision of man he was first conceived as a member of the divine family and then was distinguished from it with an additional note of possessing a body subject to life and death. Hence he was called *jivātman*. *Jivātman*, though not always called person, is certainly personal as he reflects the Divine who is pure consciousness and therefore person par excellence.

In both traditions, namely, that of the East and of the West, consciousness is the key to understand the mystery of the self or person. Person is there where there is consciousness. The Word is the supreme person because it is subsisting consciousness. Wherever there is consciousness there is the presence of a person. Consciousness, whenever it exists distinctly, becomes a person.

## CHAPTER X

### THE RELATIONAL NATURE OF REALITY

The whole universe is a network of relationship. We have the rhythmic succession of days and nights and the unbroken flow of seasons because the planets and everything associated with them keep their relations to one another. Relation is a peculiar kind of being which never exists in itself but characterizes and modifies the existence of several beings. There is relation between master and student, between father and son. The whole study of metaphysics is also founded on a relationship which the students establish with the master and the master with the students. In early Indian training of studentship in *Gurukula* this mutual relationship was of supreme importance. It is in the atmosphere of loving relationship that we accept and understand things with greater ease and comfort. Friendly relations between nations guarantee the peace of the world. Thus the reality of relations plays an important role in different spheres of our life. Hence the question: What is relation?

#### 1. EASTERN APPROACH:

##### *SAMAVAYA AND PRATITYASAMUTPADA*

India found the whole universe in a cosmic *rita* (rhythm) which was nothing but a net work of relationship founded on Brahman. Everything in the universe is moved by the power of the Imperishable in perfect order and harmony. From *rita* was later developed the notion of *Dharma* which again was founded on right relationships which man makes with things, persons and the Lord of the universe.

The *Vaiseshika* school developed the notion of *samavāya* which speaks about inseparable and eternal relations between



things. Relation is said to be the *āyutasidha* namely the inseparable character of being. There is an inseparable relation between the particular and the universal as the particular man contains in himself the universal idea of man. This is called *samavāya* relation. Such relations are eternal and transcendental. Predicamental relations always depend on foundation such as the act of teaching, laying foundation for the relationship between master and students. But once the foundation is there, relation is an inseparable reality in so far as the foundation remains sound and intact.

Buddhism in its attempt to eradicate sorrow came to a doctrine of dependent origination known as *pratītyasamutpāda*. Dependent origination, as the word signifies, is a doctrine of inherent relations between events of life. It is intimately connected with the four noble truths (*āryasatya*) of Buddhism. They are:

1. *dukkhah* : there is suffering
2. *dukkhah samudaya* : there is cause of suffering
3. *dukkhah nirodha* : there is cessation of suffering
4. *dukkhah nirodha gāmini* : there is a way leading to the cessation of suffering.

Hence according to Buddhism there is suffering in this world. Suffering is said to be the *samsāra*. But there is also cessation of suffering. Cessation of suffering is *nirvāna*. Both are only two aspects of the same reality. Everything is linked together in this empirical world as to cause the wheel of relations and of dependent origination. This dependent origination is known as *pratītyasamutpāda*. This is also known as the causal wheel of dependent origination. There are twelve links in this causal wheel. They are:

1. *avidyā* : ignorance
2. *samskāra* : impression of *karmic* forces
3. *viññāna* : initial consciousness of the embryo

4. *nāma-rupa* : psycho-physical organism
5. *ṣaṭyatna* : six sense organs including mind
6. *sparsā* : sense, object, contact
7. *vedana* : sense experience
8. *trshṇa* : thirst for sense enjoyment
9. *upadāna* : clinging to the enjoyment
10. *bhāva* : will to be born
11. *jāti* : birth or rebirth
12. *jarā-maraṇa* : old age and death

According to Buddha everything is related in this world in this order of dependent causation. From *avidya* is born *samskāra* and from *samskāra*, *viñāna* and so on. Because it is a vicious circle of an ongoing origination it is called *bhāva-chakra*. It can be destroyed only when the root cause which is ignorance is destroyed. Because things are relative and dependent on one another for their existence, as they are being caused then and there, everything is judged to be momentary. This gave rise to the theory of momentariness (*kṣaṇa-bhāṅga-vāda*). Since everything is momentary it follows that there is no permanent *ego* (*nairātmya-vāda*). There is no thing called material substance. What exists is momentary and pure relations which are ultimately unreal. Thus the original Buddhism, which came to be known as *teravāda* (the doctrine of elders), penetrated into the nature of interdependent relations in the process of human life. The denial of an underlying substance is to be understood as the desire to transcend all links of relations as well as the very fabric of relationship.

## 2. WESTERN APPROACH: RELATION AS "BEING TOWARDS"

The peculiarity of the reality of relation is that it never exists as an entity in itself. Relation is a kind of orientation which one being bears to the other. Hence it is

technically defined as "being towards" (*esse-ad*). Thus the master is related to the student and student to the master. Relation is the outgoing attitude of openness in both which becomes an orientation of the one to the other. Therefore, the fact of relationship presupposes a subject who is related, a term to whom he is related and a foundation on which this relationship is established. In the given example, master is the subject, student is the term and teaching is the foundation. Without proper foundation no relation can ever be established. The foundation can, however, be in the inner nature of things bearing inherent orientation to other beings. These are natural and spontaneous relations as in nature. Relation can also arise from new actions which becomes foundations of newly established relations. Thus the act of teaching brings about a new relationship between the master and the student.

That there are relations between the beings in this world is a truth we derive from contemplating the harmony and the rhythm of the universe. We have already seen that being is one and many. Though all entities have received existence from one and the same source, they have received it in different grades of perfection. They are different with their own individual characters. However, we find a unity and rhythm in the whole universe. Every individual being is in some way ordained to another being. This characteristic of being ordained to other beings, emerging from its very inner nature, we call relation. This relation is a reality because the beings moving in the rhythm and order of the universe are real. Hence relation is not something existing in our mind but in the things themselves. There are real relations in this world, relations between things in nature and relations to persons. The whole process of science is based on the relation which things bear to one another. Because this relation is naturally kept up there is order in the universe. Without a pre-acceptance of a basic order founded

on the ultimate identity of things no scientist can work out anything, even in the level of experimentation. Relation is ultimately related to the notion of identity and the transcendental quality of oneness.

Relations emanating from the true nature of things are to be respected and accepted. Relations, which beings bear to one another, point to the original rhythm which the Lord of the universe has designed in creation. So also relations founded on new actions of man are also to be honoured. Thus children respect and love their parents and parents their children. Students honour their masters and masters love their students. Above all, man, who is the crown of creation, finds himself related to the universe and yet above the universe in a transcendental relation to God which we call devotion.

### 3. THE COSMIC RHYTHM AND ITS RELATION TO ATMAN AND LOGOS

Brahman is the abiding Atman of the universe. As Atman he is the *antaryāmin*, the divine indweller in all beings. The cosmos which is the *māyā* of Brahman, as it is founded on Brahman, is also centred on Atman the inner soul of the whole universe. The universe moves in its eternal rhythm around the Atman in a relationship of total dependence to this eternal centre which is at the same time the transcendent source. Rhythm is the beauty of Brahman as well as the harmony of the universe. The world, together with all creatures, moves in dancing rhythm around the creator whom they magnify and by whom they are vivified. Religions in this world are attempts to restore the distorted rhythm of the universe. Restoring rhythm means re-establishing authentic and lasting relations between man and the world, man and mankind, man and God.

In the Christian vision it is the *Logos* who, becoming flesh, laid the foundation for the universe. The *Logos* is the abiding Atman, the *Antaryāmin*. The whole humanity, as it is conceived in him and shared by him, is centred around him. Since the world is designed for humanity and humanity was originally conceived in the flesh of Christ, the universe is ultimately related to and centred on the *Logos* who became flesh. The rhythm of the universe in the Christian vision is the vibrating presence of the *Logos* in everything which controls, guides and perfects the whole creation, with unblemished truth and heavenly harmony.

