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DIALOGUE

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Working Office:
23/203 East End Apartments,
Mayur Vihar, Phase-I Extension,
Delhi-110096
Phone : 91-11-22712454
e-mail : asthabharati1@gmail.com
web-site : www.asthabharati.org

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Editorial Perspective

This Issue of the Journal

The last issue of the journal was focused on the **Indian Thinkers**. We are bringing out papers on some more Indian thinkers in this issue, as well as in the next one. This is a symbolic attempt to bring back the discourse on right track. As we know Indian scholarship has lost its track; the links with perennial philosophy have been severed; dwarfs and pamphleteers have captured the Centers of Higher Learning. Entirely **brain-washed activist degree holders** are coming out of our premier universities. The dominant group of the University teachers in the field of Social Sciences terrorize, rather than discourse. Others suffer from **Intellectual/Academic Dhimmitude**. Many genuine scholars have become timid; they are afraid of being accused due to **guilt by association**. There are many other maladies. Remedial measures are urgently needed.

As we mentioned in the earlier issue of the journals, our thinkers were systematically pushed to the margins. It is high time, we take steps to acquaint our students with them. The Government of India should re-examine its policy of proliferating the country with third rate Central University. A commission is needed to go through the workings, etc of the UGC. The scholarship, rather than the post held should taken as the criteria of scholarship.

Reservations and the Caste Debate

The Jat agitation going on in Haryana, and the similar agitations, the other day, by the Kappu community of Andhra Pradesh, and the Patels of Gujarat, points towards the deep malady in the system. What these agitations show is only the tip of the iceberg. The real problem is deeper, and needs in-depth study and remedy. The lack syndrome causing the problem is not properly understood, nor is there any

sincere effort to understand and tackle it. The need of the hour is to ponder, and initiate policy formulation and action on the whole problem.

The lack of proper understanding of the Indian society and culture, especially the caste and untouchability, has created enormous problems for the nation and the society. Caste and untouchability, in its present form, is a recent, and, at best, a post-Turk phenomenon. **Al-Biruni**, only a thousand years ago, talks of only the four castes, and all sitting and eating at one place; no caste proliferation, and no untouchability. For **Panini**, *jati* was *gotra* and *charana*. **Manu** and **Vyasa** (in Mahabharata) recognize only four, and if we take hypergamy into account, then only three, exogamous categories in Hindu society. **Vedas**, in the matter of marriage, is free from even that restriction.

Hindu society witnessed many changes after Arab, Turk and Mughal aggressions. (a) Many a *Mahattar* (greater) were forced to become *Mehtar* (scavenger). After all, there is **no mention of scavenger in Classical Indian literature**. In this connection, it also need mention that Risley's survey found *Mehtars* better placed than the Punjab Brahmins, and Mahars better placed than the Chitpawan Brahmins in the facial frame in the survey conducted to show the social and racial correspondence of the Scheduled Castes. The hypothesis, which Risley wanted to prove, was aimed at dividing the Hindus to strengthen the British colonial cause, and facilitate the conversion agenda of the Christian Missionaries. (b) Aggressive anti-Hindu agenda of conversion of the Muslim rulers, their capture and sale of Hindus as slaves, etc., led lakhs of Hindus to run away to the forests for saving themselves; many started taking pig's flesh to avoid becoming Muslims; they, eventually, become Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes. This led to the increase in tribal and Scheduled Caste population. (c) There was lowering of the status of the Hindu women due to the (i) introduction of veil, (ii) early marriage, (iii) women's restricted movement and limited participation in economic activities, etc. (d) The range of the marriage area, socially and geographically, shrunk, leading into the rapid growth in the number of endogamous groups, and thus, the caste. Thus, the root cause of the proliferation of the number of castes in Hindu society has been the (i) conversion of exogamous guilds (*shrenis*) into endogamous castes, and (ii) fission and fusion of the social groups. What **Manu** names as the mixed marriage progeny is technical terms, which mischievous anthropologists term as castes.

A point, needing emphasis, is that caste in the present form, untouchability and intra-Hindu societal exploitation are entirely non-

Hindu factors. Dominant JNU type scholarship in the field of Social Sciences has neither the tendency nor the will and understanding to put the discourse in proper perspective. The issues, so vital for the society, have been over-politicized. The need is to depoliticize the issue, continue the reservations, and to ensure its benefits to the deserving ones.

