

ISSN 0970-7794

Journal of Indian Council of Philosophical Research

is a quarterly journal published by the Indian Council of Philosophical Research (ICPR). It is devoted to the publication of original papers of high standard in any branch of philosophy. One of the objectives of the ICPR is to encourage interdisciplinary research with direct philosophical relevance. Accordingly, contributions from scholars in other fields of knowledge, dealing with specific philosophical problems connected with their respective fields of specialization, would be highly welcome. However, good and original contributions pertaining to any branch of traditional philosophy would be equally welcome.

Each regular issue of the journal will contain, besides full-length papers, discussions and comments, notes on papers, book reviews, information on new books and other relevant academic information. Each issue will contain around 250 pages (Royal 8'vo).

Annual Subscriptions

	Inland	Foreign	
Institutions	Rs 450	US \$ 40	(Surface Mail)
Individuals	Rs 200	US \$ 30	-do-
Students and retired teachers	Rs 100	US \$ 15	-do-
Single Issue	Rs 100	-	-
Individuals	Rs 500	(for 3 years)	-do-
Life Membership	Rs 1500	US \$ 200	-do-

Bonafide students and retired teachers are requested to ask for the special subscription form.

Air mail cost will be charged extra to those subscribers who want to get the journal by air mail. Requests for air mail delivery must be made in writing.

For subscription and all other business enquiries (including advertisement in the *JICPR*) please contact directly:

Subscription Department
Central News Agency Private Limited
23/90 Connaught Circus, New Delhi 110 001, India

All subscriptions must be prepaid.

All contributions to the Journal, other editorial enquiries and books for review are to be sent to the **Editor, Indian Council of Philosophical Research**, 36, Tughlakabad Institutional Area, Mehrauli-Badarpur Road, New Delhi 110 062, India; Email: icpr@del2.vsnl.net.in

Journal of Indian Council of Philosophical Research

SPECIAL ISSUE 2002

Journal of Indian Council of Philosophical Research

JICPR

SPECIAL ISSUE

PHILOSOPHICAL TRADITIONS IN THE
INDIAN LANGUAGES - 2002



Edited by : R.C. Pradhan

Editorial Advisory Board

D.P. Chattopadhyaya
25 Park Mansion
57/A Park Street, Kolkata

Sibajiban Bhattacharyya
P/139 Metropolitan Cooperative
Housing Society, Chingrighata, Kolkata

Richard Sorabji
Kings College, London
England

G.C. Pande
Allahabad Museum Society, Allahabad

D. Prahlada Char
Rashtriya Sanskrit Vidyapeetha
Tirupathi

Anil Gupta
Indiana University
Bloomington, USA

T.N. Madan
Institute of Economic Growth
University of Delhi, Delhi

R. Balasubramanian
5 Bhagirathi Street, Srinivasa Avenue,
Chennai

V.N. Jha
University of Poona, Pune

Articles published in this Journal are indexed in the
Philosophers' Index, USA.

Typeset by Print Services, New Delhi 110 024
Printed in India
at Saurabh Print-O-Pack, Noida 201 301
and published by Member-Secretary
for Indian Council of Philosophical Research
36, Tughlakabad Institutional Area
Mehrauli-Badarpur Road, New Delhi 110 062

Contents

<i>Editor's Note: R.C. Pradhan</i>	v
✓ S.V. BOKIL <i>The Philosophy of Jñāneshvara</i>	1
✓ KAMALAKAR MISHRA <i>Philosophy of Tantra in Hindi Language</i>	23
✓ HARSIDDH M. JOSHI <i>Polytheism, Monism and Rational Temper in Philosophical Traditions in Gujarati Literature</i>	37
✓ S.B.P. SINHA <i>An Insight into Maharishi Dayananda's Philosophy</i>	61
✓ S.N. KANDASWAMY <i>The Philosophy of Śaiva Siddhānta</i>	77
✓ BIJAYANANDA KAR <i>Mokṣa, Theistic Vedānta and Viśuddhādvaita Darśana</i>	95
✓ NIRBHAI SINGH <i>Social Philosophy of Sikh Gurus</i>	111
✓ S.P. DUBEY <i>Philosophy of Kabir</i>	133
✓ V.N. SHESHAGIRI RAO <i>Philosophy of the Haridāsa Saints</i>	143
✓ SHEFALI MOITRA <i>Tagore and the Philosophical Tradition of Bengal</i>	167
✓ TANDRA PATNAIK <i>The Concept of Śūnya in Orissan Santha Philosophy—An Overview</i>	177
✓ S. PANNEERSELVAM <i>The Philosophy of the Tamil Siddhas</i>	197

R.I. INGALALI <i>Viraśaivism and its Philosophy</i>	209
AMITA CHATTERJEE <i>Kāli, the Mother, and the Play of Swan</i>	219
A. RAGHURAMARAJU <i>Mapping Repetition and Novelty in Creativity</i>	235
PADMAJA SEN AND ASOKA KUMAR SEN <i>Religion as Identity: Evolution of Religious Ideas among the Adivasis of Jharkhand</i>	247
M. RAMAKRISHNAN <i>Brahmananda Sivayogi's Psychocentric Interpretation of Yoga—A Prospective Study</i>	259
SATRUGHNA BEHERA <i>The Philosophy of Mahimā: An Extended Visuddha Advaitavāda</i>	269
N. SREEKUMAR <i>The Tradition of Dissent: From Ezhuthachan to Chattampi Swamikal</i>	297

Editor's Note

The Special Issue on the 'Philosophical Traditions in the Regional Languages of India' was originally planned by Professor Daya Krishna, Editor, *JICPR*. I am thankful to him for giving me this honour and responsibility to edit the Special Issue.

As a first step, we had planned to have a National Seminar on the same theme which was organized in the month of September 2001. A large number of scholars representing different languages of India participated in the seminar and papers written on different philosophical movements in the different parts of the country were discussed. There were papers on the following schools and sub-schools of philosophy as found in the regional languages in India:

1. Bhakti movements in Assam, Manipur, Orissa and Bengal
2. Philosophy of Saint-poets like Kabir, Vidyapati and Rabindra Nath Tagore
3. Philosophical Movement called Mahima in Orissa
4. Saivite Schools of the South like Saivasiddhanta and Veersaivism
5. Bhakti movements of Maharashtra
6. Philosophical movements of Gujarat and Kerala
7. Philosophy of Sikh Gurus
8. Philosophy of Swami Dayananda, the founder of Arya Samaj
9. Philosophy of Tantra
10. Philosophy of the Sufi Saints

The philosophical foundations of the different schools which had developed in the distant antiquity were brought to the focus and a panoramic view of the different philosophical, religious and ethical ideas and doctrines was presented. There were not only historical surveys of the schools but also critical appraisal of the same. The seminar thus brought alive the currents and sub-currents of philosophical activity that have been recorded in the regional languages of India.

The Indian languages other than Sanskrit which constitute a large family have a history running into the distant past. Though Sanskrit has been recognized as the medium of philosophical writing all over India, the languages which developed in the different parts of the country also have had philosophical writings on the major issues confronting man, namely, the religious and ethical issues. The regional languages are no less developed in this

respect in comparison to Sanskrit, but unfortunately the philosophical contributions of these languages have never been highlighted. It is time we take these contributions seriously and give them national recognition.

The major philosophical movements in India have originated in some regional centre or other in response to the demand of the time. The Bhakti movements started in reaction to the medieval orthodoxy of the Brahminic systems of thought rooted in the Vedas. In reaction to the rigidity of the caste system and the negative impact of the Brahminic ideas of renunciation, there were all out efforts to unify society through devotion to God and to preach the values of ordinary life of work and worship. The great saint-poets of medieval India believed in social unification through spiritual devotion and preached the philosophy of practical Vedanta to the masses. It is for the first time that the masses had access to the wisdom of the Vedas through the popular devotional songs written by the philosopher-poets. There were not only paradigm shifts at the metaphysical and religious levels from the abstractions of the Brahminic systems but also there was a recognition, for the first time, of the right of the masses to philosophical wisdom. The followers of these regional schools of thought largely were the illiterate masses. This brought about a revolution in Indian society. Never before was witnessed such a radical transformation in the religious and the philosophical psyche of the people.

These regional philosophical traditions which may be called the 'small traditions' in comparison to the 'big traditions' like Vedanta, Buddhism and Jainism have their importance in bringing about social and religious transformation in the country. They have brought the high wisdom of the great philosophical traditions down to the villages and hamlets and have enriched the life of the teeming millions throughout the length and breadth of the country. It is the regional philosophical traditions that have provided spiritual sustenance to the masses. There lies their greatness and profundity.

Out of the papers written for the seminar and the contributions submitted in response to our open invitation published in the *JICPR*, only a few papers have been selected for publication in this Issue. The rest of the papers could not find a place because of lack of space. Making the selection out of many good papers has been a difficult task. It is hoped that the papers included here will justify our effort to make the philosophical traditions in the Indian languages come to light and have impact on the philosophical thinking of our country.

The Philosophy of Jñāneshvara

S.V. BOKIL

Department of Philosophy, University of Poona, Pune 411 007

Before I describe and deal with the philosophical tenets of the Maharashtrian thinker Jñāneshvara (AD 1275–96), I would like to draw attention to the most important fact insofar as Marathi literature is concerned, that he is the first and the last original philosopher. His place in the philosophical developments in Maharashtra during the last 700 years or so is unique since he is not preceded, nor superseded by any thinker in Marathi language propounding philosophical doctrines that are absolutely original in quality and content. People might object to this very bold claim that I am making. There have been many saintly figures, like Namadeva, Tukaram, Eknath and Ramadasa who have made quite sterling contributions to the field of Marathi literature, but whether any of those contributions is philosophically innovative in its character the way Jñāneshvara's is, is extremely doubtful.¹ I shall not go here into any analysis of the conditions which made extremely difficult and almost impossible the growth and development of academic philosophy in Maharashtra during the last seven centuries. One who knows the history of Maharashtra during that period knows well that the reasons are political, social, economic and, more importantly, lack of the high level of literacy required for conducting philosophical debates and discussions. There does not seem to be any institutional backing or state support for producing philosophical works or for that matter any other kinds of literary works at least until 1947, the year of our country's independence from the yoke of British rule. Of course we have some works on that front but whatever we have is solely due to individual initiative and effort to preserve ancient traditional culture and literature of the Hindu society, and its various forms of life intact and uninjured from the continuing threats from foreign cultures, firstly the Islamic and then the Western, in particular the Christian. As compared with the later centuries of incessant warfare against Islam and the freedom struggle against the British, the times during which Jñāneshvara

did his work were relatively marked with peace and order. The period to which Jñāneshvara belonged was the Yadava period that ranged approximately from AD 1187 to 1309. Of this period the rule of Ramadevarava from AD 1271 to 1309 is considered to be the golden period of the history of Maharashtra because Devagiri, which was the capital of the Yadavas, was at that time the centre of learning, music, art and culture, and men of great attainments and scholars from distant places in India in the fields of astronomy, mathematics, medicine, statecraft and theology enjoyed the patronage of the state.² Jñāneshvara however was not fortunate enough to avail himself of that culturally exciting and effervescent climate. Personal tragedies of his parents' lives and the consequential sufferings forced on their forlorn children by the Brahmin community of Alandi, a village nearby the city of Pune and the relentless fight for justice given by them are known even now in every house of Maharashtra. (Thanks to the film media and the television network.) The family suffered ostracism of a magnitude that made the parents commit suicide and probably forced young sons and a daughter to sacrifice their lives by staging *sanjivani samadhis*—indeed an honourable way of 'how not to be in this world', approved in the ancient Indian tradition for Sanyasins. Jñāneshvara's literary contribution is, in a way, a Socratic but philosophical apology demanding justice and fairness in the name of whole mankind. The whole world was awakened to this apology in the year AD 1996 when the World Philosophers Meet was held in MIT Pune for perpetual peace in this world which was shaken and greatly disturbed by the two world wars of the previous century.

Surely, the greatness of Jñāneshvara as a thinker philosopher, a man of letters and social reformer if at all, must be elicited by us from his works and not from the legends that are usually associated with his name. We must think with the learned in the world society which has seen Copernican, Cartesian, Newtonian and Einsteinian revolutions in physics and astronomy and corresponding philosophical shifts in human ways of thinking. The eminence of Jñāneshvara's thought will not be affected in the least even if we do not attribute to him a few spiritual powers that are said to have enabled him to break the laws that govern physical and human events. We should look upon him as a plain human being, a prodigy at the most. One of the great hurdles in the way of understanding our own thinkers is that we do not have intellectual biographies ready for us, nor do we have much by way of source material from which to reconstruct

them. Naturally, we make haphazard claims regarding traditions to which thinkers like Jñāneshvara belong. Jñāneshvara is claimed to belong to different traditions, different schools of thought, different *sampradayas*. This may also be due to the poetic style of his writings which are usually taken to be what they are, i.e. pieces of literary art which become interpretable in different ways. There is fusion of poetry and philosophy in his works which poses problems of interpretation for the scholars in the field.

Whatever may be the case, in Jñāneshvara we have a philosopher who feels quite confident that his mother tongue (viz., Marathi) is immensely rich to serve as a prolific vehicle of subtle and in-depth philosophical thought. There are several places in his works where he expresses this confidence in the communicative ability of the Marathi language. A couple of these places are well-known. 'Māzā marāṭhā bola kautuke, Amṛtātehi paijā jinke'—My Marathi language precious enough, can win over Amṛta (i.e. nectar) if one were to have a race with it. The obvious implication is that it can handle even such abstruse and abstract philosophical matters with great ability. Or again, 'Iye Marāṭhichiye nagari, Brahnavidyechā karu sukāḷu'—In this city of Marathi, let us make the harvest of Brahnavidyā, i.e. philosophy. It is regrettable that during all these seven or eight centuries of stress and strain, struggle and hardships, the Marathi language has fallen from this crest and enjoyed no pride of place in our educational system.

II

On reading Jñāneshvara's works, especially *Jñāneshvarī*, a poetic commentary in Marathi on the *Bhagvatgītā* which is in Sanskrit verses and which contains a lot of poetic imagery, one certainly gets an aesthetic satisfaction or gratification comparable in kind, and sometimes in degree, to that which one would have upon reading a good poem, a play or a novel. Jñāneshvara himself did not use this title, viz., *Jñāneshvarī*, nor even the title *Bhāvārth-Dīpikā*. He himself regarded his work as an ornament embellishing the *Bhagvatgītā* (Kele Jñānadeva Geete, Deshikāra Leṇe). It is a literary work of art and as such has been studied by many a scholar who is student of Marathi literature and not a student of philosophy. Scholars of philosophy have differed on the interpretation of the original *Bhagvatgītā* itself. It is not therefore surprising that they have also different views regarding the exact philosophical import of the

Jñāneshvarī. The ancient Indian scriptures, including *Bhagvatgītā*, were mostly written in Sanskrit and because the learning of that language was restricted in the Hindu society to a very few fortunate souls and those too only males, they could not be *literally* accessible to a large number of men and women, the poor and the illiterate ones. We must give credit to Jñāneshvara, and to Jñāneshvara alone, for having undertaken this revolutionary task of poetically narrating the entire *Bhagvatgītā* elaborately with such unmatched extensive display of *pratibhā* in Marathi in the era which marks the beginning of Marathi literature. This epoch-making work of Jñāneshvara is his *magnum opus*. There can be no doubt that it is a philosophical work because the original basic work of which it is an extensive commentary is itself a philosophical work and well recognized member of *prasthānatrayī* of one of the most prominent systems of Indian philosophy, viz., Advaita Vedānta.

There is also another work, *Amṛtānubhava* (alternatively known as *Anubavāmṛt*) composed by Jñāneshvara and which is claimed by some scholars to express Jñāneshvara's own original philosophical doctrines. Scholars of philosophy in Maharashtra however differ amongst themselves as to whether that work expresses philosophical views on various issues, whether they are really different from those expressed in the *Jñāneshvarī*, the commentary on *Bhagvatgītā*. There are differences regarding the date of its composition. The majority of scholars however agree that it is the last philosophical work of Jñāneshvara and its date may be around AD 1295. Ekanath whose career belongs to 16th century is said to have written the first commentary on that work but unfortunately that commentary is not available as yet. The first available commentary, *Nityānandaikya Dipikā* is by Shivkalyana and dates back to AD 1635. It is an extensive commentary, the total number of verses being 6294. In his introduction, Shivkalyana says that *Amṛtānubhava* has been written for those who have gone beyond the viewpoints of *Pariṇāma* and *Vivarta* (illusion) and have attained the perfect vision.³ Pralhadbuwa Badve (AD 1718), Vireshwar Vallabh (AD 1795), Vishwanath Kibe (AD 1882), Harihar (date not known), Hansarajaswami (AD 1798–1855), Niranjanbuwa (AD 1782–1855), Balshastri Huparikar (AD 1698) and Jivanmukta Yati (AD 1919) are some of the later commentators. Besides these there are some expository works on *Amṛtānubhava* by a few recent writers like, Jog, Sakhare, Kene, P.Y. Deshpande, Rajaramabuwa Brahmachari, Dasganu,

etc. Professor S.V. Dandekar, Dr. S.D. Pendse, Dr. S.R. Talghatti have also expressed their own views concerning the teachings of that work.

Chāngdeva Pāsaṣṭī is yet another work whose authorship is undoubtedly that of Jñāneshvara. It is a very small work and is distinctly philosophical in character and content. While *Jñāneshvarī* contains around 9000 ovis, and *Amṛtānubhava* contains around 835 ovis, this small work contains only 65 ovis, but the views expressed are quite in line with those expressed in the other two works. Though cryptic in its expression, its message is not beyond the ken of anyone who is acquainted with the development of spiritual monism on Indian soil.

There are three other minor writings which stand in the name of Jñāneshvara: *Haripāth* which conveys the importance of Japayoga—regular but continuous chanting of the name of God in the spirit of devotion and dedication as the only royal path to meet God; *Namana*, which is a hymn in praise of the Lord containing 108 stanzas expressing his view that 'prayer is the supreme end; it is the secret—a divine experience. Prayer is the faith in God, nay, it is the very God Himself.' There is also a collection of stray *Abhangas*, around 900 religious lyrics. Subjects tackled within these *Abhangas* are varied but all of them are invariably associated with love of God. Some of these are '*virahinīs*' which depict intense longing for union with God, the supreme lover.

I shall mainly speak of the major three works which are straightaway philosophical in design, by which I mean the expression of philosophical views with the help of argumentation, good or bad. Further I shall not take seriously some anecdotes that are associated with the composition of these three major works. For example, it is said that Jñāneshvarī was not written putting in great effort but it was very effortlessly revealed to Jñāneshvara in great *pratibhā* and spontaneously delivered when Satchidānanda Bābā took it down. It is also said that it is not Jñāneshvara who wrote *Amṛtānubhava* at his own sweet will but that he was directed by Nivṛttināth to do so and he did it. The composition of *Chāngdeva Pāsaṣṭī*, it is said, to be a reply in response to Changdeva's letter which was blank with no material written because of hesitation over how to start, with respects or blessings etc. Another anecdote which is told in connection with the meeting of the two is that Jñāneshvara, because of some special spiritual powers in him, was able to make the wall itself on which he, his brothers and sister were sitting to move on its own and to take them to the place of meeting like a modern spaceship.

We must rescue Jñāneshvara's person and works from the halo of superstitions, magic and miracles. He is a human being; his life and works are also human. For aught we know, he had undergone terrible suffering in his very short career and so must have had tremendous intellectual torment before he could formulate his views, depicted as they are in his three major works. The intrinsic greatness of his personality will be directly reflected by the thought he expresses and the limitless magnitude of *pratibhā* with which he adorns it. I shall consider his works from this angle.

III

Do his works reflect any dominant tradition or school of thought to which Jñāneshvara belongs? This is a difficult question to answer.

Since Jñāneshvara's philosophical works are first amongst the Marathi literature, in one important sense there is no tradition to which he belongs. He is the first path-breaker, so influential and so powerful in his firm impact on future generations that he is as yet, as mentioned earlier, unsurpassed by anyone of his calibre. But because of the heavily laden poetic style of his writings which lends itself to diverse interpretations, he is claimed to belong to different traditions. For some he is an ardent exponent of Advaita Vedanta which dominated the philosophical scene in India since the latter half of the 8th century AD. There are works which trace textual supports for placing Jñāneshvara in the Advaitic tradition.⁴ There is no doubt that Jñāneshvara is a spiritual monist identifying Ultimate Reality (Brahman) with Sat, Chit, Ānanda, i.e. Existence, Consciousness and Bliss. In *Jñāneshvarī*, he certainly uses the language of Māyāvādin to describe the relationship between the Brahman and the Jagat on the lines of the theory of illusion whereby many scholars take him to be a staunch advocate of Saṅkara's philosophy. And yet while working within that tradition, Jñāneshvara places great stress not so much on Jñāna or Karma or Yoga as on Bhakti—devotion of God—that stalwarts in the Bhakti cult—ardent followers of Bhāgavata religion, a sub-sect amongst Hindu, and avowed members of the Vārakari Sampradāya in Maharashtra, have taken him to be a strong protagonist and votary of Bhakti tradition representing propagation of Bhakti or Bhāgavata Dharma as the true and sole pathway to God-realization. It is not surprising that *Jñāneshvarī* is highly respected amongst thousands of followers of that cult—the

devotees of God Viṭṭhal—as their Gospel. Both the author and the work are referred to by them as *Māuli* (i.e. mother). Thus while scholars are keen on tracing the spiritualistic and monistic lineage of Jñāneshvara in the Advaita tradition of Vedanta, the saints like Eknath, Tukaram and many, many others and the thousands of Varkaris have placed him at the centre of the Bhakti school or cult which is associated with the name of Pandharpur—presently the city where the temple of Lord Viṭṭhal is located. It is a place of pilgrimage where millions of pilgrims throng at least twice a year. The origins of the history of this cult are not definitely known but from the evidence that is available it can be safely surmized that the tradition enjoyed a wide reputation nearly for four to five centuries before Jñāneshvara's times, beginning with Puṇḍalika who is supposed to have lived in the 8th century AD. (The *Pāṇḍurangashāṭaka* of Śaṅkarācārya mentions Puṇḍalika and God Viṭṭhal.)⁵ It should be however noted that Jñāneshvara himself mentions his lineage to the Nath cult at the close of *Jñāneshvarī* as follows: Shiva-Shakti-Matsyendra-Gorakh-Gahinī-Nivṛtti-Jñānadeva. The history of this Nath cult is also not known beyond Gorakhnath since there has been no effort to explore it. It is certain however that Jñāneshvara's own great grandfather and a few others who belonged to the later generations of the family were initiated into that cult. It is known that Gahininath initiated Nivṛttinath who in turn initiated Jñāneshvara. But it is also true that nowhere do we find the suffix 'nath' being added to the name of Jñāneshvara or Jñānadeva—which suggests that Jñāneshvara himself was not particularly keen on such an initiation. It may also be noted that the spiritual wealth of this cult—whatever it may be—was held in secrecy between the teacher-initiators and the initiated ones. Contrary to this Upanisadic 'rahasya' tradition and in keeping with the tradition of debates and discussions prevailing in the period of classical systems, Jñāneshvara requested towards the close of the *Jñāneshvarī* his Master (i.e. Nivṛttināth) to allow him to disseminate that spiritual wealth to all for their benefit.⁶ All this simply shows that Jñāneshvara was not bound to a particular tradition as such, but that he was a well-read, profound scholar of then-available philosophical and religious treatises. To be able to master them and then to react to them in a characteristically critical and original way must be regarded as an astounding achievement particularly for his very brief career of only 21 or 22 years (AD 1275–96).

IV

Instead of therefore relying on the traditions mentioned above I shall suggest that one can trace continuous development of his intellectual thought through his three major works. It is quite obvious that *Jñāneshvarī* occupies the first stage in that development where the youthful exuberance of poetic imagination enabled him to present the message of the *Gītā* for the Marathi speaking people in resplendent strokes. There can be no doubt that the main thrust of *Jñāneshvarī* is on Bhakti or devotion as a pathway to God. Knowing fully well that the people for whom he was interpreting the message of *Gītā* were not literate and educated enough to understand the philosophical intricacies contained in the terse Sanskrit text of the *Bhagvatgītā* and in the passages of variant *Bhāṣyas* on it, it was reasonable for him to stress the role of *Bhaktī* in human life with a literary flourish and with gusto. The *Jñāneshvarī* must have had a golden touch in giving a philosophical dimension to the commonplace and humdrum reality of the ignorant masses. Accordingly, instead of adopting the traditional division of *Bhagvatgītā*, into three parts, each one containing six *adhyayas*, Jñāneshvara suggested a new division. The first division, according to him, comprises the first three chapters which deal mainly with the nature of action as a pathway to God. The second division contains eight chapters from 4 to 11, mainly focusing on Bhakti. Though it is so, Jñāneshvara never speaks of Bhakti alone. It is Bhakti through action. The two are combined in harmony to yield the desired goal, viz., union with God. The third division suggested is of 4 *adhyayas* from 12 to 15 where Jñāna as a pathway to God is at the centre. The real *Bhagvatgītā*, according to him, ends here.⁷ The last three chapters which form the fourth division bring out conditions that help or hinder the growth of Jñāna and deal with some sceptical scruples of Arjuna. The last chapter also gives the quintessence of the *Gītā*, which may be stated in the words of Dr. B.P. Bahirat as follows:

Jñāneshvara, all through his *Jñānadevī*, brings out fully the spirit of loving devotion that pervades the Song of the Lord. Bhakti or loving devotion is the fruit of right knowledge and the spring of right actions. This is the message of the Geetā and Jñānadeva proclaims it in words that are so sublime, so lucid and so enchanting. The object of the *Jñāneshvari* is to spread spiritual bliss ... and to enable any aspirant to have the glimpse of divine knowledge.⁸

Or again in the words of Professor W.B. Patwardhan:

The general drift of the teachings of *Jñānadevī* is to emphasize Upāsana and Bhakti, service and love of god, not the identity of the Bhakta and his Lord. The latter is to be inferred from the fact that Jñānadeva is at his best, his spirit in full swing and his soul in sympathetic raptures in those portions of *Jñānadevī* that deal with the Bhaktiyoga system which maintains that salvation is to be attained by means of bhakti or is bhakti.⁹

The conception of Bhakti that figures in *Jñāneshvarī* and, as I shall argue later on, in his *Anubhavāmṛt* and *Chāṅgdevapāsaṣṭi* is a highly refined conception. We know that the concept of Bhakti had a very long history right from its crude formulation in the Vedic ages in the form of worship to be offered to deities for the sake of worldly benefits such as wealth, offspring, cattle, rainfall, agricultural products, and victories in all sorts of struggles which the Aryans had to undergo for sheer existence down to its refined formulation in the form of identity of self and God—the identity expressed by such Mahāvākyas as *Tattvamasi*, *Aham Brahmāsmi*, *Sarvam Khalvidam Brahma*, or *Ayamātmā Brahma*, etc. It indicates the dialectic of moments from the early polytheistic stage of pretty early times down to the highly philosophical thoughts contained in the later systems—especially the orthodox ones. Jñāneshvara had the advantage of drawing upon such a long tradition,¹⁰ which is indeed weighty. I shall not go into the details of this tradition. Jñāneshvara belongs to the age of systems—to the era of rich philosophical flourishing of two or three centuries after the formulation of one of the most imposing intellectual formulations of Advaita System at the hands of Saṅkara. Philosophers discussing the nature of *Bhakti* as one of the teachings of the *Bhagvatgītā*, are not prepared to treat *Bhakti* as '*guhātguhātaram jñānamakhyātam*'. Since the philosophical background of the *Bhagvatgītā* certainly appears to be indefinite, the different Acaryas who belong to different schools have accordingly given different interpretations of Bhakti depending on what philosophical import is conveyed by the text of the *B'gītā*. Thus Ramanujacarya takes Bhakti to be a continuous meditation accompanied by the practice of *aṣṭāṅgayoga*. (Bhaktiyogo nāma yamaniyamāsana-prāṇayāmapratyāhāradhāraṇādhyānasamādhirupāṣṭāṅgavanstailādhāravadvicchinnaśmṛtiantanarūpah//*Yatīndramatadipikā*, Chap. 7, p. 62.) *Bhakti*

leads to Mukti—the alternative path to it being *prapatti* or self-surrendering. According to Madhwa, Bhakti is a method of service that leads to the perception of God (Hari). Vallabh thinks that Pushtibhakti is supreme. It is God alone that is desired and attained to the exclusion of everything else. If a devotee concentrates on this kind of Bhakti, he is admitted to Go loka where he can participate in the eternal sport of Lord Shrikrishna. Thus most of the Acaryas have different descriptions of what they conceive to be the nature of Bhakti. For Sankara (and this is more important), Bhakti is meditation upon ones supreme self, which leads to mokṣa. (Swarupānusandhānam bhaktirityabhidhīyate/Mokṣakāraṇasamagrāyam bhaktireva garīyaṣī/Vivekachūḍāmani.) Vallabh rejects all kinds of muktis and considers Bhakti as superior to all. The point that we have to note is that while Jñāneshvara is close to Śankarācarya in developing Spiritual Monism, that is, the Ultimate Reality is Spiritual and that it is one—he is able to see that if his conception of bhakti is to be admitted as a pathway to God-realization (or which is the same as self-realization) then he will have to radically change the conceptual framework of Advaita Vedānta, keeping monistic nature of ultimate reality intact and modifying, and sometimes modifying radically other doctrines, in a way consistent with his view of Bhakti.

What is then the view of Bhakti espoused by Jñāneshvara? Surely he does not accept the commonplace view of Bhakti—that it is a whole-hearted devotion to God involving a pure subjective feeling, an emotion and love unto God who is a person, just, benevolent and kind to all the living beings in the world. All forms of human life which indulge in upāsānās, upcāras and karmakāṇḍas would be ultimately of no relevance in the proper understanding of what this relation of Bhakti is. In the ultimate realization Bhakti could not lie in some external mode of approach to reality or God but it will have to be the very essence of Reality which is *swasamvedya* and *swaprakāsh*—an intrinsic value. This self-expressing and self-illuminating is nothing but Bhakti or love of God towards himself. Bhakti, for Jñāneshvara, is not a relation between *two* terms—not a dyadic relation but a fully reflective identity relation. When that is realized, the individual Jiva (in this case a human being) does not remain a separate entity but becomes God himself. '*Bhaktirveda bhaktireva wā Isvaraiva bhavati*. This is the view of Bhakti which he develops in *Amṛtānubhava*—his independent philosophical treatise. According to Advaitin, bhakti relation with Isvara would belong to *Lokavyavhāra* which

is always, as Śankara maintained, *Satyānrte mithunīkṛtya* (fusion of truth and falsity). This Advaitin view of Bhakti would be after all an appearance and would always fall short of that identity which is expressed in *Tattvamasi*—the basic of all the mahāvākyas. God, for Śankara, is *saguṇa Brahma*, not the philosophical Absolute and hence the implied dualism of God and man is not acceptable to Jñāneshvara. There are anticipations of this view of *Bhakti* in the *Jñāneshvarī* but having once accepted *Bhagvatgītā* as the base in which the foundations of this view of Bhakti are to be traced, Jñāneshvara must have found it difficult to throw away the Advaitic metaphysical framework completely. The high esteem in which the *Bhagvatgītā* was held by the Sāmkhya-yoga and the Vedānta schools of thought and also by the common masses must have been responsible for this. Even if you are yourself convinced of a certain philosophical truth, which is stranger to both the academic community and the common masses, do not speak it out blatantly ... deliver it to them in sugar coated pills.

V

In the *Anubhavāmṛt*, Jñāneshvara unfolds his spiritualistic, monistic but worldly realistic framework of Ultimate Reality which is identified with God. He says that God is Absolute and unlike Advaitic gloss. He is not to be reduced to appearance, though of the highest order. He is thus, like Spinoza, a God-intoxicated philosopher. The Love, which is the very nature of God is not something material but it is spiritual, self-conscious, self-realizing and self-sustaining. To use the words of Henry Bergson, 'Divine Love is not a thing of God; it is God Himself. It is on this point that philosopher must fasten who holds God to be a person and yet wishes to avoid anything like a gross assimilation with man' (H. Bergson, *Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, p. 216). For Bergson, as also for Jñāneshvara, the principle of life (*elan vita*) which inward intuition reveals, is to be defined as Love which is God Himself. The new metaphysical framework which Jñāneshvara introduces is infused with this Love principle. The Philosophical God is introduced first as a metaphor borrowed from the *Shivsūtras* which are described as the fountainhead of Kashmir Śaivism.¹¹ Scholars find that Jñāneshvara's views on ultimate questions as stated in *Anubhavāmṛt* are quite similar to those expounded in Kashmir Śaivism. According to *Shivsūtras*, the ultimate reality is the

Chaitanya or Shiv. It is swayamprakash—self-illuminating and needs no proof. Shakti is its inseparable aspect and the universe is its continuing manifestation. The universe has no other basis or ingredient like māyā or Ajñāna in it. Both Shiva and Shakti are ultimate principles of the same nature, inseparable and give birth to the Universe. Thus the very first verse of chapter 1 of the *Anubhavāmṛt*, says: ‘Thus have I paid my homage to the God and Goddess who are the limitless primal parents of the universe,’¹² and the 8th verse tells as that ‘From time immemorial, they dwell happily in union.’¹³ Although a metaphor, its significance can be gleaned by us from the views which Jñāneshvara expounds in the following chapters of his work and which show a radical departure from the Advaitic position which is forced on him by many a scholar who are scholars of literature and language but hardly ever trained philosophers. In fact I find even many philosophers who are not careful in clearly distinguishing the position of Jñāneshvara from that of Shankara. Some have compared the Shiv-Shakti model to the Sāmkhya model of Prakṛti-Purusa but I think that would be a grave mistake for the reasons which should be obvious to anyone who knows that the Sāmkhya system is an avowedly dualistic system. For Jñāneshvara dualism is completely foreign to the spirit of oneness which inflows, outflows and overflows in his conception of Ultimate Reality. This Universe which is manifestation of Shiva-Shakti union, as an offspring of both, is eternal. It is real in itself. It should be particularly noted that Jñāneshvara is not talking of this part or that part of the Universe. His vision of the Universe is his vision of God. The usual theistic contention that God is a Being, transcendent to Universe would be a meaningless proposition for him. So also many other characterizations of God given by men of religion and others would be simply nonsensical for him. His is a lofty vision as will become clear as we proceed. The relationship between Siva and Shakti is indeed a moot issue and although Jñāneshvara tries to make use of certain similies including the similie of sex-relation between a wife and husband (not between man and woman), it is quite clear that he finds that relation as ineffable, indescribable in words. Towards the end of the second chapter of the work, in which Jñāneshvara pays high tributes to Nivratinath, his eldest brother and his spiritual Guru, he says that ‘by this salutation to Master, he has discharged the debts of four kinds of speech’ (parā, pashyantī, madhyamā and vaikhari). This whole search for truth, which Brahmajñāna consists of, cannot be undertaken unless one makes use of language (it is

obvious that how can one possess Nityānityaviveka which Sankara prescribes as one of the requisite qualifications for sādḥaka, without careful use of language?) for which he owes quite a lot to his teacher or Guru. In undertaking the search for truth thus, Jñāneshvara is paying back the debt of the teacher and also of the language itself because the language is considered to be apauruṣeya. Language is something which is not set up in this world once and for all. It is a continuous sportive display or expression of that Ultimate Reality, the God-Goddess Shiv-Shakti. He also tells us in the very next chapter that with the help of these four kinds of speech (i.e. with the help of language) one cannot hope to have even remote acquaintance with Ultimate Reality, the Atmajñāna. It is believed that language helps us remove ignorance and yields knowledge for us. But it is a mistaken belief. To say that language removes ignorance or Avidyā is not correct because though ‘As a matter of fact, the four kinds of speech, are useful for the salvation of the individual self, with the destruction of Avidyā, these four are also destroyed.’¹⁴ They are very much ingredients of Avidyā. But though this is so, Jñāneshvara also assures us that ‘these four kinds of speech come to life in the form of the knowledge of Reality.’¹⁵ But this would entangle us into a paradox of a speaker, viz., I am speaking out the truth but the truth is unspeakable. Language is of no avail. We must fix our gaze on ‘Anubhava’ and make earnest effort to fix it up on Amṛtānubhava. Jñāneshvara argues that ignorance is not in existence and knowledge which is also a form of ignorance is a bondage. He assures us that that is his reflective view and he would accept it not because ‘it is said by Shiv or Shrivallabh. He says that his view can be understood even if they had not said it. In the fourth chapter, he proceeds to explain in a poetic flourish as usual, the relativity and reciprocity of ignorance and knowledge, the main thesis being: ‘The absolute exists in itself and is beyond the ordinary conceptions of existence and non existence’.¹⁶ In the fifth chapter, which is titled *Sat Chit Ānanda*, Jñāneshvara’s opening verse says that the three attributes—existence, knowledge and bliss—are incapable of exhaustively determining the Ultimate Reality but one does not know how this remark is to be taken in the light of his addition: A poison being itself a poison is not poison to itself.¹⁷ Nor does one know how to understand the sixth verse that follows and says: As a matter of fact the three words—existence, knowledge and bliss—are different but the triad is merged in one Bliss. He thus looks for the unity of the three that makes them lose their individuality. The three words viz.,

sat, chit, ānanda, when applied to *Ātman* do not denote Its nature but differentiate It from its opposites.¹⁸ Raising the question: which means of valid knowledge will be useful to the self-illuminating *Ātman* who is not an object to any one and has no knowability?, he asserts that the means of valid knowledge is always limited by the object of knowledge and hence of no use in the case of substance which is self-evident.¹⁹ One notices in all this a very striking anticipation of what Spinoza maintained as a rationalist who got completely engulfed by the consummate intellectual love of God. 'Those well-known words—*sat, chit, and ānanda*—become current but when they are united harmoniously to the knower, they vanish at that time like the clouds that shower rain or like the streams that flow into the sea or the paths that reach the goal.²⁰ Jñāneshvara is aware that while the various modes of proof declare their own inability to prove, the various analogies that he is putting forth solemnly declare their own inability to illustrate the Reality.²¹ How can words describe the Reality where the supreme speech itself disappears and no trace is found of any sound?²² The word has a glory but only as a reminder, and it has no merit beyond that. Chapter VI speaks of the inefficacy of the word in relation of *Ātman*, i.e. Ultimate Reality. The usefulness of 'word' is not denied, its capacity to set free the finite self that is entangled in the body is recognized, its ability to distinguish action from inaction is also admitted and yet, so declares Jñāneshvara, the 'word' is absolutely useless in the case of *Ātman* that is self-luminous and stands in no need of any obligation whatsoever.²³ Taking this stand, Jñāneshvara wishes to drive home the point that 'it is foolish to say that *Avidyā* is destroyed by the word and then the *Ātman* became conscious of itself.'²⁴ For him there is no *Avidyā* even for the sake of being destroyed. '*Avidyā* is non-existent like the son of a barren woman and if that is so, what should the axe of right thinking cut into pieces?'²⁵ *Avidyā* by its very nature, says Jñāneshvara, is non-existent. Its very name declares that it is non-existent.²⁶ Even if for the sake of argument, we accept that there is *avidyā*, it would be false to think that it can be dispelled with the help of word.' Word with all its associates becomes a meaningless prattle like a picture with unnatural colours. Hence the knowledge and the ignorance whose very life pitifully depends upon the word, are as real (or unreal) as the forests in a picture.²⁷

VI

Chapter VII of *Anubhavāmṛt* is the longest of all chapters and covers, say, almost one-third of the length of the book. It is refutation of Ajñānavāda. I have already said that Jñāneshvara is a spiritual monist but have also maintained that he is a monist not of an Advaita Vedanta school. He is not a follower of Śankara. If there exists any doubt concerning this, this chapter on *Ajñānakhaṇḍana* should dispel it. Jñāneshvara identifies Śankara's 'māyā' with 'Ajñāna'.²⁸ I shall not spell out Śankara's view of Māyā since it is well known. The world which has 'vyavaharika satta' is only an appearance of Brahman which has Pāramārthika satta and this appearance is caused by Māyā or Avidyā which not only veils Brahman but distorts it into manifold things that we, the jivas, experience in this world. The Jīva itself is also an appearance. Even God is also an appearance. This doctrine of Śankara, which maintains thus the phenomenality of God, World and Man and asserts the reality of Brahman alone invited great protest not only from the realists but also from the other schools of Vedanta. Jñāneshvara has seen that the most important fulcrum which supports the Advaitic argument that balances the Brahman and the World is argument from Adhyāsa which becomes possible owing to the existence of Māyā or cosmic Avidyā. Refutation of the doctrine of Māyā by Ramanuja, Madhwa, Nimbarka and Vallabh are known to scholars in the field, especially the Saptavidhā Anupapattis given by Ramanuja-Āśraya, Tirodhān, Swarupa, Anirvacanīya, Pramāṇa, Nivartaka and Nivṛtti Anupapatti. Chapter VII contains ten tropes which remind us of many points which those earlier Ācāryas have made. This clearly shows divergence of Jñāneshvara from Śankara and also at the same time his thorough scholarship on the issues involved. The ten-fold argument of Jñāneshvara should be a theme for an independent paper which I may hope to do some time later but I shall indicate the points made.²⁹ 1. Ignorance has no foundation, is unknowable and ineffective. 2. Ignorance can neither co-exist with knowledge, nor can it exist independently. 3. Ignorance cannot be proved by any *pramāṇa*. 4. Ignorance cannot dwell in *Ātman* in its pure state. 5. Ignorance cannot be proved with reference to the manifestation of the objective world. 6. If the Ignorance has the power of presentation, it cannot be called Ignorance. 7. Ajñānavadin indulges in malapropism and thus creates confusion of two words which are somewhat similar in sound but different in meaning. This is with reference to

his use of the words: *jñāna* and *ajñāna*. 8. Though ignorance is supposed to be born out of knowledge, it vanishes at its very birth. 9. *Ātman* would never meet Ignorance even if He purposefully tries to do so. It is only after presenting these arguments each one of which covers several twists and turns, *Jñāneshvara* brings in his last trope. 10. The support of the *Śruti*. Why is it that *Jñāneshvara* is so keen on refuting *Ajñānavada* or *Māyāvāda*? The last trope is quite crucial in that he wants to convey that *Śruti* passages have been misinterpreted to denote reality of Brahman alone and the falsity of the world. *Jñāneshvara* quotes a verse that occurs in three different Upanisads³⁰ and claims that it cannot be said to support *Māyāvāda*. On the contrary, he says that verse supports his theory of the world as the delightful expression of the Reality and not its illusory appearance. Refutation of *Māyāvāda* by *Jñāneshvara* has been discussed by some Marathi scholars³¹ but most of them try to focus their attention on the differences between *Jñāneshvara* and other *Ācāryas* and bring him closer to *Śamkara* in a way to suggest *Jñāneshvara* as a faithful follower of *Śamkara*'s *Advaita Vedānta*.

VII

Let us now get to the metaphysical world-view of *Jñāneshvara* which is usually known as *Chidvilāsvāda*. Starting with the position that *Ātman* is beyond description, the world, it is obvious, cannot hold itself in causal relationship with the *Ātman*, nor can the world be said to be caused by *Ajñāna*. People try to catch the nature of world by constructing intellectual theories of all sorts but they become worthless because one cannot comprehend the nature of *Ātman* with the help of language or in other words there cannot be *jñāna* (knowledge) of what this world is. *Jñāneshvara* conceives therefore a theory which says that the world is the expression of Divine Love and Joy. The world itself is the sport of *Ātman*. It is manifestation of *Ātman* itself, a glorious display of self-illuminated nature. Visions upon visions are put forth within that Pure Consciousness as aesthetic compositions by God himself. This is the kind of *param-bhakti*, devotion of highest order—God loving himself. That is *Amṛtānubhava*—nectar-like experience. The *Ātman* is completely intoxicated by the glorious spectacle of His own creation. There is no repetition of scenes, acts, works of His. Every moment he wears ever new and beautiful apparels. The world is His shining and his expansion. For saying all this, *Jñāneshvara*

is obviously depending on what may be called *prātibhājñāna*. We have seen that he discounts both knowledge and ignorance in the ordinary senses of the terms, i.e. something that is couched in language. But in advocating *Chidvilāsvāda* or *sphurti-vāda*, he is banking on a very distinctive kind of knowledge, which can be had only through experience of highest order—experience which results from the faculty of *pratibha*, a distinctive power of imagination. I need not question here the possession of *pratibha* by human beings. The artists, the poets and playwrights have always exercised such power in creating ever-new works of art and literary pieces. But what are the limits of *pratibha*? Can *pratibha* by itself acquaint us with the nature of ultimate reality? *Jñāneshvara*'s answer to this latter question is in the affirmative and God, i.e. Shiv-cum-Shakti, is the highest *prātibhāvāna* Being—the ultimate reality. All this is poetic vision that can be grasped through dedicated devotion—*nispṛha bhakti*. It is beyond the ken of ordinary human beings, the finite selves. Both the works of *Jñāneshvara*, the *Jñāneshvari* and the *Amṛtānubhava* give prominence to *Bhakti*, the first one as a commentary on *B'Gītā*, the second one through philosophical debate with other schools of thought. The conclusion of both the works is a sort of poetic vision—all embracing spiritual monism realized in intuitive experience—*anubhuti*. The poetic vision is embellished by similies and metaphors. The third work, *Changadeva Pasasti* which I mentioned, though a very short one, reflects *Jñāneshvara*'s attitude to the ultimate problems of philosophy. Dr. Bahirat has called it a quintessence of *Jñānadeva*'s philosophy.³² It however does not contain refutation of others' views nor does it contain any mention of *Bhakti* and its nature. There is however a summary statement about the absurdity of those who regard *Avidyā* as the cause of the world. With regard to the nature of Ultimate Reality, his position is not different from the one which he states in *Amṛtānubhava*. But the main point which he makes and which deserves our attention is that the triad of knower, knowledge, and the known is the manifestation of one Consciousness (*Samvitti*). Hence one cannot think of the world being caused by *Ajñāna*. Being natural manifestation, God is not screened or hidden by this resplendent nature. The relation between the two is not that which obtains between a rope and a serpent. Reality is not the ground of an illusion in the form of world. As usual *Jñāneshvara* uses several similies to bring this point home. Professor A.G. Javadekar calls this work very rightly 'a Unique Advaitic Composition',³³ makes succinctly the points on which *Jñānadeva* differs

from Sankara's advaitic position and comes up with the following evaluation:

Jñānadeva holds that the whole world of plurality is an apparent expression of the Brahman, without its undergoing any change within itself. Without affecting its basic unity, it appears as the duality of subject and object or the triad of the knower, known and knowledge. Jñāneshvara says that such manifestation of Brahman is natural to it. He does not subscribe to any element of *Avidyā* or *māyā* as an explanation of this dualism or triadism or pluralism. Jñānadeva's insistence is on the unbroken, continuous nature of Atman, even if there is the manifestation of two or more.³⁴

Thus even this work also emphasizes the reality of this world as manifestations of one Unitary Consciousness.

VIII

All the three philosophical works of Jñāneshvara are poetical treatises. I say this not because they are written in verses but because their nature is more of literary works of art than that of a philosophical work. Of late philosophers have started taking interest in this kind of distinction and throw out their reflections on 'Philosophy as Literature'.³⁵ Descartes' *Meditations*, Locke's *Essay*, Kant's *Critiques*, Hegel's *Phenomenology*, Śankarācārya's *Bhāṣya on Brahmasūtras*, and there are so many others which we shall hardly ever refer to as literary works of art, since they call into play higher order rational or logical rigorous exercises. Their nature is more like treatises in natural sciences and mathematics. Both philosophical works, and scientific works are said to belong to the literature of knowledge which is again distinguished from what Nietzsche called literature of power, to which literary works of art belong. We may also note that though we thus club together philosophical works and scientific works under one rubric 'literature of knowledge', both of them differ in vast degrees so far as their semantic transparency is concerned. Darwin's *The Origin of Species* is said to be semantically transparent which puts constraint on freedom of interpretation of that work because we see *through it* to the biological facts and theories he is talking about and we find that there is only one right way of reading Darwin's book. The literary work of art is no doubt *about* something but is this 'about' the same as the

'about' when we say that Darwin's work is about the biological facts in nature and theories about them? Linguistic philosophers make distinction between 'reportorial about' and 'fictive about'. 'The meaning of *The Origin of Species*, what it is reportorially about, is the meaning in the mode of semantic transparency. The rich ambiguity, the over-determination and invitation to diverse levels of interpretation which rivet our attention to a literary text would be faults in a scientific treatise.'³⁶ A literary work of art which is 'fictive about', is a mode of semantic arrest, in contrast to the semantic transparency of non-literary text with its reportorial about. At present we have to face these distinctions because we have all the three *genres* of literature before us. A distinction between a pure philosophical work and literary work of art, especially poetry, seems to be absent in Jñāneshvara's times, and philosophers do not seem to be jealous of semantic transparency as against semantic arrest. Because of the influence of scientific style and mathematical reasoning, philosophy is moving away from poetry. One is reminded of that famous essay by Lord Macaulay: 'As Civilization Advances, Poetry Declines'. Philosophy and poetry which were once upon a time so fused together have now fallen apart. The reason why the poet cannot be a philosopher and the philosopher a poet lies in the style and function of philosophy and poetry. A philosopher has to prove and each one of the steps of his proof for a certain philosophical point, howsoever long it may be, is equally important. The poet, a light winged creature that he is, will not bother or get entangled with proof. Poet goes on using analogies in legion in support of a philosophical point or a theory because he believes like most of the Indian philosophers that *Upamāna* (analogy) is a valid source of knowledge. But the logic of analogical reasoning tells us that howsoever strong the analogical reasoning may be, it can never be a substitute for proof which a philosopher is on the look out for. There may be such a thing as 'philosophical poetry' in which, as George Boas remarked, 'The ideas of poetry are usually stale and often false, no one older than sixteen would find it worth his while to read poetry merely for what it says.'³⁷ But one cannot ignore the philosophical poetry of a sublime genre, of Dante, Milton and Goethe in the West and of Vyasa, Valmiki, Jñāneshvara, Tulsidas, Tagore and Aurobindo of our own land. All of them embody philosophical stances in situations and characters so that we can see philosophical models instead of think about the abstract concepts involved. Jñāneshvara's poetry belongs to that sublime genre.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. For a general survey type article on Philosophy in Marathi, refer to Karandikar, V.R. and Ledele, M.R.: 'Philosophy in Marathi' in *Philosophy In Fifteen Modern Indian Languages* edited by Professor V.M. Bedekar, Poona, 1979, Continental Prakashan and M.E.P. Council, pp. 186-229. It is true that *Vivekasindhu* by Mukundraja is claimed by some to be the first philosophical treatise in Marathi but the historical priority of Mukundraja over Jñāneshvara is doubted by some, notably by Ajgaonkar, J.R. in his *Maharashtra Kavi Charitra*, Part I, p. 14. It may be noted that Mukundraja's work is written in the Advaitic tradition of Śamkara. As I shall indicate below, Jñāneshvara's refutation of Māyā doctrine is undoubtedly indicative of his divergence from that tradition.
2. For fuller discussion on this point, many historical works are now available. I have however drawn on the first chapter of Bahirat, Dr. B.P.: *The Philosophy of Jñānadeva*, Mumbai, 1996, (Spl Edn), by Popular Prakashan Pvt. Ltd. The first edition of this book was published in 1956 and the second in 1961. A very resourceful publication was brought out by Professor V.R. Karad: *In Quest of Universal Peace*, in 1996 on the occasion of World Philosophers Meet held at M.I.T. Pune, to celebrate the 700th Anniversary of Sanjeevan Samadhi of Jñāneshvara. This publication consists of many articles on social, cultural and religious and political conditions that prevailed before and after Jñāneshvara.
3. *Nityānandaikya-Dīpika*: I-158.
4. Prominent amongst these have been the works of Professor S.V. Dandekar, Professor G.B. Saradar, Dr. S.D. Pendse and Dr. S.R. Talghatti. They belong to the latter half of the 20th century.
5. Refer to Dandekar, Dr. S.V.: *Vārakari Sāmpradāyāchā Itihāsa*, 1928, and Fred Dallmayr: 'Jnanadeva and the Varkari Movement' in V.K. Karad: op. cit., pp. 52-66.
6. *Jñāneshvari*, XIII, 1162-3.
7. Ibid., XVI, 41-6.
8. Bahirat, Dr. B.P.: op. cit., p. 16.
9. Patwardhan, Professor W.B., *Wilson Philological Lectures—1917*, Lecture III, University of Bombay, Bombay, 1917.
10. Dr. B.P. Bahirat in his work (op. cit.) indicates influences right from Upanisads down to his elder brother, Nivr̥ttinath. He refers mainly to ten major Upanisads, Yogavasista, The Shivasutra, Gorakhnath, Sankara and many others. Refer to Chapter VIII.
11. A highly informative account of Saiva philosophy has been given in Marathi by Shri G.V. Tagare in his book which is published by MEP Council, Pune, 1987. The language of the book is Marathi.
12. Refer to an English rendering of *Amṛtānubhava* given by Dr. B.P. Bahirat in his work which is already cited in note 2 above. Chapter 1 is preceded by five

- Invocatory Sanskrit verses. Although the whole book is in Marathi, it was probably customary to offer a few verses by way of invocation to a God and Goddess. I have depended on the English rendering made by Dr. B.P. Bahirat.
13. Since the Ultimate Reality has been described as *Satchitānanda*, the 8th verse makes reference to all the three aspects of it. In full, it says: 'They are seated on the same ground (existence) and they wear the same ornament of light (knowledge). From time immemorial they dwell happily in union. Ibid., p. 152.
 14. Ibid., p. 170 (Stanza - 2).
 15. In Chapter VI of *Amṛtānubhava* where Jñāneshvara speaks of the inefficacy of word, he also speaks of the efficacy of word to make finite selfhood enter into the body of Pure Shiv and Ātman being able to meet Himself by means of word. Refer *ibid.*, pp. 187-8 (Stanzas - 7-11).
 16. Ibid., p. 178 (Stanza - 40).
 17. Ibid., p. 179 (Stanza - 1).
 18. Ibid., p. 180 (Stanza - 13).
 19. Ibid., p. 180 (Stanza - 17).
 20. Ibid., p. 181 (Stanzas - 20-21).
 21. Ibid., p. 184 (Stanza - 54).
 22. Ibid., p. 184 (Stanza - 54).
 23. Ibid., p. 188 (Stanza - 13).
 24. Ibid., p. 189 (Stanza - 20).
 25. Ibid., p. 189 (Stanza - 24).
 26. Ibid., p. 191 (Stanza - 38).
 27. Ibid., p. 197 (Stanza - 102).
 28. In the *Amṛtānubhava*, Jñāneshvara does not use the expression 'māyā' anywhere. All the time he talks of Ajñāna. For him, however, Ajñāna is identical with Śankara's 'māyā'. Refer to *Jñāneshvari*, XIV. 71.
 29. For fuller treatment, see Dr. B.P. Bahirat, op. cit., pp. 63-73.
 30. Kaṭhopniṣada: V-15, Śvetāśvetaropniṣada: VI-14, Muṇḍakopniṣada: II-2-10. The verse runs as follows:
 There no sun shines, no moon nor glimmering star.
 Nor yonder lightening, the fire of each is quenched.
 From him, who alone shines, all else borrows its brightness.
 The whole world bursts into splendour at his shining.
 (English rendering taken from Dr. Bahirat, op. cit., p. 69.)
 31. Notably Dr. S.D. Pendse, Dr. S.R. Talghatti. Dr. R.D. Ranade has a special chapter on *Amṛtānubhava* in *Mysticism in Maharashtra* (Poona, 1933), and although he recognizes the originality of Jñāneshvara's Sphurtivada, he interprets it as not essentially different from Śankara's Māyāvada.
 32. Bahirat, Dr. B.P.: op. cit., p. 114.
 33. Javadekar, Dr. A.G.: 'Jñāneshvara's *Chāngadeva Pāsaṣṭi*, A Unique Advaitic Composition', in Karad, V.D. (ed.), op. cit., pp. 67-72.

34. Ibid., pp. 70–71.
35. Refer to such works as 1. Jones, Peter: *Philosophy in the Novel* (Oxford, 1975). 2. Lang, Berel (ed.) *Philosophical Style* (Chicago, Nielson Hall, 1980).
3. Charlton, W.: 'Is Philosophy a Form of Literature?', *British Journal of Philosophy*, 14 (1974), pp. 3–16.
36. Quoted from Beck, Louis W.: 'Philosophy As Literature', reprinted in Cicovacki, P. (Ed.) *Essays by Lewis White Beck: Five Decades as a Philosopher*, Rochester, N.Y., University of Rochester Press, 1998, p. 148. I am greatly indebted to the late Professor L.W. Beck for the view that I state in this section of my paper. It is mainly based on his essay quoted above.
37. Boas, George: *Philosophy and Poetry*, (Norton, Mass. 1932), p. 9.

Philosophy of Tantra in Hindi Language

KAMALAKAR MISHRA

(Retd.) Professor of Philosophy, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi 221 005

It is amazing to find that elements of the Tantric philosophy are widely present in the Indian life, and they are reflected in the Indian literature of regional languages as well. This is true with the Hindi literature too. The object of this short paper, besides giving a brief introductory history of the Tantric writings in Hindi, is to point out and highlight some salient features of the Tantric philosophy, which are present in the Hindi writings. The object is also to show that the Tantric philosophy expressed in the Hindi poetry and other writings, is not just the traditional philosophy (in Sanskrit) but it has its own special significance—it brings the Tantric philosophy nearer to everyday life and successfully synthesizes it with the other philosophical traditions. Since the compass of this paper is very short, it is not possible to touch upon each and every issue in question; I have naturally to be selective, although systematic.

In India the Tantric tradition has been co-present with the Vedic one, if not earlier to the Veda. However, the Tantric tradition was mainly oral, the Tantric ideas and practices were conveyed from teacher to taught in the oral way (*'karnāt karnopadeśena samprāptamavanītaṃ'*).¹ It was only in the post-Vedic period that the Tantric philosophy was put into black and white, and naturally therefore the language was post-Vedic Sanskrit. But it seems that the written Sanskrit corpus was kept for record, and the tradition practically continued in the same oral way. In the medieval period, Hindi which is said to be the daughter of Sanskrit, was rising in the northern parts of India, and the Hindi literature imbibed in itself the continuing Tantric tradition. In this context it is significant to note that the Tantric philosophy, which entered into the Hindi language, came from the continuing oral tradition and not so much from the written Sanskrit source. The oral tradition was more powerful than the written one, and perhaps this is the reason why the Tantric ideas expressed in the Hindi literature are very forceful.

The history of the Tantric philosophy in Hindi literature obviously begins from the 14th–15th century. We find Tantric ideas in the compositions of the poets of the *Saguna-Bhakti* tradition like *Mirābāī*, *Sūradāsa*, *Tulasīdāsa*, etc., and of those of the *Nirguna-Bhakti* tradition like *Kabīra*, *Raidāsa*, *Dādū*, *Nānaka*, etc. In the present times the language which *Nānaka* used, is known as Punjabi; but in those times there was no sharp demarcation between Hindi and Punjabi or between Hindi and Rajasthani. The language which these saints spoke was popularly and commonly known as ‘*Sadhukkādī*’ language; ‘*Sadhukkādī-bhāṣā*’ is the early form of Hindi. *Sūradāsa* and *Mirā* composed in what is called ‘*Braja-bhāṣā*’ and *Tulasīdāsa* in *Avadhī*, but *Brajabhāṣā*, *Avadhī*, *Bhojapuri*—are all taken to be different forms of Hindi.

In the medieval period itself, there are two main lines or traditions of the Tantric saints who composed in Hindi. One is called the *Nevārī* tradition represented by *Matsyendranātha* and *Gorakhanātha* (also called *Nātha-sampradāya* or *Nātha* tradition). The other one is called *Girnārī* tradition represented by *Kīnārāma*. The Tantric line of *Kīnārāma* is also called ‘*Aghora*’ tradition. ‘*Aghora*’ means ‘pure’, signifying the realization of ‘pure Consciousness’ that purifies the so-called impure objects of the world.

In the modern period, the ‘*Chāyāvāda*’ poets—Jayashankar Prasad, Suryakant Tripathi Nirala, Sumitranandan Pant and Mahadevi Verma—exhibit a lot of Tantric insights. Of these, Jayashankar Prasad is the most prominent exponent of the Tantric philosophy. *Kashmir Śaivism* is the most prominent philosophical system of the Tantric tradition, and Prasad seems to largely follow the *Kashmir Śaiva* line of Tantrism. His famous work, ‘*Kāmāyanī*’, presents the spiritual way of life clearly based on *Kashmir Śaiva* Tantrism. Several researchers of the Hindi world have published works on Prasad and his *Kāmāyanī*. To mention one, Dr. Bhanwar Lal Joshi in his ‘*Kāśmīra Śaiva Darśana Aura Kāmāyanī*’ (Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series, Varanasi, 1968), has comprehensively brought out the *Kashmir Śaiva* Tantric philosophy present in the *Kāmāyanī* as the very ground of the work.

Besides work in poetry, Jayashankar Prasad has also written in prose, picturing the Tantric philosophy. In the medieval period, the writers composed poems and wrote no prose, but in the modern period we find prose writing also. Of the Tantric prose writers of the contemporary period, *Mahāmahopādhyāya Pañḍita Gopinātha Kavirāja* is the most

prominent. His ‘*Tāntrika Vāṇmaya me Śāktā Drṣṭi*’ (Bihar Rashtrabhasa Pariṣad) is an important work on Tantric philosophy in Hindi prose.

Rajneesh (Osho), although a bit controversial, is the modern protagonist of the Tantric philosophy. He spoke and wrote both in English and Hindi. His lectures and writings published in Hindi, present an inspired (but rational) picture of the Tantric way of life. Though in the matters of the Tantric sex-life he sometimes seems to take wild flights and advocates such behaviour which is unsocial and which is also not permitted by the traditional Tantra, yet his thinking largely contains elements of very rational and unorthodox philosophy of life.

There are also some other writers of the modern time who present a general philosophy of life in which spiritual Tantrism is included and happily blended with the total Indian tradition. *Shri Ram Sharma Acharya*, the founder of *Gayatri Sakti Peetha*, is the most prominent of them. He and his followers have launched a movement of Indian social regeneration through the practical Vedic and Tantric spiritualism. *Lakshman joo*, perhaps the last spiritual *guru* in the line of the *Śaiva* Tantrism of *Kashmir*, has authored Hindi commentaries and translations of the Sanskrit Tantric texts. *B.N. Pandit (Balajinnath Pandit)*, an academic of the *Kashmir Śaiva Tantrism* and a disciple of *Amṛtavāgbhavācārya*, has written important articles (collectively published in book form) on Tantrism in general and *Kashmir Śaivism* in particular. *Swami Satyananda* and his disciple *Swami Niranjanananda* of the *Bihar School of Yoga* have published work in Hindi, in addition to their English writings, on the Tantric Yoga.

Varanasi is the centre of the Tantric studies in Hindi. *Gopinatha Kavirāja*, the great Tantric writer in Hindi, was himself settled in Varanasi. His disciples, *Vrajavallabha Dvivedi* and *Paramahansa Mishra*, have produced translation, annotation and commentary of the Sanskrit Tantric texts, besides articles on the Tantric philosophy. *Paramahansa Mishra* has done the arduous work of the Hindi translation with his own Hindi commentary of the voluminous *Tantrāloka* of *Abhivanavagupta* (published in eight big volumes from the Sampurnananda Sanskrit University, Varanasi). *Jaideva Singh*, *K. Mishra* and *K.D. Tripathi*—the disciples of *Ācārya Rāmeśvara Jhā*—besides their English works, have written important articles and monographs on the Tantric philosophy in Hindi. Professor *Vidya Niwas Mishra* is an eminent Hindi writer. His special contribution to the understanding of the Tantra and the Veda is that the Vedic and the Tantric should not be taken as two different and separate traditions, that the Tantra

is a continuation of the Veda, and that the Veda and the Tantra should be taken together as one continuous whole. Moreover, Professor Mishra specifies how the Tantric wisdom has penetrated deep into the veins of the Indian public life including the folk life. Navajivan Rastogi of Lucknow, a disciple of K.C. Pandey, is associated with the Varanasi circle. Ram Chandra Dvivedi of Jaipur University was also associated with the Varanasi circle. He and his wife, Kamala Dvivedi, have contributed to Tantric scholarship in Hindi. There are other scholars like Vishal Tripathi (Delhi), K.P. Mishra (Varanasi), etc., who are Hindi writers of the Tantric philosophy.

II

(i) Conception of Consciousness as force or energy (*Śakti*), and (ii) the unity of *Śiva-Śakti* (Knowledge-Activity or *Prakāśa-Vimarśa*) are the central themes of the Tantric metaphysics. The ultimate reality according to Tantra, is Consciousness (*Citi* or *Samvit* or *Caitanya*) which is *Ātman* (the Self) and is called *Śiva* (the 'Benign') or *Brahman* (the 'All-pervasive') or *Viṣṇu* (the All-permeating). This Consciousness or *Śiva* is dynamic by its very nature, and the very dynamism of *Śiva* is called *Śakti* (Power or Energy). The *Upaniṣads* accept *Jñāna* (Knowledge) or *Prakāśa* (Illumination) as the very nature of Consciousness (Brahman or the Self), and they implicitly accept *Kriyā* (Activity) too in Brahman; whereas according to the Advaita-Vedāntic interpretation of the *Upaniṣadic* philosophy, Brahman (Consciousness) is only *Jñāna* and no *Kriyā*. In contradistinction to this position, Tantra (specially the Kashmir Śaiva Tantrism) holds that Consciousness (*Śiva* or Brahman) is not *only Śiva* or *only Jñāna* or *only Prakāśa* but *Śiva-Śakti* or *Jñāna-Kriyā* or *Prakāśa-Vimarśa*—the two in one, or the two aspects of one and the same reality.

The *Vaiṣṇava* Tantrism which has all the characteristics of Tantrism in general, naturally conceives *Viṣṇu*, the ultimate consciousness, as *Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa* (in the Krishna Bhakti tradition) and *Sītā-Rāma* (in the Rāma Bhakti tradition)—both as the two aspects of one and the same Reality. The Hindi poets highlight this Tantric truth using similes and imageries. For example, *Tulasīdāsa*, paying obeisance to *Sītā-Rāma*, says, 'I bow to the feet of *Sītā-Rāma* who are different in appearance but one in reality like the word and its meaning or like the water and the wave.'—

*girā artha jala bīci sama kahiyata bhinnā na bhinna.
bandau sītā-rāma pada jinhahi parama priya khinna.*²

What is emphasized here is that the difference between *Rāma* and *Sītā* is there, but the difference is appearance and not reality; in reality the two are one.

In the Krishna Bhakti tradition (of *Sūradāsa* and others) too, *Rādhā* and *Kṛṣṇa* are taken to be one and only apparently different. Sometimes expressions are used saying that *Rādhā* is the power (*Śakti*) of *Kṛṣṇa* or *Sītā* is the *Śakti* of *Rāma*. *Rādhā* is said to be the '*Āhlādinī-śakti*' or *Ānanda-śakti* (Bliss-power) of *Kṛṣṇa*. Such expressions may suggest that there is substance-quality relationship between the two. But at the same time it is also said that *Kṛṣṇa* himself is *Rādhā*, and that *Rādhā* herself is *Kṛṣṇa*, suggesting that the relation is not of substance-quality type but there is identical relation between the two. There is a legend popular in the tradition that a devotee of *Kṛṣṇa* and *Rādhā* wanted to know the actual relationship between the two. In order to know the truth, he went to *Vrindavan*, the sporting place (*Līlā-bhūmī*) of *Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa*, and visited their temple. In the temple he saw the idol as *Kṛṣṇa*. But when he went for a second '*darshan*', he saw the same idol as *Rādhā*. He was baffled, and in order to clear his confusion he went to the temple again and again, but the result was that the same idol appeared as *Kṛṣṇa* at one time and appeared as *Rādhā* at another time. Finally he concluded that the two are really one and that *Rādhā* and *Kṛṣṇa* are two different forms of one and the same deity. The point is that the relation between *Kṛṣṇa* and *Rādhā* or *Rāma* and *Sītā* or *Śiva* and *Śakti*, is not that of two partners or even that of substance and quality, but the two are in identical relation. The Reality can be called *Kṛṣṇa* (*Śiva*) or can be called *Rādhā* (*Śakti*) as well. *Kṛṣṇa* bifurcates himself into two (*Kṛṣṇa* and *Rādhā*), or *Rādhā* bifurcates herself into two (*Kṛṣṇa* and *Rādhā*), and plays. For playing one has to apparently divide oneself into two.

A question may be asked here: If *Śiva* and *Śakti* or *Kṛṣṇa* and *Rādhā* are identical, why are two words (*Śiva* and *Śakti*) used? The very use of the two words suggests that they are not identical. In answer it may be pointed out that the terms, *Śiva* and *Śakti*, are connotatively different but denotatively one. They connote two characteristics or two aspects, but they denote one and the same object—call it *Śiva* or call it *Śakti*. A current of water means flowing water itself. The two words 'current' and

'water' connote two different meanings, but they denote one and the same thing—the same flowing water. Similarly, *Śiva* (Consciousness) is dynamic in nature, and the very dynamism of *Śiva* is called *Śakti*. So, these two words denote one and the same reality, although connoting two different characteristics. The same is true, in the *Advaita-Vedāntic* tradition, about the three terms—*Sat*, *Cit* and *Ānanda*—which connote three different characteristics or aspects of Consciousness (*Brahman* or *Ātman*) but they all denote the single reality, *Brahman*. Prasad in his *Kāmāyanī* says, 'that sentient eternal Person (Self) was dynamically animated by His *Śakti* ('*nija-śakti tarangāyita thā vaha cetana puruṣa purātana*' or 'that sentient eternal person or *Puruṣa* (Self) was vibrating with joy, being eternally united with *Prakṛti* (*Śakti*)' ('*cira milita prakṛti se pulakita vaha cetana puruṣa purātana*').³

However, while fully knowing the truth that *Śiva* and *Śakti* are one, the Hindi poets have also realized the additional aesthetic truth that for the sake of *Līlā* (play) the *one* becomes two or many. The poets personify the two aspects and depict them as playing and enjoying, so that we may also enjoy the same. The personified divisions of Reality, although apparent, are of aesthetic value.

Of the two aspects, the *Śakti* is more important, as it is *Śakti* that makes *Śiva* active and creative. There is a poetic imagery that the 'ikāra' (f) in *Śiva* (शिव) is *Śakti* (that is, the symbol of *Śakti*—the 'i', f, of शक्ति), and शिव devoid of शक्ति (f) becomes 'शव (corpse)'. That is, *Śiva* is as good as dead without *Śakti*. *Bihārīdāsa*, a *Rītikāla* poet of the medieval period, presents this idea in an allegorical way. The meaning of the word *Kṛṣṇa* is black (*Kṛṣṇa* is so-called because he was black) or green and the greenness of *Kṛṣṇa* is because the shadow of *Rādhā* falls on him. *Bihārīdāsa* says in his prayer to *Rādhā*, 'May the wise *Rādhā* remove my worldly bondage—the same *Rādhā* whose shadow, when falls on *Kṛṣṇa*, makes him a person of green grandeur'—

merī bhava-bādhā harau rādhā nāgari soya.
*jā tana kī jhānī pare śyāma harita-duti hoyā.*⁴

According to Jayashankar Prasad, 'that sentient and eternal Being was vibrant with His own *Śakti* (*nijaśakti-tarangāyita thā vaha cetana puruṣa purātana*)' or 'that sentient *puruṣa* was vibrating with joy by being eternally united with *Prakṛti* (*cira-milita prakṛti se pulakita, vaha cetana puruṣa purātana*).'

The significance of such poetic presentations is that they touch the heart, and the truth presented by them, becomes palatable and enjoyable. The philosophic truth touches only the mind, but when expressed in a poetic way, it touches the heart and easily enters into the inner being.

It is the *Śakti* who is responsible for Creation, and the spontaneous act of Creation is Her play (*Līlā*). *Tulasī* says, 'By the play of whose eyebrows the world comes into existence, the same *Sītā* is there on the left side of *Rāma*'.—

*bhṛkuṭi-vilāsa jāsu jaga hoī, rāma vāma disi sītā soī.*⁵

There is no material (outside Herself) from which the world can be created; She freely creates the world as if out of nothing. This means that She creates the world out of Herself; She is Herself the material cause of the world. *Sūradāsa* says, 'void is the canvas on which the picture is drawn, there are no colours also, the painter is bodiless, and yet the picture (of Creation) is painted.'—

*śūnya bhīti para citra raṅga nahi, tanu binu likhā citere.*⁶

This is comparable to the statement of the Tantric position, made by *Kṣemarāja*: '*citiḥ svatantrā viśvasiddhihetuḥ svabhittau viśvam unmīlayati*', that is, 'Goddess Consciousness who is free, is the cause of the universe; She manifests (the picture of) the universe on Her own canvas.'⁷ The point is that Creation is the free self-manifestation of the divine reality, *Śiva-Śakti*, which is Consciousness. Life is a free and playful extension or expansion of the Consciousness itself. Prasad says, 'life is spread like the waves in the ocean of Consciousness'.—

*cetana samudra meṅ jīvana, laharoṅ sā vikhara paḍā hai.*⁸

Since the universe is the manifestation of *Śiva-Śakti*, it is one with the divine reality. *Śiva-Śakti* (*Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa* or *Sītā-Rāma*) is '*Viśvottīrṇa*' (transcendent) as well as '*Viśvamaya*' (immanent). *Tulasī* says, 'knowing that the entire world is the form of *Sītā-Rāma*, I pay my obeisance with folded hands to everyone and everything as *Sītā-Rāma*'.—

*sīya-rāma-maya saba jaga jānī, karahuṅ pranāma jori juga pānī.*⁹

This is comparable to the prayer statement of *Abhinavagupta*, 'I bow down to the non-dual Absolute *Śiva-Śakti* who is manifest in the form of the entire universe.'—

*tadadvaitam vande parama-siva-saktyātma-nikhilam.*¹⁰

Creation is not the 'Karma' but 'Kriyā' of Śiva-Śakti. Kriyā, also called 'Spanda' (Spandana), is a highly technical term of the Tantric tradition. It is not possible here to explain fully the nature of Spanda. However, it can be said very briefly that Kriyā or Spanda is basically different from what is called 'Karma' in the general Indian philosophical tradition. Karma is the voluntary effortful action arising out of some want or lack; but Kriyā or Spanda is the spontaneous activity naturally and effortlessly arising out of the fullness of Ānanda (Joy). Karma is suggestive of imperfection, whereas Kriyā or Spanda is the natural joyous overflow of the state of perfection. There is Kriyā or Spanda, and no Karma, in the Reality (Śiva-Śakti) as its very nature. Creation is the natural Spanda (Spandana) of Consciousness (Śiva-Śakti). So, Spanda (Vibration) and 'Sattā' (Existence) are one. Prasad says 'the vibration of Existence began to overflow' ('sattā kā spandana calā dola').¹¹

In Tantra, Creation is understood as the manifestation of Śabda (Word or Speech). Actually Creation is the manifestation of Consciousness, and Consciousness is conceived as Vāk (Language or Speech). The reason why Consciousness is taken as Vāk, is this: Kriyā (Activity) is the very nature of Consciousness. The activity of Consciousness is in the form of thinking (Vimarśa). Thinking is always through words. As Bhartṛhari says, there is no concept or thought which is devoid of word or language ('na so'sti pratyayo loke yaḥ śabdānugamādrte').¹² So, Consciousness is linguistic; or in other words, language is the very nature of Consciousness. Thus it is quite right to understand Consciousness as Vāk and Creation as the manifestation of Vāk. Before Creation or beyond Creation, the Mother Consciousness or the 'Goddess Speech' (Vāgdevī), when she is in her virgin state, is called 'Parā' ('the Transcendent') Vāk. When she wills to create the world (or 'conceives' it), she is called 'Paśyantī Vāk'. When she develops the form of Creation within the embryo of her mind, she becomes 'Madhyamā Vāk'; and when she 'delivers' the Creation outside herself as external object, she is called 'Vaikhari Vāk'. Gopinatha Kaviraja and other writers make this Tantric position very clear.

This 'Śabda' (sound energy or the speech vibration) is not only the force of Creation but it also helps the sādḥaka attain the higher stages of Consciousness. Catching the thread of what is called 'Anahada-Nāda' or 'Anāhata-Nāda' (the uncreated spontaneous sound vibration), the sādḥaka

merges or jumps into the higher Consciousness. Gorakhanātha says, 'Śabda is the lock and Śabda is the key; Śabda is awakened through Śabda. Śabda introduces the (higher) Śabda and then enters into it (the higher Śabda or higher Consciousness or the higher Self).'—

sabadahi tālā sabadahi kūñjī, sabadahi sabada jagāyā.

*sabadahin sabada suñ paracā hūā, sabadahi sabada samāyā.*¹³

Kabir too widely refers to the 'Anahada Nāda' (uncreated spontaneous sound) or 'anahada-bājā' (natural or automatic or uncreated music) of Consciousness. Anahada (Anāhata) Nāda is actually the Spanda of Consciousness, which is the factor of Creation on the one hand, and which is the helping step for the sādḥaka on the other hand. Jaya Shankar Prasad too refers to this when he says, 'Manu in unity with Śraddhā was absorbed in the divine transcendental Anāhata sound.'—

*divya anāhata para nināda meñ, śraddhāyuta basa manu tanmaya the.*¹⁴

One more thing to be noted is that according to the Tantric metaphysics, 'Matter' (Jada) is the manifestation of Consciousness itself. Matter is the 'coagulated' or 'frozen' form of Consciousness. To use the metaphorical phrase of Sri Aurobindo, Matter is 'Consciousness fallen asleep'. So, there is no dichotomy between Spirit and Matter; the two are one and the same substance. The Hindi poets and writers, with the help of metaphors and analogies, express this point very clearly. For example, Prasad in his *Kāmāyanī* says, 'Above was the ice, beneath was the water; one was liquid, the other was solid. But the substance is one and the same—call it insentient matter or call it sentient consciousness.'—

ūpara hima thā nīce jala thā, eka tarala thā eka saghana.

*Eka tattva kī hī pradhānatā, kaho use jada yā cetana.*¹⁵

III

If the metaphysical position of the Tantra is that Creation is the manifestation of the 'Good' or the 'Benign' (Śiva) from the ānanda (Bliss or Joy) of Śiva as His joyful play or sport (Lilā or Kriḍā) or the blissful dance of Naṭarāja, then this position sparks the question: Why is there evil and suffering in the world, why does life not become a sport? The answer is that everything of the world is not created by Śiva, many things are created by the ego of the human being also. Evil is a human creation and

not the creation of Śiva. But then again the question arises: why does Śiva allow man to commit evil, why does He not interfere? The answer is that the human is a free being, s/he has the freedom of will; his/her identity lies in his/her freedom. If Śiva deprives the human being of his freedom, the human being will be reduced to a robot or a biological computer having no freedom of its own, which in turn would mean that man would not remain man, and the very creation of man would be defeated. So, although Śiva wants that the humans should follow the path of goodness, it is the humans that have to choose it freely; Śiva does not interfere here, lest the very identity of man—his freedom—be lost.

The point is that making life a sport and the world a happy abode, is in the hands of man and not in the hands of Śiva. And by changing themselves, the human beings *can* and *should* change the world into a heaven and life into a blissful sport. Tantra gives the philosophy (and also the way) of the transformation of life and the world into a heaven. The Hindi poets and writers are very clear about this and they emphasize this point in their compositions and writings. Maithili Sharana Gupta, for example, makes Rāma say, 'I have not come here with a message from the heaven; I have come to make this earth itself a heaven.'—

*sandeśa yahān maiñ nahīñ svarga se lāyā,
īsa bhūtala ko hī svarga banāne āyā.*¹⁶

In the *Kāmāyanī*, *Manu* acknowledges to *Sraddhā*, 'you have joyfully taught me that the world is a play and that I should play it that way.'—

*tumane hañsa hañsa mujhe sikhāyā,
viśva khela hai khela calo.*¹⁷

The way of changing the world into heaven and life into a play, is the way of love. Poet *Sūradāsa* says, 'Love begets love, and love takes to success. The whole world is tied with love; love makes one achieve the ultimate goal.'—

*prema prema soñ hoyā prema soñ pārahi jaiye
prema bañdhyo sañsāra prema paramāratha paiye.*¹⁸

Love is the realization of ones unity with all and wishing the good of all. In the beginning, love may be cultivated or practiced, and the practice of love makes one realize ones real nature or real Self, and then love begins to naturally flow; as love is the very nature of the real Self. In the *Kāmāyanī*

Prasad says that when *Manu*, by the practice of love, realizes his real nature, the feeling of unity with all naturally comes in him. *Manu* says, 'See, nobody here is "other" to me. We all are only "me", you all are part of me, and there is no lack or imperfection in this.'—

*bole dekho ki yahān para, koī bhī nahīñ parāyā.
hama kevala eka hamīñ haiñ, tuma sava mere avayava ho.
jisameñ kucha nahīñ kamī hai ...*¹⁹

And the natural consequence of this realization is that one begins to serve the entire Creation. Prasad says, 'the couple sitting there, is now serving the world, removing the pain and suffering of the people and giving satisfaction and happiness to all.'—

*ve yugala vahīñ aba baithe, sañsṛti kī sevā karate.
santoṣa aura sukha dekara, sabakī dukha-jvālā harate.*²⁰

Along with giving the *sādhana* of love, the Tantra also prescribes the practice of what is called 'Śivabhāvanā' or 'Īsvarabhāvanā' which means seeing Śiva (God) in everyone and everything. *Śivabhāvanā* means cultivation of the feeling of reverence towards everything of the world—feeling that all Nature, sentient and insentient, is divine. This *sādhana* helps melt the ego and realize ones real Self which is one with all. It serves as an antidote to the egoistic, arrogant and consumerist attitude that Nature, including human beings, is just a resource for ones egoistic ends.

