

CHAPTER 7

The Controversy Between the Advaitins and the Non-Advaitins from Madhusūdana Sarasvatī Onwards

A Reconstruction Based on the Construction by Kutumbashastrī
Entitled "The Advaita vs. non-Advaita: Anantakrishna Shastri's
Reply to Vedānta Deśika"

I

A part from the developments in Mīmāṃsā, the Nyāya, the Vaiśeṣika, Śāṅkhya and the Yoga which have been highlighted in the earlier chapters, developments in the Vedānta can only be understood in the context of the great debate between the Advaitins and the non-Advaitins culminating in the well-known work of Madhusūdana Sarasvatī entitled *Advaita-siddhi*. As the Advaitins first appeared on the scene with Śāṅkara as their *ācārya* at the beginning of the eighth century, all other schools of Vedānta had to define and defend their position against Śāṅkara who had formulated his own position as the correct understanding of *tīrtha* propounded in the so-called *prasthānatrayī*, that is the *Upaniṣad*, the *Brahma Sūtra* and the *Gītā*. As Śāṅkara had given his reasons for his own understanding of these texts, it became incumbent on all later Vedāntins who differed from him to justify their own interpretation by questioning his understanding of these texts and also to provide ground for an alternative interpretation. The myth of the *prasthānatrayī* may be said to have arisen in this way. An impression was created that these three texts were the main sources of all philosophical developments in India, and, if any philosophical position claimed to be "orthodox", it had to be in accordance with what was maintained in these texts. However, this was never the position in reality as the other *ācāryas* did not write independent commentaries on all these three texts and, as pointed out elsewhere, new texts such as the *Śrīmad Bhāgvat* were accepted as authoritative by the Vedāntin *ācāryas* in the tradition.

It was inevitable, that the debate between the Advaitin and the non-Advaitin schools of Vedānta should centre around Śāṅkara's central premise namely, the denial of the reality of all difference in order to establish his radical Advaitic position as being a true interpretation of the texts deemed by him to be the basic authoritative texts of the tradition. The debate in the discussion initiated by him

took two forms: One was related to certain basic statements in the texts mentioned above regarding the reality or non-reality of the difference at the ultimate ontological level. The second was with regard to the reality of difference at the epistemological, ontological and axio-logical levels independently of what was said in any particular statement in the texts chosen by Śaṅkara for his authoritative statement on the subject. And, though the Naiyāyikas were the prime protagonist, in the second type of debate with the Advaitins, many of the non-Advaitic Vedāntin thinkers were also seen as arguing at this level, though inevitably, they had to defend their own interpretation of the texts chosen by Śaṅkara to establish the *tīrtha* of his interpretation.

The beginnings of the debate between the Advaitins and the non-Advaitins can be tentatively dated to early second millennium. Thus, Rāmānuja in the twelfth century in his famous *Śrī Bhāṣya* on the *Brahma Sūtras* had not only exhaustively articulated Śaṅkara's position in his *pūrva pakṣa* but also refuted it to establish his own counter-interpretation of the Vedāntic position. The position he espoused has been called *Viśiṣṭādvaita* in the tradition. Yet, though Rāmānuja's work has an authoritative position in the *Viśiṣṭādvaita* tradition, it was Vedāntadeśika in 1330 whose criticism of the Advaita position in his work entitled, *Śatdūṣaṇī* became the paradigmatic anti-Advaitin work from this school. However, with the appearance in the non-Advaitic tradition of Vedānta of Madhva who was the most uncompromising dualist in his interpretation of the foundational texts of Vedānta, it appears that the criticisms given by Rāmānuja and Vedāntadeśika took a secondary place in the debate, the focus having shifted to the more outspoken and trenchant criticism of the Madhva school which needed to be replied to by the Advaitins. Madhva himself was followed by such outstanding thinkers as Jayatīrtha (A.D. 1370) and Vyāsatīrtha II (A.D. 1535) who in their works entitled, *Nyāyasudhā* and *Nyāyāmṛta*, continued the criticism of the Advaitic position and developed it further. The work of Jayatīrtha, however, seems to have been overshadowed by Vyāsatīrtha II as the latter became the real focus of the controversy for the Advaitins. The frames of this controversy were fed further by Madhusūdana Sarasvatī's outstanding point by point refutation in his *Advaitasiddhi* of Vyāsatīrtha's *Nyāyāmṛta*. As Madhusūdana Sarasvatī lived in the seventeenth century, the stage was thus already set for the controversy to be carried further into the subsequent centuries.

The controversy took an interesting turn when one of the Advaitins, that is, Āgneya Paṇḍit (A.D. 1750) in his *Vyāsatīrthaparyanirṇaya* argued that Vyāsatīrtha II rather than refuting the Advaitic position intended to support it. This contention not popularly acceptable was rejected in detail by Kapisthala Desikacharya (A.D. 1911) in his work entitled *Vyāsasiddhāntamañthana*.

One of the most important defenders of the Advaita position, in the twentieth century was Anantakrishna Shastri who, it appears, took upon himself the responsibility of replying those anti-Advaitic thinkers who had not been answered satisfactorily by the earlier Advaitins. Choosing Vedāntadeśika's *Śatdūṣaṇī* from the *Viśiṣṭādvaita* school he replied the arguments in his work entitled *Śatbhūṣaṇī*.

He also answered the questions raised in Jayatīrtha's *Nyāyasudhā* from the Madhva school and in his work entitled *Advaitatattvasudhā*. So far, no refutation had been attempted perhaps as Vyāsatīrtha II in his *Nyāyāmṛta* appears to have taken all the previous anti-Advaitic and Advaitic arguments and summarized them in such a masterly manner that Madhusūdana Sarasvatī thought that in refuting him he was refuting all the anti-Advaitic arguments that had been given until then. Anantakrishna Shastri, however, presented a detailed discussion and refutation of the arguments given by Jayatīrtha and Vedāntadeśika despite the existence of those that had been given by Vyāsatīrtha II in his *Nyāyāmṛta*.

Anantakrishna Shastri perhaps felt that it was necessary to reply to Jayatīrtha's work, as it had not been replied to adequately earlier and hence wrote *Advaitatattvasudhā*, completing the exercise on the Advaitic side. The work summarizes the points of agreement and difference between the Advaitins and non-Advaitins, even though Vidyāmanyatīrtha from the Madhva school who wrote a reply to his work, did not agree with all the so-called points of agreement between the Advaitins and the non-Advaitins as indicated by Anantakrishna Shastri in his own presentation of the subject. Vidyāmanyatīrtha's work is explicitly entitled *Advaitatattvasudha Samikṣā*. In fact, it is surprising that Anantakrishna Shastri could have ever seriously meant that the Advaitins regarded the *Vedas* as 'eternal' and all its parts as equally authoritative, particularly those which dealt with various sacrifices and other sundry matters. To claim this in the face of Śaṅkara's explicit statement that if even a hundred *śrutis* were to declare that fire is cold, no one would believe it, is to ignore the essential limitation imposed on the statements of the *Veda* (though specifically and differently) by both the Advaitins and the Mīmāṃsakas even though the limitations they impose pertain to different types of statements in it. The Advaitin's criticism of the Mīmāṃsaka makes no sense in the context of Anantakrishna Shastri's listing of the points on which the Advaitins and non-Advaitins agree. One important difference in the controversy between the Advaitins and non-Advaitin Vedāntins on the one hand and between the Advaitins and the Naiyāyikas on the other that emerges in that there is a hermeneutical dimension in the controversy, which is completely lacking in the other long controversy, which the Advaitins had with the Naiyāyikas. But then, the 'hermeneutical' enterprise is central to Mīmāṃsā also and the difference between the Mīmāṃsakas and the Vedāntins in this regard does not seem to have been explored. In any case, the long hermeneutical debate with respect to the interpretation of the Vedic texts reveals that this kind of debate remains inconclusive, as all the sides adhere steadfastly to their own interpretation, a result which might have some lessons for those who expect much from the hermeneutical studies these days.

Perhaps for the first time, a detailed examination of the works of Vedāntadeśika was made by Shastri who classifies the objections into basic topics or issues with which the discussion is concerned. He divides these issues under nine heads which deal with the interpretation of the words in some of the key *sūtras* of the *Brahmasūtra*, such as the first word of the first *sūtra*, that is, "atha"

and the words 'tat' and 'tvam' in the well-known Upaniṣadic *mahāvākya* 'tat tvam asi', the meaning of which he propounds in non-Advaitic terms. Besides these are discussed the meanings of the words in the sentence, "tat tvam asi" which are crucial both for the Advaitins and the non-Advaitins as they accept the unquestionable authority of the texts in which they occur. The other topics that he mentions are *avidyā*, *māyā* (falsity of the world), and *jīvanamukti* of which obviously only the first two are of philosophical significance. He also mentions Bhartṛprapañca's doctrine of *niṣprapañcīkaraṇa* and Niranjana Sanyasin's, doctrine of *alepakamata*. It may be interesting to note that Vedāntadeśika in his work written in the fourteenth century had considered the views of Bhartṛprapañca and Niranjana Sanyasin important enough to discuss them in detail apart from the other issues mentioned earlier. The detailed subdivision of the topics under each of these heading makes interesting reading as it maps the areas of philosophical concerns which seemed pertinent to Vedāntadeśika in the context of the debate between the Advaitins and the non-Advaitins.

ISSUES IN THE DEBATE—VEDĀNTADEŚIKA

One of the fundamental philosophical issues relates to the actuality of illusion and error that infects our knowledge and renders, many a time, what one had considered to be as true. This, as is well known, raises a generalised doubt regarding everything held as knowledge and considered to be true, leading to the suspicion that it may not really be so. The problem has recurred in western philosophy and both Descartes and Husserl are recent examples of the attempt to ground philosophy in a radical certitude after everything has been doubted or 'bracketed'. Russell's attempt to ground philosophy on the two separate certitudes of sense data, on the one hand, and logical relations, on the other, is another example of this.

What are the consequences of this false knowledge when it is regarded as true of what status are these consequences is an issue that has not been tackled so far. Because of the fact that one acts on the belief that the knowledge one entertains is "true", these consequences are apparent in the objective world as also in oneself as one has actually entertained this false knowledge in one's consciousness. In fact, a "false" knowledge may be as much about oneself as about something in the world and as the knowledge was believed to be true, one had acted on this belief and brought certain consequences into being both for oneself and the world.

Another dimension to this issue of false knowledge is provided by the world of art and imagination. Something is entertained as true, even though one knows that it is not really so. This has profound consequences apparent in the creations of man which stimulate people to participate by an act of imaginative empathy. The observer "lives" out all the emotions which are normally experienced in

connection with the actual world which alone is considered to be the object of true knowledge and true judgements.

There is yet another level where what might be meant by "true" knowledge about this world is created and posited and lived through by a willed acceptance of it as being "true" even though the assumption is "known" to be false. The Naiyāyika has tried to deal with this in the notion of *āhāryajñāna*, but it is not clear whether he has succeeded in dealing with the epistemological and ontological problem associated with this issue.

The ontological status of the object of erroneous cognition, which has been treated extensively in Indian philosophy, surprisingly, does not find any significant place in the western tradition of philosophising. However, even in the Indian tradition, the discussion relating to the problem has not been extended to the erroneous cognition of the self and the ontological status that such an object might possibly possess. The term "*jīva*" usually connotes such an erroneous cognition of the self which, in its true nature, is supposed to be the *ātman* or the *puruṣa* in Vedānta and Śāṅkhya respectively. But whom does this erroneous cognition of the self belong to as it cannot belong to the *jīva* which is constituted by the erroneous cognition itself and it cannot belong to the *ātman* also, as the *ātman* or the *puruṣa* cannot be the locus of an erroneous cognition since, by definition, it cannot have anything erroneous or false in it.

This issue is raised in the debate between the Advaitin and the non-Advaitin with respect to the locus of *avidyā*. The question asked is whether Brahman can be its locus, or in other words, whether *avidyā* can even be considered to be a property of this locus. If it cannot be so considered, then whose property is it?¹

A related problem which again has not been in the centre of philosophical discussion in the Western tradition is in regard to what exactly does the erroneous cognition do to the true nature of the object which it conceals or distorts or modifies? The Advaitin/non-Advaitin discussion focusses attention on this issue but raises it primarily to highlight how *avidyā* conceals the nature of the Brahman. It is not necessary that the question be posed only in these terms, for *avidyā* in general can conceal the nature of the object as much as that of the pure subject of experience. It is the Advaitin's presupposition that the object is there because of *avidyā* and that even the so-called relation between the subject and object occurs because of it. But, philosophically, this is not necessary as the notion of erroneous cognition is not necessarily tied to any specific view regarding what is to be considered as true.

The "positive" character of error and falsity and its difference from ignorance is similarly relevant to all thinking about knowledge. Ignorance is that of which one does not know anything at all, while when one is in error or when one entertains a belief that is false, one is aware of the object, but conceives of it incorrectly. There is, in this situation, a two-fold problem and it would be interesting to find if the Advaitin/non-Advaitin controversy has taken note of it. The problem relates to the fact that when one entertains a false belief about something, it can seldom be the case that one is wholly in error or that the belief that

one entertains is false in all respects. What is more likely is that only some aspects or features of the belief are mistaken while some others are true and, if so, the erroneous cognition of the object will have to be considered as partially true and partially false. This then raises the paradoxical nature of the erroneous cognition as being not entirely erroneous in nature.

This "positive nature" of the erroneous cognition is in contrast to the sheer state of ignorance from which it has to be radically distinguished. In case it is positive, it must have a being of its own as it cannot be pure non-being or something like pure ignorance of which one cannot even be aware, for to be aware that one is ignorant is already a step away from it and a movement towards knowledge. But if it has a being, it must be effective and hence must produce consequences, thus raising the question as to how such causal effectivity is different from that which one ascribes to true being or existence in general. In other words, *avidyā*, if it is positive, has an *arthakriyākāritva* of its own. And if so, how would one distinguish it from *vidyā* except perhaps in terms of the nature of the consequences which follow from them? Normally, the distinction in the Indian tradition has been made in terms of bondage and freedom, while in the western tradition, it has been made in terms of the success and failure of action. But both the criteria are ambiguous as it is not easy to define what is bondage or freedom or the success or failure of action. Further, it is only after the consequences occur that one knows whether one was in a state of *vidyā* or *avidyā*. On the other hand, both notions of ignorance and error involve the possibility of their removal and thus raise the question as to how this removal occurs and how one can be sure that it has really been removed. There seems to be a radical difference in this respect between ignorance and error as one can be sure that one is not ignorant if one has even some sort of knowledge about anything; while in error it is easy to fall into the illusion that one is rid of it when, in fact, one may have fallen into another error having rid oneself of the earlier one. But, if knowledge is a unified whole, then error with respect to any part of it will in fact affect the whole in some sense or the other. On the other hand, if knowledge is considered atomistically or item-wise, then one will have to find some criteria of demarcation and distinction between one knowledge and another. In any case, as the Advaitin/non-Advaitin debate is concerned not only with *avidyā* but also with its removal, the arguments given in this regard will be of wider relevance to this epistemological issue of truth and error in general.