## APPENDIX I

# SUGGESTED READINGS

## A. TRAINING IN THE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF INDIA

*T. Manickam CMI*

### 1 Integration of Disciplines and Values of Life

It is good to have a retrospection into the cultural factors of our ancient Indian education system at least to see the contrast with our present system. The ancient Indian educational institutions were planned on the principle that they should offer the best scope for the integral development of the individual as their main concern, though it may be argued that the means adopted had not always been as sound as the ends. However, the Hindu view of life in general had been characterized by its instinctive choice of realities of a particular order, the ideal and the eternal as distinguished from the practical and the temporal, yet they are not to be floated as two irreconcilable spheres of life. Life and its value system had been conceived as one integral whole having various levels of realization, the highest of which being the final liberation of the spirit in man. According to the perception of integration of the various spheres of life of an individual in his society, the process of adjustment to the group-life was not left to chance, or to the raw impulses or instincts of the individual, or to the changing patterns of fashions and fads, but it was subjected to rigorous discipline—physical, spiritual, intellectual and psychical. In order to achieve the fine results of a disciplined adjustment of the individual an integral realization of the ideals and values of human culture as known then was

emphasized. Hence the ancient school masters of our country strove to impart to their wards a comprehensive plan of learning and realizing some of the fine values of life. They construed a scheme with the methods of sharing their forefather's experience of "revelation" by means of scriptural studies and meditation coupled with tight disciplines of character formation in view of right performance of one's duties (*dharmā*) by means of correct actions. Education in this way was a sacred *sādhana* for a sacred *sādhya* (task/goal). One needs only compare the method of primary education imparted in a *gurukula* with that of *yamā* and *niyamā*, the first two steps of *ashtānga yoga*, in order to understand their very close similarity, nay, identity. Rules of disciplining the individual for serious academic study employed in the early stages of *gurukula* life were the same as those of the spiritual discipline known as *ashtānga yoga*, of Achārya Patanjali. One could not expect a student to be an educated person unless he has learned to practise all natural and cultural values mentioned in *yamā* and *niyamā* scheme of training, such as, truthfulness (*satyam*), non-violence (*ahimsa*), non-stealing (*asteyam*), non-possessiveness (*aparigraha*) and purity of mind (*brahmacharya*)—these all are *yamā* and cleanliness (*sauca*), joyfulness (*santhosa*), asceticism (*tapas*), self-study of the sacred texts (*svādhyāya*), and meditation on God (*Iswara pranidhāna*)—as rules of *niyamā*. This scheme clearly points to the ideal I was trying to clarify here, namely, the integration of the intellectual and the spiritual dimensions of the individual in the context of his cultural and social exigencies.

Education in ancient India was not merely an information process but a transformation process. It was not a coaching for a career, to be called as a means for the livelihood. It was a matter of cultural discipline of a person who belonged to a group of enlightened people who lived and worked in a society with some common goal, such as *lokasamgraha* (welfare of the world). The ideal set

up for such a socially oriented educational programme was conceived to be a *gurukula*, a community of disciples living with a master. Education was not a mere "reading test" nor a "listening submission" nor a "correspondence course", to obtain some degree of nominal value. Intellectual training was integrally linked with spiritual realization and orientation for right and dutiful actions for the welfare of the people. This was the cultural expectation of decent education for common man. However some additional requirements were demanded for theological investigation (*brahmajijñasa*) by theologians like Sankaracharya and others. In his commentary on the *Brahmasutra*, Sankaracharya on *nityānitya vastu viveka* (discernment between the eternal and the non-eternal), *vairāgya* (detachment from the desire for rewards here and hereafter), *shadsampa* (practice of the sixfold virtue beginning with calmness) and *mumukshutva* (intense desire for spiritual liberation) as essential disciplines to be acquired anterior to theological studies. Without having these pre-requisites one shall not venture upon theological investigation; because besides being an intellectual discipline, theology itself was considered to be a *sādhanā* for the realization of the ultimate truth of life while living it. Theology in this perspective was a meditative reflection on the realities of life with reference to the ultimate concern of life itself.

Learning in India had been priced and pursued not for its own sake but for the sake of the final emancipation or liberation. It was conceived and put into action-form as a means for achieving the wholeness of human life. This integration was not conceived to be a monovalent orientation to one's own self-satisfaction, rather it had ambivalent opening to the various aims in life, all of them ultimately should subserve the attainment of the supreme enlightenment in life. This is achieved not by denying any of the dimensions of real life but by discovering in every aspect of life



the impression of the really Real. Intellectual pursuit on any frontier of knowledge, secular or sacred, should finally terminate at this finishing point which makes sense and meaning to any discipline, even to medicine and archery, music and dance, economics and politics; and hence these are all classified under the eighteen *śāstrās* of the Vedic tradition of education. In ancient Indian traditions of educations, nothing was considered to be alien that alienates a true seeker of knowledge from reaching the ultimate realization of the Truth, that enlightens everything else in proper perspective.

## 2. HOLISTIC VIEW OF LIFE AND REALITY:

Ancient Indian educational systems, as could be understood from the various *śāstric* traditions, depended heavily on the classical Indian philosophical theory of knowledge which demanded the correspondence of reality with morality. True knowledge required sequence between theory of reality and theory of morality (rules of action). The former defines the vision of life while the latter described the scheme of actions to be performed in view of achieving the goals of life. This implied the fact that true learning aimed at achieving perfect harmony between the perception of truth and the execution of it in actual life. Such a scheme took full account of the fact that life includes also death and both from the whole truth of living one's life authentically. This gives an integral vision of life as well as a sense of proportion in which the theoretical and the practical, the physical and the spiritual, the perishable and the permanent interests and values of life are clearly defined and proportionately differentiated in actual life. A Hindu philosopher or theologian, or even an ordinary believer cannot take life seriously unless he has some glimpse of the whole scheme of life with regard to its origin, mutation, and final dissolution into something whole about which he can think holistically. He would take the biological process of his life in the context

of the total life-process and in relation to the inner self of his being. Into these breadth and depths he may expand and descend by means of the contemplation on the enveloping presence of the All-pervading Reality on the one hand and by intuition into inner essence of all things in relation to the One on the other. Thus he may devote himself to a study of the most fundamental and ultimate truths of life and may not care very much for half-truths or intermediate truths. His main aim of study and thereby of life is to find out and follow consistently the proper *sādhanā* for resolving the problem of suffering and death. This requires the knowledge of the whole truth of which life and death are only parts. He perceives that it is the individual *ego* that is of the nature of the transient world that dies and not the whole or the Absolute in him. Any study especially theological studies should contribute towards the transcendence of the petty individual self and towards the realization of his integration with the totality of Reality. Individuation and all allied feelings of selfishness result from the one dimensional pursuit of objective knowledge which is discursive, which makes man more and more oriented to the analysis of matter and not to the discovery of the synthesis of matter and spirit in a unit-whole.

In general the Indian philosophical and theological traditions held that the human person (individual) is a psycho-somatic-pneumatic integral whole which comprises elements from the three spheres of reality which is described as *jīva-jagat-ātman*. The individual has to realize in himself the convergence of this tripolar reality by awakening his consciousness about the various elementary composition of his being, his inner potentiality to grow and be transformed unto the one unity and his self sufficiency for achieving inner harmony between the conflicting forces and impulses that act upon him. The rule of the harmony is the interdependence of these levels operating in man.

Indian education apparatus as operated in ancient times had two main functions: (a) to discover the human personality as a continuum rather than a contiguum of disconnected elements; (b) to make the human self the meeting point of Heaven and Earth - God and World or Spirit and Matter. With such an integral vision of the unity of reality in him man had to overcome the inhibitions caused by pure rationalization, symbolization or dramatization of his life by other external factors. Education in this sense also meant a high spiritual culture. This then proposed a more experiential approach in education than an abstract and speculative one. Sometime a tilt to subjectivity was felt more acutely even to the extent of disregarding the objective world as not that worth to be pre-occupied with except for some practical purposes. This, of course, is one of the major criticisms of interiorization. But there is another side to this issue. Emphasis on the subjectivity-factors of learning has paved the way for deeper exploration into the realms of consciousness. Such deeper leaps into the interior layers of human consciousness have revealed that the universe we live in is not confined to what is empirically given to us in mere bodily senses which man shares with his lower species of beings; man's cognitive faculties are not necessarily limited to the five senses; his mental life is not entirely bound up with or completely dependent upon what is called the cerebral mechanism or the brain. It is, therefore, considered as the main business of education to open up other avenues of knowledge, of course, through the help of the brain but beyond the sensorial limitations, more by means of intuitive awareness through the enlightening process of consciousness. Silence and meditation are two doors to enter these realms of consciousness.