In the Hindi writings we find strong emphasis on the practice of *Śivabhāvanā*. We have already referred to the invocatory prayer of *Tulasidāsa*, in which he offers his 'obeisance to all beings and all things of the world, thinking that all are the forms of *Sītā-Rāma*.' *Kabir* is very emphatic on this. He says, 'Remove the veil off your eyes, and you will see the dear God (everywhere). God resides in everybody, do not speak harsh words (to anybody, for you are speaking to God).'—

*ghūñghaṭa ke paṭa khola re, tohiñ pīu mileñge.
saba ghaṭa ghaṭa meñ sāññ basata haiñ.
katuka vacana mata bola re tohiñ pīu mileñge.*²¹

According to the socio-cultural philosophy of Tantra, the woman deserves highest respect and reverence. In Tantra, God is conceived as the Mother and every woman of the world is regarded as the incarnation of the divine Mother. The woman even in the form of consort or wife is held

in high esteem. Prasad says, 'Woman, you are the object of complete reverence. Continue to flow like the current of nectar from the silver mountain of faith down into the beatific planes of life.'—

*nārī tuma kevala śraddhā ho viśvāsa rajata naga pagatala meñ,
pīyūsā srota sī bahā karo, jīvana ke sundara samatala meñ.*²²

The contemporary *Aghora* Tantric *guru*, Bhagawan Ram, exhorting the women, says, 'I am requesting you to realize and establish in your heart the real nature of woman. Your real nature is that you are the incarnations of the divine *Śakti*, the most powerful one.'²³

The woman is spiritually superior to man; she can more easily attain her divine nature in comparison to man. The reason is that her personality is so formed that there is lesser amount of impurity in her, and so the manifestation of divinity in her personality is more easily facilitated. This is the reason why the woman can become the spiritual *guru* of man. In the writings of Prasad as also of Gopinatha Kaviraja, this point becomes quite clear. In the *Kāmāyanī*, *Sraddhā* (the lady) is the *guru* of *Manu* (the male) and leads him from his bound narrow state of consciousness to the perfect divine state.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. 'कर्णात् कर्णोपदेशेन सम्प्राप्तमवनीतलम्'
—*Yoginīhrdayam*, 1-3.
2. 'गिरा अर्थ जल-वीचि सम, कहियत भिन्न न भिन्न।
बन्दौ सीताराम पद जिन्हहि परम प्रिय खिन्न।।'
—*Rāmacaritamānasa, Bālakāṇḍa*.
3. 'निज शक्ति तरंगायित था वह चेतन पुरुष पुरातन।
चिर मिलित प्रकृति से पुलकित वह चेतन पुरुष पुरातन।'
—*Jaya Shankar Prasad, Kāmāyanī*, 8th edition, p. 286.
4. 'मेरी भवबाधा हरौ राधा नागरि सोइ।
जा तन की झाँई परे स्याम हरित-दुति होइ।।'
—*Satsai (Bihāridāsa)*.
5. 'भृकुटि-विलास जासु जग होई। राम वाम दिसि सीता सोई।।'
—*Rāmacaritamānasa, Bālakāṇḍa*.
6. 'शून्य भीति पर चित्र रंग नहि, तनु बिनु लिखा चितेरे।।'
—*Sūrasāgara*.
7. 'चितिः स्वतन्त्रा विश्वसिद्धिहेतुः। स्वभित्तौ विश्वमुन्मीलयति।'
—*Pratyabhijñāhrdayam*.

8. 'चेतन समुद्र में जीवन लहरो सा बिखर पड़ा है।'
—*Kāmāyanī*, p. 286.
9. 'सीय-राम मय सब जग जानी। करहुँ प्रनाम जोरि जुग पानी।।'
—*Rāmacaritamānasa, Bālakāṇḍa*.
10. 'तदद्वैतं वंदे परमशिवशक्यात्मनिखिलम्।।'
—*Ī.P.V., maṅgalācaraṇa*.
11. 'सत्ता का स्पंदन चला डोल ...'
—*Kāmāyanī*, 8th edition, p. 286.
12. 'न सोऽस्ति प्रत्ययो लोके यः शब्दानुगमाद् ऋते।
अनुविद्धमिव ज्ञानं सर्वं शब्देन भाषितम्।।'
—*Vākyapadīyam*, 1-123.
13. 'सबदहि ताला सबदहि कूँजी, सबदहि सबद जगाया।
सबदहि सबद सुँ परचा हुआ, सबदहिँ सबद समाया।।'
—*Gorakha-vānī*.
14. 'दिव्य अनाहत पर निनाद में, श्रद्धायुत बस मनु तन्मय थे।'
—*Kāmāyanī, Rahasya-sarga*.
15. 'ऊपर हिम था नीचे जल था, एक तरल था एक सघन।
एक तच्च की ही प्रधानता, कहो उसे जड़ या चेतन।।'
—*Kāmāyanī*.
16. 'संदेश यहाँ मैं नहीं स्वर्ग से लाया,
इस भूतल को ही स्वर्ग बनाने आया।'
—*Maithili Sharana Gupta, Sāketa*.
17. 'तुमने हँस हँस मुझे सिखाया, विश्व खेल है खेल चलो।'
—*Kāmāyanī, Nirvedasarga*.
18. 'प्रेम प्रेम सों होय, प्रेम सों पारहि जैये। प्रेम बँध्यो संसार, प्रेम परमारथ पैये।'
—*Sūradāsa, Bhramaragītasāra*.
19. 'बोले देखो कि यहाँ पर कोई भी नहीं पराया।
हम केवल एक हमीं हैं तुम सब मेरे अवयव हो।।
जिसमें कुछ नहीं कमी है ...।'
—*Kāmāyanī, Ānanda-sarga*.
20. 'वे युगल वहीं पर बैठे, संसृति की सेवा करते।
संतोष और सुख देकर, सबकी दुख-ज्वाला हरते।।'
—*Kāmāyanī, Ānanda-sarga*.
21. 'धूँघट के पट खोल रे, तोहिं पीउ मिलेगे।
सब घट घट में साई बसत है, कटुक वचन मत बोल रे, तोहिं पीउ मिलेगे।'
—*Kabiradāsa*.
22. 'नारी तुम केवल श्रद्धा हो, विश्वास रजत नग पगतल में।
पीयूष स्रोत सी बहा करो, जीवन के सुन्दर समतल में।।'
—*Jaya Shankar Prasad, Kāmāyanī*.

23. 'मैं आपसे अनुरोध करूँगा कि आपका जो वास्तविक स्वरूप है -- देवी का प्रचण्ड स्वरूप, शक्ति का दिव्य स्वरूप, उसे आप अपने हृदय में प्रतिष्ठित करें।' —'Param Ajñāta' (Pub. Aghora Shodha Sansthan, Varanasi, 1999), p. 226.

Polytheism, Monism and Rational Temper in Philosophical Traditions in Gujarati Literature

HARSIDDH M. JOSHI

Yogi Amrut, 24/4 Nutan Bharat Society, Alakapuri, Baroda 7

Gujarati literature is rich and prodigious in philosophical and religious thought. This can be perceptibly observed while going through the poetic, literary, classical and folklore literature of the last five hundred years of its medieval and modern history. Gujarati is a dialect of ancient Prakrit language and certain Jain thinkers have written important literature in Prakrit during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Since its vicinity with the sea, and the land abounding in rivers and mountains, its inhabitants were influenced by mystery of nature, soul and God. Its invincibility was retained for a long time by its native races and people gifted by strength and valour.

This is true not only of Gujarat but it is true of Indian culture and civilization which is both religious and philosophical in its essence and core. The fact that it has survived for the last five thousand years and more shows its vitality and fertility. Its impact on the culture and spirit of Gujarat is potent and lasting. The devotional poem of Narasinh Mehta, 'Vaishnavajan is he who pines for benevolence and for betterment of other miserable and griefstricken', was made the worldwide prayer song by Mahatma Gandhi and shows the inner spirituality and the vitality and power of poetry to enhance and regenerate the human soul. The term 'Religion' does of course have multiple imports. However, if religion is understood in its operational sense, that of religiosity and life-orientation, then there have been saints, mystics, thinkers and such poets who have lived religion and risen to the height of spiritual life. Historically it may be observed that when Lord Krishna left Mathura he came to Saurashtra and he visited both Somanath as well as Dwarika and finally made Dwarika his capital town where thousands of Yadavas lived with him. The image of Lord Krishna with the Gopis has left an indelible print on the minds of the people of Gujarat. The memory is still preserved in the classical as well as folklore literature in Gujarat.

As the land of Gujarat is inhabited by several people who have immigrated from other countries such as Arabia, Iran, Greece, ancient Assyria, Babylonia, Africa and Chaldea, the people have mixed social customs, religious festivities, worship and ways of life. When one reads of common events as well as the literary accounts of different poets and literatures, one observes that in a common man's mind it was polytheism which was reigning. As there is an anecdote to the effect that when the British arranged the fixing of milestones in the nineteenth century on highways, the common people in the country coloured them in saffron and made them in the image of Hanuman. As there are two main traditions of worship in India, Lord Krishna and Lord Shiva, similarly there is worship of Ram, Narain, Hanuman and Ganesh, Lakshmi and Amba. During religious festivals many common castes, groups and natives come together in certain temples and worship certain deities. Common people believe in idol-worship. Polytheism is so much rooted in the minds of common people that they hardly question the origin and form of the idols. Akhaji (1600-1655), a poet of the seventeenth century, questions the truth of prevalent polytheism, 'What is this talk of many Gods?' Narasinh Mehta also tells us about the polytheistic attitude of the people. 'People start worshipping any God and Goddess according to their inclination' (*jene je game tene puje*). In Dwarika as well as in Somanath the root cause of looting the temple by foreigners has been the lure of gold, valuables and luxurious decoration. However its sanctity has been the trust of the common people in the truth of idols. The truth of idol-worship has made an impact upon Jainism also. One of its sects, 'Swetambara' and 'Pujavasi', has erected temples of Tirthankaras in certain cities and upon certain mountains in Gujarat. Jains are polytheistic in their belief in Gods. However persons such as Sri Kanji Swami in Songadh have questioned the truth of idol-worship and have emphasized the reality of pure self and soul.

Besides the worship of idols in certain places where the goddess is worshipped such as Ambā, Bahucharā, Chamundā, certain animals are killed and they are offered in sacrifice as oblation by common people for propitiation of goddesses. There are unique festivals for worship and celebration of goddesses such as Ambā, Kāli, Chamundā and Lakshmi in Gujarat continuing for nine days during the last month Āshu of Vikram year. In every village and city of Gujarat and wherever a Gujarati family is living either in India or abroad, there is a special festival in which people keep earthen lamps round the idol of the mother goddess and they

dance together round the idol of Amba, Kali or Durga for nine days. This is called the Navaratri garbā. It is difficult to say when the worship of Mother-Goddess started in Gujarat. However it has started with the gathering of the Āhir community and the growth of the Yādav community which enhanced the memory of Lord Krishna and Rādhā and the earlier festival of collective dance in Mathura and Vrindavan where Lord Krishna danced with Gopis before he came to Dwarika. It may be the remnant of the Gopi dance which was played there in ancient times.

In this context the name of the poet Dayaram (1777-1853) who lived in Chandod near Baroda may be mentioned. He was a follower of Pushtimārg of Shrimad Vallabhāchārya and he wrote devotional poetry admiring Lord Krishna. The 'Garabi' of Dayaram is sung by large number of women of Gujarat during Navaratri festival. Shri Dayaram has written about forty-five and more works especially in the Vrij dialect of Hindi. It is a mixture of devotion and Shringār and in this context he has written Rasik-Ranjan as well as Rasik-Vallabh. Dayaram has attempted to formulate the philosophy of Shuddhādvaita wherein he has advocated devotion to God as the most valuable and fruitful offering of human endeavour. Soul is not identical to but it is a part of God. Soul aspires to devote and consecrate his love and surrender to the almighty power of the world. Dayaram is a monist and therefore holds nature to be 'Māyā' of Brahman which is separate and yet an inborn part of Brahman. In order to let the beings and creatures of the world be lured into the net of nature it creates Māyā where he remains away from it but he lets others be deluded by it. It is named as 'Aja' and hence Brahman is named as Ajapati. As it is known, the distinction between Vidyā and Avidyā has been made since Isha Upanishad and Dayaram holds that the self of an individual is enveloped by Avidyā. Dayaram refutes the nature of Māyā as held in Advaita Vedanta wherein it is associated with falsity and falsehood. Dayaram thinks that one can achieve liberation by complete devotion to Lord Krishna.

As for common people and those who are imitating customs, popular rituals and sectarian religion, the polytheism has sway over their minds. However for those who rise above customs and social usages there is the ultimate real which may be named as supreme nature, God or creator of the world. It may be regarded as either Monotheism or Monism. This distinction being largely dependent upon separation among three entities such as nature, self and God or held as the Absolute or Brahman. At times

it is said that Brahman is the only Reality and nature or world is partly real, illusory or unreal.

During the course of poetry or prose in modern times with regard to the nature of the Absolute, when it is held as ultimately real there are two main views expressed: whether such Absolute is personal 'Saguna' or impersonal 'Nirguna' or whether it is both, as said in the Gītā, as 'Purushottama'. The opposition between the status of either personal or impersonal is largely dependent upon the issue of Māyā which historically in Indian philosophy is at times maintained either as illusory or real nature or as power of God or as partly real, appearance and as principle of creation. In Gujarati literature such a treatment of Māyā starts from the poetry of Narsinh Mehta (1418-80), passes through poets such as Akhaji, Dadu, Ravi, Bhan, Nirant, Swami Sahajananda, Pritam and ends in modern poets such as Rajendra Shah and Makarand Dave.

Long before Swami Dayananda criticized idol worship, casteism, polytheism, superstition and ritual practises he was poet Akhaji who opposed idol worship in his works such as 'Anubhavbindu', 'Akhe-Geeta', 'Chhappa', 'Gurushushya Samvad' and others wherein he has philosophically shown sometimes Ajatavada, Vivartavada, Brahmavada, Adhyasavada and he has attempted to argue with the help of several analogies, examples and images. He starts with theistic worship of God and ends in Absolutistic nature of the Real. Like Gaudapada he says that nobody is bound and nobody is free. He writes, 'There was a fool who had the habit of worshipping as many Gods as there are stones; he used to take a bath in each pond of water and pluck each leaf thinking it is Tulsi leaf and yet he did not attain knowledge of Brahman.'

Like Gaudapada the grand-teacher of Sri Samkaracharya, it appears that Akha held the view of Ajatavada according to which nothing is created and there is nothing like liberation. In his work, 'Anubhavbindu' Akha writes, 'It remained as it was, Akha, nothing has happened, anandaghana itself in its own form has not seen anything' (Anu. 31).

So long as one is on the plane of thought he cannot go beyond the plane of time, space and causation. Various theories have been set up to explain the cause of the world, but none of them has been fully accepted by all. According to the theist, this variegated world with all its order and regularity could have been produced only by an omniscient, omnipotent God. To some He is only the efficient cause, to others He is both the efficient and the material cause. Against all the opposite views about a

creator God, Gaudapada presents his theory of Ajatavada or the theory of non-creation and thus rejects all the theories of God as creator. According to this theory nothing whatsoever is born either of itself or of another. Nothing is ever produced whether it be being, or non-being, or both being and non-being.

On the other hand, the fifteenth century poet of Gujarat, Narasinh Mehta, who lived in Junagadh expresses the omnipotent God as the creator and brings out the principle of sport in his poem, 'All this is nothing but Brahman, displayed in variety of forms. The essence of all the different elements is nothing but Brahman. Creation of the whole world of names and forms is for the sport of the Lord, and his descent from Absolute to Qualified Brahman is also with the same motive. Shrutis and Smritis teach that there is no distinctive difference between gold and golden earrings, names and forms are different only after assignment of shape. Gold in fact undergoes no change in its nature as such, so also all is nothing but Brahman (Tripathi, p. 57).

A knowledge-seeker and a devotee, one who is both religious as well as philosophical, is Narasinh Mehta whose works known to us are: (1) Harmala, (2) Govindagamana, (3) Samaldas no vivah, (4) Suratsangrah, (5) Caturi Chatrisi, (6) Caturi Sodasi, (7) Sudama Caritra, (8) Rasa-sahasripadi, (9) Vasantan Pado, (10) Shrigarmala, (11) Shri Krishna-janma-samanan pado, (12) Sri Krishna-janmavadhainana pado, (13) Hidolanan pado, (14) Bhaktijnananan pado.

It may be observed that Narasinh Mehta was not only a Monist but a pantheist who believed God to be pervading in all living and non-living beings of the world. He writes, 'There is seed in tree, and thou art there, there is tree in thee and thou art there, thou art wind thou art water, land and flowering of flowers, thou resides in the entire sky. Thou art taking taste by forming multifarious network, Shiva has become Jiva with the subtle purpose of thy reality, in the body thou art living thou art in the light, by taking form of the word thou appears as Veda, Thou art Hari in the entire Brahmananda, thou appears with several forms.' As it was pointed out previously there are two main traditions continuing, one Saguna, personal form of God, and another Nirguna, impersonal form of God. Narasinh Mehta attempts to reconcile the two forms and calls it by the name of Shri Krishna. He thinks that by calling Ultimate Reality by the name of Hari or Krishna he is harmonizing two forms of Brahman. In his poem he writes, 'It is by consciousness that he envelops the world, Brahman is

it is said that Brahman is the only Reality and nature or world is partly real, illusory or unreal.

During the course of poetry or prose in modern times with regard to the nature of the Absolute, when it is held as ultimately real there are two main views expressed: whether such Absolute is personal 'Saguna' or impersonal 'Nirguna' or whether it is both, as said in the Gītā, as 'Purushottama'. The opposition between the status of either personal or impersonal is largely dependent upon the issue of Māyā which historically in Indian philosophy is at times maintained either as illusory or real nature or as power of God or as partly real, appearance and as principle of creation. In Gujarati literature such a treatment of Māyā starts from the poetry of Narsinh Mehta (1418-80), passes through poets such as Akhaji, Dadu, Ravi, Bhan, Nirant, Swami Sahajananda, Pritam and ends in modern poets such as Rajendra Shah and Makarand Dave.

Long before Swami Dayananda criticized idol worship, casteism, polytheism, superstition and ritual practises he was poet Akhaji who opposed idol worship in his works such as 'Anubhavbindu', 'Akhe-Geeta', 'Chhappa', 'Gurushushya Samvad' and others wherein he has philosophically shown sometimes Ajatavada, Vivartavada, Brahmavada, Adhyasavada and he has attempted to argue with the help of several analogies, examples and images. He starts with theistic worship of God and ends in Absolutistic nature of the Real. Like Gaudapada he says that nobody is bound and nobody is free. He writes, 'There was a fool who had the habit of worshipping as many Gods as there are stones; he used to take a bath in each pond of water and pluck each leaf thinking it is Tulsi leaf and yet he did not attain knowledge of Brahman.'

Like Gaudapada the grand-teacher of Sri Samkaracharya, it appears that Akha held the view of Ajatavada according to which nothing is created and there is nothing like liberation. In his work, 'Anubhavbindu' Akha writes, 'It remained as it was, Akha, nothing has happened, anandaghana itself in its own form has not seen anything' (Anu. 31).

So long as one is on the plane of thought he cannot go beyond the plane of time, space and causation. Various theories have been set up to explain the cause of the world, but none of them has been fully accepted by all. According to the theist, this variegated world with all its order and regularity could have been produced only by an omniscient, omnipotent God. To some He is only the efficient cause, to others He is both the efficient and the material cause. Against all the opposite views about a

creator God, Gaudapada presents his theory of Ajatavada or the theory of non-creation and thus rejects all the theories of God as creator. According to this theory nothing whatsoever is born either of itself or of another. Nothing is ever produced whether it be being, or non-being, or both being and non-being.

On the other hand, the fifteenth century poet of Gujarat, Narasinh Mehta, who lived in Junagadh expresses the omnipotent God as the creator and brings out the principle of sport in his poem, 'All this is nothing but Brahman, displayed in variety of forms. The essence of all the different elements is nothing but Brahman. Creation of the whole world of names and forms is for the sport of the Lord, and his descent from Absolute to Qualified Brahman is also with the same motive. Shrutī and Smritī teach that there is no distinctive difference between gold and golden earrings, names and forms are different only after assignment of shape. Gold in fact undergoes no change in its nature as such, so also all is nothing but Brahman (Tripathi, p. 57).

A knowledge-seeker and a devotee, one who is both religious as well as philosophical, is Narasinh Mehta whose works known to us are: (1) Harmala, (2) Govindagamana, (3) Samaldas no vivah, (4) Suratsangrah, (5) Caturi Chatrisi, (6) Caturi Sodasi, (7) Sudama Caritra, (8) Rasasahasripadi, (9) Vasantan Pado, (10) Shrigarmala, (11) Shri Krishna-janma-samanan pado, (12) Sri Krishna-janmavadhainana pado, (13) Hidolanan pado, (14) Bhaktijnananan pado.

It may be observed that Narasinh Mehta was not only a Monist but a pantheist who believed God to be pervading in all living and non-living beings of the world. He writes, 'There is seed in tree, and thou art there, there is tree in thee and thou art there, thou art wind thou art water, land and flowering of flowers, thou resides in the entire sky. Thou art taking taste by forming multifarious network, Shiva has become Jiva with the subtle purpose of thy reality, in the body thou art living thou art in the light, by taking form of the word thou appears as Veda, Thou art Hari in the entire Brahmananda, thou appears with several forms.' As it was pointed out previously there are two main traditions continuing, one Saguna, personal form of God, and another Nirguna, impersonal form of God. Narasinh Mehta attempts to reconcile the two forms and calls it by the name of Shri Krishna. He thinks that by calling Ultimate Reality by the name of Hari or Krishna he is harmonizing two forms of Brahman. In his poem he writes, 'It is by consciousness that he envelops the world, Brahman is

dancing before Brahman.' Here it seems that passive and active Brahman are being reconciled. Although he was a seeker of knowledge, his devotional songs show how he makes special reference to the principle of love rather than knowledge. In the following line he writes, 'Narsinh learns that this is the usual search of mind, it really manifests by the force of Love.'

Narasinh Mehta has veritably realized the identity with Lord Krishna as self with Brahman. He says that one is not able to realize it by the help of Japa, Tapa, study of scriptures, pilgrimage, bathing in sacred rivers and temple worship of God—All this is of no concrete use unless one finds unity of individual self with Brahman. He says that everything is brittle without the presence of Lord Krishna. According to him this most valuable life is wholly wasted if the mystery of the self 'Tattvadarshan' is not recognized and fully realized. Of course he mixed Kevaladvaita with Shuddhadvaita of Vallabhacharya. At times he feels that world is an illusion and he also feels that world is manifestation of the play of God.

II

As it is said previously Akhaji propounds at times Ajativada wherein Māyā is said to be entirely a naught, as if nothing is produced and nothing is to be liberated. At times he thinks that everything is enveloped by Māyā. He says that Karma, its fruits and ultimately the next birth to enjoy the fruits of Karma, all this is due to Māyā alone. All the different relations of the Jiva such as father, mother, brother, wife, and the like, the differences of castes and creeds, the beauty of form, wealth, tact, and skill, the mastery of fourteen kinds of Vidyas, composition of poems, erudition, pride of virtue and charity, all this is nothing but adoration of Māyā.

It is in Akhe Gītā that Akhaji elaborates and propounds the doctrine of Māyā. Moreover he has expounded his own philosophy of Advaita Vedānta and related principles in Gītā. Akha speaks about the relationship between soul and Brahman. He terms the Real as 'Mahamokshadayini'. He describes the means and devices by which human beings can live in samsara. He elucidates the characteristics of Jivanmukta and the doctrine of Pushti or the grace of Guru by which individual can be relieved of the evil and suffering of life and world. In this context Akhaji thinks that Māyā has two aspects, one its immobile nature which is inactive and unborn and its active part is Prakriti which consists of three Gunas such as Sattva, Rajas,

and Tamas. There are twenty-five evolutes of Prakriti such as gross elements, manas, buddhi, chitta and ahankara. Māyā which is active creates the qualities represented by Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesha and then she becomes the wife of these three as Saraswati, Lakshmi and Kali. This Prakriti is also known as Chit-Shakti which is Paratattva and Prabhama Mahisi. Of course Prakriti has no independent reality from that of Brahman.

Akha has written his poetry in Hindi language also and in this way he has contributed his ideas and thoughts in the wider Indian perspective. There is a definite line of northern Indian poets who are devotees and have written in Hindi literature such as Raidas, Kabir, Sen and Dadu. Quite often Akhaji gives the impression that in his Kavaladvaita he is an advocate of Nirguna Brahman. In his view of Prakriti as we saw previously along with Prakriti there are twenty-five evolutes. Ishwara or Brahman is the twenty-sixth. The power of Brahman is called Māyā. The fourfold activities, Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha, the four stages of human life, the three Lokas, birth, death and embodiment, the time-sense of past, the present and the future, Karma and its result—all this is non-existent to one who is embedded in Brahman. In reality, nothing truly exists but Brahman, all creation and non-creation is false. Brahman, the pure self, never undergoes any change at any time.

Besides his inclination and belief for Kevaladvaita Akhaji shows a leaning towards Shuddhadvaita also as he leaves for Gokul Mathura after his resignation from the mint in Ahmedabad. In order to get initiation from a proper Guru he goes to Gokul. Still he was not satisfied and from Gokul he went to Kashi and on Manikarnik Ghat he heard a dialogue from an adept in Vedānta for one year sitting outside a hut. There was his disciple present who was listening to the Guru but when he took a nap, Akho spoke nodding from outside. Guru felt the loyalty of Akho and his sincerity in learning the lessons of Vedānta. So Akho was initiated by Guru in Kashi. The name of Guru is a matter of conjecture among scholars. Akho has mentioned the name of Brahmānanda. However Narmadashanker Mehta writes that 'Brahmānanda means joy of Brahmatattva.' Yet Akho refers to Brahmānanda as his Guru. Regarding selection of a Guru, Akho says that 'You select yourself as your own Guru.' It is by exploring and obtaining knowledge of self that one gets proper guidance, inspiration and instruction from the self. As the Bhagvad Gītā says, self is the best friend,

helper, brother and guide (VI. 5). Akho too advises that one should become one's own Guru.

Akho has a spirit of renunciation and he feels detached from worldly life. He is at the same time devoted to Brahman, but he thinks that Brahman is the absolute. He is an iconoclast. He does not think that one can adore Brahman by performing rituals and bowing down before idols. So although he is a devotee as Shri Umashanker Joshi says, 'There is no pomp in Akha's devotional spirit.' When in Gokul he went into the temple of Vallabhacharya where he was honoured and offered a high pedestal; but instead of sitting on the pedestal he took off his turban and coat and sat down on the floor. This shows how humble he was. In 'Akhe Geeta' Akha has discussed the nature of the relationship between Jiva, Jagat and God. It was written in AD 1649 with forty Kadavan, chapters, and ten padas. It has topics such as Parabrahma, Aradhana, Bhaktimahima, description of Jivanmukta, Māyādāsi, Āvaraṇa-Vikshepa and svabhāva. Akha is a keen observer of the multiple events of life and the world. He thinks that Ajātavada and Advaitavada are not separate.

Besides this, it seems that Akha had studied 'Yoga Vashishtha'. In Yoga Vashishtha the need of Guru is shown at length.

Sarvabhutantarasthaya nityayukta chidatmane
Prtyakchaitanya sapaya prahyameva namonamah

It is held that Reality is in the form of consciousness. It is inner, eternal, liberated chit-Ātmā. There is salutation to this eternal Reality which is within. Poetry and philosophy are related in Indian tradition since antiquity. The Bhagvad Gītā is a glaring instance of it. However Akho objects to himself being called a poet. He prefers being called a 'Jñāni' rather than a poet. It is usual for a poet to approach the object of poetry with the mode of feeling. Akha insists that a human person ought to cultivate true knowledge of Ultimate Reality. He is a lover and votary of truth rather than imagery and dream. He refers to Mandukyakarika wherein world is compared with dream. Dream is true in its circle and limit. However it is corrected by waking state. Similarly, to the ignorant mind, world is observed as multiplicity and it is projected upon oneness of Brahman. That which is not there is observed by the ignorant mind. This is the result of Adhyāsa.

Besides Adhyāsa it is vikshepa shakti of Māyā which is capable of distorting the object and this is conducive to deception and fraud. A

monkey is asked to perform various acts of dancing, entertaining and pleasing people from the audience. It is the master who earns money and at times starves the monkey and allows it to suffer for the merriment of spectators. The male-goat is also fed properly and allowed to enjoy till one day it is killed by the butcher for its mutton. Akho frequently attempts to describe that which is indescribable and ineffable. About the creation of the world he thinks that 'There are many causes of the world, but once it is there then there are many names, it is idol of Panchbhuta, it is really the work of Brahma.' At times in Akhe Geeta and Anubhavbindu he writes as if he is pantheist; he says that Hari is everywhere, one whose eyesight is changed and perceives Hari in the multiple objects of the world, but from a metaphysical point of view he thinks that supreme Reality is beyond multiple objects of the world. This is why he thinks that it is beyond our usual attributes of one and many, truth and falsehood, spirit and world. Akho relates the need of true Guru with ineffability and immutability of Brahman. He thinks that to seek for true Guru is not hankering after pomp and wealth but the true Guru opens up the eyes of the disciple. He writes that for a long time he was weeping as he was in search of the true Guru. At last 'Hari' revealed himself before Akha. It was after this revelation that true speech opened in the self of Akha. Narasinh too had to undergo an arduous penance for seven days. It was after this rigorous ordeal that he realized Brahman in the form of Shiva and Hari.

Later Akho describes the nature and limitation of speech (Vak). Speech is conjoined with senses and other intellectual modes of cognition beyond sense. Vak is an instrument of that which is beyond sense-organs. Akho intends to say that when one seeks the origin of speech one is required to find its true object. Its object is at times mundane, empirical, intellectual and transcendent. In the Upanishads it is mentioned as: (1) Para, (2) Pashyanti, (3) Madhyama, and (4) Vaikhari. Accordingly its objects are physical, vital, intellectual and transcendent. Experience has got its own object and intellect attempts to describe and express the content of experience. However experience of Advaitic Reality transcends the subject and object. The moment it is described, it divides itself in a dualistic position. As an experience it is non-dualistic. It is implicitly an identity of subject and object. As an experience it is described in subject and predicate. So it is dualistic. Bliss is indescribable. One who feels it, he alone knows it. It is like the sweetness of sugar. Its description is physical

or chemical which is neither feeling nor experience. In 'Anubhavbindu', Akho articulates poetically the notion of supreme experience. Its experience is limited by speech and mode of communication.

'Panchikarana' is a long poem in which Akha describes how the human soul is related with supreme Reality and the treatment of five physical elements is shown from a metaphysical point of view. From the ethical standpoint human ego has been dealt with as if it is bound by ignorance and evil. Its aim and object is to change itself into Shiva which is good itself. Further the creation of the world is described and expounded here just as rays of the sun belong to sun and they are separate, similarly soul and world are separate and they belong to Brahman. There is, according to Akho, non-dual relationship between Brahman and world. Just as 'Knower' of Brahman becomes himself Brahman, says Upanishad, similarly to think about the creation and development of the world brings us nearer to its creator and maker. In this context Akho thinks that Brahman in himself is Nirguna but when Brahman manifests in the world, it is Saguna, that is personal and mutable.

A question would arise as to the necessity of such knowledge. In reply Akho thinks that to know about Māyā and the multiplicity of the world is to go beyond it. In the process of thinking it takes the knower or thinker above the object of thought. Advantage of this knowledge is that the knower becomes detached and like water and lotus, the knower and world are non-attached. The distinction within Māyā, that of Avarana and Vikshepa and its understanding is necessary in order to get withdrawn from the working of Māyā. Otherwise a person gets immersed in Māyā of ego and the world. Akho says that it is usual for the ego to utter 'Mine' and 'I'. Jiva of the human individual is usually identified with five material elements and sense-organs. When inward Jiva recognizes that it is not separate from the true self which is supreme Reality, then it obtains liberation. Till then the curtain created by 'Māyā' continues, the soul is enmeshed in bewilderment of passions and it moves within the circle of ignorance and suffering. Soul should recognize the reflection (pratibimba) of Reality and Brahman within Antahkarana.

There are two dialogues written by Akha, 'Chitta vicharsamvada' and 'Gurushishyasamvada'. They are his later writings. One ought to pursue the search of true knowledge removing all doubts in mind regarding objects of inquiry. In these dialogues there is an inquiry into the nature of knowledge and Brahman by asking questions and an attempt to reply to

it. In 'Chittavichar' there is an attempt to combine knowledge with devotion whereas in 'Gurushishya' the thought of Advaita is made dominant and there is an inquiry into objectivity. There is a mention of experience of 'Aparokshanubhuti'. However it is largely analytical.

In 'Chittavichara', chitta is the fatherhood whereas thought is the offering. Both father and son are acquainted with scripture and Puranas. Chitta expresses its puzzle regarding the experience of Advaita. The perplexity is presented before the seal of thought. The person in the form of thought attempts to resolve doubts by answering questions. To a certain extent the dialogue shows indirectly Akha's own inquiry into truth. Chitta is partly ignorant. Ego and thought are attempting to clarify truth. It is ignorant ego which utters, 'My son, my family'. It is not capable of resisting the māyā which envelops mental cognitive states and emotions. It is thought that God is a very powerful entity. It is inaccessible. One cannot utter anything about God. Soul is constantly under the duress of Karma. It is dependent upon the lust of Māyā and its created armoury. Mind understands the Puranas, sad Darshanas, Veda and Vedanta and yet it fails to understand and grasp truth. Akho says that just as there is a lamp in the darkness, similarly there is nearness to God. Although Jiva aspires to become Shiva it is oppressed by ignorance and ego. In subtler Reality there is preparation of God in the world yet there is an envelope of ignorance and Māyā. So long as there is body and its adjuncts, there is a hurdle against knowledge and true devotion. Samkara calls it the superimposition of matter or body upon the reality of Brahman. Akho says thus, 'O Sun, hear the truth of thought and understand soul and Ishwara, there are various names and spaces but there is one inhabitation of Supreme consciousness. It is non-dual consciousness.' How does it express within human personality? There are several explanations given for that purpose. Jiva is part of Brahman. It is a reflection of Brahman. Jiva is a product of Māyā which is ignorance. Māyā is superimposition upon Brahman.

Akho thinks that world lives in primary stage in embryo and all fourteen lokas are implicit in this embryo. This embryo is 'Hari' which is unborn. So long as man lives in the world his Jiva or mundane and empirical self is not annihilated and the end of the world is not found. The mundane world revels in duality. It is only when world is understood as non-dual that it gets removed. Excellence dawns when duality of body and soul is annihilated. As regards duality which is felt on a mundane plane, Akho describes three types of duality such as 'Bhāva', 'kriyā' and

'Dravyādvaita'. Non-dual consciousness is above all three types of duality. The relationship between birds and animals is that of Bhāvādvaita, their activities are regarded as 'Kriyādvaita', whereas relationship between matter and consciousness is 'Dravya-advaita'. The aim is fixed at non-dual awareness. Akho believes that to attain it is supreme achievement; such an achievement is on par with pilgrimage, devotion, sense of renunciation, knowledge and strict austerities. One who attains this supreme awareness is not required to join any sect or creed and subscribe to any faith.

It is the common feature of knowledge-oriented poets to seek truth and knowledge within and in inner spirit. Akho gives an analogy of lightening in the sky during the monsoon in which people find sudden light to do work. He advises that it is not easy to pass a thread through the hole of a needle during that fraction of a second of lightening in the sky. Life is also short, like lightening in the sky, and in this short life how one should attempt to devote oneself to a true Guru and seek God is a pertinent question. The function of a true Guru is like a swan who, it is said, understands the distinction between milk and water. Guru can show what is permanent and what is fleeting. What is essential is the knowledge of Svasvarupa. Without it one just wanders in darkness and ignorance.

As against this wandering when one resorts to Hari, his embarrassment ceases; Karmas cannot trouble him. Human persons cannot be spoiled by the dirt of Karma. Even though he lives in saṁsāra, he lives a detached life, like a lotus which is not wetted by the touch of water. When a person is seeking a true Guru and Brahman he denies himself and asserts Brahman. It is by losing oneself that one finds oneself. In spite of insistence by Akho on self-knowledge he relies ultimately upon the grace of personal God and the favour of Sadguru. It is the grace of Supreme Brahman which is superior to Sadguru. He says that although the rays of the sun are spread everywhere, yet the owl is not able to observe the light of day. Thus the grace of God is very essential. The bird Chatak remains thirsty even on the bank of the Ganges. In a like manner the disciple of a learned Guru is not able to resolve ignorance without the grace of Hari.

III

There are Advaitins besides Akha and Narasinh Mehta such as Dhiro (1752-1852), Nirant, Bapu Gaekwar, Pritamdas (1718-1798), Chhotalal Kalidas (1812-1885), Bhansaheb (1690-1760), Ravisaheb,

Damodarsharma, Jivan, Bhojo and in modern times the name of Manilal Nabhubhai Dvivedi (1858-1898) who was an Advaitin of repute and whom Swami Vivekananda met in Nadiad must be mentioned. He has written a number of books on Vedānta and was the guru of the Gujarati poet Kalapi at the end of the nineteenth century. Just as there is a distinct line of poets and thinkers in Kevaladvaita in Gujarati literature, in a like manner Swami Sahajananda (1775-1826) is a distinct thinker, religious and social reformer of Vishishtadvaitism of the early nineteenth century. Long before Mahatma Gandhi attempted to eradicate untouchability, casteism and unwanted social customs from Hindu society, it was Swami Sahajananda who heralded such reformatory and regenerative work in religion and society in India and Gujarat in particular. During the times when Swami Sahajananda lived and worked, there were misconceived social customs and religious rituals. He advocated abolition of superstitions, dogmas and misconceived customs in society. Moreover besides knowledge-oriented instruction, he attempted devotion-oriented teachings in the masses and intellectual people in society. Moreover Sri Swaminarayan held the notion of equality of men and women and upheld the sanctity of Grihasthashrama and at the same time showed the value of Tyagashrama for the preservation of moral and spiritual values of life.

Sri Swaminarayan also held the virtues of truth and non-violence in every aspect of individual and collective life. His renowned ethical work 'Shikshapatri' which consists of 225 prescribed rules for individual, family, social, cultural and civil life, is indeed a significant landmark in the religious literature of India and modern philosophical thought.

In its essential root, Sri Swaminarayan's thought is dependent upon Sri Ramanujacharya's Vishishtadvaita and Vaishnavism in its general outlook. The improper usages and rituals of Vaishnavism were strictly opposed by Sri Swaminarayan and his followers. Religion in its proper sense is not simply practise and faith but it is proper philosophical understanding and outlook. Common people and followers in collectivity take rituals for granted and minimize reason and understanding which in reality are the supports of true faith. Sri Swaminarayan emphasizes adequate understanding and explanation which support religious faith. It is owing to the inadequate understanding of rituals that they become stereotypes at a later stage and lose their true spirit. This actually happened in the Vaishnava religion and its followers began to distort the spirit of religion. The power of religious institution was mixed with the devotional aspect of religious

congregation with the result that the head of the institute bypassed the religious aspiration which is the true core of spirituality. Sri Swaminarayan emphasized the true aspiration of understanding of the nature of God and its faith and surrendering in true spirit. In Vaishnavism the practises of religious custom and ritual were misused and righteous spirit was lost, especially in private temple, haveli and order of religious authority. Sri Swaminarayan attempted to bring in transparency, clean relationships, high idealism and rigid practise of moral virtues.

Besides rational and intellectual knowledge there exists intuitive knowledge capable of grasping the subtle nature of self and Reality. Just as behind moral practise there is the metaphysical foundation of essential Reality, in like manner at the back of Prakriti there exists essential knowledge of Aksharbrahma and Parabrahma Absolute. When a person is living a truly moral and religious life he is supposed to have adamant faith in foundational principles of self, God and Reality, which are ultimate justification of moral and religious life. Sri Swaminarayan believes that religious life is not a superstitious and dogmatic life but it is an enlightened, intellectual, morally perceived and clearly thoughtful life.

We may now observe certain basic principles, metaphysical and moral, which are conceived in the philosophy of Sri Swaminarayan. Firstly, it is held that the devotional life of a human person depends upon belief in one God. There is a single Reality which is given many names at times. However, Reality is one and it upholds the multiple and dynamic world of matter and conscious beings. Secondly, God is one, but it is the transcendent and Ultimate Reality in case of its attributes and predicate. It is perfect, great, supreme and final Reality. It is sovereign, and fundamental metaphysical Reality. As it is the supreme, there is no other Reality which can compete with it. Thirdly, God is not only ultimate and supreme but has the attribute of personality. God is love, compassion, person and intimate to human beings. Fourthly, religious life of a human person consists of experience which is spiritual. This characteristic makes Sri Swaminarayan's thought quite distinct in Indian tradition as according to him religious life is an experience of the individual. It is not the body or physical self which can be called human being but it is the soul or spiritual being which is entitled to be called the human person. A human person ought to think that he is Brahman which is not the body but the spiritual soul. In consonance with Vedanta, Sri Swaminarayan holds

ultimate Reality to be Sat, Chit and Ananda. So communion with ultimate Reality ensures supreme joy and in that view worldly pleasures are futile.

A religious person ought to feel that mundane life and its pleasures are in vain. Sri Swaminarayan has frequently mentioned that there are certain definite presuppositions of moral life such as immortality of soul, freedom of will, existence of God, evil, time and the law of Karma. In social and moral life, an individual should observe the station and duty to be fixed and to be practised in ones life. Although there is the law of Karma, it does not prevent an individual from feeling encouraged and making effort for good activity and righteousness. In the course of after-life and rebirth it is the true sense of aspiration, effort, purpose and earnestness which accumulate in gearing righteousness. Even though religious and moral effort may be small and meagre, however it can never go in vain. It definitely protects the moral doer. Lord Krishna in the *Gītā* says, 'Na hi Kalyankritkashit durgatim tat gachati' (VI.40).

In this context, it may be observed that religion and philosophy according to Sri Swaminarayan are intimately related as cognition orients feeling, devotion and religious life. Understanding and conceptual grasp add adequate content to religious activity. Renunciation, devotion, surrender, consecration and total sincerity are extremely essential for total religious life. However Sri Swaminarayan insists upon the quality of love and devotion in cultivation of religious life. The other qualities of religious life are Dharma, Jnana and Vairagya. Sri Swaminarayana has written in his 'Shikshapatri' that it is the duty of every human being to worship God in every possible manner, for Bhakti is really the only means of attaining salvation. It is in surrendering to God, according to Sri Swaminarayana, that the devotee secures the grace of God which is essential for achieving true release from the clutches of *Māyā*.

At times a person or devotee is loving God and is religious but his religiosity is not in consonance with morals of collective life, harmony of family life and society. This is not admirable as true devotion to God ought to be consistent with proper duties and moral fervour. Sri Swaminarayan maintains that *jñāna*, *vairagya* and *dharma* are necessary ingredients with devotion or Bhakti. In the religion of Swaminarayan as distinct from other sects of Hindu religion, morality is a necessary part of devotion and the religious activity of an individual should be in harmony with the religious group of Swaminarayan.

There are five distinct categories of knowledge in the philosophy of Sri Swaminarayan. They are Jiva, Māyā, God, Aksharbrahma and Prabrahman. There is unity and harmony of knowledge in the system of his philosophy. It is faith which is the pivot in these sources of fundamental knowledge. These beliefs which are implicit in the method of being and knowing ultimate Reality are founded in its central experience which is working as faith in the consciousness of the individual. Faith can be rationally justified but as such it stands as the pillar of fundamental belief. Of course it is founded on experience but in its absence in the individual framework it works as faith. In order to recognize and realize the ultimate knowledge and experience, it is faith which is working for individual search and endeavour. According to Swāminarayan faith should not be contrary to reason. However it may be supported by reason. An intellectual rational person should not be forced to believe but he should be persuaded to believe. So faith may be made conducive to reason. Small and inferior deities should not be adored and worshipped by devout and sincere persons having faith in true religiosity.

There is a link between scriptural word (shabda), faith, Sadguru and seeker of liberation (Mumukshu). The link among these constituents is abiding experience. He is Sadguru who has the essential experience and he is entitled to interpret the scripture and explain it to the seeker of liberation. It is upon the basis of this rational explanation that faith in God and religious system is based. Scripture and religious system are not mere authorities and the seeker of liberation should not be afraid of rational seeking, questioning and need of explanation. They are parts of faith and when faith is not opposite to reason then it is intrinsic to the content of faith.

It fits in with rational elucidation that the category of Aksharbrahma for instance requires to be related and shown. It is said above that according to Swaminarayan there are five important principles of his metaphysical position which are Parabrahman, Aksharbrahma, Ishwara, Māyā and Jiva. Out of these it is Aksharbrahma who is eternally related with Parabrahma and yet immanent in Jiva and Māyā. Although Māyā is unreal, yet it is a part of Brahman which makes the unique relationship between Brahman and Māyā. It makes Aksharbrahma personal in spite of its impersonality. This is distinct in the structure of its thought. Although it is beyond Māyā and Jiva, yet it is implicit within the fold of Jiva and Māyā. It is within and without the evolutes.

As regards the Reality of Parabrahman it is altogether distinct from Aksharbrahma, for Parabrahman is absolutely beyond the immanence of Prakriti or Aksharbrahma. It is here that Sri Swaminarayan differs from the philosophical view of Sri Ramanuja who thinks that world is related with Brahman, the Absolute like soul and body, 'Sharira-Shariribhāva'. It is true that the relationship between soul and body is interdependent; however it is not absolutely so as in the case of body it is dependent upon the soul but soul has independent consciousness of its own. Soul is not dependent upon body for its state of consciousness. In case of Absolute also it does not depend upon the world for it is 'Parātpara'. A verse from the Gītā may be quoted in its substantiation from canto nine, 'Mayatamidam sarva jagat avayaktamurtina/Matsthani sarvabhutani na chaham teshuavasthitah// (9.4)' By Me, the Unmanifest Being, is all this universe of motion pervasively extended. All the existences are situated in Me and not in them am I situated.'

It is the above elucidation of metaphysical categories in the philosophy of Sri Swaminarayan which calls for rational elucidation even though the main principles rest on the faith of the devotee and the seeker within the individual. Moreover just as the Gītā advocates devotion as the best means to realize God, similarly Sri Swaminarayan advocates devotion as the superior way of attaining Aksharbrahma.

Having dwelt upon Polytheism, Monism and the philosophical thought of Sri Swaminarayan, I should like to dwell a little on the nineteenth century movement of the Arya Samaj initiated by Swami Dayananda (1824–1885) who was born in Tankara, a village near Rajkot in Saurashtra. Owing to his dissatisfaction with ritualistic idol-ridden Hindu devotional worship he fled and went to Haridwar and took his learning of Veda from a blind Swami Virjananda. Guru told Dayananda to spread the true gospel of Vedas and Vedic religion. He wrote his autobiography in Hindi and his most significant work 'Satyārtha Prakash' in which he elaborated his ideas of Traitavāda, philosophy of God, soul and the world as well as his polemic against Avatārvada, Jaina, Christianity, Islam and other sects and religion. He attempted to establish the supremacy of Vedic religion and gave a call to go back to Vedas.

IV

During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries there has been indeed 'Indian Renaissance' as Sri Aurobindo has called it in his 'Foundations of

Indian Culture' and in the spirit of Sanātan Dharma there has been a serious attempt to regenerate and revitalize society and religious activity. In this context there have been poets, literary writers, reformers such as Kavi Dalapatram, Narmadashanker Bhatt, Ramanlal Desai, Kalapi, Acharya Anandashanker Dhruv, Govardhanram Tripathi, Mahatma Gandhi, Shri Manilal Nabhubhai Dwivedi, Shri Kishorilal Mashruwala, Pandit Sukhalalji and many renowned learned persons who have contributed towards reconstructing social and national conditions, freedom and unity. Out of these thinkers and reformers one person and thinker who has written in Gujarati and thought on philosophical, religious, social, educational values and liberation is Kishorilal Mashruwala (1890–1953).

Mashruwala wrote certain important works such as Jeevanshodhan, Samuli Kranti, Samsar ane Dharma, Kelvanina Paya and others. His Guru Shri Kedarnathji wrote 'Vivaka ane Sadhana'. In his main contention, Shri Mashruwala brings out that Theism remains in its essence an inspiration and spring for moral earnestness, religious aspiration and altruistic endeavour. It may be seen that in his most important work he enumerates the qualifications and moral treasure of 'Shreyarthi', one who endeavours for 'Shreyas' the Good. They are aspiration for truth, earnestness, love, sincerity, discipleship, renunciation, agility and healthy physique. Just as there are certain conditions for celibacy, similarly there are definite conditions for securing 'Shreyas'. It is in this background that Mashruwala thinks that the desire for liberation ought to be evaluated.

In his view philosophy is not mere intellectual exercise, analysis, thought-provoking discussion but it is distinctly a way of life, Yoga and direction for experience. A thinker in philosophy has to find proper righteous activity keeping in mind its objective. 'Man should desire knowledge, he should become Shreyarthi, desire more research, purity in mind and thought,' writes Mashruwala. As a result man destroys superstition, ignorance, partial knowledge, indecision; in short it will be release from irrationalism. Mashruwala believes that in the Indian tradition there is a misconception about the fourth Purushartha 'Moksha' that by any means there ought to be release from activity. As a result there is a lot of confusion in the minds and thoughts of people. In this way the term 'Moksha' is deceiving. He renames 'Moksha' as search or desire for knowledge. It is owing to this desire for release or knowledge that a person seeks Dharma, Artha and Kama. He purifies the activities he undertakes. A person who knows is not free from the control of morality or religion but he

understands properly the 'Dharma'. He knows the limitations of desires for various activities and with proper understanding accepts the control and limitation willingly.

The problem of release or liberation is intimately connected with 'Dharma'. Mashruwala believes that righteous living is very valuable. What is the meaning of Dharma or righteous living? There is a question as to whether there is a key for a thoughtful system is it really philosophical or is it a just an appearance of thought system. It is by accepting a thoughtful system that there is an encouragement for development and progress of society, its purity, sanctity, and as it grows there is more growth of social health, culture and its cohesion also. This is its key to be called really philosophical. Maintenance does not mean its physical body alone but it means adequate protection and self-sustained disciplined life. In our progressive life of balanced emotions and intellectual skills, our life ought not to be self-centred, egoistic and self-sustained but we should look towards the well-balanced being of family, village, community, city, nation and whole mankind. We should observe that by our activity those who are nearby, animals and neighbours, are done proper justice, acquaintances are properly benefited. There should be peaceful, satisfactory and affectionate distribution of utility and benefit to all who are related. Those who are suffering and in calamity are cared for properly. We should not let the evil of life and world harass the poor and downtrodden. Our intelligence should make them fearless.

It is open to question whether such a state of society will emerge at any stage or time. This is not important but our approach and way of life ought to turn to social betterment and welfare or at least we should show inclination in this direction.

Mashruwala says, 'This is what I understand by aim of life. This is progress of human being. To the extent that learning, art, science, interests of life lead towards this aim of life it is desirable and essential.' It is true that certain activities are not injurious or harmful to this betterment of society, then it may be allowed to flourish. All other activities are improper and inessential. An activity which encourages and enhances such aim of life is righteous, it is 'Dharma'.

He thinks that duty and Dharma are synonymous. The right duty is that which coincides with consistent dharma of society. Purified emotion, thought and action have a relationship with religious import. This is what is understood by purification of consciousness. Such purity has impact not

only upon the doer, person, but upon family, surroundings and as a result upon society. Moral righteousness has impact upon enrichment of society. At the same time if society is on a lower level, it is degenerating, it is the duty of the doer or individual to suffer on that account and improve ones doing, action, try ones best to remove injustice. The upshot is that there should be cultivation of 'Daivi Sampatti', righteous qualities.

In the second part, Mashruwala elucidates on elements of religious preparation such as thought on taking support of God, God as cause of the world, consciousness, Supreme Brahman, for austerity, devotion, Sadhana for God, faith, atheism, death, rebirth and related matter.

Aim of knowledge is to improve and purify, explore Dharma, Artha and Kama, three Purusharthas. To know oneself means to depend on ones own self, its power, knowledge, Karma and not to depend on others for ones own doing whether it gives pain, or pleasure. To endure, suffer and persevere in ones own effort for self-knowledge. One should not worry about death or the state after death. The life is here and one should face squarely the state of life and existence. One should pursue goodness as Nishkama Karma.

One should take resort to the pure principle of ultimate existence as support and not any specific religion or particular prophet. This is true and resorting to certain foundations of life. Mashruwala thinks that Shreyarthi depends upon one single principle God who is both efficient and material cause of the world, and that it is consciousness. God is not simply matter but it is consciousness. Moreover it is not proper to say that God is 'Nirakar' but it is the base of all forms and its support. Then in the second instance there is a distinction between 'Chitta' and 'Chaitanya'. Chitta is a conglomeration of passions and desires. It is related with different types of objects. It is in chaitanya that one is self-conscious and one has got self-knowledge and discipline. When self knows, one is conscious and having consciousness then this consciousness is named as Param chaitanya, Paramātmā, Param Tattva, parameshwara. Chitta is referred to as 'I' whereas chaitanya is referred to as 'Thou' or 'That'.

Mashruwala thinks that in his or her Purushartha, every individual has implicitly three beliefs—one is having true will power; with true desire whatever one desires, one is likely to attain. Secondly, in the world there is provision to fulfil ones desire. Thirdly, there is the faculty of discrimination of right and wrong. There is intelligence. Moreover through various sources such as scripture, experience and acquaintance with great

teachers, reading biographies, one comes across certain definite beliefs as follows:

1. One is capable of getting intelligence as perfect as that of God, one can get detachment, recognition and attainment.
2. One can gradually develop, purify discrimination of right and wrong.
3. One gets decision and conviction in ones effort.
4. Development of virtues of truth, non-violence, charity, mercy and renunciation.
5. One who possesses such virtues and attainments and is capable of communicating it to a devotee is 'Vibhuti' which is representation of Paramātmā.

The above characters of a devotee and progressive individual show that God is potential of powers and Vibhūti. However one cannot achieve all the powers one conceives. One should attempt to obtain good, pure powers and one should ponder over it. Mashruwala says that by attributing several qualities to God he is attempting to improve, add, purify and cultivate such qualities within ones own character, consciousness and self. So he exhorts Shreyarthi to follow the description of Sthitaprajña, Jivanmūka, Bhakta, Jñāni, Guṇātīta and Daivi Prakriti given in B. Geetā.

It may be observed from the above elucidation that Shri Mashruwala has brought rational temper in ethical and religious pursuit prevalent in customary and reflective life. It is altruistic rationalism which he has attempted to articulate in moral and religious endeavour. He believes in God, Guru, holy and spiritual company, moral beliefs and in true liberation. However he is critical about the law of Karma and its popular interpretation. Mashruwala says that the law of Karma should not be brought as a pretext now and then in explaining cause of event or phenomenon. There are several immediate causes such as environment, relatives, living beings who may have been connected with an individual or event and they cannot be ignored.

One who is 'Shreyārthi' seeker of Goodness, ought to have intelligent guidance in ones life and trust or faith in one God. He should not deviate from the path he has demarcated as an aim of life. Mashruwala believes in life after death but he is cautious in interpreting miracles and belief in spirits. Quite often religious people are hankering after heresies and looking after so-called spiritual phenomena which are hostile for true ethical and religious life. They mislead individuals into deviating and straying

from the true goal of life. When an individual believes that somebody is his Guru he then takes him to be an Avatār, immortal, son of God, most righteous, holy, sacred and saviour of mankind. Such belief spoils the true righteous life and aspiration for God. The true aim is to purify belief, endeavour, attitude and love for mankind. These should be true devotion which consists in surrendering to the almighty power of God. He attempts to bring innovation in the concept of Bhakti, upāsana and karmakānda.

He devotes a special section on elaboration of Samkhya and Yoga sutras and gives his own understanding and interpretation of Purusha, Prakriti, God and liberation. In case of Yoga sutras he attempts to explain the true meaning of 'Samadhi', 'asamprajñāta', 'samprajñāta', savitarka, savichara and other technical terms in Yogadarshana.

It seems that Mashruwala has expounded the philosophy of Vishishtadvaita while adhering to Samkhya thought. He thinks that Vedic religion is religion based upon ones experience and it instructs such percepts only which have access to experience. To surrender to God is meant for the purpose of righteous behaviour and not for any religious act or will. It is for self-control that Yoga is to be practised. To distinguish Purusha from Prakriti and cultivate 'Vivekakhyaati' is the purpose of Yoga. Abhyasa, Vairagya and Ishwarpranidhana are ways to cultivate Vivekakhyaati.

CONCLUSION

Religious tradition and philosophical thought in Gujarati literature are diverse and it is difficult to find uniform religious and philosophical tradition pervading it. However religious revival, regeneration and reform can be found in it in several parts. It is true that polytheism still persists among masses. It is to be noted that a sect called 'Radha swami Sampradaya /Pranami Sampradaya, which had its roots in the United Provinces (present-day Uttar Pradesh) has its followers in Gujarat and they have a temple in Jamnagar and in Sorath district.

Since the times of Adikavi Narasinh Mehta, both Jnani and Bhakta have favoured Monistic principle of Reality and Idealistic thought in poetry and literature at large. There has been deep impact of the thought of Mahatma Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore and Sri Aurobindo on the literature in Gujarati largely during first half of the twentieth century.

I have taken help of the following books while preparing this article:

1. *Gujarat and its Literature*, K.M. Munshi, Longmans Green & Co. Ltd., 1935.
2. *Further Milestones in Gujarati Literature*, D.B.K.M. Jhaveri, 1921.
3. *Narasinh Mehtanan Kavyo*, edited by Iccharam Suryaram Desai, Gujarati Printing Press, Bombay, 1913.
4. *The Classical Poets of Gujarat*, Govardhanram M. Tripathi, 1894.
5. *Aapana Kavio*, Vol. I, K.K. Shashtri, Gujarat Vernacular Society, Ahmedabad, 1941.
6. *Jivanmuktiviveka*, Vidyaranya Muni, Vidyavilas Press, Benares, 1913.
7. *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. II, Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London, 1931.
8. *Jivanshodhan*, Shri Kishrilal Mashruwala, fourth edition, Navajivan, Ahmedabad, 1952.
9. *Swami Sahajananda*, Sastun Sahitya, Ahmedabad, 1930.
10. *Shkshapatrici*, Swami Sahajananda, Gurukul Rajkot, 1945.
11. *Philosophy of Shri Swami Narayan*, J.A. Yajnik, L.D. Indology Institute of Research, Ahmedabad, 1975.
12. *Hindu Tattvajanno Itihas*, Vol. II, N.D. Mehta, Gujarat Vernacular Society, Ahmedabad, 1925.
13. *Gujarati Language and Literature*, Vol. II, N.B. Divetia, Macmillan & Co. Ltd., 1932.
14. *Vaishnavadharmono Samkshipta Itihas*, D.K. Shashtri, Forbes Gujarati Sabha, Bombay, 1930.
15. *Bharatiya Tattva Vidya*, Pandit Sukhlalji, M.S. University of Baroda, 1958.
16. *Aapano Dharma*, Anandashanker B. Dhruva, R.R. Sheth & Co., 1963.
17. *Gujarati Sahityani Ruparekha*, Vijaya Rai Vaidya, Gurjar Granth Ratna Karyalaya, Ahmedabad, 1954.
18. *Kevaladvaita in Gujarati Poetry*, Y.J. Tripathi, Oriental Institute, Baroda, 1958.

An Insight into Maharishi Dayananda's Philosophy

S.B.P. SINHA

Former Professor and Emeritus Fellow and Senior Fellow,
Department of Philosophy, B.R.A. Bihar University, Muzaffarpur 842 001

I

In India, philosophy is much more than intellectualism. It is rightly held that philosophy here is not merely a way of thought but also a way of life. Maharishi Dayananda, like Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Swami Vivekananda, Maharishi Ramana, Gandhi and such others have contributed profoundly in the domain of philosophy. So, their importance as philosophers should not be undermined. So, it is quite befitting to study his contributions in this brief paper. Here it may be observed that really so-called non-technical philosophers have also played an important role in enlightening and inspiring the society. It is well known that Ramakrishna Paramahansa and such others have influenced and inspired the modern man much more than any technical philosopher. This holds true so far as Maharishi Dayananda's philosophy is concerned. Indeed he has appreciated ancient Indian philosophy and religion quite well and tried to develop his philosophy on the bedrock of Vedas. His clarion call was to go back to Vedas. Professor D.M. Datta has rightly observed, 'The Arya Samaj was founded by Swami Dayananda (1824-1883), a recluse of great Sanskrit scholarship and a dynamic personality. On the one hand he opposed Islam and Christianity, and on the other idol-worship, the caste system, and the Vedantic monism, Jainism and Buddhism prevalent among the Hindus. He revived Vedic ritualism and monotheism, based on the philosophy of three fundamental realities—God, soul and nature. His movement spread far and wide in western and northern India, particularly among the non-Europeanized and backward classes, it prevented the Hindus from conversion into other faiths and also reconverted some of the already converted, and gave birth to a network of educational institutions.'¹

Before coming to this point, it may be mentioned here that Hinduism lost its pristine purity and its original character due to adverse political conditions during the middle ages. This stage of degeneration continued till the first half of the 19th century. Several malpractices crept into the fold of this great religion. We may mention here a few among them, e.g., the sati system, child marriage, exploitation of the common masses in the name of religion. Things were then quite pitiable. Naturally, it is seen that many socio-religious reformation movements appeared on the scene to rectify things. Among them the Arya Samaj, like the Brahma Samaj and others played an important part to reform and revitalize the great religion of the Hindus. So far as the Arya Samaj is concerned, it is said that it was formed more or less as a reaction against Christianity. Pandit Chamupati has appropriately remarked,

Just as the impact of Islam gave a fillip to Bhakti systems in India in the middle ages, so has the inroad of western civilization given rise to a number of reform movements in Hinduism in modern times. All these are contributing in different ways to the furthering of Indian renaissance that is going on apace. Of these, the Arya Samaj takes its stand on the bed-rock of the Vedas, which, it believes, hold the key to all our socio-religious problems.²

Now it may be mentioned here that the Arya Samaj was founded in 1875 at Bombay. Late Lajpat Rai in his book *History of Arya Samaj* has observed that the Arya Samaj, which was established by Maharishi Dayananda, was mainly concerned with restoring original purity to Hinduism in the light of Vedas. He has rightly highlighted this point:

The (Arya) Samaj shall regard the Vedas alone as independently and absolutely authoritative. For purpose of testimony and for the understanding of the Vedas, as also for historical purpose, all the four Brahmanas—Shathpatha, etc., the six Vedangas, the four Upavedas, the six Darshanas, and 1,127 Shakhas or expositions of the Vedas, shall by virtue of their being ancient and recognized works of Rishis, be also regarded as secondarily authoritative, in so far only as their teaching is in accord with that of the Vedas.³

Now instead of presenting a historical account in this context, it would be proper to study deeply and critically Swami Dayananda's philosophy. At the very outset, it may be seen that though he was not a technical

philosopher, yet his contributions, especially his interpretation of Vedas, find important place in the history of contemporary Indian Philosophy and religion. This is quite just because in India philosophy is not confined to intellectualism and to such logical and analytic pursuits. On the other hand, philosophy here is said to be vitally connected with life. It is seen that in India philosophy is said to be concerned with socio-spiritual development of man also. This is more true so far as contemporary Indian philosophy is concerned. Dayananda certainly fulfils this important criterion. No doubt he seems to be mainly interested in purifying and rationalizing the great religion of the Hindus. But it is well known that his contributions do not end there alone. He has come forward with a great scholarly work which is known as 'Satyarth Prakash'. This is really regarded to be the *magnum opus* of this great original Satyarth Prakash quite faithfully as it is testified by Mahatma Hansraj. In this book Swamiji has touched important aspects of life including views concerning reality—God, soul, world etc. At the very outset, Swamiji eulogizes God and praises him for happiness and peace. We may quote these lines:

MAYEST THOU (AOM) O God, who art (Mitra) Friend of all, (Varuna) Holiest of all and (Aryama) Controller of the Universe, be merciful unto us: Mayest thou (Indra) O Lord Almighty (Brihaspati), the Lord of the Universe, the support of all, endow us with knowledge and power. Mayest Thou (Vishnu) O Omnipresent and (Urukrama) omnipotent Being, shower thy blessings all around us.⁴

Before further explaining and illustrating his approach it may be pointed out here that Swamiji as indicated earlier also does not accept such additions and accretions of Hinduism which entered there during the period of Puranas. It is well known that a sectarian approach developed during puranas. To make this point more clear, it may be observed here that during this period cults like Vaishnavism, Shaivism, Shaktism etc. developed. In reality, though, these different cults cannot be ultimately regarded to be antagonistic to each other. According to our Vedic saying, scholars call differently the same one principle of truth or reality 'Ekam Sat Vipra Bahudha Vadanti' but unfortunately things could not be so in actual practice. This is testified by the fact that votaries of one cult sometimes unfortunately clash with adherents of other cults. Swamiji was naturally unhappy with such developments. It is also seen that he was equally unhappy with the cult of idolatry. Everybody knows the story how he was

annoyed when he was asked to keep awake in the Shiva Temple on the Shiv Ratri night. It is said that subsequently he became unhappy with the system of idol worship. In this background, he comes with his gospel of truth which aims at rationalizing, purifying and simplifying Hindu religious practices in the light of Vedas.

Before dwelling on some of these points, it would not be out of place to point out here that Buddha also was not happy with excesses done by Vedic priests and it is maintained by some that he also tried to reform ancient Brahmanism. Of course, it is not meant here that Swami Dayananda's approach is identical with that of Lord Buddha. Obviously, that cannot be. Because Buddha's philosophy was anti-Vedic and atheistic in character. This is not the case with Swami Dayananda who is avowedly a Vedic thinker. Likewise his role is also comparable with that of Swami Vivekananda, because both are socio-religious reformers in the sense that both these saint philosophers have tried to bring about a veritable reformation in Hinduism as it needed to be reformed and revitalized after being polluted during the middle ages due to adverse social and political conditions. Both have thus tried to rationalize and purify Hinduism but, as it would be seen later, both differ in their approaches. No doubt, both are Vedantins in their own ways. But it would be clear subsequently that Swami Vivekananda advocates the non-dualistic approach of Vedanta whereas Maharishi Dayananda advocates pluralism as he believes in reality of God, soul and nature. Besides this, Swamiji is more catholic and synthetic in his approach so far as his treatment of religion is concerned but Maharishi appears to be more rigid and is critical of both Islam and Christianity.

II

Having made these preliminary observations now, it would be interesting to study some important aspects of his philosophy briefly and critically. Beginning with his approach to knowledge, it is seen that though he believes in various kinds of knowledge, he seems to be interested in vedic testimony. He upholds vedic ritualism and dharma on the basis of Vedas. But he has also discussed other pramanas in the third chapter of his work 'Satyarth-Prakash' like perception, inference, upaman (analogy), shabda or testimony, itihās (history of a country or biography of a person), arthapatti (conclusion or deduction), sambhava (possibility), abhava (absence or

negation). Although Maharishi refers to these eight kinds of evidence or means of knowledge, ultimately he reduces them into four heads. He says, 'The eight kinds of evidence have been briefly described. Their number can be reduced to four if History be included under Testimony and Deduction, Possibility and Negation under Inference.'⁵

He has also discussed various kinds of human and other allied matters in his epistemological constructions. It appears that he has studied Vedas and also other works of Indian philosophy. That is why, it is seen that he discusses all these matters relating to knowledge like a technical philosopher. He has discussed the nature of perception like Naiyayika and also refers to the Vaishesika system frequently in his work. Similarly, he has treated the problem of inference and here he naturally discusses the role of Vyapti which is the basis of such knowledge. Likewise, he treats analogical evidence and says, 'The evidence of similitude is that kind of proof which is based upon the agreement of important characteristics cognizable by the senses.'⁶

Then, coming to Shabda Jnana, it is the evidence which is the opinion of an adept or a person thoroughly competent and who is also supposed to be virtuous and trustworthy. Then Itihās or historical evidence is said to be concerned with the exact occurrence of an event or action of person as mentioned earlier also. It relates to the history of a place or biography of a person. Then coming to the sixth kind, the following lines may be relevantly quoted, 'The proof of the converse: as, for instance, when it is affirmed that the existence of clouds produces rain, or every effect has its cause, it is proved without any explicit saying that there is no rain without clouds, and no effect without cause.'⁷

Then so far as Sambhava is concerned, it is like possibility and possible knowledge. Then Abhava or non-existence implies knowledge of absence of a thing. Again, it is seen that we have also studied various kinds of inferential knowledge like purvavata, seshvata, samanyatodrishta. Besides these various kinds of evidence or instruments of knowledge, he has also discussed the nature of knowledge and other allied problems. Dr. Veda Prakash Gupta⁸ has also studied this aspect of Maharishi's approach and has rightly found how he lays stress on the role of purity and spiritual and moral discipline for right or unerring type of knowledge. Naturally he also mentions the role of samskaras in this context. It may be added here that he is very much influenced by our ancient vedic tradition of education. According to this scheme, the student has to comply with rules of morality,

like Brahmacharya etc. So Maharishi rightly feels that such provisions make the students eligible and capable for acquiring unerring knowledge. Before coming to his ontological constructions, it may be observed here that Maharishi Dayananda seems to be naturally influenced by metaphysical and moral considerations even in his epistemological views. This is natural because he is a staunch exponent of vedic philosophy. That is why he takes all these matters in his account of knowledge. Besides this, he also appears to be quite acquainted with technical matters relating to nature, mind and other allied factors concerning knowledge. So, he undoubtedly follows the traditional vedic approach but does not ignore technical matters as well in this respect.

He also discusses the problem of truth and error and naturally appears to be inclined towards realistic interpretation. It is seen that his approach in this respect is nearer to 'Anirbachaniya Khyativad' but this is not the full fact about his approach to error. As a realistic thinker he seems to favour also Nayaya's views of 'Anyathakhyativad'. It may also be added here that Dayananda does not fully agree with Ramanuja's criticism of Shankar theory of 'Anirvachaniya Khyativad'. This is the reason why he also seems to be advocating realistic approach and is supposed to be nearer to 'Anyatha Khyativad'.

III

Having thus briefly discussed Maharishi's theory of knowledge, truth, error etc. now it would be interesting to study his approach in the realm of metaphysics and religion. This is because his contributions in these areas are seen to be more conspicuous. Here, it is seen that he naturally bases his metaphysical approach on the basis of Vedas. Besides this, it is also to be borne in mind that quite naturally he attaches importance to ontological constructions as he does not support those modern thinkers who are anti-metaphysicians and are votaries of linguistic analysis. As indicated earlier, although his metaphysical views are based on Vedas and Upanishads, it is important to note that he does not advocate such views of Upanishads which give rise to either monism or dualism. This is clear from the fact that he believes in three eternal realities, namely God, soul and world. So, he is for the trinity of reality. Professor Brodov has made relevant observations in this context.

Thus God, the soul and prakriti are correlated within the universe as 'three causes': the efficient, the auxiliary, and the material.

God is the highest form of being, the 'Supreme Spirit' dominating all and needing no matter for existence.

The souls (numerous but finite in number), or the 'lower spirits' are immaterial but need matter for their growth and development. The spirits, in Dayananda's words, are imperfect but essentially progressive; they are doubly dependent—on God ('the spiritual leadership') and on material implements (the concrete conditions and forms of being).⁹

So obviously he is a theist and believes in the existence of God. Not only this, we also consider his belief in the existence of God to be desirable and necessary. Commenting on Rigveda, he says, 'They are atheists and of weak intellect, and continually remain sunk in the depths of misery and pain who do not believe in, know, and commune with Him who is Resplendent, All-glorious, All-Holy, All-knowledge, Sustainer of the Sun, the earth and other planets, who pervades all like ether, is the Lord of all and is above all devatas. It is by the knowledge and contemplation of God alone that all men attain true happiness.'¹⁰

In this context it may be also added by way of further clarification that though he bases his philosophy of God on the Veda but obviously he does not agree with the early polytheistic approach of Vedas. In this context we may quote his following observations, 'No, we do not; as nowhere in all the four Vedas there is written anything that could go to show that there are more gods than one. On the other hand, it is clearly said in many places that there is only one God.'¹¹

So, he clearly advocates monotheistic philosophy. It may be seen here that though he believes in various rites and ceremonies in accordance with vedic provisions, he appears to be more realistic and rationalistic in this respect. It is also further interesting to see that he makes a distinction between God and Devata. Again, we may quote him, 'These thirty-three aforesaid entities are called devatas by virtue of possessing useful properties and actions. Being Lord of all and greater than all, the Supreme Being is called the thirty-fourth Devatas who alone is to be worshipped. The same thing is written in the Shastras. Had people consulted these books, they would not have fallen into this error, viz., the belief that there are more gods than one mentioned in the Vedas.'¹²

Here, obviously he follows Rigveda (X, 48) and Yajurveda (XL, 1), where it is clearly stated that there is one God, who is the Supreme ruler and the entire Universe is pervaded by Him.

Then coming to his conception of soul it would be better to quote Lala Laipat Rai, 'The immortal, eternal principle which is endowed with thought and judgement, with desire and hate, which is susceptible of pleasure and pain, whose capacity for knowledge is limited—even that is "soul".'¹³

So, unlike God, soul is finite and is subject to bondage and liberation. Like a realist thinker, he believes in plurality of souls as it is clearly observed that there are different souls having different bodies. Naturally his approach is nearer to Sankhya, which also advocates plurality of purushas but the important difference is that Sankhya is atheistic and Dayananda clearly believes in the existence of God with all His extraordinary attributes. He clearly differs from non-dualistic interpretation of vedic text and clearly declares thus, 'If God and the human soul be different, how will you interpret the following mighty text of the vedas? "I am God", "Thou art God" and "The soul is God".'

These are not vedic texts at all, but quotations from the Brahmans. They are nowhere called 'mighty texts' in the true shastras. Their true meanings are as follows: we take the first quotation which does not mean 'I am God' but 'I live in God'. Here is used what is called 'substitution of the thing that contains or supports for the thing which is contained therein or supported thereby'; just as we say 'watch platforms are shouting ...'.¹⁴

It may be added here that Maharishi Dayananda was also an erudite scholar of Sanskrit and so it is natural on his part that he interprets vedic texts including 'Mahavakyas' quite clearly in his scholarly manner and tries to emphasize the element of difference in tune with his realistic pluralism.

Now, instead of making more detailed study in this context, it may be desirable to discuss his views relating to Prakriti which is considered to be the material cause of the universe. To make this point more intelligible, it may be mentioned here that God is regarded to be only the efficient cause of the universe. So naturally the reality of prakriti is posited here to explain the material cause of the universe. Here, the following lines from his book may be quoted: 'The material cause is the Prakriti which is the material used in the making of the universe. Being devoid of intelligence it can neither make nor unmake itself, but is always made or unmade by a conscious intelligent being; though here and there even one

kind of dead inert matter is seen to produce changes in another kind of dead matter (but those changes are never ordered). Let us take an illustration. God made seeds (of different kinds). When they fall into a suitable soil and get the proper amount of water and nourishment, they develop into trees; but if they come in contact with fire they perish. All ordered changes in material things depend for their occurrence on God and the Soul.'¹⁵

Maharishi further talks about three kinds of causes in order to explain this world. They are the efficient, the material and the common. The efficient cause is the God or supreme spirit in this context. He alone creates the world out of the material cause. In this case, as mentioned earlier, Prakriti is the material cause. Maharishi uses common cause in the sense of instrument by means of which the efficient cause is transformed into the effect; then he talks about two kinds of efficient causes, namely the primary efficient cause and the secondary efficient cause. Naturally, God is here regarded to be the primary efficient cause whereas soul is considered to be the secondary efficient cause. In this respect, it may be also pointed out that Dayananda perhaps bases his view on the Mundkopanishad where, to some extent, the example of a spider is presented. Maharishi does accept this conception in-toto as he seems to be interested in a more realistic approach and his treatment in this respect is nearer to Nyaya-Vaisheshika systems so he also behaves like a technical philosopher and naturally talks about the creation of the world in a more realistic way.

Instead of discussing the matter more elaborately it is seen here that he seems to be influenced by the account of the universe as presented in Mundkopanishad as well as in Taittreyaopanishad. In Taittreyaopanishad it is mentioned that God is the efficient cause who creates the world and in this context first Akash or Ether is created and then Air is created. In this way, he presents the account of the creation. Before coming to his views concerning ethics and religion, it would be in the fitness of things to observe here that he explains the creation of the world on the basis of God, soul and prakriti and frequently quotes texts to support his view.

IV

Then, coming to his views in the domain of ethics and social philosophy, it may be mentioned at the very outset that his contributions in this field

are really quite important and interesting. As mentioned earlier also, he was mainly interested in reforming and purifying Hinduism on the foundation of Vedas and was aware of various practices which defiled the pristine purity of this great religion due to the various factors hinted at earlier so he realizes that veritable renaissance of the great religion could be possible only on the basis of proper cultivation of moral virtues and ideals. Here it would suffice to observe that he attaches importance to rules of Varnashram Dharma. He has discussed in detail various virtues of different classes. Likewise he also discusses various rules relating to persons belonging to various stages or Ashrama of Life. Instead of referring to all these details, it would be interesting to see that Maharishi Dayananda tries to rationalize and democratize even some such provisions of Vedas which may not be regarded to be based on the principle of natural and social justice. Some time due to interpolations, it is believed that Vedas do not encourage education of women and shudras. Here we may quote again the following lines. 'All men and women (i.e., the whole mankind) have a right to study. You can go and drown yourselves. As for the text you have quoted, it is of your own fabrication, and is nowhere to be found either in the Veda or any other authoritative book. On the other hand, here is a verse from the Yajur Veda that authorizes all men to study the Veda and hear it read:

God says: 'As I have given this word (i.e., the four Vedas) which is the word of salvation for all mankind [Here some one might say that by the word Jana, which we have translated into all mankind, only Dwijas are meant, as in the smritis (so-called) they alone are allowed to study the Veda but not women and shudras, the other half of this verse answers this objection by adding]—Brahmans, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, Shudras, Women, Servants, aye, even the lowest of the low, so should you all do i.e., teach and preach the Veda. Let all men therefore read and recite, teach and preach the Veda and thereby acquire true knowledge, practise virtue, shun vice, and consequently being freed from all sorrow, all pain, enjoy true happiness.'¹⁶

Thus it is seen that like Buddha, he has tried to moralize and universalize various provisions of Vedas. Likewise his book contains other allied details pertaining to various rules and virtues to be practised by Brahmchari or student. They are expected to observe celibacy and virtues like truth, non-violence, non-stealing etc. The Grihastha or the householder is also expected to observe the rules of righteousness after getting themselves married

according to provisions laid down in shastras. He has also discussed various forms of marriage and pleads for following these provisions for happy married life. It is neither necessary nor possible to present exhaustive lists of various provisions pertaining to different stages and classes of men but it may be mentioned here that he considers these provisions and rules to be desirable for better social and national life also. The following observations may however be quoted in this respect. 'As long as in this country (India), sages and seers, emperors and kings and other people followed the aforesaid system of marriages of choice (swamvar vivah) preceded by a life of Brahmacharya devoted to the acquisition of knowledge and culture and perfection of the body, it continually progressed and prospered. Since its inhabitants have neglected Brahmacharya and the pursuit of knowledge, and have, instead, taken to child-marriage—and that too under the control of the parents—India has been steadily declining. It, therefore, behoves all good and sensible men to do away with this pernicious system, and introduce instead, marriage by choice in accordance with the division into classes (varna vyavastha) which should be based on the qualifications, accomplishments and character of the individuals.'¹⁷

Again it may be added here that though he may not approve of the present caste system which is really a travesty of the Varnashrama Dharma, yet he favours the traditional ancient scheme of Varnashrama and in this context he expects that Brahmins should be engaged in pursuit of knowledge and in performance of yajnas etc. and he should preach the ideal of purity and virtues etc. Likewise, the Kshatriyas should be engaged in the work of administration and other allied duties. Likewise, the duties of a person belonging to other classes are also discussed and it is expected that they should be honest and faithful in discharging their duties. It may be interesting to note here that Dayananda and Aryasamaj founded by him has done a lot to simplify, purify and rationalize various moral and social ideals though they plead for the system of monogamy and allied provisions in this respect but in exceptional cases some relaxations are also made.

V

Then coming to his approach to religion, again it may be mentioned that here he has also played an important role and has done a lot to bring about a veritable renaissance in Hinduism on the bedrock of vedas but it would

be also befitting to mention here that his approach is not so flexible and liberal as is the case with Ramakrishna Paramhansa and his dynamic counterpart Swami Vivekananda. Maharishi appears to be critical of other religions, like Christianity and Islam. Besides, with these alien religions, he also feels unhappy with religious cults like vaishnavism, shaivism and shaktism etc. He frequently tries to find out some irrational practices in those religious cults. Then it is noteworthy that he is very critical of atheistic systems, like those of Charvaka. He particularly refutes and ridicules such approach of Charvaka which has undermined Vedas. According to Maharishi, Charvaka has misrepresented Vedic presentations and has found fault with them. Likewise he criticizes Buddha's doctrine of impermanence etc. He does not spare Jainism also from his attack. He specially refutes atheistic arguments advanced by Buddhism and Jainism.

So far as various cults of Hinduism are concerned, he finds faults like idolatry, various excesses, and exploitation of various kinds. We may quote here the following lines—'The idol worshippers and others of the orthodox cult say that the Vedas are endless; the Rig Veda has 21 shakhas (branches), the Yajur Veda 101, the Sama Veda 1,000 and the Atharva Veda 9; out of these only a few shakhas are met with now-a-days, the rest have been lost; the latter must have contained authorities for the practice of idol worship and pilgrimage to sacred places etc. Otherwise how could they have found their way into the puranas. Since the cause can be inferred by observing its effects, there can be no doubt in the truth of idol worship when it is taught by the puranas. We answer by saying that the branches of a tree, be they small or large, are always like (its trunk) and not unlike it; likewise when the shakhas, that are extant, do not sanction idol worship and pilgrimage to sacred places, such as rivers and the like practices, it is not possible that they were sanctioned by the lost shakhas.'¹⁸

Although he finds irrational elements and superstitions in vaishnavism and shaivism also, he seems to be more critical of the 'vam marga' of shaktism.

Instead of more detailed discussion in this context, it would suffice to observe here that he feels unhappy with post vedic developments of Hinduism and tries to interpret Hinduism in the light of Vedas and there also he favours a more rationalistic and puritan approach and naturally naturalistic polytheism such other allied beliefs do not find place in his interpretation of Hinduism. Then coming back to his polemic against Islam and Christianity, he tries to see elements of irrationality specially in their

mythological constructions. He feels unhappy with the account of creation which has been presented in the Bible. He vehemently deplores such provisions and rites which are not healthy socially and morally as they can be misused by simple and credulous men.

