CONTENTS

J. KRISHNAMURTI'S PHILOSOPHY OF PSYCHOLOGY

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"Philosophy means the love of truth, not love of words, not love of ideas, not love of speculations, but the love of truth. And that means you have to find out for yourself where reality is and that reality cannot become truth. You cannot go through reality to come to truth. You must understand the limitations of reality which is the whole process of thought". *Truth and Actuality* – J.Krishnamurti

This article is an attempt at an exposition of Jiddu Krishnamurti's philosophy of psychology which is the "understanding" of the absolute and unconditioned truth transcending the "psyche", put together by thought. Part I of the paper brings out Krishnamurti's philosophy as the realization of the timeless and nameless truth of a thousand names, which the human beings have been seeking throughout the ages. Part II is devoted to an explication of the nature and content of the reality of thought which is dependent on and conditioned by the known. Part III elucidates the comprehension of truth through choiceless awareness of the limitations and the fragmented nature of thought. Part IV deals in brief with the implications of truth for the individual and social well-being. The paper concludes with a note that the inward transformation of realizing the truth, which is beyond the material structure of thought, is the only revolution that can save humanity from the crises of all kinds – social, economic, environmental and so on. Truth which is of the nature of supreme intelligence and love alone can be the true and lasting foundation for a sane and sustainable life-world.

I. Nature of Philosophy

According to Krishnamurti, philosophy is not an analysis of language, concepts or ideas, or a theoretical enterprise of building systems about the life-world. It is not a hermeneutics of human existence, text(s), or symbol(s); or an art of persuasion aimed at convincing anybody about anything. It is also not a speculative theory of proving or disproving the existence of God, truth or soul; or an argumentative search for more and more reasonable knowledge or truth; neither is it a body of justified true beliefs nor an activity of condemning a particular belief. To Krishnamurti, philosophy is not an intellectual affair of inventing new ideas or a diffusion of concepts; it is not the professional or academic discipline which is exclusive of the truth and actuality of daily living; nor an accumulation of knowledge about truth, or a conceptual play of thought around it.

On the contrary, philosophy, according to Krishnamurti, is the love of truth which means direct perception or insight into the truth which is not thought. Thought is (of) something whereas truth is (of) "nothing"; thought is the past, memory or knowledge

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whereas truth is what is happening "now", at this moment. Philosophy is the perception of truth from moment to moment; it is also the art of being "nothing" and living life directly without the intermediary of thought, idea of conception about it; it is meeting life without a theory, a belief or a system, and taking the very first step in the right direction of living in the "present" without a shadow of the past and future, the products of thought. Philosophy is the comprehension of life in the momentary present which is beyond time as the movement of the past modifying itself as the present and the future; it is the experiencing of the truth of "what is" without the experience; it is the movement of the mind in meditation without the meditator; the art of living without a division as the thinker and thought, the "me" and the "other", and the "I" and the world. Krishnamurti says, "Life is what is happening at this instant, not an imagined instant, not what thought has conceived. So it is the first step you take that is important. If that first step is in the right direction, then the whole life is open to you. Right direction is not towards an ideal, a predetermined end. It is inseparable from that which is taking place now. This is not a philosophy, a series of theories. It is exactly what the word 'philosophy' means – the love of truth, the love of life. It is not something that you go to the university to learn. We are learning about the art of living in our daily life."[1]

Philosophy is the understanding of the fact that the truth of "what is" can never be found through thought; it is the realization that knowledge is not the way to wisdom. Realization of truth is not thinking about it and the comprehension of wisdom is not an accumulation of knowledge; perception of truth is not the experience of it, for experience is the product of thought and knowledge, and the response of thought to a challenge by naming it. Thought is reality confined to the realm of the known. It is always a movement from the known to the known; a process of accumulating more and more experience and knowledge without ever actually coming upon the truth which is the "unknown"; it is only in the complete ending of the known that the unknown happens to be; it is only in the absolute cessation of thought that there is the arising of truth; ending of thought is the beginning of truth, the supreme intelligence; it is in the ending of time that the timeless "begins" to be. Krishnamurti says, "Philosophy means the love of truth, not love of words, not love of ideas, not love of speculations, but the love of truth. And that means you have to find out for yourself where reality is and that reality cannot become truth. You cannot go through reality to come to truth. You must understand the limitations of reality which is the whole process of thought."[2]

Further, philosophy, according to Krishnamurti, is deconditioning the mind which is caught in the "psyche" or the "self" put together by thought; it is the ending of consciousness the content of which is put together by thought at the psychological level; consciousness or the mind as we

know it to be is precisely the content which constitutes the "self"; the "self" embodies desires, images, beliefs, hatred, envy and so on; it is divisive, conflicting and contradicting within itself; it is also the source of ideas and ideals which are a barrier to meeting life directly and as it actually is; the "self" is habituated to seeking pleasure and gratification which inevitably result in pain and misery; it is the source of endless sorrow, for it is the construction of thought which is a superficial response to the challenges of life. Philosophy is putting an end to the psyche through a clear understanding of its nature and content; it is the "death" of the psyche constructed by thought for its own sustenance and continuance; it is freeing the mind of its crises by dying to everything that thought has invented in the name of security, peace and happiness. Philosophy is living afresh by breaking the patterns of life that thought has created; it is the art of living without fear, division, conflict, images or beliefs which are the products of thought; it is the movement of the mind in silence and solitude which thought can never touch; it is responding to the challenges with the mind that is empty within itself; the emptiness is not a state of amnesia or blankness but a creative energy which is devoid of inward division and conflict. Krishnamurti opines "We have accepted life with all its agony and despair and have got used to it, and think of death as something to be carefully avoided. But death is extraordinarily like life when we know how to live. You cannot live without dying. You cannot live if you do not die psychologically every minute. This is not an intellectual paradox. To live completely, wholly, every day as if it were a new loveliness there must be dying to everything of yesterday; otherwise you live mechanically and a mechanical mind can never know what love is or what freedom is."[3]

Further, philosophy, to Krishnamurti, is neither the accumulation of knowledge about truth nor thinking about it. Knowledge and thought are not the being of truth but only the conception about it; they are of the past whereas truth is timeless and eternal; a philosopher is not the one who has gathered a lot of knowledge about truth(s); he is not the one who is erudite and scholarly about truth with a variety of ideas and conceptions about it; a true philosopher is one who is truth itself; truth is the state of his being and not the process of his thinking; a philosopher "may think certain things which would be reality, but he 'is' truth"[4], says Krishnamurti. Philosophy, therefore, is the insight into truth by ending all knowledge about it; it is the instantaneous perception of it by negating the knowledge which is additive and evolutionary; it is being one with truth by deconstructing the systems and doctrines woven around it. Philosophy is the awakening of intelligence and love by questioning the philosophies that have sacrificed the human being for the establishment of their pet and petty concepts; it is the demolition of the philosophies that have enslaved and

dehumanized humanity in the name of the utopian and grand eloquent series of theories.[5]

To be philosophical, maintains Krishnamurti, is to have self-knowledge. Self-knowledge is to see psychologically as one exactly is; it is discovering the truth of oneself in the mirror of relationship with people, things and ideas. Self-knowledge is learning about oneself without accumulating knowledge about oneself; it is a spontaneous negation of everything that thought has conceived as the psyche; self-knowing is an endless process of "knowing" oneself without ever coming to a conclusion about oneself; that is, a truly philosophic way of life is living without inward conformity or identity; it is living a life of anonymity, freedom and responsibility. Philosophical life consists in being truly nothing – which we actually are bereft of what thought has projected us to be; self-knowledge is the wisdom of understanding the ways of the "self" and going beyond; it is the comprehension of the inexhaustible beauty of being absolutely nothing which is inclusive of everything, including the ugly; it is the wisdom of being alone which means being one with all. "Without these accretions you are nothing – which is the truth. And why not be that? Why all these pretensions and conceits? We have clothed this nothingness with fancies, with hopes, with various comforting ideas; but beneath these coverings we are nothing, not as some philosophical abstraction, but actually nothing. The experiencing of that nothingness is the beginning of wisdom" [6], avers Krishnamurti.

Krishnamurti's philosophy as the verbalization of the truth of the life-world comprises of the speeches he delivered, and the conversations and dialogues he had with a variety of people for over six decades; it is the outcome of his interaction with common people as well as with the eminent intellectuals of his times. The people with whom he shared his understanding of the human predicament included scientists, philosophers, psychologists and religious saints and sages. His speeches, conversations and dialogues are a spontaneous expression of the truth and reality of life as they exactly are. They are the unpremeditated articulation of a mind free from all isms and systems of philosophy. They are the reflections of a mind not committed to an ideology or a doctrine, but direct perception of the problems of life as they revealed themselves to it in their actuality. In other words, Krishnamurti's philosophy is an undistorted commentary on life as a whole, the commentaries have neither a beginning nor an end; they are neither of the East nor of the West, neither ancient nor modern; nevertheless, Krishnamurti's teachings are profoundly religious in the sense that they are rooted in the sacred truth which has a great significance for the secular life-world.

It is important to note that Krishnamurti does not hold that his philosophy as contained in his books "carries" the truth, for what is in the books, speeches or

writings are only words. The word "truth" is not truth itself. The word is not the thing, but a pointer to truth. And, truth has to be discovered by uncovering the process of thought which is a verbalization of truth. Truth lies beyond, under the cloak of a thought and word. Understanding the truth of "what is" is totally different from the verbalization of it. Philosophy, therefore, lies not in the books but in the insights that break through the realm of thought and language. Krishnamurti says, "In the uncovering of the thought process, which is self-knowledge, the truth of what is puts an end to the thought process. The truth of what 'is' is not to be found in any book, ancient or modern. What is found in the book is the word, but not truth."[7]

II. Nature of Thought

According to Krishnamurti, thought is a material process of memory stored and functioning in the brain cells. Brain is matter, and memory accumulated in it is also matter. Thought is the movement of memory as a response to a challenge. So there is nothing sacred about thought. Every movement of thought is within the field of matter, and all its manifestations are confined to the materialistic realm of life. All its inventions, technological as well as spiritual, are materialistic in nature. Thought is energy working with a motive and an end in view. It is an activity of seeking more and more pleasure and gratification within the pattern of the known, the old, which can never understand the truth beyond the field of matter. Thought can never know the "new" which cannot be thought about. It is incapable of being in the state of experiencing of that which is beyond the realm of consciousness as we know; as a process of naming or terming, Thought can never touch that which is nameless; all its products, either the aeroplane or the *Atman* are materialistic in character. Krishnamurti says "Those who think a great deal are materialistic because thought is matter. Thought is matter as much as the floor, the wall, the telephone are matter. Energy functioning in a pattern becomes matter. There is energy and there is matter. That is all life is, we may think thought is not matter, but it is. Thought is matter as an ideology."[8]

To Krishnamurti, thought is always dependent on the past; and ever conditioned by memory. Thought is movement of memory in the brain. An unconditioned thought is out of the question, since it arises only as a reaction of the past to a challenge, physical or psychological. Thought is always of something, and thought which is of nothing does not exist. Independent thought is a contradiction in terms; Thought is the result of a result, for it is of the past which itself is the result. That is, thought can never be free, for it is always tethered to memory and it can never go beyond itself to discover the truth of what is. Krishnamurti says,"Thought being a result, opposes or agrees, compares or adjusts, condemns or justifies, and therefore, it can never be free. A result can never be free; it can twist about,

manipulate, wander, go a certain distance, but it cannot be free from its own mooring. Thought is anchored to memory and it can never be free to discover the truth of any problem."[9]

Thought is limited since the past out of which it arises is also limited. Thought is limited also because it is an inadequate response to the challenge. Its response is inadequate because it is on the background of the past that thought meets the challenge which is always in the timeless present; the limitation creates division, contradiction and conflict. "As every challenge is met in terms of the past – a challenge being always new – our meeting of the challenge will always be totally inadequate, hence contradiction, conflict, and all misery and sorrow we are heir to."[10] Thought creates division and conflict not only in our perception of things but also in our relationship with others; it creates images about people in terms of race, religion, nationality and so on. It identifies them as Hindus, Muslims, Christians and so on. It programmes them into certain patterns of life and isolates them into groups. The images and identification divide people and the division brings about conflict and violence in relationship. Being essentially an abstraction, thought seeks to establish relationship between the images which are also an abstraction; but there can never be relationship between the images which are abstract. Humanity has been in perpetual strife since it is conditioned by the images created by thought. Human relationships are bound and limited by the images through which we are seeking pleasure and security. But the images are the source of pain and misery, for they are illusory, the source of insecurity and instability in life. Krishnamurti says, "Thought is so cunning, so clever, that it distorts everything for its own convenience. Thought in its demand for pleasure brings its own bondage. Thought is the breeder of duality in our relationships; there is violence in us which gives pleasure, but there is also the desire for peace, the desire to be kind and gentle. This is what is going on all the time in all our lives. Thought not only breeds this duality in us, this contradiction, but it also accumulates the innumerable memories we have had of pleasure and pain, and from these memories it is reborn."[11]

According to Krishnamurti, thought is an exclusive activity; being conditioned by the past, thought can never be unlimited and unbound; bound by an idea, a belief or an image which is of the past, thought can never be an all inclusive activity; thought always has a "centre" and a circumference; like an animal tied to a post, thought can extend itself only to the extent that the past allows it; it cannot break the boundaries it has "carefully" built around its centre, around itself. Thought is a self-centred activity which is exclusive of the"other"; it is an instrument of measurement which excludes all that which fall short of its measure; thought is "self centred and self-enclosing in its very nature"[12]; through its own self-protective mechanism and

measurement, thought creates the "other" as its opposite; the opposition breeds fear, anxiety and hatred in relationships; thought as the thinker is the source of all exclusion and separation in human relations; the exclusive self arises when thought separates itself as thought and thinker; but the "self" or the "thinker" is not different from thought; the thinker is thought itself; thought seeks to continue itself by creating the "thinker" which is thought itself. "The thinker comes into being through thought; then the thinker exerts himself to shape, to control his thoughts or to put an end to them. The thinker is a fictitious entity, an illusion of the mind."[13]

Krishnamurti distinguishes between two kinds of thought – the factual and psychological. The factual thought is strictly logical, objective and precise; it comprises knowledge which is well-reasoned, sane and experimented; it includes knowledge which is essential for our daily living and biological well-being; it is related to the scientific and technical knowledge like driving a car, going to the moon, and so on; it also refers to the linguistic, mathematical, historical and geographical knowledge which contributes to the growth of civilization.Andthe psychological thought refers to the accumulated beliefs, desires, images, attachments, ambition, fear, anxiety, and uncertainty; it stands for the memory which is a muddle of likes, dislikes, confusion, contradiction, choice and sorrow. Krishnamurti calls it "a messy conglomeration of irrational knowledge".[14] which constitutes the "self" or the "psyche" of the individual. The content of the thought at the psychological level is the same all over the world and it constitutes the consciousness of the whole of humanity; my consciousness is not different from the consciousness of the other; consciousness put together by thought at the psychological level is shared by humanity for millennia; we have been inheriting and nurturing it without a break and it is the stream of the "self", the "me" which has been "evolving" through time. Equating it with the brain with which we all are functioning Krishnamurti says, "My brain is the brain of time. The brain is not my brain. It is the brain of humanity in which the heredity principle is involved; it is consciousness of humanity because man suffers, he is proud, cruel, anxious, unkind. This is the common ground of the man. There is no individual at all for me."[15]

Consciousness as the network of thought is not what it appears to be but has as it were "an enormous length, depth and volume"[16], has many layers and works at different levels; it is "like an iceberg the greater part of which is hidden deep down, only a fraction showing outside"[17]; it creates its own energy and momentum out of its own content which is an agglomeration of several irreconcilable and opposing desires, beliefs, aspirations; consciousness sustains and continues itself by generating energy out of its own content which is of division, contradiction and conflict. Krishnamurti

says "Actually, the content is creating its own energy. Look, I am in contradiction and that contradiction gives me vitality."[18] But the content and the energy of consciousness is dissipating, deteriorating and destructive, for it is born out of self-contradiction, conflict and confusion. This is evident from the fact that humanity has been suffering for millennia, since it has been living on the background of the consciousness which is the source of destructive energy; the violence that humanity has been causing to itself and to nature, the flora and fauna is a testimony to the fact that the human consciousness is in crisis created by thought at the psychological level; the crisis in consciousness is at the root of all crises in the life-world; it is the source of the problems like poverty, violence, war, and environmental degradation and it is only by totally transforming the conditioned consciousness that we can transform the life-world."Unless human beings radically transform this consciousness, we are going to end up in bloody wars"[19], says Krishnamurti.

III. Choiceless Awareness

Krishnamurti says that thought cannot end itself, and all its efforts to put an end to itself result in its own continuity; consciousness cannot transform itself, for all its attempts to do so involve the division of itself as that which transforms and that which has to be transformed; in its desire to overcome itself thought separates itself as the thinker and thought; but the thinker, the part of consciousness which tries to transform thought is not different from thought; thought cannot go beyond itself and discover the truth, for truth is entirely different from thought; thought and consciousness are conditioned and limited whereas truth is absolutely and unconditionally free; it can only speculate about truth but cannot realize it in actuality; thought can only think or conceive of truth, and thinking or conceptualization about truth is no truth at all; so also consciousness can never "be" truth, for consciousness can only be conscious of truth.Thought or consciousness can only know truth but cannot "be" truth itself; to think, to be conscious of or to know truth is not the "being' of truth; knowing and being are entirely different; knowing is the process of becoming which can never become the being; it is only in the total ending of becoming that the "being of truth" happens to be. "Thought is always the outward response, it can never respond deeply. Thought is always the outer; thought is always an effect and thinking is the reconciliation of effects. Thought is always the superficial, though it may place itself at different levels. Thought can never penetrate the profound, the implicit; thought cannot go beyond itself, and every attempt to do so is its own frustration"[20], observes Krishnamurti.

The ending of thought is possible only when thought is aware of itself without choice. Thought has to observe the whole nature and content of itself without the

observer; it has to be aware of its entire structure without the thinker; awareness has to be without choice since choice implies the movement of thought; it has to be without the thinker for the thinker is the product of thought itself. The "observer" is the residue, the refuse of the consciousness with content only; the thinker, the observer is the modified continuity of thought itself. Awareness takes place when thought or consciousness is in a state of alert passivity and holds the whole content of itself without a movement; in it, consciousness or thought perceives the actuality, the truth, or the "what is" of itself without division, knowledge or an idea; the undivided perception brings about the insight in which consciousness remains absolutely silent and realizes the truth of itself instantaneously and irrevocably; awareness is a state of being in which the truth of what - is can come into being. Krishnamurti says, "When there is a realization of thought as a fact, then there is no need to think about the fact. If there is a simple, choiceless awareness, then that which is implicit in the fact begins to reveal itself. Therefore thought as a fact ends. Then you will see that the problems which are eating at our hearts and minds, the problems of our social structure can be resolved."[21]

Krishnamurti contends that the understanding of truth is not through a method, since truth is not a static thing or a fixed point to lay down a path to it; methods and paths are the products of thought only; they are of time and progressive in character whereas truth is timeless and instantaneous; therefore it is only through a flash of insight that the truth of the mind, consciousness or thought can be understood; neither thought nor knowledge nor a technique can serve as a means of realizing the truth of anything. Krishnamurti declared that truth is a pathless land and nobody, no system, no religion, no organization can lead us to truth; truth happens to be only in the direct perception of the whole structure and limits of thought; it is not the method, either spiritual or psychoanalytic, but an unconditional inquiry into and attention of "oneself", one's consciousness, the structure of one's thought-feeling that reveal the truth. "We do not have to seek truth. Truth is not something far away. It is the truth about the mind, truth about its activities from moment to moment."[22]

IV. Nature of Truth

Truth, according to Krishnamurti, is not an abstraction, not an idea conceived by thought; truth it is not the "self" or the god that thought has invented as the opposite of itself; the truth that thought invents cannot be the truth in its true sense, for thought is essentially of time, division and fragmentation. Primordially, truth, according to Krishnamurti, is the mind that "transcends" the realm of thought and is "free of all dependence and limitation"[23]. Truth is the supreme mind which is devoid of the psychological past, memory or knowledge; it is the mind which is acausal in the sense of being beyond all causal determination – physical or psychological;

it is a timeless or an eternal mind which is without beginning and ending. Krishnamurti calls it the free and true mind which is (of) intelligence. The intelligence of the new mind is not of the intellect but of love and compassion. The intelligent mind is "alone" in the sense of being one with everything without a sense of attachment or detachment. Krishnamurti also calls it an empty mind the essence of which is nothingness. Nothingness means not-a-thing; it does not contain within itself anything that thought constructs. Nothingness is not a vacuum but full of energy which is not of thought; the immense energy of nothingness is creative and sensitive to the truth of everything; there is security and stability in being truly nothing, and the security that thought brings about is no security at all; security in something, in that which thought invents including nationalism or god are the source of greatest insecurity. The intelligent mind is an orderly mind; the order of it is uncreated, infinite and integrating; it is not the order that thought has invented and imposed on it. The intelligent mind is a perceptive mind, the perception of it is from moment to moment and not the continuity of time; there is a total gap between two moments of its perception; the perception is "like the light of a candle which has been put out and relit. The new light is not the old, though the candle is the same."[24]

The true mind is of the nature of love which is neither sensual nor romantic. Love is compassion which implies "transformation from moment to moment"[25]; it is not an abstraction but action in the flowering of goodness in relationship; it is an unconditional care and concern for everything, for the whole world without expecting anything in return. Love is goodness which cannot be disturbed by circumstances or by human corruption; the goodness of love is absolute in the sense that it is not relative to evil. "When there is love you can do what you will. Then there is no sin, then there is no conflict",[26] says Krishnamurti. He contends that true love is the only panacea for the human predicament. Life-world is full of crises – hunger, poverty, conflict, violence, war and sorrow. The predicament is due to the consciousness which is in crisis. Society is the extension of the psychological structure of humanity. I am the world and the world is the "me". Love implies the absence of thought which is the source of crisis in consciousness. "If there is love there are no social problems",[27] observes Krishnamurti.

Love is such a profound feeling that thought can never comprehend it. Love is of truth which is of the timeless present whereas thought is of tradition which is always of the past; thought is the betrayal of love which is ever fresh; love is not the feeling cultivated by thought, for love cannot be cultivated as a plant in the garden; love is neither the emotion brought about by thought nor is it related to the morality created by thought; it is beyond the division of the moral and immoral invented by thought; neither the moral nor the immoral

can know love; the moral structure created by thought to hold the social relationships together is not love; thought can never lead to love, for, to think is to deny love; to love is to be "alone" which means being one with all; to the one who "knows" love beyond thought, far is near and the world is his or her home. Krishnamurti observes, "If you are at all aware you will see what an important part thought plays in your life. Thought obviously has its place, but it is in no way related to love. What is related to thought can be understood by thought, but that which is not related to thought cannot be caught by the mind. You will ask, then what is love? Love is a state of being in which thought is not; but the very definition of love is a process of thought, and so it is not love."[28]

CONCLUSION

To conclude, truth is freedom, intelligence and love; it is also beauty, sanity and sensitivity; so, the true mind uses the factual thought strictly for biolgical survival and well-being. It guides the instrument of thought in a proper direction and confines it to the physical realm; it does not allow thought into the "psychological realm" of emptiness, silence and meditation, the only foundation for harmonious human relations and peaceful co-existence of humanity. In the light of the truth, the factual thought functions objectively and with precision and sanity. Devoid of truth, thought goes berserk and creates havoc in the life-world. It divides humanity and the world and brings about destruction and sorrow. So the realization of the supreme truth by bringing about a radical psychological revolution is the only way for a meaningful and sustainable survival of humanity.

NOTES

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6. _____, *Commentaries on Living*, I-Series, D.Rajagopal (Ed.), B.I. Publications, 1972, p. 209.
7. _____, *Op.cit*., p. 171.
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9. _____, *Commentaries on Living*, I-Series, p. 159.

10. _____, *Freedom from the Known*, p. 150.
11. _____, *Op.cit*., p. 151.
12. _____, *With You is the Key – Excerpts from Krishnamurti's Writings*, The Krishnamurti Study Centre, Varanasi, 2006, p. 16.
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14. _____, *Truth and Actuality*, p. 22.
15. _____, *The Way of Intelligence*, KFI, 1985, p. 41.
16. _____, *Op.Cit*., p. 18.
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BUDDHISM AS IDEOLOGY AND INSTRUMENT OF FOREIGN POLICY

Dr. Ms. Santishree . D. Pandit

Introduction

May all beings be happy and secure;
May their hearts be wholesome.
Whatever living beings there may be,
Feeble or strong, tall, fat, or medium,
Short, small, or large, without exception,
Seen or unseen,
Those dwelling far or near,
Those who are born or who are to be born,
May all beings be happy.

Metta Sutta

Basic Tenets of Buddhism as Followed by Sri Lanka

Given the nature of Buddhism, as inscribed by Bhikkhu Saṅgharakṣita, the nature of Buddhism, or more accurately, the Dhamma, may best be defined simply as the means to enlightenment. The Buddha himself compares it to a raft. Just as a raft, after being fashioned out of grass, sticks, branches and leaves, serves to cross over great stretches of water and is then abandoned, so the Dhamma, by means of which we ferry over the waters of birth and death to the other shore, *nirvāṇa*, is not something to be taken with us but something to be left behind. In short, it is not an end in itself, but only a means to an end. In modern parlance, its function is purely instrumental and therefore its value only relative. This of course does not mean that it can be dispensed with. When we have arrived safely on the other shore, the raft may indeed be abandoned; but so long as we remain on this shore, or are still paddling across the stream, it is indispensable.

The pragmatic nature of the Dhamma is emphasized in the words addressed by the Blessed One to his foster-mother and aunt, Mahāprajāpati Gotami, who had asked him to give her precept, hearing which she might dwell "alone, solitary, ardent and resolved." The, Buddha replies, "Of whatsoever teachings, Gotami, thou can'st assure thyself thus: 'These doctrines conduce to dispassion, not to passions: to detachment, not to bondage: to decrease of (worldly) gains, not to increase of them: to frugality, not to covetousness: to content, and not discontent: to solitude, not company: to energy, not sluggishness: to delight in good, not delight in evil': of such teachings thou mayest with certainty affirm, Gotami, 'This is the Dhamma. This is the *Vinaya*. This is the Master's Message." [*Vin*. II. 10]. It is for this reason that the Mahāyānists were not only able to say, with Aśoka, "Whatever the Blessed One has said is well said", but also "Whatever is well said is the word of the Buddha." [*Adhyāsayasamcūdana Sūtra*, *Śiksa Samuccaya of Śāntideva,* Tr. by Cecil Bendall and W.H. D. Rouse, London, 1922, p.17].

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Culture in Buddhism

Culture in Buddhism can therefore be perceived as regular observance of the Five Precepts, positively and negatively, in order to incorporate the ideals in practicability. Practicing Buddhism thus facilitates reduction of hatred and greed. Simultaneously, good habits like kindness and compassion; honesty and truthfulness; chastity and heedfulness is nurtured. The overall cultural traits of Buddha Dhamma inculcate all the above mentioned traits steadily since the practice of Buddha Dhamma imbibes all these traits. Cultural relations occur naturally between people in different nations as a result of trade, tourism, student exchanges, entertainment, communications, migration, inter-marriage, and through millions of cross-cultural encounters. However, cultural diplomacy happens only when a government decides to channel and support cultural exchange through planned programs to promote broad national interests. Religion-based culture implicitly incorporates religious rituals as part of culture. That in itself impacts the foreign policy too.

Diligence in cultivating all aspects of the Dhamma is the main pillar of observation in Buddhist culture. An individual following all the traits of Buddha Dhamma, will automatically contribute positively towards the community and the country. With this perception, thus, it can be clearly stated that Buddhist culture is “individual centric” and not “mass centric” in nature. Buddhism addresses itself only to an individual, and tries to incorporate the positive thinking in him/her. It has nothing to do with mass movements, for "masses" are just collections of individual men and women. Thus, theoretically speaking, transformation of each individual person, is in itself a true social development/reform , wherein the society and the state collectively gains.

Although it is quite commonplace to mingle religion with politics today, unlike the days of the Romans, when religion and politics were distinctly different, the interpretations of this assimilation is both negative and positive, taking into consideration the various facets of a particular religion, and its far reaching implications. Today's world is overcrowded with many religions and religion like segments acting on behalf of them. Among them, it is interesting to note that the true and main tenets of all the major religions of the world is getting unnecessarily shrouded with confusion. Religion has been used as a cushioning since a long time. Of late, religion has been used for various purposes to serve the interests of the fanatics. Revival of true religion is, thus, extremely necessary to further strengthening the basic mosaic of every society. Many countries today follow religion officially, to serve their population, as in Sri Lanka and Myanmar. Most of them follow it to pacify the fundamentalist outfits, either intentionally or unintentionally. However, religion-based culture, and its formal application through

foreign policy will surely endanger the international system. Going by this hypothesis/argument, certainly mass movement steered through the Dhamma, and the preachers of Dhamma is a dark contrast which is visible very clearly in Sri Lanka.

According to the Buddhist scholar A.K. Warder, the Theravāda "spread rapidly south from Avanti into Maharashtra and Andhra and down to the Cola country (Kanchi), as well as Ceylon. For sometime they maintained themselves in Avanti as well as in their new territories, but gradually they tended to regroup themselves in the south, the Great Vihāra (Mahāvihāra) in Anuradhapura, the capital of Ceylon, became the main centre of their tradition, Kanchi a secondary center and the northern regions apparently relinquished to other schools."[1] There is little information about the later history of Theravāda Buddhism in India, and it is not known when it disappeared in its country of origin. The Theravāda school had also reached Burma around the time it arrived in Sri Lanka and something of a synergy gradually developed. Around the end of the tenth century C.E, for example, war in Sri Lanka had extinguished the Theravādin ordination lineage, and a contingent of Burmese monks had to be imported to rekindle it. Burmese and Sri Lankan Theravāda reinforced each other sufficiently, so that by the time Buddhism died out in India in the eleventh century, it had established a stable home in these countries. Gradually the Theravāda form of Buddhism spread to Thailand, Laos, and Cambodia.[2] Royal houses in Sri Lanka and South-East Asia associated themselves closely with Buddhism. States in those areas strictly enforced orthodoxy, and ensured that Theravāda remained traditionalist. This contrasts with the relationship of Buddhism to states throughout most of Buddhism's history in India.[3]

According to the Sinhalese tradition, Buddhism was first brought to Sri Lanka by Mahinda, who is believed to have been the son of the Mauryan emperor Aśoka, in the third century B.C., as a part of the missionary activities of the Aśokan era. In Sri Lanka, Mahinda established the Mahāvihāra Monastery of Anuradhapura. Later it became divided into three subgroups, known after their monastic centers as the Mahāvihāra, the Abhayagirivihāra, and the Jetavanavihāra. In 1164, with the guidance of two monks from a forest branch of the Mahāvihāra, Sri Lanka King reunited all Bhikkhus in Sri Lanka into the orthodox Mahāvihāra school. A few years after the arrival of Sthavira Mahinda, Saṅghamitta, who is also believed to be the daughter of Emperor Aśoka, came to Sri Lanka. She started the first nun order in Sri Lanka, but the nun order died out in Sri Lanka in the 11th century and in Burma in the 13th. With the request of the Chinese Emperor, in 429 CE, nuns from Anuradhapura were sent to China to establish the *Nun Order*. The order then spread to Korea. In 1996, 11 selected Sri Lankan nuns were ordained fully as

Bhikkhunis by a team of Theravāda monks in concert with a team of Korean nuns in India. There is a strong disagreement among Theravāda *Vinaya* authorities as to whether such ordinations are valid. In the last few years the Head of the Dambulla chapter of the Siyam *Nikāya* in Sri Lanka has carried out ordination ceremonies for hundreds of nuns. This has been criticized by some other leading figures in the Siyam *Nikāya* and Amarapura *Nikāya*, and the governing council of Burmese Buddhism has declared that there can be no valid ordination of nuns in modern times, though some Burmese monks disagree with this.[4]

According to the *Mahāvaṁsa*, the Sri Lanka chronical, after the conclusion of the Third Buddhist Council, a missionary was also sent to Suvannabhūmi where two monks Sona and Uttara, are said to have proceeded.[5] Scholars differ as to where exactly this land of Suvannabhūmi is located, but Suvannabhūmi is believed to be located somewhere in the area which now includes lower Burma, Thailand, Malay Peninsula and Sumatra Island. Incidentally, the Mon and the Pyu were one of the earliest people to inhabit Burma. Recent archaeological findings at Pyu settlement at Samon Valley (around 100 km south-east of Bagan) have shown that there were trade links with India at around 500 B.C.-400 B.C. and with China at around 200 B.C.[6] Chinese sources which have been dated to around 240 A.D. have mentioned a Buddhist kingdom by the name of Lin-Yang, which some scholars have identified it as the ancient Pyu kingdom of Beikthano,[7] ,[8] which is 300 km north of Yangon. The Burmese slowly become Theravādin when they come into contact with the Pyu and Mon civilization. The Mon were also one of the earliest people to inhabit Thailand. The Thai slowly become Theravādin when they come into contact with the Mon civilization.

Despite its success in South-East Asia, Theravāda Buddhism in China has generally been limited to areas bordering Theravāda countries. In Chinese historiography, it is normally referred to as Hīnayāna, a term used in Mahāyāna texts to denigrate Buddhists who did not accept the Mahāyāna *Sūtras*; this usage is increasingly regarded as derogatory within the Buddhist community.

Of late, Buddhism has manifold, and embraced the following modern trends or movements. They have been identified.[9], [10]as the following :

1. modernism: attempts to adapt to the modern world and adopt some of its ideas; includes among other things.
2. green movement
3. syncretism with other Buddhist traditions
4. women's rights
5. gay rights
6. reformism: attempts to restore a supposed earlier, ideal state of Buddhism; includes in particular the adoption of Western scholars' theories of original Buddhism (in recent times the "Western scholarly

interpretation of Buddhism" is the official Buddhism prevailing in Sri Lanka and Thailand.

7. ultimatism: tendency to concentrate on advanced teachings such as the Four Noble Truths at the expense of more elementary ones.
8. neo-traditionalism; includes among other things
9. revival of ritualism
10. re-mythologization
11. insight meditation
12. social action
13. devotional religiosity
14. reaction to Buddhist nationalism
15. renewal of forest monks
16. revival of *samatha* meditation

Buddhist revivalism has also reacted against changes in Buddhism caused by colonialist regimes. Western colonialists and Christian missionaries deliberately imposed a particular type of Christian monasticism on Buddhist clergy in Sri Lanka and colonies in South-East Asia, restricting monks' activities to individual purification and temple ministries.[11] Prior to British colonial control, monks in both Sri Lanka and Burma had been responsible for the education of the children of lay people, and had produced large bodies of literature. After the British takeover, Buddhist temples were strictly administered and were only permitted only to use their funds on strictly religious activities. Christian ministers were given control of the education system and their pay became state funding for missions.[12]

Foreign, especially British rule had an enervating effect on the Saṅgha.[13] According to Walpola Rahula, Christian missionaries displaced and appropriated the educational, social, and welfare activities of the monks, and inculcated a permanent shift in views regarding the proper position of monks in society through their institutional influence upon the elite.[14] Many monks in post-colonial times have been dedicated to undoing this paradigm shift.[15] Movements intending to restore Buddhism's place in society have developed in both Sri Lanka and Burma.[16]

One thing that should be mentioned first and foremost is that the Theravāda philosophy is a continuous analytical process of life, not a mere set of ethics and rituals. Thus, the ultimate theory of Theravāda uses the Four Noble Truths, also known as the Four Sublime Truths. In simple form these can be described as the problem, the cause, the solution and the pathway to solution (implementation).

The four noble truths are: suffering *(duḥkha*); cause of suffering (*duḥkha-samudāya*); cessation of suffering (*duḥkha nirodha*); and the pathway to freedom from suffering (*duḥkha nirodha gamini patipāda*) The three characteristics of all conditioned phenomena in Theravāda thought are: impermanence (*anicca*); suffering (*duḥkha*); not-self (*anatta*).

In the philosophical sense, Theravāda promotes the concept of *Vibhajjavāda*

(Pali), literally meaning "teaching of analysis." This doctrine says that insight must come from experience, critical investigation, and reasoning of the aspirant instead of by blind faith. However, the scriptures of the Theravāda tradition also emphasize heeding the advice of the wise, considering such advice and evaluation of the experience of oneself, as the two tests by which practices should be judged.

In Theravāda Buddhism , thus, the cause of human existence and suffering (*duḥkha*) is identified as craving (*tanha*), which carries with it the defilements (*kleśas*). Those defilements that bind human to the cycle of rebirth are classified into a set of ten "fetters", while those defilements that impede concentration (*samādhi*) are presented in a fivefold set called the "five hindrances". The level of defilement can be coarse, medium, and subtle. It is a phenomenon that frequently arises, remains temporarily and then vanishes. The Theravādins believe that defilements are harmful both to oneself and also to the others. They are the driving force behind all inhuman actions a human being can commit. The Theravādins also believe that these defilements are the habits born of ignorance (*avijja*) which afflict the minds of all unenlightened beings. It is believed that unenlightened beings are under the influence of the defilements, and that they cling to them due to ignorance of truth. But in reality, those mental defilements are nothing more than taints that afflict the mind and create suffering and stress. It is also believed that unenlightened beings cling to the body, assuming it as their "Self", but in reality the body is an impermanent phenomenon formed from the four basic elements - earth, water, fire and air. The early Buddhist texts defines the elements as abstractions representing the sensorial qualities solidity, fluidity, temperature, and mobility, respectively.[17] The mental defilements frequently instigate and manipulate the mind and prevent from seeing the true nature of reality. Unskillful behavior in turn can strengthen the defilements, but following the Noble Eightfold Path can weaken or eradicate them.

There are three stages of defilements. During the stage of passivity the defilements lie dormant at the base of the mental continuum as latent tendencies (*anusaya*), but through the impact of sensory stimulus it will manifest (*pariyutthāna*) itself to the surface of consciousness in the form of unwholesome thoughts, emotions, and volitions. If they gather additional strength, the defilements will reach the dangerous stage of transgression (*vitikkama*), which will then involve physical or vocal actions.

It is believed that in order to be free from suffering and stress these defilements need to be permanently uprooted. Initially the defilements are restrained through mindfulness to prevent them from taking over the mind and bodily action. They are then uprooted through internal investigation, analyzing, experiencing and

understanding the true nature of those defilements by using *jñāna*. This process needs to be repeated for each and every defilement. The practice will then lead the meditator to realize the four noble truths, enlightenment, and *nirvāṇa/nibbāna* - the ultimate goal of the Theravādins. *nirvāṇa* is said to be perfect bliss and the person is liberated from the repeated cycle of birth, illness, aging and death.

The Theravādins believe that every individual is personally responsible for one's own self-awakening and liberation, as they are the ones that are responsible for their own actions and consequences (*karma/kamma*). Simply learning or believing in the true nature of reality as expounded by the Buddha is not enough, the awakening can only be achieved through direct experience and personal realization. An individual will have to follow and practice the noble eightfold path as taught by the Buddha to discover the reality for themselves. In Theravāda belief, Buddhas, gods or deities are incapable of giving a human being the awakening or lifting them from the state of repeated cycle of birth, illness, aging and death (*saṁsāra*). For the Theravādins, Buddha is only a teacher of the noble eightfold path, while gods or deities are still subject to anger, jealousy, hatred, vengeance, craving, greed, delusion, and death.

These basic tenets have been visibly distorted in the Buddhist culture as envisaged in both Sri Lanka and Myanmar, if not distorted , then certainly modernized, giving way to the rise of both "mass movement", and the "Bhikku/monk-dominance", in the practice and culture of Buddhism. This has been typically observed in Sri Lanka, where every part of an individual's life is directly or indirectly controlled or directed by the *Bhikkus*. Inadvertently, this paradigm shift has greatly influenced the modern facets of life. The earlier argument that Buddha Dhamma imbibed in its culture addresses itself only to an individual, and tries to incorporate the positive thinking in him/her, explains the ethical dilemma of an economically developing country like Sri Lanka, with a background of Buddhist culture, where lay Buddhists are aiming at personal progress in worldly matters , only on the foundation of the noble eightfold path. Also the established philosophy that Buddhism aims at the "individual" and has nothing to do with mass movements, for "masses" are just collections of individual men and women, who if , individually altered according to Buddha Dhamma, can bring peace and prosperity.

Having said so, it is pertinent to understand how the Buddhist monasteries evolved over the years to serve religion, and address the patrons. Monasticism is one of the most fundamental institutions of Buddhism. Monks and nuns are responsible for preserving and spreading Buddha's teachings, as well as educating and guiding Buddhist lay followers. Collectively, the ordained male and female Buddhist monastics constitute the Buddhist Saṅgha.

The order of Buddhist monks and nuns was founded by Gautama Buddha during his lifetime over 2500 years ago. The Buddhist monastic lifestyle evolved from the lifestyle of the earlier sects of wandering ascetics, some of whom the Buddha had studied under. It was not really isolationist or eremitic: the Saṅgha was dependent on the lay community for its basic provisions of food and clothing, and in return the Saṅgha members helped guide lay followers on the path of Dhamma. Individuals or small groups of monks – a teacher and his students, or several monks who were friends – travelled together, living on the outskirts of local communities and practicing meditation in the forests. Monks and nuns were expected to live with a minimum of possessions, which were to be voluntarily provided by the lay community. Lay followers also provided the daily food that the monks required, and also their shelter when needed. During Buddha's time, many retreats and gardens were donated by wealthy citizens for the monks and nuns to stay in during the rainy season. Out of this tradition grew two kinds of living arrangements for monastics, as detailed in the *Mahāvagga* section of the *Vinaya* and *Varsavastu* texts. They are *āvāsa* - a temporary house for monastics called a *vihāra*; *ārāma* - a more permanent and more comfortable arrangement than the *āvāsa*. This property was generally donated and maintained by a wealthy citizen. This was more lavish (as suggested by the name "*Ārāma*" which means both "pleasant/park". It generally consisted of residences within orchards or parks.[18]

It is pertinent here to understand the present day divisions of the Buddhist Saṅgha order in Sri Lanka.