While there can be grounds for believing that some particular objects of apparent cognition are unreal, that the Advaitin considers the whole world to be ultimately "unreal", appears meaningless for how can we say everything is unreal, as unless we know something as real, how can we call something else unreal? The Advaitin appears to have argued that an analysis of the notion of difference shows it to be self-contradictory and that distinction or difference is the constitutive condition of the world and hence the world is bound to be unreal. The debate between the Advaitin and the non-Advaitin, thus, ultimately hinges on the analysis of the notion of difference but, at another level, it could equally concern

the axiomatically presupposed idea that if something is self-contradictory in its nature, then it cannot be real. The notion of self-contradiction itself could be the subject of philosophical analysis and it could be inquired as to whether it can be relevantly applied to empirically experienced reality.

The discussion of the word “*atha*” at the beginning of the first *sūtra* in the text of the *Brahmasūtra* is totally irrelevant as the same word occurs in many other basic texts including the *Mīmāṃsā Sūtras* so that the discussion is not confined to the context of the *Brahmasūtras*, but somehow this has not been noticed in the Advaitin/non-Advaitin debate, which only shows how preconceptions can blind one to the existence of obvious objections.

The Advaitin/non-Advaitin debate raises some interesting issues: whether the function of knowing and knowership is an accidental property of the self; whether the so-called *jñātvā* and *bhoktvā* are properties imposed on it by false identificatory consciousness; whether the “witness-consciousness” should be treated as an adventitious property or not. In fact, can self-consciousness be said to have any property at all which may be regarded as its intrinsic or essential property? Similarly, can consciousness or the self be considered as a unity if there is nothing for it to unify, as all multiplicity in it is unreal. If multiplicity is unreal, then unity will also have to be unreal.

There is an interesting relationship between the well-known controversy in the Indian tradition regarding the primacy of meaning in the sentence over word meaning or the converse contention that meaning belongs primarily to the individual word and that sentential meaning is a construct. The controversy between the Advaitin and the non-Advaitin regarding the meaning of the statements of the *śruti* appears to be related to the controversy regarding the primacy of the sentential meaning over the word meaning. The non-Advaitin insists that knowledge of the meaning of Brahman precedes its meaning being established as knowledge in the sentences in which it occurs. He also seems to suggest that no secondary meaning can ever be established without first knowing the primary meaning of a word. In such a theory, therefore, *lakṣaṇā* and *vyañjanā* are always secondary to *abhidhā*. On the other hand, the Advaitin seems to argue that the sentential meaning occurs not only over and above the meanings of the individual words which are supposed to give rise to it, but even that their individual meaning can only be understood in the context of the meaning of the whole sentence of which they form a part, since at least in spoken language, the words cease to exist by the time the totality of the sentence is comprehended and its meaning grasped by the listener. In a fundamental sense, therefore, the meaning of a sentence is always primary. Also, if the context of the occurrence as well as the intention of the speaker is taken to be relevant to the understanding of the meaning, then the sentential meaning cannot but have a secondary or tertiary character to which the words in their combination only contribute in an indirect way. In other words, they can only function in a *taṭastha* manner. But if this is accepted, what exactly would be meant by the notion of primary meaning? And what exactly would be meant by the meaning of the word outside the context of

the sentence in which it occurs? Moreover, if the meaning of the sentence itself gets modified by the sentences which have preceded it or those which follow it, then would not the meaning of an individual sentence be like that of a word and function as primary meaning in relation to other sentences? Yet, even then there would remain an essential difference between the primary meaning of a word and the primary meaning of a sentence, for the latter in relation to the words which constitute it will always have a secondary character, while the meaning of a word, in case there is any such thing, will always be primary as the letters or sounds that constitute it are not considered by anybody to have any meaning at all. But, then the relation between the primary and the secondary meaning of a sentence would become relative and that which is secondary in one context will become primary in another.

Other issues in the Advaitin/non-Advaitin controversy relate to the knowledge of an object which is devoid of all qualities whatsoever. As the first *sūtra* of the *Brahmasūtras* relates to the desire for the knowledge of the Brahman, it assumes that Brahman is knowable in principle and that one cannot only have the desire to know it, but that the desire is attainable in principle. Yet, the Advaitin holds that the Brahman is devoid of all qualities whatsoever and is still knowable, implying thereby that something that is absolutely without qualities can be known, although it is not quite clear whether this knownness or being known affects the Brahman in any way or makes it possess a property which it did not possess before. On the other hand, if the absence of a property is itself treated as a property, it will then be impossible in principle for Brahman not to possess a property. It is not quite clear whether the absence of a property as a property has been the subject of the debate between the Advaitin and the non-Advaitin, on what has been, the Advaitin's reply to it? It may be said that knowledge of the Brahman is not like the knowledge of any object as it is beyond the subject-object distinction.

Yet, the *ātman* is supposed to be both devoid of this knowledge through beginningless *avidyā* and desirous of having it. Not only this, in the state of liberation, it is supposed to attain this knowledge which, in fact, is identical with "liberation" itself. In other words, 'liberation' and 'bondage' are the same as the presence or absence of this knowledge in the *ātman*. In fact, one may distinguish the three stages in the process: First, when one is completely ignorant about Brahman and does not know anything about it and hence no desire to know it would possibly arise. The second stage is when one has heard that there is such a thing as Brahman and one has the desire to know it. What is meant here by this desire of 'knowing' and how is this desire different from other desires for knowledge? This leads one to explore the phenomenology of the desire for knowledge and the different kinds of knowledge that there can be and the differences in the desire for them. Such a phenomenological epistemological analysis has perhaps not yet been undertaken. Nor has the analogous problem regarding an analysis of the desire for the knowledge of the Self been undertaken.

In fact, what difference would it have made if the *Brahmasūtras* were called the “*Ātmasūtras*” instead and the first *sūtra* been written as “*Athāto ātma jijnāsā*”?

The third stage is supposed to arise when this desire for knowledge has been fulfilled. Here, two questions arise: (i) whether any desire can ever be fulfilled, and (ii) whether the desire for knowledge can ever be completely fulfilled. Normally, the fulfillment of a desire gives rise to another desire which may be of the same kind or of a different kind. As for the desire for knowledge, it seems to be of a very peculiar nature as the criterion for its fulfillment itself means that some new questions have arisen which demand further answers. It is true that one may feel a state of satiation after the fulfillment of a desire, just as one may feel that the question that one had raised has been answered and that there are no more questions to be asked. But such a state is only temporary, because if one is physically alive, the desire will arise once again and, similarly, if one is intellectually alive, new questions will arise to challenge one’s desire for knowing once more. It is true that it has been suggested that the final and absolute cessation of this process is itself the goal of seeking which is variously named as the *mokṣa* or *nirvāṇa* of brahman-realisation or *kaivalya* or *Śiva-śakti sāmarasya*, implying that the dichotomy between the seeking and the sought, the desiring and the desired, the subject and the object has finally been overcome. But then, non-existence of such a dichotomy exists almost by definition in the state supposed to characterize non-living, material objects which are devoid of all consciousness. If so, how does one distinguish between this state and the state in which all dichotomies have been finally overcome absolutely and forever. And, if one makes a distinction between the two states how will the Advaitin deal with this final distinction which still haunts and affects the so-called state where no distinctions whatsoever can be ascribed or conceived.

The problem of the knowledge of that which is completely without any attributes whatsoever has arisen in the western tradition in the philosophies of Locke and Kant. Locke had called a substance a ‘know-not-what’ while Kant had called a thing-in-itself an object of thought, but not of knowledge. The problem was never directly tackled even though both Berkeley and Hegel tried to get rid of such a postulated entity in different ways, and argued that the distinction between thought and knowledge was untenable. It would be interesting to find whether the Advaitin/non-Advaitin controversy has dealt with this problem.

Are there any entities which can be known only through the secondary significance of the words, as no primary meanings can ever indicate them or apply to them? Many points of discussion are raised while examining the concept of secondary meanings from the Advaitin and non-Advaitin perspectives. The world created by secondary and tertiary meanings and its autonomy and independence from the world of primary meanings needs to be investigated. In the contemporary epistemological discussion relating to the philosophy of science the ontological status of theoretic entities are postulated to understand primary sense experience. However, it is not quite clear whether the two are the same or if there is any relation between them. Further, what exactly is meant by primary

meaning? Does it apply to primary objects alone, or to that which can be grasped by the senses, or to that which can be known by reason and inference but never by perception, or does it apply to possible percepts, which can be imagined but which are never the objects of perception? Anantakrishna Shastri contends that the Viśiṣṭādvaitin had to take as much recourse to the primacy of secondary meaning in his own description of ontic reality as the Advaitin does. The deeper problem however, which this observation of Pt. Anantakrishna Shastri raises, is whether any thinking about reality can avoid positing entities whose meaning primarily arises from their secondary significance and which are not only known by their primary meaning but are also incapable of being so known in principle. But if such is the case, as Pt. Anantakrishna Shastri seems to contend, then how does one choose between the different entities so posited if they themselves are opposed to one another. The problem in the context of the Advaitin/non-Advaitin debate may be put in the following way: if both of them are forced to posit such entities, then what is the ground for preferring one to the other?

Regarding the consequences of false knowledge, Śaṅkara himself had argued that a false knowledge can have "real" consequences. But it is doubtful if he would have accepted that a knowledge that is false can lead to liberation or *mokṣa* or freedom. It is not clear why such a limitation on the nature of consequences following from the falsity of knowledge should be imposed and on what grounds. There would be no problem if the falsity of knowledge resulted in no consequence whatsoever, but in case it does, it is not clear why the consequence should be only evil and not good. One may, for example, meaningfully achieve a very significant state of consciousness by means of a great imaginative creation which in itself is not real or which may even represent something that is totally false, just as by meditating on an image of a deity, one may achieve a state of consciousness which is of profound significance and which itself may later have desirable observable effects on one's behaviour. The relation between the "falsity" of knowledge and the specific nature of the consequences that alone may follow from it is an ontological supposition in Advaita and non-Advaita Vedānta which needs justification and further exploration. (The Advaitin seems to posit a third state between something which is not characterised by any property whatsoever and something which is characterised by properties which are generally called *upādhi* and this he calls *Saupādhika Brahman* which is not supposed to have any *upādhi* but which is not completely devoid of all attributes or properties either as it is related to *jīva*. This distinction is made by Vācaspati Miśra I in his *Bhāmatī* and needs to be clarified further.)

The discussions in Advaita Vedānta regarding the destruction of ignorance or false knowledge have to be seen not only in the specific context of the relationship between Brahman, *jīva* and *avidyā*, etc., but also in the ordinary instance of erroneous cognition and its removal in day to day life. However, as pointed out earlier, a distinction has to be drawn between the removal of ignorance and the removal of erroneous cognition. Further can an erroneous cognition be said to remove ignorance, for ignorance is the total absence of any awareness regarding

a thing that exists or is real, while an erroneous cognition is aware of it, but is supposed to misapprehend it in some way or other. Should one therefore regard the state of ignorance as being better than a state in which one has an erroneous cognition about the object of which one was ignorant or should one regard an erroneous cognition as a better state, as it is at least aware that something is there about the existence of which one was previously ignorant. Another aspect to be examined is that of the relation between the erroneous cognition and the same cognition when it is corrected by subsequent knowledge because a memory of the erroneous cognition still haunts or infects the corrected cognition in some sense or the other. This may be considered as analogous to the Advaita Vedānta context in which the notion of the *Śatapatha Brahman* is postulated which itself gives way to a pure *Śuddha Brahman*. The difference between the two is said to be that while in the former there is still a reference to the *avidyā* that has been corrected, in the latter even such a reference does not exist. This, of course, happens in the case of all erroneous cognitions and is not peculiar to the knowledge of Brahman alone, even though the discussion between the Advaitins and the non-Advaitins do not see it in this way.

The distinction between knowledge as an essential property of consciousness or as an accidental and adventitious property is usually formulated in the classical discussion of the subject as *svarūpa jñāna* and *vṛtti jñāna* or between *dharmī jñāna* or *dharma jñāna*. The former is treated as the natural property of the self and the latter as its accidental property. The distinction, however, is linked to what exactly is meant by *svarūpa jñāna* or *dharmī jñāna*, for in both cases, the self or consciousness will have to bifurcate itself into the subject and object of cognition, unless one can think of a state of consciousness in which such a distinction does not exist. The Advaitin, however, cannot in principle, admit any distinction at the ultimate level and hence cannot legitimately employ the notion of *svarūpa jñāna*.

Eternality of Knowledge

The eternity or non-eternity of knowledge adds another dimension to the discussion for, if the self has knowledge as a property then obviously, this would be the essential property ascribed to it as long as the self is there. But, if knowledge is something relational, that is, if it is knowledge of "something", then the self will always have to be at least aware of itself in relation to something else of which it has the knowledge. On the other hand, even in such a situation in respect of that of which the self is supposed to have knowledge there can be no "necessity" regarding the supposed knowledge. As, in case it is knowledge of anything other than itself then generally such a knowledge is supposed to be accidental or adventitious as there can be no necessity about having knowledge of one thing rather than another. What will be necessary in such a situation is only that one is aware of "something", but there is no necessity regarding what that something is or ought to be.

However, the question will remain as to what happens to the specificity of the knowledge when it ceases to be. Does it, for example, leave any trace of itself, any *samskāra*, anything which becomes the ground for remembering what one had known and which makes memory possible? In case it does, the so-called *ṛtti jñāna* or *dharmā jñāna*, even though adventitious and accidental, would make a difference to the consciousness itself as the consciousness will not only be aware of itself but also of itself as having had those *ṛtti jñānas* which have ceased to be. The memory, of course, need not always be present in consciousness, but it certainly can occur at any time and when it does, it certainly becomes not only an object to consciousness, but it also affects it in some way or the other. In distinguishing between the *ṛtti jñāna* of memory as different from the *ṛtti jñāna* of that of which it is supposed to be a memory, one generally says that the difference lies in that in memory the object or event of which one is aware, is attended by the consciousness that it had happened in the past. It would be interesting to ask about the temporal dimension of the *ṛtti jñāna* in perception, in memory, in dreams, in respect to imagined objects and in self-consciousness. The *Viśiṣṭādvaitins* seemed to hold the peculiar doctrine that *ṛtti jñāna* and *dharmā jñāna* are eternal in nature and come into being and are destroyed because of expansion and contraction which, according to this school, is the peculiar nature of all such knowledge. How do they explain the awareness of an object that had never been known before?