'Now look at this biblical god! He is so destitute of mercy that He did not take any pity even on children and the like. Were they all so wicked that He overthrew cities and buried them all underneath. Such a thing is opposed to justice, mercy and reason. Why should not they, whose God is guilty of such things, do likewise?'¹⁹

'Now (gentle reader!) look at the crooked doings of this Christian God! First he unjustly sided with Sarah (vide XXI.12) and had Haggar driven out of the house. Then it is Haggar that lifted up her voice and wept whilst it was the lad's voice that God heard. How wonderful! Is it not? Can such a being ever be God! Can such a thing ever be found in the Word of God? Excepting a few (ordinary) truths that could have been written by a man of ordinary intelligence the whole book abounds in absurdities.'²⁰

Then coming to Islam again, it is seen that he is not happy with various observations which are there in the Quoran. Really he has gone into minute details but it is neither necessary nor possible here to refer to all these points but it is proper to point out here that he sees unjustifiable and irrational beliefs in Quoran as well. To illustrate this point, we may quote his following points:

Had the God of Quoran been the Lord of all creatures, and been merciful and kind to all, He would never have commanded the Mohammedans to slaughter men of other faiths, and animals, etc. If He is Merciful, will He show mercy even to the sinners? If the answer be given in the affirmative, it cannot be true, because further on it is said in the Quoran 'Put infidels to sword', in other words, he that does not believe in the Quoran and the Prophet Mohammed is an infidel (he should therefore be put to death). (Since the Quoran sanctions such cruelty to non-Mohammedans and innocent creatures such as cows) it can never be word of God.²¹

VI

Before concluding our observations it may be stated here that he has added realistic and dynamic dimensions to the philosophy of Vedas. So

far as his ontological constructions are concerned, of course, logically it may be difficult to explain satisfactorily the relationship between different eternal realities posited by him, perhaps he tries to do justice both to the theistic approach of Vedanta as well as to the realistic approach which also finds some place in Vedas and Upanishads. His inconsistent compromise may be condoned in view of the fact that he was not a technical and academic philosopher but on this ground we should not undermine his creative approach and scholarship. Again his epistemological constructions also show his access to technical, philosophical understanding of various matters relating to truth and knowledge. Then, his contributions in the realm of ethics and social philosophy are also quite interesting and illuminating. He has tried to encourage rational approach based on moral ideals in various walks of life. We also see his sense of details in his treatment of various duties pertaining to various classes of people relating to different stages and stations in life. So far as his view relating to religion is concerned that is really a bit narrow and sectarian. He seems to suffer from undue bias and perhaps lacks holistic approach which is very much needed today. He seems to be unsympathetic to various religious practices, specially those of Islam and Christianity. It should be borne in the mind that mythology, symbology and ritualism have also got their relative importance. Maharishi Dayananda perhaps fails to appreciate these things. However, his important and interesting role in reforming and revitalizing Hinduism should not be ignored. D.S. Sharma has relevant observations in this context, 'The Arya Samaj is the Church militant in the Hindu fold. It is also a true expression of the militant personality of its founder. It has withstood persecution, as Dayananda withstood persecution during his lifetime. Its philosophy may be inadequate, its cry of 'Back to the Vedas' may do scant justice to the continuity of the Hindu spiritual tradition and its interpretation of the Vedas may be arbitrary, but there is no denying the fact that it has played and is playing a glorious part in the regeneration of Hinduism in modern times.'²²

Despite this, his contributions, as indicated earlier also should not be ignored. His rigidity and approach to different religions and sects should be understood as his reaction to undue and unwarranted missionary zeal and allied activities by some alien religious institutions. Perhaps his intense love and regard for vedic Hinduism might have inspired him to be unduly critical of not only Christianity and Islam but also of various sects of Hinduism which did not follow the pristine vedic approach. It has been

seen in this context earlier that he also expressed his disapproval with such religious practices which were popular among different ramifications of Hinduism. So his rigidity should be appreciated in the background of his over-enthusiastic adherence to vedic approach. But, it may be submitted here that this may not be regarded to be in tune with the dynamic and all-embracing character of Hinduism. However, his role and importance as a socio-religious reformer has to be acknowledged. Professor K. Satchidananda Murty has also given due place to his philosophical contributions and has also highlighted as to how he aimed at better society. He observes thus in this context, 'Swami Dayananda (1824-1833) developed a rational monotheism in harmony with the earlier vedic books (samhitas), which he considered to be revelation, and pleaded for a society based on reason, ethics and the veda. His Satyarthaprakas is a philosophic classic.'²³

Thus, Maharishi's contributions in various domains of philosophy need to be appreciated with an open mind, specially those pertaining to the applied side of his philosophy (moral and social philosophy).

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. D.M. Datta, *The Chief Currents of Contemporary Philosophy*, The University of Calcutta, III Edition, 1970, p. 572.
2. Pandit Chamupati, *The Arya Samaj, The Cultural Heritage of India*, Vol. IV, Edited by Haridas Bhattacharya, The Ramakrishna Mission, Institute of Culture, Calcutta, 1969, p. 634.
3. Lala Lajpat Rai, *A History of the Arya Samaj* (Orient Longman, Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai, New Delhi, 1967).
4. Maharishi Swami Dayanand Saraswati, *Satyartha Prakash* (Translated by C. Bharadwaja), Lahore, November 1906, p. 1.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 54.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 57.
7. *Ibid.*
8. Ved Prakash Gupta, *Dayanand-Darshan*, Prakashan Pratisthan, Subhash Bajar, Meerut, 1973, p. 237.
9. V. Brodov, *Indian Philosophy in Modern Times*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1984, p. 175.
10. *Satyartha Prakash*, p. 191.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 191.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 192.
13. *Op. cit.*, p. 61.
14. *Ibid.*, pp. 211-12.

15. Ibid., p. 233.
16. Ibid., p. 73.
17. Ibid., p. 85.
18. Ibid., p. 405.
19. Ibid., p. 568.
20. Ibid., p. 569.
21. Ibid., p. 613.
22. D.S. Sarma, *Hinduism Through the Ages*, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Mumbai, 1989, p. 101.
23. K. Satchidananda Murty, *Philosophy in India, Traditions, Teaching and Research*, Motilal Banarsidass, Indian Council of Philosophical Research, 1991, p. 98.

The Philosophy of Śaiva Siddhānta

S.N. KANDASWAMY

61, Fifth Street, Natarajapuram (South), Thanjavur 613 007

The philosophical system of the Tamils, based on the *Śaiva Āgamas*, *Upaniṣads*, *Tirumurais* and *Meykaṇṭa Śāstras*, is known as *Śaiva Siddhānta*. *Siddhānta* literally means the established conclusion, and in its extension of meaning it denotes any system of philosophy. *Śaiva Siddhānta* indicates the philosophy of those who worship Lord Śiva as the Supreme Being. This system of philosophy has been very popular in South India as evidenced from the great temples dedicated to Lord Śiva and the mine of source materials embedded in the Tamil language. It is a living system taking its origin in the Indus Valley Civilization.

As opposed to *Vedānta* (i.e. the conclusion of the *Vedas*), *Śaiva Siddhānta* is called *Āgamānta* (i.e. the conclusion of the *Āgamas*). The primary *Śaiva Āgamas* are twenty-eight in number. Early available references to the *Āgamas* are found in the *Śāntiparva* of *Mahabharata* and Badarayana's *Vedānta Sutra*.¹ A.P. Karmarkar is of the opinion that the *Āgamas* are older than the *Vedas*. Tirumantiram (AD 500) preserves the quintessence of the *Śaiva Āgamas* and it is the earliest extant Tamil treatise on *Śaiva Siddhānta*. The name 'Śaiva Siddhānta' occurs in this text for the first time. Tiruñāṇa Campantar (7th century AD) extols Lord Śiva as 'Ākamac Celvar' (the Rich One who revealed the *Āgamas*). He also mentions that the people of Kōkaraṇam (a place in Karnataka state in South India) professed the faith of *Śaiva Āgamas*. His contemporary, Saint Tirunāvukkaracar points out in one of his hymns that the Lord revealed the *Āgamas* to His consort beneath the *marutam* tree in the shrine at Tiruviṭaimarutūr. Cuntarar (8th century AD) praises the Lord as the 'Ancient One' who revealed the *Āgamas* to the celestials. He also refers in one of his last hymns to the chanting of Śivanāma by those who were well-versed in the *Āgamas*. In one of his inscriptions, Rajasimha Pallava (AD 691–729) is mentioned as 'ākamappiriyaṇ' (lover of *Āgamas*) and 'caiva cittāntattir pēraṇivu utaiyavaṇ' (one, who has immense knowledge in *Śaiva Siddhānta*). References to *Āgamas* are many in Tiruvācakam. In

this work, the author Mānikkavācakar (AD 800) mentions that the Lord revealed the *Āgamas* to His consort in the Mount Mahendra. He has also indicated the superiority of the *Āgamas* over the Vedas in the *Civapurāṇam*, the preface to *Tiruvācakam*. In the opening portion of this hymn, he says that the Lord Himself is the *Āgama* conferring the bliss on His votaries. In a subsequent passage of the same hymn, he declares that the Lord transcends the triple dimensions of height, breadth and depth untouched by the Vedas assuming the subtlest form. References to the *Āgamas* in the *Meykaṇṭa Śāstras* are many.

The *Śaiva Siddhānta* is mainly the outcome of *Āgamic* tradition. But, this does not mean that it rejects the Vedic tradition. The Vedas are held to be the general source for almost all the systems of Indian philosophy including *Śaiva Siddhānta*. The *Āgamas* form the special source for this system. Most of the *Āgamas* contain four portions dealing with *cariyā*, *kriyā*, *yoga* and *jñāna*. It is essential to note that the *Pinkalantai Nikaṇṭu* (AD 900), a metrical lexicon in Tamil, categorically states that *Āgama* means *jñāna*. From this, it may be understood that the *jñāna* portion of the *Āgamas* is very significant as it actually deals with the basic principles of *Śaiva Siddhānta*.

TAMIL SOURCES

Chronologically speaking the *Sangam classics* (500 BC to AD 300) are older than the *Tirumūrais* (AD 500 to 1200) and the *Meykaṇṭa Śāstras* (AD 1200–1400). They bear ample testimony to the spiritual supremacy of Lord Śiva. Some of the principles of *Śaiva Siddhānta* would be traceable in them. In the Buddhist Tamil epic, *Maṇimēkalai* (AD 450–500), there is a chapter that dealt with the various schools of Indian philosophy which were current during the period of its author, Cāttanār. Among them, the *Śaiva* system is also included. The exponent of this system is known as *Śaiva vādi* (one who debates or argues for the cause of Śaivism) and through him Cāttanār expressed some of the doctrines of *Śaiva Siddhānta*. It is interesting to note that Madhava (AD 1238) in his *Śarvadarśana Saṃgraha* presented the principles of *Śaiva Siddhānta* under the caption, 'Śaiva'arśana'.

The heyday of *Śaiva Siddhānta* is the period of the Imperial Colas. The temples, being the centre of arts and religion, were constructed in accordance with the prescriptions of the *Śaiva Āgamas*. *Nānāmīrutam* (12th

century AD), a classical text on *Śaiva Siddhānta* was written by Vākīca Muṇivar in the style of *Sangam* Tamil. Subsequently, two more works viz., *Tiruvuntiyār* and *Tirukkalīruppaṭiyār* were composed respectively by Uyyavantatēvar of Tiruviyalūr and of Tirukkaṭavūr. Then commences the renowned *Meykaṇṭar* school of *Śaiva Siddhānta*.

Meykaṇṭar (13th century AD) is highly esteemed to be the first systematic exponent of the *Siddhānta* philosophy. His immortal treatise *Civañānapōtam* and its metrical commentary *Civañāna Cittiyār* by his disciple Aruṇanticivam form of foundation bedrock upon which the edifice of the existing *Śaiva Siddhānta* is erected. Another great exponent Umāpaticivam (14th century AD), the disciple of Maraiñāna Campantar, nurtured the system by his contribution of eight works on the subject. Among them, *Civappirakācam* and *Tiruvaruṭpayan* are held in high esteem. *Civañāna Muṇivar* (AD 1800), the commentator of the *Siddhānta* canonical works, is respected to be the official interpreter of the system.

Śaiva Siddhānta accepted perception, inference and verbal testimony to be the valid sources of knowledge. However, soul's cit-śakti is treated to be the sole pramāṇa. Among the triple realities, viz., Pati, Paśu and Pāśa, let us first focus on Pati.

CONCEPT OF GOD [-PATI]

Vākīcamuṇivar, the author of *Nānāmīrutam* presents cosmological argument based on inference to prove the existence of God [57.1–3]. According to this argument, the aggregation of the gross elements commencing from earth and various objects like mountain that constitute the universe should have a creator, because these components are products without comparison. The example given to support the proposition is that of a pot. The syllogism of this argument requires some elucidation. A product is one which is subject to division and which undergoes changes. Each one of the contents of the phenomenal world is divisible and mutable. Since the products are inert and non-intelligent, they require an all-intelligent being for their division and changes characterized by production, existence and destruction. Since the intelligence of the souls is limited and they get the knowledge only after getting a body, they could not effect the changes and classification all by themselves. Any product for its inception requires the co-operation of three causes, viz., the material cause, the instrumental or auxiliary cause and the efficient cause as evidenced from

the empirical experience. For the production of a pot, clay is the material cause, the potter's wheel and other instruments are the auxiliary cause, while the potter is the efficient cause. The world is a product and its production also involves three causes. *Māyā*, the primordial matter is the material cause. Śiva's inseparable Śakti and the root *karma* of souls form the auxiliary cause, while Śiva Himself is the Efficient Cause. Śiva through the instrumentality of His Śakti causes the universe to emerge from *Māyā*.

According to *Śaiva Siddhānta*, God does not create the souls or the primordial matter which are eternal like Himself. Eternity does not mean equality. Just like the potter who cannot create clay but can effect only the pot, so also the Lord creates only the manifested world and not its primal core, i.e. *māyā* which is ever existing. In *Śaiva Siddhānta*, creation means the *kāraṇa rūpa* (i.e., the causal form of *māyā*) assuming the *kārya rūpa* (i.e. the effected form of *māyā*), while destruction means the *kārya rūpa* returning to its original state of *kāraṇa rūpa*. There is no complete destruction. *Kārya rūpa* is fleeting and ephemeral, while *kāraṇa rūpa* is a reality.

THE MEYKAṆṬĀR SCHOOL

The cosmological argument advanced by Vākīcamuṇivar is further developed in the *Meykaṇṭār* school, as noticed in *Civañāna pōtam* and *Civañāna cittiyār*. The first aphorism in *Civañāna pōtam* purports to prove the existence of God through analogical reasoning.

The world is inert and non-intelligent. It undergoes three operative functions viz., production, maintenance and destruction. Among the three, through the first two functions it assumes *Sthūlarūpa* (i.e. concrete, visible form), while through the last one, it resolves into its original *sūkṣmarūpa* (subtle, invisible form). Since the world is inert, it cannot dissolve into its causal form and also it cannot manifest again all by itself. So, the reality of the phenomenal world comes out of the ground of God whither it is resolved and whence it re-emerges. The reason for the dissolution is to give rest to the wearied souls and for the recreation is to enable them to exhaust their *āṇava*. The cosmic changes could be effected only by one who is changeless. From the seen world, the reality of its author, viz., the unseen God, is to be inferred [also vide, *Civañāna Cityyār*, 1.1-17].

GOD AS THE MATERIAL CAUSE

The material cause *māyā*, its product the world, and the ground of *māyā*, viz., Lord's Śakti are compared to the seed, its shoot and earth.² If the seed comes into contact with the moist earth, it becomes capable of manifesting a shoot. So also, if *māyā* reposing at the feet of the Lord receives the Divine Will of His Śakti, it becomes capable of manifesting the world. If there is no moisture in the earth, the seed could not germinate. Likewise, if there is no will of Lord's Śakti, then *māyā* could not evolve. The world is evolved from *māyā* with the will of Lord's Śakti which functions in accordance with the individual's *mala* to endow the concerned souls with the different types of psycho-physical organisms.

But some passages in the *Tirumuṟais* and *Āgamas* reveal that the world is emanated from God Himself. These portions are taken in a literal sense by some people who argue that God forms not only the efficient cause but also the material cause. Such misunderstanding would go against the same literature which describes Him to be immutable. Though the Lord transcends all the elements that constitute the universe, He is simultaneously immanent in them. His immanence should not be mistaken for material causality. Civañānamuṇivar, the able exponent of *Śaiva Siddhānta* submits an illustration to explain the figurative expressions in the texts. The lotus actually germinates from its root and not from the mud, though it gets the name *paṅkayam* [Pankaja] which really means that which is born of mud. Similarly, it is figuratively said that the world is proceeded from God who actually provided the ground for *māyā*. So, the material universe (i.e., non-intelligent principle) could not originate from the Intelligent Principle, viz., God.³

If God is held to be the material cause, the product (i.e., world) also should resemble Him in content and quality. Since there are many imperfections and defects in the world, they are also to be accounted from the material cause. Since God is conceived to be absolutely perfect, impeccable and immutable by nature, He could not be postulated to be the material cause which is subject to changes. The defects and diverse features are due to *āṇava* and *mūlakarma* of the souls.

However K. Sivaraman attempts to explain the material causality in order to reconcile the two views in the following passage of his dissertation.⁴

'The intelligent agent of the world is not as such the material cause of the world but only as related to the non-intelligent *māyā* ... It is efficient

cause which is also material cause by virtue of its being inseparably qualified by *māyā* ... Just as the hair and the nails, etc., are not born of the body alone (insentient) or the soul alone (sentient), so the universe is born not of *māyā* alone or Māheśvara alone, but of the Embodied Unity which is accordingly described as the “womb of all elements” and also the ‘Supreme Lord, the Mighty etc. ...’ His interpretation obviously confirms the sole causality of God.

NATURE OF GOD

Śaiva Siddhānta identifies the two-fold nature of God known as *Svarūpa-lakṣaṇa* (*Cirappu iyalpu*) and *Tatasthalakṣaṇa* (*Potuiyalpu*). *Svarūpa-lakṣaṇa* denotes His essential and intrinsic nature, while *Tatasthalakṣaṇa* refers to His general or accidental nature that arises due to His relation to the souls. God in His essential nature is static, immutable and immeasurable by the limits of time and space. He transcends all the sources of empirical knowledge. He has no name and form. Māṅikkavācakar refers to this nature of God in his *Tiruvācakam* [11.1; 7.10] as ‘*orunāmam ōruruvam onrum ilān*’, ‘*ētu avan ūr? ētu avan pēr?*’ etc. God is the Pure Being (*Sat*), the very source of all knowledge (*Cit*) and eternal bliss (*Ānanda*). The *Śaiva Āgamas* mention eight divine qualities to be His essential characteristics, as identified by Parimēlaḷakar, a staunch *Vaiṣṇavite* in his learned commentary on *Tirukkuraḷ*. They are the following:

Tamil	Sanskrit	English equivalent
1. Taṅvayattan ātal	Svatantra	Self-dependence
2. Tūyauṭampinaṅ ātal	Viśuddha deha	Immaculate body
3. Iyarkai uṇarvināṅ ātal	Anādhi bodham	Natural understanding
4. Muṇrum uṇartal	Sarvajñata	Omniscience
5. Iyalpākavē pācaṅkaḷiṅ niṅkutaḷ	Nirāmayam	Eternally free from bonds
6. Pēraruḷuṭaimai	Nityaluptaśaktitva	Infinite grace
7. Muṭivil āṅraḷ uṭaimai	Anantaśaktitva	Infinite potency
8. Varampil inṅpam uṭaimai	Nityatriptaka	Infinite bliss

Since the Lord is associated with these eight divine features, He is known as ‘*eṅkuṇattān*’; this term occurs in the ninth couplet of the first chapter in *Tirukkuraḷ* (i.e., *katavul vālttu*—The Praise of God) and hence one commentator ably attempted to isolate the eight qualities under reference

in the first eight couplets of the same chapter. Some considered that the third and the fourth qualities may be counted as one as well as the second and fifth as one. Thus the Lord is said to possess six divine characteristics and hence he is known as ‘*Pakavaṅ*’ [Bhagavan] which name occurs in *Śvetaśvatara Upaniṣad*, *Tirukkuraḷ* and *Tēvāram* to denote Lord Śiva. However, Māṅikkavācakar reminds one that the Lord’s auspicious qualities are innumerable [Tiruvācakam 2.3].

God in His essential nature is called as *Paraśivam* or *Svarūpaśivam*, and His inseparable energy is known as *Parāśakti*. Out of His boundless compassion towards the souls, He becomes dynamic through His will of Divine energy, assuming various forms and names for the benefit of the souls.

Svarūpa and *Tatastha* concept of God should not be equated respectively with the concept of *Nirguṇa Brahman* and *Saguṇa Brahman* of *Vedānta* philosophy. *Nirguṇa Brahman* is devoid of any quality or attribute and it is a mere abstraction. But *Svarūpaśiva* has countless divine qualities. *Saguṇa Brahman* of *Vedānta* has material qualities and it is only fictitious like a snake in rope, water in mirage, etc. But, *Tatasthaśiva* is a reality of the Absolute. However, in the Śaiva Tamil devotional literature, God is depicted as one who has no quality or symbol which means that He is devoid of material qualities and forms [vide *Tiruvācakam*, 6.46; 18.1; 22.4; 40.4; 41.6].

TRANSCENDENCE AND IMMANENCE

The spiritual experiences of the Tamil Śaiva saints as recorded in the devotional literature reveal the Lord’s transcendental as well as immanent features. Let us briefly present some of these features.⁵

The Lord abides everywhere without leaving any space. He is immanent in the five gross elements (viz., earth, water, fire, air and ether) and in the sun, moon and the souls (collectively known as *Aṣṭamūrta*). He is seated in the consciousness and also in the organs of knowledge. He is the soul of all souls. His immanence with the souls and matter is compared to the inseparable relationship of body and soul, word and its meaning, fragrance and flower, relish and the fruit, oil and sesamum, etc. He is the fire concealed in the wood; He is likewise the ghee in the milk and the brilliance in the great gem. If one churns in his consciousness with the stick of intense devotion entwined by the rope of knowledge, the immanent God becomes transparent to the devotee.⁶

The description of the immanent nature of Śiva by the Tamil devotional poets seems to be similar to that of the Upaniṣadic seers.⁷ A significant parallel is given below from the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad*.

'As oil in sesamum seeds, as butter in cream, as water in the dry bed of a stream, as fire in friction sticks, so is the Self (God) seized in ones own soul if one looks for Him with truthfulness and austerity.' 'The self which pervades all things as butter is contained in milk, which is the root of self-knowledge and austerity, that is the Brahman, the highest mystic doctrine. That is the highest mystic doctrine.'

GOD'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SOULS

Tēvāram and *Meykaṇṭasāstras* denote three kinds of relationship of the Lord with the souls.⁸ Accordingly, He is one with them (*onrāy*), different from them (*vērāy*) and along with them (*uṭānāy*). These are illustrated through some analogies.

1. The soul and the body

The Lord becomes one with the souls in actuating them to undergo the five-fold functions. To illustrate this sort of relationship the usual simile is that of the soul and body. Like the soul that animates the body, the Lord animates the soul. Though the soul and the body are one due to their combination, they are different in substance. So also the Lord and the soul are one due to their intimacy, but they are different categories. This sort of oneness is known as *Advaita* or *Ananya* (non-difference). The intimate and inseparable contact of two things which makes them appear to be one is recognized as *Advaita* (or *abheda*) in *Śaiva Siddhānta*. *Advaita* does not mean that God and soul are one as held in *Vedānta* philosophy of *Śaṅkara*.

2. The sunlight and the eyesight

Though the soul and the Lord are inseparably connected, they are not of the same content. Their difference is just like the sunlight and the eyesight. The eye cannot perceive things in its own right. It requires the help of an external power, viz., the sunlight. The souls are like the eyes, while the Lord can be likened to the sun. This analogy proclaims the concept of *bheda*.

3. The finite-consciousness and the eyesight

The third comparison to explain the Lord's relationship with the souls is that of the finite consciousness and the eyesight. In the former illustration,

the eyesight requires external light for its perception. Here, it is in need of inner-light known as *ātman's cit-śakti* (i.e. the soul's finite consciousness). It is purely internal and pervades the eyesight in illuminating the objects. Like the soul's consciousness to the eye, the Lord's consciousness-force stands to the soul. He is the life of the souls. Here, in this relation, He is one with the soul and at the same time different from it. Hence, this relationship is known as *bhedābheda*.

Thus, *Śaiva Siddhānta* propounds three kinds of relationship of God with soul, viz., 1. *abheda* like body and soul, 2. *bheda* like the sunlight and eyesight, and 3. *bhedābheda* like the finite consciousness and eyesight. But other theistic schools prefer only one among the three and adduce different illustrations to maintain their viewpoints. The *Kevāladvaita* of *Śaṅkara* interprets the word *advaita* to mean one reality, and that is why it is known as monism. This school treats God and soul as the different modes of the same stuff like the gold and its ornament. The *Dvaita* of *Mādhva* advocates dualism considering that the word *advaita* means more than one reality. According to this school, God and soul are completely different categories like light and darkness. The *Pāñcarātras*, a sect of *Vaiṣṇavism* propounds the concept of *bhedābheda* taking the two like word and its sense. All these ideas are presented here according to the commentary of *Civañānapōtam*. It seems that *Śaiva Siddhānta* did not agree with these views. Its concept of *advaita* is known as *Śuddhādvaita*, i.e. pure *advaita* as explained through the three analogies cited earlier.

CONCEPT OF SOUL

Now, let us pass on to present the seven arguments of *Meykaṇṭar* to establish the existence of soul.⁹ These arguments are being advanced in such a way as to refute the views of opposite schools. This could be possible only after a careful survey and scrutiny of other systems. Let us present them serially.

1. The Śūnya is Soul

According to the *Śūnyavadins* (*Mādhyamika* Buddhists and also *Vedāntins*), the souls is nothing but void (*Śūnya*). They indicate the various parts of the body and decide that none of these can be taken to be soul. Apart from the physical organs, there is nothing visible to be known as souls, and hence the soul is a mere void.

The Śaiva Siddhānta examines this statement and argues that after eliminating from the body whatever could not be treated as soul, there remains something which could not be identified with the body. This something which informs that this is not the soul etc., should be the intelligent entity known as soul. Reminding one of the celebrated argument of Descartes, the eminent exponent of Śaiva Siddhānta, V.A. Devasenapathi clearly points out, 'I doubt therefore I exist' and further continues that one can not doubt ones existence and not exist at all and one exists at least in the act of doubting.¹⁰

The intelligence that informs that neither the physical nor the psychological aspects of a sentient being are soul, is grounded in the soul. If that informing agent is also taken for Śūnya, then it is just saying ones mother is barren.

2. *The body is soul*

According to one branch of Indian materialists (Cārvākas), apart from the physical body, there is nothing worth mentioning as soul. They viewed that the body itself cognizes objects. Though the sense organs in the body are inert, due to their combination intelligence emerges, just like the red colour resulting out of the combination of areca nuts, betel leaves and lime.

For this, the Śaiva Siddhāntin puts forth his rejoinder that red colour is impossible in the absence of an intelligent being to combine and chew the three things. So also, the mere combination of various limbs in a body does not give rise to intelligence which is possible only if there is some underlying reality.

Further the materialists insist that in the statements like 'I am fat', 'I am thin', etc., the physical body is referred to as ones soul. But according to Śaiva Siddhānta, fatness and thinness being the features of the body are figuratively ascribed to the soul. Just like saying 'my wife, my house', etc., one says my hand, my leg, etc. In such statements, the possessor is different from the possession. The body is the possession and the possessor should be one, other than the body. Since there is no such usage as 'I am my body', etc., the soul should be different from body.

If the physical body itself can cognize, a dead body which is not deficient in any member of the body must be able to cognize. So, there should be some intelligent principle different from body responsible for cognition.

3. *The sense-organs constitute soul*

Another group of Cārvākas considered that the sense organs constituted soul. In their opinion the five sense organs, viz., ear, skin, eye, mouth and nose cognize their respective objects, viz., sound, touch, light, taste and smell, and hence they are not inert. Further such usages as 'I saw', 'I heard', etc., are many. So, 'I' is to be equated with the sense organs which constituted the soul.

The rejoinder to this view follows thus: One sense organ can cognize only one object, i.e., the ear can hear and can not do the functions of other sense organs. A single sense organ can not cognize all kinds of objects, and its faculty is limited to a particular object. In statements like, 'I cognize the sound, light, touch, taste and smell', there are five experiences of cognition. There should be an experient who, with the aid of the sense-instruments, receives these manifold experiences and their results. That experient is the soul. Since the soul is enveloped by the root-evil āṇava, it could not cognize all the things at once. The evolved souls in whom the grip of āṇava is cast away attain pervasion to have a correct and clear vision of all things.

4. *The internal organs (i.e. antaḥkaraṇa) or the subtle body should be the soul*

Another school considered that the internal organs or the subtle body should be taken for soul. But this view is seriously criticized. During the dreaming state, the subtle body (Śukṣma Śarīra) serves as an instrument to the soul to have dream cognition. But in the waking state, the same subtle body does not cognize the same dream experience. If the subtle body cognizes the same dream experience even in the waking state, there is no delusion or confusion in its awareness.

But the soul does not remain in the same condition. Withdrawal from and return to both internal and external sense organs is a peculiar feature only to the soul and not to the subtle body. Because of this difference, the soul in its waking state recalls its dream experience mingled with some delusion or confusion due to its association with some elements which did not function during the dreaming state. So there should be something which is different from the internal organs, even as it stands apart from the external organs. According to Śaiva Siddhānta, both the internal and external organs are but products of matter, the former being fine and subtle, while the latter being gross and concrete, and hence to be held as

inert and so the intelligent reality known as soul is essential to experience the different kinds of cognition.

The internal organs, viz., consciousness, intellect, ego and mind, being the instruments in the process of cognition, are very intimately associated with the souls, making the impression that they themselves form the soul. They are to the souls what the ministers are to a king. They serve the soul just like the lamp helping the eyesight. On the attainment of the supreme knowledge of oneself and the Lord, it becomes evident that the internal organs are only instruments and not agents.

5. Vital air is soul

Some thinkers contended that the vital air (prāṇa) which is present throughout life cognizes through the sense organs. In the dead body the absence of this prāṇa is observed. So it should be taken as soul.

The refutation to this view runs thus: since the vital air is inert and material, it could not cognize. If it is capable of cognition, though it is present during sleep, the crawling of reptiles on the body, the entry of thieves in the house etc., are not cognized. It is obvious that the vital air does not have control over the sense organs, because it is inert and insentient. There should be some intelligent entity which even during the time of sleep causes the respiration of the vital air, reposes itself withdrawing from the contact of all organs both internal and external. And if that entity returns to its wakeful state, the organs commence to function.

6. Aggregate of organs constitutes the soul

According to the Buddhists, the five skandhas representing the psychic and physical aspects constitute the soul. The psychic aspects, viz., Vijñāna skandha (the aggregate of consciousness), Saṁskāra skandha (the aggregate of innate impressions), Vedanā skandha (the aggregate of feelings) and Samjñā skandha (the conceptual aggregates) are collectively known as nāma skandha, while rūpa-skandha (aggregate of physical aspects) represents the outer personality of a sentient being.

Since a sentient being is made up of these five skandhas, that being is known as *nāmarūpa*. Apart from the aggregate of five skandhas, there is no enduring entity known as soul. Just as the collection of trees, shrubs, plants etc., is taken to be forest, so also the collection of skandha is to be considered as soul.

This sort of explanation is not agreeable to Śaiva Siddhānta. It is fallacious to consider either each one of the physical or psychological organs or their collection to be the soul which is entirely and essentially different from them and which directs them to functioning. Since all the skandhas are products of matter, there should be some intelligent reality to reside in them.

7. Jīva is Brahman

The Vedāntin upheld that jīva is nothing but Brahman. In the empirical level what appears as jīva (individual soul) remains as Brahman (Absolute soul) in the transcendental level.

Though jīva, i.e. Paśu and Brahman belong to the same category of intelligent entities, there is a difference in the nature of their intelligence. Brahman knows everything by itself. It is the very essence of infinite pure consciousness, and hence it never forgets. But though the Jīva is capable to know, will and do, in its kevala stage (i.e. pre-creation stage) it is in utter darkness due to the conjunction of āṇava. In this stage it does not know itself. It behaves like an *asat* or inorganic object. In the state of *sakala* (i.e. the embodied condition) it depends on the sense organs being the products of māyā for its cognition. It forgets and misunderstands. The knowledge derived through the material organs is only *Pāśajñāna* or knowledge of matter. Knowing the self to be other than the internal organs is called *Paśujñāna* which is pre-requisite to *Patijñāna* which descends on the soul during the state of release (i.e. Śuddhāvasthā or *mukti nilai*) and this divine knowledge is the total illumination and enlightenment for eternal enjoyment.

So, the equation of Jīva with Brahman is misleading. It is essential to note that while refuting the opposite views, the nature of soul is also indicated.

THE CLASSIFICATION OF SOULS

In Śaiva Siddhānta, the innumerable souls are classified into three categories on the basis of the number of *malas* associated with them. Those souls which have only one *mala* (i.e. āṇava) are known as *Vijñānakalas* in whom the impure karma and impure māyā are absent, and those with two *malas* (i.e. āṇava and karma) are *Praḷayākalas* in whom the *prakṛtimāyā* is absent, and all others having all the three *malas* (i.e. āṇava, karma and māyā) are classified as *Sakalas*.

There is a difference between the souls of Vijñānakala and those in the kevala state (i.e. the pre-creation state). Though they are supposed to possess only one *mala*, i.e. āṇava, the intensity of āṇava is lesser in the former who are highly evolved souls, while in the case of the latter, they are in dormancy, utterly obscured by āṇava. It is further to be inferred that there are two types of Vijñānakalas and Praḷayākalas, one type are natural and another type are formed by promotion from the sakalas.

THE CONCEPT OF PRAKṚTI OR MĀYĀ

The next reality is Prakṛti Māyā, or primordial matter. It is classified in Śaiva Siddhānta as one among the three *malas* known as *pāśa*, the other two being *āṇava* and *karma*. All these three bind the soul and hence the name *paśu*, to denote the soul. Prakṛti is usually known as Māyā in Śaiva Siddhānta. It is not a principle of illusion and ignorance as understood in Vedānta but, on the contrary, it is instrumental for illumination of the souls. The unique feature of Śaiva Siddhānta remains in the classification of Māyā into three types, viz., *Śuddhamāyā* (pure matter), *Miśramāyā* (the mixed matter) and *Prakṛtimāyā* (impure matter), in consonance with the threefold classification of souls. Śaiva Siddhānta considers that the Prakṛti and its products are solely meant for the souls endowed with triple *malas* (i.e. sakalas). The present world in which we live is the direct outcome of Prakṛtimāyā. Since Sāṃkhya did not think of souls of Vijñānakala and Praḷayākala types, it did not attempt to postulate two more types of māyā to provide the required accessories to them. Further, Prakṛti in Sāṃkhya is not created; it is eternal and the uncaused cause containing triple *guṇas*. It is the matrix of the manifested world. In Śaiva Siddhānta, the Prakṛti of the Sāṃkhya type is a product from the still further principle *kalā* which in turn is a subtle product from Miśramāyā.

Satkaryāvāda is common to Sāṃkhya and Śaiva Siddhānta. Out of nothing, nothing is produced. All effects are produced out of something possessing the same features implicitly. Though this concept of Satkaryāvāda is admitted in the two systems, there lies the striking difference. According to Sāṃkhya, the mere presence of the inactive Puruṣa enables Prakṛti to evolve, just like a filament of iron is attracted by a magnet. But, Śaiva Siddhānta points out that since Prakṛti is inert and non-intelligent, the involvement of an all-powerful intelligent agency is a must for evolution. In Sāṃkhya, the material cause alone is established.

But Śaiva Siddhānta is rational in anticipating the requirements of an efficient cause and instrumental causes for the evolution of the universe. From the empirical point of view, anything for its production requires three causes, viz., the material, the auxiliary or instrumental and the efficient causes. In the example of a chair, the wood is the material cause and tools the instrumental cause. If there were no intelligent being or efficient cause in the form of a carpenter, how can the chair be produced or evolved?

In the absence of any one of these three causes, the product is impossible. Though all the three causes are present, there should be the will to produce on the part of the carpenter. In explaining the evolution of the universe, Śaiva Siddhānta accepts Prakṛti to be the material cause and the Lord as the efficient cause and his inseparable Energy (Śakti) and the mūlakarma of the souls as the auxiliary causes.

DESCRIPTION OF MĀYĀ

A detailed description of the māyā tattva is found in Civajñāna Cittiyār (Cupakkam, 2.3.3): Māyā is eternal; formless, one (single entity), seed of all the universe, non-intelligent, ubiquitous, assumptive potency [Parigraha Śakti] to the Lord and the material cause to the world of enjoyment, sense-organs, body, etc. of the souls. It is also personified as the mother-principle (i.e. māyāl). It is one of the triple *malas*. Usually it will illumine the soul's intelligence, concealed by āṇava and at times it will delude or confuse it. In the latter aspect, it resembles the Māyā of Vedānta.

ĀṆAVA AND AHAMKĀRA

The omission of āṇava mala in other systems of Indian philosophy may be due to the acceptance of the concept of ahamkāra. In the common language of the Tamils, the two words are indiscriminately used as if they were synonyms. The difference is to be noted. Āṇava is not a product, it is an eternal evil attached to the soul. Ahamkāra is a product of Buddhittattva. Soul exhausts the potency of its āṇava through the internal organ ahamkāra. So, in the philosophical language of Śaiva Siddhānta, the two are treated separately. However, at the state of release, āṇava becomes powerless, like the fried gram.

THE TOTALITY OF TATTVAS

According to Sāṃkhya, there are 25 tattvas, viz., Puruṣa, Prakṛti and the 23 evolutes, i.e. Buddhi, Ahaṃkāra, Manas plus five sense organs, five motor organs, five subtle elements and five gross elements. Leaving puruṣa, the remaining 24 tattvas are admitted to be ātma tattvas in Śaiva Siddhānta. Since these tattvas are created and controlled by Srikaṇṭha-rudra, the chief of the Ātmas (sakalas), they are so named. Civañāṇa Muṇivar recorded in his elaborate commentary on Civañāṇapōtam three ways of counting the 24 tattvas and the difference is found only in identifying the internal organs.¹¹

According to one school, the first four are: 1. Guṇa tattva, 2. Buddhi tattva, 3. Ahaṃkāra tattva, and 4. Manas tattva. This school did not count *cittam* as a separate principle. Perhaps they included it with *manas*. According to another school, *cittam*, *buddhi*, *ahaṃkāra* and *manas* (mind) are the first four tattvas. This school considered that guṇa tattva was the explicit form of prakṛti, and hence there is no need to count it individually. This view is also found in the Sāṃkhya system. The third school counted Prakṛti, Buddhi, Ahaṃkāra and Manas. With regard to these basic 24 principles, the Sāṃkhya and Śaiva Siddhānta go hand in hand.

ADDITIONAL TATTVAS

Miśra Tattvas-7

From Miśramāyā, *Kāla* tattva is evolved. It is the time principle. Next, *Niyati* is produced. It allocates the deserts to the respective agents. *Kalā*, *Vidyā* and *Rāga*, being the cosmic energies, are emanated in order to arouse the *kriyā*, *jñānā* and *icchā śaktis* of soul. In association with these five tattvas, viz., *kālā*, *niyati*, *kalā*, *vidyā* and *rāga*, the soul gets the epithet *Puruṣa*, which is different from that of Sāṃkhya. *Puruṣa* is also counted one of the tattvas. From *Kalā*, *Prakṛtimāyā* is evolved.

Śuddha Tattvas-5

From Śuddhamāyā, Śivam [Nadam], Śakti [Bindu], Sadāśiva, Īsvara and Śuddha Vidyā are evolved. Since these five modifications are directly affected by Śiva and also they form the substrate for His cosmic functions, they are also called Śiva Tattvas.

All in all there are 36 tattvas. Also there are 60 tāttvikas through secondary evolution. So, 96 principles are noted in Śaiva Siddhānta.

THE DOCTRINE OF KARMA

The doctrine of karma belongs to the national stock of Indian philosophy. It is advocated also in Śaiva Siddhānta. Nobody can escape the consequences of ones own deeds. The involvement of Sūkṣmaśarīra (subtle body) consisting of the internal organs and the five subtle essences in the transformation of the souls in accordance with the results of karma is a common feature in Sāṃkhya and Śaiva Siddhānta. But there is a notable difference. Sāṃkhya attributes all actions to the psychical aspects especially the Buddhi tattva and not the Puruṣa. The self is neither an agent nor an experient. But due to its immediate presence with the matter, it seems to suffer or enjoy. Actually the joy or sorrow belongs to the matter (i.e. the psychical aspect). Sāṃkhya recognizes three kinds of suffering due to evil deeds, viz.

1. *ādhyātmika*—the physical pains due to disease and agitation.
2. *ādhibhautika*—the pains afflicted by the external world.
3. *ādhidāivika*—the pains caused by supernatural agencies.

These three kinds of pain are due to the *prārabdha karma* according to Śaiva Siddhānta.

Śaiva Siddhānta classified all karmas into three groups. From the stored up karmas, what we experience in the present life is called *Prārabdha*. The remaining store is *Sañcitakarma*. While experiencing the *prārabdha*, one indulges in fresh karmas known as *āgami*. According to V.A. Devasenapathi,¹² *metempsychosis* is not approved in the system. Depending on ones own deserts, the soul takes any kind of birth in its long journey known as transmigration. Saint Māṅikavāsakar clearly pointed out the different types of births that he underwent due to karma, and finally he pronounced about the termination of his transmigration on having the glimpse of Lord's golden feet of grace [Tiruvācakam I 26-32].

MEANS OF LIBERATION

In Śaiva Siddhānta, the soul is the agent and experient of the actions and their consequences. If the soul is dumb and inactive there is no difference between matter and itself. The purpose of evolution is not clearly justified in Sāṃkhya. In Śaiva Siddhānta, the concept of *āṇava* is introduced to account for the creation of the world. *Āṇava* is to the soul what verdigris is to copper. It is a wonder that this idea of Śaiva Siddhānta occurs in

Dhammapada [239], a part of Suttapiṭaka. Āṇava is characterized as darkness, producing delusion, desire, dejection and desolation. The lord out of his intrinsic nature of immense compassion creates the universe from Māyā to provide the souls with the necessary equipment so that they could engage to various activities due to the impulse of āṇava, until its potency is completely exhausted. Āṇava is utter darkness while God is total brilliance and hence the real antidote to āṇava is God.

Śaiva Siddhānta being a theistic philosophy emphasizes that services and worship (the paths of *cariyai* and *kiriyai*) are the preliminaries to attain salvation. Service to Devotees is stressed by Saint Cuntarar (8th century AD) to be the powerful means to secure the grace of God. *Yoga* (meditation) is the next *sādhana*. These three means are only steps to attain *jñāna* (i.e. the divine knowledge, *patijñāna*). By the constant practice of the *sādhana*s, the souls gets the balanced outlook and then it is neither annoyed nor elated in adversity or prosperity. While the soul is thus marching towards perfection, the Lord in the form of preceptor appears before him and instructs the nature of the triple realities, viz., *pati*, *paśu* and *pāśa* and illumines the soul, ultimately to release the soul from the meshes of karmic world and to enjoy eternal bliss.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. *The Religions of India*, New Delhi, 1951, p. 276.
2. *Civañāṇapōtam Cīrururai*, Kazhagam Edition, Chennai, 1981, pp. 15–16.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 16, Civananacittiyar 1.2.48.
4. *Śaivism in Philosophical Perspective*, New Delhi, 1973, pp. 112–15.
5. *Tiruvācakam*, 3.116–17; 15.5; 33.5; 34.4; 1.69; 2.2; 22.4.
6. *Tēvāram*, 5.90.10.
7. *Śvetāśvatavra Upaniṣad* 1.15.16, Radhakrishnan Translation.
8. *Tēvāram* 1.11.2; *Civañāṇapōtam* 2.1; *Civañāṇa Cittiyār* 2.1; *Tirukkalīrurupattiyār* 86.
9. *Civañāṇapōta Cīrururai*, pp. 40–54.
10. *Śaiva Siddhānta*, Chennai, 1974, p. 195.
11. *Māpāṭiyam*, Kazhagam Edition, pp. 199–206.
12. *Śaiva Siddhānta*, pp. 179–80.

Mokṣa, Theistic Vedānta and Viśuddhādvaita Darśana

BIJAYANANDA KAR

UGC Emeritus Fellow (in Philosophy), Ravenshaw College (Autonomous),
Cuttack 753 003

Mokṣa/mukti occupies a prominent position in the theistic Vedānta. It is regarded as the summum bonum (*niḥśreyas*) and the highest goal (*parama puruṣārtha*). There is, however, difference of views expressed by the theistic Vedāntins with regard to the nature of the good or the goal and also about the means of attaining it. Traditionally one comes across such major formulations as Viśiṣṭādvaita, Śuddhādvaita, Dvaita and Dvaitādvaita. Śrī Caitanya's point of view is also given a dārśanic shape under the expression: Acintya Bhedābheda by his follower, Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa while commenting on *Brahmasūtra* (*Govindabhāṣya*). Though they all agree for a theistic interpretation of Brahman, their accounts are found to be strikingly different. Even if they concede for bhakti (devotion) as the sole means for the realization of Brahman, the interpretation of bhakti and also the account of mukti are found to be conspicuously different amongst them.

According to the Viśiṣṭādvaitins, mokṣa does neither mean the disappearance of jīva nor the full non-difference or identity between jīva and Brahman. Mokṣa signifies the 'other' (Brahman) to whom jīva is to surrender.¹ Jīva remains distinct from Brahman in the sense its individuality persists; only the egoity is destroyed. It is the disembodied individuality that is considered as eternal (i.e., *sat*) and the embodied individuality is non-eternal (i.e., *asat*). Hence, according to this position, there is no jīvan-mukti. Jīva, attaining mokṣa, is in its own state, i.e., the pure spirit, and is similar to Brahman except that it is not able to create, sustain and destroy the world. It is through the integration of karma and jñāna, there is the dawn of highest bhakti in which the jīva is to move for absolute surrender to Brahman that is no other than the theistic Lord: Nārāyaṇa/Vāsudeva.

While the Viśiṣṭādvaitins are qualified non-dualists, the Vallabhāites claim themselves as Śuddhādvaitins or pure non-dualists. They disapprove of Śāṅkara's Advaita because of its acceptance of māyā.² Brahman,

according to Vallabha, is identified as Kṛṣṇa (the theistic Lord). Mukti is possible due to jñāna which is nothing but pure bhakti or loving devotion to the Lord and on the basis of which the jīva attains the grace of the Lord. The Vallabhāites introduce a distinction between jagat and saṁsāra. They hold that on the attainment of jñāna, jagat does not become non-existent; only saṁsāra is ceased as that is due to avidyā or ignorance. Jagat is real, only the baddha jīva (bound soul) experiences it mistakenly. It is the mistaken view that gives rise to the saṁsāric diversity and the world as Brahman (Brahmātmaka) is not realized. It means that avidyā is only psychological and is confined to jīva, having no cosmic trace in it. In other words, saṁsāra is mental projection while jagat is not. It is only prema or love to the Lord which is the means for the attainment of mukti. It is interesting to note that Vallabha is opposed to self-mortification. Body is not looked down upon as it is the case with the Viśiṣṭādvaitins. According to him, the mukta performs action. That means there is some scope for jīvan-mukti. But notwithstanding, it is insisted that the highest goal is not mukti but the śāśvata sevā (eternal service) of Kṛṣṇa in the celestial plane of Vṛndāvana.³ This point obviously has a leaning for transmudane existence as the ideal one.

While both Rāmānuja and Vallabha are Advaitins, adding the theistic character to the absolute monistic Brahman, Nimbārka propagates the reality of both difference and non-difference (bhedābheda) and opts for Dvaitādvaita, i.e., admitting non-duality as well as duality. Bheda does not signify, according to him, absolute distinctiveness but dependent existence (paratantra-sattābhāvaḥ) and abheda means non-being of independent existence (svatantra sattābhāvaḥ). Brahman is, according to him, identified as Kṛṣṇa, Rādhā being His consort. The individual jīva is His part in the sense it is His power (amśo hi śaktirūpo grāhyaḥ). Mukti is possible not on account of upāsana (meditation) but is due to loving devotion which, it is believed, arouses Lord's grace to him.

The jīva is essentially knowledge as such (jñāna svarūpa), atomic in size and many in number. Though the jīva is eternal, it suffers from birth and death due to its embodiment which again is due to ignorance and action.⁴ This shows that release, to Nimbārka, is not possible so long as the jīva is embodied and mukti is held to be transcendental to the empiric embodied state of existence.

It is notable that while Rāmānuja, Vallabha and Nimbārka have accepted Advaita in adding different conditions (Viśiṣṭa, Śuddha and Dvaita),

there is a radical departure advanced in Mādhva Vedānta which presents pure Dvaitavāda (dualism) having no inclusion of Advaita in its fold. Jīva is viewed as substantively different from Brahman. The mukta jīva is not Brahman, not similar to Him, but very much inferior to Him.⁵ The most qualified jīvas (sāyujya mukta), being liberated, are said to have entered into the body of the Lord (Brahman, i.e., Viṣṇu) and thus enjoy partial bliss (Brahmaprakāra). It is interesting to note here that mukti is not open for all. Some jīvas like demons, ghosts etc. are fully debarred from release and are eternally doomed. This view of mukti advances a discriminatory approach. Mukti is not due to ones effort or merit but due to the Lord's grace. Absolute release and embodied life are not compatible. Release is not there so long as one is embodied. Release is said to be thus full restoration of the pure spiritual existence (svarūpeṇa vyvasthitiḥ). That means, mukti is interpreted in this set up in a total transempirical frame.

Nimbārka's doctrine of Bhedābheda has been supplemented by the qualification, i.e., acintya (incomprehensibility) by Caitanya and his followers. Acintyabheda admits the incomprehensible integration between duality and non-duality or difference and non-difference. There is no attempt made to give a rational account for such integration and here absolute submission to sheer faith or transcendence to reason becomes the sole guiding factor. To this view, Brahman is Śrīkṛṣṇa who is held to be satcidānanda svarūpa. Mukti consists in the eternal enjoyment of the blissful love for Śrīkṛṣṇa in His nityavṛndāvanadhāma. This clearly reveals that for this point of view, mukti is clearly spiritual, transempirical and transmudane.

As we notice here, the Advaitic point of view as such is not thought to have any scope for theistic approach. If Brahman is viewed as purely nirākāra, nirguṇa and niṣprapañca then it can never cater to the expectations of theism. That is why personal Lord or Īśvara is held to be the product of māyā (māyā prasūta) according to Advaita. In order to accommodate the popular demand at the mass level, perhaps, there has been the introduction of two standpoints, viz., pāramārthika and vyāvahārika drṣṭi. It is said that only from the vyāvahārika or phenomenal standpoint, the nirguṇa Brahman is regarded to be saguṇa and there is thus the sanction for pūjā (worship). But, since this logically involves duality between the worshipper and the object of worship, the Advaita point of view treats this to be the preliminary step and never the final means. For, according to the Advaitic point of view, any sort of duality, distinction or discrimination

cannot be ultimately real and thus the highest goal to be attained is the realization of abhedā, advaita Brahman as such.

It is obvious that such a point of view is not found suitable for theism where there is the urge for total submission of oneself (ātma samarpaṇa) before the Lord (Bibhu) to seek His grace (prasāda). On account of this, qualifications are added to the concept of Advaita by some other theistic Vedāntins. Brahman cannot be, it is held, nirguṇa. It is saguṇa and sākāra. Otherwise the emotional urge of the true bhakta to have the parama sānnidhya (supernormal contact) in whatever form is not possible. Brahman, thus, is held as Nārāyaṇa, Vāsudeva, Viṣṇu, Kṛṣṇa and so on.

The avatāra conception is also entertained in this context to satisfy the theistic demand. The Lord, though in Himself is all pervasive (sarvabhūta), (He) lovingly chooses to take different forms at different times and thereby He rewards the nobles and punishes the ignobles (vide *Bh. Gītā*). So, in this framework, the nirguṇatva (nonqualitative) is replaced by some form of saguṇatva (qualitative).

But, it seems, any qualification that is attributed to the concept of Advaita turns out to be quite unfair to the very essence of Advaita. For, Advaita in any form cannot consistently accommodate within its fold any sort of quality or attribute. So it was felt necessary in certain circles to have a relook at the philosophical foundation of Advaita itself. True, except Madhva's Dvaitavāda, the other Vedāntic exponents (as referred to here) have not made departure from the general texture of Advaita. Only they have added some further qualifications. Even Nimbārka and Caitanya do not completely set aside Advaita but have tried to synthesize it with Dvaita either seeking some rational justification (Dvaitādvaita) or openly maintaining the position as not a matter of logical comprehension but as sheer faith. But, as already hinted before, such a step has not been found to be convincing to the Advaitic mind. Advaitin cannot, truly speaking, make any compromise with duality.

Further there is another issue which has been often raised in the Vedāntic circle about the emphasis on the concept of māyā within the Advaitic fold. It is true that the reference to māyā is traceable in the Vedāntic sources. But, the way in which it was introduced and emphasized by Śaṅkara in his rendering of Vedānta was not found to be appealing to both the non-Advaita Vedāntins and also to the other Advaita Vedāntins. It is well known that the prominent theistic Vedāntin: Vijñāna Bhikṣu has castigated Śaṅkara as praccana Bauddha (crypto Buddhist). Rāmānuja and his

followers like Venkatanātha have vehemently criticized the concept of māyā. Even Vallabhācārya who proclaims himself as Śuddhādvaitin has not hesitated to be critical about māyā. For him, it was not difficult to be Advaitin without the acceptance of māyā. Because to him, Brahman is not nirguṇa but saguṇa and being Kṛṣṇa himself. This has been done to accommodate the spirit of theism within the fold of Advaita. There has been an attempt to reconcile Śaivism with Vaiṣṇavism.

But, it is also felt in certain circles that once Vaiṣṇavism is entertained in some form, then the essence of Advaita is definitely affected. It is notable that Śaṅkara has cautiously avoided any inclusion of theistic temper so far as nirguṇa Brahman is concerned. He accommodates niddhidhyāśana/upāśanā. Of course, in order to cope with the popular sentiment, there is the introduction of vyavahāra. But from the standpoint of paramārtha, Brahman is nirguṇa, and it is not identical with Īśvara in any form. The logical consequence of this point of view is that Īśvara, as the creator of the world, is not admissible in Advaita.⁶

This, in short, is the tradition of different Vedānta formulations down the ages. All these important views have been traditionally established and all of them either in full or in part have advanced commentaries on prasthāna trayee. In modern times, one notices a neo-Vedānta movement initiated by Vivekananda and that is also identified as practical Vedānta. Sri Aurobindo's Integral Advaita (Purnādvaita) is another distinct formulation where the ultimate reality is viewed as spirit-matter complex and thereby this philosophy advocates the redundancy of the principle of māyā within the fold of Advaita.

As distinct from these formulations, there has been attempt to offer another interpretation of Advaita which accommodates theism without Vaiṣṇavism in any form and keeping the Advaita point of view intact without the inclusion of the principle of māyā. That is Viśuddhādvaitavāda held by another distinct cult of the nineteenth century: Mahimā⁷ dharma (which is at present alive with a large number of followers).

The original exponent of this Cult is Mahimā Svāmī/Dhuliā Bābā who revealed himself at Puri in 1826 and passed away in 1876 at Joranda (Dt. Dhenkanal) where the main Centre of Mahimā dharma remains active. His devotee: Bhīma Bhoi (a kandra of tribal origin) composed a number of devotional poems and songs, easily accessible to the illiterate mass because of their simplicity and sentimental appeal. Later on it was Biswanatha Baba who, in his profuse writings, advanced, for the first

time, a theoretical foundation of Mahimā dharma by placing it within the Vedāntic tradition and claiming it to be Viśuddhādvaita darśana.⁸

According to him, Advaita admits only nirguṇa Brahman. It has no guṇa (attribute), no nāma (name), no rūpa (form), no ākāra (shape). It is śūnya (devoid) of any description and that is why no vigraha/pratimā (image/idol) can be worshipped as the symbol of Brahman according to him. There is, therefore, no pūja in this cult; though there is the admittance of upāsana of Alekha Param Brahman (i.e., pure non-dual—viśuddha Advaita).

It is advanced that though Brahman is essentially nirguṇa and nirākāra, yet He, out of His own will, reveals Himself as avatāra to spread Viśuddhādvaitic darśana among the ignorant mass out of His own greatness (mahimā).⁹ Thus there is the admittance that Brahman, of His own will, takes a human form and thereby directs the created beings towards the attainment of śuddha jñāna (pure knowledge of Brahman).

The theory of creation is accepted as real. It is due to mahimā of Brahman.¹⁰ The world-creation (jagat-sṛṣṭi) is not illusory (māyā). It is real. Only it is not really distinct from Brahman. Brahman is also pervasive. It is not māyā but Brahman that is the cause of the world. Brahman, the Alekha Niranjana Prabhu who is nirākāra svayam, is alone real. Reality is nothing but Advaita or non-dual. But, so long as there is no realization of Alekha Brahman by the jīva, the world with its manifold form is regarded by him as real. Jagat, however, being the sṛṣṭi of Brahman cannot be unreal (asat). Though it is not ultimately real (as a distinct entity), it is not false (alīka).

In other words, theism in Viśuddhādvaita has taken a peculiar form. It is not the admittance of any personal theistic Lord like Nārāyaṇa/Vāsudeva/Kṛṣṇa. It is the Alekha nirākāra Brahman who is to be meditated upon in void (śūnya). That means there is no image to be meditated upon. Alekha Brahman is also addressed as Prabuddha Svāmī. Some have mistakenly read it as Buddha and thus Mahimā dharma is treated as an offshoot of Buddhism.¹¹ But this is not the case. The word 'Prabuddha' does not indicate Buddha but it only refers to Brahman which is knowledge as such (jñāna svarūpa). The Buddha is personified, as indicated in some form of Orissan Vaiṣṇavism and He is adored as avatāra (incarnation).¹² Though the element of personification is present in the other word 'Svāmī', it has a different sense. It is held as quite significant, being applied to the Alekha Brahman itself who is supposed to be the creator out of His own will.

The release from the threefold suffering is said to be possible by realizing the inessentiality of the worldly attachment (saṁsāra moha). It shows that the Mahimāites, like the Vallabhāites, prefer to distinguish between saṁsāra and jagat. For them, jagat is not māyā or mithyā; but saṁsāra is due to moha and that is on account of ajñāna or avidyā. Enlightenment or śuddha jñāna is possible by way of practising restraint (saṁyama) in all walks of life and full devotion to Brahman. It leads to peace of mind, tranquillity and compositeness. The Mahimā dharma admits (as usual in other cults) two orders: sannyāsi and grhī. There are different prescriptions of duties and codes of conduct for both the orders and release is open for all, provided one seriously and sincerely discharges the duties and obligations meant for the order in which he is placed of his own choice. The sāṁsāric attachment gives rise to mental pain and suffering. It has a resemblance with classical Advaita and Buddhism. But the resemblance, to be rationally consistent, need not be stretched too far.¹³ The Advaita view takes jagat to be māyā and mithyā ultimately. It pleads for total identity between jīva and Brahman, while in Mahimā the jīva is not regarded as the same as Brahman. It, aiming at the final release (kaivalya mukti), absolutely surrenders before the Lord (Brahma śaraṇa) and is blessed with His grace. The illusionistic (māyika) rendering of jagat is not accepted. It is real and the creation is not unreal. Only it is transitory in nature. The Buddhist approach of transtheistic voidism is also not acceptable to Mahimā.

By the time of the nineteenth century, there had already been the rise and growth of multifarious culture throughout the country. The Muslims had been established in the land since several centuries. Christianity had also been introduced long since and had attracted people to a considerable extent. The conservative attitude of some of the so-called protagonists continued to have a closed look towards social relationship by way of having stubborn resistance for any liberal or catholic look towards the caste system. Idol or image worship has been given so much importance that quite often it beclouds the Vedic message that the Lord transcends all finite forms of names and descriptions. He cannot be limited to any particular form or shape. The prayer to the Lord must be directed towards bhūmā (all pervasive). But, in the social framework, undue supremacy is given more to the idol than to the Lord Himself which has given rise to unsound regional divisionism, separatism and factionalism. So, in this situation, to revive the Upaniṣadic spirit of oneness of God, i.e. Brahman Himself is felt to be necessary.

The Mahimāites, without making radical revolt or departure from the age-old Vedic tradition, have made a sincere effort in restoring the spirit of absolute monotheism of Vedānta sans finite attributions or descriptions. The Lord is, therefore, conceived to be formless; but, at the same time, the Mahimā darśana does not set aside religious consciousness in preference to some form of metaphysical abstraction. That is why the Śāṅkarite nirguṇa Brahman as transcendent to Lord is not acceptable to them. The Śāṅkarite dārśanic move for some sort of abstract metareligious set up is not found to be inspiring to the laity. The Mahimāites, therefore, have made an attempt to combine both absolutism and theism without giving any scope for the propagation of polytheistic practice of worshipping a number of devas and devīs. The Lord need not be identified with Nārāyaṇa etc., because that would give rise to some sort of religious rivalry creating thereby social clash and intolerance. Probably that is the background, on account of which, though Mahimā movement has started in a south-east corner place like Orissa, very soon it has drawn the attention of common people of the country. The whole movement has spread to distant places like Andhra, Assam, Bengal, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, and even to Myanmar, Nepal and Tibet.

In certain circles, the Mahimā dharma-darśana has been viewed as anti-Brahminic. This is totally unfounded. The Mahimāites are opposed to casteism. In fact Mahimā dharma is quite liberal and it has welcomed a number of Brahmins into its fold. This point of clarification has been certified by the Mahimā order itself. The dharma is opposed to all varieties of casteism wherever it operates in any form, be it with a Brāhmaṇa, or a Kṣatriya, or a Vaiśya, or even with a Śūdra. It is to be noted that among the tribal community too, there are found several gradations at the social level and one group either considers itself higher or lower in contrast to others. The Mahimā dharma is equally critical about such pernicious, divisive and separatist tendencies. The Mahimā dharma is a living and growing movement and it easily reaches the simple commoner because of its plainness and minimum abstraction and theorization. Biswanatha Baba has, for the first time and quite convincingly, emphasized on its traditional footing and thereby it is claimed as Alekha Parama Brahma Darśanam having the essence of the Vedas and the Vedāntas. Biswanatha Baba's philosophic presentation has been also legitimized by the Mahimā dharmic order as authentic and valid.

According to Mahimā darśana, Prabhu Alekha Parama Brahman reveals Himself in Jagat as avatāra. Here the concept of avatāra has certain specification. Unlike the jīva, the Lord is never born (aja). He discloses Himself in jagat. The Mahimāites maintain that Mahimā Svāmī was neither born nor dead. He appeared and after completing His līlā he disappeared. Līlā means not simply to show miracle but to establish satya dharma. This is what Prabhu Alekha does in different ages when there is necessity. Biswanatha Baba here cites *Bh. Gītā* and holds that Alekha Svāmī has appeared as Siddha and has imparted dharma to devotees out of grace (anugraha).¹⁴ The common man takes Īśvara as anthropomorphic out of ignorance. But in reality, Īśvara is aja and avyaya (unborn and indestructible).¹⁵

The Mahimā darśana advocates the conception of jīvan-mukti. By means of attaining śuddha-jñāna and eradicating moha and māyā which are due to avidyā, the jīva becomes satyaniṣṭha, Brahmavit and never comes back to the sāmśāric fold. In this connection, the Mahimāites accept Śāṅkara's conception of jīvan-mukti as sthitaprajña who is bound in bliss and is free from all errors and confusions.¹⁶ A tattvajñāni or enlightened person is jīvan-mukta. If one is not enlightened and is not free from moha, then he is subject to rebirth. And, this would continue till he becomes free from moha and māyā. This means, unless there is jīvan-mukti, videha mukti is not possible. Because jīva is to be born and reborn till the release is attained in the empirical worldly state. The difference between jīvan and videha is only confined to the point that there is in one case śarīra and in the other case there is no śarīra. But, so far as mukti is concerned, there is no difference between the two.

The person who is completely engrossed in Alekha Brahman, has no attachment for any thing and being, at the same time, is ever duty-bound and never neglects his moral obligations, has maximum involvement with minimum attachment, has sense of responsibility and is composed intellectually, is above all self-centredness, is moved for other's welfare without any personal gain or motive, is called siddha and he is fit for enlightenment. Biswanatha Baba holds that mukti is attained by Brahma-jñāna-bhakti, i.e., having full surrender to Alekha Prabhu out of unadulterated pure devotion along with the discharge of ones own duties and obligations aimed towards human welfare. Unlike Śāṅkara, the Mahimāites advocate jñāna-miśra-bhakti (composite of knowledge and devotion) which has already gained some prominence in Orissa on different ground, by the time, the Mahimā dharma-darśana was introduced.

The present discussion reveals that the theistic Vedāntins have not one single conception of mokṣa. While some have viewed it to be fully videha, others have preferred jīvan-mukti. In any case, the account of mukti as advanced by them is found to be predominantly spiritual and transcendental. However, there are references about human welfare and social progress as indicated in certain formulations. But, the coherent link between the concept of human welfare on the one hand and the individual freedom or enlightenment on the other does not seem to have been worked out in detail. For instance, in what sense is the ideal of attaining the blissful love for Śrīkṛṣṇa in His nitya Vṛndāvanadhāma (at the individual plane) is related with human welfare and progress at the mundane level is not well accounted for. On similar ground, the concept of śāśvata sevā of Kṛṣṇa in the celestial plane of Vṛndāvana (to whatever extent it may be lucrative from the point of view of spiritual urge) remains somewhat obscure so far as the objective of attaining world peace at the mundane plane is concerned. It is not made plausible as to how Brahma-śaraṇa which is supposed to bring kaivalya-mukti of the concerned devotee, also contributes towards the welfare of humanity. If the sense of transcendence is inbuilt in the very concept of mokṣa, how at all it is to promote human peace and progress at the socio-empiric level is not clearly explained. Mukti at the spiritual level of transcendence and social progress at the mundane level are not coherently integrated. This needs clarification.

But, despite these shortcomings, so far as the Viśuddhādvaita darśana is taken into consideration, the impact of bhakti in Advaita Vedānta at one stage is notable. The attempt to integrate bhakti with nirguṇatattva is novel and interesting.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Rāmānuja: Śrī Bhāṣya, I.I.1 (Brahmaprakāra-Bramaṇo bhāvaḥ na tu svarūpaikyam).
2. Vide Vallabhācārya's Śuddhādvaita Mārtaṇḍa (māyā sambandha rahitam śuddham ityuchyate buddhaiḥ).
3. Vide S. Radhakrishnan: *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. II, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, p. 760.
4. Vide Nimbārka's *Daśaślokī*, I (jñānasvarūpam ca hareradhinaṁ śarīrasamyogaviyogayogyam aṇum hi jīvam pratideha bhinnam jñātṛtvavantaṁ yadanantaṁ āhuḥ).
5. Vide Madhva's *Gītā Bhāṣya* (muktāḥ prāpya param Viṣṇum tadeham samśrīta api tāratamyena tiṣṭhanti guṇair ānandapūrvakaiḥ).

6. Vide Śaṅkara's *Gītā Bhāṣya*.
7. The word: Mahimā (mahat+iman) means greatness or gloriousness.
8. Vide his *Alekha Parama Brahma Darśanam—Viśuddhādvaitavāda—Sarva Vedānta Sāratattva Śiromaṇiḥ*, Vols. I and II, Cuttack: Dharma Grantha Store, 1998 and 2000.
9. The conception of avatāra here is distinct. The Lord, according to the Mahimāites, is not born out of any living being. He only reveals Himself at the time of crisis. They maintain that Mahimā Svāmī was neither born (ayonīsambhūta) nor dead. He simply remained in samādhi and disappeared.
10. 'sve mahimni pratiṣṭhitāḥ' *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*.
11. N.N. Vasu: *The Modern Buddhism and its Followers in Orissa*, Calcutta: 1911.
12. Chittaranjan Das: 'Studies in Medieval Religion and Literature in Orissa' published in *Viswa-Bharati Annals*, Vol. III, 1950.
13. Vide my book: *Major Trends in Orissan Philosophy*, Cuttack: Granth Mandir, 1989 (Chapters 6 & 7).
14. Vide his *Mahimā Dharma Pratipādaka*, Cuttack: Dharmalocana Parishad (seventh print), 1977, pp. 44-6 (translated into Hindi).
15. *Ibid.*, pp. 18-19.
16. Vide Biswanath Baba's citing Śaṅkara's *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi* in his *Alekha Parama Brahma Darśanam*, Vol. II (uttarārdha), p. 435.

BIBLIOGRAPHY ON MAHIMĀ DHARMA AND DARŚANA

(a) Original Sources (in Oriya)

1. Bhīma Bhoi: *Ādyanta Gītā*
2. ———: *Aṣṭaka Bihārī Gītā*
3. ———: *Bhajanamālā*
4. ———: *Padmakalpa bā Bhīma Bhoi Mālikā*
5. ———: *Brahma Nirūpaṇa Gītā*
6. ———: *Cautiśā Madhucakra*
7. ———: *Mahimā Bhajana*
8. ———: *Nirveda Sādhanā*
9. ———: *Nirveda Samhitā*
10. ———: *Sṛṣṭiṇiṣedha Gītā*
11. ———: *Stuti Cintāmaṇi*
12. Biswanatha Baba: *Alekha Parama Brahma Darśanam, Sarva Veda-Vedānta-Sāratattva Siromaṇi* (Mahimā Dharma-Darśanam), Pūrvārdha (Vol. I), second edition, Cuttack, 1988.
13. ———: Biswanatha Baba: *Alekha Parama Brahma Darśanam, Sarva Veda-Vedānta-Sāratattva Siromaṇi* (Mahimā Dharma-Darśanam), Uttarārdha (Vol. II), second edition, 2000.
14. ———: *Bhāgavatasāra Satya Dharma*, 1936.

15. ———: *Māhima Bālya Līlā Gīti*, 1957.
16. ———: *Mahimā Dharma Darśana Tattva*, 1971.
17. ———: *Mahimā Dharma Itihāsa*, sixth edition, 2001.
18. ———: *Mahimā Dharma Pratipādaka*, seventh edn., 2000 (also translated into Hindi).
19. ———: *Mahimā Dharma Pradīpa*, 1957.
20. ———: *Mahimā Dharma Paricaya*, 1958.
21. ———: *Mahimā Dharma Sacetavāṇī*, 1963.
22. ———: *Mahimā Dharma Svarūpa*, 1938.
23. ———: *Mahimā Dharma Tattvasāra*, 1935.
24. ———: *Sādhu Gīti*, 1932.
25. ———: *Śrīmat Cinmaya Brahma Gītā*, 1939.
26. ———: *Tātamata Gīti*, 1934.

N.B. All the books (Nos. 1–26) can be made available in Mahima Dharmalocana, Parishad, Chandini Chouk, Cuttack (Mahimasrama Alekha Tungi).

27. Bhramarabara Behera: (compiled) *Brahma Jñāna Bhajana of Bhīma Bhoi*.
28. Ch. Madhusudan Mohapatra: (compiled) *Bangalā Ātha Bhajana* (Bengali).
29. ———: (compiled) *Prabhāt Avakāśa of Bhīma Bhoi*.
30. Jagannatha Panigrahi: (compiled) *Nirākāra Bhajanamālā of Bhīma Bhoi*.
31. Jagannath Sinha: (compiled) *Bṛhat Bhīma Bhoi Bhajana* (in two vols.).
32. Rajendra Baba: (compiled) *Alekha Bhajana of Bhīma Bhoi*.

N.B. The books (nos. 27–32) are referred to by Professor N.K. Sahu in his article 'Bhīma Bhoi' (in English), published in the book: *Mahima Dharma and Darshan* (Ed. by D. Panda), Koraput, 1972.

33. Sadhu Bharat Das: *Mahimā Prakāsha*, Dhenkanal: Mahima Gadi, 1992.

(b) Allied Sources (in Oriya)

[The Orissan Vaiṣṇavism which has its origin before Śrī Caitanya came to Puri has some sort of Advaitic leaning. Śrīdhara Svāmī, the famous gloss writer on Bhāgavata (*Bhāvārtha Dipikā/Śrīdhari Ṭikā*), was an Advaitin and greatly influenced the Orissan Vaiṣṇavites in blending bhakti with jñāna. He was from Orissa and Śrī Caitanya accepted Śrīdhara as his mentor. Consequently, the Orissan Vaiṣṇavites developed Jñāna-mīśra-bhakti very much distinct from Bengal Vaiṣṇavism. They also emphasized on Alekh Mahimā Svāmī/Śūnya Puruṣa in their writings which has some affinity with the concept of Mahimā, later propagated by the Mahimāites. Here, therefore, some of the writings of the Orissan Vaiṣṇavites dealing with the concept of Mahimā are listed for reference.]

34. Acyutananda Das (B) *Anādi Samhitā*.
35. ———: *Nirguṇa Samhitā*.
36. ——— (A): *Śūnya Samhitā*.
37. ———: *Jñāna Pradīpa Gītā*.

38. ———: *Tattva Bodhinī*.

N.B. Some scholars (Pt. Binayak Mishra and Dr. H.K. Mahtab) have taken both the writers mentioned above as one and the same; but others like Dr. N.N. Pradhan have taken them to be different. Vide his article 'Mahimā O Oḍiyā Sāhitya' published in *Mahima Dharma and Darshan*, op. cit.

39. Araksita Das: *Mahī Maṇḍala Gītā*.
40. Balarama Das: *Birāta Gītā*.
41. Candramani Das: *Sudhā Sāra Gītā*.
42. Caitanya Das: *Nirguṇa Māhātmya*.
43. ———: *Viṣṇugarva Purāna*.
44. Dvaraka Das: *Gupta Gītā*.
45. Jagannatha Das: *Tulā Bhiṇā*.

N.B. All the books (Nos. 34–45) can be made available in Dharma Grantha Store, Alisa Bazar, Cuttack.

(c) Secondary Sources

(i) Books (in English)

46. Dash, Sarbeswar: (tr.) *Biswanatha Baba's Alekha Parama Brahma Darśanam* (Vol. I), Cuttack: Dharmalocana Parishad.
47. Kar, Bijayananda: *Major Trends in Orissan Philosophy*, Cuttack: Granth Mandir, 1989.
48. Mahatab, H.K. (Dr): *History of Orissa*, Cuttack: Cuttack Student's Store, Balu Bazar.
49. Majumdar, B.C.: *Sonepur in the Sambalpur Tract*.
50. Mishra, K.C.: *Studies in Mahimā Dharma*, Bhubaneswar: Institute of Orissan Culture, Vivekananda Marg, 2000.
51. Mukherjee, P.: *History of Medieval Vaiṣṇavism in Orissa*, Calcutta, 1941.
52. Nath, Shatrugna: *Mahimā Dharma Dhārā*, Bhubaneswar: Saheed Nagar, 1990.
53. Panda, Datyari: (Ed.) *Mahima Dharma and Darshan*, Koraput: D.A.V. College, 1972.
54. Panigrahi, S: *Bhīma Bhoi and Mahimā Darśana*, Philosophy Department, Utkal University, Bhubaneswar, 1998.
55. Nepak, Bhagirathi: *Philosophy of Mahimā Dharma*, Bhubaneswar.
56. Nath, Shatrugna: *Biswanath Baba: A Saint Self-realised*, Cuttack: Dharma Granth Store, 1977.
57. Senapati, Nilamani: *Satya Mahimā Dharma*, Cuttack: Dharma Granth Store, 1975.

(ii) Articles (in English)

1. Eschmann, A.E. (Dr.): 'Spread, Organisation and Cult of Mahimā Dharma' in *Mahima Dharma & Darshan*, op. cit.

2. ———: 'Mahimā Dharma: An autochthonous Hindu Reform Movement' in *The Cult of Jagannāth* (Ed. Kulke), Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1981.
3. Kar, Bijayananda: 'The Religious Philosophy of Mahimā Gosāiṅ & His School' in *Bharati*, Utkal University Journal—Humanities, Vol. III, 1969.
4. ———: 'Biswanatha Baba on Mahimā and Advaita' in *Mahima Dharma & Darshan*, op. cit.
5. ———: 'Biswanatha Baba and Viśuddhādvaita Darśana' in *Studies in Mahimā Dharma*, op. cit.
6. Misra, G.: Foreword (Directorial Introduction to Mahimā Dharma & Darśan Seminar at D.A.V. College, Koraput), 1972, op. cit.
7. Mansingh, Mayadhar (Dr.): 'The Unique Alekha Cult' in *The Saga of the Land of Jagannāth*, J. Mohapatra & Co., Cuttack.
8. Nath, Shatrughna: 'Mahimā Movement in Cuttack City', in *Cuttack: One Thousand Years*, Vol. II, The Universe, Maitree Sarani, Cuttack, 1990.
9. ———: 'Mahimā Dharma in Orissa' in *Cultural Heritage of Orissa*, The Universe, Maitree Sarani, Cuttack, 1993.
10. Rath, Chandrasekhar: 'Mahimā Dharma as Applied Vedānta' in *Studies in Mahimā Dharma*, op. cit.
11. Sahu, N.K.: 'Bhīma Bhoi' in *Mahimā Dharma & Darshan*, op. cit.
12. Tripathi, K.B.: 'Source of Mahima Dharma' in *Mahima Dharma & Darshan*, op. cit.
13. Nath, Shatrughna: 'Mahimā Dharma' in *Sidelights of Orissa History*, Cuttack, Vidyapuri, 1977.
14. 'On the Origin and Growth of the Sect of the Hindu Dissenters who Professed to be the Followers of Alekh' published in the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, 1887.
15. Nayak, G.C.: 'Viśuddhādvaita Brahmavāda of Bishwanatha Baba', being published in *The Quarterly Journal of the Mystic Society*, Bangalore.

(iii) Books (in Oriya)

1. Uddhava Charan Nayak: *Mahimā Dharma Biśwa Itihāsa*, 1985.
2. Bansidhar Mahanty (Professor): *Oḍiśāra Nātha Dharma*.
3. Binayaka Mishra: *Oḍiyā Sāhityara Itihāsa*, Cuttack: Binod Bihari, 1978.
4. Shatrughna Nath: *Biswanath Baba Caritāmṛta* (Vols. I and II), Cuttack: Mahima Dharmalocana Parishad, 1992, 1993.
5. ———: *Mahimā Dharma Prakāsha O Vikāsha*, Satya Mahima Ashrama, Khandagiri, Bhubaneswar, 1995.
6. Chittaranjan Das: *Oḍiśāra Mahimā Dharma*, Viswa Bharati, 1952.
7. *Bhīma Bhoi Granthāvalī*, Cuttack: Dharma Grantha Store, 1988.
8. Mahindra Baba: *Satya Mahimā Dharmara Samkṣipta Itihāsa*, Cuttack: Dharmalocana Parishad.
9. Mirdha, Hadibandhu: *Bhīma Bhoi, Eka Naba Anweśa* (Saint Poet Bhīma Bhoi, a new investigation).

10. Swami, Satyananda: *Mahimā Dharma*, Cuttack: Chandi Pustakalaya, 1998.
11. Sahu, Karunakar: *Brahme Jāo Śanaṇa*, Bhubaneswar: Sahid Nagar, 2002.

(iv) Essays (in Oriya)

1. Kahnu Charan Misra (Dr.): 'Mahimā Dharma O Oḍiyā Sāhitya' in *Mahima Dharma and Darshan*, op. cit.
2. Krushna Ch. Panigrahi (Dr.): 'Bhīma Bhoi' in *Mahima Dharma and Darshan*, op. cit.
3. Chittaranjan Das: 'Jorandā Yātrā' in his book: *Śilā O Śālagrāma*, Cuttack: Jayanti Sahitya Samiti.
4. Nagendra Nath Pradhan (Dr.): 'Mahimā O Oḍiyā Sāhitya' in *Mahima Dharma and Darshan*, op. cit.
5. Bijayananda Kar: 'Mahimā Dharmara eka Dārśanika Paryālocanā' in *Jhankara*, Cuttack: Prajatantra Pracara Samiti, 1970–71.

Social Philosophy of Sikh Gurus

NIRBHAI SINGH

Fellow, Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla 171 005

'The world you see that is form of
Hari; nothing but *Hari* is visible.'¹

I. INTRODUCTION

The term social philosophy does not have a fixed connotation in the philosophical circles. The philosophical activity of the Sikh Gurus was that they reaffirmed social reality that was negated in the medieval periods. In the above quotation of Guru Amardāss the reality of the external world is reaffirmed. The world mirrors *Akālapurakh*, the all-inclusive 'Becoming'. It is certain that the Guru accepts the societal reality. It analyses the social phenomenon as a living reality.

In this paper I am using it as a normative study of society with special reference to the Sikh social philosophy based upon the Sikh scriptures and the Sikh tradition. It will be pertinent to point out that the primary sources of the Sikh social philosophy are enshrined in the *Guru Granth*, which was authenticated by the Sikh Gurus themselves. The tenth mentor, Guru Gobind Singh in CE 1708 apotheosized it as a living *śabda-guru*, for eternity for the welfare of humanity. It is an eternal fount of *ipse dixits* of the contributors of the *Guru Granth*. The Sikh social order is derived from the dynamic ontology of non-dual *Akālapurakh*. Reality of the fluxional social phenomena is a logical necessity of the pronounced dynamic ontology of Sikhism. It is to be seen how far their social order is capable of reconciling eternity and temporality. The social philosophy is a development from Guru Nanak's ideology of *sacakhaṇḍa* to creation of the *Khālsā*.

Kāla (time) for the Gurus is not mythical but a historical time. *Akāla* in the Sikh onto-theology is not timeless but plenum of time. Thus, *Akālapurakh* signifies eternity inclusive of temporality. It justifies dynamic ontology of the Sikh faith. It will also imply that social dynamic relations are real because social phenomena are real. This was done by the

Gurus through their philosophical activities in the society and was validated by them through confirmation in praxis.

Before I take up social philosophy of the Sikh Gurus it will be desirable to analyze the philosophical scenario at the advent of Sikhism. Sikhism as a continuation of the idealistic metaphysical system is a hermeneutical reinterpretation developed out of dialectical dialogues with other religious philosophies of India. It emerged out of acrimonious metaphysical systems of Indian religious philosophies of idealism and realism or Vedanta and Buddhism, and of Mimāṃsā, and Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika. The last two schools are realistic. For the latter the external world is an independent static real object. On the contrary, for the Buddhists the real external world is point-instant flux but the logical linguistic concepts are stabilized entities. However, both systems start with rudimentary sensation and affirm reality of the external world. And through reason images or concepts are the reproduction of ratiocination and validation based on sense data. And judgement through verbal expressions of inference or syllogism is made for public debate (*samagoṣṭi* or *vāda-vidhi*). For the Buddhists valid knowledge is got through intuitive insights. Memory stimulates the birth of ideas and produces action that realizes a purposeful goal. Thus Buddhist epistemology and logic are rigorously engaged in discursive analysis. And true knowledge of *nirvāṇa* is realized through mystic intuition. All elements (events) are dormant in *nirvāṇa* but are active in ordinary life. Buddha's initial search for dynamic view of life ended in static view of life and withdrawal from the societal realities. Truth and error are validated on logical arguments. Hence knowledge is a linguistic construct of the mind and it is validated through inference and syllogism. However, absolute quiescence is attained through practice of concentrated ecstatic meditation (*dhyāna=samādhi=yoga*).

Sikhism evolved an all-comprehensive concrete metaphysical system. It derived a dynamic view of life from the dynamic ontology. It agreed with the Buddhist ontic view of a dynamic impersonal flow of momentary (*kṣinaka*) point-instant events.

The neo-Platonists' quest in the West was for the cosmic reality. Plato gave precedence to the universals over the particulars, essence over existence and ultimately separated universals (ideas) from the particulars (world). Platonic universals are to be realized through esoteric discipline. Extreme universalism is not more than a mere name. The universal (horseness) is a predicate of the particular objects (horses). In Platonic idealism universals

(ideas) don't partake of particulars. Platonic universals (ideas) exist independently of mental constructs. Significance (meaning) is appellative by the mind, which does not signify the external real objects (particulars). On the contrary, Aristotle's universals exist in particulars. Sikhism is nearer to the Aristotelian viewpoint.