Divisions in the Saṅgha

Popular Factors (Ascribed)	Elite Factors (Ascribed)
Low-caste Status	High-caste status (Goyigama)
Young Monks	Old Monks
Nuns/Sil Matas Background Socialization	Monks
Monks from Poor Families or Villages	Monks from Wealthy Background or Cities
Amarapura or Ramanna Sect of Membership	Siyam Sect Membership

The Siyam sect accounts for half of all the Sri Lankan monks, roughly equal to the percent of Sinhalese who are Goyigama caste. Amarapura monks, on the other hand, are almost solely from lower-caste backgrounds, while Ramanna monks are from all castes, being distinguished by their disciplinary rigour and relative poverty.[19]"... Buddhism spread literate culture into many societies in the process of political unification and organization, it is not surprising that the Saṅgha came to wield political influence, or even political power, in a number of countries." - Peter Harvey, *An Introduction to Buddhism,* A similar view is reported by Paul Harrison, Professor of Buddhist Studies at Stanford University, where he argues that traditionally, the role of Buddhist monastics and clergy was limited to advising rulers on the proper application

of Buddhist teachings to the Government. However, in recent decades increasing political instability and oppression in Asia caused a change in the relationship between Buddhism and politics. As clearly inscribed by the former President of Sri Lanka, that … it was to help humanity that the Buddha founded the Order. He intended it to be a voluntary association of dedicated persons who would devote themselves to the task of making the process of wayfaring through life easier for such among their fellow beings as were weak, helpless and stricken. … It is another matter that the order never quite became what it was meant to be. The Bhikkus (homeless ones) very soon became Priests, living in temples built like palaces. Today the lazy and ceremonious Church, split into *Nikāyas* based on caste divisions, maintains its place in society, not by tendering to the sick, the poor and the helpless but by placing a Messianic halo above the Buddha-myth, and by chanting faint Pali gāthas to the cold, fruitless moon. (*J.R. Jayawardene, Sri Lanka's President 1977-1987, A Life of Service 1942*).

While most of the Saṅgha have been content to influence party politics from the sidelines, a number of monks have become more engaged politically, associating themselves openly with Marxist and Sinhala nationalist activism. In the 1980s, and particularly after the signing of the 1987 Indo-Lanka Accord, many became increasingly militant in rejecting the proposals for federalism or devolution. The Janatha Vimukti Peramuna (People's Liberation Front — JVP) was very successful at this time in recruiting Bhikkus in support of its armed anti-Accord insurrection. .

Thus, it has also been observed that there is a clear structural position of a given "monk" in the Sri Lankan society. The structural position of a monk, by itself along with his personal history and ascribed characteristics of biases and vices, all tend to predetermine whether a monk will adopt a pro-plebian or a pro-elite stance. The streams of ideological discourse in which monks are embedded are rarely purely "hegemonic" or purely "insurgent". In the Sri Lankan context, monastic social and political attitudes tend to vary along a continuum from traditionalism to radicalism. The "hegemonic" model for the monk is as a "spiritual" rather than "this-worldly" guide for the people, except when the "Sinhalese people and religious culture are threatened". In particular, almost every monk, interviewed corroborates to this fact, that at the time of crisis to the Sinhalese people and religious culture , the Sri Lankan clergy have a self-imposed racial-national responsibility to assume leadership, as "inscribed" in the religio-historic chronicle the *Mahāvamsa*. Those monks who claim that they are acting on the basis of this historic racial-national responsibility range ideologically from cosmopolitan elite patrons of philanthropy to proto-fascist populists.

It was interesting to note by this author that the Left oriented monks, who are

politically more active, observe it more in terms of class and anti-imperialism struggle rather than race and religion. Both Left and traditional elements are present in the thinking of most monks, but it has been observed that the monks with the clearest organic ties to the subordinate classes are more prone to adopt "insurgent ideology", and consequently engage in more insurgent organization. Thus, finally, it has been found that both insurgent and hegemonic ideologies vary along the "*Mahāvamsist"* or "Cosmopolitan". According to the Mahāvamsist World-View, the Structurally Elite Monks, are engaged in "religious role to social service to rightist activism"; and the structurally plebian ones are engaged in " social service/ populist activism". According to the "cosmopolitan world-view", the structurally elite monks are engaged in "religious or academic role (inactive) to philanthropic social service"; and the structurally plebian ones are engaged in " social service/left political activism".

How Buddhism as an Ideology and an Instrument of Foreign Policy has Affected the Politics of Sri Lanka

There is substantial evidence in ancient Sanskrit writings to support the notion that the landmass known as South-East Asia was at one time considered the outer frontier of India. Those documents make mention of the Khmer Kingdom ruled by distant relatives of Indian royalty. Through natural migration along the coastline of the Indian Ocean, Indians spread into current day Myanmar, also known in history as Puma (Burma). Burmese dynasties in fact record Kings of Indian descent. The migration Eastward through Southern Thailand brought with it the Hindu religion which eventually was responsible for the creation of the Khmer Kingdom (Cambodia) and Angkor Wat. Angkor Wat, originally a Hindu Temple and later a Buddhist Temple is a great archeological find in South-East Asia and testimony to great Indian achievements and influence.

One King of India, King Aśoka, after having slaughtered several hundred thousands of his own people in a war of conquest to control the whole of India. encountered a Buddhist monk about 500 years after the death of the Buddha. King Aśoka was so impacted with his guilt of the slaughter that he made it his life's mission to spread the compassionate word of Buddhism. It was during his reign that Buddhism spread through the farthest reaches of the Indian frontiers. Burma, Siam, Khmer, Malaysia, Indonesia, and even into Vietnam. This accounts, in my opinion at least, for the widespread use of curry throughout Indonesia, Malaysia, Burma, Thailand, and Cambodia. For reasons of geography, due mostly to easy access from China, the Vietnamese and the Laotians never developed a big desire for curry based dishes.

Due to the mountainous terrain separating Laos and Cambodia with Vietnam, the Vietnamese culture was barely impacted by Indian encroachment. The

many mountain passes between China and northern Vietnam account for the much greater Chinese influence on Vietnamese culture. Interestingly, both flavours of Buddhism (H*ī*nayāna and Mahāyāna) exist in Vietnam. Hīnayāna arriving *via* the southern sea route and Mahāyāna arriving out of China from Tibet.

There is no social welfare system in South-East Asia. There is thus, no difference between a believer and a non-believer. A specific time of visit to any Buddhist temple at the right time every day in South-East Asia will make a person meet his hunger. Regarding housing, too, if required an individual is welcome to stay and sleep in the verandah or portico (*sāla*) of any Temple in South-East Asia. The system in South-East Asia, thus, represents a perfect harmony of life and is totally consistent with helping others by a virtue known as compassion. There are no inefficient Government programs that attempt to feed the less fortunate. The less fortunate do not look upon the system as one of entitlement and protest for more other than basic sustenance and shelter. The society is based upon a common notion of giving from the heart and not from the wallet. The system works, and works well; there is no widespread starvation in South-East Asia such as might be found in African countries. The system is based on respect for human life and compassion.

While Buddhist orthodoxy tends to promote the renunciation of all worldly concerns, there remains significant theological latitude for individual monks (Bhikkus) to justify political activity which aims to reform society "for the good". Since independence, Sri Lankan Buddhist leaders have been active in the political arena whenever they felt it appropriate, particularly on issues relating to the primacy of the Buddhist faith and the territorial integrity of Sri Lanka.

On these issues, and others such as language, the Buddhist clergy as a whole (the Saṅgha) have exerted a particularly powerful influence in Sri Lankan political life. In 1951, resolutions of the All Ceylon Buddhist Congress to the Prime Minister included a statement that "the … government is legally and morally bound to protect and maintain Buddhism and Buddhist institutions." It also demanded the restoration of Buddhism to "the paramount position of prestige which rightfully belongs to it." In the same year, the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) was established with a vow to promote Sinhala Buddhist interests, signalling a new era in Sri Lankan politics. Since its formation, the SLFP has alternated in government with the United National Party (UNP), with both parties jockeying for the favour of the Sinhala Buddhist establishment and its huge popular constituency.

Sinhalese politicians have often been calculating in their exploitation of "the Buddhist card", and the Saṅgha has been manipulated as much as they have been deferred to. It must be remembered, however, that Sri Lankan Buddhists

strongly believe that they have a duty to protect and uphold their faith in Sri Lanka and that thousands of Buddhist monks have taken sacred vows to do so. When Buddhist leaders voice concern that their faith is under threat, this is an extremely powerful and emotive message.

The argument that a unitary state with one religion and one language is required to honour the sacred trust of Lord Buddha, has clear ramifications for the self-determination and aspirations of the Tamils and other minorities living in Sri Lanka. A corollary of this argument - that federalism constitutes a threat to Buddhism - is voiced by some Bhikkus and ordinary Sri Lankan Buddhists too. According to some Sinhala factions, all minority ethnicities should respect the dominance of Sinhala Buddhist culture in Sri Lanka and assimilate into it.

As a counterpoint to this radical nationalism, secular democrats, one or two small left-wing parties and a handful of trade union groups have consistently campaigned within the Sinhalese polity for a more moderate approach to the ethnic problem. From 1987, the United Bhikshu Congress, an organization of social activist monks, also started campaigning for devolution. Due partly to the efforts of these groups, strident Sinhala nationalism has become increasingly marginalized in recent years. Today, though "federalism" remains outside the bounds of acceptable political vocabulary, the need for "devolution" is widely accepted.

This sea change within Sinhalese society has been gradual as the open market, modern education and globalization have lessened the political influence of the Saṅgha. It was strenghtened after the 1990 renewal of hostilities in the North and East between the Government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) which demanded increased army recruitment and the sustained sacrifice of young Sinhalese lives. The popular thirst for an end to the war was then nurtured and consolidated by the People's Alliance and its leader Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunge, who in 1994 achieved unprecedented electoral success on a platform of peace and negotiations with the LTTE.

As euphoria at the prospect of peace spread, the precepts of non-violence and accommodation regained primacy within the Buddhist establishment, even among those who had vigorously opposed the Indo-Lanka Accord. This was illustrated in 1995 in a joint statement issued by prominent members of the Saṅgha and the Catholic clergy which broadly supported government devolution proposals. The statement clearly acknowledged the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka and accepted that war was not a legitimate solution. It suggested instead that a negotiated settlement based on devolution of power was the only way forward, specifying that, "whatever the solution may be, it should not be a Sinhala solution imposed by force on Tamil people."

Popular Sinhala Buddhist opinion, therefore, has largely conceded the need to respect and protect the civil liberties of

Tamils and other minorities. While many continue to equate a threat to the territorial integrity of Sri Lanka with a threat to the Sinhala identity, it is also widely accepted that devolution per se will not mean the bifurcation of the island. Nevertheless, many Sinhalese remain suspicious that Tamil nationalist claims for "self determination" still entail the division of the country, and the hard-line demands of the LTTE continue to inspire heartfelt resistance. Reflecting this popular dichotomy, Sinhala politicians in the South now argue about the appropriate degree of devolution while, in the North and East, the military execute war on the LTTE with ever-increasing vigour. Thus, it was found that the monks who are structurally allied with the middle and upper classes tend not to get involved in social service advocacy or for that matter left-populist activism, while monks who are directly financially dependent on the voluntary support of poor villagers would tend to become involved.[20] The donation of land by the aristocrats and the Kings to the Buddhist temples led to the unholy solidarity between the land-owners, the state and the wealthy temples; in the process the incumbent clergy of the Saṅgha got involved too. In fact, it is the state, which ultimately enforced the appropriation of rice of the Saṅgha. This hypothesis, justifies the monk-led revolt against the colonial powers in 1848 when the British decided to stop enforcing the "customary" rice title of the share-croppers of temple lands to their monastic land-lords, and as a result the monks were driven to insurgency simply by their hunger (de Silva, 1941).

The accumulation of monastic property in the medieval and colonial periods encouraged the internal differentiation of, and conflicts within, the Saṅgha, and thus necessitated the growth of strong, centralized sect structures to mediate these conflicts between monks over property, as Gunawardana (1979) shows for medieval Anuradhapura. These hierarchical sect structures, controlled by wealthy clerical elites, allied politically, economically and through kinship with the aristocracy, also allowed the maintenance of the political and ideological hegemony of these elites over the plebian, propertyless monks at the base; monks and temples not allied with the dominant sects were frequently accused of heresy and became the subjects of clerical and political persecution. Periodically, as the temples became obscenely wealthy and lost their legitimacy for the public, and thus their ability to legitimate the social and political order, ascetic movements split off which attracted pious lay patronage, became rich and powerful, and spawned new reform sects. Even the religious ideologies of these competing monastic groups were never purely "insurgent"; any particular religious expression, being the result of social struggle, necessarily included elements which both potentially undercut and reproduced social power relations.

The monks not only monopolized religious legitimation, but also education. In the pre-colonial period the only formal

education available was to be found in the temple. As the sole teachers and knowledge producers for their society, the monks shaped the world-views of the people in their own interests, and in the interests of those with whom they were inter-dependent, the aristocracy and royalty. One of the main spurs to the anti-colonial/anti-Christian militance of the disenfranchised, low-caste monks of the nineteenth century was the threat to the clerical monopoly on edcuation posed by the Christian missionaries. The missionary school training of an indigenous Tamil and Sinhalese elite to administer Sri Lanka for the British was accompanied by the conversion of these indigenous elites to Christianity. Though the conversion of Sinhalese elites to Christianity threatened even landed, upper-caste monks' organic connection to power, the landless, low-caste sects along the Southern coast were directly economically threatened by this disenfranchisement. The Kandyan, Siyam monks just grumbled, while the low-country plebian monks became leaders in the anti-colonial agitation.

Conclusion

"Health is the highest gain.
Contentment is the greatest wealth.
The trusty are the best kinsmen.
Nibbāna is the highest bliss."

Dhammapāda, v. 204

Cultural relations occur naturally between people in different nations as a result of trade, tourism, student exchanges, entertainment, communications, migration, inter-marriage and millions of cross-cultural encounters. But cultural diplomacy happens only when a government decides to channel and support cultural exchange through planned programs to promote broad national interests.

Interactions with the various sections of the monks in Sri Lanka revealed the political nature of Buddhism , which is as of today termed as "political Buddhism" (read Joseph Tambiah). However, the cultural impact of India is very prominent in Sri Lanka, and indeed an unexplored virgin area to venture upon. Careful study of the inscriptions , during the tour have alerted us that most of the historical facts are available as relics in Sri Lanka. The ancient script, called the Brahmi has been well-preserved, and deserves respect. Almost all the deities have an Indian cultural impact, indicating strong Indian influence since ancient times. The carefully preserved Anuradhapura Mahāvihāra contains statues, which ensemble Indian origin, and a strong Indian connection. The restoration work , which was going on , when this author visited, gave her to understand that there is a clear superimposition of the Buddhist culture.

Nevertheless, the extremity of Buddhism needs to be contested. For example, in an informal engagement of conversation (with some of the former monks, names not revealed to keep their identities as a secret, one lady (wife) has revealed that they keep themselves simple without any use of womanly make-up, use

light colour clothes, preferably white during temple visit or other ceremonies, etc., since that is antithetical to Buddhist culture. Thus, culture *per se* is getting mingled with religion, which in turn is also percolating into the various levels of the society. Whether this culture is actually benefitting the whole society is a contested one. Further, if the cultural ethos and practices are only "overtly binding", then the main precepts of Buddha *Dhamma* will be surely overlooked by the followers, giving rise to untoward tussle among all. It has also been observed by this author that the Buddhist monks command high respect among all. One such example, is that all the laymen sit on a "kneel down" position in front of any monk, thereby creating, unknowingly a superior hierarchical structure in the society.

Projecting insecurity among the masses has given rise to fundamentalism, which has been proved as a major source of terrorism. The Governments of many of these states are, thus facing overt and covert challenges of meeting the expectations of the population en masse, by and large, and also combating all subversive activities from within the society. These are getting reflected in the formulation of the foreign policies of these countries too. These types of countries are spread all over the world.

One of the major tributaries of the Marxian theoretical exposition comes from Antonio Gramsci and his powerful conceptualization of the relationship between culture and power. He suggested that subordinate classes had a latent "critical consciousness", a latent cognizance that the hegemonic world-view and social order tended to serve the interests of the ruling classes. The intellectuals directly rooted in these subordinate classes, those who have the opportunity and training for reflection in their institutional roles such as doctors, clerks, teachers, clergy, these "organic intellectuals" may mobilize this latent critical consciousness in a "counter-hegemonic" "war of position" against the hegemonic powers. Gramsci wrote that the role of a revolutionary party is to develop a new organic intellectual leadership from the peasants and workers. From the vantage point of Gramsci's Italy, most clergy and other categories of traditional intellectuals were organically tied to the upper classes, and thus not the basis for radical social change. The lowest plebian clergy could, however, be "organic intelligentsia" of the peasantry.

Some of the ideals inscribed in Buddhism and the subtle way in which it influences the foreign policy of the Sri Lanka and Myanmar is interesting to note. A religion which on the one hand has always preached, compassion, and detachment, does not get expressed by the followers. What is most surprising is the "rigidity" that the monks, and the Saṅgha display, when it comes to nation. It brings us to the basic question of whether religion is a unifying force in these two countries or whether it imposes a superstructure on the civil-administration. The answer is simply, more

or less yes, which attests that religio-cultural expression of a nation needs to be taken into consideration while studying any other country of the world, especially our South-East Asian neighbours.

Recently, scholars have begun to suggest differentiated roles, neither wholely elite nor wholely insurgent, in class struggle for the Thai Buddhist clergy (Suksamran, 1982), the Burmese Buddhist clergy (Sarkisyanz, 1965), for the Sri Lankan Buddhist clergy (Rahula, 1956, 1974; Houtart, 1974, 1977; Phadnis, 1976; Jayawardene, 1979; Malagoda, 1976), and even for the early Buddhist movement in ancient India (Sankrityayan, 1973; Ling, 1973).

Alexander Wendt, in his book "*Social Theory of International Politics*", Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999, Chapters 6 and 7, "Rationalist models are incorrect to assume that only the behavior of states is affected by the structure of the international system. Instead, the interests and identities of states are themselves constructed by the distribution of ideas within that system", perceives three distinct cultures of anarchy: Hobbesian, Lockean, and Kantian. Each of these is constituted by a particular notion of the basic relationship between states. A state may consider its Other an enemy, rival, or friend, respectively. Each culture, moreover, includes three degrees of "internalization" – the motive states have for playing by the rules. They are: (1) coercion; (2) interest; and (3) legitimacy. Thus, in any given ideational structure, some ideas will be shared and others will be termed as private. Shared ideas, especially about the nature of Self and the Other, are the "culture", or, more precisely , the "political culture" of an international system. Thus, the political culture of a system is the most important element one needs to understand and analyze in order to understand the impact of any given factor, (in this case Buddhism as an element in foreign policy). Going by Wendt, it can be stated that both rules - 2 & 3 (interest and legitimacy) are being meted out through Buddhism. The "shared ideas" about the nation and the self are inter-twined in such a way with Buddha Dhamma, that distinction of any sort is simply not possible. It is thus, imperative that the presence of this "shared ideas" intertwined inexplicably with Buddha Dhamma is not identical with high levels of cooperation, corroborating the factual rise of militant nationalism in Sri Lanka.

NOTES

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4. See the article on this subject in *Buddhist Studies Review*, 24.2, 2007
5. Wilhelm Geiger, (Tr.), *Mahavamsa : The Great Chronicle of Ceylon*, Pali Text Society, 1912, pp. 82 & 86.
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12. Stanley Jeyaraja Tambiah, *Buddhism Betrayed?* The University of Chicago Press, 1992, pp. 35 & 36
13. *Ibid*., p. 28.
14. *Ibid*.,
15. *Ibid*., p. 29.
16. *Ibid*., pp. 63 & 64
17. Dan Lusthaus, "What is and isn't Yogācāra." He specifically discusses early Buddhism as well as Yogacara.
18. Prebish, Charles S, *Buddhist Monastic Discipline*.
19. http://www.changesurfer.com/Bud/Sri/Sri.html, revisited on 28/1/2011
20. By paying particular attention to the economic support of the temple, this model also would fit within a rational choice framework: it is in the self-interest of a cleric whose livelihood is dependent on the voluntarily donated economic surplus of his parishioners to see that his parishioners have more surplus, and feel that his services are beneficial. It is in the self-interest of a property-owning or elite-allied monk however to work in the interests of property-owners.

BHĀMATI ON *AVIDYĀ* AND ITS LOCUS

Professor V. Swaminathan

The *Upaniṣads* popularly known as Vedānta declare that Brahman or Ātman is the Ultimate Reality of the world and that it is non-dual, i.e. one without a second. This would mean that the entire universe of sentient beings and non-sentient matter are identical with Brahman. In other words, nothing exists apart from Brahman; whatever exists, exists in Brahman and not independent of Brahman. Further the *Upaniṣads* describe Brahman in unequivocal terms as pure consciousness, nameless, formless, eternal, etc.

If nothing exists over and above the non-dual and formless Brahman, how can we account for our valid experience of the world of infinite variety? How does the non-dual Brahman become the world of variety and plurality? Does Brahman undergo any transformation or without suffering any change present itself as manifold?

These above and other related questions have been answered elaborately, by Ācārya Śaṅkara in his *Bhāṣya* on the *Ārambhaṇādhikaraṇa Br. Su,* II,1,14-20.

Śaṅkara avers that Brahman is the material cause of the multiplicity, and that it does not suffer any change; but it only appears as many in association with *avidyā* (synonymous with *māyā). Avidyā* has to be understood as the opposite of *vidyā,* since *vidyā*, or consciousness, reveals objects whereas *avidyā* conceals objects. Since anything besides Brahman exists in Brahman, *avidyā* also must exist in Brahman.

At this stage one may ask - How can *avidyā* (the opposite of *vidyā*) exist in Brahman which is *vidyāsvabhāva* or of the nature of pure consciousness.

Vācaspati Miśra the celebrated polymath of ancient India comes forward with the following solution in the *Bhāmati*, his commentary on Śaṅkara's *Brahma-Sūtra Bhāṣya*

He declares that the jīva is the locus of *avidyā* (implying that Brahman is not). Even though the jīva and Brahman are one and the same as witnessed in the scriptural statements: "Thou art that! This Self, verily, is all (the world)"; still this much difference obtains between them as vouched by our day to day experience.

Brahman, pure consciousness, infinite, becomes individualized by the adjuncts, *viz*., *avidyās*. This phenomenon is convincingly expounded by employing the analogy of the object and its numerous images reflected in the diverse media.

The images of an object reflected in the manifold media such as mirror, sword, precious stones like the emerald and so on differ from each other and also from the object owing to the difference in their shape,

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properties, etc., acquired from the reflecting media though they, in reality, do not differ from the object which remains unstained in spite of the vicinity of the object. Likewise the infinite number of jīvas become the abode of miseries such as ignorance, delusion, bereavement, sorrow, and so on, on account of their adjuncts, the beginningless inderminate *avidyās,* even though Brahman remains untainted by any of the human miseries.

This difference between Brahman and the jīvas is adventitious, since the difference gets dissolved when the adjuncts get destroyed. For example, the space contained inside the jar and the other utensils exhibit some difference from the unlimited space outside; but the difference is totally destroyed when the jar breaks. In truth, therefore, the limited space is not different from the unlimited space.

Vācaspati Miśra on *Avidyā* and the Jīva

Avidyā is the power of Brahman. It is indeterminate (*anirvacanīya*), i.e., neither existent nor non-existent (*sat-asat vilakṣaṇa*). Brahman which is the one and devoid of attributes by itself cannot become the cause of the world of diversity. It assumes the role of the cause only in association with *avidyā* in order to create the world of variety and multiplicity.

At this juncture emerges this question - How does *avidyā* residing in the jīva become associated with Brahman? In other words, what does this association with Brahman consist in?

The reply is - *avidyā* being non-sentient cannot bring about any effect by itself, and, therefore, stands in need of a sentient being, Brahman, in order to give rise to any effect.

Brahman is the content (*viṣaya*) of *avidyā* that abides in the jīva. Like its counterpart *vidyā, avidyā* also has a content (i.e., something to be concealed by it). Brahman being its content prompts *avidyā* just as fragrance, the content (target) of the sense organ, *viz*. nose, activates it. Furthermore, Brahman serves as the substratum of the world of multiplicity brought into existence by the operation of *avidyā.* In other words Brahman happens to be the material cause of the universe. Any effect, to materialize, stands in need of two causes *viz*., (1) efficient cause, and (2) material cause. Brahman achieves the twofold causality in the following manner.

Brahman assumes the role of efficient cause of the world in as much as it activates *avidyā* and of material cause by being its substratum. Thus, *avidyā* confers on Brahman the role of both efficient and material causes. Since *avidyā* relies upon Brahman for its activation and also for a substratum to accommodate the world brought by it, it is said that *avidyā* is dependent on Brahman though it is actually located in the jīva.

Avidyā is not a singular entity. There are as many *avidyās* as there are jīvas. Therefore, when a particular jīva realizes its identity with Brahman its *avidyā* alone is annulled; the *avidyās* of all

other jīva remain intact. Therefore, the question of all the jīvas attaining liberation (on the collapse of *avidyā)* will not arise when *avidyā* is annihilated. Therefore, the singular in the words *māyā, avidyā, avyakta,* etc., is to be understood as pertaining to the *avidyā*-universal and not to the individual-*avidyā.* The use of plural in the Upaniṣadic statements: "*yo yonim yonim adhitiṣṭatyekah. Indro māyābhih pururūpa iyate"* points to the multiplicity of the jīva.

From the foregoing brief account it transpires that the jīva is absolutely non-different from Brahman; but the difference experienced in common parlance is only adventitious as it owes its existence to the adjunct, *avidyā.* It was also observed that the jīva is the abode of *avidyā.* Also every jīva is differentiated by his own *avidyā.* It amounts to saying that the jīva owes its existence to *avidyā,* and that the *avidyā* rests in the jīva. The multiplicity of *avidyā* is contingent upon the multiplicity of jīvas, and multiplicity of the jīvas is contingent upon the multiplicity of *avidyā.*

This stand of Vācaspati Miśra, one may point out, involves, the flaw of reciprocal dependence.

Let us explore the possibilities of the occurrence of reciprocal dependence in the present instance, in the light of the basic conclusions of Advaita Vedānta.

Reciprocal dependence may occur in three different ways *viz.,* with reference to either: (1) origination, or (2) knowledge, or (3) existence. To put it precisely, either (1) one originates from the other, or (2) one's knowledge needs the knowledge of the other, or (3) one's existence rests on the existence of the other.

The first alternative cannot be true because the jīva and *avidyā* are both beginningless the question of origination does not arise with reference to either *avidyā* or the jīva.

The second alternative too cannot stand. For though *avidyā,* being non-sentient needs the light of the jīva to be revealed; the jīva, being self- revealing (*svaprakāśa*) does not require the knowledge of *avidyā* to reveal itself.

The third alternative will be a flaw only when one is posterior and the other is anterior to it. Since the jīva and *avidyā* are both beginningless, according to Advaita Vedānta, reciprocal dependence grounded on successive origination can hardly find a lodging here.

Even in instances, where both the entities originate simultaneously it has no occasion to occur. For example, substance (*dravya*) and quality (*guṇa*). Substance and quality originate at the same instant. At no point of time substance can exist without quality, and quality can exist without substance. They always exist together. Since *dravya* without *guṇa* and *guṇa* without *dravya* can hardly be conceived of, it has to be admitted that they originate simultaneously. If reciprocal dependency were to be a flaw in this instance we will be

barred from offering definitions of *dravya* and *guṇa* free from fallacies. But *dravya* had been defined as the residence of *guṇa,* and *guṇa* as the resident of *dravya.* In this instance, one has to be defined in terms of the other. The existence of one rests on the existence of the other.

Also in cases involving the relation of the delimitor and the delimited reciprocal dependency cannot gain entry. For example, the jar and the space limited by (contained in) it. Limiting the space to be occupied by it the jar emerges. i.e., the jar — exists in the space delimited by itself. The jar-space also (*ghaṭākāśa*) exists in the jar. Here we notice that the jar exists in the space defined by it and the jar-space also exists in the jar. The existence of one resting on the existence of the other is a matter of common experience, and there is nothing to contradict this experience. In as much as reciprocal dependence does not hinder the rise of valid knowledge it has no claims to be considered as a flaw.

The statement that the jīva is the locus of *avidyā* means that *avidyā* resides in the jīva. By definition the jīva is consciousness limited by *avidyā.* Therefore, that the jīva is the locus of *avidyā*, will have to be understood as meaning that *avidyā* exists in the consciousness limited by itself. This situation is analogous to the existence of the jar in the space conditioned by itself.

Therefore, it is reasonable to hold that the jīva is the locus of *avidyā.* This stand taken by Vācaspati Miśra does not militate against the stand favoured by the other preceptors of Advaita that the pure attributeless Brahman is the locus of *avidyā.*

The jar existing in the space limited by it does exist in the unlimited space (*mahākāśa*) also. To be precise, the jar exists in the unlimited space through the space limited by it, but not directly. Likewise *avidyā* existing in the jīva (limited consciousness) exists in the unlimited consciousness (Brahman) also, i.e., avidyā does not exist in Brahman directly, but through the jīva. It is only in this sense that the views of the other preceptors are to be understood.'

If *avidyā* is thus admitted in the unlimited consciousness then the stand that the jīva (limited consciousness) is the locus of *avidyā* becomes superfluous. It is not so. For such a stand is favoured only to obviate the flaw of *avidyā* in Brahman so as to be in harmony with the Upaniṣadic statement "Free from flaws and free from stain" which proclaims that Brahman is "absolutely devoid of all blemishes."

Nor does this stand disregard the scriptural statement "*māyinam to maheśvaram"* meaning that Brahman is the abode of *māyā* (*avidyā*). For the suffix "*in"* in the vicinity of the stem "*māyā*" does not invariably express the abode; it conveys possession also. For example, in words like "*gṛhin",* the suffix stands for relation (possession) and not for locus. Therefore, "*māyi*" will mean one who is related to *māyā* as its content and not as its abode.

Further the acceptance of the jīva as the locus of *avidyā* entails these difficulties. The (1) jīva will have to be admitted as the material cause of the universe. Because the material cause of the world, it is held, (transformation of *avidyā)* is the locus of *avidyā.* (2) Brahman will cease to be the creator and controller since it is stripped of the adjunct, *avidyā,* that confers on it creatorship and controllership. These difficulties shoot up from a consideration of the other view that the world is a transformation of *avidyā* and that Brahman by virtue of its being the locus of *avidyā* assumes the role of both the efficient and material cause of the world. Vācaspati Miśra outrightly rejects this view since it will be blasphemy even to conceive *avidyā* in Brahman.

Vācaspati Miśra's stand may be demonstrated as shown herein below. Such Upaniṣadic statements as The Brahman created a Self out of itself unequivocally assert that Brahman is the material as well as the efficient cause of the world-appearance. *Avidyā* also has to be admitted as a cause of the world appearance because the world appears when Brahman is not realized as the Self and does not appear when Brahman is realized as the Self. The world-appearance is thus the effect of two different causes, Brahman and *avidyā.* How these two causes will give rise to one and the same effect has to be determined.

It cannot be presumed that a combination of Brahman and *avidyā* constitute the cause of the world appearance. For a combination of these two is unthinkable since Brahman, the flawless pure consciousness (*niravadya jñāna*), will never become an associate of the flaw of *avidyā.*

That Brahman alone could be the material cause is vouched by the scriptural statements. "All these beings spring up from Brahman alone."' Therefore *avidyā* becoming the material cause is absolutely impossible. Nor can it have any claim to be the efficient cause as only a sentient being could act as the efficient cause according to the Upaniṣadic statement. “The world of name, form and so on originate from the Being that possesses the knowledge of the entire universe in its general and special aspects”. Therefore, *avidyā* has to be considered as stationed in the jīva and an auxiliary cause (*sahakāri kāraṇam*).

In its capacity of an auxiliary cause *avidyā* must have some connection with the material and efficient causes in order to give rise to any effect. The wheel and the staff are in contact with the potter and the clay. What type of connection will *avidyā* have with Brahman? The universal common experience, “I do not know Brahman; I see only the world of variety and multiplicity”, shows that Brahman is the content (*viṣaya*) of the individual-*avidyā* and it is responsible for the appearance of Brahman as the world.

In the oft cited of rope-snake analogy, the rope is the content of the *avidyā* which is responsible for the appearance of the snake. Here the rope becomes the substratum of the

snake. As long as the rope continues to be the content of the individual's *avidyā* it appears as snake and the moment it ceases to be the content of *avidyā* (i.e. the rope is visualized), the snake disappears. As long as Brahman continues to be the content of the individual *avidyā* it appears as multiplicity, and the instant at which it ceases to be the content of *avidyā* (i.e. at the dawn of the Self-Brahman identity), the world disappears.

To put on the appearance of a snake the rope acquires the contentness forged by the *avidyā.* In other words, *avidyā* confers contentness on the rope, and, consequently it becomes connected with the rope through the relation contentness (*viśayata*). Likewise, the jīva's *avidyā* imposes contentness on Brahman and becomes connected with it through the relation, contentness. Vācaspati Miśra affirms that *avidyā* though located in the jīva, becomes connected with Brahman through contentness.

Without undergoing any change - remaining it its nature - the rope appears as snake when it happens to be the content of *avidyā.* In the same way, without suffering any change - retaining its pristine purity - Brahman appears as the world of multiplicity when it happens to be the content of the individual's *avidyā*

This, phenomenon of one object appearing as a totally different object without suffering any change is known as transfiguration (*vivarta*). The snake is a *vivarta* of the rope and the world is a *vivarta* of Brahman.

Vācaspati Miśra avers that the world is a transfiguration (*vivarta*) and not a transformation (*pariṇāma*) of Brahman. So also creatorship and controllership are *vivartas* of Brahman.

M*āyā* has to be regarded as only the auxiliary cause because by being the content of *māyā,* located in the jīva, Brahman becomes the material cause of the world, its own *vivarta.* Therefore the criticism that the jīva will become the material cause of the world, and that Brahman will lose its creatorship and controllership have little chance in Vācaspati's exposition of Advaita.

THREE CONTEMPORARY SPIRITUAL GIANTS

Dr. Kalpana Bidwaikar

Sri Krishna has said in the *Bhagavad-Gitā*, that whenever there is a decline of *Dharma,* He will incarnate to save *Dharma*. The 19th century witnessed the advent of three spiritual giants in quick succession to save *Dharma* and save the humanity. In the mid nineteenth century, spirituality had almost disappeared from the world. Darwin's theory of evolution shook the world and evidences were being found to support such a theory. While it contradicted the *Bible* regarding the origin of man it also perplexed the Western mind. People did not know which way to go - the religious or the scientific. Religion had already been losing ground not only in Europe but also in the whole world as there was an urge towards progress and expansion. India was not untouched by such a turmoil. Falsehood, atheism, fragmentation, confusion and pretense were gripping Indians and they were losing faith in their religion and culture.

In this chaos, India was struggling to find its basis for existence - spiritualism. However, this truth which got overshadowed by falsehood was infused and re-installed by the priest of Dakshineshwar in the late 1850s, through his visions of the Divine Mother. He was none other than Sri Ramakrishna Paramhamsa who was himself chosen by the Divine Mother for her divine work on earth. When there was darkness all around, and atheism and superstition prevailed, this son of the Divine Mother represented spirituality at its absolute. Also, when there was a complete lack of faith regarding the existence of the Divine, he instilled faith in people that they could not only know God, but also attain Him, and help others if they wished to. He authentically established spirituality, which is the core of all existence; and proclaimed authoritatively about faith in God's existence. At a time when people were craving after material gains and intellectual and scientific knowledge, Sri Ramakrishna exemplified through his own practice the great Vedantic method of experience - inner revelation, and also showed its possibilities. Sri Aurobindo says that "…in the life of Ramakrishna Paramhamsa, we see a colossal spiritual capacity, first driving straight to the divine realization, taking as it were, the kingdom of heaven by violence, and then seizing upon one Yogic method after another and extracting the substance out of it with an incredible rapidity, always to return to the heart of the whole matter, the realization and possession of God by the power of love, by the extension of inborn spirituality into various experience and by the spontaneous play of an intuitive knowledge."[1]

Spirituality is concerned with clear realization, an unveiled intuition of truth and God attainment. It is not a concept or imagination or an intellectual conclusion,

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but a living experience and concrete realization. This God-realization came to a person who was an "illiterate, poor and obscure Bengali peasant, one who to the end of his life used a patois full of the most rustic forms and expressions, ignorant of Sanskrit, of any language but his own provincial dialect, ignorant of philosophy and science, ignorant of the world, yet realized in himself all the spiritual wisdom of the ages, shed in his brief sayings a light so full, so deep on the most difficult profundities of our inner being, the most abstruse questions of metaphysics that the most strenuous thinkers and the most learned Pandits were impressed by his superiority."[2] The process through which Sri Ramakrishna arrived at this knowledge was neither intellectual nor reasoning. The secret of his success was that he always lived and saw things with the higher faculty, and threw his vision into experience accompanied with a power of realization.

These spiritual realizations of Sri Ramakrishna were not limited to himself only. He was an *avatāra* whose advent intended the betterment of humanity. He was a reservoir of spiritual energy so full of the power of God that he could not remain satisfied with his silent bliss. He poured out the bliss on the world and communicated his ecstasy of realization to others who were fit enough to receive it. Who could have been more qualified as a disciple than Swami Vivekananda himself? At the time when Swami Vivekananda appeared on the scene, India was in deep slumber, there was *tamas* all around. India had lost her mission, her very reason for existence, her spirit and wisdom. Swami Vivekananda awakened India from this deep slumber. He reminded her of her spiritual strength and her mission to lead the world through spirituality. "Vivekananda lifted India up as did the Lord when he had incarnated himself as a white boar and lifted the earth from the ocean bed with his pointed tusks."[3] With this power he upheld India before the world and unveiled a new vision of India's place among the people of the world. Swami Vivekananda was a seer who saw and revealed the mystic word by the force of which India awoke and stood vibrant with life. His philosophy was conveyed in powerful words "No fear; Brahman am I. Fear not! Infinite is your courage, limitless your capacity. You are the very Brahman. Awake in the Being of the Brahman within you. Know who you are and what you are…… A man becomes as is his faith. A man becomes whatever he has faith in."[4] Swami Vivekananda's advent was not for formulating a new scripture. His was a role of awakening the individual soul to its real divine nature.

Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda are intimately connected in their spiritual work. Sri Aurobindo says that "The going forth of Vivekananda, marked out by the Master as the heroic soul destined to take the world between his two hands and change it, was the visible sign to the world that India was awake not only to survive but to conquer."[5] He observes that the coming of Sri Ramakrishna brought the "*Satyayuga*"

on earth. It was the beginning of a new *yuga*, a new era. His advent dissolved *tamas,* and the darkness which engulfed the country for centuries got dispersed. He worked for the future of India through his spiritual strength. He called Swami Vivekananda the future representative of India, and moulded him. The patriotism of Swami Vivekananda was the gift of his revered Guru. The way in which Sri Ramakrishna moulded him, he deemed the best way of moulding the future of India. He infused in him the spirit of a hero and used to tell him "Thou art a Hero". The radiation, the impact of the personality of Swami Vivekananda was like that of the sun; he enlightened the masses with his strength and vigour. He was the ambassador of India to the West who declared "the tidal wave of spirituality which is destined at no distant future to break upon India in all its irresistible powers... fulfilling its mission amongst the races of the world - the evolution of spiritual humanity."[6]

It may be worthwhile to note that no great soul works in isolation, neither do they work for themselves. Their work also is not restricted to the span of their lives. The power and consciousness that they bring with themselves are at work even after their departure from the earthly life. The prophecy of the evolution of spiritual humanity is further carried out by the *yoga sādhana* of Sri Aurobindo. He says "… there can be no doubt that man is full of divine possibilities – he is not merely a term in physical evolution but himself the field of a spiritual which with him began and in him will end. It was only when man was made that the gods were satisfied - they who had rejected the animal forms, and cried "*sukṛtameva*", "Man indeed is well and wonderfully made; the higher evolution can now begin."[7] This is the work, that of the spiritual evolution of man which was taken up by Sri Aurobindo.

According to Sri Aurobindo, the world is in evolution from matter to plant, plant to animal, animal to man. However, man is not the last step in evolution as it will go further from man to superman. Evolution is not restricted merely to the development of forms and species but is a progressive growth of consciousness. The whole process implies the emergence of the Spirit involved in Nature. Sri Aurobindo takes an integral view of evolution as a continuous process of the unfoldment of Spirit that is involved in the ignorance and inconscience of matter. Hence, evolution for him is the evolution of consciousness. The whole meaning of man's existence on earth is in one's spiritual evolution. However, as Nature changes itself through physical organization, man has to proceed through a change in consciousness. The individual has to evolve and grow more and more into a developed consciousness so that one's evolution is effected. This involves the process of triple transformation – the Psychic, the Spiritual and the Supramental. Consequent upon this will be realized Sri Aurobindo's formula of the ideal of "a divine life in a divine body". He lived, worked and struggled to achieve this ideal.

He not only takes evolution on to a new scale but also gives us a new and concrete concept of transformation through his own realization. With Sri Aurobindo the evolution of human consciousness has reached its acme. We get a full account of this in his spiritual autobiography which is the great cosmic epic *Savitri*. Sri Aurobindo has himself charted these vast unknown routes from the mind to the Overmind and beyond, and the *Savitri* is his yogic experience in poetic form. The *Savitri* is the Creative Word of Sri Aurobindo which can help us to evolve into higher states of consciousness.

