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Sibajiban Bhattacharyya

The Emergence of the Person:
Some Indian Themes and Theories

I. INTRODUCTION

There are different philosophical theories about the nature of the person. For example, according to some the concept of the person is logically prior to the concepts of the body and the mind of the person; according to others the person is the combination of the body and the mind. There are those who believe that the person is the combination of the body and the mind; according to another group of philosophers the person is identified with the mind or the self which is simple, a monad. There is however, a radically different body of philosophers according to whom our consciousness of ourselves as persons is a mistake. Really we are not persons at all. The person is constructed out of what is impersonal. There are two different types of this theory. According to Hume, Robert Nozick, Derek Parfit, as also in Yogācāra Buddhism, the reality is a succession of momentary mental states. In Advaita Vedānta, on the other hand, consciousness is eternal, but universal and impersonal. A main problem of this type of philosophy is to explain how the awareness of individual selves can be founded on impersonal consciousness.

II. THE METHODOLOGY OF STUDY

The problem here is to explain how we are to account for our awareness of ourselves. It is usual to treat this question as the question of what we believe ourselves to be. Yet we do not believe

ourselves to be the same person, the same individual, all the time. When we are awake we identify ourselves mostly with our bodies and consider ourselves as embodied. But this identification with our body is forgotten when we dream that we are children, giants or whatever. When I dream that I am a child I forget my identity in the waking state and identify myself with the child in the dream. McCawley's paradoxical example, 'I dreamt that I was Brigitte Bardot and that I kissed me' clearly brings out not merely the logical difficulty of cross-reference but also the psychological, epistemological and ontological difficulties in explaining dream experience. It is also clear that I may identify myself with some one for some time, and with some one else in a different dream. In deep dreamless sleep, again, I do not have any awareness of my identity. The problem here is to decide whether to base a philosophy of the self exclusively on waking experience, or also to consider dream experience and deep dreamless sleep.

It may be argued here that waking experience alone matters and so a philosophical theory of the self as a person ought to be based on the evidence of waking experience alone.

This sort of consideration has its limitations. To argue in this way would be similar to argue in epistemology that veridical perception alone matter and that, therefore, an epistemological theory of perception should be exclusively based upon veridical perceptions ignoring aberrations like illusions, hallucinations, etc. Even though it be granted that most of the time our perceptions are veridical, and only rarely illusory, still a philosophical theory of perception cannot be based on veridical perception alone. Similarly a philosophical theory of the self cannot be based on the evidence of waking experience only, but has to take into account dreams and dreamless sleep. It is a peculiarity of Indian philosophical systems, a philosophy of the self is based on waking experience, dream and also deep dreamless sleep.

There is, however, a puzzle of identifying the dreaming subject with the empirical subject on waking from the dream. So long as the dream lasted, McCawley was Brigitte Bardot; in his dream the person that was McCawley was a different person; when identifying himself with Brigitte Bardot in the dream he could not continue to identify himself also with the person with whom he identified himself in the waking state. This means that even in a dream he

could not identify himself with two persons, Bardot and McCawley. One cannot dream that one is two persons. One can identify oneself with one person in a dream and with another in waking from the dream. When McCawley wakes up from the dream he identifies himself with the person whom Bardot kissed in the dream; but then he no longer is Bardot.

But if the dreaming subject is identical with the empirical subject on waking, when McCawley dreamt that he as Bardot kissed McCawley who he is on waking, then, as a matter of fact in the dream he kissed himself. Professor Kalidas Bhattacharya has denied the possibility of such identification of the dreaming subject with the empirical subject on waking. Just as correcting an illusory perception is the realisation not merely of the unreality of the object perceived (the snake), but also of the seeing of the snake, so also in the case in dream. (i) The 'I' who dreamt is rejected as being identical with the 'I' in waking consciousness. I often am not ready to recognise the identity of the dreaming subject with me. (ii) The other persons in the dream are recognised as unreal on waking. Why should not the dreamer himself who has the same ontological status as other persons in the dream be as unreal as they? (iii) I may dream about things happening to me over a week, a month or even a year, although the dream may last only a few minutes. How can the week, the month or the year be accommodated in the few minutes of the dream? As a matter of fact, I do not, and do not want to, include the dream events in my life history. The entire dream world very strangely floats, hangs in the air, without any mooring in my life.¹

Now even acknowledging the force of these arguments of Professor Kalidas Bhattacharya one may still wonder, however one can remember, or seem to remember, one's dream on waking. If the dreamer and the person remembering the dream are different persons, one unreal and the other real, then how is it possible to remember a dream? If the dream is not remembered by the subject on waking, it cannot be even rejected as unreal then. So the person dreaming and the person remembering the dream must be the same person. The difficulty is that if one dreams that one is a completely different person from the person who he is in waking consciousness, then how is the identification of these two persons possible? This shows that one can identify oneself with anyone one wants to, and with different persons at different times. It will not do to

formulate a philosophical theory of the self only on the evidence of what we believe ourselves to be in the waking hours.

I shall begin my discussion of the emergence of the personal self by examining three theories of the no-person variety, of Hume, Nozick and Parfit in that order.