The game going on in the Universities, like JNU, Hyderabad and Jadavpur university, the role of the Marxist-Leninist teachers and students, anti-national game of a section of the media, the foreign scholars, supporting their client scholars in JNU, need to be understood, and taken to the public.

A very subtle game, with hidden agenda, to facilitate division of the Hindu society, with the aim to grab a section of them, is going on in many universities. The beef festivals, aimed at humiliating the Hindus, and hurting their sentiments, clearly shows the designs of the Semitic linked organizers. Such activities, anyway, cannot go indefinitely; and, it is better if the conspirators understand it sooner.

Perversion of Meanings of Concepts

The shocking incident of the other day, in JNU, though not unexpected, surprised many of us. Though anti-national activity in JNU usually does not surprise us, as we have seen that University's ugly face several times; we have witnessed its activist teachers lobbying for US intervention in our country's internal affairs; a section of its students celebrating the murder of seventy CRPF men by Maoists, the innocent India-loving foreign students coming for study here and returning as this country's enemies, and many more such unforgettable black records. But this time, it was a surprise with a difference. The dirty combination of the twin ideologies, responsible for this country's partition, has resurfaced and shown its dirty face again after seventy years. The slogans raised in the JNU campus on February 9, 2016, were:

*Bharat ki barbadi tak, Kashmir ki ajadi tak,
Jang rahegi, jang rahegi.
Bharat tere tukde honge,
Insha Allah, Insha Allah.
Afjal ham sharminda hain,
Tere qatil jinda hain.*

The happenings in JNU campus have made some facts clear:

- (i) The belief that the partition of India brought the end of Pakistan ideology on Indian soil is a myth.
- (ii) The destructive role of Marxist-Leninist ideology in India tenaciously persists.

As mentioned above, the marriage of strange bedfellows is not new for Indian politics. It happened when India was just to attain Independence. Communist Party of India resolved to support the ideology of Pakistan, and sixteen nationalities. Rammanohar Lohia understood the reality of their game plan. It was to help balkanization of India, and then to capture the parts one by one, and thus, capture power in India. The game plan failed that time. The Communists received a kick from Pakistan. Randive experiment also failed. The game plan failed, but not their dream; not the ideology; not even their modus operandi; no lesson from the failure of their ideology was learnt either. What happened in JNU was the repeat game of the mid-1940s. It exhibited the same malady, and identical syndrome to promote radical and divisive agenda.

The student politics in JNU has mostly been dominated by the Students Federation of India (SFI), the student unit of the Communist Party of India (Marxist). A change came among the Muslim students after Nandigram incident, where some Muslims were killed. AISA, the students' wing of Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) took advantage of the same. Muslim students' link with AISA consolidated after JNU, under AISA's pressure recognized Madarsa degrees as equivalent to college degrees. The Naxalite support, for every secessionist cause in India, is a well-known fact, needing no elaboration. The only shocking addition is the brave show of Pakistani face of some Indian Muslims, boldly declaring the destruction of India. The question is: Does India need to tackle a Pakistani Jehadi activist and ideologue, when his replica in flesh and blood is present in Delhi itself?

Although, JNU incident was shocking, but more so was the behaviour of a section of our politicians, media men and University professors. Congress vice-President, Rahul Gandhi, accompanied by the Communist leaders, rushed to the University campus to support the accused student leaders. They hurt the sentiments of the entire nation by their action, especially the sacrifices of the Indian Armed forces personnel and their families; After all, hundreds of soldiers have laid down their lives in J&K. The people of India have realized the reality

about the Communists; they have already been pushed to the margins. The sad thing is that Rahul Gandhi, who has proved by his actions and utterances to be an incapable and un-understanding leader, is becoming a burden for the country, and more so for his party. The Congressmen should realize, sooner than later, that army of sycophants can never enhance capacity of a leader. The statement of Nitish Kumar has also come, which needs to be viewed in the light of the compulsions of coalition politics.