It is worthwhile to note here what Sri Aurobindo wrote to a disciple "… Remember also that we derive from Ramakrishna. For myself it was Ramakrishna who personally came and first turned me to this Yoga. Vivekananda in the Alipore jail gave me the foundations of that knowledge which is the basis of our *sādhana*."[8] While he received three messages from the spirit of Sri Ramakrishna, the spirit of Swami Vivekananda visited him in Alipore jail. He says "Then there is the incident of the personality of Vivekananda visiting me in jail. He explained to me in detail the work of the Supramental (Supermind) - not exactly of the Supramental, but of the intuitivised mind, the mind as it is organized by the Supramental. He did not use the word 'Supermind', I gave this name afterwards. That experience lasted for about two weeks."[9]

To conclude, it can be said that the spiritual torch which was lit by Sri Ramakrishna was handed over to Swami Vivekananda and later to Sri Aurobindo. The advent of the three great spiritual giants in quick succession has helped humanity immensely to proceed along the lines of evolution. It is left to us to benefit from these great Masters of our country. What Sri Aurobindo wrote about Swami Vivekananda may fittingly be applied to Sri Aurobindo himself - "Vivekananda was a soul of puissance if ever there was one a very lion among men, but the definite work he has left behind is quite incommensurate with our impression of creative might and energy. We perceive his influence still working gigantically, we know not well how, we know not well where, in something that is not yet formed, something leonine, grand, intuitive, upheaving that has entered the soul of India and we say, "Behold, Vivekananda still lives in the soul of his Mother and in the souls of her children."[10]

NOTES

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AESTHETIC COMMUNICATION

Dr. R. Lekshmi

Art is, first and foremost, a kind of human creativity, a product of enormous skill and fertile imagination. It is human creation arising from human experience, which is a configuration of thought, feeling, emotion, etc. This experience, in fact, is mental. The problem for art is how to communicate the mental experience to the others. In other words art "communication" is a significant topic for discussion in philosophical aesthetics

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Like any other communication, communication of art experience involves a minimum of two persons: (1) the creator/communicator, and the viewer/appreciator/receiver(s) involved in the communication. In art, the communication is between the artist and the appreciator, which is carried on through a medium - a work of art. The content of the mind, which the artist is impelled to express; and the effort made by the appreciator to receive the same are both mental. Unlike other means of communication, in the realm of art there cannot by any direct transmission and reception of contents. The content of the artist's mind must take some form, which will serve as a medium (art), between the artist and the spectator. The medium and the message conveyed through it though distinguishable/distinct are highly inseparable like a copper-wire and the electricity flowing through that wire. Aesthetic communication involves blending two hearts, agreeable to two hearts – *hṛdayasamvādi.*[1]

There are thus three elements in the process of aesthetic communication: (1) the content of the mind of the artist, (2) the objectified mental facts or symbols, and (3) the contents in the appreciator's mind. Though the above said process seems to be very simple, viewed from a philosophical perspective, it is not so because many fundamental questions arise in this context. They include:

- is communication the primary objective of aesthetics? If, "yes"; what is its unique status?
- does aesthetic communication imply a context of transmission and evoking of human emotions? Or does it lead us to higher realms of consciousness?
- is aesthetic experience the crux of aesthetic communication? What is its cognitive status?
- how is the Indian concept of *rasānubhūti* similar to the Western conception of aesthetic experience?
- what is the ontological and epistemological significance of aesthetic communication?
- what is the pragmatic value of aesthetic communication in the moral and the

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social lives of human beings?

That aesthetic communication is "*hṛdayasamvādi*" itself suggests that it is an experience. Artistic communication transmitted through a medium of art produces certain reactions in the states of consciousness and emotions in the spectator's mind. Whenever there is a reference to a piece of art, there is also a reference to the experience associated with it. "To call something beautiful or artistic is to declare that it is a source of aesthetic experience…the very gradation of the object as aesthetically valuable depends in the extent of the qualitative excellence of the experience itself." [2]

According to the theories of art and beauty in Indian and Western aesthetics, "aesthetic experience" has certain distinct features and characteristics. In the Indian context, it is called "*rasānubhūti*" which is the central axis around which Indian aesthetics revolves. Indeed the aim of art is communication and the aim of communication is the genesis of aesthetic experience or *rasānubhūti* which is *a priori* and immediate.

The process of communication, which flows through the medium of art, was given the name "*rasa"* in Indian aesthetics. "*Rasa*" is the mode of transition from subjectivity to objectivity or from privacy to publicness. The basic elements in *rasa* are emotions (*bhāvas*). In aesthetic communication, it is the experience contained in the *sthāyi-bhāvas,* which is carried from one individual to another. Anandavardhana describes *rasa* as that form of aesthetic-experience resulting from happy contemplation, which is self – revealing, which is realized by the power of words attracting the heart to an identity, aided by the beautiful *vibhāva, anubhāva* etc., together based on the *sthāyi-bhāvas* [3]

Sthāyi-bhāvas exist in the heart of everyone as unconscious latent impressions – in the ordinary person and also an actor. In an ordinary person, these occur naturally. In an actor, they are expressed in the form of imitation of emotions or other form of experience of some other person. In this transformation, the *sthāyi-bhāvas* become objective through *vibhāvas, anubhāvas* and *vyabhicāri-bhāvas* and *rasa* is produced.

There are subjective and objective factors in the production of *rasa*. The subjective factors include a *sthāyi-bhāva* present in the dramatist as well as the spectator. Besides *sthāyi-bhāva*, the artist as well as the spectator must have imaginative insight (*pratibhā)*. The objective factors include *vibhāvas, anubhāvas* and *vyabhicāri-bhāvas*. *Vibhāva* makes an emotion appear directly in a character in the play by suggesting it to the spectator. The *ālambana vibhāva* is constituted of the human element while the *uddīpana vibhāva* by that of natural element. *Anubhāva* is the effect or manifestation of an emotion. *Vyabhicāri-bhāva* is the transitory emotion. To produce *rasa,* the subjective and the objective factors must work in perfect unison. *Rasa* thus produced is above the ordinary state of consciousness. It is

described as *ālaukika* or *lokottara*.[4]

In describing *bhāvas* as the prior conditions of *rasa,* Bharata means by "*bhāvas*" both the mental states as well as the expressions of these in bodily and organic forms. He defines *bhāvas* as the conditions for the expression of *rasa*.[5] Bharata's *Sūtra* in the *Nāṭyasāstra*: "*tatra vibhāvanubhāva vyabhicāri samyogāt rasa niṣpatti* " which is generally interpreted as "*rasa*" is a procreation caused by the combination of *vibhāva, anubhāva*, and *vyabhicāri-bhāvas* has raised various controversies about its meaning.

Lollaṭa in explaining Bharata's *Sūtra* took the *vibhāva* as the direct cause of *rasa. Rasa* is therefore an effect. Here the term "*vibhāva* " stands for the actual characters of the play. This view has been criticized on the following grounds. If the emotions of the original character are the causes, i.e. the *vibhāvas*, how can it be taken for granted that the actor also has the same emotions while he is acting? [6]

Śaṅkuka*,* the next commentator on the subject, criticizes the theory of cause-effect relationship between *vibhāva* and *rasa* (*utpattivāda*), and maintains that *rasa* is inferred from the *vibhāvas* by the spectator. According to him, *rasa* is a culmination of the process of logical inference drawn from the *vibhāvas, anubhāvas,* etc., The word "*niṣpatti*" in Bharata's *Sūtra* is explained as inference (*anumiti*). The *vibhāvas* though artificial, appear as the real grounds for the inferred moods.

Both the above said views fail to explain how the spectator gets aesthetic pleasure by witnessing tragedies.

Bhaṭṭanāyaka lays stress on the subjective aspect of *rasa* as the aesthetic experience of the spectator. The audience cannot have unpleasant experience when the emotions of the characters are unpleasant. They always experience enjoyment since their contemplation is a kind of meditation. This sounds similar to the Kantian concept of disinterestedness of pleasure as the fundamental feature of aesthetic experience. Kant says. "The beautiful is that which pleases in disinterested contemplation. Disinterestedness is pure contemplation independent of any concern for the real existence of the object."[7]

Bhaṭṭanāyaka distinguished poetic language from ordinary language and postulates for the former two functions, *bhāvakatva* and *bhojakatva* in addition to the primary function *abhidha*. [8] *Bhāvakatva* is the power of universalization (*sādhāraṇikaraṇam*), which strips the *vibhāvas* and *sthāyi-bhāvas*, etc., of their personal aspects and generalizes them in the minds of the spectators. *Bhojakatva* is the power by which the *sthāyi-bhāva* reaches its climax and is enjoyed by the spectators.

All the above discussed aestheticians display a strong affiliation to the different systems of Indian philosophy. Lollaṭa being a Mīmāṁsaka*,* believes in the far reaching functions of the denotation of a word and

thinks that it is capable of expressing implied or suggested sense of *rasa.* Śaṅkuka is inclined towards Nyāya logic and makes *rasa* a matter of logical inference, whereas Bhaṭṭanāyaka is a follower of Sāṅkhya philosophy.

The *bhāvakatva* theory of Bhaṭṭanāyaka was accepted and further modified by Abhinavagupta . He explains the genesis of *rasa* as due to the contribution of the spectator or reader. According to him, the reader is a *sahṛdaya-rasika*, a person with a capacity to identify himself with the generalized emotions.

The concept of generalization (*sādhāraṇikaraṇam*) is central to aesthetic experience (*rasānubhūti*) through which only aesthetic communication is effectively accomplished. The core of it is the assumption that a spectator must rise momentarily above time, space and causality and therefore above the stream of his personal life. Men and their actions shown in the art are freed from all particulars, i.e. are totally de-individualized.[9]

The concept of *sādhāraṇikaraṇam* sounds similar to the "disinterested attitude" suggested by Stolniz in the realization of aesthetic experience. By disinterested attitude a spectator learns to isolate himself from the environment surrounding him and concentrates himself on the piece of art and nothing else. In other words, the individual spectator identifies himself with the generalized emotion and gets disinterested enough to rise above the personal level of experience. Stolniz defines aesthetic attitude as "the disinterested and sympathetic attention to and contemplation of any object of awareness whatever, for its own sake alone."[10] To be sympathetic in aesthetic experience means to give the object the chance to show how it can be interesting to perception.[11]

Similar views are expressed by Edward Bullough through his concept of "psychical distance". Distancing involves the act of paying proper attention to the art object without relating it to our practical personal concerns. Every creation of a work of art is coloured by the personal emotions of the artist, yet it gets cleared off the personal traits. This holds the same with respect to the appreciator also. He acquires an impersonal attitude in his experience of the art objects. Psychical distance involves the antinomy between "under distancing" and "over distancing". Bullough says: "What is therefore, both in appreciation and production, most desirable is the utmost decrease of distance without its disappearance."[12]

With generalization (*sādhāraṇikaraṇam*) or proper distance or attitude, the spectator forgets about the *samsārika* existence. This is the state of identification termed by Abhinva Gupta as *"tanmayibhāva"* which is followed by *chamatkāra* - an uninterrupted state of immersion in an enjoyment, characterized by the presence of a sensation/feeling of inner fullness (*tṛpti*).[13] By means of *rasānubhūti* the spectator experiences the

happiness and despair of the world, uncircumscribed by time and space. Slowly, the multiplicity of the worldly duality, of happiness and sorrow, is transcended, in such a way that the spectator realizes one's perfect identity and oneness with Brahman.

Artistic creation begins only in the calmer moments when an artist has been able to detach oneself from personal feelings attached to the emotions and view it in itself. Hence, Wordsworth said that poetry springs from emotion recollected in tranquility. The emotion is de-personalized by the artist and presented in itself "*kavigata– sādhāraṇibhūta samvinmūlaḥ*" (*Nāṭya-śāstra,* VI, 42).

As a consequence of generalization (*sādhāraṇikaraṇam*), the emotion acquires two characteristics.[14] These can be considered as the practical outcome of proper aesthetic communication. First is that it is rendered free from the ugliness of defects. An emotion as it occurs in the actual life of man (*laukika)* has its own blemishes. The emotional material selected by the artist from the ordinary world is profoundly transformed by the artist's imagination such that it stands out in its perfect form (*ālaukika*). The emotion is presented as free from all its defects and as it ought to be cultivated in the life by human beings, i.e. as an ideal to be striven for. This can be best illustrated from Kalidasa's *Śakuntala*. The emotion of love, which is conjugal, is transmuted in the end as a spiritual welding of hearts.[15] The above said aesthetic process of freeing the emotions from their defects or purification of emotions is nothing but the catharsis of Aristotle.

The second characteristic is that the emotion becomes a source of pure delight to the appreciator. Since the emotion treated by the artist is impersonal, even painful emotions like fear and sorrow become enjoyable. When one perceives the generalized emotion, one is transported to a restful, disinterested self-forgetful state of the mind. In Schopenhauer's words: "aesthetic experience is our primary avenue of release from the wheel of striving."[16] Art is nothing less than a source of salvation, albeit temporary.

Aesthetic experience (*rasānubhūti*), thus takes one to the higher states of existence, in other words, to a higher ontological level of Being. According to Schopenhauer works of art afford an opportunity to escape the principle of sufficient reason and the principle of individuation. He says, "We do not let abstract thought, the concepts of reason, take possession of our consciousness, but instead of all this, devote the whole power of our mind to perception, sink ourselves completely therein, and let our whole consciousness be filled by the calm contemplation…we forget our individuality, our will and continue to exist as a pure subject, as clear mirror of the object…and thus we are no longer able to separate the perceiver from the perception, but the two have become one."[17] Through aesthetic experience, a person becomes a pure, will-less time-less subject of

knowledge.

If an appreciator is to be taken to such a transcendental level of being and knowing, the producer of that work of art has to be a genius. A genius is a person with a capacity of knowing the world independently of the principle of sufficient reason. The artistic geniuses, who are not generated by the principle of sufficient reason, enable us to see the world through their eyes.

The artist has to visualize clearly in his imagination the reaction of the spectator to the total situation of the art presented. The artist's mind is more complex which Bharata calls as "*kavi-antargata bhāva*". It is of the nature of self – consciousness (*anuvyavasāya*). Abhinavagupta also holds that an artist (poet) must have creative imagination - *pratibhā* and discernment - *vyutpatti*. While commenting on Ānandavardhana, Abhinavagupta defines *vyutpatti* as the discerning ability in using the insight with propriety: "*tadupayogisamasta vastu paurvaparāya – parāmarśa kauśalam*". Croce holds a similar view while saying that the real work of art is completed within the mind of the artist.[18]

What is communicated in art - in general; or poetry - in particular; is emotion. In the case of poetry, the question is how the emotional content of a poem is communicated to the reader. It was in answer to this problem that the *ālaṅkārikas* of Indian aesthetics discovered the concept of *dhvani*. It was accepted as most revolutionary in explaining the *rasa* phenomenon in poetry. The *dhvani*-theory and the *sphoṭa*- theory later developed by the grammarians suggest the potentiality of words to denote objects and ideas, which are conventionally, associated with them and so also something beyond them in some cases. Words have three types of meanings conveyed through *abhidhā, lakṣaṇa and vyañjana* - the direct meaning, implied meaning and suggested meaning. Here, the significance of the artist vanishes and what remains is how the reader understands the symbols or words. This sounds similar to "the death of the author" suggested by Roland Barthes, and the transition "from work to text" by the post-structuralists like Derrida.

But poems or art-works which present an "inner" type of subject matter, namely emotion, call for a better type of equipment in the appreciator also. Then only the process of aesthetic communication will be successful. In other words, the *asvāda* of the artist would become *asvādya* and should enable the spectators to *asvāda*. For that, firstly, the reader should have a penetrating imagination. The imagination of the spectator (reader) should be incisive so as to penetrate the situation and catch the underlying emotion. Secondly, the appreciation of the emotional type of poetry (art) presupposes that the reader must be adequately equipped with emotion even as with imagination. In other words, the reader must be sensitive as well as sympathetic.[19] In respect of imagination, it may be said that the reader's similarity is with the artist and in

respect of emotion with that of the art-work. Such a qualified appreciator of any art is a *sahṛdaya* - one of similar heart. As a consequence of this the reader gets absorbed in contemplating the art object, which is *tanmayi bhāva (tādātmya*), similar to "empathy" suggested by Ducasse.[20]

That a work of art is successful is proved by the fact that the artist effectively communicates his intentions/emotions to the spectator who in fact experiences the same feeling. Tolstoy states his firm view that art is a means of bringing the artist and the recipient on the same emotional plane. He says, "to evoke it oneself a feeling one has once experienced and having evoked it in oneself then by means of movements, lines, colours, sounds or forms expressed through words, so to transmit that feeling that others experience the same feelings. This is the activity of art." [21]The degree of infectiousness, as he calls it, is the sole measure of excellence in art. The infectiousness, which Tolstoy calls, is nothing but effective communication.

As a result of empathy (*tanmayibhāva*), the spectator experiences a higher order of delight (*prīti*), which may be its direct effect. But it also helps in the moral reformation of the individual. It is a mode of self-understanding in Gadamer's terminology. When we interpose art we interpret ourselves. The genuineness of the experience of art is indicated by the fact that it alters the one who experiences it; it alters the understanding subject. The experience of art is an experience of truth. Experiencing and interpreting art is called by Gadamer as "encounter": something happening to us or our happening into something.[22]

In fact, art is undeniably connected with morality in the sense that the artist's moral outlook counts much. Emotions are the basic springs of moral life. They supply the urge for conduct, while reason gives it a direction. The moral ideal comes to be intimately woven into the structure of the artistic theme. Tolstoy believes that art must have a social and moral purpose, which can guide humanity towards progress. According to Habermas, art must be thought of as a part of the project of emancipation and its role of helping people to understand and act in the world around them (a communicative action in art). Lyotard finds in aesthetic communication the capacity to present the fact that the unpresentable exists, the ideas that cannot be formulated in rational communication. The profound influence, which a work of art of the *rasa* type can produce upon countless generations of people is, no doubt, highly significant.

Conclusion

What is at work in aesthetic communication is *hṛdayasamvāda* which takes its participants to a realm of deeper or inner perception of reality. Aesthetic experience (*rasānubhūti*) takes the participant to a level of experience and cognition that transcends the ordinary levels of consciousness. The reader or the enjoyer of art undergoes a self-transformation, a

moral purification or a self-understanding in the process of interpreting a work of art. Through an effective aesthetic communication the participant is involved in a unique mode of communication, which is sometimes, far above rational communication. Through such a communication one reaches a level of knowledge transcending the subject-object duality where one enjoys pure delight free from all impurities. Thus aesthetic communication is unique and effective in enlightening and transporting a person to higher realms of ontological being, pure delight, pure cognition and also in producing better moral and social order.

NOTES

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3. Anand Amaladass, *Introduction to Aesthetics***,** Chennai: Satya Nilayam Publications, 2000, p. 64.
4. *Ibid*., p.65.
5. Barlingay. S.S, *Op.Cit*., p.125.
6. Shymala Gupta, *Op.Cit.,* p.46.
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ON TANTRAS

Sri M.P.Pandit

I

WHAT ARE THE TANTRAS

IT is recent. An influential figure in the political life of the country was suddenly taken ill with what proved to be an obstinate physical ailment. The usual medical aids were not of much help and he was obliged to submit himself to a high-pressure treatment for a continual period of six months in a foreign country, before substantial relief could be obtained. It was a mystery how he came to develop this illness at all, till one day his brother - himself a noted leader of thought and education - happened to consult a clairvoyant. And what he said was remarkable. He stated emphatically that on such and such a date, during the elections, the patient's opponent had a tantric ritual performed as a result of which the patient should have met with certain death but for the protection extended to him by his Guru (who, by the way, had left the physical body more than twenty years before). The illness was the direct, though arrested consequence of the ritual.

Is it possible for tantric rites to bring out effects of this kind? If it is, is this the character of the Science of Tantra? Could this be the Sastra that has come down the centuries, celebrated in the lives and teachings of so many men of God, claiming adherence of large and varied sections of the peoples in this land and beyond .What indeed is Tantra ?

The Tantras or Agamas as they are otherwise known have been looked 'upon as texts of scriptural importance. A tradition has it that the Agamas arc the Fifth Veda. It is declared that each Age has a God-given Sastra to guide it. The Satya (Krita) Yuga has the Veda, the Treta its Smriti, Dvapara the Puranas and the Kali Yuga (the present age) the Agamas.[1] *Agama* originally signified the word of authority, authenticity, and was applied to Veda. But later on with the rise of the teaching and practice of the Tantra Sastra claiming the same prestige, the word gradually came to be applied to the Tantras and the Vedas were generally referred to as Nigamas. "In dealing with the purposes of the study of *Vyakarana*, Sanskrit Grammar, Patanjali uses the word *Agama* in the sense of Veda or Vedic knowledge ; and in the Yoga Sutras he speaks of three criteria of knowledge - Perception (*pratyakṣa*), Inference (*anumāna*), and Revelation or authentic utterance (*āgama*). Thus we find that because all sacred scriptures were considered to be revealed, the Veda was termed Agama; and when another class of literature, *viz.* Tantra, scriptural in import, appeared and began to hold sway over a vast mass of people, the term Nigama was applied to Veda while Agama though not exclusively but generally came to denote Tantra on the one hand and ensure its

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sanctity like the Veda on the other." (Sri Kapali Sastry)[2]

It is not possible to fix with any finality the date of the inception of the vast literature of the Tantra. Some of tile main texts are determined to have been complied in their present form during the Gupta period while some are comparatively recent. Whatever it be, certain it is that the tradition and the practice they seek to embody is much older. There are references to the worship and rituals of the agamic kind in works like the Brihad-Katha of Gunadhya and in Inscriptions which belong to pre-Christian eras, apart from their mention in the devotional outpourings of saints in the South from the second century. Considerable part of the Teaching can be directly traced to the Vedas and a striking parallel seen between the development of some of the Vedic concepts in the Upanishads and their course in the line of the Tantra. The fact as it appears unmistakably on a close study of these scriptures, is that just as the Upanishads represent the revival and continuation of the Jnana, Knowledge content of the Vedas, as the Brahmanas seek to conserve and prolong the ritualistic basis of the Vedic religion, the Agamas take up the esoteric teaching and practice of the Vedic mystics and go on to develop and build upon it, in forms and means suited to the changing conditions and needs of later times.[3]

"As Sri Aurobindo observes, 'There was a transformation of symbol and ritual and ceremony or a substitution of new kindred figures, an emergence of things that are only hints in the original system, a development of novel idea-forms from the seed of original thinking...The house of Fire was replaced by the temple; the karmic ritual of sacrifice was transformed into the devotional temple ritual; the vague and shifting mental images of the Vedic gods figured in the mantras yielded to more precise conceptual forms of the two great deities, Vishnu and Shiva, and of their Shaktis and their off-shoots. These new concepts stabilized in physical images were made the basis both for internal adoration and for the external worship which replaced sacrifice. The psychic and spiritual mystic endeavour which was the inner sense of the Vedic hymns, disappeared into the less intensely luminous but more wide and rich and complex psycho-spiritual inner life of Puranic and Tantric religion and Yoga.' Such knowledge as this-of the building of the inner life was traditionally handed down, from father to son, from Guru to Shishya and the Agamas represent a worthy compilation and preservation of this inheritance from the forefathers." (Sri Kapali Sastry).[4]

Bringing out the inner significance of the Tantra Movement, Sri Aurobindo points out how it represents a special out surge in the expanding reign of the Spirit on the Indian soil. The Rishis of the Veda evolved and perfected an inner discipline and religion which was essentially intuitive in character and symbolic in form suited to the

fresh and unsophisticated humanity of that age. The Upanishads record the beginnings of an endeavor in which the human mind is taken up successively in its different gradations from its summits of illumined intelligence downwards and muted to the light of the Spirit - a course which proceeded through the age of the Smritis and culminated in the Darshanas. The Tantric discipline extends the claim of God farther wide and deep; it takes up the emotional and dynamic parts of man, the heart, the wilt and the life-being and seeks to develop them too in the mould of the Spirit. The Tantra has thus been an important and even an inevitable step in the progressive and self-extending Soul-Movement of the country.

Like the Vedas the Agamas too are revered as the Revealed Word of God.[5] They are the utterances of the supreme Divine Person who is Shiva or the Devi(Godess) or Hari(Vishnu); and they are known after the Deity who reveals the Knowledge, e.g. Shaiva Agamas, Shakta Agamas, Vaishnava Agamas (also called Pancharatra) respectively. Adherents of these Agamas are the Shaivas, Shaktas and Vaishnavas. There are two other classes of Agamas and their votaries, specially in western India, the Sauras who worship God Surya and the Ganapatyas who adore Ganapati, all together making the Five Classes of worshippers, Pancha Upasakas.[6]

Of these the Shakta Agamas, i.e. those in which the Divine Shakti is held to be the highest object of adoration and the Supreme Creatrix of the universe, even putting the Lord Purusha into the background—a departure from the Vedantic tradition which gives the prime position to the Conscious Soul, the Purusha—are the most well known; and they have come to be commonly regarded, though erroneously, as the whole of the Tantra Sastra with the result, as we will see later on, that for certain deviations in one of the practices of this line of Agamas, condemnation is heaped upon the entire Tantra Sastra. We may note in passing that some of the western scholars have sought to read a non-Aryan influence, or revival of a pre-Aryan tradition in the Shakti worship popularised by the Tantra. As a matter of fact, there is nothing fundamentally new in the worship of the Devi; it is in line with the Vedic religious worship which celebrates the eminence of Deities like Aditi, the Infinite embodied Mother of all the Gods, Saraswati the Goddess of Inspiration and Knowledge and other Goddesses. It is neither a new departure nor a violent go-back. I is a continuation of the same tradition which is to be found in the Vedas, as indeed in all the religions of the ancient world of that Age.[7]

II

THE FOUR PADAS

THERE are thus various kinds of Agamas forming the vast Tantra literature. But there are certain features common to all of them. They avow allegiance to the Veda and even claim to be the announcers of the

Vedic Knowledge to the current Age.[8] It is to be noted, however, that their doors are open to all, irrespective of their social or biological differentiation. Unlike the Vedas to which access was confined only to the three higher classes viz. Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas, the Tantras pride themselves that their teaching is open to the Shudras and even to those beyond the pale of the four orders of Aryan society. [9] Also, women have as much right as men to participate in the full ritual of the Tantra—a feature which is notable for its absence in the Vedic ceremonial religion. Not only that, a woman is entitled to be a teacher as well ; some of the Tantras hold that initiation by a woman-teacher is even more fruitful. In practice, however, the Agamas of the Shaiva and Vaishnava persuasions have tended to continue the Vedic exclusiveness and it is only the Shakta Agamas which have thrown open their portals to one and all.

They proclaim there is One Supreme God who is the Creator and Ruler of the Universe; the universe is cosmic manifestation of the Divine and man also is an individual manifestation of the same Divine. Man has all the principles of Creation veiled in himself; his body holds the universe in essence and even the creative Power of God is there latent in him. To awake to it, to discover and release these powers in action, to realise his own godhead and embrace the large godhead in the creation around is the one Ideal which all the Agamas proclaim, the one Goal to which all their roads of self-culture and discipline, *upasana*, lead. The way they show is the way of action, not withdrawal from action. To exert oneself in all the parts of the being endowed by the Divine, in the mode and manner intended by the Divine, for the glory and self-manifestation of the Divine,—this is the central truth of their sadhana. One has not only to understand, to know in mind, but to practise, to know in action; *act, tantra*, is the watchword of the Agamas and so they have come to be known as Tantras. This is a Pratyaksha Sastra where knowledge at every step is sought to be experienced and realised by oneself in action.[10]

The Tantra Sastra, embracing as it does the whole of man and his aggregate, is very comprehensive in its scope. Its range is covered by four great Steps, *padas*-- the *Jñāna Pāda*, *Yoga* Pāda, *Kriyā Pāda* and *Carya Pāda*.

The Tantras have, in the first place, a Philosophy, a Metaphysic which bases their system. Broadly speaking, it may be said to be *both* Vedantic and Sankhyan in character.[11] There is one Reality, the Brahman which is Immutable and Ineffable. When It manifests itself it assumes the dual status of Purusha and Shakti and All action proceeds from this creative poise of the Supreme. Various accounts are given of the Process of Creation, the different principles or Tattwas, the birth and formation of the archetypes and the evolution of Man in the gradation of created beings. The movement of manifestation is conceived as springing from a Fount of Bliss, Brahmananda, and

the realisation of the same bliss in each individual form is set as the goal before man. His body is seen as a veritable universe and he is called upon to find in himself the same Truth-principles which are at the head and govern the functioning of the Universe, the Divine Purusha and his Shakti who are the two eternal Terms of all Existence. Both of these, declare the Tantras, are there, veiled, in man; he is ignorant of their presence and misses the harmony and joy of their concerted action. To lift him out of this ignorance, to awaken him to this higher potentiality and lead him to discover, realise and participate in the inner harmonies of the mighty Powers governing his life- activity so as to progressively achieve the Delight of the Individual, the Jivananda, is the object of the second step, the Yoga Pada.

The Knowledge propounded by the Jnana Pada, the solution of the problem of existence as presented by the Sastra, is to be worked out in the life of each individual. Otherwise, Knowledge remains a mere learning. The Tantras have developed an inner discipline, Yoga, to enable everyone who undertakes to follow it, realise the truth of their philosophy in his own being. This Yoga, it must be noted, is not an invention of the Tantriks. There have been in India, since the days of the Vedic Mysteries, many lines of inner discipline to achieve union between the individual soul and the Divine, *yoga*. Different teachers developed different applications of it and the Tantric Yoga is a special elaboration based upon certain psycho-physical truths which have always formed the kernel of all forms of Yoga in India. No text gives the sadhana in full, for it cannot. The crucial part, the *life* of the sadhana in fact, is communicated in person, in secret, by the Teacher to the disciple ; yet the general framework is sketched out sufficiently enough to provide a working guidance.

The Sadhana of the Tantra is not an inner discipline alone; it has a closely related external practice as well, both of which together form a comprehensive manual touching every part of the life of man, as we shall see later on. But the Problem is not of the individual only. His aim, his endeavour is a part, a segment—significant one though—of the larger issue facing the collectivity of which he is a member. Man does not live all by himself. He lives amidst his fellow beings and whether he wills or not he is influenced by his environment much more than it is influenced by him. The Tantra Sastra recognises this fact and seeks to correlate their solutions in a way that is mutually enriching. It gives, so to say, a way of life, a religion to the society also so that both the individual and the aggregate can join and help each other in their common effort which is to seek and realise the Harmony and Joy of the Spirit in this terrestrial creation. And it is towards this end the institution of Community-worship, the Temple, the Yaga, the Kshetra, sacred spot of pilgrimage, are developed in the third step, Kriya Pada. The will and aspiration of an individual best develop and flourish when it is buttressed by

nourishment from an environment of like wills and aspirations. The collective thought and feeling also derive an impetus and gain a lead by a strong individual Force. The Tantra keeps both these truths in view in developing its Kriya Pada. Ceremonial worship, specially on a collective scale, has a strong dynamic effect, on the consciousness of its participants. It generates an atmosphere and releases vibrations in which the godward emotions of the heart, the truth aspiring flowings of the mind gather movement and spread out in abundance and even the cells of the physical body throb in response to the Call of the Spirit. Furthermore, in developing this mode worship and ritual the Sastra takes note of the fact that men in the mass need a more concrete, a more materially formulated presentation of the Truths of God and Religion than man as an individual does.[12]

And there is worship, ritual, for the individual as well. The last step, Charya Pada deals with the details of worship which are enjoined upon the seeker as an important part of his Sadhana. The Tantras develop the minutiae of the ritual with great care and load every gesture and act with a wealth of symbolism. This Pada not may lay down the mode of sadhana but gives also a code of conduct to the seeker and to the adept. The Sastra holds that no one law or rule could apply to all. For, men are of different natures; they are o f varying temperaments in several ages of growth and not all of equal competence. Hence no one uniform discipline amid be laid upon all, especially when it is a matter of individual growth. As Sri Aurobindo writes; " Actually in life there are infinite differences between man and man; some are more inwardly evolved, others are less mature, many if not most are infant souls incapable of great steps and difficult efforts. Each needs to be dealt with according to his nature and his soul stature. But a general distinction can be drawn between three principal types varying in their openness to the spiritual appeal or to the religious influence or impulse. This distinction amounts to a gradation of three stages in the growing human consciousness. One crude, ill formed, still outward, still vitally and physically minded can be led only by devices suited to its ignorance. Another, more developed and capable of a much stronger and deeper psycho spiritual experience, offers a riper make of manhood gifted with a more conscious intelligence, a larger vital or aesthetic opening, a stronger ethical power of the nature. A third, the ripest and most developed of all, is ready for the spiritual heights, fit to receive or to climb towards the loftiest ultimate truth of God and of its own being and to tread the summits of divine experience."[13]

In the Tantras these are grouped under three broad categories;

1) Those who are inert, dull and governed primarily by needs and impulsions of the physical nature— what we may call *tamasic*. Such a person is called *paśu* (animal man) who is bound (from the root *paś*, to bind) to the littlenesses of his nature. He corresponds, as Sir John

Woodroffe points out, to the material man of the Gnostics. The pashu, says Bhaskaracharya, looks always outward, *bahirmukha*, 'seeing the outside only of things and not inner realities'.

2) Those who by nature are restless, vigorous in vitality and impetuous in action—the *rājasic*. One of this order is the *vīra* (hero-man), corresponding to the 'psychical man' of the Gnostic classification.

3) Those who are by temperament refined, said, led by a light of reason and generally balanced poise and outlook—of *sattwic* nature. A man of this type is known as the *deva* (divine man),-the 'spiritual man' of the Gnostics.

These are the Pashu, the Vira and the Deva of tantric classification ; their temperaments, their ways of living are *paśubhāva*, the animal way, *virabhāva*, the heroic way, *divyabhāva*, the godly way. And the Sastra proceeds to lay down different orders of ritual, worship and even daily conduct for each of them. Thus what is permissible to the *paśu* is not expected from the *deva* nor what is enjoined upon the *vira* permitted to the sadhakas of the other groups. This is the only distinction—practical and wise—that the Tantra makes between man and man, the distinction of competence, *adhikāra bheda*, which, by the way, is decided not by birth or status but by a close study of one's *samskāras* and the nature formed by them, by a Guru. And be it remembered, the Sastra envisages, even calls for, a progression of the sadhaka from *bhāva* to higher *bhāva* with a corresponding change in the mode of his sadhana. The Tantra thus shows rare wisdom in recognising the fact of the developing states of nature in evolution and providing means of 'discipline and codes of conduct to suit the different gradations of humanity.

III

THE KUNDALINI YOGA

THE Tantra Sastra has been aptly described as the practical Science of self-realisation. The aim of the Sadhana which is the main content of this Sastra is to awaken man to the true state of his being, free him from the bonds of ignorance, limitation and suffering to which he is normally subject and release him into a state of unfettered freedom and unalloyed bliss. The Truth around which the sadhana is built up is this the entire universe is a joyful efflorescence of the dynamism of the Supreme Purusha and Shakti in their creative move-ment. The Intention is to repeat this joy of manifestation in each of the million forms which people this creation, to make each a living centre of the ebullient Ananda of the Divine Play. The same Divine Being and Power are there in man acting covertly. He misses the joy of their presence and the harmony of their rhythm because he is lost to himself, lost on the surfaces of his ignorant being. It is possible, says the Tantra, to become conscious and discover this divine creative power in oneself. The Shakti is lying apparently latent, asleep as it

were, and its centres of action in the human system are only partially open and largely closed. So too the Divine Purusha, the Divine in its presiding poise, is veiled and waits for the Shakti to wake and work overtly before the consummation of their union in delight is effected. The Tantra Sastra has developed a psycho-physical discipline to achieve this end. To quote Sri Aurobindo:

"It has seized on the large universal truth that there are two poles of being whose essential unity is the secret of existence, Brahman and Shakti, Spirit and Nature, and that Nature is power of the spirit or rather is spirit as power. To raise nature in man into manifest power of spirit is its method and it is the whole nature that it gathers up for the spiritual conversion. It includes in its system of instrumentation the 'forceful Hathayogic process and especially the opening up of the nervous centres and the passage through them of the awakened Shakti on her way to her union with the Brahman, the subtler stress of the Rajayogic purification, meditation and concentration, the leverage of will-force, the motive power of devotion, the key of knowledge. But it does not stop short with an effective assembling of the different powers of these specific Yogas. In two directions it enlarges by its synthetic turn the province of the Yogic method. First, it lays its hand firmly on many of the main springs of human quality, desire, action and it subjects them to an intensive discipline with the soul's mastery of its motives as a first aim and their elevation to a diviner spiritual as its final utility. Again, it includes in its objects of Yoga not only liberation (Mukti), which is the one all-mastering preoccupation of the specific systems, but a cosmic enjoyment (Bhukti) of the power of the Spirit, which the others may take tally on the way, in part, casually, but avoid a motive or object."[14]

Following the ancient Vedic tradition the Tantra conceives of creation in terms of several planes of Existence, from the Plane of Bliss at the summit to the Plane of Physical Matter below, each plane being a manifestation of its own psychological Principle. And this organisation planewise is reproduced in the human organism as well.[15] There are in the being of man certain nodii which are so to say centres connecting him with these universal planes of existence ; and when properly tapped they open up in one's being their respective planes and the powers that are characteristic of the principles governing those planes. These are called Centres or *cakras* in the Indian Yogic system.[16]

These Chakras are also known as Lotuses with each a different number of petals. The different petals are the *nāḍis* or subtle nerve-channels[17] which surround and function through each of these centres. It is the number and configuration of these *nāḍis* that gives rise to the image of a lotus with a particular number of petals. And on each of the petals there is a letter, *varṇa* representing the deity that manifests at that Centre. These letters, Varṇas, are in all fifty

in number forming together what are known as seed-letters, *bīja-akṣaras*, of all Mantra and Speech. Each of the *bīja-akṣaras* is the *svarūpa*, own form, of a particular manifestation of the Supreme Shakti ; the sound which the letter represents is the sound-body of that Devata.

Now in the human body are found the following Chakras in an ascending order:

1)The Centre at the root of the spine called *Mūlādhāra* (Lotus of 4 petals). It presides over *pṛthvi,* matter in its gross physical state. Psychologically it governs our purely physical or sb-conscious movements and impulsions.

2) *Svādhiṣṭhāṇa* (Lotus of 6 petals) at the level of the genitals ; presides over *apas*, the water-state of matter. Psychologically it governs the lower vital being, its desires and petty movements.

3) *Maṇipura* (Lotus of 10 petals) at the level of the navel, presides over *agni*, the fire-state of matter. Psychologically it governs the larger vital, the expansive movements of the life-being.

4) *Anahāta* (Lotus of 12 petals) at the level of the heart ; presides over *vāyu*, the air-state of matter. Psychologically it governs the emotional being.

5) *Viśuddha* (Lotus of 16 petals) at the throat level; presides over *ākāśa*, the etherial state of matter. Psycho-logically it governs the expressive and externalising mind.

6) *Ājña* (Lotus of 2 petals) between the two eye-brows; presides over *manas*, the mind proper. It governs the mind in manifestation, its vision, its dynamic movement of Will-Knowledge.

7) And finally, the *Sahasrāra*, (Lotus of 1000 petals) at the crown of the head, 'the highest centre of manifestation of consciousness in the body'. It governs the higher reaches of our thinking mind, its illumined heights bordering on Intuition.[18]

"*Sahasrāra-padma* or thousand-petalled lotus of all colours—hangs with its head downward from the *brahmarandhra* above all the *cakra*. This is the region of the first cause (Brahma-loka), the cause of the six preceding causes. It is the great Sun both cosmically and individually, in whose effulgence Parama-Shiva and Adya-Shakti reside. The power is the *vācaka-śakti* or *saguṇabrahman*, holding potentially within itself, the gunas, powers, and planes. Parama Shiva is in the form of the Great Ether, the Supreme Spirit, the Sun of the darkness of ignorance. In each of the petals of the lotus are placed all the letters of the alphabet; and whatever there is in the lower *cakra* or in the universe (*brahmāṇḍa*) exists here in potential state (*avyaktabhava*). Shaivas call this place Shiva-sthana, Vaishnavas Parama-Purusha, Shaktas Devi-sthana, the Sankhya sages Prakriti-Purushasthana. Others call it by other names, such as Har-hara-sthana, Shakti-sthana, Parama-Brahma, Pararnahangsa, Parama-jyoti, Kula-sthana, and Parama-

Shiva-Akula. But whatever the name, all speak of the same ". (Sir John Woodroffe)[19]

These various Chakras provide, as we have noted, not only an opening into the different planes of existence of which they are the doors as it were but they are also springs which release into action the several powers and energies that are centred in them. And it is at the lowest centre, the Muladhara, that lies coiled up like a serpent, that Divine Shakti, the Power which alone can manifest the Brahmananda under the world conditions, the Kundalini Shakti. By Yoga, Tapas, by a strenuous discipline, inner and outer, the Kundalini should be awakened, uncoiled, and released into a movement of ascent from level to higher level of being, from Chakra to Chakra - each step of the ascent meaning an opening up of the Lotus of that Centre and a possession of its plain and powers by the awakened Shakti[20] till it rises to the crown of the head and there meets the Supreme Lord who awaits in the Thousand-petalled Lotus, the Sahasrara. With the achievement of this union between the Lord purusha who presides and the Mother Shakti who effectuates and fulfills, there ensues the crowning realisation of the downpour of Bliss with which the entire being is inundated. The Kundalini then comes down the route, loaded with this Amrita, the wine of delight, and lifts up each of the levels of the being to its highest possibilities of power and joy and in full course of time this ascent and descent of the Shakti in the human being delivers it into ultimate joyful Liberation.

This in outline is the Kundalini Yoga of the Tantras.

To recapitulate in the words' of Sri Aurobindo:

"It takes account of the physical or mental body behind of which the physical is a sort of reproduction in gross form, and is Able to discover thereby secrets of the physical body which do not appear to a purely physical enquiry. This mental or psychical body, which the soul keeps even after death, has also a subtle prank force in it corresponding to its own subtle nature and substance, —for wherever there is life of any kind, there must be the pranic energy and a substance in which it can work, —and this force is directed through a system of numerous channels, called *nāḍi* - the subtle nervous organisation of the psychic body, which are gathered up into six (or really seven) centres called technically lotuses or circles, *cakra*, and which rise in an ascending teak: to the summit where there is thousand petalled lotus from which all the mental and vital energy flows. Each of these lotuses is the centre and the storing-house of its own particular system of psychological powers, energies and operations,-- each system corresponding to a plane of our psychological existence, - and these flow out and return in the stream of the pranic energies as they course through the *nāḍis*.