III. HUME'S THEORY OF THE SELF

Hume in an oft-quoted passage says:²

When I enter most intimately into what I call myself, I always stumble on some particular perception or other, of heat or cold, light or shade, love or hatred, pain or pleasure. I never can catch *myself* at any time without a perception and can never observe anything but the perception.... I may venture to affirm of the rest of mankind that they are nothing but a bundle or collection of different perceptions, which succeed each other with an inconceivable rapidity and are in perceptual flux and movement. The mind is a kind of theatre where several perceptions successively make their appearance, pass, re-pass, glide away, and mingle in an infinite variety of postures and situations.... The comparison of the theatre must not mislead us. They are the successive perceptions only, which constitute the mind....

Explaining Hume's theory, Bruce Anne says:³

The view Hume expresses here has come to be known as the Bundle theory of the self. Just as Bertrand Russell argued that physical things are bundles of qualities, Hume argued that even minds must be viewed as bundles. To say, on this view, that a quality exists in a mind is just to say that the quality belongs to some mind-bundle.

There are various sorts of difficulties in Hume's theory. When he says 'when *I* enter most intimately into what I call myself' it is not clear what is that which enters most intimately into what I call myself and who is this *I* who call whatever it is 'myself'. It is also not explained how a sequence of momentary ideas can be collected in a bundle. The metaphor of momentary perceptions which 'succeed

one another with inconceivable rapidity' is of falling rain drops in a heavy shower. How can the falling rain drops be collected together? It is only when they fall on the ground that we can have the pool of water, where the rain water is collected, but *then* the drops are *not* successive. It is also not clear how I get my I-sense; is it also momentary, or is it of the series? If it is momentary, then at every moment there is a different *I*, as there is a different perception or idea. On the other hand, it cannot be momentary, for then memory, moral responsibility etc., cannot be explained. Yet according to Hume there cannot be identity of the person across time, for the following reason.

Hume admits that there are gaps between the ideas or impressions succeeding each other; so the question is: What happens during these gaps between any two successive ideas? These gaps must be there, for the series of ideas and impressions is a discrete series; to make a continuum of ideas and impressions, their number has to be non-denumerable which is not possible. In any case, Hume himself admits that there are gaps between any two successive ideas. As there is just nothing in the gaps, there cannot be any personal identity.

Hume seems to be aware of this difficulty and tries to cover, not solve it, by his theory that the 'different perceptions... succeed each other with an inconceivable rapidity,' for there will be nothing during the gaps to experience then. The preceding perception cannot experience the gap, which is still to come, the succeeding perception cannot experience it as the gap has ceased to exist when it has come into being. This being the case there is no reason for Hume to hold on to the theory of inconceivable rapidity of succession; for even if the perceptions do not succeed each other with 'inconceivable rapidity' and the intervening gaps are lengthened, still the gaps will not be experienced as there will be nothing to experience them. The gaps are actually there, whether they are inconceivably short or very long, all incapable of being experienced; and if the existence of long gaps makes the unity of the self inconceivable, the inconceivably short gaps cannot solve this difficulty. To explain the immediately felt unity of the self it is necessary to deny the *existence* of gaps in consciousness, not merely their experience or conceivability.

This reveals another difficulty in Hume's theory. According to Hume ideas are associated by contiguity and similarity. But every

idea is insulated from every other idea by a gap in consciousness on two sides between it and its preceding idea as well as its succeeding idea; it is not clear how there can be any association of ideas surrounded by gaps in consciousness. An idea will not be aware of what precedes it or succeeds it; it cannot be connected or associated with a preceding or a succeeding idea, as all ideas are surrounded by gaps in consciousness; between two ideas there is just nothing. And it is not clear how this gap, although it is 'inconceivably' small, can be bridged. So there will be no contiguity.

It is only a *transcendent* observer or thinker, who would be helped by the 'inconceivable rapidity' of succession of ideas into wrongly perceiving or conceiving an enduring self. The modern analogy of movie films may explain this point. The still photographs have to be projected on the screen with sufficient rapidity, not with inconceivable rapidity, to produce the illusion of continually moving objects to an observer who is *outside* the pictures. But in the case of perceptions succeeding one another with 'inconceivable rapidity' there is no transcendent subject which can have the illusion of an enduring self.

We may explain these difficulties in Hume's theory in some detail. Suppose that in some way 'a bundle of different perceptions' can be formed. But, then, either this bundle can be completed only when the person dies; till then the bundle will go on including almost infinitely many perceptions every day. Or, if the bundle is regarded as closed at any time, then the bundle the next day will be different, even if it includes all perceptions of the closed bundle. If bundles are regarded as collections or sets of perceptions, then we have an infinite series of ever wider sets of perceptions from birth till death of the person. Thus we have the almost infinite sequence of bundles:

$$B_1 B_2 B_3 \dots B_n \dots$$

The union of all the B_n 's will be the same as the last bundle that one has at the time of death. Thus at every moment of waking life, one has a different self—it is almost the same as the Buddhist theory of momentary selves.

Now let us see how the so-called laws of association can work. Suppose there is a perception, p_1 , and there is another perception p_2 , which is either similar to p_1 , or is contiguous in time. Now p_1

will *not* be associated with p_2 unless both p_1 and p_2 belong to the same bundle, i.e. to the same self. If p_1 belongs to one self, and p_2 to another, then even if they are similar or contiguous in time, they will not be associated with each other. This shows that the so-called laws of association already *presuppose*, and hence, cannot explain, personal identity.