### 3 HARMONY WITH NATURE

Just as intellectual training involves achieving harmony with one's own interior and exterior realms of being, so

also, it involves environmental harmony with Nature and its rhythm of successive mutations. Man learns many things from his natural *habitat*. The universe is perhaps the greatest library filled with unwritten but powerfully eloquent sources of learning. The ancient masters used numerous objects of this Nature as illustrations of great mysteries. They were converted into parables and symbols which demonstrated the hidden mysteries of highest learning and speculation. In order to learn from the Nature one should not do violence to it nor disturb the ecological balance. Instead man has to listen to the humming of the dawn and the dusk, attend to the flashing of lightning, feel the pulse of life in plants, trees, animals and human kind; he should also watch the movements of the planets, stars, and other luminaries of the sky; meditate on the abyss and expanse of the ocean, sense the thrills of the clouds, and the chills of the winds; wonder at the drops of dew, because all these realities of Nature communicate numerous messages to those who are open to listen, see, touch, taste, smell, understand and realize them patiently. The village schools and the *gurukulas*, *muttahs*, and *vidyā-peethas* of higher learning were situated on the banks of rivers in the valleys of the mountains and in the woods near the villages. In all these places man was placed for learning in the laps of Nature offering him scope to grow in response to the challenges of Nature. Alone in the woods or pastures, man gets emotive responses in the form of fear, wonder, joy or peace which all reawaken in him the consciousness of self which he would otherwise lose, if at all he had it, in the crowd of the city. Such an environmental congeniality of Nature in which an educational centre is situated, helps the students to eliminate the disharmonies and tensions of inner life by providing scope for reflection, meditation, self-integration and deeper awareness of one's conaturality with the totality of Reality which manifests in diverse forms in the Cosmic order. Actually it is such sylvan schools (*parnaśālas*) and houses of

masters (*gurukulas*) that had developed some of the fine ideals of life, noble thoughts of culture and higher perspectives of values in Indian heritage.

#### 4 GURU-SISHYA RELATIONSHIP :

A fourth ideal that made ancient Indian educational system more effective and meaningful was the intimate relationship that a teacher and student maintained between themselves. This relationship was initiated by a religio-moral ceremony called *Upanayana*, meaning "leading-near" (the teacher). This was not a registration formality as it goes in today's schools and colleges, but meant to build a relationship between two strange persons who would later become so intimately related for a common purpose namely the promotion of learning. The help of the teacher was not a superfluous one, but a necessary guidance for the student to help himself. Education was very much a transformation process, and hence very much an inter-personal affair between a teacher and a student. Experience of the Master was a source of inspiration for the student and not an imposition on him. The pupil had to work hard sometimes in utter loneliness so that he might discover himself to be in the vicinity of the Allpervading and permeating Reality of the Divine. The teacher was not a sculptor, but a model of spiritual enlightenment. The student himself was the sculptor, of his own bust to be carved out of his realization of the unity of reality. In doing so the teacher's own experience served as an inspiration as well as a model giving hope of success for the student to strive for his own set ideal of perfection and not that of the teacher. The supposition was that there is only One Reality and on harmony, that link up all towards perfection. Models of perfection, either of the teachers or of the friends (*sattirhya*), are only indicators on the way to perfection. This does not and should not suggest that the guidance of the teacher can be dispensed with. For

according to the accepted tradition only one-fourth of the entire knowledge can be obtained from the instructions of the teacher; and hence this share of the teacher's role is significant. But much more than the quantity of objective informational knowledge, the experiential and personal communication of the teacher with the pupil is of higher educative value. It implies more of a transference of realized knowledge called "wisdom" to the transparent consciousness of the pupil which becomes the *gurutva* "gift of the teacher" to the pupils of his patrimony of enlightenment which cannot be obtained from any other source. This links the pupil to the teacher's heritage of a rich patrimony of wisdom-experience that comes down from a long lineage of great masters of learning (*paramparā*).

Another factor of great significance in the process of education with the help of a teacher is the facility to hear "God-the-Word" (*Sabda Brahman*) resonated from the oral recitation of the teacher. This was so very urgent when the ancient lores of wisdom were committed to posterity mainly by oral transmission before writing became the common media of communication. Sound by itself has its own power to strike the memory much more than visualization. Even today instructions given by native primary school teachers to their little kids to read their lessons loudly early morning or in the late evening when the domestic environment is quiet is reminiscent of the ancient practice of loud recitals (*pārāyanam*) in the *gurukulas* with the help of the master who knows to articulate every word with proper accent, intonation and rhythm with the simultaneous understanding of the sense and nuances of the words, especially when there was no vowel system or diacritical marks for correct pronunciation of consonants in the early stages of classical languages like Sanskrit. The teacher almost created, as it were, the sense and meaning for the words of the texts of the Scriptures. This was indeed done in the most interpersonal and

intimate way between the teacher and the pupil, a great value of education which is now almost disappearing not only from schools and colleges but even from our Seminaries where we should have kept a few pennies in the balance sheet on the credit side of our various experimentations.

The third element worth mentioning in the value scale of *guru-sishya* relationship is the transmission of a *mantra* which is still maintained in such centres of spiritual disciplines where traditional training in *Yoga* is being imparted. The values of individual attention, personal concern and respect of the aptitudes of candidates, with deep interest in promoting the less gifted pupils with additional stimulus of personal touch are some of the interesting aspects of this method of personal coaching. The trilogy of *sravana*, *manana* and *nididhyāsana* are steps towards reaching higher consciousness not only in the spiritual plane but also in the ordinary academics of mastering any human science. The *mantra* discipline was even extended to the ancient science of archery.

## 5. SELF-STUDY OF THE SACRED SCRIPTURES (SVADHYAYA)

Education was not limited to a listening-understanding process alone. It was also *svādhyāya* (self-study). Self-study of the sacred texts and meditation thereon constituted the essence of *svādhyāya*. The efficacy of *svādhyāya* was pointed out in the *Satapatha Brāhmaṇa* (XI, 5; 6, 3) which regarded it as a form of sacrifice (*yajña*) due to God by means of which the imperishable world is gained. By self-study and meditation on the sacred Word of God one becomes calm in mind, self-reliant, content, capable of controlling senses, tranquil in attitudes, growing in intelligence and virtue and becomes a powerful person capable

of leading others. When the environment is not quiet and serene, silent reading and deep brooding over the text are the methods prescribed in *svādhyāya*. When the environment is quiet and is in the sylvan context self-audible reading followed by pondering on the meaning, and meditating over the message of the text have been found the most suitable ways of realizing the purport of the Word of God.

The necessity of self-study does not preclude that of the student to find a teacher to interpret the text to him. Mere self-reading without understanding the purport of the text was also found futile. So for the correct understanding of the meaning and message of the text the need of a teacher who should have realized meaning in his life had been very much emphasized (Cf. *Kath. Up.* ii, 8; *Mund. Up.* 1, 2, 3; *Chand. Up.* vi, 14, I-a).

## 6. METHODS OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

### a. Inquisitive Discourse (*Praśnothara*)

The art of questioning and answering was effectively employed not only in teaching but also in writing discourses on serious matters of philosophical interest. *Kena Upanishad* even adopts its name from the very question with which it starts its enquiry into the origin, constitution and end of this cosmic order. This method helps the teacher as well as the student to explore the various issues of the problem under investigation more critically and with curiosity to know more in detail and with clarity and precision. This method had been employed practically by all great masters in all known ancient cultures. The style of inquisitive dialogue was almost a literary *genre* of classical sanskrit literature. Some of the famous dialogue may be enlisted here below:

- (i) Yajñavalkya and Janaka (*Br. Up.* 1-5; 4, 3)
- (ii) Yajñavalkya and Maitreyi (*Br. Up.* 2-4)
- (iii) Yajñavalkya and Gārgya (*Br. Up.* 3-5)



- (iv) Gārgya and Ajātaśatru (*Br. Up.* 2, 1)
- (v) Uddalaka and Svetaketu (*Ch. Up.* 6)
- (vi) Asvapati and five great house-holders (*Ch. Up.* a-23)
- (vii) Janasruti and Raikva (*Ch. Up.* 4, 1-3)
- (viii) Nārada and Sanatkumāra (*Ch. Up.* 8)
- (ix) Bhṛgu and Varuna (*Tait. Up.* 3, 1-3)
- (x) Naciketas and Yama (*Ka. Up.* II)

#### b. Debate (*Samvāda*)

Conferences of elites and discussions of aspirants of knowledge were common forums of social education often organized by great teachers of certain *gurukulas*. They were in the place of modern seminars or panel discussions or party debates. Such debates, discussions, scholarly discourses and public recitals among teachers of various schools of thought swayed over the intellectual climate of this country in the past. Sri Sankaracharya's record of winning in such debates on philosophical questions have gone into our cultural history in indelible letters.