"This arrangement of the psychic body is reproduced in the physical with the spinal column as a rod and the ganglionic centres as the chakras which rise up from the bottom

of the column, where the lowest is attached to the brain and find their summit in the *brahmarandhra* at the top of the skull. These chakras or lotuses, how- ever, are in physical man closed or only party open, with the consequence, that only such powers and only so much of them are active in him as are sufficient for his ordinary physical life, and so much mind and soul only is at play as well accord with its needs. This is the real reason, looked at from the mechanical point of view, why the embodied soul seems so dependent on the bodily and nervous life,—though the dependence is neither so complete nor so real as it seems. The whole energy of the soul is not at play in the physical body and life, the secret powers of mind are not awake in it, the bodily and nervous energies predominate. But the while the supreme energy is there, asleep; it is said to be coiled up and slumbering like a snake, - therefore it is called the *kuṇḍalini śakti* the lowest of the chakras, in the *mūlādhāra*. When..this Kundalini is struck and awakened, it uncoils itself and begins to rise upwards like a fiery serpent breaking open each lotus as it ascends until the Shakti meets the Purusha in the *brahmarandhra*, in a deep samadhi of union."[21]

Read also:

"….. the awakening of the Kundalini Power.... is felt as a descending and an ascending current. There are two main nerve-channels for the currents, one on each side of the central channel in the spine. The descending current is the energy from the above coming down to touch the sleeping Power in the lowest nerve - centre at the bottom of the spine; the ascending current is the release of the energy going up from the awakened Kundalini. This movement as it proceeds opens up the six centres of the subtle nervous system and by the opening one escapes from the limitations of the surface consciousness bound to the gross body and great ranges of experiences proper to the subliminal self, mental, vital, subtle physical are shown to the sadhaka. When the Kundalini meets the higher Consciousness as it ascends through the summit of the head, t here is an opening of the higher superconscient reaches above the normal mind. It is by ascending through these in our consciousness and receiving a descent of their energieshat it is possible to reach the Supermind. This is the method of the Tantra."[22]

NOTES

1. *Kŗte śrutyukta ācārstretayām smŗtisambhavaḥ dvāpare tu purāṇoktaḥ kalāvāgamasammatḥ (Kularnava Tantra)*
2. *Further Lights*: *Veda and Tantra (*Pp. 155 – 56*)*
3. The following note (by Swami Prananda?), approvingly cited by Sir John Woodroffe, would be founded useful on the subject. Sir John it was, it will be always gratefully remembered, who made a deep study of the Tantras, pioneered and contributed more than any other single individual towards the

resuscitation of the rightful glory of this ancient Sastra through his lectures, translations and writings under the *nom de plume*, Arthur Avalon. We will have frequent occasion to quote from his works in our present study.

> "Hitherto all theories about the origin and the importance of the Tantra have been more or less prejudiced by a wrong bias against Tantrikism which some of its own later sinister developments were calculated to create. This bias had made almost every such theory read either like a condemnation or an apology. All investigations being thus disqualified, the true history of Tantrikism has not yet been written; and we find cultured people mostly inclined either to the view that Tantrikism originally branched off from the Buddhistic Mahayana or Vajrayana as a cult of some corrupted and self-deluded monastics, or to the view that it was the inevitable dowry which some barbarous non-Aryan races brought along with them in to the fold of Hindusim. According to both these views, however the form which this Tantrikism – either a Buddhistic development or a barbarous importation – has subsequently assumed in the literature of Hindusim, is its improved edition as issuing from the crucibles of Vedic or Vedantic transformation. But this theory of the curious commingling of the Vedas and Vedanta with Buddhistic corruption or with non-Aryan barbarity is perfectly inadequate to explain the all-pervading influence which the Tantras exert on our present-day religious life. Here it is not any hesitating compromise that we have got before us to explain, but a bold organic synthesis, a legitmate restatement of the Vedic culture for the solution of new problems and new difficulties which the signalized dawn of a new age.

In tracing the evolution of Hinduism, modern historians take a blind leap from Vedic ritualism direct to Buddhism, as if to conclude that all those newly formed communities, with which India had been swarming all over since the close of the fateful era of the Kurukshetra war and to which was denied the right of Vedic sacrifices, the monopoly of the higher three fold castes of pure orthodox descent, were going all the time without any religious ministrations. These Aryanised communities, we remember, were actually swamping the Vedic orthodoxy, which was already gradually dwindling down to a helpless minority in all its scattered centres of influence, and was just awaiting the final blow to be dealt by the rise of Buddhism. Thus the growth of these new communities and their occupation of the whole land constituted a mighty event had been silently taking place in India on the

outskirts of the daily shrinking orthodoxy of Vedic ritualism, long before Buddhism appeared on the field, and this momentous event our modern historians fail to take due notice of either, it may be because, of a curios blindness of self-complacency or because of the dazzle which the sudden triumph of Buddhism and the over-whelming mass of historical evidences left by it, create before their eyes. The traditional Kali Yuga dates from the rise of these communities and the Vedic religious culture of the preceding Yuga underwent a wonderful transformation along with a wonderful attempt it made to Aryanise these rising communities.

History, as hitherto understood and read, speaks of the Bramins of the pre-Buddhistic age,- their growing alienation from the Jnana–Kanda or the Upanishadic wisdom, their impotency to save the orthodox Vedic communities from the encroachments of the non-Vedic hordes and races, their ever –deepening religious formalism and social exclusiveness. But this history is silent on the marvellous feats which the Upanishadic sects of anchorites were silently performing on the outskirts of the strictly Vedic community with the object of Aryanising the new India that was rising over the ashes of the Kurukshetra conflagration. This new India was not strictly Vedic like the India of the bygone ages, for it could not claim the religious ministrations of the orthodox Vedic Brahmins and could not, therefore, perform Yajnas like the latter. The question, therefore, is as to how this new India became gradually Aryanised, for Aryanisation is essentially a spiritual process, consisting in absorbing new communities of men into the fold of Vedic religion. The Vedic ritualism that prevailed in those days was powerless, we have seen, to do anything for these new communities springing up all over the country. Therefore, we are obliged to turn to the only other factor in Vedic religion besides the Karma Kanda for an explanation of those chances which the Vedic religion wrought in the rising communities in order to Aryanise them. The Upanishads represent the Jnana –Kanda of the Vedic religion and if we study all of them, we find that not only the earliest ritualism of Yajnas was philosophised upon in the earlier Upanishads, but the foundation for a new, and no less elaborate, ritualism was fully laid in many of the later Upanishads. For example, we study in these Upanishads how the philosophy of Pancha-Upasana (fivefold worship, viz., the worship of Shiva, Devi, Sun, Ganesh and Vishnu) was developed out of the mystery of the Pranava (OM). This philosophy cannot be

dismissed as a post-Buddhistic interpolation, seeing that some features of the same philosophy can be clearly traced even in the Brahmanas (e.g., the discourse about the conception of Shiva.)

Here, therefore, in some of the later Upanishads we find recorded the attempts of the pre- Buddhistic recluses of the forest to elaborate a post-Vedic ritualism out of the doctrine of the Pranava and the Vedic theory of Yogic practices. Here in these Upanishads we find how the Bija-mantras and the Shatchakra of the Tantras were being originally developed, for on the Pranava or Udgitha had been founded a special learning and a school of philosophy from the very earliest ages and some of the 'spinal' centres of Yogic meditation had been dwelt upon in the earliest Upanishads and corresponding Brahmanas. The Upakaranas of Tantrik worship, namely, such material adjuncts as grass, leaves, water and so on, were most apparently adopted from Vedic worship along with their appropriate incantations. So even from the Brahmanas and the Upanishads stands out in clear relief a system of spiritual discipline, - which we would unhesitatingly classify as Tantrik - having at its core the Pancha-Upasana and around it a fair round of rituals and rites consisting of Bija-mantras and Vedic incantations, proper meditative processes and proper manipulation of sacred adjuncts of worship adopted from the Vedic rites. This may be regarded as the earliest configuration which Tantrikism had on the eve of those silent but mighty social upheavals through which the Aryanisation of vast and increasing multitudes of new races proceeded in pre-Buddhistic India and which had their culmination in the evenful centuries of Buddhistic *coup de grace.*

Now this pre-Buddhistic Tantrikism, perhaps, then recognised as the Vedic Pancha-Upasana, could not have contributed at all to the creation of a new India, had it remained confined completely within the limits of monastic sects. But like Jainism, this Pancha-Upasana went forth all over the country to bring ultra-Vedic communities under its spiritual ministrations. Even if we enquire carefully into the social conditions obtaining in the strictly Vedic ages, we find that there was always an extended wing of the Aryanised society where the purely Vedic Karma-Kanda could not be promulgated, but where the moulding influence of Vedic rituals worked through the development of suitable spiritual activities. It is always to the Jnanakanda and the monastic votaries thereof, that the Vedic religion owed its wonderful expansiveness and its progressive self – adaptability, and

every religious development within the Vedic fold, but outside the ritualism of Homa sacrifices, is traceable to the spiritual wisdom of the all – renouncing forest recluses...

The greatest problem of the pre-Buddhistic ages was the Aryanisation of the new India that rose and surged furiously from every side against the fast – dwindling centres of the old Vedic orthodoxy struggling hard, but in vain, by social enactments to guard its perilous insulation. But for those religious movements, such as those of the Bhagavatas, Shaktas , Sauryas, Shaivas, Ganapatyas and Jainas, that tackled this problem of Aryanisation most successfully, all that the Vedic orthodoxy stood for in the real sense would have gradually perished without trace . These movements, specially the five cults of Vedic worship, took up many of the non Aryan races and cast their life in the mould of the Vedic spiritual ideal, minimizing in this way the gulf that existed between them and the Vedic orthodoxy and thereby rendering possible their gradual amalgamation. And where this task remained unfulfilled owing to the mould proving too narrow still to fit into the short of life which some non- Aryan races or communities lived, there it remained for Buddhism to solve the problem of Aryanisation in due time . But still we must remember that by the time Buddhism made its appearance, the pre-Buddhistic phase of Tantra worship had already established itself in India so widely and so firmly that instead of dislodging it by its impetuous onset - all the force of which , by the by, was mainly spent on the tottering orthodoxy of Vedic ritualism - Buddhism was itself swallowed up within three or four centuries by its perhaps least suspected opponent of this Tantra worship and then wonderfully transformed and ejected on the arena as the Mahayana. (*S'akti and S'ākta,* Pp. 115-118)

4. *Further Lights: Veda and Tantra (*p. 161*)*
5. There are two kinds of *Śruti*, revealed knowledge, hat of the Veda and that of the Tantra, *vaidikī tāntrikī caiva dvividhāśrutiḥ kīrtitā (*Kulluka Bhatta*)*.
6. In these different classes of Agamas again, there are sub-divisions. For instance, among the followers of the Shaiva Agamas there is the Trika school current in Kashmir and the Shaiva Siddhanta in the southern parts of the country.

   Among the Shaktas there are the three well-known divisions: (1) Kaula Agamas whose way is more of external worship, *bahirmukha,* with a stress on *artha* and *kāma,* material prosperity and enjoyment, (2) Mishra Agamas (so called because of the mixture, *miśra, of action, kriyā*, and special worship,

upāsanā, in their methods) which aim at the fulfillment of Dharma , moral elevation of man, and lastly the (3) Samaya Agamas which develop a more inward, *antarmukha,* discipline to achieve the spiritual liberation of the worshipper.

It is computed that the number of the Vaishnava Agamas is 108, Shaiva 28; Shakta comprises 64 kaula texts, 8 Mishra and 5 Samaya agamas. There will be always difference of opinion in these matters as the number of spurious 'agamas' claiming to be genuine sastras is legion.

7. The following remarks Sir John Woodroffe in this connection will be found interesting : "Many years ago Edward Sellon , with the aid of a learned Orientalist of the Madras Civil Service, attempted to learn its mysteries, but for reasons, which I need not here discuss, did not view them in the right stand point. He, however, compared the Shaktas with the Greek Telestica or Dynamic, the Mysteries of Dionysus "fire borne in the cave of initiation" with the Shakti Puja, the Shakti Shodhana with the purification shown in d'Hancarvilles' "Antique Greek Vases"; and after referring to the frequent mention of this ritual in the writings of the Jews and other ancient authors concluded that it was evident that we had still surviving in India in the Shakta worship a very ancient , if not the most ancient, form of mysticism in the whole world. Whatever be the value to be given to any particular piece of evidence, he was right in his general conclusion. For, when we throw our minds back upon the history of this worship we see stretching away in to the remote and fading past the figure of the Mighty Mother of Nature , most ancient among the ancients; the Adya Shakti, the dusk Divinity, many breasted, crowned with towers, whose veil is never lifted, Isis, 'the one who is all that has been, is and will be,' Kali, Hathor, Cybele, the Cowmother Goddes Ida, Tripurasundari, the Ionic Mother, Tef the spouse of Shu by whom He effects the birth of all things, Aphrodite, Astarte in whose groves the Baalim were set, Babylonian Mylitta, Buddhist Tara, the Mexican Isha, Hellenic Osia, the consecrated, the free and the pure, African Salambo who like Parvati roamed the Mountains, Roman Juno, Egyptian Bast the flaming Mistress of Life, of Thought, of Love, whose festival was celebrated with wanton joy, the Assyrian Mother Succoth Benoth, Northern Freia, Mulaprakrti, Semele, Maya, Ishtar, Saitic Neith Mother of the Gods, eternal deepest ground of all things, Kundali, Guhyamahabhairavi and all the rest.

And yet there are people who allege that the 'Tantric' cult is modern.

To deny this is not to say that there has been or will be no change or development in it. As man changes, so do the forms of his beliefs. An ancient features of this faith and one belonging to the ancient Mysteries is the distinction which it draws between the initiate whose Shakti is awake *(prabuddha)* and the Pashu the unillumined or 'animal' and, as the Gnostics called him, 'material' man. The Natural, which is the manifestation of the Mother of Nature, and the spiritual or the Mother as She is in and Herself are one, but the initiate alone truly recognizes this unity. He knows himself in all his natural functions as the one Consciousness whether in enjoyment (*bhukti*) or Liberation (*mukti*). It is an essential principle of Tantric Sadhana that man in general must rise through and by means of Nature, and not by an ascetic rejection of Her. A profoundly true principle is here involved whatever has been said of certain application of it. When Orpheus transformed the old bacchic cult, it was the purified who in the beautiful words of Euripides 'went dancing over the hills with daughters of Iacchos'.. There are features in the ordinary outer worship which are very old and widespread, as are also other parts of the esoteric teaching. In this connection, a curious instance of the existence, beyond India, of Tantric doctrine and of practice is here given.

The American Indian Maya Scripture of the Zunis called the Popul Vuh speaks of Hurakan or Lighting, that is (I am told) Kundalinishakti ; of the 'air tube' or 'White-cord' or the Sushumna Nadi; of the 'twofold air tube' that is Ida and Pingala ; and of various bodily centres which are marked by animal glyphs. (*S'akti and S'ākta*, Pp.87-88)

8. (*Kulārṇava* II.85.140,141)

   Vedātmakam śāstram viddhi kaulātmakam…

9. *Viprādyantyajaparyantā dvipadā ye'tra bhūtale*

   Te sarve' smin kulācāre bhaveyuradhikāraiṇah.

   All two-footed beings in the world, from Vipra to inferior classes, are competent for Kulachara. (*Mahanirvana Tantra*, XIV. 184)

10. It is a common saying in Tantra literature that while other Sastras only speculate, the Ayurveda (medical science) and Tantra "are practical, self-evident and prove themselves at every step."

11. Some want duality, some non-duality; but my Truth is beyond both. (*Kularṇava* 1.110)

12. *Vide* the relevant remarks of Sri John Woodroffe:"The Tantras both in India and Tibet are the expression of principles which are of universal application. The mere statement of religious truths avails not.

    What is necessary for all is *practical*

method of realization. This too the occultist needs. Further the ordinary run of mankind can neither apprehend, nor do they derive satisfaction from mere metaphysical concepts. They accept them only when presented in personal from. They care not for Shunyata the Void, nor Sacchidananda in the sense of mere Consciousness Being-Bliss. They appeal to personal Bodhisattwas, Buddhas, Shiva, Vishnu, Devi who will hear their prayer and grant them aid. Next they cannot stand by themselves. They need the counsel and guidance of the priest and Guru and the fortifying virtues of the sacraments. They need a definite picture of their object of worship, such as is detailed in the Dhyana of the Devatas, as image, a Yantra, a Mandala and so forth, a developed ritual and pictorial religion. This is not to say that they are wrong. These natural tendencies however become accentuated in course of time to a point where 'supersition', mechanical devotion and lifeless formalism and other abuses are produced. There then takes place what is called a 'Reform', in the direction of a more spiritual religion. This too is accentuated to the point of barrenness. Religion becomes sterile to produce practical result and ritual and pictorial religion recurs. So Buddhism, which in its origin has been represented to be creation against excessive and barren ritualism, could not rest with a mere statement of the noble truths and eightfold path. Something practical was needed. The Mahayana (Thegpa Chhenpo) was produced. Nagarjuna in the second century A.D.(?) is said to have promulgated ideas to be found in Tantras. In order to realise the desired end. Use was made of all the powers of man, physical and mental. Theistic notions as also yoga came again to the fore in the Yoga-charya and other Buddhist systems. The worship of images and an elaborate ritual was introduced. The worship of the Shaktis spread. The Mantrayana and Vajrayana found acceptance…."

(*S'akti and S'ākta*, Pp. 42-43)

13. *The Foundations of Indian Culture* (Pp.183-4)
14. *On Yoga* (Pp.698)
15. "Man's conciousness has no fixed boundary. On the contrary, it is at root the infinite conciousness, which appears in the form of a contraction (*Sankoca*), due to limitation as shakti in the form of mind and matter. This contraction may be greater or less. As it is gradually loosened, consciouc ness expands by degrees until,all bonds being gone, it becomes one with the Full Consciousness or Purna. Thus there are, according to common teaching, seven ascending light planes of experience, called Lokas, that is 'what are seen'

(*lokayante*) or experienced; and seven dark descending planes, or Talas, that is places'. It will be observed that one name is given from the subjective and the other from the objective standpoint. The center of these planes is the 'Earth-plane' (*Bhurloka*). This is not the same as experience on earth, for every experience, including the highest and lowest, can be had here. The planes are not like geological strata, though necessity may picture them thus. The Earth-plane is the normal experience. The highest of the planes is the Truth-plane (*Satyaloka*). Beyond this is the Supreme Experience, which is above all planes, which is Light itself and the love of Shiva and Shakti , the 'Heart of the Supreme Lord (*Hṛdayam Parameśituḥ*). The lowest Tala on the dark side is described in the Puranas with wonderful symbolic imagery as a Place of Darkness where monster serpents, crowned wiyh dim light, live in perpetual anger. Below this is the Shakti of the Lord called Tamomayi Shakti - that, the Veiling Power of Being in all its infinite intensy.'; (Sir John Woodroffe: *S'akti and Śākta*, p.25)

16. "It is necessary to remember the fundamental principle of the Tantra Sastra that man is a microcosm (*kṣudrabrahmāṇḍa*). Whatever exists in the outer universe exists in him. All the Tattvas and the words are within him and so are the supreme Shiva-Shakti.

The body may be divided into two main parts, namely the head and trunk on one hand, and the legs on the other. In man, the centre of the body is between these two, at the base of the spine where the legs begin. Supporting the trunk and throughout the whole body there is the spinal cord. This is the axis of the body, just as Mount Meru is the axis of the Earth. Hence man's spine is called Meru-danda, the Meru or axis-staff. The legs and feet are gross matter which show less signs of consciousness than the trunk with its spinal white and grey matter, which trunk itself is greatly subordinate in this respect to the head containing the organ of mind, or physical brain, with its white and grey matter. The position of the white and grey matter in the head and spinal column respectively are reversed. The body and legs below the centre are the seven lower or nether worlds upheld by the sustaining Shaktis of the universe. From the centre upwards, consciousness more freely manifests through the spinal and cerebral centres. Here there are seven upper regions or lokas. These regions, namely Bhuh, Bhuvah, Svah, Tapas, Jana, Mahah, and Satya Lokas correspond with the six centres; five in the trunk, the sixth in the lower cerebral centre; and the seventh in the upper Brain or Satyaloka, the abode

of the supreme Shiva-Shakti…" (*Ibid*. p. 433).

17. These Nadis are not the gross physical nerves known to medical Science. They are "Yoga-Nadis and are subtle channels (*vivara*) along which the Pranic currents flow. The term Nadi comes from the root *nad* which means motion. The body is filled with an unaccountable number of Nadis. If they were revealed to the eye body would present the appearance of a highly complicated chart of ocean currents." (*Ibid*. p.436)

18. Different computations of the Chakras are given, but these are the main seven. It is to be noted that these Chakras or Lotuses are naturally not visible to the physical eye, but they can be located and felt only by the eye of subtle vision. No wonder when some of the 'modern' scientists dissected the human body to verify the truth of the claims of Indian Yoga in the matter, they found no Chakras inside and had the satisfaction that it was all a typical fantasy woven by the ever-fertile Hindu imagination. "The six Chakras have been identified with the following plexuses commencing from the lowest, the Muladhara; the Sacrococcygeal plexus, the Sacral plexus, the Solar plexus (which forms the great junction of the right and left sympathetic chains Ida and Pingala) with the cerebrospinal axis. Connected with this is the Lumbar plexus. Then follows the Cardiac plexus (Anahata), Laryngeal plexus, and lastly the Ajna or cerebellum with its two lobes and above this the Manas Chakra or sensorium with its six lobes, the Soma Chakra or middle Cerebrum and lasly the Sahasrara or upper Cerebrum. To some extent these localizations are yet tentative." (*Ibid*. p. 435)

19. *Introduction to Tantra Sastra* (p. 58)

20. *Vide* Sri Aurobindo's splendid description of the opening of the Lotuses, in his Epic *Sāvitri*:

A mighty movement rocked the inner space
As if a world were shaken and found its soul;
Out of the Inconscient's soulless mindless Night
A flaming serpent rose released from sleep.
It rose billowing its coils and stood erect
And climbing mightily stormily on its way
It touched her centres with its flaming mouth:
As if a fiery kiss had broken their sleep.
They bloomed and laughed surcharged with light and Bliss;
Then at the crown it joined the Eternal's space.
In the flower of the head, in the flower of Matter's base
In each divine stronghold and Nature-knot
It held together the mystic stream which joins
The viewless summits with the unseen depths,
The string of forts that make the frail defence

Safeguarding us against the enormous world,….

All underwent a high celestical change:

Breaking the black Inconscients' blind mute wall,

Effacing the circles of the Ignorance,

Powers and divinities burst flaming forth;

Each part of the being trembling with delight

Lay overwhelmed with tides of happiness

And saw her hand in every circumstance

And felt her touch in every limb and call;

In the country of the lotus of the head

Which thinking mind has made its busy space,

In the castle of the lotus twixt the brows

Whence it shoots the arrows of its sight and will,

In the passage of the lotus of the throat

Where speech must rise and expressing mind

And the heart's impulse run towards word and fact,

A glad uplift and a new working came.

The immortal's thoughts displaced our bounded view,

The immortal's thoughts earth's drab idea and sense;

All things now bore a deeper heavenlier sense.

A glad clear harmony marked their truth's outline,

Re-set the balance and measures of the world.

Each shape showed its occult design, unveiled

God's meaning in it for which it was made

And the vivid splendour of his artist thought.

A channel of the mighty Mothers choice,

The immortal's will took into its calm control

Our blind or erring government of life;

A loose republic once of wants and needs,

Then bowed to the uncertain sovereign mind,

Life now obeyed to a diviner rule

And every act became an act of God.

In the kingdom of the lotus of the heart

Love chanting its pure hymeneal hymn

Made life and body mirrors of sacred joy

And all the emotions gave themselves to God.

In the navel lotus's broad imperial range

Its proud ambitions and its master lusts

Were tamed instruments of a great calm sway

To do a work of God on earthly soil.

In the narrow nether centres' Petty parts

Its childish game of daily dwarf desires

Was changed into a sweet and boisterous play,

A romp of little gods with life in Time.

In the deep place where once the serpent slept,

There came a grip on matter's giant powers

For large utilities in life's little space;

A firm ground was made for heaven's descending might.

(Book VII, Canto 5)

21. *On Yoga* (Pp. 611-12)

22. *Letters* (First Series, Pp. 226).

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NĀGĀRJUNA'S DIALECTICS AND POSTMODERN EPISTEMIC TRENDS

Dr. S. Lourdunathan

The dialectics of Nāgārjuna's epistemology and the postmodern epistemic moorings suggest considerable similarities. Nāgārjuna's epistemic positions such as *Śūnyavāda,* the idea of indeterminacy, not void, the debate between absolutism and relativism, understandings or concepts (*nāma* and *lakṣaṇa*) as mind-constructions (*nirmāṇa*), suspension of absolute judgment in the act of knowing (*śūnyata*), non-contentiousness (*anupalambha*) as the way of inquiry or right thinking, his metaphysics coupled with epistemic position namely the idea of *pratityasamudpāda*, that everything is relational and only relationality contributes epistemic sensibility, etc., all stand in strong parallel to the postmodern epistemic positions as well their skeptical claims which include - the *death of subjectivity* and the erosion of objectivity, incredulity towards meta-narratives, the erosion of the centre/essence as authority of meaning or the death of the author, meaning as a matter of simultaneous presence (co-relationality) etc., all these markedly suggest a strong philosophical sense of epistemological parallels. By bringing together the dialectics of Nāgārjuna[1] of the Mādhyamika and some of the postmodern epistemic strands the present paper aims not only to defend a case of parallel positioning but all the more to sensitize the social affirmations embedded in both these trends of thought. Moreover, the rich territories of both Buddhism and Postmodernism, I believe, would as well open up further vital research inquires in their dialectics.

The validity of a human being as the knowing-subject and the claims to certainty of knowledge in terms of either objectivity or subjectivity are epistemological issues in the last four decades, raised by the poststructuralists and postmodern thinkers. Though their cultural politics can either be a rejection of the structures of the modern or an extension of the modern, they probe the profound epistemic inquiry regarding the status and validity of our claims to knowledge.

Differentiating the modern and the postmodern, Jean-François Lyotard says, 'I will use the term modern to designate any science that legitimates itself with reference to a metadiscourse ... making an explicit appeal to some grand narrative, such as the dialectics of Spirit, the hermeneutics of meaning, the emancipation of the rational or working Subject, or the creation of wealth.[2] For Lyotard, these grand narratives and their claims to objectivity of knowledge, persist by a process of self-legitimation. But then for Lyotard, 'this is not to suggest that there are no longer any credible narratives at all. By meta-narratives or grand narratives, I mean precisely narrations with a

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legitimating function.[3] Rejecting these defining narrative structures of modernity, Lyotard announced the *post*-modern age "as incredulity towards meta-narratives."[4] By contenting itself to do away with any totalities of ideologues or truth-claims, the postmodern shifts towards a form of subjectivism, yet not content with subjectivism as well. For the Postmodern knowledge is not simply a tool of the authorities; it refines our sensitivity to differences and reinforces our ability to tolerate the incommensurable. Its principle is not the expert's homology, but the inventor's paralogy.[5] David Clippinger, of Pennsylvania State University, notes, "therefore, modernism might best be conceptualized as a field of ideas, styles and concepts to which the postmodern has returned, carried off and transformed, while simultaneously criticizing what it has chosen to transform and leave behind."[6]

Like Lyotard, who pronounces a profound doubt towards modernity, not only as a way of living, but also as a way of knowing, Nāgārjuna in the Indian tradition foreshadows similar incredulity towards any overarching theories or truth claims. Nāgārjuna emerges as one of the best dialecticians to warn against any absolute truth claims and alternatively posits his *Śūnyavāda*, as a mode of truth-inquiry and claims, (not a position) against any absolute ontological and epistemic totalities. "*Śūnya*" for Nāgārjuna does not necessarily mean emptiness or void but it posits a relativistic position of indeterminacy as against any grand narrative or theory that encapsulates everything into the self same oneness a meta-narrative to be pronounced a suspension or incredulity. Avoiding the extremities of realism, for instance the epistemic claims of Nyāya, and absolute skepticism, and even total world negation, Nāgārjuna takes up a middle way, the way of the Buddha, in his epistemological inquiry. A total grasp or comprehension of reality is never possible and what is possible is a certain sense of (in)/describability, which is only a point of view (*dṛṣṭi* or *dhitti*) and what can be said here to some extent is that reality is indescribable (*avācya*), and for Nāgārjuna this does not mean any sort of nihilism.

Beyond Objectivity (Exclusiveness) & Subjectivity (Inclusiveness)

The beginnings of most postmodern writings spell out clearly against the epistemic position that knowledge is purely empirical, scientific, objective and hence vulnerable to rational certainty and technological scrutiny. But it was not immediately clear that the implications of the theory called first "post-structuralism" and its modification called postmodernism were hostile to subjectivity. Indeed the opposite appeared to be the case. Most postmodernists apparently stimulated by a sense of overriding subjectivity imply a strong rejection of the claims of objectivity. Predominantly postmodern criticism or skepticism was aimed against the objective truth claims of the scientists and social scientists. Postmodernists in general

consider that truth of modernity is but an exaggerated error. The primacy of reason as a valid means to objectivity strategically established by Descartes, as "*cogito ergo sum*" is read as an arching exaggerated error in the language of postmodernists. Richard J. Bernstein deems the foundationalism of modernism as the "iron cages of bureaucratic rationality" from whose clutches we have yet to break free.[7]

Nāgārjuna, in the footsteps of his master, Buddha, similarly opposes the absolute claims of objective rational certainty. He upholds *anupalambha*, a sense of non-contentiousness to thinking rightly. According to Nāgārjuna, the human inherent tendency to cling on to something as absolute, to hold tight to something as certain is the root cause of this "suffering", a sickness to truth-claims. Between change and permanency, the human tendency is to embrace the latter, and this deprives the human from being dynamic and seek security in the enslavement of any ideologue or structure as permanent or absolutely true. By seizing the relatively separate as absolute, one will never regain the dynamic, organic relatedness in which richness of life consists.[8] Like that of the postmodern rendering against any objectivity of truth claims, Nāgārjuna deems the tendency to absolutism as misplaced absoluteness, an error in human conceptualization of the reality.

What can be seized to be true, for Nāgārjuna is the immediate query here. Nāgārjuna tentatively and hesitantly defines true knowledge as "*dharmanambuhutpyatyaveksah*," meaning that the revelation of indeterminacy as against any form of determinate absolute truth claims, is the way of perceiving. But then, for Nāgārjuna, indeterminacy is not to be reduced to a sense of illusion (*māyā*) or nothingness. Reality in itself is indeterminate, and it calls for a dependency on the other, a sense of openess, a sense of *pratitya*, or dependent origination, towards understanding and meaningfulness. Here one is reminded of the writings of Ferdinand de Saussure, whose writings ignited the post structuralists and postmodernists. For Saussure, the question of meaningfulness is a matter of arbitrariness, (the indeterminacy of that of Nāgārjuna) and relationality in the network of linguistic structure, and as such there is no objective or realist sense of meaningfulness. He writes, "In a language, there are only differences, without fixed terms."[9]

The concept of *Śūnyata* as propounded by Nāgārjuna neither affirms pure subjectivity nor objectivity, rather it is symbolizes the participatory, act pluralistic perception in terms of relations. It is not even a concept to determine something as determinate. It is a symbol an expression that speaks of non-determination. It is literally a sort of emptiness (not nihilism), a void that opens the multiple possibilities outside one's self-existence, directing towards multifaceted dimensions of representations.[10] The postmodernists sensibility to resist any totalities or

monopolizations point out similar directions by a mode of deconstruction to restore the differences and particularities as they are in their inter-connectedness and in ruptures, which are robbed/straightened within the imprisonment of objective or subjective truth claims. In *Śūnyata*, there is no distinction between the knower and the known, the personal and the impersonal. *Śūnyata* proposes a sense of awakening to *dhamma,* to the rhythm of the natural life. Jacques Derrida indicates such intrinsic nature of difference with his own concept of *différance* indicating not only differentiation, but also the deferment of the moment of closure that is definition, and hence the perpetual play of difference. *Différance* is the non-full, non-simple, structured and differentiating origin of differences. The writings of Derrida expose the view that postmodernists do in fact, rejected subjectivity as well objectivity. His method of deconstruction is not only directed towards the objective world but also systematically against the forms of subjectivity, namely the primacy of the subject-self as the author or giver of meaning. Emphasis of differentia, for Derrida implies the differentia of the subject- self as well.

The postmodern readings suggest a strong sense of non-centeredness, a rejection of any centered author as the meaning-giver. According to them, the perceiving or meaning-giving essential self (the perceiver or the supreme perceiver, "The Gaze" (Foucault) is not devoid of deconstruction-for-difference. The subject itself is called into question here. For Derrida, the difference is not only of the people, or objectivity but also of the Self that differentiates. The difference, or *différance,* comes before the Subject. To ask what or who differs assumes the prior existence of Subjects who differ. Derrida is insisting on the priority of difference over the Subject. The implication is that the Subject, too, cannot be assumed to be a unitary whole without difference, but rather, must in turn, itself be deconstructed.[11] The deconstruction of objectivity runs parallel to the deconstruction of subjectivity.[12] As objective truth is a narrative so also the subjectivity that assumes the authorship of objectivity is also a social construction, a myth then to be dispensed with. The spirit of the West (Heidegger) as the provider of meaning for the rest of the world is abnegated in the postmodern.

De-centered Self and the Erosion of Ideological Imprisonment

Like the affirmation of non-centeredness by the postmodernists, the State of *Śūnyata* means, a sense of de-centered existence; *Śūnyata* is without any centre. This implies a serious sense of non-anthropocentric appropriation of reality, which amounts to reject the human claim towards appropriation, and thereby exploitation of the vulnerable wherein the subject is culturally positioned to the "grasp" of the object. Within the epistemology of Nāgārjuna, in terms of his, Śūnyata, there is no subject-object grasp.

Everything is related in everything else, in a way of *pratityasamutpāda.* There is neither a perceiver in domination of the perceived to be dominated, which in turn calls for an ethic of emancipation, a sense of freedom or emancipation of any fragile particularities. There is absolute truth claim. It is simply and profoundly a revelation of the "let be". The relational is the only determining factor, (the differentia, in the language of Derrida), and the being is in dependent origination every moment (*prajñā* in *kṣaṇika*). This means that one cannot know anything in isolation or separation. What is known is reveled in the matrix of realities, within the complexity of causal factors, the essentially dependent nature, *viz*., its dependence on the unconditioned reality.[13] According to Nāgārjuna, the determinate reality and the indeterminate reality are not two separate entities: the indeterminate reality is nothing but the ultimate nature of the determinate reality.[14] Becoming aware of the absurdities and self-contradictions is the way to *nirvāṇa*, held by Nāgārjuna. Thus like the postmodern sensibility against forms of *eidos*, or *arche*, Nāgārjuna did not allow himself to be confined to any singular epistemic position, but he let himself in the flow of knowing the differentia view points in a mode of dialectics. The Mādhyamika system names this position as *Prajñā,* which means to be devoid of any singular narrative or "episteme", a way to rise above all forms of exclusiveness. As Nāgārjuna says, in the *Kārikā*, "Everything" holds good in the case of the one who is in agreement with Śūnyata."[15] Like the postmodern claim that truth is socially construed or context, conditioned, Nāgārjuna claims, "The ultimate truth cannot be taught except in the context of the mundane truth, and unless … (this) is comprehended, Nirvāṇa cannot be realized."[16] Like the postmodern position that every reality is specific and particular, and there is no any generalizations, Nāgārjuna, holds that 'every theory is specific and being specific they are limited and conditioned and no view, being a view, is ultimate.[17] "*Dṛṣṭi*" meaning a epistemic view point, can not be held to be absolutely true for Nāgārjuna, as holds that, "Śūnyata has been taught as a remedy for all *drishtis*. But they indeed are all incurable who cling (to any singular truth) and turn *Śūnyata* itself into a *dṛṣṭi*."[18]

Dialectics for Nāgārjuna and Deconstruction for Derrida

Like Derrida who was against any system-building, who favored, "the death of the author" by a mode of deconstruction, Nāgārjuna by refraining himself from any system building or singular philosophical position, he severely criticizes every system that pretended to be the final, over arching grand narrative of ultimate truth. Derrida, while considers, western philosophy, as a totality, a metaphysics of presence, supported a series of founding concepts or centers, that each one hoped to rule or dominate other systems of thought, by remaining unsullied promoted a sense and practice of domination. He says, "Successively, and in regulated fashion, the center receives different forms or names.

The history of metaphysics like the history of the West is the history of these metaphors and metonymies. Its matrix …. is the determination of Being as *presence* in all senses of this word. It could be shoul that all the names related fundemntals, to principles, or to the center have always designated an invariable presence – *eitdos, arche, telos, energia, ousia* (essence, existence, substance, subject) *aletheia*, transcendentality, consciousness, God, man and so forth."[19] Deconstruction for Derrida (dialectics for Nāgārjuna) begins by identifying the centre of a system, or the privileged term in a violent conceptual hierarchy and represents an intervention to make that system or hierarchy tremble. Similarly, for Nāgārjuna, dialectics is the way of exposing the exclusiveness of any truth claims to a moment of fragility in order that *Śūnyata* is revealed as non-exclusiveness and non-inclusiveness (total comprehension or appropriation) as against any *nāma* or *lakṣaṇa*, the conceptual constructions of realities.

Ethics of Relatedness

The notion of *Pratityasamutpāda* is in tune with *Śūnyata* of Nāgārjuna. *Pratityasamutpāda* literally translated as dependent origination implies a serious sense of meaningfulness (an emptiness, a rupture, an opening for mutual presences in interrelatedness) in terms of inter-dependency. That meaning is not traced from pure essence or empirical or factual representation, meaning lies in an in-between, the middle way, in the matrix of pluralistic mutuality. Taking clue from the structualists' readings, Derrida, in the similar way, holds that, "Whether in the order of spoken or written discourse, no element can function as a sign without referring to another element which itself is not simply present. This interweaving results in each 'element' – phoneme or grapheme – being constituted on the basis of the trace within it of the other elements of the chain or system. This interweaving, this textile, is the text produced only in the transformation of another text. …. There are only, everywhere, differences and traces of traces."[20] In the same manner, Nāgārjuna interpreting *Śūnyata* as interrelatedness holds that nothing exists on its own. Every existence is in a sense limited or empty (*śūnya*) calling for the other reality in a fabric of relationship. Monopolizing reality monistic or dualistic manner is then a form of restriction to the boundless and ever enfolding nature of reality. Difference, for Derrida, "is at the origin of all ethics as of all would-be centers. It is the *spatialization* and *temporalisation* which precede all centers, all concepts and all reality, making these things possible."[21] by difference and deference. Similarly, "In *Śūnyata*, there is the possibility of just interpenetration and the mutual reversibility of all things in a reciprocal manner."[22]

Ethics of Resistance for Relatedness

The hostility of the postmodernists against objectivity and subjectivity I hold has a positive significance, an affirmative standpoint to engage into a pronouncement

of an erosion of these in order to restore the views/realities that have been subjected or subjugated by them. The postmodernist's incredulity towards metanarratives is simultaneously tied with the objection and opposition to totalitarianism, territorial geo-politics of the late modern age of the powerful nations, to forms of discrimination - racial or fascist, to primacy of one moral claim as against the other, to technocratic domination, to economic globalization, etc., The positions of Nāgārjuna and the postmodernists open up opportunities to deconstruct the disabling ideological, social and political centric-constructions, the enslaving systems and alternatively reconstruct anew, powerful identities in favor of those who have been subjugated by the alienating systems of both tradition and modernity. In practical terms, this would mean that both Nāgārjuna (Buddhist sensibility) and the affirmative postmodern contest/resist for a space/site for the emancipation of the engendered. The warning here is that the ideological imprisonments often produce social slavery. The subject that is produced/construed by social constructions – an ideology, in turn assumes the role of a master meaning giver, and loses the very ground of conscience and thereby assumes a sense of domination over and against the Other. Louis Althusser a colleague of Foucault and Derrida, in his essay on "Ideological State Apparatuses" (1970), argues that "ideology has the function of 'constituting' concrete individuals as subjects."[23]

Derrida's deconstruction of the Western metaphysics of presence as Subject-Self, is aimed at the downfall of the alleged enlightenment rationality of modernity, the Spirit of the West scientific and political meaning giver. Lyotard's pronouncement of incredulity towards grand-narratives remains a prophetic caution against the alleged promise of progress and happiness mediated purely by the technocratic centre. The equation of knowledge and power, by Foucault, is a resistance voice against the matrix of power relations practiced in the late modern society. Similarly the position of Nāgārjuna in terms of *Śūnyata*, *Pratitya*, and *Nirvāṇa,* etc., reveal a strong sense of theoretical and practical resistance to forms of knowledge/power and cultural dominations and thereby disable them by pointing out their limitations, and enable a sense of an ethic of responsibility towards the other, and celebrate the differentia without annihilation of the vulnerable forms of life.

By tracing the Western notion of Being as the centre-self predicated of domination the postmodernist contrasts it with the non-centre, the periphery constituted by the very system that construed the centre-self. The dominant self of the centre by specific modes of domination persists its primacy by a process of exclusion of the Other, the vulnerable ones, and this compels the ethical imperative to engage a philosophy mutual presence. A philosophy of resistance is to approach the reality of a despised category, namely the despised-other, as a

historically deprived category in the vistas of constructions of knowledge. It is to advance towards the origin, toward the very foundation/archeology of metaphysical/epistemological/ethical discourse without losing sight of the emotional, pathological historical sense of subjectivity in relation. Such advancement is possible only by pronouncing the death of a certain centre and simultaneously announcing the birth of a philosophy of social emancipation proper. The politics of a philosophy of resistance is to reestablish the stolen territory of those who have been systematically reduced as objects for knowledge/power manipulations. The ethos of resistance (dialectics/deconstruction) for restoration of inter-connectedness is then historical, political and philosophical inquiry with a specific sense of ethics, namely a discriminatory sense of ethics to discriminate that which discriminates and to negate (*Śūnya*) that which negates or subdues. Its aesthetics is to place oneself in proximate and liberating relationship with the other.

NOTES

1. A Buddhist monk and exponent par excellence of Buddhism, whose philosophical treatise is called, *Mādhyamaka-Śāstra*, said to have lived in second century A.D and taught at Nalanda.
2. *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, Manchester: University Press, 1989, p. XXIV.
3. Jean Francois Lyotard, *The Postmodern Explained*, p. 19.
4. The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge, Manchester: University Press, 1989, p. XXIV.
5. Jean Francois Lyotard, *Op.Cit.,* p. xxv.
6. Victor E. Taylor and Charles E. Winquist (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of Postmodernism*, London: Routledge, 2001, "Modernism", p. 252.
7. Reference here is to Rene Descartes, "Discourse on Method", found in Part – I, translated by Desbruslais, p. 1117.
8. Nāgārjuna, *Mādhyamaka-kārikā*, xxiv, pp. 36, 38.
9. Ferdinand de Saussure, Course in General Linguistics, Wade Baskin (Tr.), London, Fontana/Collins, 1981, p. 120.
10. Roger Coreless and Paul F. Knitter (Eds.), *Buddhist Emptiness and Christian Trinity,* New York: Paulist Press, 1990, p. 53.
11. Jacques Derrida, *A Derrida Reader: Between the Blinds,* Hemel Hempstead: Harvester, 1991, p64 - 65.
12. *Of Grammatology*, Maryland: John Hopkins UP, 1997, p. 16.
13. R. Venkat Ramanan, *Nāgārjuna's Philosophy*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1975, Ch. 9.
14. Nāgārjuna, *Mādhyamaka-kārikā*, xxv, 9.
15. *Ibid.,* xxiv, 14.