The most fundamental question which arises in this type of theory is that if none of the single perceptions is felt as myself how can a 'bundle of perceptions' amount to self-awareness? Is the origin of awareness of myself just bundling of perceptions, none of which is myself? How can a bundle give rise to an awareness of myself? The point is that the bundle of perceptions is possible only if the perceptions belong to the same person; that is, the bundle presupposes the actuality of the person whose perceptions are collected in the bundle.

IV. NOZICK'S THEORY OF THE SELF

Robert Nozick in his *Philosophical Explanations* tries to develop the idea of the self from mental states. He finds the theory of a permanent self inadequate. Basing his argument on Shoemaker's assertion that self-awareness being 'immune to error though misidentification,' Nozick states 'with a pre-existing I, however, there is always room for a mistake' (p. 90). So there cannot be any pre-existing I. 'The Vedānta theories that Ātman is Brahman... [Nozick's theory] does conflict with the view that this self exists independently of any act of synthesis, a contention massively and inconclusively debated between Vedantists and Buddhists' (p. 94).

According to Nozick the term 'I' is a linguistic device which is reflexively self-referring 'from the inside'. 'With reflexive self-reference, it follows from — is part of — the sense that the term necessarily self-refers in virtue of a feature bestowed in the token act of referring' (p. 76). 'From the fact that I have this property of being a self, it does not follow that the property is essential to my nature. Moreover, even though the capacity for reflexive self-reference is essential to being a self, and even though reflexive self-referring provides the access of a self to itself, it does not follow that it is of my essence (though actually I am a self) to be a self' (p. 79).

Though it does not follow from considerations about how the term 'I' refers, it nonetheless is true, I think, that selves are essentially selves, that anything which is a self could not have existed yet been otherwise. I am an I—necessarily I am an I (p. 79).

To explain this point Nozick examines reflexive self-referring more closely. 'The token 'I' refers to the entity (capable of self-referring) which produces the token... Thus, within the reflexive self-referring act are components of action, intention, causal production' (p. 88).

Let us imagine initially, acts without a doer, with no agent behind them. Better imagine acts so as to leave open the question of whether or not an agent is behind them. Acts A_1, \dots, A_n take place. These include (but are not restricted to) acts of applying the closest relation..., unifying and synthesizing entities in classification, bringing together things to constitute demarcated entities (p. 88).

This synthesis which produces the self is momentary. Yet Nozick states 'If the self synthesizes itself at a time isn't it only a momentarily existing self? How then can we have identity over time?' The self synthesizes itself not only transversely, among things existing only at that time, but also longitudinally so as to include past entities including past selves which were synthesized' (p. 91).

Now Nozick distinguishes his theory of the self from Hume's theory. 'Does not the self-synthesizing view give the self the status of a collection or bundle (to use Hume's term) rather than a true unity?' (p. 94).

'What makes one mind one, rather than a composite of different entities?' (p. 95) The reply is: 'We can use the closest continuer theory of identity over time to specify how a whole may differ from the sum of its parts....' The closest continuer of a whole is not the sum of the closest continuer of the parts of the whole' (p. 99).

Two notions have been intertwined in our discussion: first, that the identity of something can be maintained over time even though the parts change; second, that the mere continued existence of all the parts is not enough to maintain the existence of the whole, presumably because the parts

have not remained (or entered) in certain relations to each other. Let us call the first a whole and the second a unity; something is a whole, if its parts can be replaced, something is a unity if its parts must stay in certain relations for the entity to continue to exist (p. 103).

The self is a unity, not a whole.

Now let us examine Nozick's theory. It has an advantage over Hume's theory of the self as a bundle of perceptions. Still Nozick's theory involves many difficulties. Nozick accepts the doctrine of 'atomic-point-instants' (p. 46), i.e. he accepts the atomistic notion of time. He, therefore, does not accept the possibility of anything enduring in time. He also does not accept the possibility of an extended thing.

Science spatial and temporal distances involve some dissimilarity, any temporal or spatial breadth involves some sacrifice of (exact) similarity (p. 46).

Now if one accepts this theory that one thing can be strictly identical with itself only at one atomic-point-instant, then it is not clear how one can talk of 'acts $A_1 \dots A_n$ ' can take place and how these acts can possibly include 'acts of applying the closest relation schema.' For, all the acts $A_1 \dots A_n$ cannot take place simultaneously, they can only be successive, if there is no 'spatial breadth' in which they occur. But then it is not clear how they can be synthesised at one time; they are not all available at one time. They cannot leave their memory, for this would require an abiding self where the successive acts occur and then vanish leaving memory traces in the abiding self. Memory is not possible if acts 'take place' somewhere, and *that* somewhere is not available later to remember the acts. If there are no doer of the acts, then what acts, (acts 'taking place' even at different places?) are to be synthesized? All the acts to be synthesized must belong to one self. Otherwise, the act of synthesis will synthesize one act of one person with another act of another person and so on. When Nozick states that Descartes can only reason 'thinking is going on' and not 'I think', thinking which is self-conscious is floating, not being tied to any 'independently existing I'. But then as all acts of thinking are self-conscious, and they are no one's thoughts, all thoughts will be synthesized, so that there is only one *I*.

This difficulty of past acts vitiates also his solution to overcome the problem of momentary selves. It is not clear how the momentary self can 'include past entities including past selves which were synthesized' (p. 91). The past selves, like other past events, are dead and gone. They can be available only in memory. But memory already presupposes an enduring subject.