The existence of strong anti-national, anti-Hindu lobby in Indian Media is a well-known fact. They ignore incidents like Malda and Baisi, where smugglers could manage to gather lakhs of minorities on communal slogans, leading to undesirable violent acts. A section of Indian media deliberately divert the attention of the people from the real issues, as they are doing now by over-focusing on the violent acts of a section of advocates in Delhi court campus and the real issue of what happened in the JNU meeting on Feb 9? It is time, the Indian society should take notice of the nefarious game of these media-men's endeavour to bring intra-Hindu divide, as well as, between different religious communities of the country. Moreover, the game to malign Hindu society taking the name of RSS, and the like, must end. Media must understand the utter insensitivity of the organizers of 'the "Beef Festivals" and "Mahishasur Festival." Foreign support for anti-national JNU activism has been prominently focused by the Indian media. Their real colour of such foreign scholars has already been documented in the scholarly work, *Breaking India*, of Rajiv Malhotra and Aravindan Neelkandan.

A well-known American scholar, Jack Hawley, has remarked about Hinduism: "Hinduism—the word and perhaps the reality too—was born in the 19th century, a notorious illegitimate child. The father was middle-class British, and the mother, of course, was India. The circumstances of conception are not altogether clear." Another notorious scholar declares our most reverend Saint Ramakrishna to be homosexual. A third, a lady Professor of Harvard, is busy in creating war machinery to invade the 'Sacred' of India. whose

A write-up of a senior Indian journalist, Rajdeep Sardesai, appeared in a national newspaper with the caption "Yes, I too am anti-National" in the context of what happened in JNU. The journalist reminded the readers about the right to free speech guaranteed under article 19, and its expanded meaning. He has initiated a baseless debate as to what comes under the purview of law and what not, forgetting the fact that

‘India is the mother’ for majority of the countrymen, and hurting her by acts and words, may provoke violence, and therefore becomes punishable under the law. Under the general rubric of freedom of speech, he forgets to mention its limits and no-go areas.

The debate, in which the journalist wants to drag us, is not different from that, which has made ‘secularism’ a dirty word. Such debates carried with ulterior motive, lead to perversion of meanings of Concepts, and needs to be avoided.

To end, we feel that every culprit, and those who have made JNU a dirty word, must be punished, but due care should be taken to see that none, who is innocent should suffer. Undoubtedly, JNU has hurt us, and it has hurt us cruelly, but it has great potential, and many good teachers and students of that university share our sad feeling. Moreover, this incident has brought out that neither the JNU faculty nor students are a monolith; though, the media has missed the message. A handful of so-called radical faculty and students should not be allowed in JNU or other campuses to hijack the traditional Indian values of tolerance, moderation and compassion. A campus may debate but not divide, which appears to have become an objective in the garb of radicalism and left liberalism. It is high time that the brainwashing activities for the country’s destruction be ruthlessly stopped in the campus and elsewhere.

—**B.B. Kumar**

North-East Scan

Banking Services and Financial Inclusion; The Case of India’s North-East

Patricia Mukhim*

On January 23rd this writer was invited to speak at the All India Bank Employees Association (AIBEA) annual meeting, led by the Punjab National Bank, on The Future of Democracy in India. The theme seemed a little incongruous for an occasion where, “Comrades of the World Unite,” to discuss their welfare. In fact, I wonder if bankers ever have the time to think or worry about democracy. Judging by the mechanical manner in which the customers who enter the banks are greeted it would seem that democracy is an outlandish concept. Then I realised that while banks may not be worried about democracy, they are surely worried about the decisions that governments take because such decisions mean that bank employees can no longer take it easy. The Modi Government’s Jan Dhan Yojna, where banks had to open several crore accounts so that every Indian has a bank account, would mean that much of extra work for banks. The transfer of subsidies from LPG and other such schemes directly to the accounts reduced corruption phenomenally.

Such a huge transaction requires that banks also engage business correspondents (BCs) to reach out to the unreached villages. These BCs are usually employed on contract basis. Ironically, one of the contentious issues discussed at the AIBEA meet was that BCs are dispensable and that bank employees are already doing more than their share.

