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PATRON'S MESSAGE

India's greatest gift to the world is her philosophy, culture, and conceptualizndtion of religion. Philosophy occupies the foremost place in the ancient Indian fourfold classification of knowledge, *viz.,* philosophy (*anvīk□iki*), scripture (*trayī*), commerce (*vārta*), and politics (*da□□anīti*). The primal importance of philosophy is emphasized by Kauṭilya's view that philosophy is essential for the growth and progress of all the other branches of knowledge because it involves identifying the problematic, analyzing its implications, formulating a remedy, and acquiring skill in action for attaining the desired goal in any sphere of activity. The West did not lag behind; it too glorified philosophy as the First Science, and as the Queen of the Sciences. The frontiers of philosophy are as extensive as knowledge itself. While all other subjects have their own subject matter; philosophy is unique in that all the other subjects themselves become the subject matter for philosophizing. Hence, the reason why we have the emerging fields of knowledge, e.g. philosophy of language, philosophy of history, philosophy of science, etc. There as many philosophies, as numerous as the number of human beings; since as is in Buddha's opinion, every human being is basically a philosopher in disguise.

The Department of Philosophy (formerly known as Sri Aurobindo School of Eastern and Western Thought in honour of the universally acclaimed revolutionary philosopher-poet-patriot Sri Aurobindo) was originally established in 1989, by an Act of Parliament. The Department has all the required infrastructural facilities for training students in Eastern and Western philosophical thought for the M.A., M.Phil. & Ph.D Degrees and foreign students under the Study in India Programme (SIP), launched by Pondicherry University.

The Indian Journal of Philosophy, Religion and Culture - published initially as an Annual by the Department of Philosophy, Pondicherry University, Puducherry, is devoted to articles in Classical Eastern & Western Philosophy, Contemporary Eastern & Western Philosophy, Religion and Culture; and is the actualization of one of the main objectives of the Society for Research in Philosophy, Religion and Culture for encouraging scholars and students to work and contribute their findings for sharing these with the readers of this research Journal.

I congratulate the Department of Philosophy for securing the UGC-SAP assistance; and wish them all success for the growth of the Journal, and progress in all the academic activities of the Society for Research in Philosophy, Religion and Culture.

(Prof. J.A.K.Tareen)
Vice-Chancellor

EDITOR'S NOTE

The vision of the far-sighted Professor J. A. K. Tareen, Vice-Chancellor, Pondicherry University, matched opulently by the incessant endeavour of Professor A. Balasubramanian, former Director, Culture & Cultural Relations, Pondicherry University, for actualizing the envisaged projects have fructified in the Department of Philosophy, Pondicherry University securing the UGC SAP DRS I status, for the first time, in the first attempt itself, since its beginning in 1989.

The Department of Philosophy (formerly known as Sri Aurobindo School of Eastern and Western Thought in honour of Sri Aurobindo), has all the required infrastructural facilities for training students in Eastern and Western philosophical thought for the M.A., M.Phil. & Ph.D Degrees and foreign students under the Study in India Programme (SIP), launched by Pondicherry University. As directed by the Vice-Chancellor, the Department of Philosophy registered the Society for Research in Philosophy, Religion and Culture. The *Indian Journal of Philosophy, Religion and Culture* – an annual, is the realization of one of the main objectives of the Society for Research in Philosophy, Religion and Culture; and it seeks to encourage scholars and students to express and exchange their views in Classical Eastern & Western Philosophy, Contemporary Eastern & Western Philosophy, Religion and Culture with the others reading this research Journal.

Like a ripple which originates as a small speck but goes on widening to embrace the entire water-surface in its ambit, the *Indian Journal of Philosophy, Religion and Culture* makes a humble beginning; and hopes to grow in time through contributed scholarly academic articles, spectrum of subjects analyzed, increasing readership and subscriptions.

B. R. Shantha Kumari

Editor

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CONTENTS

THE QUESTION OF QUESTIONS

* Professor R. Balasubramanian (Retd.)

1. NATURE AND CONTENT OF INQUIRY (*VICĀRA*)

Philosophy is essentially an inquiry, whatever, the definition of philosophy one gives. In the Indian philosophical tradition, the term "*vicāra*" denotes "inquiry". All philosophical systems, both Vedic and non-Vedic, use inquiry as an indispensable tool for analyzing philosophical problems - epistemological, metaphysical, axiological, and soteriological. Even systems which accept scripture as a *pramāṇa* provide an important place for inquiry. This is not surprising, because even the *Upaniṣad* suggests that one should inquire into, and contemplate on, the nature of the Self - the Supreme Reality - after getting the scriptural instruction about it from a competent teacher; that is to say, the Vedāntic discipline of *śravaṇa*, *manana*, and *nididhyāsana* provides an important place for inquiry (*vicāra*, also called *manana*) for the purpose of realizing the highest value.

What calls for and also is worthy of inquiry, must be inquired into. The objects of the world, no doubt, call for inquiry for the purpose of explaining them. However, whether they are worthy of inquiry is the important question which one should ask. The *Upaniṣad*, and Śaṅkara following the *Upaniṣad*, make a distinction between Brahman-Ātman and the things of the world. The things of the world are no doubt important in our day-to-day life, and so we should know them. The knowledge which one acquires of them does not give a sense of satisfaction, for there is always the question after knowing any object, "What then?" It only means that the knowledge of the things of the world, which are finite, is incomplete; and the essential incompleteness of empirical knowledge of finite things points to the Infinite - the Primal Being - whose realization alone gives one a sense of fulfillment. The Upaniṣadic seers have made a distinction between the ordinary and the extra-ordinary. While the things of the world are ordinary, Brahman-Ātman is extra-ordinary; correspondingly, while the knowledge of the things of the world is ordinary, the knowledge of Brahman-Ātman, the Primal Reality, is extra-ordinary. Keeping this distinction between two kinds of knowledge, the *Upaniṣad* declares that the Self, the Primal Reality, should be realized, *draṣṭavyaḥ*. The semblance of injunction in the word "*draṣṭavyaḥ*" is intended to convey the idea that the Self, and the Self alone, which is the Primal Reality, is worthy of realization.

The word "*draṣṭavyaḥ*" means "*pradarśanīyaḥ*", i.e. "*prakarṣeṇa draṣṭuṁ yogyaḥ*", which means "what is fit or worthy enough to be known". In other words, here the usage of the word "*draṣṭavyaḥ*", is in the gerundive sense and not in the imperative sense. Commenting on the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* text (2.4.5), Śaṅkara observes:

> So, the Self, my dear Maitreyī, should be realized, is worthy of realization, or should be made the object of realization. It should first be heard of from a teacher

President, Afro-Asian Philosophy Association

> and from the scriptures, then reflected on through reasoning, and then steadfastly meditated upon. Thus only is it realized when these means, *viz*., hearing, reflection, and meditation, have been gone through. When these three are combined, then only true realization of the unity of Brahman is accomplished, not otherwise - by hearing alone.[1]

It may be noted that, according to Śaṅkara, all the three components of the discipline - guided study (*śravaṇa*), reflection (*manana*), and contemplation (*nididhyāsana*) - are necessary to realize the Primal Reality, which is extraordinary. If all the three are not necessary, then the *Upaniṣad* would not have mentioned them after declaring that the Self should be realized. In other words, the *Upaniṣad* first of all tells us what should be known, and then it gives information about the means by which it can known. Here, what is worthy of knowing is the "*iṣṭa*", and the means by which it can be realized is the "*sādhanā*". In other words, this Upaniṣadic text gives us information about the end and the means thereto, what is called "*iṣṭa-sādhanatā-jñāna*". It may be noted that the Jaina and Buddhist traditions also recognize the importance of the three stages of spiritual discipline for the purpose of realizing the Truth or Reality. For example, Jainism speaks about the "three jewels" (*ratna-traya*) as the stages which a spiritual aspirant, a truth-seeker, has to go through for realizing the goal. If the object to be attained is extra-ordinary, then the discipline for inquiry, too, must be extra-ordinary.

2. LOWER AND HIGHER KNOWLEDGE

There are two places in the *Upaniṣads* in which the inquiry into the extra ordinary has been highlighted. Brahman-Ātman, the Primal Reality, is the source, support, and end of the entire manifested world. To know it, according to the *Upaniṣads*, is to know everything, because it is the essence of everything. In the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* (1.1), there is the dialogue between Aṅgīrasa and Śauṇaka, which draws our attention to what is worthy of knowing. A great house-holder by name Śauṇaka is desirous of knowing the Ultimate Reality by knowing which everything is known. He approaches the, venerable Aṅgīrasa with the question relating to the Primal Reality. Having approached Aṅgīrasa, Śauṇaka duly asked, "O Adorable Sir, (which is that thing) which having been known, all this becomes known"[2] Śaṅkara in his commentary on this text points out that Śauṇaka has heard the traditional view of the wise that there is something by knowing which one becomes omniscient, i.e. one knows everything, is all-knowing. There is, says Śaṅkara, justification for raising this extra-ordinary question. To quote Śaṅkara: "It is well known in our experience that there are many objects made of gold, which reveal the material unity of gold. Similarly, is there a single substance which is the cause of the whole universe of diversity, by knowing which all things become known?" Śaṅkara considers a possible objection in this connection. Instead of asking the question, "Which is that thing, which having been known, all this becomes known?" Śauṇaka should have asked, "Does such a thing exist?" It is sensible to ask, "Which is that thing?" only in the case of an object whose existence is already known, but not in the case of an

object which is unknown. For example, it is reasonable to ask: "Which is the thing to be brought from the shelf?", and this way of putting the question implies that the thing referred to already exists. Śaṅkara's answer is that, though one may ask one after another, two questions as stated above, for the sake of simplicity, Śauṇaka has straight away asked the question, "Which is that thing, which having been known one becomes all knowing?"

In order to answer Śauṇaka's question, Aṅgīrasa first of all refers to two kinds of knowledge which one should acquire. The Upaniṣadic text says:

> "To him (Śauṇaka), he said: "There are two kinds of knowledge to be acquired—the higher and the lower; this is what, as tradition goes, the knowers of the import of the *Vedas* say."[3]

Commenting on the text, Śaṅkara observes that the knowers of Brahman who follow the tradition and know the purport of the *Vedas* speak about two kinds of knowledge - higher knowledge (*parā-vidyā*), and lower knowledge (*aparā-vidyā*). Higher knowledge is knowledge of the Supreme Self, and the lower knowledge is knowledge of virtue and vice, as also their means and ends. Why is it, one may wonder, that Aṅgīrasa, without answering Śauṇaka's question straight away, speaks about two kinds of knowledge, higher and lower. Śaṅkara in his commentary points out that the way in which Aṅgīrasa answers the question is not without justification and that there is nothing wrong in the answer. Aṅgīrasa, says Śaṅkara, follows a certain order of procedure. What has to be discarded should be known first and kept aside. What is called "lower knowledge" is ignorance, which has to be removed, because one does not know the Truth or Reality by knowing the objects of ignorance. The rule is that the final position or conclusion should be stated after refuting the wrong views, which stand as obstacles obscuring the Truth. It may be noted that, according to Aṅgīrasa, both higher knowledge and lower knowledge must be acquired (*dve vidye veditavye*), the former as the goal, and the latter as the means thereto.

If so, what is lower knowledge? To this, Aṅgīrasa's answer is:

> "Of these, the lower knowledge comprises the *Ṛg-veda*, *Yajur-veda*, *Sāma-veda*, *Atharva-veda*, the science of pronunciation, etc., the code of rituals, grammar, etymology, metre and astrology. Then there is the higher knowledge by which that Immutable (Brahman-Ātman) is realized."[4]

After identifying the contents of the lower knowledge, Aṅgīrasa points out in the above text that the Immutable, i.e. Brahman-Ātman, is attained by higher knowledge. Śaṅkara draws our attention to the significance of the use of the word "*adhigamyate*" in the text. Ordinarily, to know a thing, say a particular place, is not necessarily to attain it. A person, let us say, who wants to go to a particular place, first of all, ascertains the location of the place and the direction in which one should proceed to reach it; after getting the knowledge of that place, etc., he makes effort and reaches / attains the place. Here, knowing the place is not attaining it; and this is true with regard to every object except the Self. To know the Self, Śaṅkara says, is to attain it; the sense of realization does not differ from that of attainment in the case of the Highest, because the attainment of the Highest consists

merely in removing ignorance, and nothing more.

It is necessary to clarify why the *Vedas* and its auxilliaries are said to constitute lower knowledge. It is well known that the knowledge of Brahman-Ātman is obtained through the *Upaniṣads*, and that the latter form part of the *Vedas*. If the knowledge of Brahman is outside the *Ṛg-veda* and other texts, then, one may object on the ground that we cannot get the saving knowledge from them with the result that we cannot attain liberation. Śaṅkara in his commentary formulates this objection presenting two alternatives both of which are undesirable. If the knowledge of Brahman-Ātman : (1) is outside the *Ṛg Veda*, etc; then the *Upaniṣads* will get excluded from these texts ruling out the possibility of attaining Brahman knowledge, and (2) if they are included in them, then it is illogical to speak of higher knowledge through which the Immutable is realized as constituting a separate category different from lower knowledge.

Śaṅkara in his commentary answers this objection. First of all, he says that the term "higher knowledge" means the knowledge of the Immutable, i.e. Brahman-Ātman, which is imparted only by the *Upaniṣads*. The term "*Upaniṣad*" ordinarily means “the text or the book” consisting of the assemblage of words. But it also means “revealed knowledge”, which terminates the cycle of birth and death by destroying ignorance. Again, by the word "*Veda*" the meaning implied everywhere is “the assemblage of words”. The mastery of the assemblage of words contained in a text does not mean the attainment of knowledge which the text is intended to convey. One may, for example, memorize an entire text, repeat it several times, and quote any passage from it, at any time, in any context, without comprehending the meaning of the passages, or possessing the knowledge of the text. Also, mere textual knowledge is of no use, because it remains only at the surface level without becoming personal or subjective. In a very important sense, knowledge or truth must be subjective; it becomes, when it is direct and immediate. There is the classic case of Nārada mentioned in the seventh chapter of the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*. Nārada approaches Sanatkumāra for instruction. The latter asks him what he already knows, so that what he does not know may be imparted to him. Then Nārada gives a long list of subjects that he has mastered—subjects ranging from the *Vedas* to logic, ethics, politics, and fine arts, and then makes a confession to Sanatkumāra:

> "Venerable Sir, I am like one knowing the words and not a knower of the Self (*mantra-vid evāsmi, na ātma-vit)*. It has been heard by me, from those like you, that he who knows the Self crosses over sorrow. Such a sorrowing one am I, Venerable Sir, help me to cross over to the other side of sorrow."[5]

Secondly, Aṅgīrasa in his answer specifically mentions the knowledge of Brahman-Ātman, the immutable Reality. Higher knowledge can be attained only when a spiritual aspirant practises the requisite discipline, develops detachment, and gets the help and guidance of a competent teacher to understand the text. In this connection, Śaṅkara draws our attention to the distinction between: (1) performing a scripture-prescribed ritual like the *Agnihotra* with the help of numerous accessories, subsequent to the understanding of the text and (2) attaining

the higher knowledge from the Upaniṣadic texts. In the case of injunctive texts which enjoin *Agnihotra,* etc. understanding the texts alone will not do; after understanding the texts, one has to perform the ritual according to the procedure prescribed therefor. But, in the case of higher knowledge, which we are discussing here, there is no scope for action after attaining the knowledge of Brahman-Ātman. All the actions, declares Śaṅkara, cease simultaneously with the comprehension of the meaning of the sentences, because nothing remains to be done, apart from continuance in the mere knowledge revealed by the words of the texts. That is the reason why higher knowledge, i.e. the knowledge of Brahman-Ātman, is specifically mentioned as something different from lower knowledge.

After drawing the distinction between two kinds of knowledge, lower and higher, Aṅgīrasa explains the nature of Brahman-Ātman, which is the content of higher knowledge. He says:

> "(By higher knowledge) the wise realize everywhere That which cannot be perceived and grasped; which is without source, features, eyes, and ears; which has neither hands nor feet, which is eternal, multiformed, all-pervasive, extremely subtle, and undiminishing; and which is the source of all."[6]

In his commentary on this text, Śaṅkara brings out the nature of Brahman-Ātman as set forth in this text. The immutable Brahman is *adṛśyam*, i.e. invisible or imperceptible, in the sense that it is beyond the scope of all the sense-organs. The sense-organs by their very nature are directed outwards, and, therefore, can comprehend external objects. The five senses are gateways as it were for the power of perception to move outwards. Secondly, Brahman-Ātman is *agrāhyam*, because it is beyond the range of the organs of action. Also, it is *agotram*, in the sense that it has no root with which it is connected. In other words, it is the Ultimate Cause, Uncaused Cause, and Prime Mover. Again, it is *āvarṇam*, because it is devoid of characteristics or qualities. Further, it is *acakṣu-śrotram* and *apāṇi-pādam*, in the sense that it is without eyes and ears, and without hands and feet. Śaṅkara in this context explains why the *Upaniṣad* says that Brahman-Ātman is without eyes and ears, and hands and feet. The *Upaniṣad* in the sequel (1.1.9) says that "Brahman-Ātman is omniscient in general and all-knowing in detail". It is likely that one may think from this passage that Brahman-Ātman, like any ordinary jīva, achieves its purposes with the help of organs such as eyes, ears, etc. In order to show that what holds good in the case of ordinary human beings does not hold good in the case of Brahman-Ātman, the *Upaniṣad* specifically says that the Supreme Reality is devoid of eyes and ears, hands, and feet. If the Supreme Reality cannot be seized by anyone nor does it seize anything, what follows then? The *Upaniṣad* answers this question by saying that it is *nityam*, i.e. eternal or indestructible. Further, it is *sarvagatum*, i.e. multi-formed, because it manifests itself in many forms in all the different creatures, from Brahmā down to a motionless thing. Further, it is *vibhum*, and *susūkṣmam*, in the sense that it is all-pervasive like ether, and extremely subtle in the sense that it is totally devoid of the causes of grossness such as sound, etc. Further, this Supreme Reality is *avyayam*, i.e. undiminishing. The reason for this is obvious. Since the Primal Being is homogeneous and partless, the question of

diminution through loss of parts does not arise. Nor is it possible for it to undergo decrease due to the loss of its treasure or valuable things, because it is *nirguṇa* and *nirviśeṣa*. Nevertheless, it is *bhūtayoni*, in the sense that it is the source of all beings - moving and unmoving. Those who are discriminating and wise see this Reality everywhere, as the Self of all. The purport of this Upaniṣadic text is that Brahman-Ātman, as described above, is comprehended by the higher knowledge.

Earlier, it was stated that the Primal Being is the source of everything. The Upaniṣadic text now proceeds to explain, with the help of familiar examples, how it is the source of everything. The text reads:

> "As a spider spreads and withdraws (its thread), as on the earth grow the herbs (and trees), and as from the living man comes out hair on the head and body, so from the Immutable does the universe emerge here (in this phenomenal creation)."[7]

As usual, Śaṅkara's commentary on this text is helpful and illuminating. The *Upaniṣad* purports to show that the Primal Being is both the material and the efficient cause rolled into one. It is well known to us that a spider, by itself and independently of any other auxilliary, spreads out or creates the threads for weaving the web from the saliva produced in the mouth of its own body and also, when necessary, withdraws the threads into itself. We have also seen how the plants of various kinds grow on the earth. Also, we have noticed that from a living person hair grows from the head and body. In all these cases, there is dissimilarity between the cause and the effect. The spider which is a sentient being produces threads which are non-sentient; plants and trees which are living, come out of the seed and the earth, which are non-sentient; the hair which is non-sentient comes out of the body of a sentient being. In the same way, the entire manifested world of sentient and non-sentient beings comes out of Brahman-Ātman, the non-dual Reality; that is to say, Brahman by itself, independently of anything else, is the sole cause of the manifested world. Śaṅkara remarks that the *Upaniṣad* gives many illustrations for the purpose of easy comprehension of the problem of creation.

After stating that Brahman-Ātman is the sole cause of the manifested world, Aṅgīrasa proceeds to explain the order of creation. The Upaniṣadic text reads:

> "Through knowledge, Brahman increases in size. From that is born (the unmanifested) food. From food evolves Prāṇa (Hiraṇyagarbha); (thence the cosmic) mind, (thence) the five elements; (thence) the worlds; (thence) the immortality that is in *karmas*."[8]

Before commenting on this text, Śaṅkara points out that there is a fixed order of creation. If creation proceeds from an intelligent being that has a purpose and also a plan in order to fulfill the purpose; then, what is created by such an intelligent being cannot be erratic. It has already been pointed out that Brahman-Ātman is not only the material cause, but also the efficient cause, of the world. Usually, we speak of two kinds of causes, material cause (*upādāna-kāraṇa*) and efficient cause (*nimitta-kāraṇa*). While clay is the material cause of a pot; the potter who is an intelligent being and who knows the design of the pot, which he plans to produce from clay, is the efficient cause. Since

Brahman-Ātman is the sole Reality that exists, it has to be both the material cause and the efficient cause. The example of the spider mentioned earlier is intended to show that, though ordinarily the material cause is different from the efficient cause, it is quite possible for one and the same entity to play the role of the twofold cause. As an intelligent being, the spider which weaves the web through the threads is the efficient cause; and since the material for the threads it produces belongs to and comes from itself; it is also the material cause. The same logic holds good with regard to Brahman-Ātman. Since Brahman-Ātman is the only entity that exists prior to creation, there is no other entity to play the role of the material cause for the world. Also, by virtue of knowledge or intelligence it possesses, it is the efficient cause of the world. So, Brahman-Ātman, according to the *Upaniṣad*, is both the material and the efficient cause rolled into one (*abhinna-nimitta-upādāna-kāraṇa*). There is yet another point to which Śaṅkara draws our attention. One should not think that Brahman-Ātman has created the entire world at one stretch. Creation, says Śaṅkara, has taken place not only according to a fixed order, but also gradually following an order of succession. The Upaniṣadic text stated above refers to the order of creation of the manifested world from the Primal Reality. Śaṅkara's commentary is helpful to understand the technical language in which the *Upaniṣad* speaks about the order and succession of creation.

In the context of creation, the first question that anyone would ask would relate to the potentiality of Brahman-Ātman to do the work of creation. What is the power that Brahman-Ātman is endowed with for creating the world? The *Upaniṣad* straight away answers this question; but the language it makes use of is baffling and unintelligible. It says: "Through knowledge Brahman increases in size." How is it possible for Brahman to increase in size? Increase and decrease in size are possible in the case of a material entity (*jaḍa-vastu*); and anything which is subject to increase and decrease is mutable, and therefore perishable. But, since Brahman is eternal, it is not perishable. If so, how is it possible for the *Upaniṣad* to speak of the increase in size of Brahman? Śaṅkara in his commentary says that Brahman-Ātman though immutable, increases in size *(cīyate*) as it were through *tapas*, i.e. knowledge, through contemplative power of the knowledge of the creation, preservation, and dissolution of the world.[9] It means that Brahman-Ātman becomes *Īśvara*, the Creator-God, who is characterized by omniscience, omnipotence, etc. The second question about creation would relate to the material out of which Brahman-Ātman created the world; this question, in other words, is about the material causality of the world. The *Upaniṣad* says that for manifesting the world, Brahman-Ātman as the Creator - God originated food *(annam*).[10] The word "food", says Śaṅkara, means "the unmanifested *māyā*", i.e. the seed of creation. It may be noted that *Īśvara*, the Creator-God, is a unity of two principles—the principle of subjectivity characterized by knowledge, desire, and volition; and the principle of objectivity characterized by transformation. *Māyā,* the unmanifested food, is in the state of imminent creation. What comes first in the order of creation is *Prāṇa,* otherwise called Hiraṇyagarbha or *Sūtratman*. It is the World-Soul, the sum total of all beings. From the Hiraṇya evolves *manas*. Here, the term

"manas" refers to the "cosmic mind" comprising volition, deliberation, determination, doubt, etc. After the *manas* came the five elements. The Upaniṣadic text refers to the five elements, some of which are gross and some others, subtle, by the term *"satyam*". "*Sat"* refers to the gross elements, and *"tyat*" refers to the subtle elements. From the five elements, called *satya*, evolved the worlds *(lokāḥ*).

According to tradition, there are seven worlds such as the earth, etc., and these worlds came in succession. Following the order of the evolution of creatures, beginning with men, there evolved on these worlds *karmas*, i.e. rituals, castes, and stages of life. Once the rituals made their appearance, the fruits of these rituals are unavoidable. The fruits of these *karmas* are said to be *amṛtam*, i.e. immortal, because they will continue to exist as long as *karmas* continue to exist.

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With a view to conclude, the *Upaniṣad* reiterates the nature of *Īśvara*, the Creator-God, and the created world of name and form *(nāma-rūpa prapañca*) starting from Brahmā. The Upaniṣadic text reads:

> He who is omniscient in general and all-knowing in detail, whose austerity consists of knowledge, from Him are born this Brahmā (Hiraṇyagarbha), name-form, and food. [11]

3. FUNDAMENTAL ONTOLOGY IN *BRAHMA-VICARA*

Like the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*, the sixth chapter of the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* raises the fundamental question, "What is that thing by knowing which everything is known?" Uddālaka puts this fundamental question to Śvetaketu in order to highlight the primacy of Being and the dependent nature of the manifested world consisting of all kinds of beings, sentient and non-sentient. It will be possible for us to account for the objects of the world in a meaningful way, only if we push our inquiry into the Ultimate source or ground of all beings. The question about Primal Being is raised by fundamental ontology which is different from regional ontologies dealing with the beings of the world. The question it raises, occupies the first rank. This is what Heidegger calls the widest, broadest, and deepest question. Where such a question is raised and an attempt is made to answer it, there is philosophy. Judged by this criterion, the Upaniṣadic speculation into the extra-ordinary through an inquiry which is equally extra-ordinary carries the hallmark of philosophy; and the rest of it, if not pseudo-philosophy, is second-rate philosophy fulfilling a limited purpose of our every-day life at the surface level. It may, at the best, end up as descriptive metaphysics of the Strawsonian type or of the Vaiśeṣika variety; at the worst, it may help us to sort out the problems and puzzles of life!

NOTES

1. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad, 2.4.5.*
2. *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad, 1.1.3.*
3. *Ibid., 1.1.4.*
4. *Ibid, 1.1.5*
5. *Chāndogya Upaniṣad, 1.1.3.*
6. *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad, 1.1.6*
7. *Ibid, 1.1.7*
8. *Ibid, 1.1.8*
9. *Ibid, 1.1.8*
10. *Ibid, 1.1.8*
11. *Ibid, 1.1.9.*

THE PHILOSOPHY AND YOGA OF SRI AUROBINDO

* Sri M. P. Pandit

PHILOSOPHY
I

Every thinking person asks himself, in his awakened moments: what is the meaning of this life? Or, has it meaning at all? What is this world? How has it come to be? Where is it drifting to? And what is the significance of his present?

Many have thought over these questions before and the answers they have given are varied and often contradictory. The universe, it is said, is a creation of an Almighty God who has brought all creatures into being by a fiat and rules over them with the scales of justice in his hands. He rewards good with happiness and punishes evil with misery. All continues till, one day, he is pleased to dissolve the empire.

There are others who pronounce there is no God. God is only a figment of the anthropomorphic imagination of man. The world is self-existent. All is a result of the action and reaction of elements and forces; each form comes into existence and passes out of it mechanically as a result of certain combinations and break-up of material elements. Consciousness is only an epiphenomenon of the physical organism. There is neither past nor future; only the present is real and it is wisdom to make the most of it.

No, this world is not real either, say still others. The world is a transient phenomenon where everything changes moment to moment. Man a stream of thought-movements and a bundle of impressions: the whole concatenation is kept going by the never-ending urge of Desire. Once this prop is withdrawn the flux of things lapses and ceases to be. There is no abiding reality as such; the only thing that truly exists is a Nothing, Zero, Shunyam.

There is yet another view which has exercised a profound influence on the mind of man. According to it there is a Supreme Reality; but it is an Absolute Indefinable, One- without-a-second - the Brahman, which stands transcendent above all creation. That alone is real; all else is unreal. The universe is a huge shadow cast by the Being of Brahman or a fantasm woven by Its own force of Being, Maya. Thus the world-phenomena, the creatures peopling it, are all shadow-figures flitting about on an illusory stage. The sooner each one sees this truth, or rather lack of truth in his life and withdraws from it to the Sole Truth Beyond, the better.

There are certain modified versions of this standpoint which lend a partial reality to the world and life, but all told, the utmost they concede is an inferior value to world-existence *vis-a-vis* a Truer Beyond. Less or more, there is always a sense of unreality, an impermanence overhanging this life. One has to recognise that it is an activity of an inferior if not a wholly unreal kind and it is best to effect one's release from this state of dissolvable turmoil and pass to a hereafter or

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Beyond which alone is ultimately True and Permanent.

To Sri Aurobindo, however, the world is not a delusion or a baseless transient phenomenon. All is real; you are real, I am real, every bit that we see around is as real as Reality could be. For all is a true formation of Brahman that is the Sole Reality:

O Brahman, Thou art man and woman, boy and girl; old and worn thou walkest bent over a staff; thou art the blue bird and the green and the scarlet-eyed.

Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad, IV.3,4

II

This Teaching starts with the ancient perception of the seers of the Vedanta that there is a Supreme Reality which is absolute, eternal and indeterminable. This is Brahman, the One Truth, Sole and Entire. Whatever is in Brahman, for there is none outside It. All this a manifestation of Brahman, by Brahman, and in Brahman; therefore all is as real as Brahman Itself.

The Supreme Reality is indeed inconceivable and ineffable – an indefinable Transcendent. But It is not that alone. Above all and yet holding all in essence, when turned towards manifestation, this Reality determines itself as a supreme Existence, Something that exists by itself, *Sat*. Not merely exist, but it is actively aware of itself; dynamic with Self-Knowledge, it is Consciousness-Force, *Cit*. And the very nature of this Existence innate with Consciousness is an utter Delight, *Ānanda*. This is the triune status, Existence – Consciousness –Bliss, in which the Reality perceives itself in its poise for manifestation.

Why does Brahman manifest? Why should the Absolute turn from its ineffable Immutability towards Movement and what is it that it seeks which is not already contained in itself? Well, Brahman manifests himself not because of any want but for a Self-revelation, a Self-deployment in the outpouring of his Bliss. It is this Ananda of his Being that throws itself out for the sheer joy of an infinite movement and variation. Ananda is the base, Ananda the movement and Ananda the goal of manifestation. All creation is a surge of Brahman in an outflow of Delight. This is the full import of the Vedantic dictum, all is Brahman, *sarvam khalu idam brahma.*

So it is that the universe is a manifestation of Brahman, the Reality. And manifestation of Brahman means the revelation, the becoming of all that is native to inherent in Brahman – the Existence, the Consciousness, the Force and the Bliss that are the very terms of this Brahmanhood. In a word, Brahman the Absolute Being moves into Becoming in order to manifest his full plenitude of Self-Existence, Self-Knowledge, Self-Power and Self-Delight in an infinitude of expression.

That, says Sri Aurobindo, is the purpose of Creation; the universe is meant to be a perfect revelation for Infinite-Existence, Absolute Consciousness-Force and Illimitable Ananda of the Creative Godhead. That is the purpose which secretly governs each and every home in creation; but it is given only to man to become conscious of it and exert himself to fulfil the Intention of the Creator.

III

The Reality of Sachchidananda does not precipitate itself directly into this terrestrial existence. The process of the manifestation is gradual. There comes about a graded self-unrolling of the creative Brahman through several layers or planes of Becoming, an ordered devolution step by step, each gradation less subtle and more dense, *ghana*, than the previous until this extension of material existence is arrived at. These are the seven planes, the *sapta padāni* of the *Veda*, or the seven habitations, stations, *sapta dhāmānī* of the manifesting God head viz. the Planes of Sat, Cit, Ananda, and Vijnana, the Plane of Truth-Consciousness, where the ten hundred steeds of the Effulgent Sun are massed together; the Planes of the Mind, Life and last Matter, the physical Earth, which is aptly described as the feet of the Cosmic Purusha, *padbhyām prthivi*.

It is to be noted that this descending Consciousness that is Brahman, extends itself in a separate formulation on each of these levels, organizes existence on each plane around the particular principle so posited out of itself; and thus each of these gradations functions as the sovereign dynamis of its basic Principle of Consciousness active for the Divine Purpose. That is how the Planes of the Supreme Existence, Consciousness-Force, and Bliss, the Plane of Truth-Consciousness and the Plane of Mind (with the intermediate levels between the two), and the Life-Plane have been formed and set in action as Powers and fields for the Divine's self-expression of its Knowledge, Force and Infinitude in terms suited to their several orders of existence.

And here too on Earth, on this plane of physical matter, the Creative Truth seeks to manifest itself. True, every factor, every condition of the organization here is quite contrary to the characteristic expression of the Reality in own sway. The self-involution of the Reality has reached its acme in a total self-denial. The utmost infinitesimal finite is the unit, a veritable inconscience its nature and insentience a special feature of this order of creation its primal beginnings. Perhaps that too is in line with the Nisus. The Divine is to reveal the glory of its Being in conditions which are the very opposite of its Supreme Nature.

And the method by which this Purpose is being carried out is what Sri Aurobindo calls the *Spiritual Evolution* – a progressive unfoldment and growth of the Spirit or Consciousness which is concealed in every form in Creation. This Consciousness whose devolution has culminated in a concretization of itself in the solid core of matter, is there imbedded or fossilized, as it were, and now seeks to release itself, to release and establish itself in an ascending gradation working out appropriate vehicles for its embodiment and expression at every step. Thus from inanimate matter, there emerged gradually the throbs of life, the first vibrations of the evolving Consciousness; they were followed by less primitive and more and more developed forms of life in which Consciousness became more and more articulate. In the emergence of this life-form of Consciousness it must be noted, a natural pressure from the Life-Plane pre-existent above, so to say, played a capital part. With the growing organization of the life-principle on earth a yet higher principle of Consciousness, namely the awakened and self-aware power of Consciousness which is called Mind made its gradual appearance; as

in the case of Life, so here too nature has been helped in her transition by the action of the Plane of Mind pre-existent above.

With the advent of this mental principle, the process of the spiritual evolution has arrived at a turning point. For till then, evolution had proceeded more or less mechanically, without any awareness or responsive cooperation by the evolving units like the plant or animal. Now Nature has an ally. The inception and growth of this active faculty of self-awareness has brought into operation a new factor. In Man, the evolving being has become conscious of itself, conscious of its power, and conscious too of its need and possibility of self-enlargement and self-exceeding. For evidently this power of Intelligence, which has been developed and established so far, has limitations which are too patent; it cannot be the final organ which the Supreme Consciousnss has evolved for its perfect expression.