So Nozick's theory of synthesis of acts to generate a self is not satisfactory.

The very concept of 'closest continuer' (p. 33), requires an enduring transcendent observer. The very question 'whether x at time t is the same individual as y at later time t_2 ' requires a transcendent subject who knows x at t , and remembers it 'at a later time t_2 .' Only someone, who has known both, can raise the question whether they are identical. The spatial figures (Figures 1.4-1.6, p. 85) of dots are misleading for mental acts, which can never co-exist like dots on a paper.

There is another difficulty in Nozick's theory of synthesis, 'Thus within the reflexive self-referring act are components of action, intention, causal production' (p. 86). It is not clear whether feelings, emotions, beliefs, thoughts, etc., are components of the self-referring act. As we shall see later the different components like thinking, feeling, willing, are not related to the self in the same way. But if the self be the synthesis of the components, then they are related in the same way to the synthesis of the components, then they are related in the same way to the synthesis. 'Acts A_1 ... A_n ' 'include acts of applying the closest relation scheme unifying and synthesizing' (p. 88). Thus all the 'acts' are synthesized, 'brought together' 'to constitute demarcated entities'. This shows that only 'acts' are synthesized, there are no feelings, emotions which are not acts.

V. PARFIT'S THEORY OF THE SELF

Derek Parfit in his *Reasons and Persons* has argued against theories of a permanent self. He first of all raises some problems of the identity of the self by thought experiments. He begins by describing an imaginary apparatus called 'Teletransporter'.

When I press the button, I shall lose consciousness, and then wake up at what seems a moment later. In fact I shall

have been unconscious for about an hour. The Scanner here on Earth will destroy my brain and body, while recording the exact states of all of my cells. It will then create, out of new matter, a brain and body exactly like mine. It will be in this body that I shall wake up.... Examining my new body, I find no change at all. Even the cut of my upper lip, from this morning's shave, is still there' (p. 201).

Then Parfit imagines a Branch-line case.

The New Scanner does not destroy my brain and body. Besides gathering the information, it merely damages my heart. While I am in the cubicle, with the green button pressed, nothing seems to happen. I walk out, and learn that in a few days I shall die. I later talk, by two-way television, to my Replica on Mars. Let us continue the story. Since my Replica knows that I am about to die, he tries to console me with the same thoughts with which I recently tried to console a dying friend. It is sad to learn, on the receiving end, how unconsoling these thoughts are. My Replica then assures me that he will take up my life where I leave off. He loves my wife, and together they will care for my children. And he will finish the book that I am writing. Beside having all of my drafts, he has all of my intentions. I must admit that he can finish my book as well as I could. All these facts console me a little. Dying when I know that I shall have a Replica is not quite as bad as simply dying.

We now examine Parfit's imaginary cases. Parfit distinguishes between qualitative and numerical identity. I and my Replica are qualitatively identical or exactly alike in body and mind. The question which Parfit poses is, whether on the strength of this qualitative identity, we are justified in postulating numerical identity so that there is only one person.

Now, it is not clear how the Scanner and the Replicator function. 'The Scanner here on Earth will destroy my brain and body, while recording the exact states of all my cells' (p. 199). If we take what Parfit says literally then the Scanner recording the exact states of all my cells will also record my consciousness of myself which is a feeling of total identity. Now the Replicator on Mars 'will then create,

out of new matter a brain and body exactly like mine' (ibid). The Replicator ought to produce a brain which has the awareness of being identical with myself. So in the Branch-line case where there are two persons exactly alike in body and mind ought to have a consciousness of identity which is numerical. 'He loves my wife, and together they will care for my children. And he will finish the book that I am writing. Besides having all of my drafts, he has all of my intentions' (p. 201). It is strange that he has my love for my wife, he has all my intentions, yet he does not have the most basic feeling that I have about myself. There is no reason why he will not have the feeling of identity which I have with myself. If he has this feeling of identity with myself, then in spite of his being on Mars and my being on Earth would not stand in the way of his feeling that he is myself. 'In every other way, both physically and psychologically, my Replica is just like me. If he return to Earth, everyone would think that he was me' (p. 200). It is immaterial if everyone thought that he was me; what would prevent my Replica from thinking that he was me?

The argument may be that if I am on Earth, then I cannot be on Mars at the same time. This is, indeed, objectively true; but this cannot prevent me from identifying myself with my Replica. One *can* identify oneself with anything whatsoever. This point may be explained by a quotation from William James.

The following vivid account of a fit of hasheesh-delirium has been given me by a friend: '... I next enjoyed a sort of metempsychosis. An animal or thing that I thought of could be made the being which held my mind. I thought of a fox, and instantly, I was transformed into that animal. I could distinctly feel myself a fox, could see my long ears and bushy tail, and by a sort of introversion felt that my complete anatomy was that of fox.... I was next transformed into a bombshell, felt my size, weight, and thickness, and experienced the sensation of being shot up out of a giant mortar, looking down upon the earth, bursting and falling back in a shower of iron fragments.'⁴

The following points about this report may be noted.

(i) That the experience of this self-identification with anything that came to the mind was hallucinatory cannot detract from not

merely its logical possibility, but also from the reality of the experience. It has now become fashionable in philosophy to examine imaginary cases to refute a philosophical theory of self-identity; there ought not to be any objection to using a hallucination, a vivid experience, for the same purpose. We shall, however, see that there are other more common types of experience of self-identification.