The issue of the eternity of knowledge in the controversy between the Advaitin and the non-Advaitin, in fact, raises the wider question as to how anything can even be regarded as eternal, particularly when it arises and ceases to be in the context of human experience. The problem arises, for example, in relation to sound, the eternity of which is accepted by the *Mīmāṃsakas* and disputed by *Gautama* in his *Nyāya Sūtras*. One would then have to distinguish between eternity and non-eternity, between the object of awareness and the awareness itself, for knowledge generally appears and disappears whatever be the nature of the object concerned. The *Vedāntins* have argued for the eternity of awareness and the non-eternity of the object of awareness on the basis of the *anvayavyatireka* as the one always seems to change while the other remains constant.

The predication of eternity itself to anything whatsoever is matter for discussion, and, in case it is predicated, how can one determine its validity. In the western philosophical tradition, a distinction is made between two meanings of eternity, one relating to the fact that temporal predicates are irrelevant to the object concerned, while in the second meaning, it merely refers to indefinite endurance in time. The usual example given of the former kind of objects relates to mathematical entities and the relationships between them. As for the second, it is obviously difficult to give an example of this unless time itself were to be given as an example as it would be difficult to prove that something which has endured in time would continue to do so for ever. However, this is explored in the *Nyāya* tradition in respect of their concepts of *prāgabhāva* and *dhvaṃśābhāva* and *atyantābhāva*. The external character of the predicates "true" and/or "false"

in respect to tautological and self-contradictory statements in the western tradition are also discussed. There is a similar problem in respect of the so-called *tīrtha* or falsity of those expressions whose suitable spatio-temporal co-ordinates are clearly provided.

The Advaitin/non-Advaitin controversy does not seem to have taken note of these issues even tangentially. Nor does it seem to have asked the central question as to what is the relation of Brahman and *ātman* to time. In case, time is an illusion, what would it mean to call Brahman or *ātman* eternal? There is also postulated the non-destructibility of that which has no parts, such as the Vaiśeṣikā atom and the consequent eternity derived from its non-destructibility. But ontological destructibility does not imply that the thing will not get new properties because of its relation with other entities or even because of the fact that it becomes an object of knowledge and awareness.

How eternity can be ascribed to any entity which undergoes actual or possible changes is a particularly interesting issue, especially, in the context of the Śāṅkhya system where the eternity of *prakṛti* is accepted in spite of the fact that it undergoes constant transformation and modification. Similarly, the Jainas believe that the *ātman*, though eternal, expands and contracts and in fact has a spatial dimension to it. The Advaitin does not accept any change or modification in Brahman, but it does accept a distinction in the *ātman* between the state of knowledge and the state of ignorance and the transition from one to the other. He then would have to accept a radical difference between the Brahman and the *ātman*, unless *māyā* is supposed to play the same role with respect to Brahman as *avidyā* does in the case of the *ātman*.

Whether an eternal object can have possible changes or modifications in it is an issue that leads further to an exploration of whether the property that such an eternal object possesses must also be eternal as is maintained by the Naiyāyikas. The Viśiṣṭādvaitins hold that knowledge is a substance and not a property of the *ātman* as is held by the Naiyāyikas. What could possibly be meant by understanding knowledge as a substance and not as a property? On the other hand, the distinction between the Naiyāyika and the Advaitin would be that for the Naiyāyika, knowledge is an emergent property which when it occurs belongs to the self which, however, does not have it as its essential property. For the Advaitin, on the other hand, knowledge would be an essential property of the self, though it is not quite clear what could possibly be meant by this as the Advaitin does not accept either the self or anything else as an object of this knowledge.

The problem of identity and difference, however formulated, cannot be made intelligible in the context of the Advaitin's assertion of the identity between the self and the Brahman as all examples would be those of identity and difference, that is, *tādātmya*, as it is understood in Nyāya, where the identity between the pot and the clay is supposed to be because of the causal relation or the identity of the body and the self which though non-causal still maintains the difference between the two even while asserting identity. The crucial point of the debate seems to be how to conceive of the identity relation in an intelligible

fashion and how to understand, epistemologically and ontologically, ignorance and erroneous consciousness and its removal.

To comprehensively sum up, Vedāntadeśika's discussion of Advaita, it may thus be considered as focussing mainly on two fundamental and interrelated issues: one, relating to foundational ignorance, and the other relating to the unreality of the world. All the other issues appear to be related either to questions of textual interpretation about which one can disagree or an empirical possibility such as that relating to the realization of complete liberation during one's lifetime. The doctrines of *Bhartyprapañca* and *Nirañjana Sanyāsin* seem too specific in character and most probably were of importance at the time when he was writing on the subject. Ultimately, the philosophical issues of dispute between the Advaitin and the non-Advaitin relate to the ontological reality of the world and the argument for the rootedness of its unreality in some foundational constitutive ignorance inherent in the very structure of human consciousness which, however, permits its own awareness and the annihilation of that ignorance.

The Advaitic position may be, in fact, reformulated in more trenchant philosophical terms as that of the meaning of an identity statement of the form "A is B" along with what can possibly be meant by a statement which ascribes "unreality" to anything in a statement such as "X is unreal". Similarly, the third issue relating to the idea of "*jīvan mukti*" may be reformulated as to whether it is possible to conceive of the realization of the ideal of freedom within the limitations, restrictions and necessities imposed by the requirements of living, both at the biological, the psychological and the socio-cultural levels.

Formulated in this way, the issues assume a contemporary relevance and profound significance for philosophical thought, and the discussion in the tradition of these assumes a significance far beyond the specific context of the Upaniṣadic *mahāvākyas* or the statements in the *Brahmasūtra* in the context of which they had usually been carried on. Does the statement of identity deny the difference between A and B in the sentence 'A is B' and, if so, how is it different from the statement 'A is A'? It may be recalled in this connection that Aristotle is supposed to have formulated the law of identity as 'A is A'; while the Nyāya tradition in India is supposed to have rejected the statement 'A is A' as altogether meaningless for it contains no information at all. Abstract identity is also attacked in the western tradition by Hegel and many others on the ground that it is not identity at all.² On the other hand, if difference is admitted between A and B, then what is the point in calling them identical? In other words, what exactly is the difference between the notions of 'identity' and 'similarity'? However, even in the statement "A is similar to B", it may be asked 'similar in what respect?' and whether the aspects in which they are similar, are not to be regarded as identical. For, if they are not treated as identical, then again we will expect some difference between them. Then further there is numerical difference or spatio-temporal difference, but as there are objects with respect to which spatio-temporal predicates are irrelevant, the problem of identity with respect to them will remain.

Similarly, the identity between a substance and its attribute and between the universal and the particular instances in which it is supposed to be exemplified, need to be explored. The problem of identity and difference, then, is central to philosophical thought and the Advaitin and the non-Advaitin debate on it needs a closer analysis.

The issue of unreality and that of whether what we consider as real may actually be so or does not hold the same central place in philosophy. What exactly is meant by the terms 'real' and 'unreal' and what is the status of that which is declared to be unreal? In recent philosophy, Quine has raised this issue in his well-known paper entitled 'On What There Is' and has suggested how one may significantly assert a negation of something without postulating any 'possible' being for it. But then, all significant negations will become equivalent as there will remain no way to distinguish between 'X does not exist' and 'Y does not exist'. Further, one may meaningfully attempt to distinguish between the notions of 'reality' and 'existence' and examine whether 'existence' is a predicate like other predicates which may be supposed to be present or absent as the case may be. The notion of "possibility" is closely related to these issues and though recent developments in modal logic have added new dimensions to this, the ontological significance of this is not quite clear.

The 'real-unreal' dichotomy was brought into the western philosophical discussion by Kant in his new notion of what may be called a 'transcendental illusion'. This means that something that was presupposed as a condition for objectivity was itself apprehended as an "object" and treated self-evidently as such, giving rise to fundamental insoluble problems for thought and that it was only a transcendental critique which exposed the illusoriness of such an illusion.

These are trans-cultural and trans-civilizational issues that occupy the centre stage in philosophical debate in all traditions of philosophy and go beyond the Advaitin/non-Advaitin debate. Similarly, the values that all cultures have postulated for man's realization are linked to man's biological, psychological and social necessities within which inevitably and only may one actualize the values and ideals of human life including the ideal of freedom or liberation.

NON-ADVAITIC SCHOOLS

The Advaita/non-Advaita controversy has primarily centered between the followers of Rāmānuja or Madhva and those of Śaṅkara. However, non-Advaitic schools of Vedānta continued to be formed after Madhva, the most well-known being of the school of Vallabhācārya, who flourished in the last part of the fifteenth century and the early part of the sixteenth century (1479–1531). He stayed near Banaras and is supposed to have become a focal point of controversy in both the Mīmāṃsaka and the Advaitin camps. He is said to have clarified his position in a paper which he put on the doors of the Vishwanath temple. As this paper outlined Vallabhācārya's position as different from both the Mīmāṃsakas and

the Advaitins, it assumed central importance as a position in the non-Advaitic Vedānta which differed from that of Rāmānuja and Madhva in that it attempted to come to terms with both the Mīmāṃsaka and the Śaṅkarite interpretations of the *śruti*. It is interesting to note that hardly any representatives of Rāmānuja and the Madhva School existed in Banaras as one does not hear of any objections to his position from these schools of non-Advaitic Vedānta. Perhaps, the situation continues to be the same as the Rāmānuja and the Madhva *saṁpradāyas* are not well-known outside the southern peninsula where these schools had appeared and still continue to flourish.

Vallabhācārya's position, as presented in his paper, has been commented upon by Giridharjī, Śrī Harirāyājī and Sri Puruṣottamājī. Recently, Shri Shyam Manoharjī Gosvami brought out all these commentaries, along with the original text, and published them together in a volume entitled *Patrāvalambana*. It is interesting to note that according to Sri Shyam Manoharjī, Sri Vallabhācārya does not accept that the *Karmakāṇḍa* of the *Mīmāṃsāsūtras* and the *Jñānakāṇḍa* of the *Brahmasūtras* form a unified whole as has been argued by many people including Rāmānuja. Rather, according to him, they relate to totally different subjects, the only relation between them perhaps being that they belong to the same life of man. He also draws attention to the fact that Śrī Vallabhācārya bases his interpretation of the *Upaniṣads* on the statement, "All this is Brahman".

But, though there is a *prima facie* attempt to delink the two *Mīmāṃsās* at a deeper level, there seems to be an attempt to place them in some sort of a unified perspective where Brahman is equated with Īśvara and Īśvara with the Kṛṣṇa of the *Bhagvadgītā* and the *Bhāgavat*. Also, there seems to have been some adaptation of Rāmānuja's idea that the world is a body of the Supreme Spirit, that is, God. This was attempted specifically with respect to the various *yajñas*, such as the Agnihotra, the Darśapūrvamāsa, the Soma, and so forth dealt with in the *Mīmāṃsāsūtras* which are regarded as parts of the body of the Supreme Being whose head is the *Jñānakāṇḍa* as treated in the *Brahmasūtras*. The so-called *karma* dealt with in the *Mīmāṃsāsūtras* and the *jñāna* dealt with in the *Brahmasūtras* are also related to the different *āśramas* in a man's life as are usually accepted in the Indian tradition. Vallabhācārya also makes a distinction between *yajñas* which are done with knowledge and those which are not done with knowledge and he makes an interesting distinction between the *sāttvika*, the *rājasika* and the *tāmasika yajña*. This distinction helps him to explain how the performance of the Vedic *yajñas* may lead to liberation in case they are done with the knowledge propounded in the *Brahmasūtras* as everything is Brahman. On the other hand, if performed without this knowledge, one only gets to heaven. However, in both the cases, he brings in the grace of God and disrupts the mechanical relation between the Vedic *yajña* and its results propounded in the *Mīmāṃsā* or the immediate, spontaneous attainment of liberation on the realization of the meaning of the *mahāvākyas* as is maintained by the Advaitins. He also tries to reconcile *karma*, *jñāna* and *bhakti* by equating the Brahman with Īśvara and Īśvara with the Kṛṣṇa of the *Bhagvadgītā* and the *Śrīmad Bhāgavat*, forgetting that the *karma* which

Kṛṣṇa is asking Arjuna to engage in is not the performance of a Vedic *yajña* but that of a righteous battle for the sake of maintaining *dharma* in which one has to kill one's near and dear ones. It is strange to find that even in the sixteenth century the problem of reconciling the *Pūrva* and the *Uttara Mīmāṃsā* continues to haunt the orthodox Indian mind and that a person of the stature of Vallabhācārya felt the necessity for writing a fresh commentary not only on the *Brahmasūtras* but also on the *Mīmāṃsāsūtras* while questioning, at important points, Śābara's interpretation of the later *Sūtras*, just as he had questioned Śāṅkara's interpretation of the *Brahmasūtras*.

In the *Patrāvalambana* by Sri Shyam Manohar Gosvami the following topics are discussed:

1. The doctrine of Brahman.
2. The creation of the world according to the doctrine of Brahman.
3. The relation of the world of form and action with the world of names.
4. A comparison between the experience generated by words and the one generated by perception.
5. That the doctrine of Brahman is the same as the identity relation between word and its meaning and a sentence and its meaning.
6. The Veda as being equivalent to sentences which are both *sādhya* and *siddha*, while God is the essential meaning of those sentences.
7. The *Pūrvakāṇḍa* determines or tells what is to be attained (*sādhya*) while the *Uttarakāṇḍa* names that which is attained (*siddha*).
8. The conflict between two parts of the *Mīmāṃsā* and *Vedānta* is similar to the conflict between Rahu and Kabandha and the resolution of this conflict.
9. The unity of a *śāstra*.
10. The difference or non-difference or identity of Veda and *Vedānta*.
11. Injunctive meaning and *Mīmāṃsā*.
12. The meaning of injunctive sentences according to Vallabha *Vedānta*.
13. Actions differentiated on the basis of the fact as to whether they are performed in fulfillment of an injunction or for sheer joy or play or for their own sake.
14. Forms of teaching or learning.
15. Reflection and analysis of Śāṅkara's view-point.
16. The analysis of teaching, learning and knowing according to Vallabhācārya.
17. A comparative study of the attempts at a unified interpretation of the whole Vedic corpus.
18. A summary of the doctrines of the Vallabha *Vedānta*.
19. A comparative analysis of the different schools of *Vedānta*.
20. The determination of the meaning of the *śruti* according to one's own reasoning faculty and doubts that one may raise regarding it versus the determination of the meaning of the *śruti* according to the sentences.

21. The problem of the validity of the *śruti* sentences and ordinary sentences.
22. The presentation of the four *puruṣārthas* in the *Pūrva* and the *Uttarakāṇḍa* of the Veda.

Shri Shyam Manohar Gosvami's extended discussion of various issues in the *Patrāvalambana* of Śrī Vallabhācārya focus attention upon the central concerns in the Vedāntic tradition of philosophising in India. The discussion relates to: one, the relation between Brahman and the world; two, to the problem of the interpretation of the Vedic sentences and the unity of meaning of the Vedic text itself, and three, to the relation between the concept of Brahman and the idea of a personal God or Īśvara. In the interpretation of the Vedic corpus, a divergence emerges between the *yajña*-centric interpretation of the *Mīmāṃsā* and the Brahman-centric interpretation of the *Brahmasūtras*. This creates the problem of the reconciliation between *karma* and *jñāna* or between the injunctive sentences of the Veda which enjoined one to perform sacrifices and those which asserted the unity of the self and everything else with the Brahman.