The Mind as it is developed is at best a half-way house. The very tortuous and tentative ways of its operation, the obvious imperfections and lacunae that characterize the world-order under its governance, are enough to convict it of inadequacy to serve as the pristine Power for the direct manifestation of the Sachchidananda on Earth. There is, Sri Aurobindo declares, yet another Power for that task, a still higher Principle high above the highest evolved human mind – what we may call Super-Mind, the Plane pre-existent at the head of this creation. It is the original Truth-Consciousness in direct possession of the Truth of each form and of the Power to effectuate it, the Vijnana of the Upanishad. It is this principle of Self-aware Knowledge and Self-active Power that is to be attained above, evoked within and established in the aspiring Consciousness of Earth-nature and it is this consummation towards which the present endeavour of human evolutionary effort is converging, consciously and half-consciously.

It is only when this Higher Power, the Supramental Consciousness of the Creative Truth is reached and realized, takes its place at the head of Evolution and functions as its governing Principle that the character of this world of half-light and half-power will begin to change and the full revelation of the veiled Godhead commence.

To strive and actualize this possibility is the Call to Man. As the highest developed being on the crest of evolving Nature, he can take into himself her laboring movement, give it a conscious direction and with his effective collaboration accelerate and telescope the Process to its destined end.

This is the aim and this the content of Sri Aurobindo's Yoga.

YOGA

I

Man is normally aware of only a little part of himself. The mind with he thinks and acts, the life-energy by which he is moved and sustained and the physical body in which both the mind and life are housed are all that he knows. But that is only his external being, a small part. He has a larger, inner being of which the outer is really a projection.

Behind the ordinary mind which is limited in its means of knowledge and modes of operation there is an inner mind with greater faculties and vaster reach. Behind the life-entity arrested by the bounds in which it

is involved there is an inner life-being with a freer and larger dynamism. And corresponding to the physical frame so obviously circumscribed there is also a subtle-physical body with a wider range.These three, the inner mental, the inner life or vital the inner physical - the *manomayapuruṣa*, *prāṇamaya puruṣa* and the *annamaya puruṣa* of the Upanishad – together constitute the inner being of man. Deeper than these, supporting them in their life-evolution, is still another being, the soul, the *antarātman*, who is a living spark of the Divine. This inmost being is the divine entity in man around which the rest of his being is centered for the significance of its life journey. Appropriately called by Sri Aurobindo, the psychic being, the *caitya puruṣa* (being of pure consciousness), it is stationed in the inner recesses of the heart, *hṛdaye guhāyām* – not the physical heart but behind the cardiac centre.

The powers and potentialities of this inner being[1] are infinitely greater and wider than those of the outer surface being and it is in proportion as they are brought out and made active in the front that man is more effective or less. It is from here that well out all true movements of Knowledge, Power, Beauty and Joy; but the limitations of the outer instrumental being diminish, dilute, even distort, their expression. It is possible, Sri Aurobindo teaches, to open up this inner ranges of the being and manifest their potentialities for the increase and perfection of man by certain psychological practices of Yoga.

II

Lost on the superficies of his being man does not know himself. To know, one has to become conscious. He should cease from looking only outward and begin to turn his gaze inward. He must gather up all the threads of his consciousness spread far and near, draw them closer and converge it within himself: concentrate. This concentration is best focused in the region of the heart. The outgoing energies withdraw from their customary preoccupation and the consciousness flows and feels inwards to get to its true source – the sole in the cavern of the heart, the psychic Purusha on whose support, veiled or apparent, the triple being of man depends for its existence. With persistent effort of will and aspiration for its revelation, it is possible for man to arrive at this center of the Divine's manifestation within himself and with a constant opening and willed surrender of rest of his being to its influence and control, to so shape his life and movements as to recast them in the mould of this inner Daemon. The psychic being is truly a delegate of the Divine in the individual evolution and when fully realized it gains him and identity with the Divine as the essential Self of his manifestation. To reach inmost centre of oneself, to find and secure ones foundation on this spiritual basis and discipline all the parts of the being so as to become free instruments for the spontaneous manifestation of this Divine Individual and its inalienable Powers of Purity, Beauty, Harmony and Joy is the meaning of this first decisive step of Sri Aurobindo's Yoga – the realisation of the Inner Divine.

An identity with the Divine within is gained. But this is not enough. One has also to reach identity with the Divine without. For the Divine which manifests in the individual is manifest in the Universe also. Only, there it is an extended manifestation.[2] The truth my

being is not complete without the truth of my neighbour's. A separative wall of ignorance shuts of my world from the world of another. The barrier is to be broken and the identity of the Divine in me with the Divine as the All must be realized.

One has to learn to enlarge oneself, to extend the range of one's consciousness to embrace more and more of the universe. One can begin at any level of his being: with a widening of the horizons of the mind or with an outflow of sympathy, love and harmony from the awakened psychic centre in the heart. This movement of self-expansion gains depth and power as the consciousness liberating itself from the limiting hold of external nature, grows into the larger consciousness active in the subliminal being, extends itself wider and wider as is natural to the subliminal, and ultimately culminates in the embrace of the individual with the Universal Consciousness. It is then that one realizes his true unity with his fellow-beings at the common Source. The Divine that I am and the Divine that is the Universe are found to be One; indeed, I am All, *aham eva idam sarvam*.[3] This is the second step: the realization of the Cosmic Divine.

The Divine in the individual and the Divine in the universe are realized to be the same because they are both manifestations of the One Divine which transcends both the individual and the universe.[4] It is this Supreme Divine that individualises itself as the divine self of the individual upholding his existence; it is the same transcendent Divine which likewise formulates itself as the divine Self of the universe basing the All-existence. Hence both the self of the individual and the Self of the universal are identical in their origin. And Sri Aurobindo's yoga, seeking to embrace the whole of the Divine in its manifestation naturally includes in its aim a union with the transcendent Divine in all its infinitude of Peace, Joy, Knowledge and Power.

The way is to rise in one's consciousness above the boundaries of the present formula of man's existence: body, life and mind. One has to open the higher ranges that are lying closed in the being. Above the thinking mind there are a number of gradations of consciousness, each with its characteristic powers. These planes of existence are to be made alive and the consciousness trained to rise to these higher levels and naturalise the workings of their Powers in itself – the Powers of Knowledge, Will and Bliss which are increasingly manifest on these higher altitude nearer to the 'own home', *svam dhāmam*, of the manifesting Spirit. At the same time, the existing active parts of the being are to be lifted up and treated to the light of the incoming Spiritual Power.

This double process of ascent of our consciousness to the higher heights of the Spirit and the descent of the Higher Consciousness with its native Powers to settle in the being is to be brought about by a discipline of concentration, will and aspiration. One can concentrate in the head to this end or meditate in an utter receptivity of the whole Being, or one can go into the temple of the heart and from there invoke the Higher Power to manifest itself. Whatever the means, the aim is to open more and more to the spiritual Force of the Divine in manifestation so that one grows and imbibes more and more of the nature of Godhead. Each higher revelation of the Divine

Consciousness as it unveils itself stamps its own character on the Being which offers itself to its clasp. This is the mode of progression: ascent, descent, integration which leads to the ultimate fulfillment of the human into the divine. But this last consummation of the complete change of the human nature into a divine nature, the conversion of man into a God-man, can be affected by nothing less than the Direct Power – the Divine, the highest formulation of the Supreme Consciousness, the Dynamism of Knowledge-Will at the head of all manifestation termed the Supermind by Sri Aurobindo. To attain this supramental Consciousness through a developing spiritualization of the being is the third and culminating realization of this Yoga.

It is not that these three realisations always come successively and in this order. They need not. Generally that which is most natural to the bent of the soul comes first and the others follow. They may – and often do – grow simultaneously, interact and promote each other; it may appear that the movement of one progression comes to a standstill and another takes its place; but in the end, they all converge into a total Realisation.

III

No serious sadhana is undertaken without the aid of a guide, and specially in a yoga of this type which covers many untrodden tracks in its comprehensive scope, it is imperative that there must be a Teacher who can guide and lead. The Teacher, Guru, is one who has realized and holds in himself the Dynamis of the Truth that is sought and is capable of communicating his realization to another. He initiates, he pours the Power of his realization in the disciple, in silence or by word, and it is this Shakti that works out the sadhana with the instrumentality of his faculties. This is the Divine Shakti – for the Power of the Guru is in fact the Shakti, the Consciousness-Force of the Truth-Being that is manifest in him – that leads and sustains the seeker through whatever ups and downs in the difficult endeavour.

Doubtless the individual has his own contribution to make. He must have an ardent aspiration for the Truth of this Path. Not only his central part but the whole being must turn to it and be lit with this flame of *aspiration*. The fire must burn.

There has to be a constant *rejection* of all that tends to weaken the strength of this aspiration, to dilute the will that is dedicated to the Ideal. Things are to be rejected or accepted not on any moral or religious grounds but only on one criterion: whatever helps the growth of the inner life is to be accepted and whatever retards it to be rejected. But one is not to preoccupy himself too much with this process of negation and elimination. It is the positive gains of Purity, Peace, Knowledge that are to be strived for and as they settle in the being of the seeker in response to his aspiration and call, they displace their opposites.

Side by side, this being has to learn to s*urrender* itself to the Divine Shakti, the Higher Consciousness that is set active in oneself, in order to be effectively worked upon and moulded according to the needs of the sadhana . The recalcitrant parts are to be disciplined to follow the parts that have received the higher light; the mind and the heart are to be tuned to the Voice of the Guide

whether within oneself or in the person of the Guru. The role of surrender in this Yoga is not to negate personal effort and will but to raise them to their highest potency by merging them in the self-fulfilling Will and Power of the Divine.

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The effort is not inner alone; the outer being also has its share to contribute. The Yoga aims at an upliftment and transforming change o the whole man – not merely the liberation of his soul – and hence all the parts of his being have to be possessed, purified and enabled to participate in the Yoga. They are all to accord with the growing realisation within. The thinking mind is to be cultivated and helped to enlarge and illumine itself in the Way of Knowledge; the emotive parts, especially the heart is to be tended into a living centre for a many-sided outflowering of emotions in the Way of Love for the supreme Lover; the dynamic or the life-being is to be yoked to the Will of the Divine and dedicated to the Way of Works to the complete exclusion of personal aim and desire; the very body is to be disciplined, purified and developed into a vibrant tabernacle of God.

This then is the labour that the seeker of the Integral Yoga has to put forth with *Faith* in the Divine Grace which has chosen him for the high destiny. The labour is indeed twofold: the personal effort and the working of the Grace. In the beginning – and that is for a considerable time – the effort has to be mainly of the individual and the Grace works through this instrumentation; it is only as he learns to surrender and place himself in the hands of the Divine that the personal striving is gradually replaced by the larger self-fulfilling action of the Shakti till the stage arrives when the sadhana is directly taken up by the Divine Power at work. And it is indispensable that this should take place. For the central object of this Yoga is not self-extinction, Nirvana which one can achieve with a determined effort of will and concentration; nor is it a state of self-realisation which it is possible to attain by tapasya and a faith in the guiding grace; the aim here is lifting up of the entire being of man to the heights of the Spirit undivided and indivisible and a remaking of it, a transformation of its nature in terms of this integral Divine Truth and this can be effected by no human effort, however intensive or massive. It can be consummated only by the original Power of Knowledge-Will, the Consciousness-Force that reigns in the Truth of the Gnosis, the Supreme Shakti that is the Divine Mother.

NOTES

1. The entire expanse of this inner being alive with a consciousness of its own is called the subliminal; but there are ranges where this consciousness is not active. Those that are below the levels of the active consciousness form what can be called the sub-consient, and those that exceed them the super-concient·
2. The One hath become all this *(ekam va idam vibbhūv sarvam), Ṛg Veda,* VIII.58.2
3. *Chāndogya Upaniṣad,* VII.25.1
4. One Godhead occult in all beings, the inner Self of all beings, the all-pervading, Absolute without qualities. *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad,* VI.11

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ETHICAL AND OTHER ALLIED IDEAS IN *ĀYURVEDA*

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Āyurveda is the indigenous medical system of the Indian sub-continent that has existed for several thousand years. Sir John Marshall's excavations at the site of the ancient University of Takṣaśila yielded a significant number of small peculiar instruments, and these are generally believed to be surgical instruments of those times. Excavations conducted at Nāgārjunakoṇḍa have revealed a big structure known as a *jvarālaya* or a hospital. The inscriptions of Aśoka mention hospitals for men as well as animals. The *Atharva-veda* is a storehouse of information about the medical practices of those times. *Āyurveda* developed and proliferated into several specialized branches like *Vṛkṣyāyurveda* (dealing with the diseases of plants), *Hayāyurveda* (dealing with horses and their diseases), *Gajāyurveda* (medicine relating to elephants), *Gavāyurveda* (bovine medicine), and so on.

With such widespread practice of medicine, naturally a code of conduct relating to medical practice also evolved. There are a few works relating to the ethics of medical practitioners (called by the generic name *Vaidyadharma*) available in the collections of manuscripts of some libraries in India, but none of these have been edited and published.[1] Like any other craft and profession, medicine was also practiced by a hereditary group of people in ancient India; and medical knowledge and practice was, therefore, embodied in a living oral tradition that was regularly transmitted from older members of the family to the younger ones, or from a teacher to his chosen pupil. Most of this knowledge seems to have been preserved only orally and not in writing because of the prevailing general practice among medical practitioners of ancient India (which survives in some places even to this day),of not letting out the secret formulas of curing to slip out of the line of succession.

1. SCOPE OF *ĀYURVEDA*

The scope of *Āyurveda* is quite comprehensive in encompassing the physical, mental, and spiritual well being of man in the specific contexts of his environment. Cosmological and ontological speculations about the intrinsic relationship between matter and life; biological theories concerning embryonic conception; ideas concerning body, life, and soul; notions relating to genetics; theories concerning physiology; pathology and food; the rules of health and longevity; diseases with their diagnosis and treatment; poisons and their antidotes; and, finally, ethics form part of the Āyurvedic discourse.

While the cosmological speculations of Sāṅkhya seem to have decisively influenced Āyurvedic theories concerning the constitution of man and his environment; the logical techniques of Nyāya seem to have been adopted by *Āyurveda*, in the matter of diagnosis and treatment of diseases. The supernatural forces in terms of which diseases were being explained in primitive medicine

are largely abandoned by *Āyurveda*, and *tarka* or *yukti* is employed in the analysis of the nature of diseases and their cure. This exhibits a strong Nyāya influence. While adopting the logic of Nyāya, *Āyurveda* coolly abandons Nyāya metaphysics in preference to the Sāṅkhyan view of prakṛti with its three guṇas. *Āyurveda* maintains that mental and physical health is the result of perfect balance of the three elements (*dhātus*) - wind (*vāta*), bile (*pitta*), and phlegm (*kapha*) – in any human organism, and this view is an adaptation and development of the Sāṅkhyan cosmological view.

The cosmic element *vāyu* physically manifests as the vital breath (*prāṇa*) in living organisms; and this *prāṇa*, according to *Āyurveda*, regulates all functions of life.[2] Pitta is responsible for maintaining the thermal balance in the body, and it is the physiological manifestation of the cosmic principle of fire *agni*)[3].In very much the same way, phlegm (*kapha*) is the physiological manifestation of the cosmological principle water (*ap*). Just as the normal state of prakṛti in Sāṅkhya, consists in its three *guṇas* being in a state of equilibrium; the normal state of health, according to *Āyurveda*, consists in the three elements of vāta, *pitta* and *kapha* being in a state of perfect balance. Disease is due to any one of these three becoming more dominant than the other two. Therefore, the goal of treatment of a disease is to restrain the dominating element, and restore the balance in the organism.

The works on *Āyurveda* deal with one or more of the following topics in medicine: therapeutics (*kāyacikitsā*), major surgery (*śalyatantra*), minor surgery (*śalākyatantra*), pediatrics (*kaumārabhṛtyatantra*), toxicology (*agadatantra*), geriatrics (*rasāyanatantra*) and rejuvenation (*vājākaraṇatantra*). The major constituents of modern medicine are all found in this classification. There are hundreds of works devoted to these topics, and there are several authors who appear to have founded schools of thought because works are named after them. For example, in toxicology, there are compilations (*samhitā*) attributed to Kaśyapa, Alambāyana, Uśana, Sanaka, Śauṇaka and Lātyāyana. Since the human body was conceived as being made out of the five elements (*mahābhûtas*) and the materials (*dravya*) which form food and drugs are also compounds of the same five elements, a great deal of importance was attached to studying the effects of food and drugs on the human body.

There is one very interesting feature of *Āyurveda*. It is traditionally described as an accessory to the Vedas (*vedāṅga*), but it is not attached to any specific school of philosophy (*darśana*) either Vedic (*āstika*) or non-Vedic (*nāstika*). The science of medicine was of interest to Jainas as well as Buddhists, besides the Hindus. There was no attempt to fit this *śāstra* within the general metaphysical framework of any single school of philosophy. Therefore there is nothing like Buddhist *Āyurveda* or Jaina *Āyurveda*. But still, we find a considerable amount of Sāṅkhyan ideas and Naiyāyika techniques of argumentation accepted in *Āyurveda*. This preponderance of Sāṅkhya ideas and the use of Nyāya theories of inference in *Āyurveda* is just the result of the common practice of the age in which it developed. Sāṅkhya views were widely prevalent in ancient India; and if any proof of this is required, we can find it in the most elaborate refutation of that school by Sankara.

Such elaborate and powerful refutation would be uncalled for if the school were not to be very influential. As for Nyāya, its techniques of inference and argumentation were universally adopted by all schools, while its metaphysics was avoided. Therefore, the world-view of *Āyurveda* developed on its own, freely borrowing whatever was found useful in the speculations of various schools.

This freedom from attachment to any specific philosophical world-view (*darśana*) naturally released *Āyurveda* from an obligation of accepting any common metaphysical baggage of those schools. All schools of Indian thought (except, of course, the Cārvāka) commonly subscribe to the notions of rebirth and *karma*. Rebirth is a natural consequence of accepting the theory of *karma*. As universally accepted by Indian schools, any *karma* done at any time, by any one, has twofold consequences. (1) The direct, natural result (*phala*), of that action is the first consequence. (2) The second consequence, is the development of a tendency (*samskāra*) to do the same action subsequently. For example, intoxication is the direct, immediate result of heavy drinking. Heavy drinking may not just end with this intoxication that might have died away by the next day, but may make a person desire to drink the following day also. This latter consequence of desiring is generally not thought to be as inevitable as the first in so far it is controllable. While it is not possible to control intoxication after being heavily drunk; it is still possible to control the desire to drink that arises the next day. The tendency to do an action can thus be controlled, and such control prevents a man from repeating the actions. In this way, a man can control his future and proceed along the path of liberation from all actions, and completely avoid the consequent rebirth. This results in *mokşa.*

2. KARMIC - EFFECT

Ordinarily, the fruits of the actions of a previous birth are reaped in the present birth. That is because those actions were not ripe enough to bear fruits in that birth, and having become ripe in the present birth, begin to bear fruits. It is, therefore, natural to conclude that the ripened fruits of the actions of the present birth determine the nature of the future birth - the period of life and the pleasurable or painful experiences during that birth. Only the fruits of extremely good or extremely bad actions are reaped immediately, in the present life itself. Other normal actions in the present life slowly fructify; and, therefore, they yield their fruits only in a later birth. This is accepted by all schools but interestingly, it is not totally accepted by Caraka and his followers.

Caraka believes that only the fruits of extremely bad actions cannot be arrested by the normal efforts of good conduct. No one, of course, wants to arrest the generally agreeable consequences of good actions. Caraka believes that the fruits of all ordinary actions can be arrested by normal physical ways of well-balanced conduct, the administration of proper medicines, and the like. This has the following important implication: our ordinary non-moral actions involved in taking proper care of our health (like taking proper food, tonics, medicines, etc.) can modify or arrest the ordinary course of the fruition of our *karma*. Caraka has to take such a stand because otherwise the whole theory and practice of medicine would become meaningless. If the ordinary course

of the fruition of *karma* cannot be arrested at all, the illness one is suffering due to such fruition of *karma* will have no remedy. The illness will have to continue, and reach its logical conclusion. Therefore, Caraka thinks that while according to the effects of one's ordinary *karma* one might have fallen ill, if one takes due care, that person may avoid the effects and still be in good health.

The point to be noted here is that according to all theorists of *karma*, the law of *karma* is immutable. According to them, only the fruits of unripe *karma* can be destroyed by true knowledge which is liberating. The fruits of all ripe *karma* will have to be invariably experienced even when a person has attained liberating knowledge. It is a well known tenet of all schools of Indian thought that prārabdha *karma* (*karma* that is ripe and has begun to fructify) cannot be destroyed or its effects annulled. It has to be necessarily experienced even by the *jîvanmukta*. What Caraka does is to reject this thesis of the immutability or inevitability of ripe *karmas*. The effects of all ordinary kinds of *karma* can always be modified or even wholly avoided and the science of *Āyurveda* is the chosen instrument of doing precisely this.

The theory of *karma* involves a belief in the mysterious existence and ripening of the sinful and virtuous elements of our actions. When *karma* ripens, these sinful and virtuous elements produce their effects. In that case, it is not mere physical actions that produce certain effects but it is the sinful or virtuous elements inherent in those actions. If the sinful or virtuous elements are alone thus responsible for those effects, it naturally follows that mere physical action cannot modify the effects of fructifying *karma*. If we thus attribute moral properties (like sinful and virtuous) to actions and hold them alone responsible for the effects, we have to deny that actions have direct physical consequences. For example, if a person takes medicine and gets cured, it has to be conceded that the cure was not at all due to a purely physical effect of that medicine but was due to the predestined consequences of some good deed of that person in his previous birth. On the other hand, if we really agree that the cure was due to the medicine itself as common sense would have us believe, then we cannot any more believe in the moral properties of fructifying *karma* as being responsible for that beneficial effect of a cure. Since Caraka, as an authority on medicine, believes that medicine has direct effects and that the success or failure in curing is due to proper or improper efforts on the part of the physician and the patient, he naturally rejects the idea that all happy or unhappy experiences are due to the ripening of the *karma*s of previous births.

Hence, if the efficacy of ripened *karma* cannot be doubted, we will have to necessarily admit that none of our efforts are of any use in warding off the calamities in life and we will have to resign ourselves to the existence of a mysterious and unpredictable "fate" or "destiny." This will not only render all medical practice meaningless but will also totally discredit the efficacy of human effort (*puruşa prayatna*). On the other hand, if there is no such absolute fatality, properly directed efforts are bound to succeed in warding off any calamity. On these grounds, Caraka concludes that it is only in the case of extremely bad or good kinds of actions that their effects are unavoidable, and the theory of *karma* is maintainable in full. In the case

of all other ordinary *karma*, its effects are changeable and avoidable through properly directed efforts. Therefore, the normally made distinction between the moral and the physical aspects of an action is not found in Caraka's system.[4]

For Caraka, the "all-round manifold benefit" (*hita*) of an action is the ultimate test of its "goodness." Before performing any action a person has to carefully judge the utility of that action. If performing that action: (1) is beneficial to him, he ought to do it; and if it, (2) is not beneficial, he ought to avoid it.[5] "The good of oneself" (*Ātmahita*) is the end of all human action. *Ātmahita* generally results from adopting the proper means by which the mind constantly remains on the right path. Over-activity (*atiyoga*), wrong activity (*mithyāyoga*), and inactivity (*ayoga*) of the mind is to be avoided in order to keep it on the right path. An individual who has an awareness of what is beneficial to oneself in this way will never do anything evil and he will always act rightly. Through such right action he not only achieves happiness, but will also have perfect mastery over his body and the senses.

Caraka not only accepts the existence of a future state but also argues that such a state must exist. He accepts the theory of after-life because he also accepts that the soul is existent and uncreated. Since human life has both a beginning and an end, the acceptance of this experienced fact in the context of an uncreated soul inevitably leads to the concepts of a previous life and an after-life. Caraka offers argument after argument to show that there is rebirth. This is another special point of *Āyurveda* because in no other system of Indian thought an attempt has been made to prove the fact of rebirth as in the *Caraka-samhitā*. The idea of rebirth has been considered by all schools of Indian thought to be simply too obvious to require any proof. Caraka definitely attributes the divergences in the intelligence of individuals to their deeds in their past births, but he does not also regard the weakness or strength of the moral will as being due to deeds in past lives. The moral will is free from control by the past and it is precisely this freedom that makes it possible for an individual to modify or overcome the effects of past ordinary *karma* in his present birth. It appears that Caraka feels an obligation to prove the possibility of rebirth because he rejects the deterministic aspect of the *karma* theory from which the fact of rebirth follows as a logical conclusion.

3. SOCIAL ETHICS AND AYURVEDA

Caraka also refers to the collective evil effects of the misdeeds of a people living in a locality which may sometimes lead to outbreaks of epidemics. He attributes the epidemics to the pollution of water and air by the people and this very polluted air and water enter the bodies of the people and make them sick. Thus, the misdeeds of a people can pollute a whole region, and ultimately ruin it. Since all misdeeds are adhārmic in character, Caraka subscribes to the view that the general well being of a people is bound up with *dharma*. *Adharma* and well being cannot go together. Large scale *adharma* on the part of a people necessarily results in climatic disturbances and natural calamities. He attributes famines, failure of crops, droughts, floods and such other natural phenomena to collective misdeeds of people. Storing habit (*sańcaya*), the tendency to receive things from others (*parigraha*) and greed (*lobha*) in

an individual or a people are all attributed by Caraka to lack of dharma in them. Greed produces malice, from malice is produced lying, from lying desire, anger, conceit, antipathy, cruelty, violence, fear, sorrow and anxiety. None of these are contributory to the well being (*hita*) of an individual or a community.

Thus, according to Caraka, an individual and a community are entirely responsible for their own health and ill-health, prosperity or decline, well being or misery. It is entirely within their power to choose to lead a good life which, according to Caraka, is not only a virtuous life but also a life free from diseases which is, for that very reason, also a long life. "*Āyu*" also means in Sanskrit the length of life. Health is as much mental as it is physical for Caraka. A physician therefore has to attend to both the body and the mind. When there is the right kind of balance of the elements in the body, it naturally produces a calm and happy state of mind. But this balance can be disturbed by certain mental states; and, therefore, Caraka advises the controlling of certain psychological tendencies. This control is generally expressed as the control of thought, speech, and action throughout Āyurvedic literature. "Thought" is used here in a very broad sense as to include all emotions, feelings, and passions also. Lack of control over thought results in hurtful speech and harmful action. Caraka also emphasizes the great importance of a proper diet, and moderate exercise in maintaining consistent health. The rules of good conduct (*sadvṛtta*) are described in very great detail in the *Carakasamhitā* (I. 8). The elements of good conduct pertain to how an individual should conduct himself privately as well as in the public, so that he is fully integrated with the community he lives in. This close association of good conduct with health clearly points to the holistic view of health advocated by *Āyurveda*. The individual, the community, and the locality within which he live;, and the general environment surrounding that community; are all equally elements contributing to the health of the individual and his community.[6]

Though moral virtues are highly recommended by Caraka in the context of good life, yet non-moral virtues such as proper care of one's body, observance of social rules, and forms of etiquette are equally necessary. All bodily and mental troubles are due to imprudent behaviour and conduct which, in turn, are due to errors of judgment (*prajnāparādha*). When such errors of judgment are completely avoided, good life becomes possible and such a good life is also necessarily a happy life.[7] The goal of *Āyurveda* is to help man attain such a state of good life.

4. MEDICAL ETHICS IN *ĀYURVEDA*

The *dharma* of a physician is to help an individual to attain and maintain a healthy state of life, which is also a good and happy state of life. This he does through the prescription of appropriate diet and medicines. The code of conduct prescribed for a physician usually forms part of only Āyurvedic texts. It is somewhat curious that the *Dharmaśāstras* do not deal with the ethics of medical practitioners (*vaidyadharma*). Āpastamba *Dharmaśāstra* briefly refers only to the duties of a king (*rājadharma*). *Yājñavalkyasmṛti* has chapters only on *rājadharma* and *yatidharma*. Even Kautilya's *Arthaśāstra* has nothing to say except on the

fines to be levied on physicians for carelessness in treatment, and for treating a dangerous disease without intimating the government.[8] This may be due to regarding the medical profession as being capable of self-regulation, and hence not being in need of regulations framed from outside.

As we can gather from the medical texts, a physician is always expected to treat a patient as best as he can. But, he is expected to treat only "deserving" persons. There is no listing of who these deserving persons are. But those who are "not deserving" are clearly listed. This list includes, according to both Caraka and Suruta, habitual sinners, persons who are morally degraded, and persons who indulge in killing as a profession. It is interesting that prostitutes were not regarded as either habitual sinners or as morally degraded persons. We find from the *Arthasāra* that prostitutes were employed in royal harems, were classified as belonging to three ranks and had their own distinct duties in the royal court and elsewhere. They also had their own code of conduct called *veṣyādharma*. There is no doubt that they were part of the "good life" as conceived by ancient Indians. The *Arthaśāstra* has a chapter on the superintendent of prostitutes.[9] It is noteworthy that in the early medical works there is no mention of sexually transmitted diseases, and, there is a reference to syphilis by the name "*phiranga roga*" ("foreigner's disease") which occurs in the medical work Bhāvaprakāśa written around 1535, which is probably only after the arrival of the Portuguese travellers in India.[10]

The physician should always remember that his patients trust him completely, and hence should always reciprocate this trust by taking utmost care in treating them, looking upon them as his own children. But it is his duty to refuse to treat a case where he is convinced that the disease is incurable. He should provide proper medical and nursing facilities to his patients. He should not attend on a female patient in the absence of her husband or guardian. He should not say or do anything that may cause a mental shock to the patient or his relatives. He must keep all information about his patients to himself and should not disclose / reveal it to anyone. He must be devoted to his profession, and should keep learning from his experience all his life. He should possess an attitude of compassion towards his patients and a philosophical outlook in respect of the cases which prove fatal despite his best efforts.[11]

From various inscriptions available in Tamil and Telugu in parts of South India, it appears that the maintenance of hospitals was either a governmental or a philanthropic activity.[12] A large number of works on personal hygiene form part of Āyurvedic literature. From this it may concluded that there was a heightened awareness regarding health, diffused throughout the society. The ancient Indian physician probably played more of a preventive role than a clinical or therapeutic role. He radiated hope for every sick person, and the efficacy of his treatment was so famous that it attracted wide attention in the Islamic world. Harun-al-Rashid had established a translation bureau to get Āyurvedic works translated into Persian; and there are stories of the Indian physicians effecting miraculous cures in royal patients who had been given up as incurable and dying cases by the best of local physicians.[13] When very efficient, knowledgeable and dedicated physicians are around, meticulous codes of

conduct to regulate their behaviour hardly become necessary; and that perhaps explains the paucity of specific and detailed works on medical ethics in classical India.

NOTES

1. I have not been able to consult any of these manuscripts extensively as they are available only in the libraries in Calcutta and Thanjavur.
2. *Suśrutasamhità*, I. 14. 4; also see *Carakasamhità*, I. 18. 49 (Jamnagar Edition, 1949), pp. 538 - 539.
3. *Suśrutasamhità*, I.21.10 and *Caraka-samhità*, I.12.11 and I.21.9.
4. See *Carakasamhità*, III.3.28-38.
5. *Buddhyà samyag idam mama hitam idam mamàhitam iti avekùyàvekùya karmaṇàmpravṛttãnàm samyak pratipàdanena iti ahita-karma-parityàgena hitakarmàcaraṇena ca, Chakrapàṇi's commentary on Carakasamhità*, I.8.17.
6. See Surendra Nath Dasgupta, *A History of Indian Philosophy*, Vol. II, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965, pp. 402 - 411.
7. *Carakasamhità*, I.30.22.
8. Kautilya's *Arthaśàstra*, Tr. R. Shama Shastry, Mysore: Mysore Printing and Publishing House, 1967, p. 233.
9. *Ibid*., pp. 139 – 142.
10. *History of Medicine in India*, a seminar report by Dr. V. Ramachandra Rao, Tirupati, 1970, p. 28.
11. See *The Cultural Heritage of India*, Vol. VI, (Calcutta, 1986), p. 174.
12. *History of Medicine in India*, a seminar report by Dr.V. Ramachandra Rao, Tirupati, 1970, pp. 69 - 79.
13. *Ibid.*, pp. 30 - 37.

COMMENTS ON SERIOUS MISTRANSLATIONS OF THE CENTRAL UPANIŞADIC TERMS

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I am provoked to write this brief essay on my having seen so many articles and books, ancient, modern, and contemporary, the authors of which - Westerners as well as Indians - translate "Brahman" as "God" and "Ātman" as "soul" and "self". Such translations are in full and complete contradiction with the original meanings and referents of these terms, as per the Upaniṣadic texts themselves.

1. MISTRANSLATED TERMS AND COMMENTS

Let me begin with a clarification of "scripture." Many scholars, Western as well as Indian, refer to the *Vedas* as "scriptures;" some even called the "*Vedas*" - "the Hindu Bible." "Scripture" in its original meaning is "the word of God", as clearly referring to the *Old Testament*, the *New Testament*, and the *Korān*, all of which belong to the so-called Abrahamic traditions. But, the *Vedas* are not the word of God; nor are they revealed to the Vedic sages by an external agency called "God". They are self-revelation, in the sense that Truth and to whom it reveals itself are non-different (one and the same). Remember the *Mahāvākya,* the great pronouncement, *"Aham Brahmāsmi* (I am Brahman)? Brahman is the Truth, and I am Brahman; and, therefore, I am the Truth. In light of these considerations, the *Vedas* are to be most correctly and faithfully referred to as "Sacred Writings" (of Hinduism). Does Hinduism have a scripture? Yes. The *Bhagavad-Gītā* is the scripture of the Hindus. As per the tradition, it is indeed the word of God – Lord Kṛṣṇa.

I have carefully gone through the *Vedas;* and several translations and commentaries on them - ancient, modern and contemporary. I was disappointed and disheartened to find that: (1) Western as well as Indian scholars (who should know better) translate "Brahman" as "God" and "Ātman" as "soul"; and (2) yes, they also refer to the "Ātman" as the "self", sometimes with the "s" capitalized. In what follows, I shall clarify and correct these egregious errors in translations; and, hence, the misunderstanding of these terms ("Brahman" and "Ātman").