There are certain areas where the AIBEA appears protective about its space. They appear antagonistic to the idea of private banks setting

* The writer is editor, The Shillong Times and an eminent social activist, journalist and member of National Security Advisory Board.

up shop in this country. Obviously private banks are competitors and most people choose to eliminate their competitors even before they arrive at the battle ground. But is there space for private banks? And who has created that space? The liberal economic climate post 1991 has allowed private players in several sectors and banking is one of them. Private banks are now doing brisk business and giving the nationalised banks a run for their money. In public sector banks] the government is the major stakeholder, so it is obvious that they have to partner with government in different public services including providing access to credit for the least financially empowered citizens. For that we salute them. Private sector banks because of their very nature would not expose themselves to the extent that public sector banks do. But increasingly, private banks are also lending to different categories of creditors.

What bothers most of us is that customer service in nationalised banks borders on the pathetic. One does not feel welcome in a bank. It is quite common for us to enter a bank and not see a welcome smile. Bank employees see customers as an intrusion to their paper/computer work. One wonders if customer service is not the prime focus of bankers, for, where would they be without their clients. Yet many don't seem to understand this fundamental logic.

With the Modi Government, things do look daunting for nationalised banks. Apart from having to put in many more hours of work, there is also much more expected from them rather than the business as usual attitude. There is the Start Up India scheme which some believe will benefit the already privileged class. Others however, hope that it will usher in a level playing field and allow smaller players to become entrepreneurs and begin to manufacture goods that they have conceived of like motor car spare parts and a whole range of things. 'Make in India' surely cannot happen if only the big players are allowed to gulp up all the economic space, thereby turning the large majority of Indians into dependent workers. And what about North-East India, where the industrial climate is still in its infancy? What start-ups are possible here and are banks going to provide the hand-holding necessary for such start-ups?

Tourism and the service industry seem to be the key drivers for the economy in the region. But most of the financing goes to well established borrowers/clients. I know of many young entrepreneurs in the tourism sector who face the initial setback because they don't have the financial backing for their projects to become viable. Should the

'Make In India' scheme be a one shoe fits all models? Can it not be tweaked to suit the needs of States that do not have much scope for manufacturing but have other strengths such as leveraging their natural resources and value addition to make those resources good enough for export?

In most States of the North-East, the credit-deposit ratio does not cross 13 percent. This means that all the deposits mopped up by banks from the region go into financing projects outside the State. Surely this is a cause of concern that the AIBEA should have discussed. We know that high level bank officers do discuss this with State governments, but can the bank employees too not raise this sticking point? After all most employees belong to the States they work in. Surely they must be uncomfortable that the deposits from their States are channelled into mega projects outside the region. In fact, this could be the prime reason why the North-Eastern States continually fall between the economic cracks. There is so little money circulating within the region. Money begets more money. If the CD Ratio here improves, one would like to believe that there would be more visible economic outcomes and the GDP of the North-Eastern States too would improve.

Most times bankers meet and discuss only their major clients, who also happen to be the biggest defaulters. The rest of the populace are treated with disdain. I have many stories about how banks make people run from pillar to post, because they don't score too well on the financial scale. They don't own gold ornaments or a home or property or a car; stuff that the upper middle class of this country are able to offer as collateral. One is not saying that banks should finance a losing venture but considering that 350 million people of the 1.3 billion Indians are living below poverty line there has to be more that the banking system ought to be doing to pull this huge number out of the poverty trap.

So, what really is the future of nationalised banks? Do the employees have a stake in laying the foundation for the future of a robust democracy in India? What is the vision of the AIBEA in the North-Eastern circle? Can they project those for public consumption? Democracy requires that all stakeholders play their role and that they pool into the larger agenda of nation building. While one expects the government/executive to tackle the challenges in the social sectors such as health, education, water supply and sanitation, roads and communications, banks are expected to be a supporting pillar in financial inclusion.

It is ironic that the CD Ratio even after the financial exclusion exercise has not improved as far as the North-East is concerned. Does this worry the bankers? It worries many of us who see farmers, struggling to access credit and small and medium stagnating. And above all it is a pity that banks have still not reached the last mile. The AIBEA meeting discussed the role of Business Correspondents. These are people who reach the last person in the villages. They enable last mile banking. They are integral to banking in the remote areas of the North-East. They have helped revolutionise banking by bringing the banks to the doorstep of people. This is how banking is democratised.

That's the future of democracy in the North-East!