(ii) One may identify oneself with anything whatsoever; hence for which either physical continuity, or memory or both are necessary. Robert Nozick's theory of closest continuer is as out of place here as the other theories of criteria of self-identity.

(iii) This is because here there is no question of knowing oneself as the same person over time. I may identify myself with a bombshell and when I do this I do not think if I remain the same person as the one who identified himself with a fox sometime ago. The point is that in self-identification there is no awareness of myself continuing over time. The question, of course, could be raised, but is not raised at all.

(iv) Identity as a relation is reflexive, symmetrical and transitive, consciousness is always directed to something, and to be directed to itself, it has to reflect on itself, to turn itself upon itself, to be related to itself. This is why self consciousness involves a reflexive relation and Nozick formulates his theory of self-identity on the basis of a special kind of reflexive relation. In identifying myself with an object, say, a fox, I do not have to be reflexively aware of myself, although when I have identified myself with a fox, I know myself as a fox, and *then* this reflexivity comes in. But the problem here is not how I know myself, but how I can possibly identify myself with a fox or whatever. Self-identification is not also symmetrical, there is no question of the bombshell identifying itself with me when I identify myself with it. Nor is it transitive. *A* may identify himself with *B*, and *B* with *C*, but from this it does not follow that *A* identifies himself with *C*. This is because when *A* identifies himself with *B* he does this as he knows him. This is common in love; when *A* loves *B* it so often happens that he loves his own image of *B*.

(v) There is also a dis-identification which is presupposed in every act of self-identification. It is necessary to cease to identify myself with this person that I am now, in order that I may identify myself with the bombshell. There must be total forgetfulness of my previous identification. The exclusive concern with the experience

of identification is not the same as the concern with the first person identity over time. This experience is not also a philosophical theory about what I am.

(vi) The difference between the usual problem of self-identity and self-identification becomes clear if we realize that in self-identification, the self that identifies itself with anything whatever, may be *ontologically* just the living body (behaviourism), or a self-substance (spiritualism), a momentary idea or perception (a self-less person); whatever *be* the self ontologically, it is the I-sense that is transferred from it to that with which the self identifies itself. The ontological self does not enter into this transference of I-sense. 'The third-person version' and 'the first-person version' do not differ in the same way as self-identity differs from self identification; for even in the 'first person version' there is a question of myself remaining the same person over time and appropriate criteria; perhaps memory etc., will be relevant for explaining this identity and sense of identity. In the case of self-identification only the experience of self-identification suffices, no other criteria are needed.

(vii) Yet we should note here that when I thus identify myself with anything, that thing does not remain that thing, but becomes 'ensouled'. When I feel myself a fox, the feeling is not the feeling which a fox has of itself; when I identify myself with a bombshell, I do not become an inanimate object, but import my feeling into it, ('felt my size... experienced the sensation of being shot up...' etc.).

Advaita Vedānta explains this type of phenomenon as a case of fusing or confusing of myself with any person or object. This confusion or fundamental unclarity about the real nature of myself is also a confusion about the nature of the object. This is the cause of emotional involvement with, or attachment to, a not-self. This attachment admits of degrees; in its initial stage the attachment expresses itself in the form of desire for a person or object. This desire makes us take pleasure in the thought of the desired object, wanting to *possess* it, i.e. have it *as mine*. When the attachment grows, the object, whether attained or not, is felt as mine, and at the most intense state, it is felt as *I*. We have a glimpse of this self-identification in empathy. But it is easier to identify oneself with the object of desire in dream. I may dream that I *am* a child, an old man, an angel, a giant or an animal. I may even dream that I am dead, but I retain consciousness and am aware of my dead body. I do not dream that

I am an inanimate object, a stick or a table. In dream this identification is total, for then there is no memory of myself as I am in the waking state; if the memory persisted, it would have rankled and interfered with my identifying myself anew. That attachment admits of degrees is obvious; it is clear, for example, in the story of Tom Canty:⁵

By and by Tom's reading and dreaming about princely life wrought such a strong effect upon him that he began to act the *prince*, unconsciously... but at last his thoughts drifted away to far, romantic lands, and he felt asleep in the company of jeweled and gilded princelings who lived in vast palaces, and had servants salaaming before them or flying to execute their orders. And then, as usual, he dreamed that *he* was a princeling himself.

Divided Minds

Parfit argues our identity is not what matters. He imagines a case of a person who has two hemispheres of the brain with exactly the same abilities. Then he argues:

Suppose that I am one of this minority, with two exactly similar hemispheres. And suppose that I have been equipped with some device that can block communication between my hemispheres. Since this device is connected to my eyebrows it is under my control. By raising an eyebrow I can divide my mind. In each half of my divided mind I can then, by lowering an eyebrow reunite my mind....

When I disconnect my hemispheres, my stream of consciousness is divided. But this division is not something that I experience. Each of my two streams of consciousness up to the moment of division....

Consider my experiences in my 'right-handed' stream. I remember deciding that I would use my right hand to do the longer calculation. This I now begin. In working at this calculation I can see, from the movements of my left hand that I am also working at the other. I might, in my

right-handed stream, wonder how, in my left-handed stream, I am getting on. I could look and see. This would be just like looking to see how well my neighbour is doing at the next desk. My work is now over. I am about to reunite my mind (pp. 246 – 247).