I shall not burden the reader with cartloads of quotations and citations; I do not need those ornaments, for my analysis is confined to the fundamental concepts and propositions of the *Upaniṣads*; all references and their documents are readily and plentifully available in the *Upaniṣads* themselves.

We are told again and again that: (1) Brahman is formless, nameless, indescribable, uncreated, unborn, undying, eternal, immortal, unperceivable, and inconceivable (cannot be grasped by the senses and the mind); and, (2) Brahman is not to be mistaken for the god(s) worshipped by people; (3) "Brahman" is not a name, since Brahman is formless (only that with a form has a name); (4) "Brahman" is merely a linguistic symbol to facilitate communication;

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and, hence, one can use any linguistic symbol. We are further told that: (5) Brahman is not the creator of the world; rather, Brahman is the world and more. And, (6) nothing positive can be affirmed of Brahman; (7) Brahman is neither a he nor a she, but the That (Tat). (8) One can only say what Brahman is not (neti, neti). What all this means is that it is a very serious mistake to translate "Brahman" as "God", as understood in theistic traditions, Abrahamic as well as non-Abrahamic. One may now ask, "What, then, is God? Hindus have many Gods; so, what is the difference between "Brahman" and "God"? Here are the answers.

Human beings, being frail and feeble, attempt to have a conception of the inconceivable and unperceivable Brahman – the Ultimate Reality. Such attempts result in various religious traditions, each with its own conception of the inconceivable Ultimate Reality – Brahman - governed by the tradition's language, myths, socio-political and economic arrangements, etc. These conceptions are the Gods of different religions with their own scriptures. Each tradition is convinced that its own conception alone is the true and correct one, and attempts to convert other peoples into its own religion. In this manner arise religious conflicts, hatred, violence, and wars.

In the Upaniṣadic tradition, especially as per the Advaita of Śaṅkara, everyone is free to have her/his own conception of Brahman, known as "*Īśvara* (personal God)." One is entitled to worship God in any form (description) that pleases one most (*Iṣta Devata*). The God that one chooses can be male, female, or androgynous. What matters most is that the God one chooses pleases one most. It is God, understood in this way, one worships; and to this God one offers heartfelt prayers and of Her/Him one asks for gifts, kindness, mercy, forgiveness, etc.; Brahman, being formless, cannot be worshipped and prayed to. We hear from time to time that someone saw God as a Cross in the sky, as Virgin Mary, or Jesus himself. What we should ask here is: Why did that person see God in this way, but not as Śiva, Rāma, Durga, Kṛṣṇa, Allah, etc.? The reason is clear, the person who sees God in the above way is a Christian, and he/she is conditioned to see God in this way; people belonging to other traditions see God in ways governed by their conditioning. Thus, God is merely an appearance; one needs to find That (Brahman), of which God is an appearance.

What all the above observations point to is that God, unlike Brahman, is a conditioned (relative) reality. Does this mean that God is unreal? No, God is not unreal; but neither real nor unreal. God is not real and unconditioned; only Ultimate Reality (Brahman) is real and unconditioned; the "real" in the Upaniṣadic teaching is "that which always is, untouched by time and circumstance". One does not see or remember God in one's deep sleep. If God were real, He/She would not have disappeared in our deep sleep. God is not unreal, either, since people claim to see God (let us not worry here about the truth or falsity of their claims). God appears to people as an object of their consciousness; objects appear, disappear, and reappear; whereas Brahman, being real, is always there, in all of our modes of being - waking, dreaming, and deep sleep - unlike God who is not there in deep sleep. People see God; no one sees Brahman, since Brahman is not an object of consciousness. Brahman is to be experienced in non-dual

intuition - *Prajña* - transcending the senses and the mind.

All the above considerations make it clear as to why "Brahman" is not to be translated as God. There are many Gods (God of the Jews, God of the Christians, God of the Muslims, Gods of the Hindus, etc.), whereas there is just Brahman - the non-dual Reality!

I come now to a consideration of the translation of the "Ātman" as the "soul". Authors, Western and Indian, of papers and books regularly translate "Ātman" as "soul". Such a translation is wholly erroneous. Here below are my arguments.

"Ātman," as per the *Upaniṣads*, is pure, objectless consciousness. The Ātman is formless; and, hence, nameless. "Ātman", like "Brahman", is not a name; but merely a linguistic symbol to facilitate communication. You can use any other word for "Ātman"; and it makes absolutely no difference to the meaning of "Ātman." As has been pointed out earlier, only objects can have names since they have forms; and since Ātman is not an object (phenomenon), it cannot have a name ("phenomenon" is "anything that is"; or, can in principle be "an object of consciousness"). You can call anyone who has no name by any name you wish. The Ātman is non-dual; this means that "Ātman" cannot be used in plural (Ātmans). In the Abrahamic traditions, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, "soul" is used in plural (there are souls). For this reason, "Ātman" should not be translated as "soul".

According to the above traditions, there was a time when souls did not exist; they came into existence as creations of God. Hence souls have beginnings, unlike Ātman, which, being the Ultimate Reality – Brahman - always is; and, hence, is beginningless. This is another reason that "Ātman" is not to be translated as soul.

Can "jīva" be translated as "soul"? No, such translation is ruled out by the following considerations. "Jīva" in the Upaniṣadic tradition means a living (animate) being, a psycho-physiological complex, wholly constituted of phenomena (objects of consciousness). As such, jīvas have beginnings and ends. In the Western religious traditions, it is taught that souls are immortal, and as going to heaven or hell after death. Here is the contradiction: anything that has a beginning has inevitably an end; and since souls have beginnings, they also have ends, and hence are not immortal. The jīvas are mortal, since they have beginnings and ends. Therefore, "jīva" also is not to be translated as "soul". "Soul" is a Western concept, and has no Upaniṣadic counterpart!

Let me now turn to the translation of "Ātman" as "self". Among scholars - Western and Indian – the universally accepted translation is "Ātman" = self. It is also true that one sometimes finds in the *Upaniṣads* themselves passages where "Ātman" is rendered as "self". Let me emphasize here that "self" is never used in plural in the *Upaniṣads*. Some scholars translate "Ātman" as "Self" (instead of self); thereby distinguishing the jiva - the empirical ego, from the Ātman - pure, objectless consciousness. This is fair, but my purpose in this essay is to reject as inappropriate and incorrect all translations of "Ātman" as "self" ("s" and "S"). Here are my arguments for this claim.

The "s(S)elf" in its original meaning is "individual presence"; this means that the "self" inevitably and ineluctably refers to an individual entity. As pointed out earlier, some scholars translate "Ātman" as "Self", in order to distinguish it from "self" - an individual entity. But the *Upaniṣads* resoundingly teach that Ātman is always non-dual; that is, there cannot be Ātmans. John does not have his own Ātman as numerically different from that of James. John and James are simply two different manifestations of one and the same non-dual Ātman. Let me further emphasize this point by pointing out that the Ātman of John's cat is non-different from John's Ātman. Rigorously speaking, there is no John possessing his own Ātman, either; John is the Ātman (*Cit aham*, I am consciousness; sentences such as "I am conscious" and "I have consciousness" are incorrect and misleading, according to the *Upaniṣads*). The passages in the *Upaniṣads* in which "Ātman" is referred to as self or Self are not to be understood as referring to an individual entity, but to pure, objectless consciousness. In view of all these considerations, I suggest that "Ātman" be not translated as "self" or "Self"; but simply as pure, objectless consciousness, the non-dual Reality, non-different from Brahman

2. ŚAŃKARA : A PHILOSOPHER NOT A THEOLOGIAN

I wish to conclude this essay with a few pertinent remarks on the characterization (categorization) of Śaṅkara, whose grandest and unsurpassed systematization of the Upaniṣadic teaching is known as "Advaita Vedānta". I have, over the years, come across a number of papers and books by Western scholars and their uncritical and loyal Indian followers, where Śaṅkara is referred to and classified as a theologian! Such a characterization of Śaṅkara is simply wrong and wholly inappropriate; and, hence, positively misleading. Who exactly is a theologian? "Theology" literally means "discourse on God and his creation"; theology is talk about God.

Even when theologians write works on other subjects and topics, their perspectives and orientations are clearly theological. Am I objecting to doing theology? Certainly not; people are free to dedicate themselves to whatever they wish to inquire into and write about. What I strongly object to is the common Western (and Indian) characterization of Śaṅkara as a theologian. Śaṅkara is not a theologian, since his remarkable and distinguished works and contributions are not about God, but about the Ultimate Reality - Ātman, Brahman. Yes, Śaṅkara, like all other inquirers, did talk about God. But God (*Îśvara*) is only a secondary reality *(Saguṇa Brahman)*, an appearance! Śaṅkara's whole inquiry is centered about and focused on the Ultimate Reality - Brahman, Ātman; and not God. His inquiries are profoundly philosophical - phenomenological and analytical. St. Augustine and Thomas Aquinas are theologians; yes, they did some philosophical inquiry, but their inquiries are to fully serve their theologies. Śaṅkara, unlike St. Anselm and Aquinas, did not bother to produce arguments (ways) for the existence of God. Thomas Aquinas titled one of his works *"Summa Theologica",* not "Summa Philosophica." True, Śaṅkara composed the *Dakşiṇamūrthy Stotra*, *Saundarya Lahiri*, etc., which certainly can be regarded as theological works; but the point is that these

works are not part and parcel of his main inquiries, such as the *Brahma-sūtra Bhāşya*, which is thorough goingly philosophical (phenomenological and analytical). In light of these considerations, Śańkara should correctly be regarded as a philosopher (*tattvaveta*) and not as a theologian. Advaita Vedānta is a grand philosophical system, not a theological system. Whether or not one finds oneself in agreement with Śaṅkara's Advaita Vedānta, one should most appropriately classify Śaṅkara as a philosopher, not as a theologian. Professor Eliot Deutsch is among the few Western scholars who clearly understood this point; his fine work is titled "*Advaita Vedānta: A Philosophical Reconstruction* " (University of Hawaii Press, 1968), not "A Theological Reconstruction"! works are not part and parcel of his main inquiries, such as the *Brahma-sūtra Bhaşya*, which is thorough goingly philosophical (phenomenological and analytical). In light of these considerations, Śańkara should correctly be regarded as a philosopher (*tattvaveta*) and not as a theologian.

SURRENDERING TO THE DIVINE

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1. CONCEPTUALIZATION OF SURRENDER

The very term "surrender" presupposes the existence of two persons. One who surrenders, and the other to whom the surrender is made. Necessarily, the term also insinuates the helplessness of the former, and the position of strength occupied by the latter. This concept is clearly understood by the formal surrender of a defeated army going to the victor with a white flag. In religion, the term undergoes a slight extension. The one who surrenders does so willingly; nay, the *jīvātman* is anxious to surrender so that refuge may not be denied on any count. The one to whom surrender is made is no victor seething with pride but a maternal Supreme who is all guardianship.

Naturally, if this theory is followed, some religions may not come within its purview as they do not accept the presence of God. Jainism, for instance, considered one of the very ancient religions to have been born and nurtured in India, Jainism speaks only of soul and matter. No God created this world. It is self-created, and one has to strive and clear one's soul of the accretions of past deeds and gain realization.

Since realized souls and teachers help one in this task of cleansing one's soul, the Jains salute them at the beginning of their prayers. It is the realized soul or *Tīrthaṅkara* who is the Lord of the universe. The *Pañca Parameşţi* prayer is a daily ritual:

Salutations to the *Siddhas*
Salutations to the *Arihants*
Salutations to the *Ācāryas*
Salutations to the Teachers
Salutations to the Renunciates

Such prayers are a necessary discipline in spiritual life, but there is no surrender mentioned. Yet the term, *"Namaḥ"* would indicate offering oneself or submitting oneself, which is very close to surrender. However, faith in a Supreme Divine and the act of surrendering to Him is a global phenomenon. Almost all religions have this concept imbedded in their world-view.

When did the idea of a conscious surrender enter the Vedic stream? There is anxiety, wonderment and some terror in the approach of man towards the Vedic deities. Prayers that speak about a movement of surrender can be noticed in such lines as "*Namaste vāyo tvameva pratyakşam brahmāsi*." Devotion for the Divine is very clearly noted and by the time we come to the epic age, we have the incarnations of Rāma and Kṛşṇa to whom people surrender for protection. The Rāmāyaṇa is, in fact, referred to as "*Śaraṇāgati Śāstra*" as the *Ṛşīs* of the forest, Kākāsura, Sugrīva and Vibhīşaṇa surrender to Rāma, while Trijaṭa persuades the *Rākşasis* in vain to surrender to Sītā. In the same way, Arjuna tells Kṛşṇa, "I am your disciple" (*śişyāsteham*) to gain knowledge and protection in the *Mahābhārata*.

It may be noticed that both the epics have beautiful devotionals addressed to Rāma and Kṛşṇa, and the *Bhagavad-Gītā* has an entire canto on the path of devotion (*bhakti-yoga*).

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In philosophical terms, the *Ācāryas* who came later added one more path to bhakti yoga. This is the path of surrender (*prapatti-yoga*). While bhakti takes a long time to bear fruit, *prapatti* acts quickly. We are told that there are scriptural assurances that the path of surrender is not only the best, but the most certain to yield direct results. Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, and Varāha are associated with the most famous *ślokas* on surrender. Of these, widest currency has been gained by the *śloka* uttered by Kṛṣṇa in the *Bhagavad Gitā*: "Leaving all other pathways, surrender to me alone. I shall save you from all sins. Do not worry."[1] The *śloka* (XVIII, 66) is referred to as *Carama* (ultimate) *Śloka*.

While the above couplet is associated with Kṛṣṇa, there is also a *Rāma Carama Sloka* uttered by Rāma, on the beach, to Vibhīṣaṇa. Sugrīva and others are not enthusiastic about entertaining the enemy's brother, but Rama accepts Vibhīṣaṇa's surrender and says (*Yuddha Kāṇḍa*, XVIII, 3):

"There is no way of my giving up this person who has come to me as a friend. It does not matter if he has flaws. Noble people should not look down upon accepting him"[2]

Another statement by Rāma is also known as the *Rāma Carama Śloka*. He says it to Sugrīva, who still seems a little put out at the ready manner in which an enemy has been allowed to enter their forces (*Yuddha Kāṇḍa*, XVIII, 33):

"I give refuge to one who surrenders but once, one who begs for refuge from all living beings. This happens to be my firm decision."[3]

The other great message of surrender is known as the *Varāha Carama Śloka*. Here the Lord Varāha speaks to His consort, Bhû Devi in the *Varāha Purāṇa:*

"When he who is sound in mind and body thinks of me who am the Cosmic Supreme and birthless, him do I think of when he lies like a piece of stone or block of wood. I convey my devotee to the highest state."[4]

Of the Vedic stream, Vaiṣṇavism uses these three verses for ritualistic initiation given by an *Ācārya* to his disciple. Generally speaking, there are two explanations to this act of surrender. One speaks of surrender as that of the baby cat. Known as *mārjara nyāya,* this calls for the aspirant to remain quiet after surrendering to the Lord. Just as a mother cat carries the baby cat in its mouth to safety, the aspirant will be looked after by the Lord. The *markaṭa nyāya* (the baby monkey analogy) calls upon the aspirant to hold on to the Lord firmly so that it will not fall off when the mother monkey takes it to safety. This means, the baby (aspirant) has to put in some effort on his own to gain refuge. To think that I have surrendered, and, now, there is no need to do anything more would be silly indeed. Speaking on this subject, the Mother of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram said once:

"You must not believe that adopting the attitude of the baby cat lets you off from all personal effort. Because you are not a baby cat, human beings are not baby cats! What ever be the way you follow, personal effort is always necessary till the moment of identification. At that moment, all effort drops from you like a worn-out robe, you are another person: what was impossible for you becomes not only possible but indispensable, you cannot do otherwise." [5]

Like Vaiṣṇavism which draws its sustenance from the hymns of the *Āḻvārs* for

inculcating the concept of surrender, Śaivism of South India (also known as Śaiva-Siddhānta) depends a good deal on the hymns of the *Nāyanmārs* and Māṇikavācakar. Four pathways are drawn in this map of bhakti. The path of servitude (*dāsa mārga*) was exemplified by Tirunnāvukarasar. Śiva is the Lord, the devotee gains His presence through service. Considering Śiva as the father has been the way of Tirujñānasambandhar (*satputra mārga*). One can draw close to Śiva as a friend (*sakha mārga*) like Sundarar; and Māṇikavācakar visioned the Lord as the very life of one's soul (*san-mārga*). Each of these pathways calls for surrendering oneself to Śiva and living in Śiva consciousness. Forgetting oneself and living in Śiva is also surrender of one's Self into the Divine:

> "Making worldly possessions valueless, contemplation frees us from pride and lust; giving bliss, it takes off anger, hatred, and jealousy; taking us to God, it gives us a mother, father, brother, and friend, inseparable from us, and causes the flow of a never-failing fountain of joy … If we can contemplate God with all love, and let His Love dominate our minds, the thought of God will come to us of itself in whatever business we may be engaged, sanctify every one of our acts, and make our lives sublime and holy." [6]

Another South Indian school of Śaivism nurtured in Karnataka was founded by Basaveśvara. Vīraśaivism drew its sustenance from the Kannada *vacanas* (prose hymns) of the Śaiva hymnologists also like Basava himself, Allama Prabhu, Akka Mahādevi and others. According to the basics of its philosophy, the soul ascends in awareness through six stages (*ṣaḍ-sthala*): *bhakta, maheṣa, prasādi, prāṇalingī, śaraṇa* and *aikya*. Being gathered in Śiva consciousness is the aim, and towards that the soul worships teachers and renunciates, wears *rudākṣa* and *vibhûti*, takes the holy water used for washing one's guru's feet (*tīrtha*), wears the liṅga on the body and recites the *Pañcākṣara*. The *Ādhāra-śruti* of all these activities is surrendering to Śiva. Basava uses an apt image for this transformatory gesture of the Lord:

> "The oyster-shell awaits
> the pearly drop
> with half-opened mouth;
> even so for your grace
> I stand and wait
> You're the home-of-all, womb-of-all,
> My sole refuge.'
> Save me,
> O Lord, Kûdala Saṅgama!"[7]

Christianity has also a vast literature on the theme of surrender. Jesus Christ himself was a man of faith who had surrendered to God, and his followers draw much comfort from his words:

> "All things are delivered unto me of my Father; and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls."[8]

The passage gives in a capsule form the

qualities to be cultivated by the devotee when he surrenders to the Divine. The accumulated writings of the Christian Church have insightful passages on the path of surrender that leads one to the Divine. Generally known as the Mystic Way, these writings are experiential wisdom. Among well-known mystics, who were also recorders of their experiences, were St. Teresa of Avila and St. John of the Cross. Necessarily, the Mystic Way has moments of ecstatic union and dark nights of the soul when the aspirant who is anxious to gain the Lord and be guarded by Him, feels cut off from God. Actually, it is God who is inviting the aspirant to raise himself to the higher stages in spiritual life. In the attempt, the disciple naturally finds it hard, at times, since mystical adventure is different from intellectual ratiocination. Hence, he might flounder in the mazes of intellectual darkness. In fact, The Cloud of Unknowing by an anonymous mystic in the fourteenth century speaks of this difficult path of the mystic. Respected as the greatest of the devotional classics of the English Church, the work calls upon aspirants to strike the thick cloud of unknowing (inconscience, ignorance, intellectual arrogance) "with the sharp dart of longing love, and on no account whatever think of giving up" this love for God. This attitude should be total. Once we give ourselves totally to God and surrender to Him we can feel absolutely safe. The manner in which the unknown author unveils his argument, it is clear that his use of the term "contemplation" is almost a twin of the term "surrender". The author explains that it is actually God's love, His Grace that makes us meditate upon Him and surrender to Him, which is the same as the Śaiva hymnologist saying, "Saluting Him by His Grace, (*avan aruḷāḷe avan thāḷ vaṇaṅgi*)".

Religion after religion professes a Supreme One, and gives this Unknowable One a name too as "*Ahura Mazda*" (Zorastrianism), "*Jehovah*" (Judaism), "*Allah*" (Islam), "Tao" (Taoism), or "*Ame-no-mi-nakanushi*" (Shintoism). Implicit surrendering to this All-pervading Lord is the driving principle. Such a belief should have floundered in this age of scientific advancement and technology. This has not happened. In today's complex world, faith in an all-pervading Supreme guarding the devotee who surrenders to Him is stronger than ever. Eminent spiritual personalities have come forward to explain this factor and also issue guidelines on how to approach the Divine, surrender to Him and receive His guardianship.

2. MEANS TO SURRENDER

In India, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa taught us to have full faith in the Supreme and surrender to Him in all devotion. One must have a burning aspiration for the Divine and may use any approach he finds closest to his heart: as a disciple, as a child, as a friend, as a beloved and so on. His advice to even Girish Chandra Ghosh was simple: "Surrender to the Divine". When Girish found it difficult, Sri Ramakrishna asked him to give "*vakālat*" so the Master could do so for disciple. After Sri Ramakrishna's *mahāsamādhi*, Girish followed his Guru with supreme faith. Though he underwent many sorrows in his life, he only said: "There can be an end to prayers, *sādhanā* and *tapasya*. But *śaraṇāgati* has no end, one has to do it while

breathing and eating or walking, and know that he is doing all this by the power given to him by the Lord. *Śaraṇāgati* calls for such eternal vigilance."

This brings to the fore the importance of the Guru in Indian spirituality, and why we worship Sri Ramakrishna as the Lord Himself. There have been other great Gurus in the twentieth century India like Ramana Maharishi, Sri Chandrasekhara Saraswati of Kanchi and Sri Aurobindo. All of them guided their disciples in their own manner and taught them the glory and bliss *(ānanda)* of God-consciousness, and the priceless value of surrender. Sri Aurobindo whose life was a total consecration to the Divine, has spoken extensively on the subject. Explaining surrender as not a passive escape from life's problems, he says in his book, The Mother:

> "An inert passivity is constantly confused with the real surrender; but out of an inert passivity nothing true and powerful can come. It is the inert passivity of physical Nature that leaves it at the mercy of every obscure or un-divine influence. A glad, strong and helpful submission is demanded to the working of the Divine Force, the obedience of the illumined disciple of the Truth, of the inner Warrior who fights against obscurity and falsehood, of the faithful servant of the Divine. This is the true attitude, and only those who can take and keep it, preserve a faith unshaken by disappointments and difficulties and shall pass through the ordeal to the supreme victory and the great transformation."[9]

Speaking of how the transcendent Divine appears as cosmic gods and godheads to help us approach the Divine's various powers; Sri Aurobindo speaks of the individual avatar that the Divine takes to help us further in our attempt to transform our life on earth into a life divine. Of course, right now, life on earth is full of anxieties, violence terrors, but like Sri Ramakrishna who assured us that we need not fear when the Divine is on our side, like Mother Sarada Devi who gave us the same assurance with her characteristic maternal grace, Sri Aurobindo also gives us a golden assurance:

> "The more complete your faith, sincerity and surrender, the more will grace and protection be with you. And when the grace and protection of the Divine Mother is with you, what is there that can touch you or whom need you fear? A little of it even will carry you through all difficulties, obstacles and dangers; surrounded by its full presence you can go securely on your way because it is hers, careless of all menace, unaffected by any hostility however powerful, whether from this world or from worlds invisible.Its touch can turn difficulties into opportunities, failure into success and weakness into unfaltering strength. For the grace of the Divine Mother is the sanction of the Supreme and now or tomorrow its effect is sure, a thing decreed, inevitable and irresisitible."[10]

Prahalada spoke of surrender very simply as ātma-nivedana in the *Bhāgavata*. It comes as the very crown of devotion, and is the last summit in the nine ways of *bhakti* spoken by

him. He is also considered the first among the *bhāgavathas*. It is thrilling to know that *bhāgavathas* like him have been with us through the millennia and continue to illumine the spaces of India. Blessed is this land which is the Guru of the world!

NOTES

1. *Sarva dharmān parityajya mām ekam-śaraṇam vṛaja Aham sarva pāpebhyo mokşhayoshyāmi mā śuchaḥ*
2. *Mitrabhāvena samprāptam na tyajeyam kathañcana dośo yadyapiu tasya syāt sathametadgarhitam*
3. *Śakrudeva prapannāya tavāsmithi ca yācate abhayam sarvabhûtebhyo dadāmi etad vṛatam mama*
4. *Sthithe mānasi suśvaste śarīre śāti naraḥ dhātusāmye sthite syarthā viśvarûpañca mâmajam tat hastham mṛiyāmnām tu kāsāta pāşnasannibham aham smarāmi madbhaktham nayāmi paramam gatim*
5. *Collected Works of the Mother*, Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Vol. XVI, 1979 - 87, pp. 161 & 162.
6. K. Shivapadasundaram, *The Saiva School of Hinduism*, Thanjavur: Kalasamraksha Sangham, 1996, pp. 64 & 65.
7. Trs. S.S. Baswanal and K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar, *Musings of Basava* Mangalore: Basel Mission Press, 1940.
8. St. Matthew, Chapter XI, 27-29.
9. Sri Aurobindo, *The Mother*, Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1996.
10. *Ibid*.

POST-MODERN DISCOURSE AND DISCURSIVE FORMATIONS IN FOUCAULT

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1. MODERNISM VERSUS POST-MODERNISM

A series of socio-economic, cultural, theoretical and political events occurred in the contemporary scene throughout the globe, which helped in one way to give rise to new postmodern theories. France is a very good example for this. French theories were very much influenced by the rapid modernization process in France that followed World War II. Post-World War II modernization process in France was an important event in this context. Scholars like John Ardagh argue that between the early 1950s and mid 1970s France went through a spectacular renewal. As a result of this, one can see the economic and social developments, urbanization, modernization, and industrial development in France. In the 1970s, French theorists were attacking modern theories rooted in humanist assumption and Enlightenment rationalist discourses. For example in Madness and Civilization (1973), Foucault talks of "death of man" while formulating new conception of politics and ethics. Similarly Baudrillard's new form of society, culture, experience and subjectivity, Lyotard's idea of the impossibility of continuity with the totalizing social theories and the need for revitalizing the politics of the past… are the important happenings in the postmodernist trend in France. Also, one can mention about Deleuze, Guattari, Lacan and Mouffe. Deleuze's and Guattari's conception of language, their criticisms against linguistics, their views on the social concept of meaning have emerged due to serious philosophical thinking. Laclau and Mouffe, use post-modernism critiques to go beyond Marxism and to reconstruct the project of radical democracy. The post-modernists call for new categories, modes of thought and writing, and values and politics to overcome the deficiencies of modern discourses and practices have made significant change in the contemporary French philosophy.

At least in the past two decades post modernism has become a dominating movement in the cultural, social and intellectual fields everywhere. In philosophy, a new awareness has entered which allows philosophers to look at things and theories in a new perspective. Thinkers like Heidegger, Gadamer, Ricoeur, Habermas, Derrida, Rorty, Lyotard and others are related to this movement by their innovative approach and insights into the philosophical problems. As a result of this, post-modernism has produced new political and social theories, which throw new light into the old problems. The post-modernists do not have one single perspective or method. But generally it is agreed that post-modernism has emerged as a reaction to the modern tradition and traditional problems. Traditionalistic approach to history, politics, culture, theory, etc., was questioned by the post-modernists. New discourses and new openings have entered into post-modernism. It is a new discourse; and, in this, established paradigms were questioned and replaced by post-modernism. It emerged as a revolt to

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modernism and modernists principles. One way of defining this movement is that it is the movement, which emerged after modern period. Though there is no unified theory or common set of positions among the supporters of post-modernism, for the above reason they are known as post-modernists.

It is true, that in modernity, there was political, social and cultural transformation. In fact, modernity emerged as a reaction to traditional society and was characterized by innovation, novelty and dynamism. Thus, prior to this modern period there was "pre-modern" period. Since pre-modern has not contributed much to the development of human race, we consider the modern and post-modern period as more important than the pre-modern period. In the modern period, reason came to be considered as the source of progress in knowledge. Some modernists went to the extent of believing that reason was the only source of knowledge. It is the foundation of knowledge, according to them. No doubt, modernity has produced many welcome changes in the human society. One such change is the industrial transformation. Modernity also called for cultural transformation. New technologies, modes of transportation, transformation, and communication—all these are important features of modernism. It allowed urbanization, rationalization, bureaucratization, industrialization, etc., which definitely have contributed much to human progress.

But the evil effects or ill effects of modernization are too many. Industrialization has alienated the common (wo)man from the society. They were removed from the public sphere. Colonialization has reduced man to a machine, and human values are lost. Modernity has become the rule of domination and control. Horkhemier and Adorno very rightly defined it as a process whereby reason turned into its opposite. Post-modernism objects the ontological and epistemological premises of modernity, and works for a reproduction of meaning. It rejects the traditional identity of a discourse, and explains how it is not possible to reduce the plurality of human values. It also rejects the hierarchy in culture, and celebrates the notion of plurality of cultures.

The development of social theories and discourse are the two new important contributions of post-modernism. One can always see the connection between post-modernism on the one hand; structuralism and post-structuralism, on the other. Post-modernism adopts the techniques developed by structuralism and post-structuralism. It must be admitted that philosophy as discourse becomes possible through the techniques of post modernism.

2. FOUCAULT AND POST-MODERNISM

Where do we locate Foucault? Foucault's contribution to post-modern thinking is highly important, though he will not associate himself with post-modernism completely. He cannot be placed in one category or group, as he is a complex thinker. He was a critic of reason and western thought, like Nietzsche and Bataille. The impact of Nietzsche and Bataille, on Foucault is noteworthy. It was Nietzsche who started the post-metaphysical and post-humanist approach in philosophy; and from him, Foucault learnt what is known

as "genealogical history". Also from Nietzsche, he understood that the will to truth and knowledge is indissociable from the will to power. Nietzsche's following claims are very important in shaping Foucault's thoughts. (a) Systematizing methods produce reductive social and historical analysis and (b) knowledge is perspectival in nature, requiring multiple viewpoints to interpret a heterogeneous reality. Foucault as a critique of modernity and humanism, approaches problems like society, knowledge, and power; and made a considerable influence on the post-modern thinking. Foucault draws upon an anti-Enlightenment tradition that rejects the equation of reason, emancipation and progress. He asserts that an interface between modern forms of power and knowledge has served to create new forms of domination.

A close study of historic-philosophical study, for which Foucault is famous, attempts to explain the above point from different perspectives, like psychology, medicine, punishment and criminology. His purpose is to write a critique of our historical era, which problematizes modern forms of knowledge, rationality, social institutions, and subjectivity that seem given and natural, but in fact are contingent socio-historical constructs of power and domination. Apart from Nietzsche, the second influence came from Bataille, who also was a critique of Enlightenment reason and the reality principle of Western culture. Like Nietzsche, Bataille also supported the realm of heterogeneity and attacked the sovereign philosophical subject and argued in favour of transgressive experiences. Foucault focused on the social and discursive practices that play a role in the formation of the human subject. Throughout his philosophical writings he examined the means by which social and personal identity are generated and objectified. One of the most important of these strategies consists of dividing practices, which categorize, label, isolate and exclude the subject from what is considered "normal" social intercourse. In Madness and Civilization he deals with how these dividing practices operated in the case of "insane", and pointed out that the manipulative procedures used to implement dividing practices change over time. In *The Birth of Clinic* and *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault continued this genealogical investigation of the rules and norms generating dividing practices. In The *Order of Things* and *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, he dealt with the autonomous structures of knowledge. He always relates knowledge with domination. Knowledge, according to him, is always part of a cultural matrix of power relations. His critique of modernity and humanism, and development of new perspectives on society, knowledge, discourse and power, thus made him the important thinker of post-modern thought.

Foucault combined pre-modern, modern and post-modern perspectives. He makes a distinction between the classical era (1660-1800) and the modern era (1800-1950) in the post-renaissance period; and says that in the classical era, we can see how human beings were dominated by power. He rejects the idea that human progress from combat to combat; humanity installs each of its violence in a system of rules and thus proceeds from domination. Modern rationality is a coercive force, according to him. He talks about the individuals who have been dominated through social institutions, discourses and practices. The task of the Enlightenment was to multiply

"reasons for political power" and to disseminate it through the social field, eventually saturating the spaces of everyday life. In his writings of 1970s, Foucault stigmatizes modern rationality, institutions, and forms of subjectivity as sources or constructs of domination. Analysis of knowledge and truth became the main task for him. While modern theories tend to see knowledge and truth as neutral, objective, universal or vehicles of progress and emancipation, Foucault analyses them as integral components of power and domination. He valorizes the amazing efficacy of discontinuous, particular and local criticism as compared to the inhibiting effect of global, totalitarian theories. For this reason, he is often considered a champion of post-modernism where incommensurablity, difference and fragmentation play an important role, though Foucault cannot be labeled as a post-modern thinker alone. It is because in his writings one can see the culmination of pre-modernism, modernism and post-modernism.

3. DIFFERENT FORMS OF KNOWLEDGE

Foucault supports the need for plurality forms of knowledge and microanalysis. His aim is to detotalize history and society as unified wholes governed by a centre, essence or telos, and to decentre the subject. His approach to history as a non-evolutionary, fragmented field of disconnect knowledge; and society as a dispersed regularity of unevenly developing levels of discourse are important. In short, he is one of the supporters of "difference". "Respect…difference" has been his slogan. Nietzsche's conception that the world has no single meaning but rather countless meaning; and that there is no limit to the ways in which the world can be interpreted, has paved the way for Foucault to reject the notion of approaching reality from a particular standpoint or from one particular way of philosophical thinking. He has understood that discourse is a complex reality; that we not only can, but also, should be approached at different levels with different methods. This means for Foucault, no single theory of method of interpretation can be acceptable. It is because there is always plurality of discourses, institutions and modes of power, which contribute to the modern society.