#### c. Natural Visualization

What has been stated earlier as theoretical perspectives of natural harmony was also converted into pedagogical techniques. Almost all masters of Indian pedagogy applied natural visualization as very effective technique for teaching. It may be recalled here that the pedagogy of Jesus is full of this method. Every bit of theoretical insight had been primarily drawn from the realities of the universe; and when such insights are transmitted to the disciples the master again referred back to the realities themselves and interpreted their insights using the realities as symbols. This is a pedagogical conversion of reality into a symbol and vice versa, a technique so well artistically manipulated by the ancient teachers of India for effective communication, taking into account the aptitude of students.

Continuous use of illustrations as symbols and parables, as in *Panchtantra*, *Purānas* or in *Gita*, are typical examples of the natural visualization techniques quite often employed by the teachers and commentators for facilitating the understanding of the students. The moral and religious motifs of such illustrations were easily grasped by the students. Examples are so numerous in the writing of the great teachers of the Indian classical schools of philosophy, that we need not bother to bring in an array of them here.

#### d. Illustrative Logic

Depending on the *adhikāribheda*—aptitude difference—of the aspirants of knowledge, the teachers applied illustrative logic in expounding abstract doctrines.

Proceeding from the concrete visualizations to abstract derivations the Upanishādic teachers applied a combined system of logic having the benefits of both induction and deduction. The *pancāvayavi nyāya* (inference in five propositions) is so well known in Indian Epistemology as the typical example of illustrative logic. Even in strict logical derivations which are usually abstract in nature the usefulness of illustration has been correctly understood and applied, a thing which Aristotle did not care very much in his syllogism. The system of logic best suited for pastors and spiritual guides is the *nyāya* of classical Indian philosophy and not Aristotle's deductive logic. I feel that in our Seminary training the basic courses should be initiated with a thorough grasp of the Indian system of logic and illustrative methods. They presently get only a marginal place in our curriculums as far as I could survey in many of our Indian Seminaries.

### 7. PSYCHOLOGY OF INTEGRATION AS BASIS FOR CURRICULUM PLANNING

I have argued here that in the planning of the curriculum for students in the *gurukulas* an integrated vision of life had

been proposed as a goal setting. Though the ultimate concern is spiritual realization and transcendence the masters thought it was necessary for students to know also the value-scale of other realities of this world including that of economics and politics, sex and eugenics. Hence *Arthasāstra*, *Kāmasāstra* etc., were made part of the study programme of the students. The integral approach to the value system according to the scale called *purushārthās* (value) has been the underlying force and the anticipated goal of training. So the curriculum followed in the universities like Nalanda, Taxila or in the *gurukulas* of ancient India was psychologically sound and planned in a manner to fit in the scheme of the integral vision of life and its achievements possible in this phase of life, as well as open to the future phase of life, after death. The ideal of *stītaprajña* to be achieved by a balanced way of life of renunciation as well as right enjoyment of the goodness of this world assures eternal peace also. This had been the integral ideal of education for life and the systems implied a corresponding psychology of integration of all values in life : reading, learning and work (manual and meanial), meditation, prayer and performance of one's dutiful action for the co-ordination and development of the society (*lokasamgraha*) were all conceived to be integral ingredients of a holistic approach to training of students. Some of these aspects were completely given up or even forgotten by modern systems of schooling in our country because of our inclination towards blind imitation of western impersonal patterns and uncritical continuation of the "left-over" system of the colonial times. It is high time that we try to restore and re-define our goals of training and the proper ways and means while accommodating them to our present needs of Seminary training programmes.

## B. BRAHMAN - ATMAN<sup>1</sup>

(The Ultimate Reality in the Upanishads)

A. Kalliath, CMI.

### INTRODUCTION

The Upanishadic search is for the profound Reality from which the world has its origin and on which the world is grounded. The Upanishads raised the question: What is that Reality, hidden from the senses, which remains ever changeless yet controls all the changes of the universe? What is that changeless centre of the changing world? Though that profound Reality is shrouded in mystery it is discernible to the reason, to the intuition of a probing man, of course, not exhaustively. Upanishads make a philosophical attempt to dig out that infinite, ineffable Reality from its hiddenness. Upanishads portray different profiles of the Reality viewing it from various perspectives and angles. There are two basic notions in Hindu thought regarding the ultimate Reality, namely, *Brahman* and *Atman*. Reality in its ultimacy is simply the Self (*Atman*), the Absolute (*Brahman*). As abiding awareness, it is the *Atman*. As the ultimate ground of all, it is *Brahman*. India in her search for the experience of the Ultimate oscillates between these two dimensions of the Real.

### I. BRAHMAN

#### 1. A PROBE INTO THE ETYMOLOGY OF BRAHMAN

The word '*Brahman*' is derived from the root *brh* which

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1. This article is an abstract of Radhakrishnan's view on "Ultimate Reality : Brahman-Atman" in Radhakrishnan (ed.), *The Principal Upanishads* (London : George Allen & Unwin Ltd., New York : Humanities Press, 1969), pp. 52-72.

means 'to grow', 'to burst forth'. The derivation suggests 'gushing forth', 'bubbling over', 'ceaseless growth'. Samkara derived the word *Brahman* from '*br̥haṭi*' which means 'to exceed', i. e., eternity, purity. Madhava conceived *Brahman* as the fullness of qualities (*guṇās*). In *Rg Veda*, *Brahman* is 'sacred knowledge or utterance, a hymn or incarnation' or '*vāc*' personified as the one.<sup>2</sup> Later *Brahman* is considered in different ways, to name a few, *viśva-karman*, the All-Maker, *mantra* or prayer. *Brāhman* is considered as a mysterious power when it is used as *mantra*. In the *Brāhmaṇas*, *Brahman* denotes the ritual and it is believed that those who know *Brahman* can control the universe. 'There is nothing more ancient or brighter than this *Brahman*.'<sup>3</sup> Later *Brāhman* meant wisdom or *Veda*. *Brahman* is viewed from different perspectives in Indian system. The various profiles of *Brahman* are described in the following pages.

## 2. *BRHMAN* AS THE INNER, LATENT PRINCIPLE

There is fundamental kinship between the aspiring spirit of man and the Real: the wish to know the Real. The wish to know the Real implies that we know it to some extent. It is because the Real knows itself in us. The Reality that is *Brahman*, is abiding within us as *Atman*. In fact the abiding *Brāhman* is *Atman* and the transcendent *Atman* is *Brahman*. The desire for God, the feeling that we are in an exile implies that the reality of God is within us or we are somehow in the grip of the Réal. Spiritual knowledge is the illumination of this obscure awareness of God.

This hidden God cannot be known or experienced except through his own act. It is in virtue of his working in us that we have the wish to know him. St. Anslem says: I cannot

2. *Rg Veda*, X, 125; *Atharva Veda*, IV, 30.

3. *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, X, 3. 5. 11.

seek Thee except Thou teachst me, nor find Thee except Thou revealest Thyself. 'Prayer is the witness to the spirit of the transcendent divine immanent in Man.' So the reality of *Brahman* can be affirmed only by the fact of spiritual experience. Through our religious and spiritual experience we are somehow reaching out the hidden inner principle. Upanishadic thinkers based the reality of *Brahman* on the experiential facts of the spiritual experience of man. It is through prayer and spiritual experience that we have vision, though dim and dark, about a principle, inner and latent in us, determining our external existence.

This inner principle is beyond our vision and comprehension but we can discern it. Though we cannot perceive the subtle essence of *nyagrodha* tree,<sup>4</sup> we know that it is made of the subtle essence of *nyagrodha* tree. So is this world made of the infinite *Brahman*. 'It is at the command of that Imperishable that the sun and the moon stand bound in their places ... that some rivers flow to the east from the snow-clad mountains while others flow to the west.'<sup>5</sup> *Brahman* is *satyasya satyam*, the Reality of the real, the source of all existing things.<sup>6</sup>

### 3. BRAHMAN AS THE COSMOLOGICAL PRINCIPLE

In some cosmological speculations certain naturalistic elements are considered as the mysterious principle of the reality. For example, water is considered as the source of things.<sup>7</sup> Some others think fire as the first to evolve from the Primaeval Being.<sup>8</sup>

4. *Chāndogya Upanishad*, VI, 12; *Rg Veda*, I, 164, 20; VII, 40, 5; VII, 43, 1.

5. *Bṛahad-āraṇyaka Upanishad*, III, 8, 9.

6. *Ibid.*, II, 1; V, 5, 1.

7. *Ibid.*, V, 5, 1.

8. *Chāndogya Upanishad*, IV, 3, 1-2.

The Upanishads conceive the earliest state of the material world as one of extension in space. The characteristic feature of this extended space is the vibration of the sound. From *ākāśa vāyu*, air arises. The interaction of the vibrations leads to the next modification. The third modification arises, it is *tejas* and its manifestations are light and heat. The denser form, water is produced. And a further cohesion took place and earth was formed. All physical objects are formed out of these five elements, *vāyu* (air), sound, light, water and earth.