The Elements can be Merciless to the Careless

Pradip Phanjoubam*

Six unnatural deaths, 70 injured on a single day is by all means a tragedy. The casualty figure in the January 4 earthquake has risen to seven with the death of one more in a school building collapse on January 6. This sense of tragedy is despite the desensitisation to violent deaths that insurgency torn places like Manipur has undergone. But the fact is, if at all this is a consolation, the casualty figure could have been much worse.

An earthquake measuring 6.8 on the Richter Scale, the biggest in 59 years in the State, is nothing not to be scared of, as those of us in Manipur who experienced it early morning, and all else who have lived similar nightmares everywhere in the world, would vouch. It is not just about the terror of sensing the subterranean violence in the manner the ground shakes, but also the low rumbling from below your feet, combined with the nerve racking sounds of window panes shattering, wall hangings falling to the ground, scared barking of dogs, and then people rushing out into the open in panic.

*Editor, Imphal Free Press, Imphal, Manipur.

Thankfully, the damages this time were not as extensive, at least there were little to compare with the pictures of horror recently seen in Nepal. Although schools were officially declared shut for a week immediately, and a general holiday declared on January 5 and 6 to meet any eventuality of probable killer aftershocks, for most, life returned to normal within a few hours of daybreak, and all traces of panic disappeared, and the streets in Imphal were as busy as ever, even as people began taking stock of the damages around their town and the State.

There were plenty of partially damaged buildings and some completely damaged ones everywhere in the State, but nothing to give a sense of disaster flattened landscape that visuals on TV channels gave the impression of, showing as they usually do only the worst scenes and screening out the normal. Indeed, the number of buildings still standing outnumbered overwhelmingly those flattened in Imphal and most other townships.

Quite interestingly, most of the visibly damaged concrete structures in Imphal were government offices and institutions built by the government and its accredited contractors. Few affluent private homes, most belonging to government functionaries again, suffered as much, again exposing the stark difference in the execution of public work by the government officials and the way they look after their private needs. As did the devastating floods in the State a few months ago, when a total of six dams and bridges were washed away by flood waters, this earthquake catastrophe too has once again exposed the corruption so deeply ingrained into the core of the Manipur officialdom.

This not saying there were no private homes damaged, but most of these belonged to owners who have had to cut corners while constructing them. Noteworthy again is that communities such as the Nepalis in Sadar Hills, were badly hit, and this probably had to do with house construction styles. Many of the traditional homes of the Nepali community for instance are built of stone blocks or bricks, without any steel reinforcement, and sometimes plastered not with cement but mud.

Plenty of lessons to learn from this tragedy and these lessons are important, for Manipur like the rest of the Northeast, falls in a very seismically prone zone, and today's earthquake is unlikely to be the last it sees.

The most important of these lessons is that the elements can be merciless to those who are careless. A positive way of looking at today's tragedy then is to treat it as a wake-up call that all in Manipur and the

Northeast should be more careful and sensitive to the knowledge that earthquakes will remain a part of their destiny for aeons, at least until the tension generated by the collision of the of the Asian geo-tectonic plate with the Eurasian plate is totally spent, probably a couple of million years from now.

The Manipur government in the meantime has swung into action, as is expected of any government. It opened a central control room to receive any quake related emergency calls. Control rooms have also been set up by respective DCs in every district headquarters. Telephone numbers of rapid response medical team of every district have been notified. Essential medicines have been procured and despatched to the districts. Hospitals, both of the government as well as privately run ones have been instructed to reserve beds for possible quake victims. School buildings have been kept aside to couple up as emergency hospitals if the need arises. Schools and colleges have been shut for a week. General holidays have been declared on January 5 and 6.

These are emergency measures and indeed absolutely necessary. However, the government needs to also begin thinking of long-term measures. One of these returns the debate to the question of corruption. Among many other precautionary measures it surely would be planning, let it also think of ways to control siphoning off money from public infrastructure construction projects, for this amounts to endangering the lives of ordinary people. Let Manipur's ministers, bureaucrats and technocrats, also begin being a little more outward looking and attend to their responsibility to the public they are supposed to be servants of, and not be so selfishly self-centred.

Lessons

Tragic though it was, the most positive way of looking at the recent earthquake is to see it as a wake-up call. Thankfully, the devastation was not as bad as it could have been. But this does not mean the place has been spared, as many believers in a supernatural order are prone to think.