Foucault in his detailed study of historiography examines the different historical societies from the ancient Greek to the European societies till the twentieth century. How does his historiography differ from the conventional historiography? Foucault's approach to the study of history was archaeological and genealogical. One of his criticisms against the traditional method of writing history, is that this modern form of history writing started in the early nineteenth century - a period which experienced a dramatic increase in European colonization. Foucault explains the problems with regard to the dialectical history developed by Hegel. First of all, such a view of history tries to justify European colonial practice as involving the clash of an advanced civilized West with the rest of the world - considered as barbaric and backward. Secondly, it tries to understand history in terms of great ideological belief systems like liberalism, capitalism, socialism, etc. Thirdly, a dialectic conception of history tries to understand history in terms of a grand or totalizing vision. This synthetic view of

history is replaced by a pluralistic view of history, according to Foucault. Thus, Foucault admits multiple beginnings, pauses, gaps in history. This means that history should be studied in terms of discontinuity and disjunctive, rather than continuity and conjunctive. Foucault very clearly states that the conventional historiography always begins with a unified subject. Such a historiography marginalizes and silences women, indigenous and colonized people. They are only supporting actors; they cannot be the makers of history. It thus divides people into subjects and object, active and passive, the colonizing and the colonized people. Against this, Foucault develops the concept of "subjugated knowledge". It is a form of knowledge, which has been subjugated, or buried under the official or dominant forms of knowledge that emerge within a social order. As a part of the colonial project, the ways of knowing in science, history and government have been buried. For example, the colonizing forces have always tried to suppress the struggle of the colonized people. Edward Said had applied the Foucaultian ideas to colonial practice in his *Orientalism.* Said explains how colonial practice was based on the construction of Oriental people as being less civilized than people in the West, and hence the need to be colonized and governed by others. One can see how discourses established a set of binary opposites as civilized and barbarous, active and passive, progressive and backward, subjects and objects of knowledge, etc. The traditional or conventional historiography ignores the history of the oppressed, the backward, and the colonized. The subjugated knowledge helps to sustain the colonized people in their struggle against colonizing forces. Foucault is interested in creating a history of the different modes by which human beings are made subjects. He says that the goal of his work has not been to analyze the phenomenon of power, nor to elaborate the foundations of such an analysis, but to create a history of the different modes by which in our culture, human beings, are made subjects.

Foucault uses the terms like “archaeology” and “genealogy” to denote the new historiographical approach while discussing the critique of modernity. He says that his objective is to create a history of the different modes, which, in our culture human beings are made subjects. In his earlier writings, Foucault had been using the term “ontology of knowledge”. His usage of the term “ontology” is different from that of hermeneutics. “Archaeology”, i.e., historical approach, is also different from hermeneutics. It is also different from idealism, and humanist mode of continuous evolution of thought. For example, in hermeneutics, there is a need for seeking a deep truth underlying discourse also. In idealist and humanist mode of writing, there is a search for "continuous” evolution of thought in terms of tradition. Archaeology rejects both. It tries to identify the condition of possibility of knowledge, the determining rules of formation of discursive rationality that operates beneath the level of intention or the thematic content. In his writings, the term “genealogy” plays an important role. He defines the word as follows:

> Let us give the term ‘*genealogy’* to the union of erudite knowledge and local memories, which allows us to establish a historical knowledge of struggles and to make use of this knowledge tactically today…What it really does is to entertain

> the claims to attention of local, discontinuous, disqualified, illegitimate knowledge against the claims of unitary body of theory which would filter, hierarchies, and order them in the name of some true knowledge and some arbitrary idea of what constitutes a science and its objects.[1]

Genealogy, for Foucault, depends on the voices of the disqualified in order to disrupt the serenity of what is. Though some argue that in his later period, he rejected the notion of testimony of the other, he maintained the view that genealogy reveals contingency as opposed to necessity, and it is contingencies that allow the possibility of freedom. A close study of Foucault's works like, Madness and *Civilization* and *The History of Sexuality* prove that he believes humanism and reason have functioned in the West as definitive, exclusionary terms; and the identity of the society is formed on what it forcefully excludes. Foucault questions the possibility of a pure other. In *Discipline and Punish,* he argues that the excluded are never outside. "The carceral network does not cast the unassimilable into a confused hell; there is no outside. It takes back with one hand what it seems to exclude with the other. It saves everything, including what it punishes."[2]

Discipline, according to Foucault, works through a system of punishment and gratification. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the "prison" was used as a central disciplinary site. It was a disciplinary site in which the coercive force of disciplinary power could be used in a direct and overt way. The prison as a micro-society had its own experts, hierarchies, ranks, and network and its own codes of conduct, protocols and procedures. Foucault talks about panopticon as one of the ways of discipline. It was Bentham who developed this concept in the eighteenth century. Panopticon, is a tower placed in a central position within the prison. The guards would be able to watch every cell and the prisoners from the tower, which was designed in such a way that the prisoners would never know whether they are being watched or not. Here, the prisoners would assume that they could be observed at any moment, and would adjust their behaviour accordingly. In *Discipline and Punish,* Foucault talks of different modes of disciplinary power, which were prevalent throughout the social body and modern western cultures. By explaining that his approach is different from the methods that analyzed power in terms of force imposed from the above, Foucault shows that discipline works through a series of quiet coercions working at the level of people's bodies, shaping how they behave and how they see the world.

In his interesting essay, "What Is Enlightenment?" Foucault articulates how his critical practices differ from that of Kantian critique, where necessary condition plays a role. He says:

> This criticism is not transcendental, and its goal is not that of making metaphysics possible: it is genealogical in its design and archaeological in its method This critique will be genealogical in the sense that it will not deduce from the form of what we are, what it is impossible for us to do and to know, but it will separate out, from the contingency that has made us what we are, the possibility of no longer being, doing, or thinking what we are, do,

or think.[3]

The above passage clearly shows that genealogy exists as an alternative to transcendental thinking of Kant. It also teaches that history could have been other than what it has been. History is the product of successive power struggles, which are discontinuous. Foucault who emerged two centuries after Kant observes the continuity of his post-Nietzschean genealogy with the classical critique of reason. He says:

> I think that the central issue of philosophy and critical thought since the eighteenth century has been, still is, and will, I hope, remain the question: What is this reason that we use? What are its historical effects? What are its limits, and what are its dangers?[4]

But Foucault emphasized the discontinuity also. He says:

> If the Kantian question was that of knowing what limits knowledge has to renounce transgressing, it seems to me that the critical question today (is) … In what is given to us as universal, necessary, obligating, what place is occupied by whatever is singular, contingent, and the product of arbitrary constraints?[5,]

The questions of Foucault prove that he is for a practical critique of reason. In the above essay, Foucault attempts to transcribe the Kantian critique as an attitude that is addressed permanently to the discourses through which the subject is constituted.[6] Foucault's view about the relationship between knowledge, autonomy and political action does not presume the transcendental implications of pure reason as in the case of Kant. Each person is viewed as the subject of knowledge and the self is always situated within the control of social, economic and political institutions. The possibility of Enlightenment, according to Foucault, is not something connected with *a priori* necessity inscribed in and practical reason, but that which enters into medicine, psychiatry, criminology, sexual hygienic, etc., as strategies of domination. In *Madness and Civilization, Discipline and Punish,* and *The History of Sexuality* one can see his genealogies of sanity and madness, sickness and health, sexuality and perversion.

In the well-known essay, "*Traditional and Critical Theory*"[7] Horkheimer supports the notion of critical theory. The standard conception of theory, otherwise known as traditional theory, is the collected knowledge, which is useful for describing facts, and from Descartes to Kant and Husserl, we find such type of knowledge. Horkheimer makes a distinction between traditional and critical theory. One of the important tasks of critical theory is to challenge the privileged "non-position" of social-scientific knowledge by analyzing the modes of its production, the roles it played in society, the interests it served, and the historical processes through which it came to power. It is concerned with the historical and social genesis of the facts it examines, and with the social contexts in which it results will have their effects. Later, the book *Dialectic of Enlightenment*[8] appeared in support of critical theory. It also was in favour of the critical historiography. Nietzsche analyzes modernity's preoccupation with history as a sign of its loss of a sense, of its own role in history. Modernity tries to break with its past, but to know that its achievements are creative and novel, it must look back to see

whether the past had anticipated it. Thinking historically, is thus a peculiar paradigmatic feature of modernity. In other words, thinking historically means, more than thinking about the methods of historiography or the events of history, for even thinking about other topics like knowledge, culture, morality, religion etc., can involve increased and perhaps, even exclusive concern with their historical nature. One can see the elements of critical history developed by Horkheimer in Foucault, who talks about three ways of thinking historically. (1) Antiquarian historiography tries to recreate the past as it really was, ignoring the present as if the present does not condition how the past is achieved and understood. (2) Monumental historiography looks at the past for models of how to act in the present, ignoring the novelty of the present, and diminishing the significance of present agents by comparison with the triumphs of past heroes. (3) Critical historiography takes into consideration both the present and future. Foucault is in favour of such historiography, which is visible in his approach to knowledge and power. Horkheimer and Adorno helped Foucault a great deal to develop his theory of power. One can see the influence of this in *Discipline and Punish*. The passage from *Dialectic of Enlightenment* explains how Foucault developed his theory of power:

Where the evolution of the machine has already turned into that of the machinery of domination …untruth is not represented merely by the outdistanced. As against that, adaptation to the power of progress involves the progress of power, and each time anew brings about those degenerations which show not unsuccessful but successful progress to be its contrary[9]

Foucault echoes the above point in *Discipline and Punish,* which shall be shown in the following discussion. Marcuse in "Philosophy and Critical Theory"[10] argues that reason is the fundamental category of philosophical thought, the category by which it has bound itself to human destiny. He says that in classical philosophy, it represents the highest human potential and in the modern period, it comes to be represented as self-conscious self-determination.[11] He further states that what remains outstanding to the realization of reason is not a philosophical task.[12] This means that the philosophical concept of free rational action was seriously inadequate. Critical theory is always concerned with the life of reason, not with mere reason, but with critical reason, which has helped Foucault to develop the theory of critical historiography.

4. DISCOURSE AND BIO-POWER

Foucault attempts to rethink the nature of modern power in a non-totalizing, non-presentational and anti-humanist scheme. He says that to this day, we have yet to fully comprehend the nature of power. He rejects the notion of modern power to be anchored in macrostructures for ruling classes. He gives a post-modern approach to power and sees power as dispersed indeterminate, heterogeneous, subjects and productive, constituting individuals' bodies and identities. He argues how the two models of power, namely the economical and the judicial are defective. For example, the economic model suggested by the Marxists has to be regarded as a reductionistic subordination of power to class domination. On the other hand, the

judicial model approached power in terms of law, legal and moral right and political sovereignty. In *The History of Sexuality,* Foucault talks of a new mode of power known as "bio-power". It is bio-power which according to Foucault, lies at the root of the Nazi Holocaust. He argues that with the constitution of bio-power as the central concern of the modern state, sex became the focus of an explosion of discourses concerning the health of the body. Thus discourses like, organic physiology, gynaecology, neurology, psychology, etc., which established life as the focus of power where the primary concern was the body, and descent of the classes that ruled.[13].

Foucault believes that every production of knowledge serves the interest of power. Thus knowledge produced in economics, medicine, psychiatry and other human sciences is nothing but a part of the power of the social institutions that have grown around these disciplines. Foucault talks of three characteristics of power. First, power is productive. Secondly, it is only exercised by individuals but never possessed by them and thirdly, power is involved in every social relation. His contention is that the individual does not stand apart from power to prior to it. Since individual is constituted by power, individual existence and identity are among power effects. The individual exercises power at certain times and in certain places as a functionary of power's intentions, but not his own. He further says:

> There is no power that is exercised without a series of aims and objectives. But this does not mean that it results from the choice or decision of an individual subject…the rationality of power is characterized by tactics that are often quite explicit at the restricted level where thy are inscribed tactics which, becoming connected to one another.[14]

Thus for Foucault, the individual is not the agent who puts power into play; on the other hand, individual is the element of power's articulation.

Stressing on the role of power, Foucault further argues that a society without power relations can only be an abstraction and in every social field, there are relations of power throughout. He wants us to reject the notion that knowledge can exist only where power relations are suspended. He is of the view that it is power which produces knowledge. Power and knowledge directly imply one another. There is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge. Similarly, there is no knowledge, which does not presuppose power relations. Thus he denies the independent knowledge. In *Discipline and Punish,* and other writings one can see the relation between power and knowledge which is scattered in different forms. In *Madness and Civilization* he argues that man is historically constituted as the other of reason. In *The Birth of the Clinic,* he talks about the movement from a premodern speculatively based medicine to a modern empirically based medicine rooted in the rationality of the scientific gaze. Again, in *The Order of Things,* he discusses the emergence of the human sciences and the importance of such a study where the rules, assumptions focusing on the shifts in the sciences of life, labour and knowledge of human societies are important.

In *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, he corrects some of his past mistakes. This was due to the influence of French historians like

Bachlard and Canguithem. In this work, Foucault maintains that discontinuity is a positive working concept. It is no longer seen as blight on the historical nature and stigmatized in principle. Foucault tries to break up the unity approach of Hegel and Marx with regard to evolutionary history, and tries to see the possibility of having a number of groups. This detotalizing move is the contribution of Foucault, which allows multiplicity of discourses in knowledge. With this concept, he attacks the traditional interpretation of history. But for this reason we cannot define him as philosopher of discontinuity. In the philosophy of discontinuity of Foucault, the break is not so radical; it does not simply negate everything that had preceded it. Very rightly, he says: "Rupture is possible only on the basis of rules that are already in operation".[15] Discontinuity does not mean complete change but a redistribution, a reconfiguration, a redefining. Thus in Foucault one can see the synthesis of continuity and discontinuity.

5. DECENTERING THE SUBJECT

In *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, he undertook two responsibilities. Decentering the subject and critical analysis of reason, are these two important responsibilities. The work attempts to show that the subject is a fictitious construct. For him, archaeology would be the appropriate methodology of the analysis of local discourses. It criticized the human sciences as being grounded in humanist assumptions. It also theorized the birth of the human sciences in the context of the modern episteme. In 1970, the transition from archaeology to genealogy took place. Genealogy is a new mode of historical writing, according to him. It seeks to foreground the material context of subject construction. A significant aspect of it is that it links theories to the operation of power and tries to put historical knowledge to operate in local struggles. It highlights the power and effects relations they produced. Foucault is interested in writing the histories of unknown, forgotten, rejected, uncared, marginal discourses. He firmly believed that the discourses of madness, medicine, punishment and sexuality to have independent histories and institutional identity, which are neither reducible nor enlargeable institutions like that of the modern state.

It was during the 1970s, he developed the theory of power; and his historical vision of problems like madness, poverty and unemployment, has helped him a great deal to develop his theory of power. He says that to this day, we have yet to fully comprehend the nature of power. He tries to approach the notion of power from a non-totalizing, non-representational, and anti-humanist approach. Foucault's approach to the theory of power is rooted in a highly individual historical vision, which centers on the transition from tradition to modern industrial societies. He was mainly concerned with the forms of knowledge, and models of social organization. His concept of power could be understood only in the context of the historical foundation of the modern west. He made a bold approach to conceive problems like madness, poverty, unemployment, the inability to work etc., as social problems, and it is the responsibility of the state to take care of these. His approach to historical analysis can be seen in *Madness and Civilization* and *The Birth of the Clinic*. His concern here was with the emergence of modern form of administration of the social world. In both the works, he makes it clear

that his concern was with the physical rather than the moral disorder. The intervention in the social domain by agencies of welfare and control is more fundamental feature of modern societies than an economy released from directly political relations of domination. In the two books that followed namely, *The Order of Things* and *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, his attention was towards the internal structure of scientific discourse especially the discourse of human sciences. Again, in *Discipline and Punish,* the historical analysis becomes prominent. Here, Foucault explains the notion of power as follows: "We must cease once and for all to describe the effects of power in negative terms: it 'excludes', it 'represses', it 'censors', it 'abstracts', it 'masks', it 'conceals'. In fact, power produces; it produces realities; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth".[16] He rejects the repressive and negative aspects of power, and apprehends it as primarily positive and productive. Power constitutes the individuals on whom and through whom it subsequently operates. He says:

The individual is not to be conceived as a sort of elementary nucleus, a primitive atom, a multiple and inert material on which power comes to fasten or against which it happens to strike and in so doing subdues or crushes individuals. In fact, it is already one of the prime effects of power that certain bodies, certain gestures, certain discourses, certain desires, come to be identified and constituted as individuals.[17] He explains the importance of power in The *History of Sexuality* as omnipresence. Power is produced at every moment, at every point, or rather in every relation between points. "Power is everywhere; not because it englobes everything, but because it comes from everywhere",[18] says Foucault.

In the writings of 1970s one can see the relation between forms of power and forms of knowledge. In fact there is a fusion between the two. While discussing the relation between the two, he says that power is a pre-condition of knowledge rather than knowledge as a pre-condition of power. He talks about the transformation of the fundamental structures of experience through which human beings become able to think of themselves as the subjects of a purely procedural rationality of inquiry, and to consider other irrational human beings as the possible objects of such an inquiry. He explains how the relation between power and knowledge concerns the repressive institutions, which make the formation of certain kinds of knowledge possible. He contends:

If it has been possible to constitute a knowledge of the body, this has been possible to constitute a knowledge of the body, this has been by way of an ensemble of military and educational disciplines. It was on the basis of power over the body that a physiological, … knowledge of it became possible.[19]

His conviction is that the power and knowledge cannot even analytically be separated. "... it is not the activity of the subject of knowledge that produces a corpus of knowledge, useful or resistant to power, but power-knowledge, the processes and struggles that traverse it and of which it is made up, that determines the forms and possible domains of knowledge."[20] He stresses the point that power and knowledge directly imply one another and there is power relations without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time relations of power.

For Foucault, structuralism is the captive to classical form of knowledge, and for this reason he rejects it.

6. DISCURSIVE PRACTICE

Foucault argues that the concept of human nature is a product of particular historical situation, a change in the fundamental arrangements of knowledge, which arose at the time of Enlightenment. He says: "If those arrangements were to disappear as they appeared… then one can certainly wager that man would be erased, like a face drawn in the sand at the edge of the sea." He analyses the "discourse" or "discursive practice", which is a rule-governed set of statements in which a community of human beings embodies what it thinks of as "knowledge". A discursive practice, according to him, is a body of anonymous, historical rules, always determined in time and space that have defined a given period, and for a given social, economic, geographical or linguistic area, the conditions of operation of the enunciate function. By saying that the discursive practices are historical, Foucault makes it clear that they are not found in all communities, at all times, and in all places, but belongs to a particular phase in the historical development of a particular community. This means that there can be no criteria of truth and falsity, which apply outside a particular discursive practice. There is no universal standard or logic or rationality. If the different discursive practices are found at different periods in history, one cannot look at history as progress towards objective truth.

The epistemes are the periods of history organized around and explicable in terms of specific world-views and discourses. According to him, knowledge and truth are not essential and ahistorical, but are produced by epistemes and hold that episteme together. This means for Foucault, knowledge and truth are tied up with the way in which power is exercised in our age, and are caught up in power struggles. Foucault talks of three main epistmes: (1) the renaissance, (2) the classical, and (3) the modern. What is interesting is that he does not see a linear development from renaissance to modern age. Renaissance, he contends is the "age of resemblances" which is traced back to God or Nature, but in modern age, man is responsible for knowledge. Foucault's book T*he Archealogy of Knowledge,* examines how epistemes work and speak themselves through the production of "discursive formations". The discursive formations, are the organizing principles of an episteme. They work to make speech possible, organize ideas or concepts, and produce objects of knowledge. Foucault's approach to the notions of the order of things and epistemes constituted a new way of looking at "the history of ideas."

Foucault's views on discourses and institutions can be seen in his book, The *Archaeology of Knowledge.* He talks about discourses, which can be understood as a series of events. He points out that what comes between us and our experience is the ground upon which we can act, speak and make sense of things. Foucault is interested in language as a whole, i.e., discourse. Discourses are nothing but language in action. Our actions and thoughts are regulated and controlled by these discourses. "Discourses can be understood as language in action: they are the windows, if you like, which allow us to make

sense of, and 'see' things. These discursive windows or explanations shape our understanding of our selves, and our capacity to distinguish the valuable from the valueless, the true from the false, and the right from the wrong".

7. EVALUATION

One thinker what was more sympathetic towards Foucault, is Habermas. The transition from archaeology to genealogy in Foucault and his preoccupation with the theory of power is very much appreciated by Habermas. In his work, The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity, Habermas asks the following question:

What, then, are the grounds that determine Foucault to shift the meaning of this specific will to knowledge and to truth that is constitutive for the modern form of knowledge in general, and for the human sciences in particular, by generalizing this will to knowing self-mastery into a will to power per se and to postulate that all discourses can be shown to have the character of hidden power and derive from the practices of power?[21]

Habermas himself tries to answer the above question by saying that if one takes the question of episteme, one never masters it. He says that this is precisely the reason for Foucault to go without the concept of episteme altogether. Habermas says: "When he (Foucault) gives up the autonomy of the forms of knowledge in favor of their foundation within power technologies and subordinates the archeology of knowledge to the genealogy that explains the emergence of knowledge from the practices of power."[22] Thus Habermas very well supports Foucault with regard to the theory of power and genealogy. Does this mean that Habermas has nothing to disagree with Foucault? Habermas says that the concealed derivation of the concept of power from the concept of the will to knowledge in Foucault is systematically ambiguous. He says, that the trace of the philosophy of subject is not completely absent in Foucault. "Genealogical historiography is supposed to be ... the functionalist social science and at the same time, historical research into constitutive social science."[23] Habermas further says: "Foucault did not think through the aporias of his own approach well enough to see how his theory of power was overtaken by a fate similar to that of the human sciences rooted in the philosophy of the subject."[24] Though Habermas supports Foucault's critiques of subjectivity and the institutions of modernity, at the same time, Habermas argues that Foucault has no standpoint from which to criticize modern institutions and has no basis for ethics and politics. Both Foucault and Habermas relate knowledge to power; while Foucault links reason with power and domination, Habermas distinguishes different types of reason. Habermas also criticizes Foucault for rejecting modernity and Enlightenment.

All of Foucault's writings from *Madness and Civilization* to the *History of Sexuality* presuppose a close proximity of power and knowledge. But, according to the critics, the concept of power has a drawback because of this intrinsic relation between knowledge and power. It is also argued that his critique of modernity is one-sided in its focus on repressive forms of rationalization, and fails to acknowledge the merits of modernity. His

criticism that modernity has brought only domination cannot be accepted, because modernity has brought advances in medicine, democracy, liberty, law or equality which are not acknowledged by Foucault. For him, power breeds resistance but the nature of this resistance is not explained by him. In other words, he has not properly developed the notion of genealogy of resistance. Also, his understanding that power is mostly understood as an impersonal and anonymous force, which is exercised apart from the actions and intentions cannot be correct. He has not taken into account how the agents in positions of economic and political power administrate power. Though he talks about the micro level of resistance in power struggle, he does not discuss the modalities of local struggles. No doubt, the importance of local struggles cannot be neglected, but the multiplicity of the local struggle must be properly united or linked in order to avoid fragmentation. Otherwise the local struggles loose their significance. All micro struggles must be related to macro struggles to oppose the domination of power. Foucault has neglected this aspect. But it is an indisputable fact that Foucault could approach the theory of power from a post-modern perspective, though it has certain deficiencies.

NOTES

1. Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, Vol. I, Tr. R.Hurley, New York: Vintage Books, 1980, p. 83.
2. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, New York: Random House, 1979, p. 301.
3. Foucault, "What Is Enlightenment?", *The Foucault Reader*, Ed., P. Rainbow, New York: Penguin, 1991, p. 46.
4. Foucault, "Space, Knowledge and Power", *Ibid*., p. 249.
5. Foucault, "What is Enlightenment?", *Ibid*., p. 45.
6. *Ibid*., p. 42.
7. Horkheimer, "Tradition and Critical Theory", Tr. Matthew J. O'Connell in *Critical Theory*, New York: Herder and Herder, 1972, pp. 188-243.
8. Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenmen*t, Tr. John Cumming, New York: Continuum, 1972.
9. *Ibid*., pp.35 & 36.
10. Marcuse, "*Philosophy and Critical Theory*", Tr. Jeremy J. Shapiro, *Negations*, Boston: Beacon, 1968.
11. *Ibid*., p. 136.
12. *Ibid*., p.137.
13. Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, Vol.I, p. 123.
14. Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*, Harvester: Brighton, 1980, p. 95.
15. Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, New York: Pantheon, 1972, p 17.
16. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, p. 174.
17. Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*, p. 98.
18. Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, Vol. I, p. 93.
19. Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*, p. 59.
20. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, p. 28.
21. Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, Tr. Fredrick Lawrence, Cambridge: MIT Press, 1987, p. 265.
22. *Ibid*., p. 268.
23. *Ibid*., p. 274.
24. *Ibid*., p. 274.

SRI AUROBINDO - THE PHILOSOPHER

* *Dr. Ananda Reddy*

1. THE IDEAL

"And philosophy!" exclaimed Sri Aurobindo, "Let me tell you in confidence that I never, never, never was a philosopher – although I have written philosophy which is another story altogether. I knew precious little about philosophy before I did the yoga and came to Pondicherry – I was a poet and a politician, not a philosopher. How I managed to do it and why? First, because X proposed to me to co-operate in a philosophical review – and as my theory was that a Yogi ought to be able to turn his hand to anything I could not refuse... Secondly, because I had only to write down in the terms of the intellect all that I had observed and come to know in practicing Yoga daily and the philosophy was there automatically. But that is not being a philosopher!"[1]

That was what Sri Aurobindo had written to a disciple on 4-9-1934. Interestingly, after six months, on 1-4-1935, he wrote to another disciple, "The 'latent philosopher' failed to come out at the first shot (when I was in Calcutta) – after some years of incubation (?) it burst out like a volcano as soon as I started writing the Arya."[2]

Whatever may be the controversy over Sri Aurobindo being a philosopher or not, what is of importance to us is that Sri Aurobindo has given us "in the terms of the intellect" a cosmic plan, hitherto unknown, and an ideal for both individual as well as collective life, which promises to deliver mankind from its present evolutionary crisis into a future that is beyond the mental line – a future aglow with revealed divinity in matter.

What then is this luminous, and at the same time, transmuting vision and ideal of Sri Aurobindo? Every ideal, be it ethical, religious or spiritual, depends for its permanence and for its breadth and depth of influence on its philosophical foundation, that is, on the approach it takes towards the Divine or the Eternal. For instance, the Greeks realized the Eternal in his aspect of Beauty, and, therefore, they developed everything in their culture – art, music, justice, law, and ethics – with a sense of beauty that reflected in balance, proportion and taste, avoiding excessiveness in any direction. So, did the Romans. They took to the Force and Power aspect of the Eternal, and, accordingly, they governed their life with a stern and orderly restraint. Thus, discipline became the bedrock of their mental, vital and physical development and enjoyment. But both these civilizations could not uphold their ideals for long because both Beauty and Power are only attributes of the Eternal and there are other aspects of the Divine which the human soul seeks, and which these two civilizations failed to provide.

The ancient Aryans of India based the ideals of their life on the vision of the Eternal as both Transcendental Self and the individual self. They raised the veil completely, as it were, and saw the Eternal in all things, and had the experience of Him in themselves and in all around them. It is because of such a broad based vision of the Eternal that India could give itself a civilization, which satisfied in every way the human personality and

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fulfilled the longings of the human soul. This is also the secret of its lasting.

In spite of its lofty vision and its multi-faceted realisation of the Eternal, the Indian ideal has apparently failed to deliver the final goods. The blue vistas of the Eternal's consciousness and the oceanic Bliss of the Supreme were meant more for the individual than the collective. It has been always the individual, who had access to the lofty idealism, and the collective was left to bask in the light of the individual's spiritual glow or to remain caught up in the quagmire of ignorance and suffering. The religious teachers, the saints, the philosophers and even the vibhutis have all shown a way out of this world, but no one has really "tread the dolorous way" and tried to "bring the heavens here" or to uplift the human race as such.

As a result, there is no true change in man's consciousness and nature. His physical is still animal in its habits and needs, and is constantly a victim of disease and suffering and death. His vital being is a battlefield of greed and lust , of base instincts, and all the dark subconscious passions. His mind is like the Supreme Court where falsehood and ignorance masquerade as truth and knowledge. The sorrowful state of the threefold nexus of man's mind, life and body remains unregenerate in spite of all the high, noble and catholic ideals put forth through his evolutionary history. His inferior nature has gone unchanged and unchallenged over the aeons, except for a cosmetic change brought about by his higher cultural and religious pursuits. A deep-rooted change, a reversal of his nature and his life can be brought about only by a force beyond his present capacities. Like Heracles who turned the river Alpheus to cleanse Augean stables, so too, a new golden river, the Supramental Force has to be brought down which alone can cleanse and transform man's nature and body.

Thus, Sri Aurobindo puts before us the uncompromising ideal of the total transformation of man and a divine perfection of human life. The highest and the most complete life that awaits man's destiny in a divinized earth is the work undertaken by Sri Aurobindo. The unregenerate mind, life and body of man are taken up, purified, heightened and uplifted into their true mould on the Supramental truth-consciousness level. Man is asked to raise himself to his true manhood by which alone can he become a perfect, integral and complete being: his psychic becoming the vehicle of true and pure love, his mind reflecting infallible knowledge, his vital manifesting inner power and strength, and his body expressing a perfect divine beauty and harmony.

What Sri Aurobindo posits is the perfect solution: to immortalize the body, to spiritualize the material, and to divinize the human. This solution seems to be the only complete one to the age long dichotomy between Matter and Spirit, between Divinity and Humanity, between Immortality and the Mortal. No one, till now, has been able to reconcile and bring accordance to these apparently self-contradictory and mutually self-exclusive pairs, neither the Vedantins nor the Mayavadins, neither saints nor gurus, neither pundits nor scholars. The eternal opposites have met for the first time in Sri Aurobindo.

In order to understand how the impossible has been made possible, we must try to grasp

the fundamental philosophy of the Eternal and Real in which Sri Aurobindo bases his ideal of a divine life, for as seen earlier, the truth and permanent value of any ideal depends "on the closeness of its fundamental idea to the ultimate truth of the Eternal."[3]

2. THE SUPREME REALITY

Very characteristic of his approach, which is to go from the near to the far, from the intimate to the unknown, Sri Aurobindo takes up the present constitution of consciousness in man which expresses itself majorly through his mind, life and body, and traces it to its transcendental source, the Absolute, the Sachchidananda. Starting from the multitudinous world, he tracks it back to a single transcendental existence, the One who is also the Many. Other great philosophers, thinkers and spiritual teachers stopped short, as it were, at this stage, viz., tracing the origins of the cosmic creation to the transcendental Reality. And this tendency, obviously, left the doors wide open for the theories of Illusionism which propound that the world is a myth, unreal and that the One, the Brahman alone is real, indivisible, eternal, infinite and unknowable.

Sri Aurobindo is not interested in only trailing the multitudinous world into the One. Starting from the Supreme Reality, the Sachchidananda, he shows us its descent, its extension within itself as phenomena, as the manifestation. By describing the process of the Divine Descent, Sri Aurobindo shows that this creation is verily true and real. He puts it simply, "If then the world is a dream or an illusion or a mistake, it is a dream originated and willed by the self in its totality and not only originated and willed, but supported and perpetually entertained. Moreover, it is a dream existing in a Reality and the stuff of which it is made is that Reality, for Brahman must be the material of the world as well as its base and continent. If the gold of which the vessel is made is real, how shall we suppose that the vessel itself is a mirage?"[4]

Sri Aurobindo is, thus, very close to the ancient seers, in his experience and vision of the Supreme Reality and its manifestation. The central experience and thought of the principal Upanishads is found to be progressively developed and brought to a perfect culmination and synthesis in his own experience and philosophy. For example, the pregnant ideas of the gospel of eternal Bliss in the *Taittiriya Upanisad,* and the teachings of knowledge and self-surrender to the universal Brahman found in the *Kena*, find their full sway in his book *The Synthesis* of *Yoga*. And, of course, the gospel of a Divine life on earth of the Isa forms the kernel of The *Life Divine.* What then is this concept of the Supreme Reality, which has found one end of its golden rainbow in the ancient seers, and the other end in Sri Aurobindo?

The Absolute or the Transcendent Reality is incomprehensible and unimaginable because it is timeless, spaceless, eternal, infinite, indivisible and stable. It is unconditioned, and, therefore, indescribable by human language, neither by its ultimate negation nor by its absolute affirmation, "It is neither this nor that". It is beyond manifestation, beyond Existence and Non-existence, beyond Being and Non-Being, because, it is unmanifest. It is, therefore, called as *Tat* or That.

As the Absolute leans towards

manifestation, the first step It takes is to formulate or render in Itself a luminous shadow of its inconceivable Being which is variously called by the ancients as Parabrahman, Brahman, the Eternal, God, Creator, the Supreme Spirit, etc. The Upanishads describe Him: subjectively, as *Sat Cit, Ananda;* and, objectively, as *Satyam, Jnanam, Anantam.* And, Sri Aurobindo prefers the first trilogy – Sachchidananda: Existence, Consciousness, Bliss. *Sat* is Pure Being, Absolute Existence. He is without cause or object of His Existence. He cannot change because He is unconditioned by Time, Space and Causality. He is alone, and alone is He in the One Existence. *Cit* is Pure Awareness, Absolute Consciousness of the *Sat. Cit* and Sat are inseparable because there is nothing beyond the *Sat.* Nor is it that *Ci*t is consciousness of one part of *Sat,* because Sat is without parts, one and simple. Ananda is Pure Ecstasy, Absolute Bliss. Existence and Consciousness are inseparable, and Bliss is the link between *Sat* and *Cit.*

Looking at the objective expression of this Trinity, we see that *Sat* being the Absolute Existence can alone be the only Reality, the Supreme Truth, *Satyam* – all other existences being partially or relatively real. Likewise, *Jnanam* – which is direct knowledge without the use of any medium – is at its highest degree Cit, the Absolute Consciousness. Finally, *Anantam*, Endlessness is *Ananda*, because Bliss consists in the absence of limitation.

Sri Aurobindo adds to this ancient trilogy, a fourth aspect, that of *Tapas*, *Sakti* or Force. It is as inseparable from Consciousness or Cit, as is the power of fire and fire. The ancient seers knew about this aspect of Sachchidananda, but they did not stress it. But, in the experience and vision of Sri Aurobindo, it gets a unique importance because in his scheme of the manifestation, it is the Force that brings into Consciousness, which otherwise is a breeding trance of immobility, perfect equilibrium and indivisibility, the first stirrings of division, of creation. So, in Sri Aurobindo, whenever we speak of Sachchidananda we mean not just *Sat, Cit* and *Ananda* but *Sat, Cit-Tapas* or *Cit-Sakti,* and *Ananda.*

3. INVOLUTION

So, with the first stirrings, the first urge towards activity in the ineffable and inalienable equality of the bliss of self-identity of *Sachchidananda*, there began the process of Involution, or the Descent of the Divine Consciousness. Somewhere a breach began in that unbroken continuity of absolute Existence and the divine afflatus of consciousness flung itself into the matrices of creativity. This self-pressure to divide sent the consciousness rolling, as it were, right into its very opposite, the very Inconscience. The stable Unity turned itself into infinitesimal particles by its power of self-limitation.