16. *Ibid.,* xxiv, 10.
17. *Ibid.,* xxiv, 30.
18. *Ibid.,* xiii, 8.
19. Jacques Derrida and Maurizio Ferraris, "*A Taste for the Secret*", Giacomo Donis (Tr.), Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001, p. 40.
20. Geoffrey Bennington (Tr.), *Bennington, Geoffrey, and Jacques Derrida, Jacques Derrida*, Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1993, p. 58.
21. Jon Simons (Ed.), Contemporary Critical Theorists – From Lacan to Said, Edinburgh University Press, 2004, p. 88.
22. Pchalakkatt Binoy, "Dialoguing with Symbols", Omega: *Indian Journal of Science and Religion*, Vol. 5, Dec. 2006, pp. 29-32
23. Slavoj Zizek (Ed) "Ideological State Apparatuses," in, *Mapping Ideology*, London: Verso, 1994, pp. 128-129.

GANDHI'S WRITINGS: NARRATING EXPERIMENTS

Dr. Prem Anand Mishra

Introduction

Gandhi's writings are spread over more then ninety volumes and still incomplete! What is the nature of his writings and what are the differences between his Gujarati and English writings? If Gandhi was a man of action - a *karmayogi*, then what led him to write and what were the circumstances that forced him to take up a pen? In the light of the above questions, this article argues that Gandhi's writings begin with a creative tension that developed in him during his early days in South Africa that gradually culminated in his own experiments with truth; further, his willingness to narrate and share those experiments made him an inexhaustible writer. For Gandhi, writing was not an end but a means to propagate his own ideas, i.e. narrating and sharing his experiments with truth with the people – across countries and continents. In fact, his writings were moralist in nature that had tremendous potential to provoke his readers to respond and reply. And on Gandhi's side, it resulted in producing a series of further writings on those responses and replies, making him an inexhaustible writer.

Nature of Gandhi's Writings

Gandhi's style of writing is simple, precise, clear, factual and devoid of artificialities. His writings never aimed at a style nor used flowery words merely to please the ears. Moreover, he never wrote anything for the pleasure of writing that is called as pure literature. His writings had always a practical aim and purpose. One may find a natural movement of thought in his writing which seems guided by his spontaneous feeling. However, an unexpected progression and an inner logic can be noticed in his writings - from the beginning to the end. In fact, Gandhi's writings bear the stamp of an artistic orientation of his mind. In regard to Gandhi's writings, as Patel wrote, "it was the product of a mind that could vividly recall the past yet lived intensely in the present, absorbing all its details and fully alive to the concrete human presence of other people, capable also of forgetting all thought and concentrating on the task on hand. It was a mind alive to the beauty of nature and of human figure, of fine emotion and noble character, of music expression self-surrender in devotion and of skilled craftsmanship, and its readily absorbed impressions of good thoughts and language. In other words, Gandhi was an artist's consciousness which fully lived every moment of experience and continued to grow till the very end."[1]

This artist's consciousness reflects Gandhi's commitment to Truth. The truth

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that he first conceived then practiced and then tried to share it with a wider audience. In fact, he defined truth as a goal rather than as an archetype or a revelation and compared it with a diamond whose many facets exposed a variety of meanings. Thus, he gave truth a contextual and experimental meaning. Consequently, his writings which are a narration of his convictions and experiments describe both his wider experiments and the context in which the experiments were made. Apart from this, his willingness to share his experiments and his open invitation to people to comment on those experiments brought voluminous response in the form of doubts, assertions and refutations that compelled Gandhi again to clarify or re-write and re-frame his experiments or his relative positions through writings. In a very specific way, he produced a chain of writings on a variety of his on-going experiments that were changing, and re-assessing themselves in nature. Thus, his writing presented a forceful style of his own which mirrored his experiments with truth - his hopes and faith, sorrows and disappointments, successes and failures, etc., Establishing a fundamental correspondence between his writings and truth Gandhi says, "There can be no room for untruth in my writings, because it is my unshakeable belief that there is no religion other than truth and because I am capable of rejecting that obtained at the cost of truth."[2]

Apart from this, his writings expressed his deep thought and experiences filtered with clinical precision and restraint. Equating his writing process that was also a "journey within" with his relentless quest for truth, he said, "The reader can have no idea of the restraint I have to exercise from week to week in the choice of topics and my vocabulary. It is training for me. It enables me to peep into myself and to make discoveries of my weakness. Often my vanity dictates a smart repression or my anger a harsh adjective. It is terrible ordeal but a fine exercise to remove these weeds." Thus, he accepted, "And I can now give myself certificate that a thoughtless word hardly ever escapes my tongue or pen. I do not recollect ever having had to regret anything in my speech and writing."[3]

Influences on his Writings

Nevertheless, it might be argued about the influences that shaped his writings. Although like most well educated Indians of his time, he had learnt to think in English, yet, Gandhi's love for and very careful reading of choice English writers and the *Bible* trained his mind for making proper use of words. As Patel put, "his English had absorbed the fine poetic simplicity of King James's *Bible*, the *New Testament* of which he had read with great interest in England during his student days and afterwards in South Africa."[4] However, his earlier Gujarati writings bear no such evident traces of literary influences. His acquaintance with Gujarati literature was limited and it always remained close to the languages of daily speech even in South Africa. But though close to the idioms of

daily speech, Gandhi Gujarati writings show his imaginative receptivity as richly as, if not more than, his English. After his return to India, Gandhi's Gujarati gradually shed its provincial touch and in his best writings of the period 1924 to 1930, a level of fineness of moral feeling and subtlety of spiritual insight can be seen in his languages and writings. This spiritual insight is best summarized in his autobiography – *My Experiments with Truth.* Thus, there is a contrast in his Gujarati writings and English writings. In this connection, Patel wrote in his same book, "His English writings and speeches often reflect the political conflict with the British Government, but in his Gujarati writings Gandhi as it were speaks to the reader with the relaxed intimacy reflecting the inner serenity which was the essence of his Karmayoga."[5] With the detailed analysis of his English and Gujarati writings, Patel suggested "Whereas in his English writings Gandhi appealed to the moral feeling of cultivated Englishmen, in his Gujarati writings he appealed to the moral feeling of the common people."[6]

Common people have always been central, for whom Gandhi used to write. But these common people also worked as motivators from whom Gandhi learnt a lot. From his daily contacts with them and stray reading, he had absorbed the deepest sources of Indian moral feeling, just as he had gained an understanding of the best elements of the English character through his reading of the *Bible* and his contact with the Christians. Thus, it was not surprising that his writings became an instrument of great power for stimulating and purifying moral sensibility and educating the people, both Indian and British, in collective democratic thinking on all affairs and problems of life.

Gandhi as a Writer

However, it might be argued, what led Gandhi to take up pen as a serious writer? It might be argued that it was the condition of South Africa that produced in him a creative tension between his vision of British liberal ideology of sameness and material reality of imposed difference by which he was perplexed and that motivated him to write. In other words, the realization of a gap between the vision of assured ideological sameness of British liberalism and the material reality of perpetual, harassed and apparent difference motivated Gandhi to relive from this cognitive dissonance and writing became a tool for that.

At the material level, a close study of the events of the early years of Gandhi in South Africa shows three physical events by which he was physically and violently hurt and felt the "difference" and "otherness" of Indian in spite of claimed ideological "sameness" of British empire. First, in June 1893, when he was thrown out of the train to Pretoria, as he was in a compartment where only white persons could travel and holding a first-class ticket was held against him. Second, in July 1893, when he was kicked off the footpath near President Kruger's

home. Third, in January 1897, on arrival in Durban from India, when he was attacked by a mob. These were humiliations to which the entire Indian community was subject, and Gandhi deeply realized that material reality of difference. These physical events may be explained as the awakening of his unknown talent to express a reality and locate himself beyond the physical. In fact, Gandhi's initial constitutional struggle in South Africa, when he had faith in British law, was solely based on his writings. Thus, material events and contradiction of "sameness" and "differences" of South Africa provided Gandhi a launching pad to develop both as a political leader and as a reflective writer that was necessary to deal with the British political establishments. It is not surprising that he accepted that he was born in India but "made" in South Africa. Later on, he wrote, "It was after I went to South Africa that I became what I am now."[7]

Yet, the experience of colonial humiliation by which Gandhi got motivated to take up pen was not the only reason of his writings. He also examined the condition of the Indians objectively, and made it a theme of his writings. It was again the search of truth that he wanted to share with his fellow men.

Prompted by this spirit of courageous truth, Gandhi admitted in every issue of the *Indian opinion* (1903-1914) that the prejudice against the Indians in South Africa was not altogether baseless and announced that it would be the aim of the weekly to draw attention of the community to internal defects whenever observed. In fact, the weekly had a twofold aim, to construct white public opinion in South Africa in support of Indian civic and trading rights, and to educate the Indian community in their duties as well as their rights. Thus, Gandhi's writing was, not only challenging the British discourses but it was also the reconciliation exercise with them as well motivated to reform Indians too. Moreover, his writings on the one hand admire Indian tradition and culture, and on the other hand he saw the evils of her contemporary social and religious life and endeavoured to educate the people against them. This can be seen even on his return to India in 1915 and in his writings in *Young India* (1919-1932) and *Harijan* (1933 - 1948) which is certainly moralistic, but not just that. He provokes his readers to respond and reflect, on his moralistic writings.

Experiments with Truth: Inseparability of Writing and Action

One of the reasons why Gandhi wrote so much can be found in the inseparability of his writings and action. For Gandhi writings and action were interrelated as they both were a part of his experiments with truth. It is surprising to see that Gandhi as man of action who led an unusually active and busy life fills 90 volumes and that they are even incomplete! One of the arguments regarding his writing's that he mainly wrote in prison because he enjoyed the leisure of writing during the less than six years that he spent in prison. However, it provides only a small part of the explanation, for much of his

writing was not done in prison. Parikh argues that "the deeper explanation is to be found in the way he defined action and the kind of active life he led. Action for him was intended not so much to achieve certain results as to live out a specific way of life, which he naturally needed to explain to his countrymen. Besides, the way of life could not be worked out in advance, and hence his whole life became one long series of 'experiments'."[8]

It is striking that the word "experiment" occurs frequently in Gandhi's writings and that he called his autobiography *My Experiments with Truth* or Autobiography. Since the meaning and implications of his experiments were not always clear to him or the others, he had to write about them. As he wrote, he evoked strong responses, to which he had to respond. For Gandhi, writing thus became inseparable from action. He was therefore never too busy to write because writing was an integral part of his business. In fact, Gandhi's writings whether in English, Gujarati or Hindi, were done as part of his public service to which he thus dedicated himself in a religious attitude. Gandhi wrote to influence the thinking of the people on subjects of immediate and practical concern to them and in a language which all could understand. By his writing, he lifted their (people) thinking from the dullness of unimaginative practicality to the higher realms of reason and moral imagination.[9] Thus, Gandhi as an educator, wanted to start a self-transformation of people through his writings and speech. Whether he wrote or spoke in English, Gujarati or Hindi, his way was to establish a personal bond with the readers and listeners, and enlarge their understanding of truth by appealing to the best in them.

Gandhi's writings show his willingness to teach people Satyagraha. Writing for his *Journal of Indian Opinion*, he claimed "I have taken up Journalism not for its sake but merely as an aid to what I have conceived to be my mission of life. My mission is to teach by example and percept under severe restraint the use of the matchless weapon of Satyagraha which is a direct corollary of non -violence and truth….To be true to my faith, therefore , I may not write in anger or malice. I may not write idly. I may not write merely to excite passion."[10]

As well known, the journal not only reported on matters concerning the Indian population, but also became the mouthpiece for the Natal Indian Congress. The journal stands out as the most faithful record of the passive resistance movement for the period 1906 to 1914. According to Gandhi, the Indian Opinion was meant to serve and keep the local and international communities informed of the events in South Africa and thereby function as an effective and potent weapon in the struggle. Thus, Gandhi's writings were not only factual and informative but based on some experiments made in the field of non-violence and truth that he wanted to make public. It was at this point that Gandhi the writer and Gandhi the leader of Satyagraha merged together.

Acknowledging the *Indian Opinion* as a "mirror of my life," he wrote in his autobiography: "Week after week I poured out my soul in its columns and expounded the principles and practice of Satyagraha as I understood it."[11] The more Gandhi's writing was read, the more support he had in his movements. Gandhi became a spiritual and political leader because of the inspirational and moving words he wrote. As his writing crossed the ocean to India, Gandhi became more popular and revered in his native home.

In this connection, Gandhi's *Hind Swaraj* (1909) is milestone. Why he wrote *Hind Swaraj*, preface reads, "It was written in 1908 during my return voyage from London to South Africa in answer to the Indian school of violence and its prototype in South Africa."[12] Thus, for Gandhi, writing, as response or answer to, was certainly a means to an end. The central inspiration of ideas described in *Hind Swaraj* is Gandhi's vision, which had grown from his practice of truth and non-violence of man as moral and spiritual being and his conviction that only by remaining faithful to that essence of his can he enjoy true freedom and grow to his full height. Thus, his purpose of *Hind Swaraj* was to suggest how the people of Indian could apply those principles to build a new India on the firm spiritual foundation of the old.

Again in the introduction of the *My Experiments with Truth*, he reveals that although he didn't intend to write an autobiography, it was bound to take the shape of one filled as it was with his lifelong experiments with truth. "It is not my purpose to attempt a real autobiography. I simply want to tell the story of my numerous experiments with truth , and as they consist of nothing but those experiments, it is true that the story will take the shape of an autobiography... I believe, or at any rate flatter myself with the belief, that a connected account of all these experiments will not without the benefit to the reader."[13] Further, "The experiment narrated should be regarded as illustrations, in the light of which everyone may carry on his own experiment according to his own inclination and capacity." Again, in the Preface of *Satyagraha* in South Africa he wrote, "I had long entertained a desire to write a history of that struggle myself. Some things only I could write. Only the general who conducts a campaign can know the objective of each particular move. And as this was the first attempt to apply the principle of *Satyagraha* to politics on a large scale, it is necessary any day that the public should have an idea of its development." Further he wrote, "We are yet to realize this truth, and so I think the history of *Satyagraha* in South Africa will be helpful to us." He concluded his preface, "My only object in writing this book is that it may be helpful in our present struggle, and serve as a guide to any regular historian who may arise in the future. Although I am writing without books of reference at hand, I must ask the reader not to imagine that any single item in this volume is inaccurate or that there is the least exaggeration at any

point." [14] In the Preface of *Key to health.* He again reiterates his experiences based on some experiment. He wrote," For the benefit of the readers to the Indian opinion (South Africa), I wrote a few articles under the heading of *Guide to Health* in or about 1906." Further, "..the book became the most popular of all my writings. I have never been able to understand the reason for this popularity. I had written those articles casually, and I did not attach much importance to them. But perhaps the reason for the popularity is to be sought in the fact that I have looked upon the problem of health from a novel point of view, somewhat different from the orthodox methods adopted by doctors and *vaidyas*. His willingness to convince people again reflects in the preface of *Key to Health*, "Anyone who observes the rules of health mentioned in this book will find that he has got in it a real key to unlock the gates leading him to health." [15]

Conclusion

In short, Gandhi writings seriously began in the backdrop of the colonial context of South Africa. It was the contradiction of sameness and difference of colonial discourses that posed a creative tension in him and he took up his pen. Yet his writings were not only political but moral too depending upon the context. Gradually his writings grew as narration of truth that he experimented through out his life. These experiments were shared by readers through three journals that invited voluminous responses and he had to clarify, modify and reassess his experiments. Further, his experimental and evolving nature of truth demanded both elaborate description and context thus made his writings inexhaustible. By writing he also played the role of an educator who employs all sorts of illustrations, clarifications and explanations. This resulted in increasing the volume of his writings. Gandhi's writing style is a blend of the modern mode of an individual sharing one's ideas and experiences with his readers, and the impersonal manner of the Indian tradition in which knowledge is more important than the person expounding it. As for Gandhi, writing was not an end but a means. There is no conscious ornamentation and one can observe a natural expression of his democratic temper in all his writings.

Some readers comment that Gandhi's writings are inconsistent. In this connection, he wrote,"I would like to say to the diligent reader of my writings and to the others who are interested in them that I am not at all concerned with appearing to be consistent. In my search after Truth I have discarded many ideas and learnt many new things. Old as I am in age, I have no feeling that I have ceased to grow inwardly or that my growth will stop at the dissolution of the flesh. What I am concerned with is my readiness to obey the call of Truth, my God, from moment to moment, and, therefore, when anybody finds any inconsistency between any two writings of mine, if he has still faith in my sanity, he would do well to choose the later of the two on the same subject." [16] Thus we

find that was the evolving and experimental nature of Gandhi's writings both in terms of quantity and content.

NOTES

1. Patel. C.N., *Mahatma Gandhi in his Gujarati Writings*, New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1981, p. 10.
2. Prabhu, R.K and U.R Rao, *The Mind of Mahatma Gandhi*, Ahmedabad: Navjivan Publishing House. 2002, p. 40.
3. *Ibid*.
4. Patel. C.N., *Op.Cit.,* p.12.
5. *Ibid*.
6. *Ibid.*
7. The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, New Delhi: Publication Division, Government of India, 1968, Vol. 29, p.257.
8. Parikh, Bhikhu, *Gandhi : A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001, p.129.
9. Patel. C.N., *Op.Cit*., p.12,
10. Prabhu, R.K and U.R Rao, *Op.Cit.,* p. 40.
11. Gandhi, M.K., *My Experiments With Truth,* Ahmedabad: Navjivan Publishing House, 2007, p. 174.
12. Gandhi, M. K., *Hind Swaraj*, Ahmedabad: Navjivan Publishing House, 2009, p.15. The style of writing of *Hind Swaraj* seems not only innovative but also fresh. In fact, it is Gandhi's most powerful rhetoric. At face value much of its power seems to be derived from the clarity of argumentation and the directness of its expression. Not strange, Gandhi says in the preface of the text that 'in my opinion it is a book which can be put into the hands of a child'. Moreover, its hallmark is a strong pedagogical desire to explain and convince people about his ideas.
13. Gandhi, M.K., *My Experiments with Truth*, Ahmedabad: Navjivan Publishing House, pp. xi, xii.
14. Gandhi, M. K., *Satyagraha in South Africa*, Ahmedabad: Navjivan Publishing House, 2008, p, xv.
15. Gandhi, M. K., *Key to Health,* Ahmedabad: Navjivan Publishing House, 2010, p. v.
16. *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, New Delhi: Publication Division, Government of India, 1968, Vol. 61, pp. 23 & 24.

HERMENEUTIC INTERPRETATION AND CRITIQUE OF IDEOLOGY

Dr. R. Murali

Understanding is, for Gadamer, inextricably bound up with interpretation. He believes that the interpreter does not approach his subject with a neutral mind. He brings with him a certain horizon of expectations, beliefs, concepts and norms. He sees the subject from perspectives opened by this horizon. According to Gadamer, all interpretive understanding is necessarily bound to be preconceived and prejudged. But only openness can help the interpreter gradually to become aware of his own structure of prejudices in the course of his interpretative activity. In Gadamer's view, a successful interpretation entails a fusion of horizons. But this does not mean that there is such a thing as the correct interpretation. Unless there is an end to history, there can be no end to the interpretative process.

To Gadamer, language and tradition are inseparable. Tradition is the medium in which language is transmitted and developed. Gadamer criticizes Dilthey by arguing that Dilthey commits objectivistic fallacy by presuming that the meaning disclosed by correct interpretation is identical with the meaning originally intended by the author. "Gadamer's primary aim was to discredit the empathetic model of understanding deriving from romantic tradition of Schleiermacher, Ranke and Dilthey".[1] Although this tradition had started out as a reaction against the Enlightenment, it discarded neither the subject - object dualism nor the methodological glorification of value freedom that were its Cartesian trademarks.

"By demonstrating that all forms of knowledge and experience are interpretative in the deepest sense, Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics undercuts the shibboleth of value neutrality and presuppositionlessness that lives at the center of positivism. Science does not mirror reality. It interprets it as a measurable spatio - temporal field of matter and energy in accordance with its own methodological assumptions."[2] Habermas is in agreement here. He also sees Gadamer's critique of romantic hermeneutics as explaining why deep ethical currents run through the human science.

"Every successful understanding applies new meaning to the current situation of the interpreter, thereby revealing new possibilities for action."[3] Habermas praises Gadamer's understanding of the way in which ideal structures are generated within the historical process. He claims that Gadamer regards the interpreter as an actual participant in practical conversation.

According to Gadamer, understanding

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serves to bridge the cultural horizons of the interpreter and the author by means of a shared public language. The process of understanding is the mutual understanding between different cultural horizons. To Gadamer, any moral relationship requires this bridging of cultures. The agreement between communicating horizons is clarified by Gadamer in terms of the dialogical dynamics of textual understanding. The objectivity of textual interpretation is achieved by checking the distorting effects of one's prejudices. Gadamer holds that it is futile to attempt to cancel the influence of values, preferences, and linguistic assumptions, because, they form the tacit background of their understanding. This argument leads to the point that the textual meaning is not pre-given by the author's original intentions, but partially constituted by the subjectivity of the interpreter. But this argument would lead to the position that textual interpretation is an act of arbitrarily projecting one's own prejudices onto the text. If these were the case, there would be no difference between correct and incorrect interpretation. Hence, it would be very difficult to establish that the understanding could serve the function of moral enlightenment. Here, there is a need for conceiving the textual interpretation along with the model of simulated communication. The objectivity and moral enlightenment can be accounted for only by merging the dialogue along with textual interpretation. Moral knowledge and its limitation, like objective interpretation and its understanding, involve a process of critical reflection that can be provoked and sustained only dialogically in communication with self and other."[4]

In Habermas's view, the most provocative feature of Gadamer's hermeneutics is the claim against historicism and by implication against phenomenology and linguistic analysis. The interest behind hermeneutic is an interest in dialogue with others, with the past and with the alien cultures about the common concerns of human life. The hermeneutic orientation is not that of the neutral observation but that of the partner in dialogue.

Habermas is of the opinion that the reflection can no longer be conceived as absolute. It is always rooted in the contingent complex of tradition. "Although he accepts Gadamer's point about the finitude and context boundedness of human understanding, Habermas rejects his relativistic and idealistic conclusions regarding the logic of *verstehen*. In the first place, hermeneutic interpretation must be conjoined with the critique of ideology."[5]

The critique of ideology requires a system reference that goes beyond tradition by systematically taking into account the empirical conditions under which it develops and changes. Hence, hermeneutic understanding must be conjoined with the analysis of social systems. If social theory is to investigate the conditions under which patterns of interpretation and of action

develop and change, it will, Habermas maintains, have to be historically oriented, Hence, hermeneutic inquiry must also be conjoined with a philosophy of history. Actually Habermas is not just after an aggregate of several useful approaches but an integrated frame work for social theory.

Gadamer does not simply plead the advantages of tradition; but argues that participation in a cultural heritage is a condition of possibility of all thought, including critical reflection. Thus in his reply to Habermas, he accuses him of employing an oversimplified concept of critique and of setting up an abstract opposition between tradition and reflection. Gadamer concludes that Habermas's critique is dogmatic. Gadamer denies that hermeneutics can be simply opposed to critical reflection as the renewal of traditional authority is opposed to its dissolution. He claims that reflection is an integral moment of the attempt to understand. Reflection, according to Gadamer, is not something opposed to understanding. So, he says that Habermas makes a dogmatic confusion by separating them.

Gadamer criticizes Habermas on the ground that he attributes false power to reflection. He claims that reflection is always limited, partial, and based on taken - for granted preconceptions and prejudgments. Habermas wants to get behind language to the real conditions under which it historically develops. But, Gadamer views language as not simply one aspect of society among others. According to Gadamer, it is the universal medium of social life. In particular, labour and power are located outside of language but mediated through it. Gadamer is of the view that Habermas makes excessive claims on behalf of critical reflection. "The critic cannot pretend to be in sole possession of the truth. His ideas of the just life are not exempt from revision and rejection in dialogue with others. Thus critical self-reflection, as well as the critique of ideological distortion, cannot be pursued in isolation from the attempt to come to an understanding with others. The ideals of reason are inherently bound up with openness to dialogue - both actual dialogue with contemporaries and virtual dialogue with the past."[6] But Habermas questions the methodological point of view of Gadamer. He asks the question whether hermeneutics is or can be the sole and adequate basis of social inquiry. Habermas feels that by absolutizing or ontologizing hermeneutics, results in an aprioristic devaluation of the methods of social analysis with a theoretical basis that goes beyond the normal linguistic competence.

Though Habermas does not deny the intimate connection between critical reflection and hermeneutic understanding, he differs on the proper approach to tradition. "Habermas's counter position is an attempt to mitigate the radically situational character of understanding through the introduction of theoretical elements; the communication and social

evolution are meant to reduce the context dependency of the basic categories and assumptions of critical theory."[7]

The important influence of hermeneutics in Habermas's work is nowhere more visible than in the "linguistic turn" of his later work. "Habermas agrees with Gadamer that language is not only an object in our hands, it is the reservoir of traditions in and through which we exist."[8] Socialization and cultural reproduction go through the medium of language. Ego – identity is formed and reciprocally stabilized in linguistic interaction. Social action is typically accomplished coordinated through ordinary speech. It is for these reasons that Habermas has taken on the colossal task of transposing his social theory into the paradigm of linguistic communication.

"Habermas agrees that it makes good sense to conceive of language as a kind of meta-institution on which all social institutions are dependent; for social action is constituted only in ordinary communication."[9] Yet hermeneutics does, not go far enough; it is insufficiently objective. By entering social reality only through the mutuality of understanding hermeneutics comes up against the walls of tradition from the inside as it were. The problem is that language is also a medium of power and oppression; language has an ideological dimension. This could be observed even in family relations and political culture. Power relations, Habermas observes, come upon as a systematically distorted communication. According to Habermas, a critical theory of society must therefore also provide objective explanations of social realities that come so to speak, from the outside. Habermas views that the problem with hermeneutics is that it affirms the rights of tradition at the expense of reflection, at the expense of potentially emancipatory reflection that proves itself.

NOTES

1. Gadamer. H.G., *Truth and Method*, New York, 1975, p. 124.
2. David Ingram, *Habermas and the Dialectic of Reason*, London: Yale University Press, p. 9.
3. *Ibid.*, p.9.
4. *Ibid.*, p.24.
5. Thomas McCarthy, *The Critical Theory of Jurgen Habermas*, USA: MIT Press, 1989, p.182.
6. *Ibid.*, p.190.
7. *Ibid.*, p.193.
8. Gadamer.H.G., *On the Scope and Function of Hermeneutic Reflection*, New York: Continuum,1970, p.360.
9. *A Review of Gadamer's Truth and Method, In Understanding and Social Inquiry,* Ed. Fred R. Dallmayr and Thomas McCarthy, Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1977, p.335.

TWILIGHT LANGUAGE OF THE SIDDHAS

Professor T.N.Ganapathy

1. Background

This article on the "The Twilight Language of the Siddhas" is a highly technical subject. Like the other mystics throughout the world, the Siddhas also express their mystical experience in a paradoxical language, called the "twilight language" or "*sandhya-bhāṣa*" or to use Tirumūlar's expression "*śūnya-sambhāṣaṇi*". This language is characterized by a deceptive simplicity. Using the common language of the people, the poems are written for both the uninitiated common people and also for the initiated. The meaning of the poems operates at two levels: (1) the exoteric and the linguistic, and (2) the esoteric and the symbolical. The poems are noted for using pedestrian symbolism, that is, symbols and words used by ordinary common people. They really conceal the spiritual doctrines and the mystical aspects of the Kuṇḍalini-Yoga from the uninitiated. The esoteric meaning can be understood only by the initiated.

The twilight language is a clothed language in which the highest truths are hidden in the form of the lowest, the most sacred in the form of the most ordinary, the transcendent in the form of the most earthly and the deepest knowledge in the form of the most grotesque paradoxes. For example, in one of the verses Tirumūlar uses the following paradoxical Tamil expression whose literal translation is: those who possess a lizard eat the snake knowingly.[1] Its significant meaning is: those who have firmness of mind (those who possess a lizard, i.e. varamamus), flourish high in Kuṇḍalini-Yoga (eat the snake knowingly). It is a language, which is not literal but suggestive, epigrammatic, and enigmatic, discernible only to those who have been initiated to the secret lore. The essential characteristic feature of the twilight language is its poly-semantic nature, its multivalence, its capacity to express at the same time a number of meanings both at the level of ordinary experience and at the level of transcendence. The Siddhas are very particular that there is no use in giving the secret treasures to people who do not have a control over their senses, that is, those who not deserve them. They are very particular that great truths should not be given to the agnostics, the cynics and the indisciplined. Kabir, the mystic poet of India, used to say "Do not display one's diamonds in the vegetable stall". There is a Sanskrit expression, *ācārya-muṣṭi*, which means the "closed fist". This is an expression, which has been applied to the Gurus who withhold their teachings from others so that they are not misunderstood and misapplied/misused. The maintenance of secrecy is not due to the opprobrium of orthodoxy. It is only a protection both

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against the vulgarizing or institutionalizing of a habit of thought only proper to those who understand and against accusations of hereby. In this connection, it is worthwhile to mention a palm-leaf manuscript available in the Kerala University MSS Library, Thiruvananthapuram (India), called *Jñāna-bodhagam* in which it is said that some who have made an attempt to study Siddha poetry have left it as a "nuisance", because they could not decipher the meaning. It speaks of the dual meaning of the language of the Siddhas as a "merciless language" since in it they conceive one thing and express another. It warns people not to take the language of the Siddhas at its face value and if one were to do it, it will be like a farmer who wants to plough one's fields relying on and trusting the mist-formation. In short, *sandhya-bhāṣa* entails a sort of systematic ambiguity.

2. S*andhya-Bhāṣa* : Two Views

The Sanskrit term for "*śūnya-sambhāṣaṇi"* (as used by Tirumūlar) is "*sandhya-bhāṣa*". There are two views about the correct form of the term "*sandhya-bhāṣa"*. One set of scholars use the term "*sandhya-bhāṣa*" meaning twilight language; and another set of scholars use the term "*sandha-bhāṣa*" meaning intentional language. Hariprasad Shastri uses the term "*sandhya-bhāṣa*" to mean the "language of light and darkness", partly light and partly darkness; some part can be understood while the other cannot.[2] Vidhushekhara Bhattacharya (Sastri), says that "*sandhya*" is a wrong spelling and it must be "*sandha-bhāṣa*"; and interprets it as "*abhiprayika-vacana*" or "*neyārtha-vacana*" meaning "intentional speech".[3] He says that it is wrong to call it "twilight language". Intentional language is a purposely-created mode of communication having a concealed meaning. Following Vidhushekhara Sastri, P.C.Bagchi, Kern, Max Muller, Mircea Ehade and Agehananda Bharathi, use the term "*sandha-bhāṣa*". Eliade informs (if; that Burnout translated it as "enigmatic language", Kern as "mystery", and Max Muller as "hidden sayings", and that he himself prefers it as "intentional language". But Lama Angarika Govinda in his *Foundations of Tibetan Mysticism*, Sneligrove in his translation of *The Hevajra Tantra* (Vol.1) and Alex Wayman in his *The Buddhist Tantras*: *Light on Indo-Tibetan Esotericism*, use the term "*sandhya-bhāṣa*" and its literal meaning is "twilight language", which is said to bear a double meaning, the ordinary and the mystic. It is the great riddle of the yogins, which the disciples and others cannot unravel. Hence Snellgrove translates the term "*sandhya-bhāṣa*" as "secret language". The term "twilight language" is an approximate one to refer to the Siddha writings.

According to Buddhadasa, the Thai monk, scholar and meditator, certain aspects of Gotama's teachings as we find them in the *Tri-Piṭṭakas* are couched in a kind of symbolic language. This he terms "*Dhamma*-language" as opposed to everyday language.[4]

He assumes that some Buddhist teachings are unintelligible unless they are assumed to be symbolic. He cites as an example the attempt by Māra and his daughters to distract Buddha's meditation. Māra is a personification of unwholesome thoughts. The three names of his daughters are Tantra, Ārati, and Rati which in Pali stand for craving, discontent and desire. The story of Māra and his three daughters represent symbolically the events that occur in the mind of the meditator. As Buddha says, this account of Māra symbolizes the arising of distracting thoughts or any mental state opposed to spiritual progress. Similarly, he identifies the various hells and heavens of the Buddhist cosmology with states of consciousness, in short, the necessary information for the meditator is there in the unintelligible teachings of the *Tri-Piṭṭaka*, but concealed in symbolic language. The Zen Buddhists use the term "*Koan*" to refer to a paradoxical expression or question or action of the masters. [5]

3. Purpose of Twilight Language

Twilight language is a purposely created mode of communication. Its purpose is to seek, search for, enquire after the meaning behind the hidden language. In fact, it is a sort of technical expression whose technique is to express in words that which is beyond expression. The purpose of great truths in symbolic, yet simple language is:

1. to prevent the uninitiated from comprehending the hidden meaning by making them satisfied with the superficial meaning;
2. to preserve the real message intact by making the people sing them in the form of popular folk songs so that the message may survive beyond breaks in the line of oral transmission and to facilitate rediscovery at a later time; that is, to ensure against the loss of the precious teaching;
3. to make the message reach anyone who is interested in it without discrimination of sex, or caste;
4. to camouflage such instructions as may be resented by the orthodox public [6];
5. to express the highest experiences of the mind since common parlance is not adequate [7];
6. to entice people from orthodox observance and to lure them into the Tantric web [8];
7. to use it as a mnemonic device [9];
8. to annoy the orthodox that is teasing the orthodox religious bourgeois; perhaps a sort of linguistic catharsis [10];
9. to project the yogin into the paradoxical situation indispensable to his training [11];
10. to provide the yogin with a means for describing supernormal experiences for which ordinary language is inadequate;
11. to provide a working basis for the interpretative analysis of the *maṇḍalas* and *cakras* used in secret meditative transmission to be revealed to the initiated disciples only;
12. to ensure that knowledge about advanced practices would remain concealed from all those known to be

incapable of applying those practices effectively [12];

13. to supplement and illustrate the instructions given by Gurus, each symbol suggesting in vivid graphic form some essential characteristic of the technique to be practiced [13];

To understand the twilight language requires a total hermeneutic of reading, awareness, in fact, of the total religious and philosophical structures, which infuse into it. How the twilight language of the Siddhas originated is a problem that scholars have yet to confront. Let us note some of the suggestions regarding its origination without entering into a discussion.

1. The twilight language may be due to the love of paradox common to all spiritual traditions.
2. It may be viewed as a special extension of mantric language.
3. The twilight language may perhaps have been merely another of the many digressions from the path of meditation[14];
4. It originated because the common parlance is inadequate to express the highest experience of the mind.

4. Interpretation of the Five M's

In Tantric literature and in Siddha poetry, we come across the *pañca-makāras* which refer to the five rites - all beginning with the letter "m" - *madya*, *māṁsa*, *matsya*, *mudra*, and *maithuna*. The *Pañca-makāras* admit a literal (*mukhya*) reading, and a metaphorical (*gauṇa*) reading. The *mukhya* reading would imply the left hand practice (*vāmācāra*) of Tantra, and the metaphorical reading would imply the right hand practice (*dakṣiṇācāra*) of Tantra.

We cannot deal with the five m's here, but we can bring out briefly a few aspects and peculiarities of them. We can safely start by saying that the five m's are not mere ceremony or ritual but reminders of the yogic process. In the right hand Tantric rituals, wine (*madya*) becomes the symbol of intoxicating knowledge; *māṁsa* (meat) implies the control of speech; *matsya* (fish) represents the two vital currents moving in the *iḍa* and *piṅgala*; *mudra* (parched grain) symbolizes the yogic state of concentration and *maithuna* (sexual union) symbolizes *samādhi*. In some cases, the *sādhaka* uses material substitutes for the five m's. Wine is substituted by coconut juice, meat by ginger, *mudra* by rice, wheat or grain, *maithuna* by two types of flowers, the *liṅga-puṣpa* and *aparājitha* (the first resembling the *liṅga* and the second resembling the *yoni*) the *Kulārṇava Tantra*, it is stated that wine and meat are the symbols of Śakti and Śiva respectively, the Goddess having pierced all the *kula-paths* {the ways of a *kaula*} - in the *mulādhāra* (earth), *maṇipura* (fire) *svādiṣṭhāṇa* (water), *anāhaṭa* (air), *viśuddha* (space) and *ājña* (mind) - enjoys the company of her consort in the *Sahasrāra*. Dr. N. Bose and Hirlal Haldar in their book *Tantras*:*Their Philosophy and Occult Secrets*, say that these terms may be taken in the sense of the five chief *asuras* of

the *Śrī Chaṇḍi*, *viz.* Madhu, Kaiṭabha, Mahiśāsura, Śumba, and Niśumba.[15] *The Tantra-sāra* traces the practice of the five *m'*s to *mantras* in the *Ṛg-Veda*. (*Mantra* in the *Ṛg-Veda*, 154.2 to be used in connection with meat; *RV* VII, 59.12 with fish; *RV* 122.20-21 with *mudras*; *RV* IV, 40.5 with wine and *RV* X, 184.1.2 for sexual intercourse). The *madya* though literally stands for wine, refers to the intoxicating knowledge of God attained through Yoga by which one becomes senseless of the outer world. It stands for the nectar that is said to ooze from the thousand- petalled lotus in the *Brahmarandhra*. Almost all the people in Tamil Nadu sing the following song from Kudambai-c-cittar:

> To those who have climbed the top of the hill and drunk the juice of fresh mango fruits
>
> O! earthern ear-ring, what is the use of coconut milk?

When a yogin has got the celestial ambrosia, why should he go in for some thing less than that like the coconut milk? This nectar has got several names in Tamil Siddha literature like "*ucci-p-pāl"*, "*comacalam"*, "*madi-y-amudhu"*, "*karavāp-pāl"*, "*māngay-p-pāl"*, "*kāya-p-pāl"*, "*arulamudu"*, etc. The effort of the yogins to get at this nectar is called by the Tamil Siddhas, as begging at the top. *Madya* also stands for the yogic process of *bhūta-śuddhi* by which the *sādhaka* turns towards and unifies the *Kuṇḍalini-śakti* with Paramaśiva. In Tantra this (wine is called *kulāmṛta*, and the Nātha Siddhas called it *Soma*. in primitive thought wine was regarded as a life-giving principle. Debiprasad Chattopadhayaya shows that in ancient India liquor was resorted to for the purpose of overcoming death.[16] One of the commonest names for wine is *mṛta-sañjivini*, that which restores life, a name very frequently used in Siddha and Ayurvedic medical traditions.

Māṁsa (flesh, meat) does not signify the physical flesh, which the aspirant should eat. It is the symbol of the flesh of the ego which must be cut with the sword of knowledge, that is, freedom from "I" and "mine" is *māṁsa*. It stands for mastery over carnal pleasures and the destruction of the "beast" in man. It has been enjoined that the *sādhaka* should kill the "beast" in him, constituted by merit and demerit with the help of the sword of knowledge and devour its flesh. In the *Haṭha-Yoga Pradīpika*, the tasting of the *amṛta* that is produced in the *Sahasrāra* is called the flesh of the cow that the yogin eats.[17] This expression eating of the cow's meat is used just to show that a true Siddha, as a participant in transcendence, goes beyond the Hindu prohibitions (eating cow's meat), that he is no longer conditioned by "ethics", that he is no longer in this world of "mine" and "thine".

"Matsya" literally means "fish" but it symbolically signifies the inhalation and exhalation of breath. It his been said that the two *nāḍis - iḍa* and *piṅgala*, have two fish, *viz*, inhalation and exhalation, moving

constantly up and down. It is enjoined that a *sādhaka* should stop their erratic movement by performing *kumbhaka* through *prāṇ āyāma*, so that the blocked channel of the central *nāḍi*, *viz*. *suśumna*, could be opened for the ascent of the Kuṇḍalini-śakti. This is symbolically called the "eating of fish (*matsya-bhakṣaṇa*)" and such an aspirant is known as *matsya-sādhaka*.

"*Mudra"* literally means "positioning of fingers in a prescribed posture", but in the context of Tantric *sādhana*, it signifies relinquishing association with evil. The parched grain also stands for the burning away of the karmic particles in the *sādhaka*. In the left hand practice of Tantra, *mudra* is a term applied to the girl in the sexual rite. Even here the girl referred to is merely symbolic, whose body is compassion, and whose form is pure bliss. The *sādhaka* has to enjoy her in order to experience this great bliss - *mahā-sukha*

This takes us to the last of the five m's, that is *maithuna*. It means that the *sādhaka* has no more a separate existence other than the all-embracing Reality. Though "*maithuna"* literally means sexual intercourse, in the Siddha tradition it signifies the union of the Kuṇḍalini-śakti with Śiva existing in the *Sahāsrara*. About this *maithuna*, Śaṅkarācārya writes: the bride (the Kuṇḍalini) entering into the royal way (the central *nāḍi*) meets and embraces the supreme bridegroom (Śiva), and by this embrace they make floods of nectar flow. (Refer *Chintamaṇistava*.).

The employment of sex imagery is frequent in the Tantric lore. It works both ways - making it both adorable and abominable, although sex is employed in Tantra not for direct gratification but for reversal and restraint. Unfortunately we live in an erotic age of "sex affirming culture" where for better or worse the lid is off the Id.