Now let us examine this imaginary case. Before I divided my mind I may have decided 'to divide my mind for ten minutes, to work in each half of mind on one of the two calculations, and then to reunite my mind to write a fair copy of the best result' (pp. 246-247). But the difficulty is that I have two eyebrows. Is it necessary to lower both to unite my mind? 'In each half of my divided mind I can then, by lowering an eyebrow, reunite my mind' (p.246). Now even if I remember in each half of my consciousness to lower the eyebrow over which the divided brain has control, it is not clear how the two eyebrows are lowered simultaneously. What my right-handed stream is doing with its eyebrow cannot be known by the left-handed stream. So, the possibility remains when the right-handed stream has lowered the left eyebrow, the left-handed stream continues to raise the right eyebrow. Even if I stand before the mirror, the left eye cannot see what the right eye sees. The right-handed stream and the left-handed stream are said to be like 'neighbours'. But it is not exactly like the relation of myself with my neighbour. I can see what my neighbour is doing. But it is difficult to see which eyebrow is raised or lowered in the case of a divided mind. Even if the two streams of consciousness could somehow act simultaneously in lowering both eyebrows, it will be fortuitous and cannot be planned. There is no explanation however the two streams, once divided, can ever become united.

VI. THE ADVAITA VEDĀNTA THEORY OF DEEP SLEEP

According to Advaita Vedānta, in deep sleep the *antahkārana* is withdrawn into its material cause which is *ajñāna* or *avidyā*. Because there is no *antahkārana* in deep sleep there cannot be any awareness of I, for, according to Advaita Vedānta, *ahamkāra* is function of *antahkārana*.

The question arises whether there is any *vr̥tti* of *avidyā* in deep sleep. It has been argued by the author of *Vedānta-paribhāṣā* that

unless a *vr̥tti* of *avidyā* becomes the object of deep sleep, or more accurately, the object of the witnessing consciousness, we cannot explain the memory of waking that I knew nothing then. That I knew nothing is not the same as I did not know anything; if I did not know anything, then I could not have said so, unless I knew that I did not know anything. To be able to say that I knew nothing, this nothing must become an object of my knowledge.

According to Advaita Vedānta every individual has three different bodies – the gross body, the subtle body and the causal body. The gross body consists of the anatomical and physiological parts; the subtle body consists of the *antahkārana*, the ten sense-organs and motor organs, and the five *tanmātrās*. The causal body is *avidyā* which is the cause of embodied existence of the individual. In the waking state there is awareness of these three bodies; in dream there is awareness of the subtle body and the causal body, but there is no awareness of the gross body. In deep sleep there is awareness only *ajnana* which is the causal body, in which the other bodies are dissolved.

Arguments for the Advaita Vedānta Theory

In deep sleep there is no awareness of the ego. This shows that the ego and pure consciousness are different. This theory is very different from the Nyāya theory according to which it is the self which is the ego.⁶ The argument that there is no awareness of the ego in deep sleep is manifold. First of all, there is the introspective evidence that there is no awareness of the ego at that stage. Against this argument that because there is no awareness of the ego therefore the ego itself is not present there, cannot be accepted as valid. It may be that because there is no awareness of objects, the ego even though present is not manifested. We become aware of our ego only when we have some awareness of objects, internal or external. There cannot be any awareness of ego pure and simple.⁷

This objection is not valid. It may be asked here whether there is no awareness at all during deep sleep or whether there is awareness but not related to objects. The first alternative is impossible for consciousness or awareness is eternal; hence, even in deep sleep there cannot be total absence of consciousness. The second alternative also is not justified, for, relatedness with objects cannot be a condition of awareness of the self which is self-revealing.

Can we have a memory of the ego during deep sleep? Even though there is no law that whatever is experienced is later remembered, still, if in deep sleep the self is aware of itself and if the ego were identical with the self, there will be consciousness of the ego during deep sleep. On waking, one remembers the self, then why should not one remember the ego?

The opponent may reply that the ego which is the self and the awareness of the self cannot be destroyed, for, the self is eternal and so also its consciousness. Because the consciousness is eternal, there cannot be any memory trace left by it. The psychological law is that we can remember an experience which we once had but do not have now. Experience and memory of the experience cannot coexist. So, as self-consciousness is eternal, there cannot be any memory trace left by it. Hence, there is no memory of the ego during deep sleep even on waking.

The reply to this objection is that if there can be no memory of the ego experienced during deep sleep, then there cannot be any memory of yesterday's ego for the same reason. But according to Advaita Vedānta, the consciousness limited by the ego which one had yesterday is noneternal. Hence, there can be memory traces left by it and hence can be an object of memory today and on subsequent days.

It may be objected that the ego during deep sleep may become an object of memory when waking from deep sleep for the person waking from deep sleep has a memory, 'I slept very comfortably'. The reply is that the witnessing consciousness which is self-revealing and is the real nature of the self which is bliss is eternal. Although the self is always self-revealing, still during the two stages of waking and dreaming it is not clearly manifested because of the wrong belief that I am a man, I am a Brahmin etc. But during deep sleep, there is no distortion due to wrong belief, the witnessing consciousness reveals itself clearly. At that stage, the *avidya* covers or conceals the Brahman, still it cannot conceal the witnessing consciousness, which reveals it. If the *avidya*, which conceals reality, could not have been revealed by witnessing consciousness then there would not have been any evidence for the existence of *avidya*. Hence it is proved that in deep dreamless sleep, three things—bliss, self and positive *ajnana* are experienced. On waking, these three

experiences are remembered in the form, 'I had a pleasant sleep, I could not be aware of anything'.