In real terms, it will be at least another couple of million years before the causes of these periodic deathly tremors are resolved. Scientist tell us that there are huge blocks of the earth's crusts (tectonic plates) floating and moving and sometimes colliding or sliding against each other. One such collision between the Eurasian plate and the Indian plate about 50 million years ago, caused the mighty Himalaya to rise, and it is the aftermath of this collision that those of us in the Himalayan

region are still experiencing in the form of earthquakes, as the two plates slide against each other.

Although there can be no accurate prediction of earthquakes, the general conclusion that these tectonic plates do exist is undeniable. Scientists would have many evidences to show this, but one simple lay observation should leave even the sceptics amongst us convinced. Had these tectonic collisions been a fiction, there would be no way to explain the existence of mountains. For if there had been no energy from these collisions pushing the earth's crust upwards, gravity and erosion would have ensured that the earth's surface is smooth in the 4.5 billion years it came into being. Tectonic movements and collisions provide this answer.

This is almost like the manner scientists now ponder in amusement that the existence of gravity itself should have been common sense with no need for Newton to discover it. If there had been no force pulling it down, the fabled apple that fell off the tree and on the scientist's head could have also flown away in any other direction.

It is also again almost like the manner scientists now realise the Big Bang should have become obvious after Newton's discovery of gravity, for if everything in the Universe was attracting each other, the Universe should have collapsed into a single point long ago. The obvious presumption then should have been, the Universe has not collapsed into a point because there was a counterforce greater than gravity, and this counterforce could only have come from an original explosion or Big Bang.

Indeed, the Big Bang theory was a consequence of scientists trying to explain observations by astronomer Edwin Hubble that all heavenly bodies appeared to be moving away from each other and that the farther they were from each other, the faster they seemed to be moving away from each other. In this regards, author Bill Bryson, though he is no great scientist himself, he is a good chronicler of the history of science, and his bestselling book, *A Short History of Nearly Everything* is an eye-opener for lay readers like most of us.

To return to the original point this column started off with, since there can be no dispute Manipur will have to live through many more earthquakes in the future, the government must begin taking measures to meet this onerous challenge. As mentioned earlier, it could begin first of all by ending the corrupt contract culture, which is nothing less than organised robbery of public funds by those in power and their cronies and brokers. As in all businesses, there is a legitimate profit

margin contractors should earn from the jobs they are contracted to do, but this should not be about siphoning off 50 per cent or more of the budget reserved for these jobs as is the practice in Manipur today.

All government constructions must be ensured to be as per specification, and it is everybody's knowledge that this has seldom been. That the recent floods and then earthquake damaged public buildings most are proof enough. But it is not just public constructions which the government must monitor. It must also come up with guidelines on how private homes are built in the State.

In the past, when everybody lived a subsistent life, homes were built of light material, either baked mud or wood or bamboo thatch, therefore earthquakes were of much less threat to lives. Today, concrete structures dominate, but not always built to absorb earthquake trauma. The government should commission a study to find out which types of houses suffered most damages in the recent earthquake, and have its engineers come up with construction methods that ensure safety as well as suit different budgets.

Seer Extraordinary: Nisargadutt

Prof. R.C. Shah*

The information available about Nisargadutt Maharaj is inadequate. He was born in 1897 in a poor Brahmin family. His father Shiv Ram Pant was a farmer at Kandolgaon – a small village in Ratnagiri district of Maharashtra. As he himself tells us in his conversations, “My destiny was to be born a simple commoner, with little formal education.” The reader is advised to read a book which is a spiritual classic called ‘I am That: Talks with Sri Nisargadutt Maharaj’ – translated from the Marathi tape-recordings by Maurice Frydman; revised and edited by Sudhakar Dikshit. To quote the editor himself, “... childhood, youth, marriage, progeny – he lived the eventless life of a commoner till his middle age. But, one evening, a friend of his took him to his Guru – Sri Siddharameshwar Maharaj – a spiritual teacher of the Navanath Sampradaya. That day proved to be the turning point of his life. Something exploded within him – a sense of eternal life. The identity of the petty shopkeeper in Bombay dissolved and the sage, Nisargadutt evolved.” I exhort the reader to also read another book *The Experience of Nothingness* from Chetana Publications Ltd., 34, K. Dubhish Marg, Bombay-400023 and M.L.B.D, New Delhi.