Special care must be taken in deciphering sexual metaphors and symbols used by the Siddhas and the Tantrics who divinized sex in order to take away sex-mindedness. It is very true that in this imperfect world the way to hell is paved with very good intentions. As a washerman makes a dirty cloth clean with some matter which itself is dirt, or as some water accidentally goes into one's ears is taken out by the help of some additional water itself. the Siddhas and the Tantrics feel that one can get rid of the *kāma* by *kāma* itself. *Kāma* becomes a bondage only when it is resorted to by the foolish and not by the wise in whose case it serves as the cause of emancipation. It is said that the joy of sexual union is a foretaste of Heaven. It is also observed that when an animal's sexual instinct is overwhelmingly strong its instinct for self-preservation or self-identity is reduced practically to zero. During sexual union one loses one's sense of individuality and merges oneself into a greater whole. Sexual union is the obscure silence where all lovers lose themselves. Tirumūlar calls sexual union as yoga and terms it as *pariyaṅka-yogam*, which has been translated by Zvelebil as "bedstead yoga". [18]

It may also be noted in this context that the familiar symbol of sexual union in Tibetan iconography *Yab-Yum* does not mean merely "male-female" more specifically it means "father-mother"; and, therefore, sexual union is actually a reverential expression According to H.V.Guenther, the symbolic *Yogānanda* points to the unique harmony and inter-penetration of masculinity and feminity. Sexual union is the best expression for the most intimate relation between the opposites. We may end our discussion of the five m's by saying that there exists a big gap between the literal, substitutional and symbolic meanings of the terms as used in the Tantras.

5. Example from Tirumūlar's *Śūnya-Sambhāṣaṇi*

We may refer to the oft-quoted verse of Tirumūlar.[19] The superficial meaning of the verse as it stands is: "I sowed brinjal and got bitter gourd; I dug the dust but the pumpkin flowered. After seeing this perversion, the gardeners ran away from me. Then the plantain fruit became ripe". But the implied meaning is: I undertook the practice of Kuṇḍalini-yoga ("sowed brinjal"), because of it I got the *vairāgya* (bitter gourd). I examined the *tattvas* of the Self (digging the dust or philosophical speculation). Because of it, I found *Śiva-tattva* in me (pumpkin flower: *Śivām* manifesting itself). Once *Śiva-tattva* was discovered in me all my *indriyas* kept quiet (the gardeners, i.e., the sense-organs ran away from me). Then I enjoyed the fruit of *Śivānubhava* (the plantain fruit is the spiritual gain).

The symbolic twilight language of the Tamil Siddhas has the advantage of precision, concentration, secrecy, mystery and esoteric significance in that symbols are objective shortcuts to subjective states of bliss. The symbols at the hands of the Siddhas, become a form of artistic expression into their unexpressed reference. The use of symbolic language is not merely a protection against the profanation of the sacred by the ignorant; but also suggests that language however enriched, is incapable of expressing the highest experience of the Spirit. In Sufi terminology, any attempt to convey the inner meaning of one's spiritual experience in a conventional language is like "sending a kiss through a messenger".

6. Conclusion

We may conclude our understanding of the nature and significance of symbol in spiritual enterprise by quoting a passage from Mircea Eliade [20]:

"Finally it is necessary to underline the existential value of religious symbolism, that is the fact that a symbol always aims at a reality or situation in which human existence is engaged. It is above all this existential dimension that marks off and distinguishes symbols from concepts. Symbols still keep their contact with the profound sources of life; they express one might say the 'spiritual as lived...'

This is the why symbols have, as it were, a 'numinous aura': they reveal that the

modalities of the spirit are at the same time manifestations of life, and consequently they directly engage human existence. The religious symbol not only unveils a structure of reality or a dimension of existence, by the same stroke it brings a meaning to human existence. This is why even symbols aiming at the Ultimate Reality conjointly constitute existential revelations for the man who deciphers their message , because of the symbol, the individual experience is 'awakened', and transmuted into a spiritual act. To 'live' a symbol and decipher its message correctly implies an opening towards the Spirit, and, finally access to the universal."

NOTES

1. *Tirumandiram*, 293.
2. Hariprasad Shastri, *Buddha Gan 0 Doha.*
3. Vidhushekara Bhattacharya (Sastri), "*Sandhya-bhāṣa*. IV, 2, pp. 287 – 296.
4. Buddhadasa, *Two Kinds of Language*, Tr. Ariyananda Bhikku, Bangkok: Sublime Life Mission, 1974, pp 20 - 24.
5. Refer also Per Kvaerne, *An Anthology of Buddhist Tantric Songs*, pp. 5 - 7 for a brief account of the range of the opinion on *sandhya-bhāṣa.* Refer also the "unacceptable view" of P.K.Banerjee. Banerjee says that the term "*sandhya*" is the proper name of a dialect system in a region of this name called the Sandhya country (Quoted by V. Bhattacharya, *Op.Cit*., p-288)
6. Hariprasad Shastri, p-46.
7. Lama Govinda's view in *The Foundations of Tibetan Mysticism*, London: Rider and Co., 1959, p. 46.
8. D.N. Bose's view in *Tantras: Their Philosophical and Occult Secrets*, Calcutta: Oriental Publishing Co., 1956, p.137.
9. Aghehananda Bharati's view in *The Tantric Tradition*, p.170.
10. *Ibid.*, p.171.
11. Mircea Eliade, *Yoga: Immortality and Freedom*, Tr. W.R. Trask, New York: Bollingen Series LVI, Pantheon Books 1958, p 250.
12. *Tirumandiram,* 748.
13. Buckwell and Stuart Fox, *The Twilight Language*: Explorations in Buddhist Meditation and Symbolism, London: Curzon Press, 1986, p. 34-35.
14. *Ibid*., p 35.
15. D.N. Bose and Hiralal Haldar, *Tantras: Their Philosophical and Occult Secrets*, Calcutta: Oriental Publishing Co., 1956, p.186.
16. Debiprasad Chattopadhyaya, *Lokayata*: A Study in Ancient Indian Materialism. New Delhi: People's Publishing House, Third Edition, 1973, p. 309.
17. *The Haṭha-Yoga Pradīpika*, Ill, 47- 48.

18. Kamil Zvelebil, *The Poets of the Powers*, New Delhi: Oriental Books Reprint Corporation, 1975, p.78.

19. *Tirumandiram*, 2869.

20. Mircrea Eliade, *The History of Religions*: Essays in Methodology, Mircea Eliade and Joseph M. Kitagawa, (Ed.) The University of Chicago Press, 1959, pp. 102.

COSMOLOGY OF JAINISM

Dr. Priyadarshana Jain

Introduction

The vast and endless universe is before us. Questions like the origin and nature of the universe intrigue us and we seek answers for questions like: How did the universe originate? Will there be an end to it? What are the principles that govern it? Is there a creator God? Is there rebirth? What is Reality? Umpteen similar questions may be asked and the answers to these questions vary according to the philosophical predilections of different schools of thought. Every religion has tried to answer vital questions about the relation between man and the universe, man and his duties, his goal of life and the path that leads to its attainment. Many saints and sages have answered these questions from time to time by precept and example. What they said and did have been noted down, as the creeds of their religions. The relationship between man and the universe has been the subject-matter of both science and religion, the common objective of which has been the search for truth. Science has concerned itself with the discovery of order in the phenomena of nature. It seeks to formulate laws inherent in the natural events and account for them in an analytical manner without recourse to the mysterious or the mythological. Though the achievements of science in the realm of the external have been excitingly remarkable, the problems of the Reality and the meaning of life still remain outside its purview.

Ancient Indian religious literature be it the *Vedas* of the Hindus, the *Āgamas* of the *Jains,* the *Piṭṭakas* of the Buddhists are replete with diverse observations of the nature of the cosmos. This article analyzes the nature of the universe as revealed in Jainism and how the cosmological wisdom can enable us to secure solutions for the varied innumerable and complex problems faced by humankind that need our immediate attention without further delay.

Uniqueness of Jainism

Jainism is one of the oldest living religions, whose antiquity can be traced to the pre-historic, pre-Vedic times. Also known as *Śramaṇic* culture it formed a vital part of the ancient Indian life, contributing greatly to its philosophical, religious, social, artistic and political heritage. Jainism is a way of life practiced and propagated by the *Jīnas* or the conquerors, *viz.* the *Tīrthaṅkaras Jīnas*. The legendary *Tīrthaṅkaras* walked the length and breadth of India, the last of whom was Lord Mahāvīra who lived 2600 years ago and was preceded by Lord Parśvanāth, Lord Neminātha and the first of whom was Lord Ṛṣabhadeva. Lord Mahāvīra is not the founder of Jainism, he only systemtaized and preached the age-old truths that were revealed by the preceding 23 *Tīrthaṅkaras*.

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In the next cycle of time, another set of 24 *Tīrthaṅkaras* shall appear and preach the same truth to humankind for the latter to attain spiritual excellence and liberation from the cycle of transmigration and suffering.

One unique feature of Jainism is that it does not acknowledge an intelligent First Cause as the creator of the universe. According to Jainism, the universe is beginningless and endless and is governed by the universal laws. It is uncreated, indestructible, eternal and ephemeral. The *Tīrthaṅkaras* have revealed the nature of the universe along with their complex constituents:

logo akittimo khalu, anainihano
sahavanivvatto jīvajīvahim
phudo, savvagasavayavo nicco,

Verse 651,Saman Suttam

i.e., the universe *(loka)* is uncreated, it has neither beginning nor end, it exists by its own nature, is pervaded by the living (*jīvas*) the non-living (*ajīvas*), and exists in a part of the space and is eternal.

Non-Absolutist Approach

Theistic-Vedānta maintains that creation universe is a *lila* or sport of Brahman. According to Advaita, Brahman alone is real and everything else is an illusion. It is a philosophy of Being, On the other hand Buddhism reveals that change alone is real; and it is a philosophy of Becoming. Jainism avoids the extremes and presents a view of Reality which comprehends the various sides of Reality to give a synthetic picture of the whole. Conflicting views of philosophers and religious men on the problem of the nature of Reality as well as that of the universe were synthesized and discussed at length. The cardinal principle of Jainism is its non-absolutist view-point (*anekānta*) which emphasizes that there is not only diversity but that the Real is also equally diversified. Thus, Jainism is a realistic philosophy. It is empiricist in its approach, synoptic in outlook, and analytic and dialectical in methodology.

Two Constituents of the Universe

a) All the components of the universe, the living and the non-living, as well as the universe have been described from the noumenal and phenomenal points of view. Just as a gold bangle is eternal from the gold - noumenal (*niścaya*) point of view and non-eternal from the bangle - phenomenal (*vyavahāra*) point of view of its modification, the universe too is eternal, beginningless and endless from the point of view of substance but it has a beginning and an end from the point of view of its modes (*paryāyas*). There are two fundamental substances in the universe the living substances (*jīvas*), and non-living substances (*ajīvas*) There are changes constantly taking place in the substance by their very nature. Called as "*Ṛta*" in the *Vedas*, it is the nature (*dharma / svabhāva*) of the substance to create the modes,

undergo changes and yet remain permanent. The *Tattvārtha Sūtra* reveals that: "*Utpad-vyaya-dravya yuktam sat",* i.e. Reality (*Sat*) is characterized by origination (*utpad*), change (*vyaya*) and permanence (*dravya*). There is no role for a creator God to create, preserve or destroy the world, in each substance a mode is destroyed, giving rise to another mode, yet the substance is eternal. Jainism and Buddhism do not accept the theory of creation. They believe in the theory of modifications (*parivartana vāda*). In Jainism, all modifications found in the universe are explained in terms of a combination of the living substance (*jīva*) and non-sentient matter (*pudgala)*. These modifications can be classified into two parts : (i) natural (*svabhāvika*) and (ii) practical or phenomenal (*prayogika*). The natural modifications are very subtle. They are not visible to the eyes. The universe is, therefore, the result of a combined operation of matter and spirit.

Position of the Universe

The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* has a dialogue between Yājñavalkya and Gārgi regarding the position of the universe. Gārgi wanted to know the fundamental principle of the universe. She asked: What is the ultimate substance of the universe?

Yājñavalkya : It comes from air.

Gārgi : And where does the air come from?

Yājñavalkya : It is from space. And space is from Gandharvaloka; Gandharvaloka from Ādityaloka (the sun); Ādityaloka from Candraloka (the moon); Candraloka from Nakṣatraloka (the stars); Nakṣatraloka from Devaloka (the heavens); Devaloka from Indraloka (abode of Indra); Indraloka from Prajāpati-loka (abode of Prajāpati) and Prajāpatiloka from Brahmaloka.

Gārgi : And where does the Brahma-loka come from?

Yājñavalkya : Gārgi! Do not ask such questions; otherwise your head will fall down.

In the Jainism, we do not reach such a situation where one reaches the dead end of intellectual curiosity. Bhagavān Mahāvīra never remained silent but answered all questions, and intellectually satisfied his disciples. In the *Bhagavati Sūtra*, Mahāvīra has explained the problem of the nature and the ultimate substance of the universe. He said that the basis of the universe could be presented in eight forms:

1. Air is in *ākāśa.*
2. The sea has its basis in the air.
3. The earth is in the sea.
4. The *jīvas* and the *ajīvas* are on the earth.
5. *Ajīva* is based on the *jīva*.
6. The *jīva* is encrusted with *karma,* and is dependent on *karma*.
7. The *ajīva* is comprehended with the help of the *jīva*.
8. The *jīva* comprehends the nature of *karma* and is covered by *karma* particles.

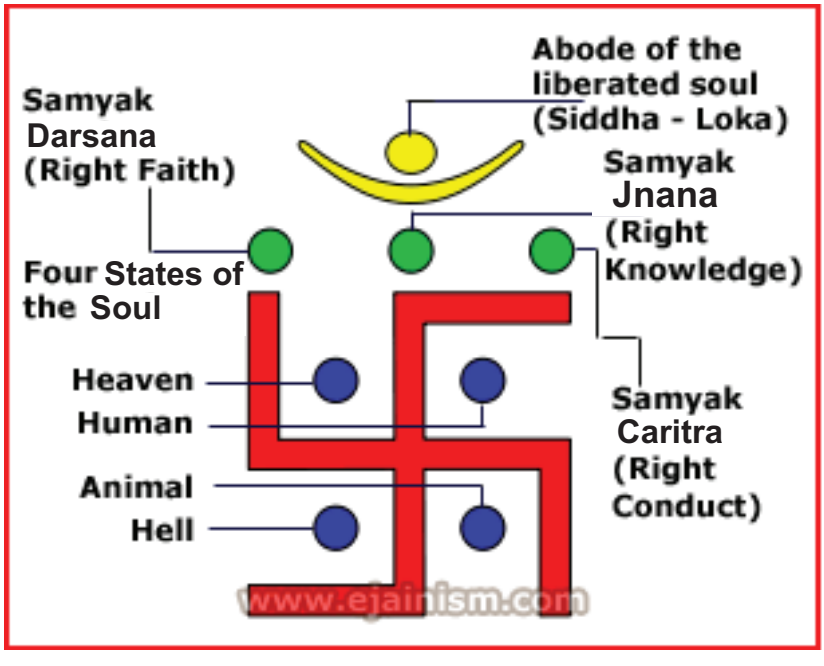
The primary elements constituting the universe are earth, water, fire, air and space. The fundamental substance of matter (*ajīva*) and life (*jīva*) are inter-related and inter-dependent. The *jīva* is the support of the *ajīva*, in the sense that the *ajīva* is dependent on the *jīva*. *Karma* is the matrix of the mundane souls (*samsāri jīvas*). The jīva gets involved in the wheel of transmigration (*samsāra*) due to the influx of *karma*. Similarly, the body is the abode of the soul. The soul when bound by *karma* particles gets embodied and becomes involved in the wheel of life and death. *Karma* causes embodiment of the soul which is responsible for all the physical activities of the body-sense-mind complex.The Jain scriptures *Jambudvīpa Prajñapti* and *Tiloyapannati* reveal that the universe (*loka*) is situated in the centre of the infinite space (*āloka)*. Beyond the *loka* is the unlimited *āloka*.

Constituents of the Universe

Dravyas	Principle of Motion	Principle of Rest	Space	Time	Living/Soul	Matter
Number (*Dravya*)	One	One	One	Infinite	Infinite	Infinite
Ksetra (Place)	In the entire Loka	In the entire Loka	In the Loka and Aloka	21/2 Dvipa	In the entire Loka	In the entire Loka
Time (*Kala*)	Beginning less, endless	Beginning less, endless	Beginning less, endless	Beginning less, endless	Beginning less, endless	Beginning less, endless
Properties (*Bhava*)	Colour-less Odour-less, tasteless, formless, non-living, innumerable space points	Colour-less Odour-less, tasteless, formless, non-living, innumerable space points	Colour-less odourless, tasteless, formless, non-living, infinite space points	Colour-less odourless, tasteless, formless, non-living, no space points	Colour-less odourless, tasteless, formless, non-living, innumerable space points	Colour-less odourless, tasteless, formless, non-living, innumerable or infinite space points
Characteristics (*Guna*)	Helps in moving	Helps to come to rest	Gives room	Operates on all	*Upayoga* Knowledge etc.	Origin, decay and destruction
Illustration (*Drstanta*)	Fish in water	Shade of tree	Sugar in milk	Scissors to cloth	Phases of the moon	Assimilation and dissimilation of clouds.

Jaina Emblem

The *Swastik*



There are six substances (*dravyas*) in the universe, *viz*:

1. Dharmāstikāya–Principle of Motion
2. Adharmāstikāya – Principle of Rest
3. Akāśāstikāya – Space
4. Kāla Dravya – Time
5. Jivāstikāya – Soul
6. Pudgalāstikāya – Matter

A substance (*dravya*) is that which undergoes change constantly but does not lose its original nature. For example, a gold ring will always be gold even though its form as a ring or a bangle goes on changing. The physical and chemical properties of gold will remain the same although its modifications as a ring or a bangle keep changing; hence non-living matter is a *dravya*. The soul may be bound or liberated, located in hell or heaven, human or sub-human bodies. Although it exists in different bodies it never loses its essential characteristic - consciousness, knowledge, perception, etc. Hence, the *jīva* or soul is also a *dravya*.

Dravyas can be broadly classified into two groups, *viz*. : (1) the living substances (*jīva dravya*), and the non-living substances (*ajīva dravya*). The *ajīva dravya* is further classified into five phenomena, *viz*. principles of motion and rest, space, time and matter. Along with these five, a sixth phenomenon: the *jīva,* a living entity is added on to the list. Among the six substances: five are *astikāyas*, i.e. they have extension is space but *kāla dravya* is *anastikāya because* it has no extension in space although it is a *dravya*.

The six substances can be understood through the following sub-divisions which are classified on the basis of their number (*dravya*), place (*kṣetra*), time (*kāla*), properties (*bhāva*) and characteristics (*guṇa*) along with illustrations of each.

In Jainism, the *Swastika* signifies the fourfold existents of hell, heaven, human kingdom and the lower plants and animal kingdom. Three dots signify right-faith/vision, right-knowledge and right-conduct. The curve on the top signifies the abode of the perfected souls. The center is the *Jambu Dvīpa* where we live. The hand signifies *ahimsā.* The Sutra below in Sanskrit denotes that all life-forms are mutually inter-dependent.

Form of the Universe

The form of the universe (*loka*) is like a dancing doll or like a man standing akimbo, that is with his legs wide apart and his hands on his hips. In a side view, the universe is like one and half *mṛdaṅga* put together. It is not hollow but solid. G.R.Jain has quoted Dr.Schubring of the Hamburg University from his lecture delivered at Delhi on Jan. 30, 1928: He who has a thorough knowledge of the structure of the world cannot but admire the inward logic and harmony of Jaina ideas. Hand in hand with the refined cosmographical ideas goes a high standard of astronomy and mathematics. A history of Indian astronomy is not conceivable without the famous "*Sūrya Prajñapti*".

Many Dimensions of the Universe

In the *Bhagavati Sūtra,* we come across a dialogue between Bhagavān Mahāvīra and

Ārya Skandaka. Bhagavān Mahāvīra said, "The universe is limited with reference to the aspect of matter and also with reference to the measurable space, because the universe occupies a limited portion of space. From the point of view of time, the universe is endless and eternal because there is no point of time in which the universe does not exist. From the point of view of essence (*bhava*) and modes *paryāya* the universe is endless, because the modes of substances are endless.

Dravya Loka - Comprising six substances
- - Finite

Kṣetra Loka - 14 Rajju - Finite

Kāla Loka - Beginning-less & Endless
- Infinite

Bhava Loka - Properties of Living & Non-living - Infinite

Vastness of the Universe

The universe is so vast that it cannot be easily measured. In order to explain the vastness of the universe, Bhagavān Mahāvīra made use of an analogical parable. Suppose a god (Deva) is standing on the top of Mount Meru, which is one lakh *yojanas* in height. Suppose again, that at the foot of Mount Meru, six goddesses of directions *(Dik-kumurikas* of East, West, North, South, Up and Down directions) are standing facing the opposite direction of the Mount, granting that they throw balls of rice *(bali-piṇḍa).* At this point of time, the god starts running, and he catches hold of the balls of rice in the mid-air before they touch the ground. The analogy is extended in order to explain the extent of the vastness of the universe. Suppose again, at the same time a child is born in a merchant's house. His span of life is one thousand years. He completes one thousand years of his age. And after him, a son is born with one thousand years of age as his span of life. In this way, the cycle continues for seven generations and memory of their family and the status etc., are obliterated from the minds. Still the god continues to run and he does not reach the end of the universe. It may be that he has covered the major portion of the distance of the universe; still the remaining part might measure innumerable parts (*asankhyeya bhāga*). The dimension of the universe in terms of *rajju* is indeed difficult to describe. The height of the universe is 14 *rajju,* in the middle is one *rajju,* 5 *rajjus* at the upper middle and again one *rajju* at the top. Its thickness north to south is 7 *rajjus* all through.

Einstein says that the diameter of the universe can be measured as consisting of one crore and eighty lakhs of light-years. The distance of light year is measurable in terms of the movement of a light-ray in terms of time. A ray of light of the sun travels at a speed of 1,86,000 miles per second.

Three Parts of the Universe

The universe (*lokākāśa*) has been divided into three parts, the:

(1) upper universe (Ūrdhvaloka)
(2) middle universe (Madhyaloka)
(3) lower universe (Adholoka)

The universe in all the three parts measures 14 *rajjus* in length i.e., from the lowest point to the uppermost point. The upper universe measures little less than 7 *rajjus,* the middle part of the universe measures 1800 *yojanas* and the lower part of the universe measures a little more than 7 *rajjus.*

Upper Universe (Ūrdhvaloka)

The part of the universe which is 900 *yojanas* above the world that we live in- is called the upper universe (Ū*rdhvaloka*). The celestial gods live in this part of the world. It is therefore called Brahmaloka, Devaloka, Yakṣaloka and Svargaloka. The uppermost part of this world is called Sarvārtha-siddhi. Siddha-sila is the abode of liberated souls, situated 12 *yojanas* above Sarvārtha-siddhi. It appears like an open umbrella. It is white and pure, like the conch and the pearl and therefore is called "Sīta". Another name for it is Īṣatprāg-bhara. One *yojana* above this is end of the universe. In the upper most one-sixth portion of this one *yojana* space, the liberated souls reside. Lokānta has been called Lokāgra in the *Uttarādhyāyana Sūtra*. The gods are classified into four categories on the basis of their residence: I) Bhāvanavāsi, ii) Vyāntara, iii) Jyotiṣka and iv) Vaimānika. They are born in a special form and a divine bed called *upapat saiyya*. They do not suffer premature death. They are extremely brave. The heavenly having the status of Indra etc., are referred to as "Kalpotpanna". Those who are above the Kalpa are called "Kalpātīta".

Middle Universe (Madhyaloka)

The Madhyaloka measures 1800 *yojanas.* In the *Uttarādhyayana* it is referred to as "*Tiryak-loka*". In this part of the universe, there are innumerable lands and oceans surrounding each other. In the vast expanse of this part of the universe, it is only two and half regions (*dvīpa*) where there is habitation of human beings. It is called "*samaya kṣetra*". The structure of each of these two and half regions is similar in form but double in diameter. There is Mount Manusottara in the centre of the ocean called Puṣkaradvīpa, and therefore only half the portion of Puṣkaradvīpa, is inhabited by human beings. There are seven important divisions in the land of Jambu-dvīpa, *viz*: (1) Bharata, (2) Haimāvata, (3) Hari, (4) Videha, (5) Ramyaka, (6) Hairanyavata and (7) Airāvata. Videha-kṣetra is further divided into two parts: (i) Devakuru and (ii) Uttarakuru i.e., Purvavideha and Uttaravideha respectively. In the Dhatakikhaṇḍa-dvīpa and in Puṣkarārdha-dvīpa there are double than that of Jambu-dvīpa, All these islands have been divided into three parts on the basis of the functional importance as: (i) Karma-bhūmi, (ii) Akarma-bhūmi, and (iii) Antara-dvīpa.

Karma-bhūmi is that part of the Madhyaloka in which human beings are engaged in activities like agriculture, commerce, art, architecture, etc. In this part, human beings are capable of earning the highest merit (*puṇya*) and the most intense demerit (*pāpa*). Bharata Airāvata and Mahāvideha are Karma-bhūmis. There are

15 Karma-bhūmis in the two and a half *dvīpas*. All the continents that we have today are covered by a small portion of the Bharata-kṣetra in the Jambu-dvīpa. From this, we can just imagine the vastness of the Madhyaloka and specially the three worlds of the universe.

That part of the Madhyaloka where there is no need to work or engage in any occupation like agriculture, etc, is called "Akarma-bhūmi". It is also called "Bhoga-bhūmi", as there is predominance of enjoyment only. There is constant pleasure in that part, as the beings enjoy life without effort. There are 6 places of enjoyment (Bhoga-bhūmis) in the Jambu-dvīpa (I) Haimāvata, (ii) Hari, (iii) Ramyaka, (iv) Hairaṇyāvata, (v) Devakuru and (vi) Uttarakuru. In all, there are 30 lands of pleasure (Akarma-bhūmis) in the two and a half regions (*khaṇḍas*).

Apart from the Karma and Akarma bhūmis, there are islands in the oceans. They are called Antara-dvīpa. There are 28 islands in the Lavaṇa Samudra - the sea that encircles the Jambu-dvīpa all round, and the fringe of the Himavana Mountain. Thus we find the Madhyaloka is vast and extensive, still when compared with the vastness and extensiveness of the Upper Universe, and of the Lower, the extension of the Madhyaloka amounts to be a negligible portion.

Lower Universe (Adholoka)

The part of the universe which is below the Madhyaloka is called the lower universe (Adho-loka). There are 7 worlds, one below the other, known as the 7 hells (Narakas). Mostly the hellish-beings reside in these worlds. The measurements of these 7 worlds are not uniform. The lower ones are more extensive than the immediately preceding upper world in order of succession. But they are not very close to each other. They are separated by a thick layer of water, air and space. Each world has below it thick water, dense air, thin air and space.

The 7 worlds of the nether regions have been named as: (1) Ratna-prabha, (2) Sarkara-prabha, (3) Baluka-prabha, (4) Paṅka-prabha, (5) Dhūma-prabha, (6) Tamah-prabha and (7) Mahātamah-prabha. The suffix "*prabha*" added to each name connotes the characteristic color of the place. Beings living in these nether worlds are considered to be hellish beings (*nāraki-jīvas*). The lower we go in the stages of the nether worlds, we find beings suffering and infected with ugliness, they are frightful in appearance and nature, and they suffer from various disabilities in increasing degrees. The devil-gods torturing them are most cruel and are found upto the first three nether worlds. They are named as Paramadhārmika and are also called as "demons" (*asuras*). They are very cruel and get sadistic pleasure in torturing other inmates of hell. The hellish beings are constantly in the grip of suffering and they have no possibility to escape till the expiry of the course of their life in the nether world, as they have no possibility of premature death.

There is the limitless space *(ākāśa*) beyond the boundaries of the universe. The

expanse of this universe is so vast that it would not be possible to gauge even the smallest portion of the extensive vastness of this universe by the modern techniques of modern science.

Time Cycles in the Universe

From the point of existence of the universe, time is divided into two cycles: (1) the ascending cycle (Utsarpini-kāla) which is characterized by progress and development of knowledge, age, happiness, etc., and (2) the descending cycle (Avasarpini-kāla) of time which is characterized by decline and deterioration in knowledge, age, happiness, etc. Each of these cycles has 6 divisions. The ascending cycle begins with most miserable (duhsama duhsama), miserable (duhsama), misery mixed with happiness (duhsama susama), happiness mixed with misery (susama-duhsama), happy (susama), happiest (susama-susama). The Avasarpini-kāla begins in the reverse order, commencing from the happiest period. This connects that the substances which are eternal and indestructible, change their conditions in the two cycles of time. The division of time does not apply to the whole universe, but only to Ārya-khaṇḍa of Bharata and Airāvata-kṣetras

Application of Cosmological Wisdom for Understanding Reality

Reality is complex and life is a many coloured dome. Philosophy is not merely an academic pursuit of reality. It is a way of life. It has the dual purpose of revealing the truth and increase in virtue. Philosophers have sought to provide a principle to live by and purpose to live for. For this practical end, philosophers have striven to achieve a synoptic view of the universe. An awareness of the finiteness of our being makes us yearn for the beyond, in the words of the *Upaniṣads* from untruth to truth, from darkness to light, and from death to eternal life.

For this, we have to look into the spiritual experience of the great seers. Broad says that there is one thing which speculative philosophy must take into most serious consideration - the religious and mystical experiences of the humankind. The mystics are in constant touch with the innermost depth of life and to them we are to look for guidance. Such "enlightened ones" or "sages" are the first-hand exponents of philosophy.

Religion which is derived from the root verb "*religare*" means to connect. Since all life is inter-connected, Jaina cosmological wisdom is concerned with the to connect the *bahirātman* with the *antarātman* and the latter with the *Paramātman.* When this connectivity is profoundly, meticulously and spiritually worked out, the other connectivity. i.e., with the society, environment and the universe fall in its place. Due to this spiritual insight a Jaina works on the law of pure potential thereby executing the law of giving through charity, selfless giving, loving kindness, compassion, benevolence, and takes to a non-violent and detached way of life

exercised through fasting, meditation, scriptural study, etc.

Moral Discipline - *Dharma*

Moral discipline is a pre-requisite for conscious spiritual evolution. The Jainism theory of morality is centered on the philosophy of non-violence (*ahimsā*). The two levels in the practice of morality are: (i) for the ascetic (*muni-ācāra*) and (ii) for the lay follower (*śrāvak-ācāra*). The former practice the five great vows rigorously while the latter take to them with less rigour. The five great vows are: (i) non-violence (*ahimsā*), (ii) truth (*satya*), (iii) non-stealing (*asteya*), (iv) celibacy (*brahmacarya*) and (v) frugality (*aparigraha).* Friendship (*maitri*), right understanding (*pramoda*), compassion (*kāruṇya*) and indifference towards the wrong-doers (*madhyasthya*) are qualities necessary as moral preparation by one seeking Self-realization.

Ethics is the heart of Jainism which springs from spirituality and culminates in the well-being of the universe. The divine messages of the great *Tīrthaṅkaras* are not for any particular race, nation, religion, caste, culture or historical period. Their teachings are priceless, timeless, logical, scientific, immutable and universal. They are valid on all planets, in all galaxies, on all levels of creation and in every age. Jaina cosmological wisdom explains the complex and diverse laws that regulate the evolution of intelligence and consciousness. Besides teaching humankind how to die while living and how to live while dying, Jaina cosmological wisdom reveals that the soul and body are inter-related and that the Self and all the other elements of the universe are inter-dependent. So the ethics of Jainism offers solutions through the practice of austerities (*vratas*) which is practiced to a very great extent by the 14,000 Jain ascetics and a few million lay householders world-wide.

Application of Jaina Ethics for Sustainable Development

The spirituality of Jainism is highly relevant today is relevant in terms of a lifestyle which cares for the future of our planet and all the elements of nature, be it the flora, fauna, micro-organisms, etc. Jaina teachers have long been propounding that all living beings desire to live none wants to do (*savva jīva vi icchanti jīvium na marijium*) and today the environmental scientists and activists talk of conserving the earth, water, fire, air and plants for sustainable development. The Jain ascetics who strive for spiritual perfection, walk bare-foot, renounce everything and live an eco-friendly life. The Jain house-holders too adopt a life-style that can sustain the universe thus respecting the freedom of all living beings and contributing towards the welfare of all. The code of conduct for a Jaina householder stipulates that one should not take to the 15 forbidden trades, give up the 7 debaucheries (*kuvyasanas*), and follow the 12 minor vows. There is no punishment under the Indian Penal Code for a person who practices the minor vows of a Jaina house-holder. The 3 basic principles of

non-violence (*ahimsā*), non-absolutism (*anekānta*), and non-possession (*aparigraha*) are very effective attitudes for solving the problems being faced by humankind, *viz.* global warming, climate change, environmental degradation, etc. The *Ācārāṅga Sūtra* reveals: "*Je guṇe se avvatte, je avatte so guṇe*", i.e. "The world is nothing but a world of sense pleasures and verily the world of sense pleasures is *Sāmsāra*." The more we take to sense pleasures which spring from passions, the more we will be damaging the material world around us and dampening our prospects of Self-realization, self-purification and liberation. Thus the spirituality of Jainism gives a road map for the spiritual evolution of the an individual (*sādhaka*), and lays the foundations for a peaceful society and provides effective tools for sustainable development and cosmic well-being.

Jaina Declaration on Nature

The Jaina Declaration on Nature was presented to His Royal Highness Prince Philip, President of the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) on the 23rd October 1990 at Buckingham Palace, to mark the formal entry of Jainism into the Network on Conservation and Religion. Mahāvīra proclaimed a profound truth for all times to come when he said: "One who neglects or disregards the existence of earth, air, fire, water and vegetation disregards his own existence which is entwined with them." The ancient Jain scriptural aphorism "*Parasparopagraho jīvanam*", i.e. all life is bound together by mutual support and independence is refreshingly contemporary in its premise and perspective. It defines the scope of modern ecology while extending it further to a more spacious "home". It means that all aspects of nature belong together and are bound in a physical as well as a metaphysical relationship. Life is viewed as a gift of togetherness, accommodation and assistance in a universe teeming with interdependent constituents. In this cycle, there are countless souls at different stages of their personal evolution: earth-bodied, water-bodied, fire-bodied, vegetable-bodied, and mobile-bodied ranging from bacteria, insects, worms, birds and larger animals to human beings, infernal beings and celestial beings. The Jain evolutionary theory is based on a grading of the physical bodies containing souls according to the degree of sensory perception. All the souls are equal but are bound by varying amounts of karma-particles which are reflected in the type of body they inhabit. The lowest form of physical body has only the sense of touch. Trees and vegetation have the sense of touch; and, are therefore able to experience pleasure and pain, and have souls. Mahāvīra taught that only the one who understood the grave demerit and demerit caused by destruction of plants and trees understood the meaning and merit of reverence for nature.

(I) The five vows (*vratas*), (ii) kindness to animals, (iii) vegetarianism, (iv) self-restraint, (v) avoidance of waste, and the practice of charity - this fivefold Jain

code of conduct outlined in this Declaration is deeply rooted in its living ethos in unbroken continuity across the centuries. They offer the world today a time-tested anchor of moral imperatives and a viable route plan for humanity's common pilgrimage for holistic environmental protection, peace and harmony in the universe.

Inherent Latent Potential

Swami Vivekananda said that the there is a fountain of all knowledge in every one of us". Jain saints and seers have revealed that the soul is a storehouse of infinite knowledge, vision, bliss and power and its purpose in this universe is nothing short of enlightenment where all the above four characteristics manifest with excellent and exemplary brilliance. The business of God is not to create a self-evolving world, but to show the real Self to the eternal Self breathing in all the individuals. Omniscience is the inherent latent potentialty through which a soul knows all the substances of the universe along with all the modes of the past, present and future simultaneously. The entire universe with its past, present and future is reflected in omniscience (*kevala-jñāna*) which is latent in all the souls. The individual souls are God un-manifest, and the Gods are nothing but the pure souls whose latent inherent potentiality - *kevala-jñāna* - is manifest. Jaina cosmological wisdom inspires one and all to live a life free from agitation and anxiety, to be equanimous, righteous, balanced and non-violent so as to succeed in achieving the latent *kevala-jñāna.* This is possible only through a human form in the vast universe, with 8.4 million life forms vibrant in this dynamic and complex universe. Thus the purpose of human birth is to lead an inspiring and fruitful life guided by *Dharma* for personal liberation as well as cosmic conservation. Jainism developed by Ṛṣabhadeva - the first *Tīrthaṅkara,* and refined by Mahāvīra in the 6th century B.C. has survived the turbulent history of India without ever going to war in the name of religion.

Twelve Contemplations

The following 12 contemplations reveal the nature of the cosmos and guide the aspirants towards Self-realization, self-purification and self-conquest on the one hand and preserve the environment on the other hand.

- *anitya* - transitory nature of the world
- *aśaran* - shelterless-ness
- *samsāra* - no happiness in the world but is within oneself
- *ekatva* - spiritual oneness
- *anyatva* - discriminating between the body and the soul
- *aśuci* - impure nature of the physical body
- *āsrava* - influx of *karma*
- *samvara* - stoppage of *karma*
- *nirjara* - annihilation of *karma*
- *loka-svarūpa* - nature of the universe
- *bodhi-durlabha* - difficult to be enlightened
- *dharma* - righteousness

THE LAST CHAPTER'S SEAL

Dr. Prema Nandakumar

I would like to begin with a story. It is typical for my age, to stretch myself in the easy chair and get lost in the truth of imagination and be called the grey old aunt keeping the little children hushed as she speaks of the smith who could not get into hell.

A smith had signed a contract with the Devil for becoming Master of Smiths. At the conclusion of seven years the Devil could take him. It is a scenario made familiar to us by Christopher Marlowe where Doctor Faustus sells his soul to Mephistopheles. All goes well with the smith till the day when Our Lord and St. Peter pass by his shop. They see the sign, Master of Smiths.

They watch as a horse is brought to fix its shoe. The Lord takes the Master-Smith's permission, cuts off the legs of the horse, burns them in the kiln and reformats the shoe very well. In the same way, he puts the smith's old mother into forge, takes her out and makes her into a beautiful woman.

The smith was astonished no end. Unless he could do such perfect work, he would not be a Master-Smith. So he sets out to show that he can also do it. But when the smith tries the same plan with another horse, it becomes lame and he has to pay for the horse. When he sets about transforming an old hag , she gets burnt up in the forge.

"That was a shame", said our Lord.

"Oh, she won't be missed", answered the smith; "but the Devil ought to be ashamed; he is hardly keeping to what stands over my door."

The Devil's Work? So the smith is the Devil's disciple? The Lord says he can grant three wishes to the smith. But then, a devil's disciple must needs be cunning. Here is the substance of the three strange wishes asked for by the smith: if he asks someone to climb up the pear tree in the garden, he cannot come down till the smith asks him to; if someone sits in his armchair, it will be the same; if someone creeps into his steel mesh purse, he should remain inside, till the smith asks him to come out. The wishes are granted. God and St. Peter go away.

Meanwhile the Devil comes to claim the soul. The smith buys time by asking him to climb the tree, later the armchair and finally the purse. The Devil has to release the smith from his contract to gain freedom from the purse.

When he dies, the smith goes to hell but the Devil does not let him in. He has had enough of this Master-Smith. So the smith goes to heaven but as he is about to enter St. Peter is closing the gates. The smith hurls his hammer at the gate and prevents its closure. The story ends here: "if the smith did not get through the crack, then I don't know what has become of him." Well, for all that I know, he may be right now chasing the

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God-particle at CERN in Geneva!

Is a total transformation of matter possible? Have we the power to forge a new world, if we put the present matter in the burning kiln? Is it because we dare not bring in a total faith in grace to do things? When the smith asks for the three wishes, there is a significant dialogue:

"You've wished very foolishly", said St. Peter; "first of all, you should have asked for God's grace and friendship."

"I didn't dare to ask for anything so great", said the smith, whereupon Our Lord and St. Peter bade him good-bye and left.

Already I find a transformation of matter which keeps me thinking and non-plussed all the time. For instance, for me an article, a manuscript has been a physical thing and so are my files and filing cabinets … a sixty years' career as a writer can overburden one's home with books and manuscripts. Now they are not a physical presence any more. Around fifteen years ago the piling up just stopped abruptly. My writings now have nothing to do with matter: no pens, ink bottles, papers, typewriters. They just come on the screen and vanish. Where are the thousands of pages that have been stored under my name? What kind of memory does my hard disk hold? Is it all in a chip and no more?

But the last chapter's seal remains. The riddle refuses to unwind though a force beyond has been pressing matter to yield to the transformatory touch. The force beyond, which I would happily call the force of the Supreme Mother that always succeeds. Meanwhile, man too assumes the God and accepts the nod to give us some juicy droplets. As when I was discussing the problem of Matter and Mind with a young scientist, she just shrugged her shoulders and said: "Aww, come now, it is all 'chemical conversations'. It is the absolute truth that memory and every activity in our body is mere chemical conversations."

Then, on 13th December, 2011, the ABC News carried a detailed report of what could possibly be a discovery: "Dr.Claire Shepherd-Themistocleus of Britain's Rutherford Appleton Laboratory put out a statement, quoted by London's Guardian, saying, "We are homing in on the Higgs. We have had hints today of what its mass might be and the excitement of scientists is palpable. Whether this is ultimately confirmed or we finally rule out a low mass Higgs-Boson, we are on the verge of a major change in our understanding of the fundamental nature of matter."

Interacting with some of the researchers associated with the LHC, the journalists were able to get this much about the assault on the last chapter's seal: "What's this all about? Would it reduce the unemployment rate, or end wars? No, say scientists, but it would help explain why we, and the rest of the universe, exist. It would explain why the matter created in the Big Bang has mass, and is able to coalesce. Without it, as CERN explained in a background paper, "the universe would be a very different place…. no ordinary matter as we know it, no

chemistry, no biology, and no people."

Thus, Matter is very much in the cauldron as we negotiate the next step beyond Mind. On the one hand are the *ādideivika, ādibhauthika* and *adhyātmika* problems. Look at the way man-made structures assault Matter. The poison that has been spewed out by a nuclear plant has rendered Chernobyl a ghost township; So many poisonings of the earth atmosphere, the most recent being the Fukushima disaster. Man's greed for power, real and metaphorical, has resulted in Matter needing to toughen itself to survive.

As if this were not enough, Nature's fury steps in. A little over a month ago, cyclone Thane battered Pondicherry and Auroville. Here are excerpts from Kim Agarwal's updates written while the storm was raging around him still, and we who were outside were anxious about the well being of all of you at Pondicherry and Auroville:

"A short update at 9.30 a.m. Winds continue unabated and rain is still pelting down, driven almost horizontally. The rumble of the freight train just keeps on and on. Anecdotal reports are coming in of several trees downed in the city, many blocked roads, toppled boundary walls, inundated low-lying areas, and collapsed huts.