Sikhism tries to reconcile the controversy between nominalists or universalists and realists. In Sikhism the external world is a real universal flux and the particulars are its manifest momentary events. It is based on the sense perception (*pratyakṣa*) of the real objects. For Guru Nanak universals and particular are intertwined with each other. *Śiva* is universal and *śakti* is particular. Both are inseparable fluxional ontic entities. Like Aristotelian 'form' and 'matter' they are two extremes of the transcendent Reality. And the universals encompass the particulars. The particulars mirror the universal (eternity). Sikhism goes beyond universals and particulars and realizes ontic identity of that 'isness' through mystic identity. It is a mystic sentient experience which is difficult to explain with discursive reasons (... *nānak kathanā karadā sāru/Guru Granth (GG)*, p. 8).

In the Indian metaphysical scenario of Buddhism and Vedanta for giving priority to the universal (*Brahmana*), the particulars were minimized and were reduced to delusion (*māyā*). The social realities were ignored. The real world was replaced with the otherworld (*svarga*) in the false hope of idyllic happiness. And the Aristotelian thinkers, on the contrary, lay stress on the particular, contingent, and existent objects. St. Augustine (CE 354–430) and others who were influenced by the Platonic universals as real were swayed in the illusory ideal of the trans-social otherworldliness. It resulted in the static perspectives of the world and life negation philosophies. On the contrary, the neo-Aristotelian thinkers, say, Ockham (c. CE 1285–1349), St Aquinas (c. 1225–74), et al., did not negate the ontic reality of the particular objects of perception. The social realities, thus, retained their vital salience. For them social realities are to be treated as the stronghold of human existence. Man's feet are to be in the world and his consciousness is to be immersed in the eternity. Then he can only develop his real self that can perform voluntaristic deeds. For a voluntarist, this world is the ground for moral struggle. Guru Nanak calls this temporal world *dharmasāla*, an embodiment for moral struggle (*dharma yudha*).

This controversy dominated the medieval ages. The neo-Platonists held that universals are existing independently of our cognition as essences of Being. And the neo-Aristotelians claim that nothing is common to the

ontology of particular real objects excepting our imposition of names of shared attributes. This controversy between the neo-Platonists and the Aristotelians ruled over the medieval religio-philosophical and social scenarios. It continued in the medieval ages till a Christian philosopher St. Aquinas questioned the Platonic and the Augustinian doctrine of *a priori* and restored the Aristotelian intellectualism that is based on *a posteriori* knowledge. It is based on perception of the external real objects. In this sense Sikhism is closer to the Aristotelian thinkers.

It also took cognizance of the Semitic ontology of Islam. And Averroes (Ibn Rushd, CE 1126–98) a philosopher of the *Qur'ānic* legacy and commentator of the Aristotelian metaphysics also emphasized reality of the particular objects. Greeks and Indians believe in the cyclic view of time. Guru Nanak reconciled historicity of the prophetic or Syrian historical real linear time with the mythical cyclic time, which is the basis of the dynamic view of human life. Guru Nanak places man in the existential concrete historical time. In simple words, it was reaffirmation of the micro-reality of the *homo sapiens* as concrete individuals in the societal space in history. Personal identity is to be developed from the matrix of *jīva* ('me') through esoteric discipline in the historical time.

The neo-Aristotelian nominalists continued the Heraclitean tradition of eternal flux. Pierre Abélard (CE 1070–1142) also developed this idea in the French tradition. His 'conceptualism' is a *via media* between Platonic universal ideals or forms (essences) and Aristotelian realism of the particular real objects. The French thinker could not go beyond the 'visible' so as to intuit the invisible 'cipher' that is difficult to realize with the senses and the intellect. He was true to the Christian Faith, which postulates the 'Holy Other'. On the contrary, Indian metaphysics encompasses both eternity and temporality. Consciousness is a transcendent reality that can't be reduced to empirical reality because it is a precondition of the essence and existence.

It is simultaneously transcendent and immanent. On the contrary, in the Indian religio-philosophical scene the *Śramaṇic* tradition of Buddhism, considered to be an antipode to the Brahmanic eternalism or essentialism, tried to restore social realities through its theory of *apohavāda*; a dialectical process of exclusion or negation. The concept of *apoha* (significance) was conceived by the Buddha himself and it was developed by the Buddhist logicians Dingnāga (6th cent. CE) and Dharmakīri (7th cent. CE) as an epistemic and logical tool for articulating through cognitive

conceptual constructs (*vikalpa*). These thinkers based their philosophies on the eternal metaphysical flux. Mere logic is a lopsided epistemic tool to comprehend the all-inclusive fluxional reality. Had reason been the sole epistemic tool of comprehension of reality, the Buddha, at the end of his earthly sojourn would have not pronounced that reason is incompetent to explain reality. His silence to the metaphysical queries is implied by the *Mādhyāmikas*. He advised the seekers of reality, 'be a lamp to thyself' (*ātmo dīpo bhava*). It was the profound spirit of Indian metaphysics that was also upheld in the Upaniṣadas. The Sikh voluntarism is revisiting the Vedic and the Buddhist philosophies of voluntarism.

We shall analyze and validate philosophical activities from the point of social philosophy. It shall be analyzed how long the social relations are useful in guaranteeing freedom, human dignity, and other human virtues and values. In this connection some analytical questions about social ontology of the Sikh Gurus are to be critically analyzed and validated with reference to the social ideal of *sacakhaṇḍa* and *khālsā-panth*. Basic issues are social and social responsibility, solidarity, virtues and values, *saṅgat* and *paṅgat*, free kitchen (*laṅgar*), voluntary social service (*sevā*), synthesis of *theoria* and *praxis*. All these are offshoots of social ideal, which was envisaged by Guru Nanak.

In the early Vedic times the concept of the otherworld was not effectively developed. In the Vedic period search for reality was from articulation of the gods and goddesses which were symbolic of the natural forces (say, *agani*, *vāyu*, *jala*, etc.). People used to worship forces of nature to achieve their desired objectives. These deities were considered eternal and distinct from the mundane human beings. The innovation of the otherworld may be attributed to the mystical trend that developed in the Upaniṣadic period. It was a movement of reification of ones experience that culminates in the mystic identity. In the Upaniṣads it was asserted 'I am *Brahman*, i.e., *aham braham asmi*'. In the Upaniṣadic period inwardization resulted in realization of the supreme transcendent Reality (*Brahman*). It snapped its relation with the temporal world. Consequently, it gave birth to the concept of otherworldliness.

So, the idea of the otherworld developed in the medieval ages due to various reasons. Later the concept of otherworld (*baikunṭha*), the transcendental abode of the Vedic deities was developed. It was an abode for the gods who determined human destiny. It was aspired by all. It was held that the liberated self (*ātmān*) is granted eternal abode in the otherworld

(heaven). Guru Nanak was critical of the otherworld because it negated social realities. Sikhism made a *sui generis* contribution in the field of social philosophy from Guru Nanak (d. CE 1489–1539) to Guru Gobind Singh (d. CE 1708). It reaffirmed social realities that were negated in the medieval ages in the false hope of the otherworld (heaven or *bahisht*).

Guru Nanak was also very critical about the siddhas, yogis, and *saṅnyāsis* who withdrew from the social responsibilities of society. When the siddhas asked Guru Nanak the cause for his wandering about, he replied that he was in search of an ideal man (*gurmukh*). His *gurmukh* is a householder. He was deadly against asceticism and celibacy for the simple reason that the *siddhas* and the *saṅnyāsis* withdrew themselves from the social, moral, and political responsibilities and became parasites on society. For their food they had to beg from door to door with beggars' bowls in their hands. Guru Nanak in this context castigates the ascetics who called themselves *gurus* and *pīrs*. One should not bow at their feet because they were parasites (... *guru pīru sadāe maṅgaṅ jāl/tā kai moli na lāgīai pāi/GG*, p. 1245).

The social philosophy of the Sikh Gurus steers a middle path between the otherworld and this world. It steers clear of gross materialist and Vedantic abstract idealism that negates the phenomenal world as illusory (*māyā*). Sikhism is an idealistic and realistic system. It is spiritualism because the ultimate nature of reality is spiritual. It is a concrete spiritual system, which emerged at a time when the medieval period was ending and the modern era was setting in. It is realistic because the external world is real. The genesis of Sikhism is often attributed to Guru Nanak. It was at the crossroads of medievalism and modernity. It ushered in the modern subaltern trend. It reaffirms the social realities and historicity of human action. From the existential standpoint it projected man as a concrete unit in society struggling for the freedom of man. The Gurus tried to make man perfect as an emancipator of humanity and guarantor of social and political justice. The Sikh movement came as a voluntaristic movement of ontological, ethical, political, etc. ideas that were to be actualized in history. With this background the Sikh Gurus envisaged an ideal social unity which could be concretized in history. It is based on human nature. In the initial stage he is incomplete. He requires continuous development from within and without. Man is the only species which can become perfect with his rational faculty. Due to his helplessness, he needs the help of his

parents and other members of society. He is not born free, but is to become free. He develops human values and virtues in the family and in the holy social group (*saṅgat*). The Sikh movement started as a peaceful upsurge for regaining personal concrete identity of man in society and spiritual social unity, which could adjust to the changing societal conditions. And it developed into a militant civil society of the *khālsā-paṅth*. The *khālsā* as individual and social order mirrors the Supreme Reality.

II. PERSONAL IDENTITY OF MAN

In order to adhere to the dynamic view of life historical action was reaffirmed. For discharging moral responsibilities for the emancipation of humanity, the 'personal identity' of the individual self as a free subject in the society was restored. Without freedom of the self, voluntarism can't be upheld. It will be a contradiction in terms. Hence, 'personal identity' is the key concept in the pronounced non-dual dynamic onto-theology of Sikhism. If it is set aside, then discharge of moral responsibility is difficult to perform. In order to make man a responsible person towards other fellow beings, his self-developed personal identity and free will were upheld in the existential situations. Both are not given static facts. Personal identity is to be developed from within the undeveloped self (*jīva*).

Different religious traditions have propounded different ways and means to reach this goal. Once personal identity in its fullness is realized, the self starts living the eternal life and enjoys ontic freedom. Ravidāss's concept of *begampurā* is an ideal state of consciousness in which the self is free in the true sense of the term (*GG*, p. 345). The narrow 'first person perspective' of the self ('me'= *jīva*) is transformed into the 'third person perspective' of cosmic consciousness ('I'= *ātman*), which transforms 'me' and subsequently his 'I' is directed towards personal identity of 'Thou'. Furthermore, when 'I' merges with the cosmic consciousness (*Akālāpurakh*), which is the basis of the ontic existence, knowledge, and moral judgements, the Sikh voluntarism emanates from the freed and transfigured state of consciousness that culminates in unity of consciousness that is the primordial cause of plurality of the manifest world. This is the Sikh theory of voluntarism, which asserts that intuitive volition is realized. This point has been upheld in the *karma-khaṇḍa* of Guru Nanak's '*Japujī*'. It has been emphasized that mind (*mana*) reconstructs and *budhi* asserts or makes a judgement. And Kabir in one of his hymns says that when he

approached the sanguine One, he himself became red. Here the personal identity of Kabir is transcendent cosmic consciousness.

What is realization of personal identity? It is to restore pristine identity of consciousness that was fragmented into multiplicity. It can't be reduced to empirical self. *Nāma-simran* is a means of creating unity in the disunity. Personal identity is the outcome of *nāma-simran* and reason supplements the spiritual process. The cosmic ontic identity reflects into the micro-identity of human consciousness. This identity shall be crystal clear provided man's consciousness is developed to the state of 'self-consciousness'. For instance, the indolent (*marjīvaḍā*) is immunized to the empirical world and is awakened to the transcendental ontic identity. His consciousness is in the eternity but he discharges his responsibilities of the world. He is simultaneously in eternity and temporality. For the realized self there is no past and future. He lives in the 'eternal present' that instantaneously encompasses past, present, and future. He transcends past and future and lives in the present. Sleep is symbolic of death for the realized self. Death is eternal sleep and awakening of cosmic consciousness is to live in eternity that is 'That' (*nirānkāra*). 'That' is simultaneously immanent and transcendent everywhere at the same time. The aim of Sikh philosophy is to arouse consciousness from the slumber inherent in the *śakti*, creative energy.

In the Western and the Indian religious traditions there are different approaches of creation of the self (*ātman*). In the Western model, the 'I-Thou' contradiction is not resolved because the chasm between the two remains at the highest state of self-realization. In the Semitic traditions, the difference between Creator and creation is never bridged. On the other hand, in the Indian religious traditions realizing the pristine *natura naturans* of the self (*ātman*), which is ontologically free, transcends this dichotomy of 'I, Thou'. There is complete ontological identity between the microcosm (*piṇḍa/deha*) and macrocosm (*brahmaṇḍa*). But the *Guru Granth* says that in the teachings of the Sikh Gurus the only esoteric means is *nāma-simran* (*keval nāmu dīo guri maṇu/GG*, p. 183).

Within this dichotomous paradigm Sikhism strikes a hermeneutical reconciliation without suppressing the Indian or the Semitic ontology. In Sikhism *hukam* is a regulative principle of the *natura naturans* and individual's will dominated by *haumai* (me-ness) that is a *natura naturata*. When the individual will is attuned to the cosmic will (*hukam*), *natura naturata* and *natura naturans* are identical, and *Akālāpurakh* is a mirror

through which we look into our 'I'. It is through *surati-śabda-yoga* the creative process is simultaneously carried out from within and without. Inward journey from 'me' to 'I' and outward process is identification with the whole humanity. It culminates in realizing its ontic identity with the cosmic law. Then there is no extraneous restraint and constraint; the self will be free.

Realization of this state is a matter of ethico-spiritual progression. It is both a theoretical (epistemic) and practical (ethico-spiritual) problem. It is a continuous process of enrichment of human intuitive insight through internalization and externalization. It is carried out so long as attributive personality (*sarguṇa*) of the *Akālāpurakh* continues. 'Thou' is to continue till the mystic realizes his identity with *Akālāpurakh*. After realization of the mystical identity between 'That' and 'I' 'That' (*nirānkār*), all the logical constructs disappear. When there is complete realization of ontological identity between 'That' and 'I', then the projected 'Thou' as personified linguistic construct is transformed into an impersonal 'That' because personality of the Numinous is dissolved. The Numinous is ineffable because there is no reason to explain.

The personality of the self ('I') is absorbed into the formless 'Becoming' (*nirānkāra*), but personal identity of the self ('I') as doer (*kartā*) is retained and the macro-unity acts through the micro-unity (*piṇḍa*). Pipā *bhakta* has reiterated this idea in one of his hymns. He says that whatsoever is contained in the macro-body (*brahmaṇḍa*) is also in the miniature form in the micro-body (i.e. *jo brahmaṇḍe soī piṇḍe/2-3/GG*, p. 695). It is evident that in Sikhism, the moral agent (*kartā*) does not annihilate his personal identity, but destroys his conceit of 'me' (*khudī*). *Khudī* is an impediment in the path of realizing mystic identity with the Numinous. As pointed out above, man retains his historical autonomous existence so that he could be active in the world and carry out his historical actions and responsibilities. The personal historical identity is carved out in the course of historical time in the world.

On the other hand, in the *Gītā* we do not find dichotomy between seer (*dr̥ṣṭā*) and experiencing self (*bhoktā*). It does not follow that the *Gītā* dissolves the personal historical identity of the self. It does not end in quietism and asceticism. The *Gītā* says:

(i) *Fix your mind on me, Arjuna surrender all deeds to me.*

xviii:57

- (ii) *Throw away your dharma, have faith in me,
Take refuge in me and do not fear, you will be saved.*

xviii:66

Now it is clear that the *Gītā* projects Lord Kṛṣṇa as teacher and guide in the battlefield. Here executor and teacher are two. In the *Gītā*, Kṛṣṇa's advice to Arjuna in the critical juncture of the war was that his will was 'dead from within' owing to blinkered fear of death and attachment with his kith and kin. Here Kṛṣṇa as an essentialist did not take part in the battle, but his will was executed through Arjuna. Guru Gobind Singh, on the contrary, reinterprets such critical predicaments from the standpoint of an existentialist. The Guru in his poetic compositions of the *Dasam Granth* is seen in the battlefield involved in the *dharma yudha* (moral struggle) for the crusade of the subaltern masses. It is interesting to note that in the longish composition of the 'Kṛṣṇa Avatāra' Khaḍak Singh is one of the heroic characters who is the idealized man of Guru Gobind Singh. He transcends the fear of death. With Guru's grace he is shown fighting in the battlefield to the last breath for the cause of righteousness. He seems to have concretized the theoretical ideals of the Guru in praxis (see, 448 *chandas* from 1369 to 1817). When trinity of the Hindu deities (Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Maheśa) approached Khaḍak Singh to appeal that they would grant him *mukti*, he declined their offer and preferred to fight and die a heroic death (*euthanasia*) in the field.

'It' and 'Thou' are transitory phases of the *Akālāpurakh*. Guru Arjunadeva explains it: '*niraṅkāra ākār, āpi nirguṇa sarguṇa eka/GG, p. 250*'. This is a simultaneous trekking of the self's identity. It culminates in 'mystical identity' of 'I-That'. It, then, dissolves ontological, epistemic, moral and other forms of dichotomies of the phenomenon, and Eternity and temporality, through inward flight of the self for chiselling out its personal identity and external identification with humanity at large. It is a process of transcendence of the cleavage of 'I-Thou' and outwardly identifying with other human beings.

It is a state of transcendental freedom (*mukti/nirvāṇa*) of the self. When one realizes ontic identity of the self and becomes self-conscious (*ātam giāna*), one is eternally free. To be free is to have the *singular* first person perspective or experience. The Upaniṣadic seer (*ṛṣi*) claims: 'I am the *brahman*: i.e. *aham brahma asmi*'. It means that the realized self transcends this worldliness and regains eternal freedom. Similarly Mansūr al-

Hājī declares in his epigrammatic statement '*an ul-ḥaqq*' that he has attained in ecstasy eternal freedom by transcending this world. He identifies himself with the self-creative Truth (*ḥaqq*). He affirms non-duality of the metaphysical fluxional 'isness'.

In the colophon of Guru Nanak's philosophical treatise 'Japujī', it is said that the word (*śabda*) fashions in its mint consciousness into incomparable forms (i.e. ...*ghaḍīai sabadu sacī taṭksāla/paurī-38*) to become *natura naturans*. *Surati* (creative energy) is to be aroused with the word (*nāda*) and to be transformed into cosmic resonance (*anhada nāda*). The 'khaṇḍas' (created spaces) of the 'Japujī' is an inward journey of consciousness (*surati*) from its dormant state to intuitive volition. It is not an accidental and contingent progression. It must reinforce human will to create a new structure of values and translate it into a living reality. So internal projection is to contemplate for a better world and will is to carry it out in praxis in the societal world.

This positive attitude toward the world enjoins upon man moral, social and political responsibilities for the welfare of humanity. It is argued out in the Sikh scriptures that the phenomenal world is a battlefield (*dharmasāla*) for bringing up ones essential self. It is concerned with the 'now' without dittoing the past. It, however, continues in the form of a tradition which determines to some extent the present. Man's creativity can revitalize the past in a restructured form. And the future is all in the dark. It is only the mystic who transcends seductions of the mundane world and peeps into the future and the dormant past. From the point of view of philosophy it is difficult to do its rational justification. However, man can create a space of his ideal world and can strive to actualize it through the vicissitudes of history.

The matrix of human self is not a finished product at the time of birth that an individual inherits from the parents. There is *jīva* and not identity of *ātman* that is perfect in all respects. The Buddha did not postulate any personal identity of the individual excepting the material transient elements (*skandhas*). It is to be carved out by man himself with the help of esoteric discipline and grace of *śabda-guru*. Personal identity is fashioned out of the given materials of the body (*śakti*). Will and intellect are significant ingredients in the human consciousness which play a vital role in moulding *śakti*. *Śiva* is pure consciousness but it is potentially dormant in the gross *śakti*. Both can't be separated from each other. There is no difference of kind but of degree. Both are simultaneously developed from

within, but more emphasis is given on the conative aspect. Development of the personal identity culminates with *karma* at the top. It is necessary that optimum balance between intellect and will is to be realized. Intellect is primarily concerned with theoretical analysis and will in the praxis. Both are to be reconciled and should constitute concrete identity of the self in temporality.

With the realization of ontic identity of the 'self', the charismatic hal- lowed personality of the personal *guru* was demolished in the *Guru Granth*. The higher classes in Sikhism are no more recognized as gifted and cho- sen offspring of God. The subaltern (*dalit*) masses were motivated to regain equality and self-dignity in the society. Medieval *ṣūfis*, *bhaktas*, *Gurus*, et al. have been instrumental for the uplift of the sons of the dusty soil. The wretched people of the earth had been victims of atrocities of the upper strata of the society. Guru Nanak has gone to the extent of identi- fying himself with the *dalits*. He refuses to have any truck with the higher castes (see, *nīcā andari nīca jāti nīci hu ati nīcu/nānaku tina kai saṅgi sāthi vadiā siu kīā rīsa/GG*, p. 15). For instance, in the hagiographic tradition (*Janamamsākhī*), Bhāi Lālo is a poor carpenter who earns his livelihood by the sweat of his brow. On the contrary, Malik Bhāgo is a feudal chief who exploits other poor people. Hence, wrenching of blood from the bread of Bhāgo and milk from Lālo's bread are symbolic of the exploiter and the exploited earnest person respectively. Guru Nanak's hermeneutics would contend that all experiences of truth are interpretive in essence.

Guru Nanak and other Sikh Gurus practically identified themselves with the subaltern masses. The creation of the *khālsā* is the hypostatized macro-identity of *Akālāpurakh* concretized in the micro-identity of the realized self in history. He is likened to Kierkegaard's 'knight of faith' on the earth. He is above all the parochial grooves of communalism, casteism and sectarianism. The principle of love as a cementing force of mankind is the essence of the *khālsā* identity.

It is possible through *einfühlung* (Gr.) that is identification of feeling or empathy. It is a flight of *ātman* to *ātman*. As Buddha says that with one candle other candles are enlightened, similarly one realized self enlightens other selves. Guru Gobind Singh identified himself with the entire *khālsā*. It was complete identification of feelings with entire humanity. First per- son *singular* experience is not timeless (*anādi*) but is eternal (*ananta*). The self creates it, but it becomes eternal when one attains the state of

indolence (*sahaj*). Thereafter, one is always in that state of eternal expe- rience (*sahaj/baqā*). This is authentic or *dharmic* life attuned to truth (*satya*). When the self is one with the creative cosmic truth (*hukam/rta*), then the *ātman* takes flight to the Numinous (*niraṅkāra*). This is how 'I- Thou' contradiction is transcended through self-transcendence with the dialectical creative process of going beyond them. The Numinous is re- flected in the heart of the individual self. Guru Nanak proclaim^s that in his immediate absorptive identification with the Numinous, he assumes consciousness of the 'Formless Form' (*ātam cīnha bhae niraṅkāri/GG*, p. 415). It is realization of ones intrinsic ontic identity with the eternal 'Be- coming'.

With the creation of the *khālsā*, Guru Gobind Singh identified himself with the *khālsā-panth*. In his poetic composition '*Khālsā Mehmā*' he eulogizes the *khālsā* as the true image of his real self. He goes on praising them that with their help he won many battles and bestowed charity on the [subaltern] with their grace. With their help he could demolish en- emies and destroy evil. Due to them he became a scholar and assumed *guru*-ship though crores of others are present in the world.

III. HERMENEUTICAL DEVELOPMENT FROM *SACAKHAṆḌA* TO *KHĀLSĀ-PANṬH*

It is a logical development from spirituality to temporal-spirituality. The genesis of Sikhism was a revolt of conscience against brutality of the central Asian invaders and shameless effeminacy of the indigenous priestly class and the feudal exploiters. It was a movement of resurrection of sense of sensibility for the welfare of humanity irrespective of any rank, sex, religion, caste, race, ethnicity, and other worldly considerations. The Sikh philosophy was a ground-breaking bold resistance to wage perpetual war against tyranny. It was a solemn moral commitment and resolution for bearing historical responsibility. Medieval Islamic hegemonic aggression on Indian indigenous culture was actively resisted. Sikhism in the Gurus' period developed a distinct cultural identity. It assimilated essential ele- ments of alien cultures into the composite culture of the land. The Gurus infused martial spirit into the castrated, eunuchized, and effeminized sub- altern Indian masses. Sikhism was initiated as a social rejuvenation for the achievement of the highest state of spirituality (*sacakhaṇḌa*) and emanci- pation of mankind (*sarbat kā bhalā*). It was more of spirituality (*pīrī*) and

less of polity (*mīrī*). The socio-political dimension of struggle against tyranny (*ati*) was added in history due to socio-political exigencies of the tyrant Mughal emperors.

Every interpretation either of sacred scriptures or tradition is in flux. Scriptures are not of the age but of the ages because they propound eternal fluxional truth. Tradition stems from the scripture. I, therefore, propose to discuss the logic of development in the Sikh social philosophy from *sacakhaṇḍa* to the *khālsā-paṅth*. Though it started as a peaceful religious upsurge, yet it culminated in the militant civil society of the *khālsā-paṅth*.

Does Sikh Canon allow reinterpretation in the changed conditions? My answer to it is 'Yes'. Sikhism itself reinterpreted earlier Indian and Islamic traditions without repudiating their pristine ontic natures. Guru Nanak reinterpreted other traditions in the context of his times. He took full cognizance of the historical developments in those traditions. With the same logic we may also argue that the Sikh Canon can be reinterpreted, though the Gurus themselves reinterpreted and the tenth mentor, Guru Gobind Singh, apotheosized it. If it is not allowed, then it shall degenerate into a fossilized dogma that shall be a belief of the past having dogmatism and fundamentalism. In the Gurus' period there had been interpretations and reinterpretations of the Sikh Canon and the tradition. The contributors of the Sikh Canon had been reinterpreting the fossilized doctrines of the previous scriptures and made significant departures from them. Similarly the fluxional nature of Akālapurakh enjoins upon us to reinterpret the Sikh faith from time to time as to keep pace with the changing historical events without deviating from its original nature. We are to restructure the Sikh world-view with the help of accredited collective historical consciousness of the people. We may discard outlived religious institutions without setting aside their essential aspects but inner urge of communitarian solidarity and participatory social contact with the mundane world are to be carried out.

We can safely infer from the above discussion that the interpreter has to be better equipped to make us understand the ciphers in the 'sacred texts'. He should have developed intuitive insight for understanding the objective truth in the texts. Philosophical hermeneutics is a better technique because it enables us to draw all the possible logical implications of the statements recorded in the texts. Logical consistency and necessary relationships among the linguistic elements are being reasoned out in the process of understanding the ciphers. Hermeneutical technique for objective

understanding is directed toward truth. Such understanding of the interpreter is freed from authorial intention and cocoonery of subjectivity and solipsism. Philosophically all interpretations are reinterpretations of the original intuitions of the mystics and restructuring of earlier interpretations is done. This point can be substantiated from history. We find that the interpretation of Sikhism from Guru Nanak to Guru Hargobind is a diachronic development of the original faith.

We are confronted with a question whether there was a deviation in the Sikh social philosophy from Guru Hargobind to Guru Gobind Singh. My answer to it would be that there was no doctrinal deviation in the Sikh movement. It lands us into interpretation of another existential socio-political problem of power. Sikhism accepts neither over-indulgence in the temporal power nor does it want to cowardly withdraw from it. It advocates indolence. In this context Guru Arjundeva, the Vth Guru, says:

Seek I neither kingship nor liberation,
Let my mind repose at Thou lotus feet.²

The above ideal of renunciation (*saṅnyāsa*) from the temporal power and active disinterested struggle in the world for righteousness was fully realized in the *Dasam Granth*. Now it is self-evident that in Sikhism power is not to be exploited to harm the subaltern folk. In the Sikh faith use of force for the welfare of humanity is the highest form of *ahimsā* (non-violence). The use of the sword as force is for restoring social justice in society. This was a *sui generis* contribution of Sikh Gurus to the social thought of India. So violence is a defensive tool for giving new lease of life to the subaltern. In this context the most important point to note is simultaneous self-surrender and retaining ones historical identity. It is continuation of Rāmānuja's doctrine of self-surrender (*śarnāgatī*) and the *Tāntric* reaffirmation of reality of the human person. Earlier we find that Buddhism and Vedānta negated historical identity of the self as an actor (*kartā*) in the temporal world.

Sikhism has positively interpreted the concept of *saṅnyāsas*. It gave birth to the Sikh faith. Guru Nanak reinterpreted the cipher of the Indian concept of renunciation (*saṅnyāsa*). It is a key concept in Indian social philosophy, which has been reinterpreted by him. In the medieval times the concept created a chasm between this world and the created space of the other-world. This chasm does not fit in the pronounced dynamic onto-theology of Sikhism. It does not permit negation of the external world.

The self realizes its true ontic nature in the world. Its true nature is a precondition of all knowledge and judgements. It is how 'me' as *natura naturata* is transformed into 'I' (*natura naturans*). If the external world is negated, then historical reality of human action can't be performed. Like in the medieval ages, people would start withdrawing from the societal realities and the arduous responsibilities of human life.

Guru Nanak in the *mūlmantra* of his 'Japujī' used hyperbole of two terms '*nirbhau nirvair*', meaning thereby without any extraneous control and implies freedom from the fear of death. It warrants freedom of action and solidarity with others. When any type of cruelty occurs against any person(s), it is our moral duty to resist against a cruel person. Thus, the idea of active resistance to overcome evil and tyranny was already existent in the Sikh Canon. The Vith Guru and other subsequent Gurus only accentuated it. It was only a development toward the ideal social order.

Till the scripture was prepared in CE 1604, it remained a pacific and spiritual movement. Guru Nanak starts with a spiritual ideology of *sacakhanda* as a transcendent state of consciousness that was realized with the creation of the *khālsā* by Guru Gobind Singh in CE 1699. It was transformation of *manmukh* to *gurmukh* or *sant-sapāhī*. In other words, it was a development from a society of saints (*gurumukh*) to a militant civilized society of the '*sant-sapāhīs*' (*khālsās*). *Khālsā* is an ideal man of Guru Gobind Singh who is above sectarian and parochial outlook. He is the representative of *Akālapurakh* on the earth. He is guarantor of justice, destroyer of evil and tyranny in society. It was an institutionalized form of the Sikh society. This development in the Sikh tradition signifies the dynamic nature of Sikh metaphysics. The very essence (*tat*) remained unchanged but the tradition was transformed. With the culmination of this development the charismatic personality or personal *guru*-ship was dissolved and it was replaced with *śabda-guru* as the divine monarch and the *khālsā-panth* a democratic polity. Both are inseparably intertwined with a domineering note of the former.

From the point of view of socio-political milieu the concept of *king-guru* in the Sikh tradition in the times of Guru Arjundeva was an internal development within the Sikh social thought. In contrast to the tyrant Mughal emperors, the Sikh *saṅgat* started calling Guru Arjundeva as the true king (*sacā-pāṭṣā*) and the Mughal emperor as the false king (*jhūṭhā pāṭṣā*). This concept became more conspicuous after the martyrdom of Guru

Arjundeva in CE 1606. In the hands of Guru Hargobind, spirituality (*pīrī*) was supplemented with temporal power and polity (*mīrī*). Earlier Guru Nanak was also seized of the secular or historical realities of his times. When Guru Nanak personally met Emperor Barbar at Amanabad he vehemently criticized his invasion of India in CE 1520 but he had not taken resort to sword by that time. His truthful tongue was his sword that could pierce into Barbar's conscience. His hymns were a crusade against tyranny and injustice of the then Mughal emperor (see *GG*, pp. 722-3).

Guru Hargobind's active resistance reflects his spiritual voluntarism glued with temporality. From the existential viewpoint it was a complete commitment for mankind. For instance, Gobind Rāe, a nine-year-old lad, spontaneously appealing to his father (Guru Tegha Bahādur) for making the supreme sacrifice, signifies his historical sense of moral responsibility. The young Gobind Rāe was fully conscious that his father was sure to be beheaded but he could not turn his back on his moral responsibility toward human beings. Subsequently, he himself jumped into dangerous war situations in the battles that were imposed upon him. After the supreme sacrifice of his father, four sons, and mother, he identified himself with the entire *khālsā*. His *khanda*-baptism is complete identification of his will with the collective will of the *khālsā-panth*, the societal mirror of eternity. The collective will of the five beloved ones (*pañja piāre*) represents the whole humanity and eternity. And wills of the individuals are mirrors that derive inspiration from *Akālapurakh*. The *khanda*, thus, reconciles spirituality and temporality. The creation of the *khālsā* is concretized eternity in history. The recycling mythical *yugas* of Indian philosophy (*satya-yuga*, *tretā-yuga*, *dvāpra-yuga*, and *kali-yuga*) were demythologized and historicized into *satya-yuga* of the *Khālsā-panth*. It was yoking eternity to temporality. In the shoes of the *khālsā*, *Akālapurakh* writes his autobiography on the footprints of history.

The Sikh voluntarism stems from the individual's free will. The divine will executes its purposes through the realized person's will. The medieval Bhakti cult was precursor to the Sikh voluntarism. The first five Gurus prepared the background of Sikh voluntarism and the remainder Gurus actualized it in history. The Buddha was a voluntarist in the beginning but later he turned out to be spiritualist and ascetic. He did not wrestle with oddities of life. The *Gītā* is a philosophical treatise on voluntarism, but the laity has misinterpreted it. As a result of it they withdrew from the worldly responsibilities. The medieval bhaktas

again revived the voluntaristic trend that was consummated in the *khālsā* creation.

Sikhism, being an idealistic system, should be interpreted from the axionoetic standpoint in which spiritual values are given priority over empirical facts. The dynamic ontology of the Sikh Gurus reflects societal structure (*saṅgat*) constituted of individuals that is a miniature representation of *Akālāpurakh* on earth. Man as a unit in the social structure is projected as a concrete person in history. His historical actions are real and the societal relationships are based on the equality principle. Sikh Gurus critiqued earlier prevalent Hindu and Muslim societies, which were based on hierarchical caste- and race-based social structures. The subaltern masses were marginalized. The common masses were devoid of spiritual values in theory and practice. Thus, social philosophy of the Sikh Gurus is based on the societal relations and *saṅgat* and the '*khālsā*'. Revival of spiritual and historical identities was the *leitmotif* of the Sikh Gurus. But the tenth Guru, Gobind Singh, transformed '*saṅgat*' into the '*khālsā*' and eliminated the institution of the *masānds*, intermediaries between the guru and the *saṅgat*. The contemporary devout poet of Guru Gobind Singh, Bhāi Gurdāss (II) eulogizes the Guru, saying that he transformed the institute of the '*saṅgat*' into the *khālsā-panth* (*wāh wāh guru gobind singh saṅgat kīnī khālsā*).

Saṅgat is the holy assembly where *nāma* is recited. *Gurudwārā* was not the innovation of the Gurus. Instead they created *saṅgats*. The Sikh scripture had been trying to dissolve personal gurudom. With the creation of the institution of the *gurudwārās* there was resurrection of personality of the *guru*-ship.

In Buddhism the *Bhikshu* and the laity have different moralities. Unlike the Buddhist moral conduct, the moral conduct (*rahit maryādā*) of the *khālsā* is for all and sundry. Morality should emanate from the scripture itself. One is to work in the field as a farmer or tiller of the land. So labour is first. The *khaṇḍā*-baptized *khālsā* was attuned to *Akālāpurakh*. Earlier Gurus had been using conceptual or imaginary attributes (*kirtam nāma*) of the 'That' borrowed from Indian and Islamic scriptures, but Guru Gobind Singh changed all the divine attributes into historical attributes (*karma nāma*) that could affirm reality of the mundane world and human action. One's historical personal identity can be simultaneously in eternity and temporality. In the *Dasam Granth* the Sikh doctrines were realized in theory and praxis.

Mythical identity was congealed into historical identity. 'Me', 'I' and 'Thou' are glued into one *sui generis* groundless identity of *Akālāpurakh*. In Sikhism 'me' is first confronted with other fellow beings in the world when it is dominated by *haumai*. When 'me' is transformed into 'I' (*ātman*), then it identifies itself with *Akālāpurakh*. 'I' is a microcosm and 'Thou' is a linguistic construct of macrocosm so long as attributive imaginary and historical attributes persist, but at the transcendental level all the attributes get dissolved into the formless Becoming. All other distinctions are brushed aside. If he does not retain his personal identity and cuts off from temporality, he can't affirm societal realities. It is possible only if one simultaneously identifies with *Akālāpurakh* ('That') that is eternal 'Becoming'.

Once man has the transcendent experience in a state of ecstasy, he knows Truth. He can't buzz off from his existential moral responsibilities. Ethical voluntarism is possible only if ultimate ontic reality is dynamic and the external world that necessarily entails from its dynamic ontological nature. It is not to be presumed that intellect is denied. It is given secondary status as compared to will. It is further attuned to the cosmic law (*rta/hukam*) of dynamic Reality. The voluntarist has no other alternative, but to martyr to the cause of humanity. Aristotelian *akrasia* presumes an existential predicament for the will. Man of realized will is above it. In the case of martyr (*shaheed*) *akrasia* is redundant. Since Guru Arjundeve and Guru Tegha Bahādur had had experience of the Truth, so they did not have the fear of death. Their sacrifices made them immortal in the annals of history. They created an eternal value of self-sacrifice on the altar of truth.

For realizing the social ideal of unity there is a need of ethico-spiritual discipline. Man is required to do honest earning (*kirtam karnā*). Guru Nanak was a mendicant, but was not an ascetic (*saṅnyāsī*). His personality and philosophy are synthesis of asceticism and domesticity of a householder. Before he undertook his spiritual sojourns (*udāsīs*), he was employed in the provision-store (*modīkhānā*) of the Sultan at Sultānpur in the district Kapurthala (Punjab). And after his *udāsīs* to different parts of India and Islamic countries, he tilled the lands at Kartārpur (now in Pakistan). He is against exploitation and hoarding. As a voluntarist it was incumbent on his part to earn his bread and share with others. Gurus evolved the social institutions of free kitchen (*laṅgar*), *paṅgat*, *sevā*, and sharing one's earnings with others. There is no room for hoarders and drones like celibates and ascetics in the *khālsā-panth*. In the *khālsā*

society man's personal identity is recognized as a free person with a social and moral commitment for the amelioration of mankind.

Therefore, the trio scheme of meditative remembrance of the divine *nāma* (*nāma japanā*), honest hard earnings (*kirtam karnā*), and sharing goods with others (*waṇḍa chaknā*) are well known in the Sikh social philosophy. Guru Nanak says: (*ghāla khāi kichu hathahua dei/nānak rāhu pachānāhi sehi/GG*, p. 1245). Therefore, *nāma-simran* and *kirat-karnā* should go hand-in-hand. *Nāma-simran* has been democratized and secularized in the medieval Bhakti cult and this wave was continued in Sikhism.

It implies that mere spirituality will not do. One must do hard and honest labour by the sweat of ones brow. One is to work in the field as a farmer or tiller of the land. So hard labour is first. One should produce for others and share with them. One should not be only a consumer but also be a producer for others. One should lead an optimistic and dynamic life with altruistic ethical values (*nānak nāma caḥādī kalā, tere bhāne sarbat kā bhalā*). Free kitchen (*guru kā laṅgar*), *paṅgat* (equality) are to be practised irrespective of caste, colour, sex, creed and any other discriminatory considerations. Despite all these, one is to be vigilant of ones self-respect and independent historical identity.

It is true that man always hankers after hedonistic pursuits. He does not want to exert himself to swim with the tide of problematic dynamic life unless he develops the habit to do action. Thus, the concept of pleasure is a natural phenomenon in man. Not to speak of human beings, it is present in lower species as well. The only difference between lower species and human beings lies in the fact that man is at an advantageous stage because he can articulate the world of his own. The Gurus tried to balance bodily pleasures and spiritual bliss. *Yogic* practices tried to arouse *kuṇḍalini*, but the Gurus made *surati-sabda-yoga* as a means of transforming consciousness with the help of *nāma-simran*. The genesis of Sikh religion lies in overcoming oddities of life caused by the uncanny natural forces like floods, earthquakes and shortage of rains etc. It was also due to the tyranny of the tyrants. The underlying idea is to attain pleasure. Indian philosophy endorses this viewpoint. It does not lay emphasis on bodily pleasure but bliss (*ānand*) of the *ātman* that is the subtlest aspect of human existence. There is a qualitative difference between the pleasure of a pig and a realized self. At the end it can be said that the essence of the Sikh social philosophy is development of identity of the self in the

world. It is an endeavour to create an ideal man who could mirror eternity on the earth.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. *ehu visu sansāru tum dekhde ehu hari kā rūpu hai hari rūpu nadriālā ... /36/ 3 GG*, p. 922.
2. *rāju na cāhau mukti na cāhau manī priti carana kamalāre/ brahama mahesa sudha muni inḍrā mohi ṭhākura hī darsāre//GG*, p. 534.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Guru Arjandeva, (ed.), *Guru Granth Sāhib*, Amritsar: S.G.P.C., 1964.
 Randhir Singh, Bhai (ed.), *Shabdārtha Dasam Granth, III Volumes*, Patiala: Punjabi University.
The Bhagavadgīta, Gorakhpur: Gita Press, 1966.

Philosophy of Kabir

S.P. DUBEY

Professor & Head, Department of Philosophy, R.D. University, Jabalpur

Nothing very definite is known about Kabir's life. Most of the information about him is based on legendary sources. But his legendary life has Hindū prints. The earliest reference to Kabir is found in the *Bhakatamāla* (1585) of Nābhādās. Abul Fazl, in his *Ain-i-Akbarī* (1598) talks about Kabir as a monotheist (*Muā'hid*). That he was born of a Brāhmin widow, found by the Muslim weaver (*julāhā*) Nīrū near the Lahartārā pond of Varanasi, nurtured by Nīrū's wife Nīmā, married to Loī (Dhaniā, Ramajaniā), had a son (adopted?) named Kamāl (Nihāl) and a daughter Kamālī (Nihālī), was initiated by the Vaiṣṇava Saint Rāmānanda (1299–1410), spent some time with Shaikh Taqī at Manikapur and lived a humble life following his parental profession, etc. are all based on a number of legendary narrations. What is definite is that he was not literate, stayed mostly at Varanasi and died at Magahar (Dist. Basti of U.P.).¹ His floral remains were partly buried in a *majār* on the right bank of river Āmī at Magahar by Muslims and partly shifted to Varanasi where his Hindū fans, under the patronage of Rājā Bīr Singh, erected a *samādhi* (known as *Kabir-chaurā*). Later on, one of his disciples, Sukhadās, developed a Kabir-Math at this place. Malūkadās, another disciple of Kabir, shifted to Purī and got a memorial of the Guru constructed there as well. Another tomb of Kabir is said to be at Anantapur (in Awadh region of U.P.). Kabir's contemporaneity with Guru Nānak (1469–1538) and Sikandar Lodī (a Sultān of Delhi who visited Kāshī in AD 1494) is more or less unestablished. The most probable dates of the Saint are—birth in 1398 and *samādhi* in 1449 of the current era.

Although unlettered,² Kabir was well-versed in the Hindū and Islāmic traditions. He had great inter-cultural understanding. He used to give discourses on spiritual matters and members of both the communities formed the audience. The catholicity of his doctrines and the illumination of his mind influenced both Hindūs and Muslims. He often criticized the orthodoxies and decried narrow parochialism of these two religions and

concentrated on the figure of Rāma which, for him, symbolized the attributive as well as attributeless Reality. He preached a type of monotheism (*Muā'hid*). The most popular religious ideal of his time was Rāma whose form was found to be most suitable for Kabir. In the broader sense of the expression, he was a philosopher of religion and a social philosopher, opposing forced conversion and socio-religious orthodoxy. When asked by his supposed Guru to bring some milk for offering to the former's departed father, Kabir sat near a dead cow with green grass requesting her to yield milk. The delay caused anxiety and when questioned about the foolish act, he rebutted, if a dead person needs milk, why not milk a dead cow?

Kabir was a mystic of the highest order and one of the greatest mystic poet-saints of the country. His was an upaniṣadic mysticism having an overplus of knowledge, although not bereft of devotion. In fact he combines knowledge and devotion in an extraordinary style. Adhering to the *Nirguṇa* of the Advaitic tradition, he propagates the *bhakti*-cult of Rāmānanda where the caste-creed barriers are overcome.³ He was a central figure of the Saint tradition of medieval India. In his sayings he combined Sūfist, Tāntric, Buddhist and Bhakti traditions.

We have no anthology of works directly from Kabir's own hand. *Bijak* (Secret of Hidden Treasure) is a collection of Kabir's teachings by his traditional followers known as *Kabir-panthis*. The language of *Bijak* is Bhojpurī (or old Avadhī).⁴ It seems that Kabir had absolute control over the language. Language follows his thought. He has been able to express what is initially inexpressible. He uses *tatsam* (word of a particular language used in another in its original or pure form, e.g., *Amrit*, *ananta*) as well as *tadbhava* (a word which assumes different form in another language, e.g., *gāon*, *chām*) words. The latter, of course, are in abundance in his verses. He also makes use of *deśaja* terms (cf. *māṭī kahai Kumhār sūn*), as he was widely travelled. Arabic and Persian terms (such as *Khāliq*) are to be found in his sayings. His language is *sadhukkādī*, a mixture (*khichrī*), of several languages but is very powerful and a path-finder one. In fact he was a dictator of language. He has frequently used paradoxes (*ulatbānsīs*). The text has an overtone of cosmology and cosmogony, in Purāṇic style. Its first version is probably after one century of Kabir's death and after the *Ādigrantha* of Sikhs (composed by Guru Arjundeva in 1603-4; has about 239 couplets from Kabir). There are two versions of *Bijak*, namely, the Eastern and the Western one. The Western corpus has

Rājasthānī, Punjābī and Gujrātī shades and a clear Vaiṣṇava impact. The Eastern one, of course, has Banaras as its main seat and its Bandhogarh (Chattisgarh) extension (established by Dharam Dāss, a direct disciple of Kabir).

The earliest collection, in manuscript form, on which Shyam Sundar Das bases his edition of *Kabira-grānthāvalī* (pub. 1928) is of about AD 1505. The other belongs to AD 1824. This has inclination towards the Rājasthānī tradition of *Kabīrbānī* (cf. Dādūpanthī's *Pañca-vānī* of Rajjabji, containing the sayings of five saints, namely, Dādū, Kabīr, Haridās, Nāmdeo and Raidās). P.N. Tiwari's critical edition of *Kabira-grānthāvalī* (1961) is the best available text on Kabir till date. There is very little difference between these two editions except the number of verses.

Bijak has three major parts, namely, *Ramainī*, *Padāvalī* and *Sākhī*. *Ramainī* is the piece of composition consisting of metres having four, seven or eight lines (*catuspadī* or *caupāis*, *saptapadī*, *aṣṭapadī*, *dvādaśapadī* and the like) and has several rāgas for its forty-seven verses. As the term suggests, it revolves around the figure of Rāma (*Rāmāyanī*). It preaches social philosophy and spirituality. It also accounts for creation in the light of Rāma and through Gāyatrī. Kabir condemns the rites and ceremonies of the orthodox followers of a religion. *Sabad* or *padāvalī* (teachings of the Guru) part is the analysis of the nature of the *jīva* (soul) so as to realize its destiny. It proves the transitory nature of the world and directs man to dedicate himself to God. It combines knowledge and devotion in an unsurpassed manner. It, further, underlines the importance of the Guru (teacher) for getting salvation. *Māyā*, the major hurdle in the path of salvation, has been exposed by Kabir. It is deceitful (*thaginī*) and indescribable (*akatha*). The concept of *Brahman* has been made clear and the Advaitic theory of the Absolute has been followed in principle.⁵ This part has about four hundred verses in different *ragas*. *Sākhīs* are the witnessing records of Kabir's visualization of the Real. They deal with ontology and contain mighty truths. Kabir was a truly realized person and imbued with the true spirit of dedication to God. This section is the largest one and has around eight hundred verses dealing with the nature of mind, *Māyā*, Saint, Word, compassion, prayer and the like.

But the above divisions have been made later. Kabir himself did not write or speak systematically. Therefore, to look for a systematic philosophy in Kabir is not possible. However, by going through his *vānīs*, we can

formulate a few categories that may be conducive to our understanding of the Saint.

Before we make an attempt to present Kabir's thought in a somewhat systematic manner, we may rightaway summarize his teachings in a *ślokārdha*-style as follows:

The ultimate purpose of life is the vision or experience of the Absolute which brings about the supreme stage of *sahaja*, an inward union which imparts ineffable and eternal bliss. Those willing to pay the price transcend the cycles of birth and death and pass into a state of beatitude, infinite, eternal and ultimately inexpressible. Otherwise, the one born will die and shall be born again:

'jo ugyā so āthave, fūlā so kumhilāya'.⁶

This summary statement can be meaningful if, and only if, we develop an understanding of Kabir's principles and under the cast of philosophical categories. As said earlier, Kabir has offered a synthesis of religio-philosophical principles and was, above all, a mystic. Therefore, we find profundity as well as obscurity in his *vānīs*. His popularity, in isolated circles, is mainly because of some of his sayings like 'When I was, Hari was not, now Hari is and I am not.' Tagore's translations, based on K.M. Sen's Bengali versions of a good number of *Kabir-bānīs*, has made him known to the outside world. It is time when one can expose the integrated pattern of thought hidden in *Kabir-bānīs*.

For Kabir the meaning and purpose of human existence centre in the divine existence—the eternal One, who is the creator etc. of this world and who reveals himself in the creation, shows the path of salvation to man. Man is deluded by the transitory attractions of the world (*Māyā*) and, with the touchstone of the *sadguru*, is able to realize his union with the Absolute. He must respond to the Word (*sabad*) made manifest in all that is around him and meditate on the name of God. Finally he reaches the ultimate (*sahaja*)—the ineffable union with the eternal One in which earthly bonds are dissolved and the cycle of death and rebirth is brought to an end, along with individual existence.

For a discussion of the Sant's *siddhānta* or doctrinal system we may concentrate, as we usually do in other such cases, on (1) the nature of God, (2) Individual, (3) *Māyā*, (4) Divine Expression, and (5) Discipline leading to salvation.

Unity is writ large in Kabir's estimate of *GOD*. This is based on his own unitary experience rather than on doctrinal or textual tenet. 'There is no second', is the cornerstone of the edifice of *Kabir-siddhānta*. Kabir uses a variety of names for the eternal One, used both in Hindū and Muslim traditions, namely, Rām, Govind, Keśava, Śiva, Allāh, Khudā, Karīm, Rahīm, Rab, Huzūr etc. His intention is not to propagate an eclectic variety of polytheism, for his God is the Supreme Reality which lies beyond the multiple appearances. His purpose in using different names is to stress the fact that God is one; one may prefer to address Him as per ones convenience (*ekam sat, viprā bahudhā vadañti*):

'One Rām, I see in everything, says Kabir from experience.'

'I have said numberless times, Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Mahesh; Rām-nām is the essence of Reality: this teaching is for all.'

This unity, however, is not of monism but of monotheism. The total range of Kabir's thought does not equate his God with that of Śaṅkara. He lays stress on the divine immanence and on the importance of this immanent revelation in the quest for salvation.

It seems that Kabir's thought is best understood if one makes an approach to him essentially as a mystic. 'Duality' is to be destroyed, but it is to be a swallowing up in a mystic union rather than the knowledge of the essential unity of all, which denies ultimate reality to all phenomenal existence. The creation provides a vital revelation of God, and the physical phenomena which impart this revelation are to be regarded as expressions of God's grace. God is not only in creation but also beyond it. The ultimate essence of God is beyond all human categories. Only in experience He can be truly known through Guru's grace:

agama agocara rahai nirantara, gur kirpā te lahie.

—*Gauḍī*, 48.

Further:

*sāt samudahin masu karau, kalam karau bana rāi,
baṣudhā kāgadu jau karau, Hari jasū likhanu na jāi.*

—*Saloku*, 81.

Kabir's own expressions of the experience show that the One of whom he speaks is a personal God. His emphasis on divine grace makes this abundantly clear. At times he uses monistic terminology. Monistic

concepts have certainly influenced him, but the structure of monistic thought has no place in Kabir's concept of God. Likewise, strict pantheism also has no place in Kabir. For him immanence is accompanied by the notion of transcendence.

A point to be noted in Kabir's thought is that his One God is both *saguna* (manifest) and *nirguna* (unmanifest):

'*gun men nirguna, nirguna men gun.*'

—*Padāvalī*, 180.

For Kabir, God in his primal aspect is *nirguna* (attributeless, absolute and unconditioned). However, God has made himself available to human beings: 'The one for whom I was searching has come to meet me.' His God is endowed with attributes that bring Him within the compass of our understanding and experience. But the attributive character of God does not bring Him to the anthropomorphic notion of the divine. The term '*saguna*' is restricted to the immanent aspect of the Absolute.

Kabir treats God as the Creator, Sustainer and Destroyer of the world. He is also the Sovereign God. Whatever God has determined, that will take place. It cannot be decreased or increased by one mustard seed. Kabir's Lord is omnipotent, eternal, ineffable but also takes initiatives for the freedom of mankind. Unless God has mercy, the individual cannot be free from *māyā*.

The nature of the *individual*, as per Kabir's statements, is dependent on his allegiance either to world or God. The nature of the individual in the condition of attachment to the world is the state of pride, self-centredness and the like. One must transcend from such conditions to attain release from the world.

Mind or psyche (*man*) is the key-concept to an understanding of human nature. If and when cleansed, the mind becomes a fitting abode of God. Through the faith of the mind Hari is to be obtained. But, if uncontrolled, it will make the individual revolve in the *karma-saṁsāra*. When Kabir uses the term '*man*' it is inclusive of other organs of *antaḥ-karāna* (namely, *buddhi*, *citta* and *ahaṁkāra*). It is the seat of evil as well as good (love for God). It is the mind as well as the heart (*hirdaya*, *dil*). At times it is used for 'soul' as well. It is the faculty with which one thinks, decides and feels. It is extremely forceful and can destroy the balance of the body if allowed to flutter in the winds of sensual desires. It can be controlled when ego is destroyed. Kabir says that by casting aside our *aham* (pride),

the Guru unites us with Rāma. He further says that he who understands his *aham* perceives the door to salvation.

The outward expression of an unrestrained mind is, traditionally, five-fold, namely, *kāma* (passion), *krodha* (anger), *lobha* (covetousness), *moha* (attachment) and *ahaṁkāra* (pride). These five basic impulses usually earn adverse *karmas* and protract the cycle of transmigration. Kabir calls them 'the snares of Yama'. The unregenerate person, after his physical death, moves in the recurring cycle of *karma-saṁsāra*. But the one who has perfected his union with God, has spiritual death. For him the physical death is not fearful; in fact it paves the way to meet the One.

A wayward man, dominated by sensual desires, is inevitably involved in *Māyā*. *Māyā* is, for Kabir, a harlot and lures people with blandishments. But it is not cosmic illusion. The world indeed is *māyā*, but it is not unreal, although not permanent. Those who accept the world as an object of value, and seek fulfilment in attachment to worldly things are victims of *māyā*. *Māyā* is '*anjana*' (black collyrium applied to the eye), the symbol of darkness and untruth. God, on the other hand, is called '*niranjana*', the one free from darkness and one with Truth.

Māyā, of course, is the work of God, for it consists in the creation and is inseparable from it. It is virtually an interpretation of the creation, or, rather, a misinterpretation or misunderstanding of its nature and purpose. The creation is both a snare and a revelation of God. What matters is the individual's attitude or response to it. If one perceives the world as the revelation of God, he is on his way to salvation. If, on the other hand, he becomes a victim of his desires and impulses, he is ruined. Thus *māyā* is a double-edged weapon, destructive as well as soteriological. It works as we make use of it.

We have already noted the immanent nature of God in Kabir's thought. Even our body and heart are his abode and the divine expresses himself through them. The importance of communication between the divine and the man is obvious. The indwelling God should speak to the individual through his 'heart'. This is a common doctrine of the *Santa*-tradition. But Kabir has something special to say in the context. His *sat* (truth) communicates in a four-dimensional manner. These four components are: (i) *sabad* (word), (ii) *nām* (name), (iii) *guru* (divine preceptor), and (iv) *dayā* (grace). These four aspects are rather different aspects of a single all-embracing concept—*sat*. These words are, at times, used as if synonymous. All of them are expressions of God. All these are used to expound

the nature, content and method of the divine communication to the individual, of the divine truth which brings salvation when appropriated. All of them share a fundamental identity. To understand the way the divine presents himself to the individual understanding, we must recognize their importance.

Sabad is a *Sant*-currency. It has come to Kabir from Nāth usage. It is used in conjunction with *anahad* (unlimited) and refers to the mystical sound which is heard at the climax of the *Hatha-yoga* practices. Its vibrations are audible only to the adept who have been able to arouse the *Kuṇḍalini* and have caused it to ascend along the *sūṣumnā*. Kabir seems to have distinguished *sabad* and *anahat sabad*. The former is the divine 'word', given in the depth of the individual's soul. The practice of *Hatha Yoga* is not necessary for it, as in the latter case.

At times *sabad* stands by itself, but it is frequently linked with the Guru. In the latter case it is *gurmati*, *Gurmukhi* and *guru kī sākhī*. All that is revealed by God through Guru is *sabad*.

'Hari jī kriyā kare jau apanī, tau gur ke sabadi samāvahige.'

—*Mārū*, 4.3

The most precise expression of the divine truth is in the *nām* (name). For Kabir, *Rām-nām* is the essence of Reality, the 'tilak' of the three worlds. *Nām* could be replaced by *sabad* without any change in the meaning. But at times, the *gurmati* appears as a medium of communication and the *nām* is the object of communication. However, both remain expressions of the divine truth.

The importance of Guru is well-known in the *Bhakti* tradition. The Guru of Kabir is a combination of the Buddhist Tāntric tradition, inherited by the Nāth-cult and that of the southern cult of devotion. In the former, the master occupies the position of an exalted authority and his word is 'word'. In the latter, he is the transmitter of the divine truth, as available in the tradition. Kabir's *guru* or *satguru* represents the 'inner voice', the light shed in the innermost recess of human being:

satgur kī mahimā anat anat kiyā upakār,
lochana anat ughāriyā, anat dikhāvanahār.

—*Sākhī*, 1.3

Kabir maintains that God reveals his truth in and through *sabad*, *nām* and *guru*. He who perceives it and submits to it finds salvation. But Kabir also

feels that very few people perceive it. It is either due to their unripe *karmas* or due to lack of divine grace. Even the faculty of perception is a divine grace. Only when the Lord bestows his grace, the *guru* is found, and by Guru's grace a new understanding is gained to visualize the Absolute. *Dayā* (mercy), *kripā* (compassion), *prasād* (propitiousness), and *anugraha* (favour) are different names of one and the same activity in *Kabir-bānī*. Why the grace is hidden from one and revealed to another is a question that cannot be answered with ease. Human understanding and logic fail here. There is much that is hidden from our understanding. Sri Aurobindo has rightly observed that such cases belong to the Logic of the Supermind.

Admitted that grace of God is beyond our control, but Kabir also admits that we must do something to get the salvation. We need not be fatalists. The effort has to be made. The path to salvation has two sides, grace and effort (*puruṣārtha*). What efforts must one make? This leads us to a consideration of Kabir's view of the *discipline* (*sādhanā*). Kabir says: 'repeat the name of the Beloved, cease the mention of others and pass over the terrible ocean'. *Sādhanā* is the individual's response to the imparted *sabad*.

The goal for Kabir, as mentioned earlier, is the union with God. The paths taken by human beings are at times negative and misleading. Kabir warns against them. He condemns the so-called sectarian paths, infected by caste-creed pride, religiosity and the like. His emphasis is on interior religions which find expression in love and devotion. Loving devotion to God is required of those who cherish salvation. Real *bhakti* is a heroic path, open to those who renounce the comforts and pleasures of this life, who have controlled their passions and desires. At times one has to sacrifice oneself like a *satī*, to unite with the beloved in the life-after. Thus a kind of synthesis of the Yoga and Sūfi traditions is visible in Kabir's idea of devotion.

Meditation on the nature and qualities of God is the core of Kabir's discipline. Remembrance of God by mind, word and action (*manasā*, *vacasā* and *Karmaṇā*) leads one to the union. *Satsaṅg* helps us in realizing the importance of *nām-smaraṇa*.

The *nāma-sumiran* results in experience which develops as meditation and the individual is drawn to the divine. Union with God (*milan*, *paricaya*) is the goal, the ultimate end and purpose of existence. Here the individual

is united with God. But this state eludes description. As a consequence of the union, man is able to transcend the transmigratory process.

Thus we find that Kabir introduces us to the ineffable spiritual quest. He does it through worldly images and symbols. His immense popularity throughout India is due to his mystical perception and his maverick nature, a synthesis that is the characteristic of the *julāhā* from Varanasi who has been hailed by many as the 'man for all seasons', the universal man. He was hailed by the Hindus as a *bhakta*, by Muslims as a '*pīr*', by Sikhs as a '*bhagaī*', an *avatāra*, a champion of Hindū-Muslim unity, a bold critic of the superstitions and rituals, an enemy of all kinds of social discriminations. He is a rare person to have appeared on the platform of human history and represents all that is noble and challenging in our Indian tradition.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. '*masi kāgada chuvo nahīn kalam gahyo nahi hāth.*'
2. There are *samādhis* at Puri and Ratanpur as well. The cenotaph at Magahar, erected in AD 1450 by Nawab Bijli Khan mentions the date as 'brighter *ekādashi* of *Agahan* in Vikram era 1505' (corresponding to AD 1448).
3. '*jāti-pāti pūchai nahi koi Hari ko bhaje so Hari kā hoi.*'
4. 'My speech is of the East (*Pūrab*).' Kabir.
5. '*jala men kumbha kumbha me jala hai*'.
6. cf. *Gītā* (II.27): '*jātasya hi dhruvo mrityuh ...*'

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Chaturvedi, P., *Kabir Sāhitya kī Parakh*, Bharati Bhandar, Allahabad, 1964.
 Das, Shyam Sundar, *Kabir Granthāvalī*, NPS, Varanasi, 1928, 1968.
 Dwivedi, H.P., *Kabir*, Hindi Grantha Ratnakar, Bombay, 1964.
 Scott, D.C., *Kabir Mythology*, Delhi, 1985.
 Sen, K., *Medieval Mysticism of India*, Luzac & Co., London, 1936.
 Shah, Ahmed, *The Bijak of Kabir*, Hamirpur, 1917.
 Singh, Pushpapal, *Kabira-granthāvalī* (with comments), Ashok Pub., Delhi, (Eighth ed.), 1988, p. 559.
 Tagore, R.N., *One Hundred Poems of Kabir*, Macmillan, London, 1961.
 Tiwari, P.N., *Kabir*, Allahabad, 1961; Eng. tr. by Uniyal, J.P., National Book Trust, New Delhi, 1968.
 Varma, R.K., *Sant Kabir*, Sahitya Bhavan, Allahabad, 4th print, 1957.

Philosophy of the Haridāsa Saints

V.N. SHESHAGIRI RAO

Professor of Philosophy, Mysore University, Mysore 570 006

This topic of my paper is perhaps, too unwieldy. Yet an attempt is made here to give in brief an overall picture of the Haridasa movement, on the basis of available regional literature.

The Haridāsas are the Vaiṣṇava saints who preached the cult of *Bhakti* in Karnāṭaka, roughly from the 15th to 19th century AD. Their teachings are in the vernacular Kannaḍa. The philosophic basis of their teachings is Śrī Madhvāchārya's (13th century AD) Dvaita Vedānta.

Karnāṭaka is a land of great antiquity. Its literature in Kannaḍa is more than 1500 years old. In this period, Haridāsa literature has carved out a niche for itself. It lasted for nearly 500 years. It is mostly devotional and musical literature. Nearly 200 Haridāsas have enriched this literature by their loving contribution. The part played by the Haridāsas in the religious and cultural life of Karnāṭaka is highly significant. Their contribution lies in spreading the soul-stirring and soul-saving message of true love and devotion in simple Kannaḍa. They brought divinity and dignity to Kannaḍa language. They visualized a philosophy of universal application. They practised what they preached. This makes their thought interesting and attractive. The Haridāsas were never sectarians as they invited all people into their fold. This is not blind following of religious practices. They verified the validity of their religious principles by the litmus test of rational practice. In this, the Haridāsas can be classed with the Śiva-Śaraṇa saints of Karnāṭaka, the Vaiṣṇava Ālwārs and the Śaiva Nāyanmārs of Tamil Nadu, the mystic saints of Maharashtra and the Christian seers like Saint John of the Cross, Saint Theresa, Thomas-A-Kempis, Saint Augustine and so on. The most popular Haridāsas are: Śrīpādarāja, Śrī Vyāsarāja, Śrī Vādirāja, Śrī Purandara Dāsa, Śrī Kanakadāsa, Śrī Rāghavendra Tīrtha, Śrī Vijayadāsa, Śrī Prasanna Venkatadāsa, Śrī Gopāladāsa and Śrī Jagannāthadāsa.

II

Among the Haridāsas, two congregations or *Kūtas* could be distinguished: (1) *Vyāsa Kūta*, and (2) *Dāsa Kūta*. The saints of *Vyāsakūta* wrote commentaries in Sanskrit, on the works of Śrī Madhva and emphasized upon the necessity of acquiring scriptural knowledge and devotion to God. They were great dialecticians who defended Śrī Madhva's philosophy of Dvaita against the onslaught of the opponents. Śrī Śrīpādarāja, Śrī Vyāsarāja, Śrī Vādirāja, Śrī Vijayendra and Śrī Rāghavendra Tīrtha primarily belong to *Vyāsakūta*. But the saints of *Dāsakūta* preferred to write in colloquial Kannada and taught the truths of Dvaita Vedānta to the common folk and thus spread the message of *bhakti*. They were interested more in the propagation of *bhakti* rather than in the subtleties of polemics. They were Śrī Purandara Dāsa, Śrī Kanakadāsa, Śrī Vijayadāsa, Śrī Prasanna Venkatadāsa. Śrī Rāghavendra Tīrtha wrote both in Sanskrit and Kannada and may be said to belong to both the congregations.

III

A broad outline of Dvaita Vedānta, which serves, as a background to the philosophy of the Haridāsas may now be given. Dvaita Vedānta has been one of the great philosophical traditions of our country. The Sanskrit word '*Dvaita*' means 'two' or duality. Śrī Madhva classifies the whole of existence into two categories: (1) independent (*Svatantra*), and (2) dependent (*Asvatantra*). Only God (or Brahman) is independent and all other entities are absolutely dependent on him, for their everything—existence, action and knowledge (*svarūpa satta*, *pravritti satta* and *pramiti satta*).

Madhva's conception of reality is wider and includes all human experiences in it. A traditional Sanskrit verse¹ attributed to Śrī Vyāsātīrtha summarizes the main tenets of Madhva's philosophy, as under:

1. God (Śrīhari) is the supreme person.
2. The world is real and not an appearance.
3. The distinction between soul, matter and God is ultimate and philosophical (*pāramārthika*).
4. All souls are absolutely dependent on God and hence they are the servants of God.
5. All souls differ from each other. There is gradation among souls.
6. Liberation is the realization of the soul's innate bliss.
7. Pure devotion is the means to liberation.

8. There are three means of knowledge—perception, inference and verbal testimony.
9. The existence of God can be known only through the Vedas.

IV

Śrī Madhva is against drawing a distinction between scriptural *Mahāvākyas* (great sayings) and *Sādhāraṇa vākyas* (ordinary sayings). All scriptural statements, according to him, are equally important. They have the same goal of revealing the true nature of Brahman. All the scriptures, viz., the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Bhagavad-Gīta, the Brahma Sūtras, Pāncharātra Āgamas, the epics and the Purānas, should be taken into account while arriving at the nature of reality. It is also wrong, according to Madhva, to divide the scriptures into (1) *Karma Kānda*, and (2) *Jñāna Kānda*. All these are to be taken in their totality. In tune with this approach of Madhva, the Haridāsas derived their content and inspiration from all scriptures, which dwell on the concept of *Vishṇu*.

V

The Haridāsa literature of Dāsakūta, which consists of poems written in the regional language Kannada, can be classified as under:²

- (i) 13th century AD—Śrī Naraharītīrtha, the direct disciple of Śrī Madhvāchārya. This may be regarded as the creative period.
- (ii) 15th to 16th century AD—Śrīpādarāja, Śrī Vyāsarāja, Śrī Vādirāja, Śrī Purandaradāsa, Śrī Kanakadāsa. This may be regarded as the classical period.
- (iii) 17th century AD—Śrī Rāghavendra tīrtha and Vedesha tīrtha. This may be regarded as the stimulative period.
- (iv) 18th to 19th century AD—Śrī Vijayadāsa, Śrī Prasanna Venkatadāsa, Śrī Gopāladāsa, Śrī Jagannāthadāsa. This may be regarded as the didactic period.

VI

Śrī Narahari tīrtha, the direct disciple of Śrī Madhva was a pontiff; he came from Orissa and immediately succeeded Śrī Madhva. He was a great *Virāgi* and hence was respected by all. He condemned hypocrisy and pretensions. He advocated complete surrender to God. He may be

regarded as the forerunner of the Dāsakūta movement. He is supposed to have written three poems in Kannaḍa. One warns against double talk and pleads for sincere prayer to God.

How I was duped, how I was duped!
How I was duped, how I suffered on earth
Save me, without break, oh Raghukula Tilak

Servitude to God in speech!
Lordship in practice
Desire for wealth, for sensuality
Negligence to God, shamelessness in treachery to the preceptor

You care for whom?
Conceal wealth for whom?
Wife, children, friends
They never accompany you in death

Therefore, Śrī Narahari tīrtha appeals to the souls:

Pray to Hari, saluted by Brahma etc.
Give up sensuous pleasure, the worst
Pray to Śrīṣha, Śrī Raghupati
Pray to Hari saluted by good people.³

The other one beseeches the Lord to save finite souls. Self-surrender is the life-breath—the soul submits:

Oh Hari is it right
Why no kindness towards faithful servant?

Powerful as you are, resolved to neglect the devotee
In vain, your title, the saviour of devotee

Okay, do as you think fit, my Lord
I am at your feet, oh Narahari.⁴

VII

Śrī Śrīpādarāja (AD 1451) may be regarded as the towering personality, who after Śrī Narahari Tīrtha heralded the *Dāsakūta* movement. The inspiration for the origin of the Haridāsa movement, of course, can be traced to the multi-faceted genius, Śrī Madhvāchārya's *Dvādasha Stotras* which are sonnets in praise of God, Śrī Krishna. They are a flow of playful deeds of the Lord, set to prayerful music. In them, surging emotions emerge from verse to verse like honey, sweet and pithy. They contain profound religious and metaphysical truths. Śrīpādarāja has deep reverence and great admiration for the staunch realist, Śrī Madhvāchārya, his *ādiguru*.

Śrīpādarāja was the preceptor of Śrī Vyāsa-Tīrtha, the astute champion of Dvaita-Vedānta, after Śrī Jayatīrtha. Śrīpādarāja was the pontiff of a monastery at Mulbagal, in the Kolar district of Karnataka. He was a great recluse and *Avadhūta*. He had the royal patronage of the king Sāluva Narasimha of the Vijayanagar empire. He was highly respected by scholars. He wrote devotional compositions in praise of God, dedicated to Raṅga-Vithala. Both his career as a pontiff and his influence on the masses were remarkable.

Śrīpādarāja was well versed in the Hindu Sastras. He was particularly fond of the great epics, Rāmāyaṇa and Mahābhāratha. Bhāgavata appealed to him most. He often refers to epics and puranas and profusely quotes from them. His philosophy is a '*triveni saṅgama*' triune union of literature, Vedānta and music.

Ignorance and egotism, Śrīpādarāja says are the great enemies of humanity. They should be won over. But how? Through the knowledge and love of God—asserts Śrīpādarāja. God is the supreme reality. There is no other reality higher than God. God is of the nature of love. He is all-knowing and all-powerful, all-pervading and all-perfect. He is the only independent reality. The self or Jīva is real and not a fiction of anybody's imagination, not even God's. He is as real as God. In contrast to God, Jīva is little knowing, atomic and limited. In his pristine purity Jīva is of the nature of bliss. But his consciousness and bliss are limited. In this sense the Jīvas are entirely dependent on God. They are the servants of God (Haridāsas)—asserts Śrīpādarāja.

Śrīpādarāja upholds the doctrine of *bheda* as propounded by Śrī Madhva. He says: 'At least now you know the doctrine of *bheda*. Raṅga Vithala will enable you to taste his mastership and grant you the highest state (*pada*)'.⁵ He further proceeds:

Knowing world and *pancha bhedas* as real
 Giving up love and aversion
 Hearing the sportive deeds of God (Hari)
 I knew him as knowable only through the Vedas.⁶

He offers obeisance to his *ādiguru* Śrī Madhva thus: 'refuting *Māyāvāda* propagated on earth, only Madhva muni showed the philosophic path (*tattva mārga*) to the straightforward people'.⁷ 'That the all-in-all God, the world—is falsehood.' Madhva criticized this view of the Advaitins. He showed that the all-in-all almighty, the world along with the communion of gods are real.⁸ This stand of Śrīpādarāja is backed by the arguments Śrī Madhva advances in favour of the reality of the world of objects and situations. The world cannot be declared as unreal on the ground of its cognizability or *drśyatva* as contended by the Advaitins in as much as the mutability of empirical objects (*anityatva*) cannot be confounded with *bādhyatva* (sublatibility). Variation is not certainly cancellation. One cannot disprove the strong and stubborn world, without standing firmly on the ground.⁹

Another significant aspect of Dvaita Vedānta is its pluralism. It rejects outright the non-dualism of the individual self and Brahman, advocated by Advaita system.¹⁰ Every soul is unique, every object in the world is unlike the other.¹¹ Madhva objects to the Advaitins' explanation of the plurality of selves as due to functioning of adjuncts (*upādhis*). He says that such an explanation is riddled with contradictions. For, a question may be asked: are the adjuncts real or illusory? If they are real, then results the dualism of self and its adjuncts. If they are illusory, then Madhva asks: how could an adjunct, which itself is illusory set up an appearance of a false self?¹² Hence the plurality of finite selves is to be admitted as a fact. Thus pluralism, as a sound philosophical standpoint stands vindicated.

The realistic and pluralistic trend of Dvaita Vedānta ends up in all possible thoroughness, in theism. Madhva argues for theism in a frontal manner. If the external world is a show of illusions and if the distinction between God and the finite selves is unreal, then the indubitable affirmation of God becomes spurious and insecure. God would then become an investor of illusions. God who is exalted as supreme and perfect, stands discredited, when he is identified with the finite self. Hence Paramātman (God) is different from the individual self (Jīvātma). Thus, the souls and

the world are taken to be real and different from God and among themselves. The theism of Madhva, further, is based not merely on reason but also on scriptural revelation. It is the oft-quoted statement of Madhva, that God can be known only through scriptural authority.¹³ Thus, Madhva coordinates realism and pluralism with theism and builds up a powerful case for theism.

The goal of the Jivas consists in surrendering their finite wills to God's absolute will. God could be realized only through unadulterated devotion (*amala bhakti*) and the grace of God. Śrīpādarāja, depicts in vivid terms, how ignorance of man concerning God puts one to great hardship.

Being ignorant of you, for infinite time I passed through
 many suffering
 Being ignorant of my dependence on you for infinite time
 I became stupid
 Being unable to kiss your feet for infinite time I pained a lot
 What merit for infinite time has made my mind descend on you?
 Please look after me well, in kindness, save me
 Oh! the Lord of the forsaken, Śrīraṅga Vithala.¹⁴

Śrī Śrīpādarāja's prayer to God runs thus:

Nothing else do I ask thee Oh Lord
 Be seated in the bower of my heart
 Let my head bend low at thy feet
 Let my eyes be fixed on thee
 Let my ears listen to thy songs
 And let me smell the flower that is offered to thee, Oh Lord
 My tongue, let it praise thee alone
 And my hands be folded in reverence to thee
 My feet be engaged in visiting holy places
 And grant me the power to meditate upon thee.
 Let my intelligence dance in thee
 Let me obtain, Oh Ranga
 The association of devotees and
 Shower thy grace on me, Oh Vithala Hari.¹⁵

Śrīpādarāja submits his will to God and surrenders:

I shall be as you keep me Oh my Lord
 Greatful world bows to your lotus feet, Lord Hari.¹⁶

The devotional songs of Śrīpādarāja are lovely, enchanting and deep and keep up the promise of spiritual growth and development of man. The canvas of the poems is wide, the topics plural and the issues, ethical. His poems have a freshness and fragrance of ideas. They go deep into the inner realities of life. They are full of word prosidy. They are aesthetically superb. They are flooded with *navarasas*. They have depth of insight, elegance, a sensitive awareness of faith, inspiration and feeling. They are thoughtful and devotion-stimulating. In them there is a journey from literature to religious devotion. Śrīpādarāja was a talented saint with vision and mission. According to him, literature should be pursued for truth, about life and living. He exhorts to live life to its fullest. The appearance of man on this planet is itself a rare act of God's goodness and kindness—he asserts.

For Śrī Śrīpādarāja morality was foremost. His poems provide a code of ethics and conduct. He stressed the need for cultivating moral life and devotion to God. He was for unflinching performance of religious and ethical duties as ordained by the scriptures. He made a sustained effort to remove feigned detachment (*abhāva vairāgya*).

Before Śrīpādarāja came on the scene, everything including rituals regarding worship of God, in Sadvaishṇava tradition was under the broad sweep of Sanskrit language. The spread of bhakti in the colloquial Kannāḍa undertaken by Śrīpādarāja has been a revolutionary one in that Kannāḍa or for that matter any other regional language was considered to be a thing in the air. It was considered an insult even to speak in Kannāḍa after a bath. Śrīpādarāja had very keenly noticed this and thought that Kannāḍa should be given pride of place in every activity whether in religious discourses or offer of prayers etc. When Śrīpādarāja was in Śrīraṅgam, he had keenly observed that Tamil was all-in-all and everything was expressed in Tamil. In fact, the teachings of the revered Ālwārs were in Tamil and the language was raised to the status of divinity.

Though Śrīpādarāja was a great Sanskrit scholar, out of sympathy for the general folk, he preached the philosophy of devotion through Kannāḍa songs. He did not give room to the so-called Sanskrit-ego. He expressed the essence of Hinduism in general and Dvaita-Vedānta in particular in chaste and elegant Kannāḍa. By doing so he paved the pioneering ground for other Haridāsas, who came after him. It is really a path-breaking work.

VIII

Śrī Vyāsarāja (1478–1539) was the worthy pupil of Śrīpādarāja, the doyen of Haridāsa movement. When Dvaita-Vedānta was sinking under the heavy attack of the Advaitins and the Naiyāyikas, Śrī Vyāsarāja appeared on the scene. He filled a new life into Dvaita-Vedānta and defended it by writing classics like *Nyāyāmṛita*, *Tarka Tāṇḍava*, *Tātparya Chandrikā*, etc. He was the *kulaguru* to Narasa Nāyaka, Vīra Narasimha, Krishnadeva Rāya and Achyutarāya of the Tuḷuva dynasty of Vijayanagar. He trained the stalwarts of the citadel of Dvaita-Vedānta like Śrī Vādirāja, Śrī Vijayendra, Śrī Puraṇḍaradāsa, etc. His influential guidance was felt in Āndhra also. It is strongly believed that Śrī Vyāsarāja initiated Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu of Bengal into the details of Vaishṇavism.¹⁷ The Puṣṭi school of *Bhakti* of Vallabha also owes much to the Vaishṇava *Bhakti* as preached by Śrī Vyāsa Tirtha. He gave encouragement and invaluable guidance to his disciples in spreading *bhakti* and the philosophy of Śrī Madhva. In short, he moulded, nourished and groomed the whole of dāsa literature.

Śrī Vyāsarāja composed innumerable Kannāḍa songs. He wrote his poems and songs under the signet or *aṅkita* Śrī Krishṇa or Sirikrishṇa. He held liberal views in religious and social matters. He was a much respected figure and established a centre of learning at Hampi, which later became a university for the study of ancient lore. He was chiefly responsible for the awakening of religious consciousness of the time. He opened the floodgates of spiritual reformation and expressed lofty ideas and ideals in simple language. He instilled new hope and confidence in each and every individual who came into contact with him. He contributed a lot individually and through his disciples towards a better understanding and appreciation of the religious, social and cultural heritage of Karnataka in particular and India in general.

Vyāsarāja, the saint-philosopher was an ardent follower of Śrī Madhva. He has all praise for his Āchārya. He sings:

How can I praise you, the apex of the hermits
Master Madhvāchārya, the stalwart of sainthood
In the third incarnation you came to explain the three worlds
As hermit you prayed to the greatest of the great
You installed at Udupi, Śrī Krishṇa
And refuted the systems of the opponents,
Oh! stalwart of the saints Poornaprajña.¹⁸

Śrī Vyāsarāja continues further and pays respects to Śrī Madhva thus:

Thirty seven were the books
You wrote for the good people
And established that the world of *bheda* is transcendental
You the servant of magnanimous Śrī Krishṇa.

Next he prays for the mercy of God, which is a must for the release of the jīva:

Never do I fear if endless are my faults
Since endless is thy grace, oh Lord
When thy kindness, oh God, is endless, eternal
Never do I fear for my countless guilts
My lord Śrī Hari, if greatest are my crimes
Never do I fear.

Does not the neem in contact with sandal
Become the sandal and remain neem no more:
Does ever a mother discard her child, guilty though it be?
What more do I want from thee, oh Lord
Than being called thy devotee?
Am I not satisfied with Lord Śrī Krishṇa
The vast ocean of grace?¹⁹

Śrī Vyāsarāja deplors the miserable state of the jīva:

Like the gnat caught up in the honey,
I have become bound by family noose
Like the fish running after the flesh in the bait
I have been duped in vain.²⁰

In what does real blindness consist? Certainly not in the blindness of physical eyes! Śrī Vyāsarāja says: 'The person who does not see the lord in his inner self is really congenitally blind.'²¹

'To the wise man, there is the Vaikuntha, here alone; he could worship Śrī Hari everywhere.'²²

IX

Śrī Vādirāja Tīrtha (1480–1600), did yeoman service in animating the activities of both Vyāsakūta and Dāsakūta. He was a *yati* and adorned the

pontifical seat of Śrī Viṣṇu Tīrtha, brother of Śrī Madhva, one of the eight mathas of Udipi. He had his education in ancient lore at the hands of Śrī Vyāsa Tīrtha. He was a powerful debater and vanquisher of *prativādi*'s views and hence the name Vādirāja. He was a *bālasānyāsin* and lived for 120 years. He wrote treatises like *Pāshandamata—Khandana*; he has composed, in lucid Sanskrit, poems in which he explains the essentials of Śrī Madhva's works like *Anuvyākhyāna*, the ten Prakaraṇas, the *Mahābhāratha-tātparyā-nirṇaya* and also Jayatīrtha's works like *Tattvaparakāshika* and *Śrī Nyāya Sudha*. *Yuktimalika* is a very important polemical work of Śrī Vādirāja in which he conveys Śrī Madhva's philosophical tenets in very simple terms. Religious geography, Biography, Rhetoric are also his works, which cover in Sanskrit and Kannaḍa, socio-religious issues of the times.