In his exegetics of Vallabha Vedānta, Shri Shyam Manohar Gosvami does not delink the hard core philosophical issues which arise in this connection from the specificity of the context in which those issues had arisen. The very first distinction between a Vedic sentence and a non-Vedic sentence is, from the linguistic point of view, untenable as all language *qua* language is one and hence the problem of meaning of word and sentences cannot in principle be divided into the meaning of words and sentences of the Veda, on the one hand, and the words and sentences of non-Vedic language, on the other. The attempt to derive the distinction from the fact that non-Vedic linguistic sentences are human productions and hence liable to be infected with falsity and other kinds of defects, while the Vedic sentences are intrinsically free from these as they are not the utterances of anybody, rests on the questionable assumption that the Vedic sentences have no source other than themselves. This obviously could not be the position of those who believe in a personal God or Īśvara as, according to them, the source of Vedic sentences must be God himself and hence their authority can be derived only from the fact that God is their author. However, then they cannot establish the reality of God or Brahman from the Vedic sentences themselves as this will not only involve the fallacy of circular reasoning but also make God dependent on the interpretation of the Vedic sentences themselves. This would also apply to those who deny Īśvara and believe in Brahman, for it is not quite clear as to what for them would be the relation between Brahman and the Vedic sentences on the grounds of which they believe in its reality. Moreover, in this entire discussion, the exact nature and content of the Vedic corpus is completely ignored and only generalised statements are made about this. To say that each *vākya* of the Veda and the totality of the Vedic sentences only refer to Īśvara who is identical with Hari or Kṛṣṇa, is as arbitrary as to say that it refers to Brahman or to *yajña*. One cannot avoid the introduction of the notion of *arthavāda*

as Shri Shyam Manohar Gosvami seems to do, as one would have to take individual sentences and show how they refer to Śrī Hari or Brahman or an injunction to do *yajña*, as the case may be.

In fact, the strategy adopted by Bhartṛhari seems better, as he discards the distinction between ordinary and Vedic language and formulates the distinction between manifest and unmanifest language, the latter having three levels of its own called *madhyamā*, *paśyantī* and *parā*, the last being identical with unitary, undifferentiated reality called *śabda-Brahman*. In his discussion of action Vallabhācārya's identification of the Upaniṣadic Brahman with the Īśvara as the creator of the world and his further identification of this Īśvara with the Kṛṣṇa of the *Bhagavad Gītā* and the *Bhāgavat* had a long history in continuity with the other *ācāryas* of the Vedānta tradition. Though Śaṅkara himself had initiated such an enterprise by writing a commentary on the *Gītā* and composing beautiful hymns in praise of various Gods and Goddesses, he had resisted the temptation of identifying Brahman with Īśvara or Īśvara with Kṛṣṇa as the later *ācāryas* seem to have done. In fact, in Śaṅkara's strict philosophical formulations, Īśvara belonged to the realm of ignorance and *avidyā* while the idea of the world being a creation of God was a part of the general illusion. He also seems to have resisted the identification of Īśvara with Kṛṣṇa as he is supposed to have said in his commentary on the *Gītā* that Kṛṣṇa was a *māyika* creation of Īśvara himself. In any case, it appears that Śaṅkara as a philosopher was not overwhelmed by the emotions of devotion to a personal God, in an exclusive form as seems to have occurred later. This fact has to be viewed in the context of the eighth century when Islam was non-existent in India and the main antagonists were the Buddhists who themselves had developed the concept of *śūnya* which was beyond all rational description and determination. Yet, there must have been some compulsion for Śaṅkara to take the *Gītā* seriously and to give it an Advaitic interpretation which obviously did violence to it.

In the eleventh century when Yāmunācārya appeared in the south, the situation in the North had changed dramatically. Mahmud of Ghazni had attacked India repeatedly and won some decisive victories symbolically destroying the temple of Somnath. This perhaps resulted in the shifting of the intellectual activity from the North to the South. It is not quite clear whether Yāmunācārya wrote a commentary on the *Brahmasūtras* and whether he identified Brahman with Īśvara. But that he explicitly wanted to establish the authority of both the *Gītā* and the *Śrīmad Bhāgavat* as coordinate with that of the *Upaniṣad* and the Veda is clear, for he wrote his *Āgama Prāmāṇya* to establish just this point. However, whether he wanted to restrict the term "āgama" only to those two texts or whether he was using it in a wider sense to include the Jaina, Buddha and Tantra *āgamas* as well is not certain. In case the latter texts were included, the differences between these, if held as equally authoritative, would need to be reconciled. Moreover, when Yāmunācārya is not supposed to deny the authority of the *śruti* according to tradition, how would he have reconciled the differences between the *śruti* and all these āgamic traditions?

With the appearance of Rāmānuja in the twelfth century, the identification of Brahman not only with Īśvara but with Viṣṇu or Śrīhari seems to have been complete and the world itself was treated as his body. The path of real devotion to a personal God was thus philosophically founded in the orthodox Vedic tradition itself. But it is not quite clear whether the identification of Viṣṇu with Kṛṣṇa took place explicitly in the thought of Rāmānuja, even though the authority of the *Gītā* and the *Śrīmad Bhāgvat* seems to have been more firmly established with him. The reality of both the world and a personal God along with the identification of the latter with a well-known mythic personality of the *Purāṇas*, however, was slowly taking shape among the so-called Vedāntic *ācāryas* whose primary interest seems to have been to move away from the world inhabited by both the Vedic thinkers belonging to the *yajña* and the *jñāna* traditions and the one occupied by the *āgamic* tradition of the Buddhist and the Jainas. The latter had, obviously, no place for a personal God as a creator of the world and hence no question could arise of his identification with any mythic personality of the epics of the tradition, that is the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*.

Madhva, in the fourteenth century carried the movement further by radically developing the notions of difference, thus granting an independent reality both of the world and the individual selves, even though both were seen as creations of a personal God, that is, Īśvara equated with Brahman. It is not clear how far he identified this personal God or Īśvara with Viṣṇu or with Kṛṣṇa as seems to have clearly been the case with Rāmānuja. These identifications are complete with Śrī Vallabhācārya at the end of the fifteenth and early sixteenth century, and the assertions of a personal God and his identity with Viṣṇu, on the one hand, and Kṛṣṇa, on the other, are carried to the extreme and the life in the world was completely vindicated if it was lived in the consciousness of and service to the Lord Himself.

The period from the eleventh to the sixteenth century is characterized by two factors which have to be taken into account in understanding this movement of philosophical thought in India. The first is the complete disappearance of the Buddhists as the antagonists with the destruction of Nālandā in the A.D. 120. The second is the gradual intrusion of the Muslims in different parts of India and the establishment of political control by them. This should be seen as a socio-political and cultural situation where the political power centre was in the hands of those who believed in a different religious tradition which had nothing to do with the tradition of India and which, in its ideological orientation, was completely hostile to the religious and cultural ethos of India as it had developed over two millennia of its history. At the same time, there was an intense assertion of a personal God who had created the world and who had sent his personal messenger to reveal the truth to mankind. The development of Indian theism from the eleventh century onwards, then, has to be seen in the political context of those times and the challenge that it had presented to thinkers of that period.

In fact Udayana, who stands at the transition from A.D. first millennium to the second millennium, is a classic example of a person who tried to combine

these diverse trends in his personality. As Buddhism had not yet disappeared from the scene, his main antagonists were the Buddhists. He also argued against the Mīmāṃsā tradition, perhaps the most uncompromising example of philosophical thought in any tradition in its propounding the notion of an authoritative text independent of any God, personal or impersonal. He was also influenced by the Advaitic tradition of Śaṅkara and tried to reconcile the Nyāya position with regard to the self with the Advaitic notion as developed by Śaṅkara. The establishment of the reality of a personal God by Udayana indicated the direction of the developments, but there still did not exist any dominance of devotion in Udayana or the identification of this personal God with Viṣṇu or Kṛṣṇa as was to happen later.

It should not be forgotten that from the eighth century onwards is also a period of great temple building in India, culminating somewhere around the thirteenth century with the great temple complexes of South, East and Central India. The simultaneous development of the literature in regional languages from the eleventh century onwards and the dominance of the devotional tradition in it should therefore be seen as a reflection of the activity of the *ācāryas* in the Sanskrit tradition.

This is also the period when the South continued to be ruled by Hindu kingdoms for a substantially longer period of time than the North. Yet, gradually, Bijapur, Golkunda and Ahmadnagara came under Islamic rule, while the Hindu Vijaynagar empire in the deep South lasted till the latter half of the sixteenth century. However, the Vijaynagar Empire was surrounded by Islamic rulers on all sides and some of its intellectual activities may be understood only in this context. If, the *ācāryas* had turned to the *Brahmasūtras*, the *Gītā* and the *Śrīmad Bhāgavata*, Sāyaṇa Mādharma of the Vijaynagar Empire turned to the Vedas and wrote his famous commentaries on them during this period. The work of the Vijaynagar scholars is similar to the impulse that made Dayanand Saraswati go back to the Vedas and write his commentary on them. One could compare Sāyaṇa's introduction to the *Rgveda Bhāṣya* with Dayanand's, written four hundred years later when a new political power and a new religion had appeared on the scene. However, the impact of Islam appears only tangentially in the devotional literature in the regional languages where its uncompromising stand against idol worship or any form of representation of God seems to have had some influence on the development of the *Nirguṇa sampradāyas* which emphasised the worship of a formless god with no attributes whatsoever, the greatest representatives of whom were Kabir and Nanak. It is interesting, however, to learn that the impulse to worship something had become so strong in the Indian tradition that many of the sects worshipped the book or the sayings of the master rather than the image of God. Both in Sikhism and in the followers of Dadu, it is the *Vāṇī* which is kept in the temple and worshipped and not the image of any God. Dadu went even further and adopted a practice from the Zoroastrians who give up their dead bodies to be eaten by birds or animals so that at least they were of some use to someone.

Vallabhācārya's was perhaps the last attempt to take the claims of the *śruti* seriously and to try to reconcile not only *Pūrva* and the *Uttara Mīmāṃsā* but also, as we have said earlier, to equate Brahman with Īśvara and the latter with the Kṛṣṇa of the *Gītā* and the *Śrīmad Bhāgavat*. Caitanya, who appeared immediately after Vallabha, gave up the whole attempt and treated *bhakti* as an independent, autonomous enterprise, having no relation with *śruti* whether of the *Mīmāṃsā* or the *Brahmasūtra* tradition. Nor does he try to find an equation between Īśvara and Kṛṣṇa. He simply assumes it and considers Kṛṣṇa to be the real Īśvara. He did not write any book but created Vrindavan where nothing existed and indicated the places where Kṛṣṇa had performed his various *līlās*. Also, he distances the Kṛṣṇa of the *Mahābhārata* and the *Gītā* completely just as Jaideva had done in his *Gīta Govīnda*. His immediate disciples, Rūpa Gosvāmī and Jīva Gosvāmī did not reveal even a trace of the tensions and arguments which had plagued the great *ācāryas* from Rāmānuja onwards. In his *Bhaktirasāmṛtasindhu*, Rūpa Gosvāmī explicitly states that there is no place for one who has no faith to enter the realm of *bhakti*. The standpoint taken by Jīva Gosvāmī in his work entitled, *Nilamanidarpaṇa* is similar. It is quite clear, then, that by the middle of the sixteenth century, the tradition had radically changed and the philosophical concerns of the first half of the A.D. second millennium, particularly of the non-Advaitic *ācāryas*, had completely receded into the background.

The polemical debate between the Advaitins and the non-Advaitins had, of course, taken a new turn with Vyāsātīrtha II who was almost a contemporary of Caitanya and Rūpa Gosvāmī. In his *Nyāyāmṛta*, he took over all the concepts and arguments of the Advaitins from Śaṅkara onwards, formulated them topic wise and refuted them both on argumentative and scriptural grounds. Vyāsātīrtha hailed from Karnataka and his work seems to have created an immediate challenge for the Advaitin camp. This was met by Madhusūdana Sarasvatī from Bengal who belonged to the latter half of the sixteenth century. In his *Advaitasiddhi*, he tried to reformulate the crucial key concept of Advaita in such a way so as to escape the criticism of Vyāsātīrtha. The subsequent debate between the Advaitins and the non-Advaitins is of interest only to hard-core philosophers as *bhakti* needed no more defence from anyone, nor did the cult of Kṛṣṇa which had assumed an autonomous validity and reality in the Indian tradition, both at the Sanskrit and non-Sanskrit levels.

In this connection the role played by Jayadeva's *Gīta Govīnda* is extremely interesting. In fact, the phenomenal success of Jayadeva's *Gīta Govīnda* which is supposed to have been composed sometime at the end of the twelfth century suggests that Kṛṣṇa *bhakti* had already taken hold of the minds and hearts of people in large parts of India, even before Caitanya appeared on the scene. Perhaps this development occurred because the great *ācāryas* from Yāmuna to Rāmānuja onwards argued for it on sophisticated philosophical grounds and the Alvaras and the Nayanars had lived and practiced it for even a longer time. Perhaps the *ācāryas* were only formulating this cult in intellectual terms and arguing for what had already become a fact at the grass roots level. Even the

Advaitins could not escape its large scale influence. Thus, Madhusūdana Sarasvatī who chose, on intellectual grounds, to oppose the arguments of Vyāsātīrtha II in his *Advaitasiddhi*, ultimately became a *bhakta* and explicitly wrote that he did not know of any reality other than Kṛṣṇa (*Kṛṣṇāt param kimapi tattvamahaṃ na jāne*). The dichotomy between the intellectual and emotional, reason and the heart could not have been exemplified better than in the personality of this great philosopher who is supposed to have been first a Naiyāyika, then an Advaitin and then a devotee of Kṛṣṇa.

Madhusūdana Sarasvatī's example seems to confirm that the intellectual ratiocinative life of philosophy gradually assumed a relatively autonomous form, unrelated to the emotional or spiritual concerns of those very people who simultaneously engaged in both kinds of pursuits. This, of course, has happened in other cultures and civilisations as well, but the close relationship between spiritual pursuits and the intellectual life which is supposed to be such a characteristic feature of the philosophical enterprise in India, appears to be so completely disrupted so as to question the truth of this contention so often asserted by most writers on Indian philosophy.

However, the intimate association of almost all the Vedāntic schools of philosophy with the particular *sampradāyas* founded by their respective masters, resulted in a peculiar situation where philosophical speculation and controversy developed specifically within the context of these division between the *sampradāyas*, where each defended the position of his school against all the others, particularly if they happened to dispute or attack one's position. This tendency is confirmed even in the twentieth century, as for example when Vasudeva Shastri Abhyankara or Paṇḍit Anantkrishna Shastri defended the position of Advaita Vedānta against the non-Advaitins, the scholars belonging to those *sampradāyas* felt it was their specific responsibility to defend the position of their school.