But, in this becoming, or descent, there is a definite process, a law, for otherwise, "infinite consciousness, into infinite action can produce only infinite results". One possibility out of the infinite possibilities was selected, one truth of manifestation out of the infinite truths of creation was chosen, organized, harmonized at different levels and then marshaled and released into manifestation. And this selective faculty, which commissioned the present manifestation, put forth by Sachchidananda,

is what Sri Aurobindo names the Supermind or the Gnosis.

From the point of manifestation, Supermind is the first step of devolution. On this level, the One retains still the essential oneness in and through the Many. That is because the Many here are as seed-truths, as Real-Ideas; and there is here no shadow of separateness, but only a difference of modes carrying within themselves the essential unity and identity.

The next step of devolution or descent is the Overmind. Here, the multiplicity becomes sharper, as it were, and there is a greater differentiation, isolation, and separation. This stress on individuation, on exclusiveness breaks the unity and oneness of the One and Many that exists on the level of the Supermind. The identity of the two recedes to the background, and the Many comes to the forefront. Here is the beginning of Ignorance, *Avidya*, the ancients had talked of.

The jealousy, self-centredness, of the Many on the Overmental level becomes "intolerant egoism and solipsism" in the next step of devolution, the Mind. The unity, the harmony of the higher levels turn into fragmentation, disharmony, conflict and confusion – the very bottom of ignorance. The transparency and subtlety is lost on the level of Mind, and there is, instead, the sense of rigidity and crudity. The global outlook of the Overmind becomes a narrow vision, a piecemeal understanding of things.

Passing through other intermediary levels, such as the Intuitive Mind, Illumined Mind, and Higher Mind, consciousness becomes, according to the hierarchy, more and more dull, dense, uncertain, slow and disintegrated. The intensity, purity, force and the synthetic unity of the higher levels diminish gradually until the consciousness reaches the level of Life.

On the level of Life, consciousness becomes fiercely selfish, dark and dense. Passion, lust, hunger, desire, blind cravings seize consciousness making it impervious to the workings of the higher forces or light. There is here a sense of throttling, and asphyxiation of consciousness.

Still, the descent does not stop here; it goes further into Matter, where there is a total self-oblivion, a complete wiping off of the consciousness, as it were. The first movement of division has now become the last movement of fragmentation; the self-luminous consciousness has become obscure, dense, dark and hard. The original One has sub-divided itself into trillions of atoms where Existence becomes non-existence, where Consciousness turns into Inconscience, and where Bliss plunges into Immunity. The Highest descends into the lowest, and not until then does the play halt. The Devolution is complete in Matter, the very opposite of the Spirit, the "plunge of the Light into its own Shadow".

But this is an illusion only. The opposite is not a zero, devoid of consciousness. The Highest and the Lowest, the positive and the negative are only apparent opposites. They, in fact, complete and explain one another. For, Matter is but "Brahman made concrete in atomic division"; it is the form of the Formless. It gives a body and a name, to the Bodiless and the indeterminate and unknowable Consciousness. Eternity has been

caught in the moment, and Infinity in the finite. The white ecstasy of the Absolute Bliss is now reflected in "a million-bodied beatitude". If Spirit is Involution on the Summit, out of which everything devolved towards the other pole of Matter, Matter too is Involution at the bottom, containing all the potentials, and from where everything evolves upward toward the other pole or Spirit. Spirit and Matter are, therefore, the obverse and reverse modes of the same Reality. Spirit is consciousness, it is awake; Matter is unconsciousness, it is true, but it is not utter absence or annihilation of consciousness – it is involved-consciousness. By this exclusive and concentrated involvement in atomic forms, by this complete and absolute identification with the scattered units of matter, consciousness forgets itself. The force and intensity of its concentration on the atomic division makes the consciousness of itself, a self-forgotten nescience.

4. EVOLUTION

As the bottom of the downward drive is reached, there goes up a "deep spiritual cry" from the Inconscient; and, then, there is a direct intervention of the Supreme's Grace which swings back the descending movement, and the ascent begins, evolution starts:

> An unshaped consciousness desired light
> And a blank prescience yearned towards distant change....
> Arrived from the other side of boundlessness
> An eye of deity pierced through dumb deeps;...
> Intervening in a mindless universe,
> Its message crept through the reluctant hush
> Calling the adventure of consciousness and joy...[5]

Evolution is the inverse action of involution; it is the upward movement of the consciousness through the stages it had taken in the descent. Therefore, what was the last derivation in involution becomes the first one to appear in evolution; what was the first highest and the Original in involution will emerge in evolution as the last apocalypse.

This being the principle of evolution, two basic characters of this movement become obvious and unchallengeable: (a) only that which is involved in Matter can evolve, for otherwise there would not be an evolution but a random and haphazard creation of new things, arbitrarily willed or conceived by an inexplicable Force; (b) all that is involved in Matter is bound to evolve in the ascending order until the final unfolding when the Consciousness, which had lost itself finds itself again "divinely self- conscious, free, infinite and immortal".

Matter is the launching-point of evolution. This is the inconscient stage of evolution when there is only Matter, when the consciousness is dormant, dense, dark and insentient.

> Then something in the inscrutable darkness stirred;
> A nameless movement, an unthought Idea
> Insistent, dissatisfied, without an aim,
> Something that wished but knew not how to be,
> Teased the Inconscient to wake Ignorance.[6]

This stirring, this teasing created a kind of

tension in the womb of Matter which soon increased and swelled into a mighty churning and an upheaval. Those were the birth pangs, so to say, of something that was already embedded in Matter and was seeking to be delivered. When this secret yearning was intense, then the descent of the Life principle from above took place. Then Life appeared. Consciousness, which was, as though in a stupor and dormant; now, opened its eyes, and looked around. Bare earth wrapped itself in a green robe and decked itself in innumerable bright colours. Still, everything was too static and rooted to earth. The semi-consciousness of the plant-world strove to come still further up, and, after aeons of struggle and preparation, there came the animal world. Consciousness was more awake now, able to express itself more freely through movement and feelings and through a rudimentary mentality in the more evolved animals.

It took millions of years for Life to influence and mould Matter in "its own mode and law of existence". Matter that was once just a physicochemical entity had undergone a change, had become ready to receive a living organism, in the form of the animal. At the same time, Life prepared itself to receive the higher principle. When, through the millennia, it attained a certain complexity of form, a certain maturity, a kind of readiness and organization to become the vehicle of the psychic element of consciousness, then the Mind principle seized Life and Man appeared on the earth's evolutionary scene.

If we follow this evolutionary trend, we see that Man is not the final rung of evolution. He is only a stage of transition. Just as Nature worked out Life in Matter, and Mind in Life; so too Man is only a living laboratory of Nature "in whom and with whose conscious cooperation" she will work out by the same method and process the next higher principle of Supermind. To an extent, Man's eternal aspiration for God, Light, Bliss, Freedom and Immortality is "simply the imperative impulse by which Nature is seeking to evolve beyond Mind…" says Sri Aurobindo. Beyond this "imperative impulse", the mental consciousness too has to be widened deepened, purified, made supple and receptive before the Supramental principle can descend. And this process of Mind's preparation is taking place at the present, through a kind of catharsis of human consciousness; Mind was a helper in the past, but now it is a bar. With the guiding lights of religion, occultism and religious thought it did lead Man on his destiny. But, now, it has brought Man to the brink of self-destruction. Unless humanity opens itself to the higher principle beyond Mind, there is no hope for it.

The path of evolution is not, however, linear. It follows two main processes, sublimation and integration, which form the single movement of ascension. Sublimation means a purification and refinement of the lower, dense and obscure consciousness. And integration is the process of the higher principle embracing the lower and infusing it with its own light and consciousness. For instance, Matter, which was once a dense obscure unconsciousness, went through a process of refinement in order to become the basis of Life in the form of fauna. The Life principle injected into Matter its own higher principle of a soul-element, and made it ready to receive and to express the vital principle in the form of the animal. Vitalized Matter then

became more plastic, and spontaneous under the pressure of Mind. Life too has been purified of its crudities, and it has become more refined, sensitive and responds to the light of the Mind. We thus see that Matter is constantly ascending in its aspiration to express a greater consciousness and light. The present day computer technology is a significant example of how the once obscure Matter has become luminous, sentient and capable of accepting the demands of the Mind and forces beyond it.

Parallel to this ascending movement, is the movement of descent, the coming down of the higher involutionary principles. No amount of churning or yearning, shuffling and reshuffling, struggle and aspiration from below is sufficient to establish the higher status. The higher status or the plane awaits for a sufficient preparation of the lower level before it can actualize itself. It is the manifestation of the higher that gives the lower aspiration and preparation a definite form and pattern. At a precise moment, the principle that is seeking to evolve and the principle that is awaiting to descend, they meet and consummate, and then alone is born the new level. After a certain degree of preparation and maturity of its womb, Matter had to await the seed of Life before it could burst forth into millions and millions of living forms and moving shapes. Similarly, no amount of permutation and combination of the Life elements could bring forth Mind. After it got sufficiently organised and ready enough to become the receptacle of the psychic element of consciousness, it had to await the conjunction of the Mind principle embedded in itself and the Mind principle from above, for the new mental consciousness to shape itself into Man.

Likewise, Man the representative of the Mind principle, has been preparing himself, though mostly unconsciously, for a higher life. Sages and saints, poets and idealists, scientists and reformers have, through the ages, prepared the Mind to open itself to higher levels than itself, have purified life with the god-ward emotion, and made Matter receptive, plastic and supple, responding readily to the deeper needs of Life and Mind. There has been on the whole a kind of preparation for a higher life. Yet, the malady of Man has not been cured, for, the powers and resources in his hand are insufficient to cure himself.

Man "has been striving through his lesser powers, through the grace of the lower gods since his advent upon earth to arrive at a reconstruction of his life and surroundings. That is why, he has never attained the full measure of success. Indeed, a period of success or progress was always followed by a decline and retrogression, a so-called golden age by an age of iron. As a matter of fact, today humanity finds itself terribly enclosed in a cage of iron, as it were. The earth has become too small for his soaring capacities and multitudinous necessities – he is already thinking of a place on the moon! That is only the sign and symbol of an inner impasse to which he has arrived. The anguish of the human soul has reached its acme: the problems - social, political, educational, moral - it is facing have proved themselves to be totally insolvable. Yes, he has run into a *cul-de-sac*, where he is caught as in a death trap. No ordinary rational methods, halfway nostrums can deliver him any more. All the outer doors and issues are now closed for him; the only way is to turn inward; there lies

the open road to freedom and fulfillment. That is the way to transcendence and self-surpassing."[7] It is always the higher principle that fulfils the lower: Man must transcend into the superman. Mind must surpass into the Supermind. Nature herself is endeavouring to bring out and establish this New Consciousness - the Supramental Consciousness - for this is her evolutionary goal, and this is what man must consciously strive for. The only way out of the human morass lies in the direction of the supramentalisation of human consciousness; all other ways will only lead him to his doom.

Fortunately, for us, both the evolutionary processes of ascent and descent have been accomplished. Although Nature and Man have been labouring for aeons to prepare themselves for the New Consciousness, it is the advent of the Divine - as Sri Aurobindo and the Mother - which has hastened this process of Mind's sublimation. They, the Supramental Avatars, have not only brought down the Truth to be established as the next evolutionary step, the Supramental Truth, but they have acted here below, struggled and suffered to carry forward the terrestrial movement towards its fulfillment. Their coming has been the only assurance of the grand finale envisaged and aspired by Matter: to reveal and manifest the Spirit. The ascent of the Mind and the descent of the Supermind, have both been accomplished by them. On 5th December, 1950, Sri Aurobindo sacrificed his body in order to bring the Supramental into the earth-consciousness. And later, on 29th February, 1956, the Mother brought down the golden flood of the Supramental Force on earth and fulfilled the promise they had given to mankind, fulfilling at the same time man's immemorial aspiration for Truth, Light, Freedom and Immortality.

Presuming that the New Race of the Supramental consciousness has come; does it mean that it is the end of the march of civilisation? It is not so. According to Sri Aurobindo, it only means that with Supermind creation has leaped from the domain of Ignorance to Knowledge and Light. Mortality, which has been the governing principle of the present life on earth, will be replaced by immortality. Thereafter, after crossing the borderland of Ignorance, a new creation starts and the evolutionary course will continue ad infinitum – from light to greater Light, because Sachchidananda is infinite and his self-revelation and manifestation are also infinite.

This then is the philosophical foundation which supports our ideal of the total transformation - the divinization of man, and spiritualization of matter. Sri Aurobindo charts the very creation of the universe, and traces in a god-like gesture the spiritual evolution of earth from the very first dawn when evolution began, from "the hour before the Gods awake". He does so only to show us the inevitability of the coming of the New Race, and to convince the human mind about the urgent need of it to submit to the ideal of integral transformation.

5. VISION OF THE FUTURE

Yet, this is only half the story. An ideal never belongs to the past; it looks always to the future. The past only serves as the foundation to a future that is more luminous, more promising, and more stupendous than anything since the beginning of evolution.

And Sri Aurobindo once again paints the glorious future in magnificent hues. His "vision and prophetic gleam" have in themselves the necessary Force, Consciousness and Light to sustain mankind in its present gloomy period of transition.

To know "the mystery of the journeying years" of the future, to try to understand what awaits our destiny is itself a help on the way of fulfilling our ideal. However faintly we may understand the Vision, we at least become humble, and the more consciously we surrender ourselves to this Vision and Force, the greater are our chances of collaboration in the ideal.

February 29, 1956, was the day when the New World was born. The New Consciousness is amidst us, recasting, unobtrusively, the old consciousness. It is there, spreading in every walk of life – the political, the economic, the spiritual, the artistic, urging man to cast off old habits, old institutions, old values, old ways of thinking and beliefs – the old consciousness based on falsehood, hypocrisy, and ignorance. Quietly, the New World is gliding into the old one, replacing it inch-by-inch, minute-by-minute. New foundations are being laid, "not below, but above", in the inner being - the psychic being of man. The New Man will be, therefore, not a slave to his outer nature, limited and obscure, but a monarch of himself and all around him – Swarat and Samrat. Living in his soul-status, he will be in conscious harmony and communion with other individuals. There will, thus, be neither strife nor competition, neither rivals nor opponents, for all would be one in the cosmic soul; and, therefore, radiating the Divine Will. His mind would be a channel of profound, creative and true knowledge. His heart will overflow not with the base human egoistic emotions, but with a "wide and intense rasa that lies in the divine identity of souls". His body will be beautiful, transparent, and supple "a tabernacle of God".

With the increase of such individuals, the social structure too will change and become one that is based on cooperation, collaboration and free expression of one's own Svadharma. It will be a kind of living in one-self by living-in-all, and vice-versa. With an increase of such aggregates, there will be a change in the nations, for; each one would increasingly find its own true soul. It would automatically result in a "supra-nation" or a federation of nations. The world would, thus, move towards one indivisible humanity, which will be the basis of the super-humanity.

> Thus shall the earth open to divinity
> And common natures feel the wide uplift, Illumine common acts with the Spirit's ray
> And meet the deity in common things.
> Nature shall live to manifest secret God,
> The Spirit shall take up the human play,
> This earthly life become the life divine.[8]

Considering the apparent state of human consciousness at present, this lofty ideal, this vision of "A mightier race shall inhabit the mortal's world" seems a far-off cry, something impossible and chimerical. Even if it is to take place, it may take place in a "far-flung futurity", millions of years from now. To this skeptical view Sri Aurobindo answers, "I have already spoken about the bad conditions

of the world; the usual idea of the occultists about it is that the worse they are, the more probable is the coming of an intervention or a new revelation from above. The ordinary mind cannot know – it has either to believe or disbelieve, or wait and see.

"As to whether the Divine seriously means something to happen I believe it is intended. I know with absolute certitude that the Supramental is a truth and that its advent is in the very nature of things inevitable. The question is as to the when and how. That also is decided and predestined from somewhere above; but it is here being fought out amid a rather grim clash of conflicting forces. For in the terrestrial world the predetermined result is hidden and what we see is a whirl of possibilities and forces attempting to achieve something with the destiny of it all concealed from the human eyes. This is, however, certain that a number of souls have been sent to see that it shall be now. That is the situation. My faith and will are for the now."9 In another letter, he writes, "But I have not been discouraged by what is happening, because I know and have experienced hundreds of times that beyond the blackest darkness there lies for one who is a divine instrument the light of God's victory. I have never had a strong and persistent will for anything to happen in the world – I am not speaking of personal things – which did not eventually happen even after delay, defeat or even disaster."[10]

Along with this sanction and will of Sri Aurobindo for the coming of he Supramental race, what is required to lay the foundations of a new world is a few pioneers, an avant-garde, a selected group of aspirants. In any case, it is never intended that the entire human race will be taken up into the new consciousness. Just as Matter continues to exist, though changed and influenced to an extent, after the advent of Life and Mind, so too Life and Mind will continue to be and they will not be obliterated from the face of the earth. However, as the small nucleus of fore-runners snowballs and becomes a larger collectivity, the effects of the New Consciousness will be felt on humanity in general: "This change might happen not only in a few, but extend and generalize itself in the race. This possibility, if fulfilled, would mean that the human dream of perfection, perfection of itself, of its purified and enlightened nature, of all its action and living would be no longer a dream but a truth that could be made real and humanity lifted out of the hold on it of inconscience and ignorance."[11]

When asked by a disciple, "What will be the effect of the Supermind on the earth?" the Mother replied, "I told you immediately that before the effects of the Supramental manifestation become visible and tangible, perceptible to everybody, perhaps thousands of years may go by."[12] As the complete transformation of the earth-life and the full manifestation of the Supramentalised beings is a proposition of thousands of years from now, Sri Aurobindo envisages an intermediary race which could act as the bridge between man and the Supramental race. It is the race of superman. The superman, although born in the human way, would transform his consciousness sufficiently – that of the mind, life and body – by connecting it with the higher spiritual principle of Supermind. However, even the level of supermen is not in the immediate reach of man. Before achieving that level,

there would be several attempts - successful and unsuccessful - each forming a partial realization, according to one's capacity and the degree of transformation. And such men who give themselves to the attempt will be the apprentice-supermen, and they will be the candidates for Superman.

"All those who strive to overcome their ordinary nature," defines the Mother, "all those who try to realize materially the deeper experience which has brought them into contact with the divine Truth, all those who, instead of turning to the Beyond or the Highest, try to realize physically, externally – the change of consciousness they have realized within themselves – all are apprentice-supermen."[13] Apart from those "number of souls" who "have been sent down to see that it [the Work] shall be now," – what is asked of us, the Mother's children, is "to overcome the ordinary nature", to realize materially the deeper experience, and "the change of consciousness." This means, a transformation or to become an apprentice-superman.

6. INTEGRAL YOGA AND TRANSFORMATION

The starting-point of the integral transformation is aspiration, aspiration coupled with a will to realize it. "But in addition to aspiration there is an inner opening, a kind of receptivity, then one can enter into this transformed consciousness in a single stroke and maintain oneself there. This change of consciousness is abrupt, so to say; when it occurs, it occurs all of a sudden, although the preparation for it may have been long and slow... It is a complete and absolute change, a revolution of the basic poise; the movement is like turning a ball inside out. To the transformed consciousness everything appears not only new and different, but almost the reverse of what it seems to the ordinary consciousness. In the ordinary consciousness you advance slowly, by successive experiences, from ignorance to a very distant and often doubtful knowledge. In the transformed consciousness, your starting point is knowledge, and you proceed from knowledge to knowledge. However, this is only a beginning; for the outer consciousness, the various planes and parts of the outer active being are transformed only slowly and gradually as a result of the inner transformation."[14]

In other words, it is the awakening of the psychic being in the seeker, the sadhaka. After a considerable time of incubation, that is, a deepening of the ordinary consciousness, there is a sudden contact with the divine Presence in the heart centre. This contact, when stabilized, guides the sadhaka at every moment telling him what's to be done and how it is to be done, for, the psychic has the absolute knowledge of the truth behind appearances. A change or reversal of consciousness is of primary importance because, "In the inner reality of things a change of consciousness was always a major fact, the evolution has always had a spiritual significance and the physical change was only instrumental; but this relation was concealed by the first abnormal balance of the two factors, the body of the external Inconscience, outweighing and obscuring in importance the spiritual element, the conscious being. But once the balance is righted, it is no longer the change of the body that must precede the change of consciousness; the consciousness itself by its mutation will necessitate and

operate whatever mutation is needed for the body."[15]

Thus, after the first change of consciousness or the awakening of the psychic being, if the *sadhaka* makes his outer nature of body, life and mind move in the light and guidance of his psychic, then, the higher consciousness purifies and regenerates his ordinary human nature. "Finally, when the psychic being is in full self-possession and power, it can be the vehicle of the direct supramental consciousness – which will then be able to act freely and absolutely for the entire transformation of the external nature, its transfiguration into a perfect body of the Truth-consciousness – in a word, its divinisation."[16] Thus, a psychicisation, leading to spiritualization, and culminating in a supramentalisation can alone fulfill the ideal of total transformation of which "a transformation of the body must be an indispensable part of it; without that no full divine life on earth is possible."[17]

It is basically for the work of the transformation in the body that the Ashram was created by the Mother. Apart from being a symbolic centre, a laboratory where, "Each one of you", says the Mother, "represents one of the difficulties which must be conquered for the transformation," the Ashram was essentially meant to build the body that is receptive to the Supramental's working. "The golden light must come into the feet," writes Nolini Kanta Gupta, while describing the nature of the Mother's work on earth, "and that was the work she was doing here and it is for that that she created the Ashram. You all know the special emphasis she laid on physical education in order to prepare the body and senses to receive the golden light. She always said, "physical education gives you the basis for the new consciousness, the new light, we must have a strong body, a beautiful body, a body that endures: for the new light is powerful, it is not merely light, it is the force, one must be able to bear it and carry out its commands."[18]

In truth, the great emphasis on the physical transformation is because, "It is only when the circle will be completed, when the two extremes will touch, when the highest will manifest on the most material that the experience will be truly decisive. It would seem that one never truly understands until one understands with one's body." Until the Supramental is realized here, in the body, nothing is realized permanently. So, the new consciousness is working itself out in the body and not on the mental or vital levels, because they cannot support it. A new body alone can stand the pressure of the new consciousness. "Only the body can understand," says the Mother. And for it to understand, means the capacity to be able to do, she explained. And this capacity and understanding is contagious. That is why the Mother gave her own body for experimenting with the principles of physical transformation, which in their essence had been realized by Sri Aurobindo in his own body. For, She believed that "It is there the transformation must be achieved; it is on earth that you progress, it is on earth that you realize. It is in the body that the Victory is won". And if this victory is won in one single glorious body, then it will be a victory for all men and Matter. "Once it is done (Sri Aurobindo has said this), once one body has done it, it has the capacity to pass it on to others,"[19] confirmed the Mother.

Once the Supramental Force hooks itself to a single body, then it will open itself around the cells of the body and refashion and remould its new body. And, "the moment a body, which was of course formed by the old animal method, is capable of living this consciousness (the New Consciousness) naturally, and spontaneously, without effort, without going out of itself, it proves that this is not one single exceptional case but simply the forerunner of a realization which, even if it is not altogether general, can at last be shared by a certain number of individuals who, besides, as soon as they share it, will lose perception of being separate individuals and become a living collectivity."[20]

The Mother's own body has been the "forerunner" of such a realization. She transformed it to the extent it could be done, leaving behind her New Body and her promise:

One day I shall return, His hands in mine,
And thou shalt see the face of the Absolute,
Then shall the holy marriage be achieved,
Then shall the divine family be born.
There shall be light and peace in all the worlds. [21]

NOTES

(All references to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother's works are drawn from Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library, Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust, Pondicherry, India, 1972 and from Collected Works of the Mother, Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust, Pondicherry, 1978. References to Nolini Kanta Gupta's writings are from Nolini Kanta Gupta Birth Centenary Edition, NKG Birth Centenary Committee, Sri Aurobindo Bhavan, Calcutta, 1989.)

1. Sri Aurobindo, Vol. 26, p. 374.
2. *Ibid*., p. 226.
3. Sri Aurobindo, Vol. 27, p. 201.
4. Sri Aurobindo, Vol. 18, p. 32.
5. Sri Aurobindo, Vol. 28, p. 2.
6. *Ibid*., pp. 1-2.
7. Nolini Kanta Gupta, A *Century's Salutation to Sri Aurobindo*, p. 11
8. Sri Aurobindo, Vol. 29. p. 711.
9. Sri Aurobindo, Vol. 26, p. 167.
10. *Ibid*., p. 169.
11. Sri Aurobindo, Vol. 16, p. 48.
12. The Mother, Vol. 8, *Collected Works of the Mother*, Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust, 1978, p. 292.
13. The Mother, Vol. 11.
14. The Mother, Vol. 12, p. 80.
15. Sri Aurobindo, Vol. 19, p. 843.
16. Nolini Kanta Gupta, Vol. 3, p. 14.
17. Sri Aurobindo, Vol. 16, p. 43.
18. Nolini Kanta Gupta, Vol. 6, Pondicherry, p. 6.
19. The Mother, Vol. II, p. 100.
20. The Mother, Vol. 9, p. 140.
21. Sri Aurobindo, Vol. 29, p. 521.

THE NATURE AND MEANS OF REALIZING TRUTH – THE GANDHIAN PERSPECTIVE

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The article in three parts is an attempt at an exposition of the nature and means of realizing truth from the Gandhian perspective. Part one deals with the Gandhian conception of Truth as God, the Eternal Principle that includes the principles of conduct like *brahmacarya*, celibacy, and truth in thought, word and deed. Part two comprises the exposition of *brahmacarya*, *anāsaktiyoga* and *satyāgraha* adopted by Gandhi as the important means of realizing the Truth. And in part three it is pointed out that in spite of his relentless search after the Truth, what Gandhi could have were only its fleeting glimpses. In conclusion, it is held that Gandhi could not have the full glimpse of the Truth probably because the means he followed were not only inadequate and preliminary, but also misplaced.

1. TRUTH IS GOD

As a born *sanātani* Hindu, and as one who believed in the *Vedas*, the *Upanisads*, the Purāṇas and all that goes by the name of the Hindu scriptures, Gandhi dedicated his life to the Hindu creed of the search for Truth, through non-violent means. He led a life of relentless pursuit after Truth and aimed at attaining *mokṣa - liberation* or becoming free from the cycle of birth and death by realizing Truth. According to Gandhi, Truth is the Sovereign Principle which includes numerous other principles like *brahmacarya*, non-violence, etc. Truth is not only truthfulness in word, but truthfulness in thought and action. It is not only the relative truth of our conception, but the Absolute Truth, that is Brahman which is without attributes and without a beginning and end.[1] Brahman is immaculate, omnipotent and omnipresent. It is bliss, the attainment of which amounts to Self-realization.[2] Gandhi regarded Truth alone as certainty, and all that appears and happens about and around us as uncertain and transient. It is wrong to expect certainties in this world. "One would be blessed if one could catch a glimpse of that and hitch one's wagon of woes to it. The quest for that Truth is the *summum bonum* of life",[3] says Gandhi.

The Truth with which Gandhi is concerned is neither abstract nor academic, but practical. To him, Truth is not the agreement of an idea with a fact; it is not the harmony of a part with the whole; nor is Truth the expediency of an idea or a belief. Truth does not involve the principles of correspondence, coherence or pragmatism. It does not pertain to the laws of identity, contradiction or sufficient reason. On the contrary, the Gandhian Truth refers to the Eternal Principle which governs the principles of our conduct like truthfulness in word, thought and action. It includes the principles of celibacy, humility and service. Realization of the Absolute Truth consists in the practical application of the principles of conduct which are embedded in it. Particular truths are different aspects of the Absolute Truth. One should shape one's life in accordance with Truth. It is only then that one can know Truth in its ultimate sense. Truth is a straight path to God. It alone can steer clear of the conflicting creeds and customs, and lead us to

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the One God. That is why Gandhi gave his Autobiography the title "*The Story of My Experiments With Truth*". Gandhi is deeply convinced that there is no other God than Truth. In the beginning, he believed in God, the Ultimate Reality, and the Supreme Power. He said "God is Truth". But later in his life, he declared, "Truth is God". He argued that while God is denied by many, none dare deny Truth. Even the atheist or the sceptic, should admit the Truth of one's own perception. To deny the Truth of one's own experience, is to deny oneself and one's own existence.[4] Man's chief need is to know God and worship Him in spirit and in truth.

Although a devout Hindu, he preferred Hinduism to all other religions as a way of life. Gandhi was religious, not in its sectarian sense but in the broadest and deepest sense of Self-realization. To him, religion is attaining Self-knowledge by seeking Truth directly through selfless service to humanity. His life was religious, in the sense of a long and steadfast pursuit after spiritual freedom. All that he did in his life — speaking, writing and struggle for the emancipation of the masses – – was aimed at the goal of realizing Truth. In his quest for Truth, Gandhi sacrificed the whole of his life and trod the path of *satyagraha* by leading a life of *ahimsā* and *brahmacarya*. Gandhi said, "There are innumerable definitions of God, because His manifestations are innumerable. They overwhelm me with wonder and awe and for a moment stun me. But I worship God as Truth only. I have not yet found Him, but I am seeking after him. I am prepared to sacrifice things dearest to me in pursuit of His quest. Even if the sacrifice demanded be my very life, I hope, I may be prepared to give it".[5] Gandhi identifies Truth with Love. "*Ahimsā*" means "identification of oneself with everything that lives." Grounded in the nature of God, love is the cohesive force that binds all the animate beings. Human existence is rooted in love which is the law of our being. To Gandhi, satya and *ahimsā* are so intertwined that it is impossible to disentangle them. Truth and love are convertible terms. Love is the reverse side of the coin, of which the obverse is Truth. Nevertheless, Gandhi regards love and non-violence as means for attaining Truth.

2. MEANS TO TRUTH

Gandhi regarded *brahmacarya*, *anāsakti-yoga* and *satyāgraha* as important ways for realizing Truth. "*Brahmacarya*" means "celibacy" of "complete control over the senses." It is freedom from lust in thought, word and deed. Control of the palate, is the first essential in the observance of the vow of *brahmacarya*. Control of the palate through experiments in food intake makes the observance of celibacy easy. A brahmacāri eats only to live, and is frugal in food habits. A brahmacāri's food is simple, spiceless and even uncooked, if possible. A brahmacāri is neither an eggarian nor a lacto-vegetarian, but a frugarian whose ideal food is limited to fresh or sun-baked fruits and nuts. A celibate should gain immunity from passion, by abjuring egg and milk.

Fasting is an integral part of *brahmacarya*. For overpowering the senses, fasting is more effective than mere restriction in diet. Since the senses are powerless without food, fasting undertaken with a view to control them is very helpful. Fasting should not be a mechanical affair of merely keeping the body without food. The mind should also be under

control, without ruminating upon the delicacies that one desires to consume after the fasting is terminated. Thinking about what one is going to eat and drink after the fast, does not help in controlling the senses, the palate, or lust. Fasting is useful only when the mind co-operates with the striving body, by cultivating distaste for the objects that are denied to it. *Brahmacarya* in its full sense is possible only when thought is under the complete control of the will. Along with human effort, firm faith in the existence of God "within" is essential for the control of the involuntary thoughts of the mind. Since the mind is the root of sensuality, fasting without the mind-control is of a little use. Nevertheless, fasting is indispensable for the observance of *brahmacarya*, for, extinction of sexual passion is as a rule impossible without fasting. "The sense objects turn away from an abstemious soul, leaving the relish behind. The relish also disappears with the realization of the Highest. Therefore, His name and His grace are the last resources of the aspirant after *moksa*"[6], says Gandhi. He repudiates the view that the soul has nothing to do with what one eats and drinks. He firmly believes in the truth of the Indian proverb that "as a man eats, so shall he become". In this, he even refused to honour Caraka's dictum that religious scruples about diet have no place in therapeutics. He holds that for a seeker of Truth, restraint in diet both in quantity and quality is as essential as restraint in thought and speech. He is firmly convinced that a seeker can secure enough nourishment both for the nerves and tissues, from fruits like grapes and nuts like almonds.[7]

Brahmacarya not only means conforming oneself to the monogamous ideal of being faithful to one's wife, but also the observance of celibacy even with respect to her. Faithfulness to one's wife does not consist in making her the instrument of one's lust. So long as one is a slave to lust, one's faithfulness is worth nothing. Lustful attachment to one's wife is a barrier to *brahmacarya*.[8] Sexual union is meant not for the fulfillment of lust, but procreation. Sexual act is not as natural as sleeping or eating, since it is meant only for the generation of our progeny. The world depends for its existence on this act of generation, which should be controlled for the ordered growth of the world, the playground of God and the reflection of His glory. The one who realizes this truth will control one's lust at any cost, and equip oneself with the knowledge required for the all-round well-being of the progeny.

Gandhi followed the monogamous ideal, and regarded faithfulness to his wife as a part of his search for Truth. A perfect observance of monogamy and celibacy with respect to his wife, meant the realization of Brahman to him. The vow of *brahmacarya*, in this sense, took him closer to Truth. It gave him the knowledge that in *brahmacarya* lies the protection of the body, the mind and the soul. Practicing *brahmacarya* is like walking on the sword's edge as it required eternal vigilance. To him, *brahmacarya* was not only a hard penance, but also a matter of ever increasing consolation and joy.[9] Gandhi holds that it is necessary to take a vow for overcoming an obstacle. A vow is a natural and an inevitable outcome of a clear perception that a particular thing must be renounced. A vow is a sure shield against temptation and a source of definite action, for it is an offshoot of aversion for something abjured. A vow opens the door to real freedom, whereas mere effort implies

a subtle desire for the thing to be avoided.