Śrī Vādirāja's Kannaḍa poems are known for high poetic skill and learning. He wrote under the signet 'Hayavadana'. His language is simple and polished. In Kannaḍa works like *Vaikuntha varṇane*, *Gundakriye*, *Svapnapada*, etc. he brings home the elements of Dvaita-Vedānta and the concept of *bhakti* to the common folk. He thus popularized the teachings of Dvaita-Vedānta among the masses, especially in the coastal areas, Konkan, Kanara and Malabar.

Śrī Vādirāja emphasizes on absolute faith in God and in Śrī Madhva, who upheld the dignity and greatness of God:

Listen, meditate and propitiate every day
Why still you linger in doubt?
What vow need I take to prove the greatness of this system?
This has been approved by the learned, oh man
To show that Madhva-śāstra is the greatest of all
Shall I cut my head and put it before thee?

To prove that Bhāgvata śāstra is a precious treasure
Shall I jump from the top of the hill?

To get the word, *Tāratamya* is the means
To prove this shall I drink the poison?
To show that no day equals the day of Hari

Do you want me to catch the moving snake?

Do you want me to prove with fire in hand
That guru Madhva is the saviour of the soul?
Do you want an oracle from the above
To learn that Lord Hayavadana
Is perfect with endless auspicious qualities?²³

Śrī Vādirāja exhorts to have the company of the devotees:

Blessed are those who spend their life
In the company of devotees of *Vanajanābha*
Who get up in the morn and sip the holy water,
And thus purified, who enjoy the nectar-like tales of Hari
Resorting to the highest Madhvamata
That grants the happiness here and in the world beyond.²⁴

X

Śrī Purandaradāsa's (1494–1564) name is the most popular and highly revered among the Haridāsas. He received Vaishṇava dāsa dikṣa from his teacher Śrī Vyāsarāja. Śrī Purandaradāsa has composed songs in praise of the supremacy of God. He is supposed to have composed 475,000 devotional songs, which is far more than those composed by other Haridasas. But only a thousand and odd have been so far traced. He wrote his poems under the signet 'Purandara Vitthala'. The greatness and majesty of the songs is such that Śrī Vyāsarāja calls them 'Śrī Purandaropaniṣad'. The songs of Śrī Purandaradāsa are based on the bedrock of the Vedas, Upaniṣads, puṛāṇas, epics, and the lively teachings of Śrī Madhvāchārya; in short on the *śrutis* and *smṛtis*. He pays due regard to the Vedic injunctions and proclaimed that *Vaidika* and *Vaishṇava* are inseparable. He reformed the sinking society and revived the spiritual outlook on life. His is a philosophy of action. He spread the spiritual message all over the Deccan and south India. Śrī Tyāgarāja, the great Telugu bhakta and composer of devotional songs was a contemporary of Śrī Purandaradāsa. He was inspired by the *Bhakti-kīrtanas* of Śrī Purandaradāsa.

What impresses one in the devotional songs of Śrī Purandaradāsa is the expression of unsophisticated ideas in the language of the masses. They

have not lost popularity even to this day. They are sung in every nook and corner of Karnataka. The philosophical writings of Āchārya Madhva learned as they are, were put into simpler terms by Śrī Purandaradāsa and this brightened the life of the common people. They took the common man to the pinnacle of spiritual glory by their analysis of true devotion, religiosity and social harmony. Śrī Purandaradāsa has set examples for mankind to emulate. He condemned pomp and outward show and immoral practices.

For Śrī Purandaradāsa, God's greatness is unchallenged. God is supreme, Purushottama. He says: 'When we possess the gem *Māṇikyā*, why borrow other jewels?'²⁵ He sings:

Oh lotus eyed, thou possessest the strength of all the planets
and thou art omnipresent, oh protector of the whole universe.²⁶

He has an invaluable piece of advice: 'Oh, to be born human being is itself great, do not waste it.'²⁷ 'May we have the fortune of family life and therein let us have the good luck of remembering God (Kriṣṇa), the enemy of Kāṁsa.'²⁸

Śrī Purandaradāsa warns: 'The bell has been ringing to announce that the man who does not pray to God spends his life in vain.'²⁹

'Man must live in this world and yet be out of it; like Janaka and others, he must act as fire to burn the grass of passions.'³⁰

Śrī Purandaradāsa has advocated the easiest and the most effective way of realizing God. And that is chanting of God's name (*nāma samkeertana*). He says: 'When man is blessed with this life, with the power to speak, oh man, why not say, Krishna, to redeem yourself.'³¹

It is in one name that are hidden
All the Vedas that are sung in glee
It is the one name that saved Pralhada
And the very name saved Ajāmila too!
In this name is that marvel
Which bestowed bliss on little Dhruva
Who was away from his father and mother.³²

Śrī Purandaradāsa has all praise for Madhva-Siddhānta. He sings:

Abandon not, abandon not!
Leave not the system of Madhva-Siddhānta
Leave it not and thus be ruined.

To have the knowledge that God (Hari) is the highest
 And then to be happy, this is the means
 Leave not the noble path
 Leading to the feet of Murali
 Driving away the fear of fierce Yama
 Leave not our Purandara Vitthala, the lotus-eyed
 The in-dweller of Mukhyaprāṇa Bharatīsha.³³

XI

Śrī Kanakadāsa (1509–1607). Along with the name of Śrī Purandaradāsa, Śrī Kanakadāsa has been a household name. Indeed he was another great Haridāsa saint. He came from a family of shepherds and was a chieftain. In the early days, he was an assuming man and was almost a disbeliever in God. A particular incident on the battlefield made him become a servant of God. He moved over to Hampi and became an intimate disciple of Śrī Vyāsarāja. He was a poet and has written many books like *Rāmadhānya Charitre*, *Nāḷa Charitre*, *Mohana Taraṅgini*, etc. He was a great *Virāgi*. He has composed several devotional songs under the signet Kaginele Adikeshava. His long devotional poem, viz., *Haribhaktisāra* teaches the importance of *bhakti* and *virakti*. In him *bhakti* and *virakti* are beautifully harmonized. His intimate contact with Śrī Vyāsarāja, ended up in his intense devotion to Dvaita-Vedānta and its main tenets. He clearly says that the individual self is different from God; it is limited whereas God is unlimited; it is the receiver whereas God is the donor; it is ignorant whereas God is all-knowing. At any time, even in the state of Moksha, it cannot become or be equal to God, the supreme person.

'I am a humble non-entity and you are the donor of the entire world. I am without any wisdom and you are the all-influential Lord granting Mukti to the devotee.'³⁴

The riddle of life is posed by him and is answered by invoking God thus:

Art thou in māyā, or māyā within thou?
 Art thou in the body, oh Hari, or the body within thee?
 Is the sweetness in sugar, or sugar within sweetness?
 Or sweetness and sugar both inside the tongue?
 Is the tongue inside the mind, or mind in the tongue,

Or tongue and mind, both in thee, oh Hari?
 Oh Kagineleyādi keshava,
 I have no answer, everything is under your control, oh Hari!³⁵

In the view of Śrī Kanakadāsa, detachment (*Vairāgya*) is a virtue and that is to be cultivated. Worldly things bind us. Worldly things including body are transient. Human existence is like a burning lamp held in the direction of the wind. Sensual pleasures are hollow and evanescent. The best way to come out of this bondage is to attach oneself to God. Attachment to God demands from the aspirant complete surrender. Kanakadāsa says:

My body is thine, my existence is thine
 Even my daily weal and woe are but thine.³⁶

He continues:

Every sentient and non-sentient play
 According to thy will, everything would topple down
 If thy guidance is gone where is the liberty for us.³⁷

Śrī Kanakadāsa insists on absolute faith in God and in his grace. He sings:

Do not get vexed, oh mind, wait
 There is one who rescues all, there is no doubt
 Who waters the tree on the top of the hillock?
 Who paints the colours on the feathers of the peacock?

Who provides food to the frog born under the stone?

Kanakadāsa's beaming answer is 'the master who has created them is responsible for their protection, there is no doubt.'³⁸

Like Purandaradāsa, Kanakadāsa had also great concern for society. He revolted against social superstitions and animal sacrifice. He worked hard to convey and propagate the universal love and devotion to mankind. Dvaita in his opinion is the most practical and realistic philosophy. His love and reverence for Madhva knows no bounds when Madhva declares that without the grace of god nothing happens! The individual soul must strive for the grace of Ādikeshava. And that Śrī Madhva showed the way brightens the pen of Kanakadāsa. He happily writes:

You adorned turīyāshrama in the Kaliyuga
 And defeated the defective Māyins

You emboldened the strong Madhvamata
You declared Śrī Neleyādikeshava as the supreme God.³⁹

XII

Śrī Rāghavendra Tīrtha was a great mystic and his life and teachings are of inestimable value. He is held in great respect and affection. He taught that Vishṇu the all-pervading supreme reality, is the only unequalled Lord of the universe.

Śrī Rāghavendra provided spiritual solace to the devotees. He revived the Vaidika culture. He wrote learned glosses on the Vedas; on the ten Upanishads, he wrote *Khaṇḍārthas*. He wrote *Parimala* on Śrī Jayatīrtha's *Nyāya Sudha* and a gloss on *Vedāvali*. For the Dāsakūta, he was the inspirer and the guide. He entered into Sanjivan Samādhi at Mantrālaya and since then it has become a holy place. His has been a strong and overpowering influence on the masses. By his magnetic personality, with his deep roots in *tapas* and spirituality, he gave a new lead to revivification of pure Vaishnavism through hoards of Haridāsas like Śrī Vijayadāsa, Śrī Mohanadāsa, Śrī Gopaladāsa, Śrī Panganāma Thimmannadāsa, Śrī Narasimhadāsa, Śrī Jagannāthadāsa, Śrī Vyāsajna Tīrtha, Śrī Lingasugur Prānesharāya, Guru Prāneshadāsa, whom he inspired. He may be looked upon as a connecting link between Śrī Purandaradāsa group and Śrī Vijayadāsa group. Śrī Rāghavendra is supposed to have written numerous devotional songs in Kannaḍa of which only one is extant now. It contains the quintessence of the Vedas, Upaniṣads, Bhagavad-Gīta, epics, Puraṇas and all great scriptures. It runs thus, with the signet Dheera Venugopāla.

May you now bestow me
Your lotus feet, oh Mukunda
The saviour of Mandāra, the child of Nanda Gopi,
The Lord of Indira, Govinda, Gokulānanda

I pained a lot being enmeshed in the cycle of birth and death
Having lost the way, not seeing future
I suffered a lot in the world
Think of me as a child, please find no faults in me
Save me you the father of Manmatha.

Owing to stupidity I became a coward
I failed to cultivate constant devotion in you

I failed to have your vision, failed to sing your glory
Enchanting Lord Kriṣṇa, I beg your excuse
I became a sorrowful soul on earth
I crossed all limits and joined the company of the wicked
Nobody can save me, oh Lord except you, I belong to you
Lord Dheera Venugopāla, I beg to be saved.⁴⁰

XIII

Śrī Vijayadāsa (1687–1765) was another great Haridāsa who exerted wide influence on the masses. He is supposed to have written 25,000 devotional poems under the signet 'Vijaya Viṭṭhala'. He was well-versed in the tenets of Dvaita-Vedānta and was considered an authority. His Kannaḍa songs are often referred to even by Sanskrit pundits, in cases of want of clarity on any matter in Dvaita-Vedānta. Consequently his poems are more śāstric in nature. He claims to have been initiated by Śrī Purandaradāsa in a dream.

Śrī Vijayadāsa emphasized upon cultivating love towards humanity. All individual souls have a place in God's creation. The souls have to utilize opportunities in the world to actualize their potentialities. For this, Śrī Vijayadāsa advocated cultivation of true detachment and one-pointed attention on God.

Nearly 120 years after Purandara and Kanaka, Vijayadāsa came on the scene. He inspired two other disciples, viz., Śrī Gopāladāsa and Śrī Jagannāthadāsa, to propagate devotion and to spread the message of Śrī Madhvāchārya.

Why has the human soul (Jīva) to come to this world with a body? In the view of Śrī Vijayadāsa, it is because the soul wants to gain worldly experience. And after doing so, now at least let it think respectfully of Śrī Hari. He offers prayers to God to grant him the nectar of his name-chanting (*Nāma Saṅkīrtana*). Like Purandaradāsa, Śrī Vijayadāsa also says that the human life is a boon to be highly prized. The body is to be kept well, so that it acts as the medium to be able to serve humanity. Śrī Vijayadāsa prays: 'Having accepted the philosophy of Śrī Purnabōdha, I crave for your mercy to make me attain Salvation.'⁴¹ The body and mind should be bathed in the nectar of *Haribhakti*. All our actions should be dedicated to God alone. He advocates the need for the company of Haridāsas and the practice of humility. 'Let the remnants left over after

their meal be my food,'⁴² says Śrī Vijayadāsa. He raised the prestige of the Haridasa movement by precept and practice.

Śrī Vijayadāsa says, 'Madhvamata is agreeable to all Śrutis.'⁴³ He further asks: 'One who does not follow Madhvamata, why for him devotion?' He is fond of saying, 'The servant of Madhva is the friend of the universe.'

XIV

Śrī Prasanna Venkatadāsa (1680–1752) was a contemporary of Śrī Vijayadāsa. He is the author of *Mahābharatasāra-nirṇaya-tīkā*, *Atharvaṇa-Veda-tika*, etc. The dominant note of his teaching is bhakti and virakti. Life without bhakti and virakti is not worth living. Man's power is only for attaining God's grace, and not for worldly benefits. 'Passions are enemies and are to be fought in the battlefield by the soul in the spirit of a soldier,' he says. He emphasizes upon the worthlessness of the sensuous life and pleads for God's grace. He wrote a number of Kannada poems under the signet Prasanna Venkatapati. In lyricism and popularity of songs, he comes next only to Śrī Purandara and is known as later Purandaradāsa. In one of his poems he offers prayers to God, to grant his grace:

You are my solace oh Kṛṣṇa
 You are my highest goal!
 Since you are my highest goal,
 I submit to thee bending low, my honour and insult too!
 Purify me, the ignorant one, oh God
 And be kind to me oh Narahari
 The body is transitory and the mind fickle
 And the wealth I have got, is all perishable
 Give me now and ever the memory of your lotus-feet
 And the creeper of birth and death, let it be cut asunder
 Known as you are the saviour of those who seek refuge in you
 Why doubt now you, oh Lord
 Lift them up that are fallen down
 Oh Lord, the revered Venkatesha.⁴⁴

XV

Śrī Gopāladāsa (1727–1765) was the disciple of Śrī Vijayadāsa. His speciality consists in giving, like Śrī Vijayadāsa, a śāstric treatment to his

songs. The main tenets of Madhva Vedānta like the *Harisarvottamatva*, *Jagatsatyatva*, *Pañcha-bheda*, etc., are well brought out in his poems.

Pañcha-bheda is for this real world
 Realize the acts of God by tāratamya
 And proclaim to the world that God (Kṛṣṇa) is supreme.⁴⁵

The significance of Śrī Gopāladāsa consists in giving to the world of devotion, the true nature of detachment. Detachment, in his opinion, consists in participating, in full, with the various activities of the world under the benevolent guidance of God without aspiring for the fruit. Man should surrender his will to the will of God and should have true devotion to Him.

Vairāgya or detachment is thus the essence of all philosophy. It consists in the contemplation on the supremacy of God with total dedication. Śrī Gopāladāsa says that it is not easy to acquire *Vairāgya jñāna*, because God binds the individual self by this *bandhaśakti*. Therefore, only He can liberate the jīva. Man's devotion is directly proportional to God's binding power; greater the devotion, greater will be the loosening of the binding power of God. The false sense of independence should be driven out of the individual self. Body is the fort and the human soul lives in it. With the passage of time, the fort wears out. God's grace is a must for the liberation of the individual self—strongly advocates Śrī Gopāladāsa. Śrī Gopāladāsa exhorted to tone up the *Sāttvika* elements in man. He taught the essence of Vedic lore to the masses in simple Kannada. He made use of Purāṇic episodes to convey philosophical truth. His significance consists in giving to this world another great propounder of Madhva Siddhānta in Kannada, viz., Śrī Jagannāthadāsa.

XVI

Śrī Jagannāthadāsa (1728–1809) was an erudite pandit in religion and philosophy and had developed conceit of learning. His original name was Śrinivāsāchārya. To start with, he had looked down upon Haridāsas as they sang the glories of God in Kannada, the language of the masses. He had insulted Śrī Vijayadāsa, in not taking up Haridāsa prasāda from the former, thinking that it was beneath his scholarship. However Śrī Vijayadāsa could tame him and Śrinivāsāchārya became Śrī Jagannāthadāsa, under the guidance of Śrī Gopāladāsa.

Śrī Jagannāthadāsa wrote many books. *Harikathāmritasāra* is his magnum opus. It has been a very popular work. It has been translated into Telugu, Tamil, Marathi, Sanskrit and English. This Kannāḍa work has many commentaries and what is remarkable is that two are written in Sanskrit. *Harikathāmritasāra* is an immortal work. It is written in a simple and lucid style. It is full of philosophical dictums, clothed in poetic language. It is easy to read but difficult to understand.

Literally *Harikathāmritasāra* means 'the essence of the nectar of the story of Hari'. Śrī Jagannāthadāsa opines that he is beholden to the inspiration of the followers of Śrī Madhva and the grace of God for what he says in his work.⁴⁶ He says that he has taken out precious pearls from the ocean of Śrī Madhva's religion and has strung them together on the string of Kannāḍa language. He submits that he has given this garland as an offering to the Lord of Lakshmi.⁴⁷ Many knotty problems in Sanskrit texts are often solved by referring them to *Harikathāmritasāra*. This work proceeds to reply to the queries of an atheist, nihilist, materialist and agnostic.

In addition to his monumental work *Harikathāmritasāra*, Śrī Jagannāthadāsa also wrote '*Tattva-suvāli*'. His works are authoritative storehouses of Śrī Madhva's philosophy in Kannāḍa. He wrote his works under the signet 'Śrī Jagannātha Viṭṭhala'. Śrī Jagannāthadāsa took the Haridāsa movement to greater glory with his spiritual experiences and wisdom.

Śrī Jagannāthadāsa confirms the tenets of Dvaita-Vedānta in his works. He says: 'To the five-fold difference world, the five-form possessor is God.'⁴⁸ He prays to God: 'Grant me devotion unto thy lotus-feet, oh merciful Lord, grant me also detachment from worldly pleasures.'⁴⁹

Animate and inanimate things are images
Protecting them safely with love is your worship.⁵⁰

The Bhāgavatas are his favourite lot:

The Bhāgavatas see thy universal form everywhere

They drink the nectar of thy name like bees

These Bhāgavatas will never take their mind away from thee
How lucky your devotees are, oh! Jagannātha Viṭṭhala?⁵¹

He pins his hopes on the grace of God:

The holy beings that praise you Ranga,
Give them happiness and protect, oh ocean of grace
They know no deity, other than thyself
Never do they forget thy spontaneous help
Never do they abandon the worship of thy feet
No thought they cherish other than the highest principle!

Victory or defeat, profit or loss, honour or insult
Fear or boldness, joy or misery, wood or gold
Good or bad, mercy or hatred always
Are under your sway, thus they think of Lord of Śrī!

Never do they remove the mind fixed in thee
Blessed are they oh, Jagannātha Viṭṭhala,
Who belong to thee!⁵²

XVII

The discussion may now be wound up. The Haridāsas were inspiring personalities. They had deep spiritual insight, fervid vernacular eloquence and broad human sympathy. Their teachings have an irresistible appeal to love life fully in all its aspects. They tried to enrich the true religious consciousness of their times. They may be regarded as spiritual ambassadors of humanity. Their mission was to interpret the meaning of life in its vedāntic setting. In their teachings, there is a healthy synthesis of *Jñāna*, *Bhakti* and *Karma*. They were mystics of the highest order. They had a direct and intuitive experience of the highest reality. Yet they were so humble that they called themselves as the Dāsas. Their teachings provide an unfailing source of wisdom. The language of their devotional poems is soul-stirring. They glorify God and soar above the world and make the reader forget himself in contemplation of the divine.

The Haridāsas were moved by the sight of acute human suffering. Their goal on earth was to remain faithful to the higher call of God, Mādhava and loyalty to the preceptor Śrī Madhvāchārya and service to

man (Mādhava seva, Mādhva seva and Mānava Seva). So much so, the mānava seva has endeared them to the people in Karnataka. They have left for posterity their devotional poems, which are regarded as classics in Kannada literature. They may be regarded as standard treatises on Hindu philosophy. They propagate Hindu spiritual culture. They act as spiritual guides to the seekers of truth. They call upon people to tread the path of spirituality, deriving moral strength and bliss therefrom and sharing the same with others. Their noble ideal is to make people to be able to experience the internal joy and the divine blessedness.

The Haridāsa literature may be regarded as condensed Dvaita-Vedānta. If Śrī Madhva's philosophy is a living philosophy today, it is because of the Haridāsa literature, known for its devotional contents and lyrical excellence. It emphasizes on the deep yearning of the individual soul to be ever in the presence of the Lord. The contribution of the Haridāsas to literature, philosophy and society is indeed great.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Srimanmadhva matē harihi paratarah satyam jagat tatvato bhedāh
Jivagaṇāh hareranucarāh nicocca bhāvam gatah
Muktirnaija sukhānubhutihi amalābhaktishcha tat sādhanam
Aksādi tritayam pramānam akhilāmnāyaika vedyah harihi
2. R.S. Panchamukhi: Karnatakada Haridāsa Sāhitya (Kannada Sāhitya Parishat, B'lore, 1952), p. xxiv.
3. Free English rendering by the author of the paper.
4. Free English rendering by the author of the paper.
5. G. Varadaraja Rao (Ed.): Śrīpādarājara Krutigalu (in Kannada) (Institute of Kannada Studies, Mysore University, 1973), poem no. 44, stanza 5.
6. Ibid., poem no. 58, stanza 4.
7. Ibid., poem no. 20, stanza 22.
8. Ibid., poem no. 20, stanza 24.
9. S.S. Rāghavachār (English translation), Srimadvishṇutattva vinirṇaya of Śrī Madhvāchārya (Śrī Ramakrishna Ashram, M'lore, 1991), pp. 69, 73, 74, 77.
10. Ibid., pp. 13, 68.
11. Ibid., pp. 71, 72.
12. Ibid., pp. 77, 79.
13. Ibid., invocation verse. Also see p. 24
14. G. Varadaraja Rao, op. cit., poem no. 2, free English rendering by the author of the paper.
15. R.S. Panchamukhi, op. cit., p. LV.

16. G. Varadaraja Rao, op. cit., poem no. 4, free English rendering by the author of the paper.
17. R.S. Panchamukhi, op. cit., p. XXV.
18. Kāvya Premi (Ed.): *Vyāsarāyara Hādūgaḷu* (Samāja Pustakālaya, Dharwad, 1983), p. 8, free rendering by the author of the paper.
19. R.S. Panchamukhi, op. cit., p. LV.
20. Translated and quoted in 'A Comparative Study of Śaraṇa and Dāsa Literature', P.S. Srinivasa (University of Madras, 1981), p. 95.
21. P.S. Srinivasa, op. cit., p. 95.
22. Ibid.
23. R.S. Panchamukhi, op. cit., p. LVIII.
24. Ibid., p. LVII.
25. P.S. Srinivasa, op. cit., p. 45.
26. Ibid.
27. Ibid., p. 98.
28. Ibid.
29. Ibid., p. 99.
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid., p. 51.
32. R.S. Panchamukhi, op. cit., p. LVIII.
33. Ibid., p. LX.
34. P.S. Srinivasa, op. cit., p. 101.
35. Ibid., p. 103.
36. Ibid., p. 102.
37. Ibid.
38. Ibid., p. 103.
39. Bengeri Huccha Rao, Betageri Krishna Sharma (Eds), *Kanakadāsara Haḍugaḷu* (Samāja Pustakālaya, Dharwad, 1992), p. 6.
40. R.S. Panchamukhi, op. cit., p. 187.
41. P.S. Srinivasa, op. cit., p. 105.
42. Ibid., p. 106.
43. 'Madhvamatave mathavu sakala śruti sammatavu'.
44. R.S. Panchamukhi, op. cit., p. LVII.
45. Satya jagakidu Pancha bhedavu Śrī Govindana krityavaritu tāratamyadi Krishnanadhikendu sarirai.
46. Harikathāmritasāra, pp. XVII, 37.
47. Ibid., pp. XXI, 54.
48. Pañchabhedātma prapanchake Pancharupatmakane daivata.
49. P.S. Srinivasa, op. cit., p. 108.
50. Ibid.
51. Ibid.
52. R.S. Panchamukhi, op. cit., p. LXIII.

Tagore and the Philosophical Tradition of Bengal

SHEFALI MOITRA

Department of Philosophy, Jadavpur University, Kolkata

Language is a major component of tradition. It provides a medium of presentation, preservation and transmission. The Bengali language in its present form has been in use for almost the past hundred and fifty years. Modern Bengali prose has gradually evolved through the writings of Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay followed by Rabindranath Tagore. Prior to this, Bengali literature was predominantly written in verse. Side by side there was a very strong oral tradition perpetuated through the discourses on religion and of course through folklore. The first book printed in Bengal in 1778 was written in English; books in Bengali were printed almost forty years later, around 1816. A rough account of the publishing history in Bengal casts light on the fact that in the pre-modern period there was no easily accessible account of philosophy and religion in the form of written tracts. There were traditions of philosophy concentrated in more or less well demarcated geographical locations where scholars congregated to meet, discuss and debate subtle philosophical points in Sanskrit. As a result, this exercise turned out to be an elitist one.

The majority of the population were dependent on agriculture and trade as a means of livelihood in 19th century Bengal. Like in other parts of India there was a very strong Brahmanical tradition guided by stringent rules of caste. Various forms of nature worship were prevalent amongst marginalized people. Till date, these forms of worship continue in rural Bengal. The snake goddess *Manasā*, the forest goddess *Bana-bibi*, the unmarried maiden *Bhādu* are given more importance than the more aristocratic brahmanical deities like Shiva and Krishna in many villages. These villagers are not aware of the so-called 'schools of Indian philosophy' and their orthodox, heterodox lineages. In spite of the cultural divide, communities have co-existed in the same geographical domain for years; exchanges of customs and beliefs have taken place between the two cultures without any effort, in a silent manner.

Apparently the caste system in Bengal was never as pernicious and pervasive as in other parts of the country. To begin with, the Brahmins of Bengal have always been considered to be less righteous by their fellow Brahmins of other states, partially due to their non-vegetarian habits. Secondly, Vaishnavism acted as a major leveller. The Vaishnava movement initiated by Sri Chaitanya swept large parts of Southern Bengal, Assam, and Orissa. Vaishnava philosophy critiqued the mainstream Brahmanical tradition by using categories from within the tradition. That is one reason why conversion into Vaishnavism was so spontaneous and irreversible. The challenge, however, did not bring about internal changes in mainstream Bengal philosophy. Through conversion to Vaishnavism the marginalized found an alternative voice and space which was more acceptable to them. The newly acquired space was never utilized as a vantage point for attack on the mainstream. The Vaishnava tradition and the Brahmanical tradition remained as two parallel modes of living; the former was, however, often looked at as a degenerate tradition due to the latitude it allowed in the realm of religious practice.

In Southern India we find that the tension between the followers of Shiva and the followers of Vishnu is much more focused and uncompromising. Southern India's relative insulation from the British rule could be one reason for the perpetuation of this tension—the secular industrial culture had not infiltrated the South. Not that the British rule represented a form of emancipatory enlightenment in Bengal. What it did was, it forced a reappraisal of tradition. This time the reappraisal was through foreign eyes. Many factors converged to create a pressure on Bengal's traditional thinking. In order to survive, this tradition had to be mutated. Tagore described the situation in the following way: 'this completeness of stratification, this utter submergence of the lower by the higher, this immutable and all-pervading system, has no doubt imposed a mechanical uniformity upon the people but has at the same time, kept their different sections inflexibly and unalterably separate, with the consequent loss of all *power of adaptation* and *re-adjustment* to new conditions and forces.'¹ (Emphasis mine.) Once the British were in power Tagore and many of his contemporaries thought of adaptation and readjustment of the Indian tradition. Since it was in Bengal that the initial impact of the British rule was felt, the reform movement also gained momentum here. No reform movement has ever been successful in bringing about a total

social revolution. The 19th and 20th century reformists were no exception. They only succeeded in re-shaping the elitist middle-class culture.

Prominent among the religious reformers of this time were Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Rammohun Roy and Sri Aurobindo. Tagore spoke of the religion of Bengal and India to an international audience but he never considered himself to be a religious leader like Vivekananda. The fact that he did not take on this role is not a matter of historical contingency or preference; he was opposed to religious institutions, rituals and sects. Tagore had very different views on religion from that of Sri Ramakrishna, nevertheless he was very respectful of the transformations brought about by him. In his 'Address at the Parliament of Religions' Tagore says: 'I have accepted this honour ... only out of respect to the memory of the great saint with whose centenary the present parliament is associated. I admire Paramahansa Dev because he, in an arid age of religious nihilism, proved the truth of our spiritual heritage by realizing it, because the largeness of his spirit could comprehend seemingly antagonistic modes of *sadhana*, and because the simplicity of his soul shames for all time the pomp and pedantry of pontiffs and pundits.'²

No one will contest the claim that the modern-day Bengali middle-class culture and tradition has primarily been moulded by Tagore. Modern Bengali prose, the stylized handwriting script, the way the traditional Bengali lady dresses, the dance form known as *Rabindrik nritya*, can all be attributed to Tagore's contribution. The innumerable poems and songs that he has composed are significantly a constitutive part of this culture. If tradition is 'the collective memory transmitted through the ages'³ then Tagore and his works are very much a part of this collective memory. Having said this, it still needs to be seen whether Tagore had a philosophy and religion which is also a constitutive part of this memory. Some say he did not have a position of his own; others believe he did, but they were not transmitted to the masses. Radhakrishnan remarks: 'Rabindranath did not claim to produce an original philosophy. His claim was not to analyse or speculate about the Indian tradition. He expressed it in his own vivid phrases and homely metaphors and showed its relevance to modern life. A fresh interpretation of religious idealism which has been the central feature of India's life and history is itself a mode of creation.'⁴ This is true and arguably every creation claims originality, Tagore's interpretation of religion was no exception. Being extremely imaginative he had a philosophy and religion of his own. His religion of man was the religion of an

artist. By no means was this an eclectic explosion of traditional religions. The emphasis laid on man's freedom and the need to be creative in order to remain spiritual put each individual in an agentic role. It is not expected of a religious person to concentrate on a fixed focus and meditate, or to repeat prescribed actions; nor is he supposed to minimize the importance of the body. Referring to himself Tagore remarks: 'I do not know if I can be called religious in the current sense of the term, not claiming as my possession any particular idea of God, authorised by some time-honoured institution.'⁵

We know that Tagore was born in a religious family. He speaks of serving as a secretary to a monotheistic church of which his father was a leader. Obviously he is referring to the Brahmo Samaj mandir. Soon he was dissatisfied as he realized that religion was being reduced to a religious institution. He gave up his connection with this church when he felt: 'this latter [religious institution] represented an artificial average, with its standard of truth at its static minimum, jealous of any vital growth that exceeded its limits. I have my conviction that in religion and also in the arts, that which is common to a group is not important. Indeed very often it is a contagion of mutual imitation.'⁶

Tagore's disapproval of churches and sects in no way changed the common man's understanding of religion. Only a section of the educated Bengali middle class was influenced by his thought. The division between the middle and lower classes of society has remained with us. The printed book and an exposure to British colonization accelerated social transformation, it also widened the gap between the core and periphery in society. An additional factor was the advent of the modern Bengali literary style. Urban language was gradually standardized while regional dialects remained isolated and stagnant. This meant that all future change and progress transformed merely the upper crust of society. All that the lower strata have received, and continue receiving, is a trickle down effect of this transformation. It is in such a context that Tagore's contributions to Bengal's tradition have to be located. In the limited sphere of Bengal's middle-class tradition of philosophy and religion today there are several influential trends. Many identify themselves with the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda interpretations of tradition; some approve of Sri Aurobindo's philosophy. I do not know of any statistical figures regarding the comparative popularity of the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna and the teachings of Aurobindo. As far as Tagore is concerned, his songs and poems are

fairly well known since they are part of the vernacular syllabus in schools and colleges. They are also regularly broadcasted by the radio and television. By contrast, his lectures and addresses are seldom referred to. Most have not read his Bengali book *Manusher Dharma* nor do they know that his English book *The Religion of Man* is not a translation of the former book. Similarly, his *Sadhana* book, and his *Religion of an Artist*, are not commonly read. One reason could be that they are not easily available in the form of separate texts. If one undertakes the task of analyzing the collective memory of the modern urbanized Bengali with an aim of locating positions occupied by Tagore, Sri Ramakrishna and Aurobindo, it will be seen that while the first name is venerated as a moulder of culture, the latter two names will be associated with religious traditions.

This is interesting, since Tagore has a lot to say about religion and philosophy. In his innumerable addresses he has discussed India's spiritual tradition and the relevance of the Upanishadic teachings which he interpreted in a novel way; he often quoted parts of the slokas out of context. He repeatedly commented on the decadence of our religious practice. Many of his views have left a lasting impact on the Bengali psyche, especially his invocations of nature. For him the creator takes on an animated personal form through nature and gets engaged in a game of love with man. God comes to man in the guise of a lover. At times it is hard to distinguish Tagore's love songs from his devotional songs. The notion of *viraha*, the sentiment of a lover's separation, and hankering for reunion, is a major theme in Tagore's devotional songs. Tagore's songs and poems are creative expressions of his philosophy of love, dignity and freedom. His thoughts have penetrated the Bengali mind in a subtle and invisible way. He has been more a moulder of sentiments than a moulder of faith.

Conscious efforts have occasionally been made to extrapolate Tagore's philosophy from his creative works with an aim to arrange his insights into a coherent system—a difficult task indeed, may even be an impossible one. Creativity, which is the essence of Tagore's philosophy, makes his philosophy resistant to investigation by the methodological tools commonly used by the great Indian philosophical systems. Tagore was never interested in traditional epistemic and metaphysical discourses; texts like the *Vedāntaparibhāṣā* or the *Bhāṣāpariccheda* never interested him. What appealed to him was the poetry of the *Upaniṣads*. He regarded Kabir to be one of the greatest spiritual geniuses of our land.

In his youth Tagore had a first-hand acquaintance with the oppression and obsolescence perpetrated by the Hindu religious sects and institutions. While comparing the ill effects of materialism with the ill effects of sectarianism, Tagore felt that the latter was more efficient in constricting the heart into narrowness.⁷ In his Parliament of Religions Address Tagore spoke in favour of spiritual 'universal aspirations to set the spirit of man free from the bondage of this own individual ego, and the ego of his race and of his creed.'⁸ He hastened to add that these aspirations need not conform to a common pattern or to a common church. Religion should not be used as a seat for the consolidation of power. On the contrary, it should be personal and private. The imposition of doctrines onto man was looked on by him as a form of imperialism. This explains why Tagore never wanted to be known as a religious preacher. But preaching is what the common man is accustomed to; it allows him to remain inert. Not having gone into this role has been instrumental in keeping Tagore's religion and philosophy obscure and unfamiliar. An impression has been created that Tagore had no philosophy. He did. Reason had a limited role in his philosophy; creative emotion was of special importance. His philosophy of religion has a mystic flair grounded in a dualistic metaphysics akin to the Vaishnava metaphysics. What is unique in Tagore's system is the ideal relation envisaged between the creator God and the created individual. His understanding of the role of the body is also unconventional. For him the body is an important component of our spiritual identity. He says: 'man is more perfect as a man than where he vanishes in an original indefiniteness.'⁹

In respect to the body, and in many other ways also, Tagore was greatly influenced by the Bengal folk traditions of the Auls and the Bauls. Tagore translates 'Baul' as 'mad cap' meaning a non-conformist. In Tagore's plays and stories too Thakurda (grandfather) and the pagal (mad man) are recurrent characters who are revered for being non-conformists and path breakers. The Bauls have no scriptures, no images, no temples. For them the human body is the only temple in which is enshrined the divine, the *maner manush*, the man of the heart. Treating the body as the holiest of the holy may seem unconventional to a traditional Hindu mind. But Tagore endorses this Baul philosophy. Tagore approvingly speaks of the Baul's mystic philosophy of the body known as *kāya sādhanā*, *kāya* meaning body. One form of *kāya sādhanā* is known as *urdha śrota*—the elevation of the current. Tagore explains that the currents of the *jiva* form a centre

around the ego. These have to be raised by the force of love. *Kāya sādhanā* leads to a form of reversal of currents.

Love as an emancipatory force is common to Vaishnavism as well. But Vaishnavism is a much more structured religion in comparison to the Bauls. In contrast to the Brahmanical tradition Vaishnavism is liberal. The Bauls consider their own religion to be *sahaja*. Being *sahaja* or simple should not be confused with being easy. It is not easy to keep the flame of love burning, a great amount of self discipline is required. The same is the case with Tagore's religion of an artist. To remain creative one has to attain a unity of consciousness. The process involves several levels of unity leading to the final stage of creative unity. The creative surplus which is dormant in every man has to be cultivated into an expressive medium so that the individual is connected with the universe through a unique harmonious bond of love. Spiritual unity is of utmost importance for Tagore; it is essential for the growth of humanity. By contrast, political unity *per se* is of little significance.¹⁰

Tagore had no clear prescription for achieving unity of consciousness other than saying that to love is a common aspiration of man. This followed from his metaphysical belief that God the creator's only purpose of creation is to indulge in a play of love with man as his partner. Like the Bauls and the Vaishnavas, Tagore also believes that 'the eternal bond of union between the infinite and the finite soul, from which there can be no *mukti*, because it is an interrelation which makes truth complete, because love is ultimate, because absolute independence is the blankness of utter sterility.'¹¹

Tagore believed that creation is programmed for a culmination in unity between the finite and the infinite without loss of identity of either partner. He believes 'if I keep going in the same direction along which He comes to me, then I shall be going further away from Him. If I proceed in the opposite direction, then only can we meet. ... One comes from freedom into bondage, the other goes from bondage into freedom: only thus can they have their communion. He sings and we hear. He ties the bonds as He sings to us, we untie them as we listen to Him.'¹² This is a highly imaginative passage which speaks of love, union, play and, above all, joy. There is no place for regimentation and compulsion. Each individual must evolve his or her own creative unity. To corroborate this position of his he approvingly refers to the Baul's explanation for not following any scriptures. He says that the Baul asks 'are we dogs ... that

we should lick up the leavings of others? Brave men rejoice in the output of their own energy, they create their own festivals.¹³ Tagore followed this same philosophy at his school in Santiniketan. He introduced new festivals like *Vasantotsava*, *Sarodotsava*, *Vriksha ropan*, *Halakarshan*. For each occasion he composed new songs, plays and poems. He kept shifting the venue for the festive congregation.

Tagore always felt that it was the common man who kept the religious tradition alive while the educated and the rich cause its degradation. Sishir Kumar Das in his Introduction to *The English Writings of Rabindranath Tagore*, Volume III, writes: 'Tagore was the first English-educated Indian to appropriate the Baul texts into his world-view. He did not consider the Baul thought either as contradictory to the Upaniṣadic doctrines or as a self-sufficient alternative to them. But he valorized its heretic character, its rejection of all institutional religions. This recognition of a folk world-view resistant to canonical texts and institutions, provided a fuller picture of Indian religious plurality, the co-existence of religious sects, distinctive by social stratification—brahmanical and non-brahmanical, elite and folk—as well.'¹⁴

It is easy to understand that a religious practice which requires a total reliance on inner resources is not likely to attract a popular following; especially in a culture where our sincerest communication is conveyed through stereotypical messages printed on greeting cards. We constantly remain at the level of communication and never rise to the level of communion. The bonds that we establish are mechanical and lack in a living joy. Tagore lived and worked in a comparatively placid world unlike the tension-ridden world we live in where we seem to be continuously hopping about. In his time he was critical about the emerging lifestyle brought about by industrialization. Tagore wrote 'compressed and crowded time has its use when dealing with material things but living truths must have for their full significance a perspective of wide leisure. The cramped time produces deformities and degeneracy, and the mind constantly pursued by a fury of haste, develops a chronic condition of spiritual dyspepsia.'¹⁵

We know Tagore worked tirelessly for his school, for his lectures and addresses, he also frequently travelled within India and abroad. Leisure in the conventional sense was a luxury he could ill afford. Leisure for Tagore is more an attitude towards work and is also determined by the type of engagement and work one chooses. A worker who cannot identify with his work considers work to be a burden. Tagore says: 'Our day of work

is not our day of joy—for that we require a holiday; for, miserable that we are, we cannot find our holiday in our work.'¹⁶ Tagore realizes the worth of work in the mundane domain where we are guided by considerations of utility as well as the need for expressing our creative surplus. Through a continuous effort man must learn to transform the domain of utility into one of creative expression. Tagore writes: 'Religion must only deal with things that belong to the spiritual realm of the eternal ... it should allow a great part of human existence to lie outside its direct interference, so that life may enjoy its freedom of growth guided by laws of reason, or rhythm of beauty.'¹⁷

Tagore felt that the only bond between man is the spiritual bond of love. There is no way in which this realization can be governed or hastened by external means. The cosmic bond of love is the aim of divine creation. The Vaishnavas realized this. Tagore writes: 'In our country the Vaishnavas have realized this truth and boldly asserted it by saying that God has to rely on human souls for the fulfilment of his love. In love there must be freedom, therefore God has not only to wait till our souls, out of their own will, bring themselves into harmony with his own, but also to suffer when there are obstacles and rebellions.'¹⁸

Obviously a religion of love has to be all-embracing. It cannot make a distinction between the blessed and the heathen. An emphasis on freedom forecloses the possibility of any type of conversion or pontification. Religious freedom is only compatible with plurality. Tagore's ideal for *Visva-Bharati* was one of free exchange of ideas. By welcoming western visitors he did not intend his students to imitate foreign ideas. As he says: 'The internationalism of *Visva-Bharati* must be the internationalism of India, with its own distinct character.' He goes on to say: 'The true universalism is not the breaking down of the walls of one's own house, but the offering of hospitality to one's guests and neighbours.'¹⁹ This is a very difficult ideal indeed. It is much easier to sing Tagore-songs and use his quotations for expressing our subtlest emotions. But to emulate his dreams of internationalism through the spiritual unity of man needs a lot more vitality than is evident in Bengal today. Tagore has given us a vision and a dream. Occasionally relevant passages are quoted from Tagore with great veneration by the Bengali intellectual, and recently by political leaders as well. All said and done, Tagore's philosophy of religion is more a *symbol* of Bengali culture than a *constituent* of the Bengali form of life.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Rabindranath Tagore, 'The Problem of India' (letter written to Myron W. Philips, 1909) in *The English Writings of Rabindranath Tagore (EWRT)*, ed. by Sishir Kumar Das, Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi, 1996, Vol. III, p. 732.
2. Rabindranath Tagore, 'Address at the Parliament of Religions' (1937) in *EWRT*, Vol. III, p. 704.
3. S.N. Ganguly, *Tradition, Modernity and Development*, The Macmillan Co. of India Ltd., Delhi, 1977, p. 46.
4. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, 'Most Dear to all the Muses', in *Rabindranath Tagore, Centenary Volume, 1861-1961*, Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi, 1961, p. xviii.
5. Rabindranath Tagore, 'Address at the Parliament of Religions', p. 704.
6. Rabindranath Tagore, 'The Religion of Man' (1931), in *EWRT*, Vol. III, p. 129.
7. Rabindranath Tagore, 'Address at the Parliament of Religions', p. 706.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 709.
9. Rabindranath Tagore, 'The Religion of Man', p. 133.
10. Rabindranath Tagore, 'The Way to Unity' (1923) in *EWRT*, Vol. III, p. 465.
11. Rabindranath Tagore, 'The Philosophy of Our People', Presidential address at the first Indian Philosophical Congress, *EWRT*, Vol. III, p. 569.
12. Rabindranath Tagore, quoted by Kshiti Mohun Sen, 'The Baul Singers of Bengal', Appendix I to 'The Religion of Man' in *EWRT*, Vol. III, p. 179.
13. Kshiti Mohun Sen, 'The Baul Singers of Bengal', p. 176.
14. Sishir Kumar Das, Introduction to *EWRT*, Vol. III, p. 19.
15. Rabindranath Tagore, 'The Philosophy of Leisure' (1929), *EWRT*, Vol. III, p. 619.
16. Rabindranath Tagore, *Sadhana* (1913) in *EWRT*, Vol. II, p. 332.
17. Rabindranath Tagore, 'The Way to Unity', p. 461.
18. Rabindranath Tagore, 'Personality' (1917) in *EWRT*, Vol. II, pp. 386-7.
19. Rabindranath Tagore, 'Lectures and Addresses' in *EWRT*, Vol. III, pp. 492-3.

The Concept of *Śūnya* in Orissan Santha Philosophy—An Overview

TANDRA PATNAIK

Professor, Postgraduate Department of Philosophy,
Utkal University, Vani-Vihar, Bhubaneswar

We usually cringe at the very idea of discussing our own medieval philosophical tradition. So the Indian philosophical tradition seems to come to an abrupt end somewhere in the medieval period. Most books on Indian philosophy are silent about the medieval traditions. The only system that attracts attention is Navya-nyāya. But it is obvious that other traditions continued with a new vigour by absorbing within themselves new characters and new forms.

There may be certain justifiable reasons for the lack of interest in the study of medieval philosophy. This was the period when the socio-cultural scene was dominated by an upsurge of *Bhakti* movements. With this, the focus shifted from the Ācāryas to the Santhas, from Sanskrit to the regional languages, and from the intellectual elites to the common mass. Like the classical Indian philosophers, the Santhas, no doubt, spoke of the absolute Truth and Reality; of the nature of the worldly life, as well as the means of spiritual realization. But they did not use logic or any form of dialectics to prove their point of view. Their philosophy was surcharged with an emotional appeal; and poetry was perhaps the best medium of expression for their ideas. This is an important reason for categorizing Santha writings as literature rather than as philosophy. In my paper I wish to throw some light on one such tradition which is typically Orissan. This is a tradition which, in spite of having a strong metaphysical base, has not received the attention it deserves. One of its central theories is woven around the concept of *śūnya Puruṣa/śūnya Brahman*.

The idea of *śūnya* dominated the Orissan cultural scene right from the first century till the 19th century. With the passage of time the very idea of *śūnya* underwent certain changes influenced variously by the religio-philosophical movements that swept this part of India. But by the 16th century it took a final shape in the hands of the five great Orissan Santhas,

popularly known as Pañcasakhā (five soul-mates), viz. Jagannātha Dāsa, Baḷarāma Dāsa, Jasovanta Dāsa, Achyutānanda Dāsa and Śiśu Ananta. Though this movement was known as a *Bhakti* movement, their emphasis was, all along, on spiritual realization through *jñāna* or true knowledge. Though their object of devotion was Lord Jagannātha yet they despised idolatry. For them, Jagannātha was the symbol of formless, shapeless, indescribable *śūnya puruṣa*.

Thus, in this Santha tradition one comes across a peculiar amalgamation of highly abstract metaphysics and a certain form of religiosity. Some scholars call the Pañcasakhā the crypto-Buddhists,¹ others call them the Bauddha-Vaiṣṇavas² and there are still others, who call them Yogācārīs.³ Yet they don't belong to any accredited Buddhist cult. In a broader perspective, Pañcasakhā are Vaiṣṇavas—by that time Lord Jagannātha had already been identified as *Viṣṇu*. But it is a very distinct type of Vaiṣṇavaism that we find here. For them, the ultimate Reality is *śūnya Puruṣa* and the mode of worship is *nirguṇa upāsana*. These two important features can be put in direct contrast to other forms of Vaiṣṇavaism, specifically Rāmānuja's Śrī Vaiṣṇavaism and Śrī Caitanya's Gaudīya Vaiṣṇavaism. Both these schools conceive the highest Reality as *Saguṇa*; and emphasize pure *bhakti* as the path to realization. On the other hand, for the Pañcasakhā it is *bhakti* that is accentuated by *jñāna*, i.e., *jñāna misrā bhakti*. Again as the propounder of the *nirguṇa tattva* their philosophy bears a close affinity to Śaṅkara's Advaitism. Yet they did not accept the abstruse metaphysics of Śaṅkara. They believed in the impermanence of the world, yet they were not exactly Māyāvādīns. To put it in brief, in Pañcasakhā philosophy we come across a grand synthesis of Buddhism, Vedānta, Tantra and Yoga. Besides, we note a fascinating confluence of ideas and ideals of the different philosophical schools that left their footmarks on Orissan soil.

In the first three sections I shall try to offer an account of the evolution of the concept of the *śūnya Puruṣa* with reference to three major trends, i.e., Buddhism, Jagannāthism and Hinduism. The last section will be devoted to the discussion of the Pañcasakhā's notion of *śūnya puruṣa*.

I

The idea of *śūnya*, through not entirely unknown to the Vedic tradition, is the focal point of the Māhāyāna Buddhism, especially the Mādhyamika

branch of Nāgārjuna. The Santha theory of *śūnya* largely draws its support from Vajrayāna, a subsect of Māhāyāna Buddhism. Therefore, it will be helpful if we discuss in brief the theoretical presumptions of Vajrayāna as an independent school of Buddhism. For this school, Reality is of the nature of '*śūnya*' which obviously is drawn from the Mādhyamika doctrine of Śūnyavāda.

It is well known that Nāgārjuna was the first systematic propounder of the doctrine of Śūnyavāda. This theory neither stands for a philosophy of void nor for absolute negation. That is why I have decided to retain the term *śūnya* instead of using the oft-translated 'void' or 'emptiness'. *Śūnya*, according to Nāgārjuna's theory, stands for the ultimate Reality (*tattva*). While defining *tattva* he ascribes to it certain characteristics which do not allow us to be convinced that *śūnya* means total annihilation (*uccheda*), as it has been claimed by Śaṅkara. For Nāgārjuna, *tattva* is that, 'which can be directly realised, which is calm and blissful, that where all plurality is merged, that where all cries of intellect are satisfied.'⁴ In other words it is the non-dual harmonious whole. It is beyond all conceptualization and intellectual categorization, for, these intellectual processes require determination and discrimination. Reality being above all categorical dualities, is simply ineffable. Thus, reality is *śūnyatā* when viewed from the phenomenal standpoint, because distinctions like affirmation and negation, existence and non-existence do not apply to it. Again, the phenomenal world itself is *śūnyatā* when viewed from an absolute standpoint, because all that is empirical fails to represent the real essence of the beings. Thus, according to Nāgārjuna, *śūnya* is a principle about which neither existence nor non-existence, nor a combination of both, nor the negation of both, can be predicated.⁵ The *Prajñāparamitā Sutra* says, 'form is *śūnyatā* and *śūnyatā* is form.' This paradoxical statement can be explained in the following way. All that is associated with names and forms, i.e., the phenomenal, is relatively true, hence 'form is *śūnyatā*'. Again, the world of names and forms is not just nothingness. Form itself arises from the *śūnyatā* and is indivisible from it. Therefore, '*śūnyatā* is form'. Here an absolute non-distinction is projected between the ultimate Reality and phenomenal Reality. In a similar vein, Śūnyavādīns claim that *saṃsāra*, i.e., the world of birth and death, is *nirvāṇa* (the transcendental state free of time and suffering). Again, *nirvāṇa* is *saṃsāra*, because it is our own ignorance which makes us comprehend the world as consisting of ones own self and of others. It is the enlightened person (the Buddha)

alone, who sees no distinction between himself and others. Hence, there is no real distinction between *paramārtha* (Real) and *samvṛtti* (the phenomenal), *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa*, the Buddha and innumerable suffering souls.

Thus, we come across a novel interpretation of *nirvāṇa* in the Māhāyāna doctrine. For Buddha, *nirvāṇa* has to be realized through one's own effort. But Māhāyāna adds an altruistic tinge to the concept by incorporating the lofty idea of *karuṇā*, i.e., compassion for the whole mankind. Nāgārjuna himself says, 'The Buddha is like the sky (which has neither origination nor cessation) and the beings are like him.'⁶ This cryptic remark directly expresses the identification of the Buddha and the whole of humanity; it indirectly confirms that *nirvāṇa* is not possible without comparison for one and all. The path to *nirvāṇa* is the compassionate identification with the ordinary people of the world, lying in the vortex of suffering, misery, birth and death. The path to Buddhahood is the knowledge of this equality (*samatā*). Personal liberation is not the goal, it is the liberation of the whole humanity. As *Sutrāṅkārā* very succinctly puts it, 'there is no *pūnya* if you feed yourself, but only when you feed others. Similarly there is no greatness in personal liberation, it must be liberation for all.'⁷ This Māhāyānī ideal of *karuṇā* is encapsulated in the example of Avalokiteśvara, the all-compassionate one, who refuses his *nirvāṇa* until all creatures of the world obtain freedom from worldly sufferings.

Vajrayāna absorbs both the concept of *śūnyatā* and the ideal of *karuṇā* into its fold. But it transforms the highly abstract philosophy of Mādhyamika into a practical philosophy. Therefore, it borrows certain basic principles from the Yogācāra, another branch of Buddhism. Asanga and Vasubandhu, the prominent propounders of this school, incorporated certain elements of Yoga in their doctrine. Besides, they accredited an ultimacy to *viñāna* (the pure consciousness), in place of *śūnyatā*. From this doctrine Vajrayāna draws support for the view that mind or inner experience is the source of energy. Mādhyamika had already shown the identity between *śūnyatā* and *karuṇā*. The Vajrayānīs add the idea of *viñāna* to it. According to them this three-fold identity leads to the fourth one, i.e., *mahāsukha* or the supreme bliss. Nāgārjuna had already hinted at the idea of bliss in his definition of *tattva*. Now Vajrayāna transforms it to the concept of *mahāsukha* (the supreme bliss) which can be realized by a seeker who attains direct knowledge of the Reality.

Vajrayāna, which is popularly known as Tantric Buddhism, includes within its fold the tantric⁸ elements which find expression in the form of belief that seemingly opposite concepts are, in principle, one. So the passive concepts of *śūnyatā* and *prajñā* are resolved with the active principles of *karuṇā* and *upāya* (the path or the means). Sometimes *śūnyatā* is conceived as the male principle and *karuṇā* as the female principle.

Buddhism, it is possible, may have incorporated tāntric elements as early as the third century AD, but Vajrayāna with its tāntric leanings comes out into the open sometime in the 7th or the 8th century. Etymologically speaking, *vajra* means 'thunderbolt'. It refers to that aspect of man that is absolute and indestructible in contrast to the fictions that a man entertains about himself and the world. *Advaya Vajra Saṃgraha*, one of the famous treatises of Vajrayāna says, '*Śūnyatā* which is firm, substantial, indivisible and impenetrable, incapable of being burnt and imperishable is called *vajrayāna*.'⁹ We note that *śūnyatā* is taken to be the focal point of their metaphysics too. A popular *mantra* of the Vajrayāna is, 'All *dharmas* are of the nature of *śūnyatā*. I am also of the nature of *śūnyatā*. God who is worshipped, who worships, the material which is offered for worship, and the *mantras* used in worship all these are nothing but *śūnyatā*.'¹⁰

For Vajrayānīs, the indestructible principle, i.e., *vajra*, is present within us. Thus, each human being is a potential *bodhicitta* (awakened soul). It is our ignorance that obstructs this knowledge. The state of *bodhicitta* is explained as a union of *śūnyatā* and *karuṇā*. *Śūnyatā* is defined as the perfect knowledge of the essence-less-ness of all that is and is not. In other words, it is perfect wisdom or *prajñā* conceived as the passive aspect of the Reality. *Karuṇā* is the dynamic principle, which helps one to lead an active life for the liberation, not only of the self but also of others. Therefore, it is also called the *upāya*, i.e., the means. *Prajñā* as pure consciousness, represents the domain of *nirvṛtti*, whereas *upāya*, as the active principle, represents the domain of *pravṛtti*. But in the ultimate sense, *śūnyatā* and *karuṇā*, *prajñā* and *upāya*, all these four principles refer to the Absolute (*advaya*) Reality. *Prajñopyāvinīcaya Siddhi*, a Vajrayānī treatise says, 'When there is the union of *prajñā* and *karuṇā*, the result is *nirvāṇa*. In this state the mind is neither aware of *śūnyatā* nor *aśūnyatā*. Again there is neither rejection of the *śūnyatā*, nor *aśūnyatā*, for the very thought of *śūnya* or of *aśūnya* may lead to conceptualized discriminations. In the state of *prajñā* the mind becomes as expansive as the sky. As the sky merges with the sky, similarly, in the state of *prajñā*,

there is no discrimination between the subject of knowledge and the object of knowledge. There is no duality between the action and the agent. This knowledge of non-duality is *vajra* or *śūnyatā*.¹¹

Another important feature of the Vajrayāna doctrine is its emphasis on the role of *citta* or mind. According to them, the unitary ultimate Being appears as many due to our concepts and intellectual categories. Therefore, they say, *cittamhy saṃsāram uvāca vajrī*, i.e., it is the mind which creates the world or multiple names and forms. Again this *citta* itself is the source of *nirvāna*, because it leads a man to intuitive realization and to bliss. Thus, the Mādhyamika concepts of *śūnyatā*, *karuṇā* and *prajñā* are assimilated with the Yogācāra and Tantra. Vajrayāna also incorporates within its scheme certain Upaniṣadic ideas. It defines the ultimate Reality in terms of the triple positive qualities of *śūnya* (the ultimate Being), *vijnāna* (consciousness) and *mahāsukha* (the supreme bliss). This triple ascription bears an uncanny resemblance to the Upaniṣadic conception of the *Brahman* as, *sat*, *cit* and *ānanda*.

II

The Orissan association with Buddhism, historically, dates back to the Ashokan conquest of Kalinga and Ashoka's subsequent conversion to Buddhism. Recent excavations and archeological findings at Ratnagiri, Lalitgiri, Puspagiri and Languli hillocks of Kendrapara show enough evidence of its presence in ancient Orissa. But what seems to be most pertinent in the context of the evolution of the concept of *śūnya* is the dominance of Vajrayāna in certain parts of Orissa. The history of Orissa reveals that during the 7th and 8th centuries AD the Bhaumakāra dynasty ruled over certain parts of Orissa. King Subhankara II of this dynasty was a staunch Buddhist and used the titles *Parama Saugata* and *Parama Tathāgata*.¹² It cannot be called a coincidence that during this phase of history Vajrayāna came into prominence in the region that now constitutes Orissa. The origin of Vajrayāna is shrouded in mystery, though it is believed to have its roots in Orissa. On the basis of the Tibetan *Pag Sam Jon Zang* and other such works, it has been claimed that there were four centres of Buddhist Tantra. Oddiyān/Uddiyān or Odevisā was one amongst them. It is even stated in some Vajrayāna works that *Uḍra* is the first centre of Tantra śāstra.¹³ But controversy arises about its geographical location. According to Benoytosh Bhattacharyya and N.K. Sahu,¹⁴ Oddiyān

refers to certain areas of what is now known as Orissa. But Waddel¹⁵ and others locate Oddiyān in the Swat valley or a certain place near Lahore. It is a matter of regret that Orissan history had never been systematically codified till the 20th century. But at least on the basis of certain treatises, inscriptions and icons, it can be argued that Vajrayāna and Sahayayāna were deep-rooted in Orissa, in spite of the rise of Brāhminism in the 11th century. Indrabhūti has been regarded as a prominent preacher of Vajrayāna in Orissa. In the closing lines of his work, *Jñānasiddhi*, he says, *Sri madoddyāna vinirgata jñānasiddhi nāma sādhanē pāykiāsamāpta kritiriyam Sri Indrabihuti pādavam*. Here, the reference to Oddiyān may prove his Orissan origin. His name also figures in the list of 84 Buddhist siddhas. It has been claimed by N.K. Sahu¹⁶ and Bhattacharyya¹⁷ that he was a king of Orissa. In the beginning of the 9th century he, along with his teacher Ananga Vajra, propounded Vajrayāna in certain parts of this land. One of their greatest contributions was the assimilation of Buddhism with Jagannathism of Orissa.

Jñānasiddhi and *Prjñopāyaviniscaya Siddhi*, the treatises composed by Indrabhūti and Ananga Vajra respectively, prove their association with the Orissan culture. In their work they devote several stanzas eulogizing Lord Jagannātha, the presiding deity of the Puruṣottam Kṣetra (what is now known as Puri). Indrabhūti, in the opening stanza of his book says:

Lord Jagannātha, who is the same as all Buddhas, and who as all-pervading *siddhi* is like the sky, is worshipped by all the highly wise men. He is the giver of all, omniscient of the essence of all, the best of all Vajrayānis. After bowing to him I now enunciate his great *sādhana*.¹⁸

Similarly, Ananga Vajra describes Jagannātha as *śūnyagarbha*, i.e., the embodiment of knowledge and beyond all conceptualization. 'Jagannātha himself manifests in the world of names and forms to remove the darkness of the world. This manifestation is due to His compassion (*karuṇā*), as He himself is the source of *karuṇā*. It is only the wise, who see Him as transcending all names and forms.'¹⁹ These descriptions show Indrabhūti and Ananga Vajra's association with the Jagannātha cult, which had become a dominant force by that time in Orissa.

Of course, it is argued by some historians, that the presence of the term Jagannātha does not prove the Vajrayānī affiliation to this cult. The term Jagannātha etymologically means, 'Lord of the universe'. On this basis

they argue that Indrabhūti might have eulogized Buddha, as the lord of the universe. But the historical and literary evidence indicate otherwise. In Orissan literature and sculptures of the 11th century and after, Jagannātha has been identified with the Buddha. It is well known that the Buddha had been admitted into the Hindu pantheon and had been given the status of the ninth incarnation of Lord *Viṣṇu*. In *The Bhagabatam* (1.3.24), *The Viṣṇu Purana*, Ksemendra's *Divyadana Kalpana* (an 11th century work) and Jayadeva's *Geetagoṇḍa*, the Buddha was considered as the ninth incarnation of *Viṣṇu*.

It is interesting to note that in Orissa, Jagannātha has been regarded as the Buddha-Jagannātha and is placed as the ninth incarnation instead of the Buddha. The iconography of the Jagannātha temple bears evidence to this fact. Ten incarnations of *Viṣṇu* are found carved on the lintel over the Lion's Gate of the Jagannātha temple. It is unanimously admitted that the temple was constructed by the king Choḍaganga Deva between AD 1112 and 1147. Here, we find Jagannātha in place of the Buddha, which strengthens our suspicion that Jagannātha was equated with the Buddha. What is most interesting about this iconography is that Jagannātha is shown here to have a complete form with hands and legs and He holds a *vajra* in the left hand and a *Cakra* in the right. In Chapter XXV of Indrabhūti's *Jnāna Siddhi*, it is stated that *vajra* stands for the *bodhicitta* and *cakra* for the elimination of *ajñāna*. This may be treated as another evidence for the accommodation of Vajrayāna within the fold of Jagannāthism. In Jajpur of Orissa and also in the Gaya Museum, some friezes are there in which Jagannātha replaces the image of Buddha. This became a regular feature of Orissan iconography till the 19th century.

In this context the evolution of Jagannātha culture itself is very fascinating. Originally, He is believed to have been the deity of the *śavaras* (the aboriginals) of Orissa. In the *śavara* culture worship of the wooden log (*dāru*) was prevalent. So their God was known as *dāru-devatā* or *Jagant*. The term *Jagant* in their terminology means the highest incarnation of the *kitung* or the supreme Reality. It is interesting to note that Jagannātha, till today, is called *dāru devatā*. How this aboriginal conception of *dāru devatā*, or *Jagant*, was transformed into the Jagannātha, is a matter of controversy. History is silent about it and legends are many. But it cannot be denied that under the influences of varied Aryan and non-Aryan cultures that prevailed in Orissa through the centuries, *Jagant* became Jagannātha. Therefore, it becomes easier for different cultures to

claim Jagannātha as their own deity. He has been identified with the *Jina* of the Jainas, *Bhairava* of the Śāktas, *Rūdra* of the Śaivas and the Buddha of the Buddhists. But its Buddhistic links seem to be very strong. It is believed that this temple was a Māhāyāna shrine and the three deities (Jagannātha, Balabhadra and Subhadra) have been identified with Buddha, *Dharma* and *Sangha* (three *ratnas*). A stone of Ashokan polish with Buddha, *Dharma* and *Sangha* at the top has been found in Bhubaneswar and is preserved in the Ausutosh Museum in Kolkata. In this panel the three images bear resemblance to the three deities of the Puri temple. Similarly, the pedestal where the three deities are installed is called *ratna vedi*, which is believed to be the abbreviated form of *triratna vedi*—referring to the three *ratnas* of Buddhism.²⁰

A close link between Buddhism and Jagannāthism, is also claimed by some scholars on the basis of certain legends and ritual practices prevalent in the Jagannātha temple. Most prominent among them are Sir Monier Williams and H. Hopkins.²¹ They draw support for the Buddhistic origin of the Jagannātha cult from the ancient Sinhalese work, entitled *Dātha Vamsa*.²² According to this work, a molar tooth relic of Lord Buddha was worshipped in Kalinga. Kalinga, once upon a time, was known as *Danta Pura*. On the basis of this work, Williams claims that the tooth-relic was placed inside the body of Jagannātha. As the account seems to be based on certain myths and legends, many modern scholars have dismissed the claim. But, we must not forget the fact that myths are rooted in the culture of the land. On this basis we can argue that there must have been a strong Buddhist influence in Orissan society at a particular period of time. But Rajendra Lal Mitra's²³ claim seems more authentic. It is based on the ritualistic use of *Yantra* (particular mystical figures used by the Tantric Buddhists), in Jagannātha worship.

However, medieval Santha literature provides the most crucial evidence for the argument about the assimilation of Buddhism and Jagannāthism. Their conception of the Buddha-Jagannātha, encapsulates this assimilative trend. This trend, to some extent, was initiated by the 15th century Santha poet Sārālā Dāsa and fully developed by Pañcasakhās and subsequent poets like Caitanya Dāsa, Dinakruṣṇa Dāsa and others. They have composed several couplets glorifying the Buddha. Sārālā Dāsa says, 'Jagannātha, you are present here as Buddha for the deliverance of the people of the world.'²⁴ Similar oblations are made by Jagannātha Dāsa, Achyutānanda Dāsa and others.²⁵

Another interesting aspect of this assimilation can be noted in the practice of Jagannātha worship in Nepal. Historians believe that with the advent of Brāhminism in Orissa, the Buddhists were hounded away from the state. It is also believed that the Buddhists fled to Nepal and Tibet, where their philosophy found new pastures. Vajrayāna is very popular in Nepal even today. The City of Kathmandu and its vicinities have, at least, eight Jagannātha temples. It may be argued that Nepal, being a Hindu state, there is nothing unusual about the worship of Jagannātha in the country. But out of all the gods of the Hindu pantheon, why the construction of temple for Jagannātha was given priority is a matter to be probed.

III

Thus far, we have been discussing about the Buddhistic influence on the evolution of the concept of *śūnya Puruṣa*. But it would be unjust if we ignore the impact of Advaitism on Orissan culture. In Pancasakha literature its influence is quite pronounced. Of course, the notion of *śūnya*, though largely Buddhistic in its origin, is not entirely unknown to the Hindu philosophy. The famous *Nāsadīya Sūkta* of *Rg Veda* hints at such a principle. Besides, the term *śūnya* is used in certain Brāhminical literature. *Bhāgavatam* (12.4.21) and the *Tejovindu Upaniṣad* (1.10) describe the *Parama Brahman* as *śūnyavat*. Even the words *śūnya* and *nirvāna* are used with reference to *Viṣṇu* in *Viṣṇu Sahasranāma*. Śaṅkara's commentary on this work defines *śūnya* as *Saviśeṣa rahita tvāt śūnyavat*, etc. i.e., that which is without any determination is *śūnya*. This suggest that either this Buddhistic concept was accepted in the Hindu fold, or else the idea of *śūnya* was already there in the orthodox tradition. But one thing is clear, there seems to be no opposition between the ideas of *Brahman* and *śūnya* at a conceptual level.

It is well known that Śaṅkara visited Puri and established his own monastery. He also received royal patronage and the pundits of Jagannātha temple accepted his supremacy in certain matters of the interpretation of religio-philosophical issues. But what seems to have influenced the common man was his theory of *nirguna Brahman*. The Orissan mind, already acquainted with the idea of *śūnyatā*, did not find Śaṅkara's philosophy very unfamiliar. They must not have found a radical opposition between the Buddhistic notions of *śūnyatā*, *nirvāna* and *prajñā* on the one hand, and the Advaitic conception of *Brahman*, *mokṣa* and *jñānamārga*, on the

other. But historically speaking, what seems to have attracted the Orissan people towards Śaṅkara's Advaitism, was its purity. By that time, Vajrayāna and Sahajayāna had degenerated into a form of sexual Tantricism. People rejected the perversion encouraged by these two schools. So, an ideological and cultural vacuum was created. Śaṅkara's attempt to resurrect Hinduism and Upaniṣadic ideals must have left its mark on the Orissan socio-cultural scene. There was a revival of Brāhminism and as a result there was an anti-Buddhist wave. This perhaps ended the Buddhistic dominance in Orissa. From the eleventh century onwards, streams of Vedāntins visited Puri and established their own monasteries. Amongst them, Rāmānuja's name figures prominently. He is believed to be largely responsible for the Vaiṣṇavaization of Jagannātha. In the Santha literature of Orissa, we notice the influence of both, Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja. The idea of *nirguna upasānā* seems to have its roots in Śaṅkara's Advaitism; and the identification of Jagannātha with *Viṣṇu* is largely due to Rāmānuja.

IV

Until this point I have been focusing on the evolution of the concept of *śūnya Puruṣa*. In this section I shall discuss, in some detail, how the five Santhas developed this belief. The Pañcasakhā literature is very vast and varied. To start with, they rendered the sacred books of the Hindus into people's language, in order to make them available to the common mass. But they took care to add their own interpretations of the Reality, truth and cosmology, in these transcreations. Jagannātha Dāsa's Oriya rendering of the *Bhāgavatam* is still every popular in the far-flung villages of Orissa, and is regularly recited in community gatherings, known as *Bhāgavata Tungi*. Baḷarāma Dāsa's *Jagamohan Rāmāyana* and Achyutānanda's *Harivaṁśa* are equally popular amongst the masses. Besides these transcreations, Jagannātha Dāsa's *Dāru Brahma Gītā* and *Tulābhīnā*, Baḷarāma's *Brahmānda Bhugola*, *Bhāva Samudra* and *Bata Avakāśa*, Achyutānanda's *Śūnya Saṁhitā*, *Tattvabodhinī*, *Brahma Śānkuli* and *Anākāra Saṁhitā*, Jasovanta's *Premabhakti Gītā* and Śiśu Ananta's *Hetu Udaya Bhāgavata* are great works. They offer us a clear picture of their metaphysical position.

Like any other philosopher of the accredited Indian traditions, these five great Santhas contemplated on the nature of the ultimate principle—a principle which could explain the phenomenality of the cosmic existence,

as well as man's unquenched thirst for spiritual realization. Their metaphysics reflected man's search for something, which is the Being of beings, the truth of truths, transcending all human limitations, including the limiting categories of the intellect. This is that principle, which the Upaniṣads designate as the *Brahman*, Śūnyavādins as *śūnya* and the later Vedāntins as *īśvara*. Pañcasakhā amalgamate these three ways of looking at the ultimate Being, and prefer to call it *śūnya Brahman* or *śūnya puruṣa*. As is well-known, the term *śūnya* is associated with Māhāyāna Buddhism and its Tantric offshoots. So, initially, the use of the term *śūnya puruṣa* by the Orissan Santha philosophers may create an impression that their metaphysics is a regionalized version of Śūnyavādā. In certain respects, the Buddhists notion of *śūnya* appears to underpin Pañcasakhā's presentation of the theory of *śūnya puruṣa*. For them, the *śūnya puruṣa* is not only the ultimate object of a man's spiritual quest, it is the very basis of the cosmic existence. Achyutānanda expresses this idea in the following way:

Śūnya itself is the form and basis of all discriminating knowledge
Look at the whole universe from the pedestal of *śūnya*,
and you will find everything manifested in the *śūnya*.
Everything arises out of *śūnya* and everything flourishes in *śūnya*.²⁶

Again, almost in the footsteps of Śūnyavādā, they seem to declare that the reality is beyond all distinctions—'It is neither *śūnya* nor *viśūnya*, neither pure form, nor non-pure form, neither the *rūpa* nor the *arūpa*, but the highest *tattva*.'²⁷ Also, they seem to follow the Vajrayāna way of classifying *śūnya* and putting these classifications in a hierarchical order. They classify *śūnya* as *śūnya*, *ati śūnya*, *mahāśūnya* and *pravāsvāra śūnya*. *Parvāsvāra śūnya* being the highest form, symbolizes pure light (*jyoti*). In a similar vein, Pañcasakhās classify *śūnya* either in three or in four layers. Achyutānanda talks of three, viz. *śūnya*, *mahā śūnya* and *jyoti*. Jasovanta, on the other hand, talks of four, viz. *śūnya*, *jyoti śūnya*, *mahā śūnya* and *cetanā*.²⁸

But in spite of these similarities we cannot simply brand these Orissan thinkers as the crypto-Buddhists. We have noted earlier that there is not much of a difference between the Advaitic and Upaniṣadic conception of *Brahman* and the Buddhistic notion of *śūnya*. It is a matter of strange coincidence that Śāṅkara himself was called a crypto-Buddhist by his critics. But if we go by the use of words, then we notice that the Pañcasakhās

very frequently identify *śūnya* with *Brahman*. Balarama Dasa, in his *Sāravvata Gītā* very clearly states, 'He is *śūnya* and also the *Brahman*.'²⁹ Achyutānanda identifies *śūnya puruṣa* with '*nirguṇa parama isvara*'. Thus we find that *śūnya* and *Brahman* are similar in their connotations, representing an ineffable, non-categorizable principle. Elaborating this, Balarama Dāsa says:

He has no form nor outline
He is *śūnya Puruṣa*, *śūnya* bodied.
He is the *Brahman* and the *śūnya*.
How can He have a name?³⁰

The best way to describe it is through negative predicates. So they call *śūnya Puruṣa nirākāra* and *anākāra* (without a definite form), *anākṣara* (non-syllable), *niranjana* (speckless), *anādi* (beginningless), *avyakta* (unmanifest), *niḥ śabda* (without the element of speech), *alekha* (non-scriptable), *anāma* (without a name) etc. The following verse from Jagannātha may give us some idea about how the *śūnya puruṣa* is to be conceived:

He is unmanifest, without activity and change.
Neither gross, nor subtle, neither short nor long.
Just know Him to be without determination.³¹

Again, sometimes *śūnya puruṣa* is described in contradictory terms. Achyutānanda would say, *śūnya puruṣa* is detached, yet kind. He is the killer, yet the saviour, receptacle of all qualities, yet without qualities. In Jagannātha Dāsa's words, *śūnya* is *sacchidānanda yet nirguṇa*.³²

One may note here a clear influence of the Upaniṣadic way of describing *Brahman* as *neti neti* and the way of ascribing contradictory predicates, such as 'that moves, that does not move' (*tat ejaṭi tanna ejaṭi*). But this is also the stand taken by the Śūnyavādins and the Vajrayānīs. They also described the highest Reality as neither the *śūnya* nor *aśūnya*. The Buddhist text *Prajna Pāramitā Hṛdayagarbha* very emphatically uses the term *neti neti* with reference to the concept of *śūnya*.³³

Perhaps, any thinker who conceives the ultimate Reality as indescribable, is bound to take such a stance. At the same time, we cannot say that the Pañcasakhā's conception of *śūnya puruṣa* is nothing but the Upaniṣadic *Brahman* and the Buddhistic *śūnya* rolled together. There are certain nov-

elties in their *śūnya-centric* metaphysics that make the theory unique in certain ways.

First, *śūnya puruṣa/śūnya Braḥman*, in spite of being nirguṇa and indeterminate, has been identified with Jagannātha, the *dāru Braḥman* (Jagannātha, being carved out of wood, is often referred to by this name). In the words of Achyutānanda:

He is the *Braḥman*,
One lettered (*om*) taintless
Also Lord Jagannātha with a form,
In the devotees devotion
He is the *dāru Braḥman*.

Emerging from the palace of indescribable
He is revealed as the pure light.³⁴

But, Jagannātha, for them, is not an idol to be worshipped. It is essentially formless, shapeless, indescribable, *nirguṇa isvara*. Śisu Ananta would say that it is due to *māyā* that He appears with a form. Thus, the Pañcasakhā identify *śūnya Braḥman* and *dāru Braḥman* Jagannātha as the ultimate Reality.

Again *śūnya puruṣa* is not just an abstract principle like *Braḥman*. It is ineffable, there is no doubt about this. But it is clearly an existent Being, and also the ground of all existence. The cosmic life is not an appearance, nor is it the product of *māyā*. It is the real manifestation of the unmanifested. There is, as if, a gradual transformation from the formless to the form, from the nameless to the name. Baḷarāma Dās puts it in the following way:

In those days my shape was *śūnya*.
This way a million years went by.
In my womb the universe was born.
This was the manifestation of *Braḥman*.³⁵

This is why they repeatedly say that in the beginning there was nothing—neither the earth nor the water, neither the Gods nor the stars. The primeval being existed as the *śūnya*.³⁶ We may compare this description with the *Nāsadiya Sūkta* of the *Rg Veda*, yet there is a difference. While in the *Nāsadiya Sūkta* the primeval fecundity is referred to as the source of creation, in case of Pañcasakhā, it is the *śabda Braḥman*—the *aum*. This is sometimes also called the *ekākṣara* (one-lettered).³⁷ Creation is a

gradual progression from *ekākṣara* to *nāma*; and from *nāma* to *rūpa* (form). To the question, how the formless, unmanifested itself is the cause of manifestation, Achyutānanda has the following answer:

All these forms are only creations of the formless and all the manifestation of forms will ultimately realize themselves in the formless. Thus one ought to be able to look at the two as one. Only by looking at the seemingly opposite with an attitude of equanimity can one realize the whole range of truth.³⁸

Regarding the question, why the manifestation? Pañcasakhā's explanation is equally interesting. They ascribe it to the *karunā* of the *śūnya Puruṣa*.³⁹ Both Baḷarāma Dāsa and Achyutānanda shared the view that *śūnya Braḥman* willed the creation out of compassion. Here, the Buddhist influence is very much pronounced. According to Māhāyāna Buddhism, the Buddha is identical with all created beings. It is a bond of *karunā*. *Nirvāna*, for the self, is not the goal, it is *nirvāna* for all which is the goal. That is why the Buddha is born and reborn till everybody is liberated. The Pañcasakhās explain the process of creation in a similar vein. The unmanifest and formless *śūnya puruṣa* manifests himself because he wants every human being to realize the real truth. Further, Achyutānanda argues, if there would not have been any sin and unhappiness in the world, why should there be creation at all?⁴⁰ In other words, the cyclic process of creation and annihilation goes on till everything is perfect.

The emphasis on *karunā* also leads them to accept the importance of *samatā*, i.e., equality. Every creature, being the manifestation of the *śūnya puruṣa*, is divine in nature. Hence, every created being is equal. This theory served as a ground for their protest against a caste-ridden society. This is explicitly epitomized in their theory of *śūdra bhakti*. Achyutānanda, eulogizing the *śūdra* class, says: 'Only a *śūdra* is eligible for real service. He has indeed little scope to be egoistic while playing his role.' So, 'to be humble and low gives you a real sense of inner humility.' Hence, Achyutānanda declares, 'That is why I have decided to be a *śūdra*.'⁴¹ For him, *śūdra bhāva* is a quality, an attitude of service to the whole mankind with the sublimation of the ego. Pañcasakhā in fact belonged to other castes by birth (and one of them was a Brāhmin). But they identified themselves as *śūdra*. With a new connotation attached to the term *śūdra*, they offered the highest status to *śūdra bhakti*, i.e., self-realization through

an attitude of service to mankind. Here again, there is an echo of the protestant attitude of Buddhism.

Śūnya puruṣa is not only the ultimate Reality and the highest Being, He is also conceived as an object of devotion and love, as the creator, and the ultimate goal of spiritual realization. We must not forget that the Pañcasakhā tradition is also a form of *bhakti* movement. So, it is natural for them to talk of God, the *Parama Īvara*. In their case, Jagannātha, *Viṣṇu* in an incarnation, is the object of devotion. Yet, God is not just an idol made up of wood or stone. It is the symbol of *śūnya Brahman*. So Achyutānanda Dasa clarifies

Lord of the *śūnya*,
they call him *Kṛṣṇa*.
With a discriminating mind,
you know Him; and meditate on the formless.⁴²

Achyutānanda warns that ordinary people are likely to worship the idols and engage in meaningless rituals, often forgetting the fact that Jagannātha is within your own being. What is important for a man is to look within.

Thus Pañcasakhā philosophy puts the entire emphasis on self-knowledge. *Bhakti* acquires a broader connotation here. It is devotion qualified by self-knowledge.⁴³ It is *jnānamisrā bhakti*. That is why Śiṣu Ananta boldly asks: 'Beyond your mind, can there be a God?'⁴⁴ Achyutānanda, elaborating the point further, says: 'the knowledge you seek is within your heart; you have to find it there and realize it.'⁴⁵ Again the '*Brahmajñāna* and *Jñāna Brahma* are never far from you, it is inseparably present within the temple of your heart.'⁴⁶ Baḷarāma Dasa goes one step ahead and declares that the human body itself is the temple.⁴⁷ It is again very interesting to note that Śaṅkara had also compared this body with the temple (*Deho devalaya Proktoḥ, jeevoḥ devaḥ sadāśivaḥ*).⁴⁸ But in case of these Santha philosophers, it is the Vajrayāna and Sahajayāna philosophers who most probably serve as the models. We note the same emphasis on mind/heart; and also an emphasis on the identification of the *Pinḍa* and the *Brahmānda*.

However, the most interesting feature of the Pañcasakhā philosophy is their way of assimilating the apparently opposed concepts of *nirguṇa* and *sagūṇa*, *rūpa* and *arūpa*, *śūnya* and *pūrṇa*. *Śūnya puruṣa*, for them, is definitely without attributes (*nirguṇa*). But the true devotee has to realize

this indeterminateness in the midst of the determinations and forms. Thus, the *śūnya puruṣa* is *sagūṇa*, as well as, *nirguṇa*. Explaining this point Achyutānanda says:

Bhakti has two dimensions. A bird can fly with both the wings. It can have perfect vision with both the eyes. In the absence of one, it becomes one-eyed; and in the absence of both it is totally blind. This is the essence of *nirguṇa* and *sagūṇa* relationship.⁴⁹

We must note here that different schools of Vedānta present a sort of opposition between both these aspects. For *Śaṅkara Brahman* is *nirguṇa* and for the later Vedāntins (including Rāmānuja) *Brahman* is *sagūṇa*. To satisfy the human inclination for the worship of the divine, Śaṅkara introduced the idea of *Īvara*; and thereby, created a conceptual gap between the *nirguṇa Brahman* and the *sagūṇa Īvara*. But the opposition seems to merge in Pañcasakhā philosophy, where *śūnya Brahman* is conceived as transcending the opposition. It is for this reason that *śūnya* for them does not signify void or emptiness. It is ineffable, not because names and forms cannot be applied to the *śūnya puruṣa*, but simply because it is self-complete—so complete that no predicate is good enough to cover its limitless completeness. In this sense, it is *pūrṇa*—i.e. self-complete. It permeates everything, every quality, name and form, as the *Pūrṇa Brahman*. Achyutānanda says: 'It is like air which fills everything. *Nirguṇa Parama Īvara* has no form or shape but is omnipresent as the indestructible *Pūrṇa Brahman*.'⁵⁰ Perhaps the following Upanisadic verse can best explain the Pañcasakhā philosophy of the *śūnya Puruṣa/śūnya Brahman*.