However, philosophers like Professor Govind Chandra Pande are exceptions to this, as is evidenced by his first Badrinath Shukla Memorial Lecture at the Sampurnanand Sanskrit Vishvavidyalaya, Varanasi, entitled *Bhaktidarśana Vimarśaḥ*. Diverse issues relating to *bhakti* were examined in this lecture independently of any particular affiliation to one *sampradāya* or another.

Professor Pande highlights the difficulty of defining a term like *bhakti* where *lakṣya* and *lakṣaṇa* appear to show dialectical interdependence. Originally meaning 'sharing', 'serving', it came to mean 'attachment', 'belonging to', 'loyalty', 'devotion'; and further, 'self-surrender', 'resignation', 'communion', 'love'. As the consciousness aspiring for the Transcendent, *bhakti* is concomitantly characterised by its willingness to give up all egoistic and empirical attachments so as to receive the grace of the uplifting power of the Transcendent through which alone *bhakti* can realize itself.

The focus of *bhakti* is shifted from an intense emotional relationship with the Lord conceived in some form or another to the surrender of the self to some higher possibility of itself which may be called by the generic term *lokottara* or *puruṣottama* which also occurs in the tradition. However, as this surrender of the

self to a higher potentiality of itself is a characteristic of the pursuit of all values, Professor Pande has to distinguish the pursuit of the value of *bhakti* from the pursuit of not only all other values but also from other forms of spiritual realization where man seeks the realization of some higher self without its taking the form which, at least until now, has been associated with the *bhakti* tradition in India and elsewhere. He seeks to highlight the role of *bhakti* as *śaraṇāgati* within the pursuit of spiritual values in general. According to him, *bhakti* is really the quest for the Transcendent through self-surrender and is as such the essential mark of all modes of spiritual life, whether belonging to "primitive" culture or to materially advanced civilisations; whether expressed in the feelings of love and compassion; or the heroism of the struggle of right against wrong; or in the tranquility of meditation; or in the dispassionate passion of the quest for truth.

But this is obviously too wide a definition as it would make *bhakti* co-terminus with the pursuit of any value whatsoever. Not only this, it would take away the specific emphasis on the development of the "feeling" mode of being and the different forms that it may take in relation to the ultimate reality where a possible "reciprocity" is the heart of the matter. Also, all "self-surrender" cannot be regarded as *bhakti*, except in a metaphorical sense, for the self-sacrifice of millions in the cause of the glorification of the national state or even in the service of a cause such as the establishment of a "liberal" or "classless" society can scarcely be regarded as "*bhakti*" in any specific sense of the term. Further, it may be difficult to treat "self-surrender" as the essence of even what has traditionally been accepted as paradigmatic forms of *bhakti* such as are typified in the well-known, five-fold possible relationships with the Lord. It will be difficult, for example, to treat "self-surrender" as the essence of the devotional mode of relationship which is known as friendship or as the *sakhābhāva*. Similarly, in *vātsalya*, the notion of self-surrender will be radically different as also in the case of "*mādhūrya*", unless this is taken totally in the traditional sense of what the ideal man-woman love relationships ought to be. Today, when the relationship is seen more in terms of "equality", the "self-surrender" will have to be mutual rather than one-sided as it has generally been traditionally conceived. The objection that this is too wide a definition as it would make *bhakti* co-terminus with the pursuit of any value whatsoever is answered by Professor Pande stating that as the end of *bhakti* is the relationship with the Transcendent, this distinguishes it from the pursuit of secular values. As for different religious and spiritual paths, all these initially require devotion as self-surrender, but the further expressions, interpretation, and formulations of *bhakti* reveal this as a divergent tradition with a multilinear dialectic—spiritual, cultural and conceptual *sādhana* and discourse of its own. He seeks to trace this dialectic of *bhakti* from its initial expression as the aspiring self-surrender of the empirical ego through dedicated work and illumination to its culmination in the ecstasy of love. He argues against the one-sidedness of those who absolutize the distinctions of *karma*, *jñāna* and *bhakti* as also of the spiritualities of different religions and paths. This argument is elaborated in his more

recent publication entitled *Ekam sad viprā bahudhā vadanti** where he examines the different approaches current in the *History of religion* and seeks to correlate religious attitudes to spiritual experiences of different levels.

Professor Pande appears to make a radical distinction between what he calls *āgama*, *śāstra* and *darśana*. *Āgama* is a record of spiritual experiences by human beings, while the *śāstra* attempts a theological interpretation of the same and *darśana*, a free ratiocinative reflection on it. Interestingly, for him all of these are human enterprises. Pande's work is based on the Advaitic postulate of the unity of spiritual experience graded into many levels and culturally diversified (*upādhibheda* and *adhikārabheda*). At the *āgamic* level, the articulation of the spiritual experience is called, following Shelley, a "multi-coloured dome".

Professor Pande examines the role of emotion and imagination as having an important constitutive place in *bhakti* and suggests that the search for reality should start not by dogmatically accepting the reality of the perceptual world but rather, to apprehend "the questionable reality of the world and to move from it to the ultimate nature of reality". Similarly, he argues that

"the obvious role of imagination and emotion in *bhakti* is not a reason for devaluing *bhakti* but for revaluing imagination and emotion by discovering the true nature as a possible means towards the revelation of subjective or spiritual truth".

In fact, if there were no feelings and emotions the world would not be the same. *Bhakti* then may be seen as assigning feelings and emotions their rightful place for the cognition of what is ultimately real and to establish a meaningful living relationship with it.

The sequencing of Professor Pande's thought regarding *bhakti* seems to have an inner tension with an attempt at resolution that may be summarised as follows. He begins by defining *bhakti* as self-surrender to the Transcendent in consciousness itself. After he finds that this definition is what may be called *ativyāpta*, he makes a distinction between the secular and spiritual Transcendents placing *bhakti* in the latter. This however appears to give no role to feelings which in the *bhakti* tradition, as we know it today, are central to this specific spiritual path. Next he seems to integrate emotion into *bhakti* and also adds imagination in his final formulation. He says that there can be no human life or life of consciousness without emotion and imagination and that thus these are bound to have a cognitive role in any human understanding of reality. *Bhakti* is unimaginable without them. Thus, through these different stages of arguments Pandeji's thought tries to grasp the specificity of *bhakti* comprehending the life of feelings as integral to it. However, what is the distinction between emotions and imagination and what are their relations has not been outlined by Pandeji. Further, what is the specific role of emotion and imagination in *bhakti* for if they are common to

*Sanskrit University, Varanasi, as the Griffith Memorial Lectures, 1970.

all human understanding what is it that makes them *Vyāvartaka* in *bhakti* is a question that remains.

Professor Pande argues for a coordinate co-relationship between the object and the subject in man's search for the ideal which may be oriented towards the realization of any value whatsoever. For him, the realization of any value is, simultaneously, the realization of an ideal self also and hence all values ultimately are only different forms through which the self realises itself and which therefore may themselves be considered as forming the ideal of that higher self which man wants to realize. This, according to him, is the essence of *bhakti*:

"Value thus may be defined as self-realization where the ideal 'self' of man is the higher or universal self of the seeker. Its highest grade would be the communion of the individual with the universal self, which is *bhakti*. *Bhakti*, thus, would be the ultimate value to which all other values seek to approximate".³

But unfortunately, in the realisation of this best of all possible worlds what is forgotten is that there are not only deeper, inner conflicts between values but that the realisation of some values not only stand in the way of other values being realised but also impede the realization of the self. The cultivation of logical and analytical rigour many a time hampers the development of emotional sensitivity and the conflict between active and contemplative values is well known in all traditions. The realms of polity and economy have always posed a challenge to the pursuit not only of spiritual values but also to those of the cognitive and artistic life. Ultimately, the realm of values is neither as coherent nor as harmonious as presented, nor is their relationship to the value of self-realization so simple.

Ultimately, Professor Pande's discussion leads him to the denial of some well-known oppositions including *dharma* and *mokṣa* and *pravṛtti* and *nivṛtti*. This follows the classical conception of *dharma* as in the *Gītā* or the *Bhāgavat* or the *Manu smṛti* which outline such a synthesis. It should not be forgotten that regarding this a long debate existed in the Indian tradition and also that both the Buddha and the Mahāvīra renounced the world in order to seek the ultimate truth.

An interesting distinction between *rasa* and *bhāva* is made by Professor Pande and he suggests that while the latter may be indefinitely many, the former is a unitary whole expressed through them. He also suggests that the uniqueness of the self lies in the fact that it is grasped through feeling, though this feeling may not be adequate to the nature of the self, just as knowledge may not be adequate to the nature of the object. Also, the communication of feeling is generally through an image or, better still, through an act of imaginative apprehension just as the communication of knowledge is through a concept and the image through which the feeling is communicated may not be adequate and thus fail in its purpose. This is an interesting idea, but here again, Professor Pande's treatment

of the aesthetic domain is opposed to the view that feelings have to be adequate, not to the subject experiencing them, but to the object that is to be aesthetically appreciated. His views regarding this have been elaborated elsewhere.*

This analysis of *bhakti*, thus, seems to be thoroughly influenced by the neo-Vedāntic formulations so popular since the latter part of the nineteenth century which totally exclude classical discussions of the subject as given in the standard texts. Also, he does not seem to take into account the radical rethinking on the subject found in the thought of K.C. Bhattacharya who formulated the notion of "alternative absolutes" and the further development of that idea by Kalidas Bhattacharya in his thought on the subject.

Paṇḍit Ramavtar Sarma

One of the most radical departures from the traditional philosophical thought of India was made by Paṇḍit Ramavtar Sarma, a Sanskrit scholar, trained and steeped in the tradition in the early years of the twentieth century in his work entitled *Paramārtha Darśana*. The work was published around A.D. 1913 and the author himself wrote a commentary on it as had been the tradition in earlier Sanskrit philosophic writing. The work does not exactly belong to any particular school of traditional Indian philosophy though it shows an awareness of most of the major systems of philosophical thought in India and, in fact, criticises them as he propounds his own views on the subject.

The Vaiśeṣika system, for example, is subjected to a detailed critique in the sixth chapter of his work where the categories proposed by the Vaiśeṣika thinkers are shown to be untenable. The author certainly shows the influence of Vedānta, particularly in its notion of the witness consciousness or *sākṣī caitanya* which underlies and accompanies all changing states of consciousness and hence is the only constant factor among all that varies in experience. Yet, the conclusion that the author draws from this is different from the one that most of the Advaitic thinkers have drawn as he distinctly denies the reality of any substantive self or *ātman* on the basis of this. Instead, he treats it as pointing to an impersonal consciousness lying at the basis of all reality, a statement which is reminiscent of the reality of the impersonal Brahman in Advaitic thought. But as against the Advaitin, he denies the transcendent character of this impersonal consciousness and treats it as completely immanent in the universe. The immanence thus seems to give a reality to everything which again seems to be in line with the general assertion of the reality of the world in all streams of Indian thought which occur after the British impact at the beginning of nineteenth century. But, though Paṇḍit Ramavtar Sarma's thought suggests that he is rehabilitating the Upaniṣadic statements which asserted that 'All this is Brahman' (*sarvaṁ khalvidam Brahman*),

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yet he departs from the tradition in that he rejects rebirth and the law of *karma* along with the ideal of *mokṣa* which had been accepted by almost all the traditions of Indian thought except the Cārvāka. Not only this, he also rejects the idea of both *śruti* and *āgama* which were the corner-stones of all Indian thinking except again for the Cārvāka. He accepts the notion of *śabda pramāṇa*, but interprets it to mean the advice of a person who is both trustworthy and benevolent in disposition and rational in his outlook. This is practically the same definition as given by Gautama of an *āpta* person in the *Nyāyasūtras*. It may be noted here that the validity of any statements by such a person is confined, as in Mīmāṃsā and Nyāya, to prescriptive statements only. It does not extend to statements that give information as their validity has to be established either by perception or inference or both. Ramavatar Sarma, however, does not discuss what one should do when the prescriptive statements emanating from the so-called *āpta* persons conflict with each other or how to identify who is an *āpta* person, particularly when one does not happen to be one oneself. He also does not seem to have discussed the notion of *ātma-tuṣṭi* in the context of the knowledge of *dharma* as mentioned by Manu and its relation to other sources of the knowledge of *dharma*.

Though Ramavatar Sarma seems to be radically different in his rejection of almost all the basic contentions of both the Vedic and the non-Vedic traditions in the country, he yet seems to be deeply influenced by the Advaitic idea of a universal, impersonal consciousness pervading all reality and thus finding the root cause of all evil in the foundational ignorance caused by the biological fact of one's having a body which makes one inevitably feel not only distinct but different from all others. It is in the rectification of this foundational ignorance that one's liberation may be said to occur. Yet, one should remember that such a liberation has to be achieved in this very life, as he does not accept the idea of liberation after death.

N.V. Banerjee like Ramavatar Sarma denies most of traditional concepts and, like him, finds the root cause of ignorance in the idea of separation which the biological condition of man inevitably imposes on his self-consciousness. However, unlike him, he presents some principles to guide life after an awareness occurs of the foundational ignorance in which self-consciousness is enveloped. The remarkable novelty of Banerjee's principles and his essential difference in this respect from Ramavatar Sarma lies in his acceptance of the fact of suffering and of death which no other thinker, has yet argued for in the Indian tradition. The invitation to "bear the cross" and to beware of the desire for immortality in any form whatsoever are the two radically innovative prescriptions for the guidance of man in his this-worldly life, given by Banerjee, which seems to have no parallel in the thought of Ramavatar Sarma. But, while Ramavatar Sarma's thinking shows radical departures from the field of Advaitic thought which somehow has not evoked the interest either of the Advaitin or the non-Advaitin until now, the work of Nischaladasa has evoked great interest. He wrote an Advaitic work in Hindi that was considered of such great merit that it was translated into Sanskrit arousing interest amongst scholars for both its exposition of the Advaita point of

view and the innovations that he makes in its presentation. Normally, a philosophical work in a language other than Sanskrit is seldom paid much attention to by scholars who still continue to be mainly Sanskrit-oriented. Nischaladasa, however, appears to have been an exception. He gives an interesting definition of perception in a sense that totally disengaged the notion of perceptual knowledge from that of the senses with which it is invariably associated. He has probably done so for two reasons: to emphasize the direct immediacy of apprehension which seems to be such a characteristic of consciousness and of all the knowledge that it has. Secondly, he argues that if senses are considered to be essential for the definition of perceptual knowledge, then one cannot be said to have any 'perception' of pain which, perhaps is the most palpable piece of knowledge that one has. In fact, the whole field of introspective awareness becomes excluded from perceptual knowledge if one confines it to the five bodily senses alone, unless one postulates an internal sense organ as some seem to have done. In fact, he suggests that the usual inclusion of perception among the *pramāṇas* is not correct, as *pratyakṣa* or immediate apprehension by consciousness does not require validation by any *pramāṇa* whatsoever. This, according to him, is because of the almost total identity between consciousness and what it apprehends. Such an approach to perceptual knowledge opens the way to the ultimate Advaitic truth which asserts the complete identity of consciousness with whatever it apprehends and treats the apprehended 'difference' as a result of a misunderstanding of the knowledge involved in perception due to the fact that we mistakenly confine it to sense perception alone. The identity in most direct, immediate apprehension which occurs at all levels of experience is, however, limited by the fact that both the 'consciousness' that apprehends and the 'object' that is apprehended are themselves conditioned or delimited by a *vr̥tti* or specific formation that does not allow the identity to be absolutely complete. Remove the *vr̥ttis* and you get the absolute identity which the Advaitin talks about. The two *vr̥ttis* by which the consciousness and the object are limited in this immediate, direct apprehension have been named as "*vr̥ttyāvachchinna caitanya*" and "*viśayāvachchinna caitanya*", respectively by Nischaladasa. What is special in this formulation is that the object is also supposed by Nischaladasa to be essentially of the nature of consciousness as he holds that 'consciousness' cannot relate to anything which is completely alien to itself. However, neither the diversity of the *vr̥ttis* which delimit consciousness nor the diversity of the *viśayas* which delimit the object seems to have been explained in detail by Nischaladasa. Nor does he seem to have squarely faced the problem of the 'veridicality' of such knowledge as many of the *vr̥ttis* which delimit consciousness and cloud and distort it sometimes, stand in the way of the correct apprehension of the specific *viśayatva* of the *viśaya* which is apprehended. Not only this, as the psychic formations themselves become 'objects' to consciousness, the distinction between the *vr̥tti* and the *viśaya* would, at least in their case, become relative. The problem has been specifically formulated in Śāṅkhya which treats even the *buddhi* and the sense of 'I-ness' as 'object' to consciousness.