According to Gandhi, *anāsaktiyoga* is another means of realizing Truth. *"Anāsaktiyoga"* means "selfless service to humanity." Gandhi calls it the *karmayoga* of rendering service devoid of *āsakti.* He regards it as a sure means of human salvation, since it emancipates the soul by leading it to a vision of Truth. So, Gandhi took to the path of disinterested service as a means for Self-realization. Like loyalty, an aptitude for nursing and helping people, whether relatives, friends or strangers, came to Gandhi without his seeking for it. Deep rooted in his nature, since his childhood, the desire for serving others gradually developed into a passion so much that it often led him to neglect his work and entrust it to his wife and children. In fact, Gandhi travelled to South Africa, for finding an escape from Kathiawad intrigues and for earning his livelihood. But he found himself in search of Truth through service to the Indians there. His deep desire for Self-realization was the reason behind his absorption in the service of the indentured Indian labourers. Gandhi made the religion of service his own and tirelessly strove for the liberation of the masses from the scourge of the apartheid.[10] Gandhi regarded liberty and self-respect as the most essential aspects of human personality. They are superior even to literary training. When a choice has to be made between freedom and learning, the former has to be preferred a thousand times to the latter. He opined that it is better to remain unlettered and break stones for the sake of liberty, than having literary education in the chains of slaves. Man is of the nature of both divinity and dignity, the transcendent and the immanent, which constitute the whole of a human being.[11]

Love and joy are the basis of service. Service should not be done for show or for fear of public opinion. Service which is rendered without love and joy helps neither the servant nor the served. All other pleasures and possessions pale into nothing before service rendered in a spirit of pure love and joy.[12] That is why Gandhi relinquished the desire for wealth and attachment to children. He lived the life of a *vānaprastha* - one who has retired from household cares. He felt that possession of wealth and attachment to children are inconsistent with public service. True humility is essential for selfless service of others. A seeker after Truth should be humble for only the humblest of the humble can have a glimpse of Truth. A person who feels oneself honoured by humiliating one's fellow beings can never realize Truth. "The true connotation of humility is self-effacement. Self-effacement is salvation (*mokṣa)*. Service without humility is selfishness and egotism."[13]

Gandhi fought for the rights of the Indians in South Africa, and liberated them from their hardships. He felt that it would be selfish and cowardice to return to India without redeeming the Indians from their inhuman and shameful condition. He took several measures to improve their lot. He fought against racial prejudice, the defranchising bill, and the bill of imposing tax on the indentured Indians. He made the Indian community recognize the need for keeping their houses and surroundings clean. He made them engage in voluntary sanitary measures, and protect themselves from epidemics. It was with infinite patience that he reformed the Indians who were a slave to their habits. Thus, Gandhi not only strived to ventilate their grievances and pressed for their rights, but

also worked for their self-purification. He found new implications of Truth, while serving the Indians in South Africa. He said, "Truth is like a vast tree, which yields more and more fruit, the more you nurture it. The deeper the search in the mine of Truth, the richer the discovery of the gems buried there, in the shape of openings for an ever greater variety of service".[14]

According to Gandhi, disinterested action is its own reward. He did not expect anything, not even gifts for his public service. He firmly believed that a public servant should not accept any costly articles. In South Africa, he returned all the gifts of diamond, gold and silver bestowed on him for his service. He created a trust of them, and used the trust money for the service of the community.[15] This event may be said to be the harbinger of Gandhi's socio-economic conception of trusteeship *(dharmakaṭṛtva)*, which advocates that no person has a right to own property, since all the resources of Nature belong to the Almighty and all of us are children of the One God. The rich should become the trustees of their wealth, and use it for the welfare of the community. In espousing unconditional service to others, Gandhi reminds us of the Kantian deontological principle that "duty is for duty's sake". Just as a diamond shines in its own light, action done with a sense of duty is intrinsically good, irrespective of the nature of its consequences. In rendering service to people, Gandhi does not subscribe to Mill's utilitarian principle - the greatest good of the greatest number. He says that service should not be limited to a majority, but should be extended to all including the weakest of the weak. His concept of *sarvodaya,* welfare of all, is founded on the principle of *antyodaya,* the welfare of the last and the least. Thus, Gandhi's *anāsaktiyoga* not only connotes selfless action, but also denotes service to all, cutting across race and class.

Satyāgraha is yet another means that Gandhi adopted for the realization of Truth. He says that the freedom and joy he experienced in *brahmacarya*, laid a foundation for *satyāgraha*. *Satyāgraha* was not a preconceived plan but an attitude that came to him spontaneously, without his willing for it. All the previous steps he took in the name of *brahmacarya*, naturally led him up to the goal of *satyāgraha.* As though unknown to him, the vow of *brahmacarya* had been preparing him for it. Gandhi describes *satyāgraha* as the science of experiments with Truth. Although difficult to practice, *satyāgraha* is the quickest and easiest path to Self-knowledge.

"Satyāgraha" means "firmness born of adherence to Truth". Since Truth is synonymous with love, satyāgraha also means the force born of love.[16] It is not the same as the Passive Resistance, which the non-conformist English launched against the British disapproving the unjust laws in South Africa. Passive Resistance is basically a weapon of the weak, and it may ultimately result in brute-force, and use of arms. As there is no scope for love in it, it can be used against the enemy alone. Moreover, it can only pose a threat to the opponent, but cannot change the opponent's heart. Devoid of soul-force, Passive Resistance cannot make the resister strong. Whereas *satyāgraha,* devoid of brute force, works on the pure and simple principle of love-force. It is not a weapon of the weak in strength, or of the few in numbers. There is absolutely no room for the use of weapons in *satyāgraha.* A *satyāgrahi* never resorts to

physical force even on occasions, when he can use it effectively.[17] *Satyāgraha* never poses a threat or a danger to the opponent. It can be offered not only to the "enemy", but also to the nearest and the dearest. It eschews weakness and instills strength in the satyāgrahi, who never gives up and knows no defeat[18], says Gandhi.

Satyāgraha is a non-violent non-cooperation to make the opponent realize the Truth without hurting him in the least. It is a combination of great love for truth and strong opposition to untruth. It is the resistance of love-force against the will of the tyrant. It is not a meek submission but a conscious self-suffering without fear, anger, malice or coercion. It is a conquest over the adversary, by suffering in one's own person. *Satyagraha* is the vindication of truth by inflicting pain on oneself. Civility is an important, and the most difficult part of *satyāgraha.* Civility in satyāgraha is not a mere outward gentleness of speech cultivated for the occasion, but an inborn desire to do good to the opponent. Treating the opponent as an enemy spoils *satyāgraha* like a drop of arsenic in milk.[19]

Gandhi says that *satyāgraha* is founded on the optimism that although we cannot totally eradicate the evil "within", we can definitely control it by constant effort. *Satyāgraha* uncovers the opponent's concealed motives, gives best possible interpretation to them and enables the opponent to discard one's baser impulses.[20] *Satyāgraha* is weaning the opponent away from hatred, and converting him with patience and sympathy without annihilating him. It is impossible to inject new ideas into one's head by chopping it off. It is foolish to try to infuse a new spirit into one's heart by piercing it with a dagger! Gandhi says, *"Satyāgraha* is the exact opposite of the policy of an-eye-for-an-eye attitude, which ends in making everybody blind".[21]

Gandhi is of the view that one has to take recourse to *satyāgraha* only when all the other ways of reconciliation fail. Before launching upon s*atyāgraha,* a *satyāgrahi* must seek redressal of one's grievances by constantly approaching the opponent and putting them before the public. A constant interaction between the contestants with a view to their ultimate reconciliation is an essential part of *satyāgraha. Satyāgraha* should be resorted to only upon the call of the inner voice. A satyāgrahi may ultimately take recourse to the final and the most effective part of satyāgraha, namely, fasting unto death which quickens the awakening of the sleeping conscience of the opponent.[22]

In South Africa, Gandhi adopted *satyāgraha* to liberate the Indians from their hardships. The conditions of the Indians there, were so appalling that they were being treated as slaves, untouchables and criminals. They were not allowed to enter public places like railway stations, and even prevented from walking on pavements. They were confined to live in separate localities, amidst worst living conditions. They had freedom neither to trade nor to move from place to place. They were deprived of the right to vote, and to marry, subjected to unjust taxation, and debarred from possessing land. Gandhi himself was a victim of the racial prejudice practiced by the British. He was beaten, thrown out of a running train, and denied food and accommodation in hotels. He received serious threats to his life on several occasions. Consequently, he resolved to emancipate the Indians by means of *satyāgraha*. He resorted

to *satyāgraha* after he exhausted all the other peaceful means of redressal. He founded the Natal Indian Congress in 1894, and led the Indians to fight against the British on the lines of satyāgraha. The Christian clergymen in South Africa hailed satyāgraha as Christianity in action, against the system that merely called itself "Christian".[23]

Since similar conditions prevailed in India, Gandhi adopted the means of satyāgraha to liberate Indians form the colonial yoke. To begin with, he launched upon *satyāgraha* in Kheda district in Gujarat to save the peasants from paying land revenue as they had suffered a severe famine. In 1919, he established the satyāgraha sabha wherein several people enrolled themselves and signed the pledge of resistance. Later, he offered *satyāgraha* as a resistance to the Rowlatt Act recommendations to which no self-respecting people could submit. Subsequently, he offered *satyāgraha* on several occasions against the British rule, and contributed substantially for gaining *Swarāj* - political freedom for India. Gandhi said that it was his devotion to Truth that had brought him to politics. The religion of Truth is all encompassing. It is wrong to separate it from politics. "Those who say that religion has nothing to do with politics do not know what religion means",[24] he averred. Thus, Gandhi all his life strived hard to realize Truth through *brahmacarya*, *anāsaktiyoga* and *satyāgraha*. The Truth he tried to seek through them was the Absolute Spirit or God, the Eternal and the Universal Principle "within" and "without". But such Truth, as Gandhi himself confessed, always eluded him. What he could attain through his experiments with Truth were only its "little fleeting glimpses".[25] What he could catch was only "the faintest glimmer of that mighty effulgence"[26] which is a million times more intense than that of the Sun.

Gandhi admitted that he did not have the triple purity of being non-violent in thought, word and deed, for having a full glimpse of Truth. He could not achieve absolute freedom from passion, in spite of his ceaseless effort. He still experienced the dormant passion lying hidden in him. He had to traverse further the difficult path of self-purification by reducing himself to a zero. He had, yet, to put himself last among his fellow creatures, and attain the ability to love the meanest of creation as himself. It was only then, he hoped, he could see Truth face to face. So he prayed to the God of Truth that He might grant him the boon of *ahimsā* in mind, word and action. But Gandhi at the same time, and paradoxically enough, says that it is impossible for human beings to realize the perfect Truth. He affirms that we can never fully grasp the Absolute Truth, since it is not easy to attain Absolute perfection by practicing non-violence. As long as we are alive, it is impossible for us to be absolutely non-violent.

3. GANDHI AS A *KARMA-YOGI*

It may be held that although Gandhi claimed that his experiments were for the Absolute Truth, they were mostly confined to the conventional truth relating to one's own convictions, belief and opinions. The experiments comprised adherence to facts, to the principles of not uttering a lie, not eating meat, being faithful to one's wife and parents. Gandhi himself confessed that all his life long it was the relative truth, the truth of one's conception that was his beacon, shield and buckler.[27]

It may be maintained that the truth that Gandhi followed in his life was more scientific than spiritual. Spiritual Truth is One and its realization is final and absolute. Once it is realized, there is no question of revising or substituting it for another. There is no scope for progress or evolution in respect of the absolute Truth. But since the truth that Gandhi practiced was relative and circumstantial, it required him to discard the views proved to be false and accept the ones that appeared to be true under the given circumstances. Like a scientist, he advanced from one truth to another. He says, "My aim is not to be consistent with my previous statements on a given question, but to be consistent with the truth as it may present itself to me at a given moment. The result is that I have grown from truth to truth".[28]

It may be argued that Gandhi failed to realize the absolute Truth in its totality in spite of his life long striving for it, probably because the means he chose were inadequate, though not wrong. The means were inadequate, in the sense that he followed only the primary steps of Patanjali's *Aṣṭāṅgayoga*, and Buddha's *Aṣṭāṅgamārga*. He seems to have observed the first five steps of *aṣṭāṅgayoga*, namely, *yama, niyama, āsana, prāṇāyāma* and *pratyahāra*. He did not seem to have gone to the extent of practising the remaining three steps, namely, *dhāraṇa, dhyāna* and *samādhi*. Similarly, it may be said that Gandhi sincerely followed the first five steps of *Aṣṭāṅgamārga*, namely, right view, right thought, right speech, right action, and right livelihood. But he could not devote his attention to the higher steps of the path, namely, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration.

Can the supreme Truth that is omniscient and omnipresent be realized through the vow of *brahmacarya* and *satyāgraha*? Is not Self-knowledge a matter of intuition arising out of the understanding of the nature and the structure of the embodied Self? Does not it warrant a deeper contemplation, a meditation transcending the activities like prayer, fasting, celibacy and service which are only preliminary steps to the realization of the transcendental Truth?

To extend the point further, Gandhi tried to realize Truth by making the senses and the mind powerless through fasting, celibacy and the power of will. It seems his experiments with Truth involved lot of struggle, effort and conflict. He was of the view that an individual can be chastised by constant suffering. It is only through suffering that one can enrich one's happiness, in its mundane and spiritual sense. Even collective salvation is possible through self-suffering only. But Self-realization in its true sense, involves not the suppression but the liberation and flowering of the senses and the mind. It implies the capacity of the senses to respond fully to the stimuli, and the ability of the mind to perceive holistically, without a sense of division.

For the realization of the transcendental Truth, more than celibacy, service and power of will, what is required is a steadfast mindfulness, an undivided awareness of the nature and the structure of the conditioned body-mind complex. Evidently, Gandhi had hardly any time for such a kind of meditation, as he was fully involved in worldly affairs. As a result, he became a true martyr who "passed away" after accomplishing the task he was destined to. He became a historic figure - a

Great Soul / *Mahātma*. Undoubtedly, Gandhi was a great *karmayogi*. As a man of action, his contributions to India and the world at large are spectacular. But, in spite of, his yeoman service to humanity, Gandhi could not attain the *summum bonum* of his life, namely, the complete realization of the God of Truth. He failed to realize the Absolute Truth probably because Truth is more a matter of *jñānayoga* than *karmayoga*. It is accessible to pure insight (*Prājña*), and not to socio-political activity. It seems, Gandhi's means to Self-realization are not only preliminary, but also inadequate.

To conclude, had Gandhi concentrated on the realization of Truth through the spiritual means of *sravana, manana* and *nidhidhyāsana*, besides trying to comprehend it through the moral means of *brahmacarya*, non-violence and service, Gandhi might have become a great *jñānayogi*, a sage like Śaṅkara*, et al.*

NOTES

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SPIRITUALITY, SCIENCE AND SRINIVASA RAMANUJAN'S SUCCESS

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The article is an introduction to Indian spirituality, and its significance for mathematical science as exemplified by the influence of spirituality on Srinivasa Ramanujan's success in mathematics.

1. SPIRITUALITY AND SCIENCE

The word "spirituality" denotes a conscious invisible power or force animating the human psycho-physical complex, and which is responsible for all its functions. Indian thinkers have deeply explored the existence of this inherent power and called it the Ātman, jīva, etc., whose English equivalents are Self, soul, spirit etc. According to some Indian philosophers, the soul is pure consciousness; whereas for the others, consciousness is its essential attribute. It has also been treated as a detached witnessing agent of human experience, which activates the body-sense-mind complex, without involving itself in their activities. The soul has also been recognized as an indispensable abiding and eternal principle, responsible for cognition, conation, and affection. Some thinkers treat it as the Ultimate knower. The *Upaniṣads* – the ancient Indian philosophical treatises pertaining to Indian wisdom - assert categorically that, "that which cannot be seen, but through which the act of sight takes place, know That to be the *Ātman*: that which cannot be heard, but through which the act of audition takes place, know That to be the *Ātman*."[1]

Vedānta Philosophers like Śaṅkara, Rāmānuja, Madhva and others either identify, or equate, or differentiate the *Ātman* and the Supreme Reality known as Brahman. A fundamental feature of philosophical inquiry is that, it is an inquiry into the nature of the Self, which is a subjective phenomenon in all human experience. Strictly speaking, philosophy is a means for discovering the Self (*adhyātmavidyā*). The discovery and realization of the Self, is the aim of all philosophical activity. Philosophers making diverse presuppositions have concluded differently about the Self. It is not the exclusive prerogative of philosophy, to investigate the existence of the Self. Also religion with a set of dogmas, doctrines, celebrations, and rituals engages in the search for the Self. The spiritual is the genus, of which the philosophical and religious consciousnesses become the species. In India, religion and philosophy include each other, by one becoming subordinate to the other. Philosophy is a rational argumentative approach, and religion a matter of faith and devotion.

Sufficient training in, and practice of religious practices ensures self-illumination, which in turn, activates intuition. When intellectual analysis is strengthened by intuitive experience, creativity emerges. But creativity of this sort will be associated with matter, and not in isolation. Consciousness is always conscious of something, and cannot function in a vacuum. In Indian philosophy, we come across two views about matter.

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Śaṅkara - an Advaitin, discards the validity of matter as an illusory appearance; while Cārvāka - exemplifying Indian materialism - admits matter only as the sole and the whole of reality, and that the soul does not exist because it cannot be perceived. The Sāṅkhya system of Kapila considers the Self, and matter, as two independent realities. The Self – *puruṣa* - is sentient, innumerable, and passive; while *prakṛti* or matter is non-sentient, one and dynamic/active. An interesting feature is that *prakṛti* or matter is constituted of three qualities, viz., *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. *Sattva* is responsible for purity, rest and comfort; *rajas* generates emotion and activity; and *tamas* is responsible for inertia, dullness and ignorance. Since Sāṅkhya considers the human body, mind and sense organs as evolutes of *prakṛti*, we come across human beings with different attributes and temperaments – physically, mentally and spiritually.

The objective of life, according to the Indian seers, is to desist from the luring impact of matter, and abide as the *puruṣa* - the Self. However, the Indian thinkers have studied the categories of the universe too. The Vaiśeṣika system of Kanāda has well exemplified the universe through categories known as the *padārthas* - six positive, and one negative category. They are substance, quality, action, universal, particular, inherence, and non-existence. This analysis indicates the keen interest shown by our ancestors in recognizing the existence of the external world, a comprehensive knowledge of which facilitates a gradual withdrawal from sensuality, and contemplation on the Self to actualize Self-realization, leading to profound discoveries. The external physical public world and the internal psychic private world became the objects of the ancient seer's investigation for attaining Self-realization.

Now, the problem before us is whether the spiritual insights, illuminations, intuitions, etc., promote scientific discoveries or place science on a distinct pedestal. Keen observation of the empirical phenomena confers the ability to frame hypothesis, and discover scientific truths, for e.g. Newton discovered the law of gravity on observing a falling apple, Stevenson made the steam engine on seeing the force of steam issuing forth from a kettle. In the words of Rabbi Kook, "The spiritual powers blossom, they branch out and become intertwined, and send deep roots into the depths of life, and the person is elevated and becomes a blessing to himself and the world."[2]

The Indian genius in developing science, especially mathematical science, is certainly based on spirituality, for e.g., the discovery of geometry - known as "*jyāmiti*" by the Hindus, in India. "Geometry"/ "*jyāmiti*" literally means "measurement (*miti*) of the earth (*jyā*)". In order to ascertain our position in the world through geography, history, astronomy, etc., measurement or calculation becomes inevitable. In all walks of life, mathematical knowledge is based on human needs, practices, observations and their systematic presentation. In the opinion of Dr. D. P. Chattopadhyaya, "In the Indian tradition, geometry owes its origin largely to the performance of sacrifices for which *vedi* and *agn*i had to be constructed. Temples were unknown during the vedic period. The ritual of sacrifice was a household affair and a must for them. A *vedi* is a specified raised area on which the sacrifice is to be performed".[3] Fire altars were made to light fire intended for

performing daily (*nitya*) and desired (*kāmya*) sacrifices for the fulfillment of wishes. The origin of geometry and its rules are known as *Śulba-sūtras*. Of all the *Śulba-sūtras*, those pertaining to Baudhāyana are the most systematic and logical. These start with various units of linear measurements and then develop the geometry of rectilinear figures, triangles and circles, their transformation from one kind to the other, methods of arriving at areas, irrational numbers, the value of *pi*, etc. The treatment of irrational numbers, and the statement by the Śulbakāras of how to arrive at their accurate value, are of great significance.[4]

In the Indian tradition, ritual and language played a vital role in the progress of the sciences. The term "*śāstra*" has been translated as "traditional discipline" or "traditional science". "A science consists, in part, of a body of statements, rules, theorems or theories which aim at the true description and analysis of some part of the world. There must be a measure of empirical adequacy of these, which can be established, not necessarily for all of them, by tests, verifications or falsifications, directly, indirectly, or at least in principle."[5] A measure of empirical adequacy was felt in both grammar and ritual that were called as *Vedāṅgas* – the disciplines auxilliary to the *Vedas*. Both these disciplines are complementary in the sense that the one requires the other for the successful completion of their mission. The background for these two is metaphysical. "From the *Ṛg-Veda* onwards there has been a belief in India, that the most effective ritual activity is that which is accompanied by language: complementarily, the most effective language is that which is accompanied by ritual activity. Of course, such beliefs are more or less universal. Important events are still initiated with speeches, pomp, and ceremony. In the *Ṛg-Veda* 7.26.1: this attitude is expressed variously, for example "Soma – unpressed has never intoxicated Indra, nor the pressed juices unaccompanied by sacred hymns."[6]

The origin of the Indian mathematical sciences can be traced back to the Indus Valley civilization. Though the people of that era did not develop mathematics as a discipline, there was a tremendous impact of the application of mathematics. The inhabitants built brick houses, planned well the topography of their cities; used metals such as gold, silver, copper, and bronze; and lived a highly organized life. Later, the Brāhmaṇa literature (2000 B.C.), following the Vedic scriptures, contains mostly ritual and philosophy, especially metaphysics, social and religious philosophy which in turn paved the way for the development of sciences and arts. The beginning of mathematical sciences like arithmetic, geometry, algebra, astronomy, etc., may be attributed to this period. In spite of foreign invasions, internal feuds, the rise and fall of several kingdoms, this development continued for nearly two thousand years. Suśruta wrote on the science of medicine and surgery, around 600 B.C. Between 400 B.C. - 400 A.D., flourished great scholars in all the fields of knowledge. The Jaina metaphysician – Umaswāti, Patañjali - the grammarian and philosopher, Kauṭilya - the celebrated political thinker, Nāgārjuna - the chemist, Caraka - the physician, and the immortal poets - Aśvaghoṣa, Kālidāsa, *et al*.

It is evident from the scriptures that in ancient India spiritual knowledge (*parāvidya*)

and secular knowledge (*aparāvidya*) went hand in hand. In fact, the former was considered as a helpful adjunct to the latter. Sanatkumāra as narrated in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* asks Nārada before imparting spiritual knowledge to him, about the subjects he has mastered already. The prompt reply from Nārada is that his knowledge about various subjects is the culmination of various sciences and arts such as astronomy (*nakṣatra vidya*) and arithmetic *(rāśi vidya)*, etc. The canonical works of the Hindus and Jainism point out that the alphabets, drawing, geometry, arithmetic, etc., were taught in the systems of education.

The Hindus called mathematics as "*gaṇita*", which literally means "calculation"; and it frequently occurs in the Vedic literature. Like the crest on the head of a peacock, and the hood of a snake, so also *gaṇita* is atop the sciences. Three kinds of *gaṇita* are mentioned in ancient Buddhist literature viz., finger arithmetic (*mudra*), mental arithmetic (*gaṇana*) and higher arithmetic in general (*saṅkhyāna*). The *Dīgha Nikāya*, *Vinaya Piṭaka*, *Divyavadana* and *Miliṇda Paṅbo* have commentaries to these three kinds of arithmetic. The word "*saṅkhyāna*" has been referred to as "*gaṇita*" in several ancient treatises. During that period, "*gaṇita*" included astronomy. However, the ancient Indians treated geometry (*kṣetra gaṇita*) as a distinct science under the name of "*kalpa-sûtra*". The entire gamut of human existence and experience was centered around mathematical calculations, in olden days, which paved the way for the advancement of mathematical sciences in all spheres such as scale of notation, numerals, spoken language, writing of earlier numerals, kharoṣthi numerals, Brāhmi numerals, relation with letter forms, Indrajit's theory, the decimal place - value system, Nāgari forms, epigraphic instances, word numbers, alphabetic notations, the zero symbol, the place - value notation in Hindu literature, tables, addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, square, cube, square-root, cube-root, checks on operations, fractions, the rule of three as a particular case; commercial role of mathematics on interest, barter and exchange; the role of zero in arithmetic, algebra, as an infinitesimal, infinity, indeterminate forms, etc.

"Thus *gaṇita* came to mean mathematics in general, while 'finger mathematic' as well as 'mental mathematic' were excluded from the scope of its meaning. For the calculations involved in *gaṇita*, the use of some writing material was essential. The calculations were performed on a board (*pati*) with a piece of chalk, or on sand (*dhūli*) spread on the ground or on the pati. Thus the terms *pati-gaṇita* ("science of calculation on the board") or *dhūli-karma* ("dust-work"), came to be used for higher mathematics. Later on, the section of *gaṇita* dealing with algebra was given the name *Bīja-gaṇita*. The first to effect this separation was Brahmagupta (628), but he did not use the term *Bīja-gaṇita*. The chapter dealing with algebra in his *Brahma-sphuta-siddhanta* is called Kuttaka. Śridharācārya (730) regarded *Pati-gaṇita* and *Bīja-gaṇita* as separate, and wrote separate treatises on each. This distinction between *Patigaṇita* and *Bījagaṇita* has been preserved by later writers."[7]

2. SRINIVASA RAMANUJAN'S SUCCESS

Srinivasa Ramanujan - the legendary hero

of mathematics, was undoubtedly a born genius. His intuitive mind blossomed even at an early age to excel his intellectual pursuits in mathematics. He was born at Erode in Tamil Nadu, but was brought up in Kumbakonam, a temple town with innumerable Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava temples. His family members and his wife were devotees of Goddess Nāmagiri of Namakkal, but at Kumbakonam they engaged in constant prayers and worship of the Lord Almighty. From his mother, young Ramanujan absorbed the tradition, memorized the holy *mantras*, mastered the *Purāṇas* and learnt to sing religious songs, at home and in the temples as well. He lived upto the expectation of his higher caste with do's and don'ts. Growing up within sight of the Nāmagiri temple enabled him to gain internal strength, self-illumination and insight. Whenever he was inspired by mathematical discoveries, he attributed all his achievements to his favorite Goddess Nāmagiri with reverence and gratitude. Even while living at Kumbakonam, Madras, and London, he was always contemplating on the holy Feet of the Mother Goddess, gained spiritual strength, insight and metaphysical knowledge as envisaged in the holy Hindu scriptures.

"All the years while he was growing up, he lived the life of a traditional Hindu Brahmin. He sported a *kuḍumi* - the topknot, and his forehead was shaved. He was strictly a vegetarian and frequented local temples. He participated in ceremonies and rituals at home, and travelled all over South India for pilgrimage. He regularly invoked the name of his family deity, Goddess Nāmagiri of Namakkal and based his actions on what he took to be her wishes. He attributed to the Gods his ability to navigate through the shoals of mathematical texts written in foreign languages. He could recite from the Vedas, the Upanisads, and other Hindu scriptures. He had a penchant for interpreting dreams, a taste for the occult phenomena, and a mystical bent upon which his Indian friends unfailingly commented."[8] This fairly good account of his spiritual life given by Robert Kanigel clearly describes his spiritual personality traits. As Ramanujan's birth itself was attributed to the grace of Nāmagiri, it was quite natural for him to owe his indebtedness to Her for his mathematical gifts. He firmly trusted that Nāmagiri would write the equations on his tongue, and bestow mathematical insight in his dreams. His total spirit was filled with divine propensities that made him world famous.

At the age of twenty-one, Ramanujan engaged in conversation at the house of a teacher and was expatiating on the ties he felt intuitively between God, zero and infinity … keeping every one spell bound till early morning. Quite often he followed the same method. Losing himself in philosophical and mystical monologues, he would make bizarre, fanciful leaps of the imagination that his friends did not understand but found fascinating anyway. He did not rebel or deny the unseen realm of the spirit. For it is firmly believed, that South India had an undiluted spirituality that had blossomed when Ramanujan lived. Even at an early age, he developed an insatiable quest for mathematics than arts, humanities or English. He baffled his teachers with puzzles and riddles in mathematics. The problems that he raised were not solved for centuries. One such problem is really interesting. Zero divided by zero is equal to infinity, or zero bananas distributed among zero boys will give each

infinite bananas. Due to his spiritual training, he was able to excel his teachers in mathematics both in India and at Cambridge!

The potential power of inherited wisdom is reflected in the innovative creativity of the number theory by Ramanujan. His poverty stricken domestic life and deteriorated health conditions did not deter his infatuation for mathematical investigations. While fellow students played games, he played with numbers in which he rejoiced. Even the senior students sought his guidance. At the age of fifteen, Ramanujan took interest in working on the problems given in the *"Synopsis of Elementary Results in Pure and Applied Mathematics"*. This venture opened the floodgates of his mathematical genius, and ideas began pouring out so quickly that he could seriously write them all down. Unable to write such findings in notebooks, he used loose sheets of paper which came to be known as "*Ramanujan's Frayed Notebooks*". Even today mathematicians engage in conducting research on them to prove or disprove the results given therein.

Ramanujan was acclaimed as a pure mathematician of the highest order, whose fundamental interest was the theory of numbers. It was quite natural for him to look for some generalities in properties of the entire class of integers. He discovered that these integers could be partitioned in various ways: sometimes as sums of two or more primes or as sums of squares, cubes, or any other power. And, then, it was the turn of the other mathematicians to develop generalized proofs to seek conjectures, and this certainly required the deepest resources of modern mathematics. Ramanujan not only gave novel and analytical proofs to some of these, but also gave further twists to the problem in leading to further interesting and complicated correlations. As a pure mathematician, he wanted to keep his work pure and uncontaminated from any kind of technological application. In spite of his struggle for existence due to penury and poverty, he survived because of his inspiring discoveries in mathematics that he forwarded to G.D. Hardy, an eminent mathematician of Cambridge University with 120 theorems and formulae that included the Relman series which Ramanujan had independently re-discovered, being ignorant of the work of George F. Relman, a German mathematician. Ramanujan's conjecture about modular equations and another key formula in hyper-geometric series were also being sent to London. In due course, Pleme Deligne proved the validity of his conjecture, which was later recognized and popularly known as the "Ramanujan Series". Despite so many constraints, he was able to engage in mathematical discoveries at Cambridge cheerfully. He became the second Indian to become a Fellow of the Royal Society and a Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge.

Ramanujan's spiritual illumination made him achieve greatness in mathematics that culminated in the Hardy – Ramanujan - Littlewood Circle Methods in number theory, the Roger – Ramanujan identities in partition of integers, the theory of numbers, a long list of the highest composite numbers and the algebra of inequalities. His originality is reflected in algebra on continued fractions, which has been equated with and considered as important as the findings of great mathematicians like Leonard Euler and Jacobs. Scholars are of the view that Ramanujan developed a creative mind than a

critical one. "Ramanujan's belief in the Hindu gods, … , did not explain his mathematical genius. But his openness to supernatural influences hinted at a mind endowed with slippery, flexible, and elastic notions of cause and effect, that left him receptive to what those equipped with mere purely logical gifts could not see: that found union in what others saw as unrelated: that embrace before prematurely dismissing. His was a mind, perhaps, whose critical faculty was weak compared to its creative and synthetical."[9]

Hardy, who used to admire the genius of Ramanujan, remarks thus: "I have often been asked whether Ramanujan had any special secret which his methods differed in kind from those of other mathematicians, whether there was anything really abnormal in his mode of thought. I cannot answer these questions with any confidence or conviction but I do not believe it. My belief is that all mathematicians think, at bottom, in the same kind of way, and that Ramanujan was no exception." [10] As Hardy was an atheist, he regarded Ramanujan's faith in Hindu gods as a harmless economy of truth. However, Ramanujan was a man with inscrutable intellect and a simple heart. There was a clash of cultures in his life - between India and the West, between a holy street at Kumbakonam and the glittering world of Cambridge; between the pristine proofs of the Western mathematical tradition and the mysterious powers of intuition with which Ramanujan baffled the East and the West alike.

Hardy - a confirmed atheist and admirer of Ramanujan, praised him greatly when he died prematurely. Ramanujan's profound conviction was structurally exquisite and beautiful, in contrast to the turbid and confused physical world. It was this, which made his attitude to mathematics essentially spiritual, and close to religion. Ramanujan's belief in the Hindu Gods, enabled him to make the landscape of the Infinite - both mathematical and spiritual - his home. "An equation for me has no meaning", he once said, "unless it expressed a thought of God". [11]

NOTES

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4. *Ibid*., p. 559.
5. Frits Staal in "The Origins of Science in India", *Journal of Indian Philosophy* , Vol. 10, 1982, p. 4.
6. *Ibid*., p. 6.
7. Bibhutibhushan Dutta and Avadhesh Narayan Singh, *History of Hindu Mathematics - A Source Book*, Chennai: Asia Publishing House, 1962, p.8.
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9. *Ibid*., p. 28.
10. *Ibid*., p. 228.
11. *Ibid*., p. 7.

HABERMASIAN NOTION OF PUBLIC SPHERE

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The main notion of Habermasian philosophy is that the quality of society depends on our capacity to communicate, debate and discuss; and reason is crucial to communication. In 1989, Habermas published an essay in which he sketched a normative concept of the public sphere. The public sphere's potentiality as a foundation for a critique of a society which in turn becomes the basis for a democratic society has attracted Habermas. In the Habermasian model of public sphere, individuals come together and participate in open discussions. Every one has access to it, and no one can have advantage over the other in the discourse. These generic qualities of the public sphere are of course subject to particularization based both on historical context and on the topics that are admitted for discussion.

1. UNCOERCED AGREEMENT THROUGH PUBLIC SPHERE

The work entitled *"The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere"* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1989) focused the problems with the bourgeois public sphere in its classical form, which originates in the private realm. The private citizens constituted it with their concern for public. Among the different public spheres, the literary public sphere, which Habermas considers a prefiguration of a political public sphere oriented towards matters of state policy, deals with issues of cultural, rather than governmental concern. As an institution mediating between private interests and public power, the public sphere in its bourgeois form, a political variant, is based on a fundamental ideological obfuscation; the fictional identity of the property owner (bourgeois) and the human being pure and simple (home). Yet, in all of its manifestations the principles of equality and accessibility are indispensable ingredients. In contrast to institutions that are controlled from without or determined by power relation, The public sphere promises democratic control and participation.