#### 4. BRAHMAN AS INTERIORITY

In the *Taittirīya Upanishad* we see a pupil asking about the nature of *Brahman*, to his father.<sup>9</sup> The answer is given: "That from which these things are born, that in which when born, they live, and that into which they enter at their death is *Brahman*." The son could not find *anna* (matter) or *prāṇa* (life) or *manas* (consciousness) or *vijñāna* (intellectual consciousness) as the basic principle because they all contain duality and are under the forces of change and discords. Finally, after pondering over the issue for years he arrives at the truth of that spiritual freedom or delight (*ānanda*) which is the ultimate reality.

Here at *ānanda* his search ends not because that his doubts are answered but because his doubts are stilled by the vision of self-evident-Reality. Leaving behind all lower forms, discursive reason, now he contemplates the One and is lost in ecstasy. He comes to the conclusion that absolute Reality is *satyam* (truth), *jñānam* (consciousness) and *anantam* (infinity).

#### 5. BRAHMA AS THE EVOLUTIONARY PRINCIPLE

World is not to be viewed as an automatic development

9. *Taittirīya Upanishad*, III.

without any intelligent course or without an intelligible aim. Matter, life, mind, intelligence etc. are different forms of existence with their distinctive features and modes of actions. They are not derived from each other. It is not a material principle but a life principle which uses condition of matter for the production of life. In this sense matter aspires for life, life aspiring for mind and in turn mind aspiring for intelligence.

The nature is working according to the fundamental intention. Nature is only an instrument of the Supreme Being. The world is not merely the result of the meaningless chance. It has been worked out through ages. Matter cannot rise above by itself to a level above its level, say, life. It moves to a higher level by the help of the higher principle. Lower is the material for the higher, like life is the matter for mind, form for physical material. So also, the intellect is form for the mind and matter for the spirit. Thinking in this line, eternal is the origin of the actual. We cannot miss the primordality of the Supreme. "Verily, in the beginning, this world was *Brahman*."<sup>10</sup> This *Brahman* is perpetually active in the world in its evolutionary process as the inner principle.

## 6 BRAHMAN AS THE GROUND OF UNITY

The Upanishads say that everything in the world depends on *Brahman* and every existence aspires to *Brahman*. *Brahman* is the source of all things, the intellectual principle, the perceiving mind. It is the principle which unifies the hierarchy of beings. The ordered development of progressive evolution is in virtue of the divine principle at work in the universe.

Cosmic process is in a flux, is patterned on a duality which is perpetually in conflict, between perfect order of

<sup>10</sup>. *Brahad-āraṇyaka Upanishad*, I, 4, 10-11; *Maitrī*, VI, 17.



heaven and chaos of dark waters. The conflict will run through the empirical world till the cosmos climaxes in the Divine which is the abode of unity and harmony. When the union between the controlling spirit and manifesting matter is completed, evolution finds its realization, the revelation of the spirit is accomplished. "The earth is the foot-hold of God, the mother of all creatures whose father is heaven." The conflict in the cosmic process is not final because heaven and earth, God and matter, have the same origins. So *Brahman* is the centre of unity where the whole reality is integrated and unified.

## 7. BRAHMAN AND SELF-MANIFESTATION

The primal being spontaneously produces the primordial God (*Hiraṇya-garbha*) as the first born of the divine order, the golden germ of the world, "who was the first seed resting on the navel of the unborn."<sup>11</sup> *Hiraṇya-garbha*, the world soul, expresses his spirit through the environment. He manifests the forms contained in himself. The world is fixed in him as the spokes in the hub of a wheel. He is the thread *śutrātman*, on which all beings and all world are strung like the beads of a necklace. He is the first born, *prathama-ja*. He is called *Brahma* and the created world is called *Brahmās*.

In the *Rg Veda*, *Hiraṇya-garbha* is the golden germ which is the result of the first action of the creator. In the *Sāmkhya* the *prakṛti* is treated as unconscious, the first product of development as 'mahat', the great one or *buddhi* or the intellect. It is the development of 'cosmic intelligence' or *Hiraṇya-garbha*.

On the subjective level *buddhi* is the first element of *liṅga* or subtle body. *Buddhi* is the basis of the principle of individuation, *ahamkāra*. From *ahamkāra* evolve mind and

11. *Rg Vedā*, X, 121, 1.

the ten sense organs. *Sattva* is *buddhi*, the innermost core, the outer being *rajas* and *tamas* which are identified with *ahankāra* and *manas*.

*Sattva* or *buddhi* is *bija*, the seed of the living individual. *Sattva* or *linga* is called ego, the *jīva*. As the *buddhi* is the *sūtrātman* of the individual so is *Hiraṇya-garbha*, the *sūtrātman*, the thread-controller of the world.

In the *Kaṭha* Upanishad, *Hiraṇya-garbha*, the world-soul, is the first product of a non-being influenced by the Eternal Spirit, *Īśvara*. The *Puruṣa* of *Sāṃkhya* system is the Eternal Spirit made many. *Hiraṇya-garbha* is the great self, *Mahān-ātmā* rising from the undiscriminated, the *avyakta*, which corresponds to the *prakṛti* of *Sāṃkhya*. So Supreme Self, the Absolute, is the eternal subject observing the eternal object, *prakṛti*. The great self is the first product of the interaction between eternal subject and eternal object. The Supreme Lord, *Īśvara* outlasts the drama of the universe. Sankara opens his commentary on the *Bhagavath Gītā* with this verse: "Nārāyaṇa is beyond the unmanifest. The golden egg is produced from the manifest. The earth with its seven islands and all other worlds are in the egg." The names and forms of the world are latent in the egg, as the future tree is in the seed.

Radhakrishnan says: "*Hiraṇya-garbha* answers to the Logos, the Word of Western thought. For Plato, the Logos was the archetypal idea. For the Stoics it is the principle of reason which quickens and informs matter. Philo speaks of the Divine Logos as the 'first born son', 'archetypal man', 'image of God', 'through whom the world was created.'"<sup>12</sup>

The world and its controlling spirit are the manifestations of the Absolute. Now what is the relationship between

12. Radhakrishnan, *The Principal Upanishads*, *op. cit.*, pp. 61-62.

the world and the Supreme Lord? Between the world-soul and the world there is a relation and interdependency. But no such relation is possible between the Supreme Lord and the world because that would be to subject the infinite to finite. However, this relationship can be considered as that of an 'accident'. The word 'accident' involves two things:

- i. The Divine creativity is not bound up with this world. The changes taking place in the world would not affect the integrity of the Supreme Lord.
- ii. The world is an accidental expression of the Divine Principle.

Creation is a free expression of the Divine mind, *icchā-mātram*. The world is the manifestation of *Hiraṇya-garbhā* and creation of *Īśvara*. The Absolute which is the abode of immense possibilities decided to express one of its possibilities. The power of manifestation is not something outside to the infinite being; it is very much inherent in it. This power of manifestation known as *māyā* may be active or inactive. Thus we get the conception of the Absolute as *Brahman-Īśvara* where the first term indicates infinite being and the second suggests creative freedom.

Why does this Absolute Brahman, perfect and infinite, move out into the world? It is not compelled to do so though it may have the potentiality. It is free to move or not to move, throw itself into forms or remain formless. It is his free choice. Hence it is known as *līlā*, the game of *Brahman*.

## 8. ISVARA—THE CREATIVE PRINCIPLE OF BRAHMAN

There are two elements in *Īśvara*, the creative principle in *Brahman*: (i) wisdom (*śiva*) (ii) power (*śakti*). By *śakti*, the unmeasured and immeasurable Supreme reality

becomes measured and defined. Immutable being becomes infinite fecundity.

Between the Absolute and the world-soul is the Creative consciousness. It is the *prajñāna-ghana* or truth consciousness. If *sat* denoted the primordial being in its undifferentiated unity, *satya* is the same being immanent in its differentiations. If the Absolute is pure unity without any extension or variation God or *Īsvara* is the creative power by which the world springs into existence. Absolute has moved out of its primal poise and become knowledge or will. If Absolute is spaceless and timeless potentiality, *Īsvara* or God is the vast self-awareness, comprehending and apprehending every possibility. The Supra-cosmic silence and cosmic integration are both real. The two, *nirguṇa* and *saḡuṇa brahman*, Absolute and God, are not different.