A short while ago, I peeped out of my third-storey window. A foolish thing to do in retrospect because the wind slammed it shut in my face... What if the glass had shattered? But I did manage to see that a neighbour's sheet roofing over a rooftop sitout had vanished. A car had been pushed by the wind and had rolled into a tree. The road is carpeted in green with leaves from all the now-bare trees.

Water is seeping and fountaining indoors from below the window shutters, pushed in by the strong wind. Me and my spare towels and buckets are out doing soakup-and-collect duties. (The towels do the soakup; I and the bucket do the collecting!). A neighbour on phone says that one of his eastern windows has fallen off and two are just hanging on. Rain is driving into his apartment. According to the Government met site, the cyclone crossed the shore an hour or so ago a few kilometres from here. (It crossed at 11.8 degrees North; Pondy is at 11.6). The site reported wind speeds of 115 - 125 km/hr gusting to 145 .We continue to be without electricity, and, for some unknown reason, without municipal water supply…

We have no power in town (I'm running on backup) and I've just learnt that the electricity company has switched off power in Auroville for two days as a safety measure (lots of trees blown over onto power lines). I hope the situation will not be as bad here in Pondicherry town."

I had to take in a lot more since Kim Agarwal's postings. How does the Mind react to this? I think Aster gave me a clue over the phone. "Forty years of hard work gone … The devastation is terrible. But Prema the spirit of the people is amazing and that is most important for our work on earth." No, not miracles to achieve the

recovery. Evolution never takes the easy way out. The spirit of the people, referred to by Aster, is the miracle of life. Faith and work do the rest.

Anything can be rebuilt. Ah, there has to be a pause here. Rebuilding a person is not possible. Death still remains holding on to the last chapter's seal. I can achieve no barter with Death. At the very opening of his epic *Mahabhārata,* Vyāsa placed the story of Ruru and Pramadvara where a barter is managed. Pramadvara dies on the eve of her wedding with the sage Ruru. Angry at the sad turn of events, Ruru fiercely turns against Nature which has this way of killing love and joy at one, unexpected stroke. When his anger had deleterious effects on creation a celestial messenger and Pramadvara's father went to Yama with a proposal:

"Then the King of Gandharvas (the father of Pramadvara) and the celestial messenger, of excellent qualities, went to the god Dharma (the Judge of the Dead) and addressed him, saying, 'If it be thy will, O Dharmarāja, let the amiable Pramadvara, the betrothed wife of Ruru, now lying dead, rise up with a moiety of Ruru's life." And Dharmarāja answered, "O messenger of the gods, if it be thy wish, let Pramadvara, the betrothed wife of Ruru, rise up endued with a moiety of Ruru's life." And when Dharmarāja had said so, that maiden of superior complexion, Pramadvara, endued with a moiety of Ruru's life, rose as from her slumber. This bestowal by Ruru of a moiety of his own span of life to resuscitate his bride afterwards led, as it would be seen, to a curtailment of Ruru's life."[1]

Rebuilding or resuscitating a dead person has been apparently possible under special circumstances. Even in the West, we have the legend of Alcestis who was a Princess of Iolcos. She marries Admetus. Admetus learns that he has not long to live. The Fates agree to prolong his life if he can give human years in exchange. But none, not even his parents are willing. Only his wife Alcestis agrees. Fortunately, Heracles wrestles with Death and gets her back to life.

Possible or not, people have discussed the possibility of breaking the last chapter's seal. Again and again they have sought to draw aside this veil but "the riddle of the unfinished Play" remains unsolved. The Play is clear enough: the evolutionary destiny of man. We have perhaps reached the critical point of the play. Haven't we drawn close to annulling Death's ways by the art of transplantation of the heart, the kidney and the hip-joints, which is another way of trading? Apparently, our elders thought of the risks of such trading if it becomes indiscriminate due to the innate presence of greed in man's heart. Vyāsa has another legend that teaches us the need for acceptance lest we become sinners sailing on greed (like the shameful trade in kidney transplants), for coming to terms with Mṛthyu.

Gautami was a widow whose child dies of snake-bite. A hunter catches the snake and brings it to Gautami. In what manner should he kill it? She asks him not to kill it

and incur sin. The death of the snake would not bring back her child to life! The hunter argues that the snake might harm other people so it needs to be killed. The snake says that it should not be blamed for it was directed by Death (Mṛthyu). Even as they argue, Death comes on the scene. He is not described as a frightening god, but very much a friendly voice that seeks to get at the truth about the child's death. After all, it is Time that is the destroyer, not he: "O Serpent, I was directed by Kāla (Time) to end this boy's life and so asked the serpent to do the deed. Neither you nor me has caused the death of this child. Like the wind that scatters the clouds hither and thither, I am controlled by Time. The *sāttvic, rājasic* and *tāmasic guṇas* are all controlled by Time and move lives accordingly."[2]

It is Time that controls everything! *Sarvā Kālapracodita*! So Time appears. He makes it clear that none of them is the guilty one. It is the past *karma* of the boy that put an end to his earthly existence. Gautami agrees with this and addresses the friendly hunter: "O hunter! Obviously I have also performed such action that has resulted in my losing my son. Now Time and Death can withdraw to their respective places. And you may release this snake." As the serpent, Time and Death went their ways, the hunter and Gautami found release from their sorrow.

Wherever we come across the death of a person, we have others consoling the stricken with words like "inevitable" and the need for accepting the Supreme's decree. However, was it ever the intention of the Supreme to have this Creation as a frozen perfection? Or was it to be an eternal circle of birth-growth-death-birth again? Or has the intention been towards a steady and endless progression, leaving behind what is not meaningful for the New Future? Our own physical lives show this happening all the time. Every moment we live something dies in us and some other thing takes its place. There are between 50 and 75 trillion cells in the body, they say. Of course each type of cell has a different life span, the scientist tells me. In seven or ten or twelve years, we seem to become a completely new person. So we live with life and death all the time.

If this living together is able to prolong life by renewing the dying cell with a living one, a stop comes at some moment of time where the living cell is not able to replace the dying cell. It is only that moment which eludes man right now and he has not stopped thinking about breaking this last chapter's seal as well. The need to solve the mystery gets keener in man in moments of crisis and aren't we living in a module of crisis-varieties? Vyāsa has given thought to this even in his time and given us the legend of Sāvitri.

> Is Fate incorrigible? The Greeks, the Anglo-Saxons … all of them said Fate is incorrigible. The essence of the Greek view of the irredeemable nature of Fate is brought out well by Sri Aurobindo in *Ilion*. At the very opening of the *Book of the Herald* we get a description of

Dawn as she rises over the ramparts of the Ilion city. We are immediately hushed into the atmosphere of Fate or Doom or Wyrd or whatever the name with which we call this relentless power:

Closer now gliding glimmered the golden feet of the goddess.

Over the hills and the headlands spreading her garment of splendour,

Fateful she came with her eyes impartial looking on all things,

Bringer to man of the day of his fortune and day of his downfall.

Full of her luminous errand, careless of eve and its weeping,

Fateful she paused unconcerned above Ilion's mysteried greatness,

Domes like shimmering tongues of the crystal flames of the morning,

Opalesque rhythm-line of tower-tops, notes of the lyre of the sun-god.

High over all that a nation had built and its love and its laughter,

Lighting the last time highway and homestead, market and temple,

Looking on men who must die and women destined to sorrow,

Looking on beauty fire must lay low and the sickle of slaughter,

Fateful she lifted the doom-scroll red with the script of the Immortals,

Deep in the invisible air that folds in the race and its morrows

Fixed it, and passed on smiling the smile of the griefless and deathless, —

Dealers of death though death they know not, who in the morning

Scatter the seed of the event for the reaping ready at nightfall."[3]

However, long before science began to think of extending man's life span and even exploring the possibility of transforming Matter, the sages in ancient India had given some thought to it. One of these explorations has taken the form of a legend. In the *Mahābhārata*, Vyāsa retells the ancient legend of Sāvitri where there is no exchange, nor yet acceptance but a positive move to triumph over death. Though Sāvitri, the Princess of Madra, is warned that she would be widowed in a year if she marries the exiled Shalwa Prince Satyavān, she braves Fate. Both of them live happily in the forest hermitage. She never tells Satyavān of the prophecy. On the foretold day, Satyavān swoons while cutting wood and Sāvitri finds the presence of Yama-Dharma, the God of Death standing near with a noose in hand. She salutes him and asks him who he is. He says he has come to take away the life of Satyavān. But why Yama himself? Does not he send his minions to remove life from the body, as she had heard it said? Oh no, Satyavān is a fine young man, and it would be insulting if Yama sends a servant to fetch him! So Yama goes away with Satyavān's life but Sāvitri follows him. She has strengthened herself by *tapasya* – the sacred ritual of *Tri-rāttra vrata* – for three days and has gained the needed power to follow Yama to the

nether regions. Yama asks her to withdraw in a kindly way, says he is pleased with her words and would give her a boon. So they walk together, the god and the mortal. Four times her words please Yama so much that he gives her boons: eyesight and kingdom for her exiled father, one hundred sons for her father and one hundred for herself through Satyavān. When she walks further saying that the company of noble people is never wasted and the really great people never fail to appreciate a new situation and do change their mind. Delighted, Yama asks the young girl to ask for a priceless boon as his mind is delighted with such wise and beautiful words:*Varam vrunmeeshva apratimam pativrate!* She asks for Satyavān's life. Yama grants it, and blesses the two to live for four hundred years and find fulfillment.

Once again, Vyāsa stops short of a total victory over Death. But there is no exchange here, nor helpless acceptance. Sāvitri has made a positive attempt and won a reprieve. With this lamp of a positive triumph in a critical moment, Vyāsa leaves us to walk the pathways of life and find answers ourselves. But not before placing a clue for our help. That is the *Tri-rāttra Vrata* (a three-night holy observance) of Sāvitri. This is the observance as described by Vyāsa.

Four days prior to the date indicated by Ṛṣī Nārada, Sāvitri undertook a *"tri-rattra vrata* of standing night and day at one single place". Her father-in-law, Dyūmathsena, heard of her vow and became worried. He had no idea why she was undertaking such a difficult vow. He told her that this particular *Vrata* was very hard and severe. The observance called for standing straight all the time and was certainly very difficult for a young girl like her. Sāvitri replies with great humility: "Be not disturbed about it, please; I shall be able to carry the vow without blame; only a firm resolve makes it go through successfully and I have initiated it with that resolve." [4]

Dyūmathsena is well versed in the Vedic rituals and knows that once it has been resolved to undertake a ritual with an aim, it was best to go through it with sincerity. So he does not ask her to change her mind. Instead he blesses her that she may perform the chosen ritual successfully. He had watched her living in the hermitage and knew that she was a woman of few words but firm in action. Rishi Mārkāṇḍeya now describes the *Vrata* to Yudhiṣṭira: "Saying so, the great-minded Dyūmathsena retired and Sāvitri, standing erect on a fixed spot, appeared to be as though she was a straight wooden post. 'O Yudhiṣṭira, Tomorrow the husband is to die' – it was with this thought, and filled with an intense grief, Sāvitri remained standing even as the last night of the vow was about to be over. Next day, knowing that it had arrived, well with the sunrise she completed the morning rituals and lit a bright fire and made to it sacrificial offerings."

Presently Sāvitri respectfully made salutations to her parents-in-law and the elders and sages who lived in the hermitage.

She then stood respectfully before them with folded hands. With a united voice all these forest-dwellers who were full of *tapasya* blessed her to remain an auspicious wedded lady (*avaidhavya*), a *sadā suhāgin.* Immediately she entered a state of meditation (*dhyānayoga parāyanā*) praying for their words to come true. Though her parents-in-law, feeling anxious for her, request her to take food after having gone through the strenuous *Vrata*, Sāvitri makes excuses saying she will do so once her desire is fulfilled.

Such is the *Vrata* of Sāvitri, seemingly simple. But then in ancient times, even before the age of the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata,* people believed entirely in the rituals set down by the scriptures. The Pūrva Mīmāmsa stands witness to the power of askesis and Vedic *mantras*. There was no particular deity which state of meditation (*dhyānayoga pārāyaṇā*) praying for their words to come true. Though her parents-in-law, feeling was elevated so that one offered one's total devotion there. All the Vedic gods were respected and those who performed such rituals had full faith in their deity to gain a power to attain their aim:

"The Mīmāmsakas have attempted to answer the question how a remote result, say, the attainment of Heaven, is obtained by an action such as a sacrifice, which belong to and in fact ceases in the present. Injunctive texts ordain that the fruits, namely, Heaven and the like, should be achieved by sacrifices such as *darśa-paurṇamāsa.* And this implies that the sacrifice is means to the fruit, *viz*. Heaven. A sacrifice is the nature of an action which is very soon lost. Hence the instrumentality of the sacrifice to the fruit which is to take place at a distant time is hardly possible. To establish this instrumentality, which is propounded by the *Śruti*, between sacrifice and Heaven, an invisible potency is admitted which issues from the sacrifice and which endures till the fruit is generated and which resides in the soul of the sacrificer. This is called *apūrva.* It ceases on producing the result…It is a power in the sacrifice."[5]

Sāvitri's aim was *avaidhavya* (non-widowhood). The power she gained for achieving the aim is the only explanation of the *Vrata*. It helped her follow Yama beyond the earth when he was taking away Satyavān's "thumb-sized life". This is mentioned clearly by Vyāsa. *Niyamavrata samsiddhā mahābhāgā pativratā* (she could do this having obtained the *siddhi*, the fulfillment, of the vow).This makes it clear that "*niyamavrata samsiddha"* is the key - phrase which has been forgotten down the ages and only "*mahābhāgā pativratā"* has been retained in the racial consciousness.

Of course, Sāvitri was an ideal wife, a *pativratā*. Indeed such was the high idealism of Indian womanhood that has remained so till this day, inspite of a variety of assaults, both external and internal. When Sītā is afflicted by the demonesses in the Aśoka grove in Laṅka and asked by them to marry Rāvaṇa, she says she is a *pativratā*, wedded to her husband alone. And she gives several such names, *yathā Śachi*

mahābhāga… Like Śachidevi following Indra, Arundhati following Vaśiṣṭa, Rohiṇi following Candra, Lopamudra following Agasthya, Sukanya following Chyavana, Sāvitri following Satyavān, Śrīmati following Kapila, Madayanti following Saudasa, Keśiṇi following Sagara, Damayanti following the Niśāda King Nala, Sītā would also follow Rāma to the end of earth and will never swerve from this high idealism.

The idea of such a wife gaining mastery over the powers of nature has been no myth but a living reality for Indian womanhood. In the same way, the other key word, "*niyamavrata"*, has also to be analyzed by us who wish to get at the secret of victory over Matter. Apparently, in the *Mahābhārata* world the "*Vrata"* chimes in with the faith that Sāvitri had prepared herself by the ritual, received the power of the sacrifice, *apūrva* and meditated upon the blessings of the elders and sages for her *avaidhavya.* Sri Aurobindo's meditations upon the "*Vrata"* must have yielded him the contours of the path that could make one walk in step with Yama.

A term used by Vyāsa to describe Sāvitri is "*dhyāna yoga parāyana".*When Dyūmathsena is agitated by the absence of Satyavān, the sages of the forest console him. Why should he worry when Sāvitri was a *tapasvini*? Hadn't they seen here these three days undergoing patiently a very difficult *Vrata*? The sage Suvarchas says: "His wife Sāvitri, I know, is engaged in *tapasya*, and has control over the senses; and is of a good well-poised conduct; from that I can proclaim that Satyavān is alive." The other Ṛṣīs assure him that Sāvitri is endowed with the signs of auspiciousness (*avaidhavya*) and so Satyavān must be alive. In fact, all of them are very sure about what they say for all of them know that this Vedic ritual cannot fail. They had seen her performing the vow and following Satyavān without taking her food, such had been her singular focus on the future. It is not what we would call merely blind faith in the grace of the Supreme, but the positive strength of mind which would compel the Supreme to act in favour of the doer of the *Vrata*. Bharadhwāja says: "His wife Sāvitri, I know, is engaged in askesis, and has mastered the senses: and is well-poised in her manner of action; I can hence affirm that Satyavān is living."

These sages are famous for uttering only the Truth-word, *Satyavāgmi tapasvins*. And so it comes to be that Sāvitri and Satyavān return safely to the hermitage. Thus, it is not only the *Tri-rātra Vrata* but the total faith reposed by the Ṛṣīs in it must have made Sri Aurobindo go in search of the *tapasya* that had made Sāvitri invincible, and he found it in *Dhyāna Yoga*. Through meditation she had gained mastery of herself. What are the phases of meditation? How deep does one move within? When does one gain the power of the sacrifice *(apūrva*), the aim of the *tapasya*? Thus was born the *Book of Yoga* in the epic poem, *Sāvitri*.

Matter-Life-Mind-Beyond the Mind. Such has been the steady format of the

evolution. But it has been no linear progression upwards. Progression has often been thwarted by what we consider to be the forces of regression, concentrated in Matter. We have been frightened of Death alone as standing in the way of transforming this Matter. The *Mahābhārata* had approached this problem as symbolic myth as against the so-called clarity of science and technology that mesmerize the modern man today at the expense of individual *tapasya*. Transformation has been going on all the time within each one of us, in each particle of matter. Understand that and use it for bringing to birth the New Creation! As an individual tuned to achieving transformation, dare to ask for God's Grace and Friendship! We have forgotten the coolness of the moon and the brilliance of the stars in our electricity-illumined cities. Enough of science now; turn to the powers of the soul. A point made eloquently by Sri Aurobindo in his poem, "*The Rishi*" where Manu seems to have recognized the limits of science with regard to Matter:

"Manu:
O Rishi, I have wide dominion,
The earth obeys
And heaven opens far beyond the sun
Her golden gaze.
But Him I seek, the still and perfect One,
The Sun, not rays.

Rishi:
Seek Him upon the earth. For thee He set
In the huge press
Of many worlds to build a mighty state.
For man's success,
Who seeks his goal. Perfect thy human might,
Perfect the race.
For thou art He, O King. Only the night
Is on thy soul
By thy own will. Remove it and recover
The serene whole
Thou art indeed, then raise up man the lover
To God the goal."

NOTES

1. Translated by Kisari Mohan Ganguli
2. Translated by Prema Nandakumar
3. Book One, "The Book of the Herald"
4. Translations from Vyāsa's *Sāvitri* are by R.Y. Deshpande
5. "Pūrva Mīmāmsa", *The Cultural Heritage of India*, Volume III, 1969, pp. 165.

TIME, SUBJECT AND LANGUAGE: A CRITIQUE OF ANTHROPOCENTRISM

Dr.Prasenjit Biswas

1. Time and Subject

The Cartesian-Kantian anthropomorphic subject represents a state of continual immanence in terms of its indefinite and infinite possibilities. The linguistic turn takes an anthropocentric form that has been embedded in the Cartesian-Kantian metaphysics of presence. Especially Wittgenstein takes language as an enactable rule-governed activity and thereby making it immanent to "lived experiences" of the users of language. Heidegger introduces a comprehensive embeddedness of being in language and *vice-versa*, and thereby assigning it a hermeneutical closure. In such anthropomorphic and anthropocentric moves, what was lost is the very ground of reality on which language must act. A project of recovery of the lost grounds of the relation between life and language cannot be completed without taking into account the "constitutive" outside of language, which is the sovereignty of the Subject that occupies an indeterminate space between lived reality/time and the time that remains. The time that remains is the time that we are projects a profound boredom as well as an existence post-salvation. This Agambenian twist to the nature of Subjectivity by an ontological return to a sense of time beyond the temporal allows slippages from Subjecthood as well as from de-subjectivation by shifting the centre of self-consciousness and identity to a state of being free from the metaphysical and ontological burden of bearing any bio - political substance.

Once subjectivity and language are disentangled from each other, the question that we need to answer is, *what comes after the* Subject as well as Language*?* The answer can just be "exploratory" instead of being "explanatory."[1] Exploratory answers are celebrated in a post-philosophical vein by many philosophers who experience the limit of language. Such limits are explored no more in terms of "forms of life", ontico-ontology or the sovereign within territorial limits of embeddedness of life and language that often turns into the power-relations that a regime of truth and subjectivity willy nilly brings in. The play between Subject and Language beyond the fixed, stable and determinate notion of self/subject takes over the domain of subjectivity in order make it free from its "core" and throw it up to the open and to the constitutive outside. Such a Subject is liberated from the desire to liberate itself, instead it is like a flickering flame of consciousness that flutters and swings in every bout of a stream of a gentle

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wind. This subject can be thought of in terms of a "process of liberation from the minimally disruptive standpoint of its hypothetical scene of origin". To put it in the language of Vaddera Chandidas,

> It is a possibilisation of an infinite time in an infinite fraction of a moment. The desire that liberates and the liberation that desires are the spiral spinal swinging current...[2]

Such a current of temporality that takes one to the extra time that comes after the consciousness of the temporal comes to an end can be celebrated in language. This celebration can take two steps. It can be a commentary about the inoperativeness of language as language, as Foucault, for example expresses it in his "*The Thought of the Outside",*

> Language is then freed from all the old myths by which our awareness of words, discourse, and literature have been shaped. For a long time it was thought that language has mastery over time, that it acted both as the future bond of the promise and as memory and narrative; it was thought to be prophecy and history; it was also thought that in its sovereignty it could bring to light the eternal and visible body of truth; it was thought that its essence resided in the form of words or in the breath that made them vibrate. In fact, it is only a formless rumbling, a streaming; its power resides in dissimulation. That is why it is one with erosion of time; it is depthless forgetting and the transparent emptiness of waiting.
>
> Language, its every word, is indeed directed at contents that preexists it; but in its own being, provided that it holds as close to its being as possible, it only unfolds in the pureness of the wait. Waiting is directed at nothing: any object that could gratify it would only efface it. Still, it is not confined to one place… It is in forgetting drawn outside of that the wait remains a waiting: an acute attention to what is radically new, with no bond of resemblance or continuity with anything else (the newness of the wait drawn outside of itself and freed from any past); attention to what is most profoundly old (for deep down the wait has never stopped waiting).[3]

This idea of language as waiting disengages subjectivity from language and returns it to the pure event of "waiting". This waiting promotes a certain kind of sign-making. In Eric Gans's words,

> Very briefly, the sign as "aborted gesture of appropriation" is

> detached from its worldly temporality as a practical act by the sacred inaccessibility of the common central desire - object. At this point, it becomes an object of attention in itself, not a mere pointing - to but a sign of the object that is, at the same time, a "sign" to the other participants of the sign-maker's renunciation of appropriative designs on this object.[4]

This is how anthropomorphic view of language could be overcome by a directedness to the "sign" that abandons an appropriation of subjectivity as well as the world, making the anthropological machine dis-simulate itself in the open. This is a staging of the sign in order to expose the dynamic interior of a project of liberation. The "saved night" of this project tells us,

> This subject, "ever-fractured" by the tension between the resentful periphery and the impossible center, may be described more simply, as linguists do, as the one who says "I." In order to become the "subject" who says "I," we must understand ourselves simultaneously as center and as periphery, both as the sacred source of language and as one of those "subjected" to it. Yet "understand" is not quite the right word, since it implies a cognitive model within which the paradox has already been resolved. Cognition, in the form of originary anthropology, offers us a metaresolution, a minimal model of what the human must be in order to give life to this paradox through a praxis of desire.[5]

This shifting and moving centre of a symptomatic "I" represents one of the possibility of a minimal presence of the self, which is far overcome by "actual" experience of making and using signs that do not necessarily fix a reference with an always already present centre of the self. The centre of the self is subverted when such a centre is fixed and such a fixed employment of "self" in a discourse also shows that the self cannot be present there. The closures attained in world-views and cultures are thereby open to an interruption by the very "present" that refuses to freeze itself in the flow of time that leaves us only as a "remnant". The future lies in establishing the self as a remnant of itself in the rediscovery of the humane as a necessary thought without which life mourns its essential connection with the infinite possibility of becoming. In the words of Vaddera Chandidas,

> Realities breathe through reality; and, reality is sustained in and through realities. Reality is not personality; whereas realities enjoy the medium of 'personality'.[6]

The shifting centre of self establishes a "personality" in reality, but the shift

recreates a new sign outside the "form of life" and its everydayness that attend to the other. Acting on such a human condition, a perpetual making of reality goes on that renders an anthropomorphic description of "reality" a static activity. Opposed to such a fixed construction of reality, there lies a temporal flux that gives necessity to the idea of reality. Anthropology as philosophy can delve into this flux of reality in the appearance and disappearance of selves. An anthropocentric notion of self does not posses the ability to inscribe itself in difference, it merely constitutes itself in its already interpellated domain of self-identity. Contrastingly a non-anthropocentric notion of self in terms of "temporal" and "beyond temporal" alterities shall constitute dual powers of repetition in difference and erasure that would never make a full presence. It would rather be fragments of various temporalities and its associated remnants. Accordingly, a cultural-anthropological notion of self would move in a repetitive trajectory of emergence and disappearance of the figure of human. As Foucault gives a suggestive notion of anthropological thinking,

> It is probably impossible to give empirical contents transcendental value, or to displace them in the direction of a constituent subjectivity, without giving rise, at least silently, to an anthropology - that is, a mode of thought in which the rightful limitations of acquired knowledge (and consequently of all empirical knowledge) are at the same time the concrete forms of existence, precisely as they are given in that same empirical knowledge.[7]

This same empirical knowledge now needs to constitute a discourse of anthropocentrism, which by way of its limitations cannot make the self and hence it remains suspended in a self - other dialectic that never reaches the full presence as the "subject" of that discourse. The anthropological machine pits language as prior to a discourse of 'constitution' of self and reality, but once such a machination is dispelled what arises is only a divestment of language and being in order to substitute the self and the other by increasing the degrees of responsibility towards the open. Anthropology merely increases the degrees of freedom for a non-anthropocentric moment of understanding the human by facilitating a transition from an absolute being to imperfections and limitations of empirical human being, who comes after transcendence and for whom there is an extra time that remains after philosophy.

2. Language

Given this inoperative "anthropological machine", language only throws up a series of homonymy in order to develop the "idea" of language. This idea of language lies in setting a limit on the very idea of language as "immediate", which is a presentation of the very idea of language. The task of this presentation is formulated by Agamben in this way,

> The task of philosophical

> presentation is to come with speech to help speech, so that, in speech, speech itself does not remain presupposed but instead comes to speech. At this point the presuppositional power of language touches its limit and its end; language says presuppositions as presuppositions and, in this way, reaches the unpresupposable and unpresupposed principle that, as such, constitute authentic human community and communication.[8]

This is a move within and beyond language that presents "a vision of language itself" at the limit or end at which it touches itself. At the limit of the possibility of signification, language touches itself and by this act of auto-affection, it goes beyond its limit to show itself as the "immediate". This immediacy is understood in this manner,

> The taking place of language between the removal of the voice and the event of meaning is the other voic… enjoys the status of a no-longer (voice) and of a not-yet (meaning), it necessarily constitutes a negative dimension. It is ground, but in the sense that it goes to the ground and disappears in order for being and language to take place.[9]

This taking place of language is signifying the signification, it is an overcoming of the dualism between an inside and an outside, that is, the temporal and the manifest speech acts that mean something. In other words, language is the ground of meaning by way of being, as it appears between "removal of the voice and the event of meaning" as the "other", which is always surpassed and which always remains as an yet-to-come. Language, by way of taking place of ground touches its "limit". The limit of language is the very presupposition of language that is presupposed in every use of language. This presupposition of language is described as,

> The instant language *qua* "presuppositional power" touches itself at its limit and end, touches itself where it sees and shows itself as 'a vision of language itself', it absolves and absolutizes itself as 'absolute presupposition'.[10]

A vision of language as auto-relation of language to itself is also the ground of being, but the ground is not "foundational". It is touching the limit of language, which is, "potentiality not to", which also is a negation of the "as if" analogy on which being is ontologically grounded, as in Heidegger. The status of "no-longer" is a negation of the temporally constructed centre of human subjectivity as present in the voice, while 'not-yet' is a suspension of the voice in the availability of meaning, which makes the voice no longer operative. The availability of meaning is the moment of fulfillment of language, which again is

the moment of experience of the end or limit of language, which is, touching itself. This is as if the Subject has taken a perspective on itself and delivered a meaning unto itself, while language has fulfilled itself by touching its own limit. Such a moment cannot be any longer maintained as the voice has been already suspended and so, the Subject loses no time in seeing that the time flies by keeping it a bystander. Such an abolition of subjectivity, which manifests in thought and representation, suspends all its 'content' in the moment of decentring itself in the flow of time just as a "spectator". Subject as spectator has already brought an end to the temporal connectedness between various instants of the time-consciousness and instead produces a lapse and delay between the "no-longer" and "not-yet". Agamben puts it in this way

> ' Whereas our representation of … time, as the time in which we are, separates us from ourselves and transforms us into… spectators of ourselves- spectators who look at the time that flies without any time left, continually missing themselves - messianic time, an operational time in which we take hold of and achieve our representations of time, is the time *that* we ourselves are, and for this very reason, is the only real time, the only time we have.[11]

A very different notion of temporality arises here that even surpasses the anthropomorphic notion of the "open" by way of the experience of limit as it arises in representation of reality and time in human subjectivity. Human subjectivity becomes the "time that we ourselves are". Following Paul's letter to the Romans, Agamben uses two different notions of time, resurrection and *Parousia*. Parousia is the second coming of Jesus at the end of time, while resurrection marks the "end of time". Similarly, Subject as spectator of time is a resurrected Subject at the end of experiential time of an event of "time flying". This resurrected subjectivity at the time of "time flying" carries no-longer the sense of being a spectator but brings in the infinite possibility of being free of the temporal structure of consciousness and subjectivity. This is not the time of becoming the Subject, as such a time has already lapsed in the spectatorial consciousness that the Subject has entered in and it takes the Subject to the state of being uncaptivated beyond the "open" to the not-yet. An example from Agamben would read the situation in exactness,

> In *The Tempest*, Prospero says to Ariel: 'Be free'. This is the moment when he relinquishes the spirit's charm and knows that the strength he has now is his own; it is the late and final stage when the old artist lays down his pen-and contemplates… No doubt life without Ariel loses its mystery, and yet somehow we know that now it can really belong to us; only now do we begin to live a purely human and

> earthly life, the life that did not keep its promises and, for that reason, can now give us infinitely more.[12]

The progress from mere subjectivity to spectatorial subjectivity and beyond leaves the life behind and yet they are given over to the smallest everyday gesture, as if the meaning of an entire existence condenses into a silly moment of "missing" oneself.[13] It is an old artists laying down the pen and contemplating, a mode of being captivated but at the same time losing oneself in that state of being captivated. What Agamben posits is the absolute sovereignty of the Subject in language as the very temporal structure of language and thought lead the Subject to a state of "meaning" that is time itself. This is also a seizing of the outside by the Subject, where time flies in relation to a Subject as spectator. Agamben characterizes this relationship between subjectivity and language as an abolition of "as", when he says

> When one looks closely, the passage from language to discourse appears as a paradoxical act that simultaneously implies both subjectification and desubjectification. On the one hand, the psychosomatic individual must fully abolish himself and desubjectify himself as a real individual to become the subject of enunciation and to identify himself with the pure shifter "I", which is absolutely without any substantiality and content other than its mere reference to the event of discourse. But once stripped of all extra-linguistic meaning and constituted as a subject of enunciation, the subject discovers that he has gained access not so much to a possibility of speaking than to an impossibility of speaking-or, rather he has gained access to being always already anticipated by a glossalalic potentiality over which he has neither control nor mastery… He is expropriated of all referential reality, letting himself be defined solely through the pure and empty relation to the event of discourse. The subject of enunciation is composed of discourse and exists in discourse alone. But for this very unreason, once the subject is in discourse, he can say nothing; he cannot speak.[14]

The Subject of enunciation is a pure shifting "I" that is related to the event of being "I" in disjunction from a centre of subjectivity, which in effect, merely experiences the pure event of touching the limit of language, which happens as a pure event of the subject as sovereign. This sovereign and shifting position of Subject both within discourse and outside makes it

an aporetic remnant that acts as a caesura that divides the boundary between the past and the present.[15]The notion of "pure event" is aporetic as the event needs just not a site, but a temporal continuum.

3. Critique of Anthropocentrism

Agamben's notion of subject as sovereign produces the possibility of language as a pure event that can break through the limits of time consciousness and representational feature of meaning. This is a Subject which is in the open beyond the duality of time and space, it is beyond the dichotomy of subjectivation and desubjectivation. The agency of such a Subject lies in a language that is not abstracted from its use and context, but it lies in creating a context for itself beyond the play of closure and openness. The idea of the sovereign Subject and the way in which such a Subject relates itself to various moments of its actualization, which is "lost" and "forgotten" needs to be characterized. Such "lost" and "forgotten" as such is "unsaveable"[16] and hence the Subject 'sees only a closing, only a "not-seeing".[17]This closing is not an apparent closure, it is a relationship of humanity with the cosmos and the nature, but it is not saveable on the basis of the relation. Agamben elucidates this relationship in terms of its limits,

> The anthropological machine no longer articulates nature and man in order to produce the human through the suspension and capture of the inhuman. The machine is, so to speak, stopped; it is "at a standstill", and, in reciprocal suspension of the two terms, something for which we perhaps have no name and which is neither animal nor man settles in between nature and humanity and holds itself in the mastered relation, in the saved night.[18]

The saved night of the anthropological machine no longer succeeds in producing the human in terms of a "mastered relation", but it only throws up an uncertain relationship between the human and nature that is something in-between the two and thereby allowing it to acquire the shape of a "remnant", as Agamben characterized it. Abandonment of Anthropological machine as a co-ordinated outcome of the progress of the human Subject to not-seeing the open is an aporetic consequence of any ontological characterization of being.

The aporetic consequence can be characterized in terms of blurring of genres of discourses such as philosophy and literature, which bear family resemblances that can cover the totality of paradigms and discourses. A diachronic mixing up that remains simultaneously hidden and manifest in layers of discourses produce a communicative continuum between subjects bound by various discourses through their cognitive-narrative abilities. This results into a few case-histories, counterfactual scenarios and parables within the discourse of Philosophy starting from Plato to say Austin's speech-act theory. For Derrida, ordinary language is shot

through metaphors, non-serious usages, chance-collocations, parapraxes and such other "accidental features". Such accidental features do not allow fixing referents in the world, but the linguistic elements themselves can "perform" the role of reference. A diachronic mixing up between the referential function of language with referents is a kind of performance that language does. Derrida uncovers all these accidental features concealed by normal uses of words in order to show how many different routes would be possible from any given point in the discourse. In Derrida's notion of language, each fragment of a language is a part of a larger language and each such fragment is open to "receiving" and "giving" in the process of reconstituting an always-already represented "referent" or an "object". But this opening "problematizes" a modular notion of language that consists of "those abstract principles which, when they interface with components outside the mind, produce disjoint effects such as language, music and the like".[19] Such a problematization results into a multiplicity of "representations" which are not only of a certain genre but also of "modulations" of the verb "to represent". In Derrida's words,

It draws attention to a situation in which a context cannot be saturated so as to permit the determination and identification of a sense... If there are two conditions for fixing the meaning or overcoming the polysemy of a word-namely, the existence of an invariant beneath the diversity of semantic transformations, on the one hand, and the possibility of determining a saturable context, on the other-these two conditions seem to me in any case as problematical for a living language as for a dead one.[20]

In other words, contexts are never complete in a specific discourse of meaning and reality without a warrant that satisfies the "truth-conditions" for a representational predicate , in almost the same way, Derrida countenanced the idea of "representation" from assuming a "semantic kernel" such as "truth" or "meaning". Derrida indicated that the very function of language lies in not expressing what is "truth" but to be true to itself. A language remains "true" to itself by being self-referential and hence the apparent isolation of the "being" of language has to be accessed as "presence". But such a presence is never auto-telic, or closed onto a reality, it is rather a "diversity of corpuses, codes, and contexts". This is a mimetic substitution of the moving multiplicity of language that passes from being singular to multiple without an ontological reduction to thought or reality into its structural manifold. The situation can be described in Wright's language,

> The form of pluralism... is one of, roughly, variable realization. What constitutes the existence of a number may be very different to what constitutes the existence of a material object. The identity of persons is generally held to call for a special account, contrasting with that appropriate to the identity of

> material constitutents generally. And what constitutes truth in ethics may be quite different to what constitutes truth in theoretical physics … Evidently there is space for a corresponding contention about truth. There need be no single, discourse-invariant thing in which truth consists.[21]

If that be so, then there are no discourse-invariant conditions of truth, then, then it results into a dis-relation between "presentatio" and "representation", which is an abandonment of the relationship between event and context without falling either into the trappings of an ontological binary between "belonging" and "inclusion" (read being and existence) or into the fear of "death", the disclosure of the "limits" of shedding an essentialist pluralism that fails in its intellection. Such an intellection, needless to say, is a reflexive failure that fails to subsume performatively its own happening from its context. This is also a shipwreck of "reflexive manner of thinking" of the Kantian kind, when sensations fail to provide any information about an object, but signals the imaginary locales of the Subjective mind, a supplementary information without "representation". This is a breach between cognitive faculties as well as a breach between constitution of subjectivity and conferment of meanings in language. The way Kant formulated about this breach still remains as an example of a return to the Subject, which in Lyotard's heuristic analysis of "sublime" is like this: "There is not one subjectivity that experiences pure feelings; rather, it is the pure feeling that 'promises a subject'."[22] But this can re-formulated in the complex architectonically breached picture of human subjectivity as: (1) "either the subjective calculus is ruled through and through algebraically, or there is a hasty subjectivation and a subjective process of certitude" and (2) the discursive materiality of the production of the subjective marked by "the ontological form of anxiety" about constitution of the very Subject. What further promises a subject is its arising after language, which at the moment of its application is "someone else's" and never of one's own. Can language be given or taken between one and the other without a promise?

This picture arises in Lacan's notion of "logical time", which in Badiou's interpretation turns out to be a notion of "experiential and lived time" in which one can only describe the breach or disjunction between "possibility" (which is infinite) and "actuality" (which is the choice of One or multiple) in a particular moment separated by the anxiety of being. The anxiety lives upto a different reality beyond the sensation in the Subjective by a breached suspension of its fulfillment in the form of a sublime that has an excess over both the sides of the breach without a possibility of any reproduction or synthesis. This breach operates as de-temporalized states of signifiers of the Subject and the temporal becoming of the subjective in the realm of meaning and language. This is a moment of resolving the duality between

the subject and its objective constituents by not synthesizing them into one, but by naming them as two, as the "truth as an effect" of the breach between the ontological "two" and the ontic "duality".[23]

The "ontic" reality relates to "facticity" or ascriber-contextualism, while the "ontological" relates to, what Jean Luc Nancy called "the coming into presence of the immobile heart of things"[24], which, in the ultimate analysis is the meaning of being as presence or absence as such, as part of a system of thought and inhabitants of language. The question of ontico-ontological difference arises at two levels: at the level of predicates that "present" being and at the level of "conditions of possibility" of that very presence. The presence of being (which is not an object or entity) is *different* from mere facticity of an experience of being; it is rather a reflected notion of being that arises from the very intentional constitution of subjectivity that enters into every instance of "facticity", which is an already interpreted notion of facts. This already interpreted notion of things/facts in the intentional-reflected notion of being in the subjectivity of the Subject overcomes the duality between Subject and Object, Self and Other by way of an ontico-ontological difference that differentiates "facticity" and "being". In this context, Heidegger granted Dasein or being-in-the-world only the status of "ontology", while he granted the "ontic" status to humans as the only creature that has a being. But this Heideggerian notion of Dasein as both "ontic" and "ontological" produces the notion of a centered being that presents itself in the world qua self-consciousness that ultimately establishes a connection of necessity between how the ontologically present being understands, interprets and acts in the world. This connection of necessity makes both "ontic" and "ontological" as mutually co-constitutive such that the difference that Heidegger talked of between Dasein and the entities towards which Dasein bears a relation of comportment is circumvented by bringing the difference under a co-reductive holism.

NOTES

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3. Michel Foucault, "The Thought of the Outside" in James Faubion (Ed.) *Aesthetics, Method and Epistemology,* London: Penguin Books, 1994,p. 167.
4. Eric Gans, *Op.Cit*., n.9.
5. Eric Gans, *Ibid.,* p. 53.
6. Chandidas, *Op.Cit*., p. 25.
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8. Agamben, *Potentialities*: 35.

9. Giorgio Agamben, *Language and Death: The Place of Negativity*, Karen E. Pinkus & Michael Hardt (Trs.), Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991, p. 35.
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11. Giorgio Agamben, *The Time That Remains: A Commentary on the Letter to the Romans*, Stanford CA : Stanford University Press, 2005, p. 68.
12. Giorgio Agamben, *Profanations*, Jeff Fort (Tr.), New York : Zone Books, 2007, p.18.
13. *Ibid*., p. 24.
14. Agamben, *Remnants*. pp. 116 - 7.
15. Agamben, *Time,* p. 74.
16. Agamben, Open: 82. Agamben invokes here the notion of Benjamin's 'saved night', which is a relationship with something unsaveable.
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18. *Ibid*: 83.
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24. Jean Luc Nancy, " The Heart of Things" in *The Birth to Presence*, Brain Holmes *et al* (Trs.), Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993, p.187.

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METAPHYSICS IN THE MYSTICISM OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

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1. Introduction

This article examines the metaphysical nuances in the mysticism of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, drawing material mainly from reading the works: *Sri Ramakrishna's Thoughts on Man, World and God*[1] and the *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa*.[2] First of all, the meaning of mysticism and metaphysics are discussed; followed by an analysis of metaphysics in the mysticism of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa - by making a truthful representation of Paramahamsa's view; and, thereafter making a sort of comparison and contrast between the metaphysics of Paramahamsa and some other thinkers and their theories.