By describing a set of conditions in which individuals might assert positions, make truth claims, and arrive at uncoerced agreement through rational argument, Habermas provides a direct challenge to radical elements in post-modernist thought. Instead of discourses intrinsically tied to power structures or language paralyzed by the possibility of infinite interpretation, this attempt gives a democratic model of discourse in which individuals might assert positions, make truth claims and arrive at uncoerced agreement through rational argument. He says, "in the power of public discourses that uncover topics of relevance to all of society, interpret values, contribute to the resolution of problems, generate good reasons, and debunk bad ones. Of course, these opinions must be given shape in the

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form of decisions by democratically constituted decision-making bodies. The responsibility for practically consequential decisions must be based in an institution. Discourses do not govern. They generate a communicative power that cannot take the place of administration but can only influence it. This influence is limited to the procurement and withdrawal of legitimation." [1]

The conditions under which the arguments of mixed companies could become authoritative basis for political action are the important factors discussed by Habermas. This is a crucial factor for the theory of democracy. He wanted to derive certain social conditions for a rational-critical debate about political issues. In his book, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, he focuses upon the seventeenth and the eighteenth century bourgeois communities. He felt that there is an institutional location for practical reason in public affairs, and for the accompanying valid, deceptive claims of formal democracy in those structures. According to Habermas, in the Kantian notion of public sphere, practical reason was institutionalized through norms of reasoned discourse in which arguments, not statuses or traditions, were to be decisive. Habermas considered the Kantian notion as procedural rationality and its ability to give credence to our views in the three areas of objective knowledge, moral – practical insight and aesthetic judgment. This procedural rationality is fundamentally a matter of basing judgment on reasons.

Habermas intended to develop a critique of this category of bourgeois society, showing both its internal tensions and factors that led to its transformation. To make it precise, a public sphere adequate to a democratic polity depends upon both quality of discourse and quantity of participation. Habermas develops the first requirement in elaborating how the classical bourgeois public sphere of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was constituted around rational critical argument, in which the merits of arguments and not the identities of the arguers, were crucial. Aristocrats played leading roles in the early bourgeois public sphere. Habermas does not mean to suggest that what made the public sphere bourgeois was simply the class composition of its members. Rather, it was society that was bourgeois, and bourgeois society produced a certain form of public sphere. The new sociability, together with the rational-critical discourse that grew in the saloons (and coffee houses and other places), depended on the rise of national and territorial power states on the basis of the early capitalist commercial economy. This process led to an idea of society separate from the ruler (state) and of a private realism separate from the public.

2. PUBLIC SPHERE AND CIVIL SOCIETY

This notion of civil society is basic to Habermas's account of the public sphere, and his account, in turn, offers a great deal of richness to current discussions of civil society that come close to equating it with the private market. The term "public" is narrowed down by the state. In the narrower sense the term "public" is synonymous with "state related". But the public sphere was not co-terminous with the state apparatus, for it included all those who might join in a discussion of the issues raised by the administration of the state Participants in this discussion included agents

of the state and private citizens. Unlike the ancient notion of the public, the modern notion depended on the possibility of counter-poising the state and the society. Here, Habermas stresses that the private sphere of the society could take on a public relevance. Civil society came into existence as the corollary of depersonalized state authority. Habermas believes that the bourgeois public sphere is institutionalized, and is not just a set of interests and an opposition between the state and the society, but a practice of rational critical discourse on political matters. Critical reasoning entered the press in the early eighteenth century, supplementing the news with learned articles and creating a new genre of periodicals.

The literature of the period relied on, and reinforced a sense of human-ness. This was a matter of not just their content, but also of author-reader relationship developed by the genre. At the same time, the literary public sphere helped to develop the distinctively modern idea of culture as an autonomous realm. Beyond this subjectivity, the greatest contributions of the literary public sphere to the political sphere lay into the development of institutional bases. These ranged from meeting places to journals, to webs of social relationships. Thus, British businessmen met in coffee houses to discuss matters of trade, including the "news" which was coming into ever-wider circulation. London had 3000 coffee houses by the first decade of the eighteenth century, each with a core of regulars. The conversation of these little circles branched out into affairs of state administration and politics. Journals of opinion were created, which linked the thousands of smaller circles in London and throughout the country. These were often based at particular coffee houses, and replicated in their contents the style of convivial exchange. In France, salons, public institutions located in private homes, played a crucial role, bridging a literary public sphere dominated by aristocrats with the emergent bourgeois political public sphere. In Germany, table societies drew together not only academics, but also other sorts of people. The public outside these institutions was very small.

All sorts of topics over which the Church and the State authorities had hitherto exercised a virtual monopoly of interpretation were opened to discussion, in as much as the public defined its discourse as focusing on all matters of common concern. The literary public sphere produced the practice of literary criticism. In France, a public that critically debated political issues arose only near the middle of the eighteenth century. Only in the years, the philosophers turn their critical attention from art, literature and religion to politics. In Germany, the public's rational critical debate of political matters took place predominantly in the private gatherings of the bourgeoisie.

Habermas stresses the economic foundations of the public sphere. "The social precondition for the "developed" bourgeois public sphere was a market that, tending to be liberalized, made affairs in the sphere of social reproduction as much as possible a matter of private people left to themselves and so finally completed the privatization of civil society"[2]. This institutionalization of a new and stronger sense of privacy as free control of productive property was a crucial contribution of capitalism to the public sphere. But here it should be observed that the

public sphere is subject to dramatic change; one might even argue that it is on the verge of extinction. Computer–mediated communi cation has taken the place of coffee-house discourse, and issues such as media ownership and commodification pose serious threats to the free flow of information and freedom of speech on the Web.

The undermining of the foundations of the public sphere came about, Habermas suggests, through a "refeudalisation" of the society. "The model of bourgeois public sphere presupposed strict separation of the public from the realm, in such a way that the public sphere made up of private people gathered together as a public and articulating the need of society with the state, was itself considered part of the private realm."[3] The structural confirmation came about as private organisations began increasingly to assume public power on the one hand, while the state penetrated the private realm on the other. The State and the society, once distinct, became interlocked. The public sphere was necessarily transformed, as the distinction the between the public and the private realms blurred, the equation between the intimate sphere and private life broke down with the polarization of family and economic society, rational-critical debate gave way to the consumption of culture. Again the functioning of the public sphere shifted from rational-critical debate to negotiation. "The process of politically relevant exercise and equilibration of power now takes place directly between the private bureaucracies, special-interest association, parties, and public administration. The public as such was included, only sporadically in the circuit of power. Innovations that opened economic access to the public sphere and realm of high culture, cheaper edition of books, are worthy of praise. But serious involvement in culture is slowly replaced by consumption of mass culture. The deep politicization of public sphere and the removal of critical discourse are happening. The newspapers that submitted political issues to critical discussion, in the long run, lost their influence. One of the effects of public discourse is that "bracketing" personal attributes, and concentrating on the rational-critical arguments become more difficult. The weakening of the public is not a matter of new (lower class) entrants, being merely a consumer is a sub-standard participant. Habermas asserts the consumption of mass culture increases with wealth, status and urbanization.

This transformation involves literal disintegration with the loss of notion of general interest and the rise of consumption orientation; the members of the public sphere lose their common ground. The public sphere has become more an arena for advertising than a setting for rational-critical debate. Special interest organizations use publicity work to increase the prestige of their own positions. The media is used to create occasions for consumers to identify with the public positions. The public sphere becomes a setting for the states and the corporate actors to develop legitimacy, not by responding appropriately to an independent and critical public, but by seeking to instill in social actors, motivations that conform to the needs of the overall system dominated by those states and the corporate actors. Habermas finds the need for a struggle to transform institutions and reclaim the public sphere, to make good on the kernel of truth in the ideology of the bourgeois public sphere. It is

a struggle to make publicity a source of reasoned, progressive, consensus formation rather than an occasion for the manipulation of popular opinion. The ideal of public sphere calls for social integration to be based on rational-critical discourse. Integration is to be based on communication rather than domination. "Communication", in this context, means not merely sharing what people already think or know but also a process of potential transformation in which reason is advanced by debate itself. This goal cannot be realized by a denial of the implications of large-scale social organization, by imagining a public sphere occupied by autonomous private individuals, with no large organization and with no cleavages of interest inhibiting the identification of the general good.

Habermas's ideas of intra-organizational publicity and democracy are important, in the absence of a unifying general interest; these can only improve representation in compromise, and not achieve the identification of the political with the moral through the agency of rational-critical debate. Habermas is not able to find an effective political public sphere in the advanced capitalist societies. In the digital age, the discussion about the public sphere has become increasingly relevant, and increasingly problematic. The validity and relevance of post–modern critique to Habermas' concept of the public sphere cannot be denied, yet the concept of a public sphere and Habermas' notion of a critical publicity is still extremely valuable for media theory today. More generally, "a radical-democratic change in the process of legitimating aims at a new balance between the forces of societal integration so that the social-integrative power of solidarity- the communicative force of production - can prevail over the powers of the other two control resources, i.e., money and administrative power, and therewith successfully assert the practically oriented demands of life world."[4]

Habermas continues to seek a way to recover the normative ideal of formal democracy from early bourgeois political theory and practice, and to develop a basis for discerning the social directions by which it might progress. More specifically, he continues to see the development of welfare state capitalism as producing impasses, but destroying earlier bases for addressing them through utopian collective action. However, where structural transformation located the basis for the application of practical reason to politics in the historically specific social institutions of the public sphere, the theory of communicative action locates them in trans-historical, evolving communicative capacities or capacities of reason conceived inter-subjectively, as in its essence a matter of communication. The public sphere remains an ideal, but it becomes a contingent product of the evolution of communicative action, rather than its basis. The public sphere is not just a "marketplace of ideas" or an "information exchange depot," but also a major vehicle for generating and distributing culture.[5] The notion of the public sphere is not a static one, but subject to change, and show how the theoretical concept of the public sphere is being used to work out viable options for a digital future and models for positive change. Its future is with the digital media, which offer exciting possibilities as digital networks enhance and change social structures. The groups and individuals can indeed accomplish

change by communicative action, and digital communications technology may empower them to do so.[6] For the first time in history, individuals and groups could shape public opinion, giving direct expression to their needs and interests while influencing political practice. The bourgeois public sphere made it possible to form a realm of public opinion that opposed state power, and the powerful interests that were coming to shape bourgeois society.

Habermas's concept of the public sphere, thus described a space of institutions and practices between the private interests of everyday life in civil society and the realm of state power. The public sphere thus mediates between the domains of the family and the workplace where private interests prevail, and the state which often exerts arbitrary forms of power and domination. What Habermas called the "bourgeois public sphere" consisted of social spaces where individuals gathered to discuss their common public affairs, and to organize against arbitrary and oppressive forms of social and public power. The concept of the civil society appears to be dated in what is essentially a network society. Van Dijk distinguishes three conditions of the public sphere that are likely to disappear in the new media environment of a network society. The alliance of the public sphere with a particular place or territory diminishes: "Members of a particular organic community or a nation are no longer tied to a given territory to meet each other and build collectivities."[7] The unitary character of the public sphere is transforming into an amalgam of different "sub"–spheres. The distinction between the public and the private spheres is blurring. The conventional notion of a single, unified public sphere is likely to disappear in favour of a more segmented, pluralist model- something like a "complex mosaic of differently sized overlapping and interconnected public spheres. What binds people in this contemporary public sphere is a "diversified and shifting complex of overlapping similarities and differences."[8] The Internet itself forms the perfect example of this new structure. Moreover, "the common ground of the unitary nation or mass society is an idea from the age of national broadcasting through a few channels. It is still rooted in the minds of the intellectual political and media elite, though it was never firmly based in reality."[9]

As Habermas's critics have documented, working class, plebeian, and women's public spheres developed alongside of the bourgeois public sphere to represent voices and interests excluded in this forum. Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge criticized Habermas for the neglect of the plebeian and the proletarian public spheres. And, in reflection, Habermas has written that, he now realizes that "from the beginning a dominant bourgeois public collides with a plebeian one" and that he "underestimated" the significance of oppositional and non-bourgeois public spheres.[10] Despite the limitations of his analysis, Habermas is right that in the era of the democratic revolutions a public sphere emerged, in which, for the first time in history, ordinary citizens could participate in political discussion and debate, organize, and struggle against unjust authority, while militating for social change, and that this sphere was institutionalized, however imperfectly, in later developments of Western societies. Habermas's account of the structural transformation of the public sphere, despite its limitations, points to the increasingly important functions of the media in politics

and everyday life. Also, it shows how the corporate have colonized this sphere using the media and culture to promote their own interests.

For Habermas, contemporary societies are divided between a life-world governed by norms of communicative interaction, and a system governed by "steering imperatives" of money and power. This distinction mediates between systems theory and hermeneutics, arguing that the former cannot grasp the communicative practices of everyday life while the latter ignores the systemic forces that have come to dominate the life-world. For Habermas, the "steering media" of money and power, enables business and the state to control ever more processes of everyday life, thus undermining democracy and the public sphere, moral and communicative interaction, and other ideals of Habermas and the Frankfurt School. It has frequently been argued that this dichotomy is too dualistic and Manichean, overlooking that the state and political realm can be used benevolently and progressively, while the life world can be the site of all sorts of oppression and domination.

Bertolt Brecht and Walter Benjamin (1969) saw the revolutionary potential of new technologies like the film and the radio, and urged radical intellectuals to seize these new forces of production, to "refunction" them, and to turn them into instruments to democratize and revolutionize society. Jean-Paul Sartre too worked on radio and television series and insisted that "committed writers must get into these relay station arts of the movies and radio."[11] Previously, radio, television, and the other electronic media of communication tended to be closed to critical and oppositional voices, both in systems controlled by the state and by private corporations. Public access and low power television, and community and guerilla radio, however, opened these technologies to intervention and use by critical intellectuals. The radio, television, and other electronic modes of communication were creating new public spheres of debate, discussion, and information; hence, activists and intellectuals who wanted to engage the public, to intervene in the public affairs of their society can make use of these technologies and develop communication politics and new media projects.

3. PUBLIC SPHERE AND CYBER DEMOCRACY

The rise of the Internet expands the realm for democratic participation and debate, and creates new public spaces for political intervention. First broadcast media like radio and television, and now computers, have produced new public spheres and spaces for information, debate, and participation that contain both the potential to invigorate democracy and to increase the dissemination of critical and progressive ideas as well as new possibilities for manipulation, social control, the promotion of conservative positions, and intensifying differences between the haves and the have not's. But participation in these new public spheres computer bulletin boards and discussion groups, talk radio and television, and the emerging sphere of, what I call "cyberspace democracy", requires critical intellectuals to gain new technical skills and to master new technologies.[12] To be sure, the Internet is a contested terrain, used by Left, Right, and Center to promote their own agendas and interests. The political battles of the future

may well be fought in the streets, factories, parliaments, and other sites of past conflict, but politics today is already mediated by media, computer, and information technologies and will increasingly be so in the future. Those interested in politics and culture of the future should therefore be clear on the important role of the new public spheres and intervene accordingly. The Internet provides opportunities for limited revitalization of the public sphere. These new opportunities are limited to privileged groups, but it is at least an increase in the activities of the public sphere, however modest. If Internet use expands into middle-income groups, lower-income groups and women, it may yet present a real opportunity for greater participation, democratic communication and a true revitalisation of the public sphere.

A new democratic politics will thus be concerned that new media and computer technologies be used to serve the interests of the people, and not the corporate elites. A democratic politics will strive to see that the broadcast media and computers are used to inform and enlighten individuals, rather than to manipulate them. A democratic politics will teach individuals how to use the new technologies, to articulate their own experiences and interests, and to promote democratic debate and diversity, allowing a full range of voices and ideas to become part of the cyber democracy of the future. Now, more than ever, public debate over the use of new technologies is of utmost importance to the future of democracy. "Who will control the media and technologies of the future?" and debates over the public's access to media, media accountability and responsibility, media funding and regulation, and the kinds of culture that are best for cultivating individual freedom, democracy, human happiness, and well-being will become increasingly important in the future. The proliferation of media culture and computer technologies focuses attention on the importance of new technologies and the need for public intervention in debates over the future of media culture and communications in the information highways and entertainment by-ways of the future. The technological revolution of our time thus involves the creation of new public spheres, and the need for democratic strategies to promote the project of democratization and to provide access to more people to get involved in more political issues and struggles, so that democracy might have a chance in the new millennium!

NOTES

1. Habermas, *Further Reflections on Public Sphere*, Ed. Craig Calhoun, Tr. Thomas Burger, Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992, p. 452.
2. Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1989.
3. R.Murali, *Habermas on Public Sphere*, "Philosophy in the New Millennium: Problems and Prospects", India, 2005, p. 50.
4. R.Murali, *Habermas on Public Sphere*, p. 51.
5. Sam Hinton, "*The Potential of the Latent Public Sphere"*, 1998, at nu.edu.au/~e951611/papers/potential.html
6. Pieter Boeder, *Habermas's Heritage: The Future of the Public Sphere in the Network Society*, URL:http://firstmonday.org/issues/issue10_9/boeder/index.html

7. Jan Van Dijk, *The Network Society: Social Aspects of New Media*. Translation of *De Netwerkmaatschappij* by Leontine Spoorenberg, London: Sage, 1999, p.164.
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9. Jan Van Dijk, 1999, *Op.Cit*., p.165.
10. Habermas, *Further Reflections on Public Sphere, Calhoun*, *Op.cit*., p .430.
11. Jean Paul Sartre, *For discussion of his Les temps modernes radio series*, New York: Whitston Publishing, 1974, p. 177 - 180
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RECONSTITUTING SOCIETY IN SEARCH OF SOCIAL JUSTICE

* *Dr. Abha Singh*

Hardly had independent India taken progressive strides, and, in effect, consolidated herself economically, socially and culturally, when several anti-national forces, not to exclude linguism, regionalism, communalism, casteism and its chain effect reservation started raising their dragonian heads. When India has declared herself to be a social republic, and has advocated equality of opportunity and equality before law to all her citizens; these forces of disintegration are acting only as retarding agents to the much required new adjustments. They, moreover, appear to be symptoms of a chronic disease, which may ultimately threaten the existence of our nation as a socialistic secular and sovereign republic. Hence, there is a need for discussing some aspects of disintegration, for, finding a way out of the quagmire.

1. PROBLEMATIC ISSUES

Indian society has for centuries been split and stratified on the basis of caste. People are born into caste and sub-caste. The social status of a person largely depends on one's caste. In consequence, many of them have traditionally suffered from various kinds of social discrimination and disabilities. The traditionally backward and deprived sections of the society have been so weak that they have not been able to take advantage of the opportunities provided to them. After independence, a cross section of the Indian society was assured of a new social order. But, we realize that the social order that has been established is certainly not the one that was promised by the leaders of the nation. Freedom from British rule was followed by grinding poverty and oppression of the weaker sections (the so-called "lower castes" in the Indian context) of the society by the stronger section (the so-called "upper castes") on the one hand; and the dawn of a new era of social justice, on the other hand. However, sadly speaking, instead of decrease, disparity in income and social inequality has increased manifold times after independence and communal amity has also diminished.

Ostensibly, the intellectuals and the politicians have not responded positively to the upheavals/ discriminations based on caste and caste-like identities. Semantically and ideologically, casteism appears to be at par with communalism, if not worse. The shift in the claim and demand by the people clamouring to benefit on the basis of caste-identities, from economic advancement to social status and political powers, has made casteism even more disconcerting. Pluralism, the core of Indian social terrain, is, of late, being expressed in an upsurge for equity and social justice. They consider it being a matter of right, and, therefore, endeavour to achieve the same through access to State power. We, thus, observe that the old liberal view of pluralism is now being countered by a more radical interpretation of it.

In the social process, the Indian vision was to reduce the potency of caste; and, in due course, eliminate it. The basis of such an idea

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seems to be that in due course class-consciousness would prevail over caste-consciousness. But, unfortunately, it could not succeed. Simultaneously, for the fractured Indian society, the idea of "secularism" was considered to be the most appropriate remedy as it was expected to weaken the base of all the three evils, viz., communalism, religious bigotry, and caste-consciousness. It was felt that our welfare society, based on the principle of equality, would provide equal access of opportunity to every person, and, thereby, ultimately succeed in drawing out people from their caste, creed, and other consciousness. Moreover, it was also hoped that modern education would make them a single and homogeneous middle class, and that a new conception of unity based on national identity would emerge. It was dreamt to be an ideal State, which could efface both communalism (based on religious assertion) and casteism (based on identities of both *varna* and *jat*i). However, this could not happen since the two terms "communalism" and "casteism" cannot be used simultaneously. To put it in the words of the noted political scientist Rajni Kothari:

> The term "communal identity" can itself take two wholly opposite forms – identity giving and identity eroding, subjugating and eradicating, just as "community" can have distinct meanings. It can be used in the macro all encompassing form of polarizing communities, or in micro pluralizing form as has all along been the case on the ground in the rural India (the former meaning has acquired some sway only of late). With the entry of the democratic political process the pluralistic micro perspective took precedence over the polarizing marco attempt that was carried over by some from pre-Partition days and in the meanwhile the diverse micro processes added up to a new macro structure of society - politics interaction – until the old marco view reverberated with a bang after a challenge thrown to it by the Mandal phenomenon.[1]

In the democratic social process both communalism and caste system have proved to be equally dangerous. However, at times, the two converge and, thereby, combine. Consequently, the basic democratic vision of plurality, diversity, and equality are shattered. It further leads to deprivation and traditional attitudes of social exploitation. It, however, produces a world in which millions are left behind or, in other words, marginalized.

Of late, there have been social movements to take corrective measures for environmental degradation, violation of the status of women, destruction of tribal culture, and the undermining of human rights. However, none of these are capable of transferring social order on their own. The fundamental weakness of all such movements is that they themselves are confined to one aspect / ailment of the society.

Indeed, it is a widely accepted fact that the Indian society is heavily segregated on caste line, which, in turn, uninterruptedly continues to weaken the entire social process. However, social reformers tried to supplement it with the quota institutions. The caste order, which came under powerful assault from both - above and below - was seen as an unmitigated evil. B. R. Ambedkar was engaged in fighting these assaults from both sides: (1) from above, an ideological shift and a regime of reservations ensuring accelerated mobility for at least some among the lower

castes; and (2) from below, a call to flatten the caste system leading to assertiveness on the part of lower castes. The inspiration of assertiveness appears to be acquired by a widespread spirit of insurgency in the Gandhian legacy of civil disobedience, as well as Marxian challenge to the authority. The policy of reservation has been adopted ostensibly to protect them from what is called "unfair competition" from others.

In fact, every citizen of the state has a right of equal access to opportunities, according to Article -16 of the Constitution of India. The specific right provided by the Article is based on a more general legal principle, which is expressed as follows: "Every citizen of a State has a right to equal treatment before law with regard to the rights conferred and obligations imposed by the state on its citizen."[2] However, the minority section of the Indian society has been a victim of centuries of exploitation and segregation in the form of centuries of untouchability. Social goods, cultural goods, and material wealth have been largely inaccessible to its members while the general group benefited from their miseries. The latter group accumulated an unfair amount of goods of several kinds. In other words, there has been an unfair distribution of wealth in the society.

2. RESERVATION AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

The purpose of reservation was to bring the disadvantaged group to the level of the advantaged, and to bring an early end to the disparity for eliminating the discrimination. However, reservations do not seem to serve the purpose because the members of the minority section are considered as belonging to an inferior caste with low potentiality, and are looked down upon as a "quota person" at their work place. This is for the simple reason that members of the minority, though bright but less qualified than others, get into educational institutions and work place on the basis of the quota. But, they fail to compete with the majority. This incites the majority to think that the members of the minority are inferior, and are not as good as those of the general group. The most distressing is, the alleged fact, that a member of the minority may be influenced by such circumstances to believe oneself as inferior. A person may think that one got a place because of the quota. In spite of the discontent on the part of the losers as well as the beneficiaries, I accept that if the policy brings justice it must be upheld.

However, the key question is, "Does reservation uphold justice? Does not it deny another group their right to equal protection under law?" Lisa Newton argues that such treatment does not serve political justice. She writes:

> (Political justice) is the condition, which freemen establish among themselves when they share a common life in order that their association brings them self-sufficiency … regulation of their relationship by law, and the establishment, by law, of equality before the law. Rule of law is the name and pattern of the justice; its equality stands against the inequalities – of wealth, talent etc., – otherwise obtaining among its participants, who, by virtue of that equality are called "citizens".[3]

Newton's argument obviously raises the issue about the right of the general group, in the present context - their right to protection before law. But, the implications of her

argument are that if one sticks to political justice, i.e. justice obtained by conforming to the law, then social justice would become an illusion and nothing else. Such a conflict between social justice and political justice is expressed in the problems of Harijans in India. Down the ages, members of the scheduled castes remained social untouchables, and yet remained useful to society by performing jobs which were considered as polluting. They were allowed to be Hindus, and yet, were outside the Hindu fold for more practical purposes. The Hindu, who pretends to believe that all human beings are God's creatures, and one's own men, has continued to treat them worse than animals. Obviously, they badly needed some people to do some dirty jobs. So, they chained Harijans to those dirty jobs and did everything to keep them landless, so that the Hindus could get bonded labourers. Harijans had every right to be treated with dignity as fellow members of the society, though the political system did not recognize their rights. Moreover, they were denied several other human rights. Human rights are those valuable ingredients without which a society fails to be a just society. The acknowledgement of injustice perpetrated to Harijans shows that the core sense of justice is fairness in all respects and not just political.

Justice as fairness presupposes the following moral facts: (a)The individuals constituting the social order are moral. (b)The just social order is basically a moral order enjoining upon the participants to respect each other's freedom and equality in respect of all, the basic or primary goods of the society. Rawls elucidated the general conception of justice in the following principle: "All social values - liberty and opportunity, income and wealth and the base of self-respect are to be distributed equally unless an unequal distribution of any or all of these values is to everyone's advantage."[4] This principle and other principles of justice, which are special cases of it, are the guidelines for the design of the institutions of the society, which confer rights and assign responsibilities to the people. These are the principles acceptable to free and rational persons for furthering their own interests, in an initial position of equality, as defining the fundamental terms of their association. A society satisfying these principles of justice comes as close as the society of the said hypothetical situation. Any political or social arrangement of a society is just if it reflects these principles. It is this conception of social justice, which makes cruelty to Harijans unjust.

Against this backdrop, the "Dalit Movement" in India emerged. It was based on the solidarity of the poor, and the discriminated class of the society. However, this movement did not gain much momentum because either their leaders were divided or bought over.[5] However, the continuous onslaught by the rural upper class, and the fear of emergence of fanatical political parties, which, in consequence, saw a constant alignment and realignment of major minorities (particularly the Muslims), gave an opportunity for the Dalit phenomenon to emerge with power and confidence during the closing years of the last millennium. Even this reinforced Dalit phenomenon will continue to remain weak as long as its basic thrust is a demand for state jobs and positions, instead of transforming the civil society.

Simultaneously, the state, on its part, has been making some concerted efforts to bridge

the gap in the society – the prime one being State sponsored reservation. Reservation is, in effect, a policy of reverse discrimination, i.e. discrimination against the traditionally privileged to favour a weaker and deprived group. But, the efforts to compensate them for historical injustice have, instead of achieving the desired goal, created a new suspicion and resentment among the various sections of the society. The strong agrarian castes, which are politically and economically very strong, staked claim for a share in the welfare booty. The upper castes also started demanding a redefinition of backwardness on an economic rather than a caste basis. All these have threatened to accentuate social cleavage, and perpetuate the indelible status of scheduled castes and tribes.

Lest we forget that it is to the credit of Ambedkar that he saw reservation as a time bound policy, open to periodic appraisal. But, the opponents of reservation started questioning the time-bound feature in the original formulation without enquiring as to whether or not the aims of the policy have actually been met. Had an onslaught of this kind continued, the quota system in India would have met an early end. That it survives today and shows no sign of diminishing, is because it has been picked up by powerful agrarian castes to further their community ends. Moreover, they began to apply the quota system to advance their ambition. Reservation now became a means of selfish use. The Mandal Recommendation was the climax of the tendency. Thence onwards Ambedkar's vision of reservation deported. Reservations now were no longer confined to the downtrodden. It was now helping the powerful agrarian castes to consolidate themselves in the cities, jobs, posts and other such opportunities. In this way, meritocracy now began to be sacrificed at the altar of reservocracy. But it is an accepted fact that merely getting jobs and occupying seats of power cannot bring about equality and social justice.

We also see that the issue of reservation is being focused primarily with the individual's development and completely overlooking the well-being of the society. The complementary perspective of society demands the well being of both, the individual and the society simultaneously. The advocates of reservation should, therefore, sit back and seriously think about what good they are doing to the society through the present pattern of reservations. A realistic solution to this problem is to step up access to education especially to the professional courses. Without proper education, the goal of equity and equality would only be a chimera. Hence, if we really wish to raise the weaker sections of our society from their present lowly status to equality with other sections, we should provide them free education up to the highest level, subsidize their feeding, clothing and accommodation. Thereafter, let them fend for themselves; and show that what the forwards can do, the backwards can do better!

An inter-connected issue that agitates the mind is the reservation in the legislative bodies. How will reservation of seats in the Parliament and the State legislatures for 40% of the illiterate poor people living below poverty line, really help in formulating policies even in their own interest; in spite of the fact that our Constitution does not insist on literacy for election to the Parliament or Assembly? Surely, we need parliamentarians and legislatures who can think in national and

international terms as well, and, thereafter, take a balanced view of problems and sort them out. Without proper education, it would be highly dangerous for the nation to allow such people to hold the reins of the nation. The citizens of India, by and large, are now realizing slowly but tediously that the quota justice, as a whole, is more for the benefit of the politicians than the people.

Conclusively, one can say that in India, the much-clamoured social justice can be achieved if and when we could give meaning and content to political democracy. This is possible only when we lay down the broad framework of economic democracy. Ambedkar suggested, quite rightly, some ways to attain such a state. It is distinguished as "Directive Principles". Accordingly, the State must make concerted efforts to minimize the inequality in income and strive to eliminate inequalities in status, facilities and opportunities, both among individuals and groups of people living in different areas or involved in different vocations. The State is expected, in particular, to direct its policies towards securing that all the citizens have a right to an adequate means of livelihood. Also the ownership and control of the material resources of the community should be distributed in such a way that it subserves the common good. The State must keep a watchful eye that the operation of the economic system does not result in the concentration of wealth and means of production to the common detriment. Moreover, there should be equal pay for equal work. Last but not the least, the State must uphold such policies which check crimes against women and stop child abuse. If these principles are followed by the State earnestly then not only social justice, but also political and economic justice can be positively attained.

NOTES

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2. Article 14 of the Constitution of India reflects this general legal principle
3. Lisa H.Newton, "Reverse Discrimination as Unjustified", *Ethics*, Vol. 83, No. 4, July 1973, p. 308.
4. John Rawls, "Theory of Justice", *Reason and Responsibilities*, Eds. John Feinberg and Russ Shaffer-Landau, Belmonmt: Thomson Higher Education, 2008, p. 57, note `
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THE HERMENEUTIC THEORIES OF HANS-GEORG GADAMER—A CRITIQUE

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1. PREAMBLE

After Heidegger, the mantle of furthering ontological hermeneutics fell on his student Gadamer who advanced his own brand of hermeneutics known as "philosophical hermeneutics." Addressing the question "What exactly is philosophical about philosophical hermeneutics?", Page in the *Philosophical Hermeneutics and its Meaning for Philosophy,* writes that "the primary universalization embodied in Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics is the move from text to experience", and adds that philosophical hermeneutics is engaged in inquiring into "the very possibility of coming to understand at all."[1] In his Introduction to Gadamer's *Philosophical Hermeneutics,* Linge observes that Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics offers no codes for interpretation or new methodological proposals for changing current hermeneutical practice, but endeavours to describe what actually takes happens in every act of understanding.

2. PREJUDICE AND PREUNDERSTANDING

Gadamer's *magnum opus* is *Truth* and *Method*. In the main, the key aspects of Gadamerian hermeneutics are the concepts of prejudice, tradition, effective historical consciousness, horizon, fusion of horizons, linguisticality, and historicality. It is a hermeneutical fact that no human being ever approaches reality or a given text with a blank or neutral mind (*tabula rasa*). As human beings are, and operate within the perimeter of tradition and history, bound by the fundamental coordinates of time and space, they necessarily encounter reality with a certain bent of mind from a particular standpoint. According to Gadamer, all understanding invariably involves some prejudice (*vorurteil*); and these prejudices of an individual, more than one's judgments, determine the historical reality of one's being

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Notwithstanding the observation that the term "prejudice" has acquired a negative semantic connotation, Gadamer points out that "prejudice" does not mean a false judgment, but it is part of the idea that it can have a positive and a negative value.[2] He adds that the pejorative sense of the term is probably a vestige of the Enlightenment's apathy towards prejudice and, in its place, a glorification of the role of reason. Petero in *The Nature and Role of Presuppositions: An Inquiry into Contemporary Hermeneutics"*, observes that the Enlightenment viewed prejudice, as a baseless judgment without grounding in reality. Therefore, it is to Gadamer's credit that he rehabilitates the term "prejudice", and gives it an interesting turn and fresh lease of life. Throwing light on the crucial role prejudices play in encountering reality, Petero observes that though "prejudice" and its cognates "presuppositions", "prejudgments", and "pre-understanding" (similar to Heidegger's "fore-structures of understanding") have acquired different connotations in common

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parlance, "they basically denote the same phenomenon: a pre-articulated structure of beliefs which directs consciousness to perceive, organize, and meaningfully understand the objects and events it encounters.[3]

3. TRADITION AND UNDERSTANDING

In Gadamerian hermeneutics, prejudices which stem from the historical tradition in which we stand play a crucial role. Not only do they help human beings in apprehending reality by providing a grid, however contingent and provisional it may be, but also play a significant role in the fusion of horizons in the context of text-interpretation. According to Bleicher, Gadamer emphasizes that the process of text-understanding is always supported by a reader's pre-understanding and interests in participating in the meaning of the text. What is most important is that a reader should become aware of one's prejudices, in one's encounter with the text; and should have the intellectual courage and honesty to stake one's personal prejudices and allow them to be challenged and, if need be, altered in the light of the horizon of the text. Significantly, readers with different prejudices will encounter a given text in potentially different ways based on their respective horizons.

Gadamer restores the pre-eminence of tradition in the face of a frontal attack on it by the Enlightenment. "That which has been sanctioned by tradition and custom has an authority that is nameless," declares Gadamer, and adds that "our finite historical being is marked by the fact that always the authority of what has been transmitted - and not only what is clearly grounded - has power over our attitudes and behaviour."[4] The authority invested with tradition should not be interpreted as the oppressive yoke of the past which cannot be shaken off. Petero clarifies that tradition is authoritative for an individual because one's very historical finite being, which is all the being we have, is determined by it. Gadamer is quick to dispel the misconception that tradition can only bring in knowledge that is fossilized and out of sync with the present. Conceiving tradition in a dynamic manner, he observes that accepting a tradition does not limit the freedom of knowledge but makes it possible.