*Pūrṇaadam pūrṇaidam pūrṇāt pūrṇamudacyate
pūrṇasya pūrṇāmādāya pūrṇamevābasiṣyate.*⁵¹

Not only did they present a spirit of conceptual assimilation, but a true assimilation of various religious trends that flourished in Orissa, within the fold of the concept of *śūnya*. These great Santha philosophers turned the ineffable principle of *śūnya* into an all-embracing concept. According to them, this *śūnya*, once realized, may be conceived as the ultimate resting place of the Śaivas, Śāktas, Vaiṣnavas and, for that matter, any religious cult. For *śūnya* is the principle of assimilation of the human quest for the ultimate truth. As Achyutānanda very clearly puts it:

The house of *śūnya* is conceived by the worshippers of Śiva as the Śiva Sthāna, for the Vaiṣnavas it is the Viṣṇu Sthāna, for the Śāktas it is the

place of the *Devi*. Thus each cult conceives its own God as the ultimate form of *Brahman*, once they realize the truth as per the faiths of their own cult.⁵²

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Nagandranath Vasu, *Modern Buddhism and Its Followers in Orissa*, Calcutta, 1919.
2. Arthaballav Mohanty, *The Introduction to Brahma śūnikuli*, Utkal University Press, Bhubaneswar, 1970.
3. Binayak Mishra, *Oriya Sāhitya Itihāsa*, Cuttack.
4. Aparam̐ pratyayam̐ śāntar̐m̐ prapancairaprapancitam̐ Nirvikalpaṁ anyanārthametataṁ tattvasya lakṣaṇam̐. *Mādhyamika Kārika*, XVIII.9.
5. Astināsti tadubhyānubhaya catuskoti vinirumktaṁ śūnyarūpaṁ. *Sarvadarśana saṁgraha*, p. 23.
6. Nāgārjuna, *Mahāyanāvimsaka*, 2.
7. Yathā punyam̐ prasavate paresām̐ bhjonam̐ dadāt Na tu svayam̐ sa bhunjanaḥ tathā punyomahodayaḥ. *Sūtrālamkara* 5.72.
8. B. Bhattacharyya, 'Tantric Culture Among Buddhists', *The Cultural Heritage of India*, Vol. IV, The Ramakrishna Mission, Kolkata, 1982, p. 262.
9. Dr̐dam̐ sāramasauśirya achhedyābhedyā lakṣaṇam̐ Adāhi avināsi ca śūnyatā vajramucyate. *Advya vajra Siddhi*, Gaekwad Oriental Series (no. 40, 1927), p. 37.
10. S.B. Dasgupta, *An Introduction to Tantric Buddhism*, Calcutta University, 1958, p. 81.
11. Na śūnya bhāvanām̐ kuryāt nāpica aśūnayabhāvanām̐ na śūnyam̐ santyajed yogi nacāśūnyam̐ parityaje Aśūnya śūnyayorgaha jāyate ananta kalpanā nirvikāro nirāśm̐go niškāṅksagāta kalpanaḥ saḥ adyāntaḥ kalpanā mukto vyomavad bhavayed budhaḥ. Ananga vajra, *projnopāya viniscaya siddhi* (ed.) B. Bhattacharyya, Gaekwad Oriental Series, 44 (1929) 4.5.8.
12. K.C. Mishra, *The Cult of Jagannatha*, Firma K.L.M., Kolkata, 1972, p. 170.
13. Uḍṭākhyam̐ Prathamam̐ Prham̐ dvītiyam̐ jalasailakam̐ ṛtīyam̐ Purnapīham̐ to kāmarūpa caturkhakam̐. *Hevajratantra*.
14. B. Bhattacharyya, *Sādhanamālā*, Gaekwad Oriental Series, Baroda, 1931, p. XXVII; N.K. Sahu, *Buddhism in Orissa*, Utkal University Press, Bhubaneswar, 1985, p. 154.
15. L.A. Waddle, *Lamaism*, W.A. Allen and Co., London, 1895, pp. 381-2.
16. Sahu, *Buddhism in Orissa*.

17. Bhattacharyya, *Tantric Culture Amongst Buddhists*, The Cultural Heritage of India, Vol. IV, 270.
18. (a) Pranipatya Jagannātham sarvajīna varācitam sarva Buddhamayam siddhi byapinano gagonopama *Two Vajrayan Works*, ed. B. Bhattacharyya, G.O.S., 44, 1929, p. 31.
- (b) Sarvajna Sarvadarśimca Sarvalokartha tatra tatra Jagannātha darśati karunatmabhih. Op. cit.
19. Namaste śūnyatagarbha sarbasankalpabarjita Sarbajnana sandohah gnanamurti namastrute. *Prajñopayabiniscaya Siddhi*, 13.9.
20. H.K. Mahatab, *Orissara Itihasa*, Orissa Sahitya Akademi, Bhubaneswar, 1958, p. 118.
21. (a) Sir Monier Williams, *Buddhism*. Reference taken from the book *Jagannatha Mandira O Jagannatha Tattva*, by Pt. Suryanarayan Dash, Friends Publishers, 1966, p. 149.
- (b) H. Hopkins, *The Religions of the World*. Reference taken from the book *Jagannatha Mandira O Jagannatha Tattva*, by Pt. Suryanarayan Dash, Friends Publishers, 1966, p. 149.
22. *Dhātha Vamsa*, ed. B.C. Law, The Punjab Sanskrit Series, p. 150.
23. R.L. Mitra, *The Antiquities of Orissa*, Kolkata, 1880, p. 135.
24. Saṁsāra jananku tarivā nimante Buddha rupare Vije acha Jagannāthe. *Sarala Mahabhārata*, Sabhā Parva.
25. (a) Tumbhe āma Sangaru antara nohiva, Kaliyuge Buddha rupaku hejiva. Achyutānanda *śūnya Samhitā*.
- (b) Bauddha rūpe cakradara keli karanti nirantara. Baḷarāma Dasa, *Vedānta Sara Gupta Gita*, XIV 51.
26. Śūnyare akāra vira śūnyare vicāra Sunye thai dekha vira saearācara. Dekha sacarācara Sunyare prakāsa, Sunye ude hoiachi śūnyare vilasā. *Śūnya samhita causathi Tika*, Manuscript, Utkal University Library 617.
27. Na śūnyarupam̐ na viśunya rūpam na suddha rupam no viśuddha rūpam. Rūpam virūpam no bhajāmi kincid svarūpa rūpam paramārtha tattvam. Balarama Das, *Prema bhakti gītā*.
28. Achyutānanda talks of three layers, *śūnya*, *mahā śūnya* and *jyoti*. Jasovanta talks of four, viz. *śūnya*, *jyoti śūnya*, *mahā śūnya* and *cetanā*.
29. Balarama Dasa. Mahasunyakue brahman boli kahi, *Saraswata Gita*, I.
30. Jāhāra rupa rekha nāhin śūnya purusa śūnya dehi śūnyare Braḥman Sina thāin Sethare Nama thiba kahin, *Virāta Gītā*. I adhyāya.
31. Nisphala niskriya je santa nirvadya niranjana sthula nohe se anu nohe hrasva dirgha seta nuhe. Nāhi tāhara parimāna kevala nirviseṣa, jāna. *Oriya Bhagavata*, 11 *Skandha 4 Adhyaya*.
32. Ibid., Braḥman Saccidananda Jāna, nirvikāra se je nirugna.

33. Reference taken from C.R. Das's, *Santha (Bhakti) Sāhitya*, Orissa Sāhitya Akademi, Bhubaneswar, 1982, p. 164.
34. Brahman ekakṣara se je ape niranjana deharupi jagannatha ape daru brahman. Bhaktanka bhāvare āpe darubrahman rupa alekhara bhavanu āsi drusya jyoti rupa. *Śūnya Samhitā*, p. 30.
35. Sekāle sarva śūnyamaya thila se śūnya brahma samastalucita śrusti sarjanāre kalpilā jahun kārunya jala upujitātahunj. Balarama Dasa, *Brahmanda Bhugola*, 1st Adhyāya.
36. Ibid.
37. Maha śūnyaru śūnyajāta tahinru pranava sambhuta. Jagannath Das, *Tula Bhina*, pp. 21-2.
38. Arūparu rūpa prakāsa heva rūpa jaina arūpa misiva rūpa arūpa sama karithivu samata rūpare savu painvu. Achyutānanda, *Sunya Samhitā*.
39. Srusti sarjanāre kalpile jātuh karunya jala upyijilā tahum. Balaramā Dasa, *Brahmanda Bhugola*, I Adhyāya.
40. Nasta Bhrama karam jebe Samasaṛe nohantā kaha gheni Brahman Srusti Sunyata. Achyutānanda Das, *Kaivarta Gītā*.
41. (a) Sudra Varnare sevā prapata hue ahamkāra nāhi sudrara dehe.
(b) Sudra hevaku je ambhara mana tahun Sudraku je na manu ana. Achyutānanda Dasa, *Śūnya Samhitā*.
42. Śūnyaara bolisinā bolanti Kṛṣṇaku vāri kati deli dhyāya tu nirakāraku. Achyutānanda Dasa, *Śūnya Samhitā*.
43. Ātma cintile bhakti hue bhaktiru yoga e udaye. Balaramā Dasa, *Prema bhakti Gītā*, I kalpa. p. 3.
44. Mana bāhāre diyan kāhin. Sisu Ananta, *Hetu Udaya Bhagavata*.
45. To hṛda madhye achi jnana to tote khoji kara sthāna. *Brahman Śānkoli*, 1st Kalpa, p. 13.
46. Brahma jñāna, jñāna Brahma e nuhai dui, gupata rahichi eha mandira tohara, ibid.
47. Bada dela bloijāhaā niscaya e tohara kāyā, Balarama Dasa, *Virāta Gītā*, V.
48. C.R. Das, *A Glimpse into Oriya Literature*, p. 83.
49. Achyutānanda Dasa, *Gurubhakti Gītā*.
50. Nahi ta akara vikara niortjuna parama Isvara Khelanti Sarvabhute vyapi aksaya purna. Achyutānanda Dasa, *Śūnya Samhitā*.
51. *Isa Upaniṣad*.
52. Achyutānanda Dāsa, *Chayalisa Patala*, 25th Patala.

The Philosophy of the Tamil Siddhas¹

S. PANNEERSELVAM

Professor, Department of Philosophy, University of Madras, Chennai 600 005

1. THE ORIGIN OF THE WORD

The word 'Siddha' must have come from the word 'Siddham' for which there is no equivalent word in English. *Siddham*, *mānas*, *buddhi*, *ahamkāra*—all these four are known as *antaḥkaraṇas*. Of these, it is *manas* which thinks and *buddhi* is that which confirms and *ahamkāra* invokes the munaippu.² It is claimed that one who has conquered the siddham is a siddha. The word 'siddhi' means attaining or reaching. This means that one who has achieved or reached the *sāyujya* state is a siddha. According to another definition, God is known as saccidānanda. Here the word *cit* means omniscient wisdom. The word 'siddha' might have emerged from it. According to another definition, the Lord Siva is known as the siddhan. There is a temple at Siddheswaram, which has been sung by St. Sambandar. Lord Siva is also known as Siddheswaran. It is also said that one who is revolting against the *sāstras* is known as siddha.³ It is said that one who attempts to see God is a bhakta and one who has realized is a siddha. From all these different definitions it is clear that one who has attained the Godhood is a siddha.

According to the Tamil tradition, there are 18 Siddhas. Though there is an argument according to which the number of Siddhas are innumerable, generally the number is restricted to 18 and the number 18 has a special significance. This may be the reason for saying that the number of Siddhas is restricted to 18. According to some the list of the siddhas are more than 18 and there is a controversy with regard to the list of Siddhas.

The Siddhas are those who have conquered death; who possess the body which is indestructible and who are capable of performing miracles. Generally it is believed that one who follows is a Siddha.

There are 8 Siddhis, otherwise known as *astama siddhis*. They are: *animā*, *mahimā*, *lahimā*, *garimā*, *prākāmya*, *īsitva*, *vaśitva*, and *karima*.

The ability of becoming smaller than an atom is *animā*.
 The ability to become bigger than a mountain is *mahimā*.
 The ability to make the body lighter like air is *lahimā*.
 The ability to reach everywhere is *garimā*.
 The power to overcome natural obstacles is *prākāmya*.
 The power of becoming God-hood is *īsitva*.
 The power over the creation is *vaśitva*.
 The power to attain the stage of desirelessness is *karima*.

The word Siddha also means knowledge. So Siddhas are those who possess knowledge. Terms like *jñāni*, philosopher, are also used to describe the Siddhas. Though it is said that the number of Siddhas are 18, there were many mystics and saints who were included in this list. So some scholars are of the view that the number of Siddhas cannot be restricted to 18. For example, if we look at the work *Periya Jñāna Kovvai* which is an edited one, it contains the poems of Pattinathar, Badragiri and St. Ramalingar. This means that a lot of poems written by great saints and sages of Tamil Nadu are included later thus making it difficult to identify the 18 Siddhas. But there is no unanimous view with regard to the names and number of the Siddhas. According to some historians, Siddhas are to be placed in the 10th century AD. Thirumoolar is one of the Siddhas who is placed in the 5th century AD. From the names that are assigned to the Siddhas, we can roughly estimate that they lived one thousand years ago. But it is very difficult to say from the Siddha medicinal works and Siddhas' poems whether they were really sung by them or whether they were of their own utterances.

In the history of the literature of Tamil Nadu, Siddhas occupy a prominent place. Though it is difficult to locate the period of the Siddhas with historical evidence, we can appreciate their rich contributions. Whether, it is medicine, *mantra*, *rasa vāda* or yoga, the Siddha wrote everything in simple but chaste Tamil. They were against caste, religion, and identified the human race as one. The Siddhas are not atheists. No doubt, they were against the ritualistic practices of the Vedic times. For example, the Siddhas like Sivavākkīyar, Agappai Siddhar, Pampatti Siddhar were vehemently criticizing the dominance of Vedic ritualistic practices. There are many Siddhas who are placed between the 11th and 19th centuries. Pambāṭṭi Siddhar, Ahappey Siddhar, Kudumbai Siddhar, Kāḍuveḷi Siddhar, Azhukuni Siddhar are among them. The other Siddhas include: Iḍaikkādar,

Kumāradever, and Tirumāligaiitevar. One difficulty in identifying the Siddhas' poems is that there are lot of interpolations and many poems which were not of the Siddhas are included in the edited volume which contains the poems of the Siddhas. For example, *The Siddhar Jñāna Kovai* contains many poems which are not of the Siddhas.

2. WHO ARE THE SIDDHAS?

It is very difficult to define a Siddha. But it is said that Siddhas are against the worldly things. Some say that the Siddhas are those who have controlled the *cit*, those who love Lord Siva and those who perform some miracles. But all these also cannot define the nature of the Siddhas, though all these are attributed to the Siddhas. According to one definition, that one who has seen god is a Siddha. Similarly, another Tamil scholar says that Siddhas are those who have seen God not by bhakti, one who has gone beyond actions, one who moves with a body.⁴ It is also said that those who worship Buddha are the Buddhists and those who worship Siva are Siddhas.⁵ Though the Siddhas have the capacity to take different forms, they were using the human body only. With long beards and unwashed bodies, with torn clothes, they were pictured as wandering saints. Pattinathar sings: 'Piece of cloth is the dress, simple fruits is the food, platform is the bed.' But this picture becomes different when we come to St. Ramalingar who is also a Siddha. He is always pictured in white and clean dress with a neatly shaven head. The name Siddha is always associated with the Lord Siva. Sivavākkīyar says that though the Siddhas live in the world by their body, their thinking is always with Siva. They were related to the world like a tamarind fruit and its shell. They were not affected by the pleasures and pains of the world. They were like the 'jivanmuktas'.

According to one view the Siddha tradition starts with Thirumoolar. He is the greatest mystic and seer. The Siddhas acknowledge him as their supreme preceptor and as the progenitor of the esoteric school of the Tamils. According to the legend, Thirumoolar lived in the 6th century BC. But Tamil scholars place him between the 3rd and 5th centuries AD. His central message is 'Love of God'. He says: 'Senseless are they who say that Love and Siva are two. They know not that it is love that becomes Siva. The moment they know this, they will remain rooted in Siva as love.' According to the legend, he was initiated by the Lord Siva himself. One day he came to the South from the Himalayas to see the saint Agasthiar.

On the way, he saw a herd of cows lamenting loudly and shedding tears because of the death of Moolan, the shepherd. Flocking around the dead body, the cows were weeping. To remove their sorrows, the Saint puts his physical body aside and with his astral body, enters the corpse of the shepherd. Moolan came back to life and herded the cows back home. The wife of the shepherd Moolan came and took him by the hand. Moolan resisted her and went into a Mutt and entered into a Samadhi. The wife of Moolan appealed to the village-head to restore her husband but in vain. Waking from his Samadhi, the Saint went to the place where he had deposited his physical body and found to his surprise, that it had been cremated by the local people. Realizing that the deprivation of his original body was part of Divine grace, the Saint dwelling in the shepherd's body, went to the Tiruvaduturai temple and sitting under a tree, he went into a trance again. Legend says that once a year he would wake up from Samadhi, sing one song in Tamil and go into Samadhi again and would wake up a year later. For three thousand years, he remained in meditation under this tree and sang 3,000 songs, one every year, the collection of which is called *Tirumantiram*.

St. Thirumoolar sings:

Mankind is one, and there is but one God;
Remember, remember this well—why be afraid of Death?

Hold fast to the Lord in your mind;
He is your only refuge.⁶

They are fools, who say, Love and the Lord are twain;
None knows that Love is God;
And God is Love—Knowing this,
All should live in God, love-apparelled ...⁷

In the North, there is a tradition which says that there were Navanātha Siddhas whose number is nine. They were Sathya Nāthar, Sathoga Siddhar, Adhi Nāthar, Anadhi Nāthar, Vaguli Nāthar, Mthanga Nāthar, Machendra Nāthar, Kadendra Nāthar, Korakka Nāthar. Among the Nātha Siddhas who belong to the North India, Machendra and Gorakka are the best known. They aim at rendering by varied physio-chemical processes, the human body deathless, perpetually alive to the light and shade of the sense-world and capable of wielding the eight supernatural powers (*siddhis*).

Now let us briefly analyze the approach of the Siddhas by taking some of the Siddhas and their contributions to the Tamil language and literature.

3. THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF SIDDHAS

Sivavākkīyar is an important Siddha who is placed in the 15th century. He condemns idol-worship as follows: 'You plant a stone, throw a few flowers over it and round it and utter some *mantras*. Can the planted stone speak when the Lord is inside you? Can the pot and ladle taste the food it has cooked?'⁸ The *Jñāna Kovai* begins with this. There are 520 poems, which are ascribed to Sivavākkīyar. His original name is not known. Since in his first poem what he writes is a Siva-vākya, he is generally known as Sivavākkīyar. There is an ancient story that goes with his name. According to the story, Sivavākkīyar was an expert in systems like Cārvāka, Buddhism and Advaita and was dissatisfied with these philosophies and became a Saivite and thus was assigned the name Sivavākkīyar. According to some, he later became a Vaishavite. But there is no proof for this. But it is interesting that he sang in praise of Lord Rama and Lord Siva. His poems contain lot of Sanskrit words like *Dosha, Jnanam Andam, Akandam, Jyoti, Balar, Nathar, Nama, Sastra, Ekabogam, Adhi, Anadhi*. Perhaps this intention was to convey the message and hence he was not concerned about the means (language) by which it was conveyed. In his poems, he praises the sanctity of Rama Nāma. He says that by uttering the Rama Nāma, one gains the profit which one gains by dipping oneself in the Holy waters. But the same Sivavākkīyar also sings in praise of Lord Siva. By uttering the sacred mantra, Namsivaya, one gets everything that is good. But from the two poems that are attributed to Lord Vishnu and Lord Siva and sung by the same Siddha, Sivavākkīyar, it can be concluded that for him, whether it is Vishnu or Siva, they represent the same God.

Another important Siddha is Pattinathar who is placed in the 10th century. He described the human body as 'the blacksmith's bellows which fan the fire of anger' or as 'the rotating top, whipped up by the string of desire' or as 'the fan that rotates with the aid of money-power' and as the 'boat, laden with the cargo of sin, launched upon the sea of births, blown by the whirlwind of lust and cunning around into the shore of evil' and so on. Another important Siddha is Bhadrāgīrīar, who was a disciple of Pattinathar who sings as follows: 'When will you burn the *sāstra*, falsify the four Vedas and get rid of sorrow by discovering the controlling centre of life?'

The Siddhas are not system-builders. We cannot place them under any system of thought. 'The basic source of Tamil Siddha philosophy is in the spoken language of the people, a claim which no other philosophical system can make. The Siddha poems are written with an entire disregard for grammatical or elegant expression,' says T.N. Ganapathy.⁹ Though they do not belong to any system of thought, their concern for the society is something remarkable. Their poems on religion, society, social equality reveal that they have not altogether rejected or condemned the world. The Siddhas always spoke about the equality among men. They were against social inequality. They considered it as an evil. The Siddhas abused people who distinguish men in the name of caste and religion. This shows their love for humanity.

A deep study of the Siddhas would show that they were against the vaidika religion. But they never declared themselves as materialists or atheists. One unique feature of the Siddhas' philosophy is that they believed that one can live more than a hundred years. A great Siddha like Thirumoolar believed that both the body and the soul are essential and argued that if the body dies the life will also go. Hence one has to take care of the body and thus can make the soul a deathless one. Generally the Siddhas do not accept the view that the human body is unreal or myth though there are some exceptions. They firmly believed that the human body is real and one can have the deathless body. For this reason, in Tamil literature the word *meyi* is used to represent the body. They argue that the *panchabhutas* are real and when the *panchabhutas* are real, the body which is produced by the combination of these *panchabhutas* must also be real.

One important Siddha in the Siddha tradition is the Pambāṭṭi Siddhar. His poems are very famous and he is of the view that the Siddhas are all-powerful and are capable of doing anything for the well being of human society. 'We can establish Justice in this world; we can make all the three worlds happy,' says Pambāṭṭi Siddhar. Though there is no proper evidence regarding his biography, his poems are very famous among common men. He was against the pseudo-gurus; he asks us not to follow them. A real guru according to him, is one who removes the sufferings of man and one who talks about a true religion.¹⁰ He also explains how to reach a real guru. A real guru, says Pambāṭṭi Siddhar, is one who has understood the real meaning of the Vedas and who has gained the knowledge of transcending the Vedas and one who possesses the capacity of teaching it to

the common man and also who gives the correct meaning to the scriptures.¹¹ Pambāṭṭi Siddhar stressed the importance of love in human life. One who has no love towards others cannot perform good actions. They can never attain mukti according to him. He was vehemently criticizing idol worship and said that a statue does not have a life. It is simply a stone, says Pambāṭṭi Siddhar.

In another poem, Pambāṭṭi Siddhar says that real salvation does not lie in reading books. The four *Vedas*, the *Sastras*, the *Tantras*, the *Puranas*, the *Agamas*, different types of books—all these do not preach the Truth. They only give contradictory views. They cause a person to develop his superstitious beliefs. Hence he asks us not to waste time on these. Then how do we know the Truth? Pambāṭṭi Siddhar answers this question by saying that truth lies in rationality. Pambāṭṭi Siddhar was attacking the caste system with full force. He says that it is not for the rationalists. Those who have human qualities will not accept these distinctions. According to him, those who preach difference among people in the name of caste are fanatics. His anger goes to the extent of saying that we should put fire in the caste of garbage and that in a common place we should declare that the caste system had gone.¹²

It was Ahappey Siddhar who compared mind with that of the Peyi (devil). The salient feature of this Siddhar is that all the poems are attributed to mind, i.e., all the poems are addressed to the mind. He sings that only to those who have delinked the feeling of 'I', the path of love is possible. If somebody wants to put an end to this birth, then he must be free from all evil actions. Such souls alone are free from greed. According to him, those who follow the path of virtue, will not make distinctions among men. They will not accept the caste distinctions. They accept the fact that all men are equal and all of us belong to one community, i.e. human community. Ahappey Siddhar also says that God is one. There is no distinction among caste. All are the same. Similarly there are no distinctions among God. From the same milk, we get ghee, curd and butter milk. Similarly, the human race is one. It cannot be separated in the name of caste. Similarly God is one, but different names are given to Him.

Another Siddha who forcefully attacked the caste system was Kakapusundar. The tradition says that he was a saint and he moved with the body of a crow. He wanted to read the world. He wanted to see more things and meet more people and record them and hence he took the body of the crow and because of this, the name *kaka* (crow) is attributed to him.

According to some, his body shape was that of a crow. There are many medicinal books that are available on his name. There is one astrological work called *Pusundar Nadi*. The other works that are attributed to him are as follows: *Kakapusundar jñānam Eighty*, *Kakapusundar Upanisads Thirty-nine*, *Kakapusundar Kaviyam Thirty-three*, *Kakapusundar Sixteen* are the works written by him which explain his Vedāntic views. He has elaborately discussed Śaṅkara's Advaita. From this, it may be assumed that he came after Śaṅkara. He claims that a person who fails to know that he is not different from Brahman will fall like a rootless tree. Further he says that the truth, namely, 'I am Brahman', is not known to the person who believes in many Gods. He is the one who runs after the guru and will be wasting his time. He does not know from where the knowledge comes. He is like a useless bull.¹³ Kakapusundar is against the gurus who have not attained the Brahman-knowledge. Though they have studied the Vedas, they do not understand the real Truth contained in it. He explains how, for the Siddhas, there are no caste distinctions. He says: 'There is no distinction of caste or kula among ourselves (Siddhas). All are equal is our motto.'

Kakapusundar says that God can be known through self-realization. One who has realized himself and one who has freed himself from the divisions can understand the nature of God. All the knowledge that is contrary to this, is not human knowledge but only a devilish knowledge. This means that for Kakapusundar realization of God is possible through self-realization. Further he says that what he says is not false; but only true. Like salt that is mingled with water, God exists in each and every individual and every man has God-hood in him.

Another Siddhar is known by the name Kudambai Siddhar. 'Kudambai' is the ear-ring. Since all his poems are addressed to the lady who wears the Kudambai, he is known as Kudambai Siddhar. In his poems, one can see the importance of yoga and jñāna. His attack is on those who make a great show while worshipping god. For all those who have realized the fact that God is aruva and those who have understood that God is *vetta veli*, everything becomes unnecessary.

Kudambai Siddhar says:

To those that hold the void
As ever true,
What need for a title-deed, ear-ringed lady,
So, that need!¹⁴

In another song, he says that the one who has the yoga-sakti, cannot be reached by the Lord of Death and those who have conquered death will not have luxurious show.

Though Siddhas celebrate the body and claimed that the body can be preserved, some believed in renouncing the body. They are ready to discard the body for reaching the feet of the Lord.

Azhukuni Siddhar says:

The body is filthy, my dear, a salt-pot it is;
To get into a new body—the prescription I do not have;
If such medicine, I secure,
Will I not leave this frail body and attain Thy feet,
Oh, dear Mother!¹⁵

Quite contrary to the above poem, there is Konkana Siddhar who spoke about the importance of the human body. For him, the body is real and hence it has to be preserved for a very long time. He says that this body is neither a filthy one nor a salt-pot. For those who have preserved the body, it is not filthy.¹⁶

The above two poems sung by two different Siddhas explain that all the Siddhas do not have the same views with regard to body. Further Konkana Siddhar explains how to preserve the body also. By the practice of yoga one can see the light of knowledge above the spinal cord. One who has seen the light can live happily, according to him. By the control of breath, one can make the impermanent body permanent. For this, one has to free himself from greed and control the bull of breath. The uncontrolled breath is compared to a bull, which roams here and there.

The origin of life, according to Siddhas is due to woman. The word 'sakti' is used to represent them. They are the symbol of *sakti*. Konkana Siddhar talks about the various roles of women. She is the mother, wife, sister, sister-in-law and mother-in-law. This explains, how according to Konkana, women are the power of creation.¹⁷ In the absence of women there is no creation of the world. 'For the *panchabhutas*, the base is earth. If there is no earth, there is neither *akasa* nor flower, which is fragrant. Flower and fragrant are the same. If there are no women then there is no man. If there is no woman and man, then there is no world.'¹⁸ This poem explains that the world exists because of women. Contrary to this, there are Siddhas like Bhadragiriar who asks the question that though he lives with ladies, when he is going to live like a tamarind-fruit and its shell.

Besides attacking the caste system and ritualistic practices etc., they were also suggesting that the duty of the rich is to protect the poor. They also emphasize the need for showing sympathy towards the poor and give shelter to them. The Siddhas condemned the pseudo-gurus who cheat innocent people. They act as though they have renounced everything but in reality they have not. They are greedy even when they are taking a bath in river; they desire objects and things and when they reach the shore, they only think about worldly things and when they smear sacred ash on their forehead also, they think about their family and other relations.

Similarly the Konkana Siddhar and the Idaikattu Siddhar spoke about the need for controlling the mind.

The Konkana Siddhar sings:

Oh! young mind! The roaming bull should be tethered;
desire should be cut; the vital breath should be contained;
The branch beyond reach should be bent; we know not how
this body will last!¹⁹

In the above poem, the roaming bull refers to the mind, and the eluding branch to truth.

Similarly, Idaikattu Siddhar says:

If the bull that is the mind is overcome, oh, Lord of Dance,
Release is attained,
I know, oh, Lord!²⁰

If we control the mind then release is guaranteed. He is free from miseries. Not only this is enough. He says that there is a snake, which resides in our mind. This snake is a poisonous one and as long as this resides in the mind one cannot attain mukti. What is this snake? Idaikattu Siddhar says that it is nothing but anger.

Thus we see in the Tamil Siddhas a concern for the people. This made them write their poems. It is from this rich treasure that we can shape our future.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. The works on Siddha literature are very meagre. Very few books are available both in Tamil and English. A systematized work on the Philosophy of the Tamil Siddhas in English is attempted by Professor T.N. Ganapathy (*The*

Philosophy of the Tamil Siddhas, ICPR Publications, 1993). This paper is dedicated to him.

I thank Professor V.K.S.N. Raghavan and Dr. K. Arumugham for helping me by giving me some rare books on this topic.

2. Akathiar anuboga sutra, p. 41.
3. Siddhar Jnanakovai Agasthiyar Jnanam 5.
4. M. Arunachalam, *Tamil Literature—14th Century*, Chapter 12.
5. R. Manikkavachakam, *Nam Naatu Siddhargal*, 1982.
6. *Tirumantiram*—2104.
7. *Ibid.*, 270.
8. நட்ட கல்லை சுத்தியே, நாயுடைய உடம்பம் சாத்தியே...
9. T.N. Ganapathy, 'The Philosophy of the Tamil Siddhas and Advaita: A Study in Parallelism' in *The Voice of Śāṅkara*, (Ed.) R. Balasubramanian, p. 56.
10. மாயம்மதங்கள் உலகமெல்லாம் மாயம் குருக்களாய்...
11. உயதப் பறந்து விண்ணத்தென்று உயதம் கடந்த...
12. சாதப் பறந்து விண்ணத்தென்று உயதம் கடந்த...
13. தான் என்று மறந்ததை அடக்கிடாமல்...
14. Kudambai Siddhar-1.
15. Azhukuni Siddhar-8.
16. மறந்ததை உலகம் என்று எண்ணாதே...
17. மறந்ததை உலகம் என்று எண்ணாதே...
18. மறந்ததை உலகம் என்று எண்ணாதே...
19. Konkana Siddhar-43.
20. Idaikattu Siddhar-13.

Vīraśaivism and its Philosophy

R.I. INGALALLI

Professor of Philosophy, Karnatak University, Dharwad 580 003

INTRODUCTION

Vīraśaivism¹ is one of the important schools of Śaivism² in the Indian philosophical tradition. It is considered to be both a religious sect and a philosophical movement and forms a significant part of Indian thought and culture. The conceptual framework of Vīraśaivism involves a harmonious blend of jñāna (knowledge), bhakti (devotion) and Karma (action).

The present paper considers the following points in order to analyze and interpret some of the basic concepts of Vīraśaivism: (i) Origin and development of Vīraśaiva Philosophy in Kannada language,³ (ii) the significance of Vīraśaivism developed in Kannada language and (iii) the status of Vīraśaiva philosophy in relation to other systems of Indian philosophy developed in Saṅskrit.

I. ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF VĪRAŚAIVISM

There are three views about the origin of Vīraśaivism⁴ which is also called Liṅgāyatism. According to a mythological account the traditional founders of Vīraśaivism are Pañcācāryas, five great religious teachers, Reṇuka, Dāruka, Ghantakarṇa, Dhenukarṇa and Viśvakarṇa who were the early manifestations of the five aspects of Paraśiva, namely, Sadyojata Vāmadeva, Aghora, Tatpuruṣa and Īśāṇa. According to the tradition these five teachers have been incarnated for the propagation of the principles of the Vīraśaivism in Kaliyuga; Revaṇārādhyā, Maruḷārādhyā, Ekorāmārādhyā, Panditārādhyā and Viśvārādhyā are called Pañcācāryas. There is also a theological view that Siva himself expressed the essentials of Vīraśaivism to the Goddess Śakti who subsequently revealed it to the enlightened seers of the tradition.

However, modern scholars like Professor Sakhare⁵ and others subscribe to the view that Vīraśaivism is considered to be the result of the experience and meditation of several enlightened persons in various ages and it

took a definite shape as a great dynamic religious movement under the guidance of Śri Basaveśwara of Kalyāṇa (Karnatak) during the 12th century. Accordingly, Basaveśwara is considered to be the founder of Vīraśaiva or Liṅgāyata religion. However, Professor Nandimath,⁶ in his *A Handbook of Vīraśaivism*, says: 'Śaiva movement is very ancient and was spread all over India centuries before the birth of Basava. In Kannada country too there was an ancient form of Śaivism, the cause of which was upheld by Basava ... Vīraśaivism as revived in the 12th century may not be exactly identical with the old form, in all probability retained the cardinal doctrines unbroken. The outstanding feature of the revived Vīraśaivism is its zeal for social reform.' It may not be necessary for the present purpose to go into the details of controversies, because of the limited scope of the paper which focuses on the essentials of Vīraśaivism as given in the Vacanas of Kannada language.

*Vacanas as source of moral and spiritual knowledge:*⁷

The vacana-śāstra literature in Kannada is the reliable source for Vīraśaivism and is very vast. The writers of the vacanas are numerous and the vacana literature ranges from the 11th to the 18th century AD. Some of the views of the important personalities of vacana-śāstra are considered below.

The vacana-śāstra is the source for Vīraśaivism and its philosophy. Professor Nandimath (1979: 11–12) says: 'The Vacana-śāstras are very popular, and hold a very high place in the heart of all Vīraśaivas of the present day. These Vacanas, sayings or utterances, have peculiar charm as they are composed in simple language, easily to be understood even by the ignorant and the illiterate. They are chiefly meant to convey to the common people soul-stirring ideas in a style most simple, terse, and convincing ... The authors have created a unique feature in the Kannada language unsurpassed in its history.' The writers of the Vacanas show the shortcomings of social and religious practices and offer pragmatic suggestions for the improvement. There are five major personalities with integral wisdom. They are Prabhudeva⁸ (AD 1100), Basaveśwara⁹ (AD 1125), Cannabasaveśwara¹⁰ (AD 1140), Siddharāma (AD 1160) and Mahādeviakka¹¹ (AD 1150). The vacanas of each of these writers have been classified under six heads namely, Bhakta-sthala, Māheśwara-sthala, Prasādi-sthala, Prānalingi-sthala, Śaraṇa-sthala and Aikya-sthala.

The doctrine of ṣatsthala (six stages) forms the central part of Vīraśaivism.¹²

The concept of sthala is very important in Vīraśaivism. The term 'sthala' as a Sanskrit word means 'place' or ground. However, it has philosophical meaning as it designates Śiva or Brahman, the source of the manifold universe with its movable and immovable things. Accordingly, sthala is considered as the support of all energies, of all luminaries and of all beings. It is the fundamental tattva or essence and constitutes the highest place for those who attain the liberation (mokṣa). It seems that the Vīraśaiva teachers had in their mind the cosmic principle from which the universe originates and in which it will be absorbed and such principle is called sthala.

In ordinary parlance 'sthala' functions in the sense of stage, step or halting place for the soul on its spiritual journey and each sthala is a necessary step for the subsequent development in the path of progress according to vacana-śāstra. Even though, Vīraśaivism like Advaita holds avidya to be the cause of human bondage, it differs from Advaita in its idea of attaining spiritual freedom (mokṣa). The soul due to avidya is incapable of realizing its true nature in a single stage and there is a need of some other stages in the progressive order. There are six stages for the gradual evolution of the soul to attain freedom.

The bound soul due to a veil of ignorance has a narrower perspective. In order to overcome its limitations due to avidya, it starts the spiritual investigation in Bhakta-sthala (stage of devotee).

A brief account of the ṣatsthala (six stages) is given below for a clearer understanding of the nature of Vīraśaivism.

1. Bhakta-sthala: The special features of bhakta-sthala are: (i) There is a firm belief in one supreme God who is Śiva and there is complete devotion to the God, (ii) the devotee daily worships the Iṣṭaliṅga offered by his guru as the symbol of Śiva, (iii) the devotees steadily follow the moral codes and dogmas, (iv) there is a belief in the duality of individual (jīva) and Śiva, because the individual soul is a devotee and the object of devotion must be superior to devotee. Consequently, the soul gets purification and raises to the next higher stage.

2. Māheśwara-sthala: In this stage bhakti or devotion remains as the dominant factor and there is increase in strength and purity of the individual; there is the strong desire in the soul to attain a higher spiritual stage by

virtue of mastery over ones own personality. Moral conduct, prue devotion and freedom from lower desire lead to the elevation of the soul to the higher stage of divine grace. The chief mark of this stage is the steadfast devotion and emphasis is also laid on the observation of vows (vrata), regulations (niyama) and moral precepts (śīla). The following vacana indicates the significance of the vows and moral precepts.¹³

To accept whatever is offered is niyama. To deceive none is niyama. Flawless conduct is niyama. Never to tell a lie is niyama.

Devotee in this stage is capable to guide others who are in the lower stage of bhakta-sthala.

3. Prasādi-sthala: In this sthala the devotee is characterized by balanced devotion and cheerful mood. The prasādin performs his duties to God and men. He also encourages others to develop an optimistic outlook in action-oriented human life. A major vacanakara Cannabasaveśwara¹⁴ says that kriyā or right actions are necessary.

A devotee without selfless work is but an ordinary man ... the devotee belonging to prasādi-sthala without selfless work is a barbarian. The devotee belonging to Prānaliṅgi-sthala without selfless work is a worldly person. The devotee belonging to Śaraṇa-sthala without selfless work is an ignorant person. ... such is the truth.

Normally, the above three stages are action-oriented stages in the form of worship, right actions including duties. And the duality or distinctness of the Deity from the devotee is preserved in these stages. The duality gradually decreases from the fourth stage till it identifies itself with the divine reality in the Aikya-sthala. The individual by virtue of divine grace in the Prasādi-sthala strongly feels the necessity of divine realization and proceeds to the next stage.

4. Prānaliṅgi-sthala: In this stage the individual develops divine consciousness as the inner vision. He acquires the qualities of prudence, truth, peace, non-violence etc. In this stge Ātman is considered as prāna and the individual self is considered to be in the Prānaliṅgi-sthala which is an important stage of Śiva yoga.

5. Śaraṇa-sthala: The devotee on the basis of his spiritual conviction, surrenders to the ultimate Reality, Śiva. Accordingly bhakta is transformed into divine self-surrender which is a higher form of devotion. The soul

evolves by virtue of its proximate relation to God; there is a spontaneous manifestation of divinity within the personality of Sādhaka. Consequently, the individual is prepared to reach the goal in the last stage (sixth stage).

6. Aikya-sthala: In this stage there is a complete unity of the individual soul with the Reality, Śiva. The soul identifies itself with the deity and loses its individuality. In the description of this stage, 'śūnya' and 'nirvāṇa' are also used in the sense of mokṣa, kaivalya or jīvanmukti.

Thus the individual soul in its spiritual journey begins with duality or dvaita and passes through the stage of viśiṣṭādvaita and finally reaches the advaitic (non-dual) stage. The Ṣatsthala method of realization in the form of Śiva yoga consists of bhakti yoga, karma yoga and jñāna yoga as its necessary and sufficient conditions (or factors) according to Vīraśaivism.

Modern analysis

According to Professor S.N. Dasgupta's¹⁶ opinion, the kernel of Vīraśaiva thought is almost as early as the Upaniṣads. Sūtra samhita in Skanda purāṇa seems to teach a similar type of philosophy. Basaveśwara (12th century AD) was probably one of the most intelligent and emotional thinkers who expressed his effusions in the Kannada language and Cannabasava also knew the Ṣatsthalas. There is an emphasis on the necessity of realizing the unity of the self with Śiva. Professor Dasgupta's views are based on his understanding of the doctrine of ṣatsthala given by Prabhudeva (12th century AD) in Kannada language. The process of ṣatsthala is to be regarded as an upward journey through a hierarchy of stations by which alone the unity with Śiva can be realized. The method of ṣatsthala implies the dynamic process of yoga which is a practical method of semi-physiological process by which the ultimate reality of God and soul can be realized. In contradistinction with monistic philosophy in Sanskrit, ṣatsthala philosophy encourages a practical utility of dynamic course of practice. The scheme of ṣatsthala as the scheme of the process of performance of yogic process involves the concept of samarasa which is spiritual homogeneity. Things which appear to be different from one another, in reality have the same essence; accordingly, they are said to be in samarasa with each other. Further, Professor Dasgupta (p. 59) thinks that it is also a way in which the bhedābheda theory of the reality and the appearance is explained.

There is an alternative understanding of the doctrine of ṣatsthala in the book: *The Lord of the Meeting Rivers: Devotional Songs of Basavanna* by K.V. Zvelebil (1984: 151-2; 161-2).¹⁷ The author thinks that Vīraśaiva

(Līngāyata) philosophy is seemingly very complex and it consists of highly evolved speculations about the six phases (ṣatsthalas). Through the technique of ṣatsthala, the individual attains līngāṅga sāmāsyā as the integral absorption of God and the soul. The author thinks that bhakta-sthala is affective and Māheśwara-sthala is characterized as the conative stage. Prasādi-sthala is considered to be a cognitive stage. Prāṇalīṅgi-sthala is understood as an intuitive stage, whereas Śaraṇa-sthala is characterized as an executive stage and finally Aikya-sthala is considered as a unitive stage. However, such an interpretation of the six stages does not reflect the conceptual ingredients of the stages, because, in each stage there is a co-ordination of the affective, cognitive and conative faculties of the individual and they do not function exclusively. By means of the technique of ṣatsthala it is possible to develop the faculties of knowing, feeling and willing in a harmonious manner.

Further, the author (pp. 161–2) says: It is necessary to stress that—it is believed that all the six stages can be achieved in each stage that in one sthala all other sthalas are inherent. However, this kind of interpretation does not conform to the spirit of the doctrine of ṣatsthala for two main reasons. Firstly, each sthala functions as a necessary condition for the goal of self-realization and secondly, the sequence of the six stages implies spiritual development as pilgrim's progress in the path of perfection.

II. SIGNIFICANCE OF VĪRĀŚAIVISM¹⁸

The followers of Vīrāśaivism irrespective of their religious or spiritual attainment, actively participate in the routine socio-religious affairs. Even the devotees after reaching their spiritual goal ought to follow the code of conduct and work efficiently for the integral development of society. Vīrāśaivism with its guiding principles of devotion and work, stress religion of heart and reason; it is a part of democratic movement in Indian culture for the spiritual regeneration of the common man. The work-ethic based on the principle of kāyaka (duty) is necessary for the socio-religious development.

Many modern scholars like Professors Nandimath, Sakhare and Dasgupta subscribe to the view that Vīrāśaiva philosophy is a *via-media* between Advaita and the Viśiṣṭādvaita and is also known as Śakti viśiṣṭa advaita. Professor Nandimath (1979: 108) says: 'Religious life is not necessarily divorced from the commitments of family and society; to labour and to serve is also an aspect of religious life; and, in fact, the business of life

and spiritual endeavour are harmonized into the pilgrim's progress towards realization. Democratic in spirit, puritanic in fervour, with service for its watchword and ṣatsthala for its signposts, Vīrāśaivism firmly blends together man's spiritual and social lives and thus teaches all the art of right living.' In order to propagate the tenets of Vīrāśaivism for effective influence on its followers, the Vīrāśaiva monastic system was organized. At present many Vīrāśaiva mathas are taking interest in teaching and research studies in Vīrāśaivism.

III. THE STATUS OF VĪRĀŚAIVA PHILOSOPHY IN RELATION TO ADVAITA PHILOSOPHY IN SANSKRIT

Modern scholars like Professors S.C. Nandimath¹⁹ and S.N. Dasgupta²⁰ find a close similarity between the fundamentals of Vīrāśaiva philosophy with the essentials of Saṃkara's Vedānta philosophy. Professor Nandimath (1979: 37) says: 'The tendency of Vīrāśaivism as indicated in the Vacanaśāstra, a vast literature in Kannada, composed in the 12th century AD, is undoubtedly monistic (Advaita) generally agreeing with the teachings of Saṃkaracarya.' Similarly, Professor Dasgupta (1957: 52) expresses his view based on his close understanding of Vīrāśaiva doctrines articulated in the vacanas of Prabhudeva (12th century AD). He says: 'As a matter of fact Vīrāśaiva thought as represented by Allama Prabhudeva can hardly be distinguished from the Philosophy of Saṃkara, for Allama Prabhu has accepted one reality which appears in diverse forms under the conditions of *māya* and *avidyā*.' However, the learned Professor focuses his attention on subtle distinction between the two philosophical systems under comparison. According to Sanskrit monistic philosophy, the highest attainable goal of life is the realization of the ultimate identity of the self with the Brahman and such an enlightenment can be realized by a proper intuition of the significance of the monistic formula 'that thou art': but it refuses to admit any practical utility of any dynamic course of practice which is strongly advised in Vīrāśaiva doctrine of ṣatsthala in the Vacanas of Kannada language.

Since Vīrāśaivism is a type of *bhedābheda* theory as understood by modern scholars like Professors Nandimath²¹ and Dasgupta²², it is desirable to analyze the nature of *bhedābheda* in the Indian tradition. Normally, *bhedābheda* as identity in difference implies a complex relation pertaining to a difference between certain *relata* and also sameness or identity between them. In other words a thing appears as different from

another thing, but in reality or essence both are the same or identical. For example, a drop of water is considered to be different from a certain quantity of water in which it is present, but as a matter of fact it has no other reality than that quantity of water in which it is present. Viraśaivism consists of the doctrine of bhedābheda (identity-in-difference) concerning the relationship between the individuals and God expressed in the universe of discourse; the world and God are also related in a similar manner. Since there are different forms of bhedābheda (identity-in-difference), it is desirable to consider them briefly in order to specify the nature of bhedābheda theory according to Viraśaivism.

According to Ramanuja²³ the souls and the world are organically related to God and also dependent on God who transcends the world of experience. However, in case of Bhaskara reality is like the ocean of which the world of experience is a part of, just as the waves are the parts of the ocean which are neither absolutely identical with each other nor do they represent any absolute difference. There is another interesting school of bhedābheda of Bhartrahari, an old Vedantin considered by Professor Hiriyanna²⁴ (1975: 131). He says: 'The doctrine accepts not only the complete integration of physical reality which the Samkhya-Yoga acknowledges, but also goes farther and postulates the kinship of all things—whether physical or mental, since it traces everything to a unitary source, viz., Brahman as taught in the Upanisads.' According to this view the content of the absolute truth is the whole of existence including the manifold universe.

The Viraśaiva view of bhedābheda is different from the above-mentioned views. Because Viraśaivism is a panentheistic school of Śaivism according to which God is both immanent and transcendent. Accordingly it is different from pantheism which implies that the divine reality is all inclusive and that man and nature are dependent on God as the modes of his being. Further, the Viraśaiva theory of freedom (mokṣa) entails the convergence of moral and spiritual values.

CONCLUSION

A philosophical outlook according to Viraśaivism is an integral perspective in which the powers of reason and experience are utilized for the realization of values. In the scheme of śatsthala, the moral and cognitive values are the means for the attainment of spiritual realization as consubstantial unity. Accordingly, the contribution of Viraśaiva philosophy

to Indian culture is significant. Recently, the studies in Viraśaivism are mainly comparative within Indian tradition and also with the western cultures which have rich philosophical heritage. Neo-Viraśaiva perspectives are slowly emerging as the consequences of comparative studies.

NOTES

1. The sources for the study of Viraśaiva religion and philosophy are available in Kannada and Sanskrit. Professors Dasgupta (1957) and Nandimath (1979) have given a comprehensive account of Viraśaiva literature.
2. Among the schools of Saivism, Pasupat system, Saiva siddhanta, Kashmir Saivism are considered to be important (See Dasgupta, Nandimath, Sakhare and Sadashivaiah).
3. An eminent oriental scholar Professor Max Müller (1971: XIX–XX) says: 'In the south of India there exists a philosophical literature which though it may show clear traces of Sanskrit influence, contains also original indigenous elements of great beauty and of great importance for historical purposes.' Professor S.N. Dasgupta has considered the religious and philosophical ideas of South Indian languages in his *A History of Indian Philosophy*, Volume V.
4. Dasgupta 1957, Nandimath 1979, Sakhare 1942, Sadashivaiah 1967: 17–19.
5. Sakhare 1942, pp. 676–7.
6. Nandimath 1979: 1–10.
7. Nandimath 1979, Sakhare 1944, Schauten 1995.
8. Hiremath and Sunkapur (Eds.) 1976.
9. Hiremath (Ed.) 1967.
10. Hiremath (Ed.) 1965.
11. Hiremath (Ed.) 1967.
12. Nandimath 1979, Sakhare 1944, Dasgupta 1957, Sadashivaiah 1967.
13. Nandimath 1979.
14. Sadashivaiah 1967, p. 35.
15. Nandimath 1979, Sadashivaiah 1967.
16. Dasgupta 1957.
17. Zvelebil (1984) rightly thinks that for comprehensive understanding of Hinduism and Indian philosophy, it is necessary to have an adequate understanding of Viraśaivism.
18. Nandimath 1979, Sakhare 1944, Sadashivaiah 1967.
19. Nandimath 1979.
20. Dasgupta 1957.
21. Nandimath 1979.
22. Dasgupta 1957.
23. Radhakrishnan 1974, p. 730.
24. Hiriyanna (1975: 131) has given a new interpretation for Indian philosophy as critical analysis of values; logical and moral values are closely related to spiritual values.

REFERENCES

1. Acharya, N.R. (1948): *Brahmasutra samkarabhāṣyam*, Nirṇayasagar Press, Mumbai.
2. Bhandarkar, R.G. (1987): *Vaiṣṇavism, Śaivism and Minor Religions*, Asian Publishing House, Delhi.
3. Dasgupta, S.N. (1957): *A History of Indian Philosophy*, Vol. V, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
4. Ghugare, S.B. (1995): *Virasaivism in India*, Sadhana Books Stall, Gadhinglaj, Kholapur.
5. Hiremath, R.C. (Ed.) (1965): *Cannabasavannanavara vacanagalu* (Kannada), Karnatak University, Dharwad.
6. Hiremath, R.C. and Śunṅkapur, M.S. (Eds.) (1965): *Allama Prabhudevara Vacanagalu* (Kannada), Karnatak University, Dharwad.
7. Hiremath, R.C. (Ed.) (1968): *Basavannanavar Vacanagalu* (Kannada), Karnatak University, Dharwad.
8. ——— (Ed.) (1967): *Sivasaraneyara Vacanagalu* (Kannada), Karnatak University, Dharwad.
9. Hiriyanna, M. (1977): *Indian Conception of Values*, Kavyalaya, Publishers, Mysore.
10. Ingalalli, R.I. (1994): *Virasaiva darsana mattu Plato darsanagalalli srasti Vicara* (Kannada) Pranama, Pura, Bellary.
11. Ingalalli, R.I. (1999): *Virasaiva naitka maulyagalu in Dharma saurabha* (Kannada), Harihara.
12. Ingalalli, R.I. (1999): 'Samskratiya svarupa' in *Jnana Surya* (Kannada), Harihara.
13. Ingalalli, R.I. (2000): 'Pascatyā tattvasāstra mattu Virasaiva darsana', in *Virasaiva Darsana* (Kannada), Karnatak University, Dharwad.
14. Mahadevappa, N.G. (2000): 'Baudha mattu Virasaiva darsanagalalli sunyada paricalpane' in *Virasaiva Darsana*, Karnatak University, Dharwad.
15. Max Müller, F. (1971): *The Six Systems of Indian Philosophy*, Chaukhamba Prakashana, Varanasi.
16. Nandimath, S.C. (1979): *A Handbook of Virasaivism*, MLB, Delhi.
17. Radhakrishnan, S. (1974): *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. II, Blackie and Sons, Mumbai.
18. Sadasivaiah, H.M. (1967): *A Comparative Study of Two Virasaiva Monasteries*, University of Mysore.
19. Sakhare, M.R. (1942): *History and Philosophy of Lingayat Religion*, Mahavira Press, Belgaum.
20. Schauten, J.P. (1995): *Revolution of the Mystics*, MLB, Delhi.
21. Zvelebil, K.V. (1984): *The Lord of the Meeting Rivers: Devotional Songs of Basavanna*, Motilal Banarsidass, New Delhi.

Kālī, the Mother, and the Play of Swan

AMITA CHATTERJEE

Department of Philosophy, Jadavpur University, Kolkata

The main objective of this paper is to discuss the cult of *Śakti* as it is manifested through the worship of the Goddess Kālī in Bengal, which is an integral part of life and culture of Bengal.¹ In the course of discussion, I shall also highlight how the concept of *Śakti* combines both the Great Sanskrit Tradition and the Little Popular Tradition, and also the exoteric and the esoteric forms of the worship of the Feminine Principle. I shall mainly rely on the *Sādhana*-songs² written in Bengali by the *sādhakas* of the Śākta sect of Bengal from the 18th century onward. Previously it was thought that the secret wisdom of the Śāktas cannot be communicated to ordinary men, nor is the experience of the Śākta *sādhakas* amenable to rational reconstruction. Hence, an account of the Śākta philosophy has been omitted even from the most exhaustive philosophical compendia like *Sarvadarśanasamgraha* of Mādhavācārya.³ But, through the *sādhana*-songs of the Śākta sect, the deep philosophical implications of the Tantric mode of worship of the terrifying Goddess Kālī percolated to the common folk, and created the right ambience for the acceptance of the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna on the one hand and those of Sri Aurobindo on the other.

The worship of *Śakti* in an anthropomorphic form goes back at least to the days of the Harappan civilization in India.⁴ The cult of the Great Mother Goddess was, however, in vogue in most ancient agricultural societies including the Egyptian, the Assyrian, the Babylonian and the Greek. The worship of the Mother Goddess was found associated with the Fertility Cult everywhere, even in Bengal. In the Vedic civilization, the Mother Goddess was identified with *Śakti*, the essence of all things. In the early history of human civilization, the concept of *Śakti* was almost ubiquitous. *Śakti* made its presence felt through natural objects like the sun and the moon. Men inferred *Śakti* wherever there was causal operation, movement of body or manifestation of energy in any form. No Vedic deity was conceived without its power (*śakti*). Thus *Śrī* or *Lakṣmī*, *Durgā* or *Śivāṇī*, and *Brahmāṇī* found place in the Vedic pantheon as deities

I express my thanks to Dr. N.G. Mahadevappa, Professor (Rtd.), for his suggestions.

representing the powers of *Viṣṇu*, *Śiva* and *Brahmā* respectively. *Śakti* has been conceived in various different ways. In the *Vedas* and in the *Śaiva* and the *Vaiṣṇava Āgama-s*, *Śakti* was identified with the ultimate principle of Reality. It has been asserted emphatically that there is no difference between the power and the powerful. In the line of the Upanisadic monism, it has been upheld in the *Devīsūkta*⁵ that She is of the nature of existence-consciousness and bliss. She is the sovereign of the universe and resides in it as its ground. She is the inner controller of heaven, earth and hell, manifests everything at her will and dwells in them as the immutable principle of consciousness. She is said to be the receiver of all sacrifices and worship. In most *Śaiva* and *Śākta Āgamas*, *Śakti* has been conceived in the line of *Prakṛti* of the *Sāṃkhya*. From it emerges the entire world. So it is also known as the *Ādyāśakti* or the Primal Power. Again, we find an Advaita conception of *Śakti* in the notions of *Mahāmāyā* and *Yoganidrā*. The Supreme Goddess in either of these forms is responsible for the cosmic illusion. In the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa*,⁶ *Devi-Bhāgavata*⁷ and *Kenopaniṣad*,⁸ we come across the stories of the emergence of the Supreme Goddess *Caṇḍikā* and *Haimavatī Umā* from the anthropomorphic focus of the energies (*tejas*) of the gods. All divine energies were concentrated in the form of the *Devī* to defeat very powerful *asura-s*, who have overthrown Indra from his kingdom in heaven. This is a recurring theme in the Sanskrit literature and the *Purāṇa-s*. The Supreme Goddess has always protected the gods from the demons who symbolized evil. The slaying of demons by the Goddess was looked upon as a metaphor of overcoming evil by the good. The struggle between the good and the evil being eternal, the Supreme Goddess is also eternal. Though this *Devī* has been worshipped in different names and forms, according to the philosophical and the meditative traditions of India, she is the Peerless One. This is indeed a very abstract philosophical view, but somehow it got entrenched in the common Indian psyche.⁹

There is, however, plenty of evidence in favour of the view that the worship of the Mother Goddess has come from the non-Vedic folk cultures. In most of the folk literature, we find mention of a local goddess invented mainly by the non-elite masses. There was a two-way process of accommodating these innumerable folk goddesses within the Great Tradition. The worshippers of a local goddess tried to prove her superiority by tracing her lineage to the Vedic and the Puranic pantheon. The *Smārta* Brahmins, on the other hand, often adopted the 'inclusionist' policy with

respect to the local goddesses to preserve the monistic culture of the Great Tradition. They rationalized the inclusion of local goddesses with the help of mythological stories. The famous story of the creation of fifty-one *Śākta* shrines (*pīṭhas*) all over India provides one instance of the case at hand. *Satī*, the wife of Lord *Śiva*, went to attend a sacrificial ceremony, which her father was performing with great pomp. There she heard her husband being maligned (does it show that *Śiva* was a non-Aryan go:?) and died out of grief. Lord *Śiva* came to know about the death of his wife. He started dancing his dance of destruction with *Satī*'s lifeless body on his shoulder. Lord *Viṣṇu* cut *Satī*'s body with his *sudarśana cakra* into fifty-one pieces which got scattered in fifty-one places all over India. And in each such place a *Śākta* shrine came up where people began to worship the Supreme Goddess under different names. The social historians conjecture that, may be these fifty-one goddesses were originally different local goddesses. However, they were accommodated within the Great Tradition through the process of intra-cultural cross-fertilization. The mythological story narrated above supplied the rationale for amalgamation.

Winternitz once wrote, 'When we speak of Tantra, we primarily think of the sacred books of the *Śākta-s*.'¹⁰ Since there are *Śaiva*, *Vaiṣṇava*, *Saura* and *Gāṇapatya* Tantras, Winternitz's observation may be taken to mean that the *sādhanā* or the worship of *Śakti* has to be understood against the wider backdrop of the Tantras. I am not entering here into the debates regarding the relative antiquity of the Tantras and the *Vedas*, or endogeneity or exogeneity of the Tantras or about the dubitable rationale of classifying Tantras into Hindu, Buddhist and Islamic esoteric practices. I agree with *Śaśibhushan Dasgupta*¹¹ in upholding that Tantra was primarily concerned with *sādhanā*. This form of *sādhanā* was in vogue for more than fifteen hundred years in India, especially in the belt from Kashmir to Assam. It served as a common heritage for many of the great and small religious sects and sub-sects of India. The essence of the Tantric practice is the belief that the Ultimate Truth is to be attained in and through body. This belief is contra-Vedic where the role of body has been ignored in realization of the Ultimate Truth. The Tantra point of view can be understood, if we consider the Ultimate Truth as immanent in the universe. To this we need to add another important Tantric belief that there is nothing in the universe which is not there in the body, since the bodily microcosm is the mirror of the macrocosm. The belief in the perfect parallelism between the physical macro-world and the biological micro-world led the

Tāntrika sādḥaka to locate all important physical entities, e.g., the sun, the moon, the mountains and the rivers within the body. Even the time element has been represented through the vital breath (*pāna* and *apāna*). A Tantric *sādḥaka*, therefore, should seek the truth within his body for, the truth that is immanent in the body is that same truth that pervades the world. Hence, maintains the Tantric yogin, the best medium for realizing the truth is the body. This, in sum, is the *Yantra-tattva*¹² of the Tantra.¹³ But the human body is not ready to represent the Ultimate Truth till it is transformed through some Yogic practices. In most cases these practices are not in accordance with the classical Yoga but are sexo-yogic as propounded by different sects indulging in esoteric practices including the Śākta sect.

These sexo-yogic practices are the most misinterpreted elements of the entire Tantric literature. These have been condemned as attempts to cover the most licentious sexual acts in the garb of religion. Side by side, there have been various attempts at justifying these practices. Some are of the opinion that these practices are to be interpreted allegorically as representing various methods of *prāṇāyāma* and *ṣaṭcakrabhedha* leading to the ultimate bliss. We shall discuss this interpretation in detail because that is how the leading Śākta schools of Bengal looked upon these practices. Some think that as the Tantrics wanted to keep their doctrines secret, they have deliberately tried to confuse the uninitiated by their account of sexo-yogic practices. Some others say that one cannot stick to the religious path unless one's enjoyment or *bhoga* is complete. These sexo-yogic practices lead the *sādḥaka* to the point of saturation of enjoyment and the motive of renunciation burns brightly in his heart. But, I think, the best justification can be reached by comparing the spirit underlying the Tantric practices with one that lies behind the Vedic practices. The orthodox Vedic, more precisely, Upanisadic practices emphasize on asceticism with a view to renouncing the world. The Tantric seems to think that it is easier for one to renounce the world that has not experienced the sensual enjoyments. The true asceticism means that all objects of sensual enjoyment will remain before a person but he should not, in any way, be attached to them. Thus, a true *sādḥaka* will have to pass the test when all temptations are in front of him in the form of wine, meat, fish, kidney beans and exquisite ladies.

Let us now look at the relation between the worship of the Goddess Kālī and the Tantric practices. According to the *Devīmāhātmya* section of

the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa*, the Goddess Kālī originated from the forehead of the Supreme Mother Goddess who became black with anger as the demons Caṇḍa and Muṇḍa came to attack her. That is why Kālī is black in complexion and has a terrifying appearance. In *Kālītantra*, *Tantrasāra* and *Śyāmārahasya*,¹⁴ we get descriptions of different forms of the Goddess Kālī, viz., Dakṣiṇākālī, Siddhakālī, Guhyakālī, Bhadrakālī, Śmaśānakālī, Rakṣākālī and others. The image of Kālī that is worshipped on the Dipāvalī night has four hands and is black as a cloud. A garland of skulls hangs loosely from her neck. Two corpses are her ear ornaments. The upper part of her naked body is smeared with blood and a girdle of human arms covers her waist. With the lower left hand, she holds a severed human head and with the upper she grips a bloody sword. Her two right hands convey through appropriate signs *abhaya* (freedom from fear) and *varadā* (bestowing boons). She has three dazzling eyes, which produce fear in the mind of the wicked but pour out affection for the devotees. She stands on the chest of Śiva lying still and bites her protruded tongue like a bashful lady. She is surrounded by ugly looking Dākinī-Yoginī-s (in Tantras, they are reigning goddesses of the ṣaṭcakras) and jackals. Mahākāla stands by her in a prominent position reminding us that the Goddess is the Mother of Timelessness and life; she is also the arbiter of Time and Death.

*Devī-purāṇa*¹⁵ and *Garuḍa-purāṇa*¹⁶ raise Kālī to the supreme position in two steps. First, various stories are offered to show that Kālī is the same as Umā and Pārvatī of the Great Tradition, thus establishing the identity of the Supreme Goddess. Second, it has been shown that Kālī is the principal Goddess; Pārvatī, Umā, Gaurī, Durgā, Caṇḍikā, are just different forms of the Goddess (*Devī*). The famous stories like Satī's death and Pārvatī's marriage to Lord Śiva were suitably altered in these *Purāṇa*-s.

It has been enjoined that the divine Mother be worshipped exclusively in the Tantric modes. The Tantric modes of worship are mainly of three types:

- (a) Dakṣiṇa or the right-handed mode: In this mode, the worship is performed with flower, leaf, water, etc., and the Tantric homa (oblation) centring around the Mother Goddess;
- (b) Vāma or the left-handed mode: It is recommended that the worshipper should observe austerity during day but at night should worship the Goddess following esoteric practices;

(c) Kaula mode: This mode includes previously mentioned sexo-yogic practices, which are opposed to the Vedic and other Smārta practices. But this mode of worship is considered the highest of all modes and the *sādhaka*-s following this mode are called the *Vīras*, i.e., the heroes. Some *Kāpālika*-s who also resorted to human sacrifice adhered to this mode of worship.

When from the sixteenth century Kālī attained the position of the principal deity of Bengal, people began to worship her along with Daśamahāvidyā-s¹⁷ daily in some places and annually on some auspicious days. Here we find the prevalence of all three modes of the Tantric worship. We come across the names of the Tantric *sādhaka*-s, viz., Kriṣṇānanda, Brahmānanda, Pūrṇānanda, who attained fame by compiling different modes of the worship of Kālī. Sādhaka Sarvānanda of Tripura reached the highest stage of attainment by worshipping the Goddess, sitting on a dead body. Another famous Tantric school of East Bengal is known as the school of Ardhakālī. Both Ratnagarbha and Bāmākṣepā¹⁸ worshipped the Goddess in the left-handed and the heroic mode. Tārāpīṭh where Bāmākṣepā practised the Tantra mode of worship is still considered a very holy place of pilgrimage in Bengal.

Until the end of the seventeenth century, Kālī was the Goddess for a select few. From the first half of the eighteenth century, however, the mode of worshipping the Goddess changed completely and She became an object of worship for all who cared to worship. It was mainly due to the influence of the Śākta *sādhakas* like Ramprasad Sen, Kamalakanta Bhattacharyya, Dasarathī Ray, Gobinda Chaudhuri et al.¹⁹ who left a treasury of the Śākta *sādhana*-songs for all devotees. In these songs they gave a novel interpretation of the Tantric rituals and could successfully remove the bad name that the Śākta *sādhanā* was given. Ramprasad Sen inherited two modes of worshipping Kālī—one was the esoteric mode and the other was the right-handed mode celebrated with at least sixteen offerings. The latter mode of worship was prevalent among the land-owners of Bengal and was characterized by severe enmity and hatred of the Vaiṣṇava sect and the Vaiṣṇava way of life. Ramprasad Sen for the first time tried to be rid of this parochial aspect of the Kālī worship and succeeded in convincing people that the deities of the Śāktas and the Vaiṣṇavas are not different in essence.

Fake prayer, Proshad says, in all this pomp and noise,
You divide Hari-Śyām from Kālī-Śyāmā, sighted you are blind.²⁰

It is evident from the songs of Ramprasad that he was not in favour of the Left-handed or the Heroic mode of worship, supposed to be practised in cremation grounds. He interpreted the five M's from an inner contemplative perspective. In one of his famous songs he wrote that intoxication arising out of constant contemplation of the Mother is more intense than one induced by the most potent wine.²¹ A *sādhaka* should always try to raise himself on a higher mental plane. This was also the aim of Śiva, the greatest yogin. A great yogin sets before himself two ends: (1) to cling to the Ultimate Truth, and (2) to cleanse his mind of all impurities and make it suitable for receiving the Ultimate Truth. This was the life-long endeavour of Ramprasad too. He confessed that he had 'brought gold to shine with brimstone and crystal-shining stone and cherish a fresh hope to scour the jewelled shrine.'²² For, once one can be rid of all inner impurities, one need not make much effort to reach the mother. Just as iron-filings free of rust are attracted by a magnet, similarly a pure soul feels the attraction of the Divine Mother. Once the mind of a *sādhaka* is prepared, he has nothing much to do. After that, the entire process rests with the Divine Mother. She attracts the *sādhaka* towards Her. She comes to dwell in the mind of the devotee permanently. When a *sādhaka* realizes this, his entire world-view changes, his way of life is transformed. He sees his deity all around him, in fact everywhere. This is how one is to combine the path of devotion with the path of salvation. To a true *sādhaka* there remains no distinction between the Divine Mother and the Absolute Brahman.

Says Proshad, I've raised love and salvation above my head;
My lesson, Kālī's absolute.²³

In the final stage of self-realization, all external differences among different deities are transcended. The *sādhaka* need not even stick to any sanctioned mode of worship. 'Worship Kālī in any way thou please,' advised Ramprasad.

In many songs of Ramprasad the theme that occurs repeatedly is that the best mode of worshipping Kālī is through contemplation. He did not advocate image worship. He wrote succinctly:

My Mother's image by error with clay I want to shape
This Mā is not earth's girl, vain toil, with clay I sweat.²⁴

Why is the toil in vain? He replies, 'My Tārā is formless just as Brahman is.' 'She is everywhere.'²⁵ 'Like all-pervasive light, She removes dark-

ness all around.' Consequently, the *sādhaka* realizes that the difference of caste and creed, difference in the Vedic and the Tantric rituals, all are immaterial. The devotee is the same as the deity who is also the spirit of the universe, who is immanent in each and every item of the universe from the smallest of the small to the greatest of the great.

These eighteenth century *sādhaka*-s of Bengal were not erudite scholars. They were not interested in attaining the ultimate through the path of knowledge. Their path was the path of devotion, which all devotees can follow. Their devotion was so great that they saw beauty and charm in the terrifying image of the Mother. This type of intense devotion and absolute fixation on the Mother Goddess make them realize that everything else in the life of a devotee is absolutely useless. As Ramprasad sang,

Friend, brother, wife, son are nothing but error's source;
Meditate stepping inside, get Kālī-Tārā for sure.²⁶

The Mother resides in the heart of a devotee who has cleansed his mind with the intensity of a householder preparing his house for the arrival of his cherished guest. The most important step in this act of spring-cleaning is to be rid of the ego, the sense of my and mine. Lord Śiva on whom Kālī stands, is thus in the state of constant meditation having got rid of the ego-sense. That is why he appears inert like a corpse. All our external movements are due to the ego. One who is able to contain the ego remains as calm as the dead.

Both Ramprasad and Kamalakanta expressed very simply a few complex and deep concepts of Tantra-yoga in their songs, which were subsequently incorporated in the songs of other Śākta poets. Consider the following:

Kālī plays with the Haṁsa (swan) as a female swan in the lotus-pond
The Yogī gets a feel of that when his Mūlādhāra meets the Sahasrāra.²⁷

Or,

I've made heart-lotus bloom, put my mind on the thousand-petal flower:
Sahasrāra

And saved up my breath at the hearth of snaking-up spirit:
Kulakuṇḍalini.²⁸

To understand these wonderful songs we need to know a few important concepts of the Hindu Tantras. The Hindu Tantras, the metaphysical base

of which is generally provided by the Sāṁkhya philosophy admit two aspects of reality—the static aspect represented by Śiva and the dynamic aspect represented by Śakti. The former follows the path of *nivṛtti* or inaction, while the latter follows the path of *pravṛtti* or action. Śiva is pure consciousness, the quality-less static principle, while Śakti is the cosmic energy, the world force, and the dynamic aspect of Reality. But the Tantra-s go beyond the Sāṁkhya view in maintaining that neither Śiva, nor Śakti alone, however, is the Ultimate Reality. Śiva and Śakti are inseparable. The highest truth is the state of neutrality produced by the union of Śiva and Śakti. Interestingly, this union, which produces the highest state of neutrality, also produces under different conditions the phenomenal world process. When Śakti unites with Śiva in the *pravṛtti* mode in association with her principle of great illusion, the entire world process is created. But 'when Śakti rises to meet Śiva in a process of introversion, their union results in a state of neutrality, in infinite bliss and tranquility.'²⁹ Hence the union of Śiva and Śakti both binds and liberates.

The theory of Śiva and Śakti that Ramprasad and Kamalakanta tried to express can be further explained as follows. According to *Tantra-yoga*, there are six centres in our body. First, *Mūlādhāra*, situated above the region of generation and is the region of earth. Second, *Svādhisthāna*, situated above the first and is the region of water. Third, *Maṇipura*, is in the spinal cord and symbolizes the region of fire. Fourth, *Anāhata*, situated at the back of the heart and is the region of air. Fifth, *Viśuddha*, at the base of the throat and is the region of ether. Sixth, *Ajñā*, at the back of the junction of eyebrows and is the region of psychic vision. The culminating point is *Sahasrāra*, situated at the cerebral cortex and is described as the lotus with a thousand petals. The yogins believe that Śiva resides in the highest plexus, *Sahasrāra* and Śakti in the lowest, *Mūlādhāra*. The aim of a *sādhaka* is to raise Śakti from the lowest plexus through different intermediate centres to the highest plexus, *Sahasrāra*, till she unites with Śiva. Again *Tantra* and *Purāna* conceive the right side of the body as the region of Śiva and the left side as the region of Śakti. This belief lies at the back of the concept of *Ardhvanārīśvara*, the half male and the half female principle. The important nerve on the right side through which flows the *apāna vāyu* is known as *piṅgalā*, and its correlate in the left through which flows the *pānavāyu* is called *idā*. The right channel represents Śiva and the left channel represents Śakti. Through *sādhana*, a *sādhaka* tries to neutralize the functions of Śiva and Śakti by channelling

both the currents through a middle channel called *susumṇā*, the way to perfect equilibrium. This state of equilibrium is the absolute reality.

Now the story of Haṁsah (Swan) may be understood in the following manner. The ultimate end of all *sādhaka* is to attain *satcidānanda*, pure existence-pure consciousness-pure bliss. This perfect state is, however, unattainable so long as the constraints (*pāśa*) of *Māyā* are not removed. By the self-limiting power of *Māyā*, the Supreme Reality polarizes itself into conscious and unconscious, into self and its other, into subject and object, i.e., *aham* and *idam*. Yet, all such distinctions are relative because the Reality never ceases to be itself. Hence, there is an essential identity between the subject and the object, between the *Brahman* and the *jīva*. The outgoing process of the ultimate reality is of differentiation and multiplication, while the return or the ingoing process is characterized by increasing assimilation and final unification. 'In the first, everything is ejected into separateness, exclusiveness, polarity and opposition. In the latter, it is drawn back and gathered into unity, harmony and peace.' The *Kuṇḍalīnī* Yoga consists in reversing the outwardly directed evolving process. The outgoing process is denoted by *Haṁsah*, short for *aham* and *sah* and is represented by the vital breath and the reverse process is denoted by *So'ham*. Since the first process signifies polarity and differentiation, there remains a difference between *Śiva* and *Śakti*. But in the ingoing process the stress is on the union of *Śiva* and *Śakti*. These two stages are, however, just a matter of emphasis, for these two are really concurrent. Hence, in all affirmation and differentiation, identity remains immanent. It is because of this that even during the outgoing or *haṁsah* stage a cosmos emerges, never chaos. In the realm of ordinary experience too we are given equalities, not identity. Consider, for instance, men and women. One can be equated with the other in a limited manner. Though polarity looms large in the ordinary life, we need to go beyond this opposition. If real identity can be asserted, then all polarities vanish and with it disappears the noose (*pāśa*) that binds us to the world (*samsāra*). The so-called left-handed mode of worship is nothing but the affirmation of this reverse process—an attempt at stopping the process of proliferation and proceeding towards concentration.

Thus in the final analysis, the teachings of the Tantra come very close to the ideals of Vedānta. The phenomenal world resolves into Brahman—many merge into the One. This is also the ideal of *asamprajñāta-yoga*. Ramprasad, however sings, 'Oh Mother! I don't want to be sugar, I love

to taste sugar.³⁰ Philosophically explained the song means that the excellent devotee wants to retain the last shred of difference from his deity. According to the Vedānta ideal, the knower of Brahman becomes Brahman. There remains no difference between the knower and the known, the enjoyer and the enjoyed at the ultimate stage. The connoisseur, however, wants to taste the sweetness of sugar. He wants to retain his enjoyer-self. In the path of devotion the devotee comes very close to his deity but does not give up his devotee-self.

The *sādhana* songs of the Śākta sect caught the imagination of the common man. The ordinary man, steeped in the nitty-gritty of everyday life, understood the possibility of transforming his mundane existence into the joyous existence of a devotee. This message spread through the length and breadth of Bengal, across the barriers of caste and creed and created an environment where it was possible for a humble village boy without any formal education to become Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, whose teachings changed the course of the Bengali culture and philosophy for all time to come.

Sri Ramakrishna inherited the liberal Śākta culture of Ramprasad Sen and others, which his disciple, Swami Vivekananda, transformed into Neo-Vedantism. From the Śākta interpretation of Tantra given above, it is evident that Neo-Vedānta is the point of culmination of the Tantric heritage for which the ultimate end is the unity of the deity and the devotee. While the traditional Vedānta enjoined the path of knowledge, the Tantric path is a combination of *kriyā* and *yoga* to which Sri Ramakrishna added the *bhakti* element. So in the Neo-Vedānta of Vivekananda we find an emphasis on both *karma* and *bhakti*. Sri Ramakrishna experimented with different modes of *sāadhanā*. He was initiated by Kenaram Bhaṭṭa into *Śākta-sāadhanā*. He practised *Tantra-sāadhanā* under the supervision of a Bhairavī, took *Rāma-mantra* from Jaṭādhārībābā of the Ramaite sect. He performed the *Vaiṣṇava sāadhanā* in the *Rādhā* mode and learnt the elements of *Vedānta* and *Nirivikalpa Samādhi* from Ācārya Totā Purī. Having experienced almost the entire range of the Hindu *sāadhanā*, he took formal initiation into Islam from a devout Muslim. Next, he learnt the teachings of the Bible. Somebody showed him the picture of the Madonna and the Baby Christ and immediately 'the Hindu child of the Divine Mother became thoroughly metamorphosed into an orthodox devotee of the Son of Man.'³¹

All these experiments of Sri Ramakrishna led him to realize and declare unhesitatingly that all religions, despite their disparate mythological accounts and ritualistic practices, aim at drawing our attention to the final cause of the universe, to God, the Ultimate Reality. He asked in his characteristic child-like simplicity, 'Why should I be bored by practicing only one mode of *sādhana*? I want to experience the joy that follows from different religious practices.' He said that different religions have been created to cater to the spiritual needs of men of different dispositions. Even when somebody devoutly follows one religious path, which is not suitable for him, the Divine Mother by Her grace sets him in the right path.

Unlike Ramprasad, Sri Ramakrishna was in favour of *sākāra-upāsanā*, idol worship. However, like Ramprasad he also wanted to remain an ideal devotee.³² That is, even after realizing the unity between Brahman and jīva, he too wanted to retain a little distinction between the deity and the devotee. One cannot enjoy the ultimate bliss if one does not have a trace of ego. But this ego is the purified ego, not the little ego full of selfishness and pride. Behind all creation, he affirms, there is a duality of the creator and the created. Without his creation, the creator God cannot engage in Līlā. The devotee who is full of Kālī takes part in the creative enjoyment of the Mother by being her co-player. His belief in the immanence of the mother in all objects of the world was the inspiration behind his teaching that the best way to worship God is through the service of suffering men. This ideal was later picked up by his disciples including Swami Vivekananda and is still being followed by the Ramakrishna Mission.

The influence of the Śākta sect of Bengal can be detected without any difficulty in the Integral Yoga of Śrī Aurobindo. Śrī Aurobindo has highlighted the process of evolution and involution in the macrocosm as well as in the microcosm. In *The Life Divine*, he has explained what is the meaning of Complete Yoga. He says that the lower should not only rise to meet the highest, the highest should also come down to meet the lower. This is nothing but the play of *pāna* and *apāna*, the combination of the outward and the inward processes mentioned in the Tantra. He writes in *The Life Divine*, 'From the divine bliss, the original Delight of Existence, the Lord of Immortality comes pouring the wine of that Bliss ... he enters into these sheaths of substance for the integral transformation of the being and nature ... Life in its self-unfolding must also rise to ever-new provinces of its own being. But if in passing from one domain to another we

renounce what has already been given us from eagerness for our new attainment, if in reaching the mental life we cast away or belittle the physical life which is our basis, or if we reject the mental and the physical in our attraction to the spiritual, we do not fulfil God integrally, nor satisfy the condition of His self-manifestation ... we climb ill if we forget our base. Not to abandon the lower to itself, but to transfigure it in the light of the higher to which we have attained, is true divinity of nature.³³

But the question is: how to attain this transformation? Like his predecessors Śrī Aurobindo also maintains, first, we have to cleanse our mind and then let The Mother Herself work within us. The *sādhaka* should prepare the ground for the descent of the Mother. 'There are two powers that alone can effect in their conjunction the great and difficult thing, which is the aim of our endeavour, a fixed and an unfailing aspiration that calls from below and a Supreme Grace from above that answers.'³⁴ 'And afterwards,' he continues, 'you will realize that the Divine Śakti not only inspires and guides, but initiates and carries out your works; all your moments are originated by Her, all your powers are hers, mind, life and body are conscious and joyful instruments of her action, means for Her play, moulds for Her manifestation in the physical universe.'³⁵

The Mother is the Divine will that flows into the entire universe. This identity with the entire universe is called the *Parāśakti*. There are two other stages of the manifestation of Śakti, as the governor of the creation and as the power in the individual, which always try to unite the human personality with the Divine Nature. For, this is required to complete the Full Circle.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Before the Bengalis became cosmopolitan, their culture centred on Kālī-temples. Kolkata, the political and cultural capital of Bengal, is famous for its two Kālī temples, one at Kalighat and the other at Dakshineswar. Whenever the Bengalis settled outside Bengal, the first thing that they used to build was a Kālī-temple. Though the worship of the Goddess Durgā is still the greatest festival of Bengal, it is Kālī that they worship daily.
2. The songs of Kālī can be classified into two main types: (a) *sādhana* songs that deal with different modes of worship of the Terrifying Mother Kālī, and (b) Līlā songs that narrate the play of the Divine Mother. The second group includes songs of Umā, the daughter of Himālaya and the consort of Śiva, who comes to her parents' house annually. These songs are known as *Āgamanī*

- (welcome) and Vijayā (farewell) songs dedicated to the goddess Umā or Durgā.
3. *Sarvadarśanasamgraha*, Mādhavācārya, ed., V.S. Abhyāṅkara, Bhandarkar Oriental Series, Poona, 1951.
 4. For historical accounts of the worship of Śakti see 'Śakti Worship and the Śākta Saints', Cintaharan Chakraborty, *The Cultural Heritage of India*, Volume IV, The Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Kolkata, 1962; 'Śakta Festivals in Bengal', Cintaharan Chakraborty, *Indian Historical Quarterly*, September, 1951; *Reflections on Tantra*, Sudhakar Chattopadhyay, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1978; *Śakti and Śakta*, Sir John Woodroffe, Ganges & Co. Ltd., Chennai, 1951; *Principles of Tantra*, Sir John Woodroffe, Ganges & Co. Ltd., Chennai, 1952; *Studies in the Tantras*, P.C. Bagechi, Calcutta University, Kolkata, 1939; *Bhārater Śaktisādhanā O Śakta-sāhitya* (Bengali), Śaśibhushan Dasgupta, Sāhitya Samsad, Kolkata, 1961.
 5. *Rgveda*, *Maṇḍala X*, 125.
 6. *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa*, translated K.M. Banerjee, Kolkata, 1851.
 7. *Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam*, ed., Vijñānānanda Swami, Panini Office, Allahabad, 1934.
 8. Kenopaniṣat, 6/38, ed., Durgacharan Samkhya-vedantatirtha, Deb Sahitya Kutir, Calcutta, 5th edition, 1967.
 9. *Nityaiva sāvā jagannurtastayā sarvamidam tatam/Tathāpi tat-samutpatti vahudhā śrūyatām mama/Devānām kāryasiddhyārthamāvīrbhavati sāvadā/Utpanneti tadā loke sāvā nityapyabhidhiyate. Śrīśricandi*, 1/1, ed., Swami Jagadiswarananda, Kolkata.
 10. Winternitz, M., *A History of Indian Literature*, Calcutta University, Kolkata, 1927.
 11. 'Some Later Yogic Schools', Sasibhushan Dasgupta, *The Cultural Heritage of India*, Vol. IV.
 12. *Ibid.*, p. 292.
 13. This theory was known to the sadhaka-s of the Aul and Baul sects—in fact to all *Sahajiyā* sects—the teachings of whom had considerable influence on Tagore.
 14. See R.C. Hazra, *Studies in the Upapurāṇas*, Sanskrit College, Kolkata, 1958; *Tantrasāra* by Krishnānanda Āgamavagīśa and *Śyamārahasya* by Pūrṇānanda Paramahansa have been mentioned in 'Śakti Worship and the Śākta Saints', Cintaharan Chakraborty.
 15. *Devī Purāṇa*, ed., Vangavāsī Press, Kolkata, 1927.
 16. *Bhāgavata and Garuḍa purāṇa*, Chapter 38, ed., Vangavāsī Press, Kolkata, 1927.
 17. For enumeration of *Dāsamahāvīdyā*-s see *Brahma Purāṇa*, Anandasrama Sanskrit Series, Poona.
 18. 'Śakti worship and the Śākta Saints', Cintaharan Chakraborty.
 19. *Śakta-padābalī*, ed., Amarendranath Ray, Calcutta University, Kolkata, 5th edition, 1955.