It may be argued here that the three things, namely, bliss, the self and positive *ajnana*, which are objects of experience, cannot be experienced through any mode of the *antabkarana* (the inner sense). For, during deep sleep there is no mode of *antabkarana*. If it is said that these experiences are by the witnessing consciousness, then the problem arises that the witnessing consciousness being eternal, cannot leave any memory trace and so, cannot be remembered on waking. Yet it cannot be doubted that we do have such memory on waking from deep sleep.

The reply to this objection is that even though in deep sleep there is no mode of the *antabkarana*, still, *avidya* which veils the consciousness during deep sleep assumes the three modes about bliss, the self and the veil. The different states of the apparent consciousness qualified by those modes reveal the self, bliss and the *ajnana* and then cease to exist so the memory traces due to the non permanent modes of *avidya* produce memory on waking 'I slept well, did not know anything'.

Now the objection is that the self which experiences during deep sleep and the self that remembers on waking are different selves. For the self which remembers on waking is the self qualified by the *antabkarana*. Thus, the self which experiences is not identical with the self that remembers. This makes memory inexplicable.

The reply to this objection is that according to Advaita Vedānta, even in the waking stage, the self qualified by *avidya* is the subject that remembers. The question then arises, what function does the *antabkarana* have in waking? The reply is that the memory which is a function of the consciousness qualified by *avidya* still requires the *antabkarana* to state the remembered objects in language. The *antabkarana* therefore, is that which initiates use of language only but is not the subject that remembers.

According to Advaita Vedānta, we can know by postulation (*arthapatti*) that during deep sleep there is absence of suffering and absence of cognition of objects. But bliss, self and *ajnana* are objects of memory on waking.

Now the question arises, what happens to the ego during deep sleep? The answer is that in deep sleep there is no awareness of

the ego and hence there is no memory of the ego on waking. But then on waking, when I say 'I slept well', I involve the awareness of the ego. The answer is that during deep sleep the ego is withdrawn into its material cause and in the waking hours that again is produced. The only function of the awareness of the ego is that it indicates the self as conducive to explicit linguistic usage by making the self an object of determinate cognition. For this reason the self is never said to have any internal state without the ego. When the self is indicated by the awareness of the ego, then that ego appears as identical with the self. The ego has no function other than explicitly manifesting the self. That is why the self is explicitly manifested only by the ego.

The material cause of the ego is the beginningless, inexpressible *avidya*. The supreme law of karma, which is located on *avidya*, is the *nimittakarana* of the ego. The ego has two powers, the power of knowledge and the power of action. It is manifested by the witnessing consciousness only. The ego produces the awareness of one self being an agent and a patient. Even though during deep sleep the ego is withdrawn into its material cause, which is *avidya*, still life continues, for life is the active power and is different from the ego. If, however, life and ego are regarded as identical, then we shall have to hold that in deep sleep the ego minus life merges in its material cause.

VII. THE ADVAITA VEDĀNTA THEORY

According to Advaita Vedānta philosophers the empirical subject is pure infinite consciousness illusorily cognised as finite. There are three different theories about how this unreal appearance is caused—(i) *Avacchedavada*, (ii) *abhasavada* and (iii) *pratibimbavada*.

(i) According to the first theory, the empirical subject, i.e. the *jiva*, is pure consciousness illusorily restricted by *antabkarana*, which is constituted by *means*, *buddhi*, *citta* and *abankara* (the I-sense or the ego). When there is an awareness of doubt or vacillation it is the function of *manas* as an element of the *antabkarana* (the inner sense). When there is awareness of certainty it is the function of the element of *buddhi* in the inner sense. The I-sense which is present in every cognition in the form 'I cognise' is due to the

element of *abankara* (ego) of the inner sense. Recollection or memory is due to the element of *citta* in the inner sense. As a matter of fact the inner sense is a unity, which does not contain these four factors but which only functions in four different ways in an epistemological context. Because of this functional difference the one *antabkarana* is called by four names.

Now according to the *avacchedavada*, this *antabkarana* is different in different individuals and so the individuals also are different. This theory is usually explained by a metaphor. Space is one and infinite; yet it is restricted by things like rooms etc. In the room, space inside is restricted by its walls, yet this space so restricted is not really a part cut off from infinite space, but is identical with the infinite space which is not affected by being bounded by the four walls of the room. Yet one may say that rooms of different sizes enclose different portions of the infinite space; so also the different empirical subjects are really partial manifestations of the infinite consciousness.

If we accept this theory, then we can easily distinguish between finite selves and the infinite pure consciousness and so can explain how a finite self can meditate on the infinite consciousness. For meditation or contemplation requires a difference between that which contemplates and that which is contemplated upon. The contemplator and the contemplated cannot be identical as that would identify the subject of the act with the object which would make the action impossible (*kartr karma bhāva*).

(ii) According to the second theory, finite selves are so many reflections of the one infinite pure consciousness in the different *antabkaranas*. This theory also is explained with the help of a metaphor of the sun reflected in different pots of water. The reflected pure consciousness is the empirical subject (*abhāsa eva ca*, *Brahmasūtra* 2.3.50).