Similarly, many of the so-called 'objects' are themselves delimited by psychic factors akin to those which are supposed to delimit the apprehending consciousness. Other human beings are the classic instance of such objects and it is not easy to treat them only as 'objects' as one's apprehending consciousness itself is an 'object' to them. Perhaps, Nischaladasa has examined these issues in detail in his work entitled *Vṛtti-prabhākara* which is said to have been written on Vidyāranya's *Pañcadaśī*.

The work of Nischaladasa also seems to show an obsessive concern with a dimension of classical Vedānta which has been underplayed in most of the modern writings on Vedānta. This relates to the two dogmas which all the *ācāryas* in the Vedānta tradition were specially anxious to uphold. The first concerns the contention that the truths of Vedānta can only be available through the *Upaniṣads* and the *Brahmasūtras*, while the second concerns the interpretation of the so-called *Mahāvākyas*, the 'understanding' of which alone reveals the Vedāntic truth directly and immediately to the one who understands them. In fact, Anantakrishna Shastri in his polemical controversy with the contentions of Jayatīrtha in enumerating the common points of acceptance between the Advaitic and non-Advaitic Vedāntins, examines only these issues to a large extent. Nischaladasa also discusses in detail how the *Mahāvākyas* are to be interpreted and suggests that, in their case, one would have to postulate a special kind of *lakṣaṇa* which is called the *bhagatyāga* or the *jahadājahad lakṣaṇa*.

However, it is not clear that such a *lakṣaṇa* applies only to the *Mahāvākyas* and to nothing else which is linguistically formulated either actually or possibly. In case there is, it is a purely *ad hoc* solution to save the Advaitic interpretation. On the other hand, if this kind of *lakṣaṇa* is found in those linguistic occurrences which are not considered to be *Mahāvākyas*, then the Advaitic relation of identity will be found not only between the self and the Brahman but amongst other things also. It is not clear whether Nischaladasa or any other Advaitin has taken note of this objection and dealt with it. In any case, Nischaladasa's work provides evidence of the vitality of the Advaitic tradition in philosophical thought in India and needs to be examined further.⁴

Interestingly, the debate between the Advaitin and the non-Advaitin seems to show the signs of lessening, as our attention has been drawn to a recent work entitled *Madhva Kudūṣaṇapeṣṇam*. The work is written by Bommkanti Sitaramshastri and published by Pt. Gauda Subramaniam Shastri.

II

THE ADVAITA VS. NON-ADVAITA ANANTAKRISHNA SHASTRI'S REPLY TO VEDĀNTA DEŚIKA

Within Indian philosophy the task of identifying the contribution to the advancement of knowledge of an author or a group of authors, belonging to a particular

historic period, poses some difficulties. Certain peculiarities of Indian philosophy make this evaluation difficult.

First, most books written on Indian philosophy are in the form of commentaries on the original texts and commentators comment not only on the texts but also to show their ingeniousness so that all that they discuss is apparently told in the original text itself. The method of commenting, consisting of an *avatārikā*, a word-to-word explanation and an exposition, enables them to depict the new ideas also as existing in the text itself.

The development of thought moreover seems to possess a backward motion, as every author of a commentary or an independent text strives hard to establish that everything he discussed is indeed, reflected in the *bhāṣya* or some other source book (*ākāraṅgranthas*). Often a theory or a concept after being developed well by an author is simply put aside or dropped if it is found contradicting the *bhāṣya* or other *ākāraṅgranthas*. Sometimes, such a theory is discarded simply on account of its being not mentioned in those books (*sūtra-bhāṣyādi-viruddhatvāt/anuktatvāt*). The reader of the original text in Indian philosophy gathers an impression that the *sūtra*, *bhāṣya* and one or two other *ākāraṅgranthas* constitute everything in that system.

Second, the origin of Indian philosophical systems is also very peculiar. Most of the systems have originated with the writing of the *sūtras*. We see in the case of the sciences and other subjects that are in the developing stage, that a *sūtra* or equation of some such thing happens, always, to be the culmination of research of an individual or a line of generations of individuals. The same should hold good with regard to the *sūtra* of the schools of Indian philosophies too. Seen from this point of view, the concerned *sūtras* of every system in Indian philosophy should not be held at the point of origination of the system, but, on the other hand, should be held at the culmination of the thought-process in that particular system. This fact is further substantiated by the references made by the writers of *sūtras* to their predecessors. Therefore, whatever be the philosophy of any system which is recorded in the *sūtras* of that particular system, it was speculated, discussed, examined and finalised before the *sūtras* were written. The main purpose of writing the *sūtras* was to pass on the conclusions to the posterity through the oral tradition, as there was no other way to record or transmit the same. We do not see any other explanation for the significance of the *sūtra* literature, as in any other branch of knowledge anywhere in the world, *sūtra*-like literature is not seen to be the point of origination of a system of thought. Therefore, the job of the *bhāṣyakāras* and the writers thereafter, was to recall and retell the philosophy through the medium of *sūtra*-literature on the strength of the oral tradition which was alive until very recent times. This can be the lone explanation to solve the problem of experience of "backward motion" in the development of Indian philosophical thought.

Third, the *Vedānta* is mainly in the form of interpretation and explanation of the *śruti* texts. This fact has had the effect of being a limitation to the intellectual exercise of the thinkers.

Fourth, the Vedāntic literature down the line of *bhāṣyakāras*, is more interpretative and explanatory in its character than an independent and speculative exercise.

In the western system of philosophy by contrast we find almost every thinker rebelled against or significantly modified the thought of his predecessor. Indeed, on this account western philosophy has developed as a thinker-based philosophy, where the thinkers play a greater role than the school of thought they uphold. Whereas in Indian philosophy, the role played by the individual thinkers is insignificant with regard to the role played by the school of thought they uphold.

Turning our attention towards the Advaita Vedāntic literature of the last two centuries, we can divide it into three to four groups: (1) polemical works; (2) commentaries on important original works mainly intended to elucidate the concepts and theories in a simple way of writing; (3) introductory works; (4) critical expositions.

1. Polemical Works

With regard to the polemics of Advaita, in the last four to five centuries, the celebrated critic of Advaita, namely, Śrī Vyāsīrtha deserves to be mentioned foremost of all others. His magnum opus, the *Nyāyāmṛta*, set the ball of criticism in motion and this has continued till today. In this regard the works written are as follows:

Nyāyāmṛta by Vyāsīrtha—critique of Advaita.

Advaitasiddhi by Madhusūdana Sarasvatī—critique of the *Nyāyāmṛta*.

Taraṅgiṇī by Rāmatīrtha—critique of the *Advaitasiddhi*.

Laghucandrikā and *Gurucandrikā* by Gauḍa Brahmānanda—critique of *Taraṅgiṇī* Sārasvatī.

Nyāyāmṛtasaugandhya by Vanamālimiśra—critique of the *Laghucandrikā*.

Advaitasiddhānta Vaijayantī by Bhaṭṭa Trayambaka Śāstrī—critique of the *Saugandhya*.

Saugandhyavimarśaḥ by Anantakrishna Shastri—critique of *Saugandhya*.

(Both *Saugandhya* and its criticisms are found incomplete).

Nyāyabhāskara by Anantācārya—critique of *Laghucandrikā* and its commentary the *Viṭṭhaleśīya*.

Four books were written by the Advaitins to counter the criticism made by Anantācārya.

Nyāyenduśekhara I by Kuṇigal Lakṣmīnṛsimha Śāstrī

Nyāyenduśekhara II by Mahāmahopādhyāya Tyāgarājā-dhvarin.

Nyāyendusekharaparīśiṣṭam by M.M. Harihara Śāstrī.

Nyāyabhāskarakhaṇḍanam by Ramasubrahmanya Śhastry.

Brahmānandīyabhāvaprakāśaḥ by M.M. Panchapangesha Shastry.

There is yet another line of polemical works in the Advaita Vedānta. Vedānta Deśika, the writer of Viśiṣṭādvaita, has written a polemical work by name *Śatadūṣaṇī*. Śrī Anantakrishna Shastry in his *Śatabhūṣaṇī* has offered his criticism and clarifications with regard to the charges of Śrī Vedānta Deśika.

2. Commentaries

Coming to the second variety of works, namely, lucid expository commentaries on well-known classical works, the contribution of these lies mainly in their clarity and the facility and ease they provide in an understanding of the difficult classical works. They are explanatory in nature and no serious effort is usually made in these works for the advancement of thought. They are very useful to those scholars who want to understand the original. Clarity of thought is their main contribution.

Under this category, is the lucid, and explanatory commentary on the *Advaitasiddhi*, namely, the *Bālabodhinī* written by Sri Yogendranath Bagchi which is most useful to the students of Advaita Vedānta in understanding the thought of Madhusūdana Sarasvatī. It is free from the Nyāya style and is very simple. The other celebrated commentaries, namely, *Laghucandrikā* and *Vitthaleśīya*, etc. are meant only for those scholars who are Naiyāyikas rather than Advaitins. Similarly, the commentaries, *Prakāśa* and *Vikāśa* on the *Bhāmatī* by Shree Lakshminath Jha deserve special mention as they contribute significantly in understanding the *Bhāṣya* and *Bhāmatī*. The author takes care to discuss the subjects which have a direct bearing on the text in the *Prakāśa*, leaving any further elaboration on the same subject to the *Vikāśa*. This helps the reader in a significant way.

The commentary of Sri Vasudeva Abhyankar Shastry on the *Siddhāntabindu* of Śrī Madhusūdana Sarasvatī is yet another masterpiece in this category. Sri Shastry is known for his simplicity and clarity in writing. Again, this commentary helps to understand the original more than the commentary written on it by Śrī Gauḍā Brahmānanda. Sri Bellamkonda Ramaraya kavi wrote a commentary on the *Gītābhāṣya* of Śrī Śāṅkara. It is one of the major works of Sri Ramaraya kavi. On several points critical expositions are made upholding the position of the Advaitins. His style is admirably lucid and free from the Naiyāyika's jargon. I understand that there is a commentary on the *Siddhāntaleśasaṅgraha* of Appayya Dīkṣita written by a Bengali scholar. Udasina Swami Amaradasa has made an elaborate commentary on the *Śikhāmaṇi* of Ramakrishnadhwarin, the celebrated son of Sri Dharmarajadhwarin, the writer of the *Vedāntaparibhāṣā*.

3. Introductory Works

With regard to the third category of works, namely, the introductory works, these are called *prakaraṇa granthas* and these are written in large numbers throughout

the history of any school of philosophy. The main purpose of these works is to introduce the student to the thought of the particular school, their method being to record the conclusions arrived at by their predecessors after long discussions. To cite a classic work belonging to this category, the *Tarkasaṅgraha* of Annambhaṭṭa summarises the entire thought of *Nyāya-vaiśeṣika* into a few pages in an admirable way. Its utility in remembering and mastering the position of the *Nyāya-vaiśeṣika* system is well known. A thorough knowledge of such texts only can enable one to undertake a strenuous journey into the jungles of the *Bhāṣyas* and their commentaries.

With regard to the Advaita Vedānta, the paucity of work on the lines of the *Tarkasaṅgraha* is often felt. The *Vedāntaparibhāṣā* is too tough for a beginner especially with regard to its chapters dealing with the problems of epistemology. The *Vedāntasāra* is good but incomplete regarding most of the aspects of the Advaita Vedānta as is the case with the *Laghuvāsudevamananam*. Seen against this background, Sri Bellamkonda Ramaraya kavi's excellent work, *Vedāntasaṅgraha* can be praised for being just on the lines of the *Tarkasaṅgraha*. Divided into fifteen chapters it runs into only forty pages and covers all the areas of the Advaita Vedānta. More attention is paid to the ontological and metaphysical aspect of the Advaita Vedānta. He shows several ontological divisions. Indeed, he starts his work with a sentence, classifying the entire universe into two categories, namely, *dṛk* and *dṛśya*. The significance of this small work is that in the form of short statements he clarifies the position of the Advaitins *vis-à-vis* other schools. For example, Swami Nischaladasa of the *udāsīna sampradāya* wrote his *Vicārasāgara* in Hindi, in which he discussed all the concepts of the Advaita Vedānta in a detailed manner, using very simple language. This work has been translated into Sanskrit by Sri Vasudeva Brahmendra Saraswati. Written in a very simple Sanskrit this book throws light on several problems of the Advaita Vedānta.

The commentary by M.M. Vasudeva Shastri Abhyankar in the *Siddhāntabindu* is yet another masterpiece. It is very lucid and discusses several fundamental aspects of the Advaita Vedānta.

4. Critical Expositions

With regard to the fourth category of works, there are good number of books written as critical expositions of the Advaita Vedānta. Sri Bachcha Jha has written the *Gūḍhārtha Tattvāloka*, which according to him, is a commentary on Madhusūdana Sarasvatī's commentary on the *Bhagavadgītā*. We purposefully omitted this work under the list of commentaries because this work can be considered as an independent one. Sri Bachcha Jha has defended the position of the Advaitins against all others on most of the topics where they differ mutually. This book is very valuable for Advaitins because it is an attestation given by a great *dārśanika* of recent times.