Understanding is possible because both the text and the interpreter stand in the stream of tradition, which is paradoxically the same and yet different, and which, significantly, cannot be totally objectified. The text and the interpreter belong to the same tradition insofar as they are characterized by radical finitude and the temporality of facticity; and they are different because they are situated in different horizons within the same tradition. In other words, tradition is actualized and individualized by different individuals belonging to diverse horizons; and, ultimately, there takes place a fusion of horizons which results in understanding.

4. LINGUISTICALITY

Gadamer, along with Heidegger, jettisons the instrumentalistic conception of language and gives it an ontological turn. Thus, the question of language in Gadamer and Heidegger is not so much epistemological as it is ontological. Against this backdrop, Gadamer's declaration that language is the fundamental mode of operation of our being-

in-the-world is significant.

In Gadamerian theory of understanding and interpretation, language plays a vital role. Gadamer conceives hermeneutics to be dialogical wherein discourse serves as the model. "The model which underlies the general hermeneutical approach is the model of the question and answer," notes Gadamer in *Religious and Poetical Speaking,* and adds that "the logical structure of dialogue must be the guideline for any research in hermeneutics."[5] Since both the text and the reader belong to language in an identical manner, the fusion of horizons is made possible. In other words, linguisticality not only discloses the world but bridges people who are situated in different horizons through the girder of linguisticality.

5. UNDERSTANDING AS APPLICATION

In Gadamerian hermeneutics, understanding, interpretation and application, the three subtilitates, constitute a unified triad. For Gadamer, all understanding is interpretation; and understanding is already interpretation because it creates the historical horizon within which to realize the meaning of a text. In the case of juridical and biblical hermeneutics, application (subtlitas applicandi) constitutes an integral part of understanding (subtilitas intelligendi) and interpretation (subtilitas explicandi); and, hence, Gadamer affirms that understanding is always application, for the application of the theoria to a given situation (praxis) completes the hermeneutical process. Palmer's view is that to understand, in the sense of knowing or explaining, involves application or relation of the text to the present.

Every interpreter brings one's own horizon to bear on the text one encounters. The interpreter views the given text through the grid of one's preunderstanding and prejudices which stem from the tradition one rooted in historically. Therefore, any interpretation is necessarily from the horizon of the interpreter, and it is not only inadmissible but impossible as well to shed one's prejudices in one's encounter with a text. According to Gadamer, it is not only impossible, but also absurd to try to eliminate one's own concepts in interpretation. Interpretation involves using one's preconceptions so that the meaning of the text can really be made to speak to us. It has to be noted that any interpretation is not only from the horizon of the interpreter, but from the present space – time context as well. Expounding this thesis, Palmer asserts that "the 'meaning' of the past work is defined in terms of the questions put to it from the present."[6] In other words, understanding brings into play a sustained dialogue between the past and the present.

6. EFFECTIVE HISTORICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Gadamer states that we cannot deny or negate the past for we are always situated in history. He further argues that historical distance should not be construed as alienating or estranging for there is an intimate link between the past, the present and the future as well. Lawn writes, "All understanding takes place from within an embedded horizon but that horizon is necessarily and ubiquitously interconnected with the past . . . The language through which we articulate the present resonates with the meanings from the past and they continue to be operative in the present: this gives a sense of what Gadamer means by

'effective historical consciousness' [*Wirkungsgeschichtliches Bewusstsein*]." [7]

7. UNDERSTANDING AN ON-GOING PROCESS

Gadamer conceives interpretation as an interplay between the language of the interpreter and the language of the text which one faces. Because understanding and interpretation are always from the interpreter's horizon and one's times, it implies that texts are understood differently by different readers situated in different ages and cultures. Every age has to understand a transmitted text in its own way; asserts the Heidelberg philosopher and adds that the real meaning of a text is always partially determined also by the historical situation of the interpreter; and, hence, by the totality of the objective course of history.

Gadamer also argues that a reader or critic has to accept the hermeneutical fact that there cannot be any one interpretation that is correct "in itself" because all interpretation is concerned with the text itself. As the interpretative horizon changes, "application" - the third element in the trilogy, leads to varying understandings depending upon the contexts of interpretation. Hans notes that for Gadamer, different readers impose different contexts on the text, thereby resulting in varying interpretations that are not simply relative to the reader's own fancies.

According to Gadamer, understanding is not a passive and mechanical operation of reproducing the author's intended meaning (mens auctoris) in the romanticist tradition of Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Betti and Hirsch. On the contrary, he contends that understanding and interpretation are creative and productive processes. Arguing from a position which is diametrically opposed to the stance of romanticist hermeneuticians, he observes that interpretation is a re-creation. But, "this re-creation does not follow the process of the creative act, but the lines of the created work which has to be brought to representation in accord with the meaning the interpreter finds in it."[8] Highlighting the Gadamerian thesis that understanding is not re-cognitive in the romanticist sense, Bleicher in Contemporary Hermeneutics, notes that "the conception of an existence-in-itself of a text is . . . quite incorrect and exhibits an element of dogmatism" and adds that "each appropriation [of textual meaning] is different and equally valid." [9]

8. FUSION OF HORIZONS

The highpoint of Gadamer's theory of understanding is his hermeneutical concept of "fusion of horizons" (*Horizontverschmelzung*). Before delving into this concept, it is mandatory to throw some light on the concept of horizon in Gadamer's lexicon. According to Gadamer, understanding is possible only within the horizon of inquiry.

"Every finite present has its limitations," notes Gadamer and adds that "we define the concept of 'situation' by saying that it represents a standpoint that limits the possibility of vision. Hence an essential part of the concept of situation is the concept of 'horizon'."[10] It has to be underlined that both creative and interpretive endeavours take place within the framework of a given horizon. Explicating the term "horizon", Hoy observes that the term "horizon" is an attempt

at describing the situatedness or the context-bound nature of an interpretation.

However hard a reader may try, he/she can never completely become aware of his/her horizon and thematize it, for he/she is engulfed by his/her horizon and can never stand apart from it. Since the writer and the reader are, each, anchored in their own horizon, there surfaces a gap between these two leading to "alienating distanciation" (*verfremdung*). Alienation creeps in even when the gap between the two horizons is minimal. In stark contrast to romanticist hermeneuticians, who, through congenial empathy, call for a transposition into the writer's subjective dimension to bridge this gap or distance, Gadamer argues that this gap should not be bridged. Undermining "alienating distanciation," he contends that this gap or distance plays a productive and creative role since it leads to a creative tension between the "two horizons," and ultimately this creative tension helps in the enlarging or modifying of the interpreter's horizon through a sustained dialogical encounter with the text's horizon.

Gadamer notes that "there is no longer primarily a gulf to be bridged, because it separates, but it is actually the supportive ground of process in which the present is rooted" and argues that "temporal distance is not something that must be overcome . . . the important thing is to recognize the distance in time as a positive and productive possibility of understanding."[11] Against this backdrop, Thiselton in "The *New Hermeneutic"*, remarks that "Gadamer believes that the very existence of a temporal and cultural *distance* between the interpreter and the text can be used to jog him to awareness of the differences between their respective horizons."[12]

Understanding takes place not when the reader transposes oneself into the subjectivity of the author and recognizes his/her original intention, but in a productive fusion of the horizon of the text and the reader. In this context, Gadamer notes that "what is fixed in writing has detached itself from the contingency of its origin and its author and made itself free for new relationships" and adds that "normative concepts such as the author's meaning or the original reader's understanding represent in fact only an empty space that is filled from time to time in understanding."[13]

Gadamer's explication of the concept of "fusion of horizons" sets the tone for a discussion of this hermeneutical process. His view is that it is part of the hermeneutic approach to project a historical horizon which is different from the horizon of the present. This historical horizon is superceded by our own present horizon of understanding. In the process of understanding, there is a fusion of the horizons, which means that when the historical horizon is projected, it is simultaneously removed.

How does this fusion of horizons take place? The interpreter, in the course of one's sustained dialogue with the past, i.e., the horizon of the text, is able to examine one's prejudices and preunderstanding critically; and is able to alter or revise, if required, one's prejudices to relate and fuse one's horizon with the horizon of the text. According to Howard, for the emergence of the truth and the meaning of the text, one must be ready to accept one's prejudices and expectations of

meaning, being exposed as groundless. The logical upshot of this encounter with the text is the fusion of horizons wherein there is, according to Gadamer, the reader's material agreement with the text.

It has to be highlighted that the blending or fusion of horizons should not be misconstrued as the flattening out or obliterating of those prejudices of the reader which are not in harmony with the horizon of the text. This is tantamount to the reader's meek submission to the horizon of the text which subtly proclaims the superiority of the past over the present. Hoy in The Critical Circle rightly cautions us that the term "fusion" (verschmelzing) is misunderstood if we admit that fusion is a reconciliation of the horizons, a flattening out of the historical and perspectival differences. Warning us of two other hermeneutical red herrings, he writes that the "fusion of horizons should not be confused, however, with appropriating the past completely into one's own stance nor with knowing the past as it was for itself."[14] The fusion of horizons is possible because of the fact that the text and the interpreter both belong to a common horizon. It is this fundamental hermeneutical condition which enables all understanding, notwithstanding the basic fact that we are separated by space and time - the coordinates of history.

9. HERMENEUTIC CIRCLE

Gadamer's rendering of the hermeneutic circle focusses on the dialogical relationship between the parts and the whole in the light of the circular movement between the horizon of the interpreter which specifically involves the reader's prejudices, and the horizon of the text. Using a broad framework, Gadamer points out that understanding proceeds from the whole to the part, and back to the whole. Our role is to extend in concentric circles the unity of the understood meaning. In concrete terms, this would mean that there is a back and forth movement between the interpreter's prejudices and the text's meaning. Thiselton sheds light on the interaction between the reader and the text in the context of the hermeneutic circle: The "circle" of the hermeneutical process gets initiated when the interpreter takes one's own preliminary questions to the text. But because one's questions may not be the best, and one's understanding of the text may at the outset remain restricted or even subject to distortion. Nevertheless the text, in turn, speaks back to the hearer. One's initial questions then get revised in the light of the text itself, and in response to more adequate questioning, the text itself now speaks more clearly and intelligibly. Since the whole process hinges on the reader's intellectual openness and honesty to the challenges posed by the text, Gadamer suggests that we should remain open to the meaning of the other person or the text. But this openness always includes our placing the other in a relation with the whole of our own meanings, or ourselves in a relation with it.

10. CRITIQUE OF GADAMERIAN HERMENEUTICS

A stinging critique of Gadamerian hermeneutics comes to the fore in the long drawn-out polemical debates between Gadamer and Betti, Gadamer and Hirsch, and Gadamer and Habermas. In the dispute between Gadamer and Hirsch, the latter takes the former to task for conceiving

understanding in an arbitrary manner which would only breed relativism and subjectivism and put the whole hermeneutical project in disarray. Arthur, in Gadamer and *Hirsch: The Canonical Work* and the Interpreter, presents the debate in a capsule: "Hirsch accuses Gadamer of disregarding the author's intention; Gadamer accuses Aristotelians like Hirsch of falsely denying the existence of presuppositions (as distinguished from pre-apprehensions) about a literary work in their own minds."[15]

The debate between Gadamer and Habermas highlights the sharp differences between philosophical hermeneutics and critical hermeneutics. Gadamer's conception of language and tradition and philosophical hermeneutics' claims to universality are the questions at issue between Gadamer and Habermas. According to Bleicher, the differences between them were concerned with the implications of the nature of the "fore-structures of understanding", especially with the status of language as its ultimate foundation, and with the justifiability of the critical stance *vis-à-vis* traditioned meaning developed by Habermas.

Gadamer is charged with uncritically accepting the authority of tradition. Habermas argues that language and tradition are laden with ideological underpinnings which need to be unmasked. According to him, hermeneutics cannot do without this critique of ideology. The position of Habermas becomes clear when his conception of hermeneutics as propounded in "The Hermeneutic Claim to Universality" is spelt out: "Hermeneutics refers to an 'ability' we acquire . . . to 'master' a natural language: the art of understanding linguistically communicable meaning and to render it comprehensible in cases of distorted communication."[16] In other words, Habermas's avowed objective is to unmask the repressive and manipulative forces that sometimes underwrite language and communication. It was left to Ricoeur, among others, to effect a rapproachment between Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics and Habermas's critique of ideology in his *Hermeneutics and the Critique of Ideology.*

NOTES

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2. Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, Trs. and Ed. Garrett Barden and John Cumming, London: Sheed & Ward, 1975, p. 240.
3. Ted Petero, "The Nature and Role of Presuppositions: An Inquiry into Contemporary Hermeneutics", *International Philosophical Quarterly*, 16.2 (1974), p. 211.
4. Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 249.
5. Gadamer, "Religious and Poetical Speaking," in *Myth, Symbol, and Reality*, Ed. Alan M Olson, Notre Dame and London: University of Notre, 1980, p. 87.
6. Palmer, *Hermeneutics: Interpretation Theory in Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Heidegger and Gadamer*, Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1969, p. 182
7. Chris Lawn, *A Guide for the Perplexed*, London and New York: Continuum, 2006, p. 68.
8. Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p.107.
9. Josef Bleicher, *Contemporary*

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10. Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 269.
11. *Ibid*., p. 264.
12. Anthony C. Thiselton, "The New Hermeneutic" in *A Guide to Contemporary Hermeneutics*: *Major Trends in Biblical Interpretation*, Michigan: Donald K McKim, William E. Eerdmans Publishing Co., p. 92.
13. Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 357.
14. David Couzens Hoy, *The Critical Circle: Literature, History and Philosophica*l *Hermeneutics*, Los Angeles: California University Press, 1978, p. 97.
15. Christopher E. Arthur, "*Gadamer and Hirsch: The Canonical Work and the Interpreter's Intention," Cultural Hermeneutics* 4 (1977), p. 192.
16. Jurgen Habermas, "The Hermeneutic Claim to Universality", Bleicher, *Contemporary Hermeneutics*, p. 181.

HEIDEGGER'S METAPHYSICS OF BEING AND NOTHING

* *Dr. Arnikar Hamsa*

This article in three parts is an exposition of Martin Heidegger's concept of metaphysics – fundamental ontology – as the interpretation of Being and Nothing. Part one deals with metaphysics as the elucidation of the question of the meaning of Being. Part two is an explanation of metaphysics as an inquiry concerning Nothing. Part three is a brief account of phenomenology as the method of demonstrating the theme of metaphysics. In conclusion, it is held that metaphysics, according to Heidegger, is synonymous with philosophy, and it constitutes the very nature of human existence.

1. MEANING OF BEING

Heidegger says that the term "metaphysics" (derived from the Greek *"meta ta physika"*) means "the inquiry beyond beings". Metaphysical investigation aims at recovering beings as such, and as a whole. It is in the question concerning Being and Nothing that metaphysical inquiry takes place. Being and Nothing permeate the whole of metaphysics, and they implicate Dasein in each and every case of the question concerning them.

Heidegger's philosophy, otherwise known as fundamental ontology, is a critique of the epistemological and theological character of Western philosophy. Heidegger contends that in the history of Western metaphysics, the fundamental question, namely, the question of the meaning of Being has not been given serious attention. The question has almost been forgotten, and seems as absolutely nothing. After Plato and Aristotle, who made initial contributions to the interpretation of Being, the question of its meaning has been trivialized. Although the question persisted in some measure and in different ways down to the logic of Hegel, incisive insights into it have never taken place. What has so far been unraveled about the meaning of Being is fragmentary and sketchy. Heidegger deplores that humanity has fallen out of Being and lost its shelter. By running after this and that thought, we have betrayed our true vocation which is to seek the ground, namely, Being through which everything gets manifest. We live in a world darkened by our forgetfulness of what Being is, and what we are.

Heidegger holds that in ancient metaphysics there are three presuppositions about Being: (1) Being is the most universal concept; (2) Being is indefinable; and (3) Being is the most self-evident of all concepts. By "universality," the ancient thinkers thought that Being was an empty concept that hardly warranted any investigation. But, Heidegger says that "universality" implies "transcendence" which requires a correct understanding and interpretation. Assuming Being to be indefinable, they thought that Being could not become a problematic. But Heidegger contends that the indefinability of Being, that it cannot be derived from any higher concept, demands us to "look" at Being in its face. And, by supposing that Being is self-evident, they were under the impression that Being was insignificant and accessible even to an average kind of

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intelligence. Heidegger holds that although self-evident, the question of Being necessitates an explanation which can render it as a special issue with its own distinctive character. Heidegger treats these presuppositions as three prejudices, which gave rise to the dogma that the question of Being was superfluous and worthy of complete neglect. They have been a barrier to discovering a proper answer to the question of Being, for they have rendered it opaque, "obscure and without any direction".[1]

Heidegger says that indeed "Being-as-such" does not require any definition. We use the term "Being" so commonly and constantly that we have an "immediate" access to it. Whenever we recognize anything or make an assertion about it, we feel the presence of Being. There are several things which we designate as Being and we encounter Being in everything we have in view. We experience a semblance of Being in comporting ourselves towards ourselves, or towards other beings. We use the expression "Being" in several ways, and hold it to be intelligible without much difficulty. "Our language is the language of Being, as clouds are the clouds of the sky"[2], says Heidegger. Language is the house of the truth of Being wherein we dwell by ek-sisting. We have a certain kind of understanding of Being even in the statements like "I am happy", "The sky is blue", and so on. The very verb "is", is a testimony to the ubiquitous prevalence of Being. The very question, "What is being?" implies that we have an understanding of Being but without being able to determine it conceptually. Heidegger maintains that this kind of understanding of Being is *a priori* enigmatic, vague and fluctuating. Comprehension of Being at this level is average, and does not manifest Being fully. It is not possible to fix a horizon of the meaning of Being at this stage. It is, therefore, necessary to ask afresh the question of the meaning of "Being." The very indefiniteness of our understanding of Being is itself a positive phenomenon for probing the question of Being. Heidegger says, "The very fact that we already live in an understanding of Being and the meaning of Being is still veiled in darkness proves that it is necessary in principle to raise this question again."[3]

Being is neither a genus nor a species. It is beyond all categories and has to be sought beyond all entities. Although Being refers to entities, Being itself is not an entity. Being is the "is-ness" of beings. Being is the Being of beings, and it determines them as beings. Being is that in terms of which beings are understood. So, it is by the interrogation of beings themselves that the meaning of Being is revealed. Beings are to be interrogated with regard to their Being for the proper disclosure of Being. The investigation should be such that the beings are able to exhibit their characteristics of Being. Being has to be conceived in a way which is different from the way entities are conceived. Since the question of the meaning of Being is the most basic and concrete one, it must be formulated in a clear and distinct way. "The question of the meaning of Being must be formulated. It is a – or even the – fundamental question, such questioning needs the suitable perspicuity", asserts Heidegger.[4]

Heidegger holds that it is only through the being of Dasein that a proper formulation of the question of meaning of Being is possible. Of all beings, Dasein alone is privileged to have an access to Being. Dasein is an

exemplary being which has an ontic and ontological priority over other beings in raising and answering the question of Being. Since Dasein is the only entity which is capable of interrogation, it alone can put Being into question. By doing so only can Dasein put its own Being into question. No other being can ask a question about itself and Being in general. Thus, it is through Dasein, by Dasein, and for Dasein that Being is disclosed. Heidegger writes, "Thus to work out the question of Being means to make a being – he who questions – perspicuous in his Being. Asking this question, as a mode of *being* of a being, it itself essentially determined by what is asked about in it—Being. This being which we ourselves in each case are, and which includes inquiry among the possibilities of its Being, we formulate terminologically as *Dasein*. The explicit and lucid formulation of the question of the meaning of Being requires a prior suitable explication of a being (Dasein) with regard to its Being." [5]

Dasein is the only being which comports understandingly towards itself and towards Being as a whole. It is a being that *exists* in the world with *mine-ness* as its essential characteristic. It exists in the mode of Being-in-the world, which is the ground of the manifestation of the meaning of Being. Dasein's Being-in-the-world with a sense of mine-ness, constitutes the essential structure of Being. It cannot but exist in the framework of an encompassing world. That is, Dasein is a being which is always here or there. The terms "*Da*" and "*sein*" signify that spatiality is the essential nature of human existence, namely, Dasein. But Dasein's spatiality does not mean that Dasein is "in" space. Dasein does not occupy even a bit of space as its body, or as a real thing does. Dasein is not a physical, but a spiritual entity which takes space *in*. Dasein is "spatial in a way which remains essentially impossible for any extended corporeal thing".[6] Spatiality is the ontological "place" that defines man even before he enters existence. To have "place", is to be free and the disregard of it is the obliteration of human freedom. To have "place" is to have a house in which Dasein can unfold its Being. "Place" reveals the uniqueness of man and conditions his existential activity. It points both to "its unique dimension of Being and to the distortion and perversion which arise from its concealment." [7]

Since Dasein exists "spatially" in the world, it is also a being of temporality. Temporality is the essential meaning of Dasein's being and Being in general. All the structures of Dasein and Being, are the modes of their temporality. Dasein simultaneously exists in three temporal *ekstases* – the past, the present, and the future. Being is revealed as Dasein temporalizing itself in the unity of the ecstasies. Dasein's spatiality of being-in-the-world corresponds to its temporality. Its constitution and its ways of being are possible on the basis of temporality only. Just as spatiality does not mean that Dasein is "in" space, temporality does not mean that Dasein is "in" time. Temporality implies that Dasein in its present, has been and ahead-of-itself. It also implies that Dasein is a being of finitude. Time, in its primordial sense, is finite; because Dasein's existential projecting of itself into future is finite. Future is finite, since it signifies Dasein's existence as its authentic, ownmost nullity which can never be outstripped. The ekstatical character of Dasein's future lies in the fact that it discloses

Dasein's potentiality-for-Being.

Heidegger says that it is by interpreting Dasein as a temporal being that the existential analytic prepares the ground for obtaining an answer to the question of the meaning of Being. It is by conceiving time as the horizon that the analytic can reveal Being in general. The analytic has to understand and interpret Being with time as the standpoint. Thus, Being is Dasein's Being-in-the-World spatially and temporally. Being is finite and this-worldly. Its transcendence is immanent, since it lies in Dasein's transcendence of being beyond the beings of the world, spatially and temporally.[8]

2. INQUIRY INTO NOTHING

Heidegger maintains that the metaphysical question of Being is internally related to the question of Nothing. Being and Nothing are so intimately connected with each other that one cannot be conceived without the other. This is so because Dasein is both a being of Being and Nothing. In its Being-in-the-world, Dasein exists on the ground of Being and Nothing. In all its modes of being, Dasein reveals immediately and simultaneously Being and Nothing. Of all the entities, Dasein is the only entity which is both a shepherd of Being and a lieutenant of Nothing.

In his lecture on "What is metaphysics?"[9], Heidegger says that just as Being, Nothing is ubiquitous in our life. The idea of Nothing, the "is-not" is as predominant as the idea of "is" in our language. We assume the idea of Nothing in all our activities. Nothing is more original than negation, the "not" that we encounter in all our transactions. Although an indefinable non-entity, the common man as well as the scientist always makes use of the idea of the nothing. Science may claim that it deals exclusively with "what is there", and may denounce the "what is not there" as being absolutely non-existent. The scientist may say, "What should be investigated are beings alone…, and beyond that – nothing"[10], and may think that speaking of Nothing is against all rules of logic. But Heidegger contends that scientific enterprise is possible only because Dasein's being is rooted in the metaphysical reality of Nothing. It is because Nothing is manifest as much as Being, in the thinking of the scientist that science is able to treat beings as the objects of its investigation. It is on the ground of metaphysics that science is able to fulfill its essential task of disclosing the truth of Nature and history.

Heidegger is of the view that human existence discloses itself not only in reason and knowledge, but also in moods like joy, excitement, anxiety and boredom. The intellect and rational opinions do not go far enough for the complete disclosure of our being. The Nothing, which is neither an object nor any being at all, gets revealed in the basic mood of anxiety. Anxiety discloses Dasein as a being that is held out into the Nothing. It is the mood in which something essential about our existence as a whole is revealed. Anxiety is neither a pathological symptom nor a fear of anything in particular. It needs no unusual event to rouse it. It can awaken at any moment and snatch us away. It is not a kind of flight, but rather a bewildered calm which leaves us hanging in air as it were. It is a kind of malaise which is less identifiable but more oppressive. Dasein's fundamental mode of being-in-the-world embodies anxiety. It is in anxiety that

Dasein realizes that it has "fallen" into the world. It realizes that its Being as such – its life and death – is an issue it must face. Anxiety unveils the Nothing, the nullity that determines Dasein in its ground which is its being thrown into death. "Dasein finds itself face to face with the Nothing of the possible impossibility of its own existence."[11]

In the fundamental experiencing of anxiety, all entities slip away, and there emerges an uncomfortable feeling of being "ill at ease" which reveals the sense of Nothing, no-thing. Although the Nothing is not itself a being, it is nevertheless at-one-with beings as a whole. In the experiencing of the Nothing, beings are not annihilated but become superfluous as a whole. Nothing is not different from or unrelated to beings. It is not a counter concept to entities, as it is in the case of traditional metaphysics and Christian theology. It originally belongs to the essential unfolding of the Being of entities. In other words, it is in relation to the Being of beings that Nothing occurs. It is on the basis of the revelation of Nothing that we can approach and penetrate the entities. It is in the naughting of Nothing (*Nichten des Nichts*) that Dasein is brought before entities as such. It is as a being that is held out into the Nothing that Dasein exists as a being of transcendence which means "being beyond beings as a whole."[12] It is as a being of the Nothing that Desein relates to itself, and to beings, and goes beyond. Heidegger says, "Being held out into the Nothing—as Dasein is – on the ground of concealed anxiety makes man a lieutenant of the Nothing. We are so finite that we cannot bring ourselves originally before the nothing through our own decision and will. So profoundly does finitude entrench itself in existence that our most proper and deepest limitation refuses to our freedom."[13]

Heidegger says that Nothing is essentially a repelling and parting gesture towards beings that are submerging and in retreat as a whole. This wholly repelling and parting gesture, which is the essence of Nothing, Heidegger calls nihilation. "Nihilation" does not mean "the annihilation of beings". It does not spring from a negation nor does it submit itself to calculation in terms of negation. It is not even a fortuitous event but a significant mood that reveals beings in their original openness, and teaches us that beings are beings—and not Nothing. The nihilation that the Nothing brings forth puts Dasein for the first time before beings as such, and discloses them in strangeness which was hitherto concealed. The strangeness evokes in Dasein a feeling of wonder which gives rise to the fundamental metaphysical question – "Why is there anything rather than nothing?"[14]

Heidegger is of the view that for a long time metaphysics has expressed the Nothing in the proposition: *ex nihilo nihil fit*, which means "from nothing, nothing comes to be". The proposition is susceptible to more than one meaning. Ancient metaphysics conceives "Nothing" in the sense of "non-being" which cannot take the form of an in-formed being having an outward appearance (*eidos*). Unlike the being which is a self-forming form that exhibits itself as such in a spectacle, Nothing is the unformed matter devoid of an image, an outward aspect. On the other hand, the Christian dogma denies the truth of the proposition, *"ex nihilo nihil fit"* by transforming it as *"ex nihilo fit - ens creatum"* which means "from nothing comes – created beings". Here, the term "nothing" has been

given an entirely different meaning. It has been used as a counter concept to beings, which means the complete absence of beings apart from God as *ens increatum*. Although here nothingness designates the basic conception of beings, the question of Being and of Nothing as such, are not posed at their metaphysical level. Heidegger holds that the Christian thinkers failed to see the anomaly in the conception that God created beings out of nothing. He argues: "If God creates out of nothing precisely He must be able to relate himself to the nothing. But if God is God He cannot know the nothing, assuming that the Absolute excludes all nothingness."[15]

Thus, a cursory historical review of the concept of Nothing shows that it was used as a counter concept, a negation of beings proper. It was not at all a problem to the classical and scholastic thinkers. Heidegger maintains that the Nothingness is a genuine metaphysical problem, for it awakens in us for the first time the formulation of the metaphysical question concerning the Being of beings. "Nothingness" is not the indeterminate opposite of beings. On the contrary, it determines itself by revealing itself as belonging to the Being of beings. In this, Heidegger is in agreement with Hegel who says, that "pure Being" and "pure Nothing" are the same. But, Heidegger does not subscribe to the Hegelian view that "Being" and "Nothing" are synonymous because they do not differ in immediacy and indeterminateness. To him, Being and Nothing belong together because "Being itself is essentially finite and reveals itself only in the transcendence of Dasein which is held out into the Nothing."[16]

The question of Being-as-such, encompasses the whole of metaphysics. Similarly, the question of Nothing embraces the whole of it, since it compels us to face the problem of the origin of negation; it forces us to confront the question concerning the legitimacy of the role of "logic" in metaphysics. In this also, Heidegger reminds us of Hegel's contention that metaphysics and logic are intimately related. Metaphysics bereft of logic, is stale and sterile. Heidegger, therefore, interprets the proposition "ex nihilo nihil fit" as "*ex nihilo omne ens qua ens fit*" which means "from the nothing all beings as beings come to be". He maintains that this rendering of the proposition alone is appropriate to the problem of Being and Nothing. It is only in the nothing of Dasein that beings come to themselves as a whole and in a finite way which is their proper possibility. It is because Nothing is manifest on the ground of Dasein that there arises the strangeness of beings which overwhelms us and evokes wonder in us. It is on the ground of wonder that there looms large the metaphysical question – Why?[17]

3. ONTOLOGY OF BEING AND NOTHING

According to Heidegger, fundamental ontology is the right "science" for the study of the meaning of "Being" and "Nothing". Ontological inquiry constitutes the proper study of the question of Being and Nothing. Explication of the question of the meaning of "Being" and "Nothing" is the proper theme of ontology. And, phenomenology is the only method of access through which the theme of ontology is demonstrated. That is why Heidegger says that it is "only as phenomenology, is ontology possible."[18] He formulates phenomenology in terms of "to the

things themselves."[19] As the science of phenomena, phenomenology brings to light the phenomena of Being and Nothing. It shows the phenomenon as such from itself, and in itself. It lets the phenomenon "show itself be seen from itself in the very way in which it shows itself from iself." That is, "phenomenology" is the way in which Being and its structures are encountered in the mode of phenomenon. But it is only by taking Dasein as its theme that phenomenological ontology can confront the question of the meaning of "Being". As it has already been mentioned, "Dasein" is the entity which is there in the world. It is the being which reveals Being by transcending the entities other than itself. It is the privileged entity which has an ontic – ontological priority to the question of Being. It alone possesses an understanding of the Being of itself as well as the of Being of all other beings which are unlike itself. It understands Being in general in a manner constitutive of the understanding of its own existence which is "Being-in-the-world". So the fundamental ontology of Being should be worked out through the existential analytic of Dasein.

Thus, to Heidegger, "philosophy" is synonymous with "metaphysics", which he calls "fundamental ontology", since it deals with the fundamental question of the meaning of Being. Since ontology – the science of Being – is possible only through phenomenology, he also calls it "phenomenological ontology". The Being that phenomenological ontology explicates is not an abstract idea but an existential reality of Dasein's Being-in-the-world, which is intimately related to the phenomenon of Nothing. As an entity that exists in the fundamental mode of Being-in-the world, Dasein at the same time exists as a being that is held out into Nothing. Therefore, Heidegger's fundamental ontology is also known as the "existential analytic of Dasein". Since an analytic interprets Dasein's existential structures on the background of Being and Nothing, Heidegger's calls it a hermeneutic in its primordial sense. The business of the hermeneutic is the disclosure of the meaning of "Being" and "Nothing" by the essential constitution of Dasein itself. In other words, it reveals to Dasein, the basic structures of Being which Dasein itself possesses.

In conclusion, metaphysics, according to Heidegger, is neither an academic discipline nor a field of arbitrary notions. On the contrary, metaphysics constitutes the very "nature of man". The truth of metaphysics lies in Dasein's Being-in-the-world and as Being-held-out-into-the-nothing. Heidegger, therefore, says that metaphysics arises in the very occurrence of Dasein. Metaphysics is Dasein itself. Heidegger's way of unfolding the question of Being and Nothing shows that metaphysics is not something that is brought before us in an extrinsic manner. Metaphysics constitutes our very being. So long as we exist, we are always and already there in metaphysics, which is philosophy proper. Philosophy is the movement of metaphysics, in which the former comes to itself with its explicit tasks. Philosophy gets under way only when we invest our existence in the fundamental possibilities of Dasein. This is possible only when we allow space for beings as a whole, and release ourselves into Nothing. That is, we should liberate ourselves from the idols we are accustomed to cling, and let the sweep of the suspense of our existence take its full course. Only then

can we enter the realm of Nothing which compels us to raise the basic metaphysical question: Why are there beings at all, why not rather nothing? And, metaphysics persists as long as human beings exist, since man as a transcending being is essentially a metaphysical being. Heideggerian metaphysics is a metaphysics of our finitude, since the ground on which it stands is the groundless ground (*Ab-grund*), namely, the finite transcendence of human existence.[20]

NOTES

1. Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, Tr. John Macquarrie & Edward Robinson, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1978, p. 24.
2. Martin Heidegger, *Basic Writings*: From Being and Time (1927) to The Task of Thinking (1964), Ed. David Farrell Krell, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978, p. 242.
3. *Being and Time*, p. 23.
4. *Basic Writings*, p. 45.
5. *Being and Time*, p. 27.
6. *Ibid*., p. 419.
7. Martin Heidegger, *The Question of Being,* Tr. William Kluback & Jean T. Wilde, London: Vision Press, 1956, p. 26.
8. *Being and Time*, pp. 72 & 403.
9. *What is Metaphysics*? in the Inaugural Address Heidegger delivered in 1929 on the occasion of his accession to the Chair of Philosophy at the University of Freiburg, left vacant by Husserl's retirement. This lecture is included in the Basic Writings, pp. 92 - 112.
10. *Basic Writings*, p. 97.
11. *Ibid*, p. 93.
12. *Ibid*, p. 105.
13. *Ibid*, p. 108.
14. Johnson J. Puthenpurackal, *Heidegger Through Authentic Totality to Total Authenticity*, Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1987, p. 101.
15. *Basic Writings*, p. 110.
16. *Ibid*, p. 111.
17 *Ibid*, p. 112.
18. *Being and Time*, p. 60.
19. *Ibid*, p. 50.
20. *Ibid*, p. 58.

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