### 9. BRAHMAN

*Brahman* is not an empty featureless reality. The *Svetāśvatara Upanishad* says: *Brahman* is beast, bird and insect, the tottering old man, boy/girl. *Brahman* sustains the world and is the inner core of each individual man. Supra-cosmic transcendence and cosmic universality are both the real phases of the One Supreme. The former is not dependent on the manifold universe but works as the principle of the manifold. The two *nirguṇa* and *saḡuṇa Brahman*, the Absolute and God are not different but perceived from two perspectives.

### 10. BRAHMAN : BEYOND PREDICATION

The Divine is beyond human imagination and human predication. The attribution of human qualities which are derived from time-space dimensions cannot describe the Divine which is of different order. However, we view the divine from different perspectives, namely, the Absolute, God as creative power, God immanent in this world, These

are not separate entities, they are separate only in our perception and view point. We conceive the Divine in tune with the logical way of thinking. First the Absolute must be there with all its possibilities before the Divine Creativity. The Divine choice must be there, before there can be the Divine immanent in this world. This is only a logical succession not a temporal one. The world-spirit must be there before the existence of the world. Logically we can see four poises of reality:

- i. The Absolute, *Brahman*
- ii. The Creative Spirit, *Īsvara*
- iii. The World-Spirit, *Hiraṇya-garbha*
- iv. The world.

This is how the Supreme is interpreted in Hindu thought. *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣhad* says *Brahman* is four-footed, *catus pat*. Its four principles are *Brahman*, *Īsvara*, *Hiraṇya-garbha* and *Virāj*.

*Brahman* is conceived as a nest in *Taittirīya Upaniṣhad*. Three birds emerged from the nest—*Virāj*, *Hiraṇya-garbha* and *Īsvara*. The Absolute, conceived as it is in itself, is beyond and independent of creation. *Virāj* is the universe, manifested of *Brahman*. *Hiraṇya-garbha* is the spirit of God moving everywhere in the universe. When it is thought of as God who is creating, protecting and destroying the universe, it is called *Īsvara*. *Īsvara* becomes *Brahma*, *Viṣṇu* and *Siva*.

The sum total of these four are not the Absolute. The Real is ineffable, indefinable and indivisible. They are definable and divisible only in appearance, in human articulation. The Absolute being is not an object of thought. It is beyond space and time. It can be conceived only negatively or analogically. Mind is limited by space and time, cannot contain a reality which is beyond time and space. So mind cannot conceive the Divine in its fullness,

Sankara in his *Brahma Sūtra* says of how to conceive *Brahman*: Bāṣkali asked Bhāva to expound the nature. *Bhāva* kept silence. He prayed: 'teach me, sir'. The teacher was silent and when addressed a second and a third time he said: 'I am teaching but you do not follow. The self is silence.'

We can more genuinely say of God in negative terms than in positive articulations. Plotinus says: "We say what he is not, we cannot say what he is." Absolute is beyond predication. It is *śūnnyatā* for the Buddhists. "It is 'not gross, not subtle, not short, not long, not glowing, not shadowy, not dark, not attached, flavourless, smell-less, eye-less, ear-less, speech-less, mind-less, breath-less, mouth-less, not internal, not external, consuming nothing and consumed by nothing.'" <sup>13</sup> It cannot be designated. Any predication would make the Divine one among things and make it something. Divine is non-dual, *advaita*. It does not mean that Absolute is nothingness. But it indicates the ineffability of the Divine. It means only that the Absolute is all inclusive and nothing exists outside it.

The negative way of describing God does not mean that God is non-entity. Absolute is described as 'full both of light and non-light, of desire and non-desire, of anger and no-anger, of law and of no-law, having verily filled all both the near and the far off, the this and the that.' Negative and positive characterisations are given to affirm the positivity of being.

When we say, Divine cannot be defined it does not mean it has no essential nature of its own. It cannot be defined by the categories of accidental features which do not belong to essence. There is nothing outside it. However, its essential nature (*svarūpa*) is said to be *sat* (being), *cit* (consciousness) and *ānanda* (bliss). There are different

13. *Brahad-āraṇyaka Upanishad*, II, 8, 8.

profiles of one and the same reality. Self-being, Self-consciousness and Self-delight are one.'

*Brahman* in itself and *Brahman* in the universe, the transcendent beyond manifestation and the transcendent in manifestation, the indeterminate and the determinate, *nirguṇo* and *guṇi* are like two sides of one reality.

## II. ATMAN.

### 1. THE ETYMOLOGICAL MEANING OF ATMAN

The etymological origin of the word 'atman' is from 'an' which means 'to breathe' or 'breath of life'. Later *ātman* denoted the essential being of man, as the soul and the interior core of man. For Sankara *ātman* is the principle that pervades his being and the *Rg Veda* considers *ātman* as the unborn element, 'ajo bhāgaḥ' of man.<sup>14</sup> This unborn element of man is not conditioned by forms of mind and intellect, it is pure existence, self-aware and self-knowledge, *ātma-jñāna*.

### 2. ATMAN THE PRINCIPLE OF CONSCIOUS REALM

Just as the *Brahman* is the inner principle of the universe, the individual *ātman* (*jīvātman*) is the manifestation of the One Universal Self (*paramātman*). As the *Brahman* is the inner operative principle of the changing world, the *ātman* is the foundational and inner principle of the conscious world. It is the depth and interiority of the conscious world. *Atman* is the supreme and superb manifestation of life, *jīva*, in the universe.

### 3. ATMAN BEYOND OBJECTIFICATION

In *Chāndogya Upanishad* we read a story where the gods and demons are eager to know the nature of *ātman*. Indra, the representative of gods and Virocana of demons went to Praja-pati to learn the nature of *ātman*. In the story it is

<sup>14</sup>. *Rg Veda*, X, 16, 4.

revealed that *ātman* is neither physical body nor dream-consciousness (a mental composite) nor a consciousness in the deep sleep. Finally, because of his persistence, Indra understood the *ātman* as the active universal consciousness. It is the absolute, the ground of being and it cannot be objectified. It cannot be known in the frame of subject-object relationship. It is the light of the lights, unaffected by change or non-change, untouched by life and death. It is the subject who sees, not the object which is seen. "The self is the constant witness-consciousness."

#### 4. THE *ATMAN* AND STATES OF CONSCIOUSNESS

We can construe four kinds of consciousness in our experience of reality. They are the following :

- i. *Vaiśvānara* : the experience of gross things
- ii. *Taijasa* : the experience of subtle
- iii. *Prajña* : the experience of unmanifested objectivity
- iv. *Turiya* : the experience of the Supreme Self .

In the same way *Māṇḍūkya Upanishad* speaks of four consciousness and also their objective sides. They are the following :

- i. Walking consciousness : Cosmos (*virāj*)
- ii. Dream consciousness : World-soul (*Hiranyagarbha*)
- iii. Deep sleep consciousness : Supreme Lord  
ness (*Īśvara*)
- iv. Illuminated consciousness : The Absolute  
ness (*Brahman*).

Corresponding to these four consciousness, there are four states of individual and they are the following :

- i. *sthāla* (gross)
- ii. *sūkṣma* (subtle)



iii. *Kāraṇa* (causal)

iv. The pure self.

The illuminated consciousness is the basis of all other three consciousness.

## 5. BRAHMAN AS ATMAN

In the earlier literatures of Upanishads, *Brahman* and *Atman* were considered as two distinct principles, i. e., *ātman* as the principle of individual consciousness and *Brahman* as the superpersonal ground of universe. Later this distinction disappeared. *Brahman* was considered as transcendent and immanent as well. As the immanent, it is the universal spirit and the basis and the ground of human personality. *Brahman* is known through *ātman*. Though God is the transcendent one, he becomes and dwells in the 'cave of man', in the innermost chamber of man.<sup>15</sup> "Verily this whole world is *Brahman*,"<sup>16</sup> so we read in *Chāṇdogya Upanishad* and *Satāpatha Brāhmaṇa*. *Brahman* who dwells in man is *Nārayaṇa*. So *Brahman* is conceived and experienced as *ātman* by man. This identity we read in the Upanishads as follows: "This self (*ātman*) is *Brahman*" (*ayam ātma Brahma*),<sup>17</sup> "I am *Brahman*" (*aham Brahmasmi*),<sup>18</sup> and "Thou art you" (*tat tvam asi*).<sup>19</sup>

## CONCLUSION

We were seeing the different profiles of the Reality, *Brahman - Atman*. *Brahman* or *Atman* in itself is beyond the premises of human comprehension. Only *Brahman* in appearance can come under human perception. The ineffable immeasurable *Brahman* is transcendent to time and space. All the

15. *Chāṇdogya Upanishad*, IV, 15.