2. Mysticism and Metaphysics: An Epigrammatic Understanding

Can there be mysticism without metaphysics? To answer this, one may wonder as to "What, then, is mysticism?" In current usage, mysticism is denoted as "that innate tendency of the soul, which seeks to transcend reason to attain to a direct experience of the Divine (God)."[3] Symbolic, allegoric or poetic expressions of the mystics are the outcome of their God-experience/Divine-experience/spiritual experience. As such these expressions will not be of the order or manner of the professional philosopher, who takes up a subject and deals with it in all its imaginable aspects in a systematic analysis. The scattered ideas and concepts that could be gleaned from the expressions of the mystics and crystallized as a single philosophical entity may not have a point-to-point correspondence with various aspects of the same philosophical entity as treated by a professional philosopher. What is to be borne in mind here is that whatever has been explained and expounded by the philosopher had already been experienced by the saints and mystics of religion.[4] Thus the mystic has a higher experience as well as higher state of realization, which could be termed as mysticism. "Mysticism has got sense and meaning if and only if there is metaphysics."[5] The fundamental experiential expressions in mysticism are based on metaphysical postulations like soul, God, and the like.

At the outset, an explication is required as to what "metaphysics" is. Metaphysics relies on reason in its aim to solve problems and understand what the reality really is, which causes both our logic and our senses (and ourselves). Insight is the immediate experience of the indescribable reality which "can only be characterized in paradoxical or, at least seemingly, contradictory ways."[6] In the West, since the time of Kant, it has become increasingly clear that we cannot exhaustively describe

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reality from one metaphysical perspective alone. This fact was acknowledged by distinguished philosophers like Nagarjuna (c.150 AD) and Śaṅkara (c.788 AD), ages ago on the Indian soil. This explains why we now live in a post-modern relative culture of no absolute truths, because our theories are founded on many changing phenomena. Thus, all our knowledge is merely a human construction, ideas approximating reality, but not absolutely true. So how do we overcome this? By rejecting particles, forces and time; and explaining and connecting these diverse phenomena? This is the role of metaphysics in philosophy. All that fragmentation abates as metaphysics grows.[7] Now we take up the mysticism and metaphysics *per se* in Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa.

3. Paramahamsa on Ineffability and the Noetic Qualities of Mysticism

Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa used to express his views on the nature of the mystical experience of the Ultimate Reality. In various places, he expressed it as if it were ineffable, or difficult to put into words that are used for communication in our day to day life. He says: "What Brahman is, cannot be described. All things in the world – the *Vedas*, the *Purāṇas*, the *Tantra*, and the six systems of philosophy – have been defiled, like food that has been touched by the tongue, for they have been read or uttered by the tongue. Only one thing has not been defiled in this way and that is Brahman. No one has ever been able to say what Brahman is."[8] And further he says: "God cannot be realized through scholarship. He is beyond the scriptures – the *Vedas*, *Purāṇas* and *Tantras*."[9] The mystic experience of the Ultimate Reality has been so pure that it is not "polluted" by the tongue, senses or even the intellect. According to him, it is pure experience of the Whole, without a tint of any other physical or mental element. He expresses, "What Brahman is cannot be described in words. Everything has been polluted…no one has been able to describe Brahman. It is therefore unpolluted."[10] The inexplicability of God and God-experience is the sum and substance of Paramahamsa's mysticism, as he himself has stated: "What Brahman is cannot be described. Even he, who knows it, cannot talk about it."[11]

Although mystic experience cannot be explained fully, one might be in a position to hint at the mystical experience, however imperfect the explanation might be. The explanation may not be the same as experienced, but its imperfect expression may tell us something about that reality. Ramakrishna also tried to explain the nature of the Ultimate Reality. He explained that form and formlessness, both qualities of Reality, are necessary for different people. Because, the Reality is so pure that there cannot be any occurrence of change by different forms assumed by It. Hence, it has been said by him: "The Reality is one and the same. The difference is only in name. He who is Brahman is verily Ātman and again, He is the Bhagavān. He is Brahman to the

followers of the path of knowledge, Paramātman to the yogis and Bhagavān to the lovers of God."[12]

Mystical experiences are explained through similes and parables. Religious language is "analogical predication" as we find them in the writings of the Scholastic thinkers.[13] Religious statements are symbolic.[14] Paramahamsa gives an illustration in this manner. A devotee worships the form of God or *Saguṇa-Brahman/ Īśvara*, and a *Jñāni* meditates on the formless Ultimate Reality or *Nirguṇa-Brahman*. This can be explained through illustration of water and ice: Brahman as *Sat-Cit-Ānanda* is like an endless expanse of water. The water of the great ocean in cold regions freezes into blocks of ice. Similarly, through the cooling influence of divine love, *Saccidānanda* assumes forms for the sake of the devotees. The mystic Sri Ramakrishna had a vision of the super-sensuous Spirit-form and even conversed with it. The devotees acquire a "love-body", and with its help they see the spirit-form of the Absolute.[15] The heat of the sun of knowledge melts the ice–like form of the personal God. On attaining the Knowledge of Brahman and communing with It in *nirvikalpa samādhi*, one realizes Brahman, the Infinite, without form or shape and beyond mind and words.[16]

Paramahamsa emphasized the omnipresence and omnipotence of the Supreme Reality in his discourses. Omnipresence and omnipotence are the "metaphysical attributes" of God. However, the logical grammar of divine omnipotence and omnipresence is so complex that the subject invites more attention and criticism from different quarters who do not subscribe to the concept of God. Omnipotence cannot to be related simply to "perfection", but also to infinity, creativity, and holiness. Infinity denotes in the first place that which is not finite. In other words, whereas the finite is defined and sustained by something else, the infinite is its own Ground. The meaning "without end" in the context of temporality remains secondary to this. Further, when omnipotence is taken into consideration, this all-power or omnipotence is for a goal, since the God can be Almighty.[17] To express the Omnipresence of Reality, Paramahamsa says that everything is in the Reality, "The macrocosm and microcosm rest in the Mother's Womb;" and "whatever is in the microcosm is also in the macrocosm."[18] Besides that, the Reality is all-pervading substance. As he says, "God exists everywhere as All-pervading Consciousness."[19] With regard to the attribute of omnipresence, it should be noted that for Paramahamsa, God is not omnipresent in the pantheistic sense. That is, God is not omnipresent, in the sense that He is everything or just a totality of all things, and nothing more. Thus, though he believes in the all-pervading Reality, he is not a believer of pantheism. His position is not pantheistic, as he does not limit the realm of God only to the Universe but also accepts it as beyond the universe too.

If we look at the *noetic* aspect of the mystical expressions of Paramahamsa, we come to realize that it has the same content as what others explained. "*Noetic*" theory is a branch of philosophy concerned with the study of mind and intuition which the mystics always uphold. Among its principal purpose, one can mention the study of non-rational ways of knowing and the way they relate to reason. It also refers to the study of relationships between human and divine intuition. Hence, the reason why *noetic* theory often had very close links with metaphysics. In the Western tradition and Arab philosophy, *noetic* theory was strongly influenced by the theories of philosophers such as Anaxagoras, Plato, and Aristotle. In modern dictionaries, "*noetic*" is often defined as meaning "intellect." But the term "*noesis*" is translated as "insight" "or "intellection." This practice derives from medieval theologians and philosophers who used the Latin word "*intellectus*", which for them, typically meant what we today would call "intuition" which we highly regard in Indian thought. This is same as the *aparokṣānubhūti* of Indian religious thought. This is the same experience which Paramahamsa had in his mystical insights into the nature of Reality.

4. Metaphysics of Paramahamsa and Other Thinkers: Similarities and Dissimilarities

4.1. Sāṅkhya Thinkers

The Sāṅkhya concepts of *Puruṣa* and *Prakṛti*, were used by Paramahamsa to explicate his philosophy. However, there is a fundamental difference in the way these two terms are used by Paramahamsa and Sāṅkhya. According to Paramahamsa, Reality is one and secondless. According to him, Brahman and Its Primal Energy, are two aspects of the same Reality. The same Reality assumes different forms and performs different functions. He says: "Nothing exists except the one. That one is the supreme Brahman…That which is Brahman is also the Primal Energy…Brahman and the Primal Energy at first appears to be two. But after attaining the knowledge of Brahman one does not see the two. Then there is no differentiations, it is One, without a second."[20] In Sāṅkhya, the *Puruṣa* which is passive and inactive; and *Prakṛti* which is dynamic and active are two distinct eternal realities; whereas for Paramahamsa there is no two, but only One, the Ultimate Reality. Paramahamsa accepts the active and passive aspects of the Ultimate Reality. He expresses it in this way: "When the Reality appears as Creator, Preserver and Destroyer, we call It *Śakt*i; and when It is inactive, we call It Brahman. But really It is one and the same thing indivisible."[21] Using the philosophical terms of Sāṅkhya, Paramahamsa declares, "He who is Brahman is the *Ādyaśakti*, the Primordial Energy. When inactive He is called Brahman, the *Puruṣa*; He is called *Śakti*, or *Prakṛti*, when engaged in creation, preservation and destruction. There are the two aspects of Reality: *Puruṣa* and *Prakṛti*. He who is the *Puruṣa* is also *Prakṛti*. Both are the embodiment of Bliss."[22] Thus it is

seen that the concepts of *Puruṣa* and *Prakṛti* are different from that of the Sāṅkhya consideration.

In Sāṅkhya, *Puruṣa* indicates the Self while for Paramahamsa, *Puruṣa* is one aspect of the Ultimate Reality. Similarly, in Sāṅkhya, *Prakṛti* is inert, while in Paramahamsa it is an aspect of the Ultimate Reality manifesting itself to becomes the world. As he says: "The *Citśakti*, *Mahāmāya* has become the twenty-four cosmic principles."[23] and "It is the Primordial Power that has become the world and all living beings."[24] Further, "It is a case of involution and evolution."[25] Paramahamsa explained the nature of God as the metaphysical ground of the universe. Though the universe exists in and through God, it is not true to say, from the point of view of Paramahamsa, that it has been brought into existence '*ex nihilo*', "from nothing," at a particular point of time. Like Sāṅkhya philosophy, Paramahamsa accepts *Satkāryavāda* and emphasizes the ultimate identity of cause and effect. It follows from this that there is no absolute beginning of anything. What is called creation is really evolution, actualization of the potential. Thus, according to him, the universe is not created but evolved from *Mahāmāya*, which would amount to the acceptance of *Satkāryavāda* in one form. According to *Satkāryavāda,* in Sāṅkhya, the evolution is possible through the existence of *Prakṛti*, which is different from the *Puruṣa*. Paramahamsa would hold that *Puruṣa* (Brahman) and *Prakṛti* (its *Śakti*) are identical. To explain the process of evolution, he states: "All elements finally merge in *ākāśa*. Again, at the time of creation, *ākāśa* evolves into *mahat* and *mahat* into *ahaṅkāra*. In this way, the whole world-system is evolved. It is the process of involution and evolution." In this connection it is necessary to mention another important facet of Paramahamsa's thought; that is, he equates Kāli with Brahman. He says: "*Kāli* is none other than Brahman. That, which is called Brahman, is really *Kāli*. She is the Primal Energy. When that Energy remains inactive, I call It Brahman, and when It creates, preserves or destroys, I call It *Śakti* or *Kāli*. What you call Brahman, I call *Kāli*…Brahman and *Kāli* are not different."

4.2. Rāmānuja's Viśiṣṭādvaita

One can find much similarity in the metaphysics of Rāmānuja and Paramahamsa. The following points are the philosophical agreement between them: Firstly, both accept the Sāṅkhya order of evolution of cosmic principles from *Prakṛti* and for both the twenty-fifth principle *Puruṣa* is not one of the many *puruṣas* but only one *Puruṣa*, God or Brahman. Secondly, both, unlike Sāṅkhya regard *guṇas* not as constitutive elements of *Prakṛti*, but as its attributes or qualities. Thirdly, according to both, the cosmic process of creation, preservation and destruction of the world is beginning-less. Fourthly, both believe a plurality of the Self. According to them, each bound soul is associated with a particular body and

identifies oneself with it, due to ignorance. During the state of preservation of the world, each bound soul reaps the fruits of his freely performed action. According to both, the purpose of creation of the world is to enable the soul to get liberation by practicing *bhakti yoga*, conceived of as inclusive of *jñāna yoga* and disinterested *karma yoga*. All selves who remain attached to the world will have to return again to the womb of *Prakṛti* at the time of destruction of the world. Fifthly, both accept *Satkāryavāda* and regard the creation of the world as actualization of what was potentially present in the womb of *Prakṛti*. Sixthly, both of them believe that from the point of view of Brahman or God, His three-fold activities of creation, preservation and destruction of the world are His *lila* (divine sport). Finally, both the thinkers are against the *māyāvāda* of the Advaitins, because, according to them, rightly conceived Absolute Monism is exclusive of *māyāvāda* as propounded by Śaṅkara.

Thus, we see that there are a number of important points of agreement between Rāmānuja and Paramahamsa. Paramahamsa fully agrees with Śaṅkara in maintaining that for a *Jñāni*, liberation is being completely merged in Brahman. One can therefore be justified in observing that Paramahamsa's absolute monism is very much like that of Rāmānuja's qualified monism (*viśiṣṭādvaita*) and yet, unlike Rāmānuja, he believes and argues for Śaṅkara's concept of liberation and regards it as a metaphysically very important point in Śaṅkara's absolute monism.

The basic point to be noted is that to assume a form is only one aspect of the Ultimate Reality. It can remain formless also. According to Paramahamsa, there are different states of consciousness among which the highest state called by him as a "*Vijñāni*". "*Vijñani*" can realize both aspects of Reality. He says, "That which is realized intuitively as Brahman, through the eliminating process of 'not this, not this', is then found to have become the universe and all its living beings. The *Vijñāni* sees that the Reality which is *nirguṇa*, without attributes, is also *saguṇa*, with attributes…The *Vijñāni* sees that Brahman is immovable and action less, like the mount Sumeru. This universe consists of the three *guṇas*: *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. They are in Brahman. But Brahman is unattached…The *Vijñāni* further sees that what is Brahman is the *Bhagavān*, the Personal God. He who is beyond the three *guṇas* is the *Bhagavān*, with His six supernatural powers. Living beings, the universe, mind, intelligence, love, renunciation, knowledge, all these are the manifestations of His power…God is endowed with the six supernatural powers."[28]

4.3. Madhva and Anselm

Now let us make a comparative analysis of the views of Paramahamsa with Madhva and Anselm. The central point to be noted about the nature of the Ultimate Reality or God is His Infinitude. As we have seen, the attributes of existence, knowledge, and bliss, possessed by Him are not limited in

anyway. Similarly, the limitations of space, time and causality are not applicable to God, because He is omnipresent and an eternally self-existing independent being. Again, the conception of God in Paramahamsa is beyond the limitations of change and mutability because, as we have discussed above, Paramahamsa has emphasized the imperishability and eternal perfectness of God. According to Madhva, the limitations of finite existence are ignorance, dependence, liability to misery, material embodiment, and equality with, or inferiority to others.[29] As God is omniscient, self-existent, essentially blissful, non-material and one without a second, it is evidently clear that He is beyond all the limitations of finitude.

Similarly, Paramahamsa would fully agree with Anselm who has said that God is infinite because He is "that than which nothing greater can be conceived" (*a liquid quo nihil maius cogitari potest*).[30] He would not, however, stop at just this, but has made the concept of God's infinitude more meaningful by saying that God is infinite, because He cannot be fully conceived. This is, according to Paramahamsa, the reason why scriptures describe God with the negative method of "*neti, neti*".[31] We find that, according to Paramahamsa, this negative method is employed not for the denial of the reality of the finite, but for the denial of the finitude of the infinite.

4.4. Śaṅkara, Rāmānuja and Paramahamsa: Dissimilarities in Metaphysics

Our analysis is not complete unless and until we compare the metaphysical views of Paramahamsa wth those of two great masters of the past, namely, Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja. Firstly, Śaṅkara propounded Absolute Monism by emphasizing the Ultimate Reality of Brahman and only Brahman. He makes a distinction between three levels of existence: *prātibhāsika*, *vyāvahārika* and the *Pāramārthika*. From the *Pāramārthika* point of view only, Brahman exists. The realized soul becomes completely identical with Brahman. This kind of realization is acceptable to Paramahamsa, but unlike Śaṅkara, he does not regard this realization as the highest. Paramahamsa makes the difference between the state of a *Jñāni* and the state of a *Vijñāni*. The realized soul of Śaṅkara is acceptable to Paramahamsa in the state of a *Jñāni*. But, according to Paramahamsa, this state is lower than the state of a *Vijñāni. Jñāni* remains simply merged in Brahman, whereas *Vijñāni* realizes Brahman or God and remains in loving communion with God. This is the highest state where one attains *prema-bhakti*.

Secondly, we find that Śaṅkara regarded the world as mere appearance of Brahman, whereas, according to Paramahamsa, the world is not the appearance but it is the reality, which is not different from God. Thus, Paramahamsa accepts the reality of the world and at the same time he emphasizes its identity with God, and regards it as the "mansion of mirth."

Thirdly, Śaṅkara and Paramahamsa both accept the conception of *jīvanmukti*. The *jīvanmukta*, according to Śaṅkara, looks at the world as an illusion, whereas the *jīvanmukta*, according to Paramahamsa serves the world, seeing God himself present in the world. While serving God in this way, he considers himself as a machine, operated by God himself. This kind of attitude is simply impossible in Śaṅkara's conception of *jīvanmukti*, because, he considers even this attitude as illusory.

Fourthly, Paramahamsa, refers to Rāmānuja and explains his theory in a way similar to Rāmānuja's vision of the identity of God with everything. But he does not accept the view that God is a Soul of the world. According to him God and world are one; there is no fundamental difference in their metaphysical position. Thus, Rāmānuja advocates qualified monism, whereas Paramahamsa believes in Absolute Monism, though his conception of Absolute Monism may differ from that of Śaṅkara, as we have seen above. Paramahamsa's Absolute Monism is inclusive of and higher than that of Śaṅkara's Absolute Monism. Hence, in order to indicate this specific significance of Paramahamsa's Absolute Monism, we suggest to name it as "Comprehensive Absolute Monism."

4.5. Deism, Pantheism and Theism: Dissimilarities

Now let us take up the theories of God which are prevalent in the West and compare them with that of Paramahamsa's. We take up, for this end in view, the metaphysically important Western theological doctrines, such as, Deism, Pantheism and Theism. Paramahamsa agrees with Deism in so far as the latter lays stress upon the purity, perfection, personality, and transcendence of God. He however, differs from Deism in conceiving the universe as constantly dependent on God. Thus, the immanence of God which is conspicuously absent in Deism finds a very important place in Paramahamsa's thought.

Like Pantheism, Paramahamsa appreciates the idea of immanence of God, but, as we have seen, his conception of God's immanence differs from that of Pantheism. The Pantheistic idea of the unity and divinity of the universe is acceptable to Paramahamsa but it is not prepared to adhere only to this idea at the cost of real multiplicity and difference that is clearly given in our experience. Pantheistic God is a whole of totality of things, which, being His constitutive elements, can never be transcended by Him. God in Paramahamsa's thought, on the contrary, is wholly present in everything, and yet wholly transcends the whole universe, which is not conceived as integral to Him. From the standpoint of Paramahamsa's position the inherent difficulty of Pantheism is that although it is put forward as a philosophy of religion and sometimes assumes genuinely religious colouring to the extent that the well known Pantheist, Spinoza, has been described as 'God-intoxicated man', the logical consequences of its premises make the practice and intelligibility of religion and

morality impossible.

Paramahamsa stands with Theism in transforming the Pantheistic incorrect assertion, "All is God" into the correct proposition, "All depends on God." It also agrees with Theism in holding, against the one-sided positions of Deism and Pantheism, that both the immanence and transcendence of God are equally important. Again, Paramahamsa fully supports Theism in the latter's emphasis upon the personality and the religious availability of God. He, thus, firmly believes with Theism that although God is distinct from the world, He is in living and loving relations with it.

Paramahamsa's stand, however, differs from Theism in conceiving the universe not as a '*de novo'* created thing, but as having a beginning-less existence. Unlike Theism, Paramahamsa is not open to the criticism leveled against the crude theories of '*ex nihilo'* and '*de novo'* creation of the world. This description of There is also another difference between Paramahamsa's thought and Theism. He is not prepared to accept any kind of dependence upon man who has the freedom of will. This, however, is regarded as self-limitation of God. Paramahamsa believes in the freedom of human action but conceives it in such a way that the sovereignty and independence of God are in no way affected. He has, therefore, to say against Theism, that the limited or finite God is no God deserving to be either the guide or the goal of man's ethical and spiritual endeavours.

5. Conclusion

We, thus, see that Paramahamsa accepted the truth contained in Deism, Pantheism and Theism and avoided the misunderstanding involved in them. He, thus, represents here also, a synthesis of Western theological thought. His thought cannot be labeled as deistic, pantheistic or theistic. It however, seems proper to call it Pan-en-theistic. In Panentheism, "*pan"* means "*all*"; "*en"* means "*in"* and *theos* means "*God*". The term for the view that God interpenetrated everything without canceling the relative independent existence of the world of entities; moreover, while God is immanent, this immanence is not absolute (as in pantheism); God is more than the world, transcendent in the sense that though the created is dependent upon the Creator, the Creator is not dependent upon the created. God thus, is held to be the highest type of Unity, *viz*. Unity in Multiplicity. The term is employed to cover a mediating position between pantheism with its extreme immanence and theism of the type which tends to extreme transcendence.[32] As the learned scholar J.A.Yajnik opines that the metaphysics of Sri Swaminarayan is *Pan-en-theism,* we believe that the metaphysics of Paramahamsa is *Pan-en-theism*.[33] We, therefore, are justified in describing the philosophical position of Ramakrishna Paramahamsa as *Pan-en-theism*. Thus, in our attempt to map and describe the metaphysical renditions in the mysticism of Paramahamsa, we have come to the

conclusion to term the metaphysics of Ramakrishna Paramahamsa as "Comprehensive Absolute Monism" and his philosophy of religion, as *Pan-en-theism*.

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SCIENCE & CULTURE: S.RADHAKRISHNAN'S VIEW

Dr.V.S.George Joseph

Introduction

S. Radhakrishnan (1888-1975), with his formal philosophical training under Christian missionaries along with his own religious convictions, developed a mixture of both cultures. His philosophy deals mostly with the inter-connectedness of human life and all that affects an individual's existence in the world, namely, religion, culture, science, technology, and a vision for humanity.

The central theme of his thought is that the spiritual has to be primary; while, reason, humanism, culture, individuals, the world and religions should be explained in the light of the spiritual.[1] He speaks about the "Religion of the Spirit"[2] which is "scientific, rational, tolerant and a positive force in the improvement of society."[3] His view is that science has raised critical questions about some religious beliefs and dogmas that are unscientific, ethically ineffective and divisive. Hence, they should not be the purview of religion but of science.[4]

Radhakrishnan defines science as "the pursuit of truth"[5] which is the object of an intellectual, ethical and emotional pursuit. In another place he says that science is not merely a technique or a specialization; but a habit of the mind. It is a way of looking at things, the capacity to rid ourselves of every kind of prejudice and look at the object in its entirety and objectivity, removing ourselves as much as possible from the investigation of the things. Finally, regarding the goal of science, he says, the purpose of all scientific pursuit, and scientific endeavour, is to know our own self.

Radhakrishnan hails the positive achievements of science. He says, "The spirit of science which has resulted in such great advances, from steam to electricity, from electricity to atomic power, from atomic power to space travel, has brought the world together into close intimacy."[6] When he talks of science he relates it with technology which has in turn affected the culture and social life of the people. He sees that "the epochs of human civilization are distinguished by the character of their technology, Stone Age, Bronze Age and Iron Age… characterized by the invention of their particular technical appliances."[7]

Technology, according to Radhakrishnan is the manipulation of the environment in the interests of human life. Technology is the manifestation of science. As Swami Vivekananda says, "Man is born to conquer nature, not to follow it."[8] The discoveries made at the sites of various civilizations reveal that people invented different kinds of equipment to protect themselves from natural hazards and to emancipate themselves from their bondage to nature.

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There has been, since then, a gradual advancement in technological inventions which eventually led to industrial revolutions.

Science and culture are so intertwined today that the world seems to have become a milieu of unified cultural values. However, this closeness is certainly not always without conflict. Traditional culture is at loggerheads with the intrusion of modern culture and lifestyle. Science seeks knowledge for its own sake. It aims at its own perfection of knowledge by arriving at greater and greater truths. It is also a fact that cultural expansion takes place when scientists discover new ideas. It is scientific discoveries that have brought about cultural complexity in the modern world. It is also true that scientific expansion depends, to some extent, on cultural expansion. [9]

No one today needs to be convinced about the value of science. The modern claim is that the present day culture is superior on the whole because of the advancement of science and the change that has taken place in the milieu of cultural life today. But the characteristic of the excellence of modern culture is that since it has a practical advantage over all the other past cultures, it has in fact, come into competition with it. In the arena of creative tension and the struggle for existence between the old and the new, it attempts to prove itself best and relevant with its distinctive scientific traits. Modern culture is creative and self-sufficient and the impact of science is that it has made individuals self-sufficient.

Science belongs to the realm of discovering new laws operative in the universe and to the framing of theories. The scientist's mind is attuned to discovering the truth by objective analysis and arriving at a hypothesis. His concern with the cultural realities of the world is secondary. The laws of science are based on empirical findings and explicable in mathematical formulae.[10]

But the world today is a witness of remarkable changes that have been affected by the advancement of science. B. M. Udgaonkar remarks that the assumption that science also is a part of culture is broadening the understanding of culture giving rise to a new outlook that has taken place only in recent time.[11] Although there is science on the one hand and culture on the other, the world has reached a point in history where it has developed a scientific culture.

Science and Culture in Radhakrishnan's Time

The relation between science and culture was not a new awareness for Radhakrishnan. The advancement of technology, to a great extent, was attributed to advancement in science. The success of science and its influence on culture is more distinct today than ever before. Looking at the reality of the world during the 1930s Radhakrishnan reflects that much of the crisis that prevailed then was made acute by the discoveries of science. The limitation of

science is that it is selective in its object of study and does not see the inter-connectedness of world reality and the unity within it. As Radhakrishnan points out, "It is perfectly satisfied if it relates to it in an evolutionary scale, or if it traces a phenomenon to certain mediating conditions…without raising further questions why things are what they are."[12]

The extensive use of scientifically advanced equipments in the World War had devastating consequences all over the world. He witnessed the degeneration of values and the cultural structures of society, about which he remarks, "To all who care to notice the symptoms of modern life it is clear…that the slow dissolution of traditional codes, social customs and beliefs, the steady breakdown of inherited sanctions of religion and law, the confusion in regard to social ethics and the principles of government is the most striking feature of our age."[13]

The world was in a serious economic depression, there was a high level of unemployment and millions lived in poverty. Media and communication were not as advanced as they are today and people did not have access to news about the happenings in the other countries. Radhakrishnan was not just content seeing scientific advancement in the world. His contention was that along with scientific progress the individual must also be conscious of the goal towards which one's life has to evolve. He reveres the great representatives of Indian culture as people of great mobility and ceaseless adventure, but the people of the present were content just glorifying the past and singing ancient chants.[14]

Radhakrishnan did not believe in a culture that was stagnant and rigid. He believed in the evolution of cultures. He compared the Indian culture to a lighted torch that is passed on hand to hand from generation to generation. He held that it is not true culture if it does not produce minds that are rational and intellectually curious. In this regard, India has not in any way lagged behind. He held that "Logic and science, philosophy and religion, are related organically"[15] and in the field of scientific achievements India was always "a part of the stream of world history" along with the great advances of science by great scientists "like Newton an Englishman; Kepler, a German, Copernicus, a Pole, Galileo, an Italian."[16]

Science and Culture in the Indian Tradition

In Indian civilization right, from the Vedic times the boundary between science and culture has been very fluid. In fact, it appears as if science and everything else is a part of the Indian culture. As Radhakrishnan mentions, "Ancient Indians laid the foundations of mathematics and mechanical knowledge. They measured the land, divided the year, mapped out the heavens, traced the course of the sun and the planets through the zodiacal belt, analyzed the

constitution of matter, and studied the nature of birds and beasts, plants and seeds." [17]

The period between 10 B.C. to 4 C. E. is described by scholars as the rationalistic period in India because of the scientific treatises that were produced in the fields of astronomy, mathematics, logic, medicine and linguistics. Advancement in science has consequent changes in the cultural patterns of people. For instance, astrology is one of the most ancient sciences, and as far as India is concerned even today it is so intertwined with the day to day culture and life of the Hindus.

"*Veda*" means knowledge. For a long time, scholars focused on the philosophical and religious aspects of the *Vedas*, and the means to liberation or self-realisation and overlooked the cultural aspect. Later research has revealed that Vedic knowledge embraced physics, mathematics, astronomy, logic and various other disciplines. This information has led scholars to view the *Vedas* as containing scientific knowledge that has always been part of the Indian civilization and culture, though the focus of scholars has been more on aspects of ancient civilization other than science. This point can be made clear by an example of Charles K. Bliss who remarks that the scientists called the Neolithic and Paleolithic man "cannibals" because they found certain animal and human bones intermingled, but when he inspected the caves he did not find any signs of cannibalism but rich paintings of their culture.[18]

Radhakrishnan traces at length the scientific developments in India. The *Ṛg-Veda*, the *Yajur-Veda*, the *Sāma-Veda*, the *Atharvaṇam*, the epics and the *Purāṇas*, grammar which is the *Veda* of the *Vedas*, propitiation of the Fathers, the science of the numbers (mathematics), the science of portents, the science of time, logic, ethics and politics, the science of the gods, the science of sacred knowledge, the science of elemental spirits, the science of serpents and fine arts make up the scientific culture of India which is not opposed to the ancient scientific knowledge handed down from the Vedic period.

As a mater of fact, Indian culture has provided the necessary space for thinking minds to blossom, and the arts and science to flourish. In India, astronomy, astrology, the Hindu calendar, the efficacy of the *mantra* and the rituals, the concepts of *māyā* and *prakṛti*, Āyurveda, Tantra, Yoga, etc., are all very scientific. They make up the world-view of people, their beliefs, their celebrations and the laws that govern society.

In the public forum, science and culture are viewed as a western phenomenon, but if one examines the cultural aspects of India, it is essentially a very ancient tradition. Referring to this aspect of India's heritage, Radhakrishnan remarks, This intellectual impulse is not confined to philosophy and theology, but extends over logic and grammar, rhetoric and language, medicine

and astronomy, in fact all arts and sciences, from architecture to zoology. If we are to find an ideal example for the relationship between science and culture, it will be the East, particularly India.

In India, after the Vedic period, scientific progress has increased the prosperity of the country but there has been little progress in the growth of cultural values. The country united through the achievements of science is administered by men and women divided on the basis of cultures. Science, of course, has called into question many cultural traditions and beliefs, and dogmatic theories of religions. Radhakrishnan participated in the World Congress of Faiths while in London, in the years 1936 and 1938. Taking the side of science, he criticized religions as unscientific because their beliefs did not agree with the discoveries of science. Science by nature is empirical, but dogmatism is not the true spirit of religion.[19] He also sees that though science has influenced culture to a great extent, the damage caused by religion is far greater because they neglect the empirical.

Radhakrishnan points out that the conflict between science and religion is primarily due to historical circumstances. According to him, science is empirical, non-dogmaticand open-minded. Religious truths which are commended to us should not mixed up with incredible dogmas. They must be based on experience, not of the physical world but of the religious reality. If scientific truth is what works in experience, religious truth also can be put to the same test.

Radhakrishnan puts forward the example of Swami Vivekananda who in his lectures combined science, religion and humanism, and emphasized that there can be no science without the recognition of the cosmic mystery. Vivekananda combined both science and culture in his philosophy though he lived at a time when the scientific spirit was at its highest. He was immersed in the spirit of science. Both religion and science pursue truth. While science studies empirical facts, religion studies the supreme fact - the Divine.[20]

Radhakrishnan and the Theory of Evolution

Charles Darwin in his commendable work "*The Descent of Man*" (1871), published his study of human life, namely, his intelligence, the effects of sexual selection, the evolution of his moral faculties and the consequences of his actions that come to influence his overall physical evolution. Cultural anthropologists later pointed out that Darwin had missed a very significant point in his study, that is, the role played by cultural factors in the physical evolution of man.[21]

Culture plays an important role in the evolutionary process of an individual. Culture involves, for instance, the development of tools, social structures like marriage, family, economic development, migration, language, etc., and it is through

these that civilizations have progressed both in the dimensions of science and culture.

Radhakrishnan opines that scientific knowledge is apparently inadequate when applied to living organisms and conscious processes, because it fails to bring out the essential unitary and dynamic character of these processes. For instance, the development of living organism is conditioned by environmental factors such as aims in life and the historical factors which are often unpredictable and incalculable.[22] He affirms that cosmic evolution, that is, the world process has a direction and goal in which there is a successive emergence of the material, the organic, the animal, the human and the spiritual orders of existence.[23]

The world, according to Radhakrishnan, has two striking features: continuity and change. Everything is in a state of progression, including the mind and spirit. There is movement in all things which is seen in every aspect of life. The culture in which one finds oneself is never static and never repeats itself. Being is not static; it is always becoming, dynamic, continuously changing into something new.[24] Similarly, there is a progressive change and advancement in scientific laws. Radhakrishnan remarks, "Our scientific theories which supersede earlier ones are only links in a long chain of progressive advances likely in time to be transcended… they are temporary resting places in search for truth and there is nothing absolute in them."[25]

The very fact that we talk about progress and advancement in scientific theories and the fact that many an old theory has been overthrown by the discovery of new ones goes to say that scientific theories keep evolving and many new laws are yet to be discovered in the future. In every era, the progress of science is marked by instances of getting nearer and nearer to the truth and the reality of the world is that it is also a process that is continuous, undivided and inseparable in its quest of arriving at truth.[26]

Radhakrishnan and Teleology

Teleology is an attempt to comprehend and explain the universe in terms of end or final causes. It is based on the proposition that the universe has purpose and design, that its effects are in some manner ordered or deliberate and that in order to understand it completely, one must take into consideration the final causes.[27] Similarly, in the Vedic religion, *Ṛta*[28] is the principle of natural order that regulates and coordinates the operation of the universe and everything within it. According to R.Panikkar, "*Ṛta* is the ultimate foundation of everything… It is the primordial dynamism that is inherent in everything…"[29] Though *Ṛta* has a wide range of meanings in Hindu literature, it is mainly seen as an ethical principle closely bound with the doctrines of *Dharma* and *karma* which are two important ethical doctrines of the moral life of a Hindu.

Philosophers today prefer to remain silent on the topic of teleology because from the scientific point of view it is a theory based on the assumption of theists.[30] According to Radhakrishnan, if we argue from our moral aspirations to their ultimate fulfillment, we assume as a premise what requires to be proved, namely, the world is reasonable, that it is teleologically ordered, and that is the very position we wish to prove. All the same, scientists avoid explanations that rely on teleology for the reason that it is beyond the scope of science to evaluate or judge the validity of such knowledge.[31]

Radhakrishnan does not refute scientific knowledge. He sees unity in all things. He aims at the transformation of both the individual and collective society by means of teleology of cultural transformation. He is against a mechanistic or materialistic explanation of the universe. He sees transformation as a teleological development. According to him, the old categories of physics are not adequate even in the physical world, the purely mechanistic explanations of even the simplest living organisms are found impossible .The order of the universe is not mechanical.

He disregards naturalism which is characterized by determinism in favour of an idealistic explanation of the universe. According to him, an idealist will find that the universe has meaning and value.[32] He sees the unfolding of a design in the observable phenomena and offers a teleological explanation that the universe is progressing towards a definite goal. He sees a sense of purpose in the very structure of the universe.

In Radhakrishnan's opinion, through teleology individuals can gain new insights into the laws that intelligently govern the universe. Though science deals with the natural laws of phenomena, philosophy of science goes beyond to include in its investigation both natural phenomena and teleology to affirm that creation is a deliberate act and that it has a definite purpose and goal. It goes to prove that if one accepts creationism,[33] then one also accepts teleology. The universe and everything in it, both animate and inanimate has a flawless design and ordered balance that makes survival and life possible.

Radhakrishnan believes that if one were to accept the mechanistic view of the world there would still be questions that need to be answered, such as, who is the author of the universe, what is the intelligence that is so magnificently at work in the universe, who has designed the structure of the universe that functions in perfect union with everything else in the universe? He says that the world is an infinite series of conditional events, but science cannot say why it is what it is… Science is a system of secondary causes which cannot describe the world adequately.

In the fifth century, St.Augustine proposed the teleological argument to prove

the existence of God.[34] St. Thomas Aquinas taking his cue from the natural order in the universe, proposes it as a proof for God's existence, saying that the perfect design that we see in the universe is the work of a supreme intelligence, that is, God who created the universe. Hence, teleology seeks to explain the purpose of creation, its existence and the ultimate end.

Science does not generally accord great significance to teleology with the pessimism that it is primitive anthropomorphism. The relevance of teleology for science has remained unseen because early progress for modern science was more in the field of mechanics than in the other branches of science. It is beyond the realm of science to assess how a future goal can influence processes that develop in the present.

However, in recent times, physics and chemistry have acknowledged that teleology has played a central role in the progress achieved in the field of biology. M. Artigas says, "In a strict sense, genetic information includes a program that guides the course of future action… seen as a set of possibilities that will develop according to the circumstances… whose end is not completely predetermined because it depends on the integration of different pieces of information." [35]

Radhakrishnan remarks that scientific knowledge can be trusted within limits. He finds that scientists are too restricted in their view, when they look at the world as a closed system in which everything is determined. But the individual and one's cultural environment cannot be confined to measurements of physic-chemical analysis. The inquiry to which physical objects are subjected to is inapplicable to human beings. If science insists on forcing facts into conformity with their theories it becomes a superstition. What is true of physics or biology cannot be true of culture because it is dynamic whereas scientific methods depend on induction with the support of statistical analysis for practical ends.

Conclusion

In modern times, science is increasingly dominating every aspect of the social and the cultural life of people. According to W. A. Rosenblith says, "Technology is in a state of transition: the strands that represent applied mathematics, physics and chemistry are becoming inter-twined with those that involve bio-medical and behavioral techniques. These latter, however, often relate quite directly to the cultural practices and ideological beliefs of a society."[36]

Whatever progress science makes, it in some way or the other, affects culture. What is unique, according to Radhakrishnan, is that though "there are fundamental distinctions between the East and the West, " the striking feature is the extent, to which the cultural life of the peoples is becoming unified."[37] According to him, if science teaches us anything it is the organic nature of the universe. We are one with the world

that has made us, one with every scene that is spread before our eyes... we are not merely spectators of the universe but constituent parts of it."

A scientist walks incessantly on the path of discovery to know the truth, the hidden mysteries of the world. True science is born of the self-critical abilities of the individual who is continually engaged in a conversation with the reality surrounding him and a vision that leads him onward. What drives him is the spirit of free inquiry and the right to think for oneself, which is not necessarily to think unlike others. When individuals cease to be self-critical they then become stagnant, fundamentalist, rigid or dogmatic about their cultural heritage and beliefs.

Radhakrishnan defines the role of scientists thus, "Scientists are men dedicated, set apart. They have renounced the life of action. Their life as the pursuit of truth is service to God, who is Truth: *satya svarūpa satyanārāyaṇa*."[38] Scientists, when they discover the scientific laws that govern the whole universe, attain the truth of the ultimate reality, that is, God. Also they unravel the mysteries of the universe to help other people realize the truth. According to Radhakrishnan the task of the scientists and every individual is the same, though they might be in different fields of specialization, that is, to gain ultimate knowledge of the truth.

According to Radhakrishnan, the essential truth of science and culture is ultimately the same, that reality is ultimately one. In spite of conflicts between nations, the world is getting to be one because science knows no borders; and art and culture are becoming common possessions. Human beings are fundamentally the same and hold the same deep values. The differences among them are related to the external and temporal, belonging to the religious, social and cultural conditions that are alterable. Science has changed peoples' lives, it has brought the world and people closer to each other, and has enabled the world to understand the cultural and spiritual heritage of every nation.

Radhakrishnan's hope for a better future is well expressed by Lawrence Hyde when he says, "Today what we are principally witnessing is, of course, the terrible effects of a scientific knowledge which is not coordinated by wisdom. But there is undoubtedly a future path indicated for humanity on which science, like art, will be the handmaid of theology, and will both lighten our burdens and extend the vision without corrupting us in the process."[39]

When we examine Radhakrishnan's views on science and culture a few points emerge that are noteworthy. To mention a few: he understands science in two ways. Firstly, when he speaks of science, in general, he means the contribution made by science in the field of technology and its effect on culture. Secondly, when he speaks of the same, from an Indian perspective, he means, the various sciences that have been

part of Indian civilization, especially, those that are mentioned in the *Vedas.*

Radhakrishnan's understanding of science is quite different from the way science is looked upon in the West and even globally today. In the ancient Indian civilization, it is evident that "culture" is a very broad term which includes science, technology, scientific study of aesthetics, philosophy, religion, grammar, logic, mathematics, astronomy, etc. Radhakrishnan in his writings applies both views. He often speaks positively of the Indian view, and to explain the negative consequences of technology he brings in his interpretation of the West. So the reader sometimes is juxtaposed between two or more perspectives. His fundamental contribution has been in the field of religion. When he evaluates the characteristics of science and culture, he does it from the point of view of religion, how science has affected culture which in turn has affected the spirit of religion. He sees the scientist as a seeker of truth. He expects the scientist to align himself to ultimately seek that one reality which is the foundation of the whole universe.

Teleology is not a serious topic of enquiry for scientists. It is the subject-matter of philosophy, but Radhakrishnan insists that teleology is in the purview of scientific investigation that theories of creation are also studied scientifically. In this regard, he mixes up science and spirituality. His understanding of evolution is beyond the scope of science. He sees evolution as the advancement of the destiny of the whole humanity itself towards self-realization or realization of the Spirit and this belongs to the realm of philosophy rather than science.

Radhakrishnan is best known as a comparative philosopher, especially, for making Indian philosophy and religion known to the West. He is neither a scientist nor an anthropologist. During his student life realization dawned on him that Indian religions, science and culture that have been prevalent from the Vedic times have been largely misunderstood and misinterpreted by the West. Though his comparisons with scientific theories are not always compatible, rather philosophical than scientific, he is relentless in his endeavour to bring to the forefront the richness and holism of the Indian heritage.

As an idealist philosopher, Radhakrishnan's approach to life is intellectual. He is well read in the subjects of philosophy, world history, science, religion and linguistics. His keen sense of observation and insight are evident from his recognition of a world that is becoming united through the achievements of science but administered by people who are divided on the basis of religion and culture. His efforts at promoting a new socialist democratic order, and a universal culture are strewn in all his addresses and writings.

NOTES

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