Now the question arises whether the reflection and the reflected are one or different. According to Suresvara, the *bimba* (the original object) and the *pratibimba* (the reflection) are different. The *pratibimba* is the shadow (*chaya*) or *abhāsa* of the *bimba*. But the shadow is not real, is *mithya*. Hence the finite selves being *pratibimbas*, i.e. shadows, cannot be real.

(iii) According to the third theory, the *bimba* and the *pratibimba* are not really different, their difference is the product of *ajnana* and is, therefore, itself *mithya*. The faces reflected in a mirror and the face itself are not really two objects. According to Vidayaranya if the *bimba* and the *pratibimba* are really different then there cannot be any relation of reflection between them. One object cannot be a reflection of an altogether different object. According to the *abhasavada* explained above [in (ii)], it is only the reflection which is illusory. But this theory cannot be accepted because if it were illusory then it would have been cancelled by a true cognition of the form 'this is not the face'; but this cognition never arises. Hence it cannot be said that the reflection of the face in the mirror is illusory. It is, of course, true that one realises that there is no face in the mirror, but this realisation cancels not the face itself, but only the relation of the face with the reflection in the mirror. As a matter of fact, what one recognises is that this face reflected in the mirror is my face, which shows that the *bimba* and the *pratibimba*, the object and its reflection, are not different, that they are really one.

There are some Advaita Vedānta philosophers who try to conceive the reflection as a copy or imprint of the object. But this interpretation of the relation between the reflection and the object reflected cannot be accepted. For the imprint, say, of a seal on a wax, is of the same size and shape as the object itself, yet the face reflected in a small mirror is smaller in size than the face itself. So the reflection cannot be regarded as an imprinting of an object as on wax.

According to others the face reflected in the mirror is not the face which is on the body of the person. The reflection is a different face. But this theory, too, cannot be accepted. If the face in the mirror is a different face, the question, then inevitably arises: From where does it come? What produces it? There cannot be any satisfactory reply to such questions. Moreover, everyone recognizes that his face, which is on his body, is reflected in the mirror, which shows that they are identical.

Against this theory it may be objected that if the face on the body and the face reflected in the mirror are one and the same then how is it that the reflection is seen in the mirror? The reply to this objection is that the face seen as reflected in the mirror is the function of *ajnana*. This *ajnana* wrongly reveals one object as

another, one object located here as the object located there and so on. When the face on the body is mistakenly cognized as being in the mirror, this wrong cognition is the reflection.

According to some philosophers, there is no such thing as reflection. That we seem to see the reflection of our face in the mirror is an illusion. When we look at the mirror the light rays are reflected back and therefore the eyes see the face itself. Unless the light rays are reflected back we cannot see our face. This reflection of the light rays requires the presence of a mirror and that is why we cannot see our face except in the presence of a mirror.

Against this theory it is pointed out that what we see in the mirror cannot be the real face because in the mirror the image is inverted. If what we see in the mirror is the real face than this inversion of the image becomes inexplicable. Hence it has to be admitted that the face and its reflection have different locations, and this difference in location can easily explain the inversion of the image.

We can easily explain how pure infinite consciousness can be the indwelling spirit of the *jiva*. This cannot be explained on *avacchedavada*.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

- ¹ Kalidās Bhattacharyya *Mandukyopanisader Katha*, p. 8.
- ² *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. L.A. Selby-Bigge (Oxford, 1988), pt. 4, Sec. 6, pp. 252-43.
- ³ *Metaphysics*, Basil Blackwell, 1986, p. 167.
- ⁴ William James, *The Principles of Psychology*, Vol. II, pp. 121-22.
- ⁵ Samuel L. Clemens, *The Prince and the Pauper*, Masterpiece Library, Magnum Books, New York, 1968, p. 18.
- ⁶ 'Abamkarasyasrayo' yam mano matrasya gocarah' — *Bhasaparcchedah*, Verse.
- ⁷ 'Atha susuptau visayanubhava' bhavat sato' pyahanikarasya navabhasah'. — *Vivaranaprameya Samgrahah*, p. 75.

J.S. Grewal

Ravidas of the Sikh Tradition

A critical edition of the works of Ravidas (Ravidas) has been published. It is based on a number of manuscripts discovered in Rajasthan, and the tradition and practices of Ravidas preserved in the *Adi Granth*. The editors made a significant distinction between the Rajasthani and the Sikh traditions. In Rajasthan, the *vani* of Ravidas was augmented for assimilative purposes. In Punjab, the *vani* of Ravidas was edited in concordance with the teachings of the Sikh gurus. Whereas the Rajasthani manuscripts have over a hundred *pads* of Ravidas, the *Adi Granth* has only forty. Seventeen of these are common with the Rajasthani sources. This common core is the most authentic representation of Ravidas's ideas and attitudes. At the same time, there are at least seventeen other *pads* which are unique to the *Adi Granth*.¹ It is important to note that the 'common' and the 'unique' *pads* of Ravidas in the *Adi Granth* differ only in emphases. It appears, therefore, that Ravidas finds a more authentic representation in the *Adi Granth* than in the Rajasthani sources. We propose to concentrate on Ravidas of the Sikh tradition in order to see whether or not this representation is significantly different from that of the Rajasthani tradition.

I

At several places in his compositions, Ravidas refers to himself as a *chamar*. He tells us further that the members of his *jati* used to take away dead cattle for skinning, and they used to tan hides. Ravidas also refers to the craft of making and mending shoes, an