M.M. Anantakrishna Shastry is an illustrious writer who wrote several polemical as well as expository works on the Advaita Vedānta, mainly, to answer the criticism against this school made by the Dvaitins and the Viśiṣṭādvaitins. We have already made a reference to his major work, namely, *Śatabhūṣaṇī*. His *Advaitatattvasudhā* is an illustrious work worth mentioning here. Apart from these, two major works, several of the lengthy introductions to the works he edited also throw light on the concepts of Advaita. Further, they are useful to resolve the contentions of the Dvaitins and the Viśiṣṭādvaitins.

M.M. Gauda Subrahmanya Shastri made an excellent attempt to show the *anumāna prayoga* of each *adhikaraṇa* of the *Śaṅkarabhāṣya*, in his *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya-pradīpikā*. This is similar to the attempt made by Pujyashri Satyapramodatirtha Swamin, in his work, *Brahma-sūtrādhikaraṇa Sasrīrasaṅgrahaḥ*.

Another Advaita writer who deserves to be mentioned here is Sri Sachchidanandendra Saraswati Swamin of Holenarasipur who has written several works. His magnum opus is the *Vedānta-prakriyā-pratyabhijñā*. From a preliminary reading of his works it appears that he wants to establish that the main and lengthy succession of the *vivarāṇa* school of interpretation of Śrī Śaṅkara has misrepresented him. He also raised the controversy that *mūlāvidyā* is not acceptable for both the *Bhāṣyakāra* Śrī Śaṅkara and *vārttikakāra*. His works are interesting and significant, on account of being a critical standpoint from within the camp. Apparently, he could not establish his ideas well because very few people among Advaitins took him seriously.

Advaitāmoda by M.M. Vasudeva Shastri is yet another important work belonging to this category.

Śatabhūṣaṇī of M.M. Anantakrishna Shastri's is a reply to Vedānta Deśika *Śatabhūṣaṇī* is a polemical work pertaining to the Advaita Vedānta. It mainly intendeds to provide answers to the numerous criticisms made by Śrī Vedānta Deśika, the fourteenth century illustrious and prolific writer held in high esteem. While, Śrī Deśika raised a total of sixty six objections against various aspects of Advaita and titled his work as *Śatadūṣaṇī*, Shri Shastri considered the sixty sixth objection as, indeed, all-comprehensive in its nature, as it tries to establish that the *Brahmasūtras* are not in favour of an Advaitic interpretation of the *Upaniṣads* (*paramate sūtrasārasya-bhaṅgavāda*). He groups the rest of sixty five objections under nine heads, namely, the objections related to: A. *avidyā*, B. the falsity of the world, C. and D. the meaning of the word *atha* in the first *sūtra*, namely *athāto brahmajijñāsā* as it is explained in the two systems, E. the analysis of the meaning of the word *tvam*, F. the analysis of the meaning of the word *tat*, G. the sentential meaning of the *mahāvākya*, namely, *tat tvam asi*, H. the concept of *jīvanamukti*, and I. the concept of *niṣprapañcīkaraṇa* of Bhartṛprapañca and the theory of *alepakamata* of Nirañjana Sanyāsin. This attempt to group these objections which are found scattered in the *Śatadūṣaṇī* text on the basis of a theme speaks well of Shri Shastri's scholarship and clarity of thought.

The following list of topics is discussed under each group. The numbers within bracket indicate the number of objections according to the *Śatadūṣaṇī*.

- A. Under *Avidyā* the following seven topics are discussed:
1. Brahman as the locus of *avidyā* (29)
 2. Brahman as subject to concealment by *avidyā* (34)
 3. That *avidyā* is a positive entity i.e., not-*abhāva* (39)
 4. *Jīva* as the locus of *avidyā* (40)
 5. The nature of *avidyā* (41)
 6. The remover of *avidyā* (43)
 7. The removal of *avidyā* (44)
- B. Under the subject of the falsity of the world, the following are considered:
1. The impossibility of discussion if the world is false (9)
 2. Criticisms of the concept of difference (13)
 3. Falsity of the world and inference (14)
 4. The establishment of falsity of objects on account of their mutual distinctness (16)
 5. That relation between *dṛk* and *dṛśya* is possible only on the basis of falsity of the world (17)
 6. Whether the false can arise from the true (30)
 7. Whether coordination can arise on the basis of super-imposition (32)
 8. The distinction between *māyā* and *avidyā* (31)
 9. That *jñāna* is the aspect of the world is illusory (47)
 10. That Brahman can be the *upādāna kāraṇa* only on the basis of the falsity of the world (53)
 11. That *māyā* too can be *upādāna kāraṇa* only on the same basis (54)
 12. That all effects are only appearances (55)
 13. That *vivartavāda* alone can explain the *sadasad-vilakṣaṇatva* of the *prapañca* (60)
- C. The next group relates to the meaning of *atha*, and discusses the question whether *Brahmavicāra* comes only after *karmavicāra* or after *sāadhanacatuṣṭaya sampatti*:
1. Whether *Pūrva* and *Uttaramīmāṃsās* constitute one whole or not (3)
 2. Whether knowledge is *upāsanā* or intuition (4)
 3. Whether *karma* is meant to desire for knowledge (*vividiśā*). (6)
 4. The possibility of desire for release on the basis of Advaita (63)
- D. Next are grouped the following:
1. The possibility of *sāadhanacatuṣṭaya* preceding *śāstravicāra* (8)
 2. The possibility of qualification of *Śāstravicāra* (49)
 3. That the unqualified Brahman cannot be *nitya*.
 4. The *śāstric* character of *saṁnyāsa* according to Advaita.

- E. The discussion of *tvam padārtha* relates to the following topics :
1. The knowability of the *ātman* (20)
 2. The contention that the *cidrūpa* of *ātman* is subject to origination (21)
 3. The criticism of the inference relating to the *nānātva* of the *ātman* (23)
 4. The criticism of the Advaitic view that *ātman* is *cidrūpa* (25)
 5. The contention that the ego and the *ātman* are one (26)
 6. The criticism of the Advaitic view that *jñatṛtva* is super-imposed on the *ātman* (27)
 7. The criticism of the witness-consciousness (28)
 8. The criticism of the unity of *ātman* (33)
 9. The criticism that in *mukti* the *ātman* is not *nirviṣaya* (52)
 10. The criticism of the unity of *jīva* (61)
- F. The following criticisms relate to *Tat-padārtha*:
1. That Brahman cannot be subject of expression (1)
 2. That there cannot be inquiry into Brahman (2)
 3. That what is *nirviśeṣa* cannot be self-effulgent (10)
 4. That the qualityless Brahman cannot be the object of indeterminate knowledge (11)
 5. That the *Sat* alone is not the cause of valid knowledge (12)
 6. That on the basis of Advaita, the Vedas will lose their validity (14)
 7. That differentiated knowledge of external objects is impossible (18)
 8. That the *cit* cannot be inferred (24)
 9. That qualitylessness cannot be inferred (24)
 10. That Advaita creates conflict between *pratyakṣa* and *śāstra* rendering *śāstra* invalid (29)
 11. That qualitylessness of Brahman cannot be spoken of by Vedānta (45)
 12. The consequent invalidity of the *purāṇas* (48)
 13. The distinction of *saguṇa* and *nirguṇa śrutis* (52)
 14. The meaning of the *anantatva* of Brahman (56)
 15. That *nirviśeṣa* Brahman cannot be of the nature of *ānanda* (57)
 16. That the *śruti* "*ekamevādvitīyam*" will be meaningless in Advaita (59)
 17. The *apasūdrādhikaraṇa* will not have meaning according to Advaita (62)
- G. Relating to the *mahāvākya* "*tattvamasi*" as a whole, the criticisms of Śrī Vedānta Deśika are grouped as follows:
1. That *śabda* cannot produce perception (7)
 2. That there can be no teaching of Advaita (34)
 3. That the Advaita of *ātman* cannot be established (36)
 4. That there is no identity of *jīva* and *Īsvara* (37)
 5. Criticism of the possibility of expression of what is unitary and impartible (38)
 6. The contention that it is impossible to affirm identity (49)

H. The criticisms relating to *Jīvanamukti* are listed hereunder:-

1. That there cannot be residual *vāsanās* after *Jīvanamukti* (5)
2. The *Jīvanamukti* itself is impossible (31)

It would appear from this analysis that many of the criticisms advanced by Śrī Vedānta Deśika overlap and are repeated in different places.

Whether the word "Brahman" signifies the Ultimate Reality according to Advaita

In order to fully appreciate the value of Shri Shastri's contribution to the Advaita the essence of one or two chapters from the Śatabhūṣaṇī are presented here.

Vedānta Deśika contends that the word "Brahman" cannot signify the attributeless-Brahman (*nirguṇa-brahman*), (hereinafter referred to as "*śuddhabrahman*") even on the basis of secondary signification as maintained by the Advaitins; as in all the cases of secondary signification (*lakṣaṇa*) the words should be well known to have their primary meaning (*mukhyārtha*) too. For example, in the case of secondary usage, *gaṅgāyām ghoṣaḥ* (village in the Ganges), the word "Gaṅgā" is well known as signifying the meaning of water-currents by its primary function (*abhidhā* or *mukhyavṛtti*). Similarly, in the case of secondary usage, *kākebhyo dadhirakṣyatām*, the word "*kāka*" which signifies all the animals which spoil the curds by its secondary function, is also well known with regard to its primary meaning, i.e. the crow. Therefore, a word, which does not have its primary meaning, cannot signify the secondary meaning. So, unless the word "Brahman" signifies something as its primary sense, it cannot signify the *śuddhabrahman* as its secondary sense. Now, what could be such primary sense of the word "Brahman" according to the Advaita? Is it *śuddhabrahman* or the Brahman which is delimited with some or the other adjunct? It cannot be the *śuddhabrahman* as the etymological description of the word "Brahman" as a thing that grows or nourishes or the great etc., cannot apply with regard to the *śuddhabrahman*, as it is devoid of any attribute whatsoever. Then it remains to be accepted as that the term "Brahman" refers to the Brahman which is delimited by one or the other adjunct/adjuncts. Advaitins cannot accept such an adjunct as being real. Their theory that such an adjunct of the Brahman is non-real (*mithyā*) cannot be maintained as it is against all the possible authoritative sources of knowledge such as, perception, inference, verbal cognition (of Vedic texts as well as *smṛti* texts), and the *sūtras*.

Also, the Advaitins are required to clarify whether the knowable Brahman, whose knowledge dispels the *ajñāna*, is *śuddha* or delimited by some adjunct. In the second alternative, the Advaitins fall into the camp of the Viśiṣṭādvaitins, who maintain that the Brahman, who professed with several auspicious attributes is enjoined as knowable in the first *sūtra* on the basis of two types of definitions of the Brahman, *taṭastha* as well as *svarūpa*. Also, since delimited by an adjunct is non-real (*mithyā*), according to the Advaitins, it follows that the liberation (*mokṣa*) becomes attainable through a non-real means. If, on the other hand, the first

alternative is accepted, it becomes difficult to maintain as the word "Brahman" does not have etymological applicability (*vyutpatti*) in the *śuddhabrahman*. Therefore, Vedānta Deśika concludes that since the word "Brahman" is not known to have any object as its primary meaning, it cannot signify the *śuddhabrahman* by its secondary function too.

From the above discussion two issues are made clear: (1) The word "Brahman" cannot signify the *śuddhabrahman* on the basis of secondary signification, (2) If the Brahman which is enjoined as knowable in the first *sūtra* is accepted as one which is delimited by some adjunct or adjuncts, then liberation as accepted by the Advaitins becomes impossible. On the other hand, the *śuddhabrahman* cannot be accepted as knowable even according to the standpoint of the Advaitins.

Sri Shastri tries to resolve the first problem as follows. Advaitins follow the *abhihitānvayavāda* of Bhāṭṭas with regard to the sentential meaning. According to this theory, the words stop functioning after giving rise to the independent word-meanings. Thereafter, such word-meanings give rise to the sentential meaning on the basis of secondary signification located in the word-meanings. Therefore, according to this theory all the sentential meanings are uniformly secondary in their nature. Since, the meaning arising out of the statements "*tat tvam asi*" etc., is also a kind of sentential meaning it can arise out of the secondary significatory function of the word-meaning and there is no necessity that *śuddhabrahman* must have been well known to be the primary meaning of any word. Therefore, even though the *śuddhabrahman* is not the primary meaning of either of the two words, namely, "*tat*" and "*tvam*" yet to maintain the validity of the sentence (*vākyaḥ prāmāṇyanirvāhārtham*), on the basis of the power of the word-meanings, named *lakṣaṇa*, which is the nature of power to convey the sentential meaning, and on the basis of purport (*tātparyā*) of the words "*tat*" and "*tvam*", the word "*tat*" and "*tvam*" convey the *śuddhacaitanya* by their secondary signification. This is the answer in nutshell.

Shastri then proceeds to show that such a position is not exclusively maintained by the Advaitins alone, but is maintained by others also in one or the other case. For example, Vaiśeṣikas define earth as a thing possessing smell. According to them, the *paramāṇu* is not perceivable. Yet, the quality namely, smell is accepted as to be existing in them even though they themselves are not known. Similarly, *Īśvara* is accepted as the possessor of eternal knowledge though He himself is not given to our knowledge. Similarly, the *saguṇa brahman*, namely, Viṣṇu or the residence of Lord Viṣṇu, namely, *Vaikunṭha*, etc. are all not given to our knowledge by any other means than by such words. Hence, they have to agree that on the basis of context, etc. principal words give rise to the meaning of a thing which is not otherwise given to us by any other valid means of knowledge. In such a case, the words "*tat*" and "*tvam*" etc., can also give rise to the meaning of the *śuddhacaitanya*, even though it is not given to our understanding by any other means of knowledge.

Also, the Viśiṣṭādvaitins accept that Lord Viṣṇu who possesses both sentient and insentient objects as his body, who is devoid of any kind of blemish

whatsoever, and who is the possessor of an infinite number of auspicious qualities, is the meaning of the word "Brahman". The word "Brahman" does not signify such a person on the basis of its primary signification as it is known to mean: (1) a person belonging to a class of people called brāhmaṇas, (2) primordial cause, (3) the Vedas, (4) the *Jīvātman*, etc., only by its primary signification. Therefore, even the Viśiṣṭādvaitin should accept the meaning of the word "Brahman" as described above, only on the basis of the purport (*tātparya*) of the entire context of the *Upaniṣad* or the *Upaniṣads*. In this way, non-applicability of primary function (*mukhyavṛtti*) in case of both the *saguṇa* and *nirguṇa* Brahman is common for both the parties, i.e. the Viśiṣṭādvaitins and the Advaitins. Hence, it should not be pointed out by anyone against any other. Also, texts such as "*yato vāco nivartante*" etc., declare categorically that Brahman cannot be spoken of in terms of words. Therefore, all the words which are supposed to be signifying the Brahman do so only on the basis of secondary signification only.