20. *Songs for Kali*, translated Gayatri Chakraborti Spivak, Seagull Books, Kolkata, 1998.
21. *Ibid.*, 'I drink not wine, I drink nectar uttering Jai for Kali'.
22. *Ibid.*, in Bengali, the song runs as follows:
Sohāgā gandhak mishāye sonāte rang dharāyecchi
Manimandir meje diba, mane ei āshā korechi.
23. *Ibid.*
Proshād bole, bhakti mukti ubhayke māthe dhorechi
Ebār Śyāmār nām Brahma jene, dharmakarma sab cherechi.
24. *Ibid.*
Māyer mūrti garāte cāi maner bhrame māṭi diye
Ma beṭi ki māṭir meye, miche khāti māṭi niye.
25. *Ibid.*
Tārā āmār nirākārā, Mā birājen sarbaghaṭe.
26. *Ibid.*
27. The translation is mine.
Kālī padmavane haṁsa sane haṁsī rūpe kare raman
Tānke mūlādhāre sahasrāre sadā jogī kare manan.
28. *Songs for Kali*, Spivak
Hridipadma prakāśiye, sahasrāre man rekhechi.
Kulakuṇḍalinī śaktir pade, āmi āmār man sanpechi.
29. 'Tantra as a way of realization', Swami Pratyagatmananda, *The Cultural Heritage of India*, Vol. IV.
30. *Songs for Kali*, Spivak.
Cini hote cāi ne Māgo, cini khete bhālobāsi.
31. 'Sri Ramakrishna and Spiritual Renaissance', Swami Nirvedananda, *The Cultural Heritage of India*, Vol. IV.
32. *Kathāmṛta*, Udbodhan Publication, Kolkata.
33. *The Life Divine*, Śrī Aurobindo, Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, 1989.
34. *The Mother*, Śrī Aurobindo, Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, 1977, p. 1.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 30.

Mapping Repetition and Novelty in Creativity¹

A. RAGHURAMARAJU

Department of Philosophy, University of Hyderabad, Hyderabad 500 046

Change and difference have enduringly mesmerized and lured those not contented with the present or the given and are ready to relentlessly explore new areas. In contrast, those who are ready to settle for fulfilment and gratification acclaim permanence and repetition. Creativity is associated with the former and conformity with the latter. Each of these do have their bad glitches, namely, the intemperance craving for difference and novelty have often ushered in derangements, whereas lack of motivation for change has been harboured by the orthodoxy. Notwithstanding this, change and permanence can be camped as constituting the pervasive polarities to understand the larger psychological types of human behaviour. Oscillating between these two extreme points of the pendulum stand a range of possibilities, which are shrouded in the expressions like harmony, equilibrium, synthesis, etc., which in varying degrees and proportions carry both difference and repetition.

This essay briefly discusses some versions of creativity with reference to novelty and repetition. Following Kalidas Bhattacharyya's recommendation, the essay discusses some novel views on creativity from a contemporary Indian metaphysician, Vaddera Chandidas in his book *Desire and Liberation: The Fundamentals of Cosmiconology* (1975). Bhattacharyya discovered this much-neglected twentieth century metaphysical text on his chance visit to Tirupati. He was instrumental in its publication and wrote a long introduction in which he says:

Decades after Sri Aurobindo's and K.C. Bhattacharyya's writings, and particularly in the recent days of anti-metaphysical thinking and sheer historical scholarship in India, it is a pleasant surprise to find in Vaddera Chandidas's *Desire and Liberation* (hardly in one or two works of other thinkers) a new complete system of *metaphysics*, presented through an extraordinarily concise form, almost in the way of ancient Indian *Sutras*. (in Chandidas 1975: v)

Further, I shall—through a distinction between author as a discloser of the text following metaphysics of presence and as concealer following metaphysics of absence—briefly analyze, using Chandidas' theoretical explanation of creativity as both repetition and novelty, a modern Telugu novel entitled, *Maidanam* (Plains) by Gudipati Venkata Chalam.

1. TRADITIONAL PARADIGM

The term 'creativity' has cosmological, metaphysical even religious association. It is closely related to creation and creator, so in this sense human creativity is derived from divine creation. For metaphysicians like Plato conformity to the pre-given divine order is a virtue, in fact, it constitutes the human telos. Leo Strauss says, 'Traditional natural law primarily and mainly an objective rule and measure, it is a blinding order prior to and independent of the human will' (1966: vii–viii). Plato, for whom any change is decay, has banned any deviation from what is given. It is in this context Plato banned poets and artists from his Republic, as human creativity is an aberration and is antagonistic to creation.^{2,3} The authors of these texts belonging to the traditional paradigm mostly disclaim their authorship and creativity attributing it to the divine agency. For instance, a thoroughly innovative Jayanta Bhatta remarks, and I quote.

From where can we (in philosophy) construct something new? Please judge whether I've arranged my statements in unexpected configurations.

Further, he says:

We can not suggest a novel theory which is highly original. Short-sighted as I am, I can not discover a blade of grass which my predecessors, logicians of keen insight, have failed to take notice of. (1978: 839)

In this traditional paradigm, agreements with the texts, which claim to merely record the nature and pattern of this order, are rewarded and encouraged; disagreements even when they existed were concealed; readers aspire to conform to the author, and even if there are deviations they are not claimed. Repetition of an already existing order is privileged and novelty is discouraged.

2. MODERN PARADIGM

The modern framework rejected the claim of divine as given. Instead, it instituted the human being as central, installing him in the place of God. Roland Barthes in his famous essay entitled, 'Death of the Author', says:

The author is a modern figure, a product of our society in so far as, emerging from the Middle Ages and English empiricism, French rationalism and the personal faith of the Reformation, it discovered the prestige of individual, of, as it is more nobly put, the 'human person'. It is thus logical that in literature it should be this positivism, the epitome and culmination of capitalist ideology, which has attached the greatest importance to the 'person' of the author. (1977: 3)⁴

In this new role, the human being assumes the role of creator. This can be traced to Social Contract Philosophers who issued a dictum that only those social institutions that are created by human beings in the state-of-nature should be accepted and nothing which is given is to be accepted. Referring to even natural institutions in ancient societies, Rousseau says:

The most ancient of all societies, and the only one that is natural, is the family, and even so the children remain attached to the father only so long as they need him for their preservation. As soon as this need ceases, the natural bond is dissolved. The children, released from the obedience they owed to the father, and the father, released from the care he owed his children, return equally to independence. If they remain united, they continue so no longer naturally, but voluntarily; and the family itself is then maintained only by convention. (1952: 4)

This paradigm not only advocates the exclusive acceptance of only that which is humanly created exercising their choice but also seeks to explain away the natural institutions like family. Transported to the literary domain, creativity and difference further sustain this author-centredness.

Though privileged, disagreement however, is also a very jarring concept. It will boomerang if overstated or even understated. Disagreements are not to be merely stated but made acceptable. Here the precariousness lies in answering the question 'Acceptable to whom?' Not only to the peer group which, to use Akeel Bilgrami's metaphor for different purpose here, is like an alcoholic asking for alcohol. For it to be effective it must be targeted towards ones adversaries. Even when they do not accept the position, they should be able to see the reason and arguments. Derrida in

his preoccupation with deconstructing the text away from its author fails to pay enough attention to the implications of his deconstructive enterprise. He and others following him, alleges Umberto Eco, appear to have given license to the reader to produce a limitless and uncheckable flow of 'readings' (Eco 1992). Eco distinguishes interpretation from what he calls 'overinterpretation'. This limitless provision to proliferate different interpretations can result in serious implications to reading habits.

While the traditional paradigm promoted repetition, the modern sponsored novelty. Many contest the extremities associated with these paradigms. I shall initially discuss the view of T.S. Eliot and post-structuralists like Michael Foucault on decentering the excessive privileges of the author.

3. T.S. ELIOT

Eliot in his famous Noble lecture entitled, 'Tradition and Individual Talent', elucidates creativity neither exclusively as defined by traditional nor by modern paradigms. Claiming a relational and dialogical notion of creativity relates it to the past and says:

No poet, no artist of any art, has his complete meaning alone. His significance, his appreciation is the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artists. You cannot value him alone; you must set him, for contrast and comparison, among the dead. (1994: 29)

In Eliot, there is an attempt to go beyond the exclusive domain of the artist. The artist is not the one who is the exclusive self-perpetuator of meanings. The artist has to be set in active relation both in terms of comparison and contrast with the past. This circumvents and goes beyond the extremities of both the paradigms alluded to above, thereby situating it in-between. An attempt like Eliot's would bring in some radical structural transformations turning face-to-face—otherwise mutually turned away from each other domains—for a conference and dialogue. This revolving breaches, so to say, the existing cleavage between modernity and tradition; alternatively, the novelty and repetition, respectively. While the past or tradition stands for repetition, the present gushes out novelty. This interaction between repetition and novelty consecutively churn out creativity.

4. FOUCAULT

While Eliot decentres an artist by relating him or her to the past, Foucault embarks on this task by relating some authors, who are called by him as

'founder of discursivity', who 'sets the rules for the formation of others' texts', to the future works. Regarding these authors he says:

They [Marx, Freud] are unique in that they are not just the authors of their own works. They have produced something else: the possibilities and the rules for the formation of other texts. In this sense, they are very different, for example, from a novelist, who is, in fact, nothing more than the author of his own text. Freud is not just the author of *The Interpretation of Dreams* or *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious*; Marx is not just the author of the *Communist Manifesto* or *Das Kapital*: they both have established an endless possibility of discourse. (1994: 350)

Unlike Eliot, who sought to bring the artist's novelty and the past, which embodies repetition, into an active relation, Foucault whose suggestion is futuristic loosens the purview of the author's novelty, which subsequently becomes thematic repetition for the future authors. This loosening makes other subsequent authors to share with the authors of discursivity, facilitating in the process both novelty and repetition. These attempts in different ways disrupt the total claim of novelty by the author on the text, and take repetition too as an important variable in assessing creativity.

Eliot is familiar with philosophical issues, and Foucault is indomitable as a philosopher. However, with regard to the place of repetition and novelty they do not offer a clear theoretical analysis, incorporating various trajectories, levels of intensity, and different proportions of heightened artistic experience. If not for the artist and for the artistic experience, at least at a theoretical level and for the requirements of conceptualization, there is a cry for some such formulation. By way of responding to this cry I turn to Vaddera Chandidas, a twentieth century metaphysician from India, both to introduce a new author into this discussion and also to look for novel ideas on creativity. He is also a creative writer in Telugu, wrote two novels *Himajwala* (1969), *Anuksanikam* (1981); a string of short stories entitled, *Cheekatlonchi Cheekatloki* (1975); a short musical treatise entitled *Himoharagini* (1982). I will discuss the notion of creativity in his metaphysical work written in English, entitled, *Desire and Liberation* which offers a theoretical analysis to relate both novelty and difference, designating each a different position, specifying their relational terms.

5. VADDERA CHANDIDAS

Creativity for Chandidas is both novelty and repeatedness. For him, creativity 'is not an apparition of an altogether novelty' (1975: 22). Something is novel in relation to something else which is not novel; hence, absolute and total claim for novelty is vacuous. He says:

Thus, creativity, in its essentiality, is inclusive of novelty and repeatedness which are not totally isolated from each other Hence absolute novelty is not a fact. (1975: 22)

Generally, in the sphere of aesthetics, novelty, uniqueness, difference are privileged. However, in so far as something comes out of something else, which is already given, there can be no absolute novelty. Further, the interesting feature in Chandidas' analysis is that he assigns different positions to repeatedness and novelty. He says, 'Repeatedness is the structural base of novelty; as novelty is the functional base of repeatedness' (1975: 22). Repeatedness is the structural base of novelty, the latter in turn the functional base of repeatedness. Novelty and repeatedness are not merely dependent on each other, they perform different roles. Novelty thus acquires its significance derivatively from repetition. This restores to repeatedness the structural significance it has lost in the modern paradigm alluded to above. In fact, though remaining within the background, repeatedness is more fundamental as the structural base of novelty. Thus, he strikes a mature balance through assigning different positions, thereby avoiding the extremities of the pre-established monotonous self-repeating order of the traditional paradigm, or an extreme form of novelty that might border on anarchy of the modern paradigm. Instead, emphasis is placed on their interdependency. Further, enunciating another aspect of repeatedness and novelty he says:

Repeatedness is the determinateness of fusion; novelty is the freedom of fusion. The determinateness of fusion necessitates freedom; the freedom of fusion chances determinateness. The predominance of one over the other is rendered possible by existences, through immediate and remote relevances. (1975: 23)

Similar to Spinoza and Hegel, but unlike them somewhat, Chandidas further relates repeatedness and novelty with necessity and freedom, respectively. Freedom and necessity are always together. Necessity is the condition of freedom and freedom is the possibility of necessity.

Realizedness is freedom and unrealisedness is necessity. By virtue of realizedness an existence transcends its condition of necessity and becomes free. Determinism thus provides the structural basis for the necessity of freedom. This fusion does not lead to complete realizedness. Was it to be so it would commit to termination, for otherwise there would be nothing to realize and reality is made to face termination. Therefore, unrealizedness is a structural necessity for realizedness. Elucidating yet another related aspect of creativity he says:

Creativity functions through making and perishing. Creativity is perpetual realisedness. It does not create something. It perpetually creates itself through making and perishing. As such it is coextensive with reality, better yet, it is reality Here it is making; here it is perishing. Here it is making to perish and perishing to make. (1975: 22)

Creativity is given the status of reality itself. It perpetually creates itself through making and perishing. Creativity explains the process—birth and death, as making to perish and perishing to make. Hence it is not merely a particular act but is essentially constitutive of the reality process in general. Further, in order to avoid the charge that this might relapse into unidirectionality or monotony, Chandidas points out that creativity is multi-directional fusion. Conceding that creativity is both making and perishing, the question that might still arise here is regarding the purpose of creativity. Chandidas at the outset rejects liberation as an end of process. Instead he adds the depth dimension to process in the form of intensification. He says:

Intensificating is the functional efficacy of creativity. The perpetual making of creativity is in terms of intensificating. Intensificating is the structural route of novel repeatedness and repeated novelty. (1975: 22–23)

Subsequent to the elucidation of important aspects of creativity as making, perishing and intensification, he embarks on elucidating the general nature of creativity. He says:

Creativity is aesthetic. Aesthetic is the pulse of creativity. Aesthetic is rapturous strain as assimilated by an existence. An existence, through realisedness, sculpts the aesthetic. The sculptures of the aesthetic—the flowing sculpture is the bearings of the history of existences.

Creativity is drealistic. Dreality is the unity of repeatedness and novelty. Creativity dreams the reality and reals the dreams. (1975: 22)

So, creativity is not beauty, or symmetry or sublimity, but is aesthetic, which is not one of the aspects rather it constitutes it. The nature of this creative process is the rapturous strain as assimilated by existence, which in its creative form 'sculptures' the aesthetic. The idea of sculpture is here associated with movement or the process of flowing. Further, Chandidas designates creativity as 'drealistic', a term coined by combining dream and reality. As the separation of reality and dream is invalid, there is need to break away from this and form a new term, dreality. So for Chandidas creativity is both novelty, which is a functional feature, as well as repetition, which is a structural feature. It is both making and perishing, is multi-directional, is intensification and is dreality. Thus, he presents a theoretical frame to account for both novelty and repetition in creativity.

Having brought in to discussion Chandidas' theoretical framework on creativity, let me apply this model and analyze a modern Telugu novel by Gudipati Venkata Chalam, entitled, *Maidanam* (Plains). Before undertaking this let me briefly introduce a distinction between disclosing and concealing. Generally, creativity is associated with disclosing. The writer discloses her/his creativity through language; the painter through colours; the sculptor through sculptures. This activity of disclosing assumes the primacy of presence. Presencing privileges disclosures. Here I want to argue that concealing that is facilitated by metaphysics of absence is equally important in addition to or in conjunction with disclosing. This is consistent with the fact that the world consists of both presences and absences. Thus, concealing is equally a candidate to reckon with for accounting for creative process. To further enhance my claim let me allude to etymological closeness between text and textile.⁵ Text, like textile or dress, not only reveals but also conceals. The textile aspect of creativity as concealing seems to have been neglected in assessing creativity of the author. So the text is both concealing as well as disclosing, it is surrounded by both metaphysics of presence and absence too. Now let me turn briefly to discuss the novel, *Maidanam*. This novel is about a married Brahmin woman who is neglected by her lawyer husband who is more interested in his practice and externalities rather than his wife. She runs away into the plains leaving behind the entire social fabric with a man called Ameer, who was her husband's client, and he showers his complete attentions on her.

Maidanam, for the Telugu readers is not only a wonderful creative text but it is a social movement, inspiring, emancipating, liberating the orthodoxy of both women and men towards freedom, sexual bondage and family restrictions. I would like to argue that its success and strength lies not only for its power of disclosing novelty but also for its capacity to conceal repetition of a structural form. This creative text, an epitome of modernity, written in simple prose, advocating revolutionary ideas of women's liberty, however, I have pointed somewhere else (Raghuramaraju 1997) brilliantly like foundation conceals the fact of its repeating some part of the structure of a 17th century classical Telugu prabhanda text, namely, *Sasaanka Vijayam* written by Seshamu Venkatapathi. This classical text is about Tara the wife of Rishi Brihaspati, falling in love with his student Sashi and running away with him. I have argued that there is structural affinity between *Sasaanka Vijayam* and *Maidanam*, between Tara and Rajeswari; Sashi and Ameer; Brihaspati and Rajeswari's husband. The similarity in reasons for the married women in both these texts to run away from their marriage bolsters this affinity. While Sashi is the student of Brihaspati, Ameer is the client of Rajeswari's husband.⁶ While Chalam's revolutionary message in the novel highlights the novelty aspect of creativity, equally important is the writer's use of the classical structure in a concealed way, which is an aspect of repetition. Thus the modern novel contains both novelty as well as repetition.

Creativity viewed from the point of view of disclosing will be able to take into consideration only the disclosed radical views on the novel and fail to account for the ingenuity displayed by Chalam in concealing from the reader the use of the structure of the classical Telugu text. In my view this structural invariance is what made it possible to successfully communicate those radical ideas to those who belong to orthodoxy. This commonality in Eliot's sense is an example of the artist's relation among those who are 'dead': in a Foucaultian sense Seshamu Venkatapathi becomes 'founder of discursivity' for writers like Chalam. But more importantly, *Maidanam* becomes an interesting text as it has repeatedness, in the form of a classical text, as a structural base of novelty and novelty by way of a modern radical message as the functional base of repeatedness. In pointing out this concealment in Chalam my intention is to restore more credibility to the author, thus enlarging the purview of creativity of the author to include both disclosure as well as concealment, of both presences as well as absences, respectively.

Chalam's attempt at using a classical form either consciously or otherwise to communicate a radical modern novel message is a good example of both repetition as a structural feature and novelty as a functional feature of creativity as proposed by Chandidas. In this context, novelty gains prominence and visibility, because of repetition as structure of the classical text.

Having analyzed a novel from the point of view of Chandidas' notion of creativity, let me briefly add to this discussion the reading habits. For me a responsible reader begins to discover the text and later seeks to explicate both the projected structure of the text and its background ambience, which in some cases even the author may not be aware of. In order to do this, the reader must not only be able to know the architecture of the text but also its strong points, its knots, joints, weak points. Along with these architectural aspects, there is a need to look carefully at the *pace* of the text as each writer sets her or his text to a particular speed, and readers might miss the text if they fail to tune to this pace. However, a mere conformity to the speed of the text might lead to monotony. A reader after catching the speed of the text and comprehending what is revealed by the author subsequently has to stop the pace of the text and look for those aspects which are made invisible due to the speed. This stepping outside might help the reader to watch from outside the nature and structure of the text. Through this the reader can acquire command over the text and will be able to see many details, which are not visible when one adheres to the pace set by the author. This in my view is very important for a vigilant reader. For instance, the remarkable achievement of feminism is to make these stops, get out and ask for unpacking when they come across the usages like 'he', its referents. Does it mean both man and woman or only man? They in the process in my view have exposed the gender contents in generic terms.

I have briefly discussed different versions of creativity in classical theories, in modern theories, in Eliot and Foucault. Subsequently, I looked into a theoretical explanation in Chandidas who incorporated and designated different roles to both repetition and novelty. In conclusion, I have briefly reassessed the creativity of Chalam by analyzing his novel from Chandidas' explanation of creativity. Though I have mentioned only a Telugu novel in illustrating Chandidas' notion of creativity, it may be possible to use this model to reread and reassess other creative texts.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I thank Professor Alladi Uma, Dr. M. Sridhar and Professor R.C. Pradhan for their encouragement and comments. The earlier version of this paper was presented to postgraduate students, in the Department of English, University of Hyderabad, I thank the students for the lively discussion.

NOTES

1. This essay is an elaborated version of a part of a chapter from my unpublished manuscript entitled, 'Facets of Desire: Intensity, Eternality, and Multi-directionality. Exploring Contemporary Themes in *Desire and Liberation* by Vaddera Chandidas'.
2. For an interesting discussion on the reason for Plato to ban artists from his Republic see Iris Murdoch (1978).
3. One does find a similar echo in the philosophy of Advaita propounded by Sankaracharya. Privileging of creator and creation, thus undermining of creativity in Sankara's Advaita is the reason for Rabindranath Tagore, the poet, to maintain an ambivalent attitude towards Advaita and lean, in the context of refurbishing significance to creativity, towards Vishistadvaita.
4. Here I also want to contest the implication of Barthes. While agreeing with him that the modern author perpetuates its authority on the text and marginalizes the reader, I would also point out that the absence of authorship in classical Greek philosophy is equally problematic. Take for instance, Aristotle, who attributes inequality to nature, thus making nature the author of inequality. In fact, Aristotle succeeds more in making the doctrine of inequality more acceptable by not claiming it as his own doctrine and by transferring its authorship to nature. This transferring of the authorship to nature or to the divine authority seems to have been an effective tool to perpetuate traditional oppression, in this context the doctrine of inequality. So unlike Barthes I would also problematize the deauthoring posture of the classical model.
5. Gayatri Chakrovorty Spivak alluding to text-ile says, 'The problematic of text-ile seems to contain a code. In the telling, the chain cuts often—but the cut threads reappear, I hope' (1999: xi). I was really struck with this allusion and used the resemblance between text and *textile* to enhance my view.
6. Here it may however be noted that there are significant differences between these two texts. For instance, the ending is different, and the other relation between Rajeswari and Meera in *Maidanam* is a new aspect which has no antecedents.

REFERENCES

- Barthes, Roland (1977): 'The Death of Author', in *Image-Music-Text*, trans. Stephen Heath (New York: Hill and Wang.)
- Bhatta, Jayanta (1978): *Nyaya Manjari*, trans. by Janaki Vallabha Bhattacharyya, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.
- Chalam, Gudipati Venkata (1993): *Maidanam*, Vijayawada: Arunodaya Publishing House.
- Chandidas, Vaddera (1975): *Desire and Liberation: The Fundamentals of Cosmology*, with an Introduction by Kalidas Bhattacharyya, Tirupati: New Directions Press.
- Eco, Umberto, et al. (1992): *Interpretation and Overinterpretation*, edited by Staefan Collini, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Eliot, T.S. (1994): 'Tradition and Individual Talent', in *Contemporary Literary Criticism: Literary and Cultural Studies*, Ed. Robert Con Davis and Ronald Schleifer, New York: Longman, pp. 28-33.
- Foucault, M. (1994): 'What is an Author?' in *Contemporary Literary Criticism: Literary and Cultural Studies*, Ed. Robert Con Davis and Ronald Schleifer, New York: Longman, pp. 341-53.
- Murdoch, Iris (1978): *The Fire & the Sun: Why Plato Banished the Artists*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Raghuramaraju, Adluru (1997): 'Srujanathmaka Kathanamlo Antharthanam Kagala Amshalu: Abhasupalayina Chalam's Rajeswari Matruprema', *Misimi*: 9: 3, April 1997, pp. 86-92.
- Rousseau, J.J. (1952): *The Social Contract and Discourse*, London: J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd.
- Shesham, Venkatapati (1990): *Sasaanka Vijayamu*, Vijayawada: Emesco Pocket Books.
- Spivak, Gayatri Chakrovorty (1999): *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of Vanishing Present*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Strauss, Leo (1966): *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes: Its Basis and Genesis*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Religion as Identity: Evolution of Religious Ideas among the Adivasis of Jharkhand

PADMAJA SEN* AND ASOKA KUMAR SEN**

*Department of Philosophy, Mahila College, Chaibasa

**Department of History, Tata College, Chaibasa
Ranchi University

This paper seeks to explore the evolution of religious beliefs and practices of the tribal groups of Jharkhand. These people are the Mundas, Santals, Hos and Oraons. Adivasi¹ groups studied here represent two linguistic groups. Mundas, Santals and Hos belong to the Munda linguistic family, while Oraons represent the Dravidian group. Munda languages had at an unknown past been spoken over a wide area in Central India and in the Ganges valley. But for quite a few centuries Chotanagpur plateau remains the principal home of the tribal people under review.² But before mediating into the actual subject we should be aware of two problems. The study has to draw its data from a large body of historico-anthropological and sociological literature.³ Next, as the adivasi society, whose religion we seek to study, belongs to a dialect-based oral society we do not have an indigenous literature to draw upon. But the available information indicate that they have had a rich religious tradition. We are therefore forced to depend upon an alien source for the novel act of reconstruction of tribal philosophy of religion. This may develop into a new area of research in philosophy, which has so far remained neglected.

The paper is divided into two broad sections. The first dwells on religious beliefs and practices as evolving over centuries indigenously and in contact with non-tribal religions. Besides philosophizing evolving tribal religion this also acts as the backdrop for the religious movements that followed. The second section seeks to provide the broad outlines of the religious movements aiming to reform tribal religion to suit the demands of changing times. It is studied under three sub-heads: militant, nationalist and Jharkhand. This study will acquaint us with the distinct notion of religion among tribals, which served more their existentialist needs, rather than spiritual.

RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

The Census Reports of 1901 and 1911 classified the tribals as animists. The available empirical accounts⁴ show that they believe that natural objects represent spirits only symbolically. Though supposedly residing in natural objects the spirits can also transcend their spatial locus at their will. This suggests that their religion is closer to spiritism and naturalistic religion rather than animism.

The Notion of Supreme Being

A Supreme Being for whom they use different names heads the tribal pantheon. Mundas and Hos call him *Singbonga*, while Santals address him as *Thakur*, *Thakur Jiu* and *Cando* along with *Singbonga*. On the other hand Oraons name him as *Dharmi* or *Dharmes*. Roy⁵ maintains that this is a recent terminology for the Supreme God, which replaced the original name of *Biri-Belas* or Sun-Lord. They also apply the Hindu name of Bhagwan for Him.

Now the point is what is the nature of Supreme Being in tribal religion? Originally Mundas, Hos and Santals conceived Him as a personal God, the creator and preserver of the world, likened to a father who also chastises when the children err. The sun represents him. He is the lord of other deities who hold their places and perform their duties due to Him. *Dharmi* or *Dharmes* is the Holy One, manifest in the sun, a perfectly pure, beneficent being. An unconscious attempt may be traced here to assimilate the many deities under One Supreme God.

Adivasis have a distinct mode of worship for the Supreme Being. The blessings of *Singbonga* are invoked before every religious ceremony for the welfare of the family. Though he is not regarded as the author of sickness or calamity like drought or famine His services may be invoked to avert them, particularly after the prayer to the minor deities has failed. Offerings and libations are made to Him. This may be a goat or white cock or a morsel of food or libations of a few drops of water.

We notice differences in the mode of worship among adivasis as well as changes creeping into their belief system.⁶ The accretions may be linked to the impact of changed spatio-temporal settings, suggestive of the lack of a unified belief and practice even in respect of a generic deity in their belief system. The developing trend appearing from the above information is to conceive the Supreme Being as the protector of total welfare and the cause of all actions in their lives. But the nature of their evolving

belief around Him becomes evident from information given by Dalton. Dalton writes about the helplessness of *Dharmes* before the spirit of evil and Oraons adoring malignant spirits more than Him. But a few decades later Roy⁷ informs of the restoration of *Dharmes* to the apex of the Oraon pantheon as against His comparative insignificance a few decades back during Dalton's time.

Tribal Pantheon

The tribal pantheon is evolutionary in nature. While interacting with their natural environment they have developed their indigenous cults both out of emotive and intellectual reasons. They believe in the division of the supernatural world into good and evil, ruled respectively by benevolent and malevolent deities and spirits. Evil is recognized as a necessary fact in tribal religion, demanding the same status as that of *Singbonga*. It can never be wiped out entirely. Therefore no attempt is made to justify evil as is done in more developed theistic religions. Instead an absolute duality of benevolent and malevolent spirits is accepted. Binary opposition⁸ into benevolent and malevolent rests on the logic that the above forces in which human agencies are incapable of playing any role essentially determine their lives. So they should always seek the blessings of the benevolent entities through worship and ward off the anger of the malevolent through propitiation. Mundas call these forces respectively as *Banita* and *Manita Bongas*. Originally Oraons believed all their spirits to be beneficent. But due to the contact with higher culture, they started investing particularly benevolent nature to some of them only. At the same time they evolved a mischievous class of the tramp or stray spirits as *Mua*, *Malech*, *Churel* and *Satbahini*. They also believe in 'evil eye' (*najar*) and 'evil mouth' (*baibhak*) or 'evil touch' (*chhut*) as essentially harmful.

The pantheon is multi-tiered intended to provide specific protection to their interests from individual/familial to community levels. It means that the tribe as a community has to have both general and special guardians to conduct their total welfare. The Supreme Being is believed to be the guardian of the entire tribe. They generally believe in the ancestral spirits as protecting the welfare of all living family members. This seems to emanate from the faith that the soul continues to exist even after death and it remains with its family in the form of spirit or shadow forever.

Adivasis assign the welfare of villages to their village deities. Some of the tribal groups have also deities to serve their *khunt* or sub-clan

interests. There is yet the notion of class gods and spirits like *Chandi* as the special deity for the Oraon bachelors and *Acharel* as that for women. Elaborate rituals are performed to worship and propitiate deities and spirits. At that time offerings of morsels of food, fowl, sheep, goats, pigs, rice, beer, fruit etc. are made depending upon socially specific norms of religious practice. They have gradually inducted the institution of priesthood to mediate between worshippers and worshipped. It becomes clear that welfare in the present world has been the main concern for the tribals. They have not developed the notion of a world beyond this.

Tribal festivals like *Mage*, *Sohrai*, *Baha*, *Sarhul* and *Karma* are closely integrated to their religious beliefs. On these festive occasions they invoke their deities and spirits with prayer and offerings. By doing this adivasis show their gratitude to their supernatural entities for help received from them. This way their socio-religious systems are closely integrated.

Over centuries tribals have gradually imbibed both deities and spirits from other tribal groups as well as Hindu neighbours with the feeling that the latter would come to their rescue when their own deities fail. Oraons maintain that except *Dharmes* all their spirits and deities have an exotic origin. Their *Devi Mai* and *Mahadeo* have been inducted from the Hindus. *Barnda Pachcho*, a household *bhut*, is in fact of Munda origin. Similarly the Oraon custom of putting up *pulkhis* or memorials is the result of Munda influence. On the other hand their practice of throwing charred bones of the dead into streams or pools of water bears the influence of the Hindus. Santal households worship the Hindu gods and goddesses like Kali, Durga, Ganga, Lakshmi, Ram and Mahadev. This timeless syncretism of tribal belief system features their life when we take up their revivalist movement in the next section of this paper.

The tribals of Jharkhand do not raise temples for their deities. But they allot separate space for them. It is common for them to demarcate a part of the primordial forest or *Sal* grove adjacent to the village as their place of worship. Mundas and Munda-speaking tribes like Santals and Hos have a sacred place in their houses called *Ading* or *Bhitar* as the abode of their household deities. Moreover, Oraons build a *Devi-sthan* or *Devi-manda* or altar for *Devimai* and a *Mahadev-manda* or *Mahadev-sthan* for Mahadev.

Generally speaking adivasis do not make images of their deities. But they often attribute form and personality to their supernatural entities. We cite a few instances to substantiate our point. For an Oraon, *Chala Pachcho* or *Sarna Burhia* is personified by an old woman with matted locks of

snow-white hair. *Chandi*, the goddess of hunting, is believed to be capable of assuming any shape she likes. Oraons also use stone as symbols of their deities and wooden *khuntas* or pegs as seats of ghosts or human spirits. Small clay cones represent their *Devimai*. Santals also use stones to represent their village spirits. This may be identified as the beginning of a trend towards idol worship.

Religious Reform Movement

The religious movement of the adivasis of Jharkhand has a historical setting. This gives us knowledge about the cause and distinctive character of this phase of tribal life. History relates that tribals cleared forests and founded their villages in the Chotanagpur plateau. Being the early settlers they came to be known as the *Khuntkattidars* and *Bhuinhars*. But under the Raja of Chotanagpur and later under British rulers extensive land alienation from tribals to non-tribal landlords and moneylenders occurred. Poverty forced tribals to emigrate to the tea gardens of Assam and other places. But it was land alienation not poverty alone, that shook their 'society to its roots' disrupting their old ways and traditional value system. Similarly Santals of *Damini-Koh* (the skirts of the hills) had to suffer at the hands of landlords, merchants and moneylenders, which the government failed to mitigate.

This material setting had a close link with the politico-religious movements that followed soon. Adivasis could easily identify the oppressors. But they also started to believe that the *Bongas* they worshipped and their priests could no longer save them from potent dangers. We have instances in support of this growing centripetal tendency.⁹ So they fell back on Hinduism and Christianity for support. But this centripetality was in fact motivated by their identity consciousness. History shows that the Jharkhand tribals had been subjected to lead an itinerant life for their survival both against natural odds and invading cultures. This created a constant crisis of identity, which they sought to address by evolving their material and moral culture as distinct from other cultural groups living in the neighbourhoods and also selectively imbibing from invading 'grand traditions' themselves, a trend found among tribals in general.

Tribal religious movements that followed may be divided into three distinct phases: militant, nationalist and Jharkhand. At the militant phase (1855–1901) the Kherwar and Birsa movements are very relevant for the present purpose for the primacy given by them to religion.

Both Kherwars¹⁰ and Birsa¹¹ inducted ideas from Hinduism and Christianity to model their religion. Religion here means both a system of beliefs and practices as well as an ethical code of conduct. As a system of belief the emphasis was on One Personal God. For the Kherwars this God was the Hindu deity Ram. He was identified with the Santal God *Cando*, the God of the universe. Birsa preached that to this One God alone worship was due.¹² The faith in monotheism was backed by the rejection of the entire pantheon of *Bongas* and the practice of making offerings to propitiate them. A prayer of Birsa said:

O Spirits of hills, deep water,
You shall not get any (sacrifice) from us
You have not created earth and heaven,
Therefore, O Spirits, keep away.

This is both an attempt to simplify the religious system and to build a bridge between the devotee and his God by purging the intervention of priesthood. This notion of One God seems to revive their original faith. Kherwars insisted that originally their ancestors were the worshippers of One God alone. Departure from the worship of One God was the cause of their present suffering.

Secondly, Kherwars and Birsa preached vegetarianism, personal purification and temperance.

The stress on the observance of a strict ethical code as a means to the total revival of tribal life, both mundane and religious, is innovative. Birsa's code of morals perhaps modelled after the Ten Commandments included:

Use sacred thread like the Hindus.
Obey and show respect to parents and elders.
Love all creatures.
Practice a life of plain living and high thinking.
Remain united.
Observe a weekly holiday as a respite from work and devote the day to worship and meditation.
Do not lie, thief, deceive or murder as they are sinful acts.
Do not practice inter-dining and do not marry Christian boys and girls.
Do not practice polygamy.

Thirdly, Birsa and others innovated the concept of Avtarvad, which was not indigenous to the tribe. Birsites believed that the faith in Birsa, the messenger of God, and prayers to him, instead of propitiation of spirits, were the means to happiness. This faith later inspired them to turn their *Dharti Aba* (the Father of the Earth) into God himself. This concept of New King is said to be derived from Christianity. Another significant innovation was the warning that those not abiding by the above preachings must face destruction.

A new spate of religious movement of the Adivasis of Jharkhand began since the 1920s.¹³ This may be regarded as the nationalist phase when tribals shunned their militancy and joined the Indian national movement. The major religious movements of this phase are Tana Bhagat movement of Oraons, Kherwar movement of Santals, Satya or Punya Dharam and Haribaba movement among Hos.

Again the faith in One God was asserted. For Tana Bhagats He was *Dharmes*, their traditional personal God. But for Satya and Punya Dharam He was *Sat Malik* or True God who is invisible and omnipotent.

Tana Bhagats preached abstention from the belief in *Bongas* and minor spirits and *bhuts*. Satya or Punya Dharam enjoined its adherents to stop image worship.

Vegetarianism, temperance, and personal purification through daily bath were the other important tenets.

But at this stage we notice tenets exclusive of particular movements. Tana Bhagats and Haribabites asked people to follow the path of devotion and meditation. Haribabites exhorted wearing of sacred thread and avoidance of vaccination and medicine.

Tana Bhagats added a novel code of conduct with pronounced economic and political overtones.

Do not yoke cows and bullocks as they are sacred.
Give up modern mode of cultivation and relapse into traditional mode of shifting cultivation.
Do not serve as coolies and labourers under zamindars and non-Oraons.
Invoke the services of Birsa, German Kaiser (Wilhelm II) and Gandhi.

The lack of uniformity in their items of reform is however very significant. It probably underlines the ideological disorientation of tribals

due to the stress created by moral and material degeneration under British rule.

The third phase of religious movement may be called the Jharkhand phase.¹⁴ In its origin it was contemporary with the second. It is characterized by an attempt to assert distinct tribal identity both at political and cultural levels. Adivasis put forth a claim for a separate state for them, complaining of a continued material and moral degradation of tribal culture even under Indian government. They sought to develop their own scripts (*Ol Chiki* by Santals and *Waran Chiti* by Hos), language and literature. They found religion as a symbol of tribal solidarity. They named it as *Sarna Dharam* which they believed to be essentially original and their own.

Tribals of Chotanagpur held a conference in 1932 at Chaibasa of delegates from Bihar, Bengal and Orissa. The conference resolved to use the term *Sarna Dharam* to denote the ancient religion of the tribals of Chotanagpur. Raghunath Murmu or *Guru Gomke* (Esteemed Guru) founded *Sarna Dharam Semlet*, i.e. Sacred Grove Religion Organization. Its objective was to express solidarity of tribals around *Sarna* religion and to restore them to their faith. The Hos of Singhbhum founded *Dupub Samaj*, an association professing faith in *Dupub Dharam*, the name they chose for the *Sarna Dharam*. Oraons founded *Sarna Nav Yuvak Sangh*. The All-India *Sarna* Association was established in 1978 to preserve and develop adivasi culture and religion.

The word *Sarna* originally meant the sacred grove consisting of Sal trees (*Shorea robusta*) adjacent to every tribal village. It is believed to be the abode of the spirits of nature and is associated with their religious practices. But in recent times the term has come to denote the original religion of the adivasis of Jharkhand for which there was no specific term earlier. Adopting this term to denote the religious belief system of adivasis is very significant. On the one hand it is expressive of their closeness to nature, while on the other hand it also indicates their separate and independent religious identity as a prop to the consciousness for their political identity. However, the term *Sarna* has not been consolidated to be the only expression to denote tribal religion as yet. Several other words like *Adi Dharam*, *Adivasi* or *Janjati Dharam*, *Sari Dharam*, *Dupub Dharam*, *Sansari Dharam*, *Jahera Dharam*, *Bongaism* etc. are used as synonyms.

Sarna is still a form of primitive religion. In its original form it lacks the emphasis on ethical or moral values as such. The element of spirituality

is also not pronounced. Still like any other religion *Sarna Dharam* is also dynamic and ever in the process of evolving. According to the demand of socio-religious consciousness new elements are being incorporated into it as a continuous process through various movements. In search of their distinct identity the educated adivasis are more and more inclined to their indigenous religious heritage. But this recall is more a reinterpretation than exact reproduction of their tradition. The distinctive features of this religion may be briefly stated.¹⁵

Despite the polytheistic attitude prevalent among Jharkhand adivasis *Sarna* religion emphasizes One Supreme God designated as *Singbonga*, *Dharmes* or *Haram*. This faith is akin to the monotheistic trait of the two earlier movements.

The relation between God and man has been conceived as a very intimate one likened to the affectionate relation between grandparent and grandchildren. Originally this intimacy was likened to the relation between father and son.

It insists on the original faith in a direct relation between man and the Supreme Being. Man has a free access to God. The mediation of a priest is not considered necessary. Here adherents of *Sarna Dharam*, like Kherwarism and Birsaism, offer a challenge to the mediatory role of tribal priests, which had crept into their belief system.

The most remarkable feature is their notion of tribe-nature-continuum. Nature is considered sacred and man is essentially dependent on it but he has no right to control it. This is an innovative interpretation of tribal faith, which has not been insisted upon by earlier religious reformers.

It does not believe in erecting temples, churches or mosques as places of worship. This underlines a conscious attempt both to forge a distance from other religions and accretions that had crept into tribal religion in its pre-reformatory stage.

Natural objects like forests, hills and rivers are considered to be the best abode of gods and spirits.

Like many other religions tribals also believe in the eternity of self or *ji*. The self, according to *Sarna*, survives death. But they neither believe in rebirth nor in heaven or hell. For them the act, which is socially approved, is considered meritorious and that which is disapproved of by society is sin. The soul does not go to heaven or hell after death. But it ever remains with the family in their *Ading* or *Bhitar*.

Sarna Dharam is believed to be self-sprung along with the creation itself, justifying its claim as *Adi* or Eternal religion.

It does not believe in Avatar, Messiah or Paigambar. Thus it distances itself from the established religions as well as Birsa religion.

CONCLUSION

The above account provides details about the process of the evolution of religious beliefs and practices of the adivasis of Jharkhand. It shows that over centuries they evolved their own religion to distinguish themselves from the non-tribals. In doing so their original notion was gradually influenced by exotic ways of life. But when they found their society increasingly threatened by invading 'grand traditions' they initiated religious movements as an important element in their assertion to establish their own identity. Initially they followed their acculturating tradition but gradually they came to realize that this was an inadequate solution to their mundane problems. So in the recent past the conscious attempt to rebuild their own religious tradition around *Sarna Dharam* has surfaced as an important part of their agenda. Resources, which help this initial attempt to reconstruct tribal notion of religion, create the impression of religion as an integral expression of their distinct identity within Indian demography. More detailed study is however needed to know if their notion of religion has any other reason and purpose.

NOTES

1. Several terms such as tribals, adivasis, autochthones, indigenes etc. are used to denote Indian tribes. But for this paper tribals and adivasis have been chosen for the more frequent use of the former and preference made by tribals themselves to the latter as the expression of their being the original people.
2. Grierson, 1967, 7-9.
3. Some of these early accounts are: S.R. Tickell, *Memoirs on the Ho Desum* (1840); B.H. Hodgson, *the Aborigines of Central India* (1848); G. Campbell, *The Ethnology of India* (1866); E.G. Man, *Sonthalia and the Sonthals* (1867); E.T. Dalton, *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal* (1872); W.W. Hunter, *A Statistical Account of Bengal* (1877); Rev. L.O. Skrefsurd, *The Traditional Institutions of the Sonthals* (1887); H.H. Risely, *Tribes and Castes of Bengal* (1891) and S.C. Roy, *The Mundas and their Country* (1912). These early ethnographies are based largely on 'traditions', 'family legends of Rajas',

- 'memories of old people' or 'oral information from intelligent and influential men'.
4. Sources used to formulate the evolving tribal religious beliefs and practices are: Dalton, 1973; Roy, 1970; Roy, 1972; Van Exem, 1982; Majumdar, 1937 and Troisi, 1979.
 5. Roy, 1972, 14.
 6. Troisi, 75-6.
 7. Dalton, 256; Roy, 1972, 15-6.
 8. However, we find among Mundas some nature gods like *Buru Bonga*, *Ikir Bonga* and *Nage Era*, who stand midway between malevolent and benevolent deities. Similarly among Oraons even the beneficent deities may prove harmful if not properly and timely propitiated.
 9. MacDougal, 1985, 74; Singh, 1983, 53-5.
 10. Kherwar is the original name used for Santals. They believed that during their halcyon days of the past they enjoyed an independent life without any material suffering. The aim of the Kherwar movement was to restore that past. But they believed that that past could be revived only when the impurities in their socio-religious system were removed. Leaders of this movement were Bhagirathi Majhi of Tardiha village in Godda subdivision of Santal Parganas and Dubia Gosain, a Hindu ascetic belonging to Jagesai of Hazaribag district in Chotanagpur. The movement was messianic as both the leaders proclaimed that God had sent them to redress the sufferings of Santals. MacDougal, 1985; Sinha, 1993.
 11. Birsa Munda (1874-1901) was originally a Christian by faith. But he lost faith in Christianity. He was influenced by his teacher Anand Panre and a monk who initiated him into Vaisnavism. Birsa then claimed that he had the vision of *Singbonga* in his dream who had asked him to revive old Munda religion. Soon he started preaching his ideas among Mundas. He came to be known to his people as the *Dharti Aba* or the Father of the Earth or Bhagwan. Roy, 1970; Singh, 1983; Sinha, 1993.
 12. According to Sinha He was *Singbonga*. Sinha, 75. But Singh argues that Birsa had disowned *Singbonga* and preached the concept of the fatherhood of God or *Aba*. He claims that by doing this Birsa crystallized the monotheistic concept of personal God. Singh, 157.
 13. Sinha, 1993; Mathew, 1993.
 14. Ibid.
 15. Mathew, 1993; Munda, 2000.

REFERENCES

- Dalton, E.T., *Tribal History of Eastern India*, Cosmo Publication, Delhi, 1973.
Fuchs, S., *Rebellious Prophets*, Asia Publishing House, Mumbai, 1965.

- Hastings, J. (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, vols. VI, IX, XI, T. and T. Clark, New York, 1974.
- Hoffmann, J., *Encyclopaedia Mundarica*, Government Printing, Patna, 1930-79.
- MacDougal, J., *Land or Religion? The Sardar and Kherwar Movements in Bihar 1858-95*, Manohar, New Delhi, 1985.
- Majumdar, D.N., *A Tribe in Transition*, Longmans Green & Co. Ltd., Kolkata, 1937.
- Mathew, A., 'Socio-Cultural and Religious Movements among the Ho Tribals of Singhbhum District of Bihar' in M. Miri (ed.), *Continuity and Change in Tribal Society*, Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla, 1993.
- Munda, R.D., *Adi-Dharam*, Sarini and Birsa, Bhubaneswar, 2000.
- Nasr, S.H., *Religion and the Order of Nature*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1996.
- Roy, S.C., *The Mundas and their Country*, Asia Publishing House, Mumbai, 1970.
- , *Oraon Religion & Customs*, Editions Indian, Kolkata, 1972.
- Singh, K.S., *Birsa Munda and His Movement 1874-1901*, Oxford University Press, Kolkata, 1983.
- Sinha, S.P., *Conflict and Tension in Tribal Society*, Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi, 1993.
- , *Life and Times of Birsa Bhagwan*, Bihar Tribal Research Institute, Ranchi, 1964.
- Troisi, J., *Tribal Religion*, Manohar, New Delhi, 1979.
- Van Exem, A., *The Religious System of the Munda Tribe*, Haus Volker und Kulturen, 1982.
- , *The Crisis and the Sarna*, Sevartam, Ranchi, 1978.

Brahmananda Sivayogi's Psychocentric Interpretation of Yoga—A Prospective Study

M. RAMAKRISHNAN

Research Fellow of ICPR, Senior Lecturer in Philosophy,
Govt. Brennen College, Thalassery, Kerala 670 106

The purpose of the Buddhas is not to inform you but to transform you. They want to bring a radical change in your consciousness, they want to change your very roots. They want to bring new eyes to you, new clarity.

Osho, *Zen and the Art of Meditation*

INTRODUCTION

A recent and relevant remark upon the state of affairs regarding the philosophical traditions of our land can be found in the following words:

In India the debate continues about how the vedic writings should be interpreted and about the acceptability of the numerous metaphysical systems which grew up around them ... (Harrison 2001: 449).

For explicating the true nature of this debate, it is exigent and essential to analyze the numerous philosophical traditions in the regional languages of India which provide us with a wide variety of interpretations consenting and dissenting in terms of *vēda pramāna* or the authority of the vedas. Many of them just tread on the heels of *vēdānta darśana*, but there are a few regional scholars and/or sects approaching the age-old tradition in their own distinct way and coming out with some very fruitful synthesis of the tenets and techniques therein.

INVITATION TO SIVAYOGI'S PHILOSOPHY

Brahmananda Swami Sivayogi (1852-1929) has been a noted philosopher and guide of people in his lifetime and afterwards, and he formed the seer-trio with Sree Narayana Guru and Chattampi Swamikal which is regarded

as responsible for the renaissance in Kerala that preceded our freedom struggle, and that founded the later widely acclaimed 'Kerala model' with its great achievements in socio-cultural life notwithstanding its comparatively low rate of economic growth.

Sivayogi preached *Ānandamata* or *Ānandadarśana* with his wholehearted emphasis on *yōga-mārga*. The kernel of his philosophy is explained in the following verse:

Bliss alone reigns supreme
Absorption of the mind in itself is verily
Bliss supreme.

Conquest of mind is the greatest conquest
Not to do harm is verily the greatest virtue.

(Sivayogi 1951: 45)

Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that his views and positions as a philosopher, social reformer, and yogi can be clearly distinguished not only from those of his Keralite counterparts mentioned above but also from the neovedantic visions of Swami Vivekananda and the like. An authoritative doctoral thesis on Sivayogi introduces his contributions thus:

He composed a number of works to explain his social, religious and philosophical views. Among them, thirteen works are surviving and one of them is in Sanskrit language whereas the other works are in colloquial Malayalam (Usha Devi 2000: 18).

It is also worth noting that a few of Sivayogi's original works were published in English,¹ and at least two English works on his contributions are recently published.²

METHODOLOGY ELUCIDATING THE PROSPECTIVE DIMENSIONS

Sivayogi's philosophy emerged and gained influence originally within the regional boundaries of Kerala and therefore it needs an introduction to the wider Indian readership, and this is expected to be fulfilled to a certain extent in the course of the ensuing discussion. More than that it is intended here to revisit his concepts and tenets in order to analyze their relevance and significance to the academic requirements in the contemporary world. This second aspect of the study carried out here is further significant in the light of the 'debate' mentioned at the outset, and it is

expected that it will help us to be clear and confident on the necessary methodological stipulation for rereading our traditions.

Hence this work is intended to be methodologically specific since it is carried out by deviating from the conventional approach which normally focuses on the conceptual analysis distinguishing the logically tenable from those which are not so. Philosophical method is something more than this and therefore we have to take a step ahead of the convention especially when we are committed to consider the complex and fast changing dimensions of human life in its entirety. So this work incorporates into its methodological framework an attempt to transcend the semantic structure of Sivayogi's yoga theory as an interpretation of the tradition with a difference. By transcending its semantic and temporal constraints, we enjoy the liberty to synthesize his doctrines with the emerging areas of human knowledge like Evolutionary Psychology and Management Studies. As we refer to these areas with synthetical reference to the given interpretation of Yoga, it is necessary to keep in mind the mundane and empirical dimensions of human life in a high-tech age rather than its metapsychological and metaempirical aspects. By making use of these transcendental and synthetical potentials essential to philosophical method, we can, beyond doubt, detect the prescriptive prospects of the yoga theory taken into account in this work. This method in its application, as we can see in the following sections, mainly aims at demystifying and detraditionalizing the age-old yoga theory with a paradigmatic reference to Sivayogi's unique interpretation of the same.

TRADITIONALIST WITH A DIFFERENCE

Keeping in sight Sivayogi's principal tenets of *śakti*, *ānanda* and *yōga* it is not difficult to place him among the traditionalists of yoga school, but he is a traditionalist with a difference. This distinction is two-fold with its metaphysical and social dimensions.

Sivayogi's emphasis on *yōga-mārga* is a corollary of his approach to the *kāndathraya* of vedic tradition. He rejected *karma-kānda* as detrimental to Hindu *dharma*. The critical foundation of his *yōgadarśana* is formed by his bold *khandana* or critique of idol worship, pilgrimage, caste distinction, yajna and allied rituals etc. It is true that Sivayogi's metaphysics does not share the essential elements of *Lōkāyatadarśana*, but the spirit and strength of his attack on *karma-kānda* is indeed reminiscent of the

Chārvakas' denial of rituals as derogatory nonsense. Sivayogi takes a step ahead and strengthens his antiritualistic stand by quoting from our *śrutis* and *śāstrās*.³ The critical dimension has not only its metaphysical aspect but also a clear impact on the philosophical views and social conditions which prevailed in his time and afterwards.⁴

The *bhakti* or *upāsana-kānda*, according to Sivayogi, is a second rate path to liberation. The value of *jñāna-kānda* remains undisputed among the *vedāntins* at large, but Sivayogi's approach is different since he treats *jñāna-kānda* as a subsidiary of yoga. So *vedānta* is just the *bahiranga* or appendix of *yōga-mārga*, and the *yōgic ānṭharanga* or essence of yoga can be attained without this appendix. It is clear that Sivayogi's approach to the *kāndathraya* is unique in the sense that he is obviously elevating the *yōga-mārga* by estimating the *bhakti* and *jñāna* paths as subservient to the former. This renders Sivayogi's spiritualism unique by its characteristic distinction from the traditionalist and/or the neovedantic position upheld by a majority of contemporary seers. This is indeed the natural outcome of Sivayogi's reluctance to accept the authority of *vedānta* as absolute and infallible.⁵

Sivayogi, as a traditionalist with difference, hence laid this critical foundation of his spiritualist metaphysics in which he placed *yōga-mārga* on an elevated plane. In this context, we can notice another noteworthy distinction in accepting and interpreting *yōga-mārga* as paramount. Sivayogi defined yoga as *manōlayābhyāsa*, the technique or practice of attaining *laya*, or absorbing ones *manas* or mind in itself. So the self as psyche is in the centre of *yōga sādhana*, and self-knowledge, self-understanding and self-control are essential to this practice.

PSYCHOCENTRIC VIEW OF YOGA

Sivayogi's interpretation of yoga is obviously *psychocentric* and this is a remarkable distinction from the numerous *ātmancentric* versions of yoga. His emphasis on mind is noteworthy with reference to the traditional definition of *ātman* as devoid of empirical qualities. Sivayogi's definition of yoga as *cittalaya* or harmonizing of mind is to be understood with explicit reference to Patanjali's concept of *cittavrittinirōdha*.

Here it is inevitable to ask what is the status and role of *ātman* when mind is placed in the centre of yoga theory. Normally this is not taken into account as most of the *vedāntins* remain contented with the principal

assertions or *mahāvākyas* from the Upanishads like *ayamātmā brahma* (Mandukyopanishad). So here it is relevant to attempt at a possible hypothesis on the relation between *citta* and *ātman* as explained in the Indian tradition. It can be clearly brought out with reference to the Aristotelian distinction between *the actual* and *the ideal*. Thus we can derive two interconnected propositions of the hypothesis as follows:

1. Mind is actual and empirical as it is the active stimulus-response mechanism. Atman is the ideal and to be attained state because it presupposes detachment from empirical constraints and causes.
2. The relation between mind and atman is dialectical as it is at the same time a relation of reciprocity and distinction. *One is in the other, but one is not the other.*

The first proposition brings out the nature of mind as the *vyāvahārika* or mundane form of atman subject to fluctuations, and mind is potentially capable of attaining the atman state. So mind is what the self is (the actual) and atman is what the self ought to be (the ideal). So liberation is the becoming of mind, through self-pacifying and self-harmonizing, into its ideal state namely atman. This entails the second proposition which brings out their dialectical relation of *bhēda* (distinction) and *abhēda* (non-distinction).

From this account, we can conclude that *aṣṭāṅgayōga* in Sivayogi's psychocentric version does not exclude atman in its non-empirical form, but only redeems the traditional concept of atman from its metaphysical logic. This does not rule out atman, but in fact brings it back to a practical and practicable plane. So *advaita* or transcending duality is, in the true sense, the volitional act of directing the dynamics of mind in the right path into the realization of its essential genuine state of harmony namely atman.

EVOLUTIONARY PSYCHOLOGY AND YOGIC PSYCHOLOGY

Another important aspect of Sivayogi's psychocentric explanation of yoga can be elucidated with reference to modern *evolutionary psychology* which is based on the following conclusion,

Human beings are animals. Singular in certain respects we may be, but we are a part of the animal kingdom, and, like all other living creatures, we are one of the many end-products of 3,800 million years of life on earth However, our uniqueness can only be understood, indeed can

only be recognized in the wider context of our biology (Plotkin 1997: 2).

So the biological basis of modern psychology makes 'evolution in mind' its central theme. This point helps us to distinguish Sivayogi's yogic psychology with 'evolution of mind' in focus, and this elucidates its essential and potential orientation to atman state. Evolutionary psychology as a branch of modern science traces the structure and functions of human mind back into its graded animal ancestry whereas yogic psychology takes into account the evolution of human *mind as it is* with its given structure, functions and characteristics.

In the common parlance of Darwinian evolutionists, the process is normally progressive. But in the yogic sense, evolution of mind is not progressive in the ordinary way. In the strict sense, it is *restorative* because through *yōga sādhana* mind is supposed to retrieve its *laya* or the essential harmonious state of *ānanda* or transcendental bliss. This, as we have already explained, is the transition of mind into its desired ideal state of atman.

YOGA IN TERMS OF SELF-MANAGEMENT

The Patanjalian prescription of mental control as the prerequisite of *yōga sādhana* as reinterpreted by Sivayogi becomes highly relevant in this high-tech age. Its value as a therapeutic technique and as a holistic way of life is being recognized and applied widely, yet, in this age of complex socio-economic and socio-cultural changes, yoga is treated as a marketable technique in its westernized styles and forms. This is mainly because of our fractional understanding of *aṣṭāṅgayōga* by projecting the *āsana* and *dhyāna* aspects at the expense of the *yama* aspect which leads to an absolute neglect of the virtues like *ahimsa*, *astēya* and *aparigraha*. In this background, Sivayogi's approach to yoga as an integral path to liberation through *self-management* becomes relevant and significant. His emphasis on the pleasure of sacrificing pleasures can be understood easily with reference to the Gandhian stress on *aparigraha* or voluntary dispossession of anything more than man's basic needs. Sivayogi insisted on *ahimsa* as inevitable for the righteous by quoting ancient authorities like Sri Kṛṣṇa and Vedavyasa. Following *Sivapurāna Deepika* he asserted, 'It is that wicked beast of the mind with its limbs of emotions, which is overpowered

by ignorance, that is to be killed and duly offered in sacrifice' (Sivayogi 1950: 42-3).

So we can see that Sivayogi's yoga philosophy has two important contributions that are relevant for the world today. In order to understand them in the proper sense, we may have to dissociate yoga, for the time being, from its conceptual and conventional link with *Sanyās*, the fourth and final of *āśrams*. If this is done, it is not difficult to decipher the scope of Sivayogi's psychocentric yoga in the area of self-management. It is possible not only with reference to the concept of *manōlayābhyāsa* but also with a revival of the *yamās* like *ahimsa*, *astēya* and *aparigraha* in personal life which is inevitable for managing our life in this world of greed and grandeur.

The above dimension of self-management implied in Sivayogi's interpretation of yoga can be adopted as a *prescriptive* and *normative* branch of the academic discipline called Management Studies. This will certainly enrich the areas of Human Resource and Personnel Management in which the pragmatic aspect of utilizing the human potential for the benefit of organizations and society is pre-eminent (see Aswathappa 1995: 5-7). As we all know, the yogic prescriptions embrace the physical, mental, ethical and spiritual dimensions of the holistic well-being of the individual and hence it can definitely provide management experts with the necessary curriculum of self-management oriented towards every human individual. With his emphasis on mind as a phenomenon to begin with, Sivayogi's yoga theory remains a *detraditionalized version* that can be clearly distinguished from its atmancentric counterparts. This characteristic makes it more responsive to the requirements of the new management experts who conceive 'corporate mystics' in place of the early 'administrators'. If we take the highly organized nature of our social life for granted, then it becomes necessary for each and every one to be an efficient manager of ones own life in all its dimensions and expressions. So self-management can be taken as the most universal application of management know-how and in this regard the significance of yoga with its effective techniques of controlling and pacifying the mind and the practical lessons of involving oneself in the task taken up is very clear. An outsider view of the impact of yoga on management personnel can be found in these words:

In the US hatha yoga effects relaxation, increased flexibility, strength, vitality, improved concentration and immune system (Bly 1999: 149).

Deliberate efforts to transform the tensed up managers into yogic personalities will be of great help in re-educating management professionals by nurturing in them the talents of mental balance and work involvement. This yogic sense of getting absorbed into ones own mind (the sanyasin perspective) when translated into the modern sense of getting absorbed into ones own task (the management perspective) reminds us of the *Bhagavad Gīta* explanation of perfect involvement as considering ones action par excellence.

ŚAKTI PRINCIPLE AND WESTERN ECOSOPHY

Sivayogi conceived *Śakti* as the only omnipresent and omnipotent principle of reality. It is the power with which the whole universe sustains its essential harmony and balance or *ānanda*. The *śakti* is *ēka* because it is omnipresent and at the same time it is *anēka* since it manifests in one and all multifarious forms alike. This *śakti* principle is just another expression of *Brahma* principle as Sivayogi has made it clear in his works (see Sivayogi 1997: 314).

Anyway, it is worth noting that this yogic definition of *śakti* when allied with the neowestern concept of nature as *theophany* or divine revelation forms a complementary definition of spirituality that makes a shift from the theocentric to the ecocentric conceptually possible. The antimodern and postmodern environmental ethics cannot regard our one and only one earth as the source of materials for satisfying human greed. So the new generation philosophers and ethicists in the West try to embrace a neotribal sense of ecocentric spirituality as voiced in the following words:

Everywhere on earth there is a spiritual symbolic language. The sun reminds us of our spiritual Sun; the winds bespeak the breath of the Spirit; the waters remind us of the Waters above and the Waters below; the earth and the landscape about us remind us of the celestial paradise from which we are in a sense exiled (Versluis 1992: 94).

AHIMSA AND THE METAPHYSICS OF ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS

The concept of *ahimsa* as the paramount virtue is normally taken as just reiterating that prescription in the *yamās* of *aṣṭāṅgayōga*. But when synthesized with *śakti* principle, it can be further extended to strengthen the

metaphysical basis of environmental ethics. A rough propositional framework for this is as follows:

- (1) *Śakti* (as *ēka* and *anēka*) is immanent in every 'one' and 'the other' alike.
- (2) To hurt the other is to hurt the *śakti* in it.

Relating (1) and (2) follows:

- (3) To hurt the other is to hurt oneself.

This is contrary to the essential (biological) principle of life that every organism is characterized by the instinctive urge to protect oneself and not to hurt oneself. Extending this conclusion further, it entails:

- (4) To hurt is to cause pain.

So (3) and (4) taken together imply:

- (5) By causing pain to the other one is causing pain to oneself.

This is again contrary to the essential (psychological) principle that one never likes to cause pain to oneself.

Thus, by relating *śakti* principle and the *yama* of non-injury in their proper metaphysical perspective, we can develop a strong basis for the doctrines of environmental ethics emerging in response to the inspiration from the new age's ecospiritualism. The above propositional framework, which renders hurting or injury unreasonable and unjust expressed in terms of a clear metaphysical maxim supported on biological and psychological grounds, logically strengthens all the efforts to fight the tendency to dominate and exploit nature as 'the other'.

CONCLUSION

In Sivayogi's view, the ideal of *cittalaya* on the individual level is a corollary of *ānanda*, the perfect harmony on the universal level of *śakti*. So a yoga-based definition of the tripartite nexus of *śakti-citta-ānanda* is implied in his metaphysics. This is *advaita* if the traditionalists prefer that term, yet it is mundane, practical and practicable in a teleological perspective by virtue of its prescription of a definite *sādhana* or practice. Moreover, if we are ready to reread Sivayogi's *darśana* there are certain valuable tenets which, if revisited and synthesized after transcending our relentless orthodoxy regarding asceticism and eschatology, will certainly help us (1) to effect a fruitful revision in our traditionalist approach to India's scriptural wisdom, and (2) to open meaningful dialogue between our philosophical traditions like *yōga darśana* on the one hand and the theoretical

and practical areas of the new academic disciplines like Management Studies on the other.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. *Ānanda Sūtra* (The String of Bliss), *Ānanda Matha Parasyam*, *Ānandādarsamsam* and *Mōkṣapradeepam* were published in English in the 1950s.
2. Nirmalananda Yogi (1996) *A Happy Life*, Alathur: Sivayogi Siddhasramam, and Gopalakrishnan, P.V. ed. (2000) *A Passage to the Bliss Supreme*, by the same publisher.
3. For instance, Sivayogi quotes from *Garudapurāna* the verse which means if a pilgrim taking a bath in holy rivers is eligible for *mokṣa*, then a better eligibility can be claimed by aquatic creatures like frogs and fishes. See his *Mōkṣapradeepam* (in Malayalam), 17th edition (1997), pp. 168–9.
4. This aspect together with Sivayogi's insistence on reason as the only standard of judging truth has been evidently admired by the atheistic rationalists in Kerala. The author of a recently published biography of Sivayogi is Pavanan, a prominent leader of *Kerala Yuktivadi Sangam* (Rationalists Association).
5. Incidentally, it is interesting to remember that upanishads also make it mandatory for Sanyasins to give up not only *lōka* and sensuous attractions but also the knowledge in the vedas (*Nārada-parivrājakōpanishad* 4.1).

BOOKS CONSULTED

1. Anthony Harrison-Barbet (2001) *Mastering Philosophy*, Second ed., New York: Palgrave.
2. Arthur Versluis (1992) *Sacred Earth*, Vermont: Inner Traditions International.
3. Aswathappa, K. (1999) *Human Resource and Personnel Management*, Second ed., New Delhi: Tata McGraw-Hill.
4. Brahmananda Swami Sivayogi
 - (i) (1951) *Ānanda Mathaparasyam* (English tr.)
 - (ii) (1950) *Ānanda Sūtra* (The String of Bliss) (English tr.)
 - (iii) (1935) *Ānandadarsamsam* (English tr. by Narayanan Nambiar, T.)
 - (iv) (1997) *Mōkṣapradeepam* (Malayalam), 17th edition, Siddhasramam, Alathur, Palakkad (Dist.), Kerala.
5. Henry Plotkin (1997) *Evolution in Mind*, London: Penguin Books.
6. Robert W. Bly (1999) *101 Ways to Make Every Second Count*, Mumbai: Jaico.
7. Usha Devi, N. (2000) *Contribution of Brahmananda Svami Sivayogi to Indian Philosophy*, Alathur: Siddhasramam.

The Philosophy of *Mahimā*: An Extended *Visuddha Advaitavāda*

SATRUGHNA BEHERA

L.K. College, North Orissa University, Bangriposi 757 032,
Mayurbhanj (Orissa), India

The *Mahimā Dharma* is praised as a unique religious phenomenon among the cults of Orissa. The main aim of this paper is to make an exploration into its metaphysics. The theme of this metaphysics is revealed in the understanding of the concept of *Mahimā*. Our claim is: could this metaphysics be reviewed in the light of the concept of *Mahimā* at all. The concept of *Mahimā* itself represents Advaitic concept of *Parambrahma* as already presupposed in the intellectual structure of Vedāntic philosophy.¹ In the *Mahimā* cult, as it is accepted, *Mahimā Swāmi* is the pioneer and propagator of *Mahimā Dharma*. He who preaches *Mahimā* as the greatness of manifestation of the unique power of the one Supreme Lord (*Eka Parambrahma*) and by virtue of being manifested this Supreme Lord is not indifferent to His manifestations. But He and His manifestation are one and unique. This doctrine of *Mahimā Swāmi* has wider philosophical implications. For his basic conception of *Mahimā* is based upon an Advaitic metaphysical framework. The followers of the *Mahimā Dharma* have committed themselves to this framework which seems to be philosophically sound and adequate. One major thesis in their position is that they have totally agreed with *Visuddha Advaitic* conception of *Brahman*² in viewing the whole cosmic structure as dependent upon it. Their agreement in this respect leads them to concede some highly plausible theses. They concern the nature of reality, cosmos, creation, self, life and values of human life *vis-à-vis* the onslaught of non-vedantic authoritarianism, religious dogmatism, and especially, idolatry. The kind of the *Mahimā*-metaphysics I like to focus on is the general philosophy of the *Mahimā Dharma*. For this purpose I have tried to develop my arguments in the light of certain luminous insights and ideas of Siddha Sāddhu Biswanātha Bābā³ and the Saint-poet Bhima Bhoi⁴, both of whom, being blessed by the

grace of Mahimā Swāmi, were devotees and progenitors of the *Mahimā Dharma*.

1. MAHIMĀ SWAMI: A MYSTERIOUS INCARNATION

In the Mahima cult, the followers of the *Mahimā Dharma* believe that Mahimā Swāmi with all spiritual features had appeared just as an incarnation (*Avatāra*) of the Supreme Lord (*Parambrahma*). A good look at the cultural mainstreams of Hindu civilization reveals that 'a period in history came, when idolatry assumed the importance of immense magnitude and the much-hated practice of sacrificing animals formed a part of worshipping God. At that time, the people began to forget the fundamental and essential principles of true religion. Further, they became indifferent to *Eka Advaita Pravu Parambrahma*, who is the prime cause and Creator of all creations.'⁵ Perhaps this was just the situation when 'Guru Mahimā Swāmi made his own revelation as full manifestation of *Mahā Mahimāmaya Pravu Parambrahma* to this visible world and re-established the primordial, eternal true religions of the pre-vedic times for the good of infinite living beings.'⁶ The fact is that on the occasion when Mahimā Swāmi made his revelation, the socio-cultural 'soil and situation' of our motherland was totally 'muddy and polluted' by intolerable dominations of different religious cults. People of the Pabitra Bhāratabhumi were completely fed up with mixed religious superimposition, propagations and inter-religious transformations. The degradation of true spiritual values, in effect, was started and became the only prevailing phenomenon in the streams of common living. Besides, in such a socio-cultural situation, Brahmanism, being synthesized with the cults of Tantra and Vaishnavism, was the most influential and dominant among the other religious movements. The dominating conditions of Brahmanism were 'sharp and solid' enough to encourage caste-supremacy, religious empowerment, and undercaste torture and exploitation. Consequently, people of the soil were in a state of religious illusion and, thus, remained total non-believers in the true spiritual features depicted in our *Vedas* and *Upanishads*. The Saint-poet Bhima Bhoi describes this situation with his divine excellence in the form of lucid verses:

Religion is uprooted, from the shrines of Purusottama and Kapilas
All have turned corrupt and *Brahma* dwells in none.
Ganga, Gaya, Prayag and the holy pilgrimage of Ramnath,

Even here religion recedes fast and Truth crouches nowhere.
Godavari, Gomati, Brundaban; Dwarka and Haridwar
Those ardent seats of faith have drowned their scriptures
Gods and Goddesses, of meditation and magic and knowledge of
healing
All activities have ceased, behold open eye, the forms of
degradation.⁷

Bhima Bhoi expressively accepts the concept of incarnation (*Avatāra*) of the Supreme Lord (*Parambrahma*). He believes that it is a spiritual need to preserve the whole cosmos from spiritual onslaught and darkness. That is to say, when mankind lives in a religious illusion, to save mankind and to restore the spiritual values the Supreme Lord comes down to the earth in *Avatāra* in all ages to come. It may be accepted as an indubitable fact that in every religious cult the followers conceive the founder as an *Avatāra* of the Supreme Lord. It is easily seen in Buddhism, Jainism, Christianity and some other institutionalized religions. So the followers and the propagators of *Mahimā Dharma* conceiving Pravu Mahimā Swāmi as an incarnation (*Avatāra*) of the Supreme Lord (*Parambrahma*) may be accepted as an indubitable fact. The saint-poet Bhima Bhoi makes this fact revealing when he sings:

He is incarnated in self-glory and his inherent power,
He the human frame adorned to apotheosise.
He is the mightiest of all incarnations, of woman He isn't born,
He became famous as the teacher of all teachers.
He descended on the sacred soil of Bharat
His *Mahimā* is beyond description ...⁸

It is, therefore, important to assert the fact that for the saint-poet Bhima Bhoi, Mahimā Swāmi, as he conceives him, not only appeared as an *Avatāra* of the Supreme Lord but also as the *Prabhuddha Guru* to preach and show the true religious paths to the totally disillusioned mankind. As he further sings:

I saw injustice in myriad forms,
This prompted me to arrive
Taking the form of *Buddha*.
And nothing from *Vedas* to derive,

I urge religion to survive earnestly
And that has made my arrival inevitably.⁹

We see that the religious teachers themselves appear as images of the Supreme Lord with distinct divine powers and features. That the Supreme Lord often sends his messengers to this visible world to protect mankind and to re-establish the true religion is a general belief in almost all the religious cults. However, the revelation of Mahimā Swāmi as an *Avatāra* of the Supreme Lord (*Parambrahma*) is considered to be quite different from this general belief. For Mahimā Swāmi has appeared in this world neither with any particular feature of the Supreme Lord nor as a mere messenger to fulfil any particular purpose. The Supreme Lord has revealed himself as an *Avatāra* to preach new universal spiritual messages to mankind against religious fundamentalism and dogmatism. In this context the Supreme Lord construed himself more as the ultimate Truth than a theological God. The philosophy of the Supreme Lord is not converted to mere mythology including quasi-history and rituals. If this conception is accepted in explaining the appearance of Mahimā Swāmi, Mahimā Swāmi himself must be distinguished from the *Avatāra* of Buddha, Mahāvīra, Jina, Jesus Christ and others. However, when the saint-poet Bhima Bhoi describes *Buddha Avatāra* or *Prabuddha*, the concept itself has a different connotation. That is, he uses the concept *Buddha* or *Prabuddha* in the sense that the Supreme Lord Himself has received spiritual self-knowledge (*atmajñāna*) and perfection.

In the Mahimā cult, it is accepted that the saint-poet Bhima Bhoi was blind and he was Kandha by caste. He was blessed with divine vision power (*Divyadrustisakti*) and poetic eminence (*Kabikalā*) by Mahimā Swāmi on a specific occasion. However, whatever the occasion may be, Bhima Bhoi presents a very different image of Mahimā Swāmi on his appearance to him, though that description fully justifies the concept of *Prabuddha* as ascribed to Mahimā Swāmi. As he sings:

Sun, moon, fire, air, vedas and scriptures no less
Adorning the robeless form, He alone is the God of eternity.¹⁰

However, Siddha Saddhus of the Mahimā cult conceive this fact in a mysterious way so that the fact of appearance of Mahimā Swāmi becomes more mysterious than what they really say about Bhima Bhoi. According to Siddha Sāddhu Biswanātha Bābā, it was a wonder of wonders that at that time Mahāparvu Mahimā Gosain flew in the sky in the company of

Govinda Bābā from Bolasinga in Baudha to the village Kankanapadā in Raidhakhola and appeared at dead of night before Bhima Bhoi who was blind and a Kandha by caste. There Mahimā Swāmi offered eyesight to Bhima Bhoi who took Him as Lord Himself and was initiated to the Mahimā cult. He then clapped His hands thrice on his head and ordered him, 'You be gifted with the ability to compose hymns. Further you be endowed with the ability to compose devotional songs about Mahimā Pravu.' Bhima Bhoi then prayed, 'Mahimā Pravu has been gracious to confer on me external eyesight. I am able to visualize the form of the Formless. But external appearance may not be visible to me.' Mahimā Swāmi, thereafter, ordered, 'Thy will be done.'¹¹ 'This was merely a vision, the dawn of a kind of spiritual awareness which lifted the cloud of unknowing. May be this is what made him a seer.'¹²

Another surprising fact is also said about the appearance of Mahimā Swāmi. 'Mahā Pravu Mahimā Swāmi, at first, was engrossed long in *Swātma Yoga* in one of the caves at the top of the Himalayas and lived on no food other than air. He then travelled over the different countries and lands in the guise of a Prabuddha Sanyāsi and at last set foot in Utkal. Mahimā Swāmi made his public appearance at Puri of Utkal during AD 1826. Swāmi was then popularly known as Dhuliā Gosain as he used to rest and sleep on dust. At the time Swāmi had a piece of saffron-coloured loin cloth around his waist,¹³ says Biswanātha Bābā. Further, according to Biswanāth Bābā, 'Thereafter Mahimā Swāmi made his appearance in the Kapilash Hills in the district of Dhenkanal of Utkalbhumi. There he gave up saffron-coloured loin cloth and put on Bhekabānā made of the bark of the Kumbhi tree. He was absorbed deeply in meditation, being seated in *Padmāsana* for twenty one days on a round stone at the hill-top in *Ananta Sajyā*. In that very place he had *Swātma Yoga Samādhi*, living on fruits for twelve years and subsequently on milk for the next twelve years. In the former period, he first came across Siddha Govinda Das Bābā and initiated him into the *Mahimā Dharma* as he remained in the service of the Swami at that time. Thus Bābā was bestowed with the Balkal Veka Bānā and became the *Siddha Para Sanyāsi* of the *Abadhuta* order. Thereby Mahimā Swāmi laid the foundation of the propagation of the *Mahimā Dharma* by initiating Govinda Bābā into the *Sanyāsi* order.'¹⁴

Besides, Biswanātha Bābā also gives description of various events that occurred on the appearance of Mahimā Swāmi which, as he understands, justify His many titles like *Prabuddha Avatāra*, *Prabuddha Guru Buddha*

Swāmi, Mahimā Gosain, Mahimā Swāmi, Alekah Brahma Abadhuta and some others. In all these descriptions the Mahimā manifestation and greatness gain special prominence throughout. 'Mahimā Swāmi had His special manifestation of Mahimā at Joranda and He had also predicted beforehand that Mahimā Gadi would be set up at Joranda. Mahimā Swāmi had His eternal and blissful Samādhi and left for Mahāsunya, Mahānityapura Avoya Paramadhāma at Joranda Tungi, the place where the wonder of leaving the mortal frame happened and which is glorified and venerated as Guru Mahimā Gadi on Monday, the tenth lunar day in March, 1876.'¹⁵

It can be said that both Bhima Bhoi and Biswanātha Bābā believe in the self-appearance of Pravu Mahimā Swāmi in different titles which, after all, refer to the one Supreme Lord (*Eka Parambrahma*). And their belief in the one Supreme Lord leads them to describe the nature of His Creatness (*Mahimā*) with specific philosophical contentions in an *Advaitic framework* which underlies the thoughts of the Vedāntic tradition. Let me turn to this point of discussion.

2. VEDĀNTIC NON-DUALISM (*ADVĀITAVĀDA*): TOWARDS TRANSCENDENTAL ABSOLUTISM (*VISUDDHA PARAMBRAHMAVĀDA*)

We may, in general, concede the view that, 'The *Upanishads* are perhaps the most famous of the sacred texts of India. Only the *Gītā* may presumably dispute this place. Besides being acknowledged as sacred and thus surrounded by an aura of religious authority, they are also the fountain-head of one of the major schools of Indian philosophy, usually designated as Vedānta,' says Professor Daya Krishna.¹⁶ Accepting this, as I have just referred to before, the Vedāntic philosophy consists of the major ideas of the *Upanishads* with a common agreement on three doctrines: *Veda* as the revelation, the existence of God and the doctrine of creation. We know that the *Upanishads* deal with the inner or secret teachings of the *Vedas* and therefore, they are often called *Vedopanisad*¹⁷ or the mystery of the *Vedas*. And since the *Upanishads* are many in number and developed in the various Vedāntic Schools at different times and places, the problems discussed and solutions offered present certain differences in spite of an agreement on the general outlook.¹⁸ Of course, in course of time a need has been felt for systematizing the different teachings so as to bring out the harmony underlying them. Bādarāyana's *Brahmasutra*¹⁹ consequently undertakes this effort. But his *Sutras* are not accepted as final. They being

brief were subject to various interpretations. After them many commentaries (*Bhāsyas*) have been written to elucidate the doctrines of the *Vedānta*. The chief exponent of each *Bhāsyā* has become the pioneer of a definite school of *Vedānta*. Accordingly, we see that there are the schools of Śaṅkara, Rāmānuja, Mādhva, Vallabha, Nimbārka and others. Even now after the *Mukhya Bhāsyas* the eminent scholars of both East and West are engaged in writing innumerable works to support its views and refute those of other systems in Indian philosophy. And also, some having similar purpose, attempt to reconcile the thoughts of different schools. No doubt, this is the fact which still shows the persistence of Vedāntic thoughts, and it would not be exaggeration to state that the Vedānta philosophy comprises all the sects that now exist in India in spite of certain incompatibilities in their contentions.²⁰ Since my purpose is limited to bringing out the interrelationship between *Pure Advaitic Parambrahmvāda* and the doctrine of *Mahimā* in particular and the philosophy of *Mahimā* as in the *Mahimā Dharma* in general, I do not intend to deal with all the doctrines and incompatibilities involved in or all the issues that arise from the contentions of the Upanishadic tradition. But this does not mean that I shall be completely different to the general outlook underlying the different *Upanishads* and the contentions of the schools of *Vedānta* developed thereof.