16. *Satāpatha Brāhmaṇa*, X, 6, 3; *Chāṇdogya Upanishad*, III, 14, 1.

17. *Maṇḍūkya Upanishad*, 2.

18. *Brahadāraṇyaka Upanishad*, I, 4, 10.

19. *Chāṇdogya Upanishad*, VI, 8, 6.

articulations and concepts come from human imagination which is time and space bound. The divine, inexhaustible, unfathomable reality is beyond the precincts of human conceptualizations and hence the best way of conceiving it is by negating the human concepts. We can have only certain aspects of the Divine through our positive concepts. The Divine is beyond human predication. So an *apophatic* approach is more effective in describing the Divine rather than a *kataphatic* pedagogy in explaining the Absolute. It does not show the emptiness of Divine but the shallowness and incompetency of human categories to convey the fullness of the Divine. But *Brahman* as *Atman* is within the reach of man. It is not through discursive thought, but it is through self-realization, *ātma-sākshātkāra*, that we know *Brahman* as the interior core of our being, and this knowledge is a spiritual knowledge which is beyond human articulation. So in Indian system knowledge of the ultimate reality is self-realization and ultimate reality is *Brahman* and *Atman*.

## C. THE WORD: THE DIVINE CENTRE IN MAN,

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### THE CHRISTIAN SEARCH FOR THE DIVINE CENTRE OF MAN

“In the beginning was the Word... All things were made through Him.” (Jn. 1:1,3). “And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us” (Jn. 1:14a). These verses from the prologue of St. John give us a clue to the understanding of the Christian idea of creation. Creation was traditionally understood, especially in the Christian scholastic thinking, as the production of things from nothingness. But the philosophical sense of the world has rightly judged that nothing can come from nothing. The awareness of this truth was clearly mentioned by Uddalaka Aruni as he was instructing his son Svetaketu on the “Science of Being”.<sup>1</sup> In traditional Christian thinking also the idea was not so much of production from nothing, as the non-existence of the thing, before it is actually produced by the all-powerful agent of creation. Creation was always understood as an act of God and an act only of God, though, as philosophy taught, God remained unmoved and unrelated, even after His act of creation. It seems to be philosophically sound, that God, being the Fullness of being, does not depend on change and cannot be in a process of becoming in order to realize Himself. This thought forced us to think of a “from-nothingness-theory” of creation. The main purpose of this theory was to keep our God, who is ‘Pure

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1. *Chandōgya Upanishad*, VI. 2. 2. Cf. also J. A. B. Van Buitinen (Ed. and Tras.) *Vedārthasāmgraha* (Poona: Deccan College Research Institute, 1956), Introduction.

Act' free of all change and the world from all shades of pantheism by the scars of which, according to many a Christian theologian, even the purest form of Hindu religion was vitiated. (Since this is not the place to evaluate such statements I do not enter into that problem). But we can have a new look into the creation theory based on the Gospel of St. John and the Epistles of St. Paul.

The language of revelation does not seem to be so much worried or overconcerned about the philosophy of the immutability of God. It plainly says: "The Word became flesh" (Jn. 1: 14). The Word for John was God Himself as acknowledged in the prologue of his Gospel, and is traditionally understood as the second person of the Holy Trinity. In fact it is the reflected awareness of the Father Himself, the very consciousness of the Father, distinctly subsisting in the all-encompassing mystery of the divine Existence. Being the Father's own reflection He could say, "He who sees me sees the Father." The Word is the very interiority of the Father seen by the Father Himself, subsisting in opposition to His own character of being the source of all (hence the Fatherhood). Being divine consciousness the Word is the real agent of creation. "Everything that was made was made by Him." Let us see how we can understand creation as part of the process of Word's becoming flesh.

### THE A-POSTERIORI CHARACTER OF THIS INQUIRY

From the very outset it is to be very clear that what we are trying to develop here is strictly *a-posteriori*, that is, strictly based on faith. It is not simply philosophical fabrications and *a-priori* conclusions analysing the nature of divinity. Our starting point is that God became man which is a tenet of Christian faith. Since we know from faith that God really became man (and in this chapter I am speaking only to those who believe that in Christ we have the Word which is made flesh or God in human nature) we

are trying to understand this great "becoming-process of God", the great divine Event of Incarnation, which perhaps led God to creation.

### **CREATION BY GOD AND CREATION FOR THE WORD**

If we look at the Old Testament description of creation we find creation as something that took place "in the beginning", "In the beginning God created heaven and earth" (*Genesis* 1:1). This looks quite natural and makes sense to the ordinary man. For man to exist on earth, there must be the earth first. There must be air, light and many other things he can live on. Hence in the order of existence the earth must be the first. But even in the *Genesis* narration of creation the emphasis is on man. God created the heaven and earth and all that is in it for man. Man was the crown of creation. The world was for man and was his dwelling place. Man was the first intended one and everything else was for him, was his accessory. This biblical picture of man-centred creation has striking parallelism to the Johannine presentation of the Word-centred creation.

The world was made for the Word. It was and is the dwelling-place of the Word-made-flesh. Jesus Christ who is the Word made flesh, is the real centre and crown of all creation. As, according to the Old Testament view, creation is to be understood and analysed in terms of man, so, according to the Johannine view, creation is to be reinterpreted and reunderstood in terms of Jesus Christ. Christ was the primordially intended one in the mind of God. The second Adam who was even before the first Adam, was the real centre of all creation. Since Christ is nothing but the "Word made flesh", God's own consciousness in visibility, the Word's becoming flesh was the central theme behind the whole process of creation.

## HUMANITY AS THE VISIBILITY OF GOD

The Word was made flesh. The flesh according to St. Paul is the human nature in which the Word found its own self-expression. The Christian faith teaches us that the flesh the Word assumed, or which the Word became, is perfect human nature, in everything like us except sin. Centuries of controversy have clarified this point and the earlier Christological councils of the Church have brought the doctrine of the Incarnation to clearer perspective. Very uncompromising is the Church's assertion that Christ, the Word Incarnate, is fully man and fully God. The Word made flesh means God really became man, allowing himself to be associated with matter, or to become matter which throbbed with divine consciousness. "Though he was in the form of God, he did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant being born in the likeness of man" (*Phil.* 2:6-7).

The real *Kenosis* of the Word was not in dying on the Cross, but primarily in emptying itself in a certain otherness, in a non-god form, namely, as St. Paul puts it, in the form of a servant. The servant is any human individual, as we all are servants of the Most High. The emptying was, therefore, in the form of human nature. Since human nature contained matter as its essential component, the Word's self-emptying was actually allowing itself to become also matter as it became man. No religion, it seems to me, has so boldly asserted the link between God and matter, founding the origin of matter in the very *kenosis* of the Word. This makes the Incarnation totally different from all other forms of divine epiphanies and *avatāras*. The flesh is, therefore, the real human nature, the very same human nature which every one of us bears, with the single exception that in Christ, this human nature knew no sin. The medium through which the Word "sought" to express himself was our human nature. Humanity was the primor-

dial medium of divine self-expression.<sup>2</sup> The Word which is the interiority of the Father exteriorizes itself in human form. Christ is thus the expression of the Father. Expression, as it literally means, is the pressing out of the internal content. The internal content of the Word, which is the Father's self-consciousness, was pressed out and the result of that pressing out is Jesus the Christ, God in human form. Christ is thus the Word uttered by the Father, the perfect Word made visible to us through human nature. Human nature was the primal image which God had in His mind as a possible medium of His own self-expression. In this image He created the first man: "Let us make man in our image" the first man ever contemplated by the mind of God, the Word to be incarnated. Therefore St. Paul rightly says that though the first Adam came to earth first, the Second Adam was even before the first Adam. The Second Adam was in the mind of God as the "First-born of all creation" (Col. 1: 15). He was the primarily intended of all creation. Everything else was subordinated to him.