Having thus countered the arguments of the opponents, Sri Shastri cites the *Siddhāntabindu* which says that an attributeless self is very much part of our experience during our deep sleep and in a yogic state called *asamprajñātasamādhi*. He cites the *Bhāmātī* which says that the differentiation in the taste of sweet between the cane, milk, jaegery etc., cannot be spoken of even by Goddess Sarasvatī. So, there is no difficulty in accepting that the word "Brahman" conveys the *śuddhabrahman* by its secondary signification.

On the basis of the *Tattvacintāmaṇi* of Gaṅgeśopādhyāya, Sri Shastri, then, proceeds to state that no secondary signification is necessary with regard to conveying the *śuddhabrahman* by the word "Brahman". According to this theory, a word which signifies a qualified thing (*viśiṣṭa*) by its primary signification is also fit to signify the qualification part (*viśeṣaṇa*) or qualificand (*viśeṣya*) along independently; if such a meaning enjoys the support of the purport (*tātparya*) in it. Since the meaning of the word "*tat*" and "*tvam*" in favour of the meaning of *śuddhabrahman* enjoys the support of purport of the entire passage, the word "*tat*" and "*tvam*" signify the pure consciousness by primary signification itself, even though they are otherwise known to have their primary signification in the qualified consciousness.

To elucidate the above point we may cite one or two examples as follows. The expressions *ghaṭaḥ anityaḥ* (pot is non-eternal), or *ghaṭam ānaya* (bring the pot) are valid expressions according to all the schools. According to the position of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣikas the word "pot" signifies a qualified pot, i.e. the individual "pot" as qualified by its universal "pot-ness". In the said expressions the non-eternality and the objectivity of the action of bringing do not apply in the case of the qualification "pot-ness" for obvious reasons. Therefore, the word "pot" in the said expressions signifies only the substantive part, i.e. the individual pot alone but not pot as qualified with pot-ness, even though the latter is the meaning of the word "pot" according to the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣikas. In this case no one concedes the above expressions as secondary expressions. Similarly, the words "*tat*" and "*tvam*" signify the pure consciousness alone even though their meaning

is a qualified one, by the very primary function (*mukhyavṛtti*) without resorting to the secondary signification. Therefore, all the difficulties pointed out in case of adopting secondary signification are thus warded off as no secondary signification is resorted to in the case of deriving the meaning of identity from the *mahāvākyas*.

Now, the second issue, namely, whether the Brahman enjoined as knowable in the first aphorism is the *śuddhabrahman* or the Brahman delimited by one or the other adjunct (*upahita brahman*) is to be examined. Viśiṣṭādvaitin is of the opinion that it cannot be the *śuddhabrahman* because the word "Brahman" cannot signify the *śuddhabrahman* either by primary signification or by secondary signification. This point is well discussed and suitably answered in the above pages. If, on the other hand, the knowable Brahman is the *upahita brahman*, the Viśiṣṭādvaitin criticises this by asking how liberation (*mukti*) is possible by knowing the *upahita brahman* which is also non-real (*mithyā*) like any other object; since knowledge of truth alone can dispel ignorance, but not knowledge of non-real objects.

Advaitins answer this question in various ways. Vivaraṇācārya's position is that the knowable Brahman is the *śuddhabrahman* only but not the *upahita brahman*. Yet, the application of the word "Brahman" in the *śuddhabrahman* is possible as discussed above in detail. According to the Bhāmatī School, however, the knowable Brahman is the *upahita brahman* but not the *śuddhabrahman*. But, when they say *upahita brahman* they mean Brahman which is delimited by that adjunct *vṛtti* which is the form of identity of *Jīva* and Brahman, but not delimited by any other adjunct such as *avidyā*, etc. They also contend that the knowledge of an *upahita* object need not necessarily be the knowledge of *upādhi* (adjunct) too. So the knowledge of the *upahita* is not non-real knowledge according to them but a real one. Therefore, it can dispel the *ajñāna* which is its counter-co-relative.

To put Vācaspati's position in clear terms, he accepts that Brahman, when associated with *avidyā*, becomes the universal cause. When the Brahman is associated with *vṛtti* or *vidyā* (the verbal knowledge of the identity of *Jīva* and Brahman) it becomes the object of Vedāntic inquiry. When verbal knowledge of Vedāntic statements, such as "*tat tvam asi*", etc. arises the *avidyā* along with its effect gets dispelled. But, at this stage, just for a moment, there remains the *śuddhabrahman* along with the delimiting factor *vṛtti* or *vidyā*. Since this *vṛtti* or *vidyā* is also an effect of *avidyā*, it cannot remain for long after its cause *avidyā* is destroyed. Such *vṛtti* or *avidyā* also ceases to exist on its own account as fire ceases to exist after fuel is totally consumed. After such self-destruction of *vidyā* or *vṛtti*, the *śuddhabrahman* alone remains. Therefore, in the said process, the knowledge of the *upahita brahman* causes liberation indirectly through destroying the *avidyā*.

In this way, Shri Shastri clarifies the position of both the Bhāmatī and the Vivaraṇa schools and counters the arguments of Śrī Deśika.*

*On the basis of Chapter, namely, "*Brahmānī—śabdavṛttyānuṣattivādaparikṣā*", pp.45-58.

Inconsistencies in the Viśiṣṭādvaita

Mahamahopadhyaya Anantakrishna Shastri highlights the inconsistency in maintaining the eternality and naturality (*svābhāvikatva*) of *dharmabhūtajñāna* in the system of the Viśiṣṭādvaita as attempted by Purisai Śrīrangācārya in his work* by Kudrṣṭi-siddhāntamārtaṇḍa. The Viśiṣṭādvaitins accept that the *dharmabhūtajñāna* is eternal and yet undergoes contradiction and expansion. By the term *dharmabhūtajñāna* they refer to the *jñāna* of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣikas and the *vṛttijñāna* of the Advaitins. Indeed, *jñāna*⁵ is accepted as one of the characteristics of the *ātman* by most of the schools, such as the Vaiśeṣikas, the Naiyāyikas, the Mīmāṃsakas, the Sāṅkhyas, the Pātañjalas, and the Advaitins, etc. But all of them accept it as non-eternal and adventitious (*āgantuka*) to the *ātman*. It is only the Viśiṣṭādvaitins who maintain that it is eternal and natural (*svābhāvika*) to the *ātman*. There also, the eternality is based on the naturality (*svābhāvikatva*) of it as all the *dārśanikas* are unanimous in conceding that any characteristic which is natural to an object (*dharmin*) cannot get destroyed until and unless the object which possesses such characteristics gets destroyed. For example, the heat of the fire cannot get extinct without the extinction of the fire. Since the *dharmabhūtajñāna* is considered as a natural characteristic of *ātman*, which is eternal, it is also considered to be eternal by the Viśiṣṭādvaitins. In this way, the aspect of naturality of *dharmabhūtajñāna* is the basis depending on which they argue in favour of its eternality. Therefore, the question of the naturality of the *dharmabhūtajñāna* deserves to be examined according to Shri Shastri.

The Viśiṣṭādvaitins and all other opponents of this theory base their mutually opposed contentions on the same *śruti* text, namely, *na vijñātur vijñāteḥ viparilopo vidyate advināśitvāt*. The Viśiṣṭādvaitins and the Nyāya Vaiśeṣikas understand the case *ṣaṣṭhī* in “*vijñātuḥ vijñāteḥ*” as non-colocative (*vyādhikaraṇa*) whereas all others understand it as colocative (*sāmānadhikaraṇya*). The result of such a differential interpretation is that the Viśiṣṭādvaitins establish the eternality of the *jñāna* of *ātman*, whereas others establish the eternality of *ātman*, which is of the nature of *jñāna*.⁶ The interpretation adopted by the non-Viśiṣṭādvaitins is supported further by the common man’s experience of the origination and destruction of *jñāna* (*jñānam utpannam; jñānam naṣṭam*). Now to account for the above said common man’s experience, Viśiṣṭādvaitins accept that the *jñāna*, which is eternal, undergoes contraction and expansion, which is mistaken as origination and destruction by the common man.

Shri Shastri contends that where thing is universally experienced and has a usage by the common man in terms of being originated and destructed, it is not wise on the part of any one to accept the eternality of such an object. For example, the light of a lamp is experienced as originated and destructed. Therefore, even though there is, in fact, only contraction and expansion of light, the origination and destruction of light is accepted on the basis of the said experience

*Potter—TAP Śrīrangācārya 1850 *Karyādhikaraṇavāda*.

and usage. As against this, where there is contraction and expansion but no experience or usage of origination and destruction as in the case of a lotus, if anyone uses "lotus is originated" or "lotus is destructed", it should be treated as secondary usage only. Following this principle, since there is unilateral experience and usage of origination and destruction of *dharmabhūtajñāna*, it should be accepted as non-eternal only.

Also, if eternity is accepted in an object which undergoes modification (*pariṇāma*), then the distinction of the Viśiṣṭādvaita becomes untenable with regard to: the *Sāṅkhya*, who accepts *prakṛti* as eternal, even though it undergoes modification, the Jainas, who accept the eternal Brahman as modifying into the world (*brahmapariṇāmavāda*); and those who accept that the eternal *ātman* undergoes contraction and expansion. Therefore, Shri Shastri adds, that the position of the Advaitins is flawless as they accept non-eternality in all objects which undergo modification. Therefore, only the Advaitins can criticize the Jainas, the *Sāṅkhyas* and the *Bhāskariyas*, etc. concludes Shri Shastri.

The basic philosophical issue involved in this discussion is whether an object can be accepted as eternal even though it undergoes modification. The *Sāṅkhyas*, the Jainas, the *Bhāskariyas* and the Viśiṣṭādvaitins say "yes", whereas the Advaitins say "no". Shri Shastri asks how can the Viśiṣṭādvaitins criticize the Jainas and others, when they themselves maintain such a position with regard to the *dharmabhūtajñāna*?

He also points out that in the case of the interpretation of the said *śruti*, the explanation based on non-colocation (*vidyādhikarānya*) is not proper as long as there exists a possibility of explaining the text based on colocation (*sāmānādhikarānya*). He cites the authority of *Niṣadasthāpatyādhikaraṇa* of *Pūrva Mīmāṃsā* in his favour.

Shri Shastri finds yet another inconsistency with regard to this theory. The Viśiṣṭādvaitins accept eternity on the basis of a theory of the *Naiyāyikas* who say that the characteristics that exist in an eternal object also are eternal. To cite an example, the singularity that exists in the substance such as *ākāśa*, etc. is eternal whereas the same is non-eternal when it exists in such objects as the pot, etc. But, following the *Naiyāyikas*, the Viśiṣṭādvaitins do not accept *jñāna* as a quality of the *ātman*, but regard it as substance.

Another central theory of the Viśiṣṭādvaitins, namely, that the Brahman is *nitya-sūkṣma-cidacid-viśiṣṭa* is also untenable for the similar reasons. Shri Shastri says that if the subtle *prakṛti* the nature of which undergoes modification into the gross world is accepted as eternal, how then does the Viśiṣṭādvaitin differentiate his theory from that of the Jainas who accept that the eternal *ātman* can modify into the world. For the Advaitins, there is no inconsistency as they accept that all modifiables are non-eternal including *prakṛti*.

Shri Shastri also criticises the theory of the contraction and expansion of the *dharmabhūtajñāna*. The Viśiṣṭādvaitins offer the definition for contraction and expansion as a distinct contact with nearer and farther places, respectively. Shri Shastri examines the process further and asks how is such contact with the object

attained by the *jñāna*? Is it on account of the capacity of *jñāna* to pull the objects nearer without itself moving as per the example of the magnet or is it due to such power on the part of the objects? In either case does that Viśiṣṭādvaitin accept increase and decrease in number of the parts of either *dharmabhūtajñāna* or the object or not? If not, he is contradicting the experience of all in the world, both scholars as well as laymen. Likewise, the theory that the upward moving *dharmabhūtajñāna* pulls the objects to its proximity, is also a contradiction of universal experience. That the unmoving objects pull the *dharmabhūtajñāna* to a distance of proximity, thus, causing an increase in the numbers of parts so that such *jñāna* results are yet to be accepted. But, such an acceptance will prove to be suicidal to the Viśiṣṭādvaitin as it contradicts their fundamental position of maintaining the *aprthak-siddhi* relation between the *jñāna* and the *ātman*, and the naturality of *jñāna* as well. In this way, while explaining the contraction and expansion, there is no way to escape from accepting the increase and decrease in the number of parts of the *dharmabhūtajñāna* and once they are accepted it becomes impossible to maintain the eternality of the *dharmabhūtajñāna*.

Even with regard to the concept of *aprthak-siddhatva*, there is inconsistency. *Aprthak-siddhatva* is nothing but *ayutasiddhatva*. It is the identity in difference (*tādātmya*) between two objects according to the Viśiṣṭādvaita. In the case of the identity in difference (*tādātmya*) between the clay and pot, the causal relation (*kāryakāraṇabhāva*) between them is responsible for it. Whereas in the case of the identity in difference (*tādātmya*) between the body and the self *śarīraśarīrī-bhāva* is responsible for it, but not the causal relation, according to the Viśiṣṭādvaitins. Now, Shri Shastri poses the question as to what would be responsible for the identity in difference between *svarūpajñāna*, i.e. the Brahman and the *dharmabhūtajñāna*, since neither of those above two relations hold good in this case?⁷

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. It may be recalled in this connection that Gautama in his *Nyāya Sūtras* discusses the question as to whose property knowledge is, that is, of the body, or the mind or the *buddhi* or the *ātman*, but he does not discuss the question as to whom the erroneous cognition belongs.
2. See the discussion on Identity Statement in Nyāya in *JICPR*.
3. Bhakti Darśana Vimarśaḥ, Badrinath Sukla Memorial Lecture, Published in Sanskrit by Sampornanand Sanskrit Visvavidyalaya Varanasi.
4. A more detailed exposition of the views of Nischaladasa is contained in the Project volume entitled "Systems of Vedānta" edited by R. Balasubramaniam. However, the article by Surendra Kumar Srivastava is primarily expository in nature and does not raise critical issues with respect to his work.
5. *Jñāna* is of two types according to the Advaitins as well as the Viśiṣṭādvaitins. To make a distinction between them, the Advaitins describe the first as *śvarūpajñāna*, i.e. *jñāna* which is a very essential nature of *ātman* or Brahman, while the other one is *vṛttijñāna*, i.e. the *jñāna* of the pot, cloth, etc. Viśiṣṭādvaitins refer to the first by the term *dharmabhūtajñāna*,

and to the second one by the term *dharmabhūtajñāna*. In this section, the term *jñāna* is used only to refer to the *Vṛttijñāna* and *dharmabhūtajñāna*. However, where reference is to be made to the first type of *jñāna*, the term *svarūpajñāna* is used.

6. Here the *jñāna* should be understood as *svarūpajñāna*.
7. *Śatbhūṣaṇī*, Introduction, pp.xxxvii–xliii.