We see that the *Upanishads*, in common, accept that there is an all-pervasive reality. Everything arises from, exists in and comes back to it. Through a knowledge of this reality liberation can be attained. This reality is often termed as *Brahman* or *Parambrahma* (The Supreme Absolute), sometimes *Ātman* (self), sometimes also simply *Sat* (Being). The *Aitareya* and the *Bṛihadāranyaka Upanishads* say that 'Om ātmā vā idam eka eva agre āsit' (In the beginning all this was *Ātman*—one only),²¹ 'Ātmā eva idam sarvam' (All this is *Ātman*) says the *Chāndogya*,²² and also 'Ātmāni khalu are dṛṣṭe śrute mate vijñātā idam sarvam veditām' (*Ātman* being known ... everything is known), says the *Bṛihadāranyaka*.²³ Moreover, we see, 'Sad eva saumya idam agre āsit, ekam eva advitīyam,' (There was only being in the beginning, it was one without a second), says the *Chāndogya*,²⁴ 'Sarvam khalu idam Brahma' (All this is *Brahman*), says the *Mundaka*²⁵ and 'Ayam ātmā brahma,' (This self is the *Brahman*) and 'Aham brahma asmi' (I am *Brahman*), says the *Bṛihadāranyaka*.²⁶ This shows that in Vedāntic philosophy *Brahman* and *Ātman* are one and synonymous; viewed objectively the real is *Brahman* and subjectively viewed

it is *Ātman*. The subjective and objective are one and the same. They represent the basic identity of one and the same reality in the *Upanishads*.

The conception that forms out of these observations is that *Brahman* and *Ātman* are used synonymously. Ultimately, the whole metaphysics of the Vedāntic philosophy is directed towards the One Supreme Reality, i.e. *Eka Parambrahma*. The Vedāntic philosophy conceives this *Eka Parambrahma* as both the creator and the material cause of the world, and, on a higher level of thought, this *Eka Parambrahma* is conceived as the Supreme Reality which is indescribable (*Avyakta*), being not only unspeakable but even unthinkable (*Akalpaniya*). The Supreme Reality (*Parambrahma*) cannot be an object of worship even. As the *Kena Upanishad* says,

anyadeva tadviditādatho aviditādadhi
iti śuśrūma pūrveṣaṁ ye nastadvyācacasire
yadvācanabhyuditaṁ yena vāgbhyudyate
tadeva brahmatvaṁ vidhi nedaṁ yudida mupāsate.

(That is indeed other than the known, and also about the unknown. What is not expressed by speech and by which speech itself is expressed, know that to be *Brahman*, and not what one worships as *Brahman*.)²⁷

Furthermore, it is significant to state that the Vedāntic philosophy, on a higher level of thought, conceives *Brahman* not only as the one Supreme Reality, but also as this One Supreme Reality which is pure (*Visuddha*) being devoid of all qualifications and having remained beyond all His manifestations. On this point what we can say at best is, 'Neti, Neti' (Not this, Not this). To this effect the *Bṛihadāranyaka Upanishad* says,

It is neither gross nor fine, neither short nor long, neither glowing red nor adhesive, it is without a shadow and without darkness, without air and without space, without attachment, taste or smell, without eyes, without ears, without voice, without mind, without vigour, without breath, without a mouth, without a measure and without an inside or an outside. It consumes nothing and no one consumes it.²⁸

The thought in the above verses provides the basic ground on which the Advaita Vedāntins like Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja make a distinction between the impersonal God (i.e. *Brahman*) and the personal God (*Iswara*).

While the former implies the philosophical truth, the latter implies a religious conception. Śaṅkara believes in the existence of God because of two different points of view, i.e. the practical point of view (*Vyvahārika drusti*) and the transcendental point of view (*Paramārthika drusti*). From the common practical point of view, according to Śaṅkara, God is regarded as *Saguna Brahman* since He acts as the creator, the sustainer, and the destroyer and, thus, as an omnipotent and omniscient being. This conception entails the nature of a personal God (*Iswara*) being possessed of all these attributes or predictions and so He becomes the object of worship. Moreover, from the transcendental point of view, according to Śaṅkara, God is regarded as absolutely real, the Supreme Reality (*Parambrahma*) and, thus, He is free from all incidental descriptions or attributes (i.e. *Nirguna Brahman*). God in this conception is conceived as what he really is without any reference to the world. Śaṅkara, it seems, accepts the true conception of God both in the sense of immanence and transcendence as described in the *Upanishads*.

Rāmānuja, on the other hand, in developing his doctrine of qualified monism, (*Viśiṣṭadvaitavāda*) believes in the personal God (*Iswara*) who represents the *Saguna Brahman* as in Śaṅkara. According to Rāmānuja, the non-dual unity of the Supreme Reality (*Parambrahma*) possesses (*visista*) real parts, both the conscious and the unconscious (*Chetan* and *Jada*). That is to say, for Rāmānuja, this conception is *Advaitic* in the sense that *Brahman* is the only reality as outside God there is no any other reality, and it is qualified in the sense that God contains within Himself the material objects and the finite souls which are real. According to Rāmānuja, God is personal in the sense that He possesses infinitely noble attributes like omnipotence, omniscience, benevolence and so God is not *Nirguna*. Rather, He is *Saguna* in reference to the world. In this sense God is the object of worship and He acts as the *Kāraṇa-Brahman* (the creator) in unmanifested form (*Avyakta*) as well as the *Kārya-Brahman* in manifested form (*Vyakta*). In effect, God appears as immanent and as transcendent and also remains as a person. Perhaps, this is the reason for which we can say that Rāmānuja believes in a theistic God who becomes the object of worship and the source of our religious comprehension. The true devotion (*Bhakti*) is the only means to please God. By doing this through prayer, liberation can be attained.

In conceding the above views, however, what is more important to observe is that Vedāntic conception of God is always placed in a higher

perspective than the entire domain of God's creation. The Vedāntic conception of God as in *Impersonal form* or as a *Personal form* ultimately pertains to one Supreme Reality to avoid the apparent distinction made between the two. That is, on a higher level of thought, one is not essentially different from the other any more than the sun seen by the naked eye is different from the sun seen through smoked glass. The negative conception of God as *Brahman* is indeed the consummation and fulfilment of the positive conception of God as *Iswara*. Once S. Radhakrishnan remarks that, 'The central theme of the *Upanishads* is the problem of philosophy. It is the search for what is true.'²⁹ And also he remarks that, 'The pessimism of the *Upanishads* is the condition of all philosophy.'³⁰ This pessimism, as I understand, consists in all genuine efforts to search for the truth in negative forms and condition of our comprehension of the world or the reality which we intend to conceive. If we accept this view as the plausible one, then the distinction between the *Saguna Brahman* and the *Nirguna Brahman* posits a significant doctrine. It is observed that the Vedāntins are not satisfied with merely collecting all the noble attributes known to human intellect and decorating God with them, and think that they have given an adequate description of God. Of course, they go far from this since these attributes even at their noblest are basically human conceptions. And, as a matter of fact, these attributes do not help us enough to bring out the immensity (*anantatva*) and ineffability (*Aprakāśya*) of the Supreme Reality (*Parambrahma*). This, thus, leads us ultimately to accept a transcendental recourse by giving up our human or practical standpoint altogether in the last resort and speak, as I have already noted down, 'Not this, Not this' (*Neti Neti*) to reach the *Parambrahma*. Otherwise, we cannot remove from the latter the last taint of anthropomorphism. The best way of reaching the *Parambrahma* is by silence (*Nirvāka*). But this does not mean that the *Parambrahma* is a mere 'Nothing'. Nothing has no metaphysical sense in the *Upanishads*. Rather, we may agree on what Śaṅkara seems to suggest about the Great Void (*Mahāsunya*) in the sense that the ultimate Reality (*Parambrahma*) is indeterminate (*Akalpaniya*) and indescribable (*Anirvacaniya*). Positively, the *Parambrahma* itself is pure existence being the cause of all existence, pure consciousness being the cause of all sentiments and pure bliss being the cause of all pleasures and happinesses. (*Idam Brahman Sachidānanda Swarupa Eva.*) By suggesting these ideas Śaṅkara asserts the unity between the *Brahman* and the *Ātman*. For him, what causes failure to see

such unity is a kind of superimposition (*Adhyāsa*). That is, in the frame of object-subject relationship the object (*Jiva*) is superimposed on the subject (*Ātman*) and like this *Iswara* (God) is superimposed on *Brahman* (Absolute) like the object. However, when the true knowledge through Vedāntic procedures (*tattva mārgas*) is achieved, the darkness of this superimposition is dispelled. And in this state one can see the real unity between the *Brahman* and the *Ātman*. In other word, a liberated soul can see this identity (*Ekātma*).

The major consequences of this view are: first, the Advaitic view of the Great Void (*Mahāsunya*) is not just (and not to be confused with) the Buddhistic doctrine of nihilism (*Sunyavāda*). Nihilism in Buddhistic metaphysics means that the utterly unreal appears as the world, i.e. unreal appears as real. And, secondly, the Advaitic concept of *Mahāsunya* differs from radical subjectivism which holds that mental ideas appear as the external world. Moreover, thirdly, the Sāṅkhya dualistic metaphysics seems to be futile against the Advaitic conception of the world view and the Ultimate Reality. Sāṅkhya holds the distinctiveness of two realities, i.e. the spirit (*Purusa*) and the matter (*Prakṛiti*). Asserting this duality of the *Purusa* and the *Prakṛiti*, Sāṅkhya limit the former to intelligence and the latter to non-intelligence. The Vedāntins, however, hold that if this dualism of the *Purusa* and the *Prakṛiti* is thought of as two different entities, they can not interact. Rather in Vedāntic philosophy a basic unity between the *Purusa* and the *Prakṛiti* is asserted. The Vedāntic philosophy, as we have already discussed in the beginning of this section, contends that since the *Brahman* and the *Ātman* are one, the *Brahman* as the transcendental reality is the ground or explanation of the interaction between the *Purusa* and the *Prakṛiti*. *Brahman* or *Ātman* is not only the efficient cause of the world, but its material cause too. That is, the *Brahman* is the ultimate and the total explanation of the world, its efficient and material cause. Against the dualistic doctrine the *Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad* very explicitly says:

For when there is duality, as it were, then one smells another, one sees another, one hears another, one speaks to another, one thinks of another, one understands another. But when everything has become the self then by what and whom should one smell, by what and by whom should one see, by what and whom should one hear, by what and to whom should one speak, by what and whom should one think, and by what and whom should one understand? By what should one know that

by which all this is known? By what, my dear, should one know the knower?³¹

Now, so far as the Vedāntic philosophy is concerned our ultimate concern is more with the *One Pure Absolute (Eka Visuddha Parambrahma)* than with any personal God. Therefore all that the expression *Nirguna Brahman* of Śaṅkara or *Eka Visuddha Parambrahma* as in the *Upanishads* means is that there are no mere analogues of human attributes in the *Brahman*. In fact, whenever we think of the *Parambrahma* as having an attribute of our conception we really impose a limitation on 'That' (*Tat*) and conceive 'That' (*Tat*) in human terms and, thus, do not know 'That' (*Tat*) what 'That' really is. The *Kena Upanishad* keeps the kernel of the matter in the paradoxical words as:

yasyāmataṁ tasya mataṁ matam yasya na veda saḥ
avijñātāṁ vijānatāṁ vijānatamavijānatāṁ.

He who does not conceive it—to him it is known. He who conceives it—he does not really know. It is not really understood by those who understand it, it is really understood by those who do not understand it.³²

Thus the idea of *Brahman* emerges on the scene with the force of a transcendental necessity. The immanent state of *Brahman*, i.e. *Saguna Brahman* and the world itself, thus, expects to co-exist with the transcendental state of *Brahman*. For this expectation the immanent state of *Brahman* as the manifestation in the world is accounted for the transcendental state of *Brahman* to arise or is it the other way round? All the three concepts like *Brahman*, *Iswara*, and *Manifestation* co-exist in such a close transcendental harmony that it is difficult to detach one from the other.

3. THE VISUDDHA ADVAITAVĀDA AND THE DOCTRINE OR MAHIMĀ: A METAPHYSICAL COMPROMISE

It is from the above discussion of the Advaitic doctrine of the *Pure Absolutism (Visuddha Brahmavāda)* that we are now in a position to reflect upon the philosophy of *Mahimā* as in the *Mahimā Dharma* in contrast to the former. In the *Mahimā* cult, Pravu Mahimā Swāmi is accepted as the sole authority and His two eminent followers Siddha Sādhu Biswanāth Bābā and the saint-poet Bhima Bhoi have attempted to lay down the basic philosophical doctrines which underlie the *Mahimā Dharma*. In other

words, as indicated already, the effort here would be to expose the underlying ground of the metaphysics of *Mahimā* with reference to the sustainable ideas of both scholars who are expressly related to the *Mahimā* cult, and also to indicate that their adherence to the doctrine of *Mahimā* is in no way different from the Advaitic doctrine of *Pure Absolutism (Visuddha Brahmavāda)*. Rather, they are essentially (with minimal differences) committed to the Advaitic framework in describing the nature of *Mahimā* in reference to the specific world-view which, in effect, constitutes the metaphysics of *Mahimā* or the philosophy of *Mahimā*.

Mahimā has been the central notion in Biswanāth Bābā's and Bhima Bhoi's descriptions. The reason is that it explicates the centrality of manifestation (as the unique power of God) in our understanding of the real nature of *Pure Absolute (Visuddha Parambrahma)* and the world-view. *Mahimā*, of course, is taken as the core concept in the framework of the *Mahimā Dharma*. However, the concept of *Mahimā* is not new in the *Mahimā Dharma* since it is neither stipulated nor invented by the followers of the *Mahimā Dharma*. That is to say, we see that the concept of *Mahimā* has been in use from a long time in our *Veda-Upanishads* and *Santha Literatures* to the mysterious revelation of Pravu Mahimā Swāmi, before the establishment of the *Mahimā Dharma*. As the *Svetāsvatara Upanishad* says,

svavāvameka kavayo vadanti kālāntathānye parimuhyaṁ
devasyaiṣa mahimātuloke yenedam bhrāmyate brahmachakraṁ.
(italics mine)

(Some wise men, being deluded, speak of Nature (as the first cause), others likewise of Time. But it is by the power of God that this cosmic wheel is made to turn.)³³

Besides, it is said in the *Svetāsvatara Upanishad* that

aṅoraniyānmaḥato mahiyān ātmā guhāyām nihitosyan jantih tamakratuṁ
paśyati vītaśoko dhātuḥ parasadān mahimānamisāṁ. (italics mine)

(Subtler than the subtle, greater than the great, the self is hidden in the heart of the creature. By the grace of Lord one sees Him who is actionless, sees His majesty, and becomes freed from sorrow.)³⁴

Furthermore, it is said in the *Purusa Sutta* that:

etāvānasya mahimāto jāyāscha paruṣah,
pādossya visvābhutāni tripādasyā mṛtamdivi. (italics mine)

(Such is his greatness, and the Perfect Being is greater than his. All the beings are his one-fourth: his three-fourth, which is immortal in the heaven.)³⁵

The fact is that in our philosophical-religious tradition our attachment to the *Ultimate Truth (Parama Satya)* has remained not only as a philosophical need but also as a religious aspiration. From the past to now our seers and saints have tried to grasp the real nature of this *Ultimate Truth (Parama Satya Swarupa)* in reference to different world-views in terms of negative words and voices.³⁶ This seems sound, because if there is something which is the *Ultimate*, that *Ultimate* can not be defined in terms of the object or the quality which is not ultimate. Something which is known, possesses certain attributes. The knowing is always followed by attribution or predication and so the knowledge is judgmental. If we concede the idea that the *Ultimate* is beyond all attributions or predications, then the question arises, how could we know it? Or to say, more concretely, how could its cognition be possible at all? Our seers and saints seem to be satisfied and find it sufficient to answer this fundamental question by announcing the *Ultimate* as unknown (*Ajneya*) in all knowns, is inconceivable (*Akalpaniya*) in all conceivable, is indescribable (*Anirvaçaniya*) in all describable and like that. This is the 'Majesty' (*Mahimā*) which belongs to the *Ultimate*. By explaining this *Majesty (Mahimā)*, i.e. what the *Ultimate* is not, they, in fact, have got the cognition of 'what the *Ultimate* really is.' That is where our last concern is the *Ultimate* with its indescribability (*anirvaçaniyata*) makes us silent, and defeats all our cognitions when we rest on its *Majesty (Mahimā)*.

A. Bhima Bhoi's Account of Mahimā

It can be said that in the Mahimā cult the followers have explicitly accepted this strategy to reach the *Eka Alekha Mahimā Parambrahma* by bringing *His Majesty (Mahimā)* into the centre of their prime focus. To state the truth, it may be assumed that 'the holy phrase "*Mahimā Alekha*" which is accorded the status of a *mantra* in the system contains the essence of the system. *Mahimā* and *Alekha* are the denotative and connotative aspects of one and the same reality. It is significant to note that the terms "*Mahimā*" and "*Brahma*" are synonymously used throughout the

Mahimā literature. The Ultimate reality is addressed as *Mahimā*. *Alekha* is significative of the nature of *Mahimā*.³⁷ *Mahimā*, here, is no more viewed as primarily a cognitive entity but as a transcendental concept that contains all manifestations in negative predications. All negative predications are meant to be *Alekha* which stands for nothing but indeterminateness of the ultimate reality. Bhima Bhoi realizes this indescribable potential of the ultimate reality reflected in manifestations but the Ultimate reality is not affected by such manifestations. The ultimate reality like the *Advaita Brahman* remains as such and this is its *Majesty (Mahimā)*. As he sings:

The glory of *Brahman* alone *Brahma* knows,
No rival in all the three worlds,
None there to estimate him in this endless universe,
He is invisible in all celestial worlds.³⁸

Bhima Bhoi concedes the Advaitic conception of *Brahman* and holds that like this *Brahman*, as it represents the Supreme Lord, His majesty is the *Great* and beyond the spatio-temporal limitations. The *Majesty (Mahimā)* is eternal and infinite. This proves the indeterminateness (*Alekha*) of the Supreme Lord. Again, Bhima Bhoi presents a comprehensive description of *Alekha Mahimā* in the following passages:

Herefrom O' listners, listen to the divine glories of Alekha,
He is the ultimate Brahman, the path finder of illumination.
He has no name, no literature, no scriptures of define Him,
He is the first step, no second follows He, no wealth confires.
He is the formless Brahman, no face, no colour abounds,
Shareless sea this Brahman dwells in, Alekha the divine.
He is beyond any urge, and the senses are beyond His apprehensions,
He is the most unattached and Māyā can hardly enchain Him.³⁹

According to Bhima Bhoi, *Mahimā* is potential and pervasive. Seers and saints describe the Supreme Lord as the creator, the protector, the destroyer, benevolent and with other noble adjectives like omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent. But Bhima Bhoi brings all these noblenesses of the Supreme Lord into *Mahimā* as His all-pervasive majesty. This justifies his stand on the Advaitic space where transcendence of the Supreme Lord provides ground or explanation to the creation of the whole universe. For Bhima Bhoi, *Parambrahma* is not the object of worship,

and idolization of Him means bringing His great majesty into positive predications; so he goes beyond idolatry. Worshipping idols in image of the Supreme Lord or as His representatives is meant to impose a finite idol upon the infinite Supreme Lord, and to make Him determinate.

Bhima Bhoi, as we have said, seems to be essentially possessive of the descriptions of *Parambrahma* given in the *Upanishads*. The *Upanishads* describe *Parambrahma* as *Arupam*, *Asabdam*, *Asparsam*, *Anjeyam*, *Nirgunam*, *Adrutam*, *Avarnam* and many others.⁴⁰ These negative concepts express potentially the significance of the concept of *Alekha* in the general sense of the term. We know that *Advaita Vedānta* gives much importance to this indeterminate potential nature of the ultimate reality (*Brahman*), and *Nirguna Brahma* of Śaṅkara in its transcendental eloquence displays such indescribable potentiality. *Advaita Vedānta* in the *Upanishads* views *Brahman* as immanent, i.e. its own majesty (*Mahimā*) which leads ultimately to the *Brahman* as transcendent that serves to direct the mind towards *Alekha Mahimā* by denying it finiteness, unreality and unconsciousness. *Alekha Mahimā Brahman* in this aspect is devoid of all descriptions, all distinctions, external as well as internal (*sajātiya*, *vijātiya* and *svagata bhedas*). Bhima Bhoi's verses resound with this oneness and uniqueness of *Visuddha Alekha Mahimā Brahman*. Bhima Bhoi expresses this Advaita Vedāntic import in very lucid words:

He is neither the teacher nor the disciple; no master nor slave has He,
Neither a *Brahman*, nor an infidel, He is the greatest of all.
He belongs to no tribe, casteless, He is the most blameless,
The two rule the world as one mind and one soul.⁴¹

Bhima Bhoi's well known philosophy of *Mahimā* is his concept of *Sunyabrahma* which follows necessarily from his conception of *Alekha Mahimā Brahman*. *Alekha Mahimā Brahman*, according to him, as we have said above, is neither based on worldly contents nor on theistic conception of God (*Iswara*). The *Majesty* of the Supreme Lord (*Mahimā Parambrahma*) is not derived from our cognition since our cognition is dependent upon the *Mahimā*. The philosophy of *Mahimā* denies this derivability altogether. As Śaṅkara conceives (discussed in Section 2) *Brahman* as *Anirvaçaniya* and this negative state positively connotes the *Great Void* (*Mahāsunya*) as the real state of existence of the Supreme Lord. This conception of the *Mahāsunya* has no features that can incorporate this conception as equal or as corollary to the Buddhist Mādhyamika

framework of nihilism (*sunyavāda*). Buddhist Mādhyamika *Sunyavāda* holds that the universe is totally devoid of reality, everything is void (*sunya*). And this doctrine is proved by the argument that a thing cannot be considered to be either real or unreal or both real and unreal, or neither real nor unreal. *Sunyatā* or voidness is the name for this indeterminable indescribable real nature of things.⁴² Following the general anti-metaphysical outlook of Lord Buddha, Mādhyamika exponents hold that this view avoids the two extreme doctrines of the absolute reality and absolute unreality of the ontological contents. And ultimately this leads to middle (*Mādhyama*) state of the reality. But what is that state? Is it the state of indeterminateness?

It can be said that Vedāntic philosophy utterly denies this view and the metaphysical doctrines are very explicit on its floor. The Vedāntic conception of the indeterminate state of the ultimate reality is neither a product nor a derivative of the void (*sunya*). The universe is determinately manifested by the majesty (*Mahimā*) of the ultimate reality. Besides, *Sachidānanda Swarup Eva Idam Brahman* expressively presupposes the eternal unity between what is apparently real (*Jiva Jagat ādi*) and what is transcendently real (*Brahma Parambrahma Sākshyat Swarup Sattā ādi*). The basic metaphysical assertion of the Vedāntic philosophy, 'Not this, Not this' (*Neti Neti*), I think, provides the ground on which one can uncover the truth of such unity or oneness. Empiricality is true in a relative sense, but the *Absolute Truth* lies in the transcendence, and the transcendence is that what is indeterminate and indescribable. This is really a positive spark in the guise of the negative sound (*nināda*) or *Majestic power* (*Mahimā*). The world of objects (or all empiricalities) follows from this *Mahimā*. Bhima Bhoi concedes this view and sings:

The universe infinite emanates from *Mahimā*
The unwritten is He, the Undivided One.⁴³

If this is the truth, *Buddhist Sunyavāda* sounds 'nothing', i.e. non-metaphysical voidism has no effect on the metaphysics of *Mahimā*. Then in what sense does Bhima Bhoi use the concept of *Sunya* as he does it frequently in his many verses? Is it ancillary to *Alekha*? Bhima Bhoi himself gives very plausible answers to these questions in saying that:

We call Him the void, the greatest void
None to surpass Him, None too above Him.⁴⁴

From the silent house, the nameless *Brahma* took birth the eternal void,
From the void, form descended and came out *varna*.⁴⁵

'*Sunya*', in this context, as Sitakanta Mohapatra points out, 'is not a total negation, a complete nescience or non-being. It is only a negation of appearances, of becomings. For it is the pure state of Being. The various stages of its becoming are only various forms or manifestations or becomings.'⁴⁶ The significative import of the concept *sunya* is kept in the transcendental space of the great silence (*Nisabda* from where everything follows) and since *Mahimā* comprises *Brahman* in the guise of *Alekha*, i.e. *Anāma Brahman* they all remain in one transcendental space without the impurities and limitations. That is, *Eka Visuddha Alekha Mahimā Brahma* is what the Vedāntic philosophy ever intends.

It is also not out of context to state that since *Mahimā* is infinite, like Śaṅkara, Bhima Bhoi has tried to describe two aspects of *Brahman*, positive and negative. If the *Sunya Brahman* is *Nirguna Brahman* he has not felt any logical oddity to describe the same ultimate reality as *Saguna Brahma* too, though he does not wish to ascribe any attribute to it. His anti-theistic adherence is not followed by the whole as it belongs to two parts, rather 'That is whole (infinite); this is whole. The whole comes out of the whole. Taking the whole from the whole of the whole itself remains.'⁴⁷ So he says, 'Non-qualified He is in all qualifications' (*Nirguna brahmati guna bhitarē thāi*)⁴⁸ If this is conceded by Bhima Bhoi, all his metaphysical descriptions of *Mahimā* in innumerable verses are directed towards the One Pure Absolute, i.e. *Eka Vissudha Parambrahma*. Bhima Bhoi, like Śaṅkara believes in the self (*Jiva*), the transcendental self (*Paramātma*), the state of bondage (*Vandhana*) and in the liberation (*Mukti*). *Brahman* remains as *Sāksi Swarupa* (true self) within the individual (*Jiva*) in the state of bondage what in his words, is 'Vandhan' or *Māyā*. Through indeterminate devotion (*Alekhabhakti*), self-knowledge (*Atmajnāna*) and disinterested action (*Niskāma Karma*) the individual attains liberation, i.e. the true self (*Sāksi*) withdraws itself from the individual (*Jiva*) and then reaches the state of transcendental subjectivity (*Paramātmā*). In the similar sense he confesses that *Mahimā* appears in *Avatāra*, *Swarupa purusa* or *Santha purusa* for the immanent state and *Alekha Purusa* or *Anādi purusa* for the transcendental state. This leads us to say that *Mahimā* philosophy believes in *ekatmavāda* but not *ekajivavāda*. Pravu Mahimā Swāmi appears to him as Mahimā Gosain. He himself concedes the

conception of *Avatāra* which literally means 'descent or coming down' and 'serves as a link between *Saguna Brahman* and *Nirguna Brahman*' without limiting the transcendental wholeness of *Mahimā*. So he says:

The name of *Mahimā* revolves on the head,
Whichever way you turn, the name always confronts you.⁴⁹

B. Biswanāth Bābā's Account of Mahimā

The Saint-poet Bhima Bhoi's philosophy of *Mahimā*, I think, constitutes the background of Sāddhu Biswanātha Bābā's account of *Mahimā*, what he prefers to call the philosophy of *Non-Dualistic Pure Absolutism* (*Visuddha Advaitavāda*).⁵⁰ His attempt develops a pure Advaitic perspective for understanding the ultimate reality and its majesty (*Mahimā*). The concept of *Mahimā*, as we have pointed out, is the main concern. For it provides the ground by which we can understand the nature of the ultimate reality and the world-view. According to Biswanāth Bābā metaphysics of *Mahimā* is the same as the metaphysics of the *Advaita Visuddha Brahmavāda* and its manifestation. This can be unravelled by the elucidation of the concept of *Mahimā*. *Mahimā* is viewed as the majesty of the *Parambrahma*. This view, as conceded by Bhima Bhoi, enables us to grasp the transcendental nature of the *Absolute* which comprises the non-dualistic ultimate reality in the Vedāntic philosophy. Biswanāth Bābā says that:

Far away from *māyā*, *avidyā*, *adhyāsa*
He is well-known as the greatest, *nirguna parambrahman*.⁵¹

The fact is that according to Biswanāth Bābā the *Mahimā Dharma* accepts the concept of *Mahimā* purely a transcendental concept which is the ultimate source of explanation of the creation of the universe. *Mahimā* philosophy posits the place in which all theories and theses against this conception are proved to be inadequate for dealing with the matters in question. Thus, the *Mahimā* philosophy refutes the major claims of *Dvaita* doctrine of Mādhva, *Advaita Saguna Brahman* and *Vivarta* of Śaṅkara, theistic conception of god and *Parinamvāda* of Ramanuja etc. according to Biswanāth Bābā. Moreover, the *Mahimā* philosophy expressly defies the doctrines of Tantra idolatry and mysticism, Śaṅkha's dualism of *Puruṣa* and *Prakṛiti*, Mādhyaṃika Buddhist doctrine of radical nihilism (*sunyavāda*) etc., and establishes the truth that the *Mahimā* is the ultimate source of everything. For Biswanātha Bābā, the *Mahimā* remains the

ultimate source of the Vedāntic conception of *Brahman* in its indeterminate import (*anirvaçaniyata*) but not the creator or the cause of the creation. In contrast, *Brahman* is conceived as the creator or the cause of the creation of the whole universe.⁵² This point distinguishes Biswanāth Bābā from the saint-poet Bhima Bhoi who conceives *Brahman* of *Advaita Vedānta* as the source of *Mahimā* and *Mahimā* as the cause of the creation of the whole universe. For Bhima Bhoi, *Brahman* is the source for this cause, though he and Biswanāth Bābā remain in the same transcendental space.

But this point of difference does not discredit their position nor does it lead us to believe that they are saying about two different realities in relation to the doctrine of creation. For, in the *Mahimā Dharma* the concept of *Brahman* and *Mahimā* are used synonymously. All the arrows are directed to one point, whatever arrows they may be. Moreover, Biswanāth Bābā holds that what we see in other sects and systems leads us to believe that there are many realities or one reality is divided into parts. Śaṅkha, for example, believes in *Puruṣa* and *Parakṛiti* as two distinct realities and interaction of both causes the creation. Śaṅkara, through Advaita, concedes the doctrine of illusion (*māyāvada*) and holds that the world is a magical manifestation of God's Power, But the philosophy of *Mahimā*, for Biswanāth Bābā, neither regards all these views, nor does it concede the doctrine of many-Gods nor does it represent that *Mahimā* can be manifested in the form of idols. So he argues that though in some of these theories the ultimate reality is accepted and is conceived as *Nirguna*, *Niranjan*, and the like so far as they concern the doctrine of creation they treat the ultimate reality as the object of manifestation or projection. Consequently, they imagine *Parambrahma*, *Sachidananda Puruṣa* as the object of worship. On the contrary, Biswanāth Bābā conceives *Mahimā* as it represents all. He suggests that we believe in *Advaita Visuddha Parambrahma* as the Supreme Majesty (*Mahimā*) who is neither the cause of the creation nor the object of worship.⁵³ He declares that:

This principle is the truth,
This principle is the truth.⁵⁴

Thus, according to Biswanāth Bābā *Mahimā* represents everything and it is the transcendental greatness of names, fames, powers, comparisons and aspirations. It is beyond all limitations and illusions. *Mahimā* and *Parambrahma* are one and unique. To this extent *Mahimā* represents

Alekha Parambrahma, Nirguna, Nirādhāra, Nirlepa, Niranjana Mahāsunya Bihari, Mahāsunyabasi, Amṛta, Akshaya, Parama Abhyaya, Asabda, Asparsa, Arupa, Parama Abyakta, Sarvajivāsraya, Parama Kaibalya, Moksyadāyaka, Mahā Mahimāmaya, Sarva Viswabyāpaka, Nikhildhāra, Dayāsāgara, Kshymasāgar, Krupāmaya, Sachidānanda Upādhisunya, Upādhibinirmukta, Nirlipta, Sarvajivadhāra, Anāhata Bihāri, Anakāra, Anākshyara, Pravu Parambrahma, Paramātama, Visuddha Nirguna Māyā Vidyā Gunātita, Anāma, Anāmaya and many others.⁵⁵

The central concern of his philosophy of *Mahimā* is the Advaitic doctrine of pure absolutism (*Visuddha Advaita Brahmavāda*).⁵⁶ He, like Bhima Bhoi, comprehends *Alekha Mahimā Brahma* without giving any distinct status to *Brahma* or *Mahimā*. He is not committed to the dual character of immanence and transcendence of one reality, nor is he committed to the doctrine of superimposition (*Adhyāsa* or *Māyā*) as in Śaṅkara's monistic absolutism (*Advaitavād*). This shows the difference between *Advaitavāda* and *Visuddha Advaitavāda*. However, as Professor B. Kar⁵⁷ claims, the doctrine of superimposition (*Adhyāsa*) in Śaṅkara does not limit or distract the monistic nature for *Brahman* nor does it follow from this that Śaṅkara concedes a form of dualism so far as his conception of the superimposition of illusion is concerned. Yet, if we believe that he does, in a similar way one can claim that in *Mahimā* philosophy Biswanāth Bābā does commit the same mistake by conferring *Mahimā on Brahman*. But the limit of this essay may not permit me to go through the debate in detail, rather it is just to state that Śaṅkara is right on his stand, and Biswanāth Bābā is also right on his own position in the sense that both are monist, and the truth (philosophy) lies not in appearance, but in transcendence. Though Biswanāth Bābā does not concede the state of superimposition or illusion as *Mahimā* or a state of *Mahimā*, at least he can agree to Śaṅkara's *Nirguna Brahma* and the ultimate concern to the concept of indescribability (*Anirvaçaniyata*) conferred upon the ultimate reality.

Besides, more can be said in favour of *Visuddha Advaitavāda* as the philosophy of *Mahimā* in relation to the Vedāntic tradition according to Biswanāth Bābā. *Mahimā* in its transcendental sense is pure (*Visuddha*), though it plays the role of the ground or the source of the universe. The manifestations may be apparent, but their ultimate concern (*caramatva*) is transcendental. The philosophy of *Mahimā*, for Biswanāth Bābā, is concerned only with the truth of the latter. This is a point on which Bhima

Bhoi differs from Bābā. Bhima Bhoi, like Śaṅkara, conceives Mahimā as both immanent and transcendent (āpe anāmika brahma āpe kaha nāma).⁵⁸ But this difference, I think, does not follow from a dual state of the same reality in two different perspectives. Since the Ultimate is one, i.e. *Eka Alekha Mahimā Brahman*, the difference is only a matter of the verbal mode of expression. Both, I think, belong to one and the only perspective, i.e. the perspective of *Visuddha Advaitavāda* which may be considered as an extended Advaitic framework, already presupposed by Vedāntic tradition. By 'perspective' here I simply mean the being moved in a determinate direction by particular kinds of reasons or evidences that satisfy our inquiry. Accepting such a perspective, both Bhima Bhoi and Biswanātha Bābā draw our attention to this transcendental harmony of *Brahman* and the world of manifestation in the light of *Mahimā*. According to Bhima Bhoi the idea of *Brahman* is a very important concept in the philosophy of *Mahimā* and yet it itself presupposes the world of manifestation. The world of manifestation constitutes the basic source of metaphysics and so everything that the world of manifestation reveals ultimately depends on *Brahman*. In this sense, for Bhima Bhoi, there is a unique ontological priority of immanence over transcendence and the rest of the transcendental concerns. Biswanātha Bābā has not been concerned with the ontological priority of *Brahman* at all, though he also believes that *Brahman* is transcendently prior to the world of manifestation. This is so because, according to him, the world of manifestation matters to the descriptions only when they are related to objects and events of the world. Since everything in this world is finite and infinite, perfect and imperfect, everything seeks a good beyond itself, tries to rid itself of its finiteness and become perfect. But immanent state of *Brahman* is the secondary picture or a state of illusion in the words of Śaṅkara. Thus there is a transcendental reason why *Brahman* must transcendently follow immanent state, rather than the other way round.

Now we are in a position to state that the whole philosophy of the *Mahimā Dharma* can be viewed in the light of *Mahimā* in the broad perspective of *Visuddha Advaitavāda*. Yet, since philosophy essentially concerns the truth, it is not a presupposed aspiration that we can easily reach. For our philosophical inquisitiveness may not be satisfied with accounts that we forward for the matter in question. So far the philosophy of *Mahimā* is concerned it seems that the accounting is variable though the matter remains constant. That is exalted in our saying '*Ekam satyam*

viprā vahudhā vadanti'. To this extent the notion of *Mahimā* may be variously interpreted by our seers and saints, but the truth itself remains constant. We see that in our philosophical-religious trends the ways to *Mahimā* are many in the sense that there are different routes (*Sadhanā*) for reaching it. But it does not mean that there are many *Mahimās* in the same perspective for the same interpretation. The methods of interpretation, *Dvaita*, *Advaita*, *Visuddha advaita*, *Visistādvaita*, *Sunyavāda* etc. may differ as our accounts of the reality are always different. But *Mahimā* itself remains as an invariant concept in its ultimate concern. That is to say that manifestation of the whole universe holds its core to itself as it is its inner essence and it is the transcendental (pure) one infinite indeterminate *Absolute* (*eka visuddha ananta alekha parambrahma*). Other than this 'That not', nothing is there at all.

4. CONCLUSION

To conclude, in a *Visuddha Advaitic* perspective, as we have discussed, barring all superficialities, the magnificent Veda-Upanishadic assertions like 'ātma eva vedam sarvamiti', 'tavanasya mahimā tato yuayameca purusaḥ', 'aham brahmasmi', 'ayam ātmā brahma', 'tattvam asi', 'neti neti' and many others, are considered significative conditions in their transcendental sense of the term. We may grasp the inner meanings of these loftily assertions to access the nature of the ultimate reality. When one's soul fails to grasp the true nature of the ultimate reality, then illusion follows. An illusioned soul sees difference in unity more than unity in difference. The fact that there is a transcendental unity (*Paramarthika ekatma*) in all differences at ultimate concern, is yet to be brought out. Both the saint-poet Bhima Bhoi and Siddha Sādhu Biswanātha Bābā teach us this truth in different words of divine excellence on the grace of Mahāpravū Alekha Prabudha Mahimā Swāmi being learned about the inner meanings (*satyārtha*) of the holy verses of *Veda-Upanishads* and other classics. We cannot ignore, but accept this truth by presuming the purity of *Mahimā* so that it enlightens our souls through *atmajnāna*, *niskāma karma* and *parama bhakti*.⁵⁹

To say a few words more, just as the Advaitic philosophy has proven useful as an instrument to unlock the inner meanings of the *Vedas* and the *Upanishads* and also the changing nature of doctrines and theories as in different commentaries, so too an exploration of the *Mahimā Dharma* as

one of the regional socio-religious-philosophical trends in Indian culture can illumine and motivate contemporary thinkers in India. Such an investigation may fasten the basic philosophical-cultural links of India that can produce new and creative philosophical theories.⁶⁰

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. By Vedāntic Philosophy I mean the philosophical ideas involved in different *Upanishads*, and also commentaries on *Upanishads* of different schools of *Vedānta*.
2. The concept of Visuddha Advaitic conception of *Brahma* may be considered in the sense of Śaṅkara's concept of Advaitic *Nirguna Brahman*.
3. In Mahimā cult, the works of Siddha Sāddhu Biswanātha Bābā, e.g. *Mahimā Dharma Pratipādaka*, *Satyamahimā Dharma Itihāsa*, *Sarva Vedānta Sāratatva Sirromanih—Alekhā Parambrahma Darshanam*, *Gruhasthāsrama Subhakarma Vidhāna*, *Mahimā Gādi Mahimādhama Itihās*, *Mahimā Dharmara Itihās*, etc. are accepted as the most authentic literature for a comprehensive description of philosophical-religious ideas of *Mahimā Dharma*. I shall use ideas evidentially presented in these texts to substantiate my discussion.
4. The saint-poet Bhima Bhoi is accepted as an original poet (*Ādikabi*) a direct disciple of Divine excellence of Prabuddha Guru Mahimā Swāmi and a devotee propagator of Mahimā Dharma in Mahimā Cult. His celebrated works, e.g. *Stutichintāmani*, *Brahmanirupanagitā*, *Chinmaya Brahmagitā*, *Nirveda Sadhanā*, *Ashtabihārigitā*, *Srutinisedhagitā*, *Cautisā* etc., including his poetic excellence *Bhajanas* and *Janānas* mark a unique path (*mārga*) toward the realization of immanence and transcendence of the Supreme Lord (*Mahimā*) describe his universal humanistic feelings in favour of philosophical-religious exposition of *Mahimā Dharma*. I shall be committed to his insightful ideas and feelings presented in these texts.
5. Biswanātha Bābā, *Mahimā Dharma Itihās*, p. 67, and also see his *Philosophy of Mahimā Dharma* presented at the Religious conference on December 3, 1974, p. 1 (published by Mahimā Dharma-Alochanā Samiti, Cuttack, Orissa).
6. Ibid.
7. Bhima Bhoi, *Stutichintāmani*, 89.
'sripurusottama kapilāsh dhāma tahun uthilāni dharma tirthamāna sabu bhrasta hoileni kāhinre nāhin nā brahma gangā gayā kāsi prayāga sahite setubandha rāmanātha a tirthamānanka dharma uthilāni kāhinre nāhin nā satya, godāvāri gaumati brundābana dwārakā je haridwāra tirthamāna je biphala heleni budilāni dharmasāra devādevi ādi aussaddhi mantra yantra japatapa jete shakala karana sarilāni āshi netre dekhantu sākshyāte.'
8. Bhima Bhoi, *Chinmaya Brahmagitā*, sect. XII.

- 'swamahimā saktire se hele avatāra
abadhuta prabuddha rupa mānaba sarira
sarvavatāra baristha ayonisambhuta
param guru rupare hoile vikshyāta
punya bhārata bhumire hele avatirna
mahimā jāhānka kare nuhai varmana.'
9. Bhima Bhoi, *Srutinisedhagitā*, sect. I.
'bahuta anyāya dekhilu, tenuti āmbhe udehelu
swarupa buddha avatāra, nirveda karichhu bistāra
dharamare rahu boli mahi, tenu mu āsichhi dhāin.'
 10. Bhima Bhoi, *Stutichintāmani*, 21.
'chandra surya ādi agni pabanādi veda sāstra nāhin lesa
ananta thākura jagat iswara dhari digambara besa.'
 11. Biswanātha Bābā, *Satya Mahimā Dharma Pratipādaka*, pp. 21–3.
 12. Sitakant Mohapatra's *Bhoma Bhoi* (Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi, 1983), p. 8.
 13. Biswanātha Bābā, *Mahimā Dharma Itihāsa*, pp. 1–12.
 14. Ibid.
 15. Biswanātha Bābā, *Mahimā Gādi Mahimādhama Itihās*, pp. 2–12 and also see *Satya Dharma Itihās*, p. 222.
 16. Daya Krishna, 'The Upanishads—What are they?' in *Journal of Indian Council of Philosophical Research*, Vol. 1, 1983, p. 71.
 17. *Taittiriya Upanishad*, 1.11.
 18. S. Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. I (New Delhi, Oxford University Press, Indian Edition, 1940), pp. 137–270, and also see S.N. Dasgupta, *History of Indian Philosophy*, Vol. I, p. 28 for different *Upanishads* and he has listed 112 *Upanishads*.
 19. Bādarāyana's *Brahmasutra* is also known variously as *Vedānta-Sutra*, *Sariraka-Sutra*, *Sariraka-mimāṃsā* or *Uttara-mimāṃsā*.
 20. Daya Krishna, 'The Upanishads—What are they?', op. cit. pp. 71–82.
 21. *Aitareya*, 1.1 and *Bṛihadāraṇyaka*, 1.4.1.
 22. *Chāndogya*, 7.25.2.
 23. *Bṛihadāraṇyaka*, 4.5.6.
 24. *Chāndogya*, 6.2.1.
 25. *Mundaka*, 2.2.11.
 26. *Bṛihadāraṇyaka*, 2.5.19 and 1.4.10.
 27. *Kena*, 1.4–5.
 28. *Bṛihadāraṇyaka*, 3.1.4–9.
 29. S. Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. I, p. 150.
 30. Ibid., p. 146.
 31. *Bṛihadāraṇyaka*, 5.2.4.
 32. *Kena*, 2.3.3.
 33. *Svetāsvatara*, 6.1.
 34. Ibid., 3.14.

35. *Purusa Sutta (Sukla Yayurveda)*, 3, see *The New Vedic Selection, part I* (Bharatiya Vidya Prakashana, Delhi, First Edn., 1965, 5th Edn., 1987) by Dr. B.B. Chaubey, pp. 234–5.
36. Chittaranjan Das, *Odisāra Mahimā Dharma*, (Dharmagrantha Store, Cuttack, Orissa, 2nd Edn., (1991), pp. 115–51.
37. S.C. Panigrahi, *Bhima Bhoi and Mahimā Darsana*, Santhosh Publications, Cuttack, 1998, p. 25.
38. Bhima Bhoi, *Bhajanamālā*, pp. 101–2.
'brahmara mahimā brahma jāne kebā samarathā tribhubane
abyaya brahmanku klibāku tākuasesha brahmande jeta chhanti he,
na disanti sarva brahmānde kahuchhanti.'
39. *Ibid.*, 88, 11.
'ethu anantare suna sunjajane *alekha mahimā* kathā
mahābrahma se je *alekha purusa* ati alokita panthā
anāmikā brahma akshara na base na lāgai sāstraveda
eka brahmapāda dipāda nuhai na chale artha sampada
arupa brahma se rupa barna nāhin na disai barna kānti
akula sāgara brahma ate sehi *mahimā* ta anasriti
niskāma brahma se kāma nāhin ange nāhin tāra indrianda
kholo polo nāhin *nirmohapurusa* na lāgai māyā danda.'
40. *Kātha*, 1.3.15 and *Mundak*, 1.1.6.
41. Bhima Bhoi, *Stutichintamani*, 36.
'nuhanti se guru nuhanti se sisya, nāhin sāānta sevaka
nuhanti brāhmana nuhanti chandāla nuhanti se baba loka
nāhin tānka jāti nāhin tānka gotra na thāi bāchha bebhāra
beni jana eka ātmā mana hoi karuachhanti sansāra.'
42. *Sarvadarsana Sanghraha*, Chap. II.
43. Bhima Bhoi, *Brahmanirupanagitā*, VII.108.
'mahimā thāru hoichhi *alekha brahmānda*
alekha purusa sehu *purusa akhanda*.'
44. *Ibid.*, 111.30.
'sunya mahā sunya boli tāhākuti kahi
tānka uparaku āāu bada nāhin kehi.'
45. Bhima Bhoi, *Stutichintamani*, 78.
'nihsabda gharu anāma brahmaru janam hoilā sunya
sunya sanchāraru ākāra dhailā bāhāra hoilā barna.'
46. Sitakanta Mohapatra, *Bhoma Bhoi*, p. 23, he also points out, 'The Late Laxmi Narayan Sahu had argued that the concept of void in *Mahimā* was different from its counterpart in Buddhism. According to him 'the Buddhist conception of *Sunya* is that in the ultimate there is nothing. But the alekhist conception of *Sunya* is that there is *only One* after all the appearances disappear. That again has no appearance. This is a very interesting and valid point and its concept of *Sunya* in Bhima's writings would seem to agree with this view.'

47. *Isvasya, Invocation*.
48. Bhima Bhoi, *Brahmanirupanagitā*, XIII.32.
49. *Ibid.*, VII.
'Mahimā nāmati jehu mathāpare achhi
Jeunāde mukhakale āgaku heuchhi.'
50. Biswanātha Bābā, *Satya Mahimā Dharma Pratipādaka*, pp. 188–211.
51. Biswanātha Bābā, *Chinmaya Brahmagitā*, X.
'māyā avidyā upādhitāru je atita
nirguna param brahma nāme se bikshyāta.'
52. Biswanātha Bābā, *Sarva Vedānta Sāratattva Sirromanih Alekha Parambrahma Darsanam*, p. 149.
53. Biswanātha Bābā, *Pratipādaka*, pp. 207–19, and also see his *Alekha Parambrahma Darshanam*, pp. 10–70.
54. Biswanātha Bābā, *Philosophy of Mahimā Dharma*, conference presentation at Puri, 3 December 1974, p. 23, 'Satyam iti upadesa, Satyam iti upadesa.'
55. Biswanātha Bābā, *Sarva Vedānta Sāratattva Sirromanih Alekha Parambrahma Darsanam*.
56. Biswanātha Bābā, *The Philosophy of Mahimā Dharma*, conference presentation, p. 10.
57. B. Kar, 'Biswanātha Bābā on *Mahimā* and *Advaita*' in *Mahimā Dharma and Darsana*, ed. Daitari Panda, Sankara Philosophical Association: D.A.V. College, Koraput, Orissa 1972, pp. 38–9.
58. Bhima Bhoi, *Brahmanirupanagitā*, IV-3 and IV-19.
59. On this line of the conclusion a comprehensive reflection is elucidated in a series of my essay, 'Naitikatāra Sreya Mārgahin Mahimā Dharma' (Oriya) in *The Mahimājyoti*, No. 4, January–March 1999.
60. I remain grateful to Professor Daya Krishna, Professor B. Chandel, Professor S.P. Dubey, Professor T. Pattnaik, Professor S. Moitra and, especially, Professor R.C. Pradhan, Member-Secretary, ICPR, New Delhi for their necessary comments and suggestions on this paper which was presented in the ICPR National Seminar at New Delhi. I am also grateful to Professor P.K. Tripathy and Professor S.K. Das, Postgraduate Department of English, M.P.C. (Auto) College, Baripada for their cooperation.

The Tradition of Dissent:
From Ezhuthachan to Chattampi Swamikal¹

N. SREEKUMAR

Lecturer in Philosophy, Humanistic Studies Group, Instruction Division,
Birla Institute of Technology and Science, Pilani, Rajasthan 333 031

This paper has two functions. First it tries to trace the development of the philosophical tradition of Malayalam language by focusing on certain important milestones in the development of the latter. Though there are many Malayalam writers, especially poets, who have made seminal contributions, the majority of them worked from within a prevailing tradition which either exhibited the influence of the Tamil culture or was dominated by the categories of Sanskrit thinking. Consequently, these two traditions have exerted vital influences in shaping the thinking and outlook of Malayalam as a language for aesthetic and philosophical articulations.

This development has a very smooth and a non-tremulous history—a history of acceptance and not that of discovery and change. Malayalam poetry witnessed many experiments, but none could go beyond affecting changes merely at the stylistic and syntactic levels. The *Manipravalam* style—which is characterized by a unique mixture of Sanskrit words and Dravidian ones—was an ideal medium for expressing aesthetic and philosophical sensibilities, which were akin to the Sanskrit tradition and the poetry of this age reflected the deep aspirations and worries of the latter. But this language failed to add any new dimensions of meaning to its semantic scaffolding. The tradition continued with the repeated use of metaphors invented by the ancient Aryans and this had been the story till Ezhuthachan.

Ezhuthachan related himself with the tradition not just by reliving it, but by sharing with it some pivotal features that made the latter a platform for a continuous discourse. His allegiance to the Advaitic framework of thinking is apparent from his works, but his relationship with the latter is confined to the realm of answers it gave to fundamental queries. He perceived the relevance and organic intimacy of these queries with the

socio-cultural situations of his lifetime and analyzed the latter from the perspective of the inherited tradition. The tradition has been explored with a set of new problems—most of them having socio-political connotations—and his poetry unveils its unseen dimensions. Ezhuthachan thus initiates a beginning, a tradition of dissent, which continued through Punthanam, Ezhuthachan's immediate successor who had written one of the most important philosophical works in Malayalam, *Jnanapana*, Chattampi Swamikal and Sri Narayana Guru, the two prominent thinkers who initiated the social reform movement in Kerala during the initial decades of the 20th century.

The second function of this study therefore, is to see in the thoughts of Ezhuthachan and Chattampi Swamikal a continuity of the same tradition. Since there is a lot of similarity between the latter and Sri Narayana Guru, both in the case of fundamental philosophical positions and in the ways they perceived the role of philosophy in the social lives of people, this study does not take into account the contributions of Sri Narayana Guru. Unlike Ezhuthachan neither of them were well-known poets. Yet all the three shared common concerns. The advaitic assumptions regarding the nature of reality formed the edifice of their thinking. Sri Narayana Guru for instance, had explicitly stated that whatever he has to convey was nothing but what Sankara had expounded.² But the unique feature that connects them intimately is their response to the social issues and problems, especially to the caste hierarchies and the more practical problems like untouchability. In Chattampi Swamikal's and Narayana Guru's works the fight against the social hierarchies are quite explicit. All of them wrote in the language of the native with an intention to reach the masses. Unlike the so-called scholars, they never treated literary and creative endeavours solely as means to gain appreciation from the learned. Ezhuthachan's *Adhyatma Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* are read by the common man and are adored as the most important religious textbooks even now in many Kerala families. Chattampi Swamikal was more an activist than a man of letters. Yet he has written a number of books which enable us to understand his philosophical position. The spirit of the tradition that begins with Ezhuthachan and continued with Chattampi Swamikal has reflected in all major socio-cultural and social-reform movements Kerala had witnessed in the last century.

There are two sets of factors that make the philosophical tradition of Malayalam language unique. The first set is linguistic in nature. The other

one refers to the socio-cultural peculiarities of Kerala as a political region. We can see the influence of both Sanskrit and Tamil (or more precisely Dravidian) traditions in the development of Malayalam as a language of poetic and philosophical communication from the popular language of the mass. For a long time it was never used by poets and scholars for creative expressions. Even the first major work on Malayalam grammar, *Leelathilakam* was written in Sanskrit. It was composed in the 15th century and it is confined to the *Manipravalam* language style, which was prevalent among the poets and writers of those days. Historically, this mixed language had been in use for composing poetic and other scholarly works. During this period Namboothiries, who were Brahmins, wrote most of the works. Again, as Logan points out, Malayalam is rich with Sanskrit words compared with other Dravidian languages. It is the most Sanskritized language in the Dravidian family.³

This points to an important feature of the history of Kerala. On the one hand it tells us about the domination enjoyed by the Namboothiries—the Brahmin caste—in the socio-cultural life of Kerala. Many fields of science like Ayurveda, Jyothisha, Mathematics, Dhanurveda etc. witnessed tremendous growth in Kerala. The Namboothiri caste of Kerala had given birth to many scholars, among whom the great Sri Sankara, the exponent of Advaita system of thought, was the prominent one. But the tradition, which supported these developments, had been essentially brahmanical in nature and all these happened well inside the tradition of Sanskrit language. Even among non-brahmin scholars Sanskrit enjoyed the status of the language for intellectual discourse. Melpathoor Narayana Bhattathiri, a contemporary of Ezhuthachan, was a renowned poet in Sanskrit and had composed a number of works among which *Narayaneeyam* is the most famous one.

Historically, Kerala inherited a mixture of philosophical insights among which the Advaitic view of Sankara and the Buddhist conception were prominent. But gradually Buddhism lost its influence due to reasons that are not very clear and the brahmanical forms of life started dominating the cultural milieu of Kerala. The domination of the Namboothiri caste testifies to this. Namboothiris brought along with them the traditions of thought and knowledge systems nurtured by the Sanskrit language. Naturally, the philosophical works that originated in this land widely reflected the concerns of these traditions. They hardly wrote in the local language and all serious intellectual endeavours were carried out in the language of the

learned, i.e., Sanskrit. The capability of the local language for expressing and communicating aesthetic and philosophical insights was strongly doubted. It was predominantly an inferior language of the vulgar. Even when they wrote in Malayalam, the influence of the inherited tradition was evident. The situation has changed only with Ezhuthachan.

Ezhuthachan's relationship with the inherited tradition was peculiar. He was not a Brahmin, but belonged to the so-called *sudra* caste. He made the local language his medium and presented complex philosophical themes through the language of the masses. His works could be considered as the first major contribution of Malayalam language to the lively philosophical tradition of India. Though before him poets like Cherusserry⁴ had dealt with philosophical themes, and his contemporary Punthanam Namboothiri's work *Jnanapana* created a new wave of sensibility, it was Ezhuthachan who expounded a coherent system of thinking in his works with all the necessary metaphysical edifices.

THE LEGACY OF EZHUTHACHAN

The first major philosophical work in Malayalam is possibly the translation of the Bhagavat Gita by the celebrated *Niranam* poet, Madhava Panikkar. This work belongs to the preparatory stage of the philosophical tradition of Malayalam language. He was the eldest among the *Niranam* poets who lived between 1350 and 1450. This work is the second earliest translation of the Gita in any language. (The first is Gyaneswari in Marathi).⁵ It is a unique translation which highlights Krishna's divine aspects, but at the same time contains frequent references to Sankara's philosophical commentary on the Gita. But unfortunately, in Malayalam, no major work with a high philosophical flavour had originated until the 16th century, which saw in Ezhuthachan a new exponent of literary genius and a philosopher who presented complex insights in a language which even the layman could understand. This could be understood as constituting the first stage of the philosophical tradition in Malayalam.

The tradition of thought developed from the writings of Ezhuthachan, though sharing with the Advaitic thought almost all the important philosophical insights, stands out from the latter by means of its emphasis on devotional aspect as well. He blends devotion with knowledge with ease as he writes:

Oh Hari Narayana salutations!
No happiness matches the knowledge that confirms
That you rule over the mind, which is an eye
For the eye which grasps the sun, fire and the lights.⁶

Again,

All the pleasures are but momentary and fluctuating
And mind you, life quickly slips away.⁷

There were many poets who followed the legacy of Ezhuthachan as he initiated a new literary style and a novel approach to the problems of life. He opened up hitherto unknown vistas to apprehend reality, but what makes the twentieth century reform movements indebted to him is not his poetic abilities but his general outlook towards life. Chattampi Swamikal and Narayana Guru stand very close to Ezhuthachan and they continue to deal with the problems with which he was preoccupied with similar intentions. All of them knew the role of knowledge in life and society and all opposed making knowledge a property. All the three thinkers carefully worked out the linguistic dimension and the social dimension of knowledge.

First they all knew that knowledge was embedded in language and is acquired and communicated through the latter. The unique relationship between knowledge and language was an accepted factor in most of the Indian traditions of thought. By recognizing the *apauresaya* character of the Vedas, the *vedantic* and other traditions overcame the 'author-centred features' of linguistic expressions that reveal knowledge. These traditions thus bring knowledge outside all possible human constraints and place it in a wider horizon.

These traditions thus originally gave humanity a set of vast and rich knowledge systems. Sanskrit was developed as a language for expressing and communicating these knowledge systems in a perfect manner. But later, with the domination of the brahmanical forms of life, these knowledge systems were kept away from the rest of the society, and Sanskrit became a language used only by the brahmins. The knowledge systems that are actually the common property of the society were preserved in this language and were hardly accessible to the non-brahmins and were never accessible to the so-called *sudras* and others who come at the bottom of the caste hierarchical order.

One of Ezhuthachan's missions was to take out these knowledge systems and make them available to the masses. He placed them in the local language which never kept any locks. The metaphysical support for these efforts was derived from the philosophical tradition of Advaitic thought. In this way they stand in a peculiar relationship with the inherited tradition of Sanskrit language. Truth and reality were explored through a language that hitherto had an inferior identity. The knowledge systems of the tradition not only found expressions in Malayalam but also the social dimension of knowledge—the role of knowledge in our society and culture and our relationship with it—has been worked out. Malayalam as a language redefined its identity. Ezhuthachan's philosophy gave it a new identity. His endeavours thus went beyond repetitions and the inherited traditions were explored differently. The tradition of dissent is thus a tradition of dialogue, where the three dimensions of time and their respective historicities participate. The tradition found in his works an acceptance as far as the fundamental philosophical assumptions are concerned. But it has also been encountered dialectically with a set of contemporary problems. The tradition of dissent has been initiated in this way. Chattampi Swamikal belongs to this tradition, though he voices his concerns in more radical and direct ways.

SWAMIKAL AND EZHUTHACHAN'S LEGACY: THE PHILOSOPHICAL EDIFICES

All of Ezhuthachan's major works deal with Indian mythological themes. Devotion thus has a prominent role. But the general philosophical standpoint is predominantly advaitic. Quite often he uses Sanskrit words and expressions as he was also writing in the *manipravalam* style. He writes that Rama is:

Pure being, consciousness and bliss, absolute non-dual
The unmovable Supreme soul, that's non-conditional and pure being
Oh, you should know with certainty
Sri Rama is the non-determined reality.⁸

This is to clearly subscribe to the advaitic concept of ultimate reality (*Brahman*) which is absolute and non-dual. It is explained in terms of pure being, consciousness and bliss (*satchitananda*). Elsewhere he refers to the *advaitic* concept of *maya*. Rama tells Lakshmana that the world and the cycle of life and death are the results of *maya*. This phenomenon, he

continues, has the dual functions of projection and concealing and the world, in its subtle and gross forms, is the result of the former function. The celebrated image of snake-rope is taken in order to explain the reality of the corporeal world. Rama then asserts the ultimate identity of the individual soul and the universal soul.⁹

In another occasion, Rama requests Sita to impart knowledge to Hanuman, his dearest devotee. Sita first explains the Truth of Sri Rama to Hanuman as:

Sri Rama is none but the Ultimate reality
Not bound to birth, death and destruction
Supreme cause, all encompassing, all pervading lord of all
One who knows everything, is witness and is eternal.¹⁰

Sita then reveals to Hanuman that she is the *Mulaprakriti*, a major philosophical concept in Indian thought, a category which explains the origination of the corporeal world. She tells him that with the mere presence of her husband she creates everything.¹¹

Chattampi Swamikal, in his work *Advaitachintapadhati*, makes clear his fundamental *advaitic* position. After explaining the various forms and levels of false attributions, and the whole dynamism of origination from the *advaitic* standpoint, Swamikal takes up the questions of the relative reality of the corporeal world and the realization of the ultimate reality. He also frequently refers to the *advaitic* images of rope-snake, water-mirage, shell-silver etc. He defines *being* as 'something that exists unchanged in all the times',¹² and goes on to explain why the corporeal world lacks any being. He writes:

We experience the corporeal world in three stages; the waking stage, dream and dreamless sleep. The world experience in the waking stage ceases to exist in the other two stages and the experiences in the dream and dreamless sleep stages are insignificant in the waking stage. Hence the world that is experienced in the three stages cannot have true being.¹³

He then asserts the reality of the fourth stage—the *thuriya* stage—and thus announces his allegiance to the *Upanisadic* and non-dualistic conceptions of reality. It is the basis and the witness of the universe which is experienced in all the above levels.¹⁴

Another section of this work deals with the great sayings (*mahavakyas*). Swamikal takes up the saying *tatvamasi*, (that is you) from *Chandokyopanasad*. He proceeds with a linguistic analysis. By revealing the limitations of the analysis based simply on the apparent word-meanings, he asserts that the relationship between word and meaning does not end with the latter. Here a discriminatory semantic analysis is essential, which has the three stages of *jahallakshana* (renouncing the apparent word meaning), *ajallakshana* (along with the word meaning, considering an object that is related to it) and the *jahadajahallakshana* (leaving one part of the word meaning and taking another part).¹⁵

Further the four *mahavakyas* are analyzed which leads to an examination into the theory of origination where he categorically asserts the *advaitic* conception of *vivarta* (apparent transformation). This work of Swamikal gives a clear exposition of the *advaitic* views in Malayalam, without deviating from the classical view of Sri Sankara.

Both the thinkers thus adopt and accept the inherited tradition of *advaitic* thought. But they considered the scope of this tradition as wider than it is generally understood. They related themselves to the tradition dialectically. To understand the nature and purpose of this relationship we need to understand the socio-cultural situations that determined the historicity of their works.

THE TRADITION OF DISSENT: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The tradition of dissent was a tradition of exploration. There was no room for disagreement in the fundamentals. But no tradition is complete without a blend of theory and practice. Every tradition will have its theoretical assumptions and its own historically determined practical ways of implementing the latter in a society. The traditions in India are not exceptions.

It is therefore paradoxical that, often the gaps between theory and practice are wide and sometimes unbridgeable in many traditions. The situation in Kerala was not different. The Kerala of Ezhuthachan's times, dominated by the caste hierarchies, nurtured a socio-political system which exhibited many inner contradictions. Though nearly four centuries separated them the situations were not radically different during the times of Chattampi Swamikal from that of Ezhuthachan. Social life centred on the caste hierarchies that placed the brahmins—in Kerala, the Namboothiris—on the top of it. Namboothiris are definitely a minority group, as they

constitute only one per cent of the total population of Kerala. But till the 18th century they were the sole landlords of Kerala and they enjoyed this privilege for nearly a millennium, without being challenged even by the powerful rulers of the land. The other castes literally worshipped them and considered them as masters.¹⁶ Others in society, from the lower caste people to the kings, sacrifice even their day-to-day needs to meet their extravagance.¹⁷

The Namboothiri legacy worked out its political and economic agenda with a well-propagated historical account which talks about the origination of the land from the ocean with a divine act of Parasu Rama, the incarnation of Lord Vishnu. Parasu Rama was believed to have bestowed the land to the Brahmins, which ultimately made them its sole owners. Even the kings ruled the land according to the wishes of the Brahmins.

But the actual reason for this continued enjoyment of privileges is the tradition of knowledge to which the Namboothiris had the special access. They have started inhabiting the land of Kerala during the times of the Chera rulers or before that and with them they brought the tradition of knowledge inherited by Sanskrit. They might have maintained contacts—not necessarily directly—with the other Brahmin groups in other parts of the subcontinent which might have enabled them to keep their knowledge tradition active and expanding. But they hardly shared this inherited knowledge with the other inhabitants of the land and even the Nairs, who were their close allies, were never taught Sanskrit. The Namboothiris were the authorities of all knowledge and keeping in mind their interests they placed themselves on the top of the socio-political milieu of Kerala life. Vedas and other authoritative works in Sanskrit were often quoted to assert their monopoly over knowledge.

Simultaneously, the Namboothiris adopted a set of customs and ritualistic practices, partially as a degeneration of their tradition and partially as a tactical move to further distance the rest of the society from their territory, which was incidentally the territory of knowledge. They mostly subscribed to the *Purva Mimamsa* tradition, which emphasized on the ritualistic practices contrary to the *advaitic* stream where knowledge acquired prominent place. All these factors together placed them in a peculiar relationship with society. This relationship had two dimensions:

- (1) They were distinct from the rest as they were the exclusive possessors of very rich knowledge systems. Subsequently, they

enjoyed special status in society and were viewed with unparalleled respect.

- (2) Along with the knowledge system they inherited, they practised the 64 *anacharas*. (The canons that determined the behaviour of the Namboothiris and their relationship with the rest. These were believed to have been established by Sri Sankara and they ultimately placed the Namboothiris high in the social order.)

Both these dimensions resulted in the alienation of the Namboothiris from the rest, a process which continued till recently. This presents a paradoxical situation to a great extent, since it is the knowledge systems that are responsible for the social alienation the Namboothiris imposed on them. A system of complicated ritualistic practices and customs were integrated with their knowledge systems. The Namboothiris failed to see this alienation as they promoted the separation with an interest to maintain the monopoly over knowledge. But this process of alienation had further consequences. In effect it had alienated the knowledge systems from the society and the people. But every society requires such sets of knowledge systems to survive and no knowledge system is meaningful outside the context of social existence. The Namboothiri legacy thus presented a crisis. Society at large failed to find a suitable medium to make the knowledge systems reach them, since Sanskrit language which nurtured them was never a language for day-to-day conversation and was also meticulously kept away from the masses by the brahmin community.

The task before Ezhuthachan was therefore multifold. His poetry was written in Malayalam and it basically dealt with philosophical themes that were the ultimate subject matter of the *Vedas*. The complexity of the subject matter demanded a unique treatment and he presented his themes with a devotional attire. Devotion was for him also a medium to communicate with the masses. *Adhyatma Ramayana* starts with the praises of Lord Rama and, different from Valmiki, his Rama is absolutely divine in nature. But behind this attire of devotion there was exploration into the nature and scope of knowledge. Ezhuthachan realized that the sole function of knowledge was liberation (*mukti*) and recognized that any monopolization of knowledge by a group would therefore take away from the rest of mankind its major benefits. Humankind's collective ownership over knowledge has been emphasized. He writes:

Seeing the hunter transformed to an ascetic
The Lord ordered that Ramayana be Composed

For the liberation of all
Those who live in the world.¹⁸

His roots were in the *advaitic* tradition that instructs that the ultimate path to salvation consists in the acquisition of knowledge. He therefore uses devotion as a means to communicate knowledge, since to acquire the latter directly will be a task difficult to accomplish by the masses.

What made Ezhuthachan the true proponent of a tradition of dissent is his criticism against the meaningless rituals and customs which were prevalent among the brahmins and which the rest of the society was forced to accept. He asserts:

Never with studies, penance, charity and rituals
Is it possible to get the ultimate liberation.¹⁹

In his short work, *Harinamakirtanam*, he undoubtedly puts it that his work, which instructs in 66 slokas the essence of *Vedantic* thought with a unique mixture of knowledge, devotion and philosophy, is meant for all, including women in menstruation, the beggar and the sinner.²⁰ He thus openly opposes the convictions of the tradition that kept away from women, *sudras* and the so-called outcastes all its knowledge systems and their benefits.

In Chattampi Swamikal these oppositions acquire a radical form as he wrote against them explicitly. His work, *Prachina Malayalam*, which carries out a historical analysis of the land and its people and also of the caste system asserts that all the privileges enjoyed by the Brahmin caste are the result of the monopolization of knowledge. This fencing on knowledge was a means to establish all forms of domination.

Swamikal announces that the sole cause of nobility is knowledge and exclaims that is it possible to impose excise duty on the latter.²¹ *Prachina Malayalam*, though it apparently looks like a work on the history of Kerala, is actually a treatise on power. He challenges the brahminical version of history and exposes the contradictions in the Parasu Rama legend, which forms its basis. By examining the ancient government records and analyzing the ancient literary works that contain references to the social life of Kerala, Swamikal arrives at the conclusion that the actual land owners of Kerala are not the Namboothiris but the Nairs whom the former call *sudras*. These findings present a polarization which is further examined from the background of caste system.

Swamikal underlines the distinction between the *varna* system which was based on quality and action and the caste system which has been in practice since long, and sees the latter as a degeneration of the former. He writes:

While the former is nectar, the latter is poison. Practising the former is like drinking the mother's milk and the latter is like drinking blood after cutting her breast.²²

He quotes from many authoritative sources like the *Bhagavat Gita*, *Mahabharata* and the *Gayatri Tantra* to strengthen his arguments.²³ Since the existing caste system is the root cause of all forms of evil and social degeneration, he calls for doing away with it. As far as knowledge is concerned these differences are irrelevant. In another book, *Vedadhikaranirupanam*, he carries out an analysis into the nature and function of knowledge in society. The monopolization of knowledge by the Namboothiris becomes the major topic of criticism here.

Vedas, according to Swamikal, are products of collective human efforts and were created by different people in different times. With this proposal he redefines the *apauruseya* character of knowledge. Knowledge, according to him is that which enables us to know the universal self. Veda or ultimate knowledge consists in the experience and realization of *brahma* and in this way the Vedas are authorless and lack beginning or end.

This analysis is followed by a critique of the authority of knowledge. Here the *varna* system was once again brought into analysis. The question is of seminal importance, as it is concerned with a phenomenon which is responsible for the segmentation of society into different groups, which again resulted in alienating the majority from constructively understanding and discovering themselves in the knowledge systems of the society. Swamikal found that this situation is the result of a created confusion between ones role in society and ones right over the knowledge systems of the society.

These two are essentially different. With respect to ones role—social functions—in the society, ones rights and obligations are determined. The *varna* system does this with precision. But there is a set of common rights and obligations irrespective of the functional group one belongs to and the rights over society's knowledge system is one of them. Swamikal writes:

All religious texts announce that, knowledge and dutiful living are inevitable for liberation. ... He who knows *brahma* alone will overcome

death. There is no other means for liberation, says the *Swetasvetaropanisad*. ... To deny the sudras the knowledge that liberates is to deny them liberation itself.²⁴

The two factors that lead to liberation—knowledge and moral living—are not related to ones birth, but one accomplishes them. As far as the natural abilities to accomplish them are concerned Brahmins are in no way in any advantageous position. One becomes a Brahmin, not by birth but by action. In this sense there will be hardly any Brahmins in the world. Hence either all have the right to learn and acquire knowledge or none has.²⁵ Swamikal asserts that the Vedas do not lose their nobility and greatness if the sudras learn them, as what makes them great is their valuable role in life.

VOICE OF THE DISSENT

The dissent gets explicit articulation in the major works of both the thinkers. But they are not absolute dissents. The dissent finds and discovers itself in the tradition. Hence the tradition of dissent lacks absolute novelty. It implies neither reproduction nor revolution as it consists in exploring the inherited traditions anew with a set of new questions. Ezhuthachan and Chattampi Swamikal picked the questions from their social systems and dialectically related them with the inherited tradition.

Every tradition works with a blend of theory with practice. But paradoxically, quite often there exists a gap between the two that again may become unbridgeable. This marks the degeneration of society and here the dissent finds a role for itself. The Kerala societies of the days of both the thinkers were degenerated societies. The major reason for this phenomenon, according to them, was the society's failure in properly relating itself with its knowledge systems. The politics of domination was a major reason for this failure. In Kerala it took the shape of monopolization of knowledge, power and financial resources.

No field of enquiry was free from this, including literature and philosophy. The inherited traditions and Sanskrit language with their conceptual and other categories dominated the latter fields. In its continuity and smooth flow, the traditions encountered hardly any opposition. But the degeneration gradually started showing its impacts. Ezhuthachan sensed this and reacted to it with his poetry. But his responses were limited to the literary

and cultural spheres. His poetry not only raised vital spiritual questions but also initiated a discourse on philosophical issues.

With Chattampi Swamikal, the local language became a medium to discuss the essential social values and educate the masses about the dynamism of power relations. Ezhuthachan initiated the protest against knowledge monopolization and Swamikal continued it and substantiated it with the real voice of the dissent, by challenging the monopolization of power and financial resources.

These two thinkers figure prominently in the social history of Kerala. The reform movements and the freedom movement had taken inspiration from their messages. Malayalees consider Ezhuthachan as the father of their language, as his philosophy gave their language a new identity. The tradition of dissent repeatedly redefines this identity.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. This paper has been presented at the ICPR National Seminar on Philosophical Tradition in the Regional Languages of India, held at New Delhi during 24 to 27 September 2001.
2. Cf. Guru, Nataraja, 1968, *The Word of Guru: An Outline of the Life and Teachings of the Guru Narayana*, Kochi, Pai & Co., p. 61.
3. Cf. Logan, William, 1981, *Malabar*, 2 Vols., Madras, Government Press, p. 118 (298).
4. Cherusserry is one of the noted poets in Malayalam and his major work is *Krishnagatha*, which depicts the story of Lord Krishna. This work emphasizes more on devotional aspects.
5. Cf. Chaitanya, Krishna, 1971, *A History of Malayalam Literature*, New Delhi, Orient Longman, p. 76.
6. Ezhuthachan, 1979, *Harinamakirthanam* (hereafter *HK*), Kozhikode, Jayabharat Publications, Sloka No. 4, p. 3 (translation mine).
7. Ezhuthachan, 2000, *Adhyatma Ramayanam* (hereafter *AR*), Thrissur, H&C Publishing House, p. 53 (translation mine).
8. *Ibid.*, p. 5 (translation mine).
9. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 101–2.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 5 (translation mine).
11. Cf. *ibid.*
12. Cf. Swamikal, Chattampi, *Advaitachintapadhati*, in Nair, Maheswaran, 1995, *Chattampi Swamikal; Jivithavum Krithikalum* (Life and Works, and hereafter *CS*), Thiruvananthapuram, Dooma Books, p. 555.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 558 (translation mine).
14. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 577–8.

15. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 603–6.
16. Cf. Aiya, Nagam, 1894, *Report on the Census of Travancore—1891*, Vol. I, Chennai, p. 653.
17. Cf. Menon, Padmanabha, 1937, *History of Kerala Vol. III*, Ernakulam, Government Press, p. 60.
18. *AR*, p. 2 (translation mine).
19. *AR*, p. 9 (translation mine).
20. Cf. *HK*, p. 7.
21. Cf. Swamikal, Chattampi, *Vedadhikaranirupanam*, in *CS*, p. 512.
22. Swamikal, Chattampi, *Prachinamalayalam* in *CS*, p. 398 (translation mine).
23. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 404–5, *Bhagavat Gita* says that '*Chaturvarnyam* is created by me on the basis of quality and action.' *Mahabharata* says that 'all men are created by Lord Brahma and due to their actions, they separated into different *varnas*.' In *Gayatri Tantra* it is said that, 'due to the difference in the nature of actions *chaturvarnya* has been established.'
24. Swamikal, Chattampi, *Vedadhikaranirupanam*, in *op. cit.*, pp. 509–10 (translation mine).
25. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 516.

NOTE TO CONTRIBUTORS

JICPR welcomes contributions in all fields of Philosophy. However, it would like its contributors to focus on what they consider to be significantly new and important in what they have to say and to consider the counter arguments to what they are saying. This is to ensure that others may judge that what they are saying is on the whole more reasonable than the views opposed to their own. The historical preliminaries may be avoided unless they are absolutely necessary to the development of the argument, as it may be assumed that most of the readers of the *Journal* are already familiar with them. Reference and quotations are generally to be avoided except in an article that is specifically exegetical. Even in such cases the author is expected to give substantive reasons as to why he differs from the accepted interpretations. The article should, as far as possible, avoid jargon and the author's contention should be stated in as simple a language as possible.

The articles which use Sanskrit terms should use the standard diacritical marks, a specimen list of which is given at the end of the *Journal*.

Editorial correspondence, including manuscripts for submission should be sent to Prof. Daya Krishna, Editor, *Journal of the Indian Council of Philosophical Research*, B/189 A, University Marg, Bapu Nagar, Jaipur - 302 015, or to the Indian Council of Philosophical Research. Articles should be between 3000 to 6000 words, two copies of which should be submitted. They should be typed on one side of the paper, **double spaced** with ample margins, and contain author(s)/contributor's name and his/her institutional affiliation along with the complete mailing address. An abstract of 150-200 words should be included. Notes and references should appear at the end of the articles as *Notes*. The authors should submit the hard copy alongwith the computer file, wherever possible, on a floppy disc or as an e-mail attachment (icpr@del2.vsnl.net.in).

Only papers which have not been published elsewhere will be considered.

Proofs will be sent to the authors if there is sufficient time to do so. They should be corrected and returned to the *Journal* at the Delhi address within ten days. Major alterations to the text cannot be accepted.

Authors will be sent twenty-five off-prints of their articles free of charge. They may order more of the same on payment.

Copyright to articles published in the *Journal* shall remain vested with the *Journal*.

Articles in the *Journal* are indexed in the *Philosopher's Index*, USA.

STYLE SHEET

For the papers in English for the *Nirgrantha*
Transliteration Conventions

For the papers written in English, words from Sanskrit, Ardhamāgadhī and other Prakrits including the Apabhraṃśa etc., will be diacriticised if rendered in Roman script. (Quotations can also be in the Nāgarī script). (Here we suggest those for the Sanskrit (classical), the Prakrit, the Apabhraṃśa, and the Dravidic languages. For other languages, namely Arabic, Persian and the modern European languages, the current international conventions for transliteration for their rendering may be followed).

Continued on back cover

Diacritical Marks

Vowels

आ	ā
ई	ī
ऊ	ū
ए, ऐ	ē } (long)
ओ	ō } (N.B. long ē and ō are for the particular syllables in Dravidic languages.)
ऋ	r̄ and not rī; (long ऋ, which rarely figures, may be rendered as r̄)

Nasals

Anusvāra

(.) m̄ and not m̄

anunāsikas

इ, ण

ऋ, ण

ॠ, ण (or ṇa as the case may be)

Hard aspirate

Visarga

(:) ḥ

Consonants

Palatals

च ca and not cha

छ cha and not chha

Linguals

ट ṭa

ठ ṭha

ड ḍa

ढ ḍha and not ḷha

Sibilants

श śa

ष ṣa

स sa

Unclassified

ळ ḷa

क्ष kṣa and not ksha

ज्ञ jñā and not djñā

ऌ ṛ and not lṛi

General Examples

kṣamā and not kshamā, jñāna and not djñāna, Kṛṣṇa and not Kṛishṇa, sucāru chatra and not suchāru chhatra etc. etc., gaḍha and not gaḷha or garha, (except in Hindi)

Dravidic (conjuncts and specific)

characters

ॠ ṛ

ॡ ṝ

ॢ ṝ̄

ॣ ṝ̄̄

Examples

ॠaṅ-Gautaman, Cōḷa (and not Choḷa),

Munnuruvamaṅalam, Māraṅ etc.

Miscellaneous

Where the second vowel in juxtaposition is clearly pronounced:

e.g. jāṇai and not jānai

Seūṇa and not Seuna

Also, for English words showing similar or parallel situations:

e.g. Preēminence and not preeminence or pre-eminence

coōperation and not cooperation or co-operation

For the Simhalese, excepting where the words are in Sanskrit, the conventions of rendering Simhalese in Roman are to be followed:

e.g. dāgaba and not dagaba

veve or vēve and not vev

Quotations from old Indian sources involving long passages, complete verses etc., should be rendered in Nāgarī script.

(The western writers, however, may render these in Roman script if they wish; these will be re-rendered in Nāgarī if necessary, by the editors.) Sanskrit quotations rendered in Roman are to be transliterated with *sandhi-viccheda* (disjoining), following the conventions of the *Epigraphia Indica*, but the signs for

laghu-guru of the syllables in a meter (when the citation is in verse) are not to be used.

Place Names

These are to be diacriticised, excepting the anglicised modern:

Examples: Mathurā, Kauśāmbī, Valabhī, Kāñcī, Uraiyūr, Tīlevalli etc., but Allahabad (not Allāhābād), Calcutta (not Calcaṭṭā), Madras (and not Madrāsa).

Annotations

There will not be footnotes; but annotations (or notes and references), serially arranged, will appear *en masse* at the end of the text in each article.

References to published works

Those pertaining to articles, books etc., appearing in the main body of the text, or annotations, or otherwise:

Title of Book, Author's name (beginning with his initials) title, edition (if any) used, the name of the series (if it appears within it); next the place of publication along with year of publication, but without a comma in between; finally the page (or pages) from where the citation is taken or to which a reference is made.