### THE WORD AS THE DIVINE CENTRE OF MAN

The human nature that was envisaged by the Word as the medium of its own self-expression was not a closed humanity. The Christian faith is not that Word was united to a human individual. The faith says that the Word became man; the very manhood of Christ is the result of the Word's self-becoming. The becoming process of the Word is never questioned in faith. The 'how' of that becoming is accepted as a mystery in faith, because of the limited capacity of the human mind, which often fails to see becoming without an

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2. According to the upanishadic thinking *Brahman* expressed Himself through *nāmarūpa*. *Nāmarūpa* (name and form) is the essential limitation-structure *Brahman* assumed in order to express Himself in a possible otherness. If we follow this line of thinking "humanity" is the basic *nāmarūpa* which God, the Word, assumed for his own self-expression.

inherent process of change denoting imperfection. The mystery of the incarnation is precisely the mystery of this becoming; remaining ever the same, the full expression of the Father as the Word, yet the same Word expressing itself as man, actuating and informing the finite human nature which the Word itself has become. Since human nature is the expression of the Word, it is most intimately centred in and grounded on the Word. It has no root but in the Word, no existence apart from the existence of the Word. The expression totally belongs to that from which it is expressed and can claim no existence but in and with that which has been expressed. This is perfectly so in the case of the human nature of Christ, which, as the Christian faith teaches, does not have an existence of its own, but subsists in the Word's existence. It is only the expression of the Word, really and literally so. The Word is the real agent, the internal centre of the human nature of Christ.

It is also a part of Christian faith as seen above, that every one of us, sinful though we are, bears the same human nature as that of Christ. If the human nature of Christ is the expression of the Word, and if our human nature is fundamentally the same human nature as that of Christ, it follows that our human nature too is, at least fundamentally, the expression of the Word. Human nature as the expression of the Word is in Christ and also in us. Of course due to the immediacy of intention (as the primarily and principally intended) and the intensity of union with the Word, in Jesus this human nature realizes itself in a singular way which is perfect and authentic. Entitatively distinct from the Word's existence, our human nature contains within itself the possibility of distortion, of turning away from the divine consciousness, the possibility called sin. But designed as the expression of the Word, our human nature too contains in itself the Word, as every expression contains the expressed. Therefore, the Word is present in us not as something



present in something else, but in a way very similar to the presence of the Word in Jesus Christ, that is, as the base or substratum of our being. Our traditional Christian conception of God as totally and wholly other has made God too extrinsic to us. But in truth it is not so. God is as immanent as He is transcendent. God is immanent in us not as someone dwelling in something else, but much more intimately, as the very foundation of our being. Ultimately, our existence subsists in the existence of God in a way very similar to the mode of subsistence of the human nature of Christ in the Word. Our human nature, as it participates in the very nature of Christ, is centred on the Word, which becoming flesh, allowed itself to be the foundation of all flesh: all human nature, irrespective of its individual realization. We are, therefore, founded on the Word. We are the continuity of the Word's own self-expression. The innermost interiority of every man is, therefore, the Word itself. The Word is the divine centre of every man.

### **PRAYER AS INTEGRATION IN THE WORD**

Though the innermost interiority of every man is really the Word, man is not actually aware of this fact. Human consciousness normally is only a fleeting awareness of the external word. Seldom does it come to its own true interiority, the Word, the origin and end of all that lies beneath human consciousness as the source of its very light, as the base of its very existence. Human consciousness, free as it is, can turn to the exteriority of its being and allow itself to be filled by the world of sensations. A man who does so will find his stream of consciousness fragmented by the isolated bits of sense experiences. Since he moves around in the gross-body level of experience, he never enters into the depth of his own being nor discovers the all-unifying centre in him. In its own way, the Transcendental Meditation movement is trying to elevate man from the level of gross-body experience to a higher level of subtle experience.

of being. This being is supposed to be the ultimate foundation of our being and consciousness. Christianity with its theology of the Word lays down an excellent foundation for this. In the innermost layer of our existence, which is self-reflective and therefore consciousness, the Word is present as its all-unifying centre. It would be more correct to say that the innermost layer itself is the Word. "He is the unseen seer, the unheard hearer, the unthought thinker, the unknown knower."<sup>3</sup>

He is present there as the silent observer, the witness, the *sākṣin*,<sup>4</sup> of all the activity of human consciousness. Nothing is hidden from Him, nothing is unknown to Him. Unaffected by the likes or dislikes of man, of the turning inwards or outwards of his consciousness, he is there awaiting the auspicious moment when man journeys into his own interiority; and He invites man to take that journey.

The hearers of the Word's invitation are those who turn to their own interior. It is not necessary that they be aware of turning to their innermost centre which really is the Word. Whenever they turn to God, to Christ as that which is unconditional and ultimately meaningful, they are turning to their own interiority. They have to purge their consciousness of the impressions arising from the world of the senses, with which it is filled, and orientate it towards the Word so that it may get charged with the Word. This is necessary and, since the Word itself is within, this orientation is ultimately to the interiority of its own being. Away from

3. *Brahadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, III. 7. 23.

4. According to Sankara *sākṣin* is the inner content of human consciousness which ultimately realizes itself as *Brahman*. We do not follow the same trend of thinking in an advaitic sense. However, the idea of *sākṣin* as the silent witness who is interior to human consciousness and yet not affected by its process of becoming, points strongly to the presence of the Word, who is both immanent and transcendent in every human consciousness.

the fleeting awareness of the world, aflame with the arising awareness of the Word, the human consciousness now slowly becomes the Word-consciousness. As human consciousness is originally the reflection of the Word, as all consciousness originates from the Consciousness that is the Word, in becoming aware again of the Word the human consciousness finds its own fulfilment and perfect authenticity. Since all knowledge is structured in consciousness, the transformation of man's consciousness effectively transforms his entire knowledge-structure, and through that, his entire being. As we have already seen above, through his own consciousness he draws the entirety of his being to the Word, making it Word-filled, and then acts as a man fully integrated in the Word. The withdrawal from the world is not meant to foster a negative outlook on life and the world. Once it is filled with the Word, the mind returns to the world, to its every day life; but now with a new awareness, with the transforming awareness of the Word, with an integrated self, and therefore, with a greater balance of mind.

## DISCUSSION

Education, both in the East and in the West, was originally understood as bringing out the inner budding personality of the student aspiring for wisdom. In fact education is meant for the flowering of one's personality. As a bud opens up in proper light and climate so the developing personality of the child blossoms up in the loving care he obtains from and the communication he enjoys with his masters and fellow students. The word education is derived from the Latin word *ex+ducere* which literally means "to lead out". So also the Sanskrit expression *vinaya* is derived from the Sanskrit root *vi+nay* which means to "lead out to perfection". Education in ancient times was conceived, both in the East and in the West, as bringing out what is within rather than pouring instructions from without. Discussion was always considered to be an effective means to bring out the hidden wealth of wisdom from the aspiring student. Therefore it is recommended to begin every new subject with a discussion. Appropriate questions will be helpful to guide discussion. This is especially so when students are beginners in their search for learning.

Here below are given a few sets of model questions which I found very useful to lead discussions. The students, all of whom were beginners in the study of philosophy, were divided into small groups for discussion, and were asked to submit a brief report of their discussion in writing. My experience is that many basic ideas which we usually treat in Metaphysics came from the students before treating the subjects formally in the class.



## SETS OF QUESTIONS

### ON ANALOGY

1. What is your knowledge about God's love for you?
2. How is it different from your parents' love for you?
3. Is all love ultimately one or different? If one, how are the different forms of love experienced? If manifold how the same love realizes itself in manifoldness?
4. Is love one or many? Is reality one or many?

### ON EVIL

The questions are drawn from a brief narrative.

Emperor Jones was a dictator. He exploited his people and accumulated money for himself. But people revolted. Finally Jones fled to a forest for safety. There he was haunted by the fear of the unconscious. He lived in the forest many days in utter poverty and agony. In a fight with a thief Jones lost his sight. As he was living as a blind man in the jungle, one day he was visited by his own minister. Jones could not recognize him. Not knowing that Jones was blind, the minister got angry and shot him dead.

### QUESTIONS:

1. What was wrong with Emperor Jones when he was ruling over his people? Was there evil in him? If there was, what kind of an evil?
2. What was wrong with Emperor Jones when his minister came to see him in the jungle? Was there evil in him then? If there was, what kind of evil?
3. In the light of these two previous questions try to define what is evil?

## ON CHANGE AND COMPOSITION

1. What is the difference between a bud and a flower?
2. What is the difference between a paper and ash?
3. What are the changes that take place in these two examples?
4. Is there any link between the "changing" and the "changed", that is, between the bud and the flower or paper and ash?
5. How is change made possible? What does the possibility of change presuppose in the changing subject?
6. What is change?

## ON CHANGE AND PERMANENCE

1. Does change lead man beyond the phenomenon of change?
2. How did Buddha react to change and impermanence of everything in this world?

## ON ATMAN

1. How do you understand God as the "Divine Indweller"?
2. What does it mean to you that God created man in "his own image"?
3. Where do you seek the image of God in man?
4. Is man's inner content the very image of God?
5. What is the role of the Word, the *Logos*, in laying foundation for the inner content of man?
6. Is God an abiding Spirit in man, an *Atman*, the *Logos* within?