Simplicity incarnate, Maharaj was a householder and petty shopkeeper in Bombay, where he lived and died in 1981 at the age of 84. “Any attempt to write a biographical note on such a man” – as the editor rightly observes: “is frivolous and futile. For he is not a man with a past or future; he is the living present – eternal and immutable. He is the Self that has become all things.” Maharaj himself tells us that “when,

*Professor Ramesh Chandra Shah, Padmashri and recipient of Sahitya Akademi Award for his novel in Hindi in 2014 is an eminent scholar, thinker, creative writer and critic. Mobile: 09424440574. Address: M-4, Niralanagar, Bhadbhada Road, Bhopal-462003.

through my faith in my guru, I realized my true being, I left behind my human nature to look after itself, until its destiny is exhausted.”

“I am is the ultimate fact. ‘Who am I?’ is the ultimate question to which everybody must find an answer.” – Nisargadutt

It is presumptuous to write about Nisargadutt Maharaj – particularly so, for someone like me, who never saw or talked to him. He is simplicity incarnate. If you are spiritually sensitive, you are simply stunned by this kind of simplicity; for, with all your well-earned familiarity with spiritual literature, you just can’t recall where in the world you have heard words of wisdom quite like these. Then, there is the utter transparency and absolute clarity of this man – the like of which you have never-ever known in all your bookish life; clarity about what is universally supposed to be the most abstruse and the most mysterious subject on earth – the mystery of mysteries; truth of truth – ‘satyasya satyam’: ‘the Self.’

And it’s all dialogue; not what you call a book. “Neither Buddha, nor Socrates ever wrote a book” – said Mrs. Blavatsky to young Yeats – “for, to do so would be reducing life to a logical process.” No one understands this better than Nisargadutt. He is a man talking to you; not writing a book to enunciate doctrine or theory, but just answering your questions with infinite patience and perspicacity.

‘Gyātarām re kena Vijāniyat’ – asks the deepest text of spiritual wisdom – the Upanishad. We sense the profundity of this Upanishadic statement, but are left clueless when we try to approach this ‘knower.’ The Upanishadic sense of wonderment as well as enquiry sounds too remote, too mysterious. How to understand it in our own terms, through our direct existential engagement? It is here that the voice of Nisargadutt acquires an immediate urgency and persuasive power for us. “Know the knower” – he says: “so far you took the mind for the knower, but is just not so. The mind just clogs you up with images and ideas, which leave scars in your memory. You take remembering to be knowledge. True knowledge is ever-fresh, new, and unexpected. It wells from within. When you know, what you are, you also are what you know. Between knowing and being, there is no gap.”

Isn’t that a direct heart to heart communication? We at once sense the real problem: it’s precisely this ‘gap’ between our knowing and being. Why this gap? Nisargadutt exposes the limitations as well as the

obstructive – distracting nature of ‘mind’ with a conviction, which grips us in a way we had never realised before.

“What I teach is the ancient and simple way of liberation” he says: “Understand your own mind and its hold on you will snap. The mind misunderstands, misunderstanding is its very nature. Right understanding is the only remedy.”

This devaluation of ‘mind’ as such, surprises and shocks us. Haven’t we all been committed to the Cartesian apotheosis of ‘mind’ as the ultimate asset of mankind? “I think, therefore I am.” What Nisargadutt reveals is the exact opposite of this: “I am, therefore I think. Find out who you are” – he tells his interlocutor. “The knower of the known. Look within diligently, remember to remember that the perceived cannot be the perceiver. You are not what happens, you are he, to whom it happens.” He exhorts us to delve deeply into the sense ‘I am.’ If we do so continuously, we will discover that the perceiving centre is not at all personal, but universal. ‘I am’ is the bedrock of the true sense of existence – the only gateway to Being and Truth. And this sense of ‘I am,’ which pervades our consciousness has nothing to do with our personality or mentality according to this sage. “Can there be the sense of ‘I am’ without being somebody or others” – he asks his questioner and listener. “The answer is implied in the question itself: Yes. The sense of ‘I am’ precedes everything. ‘I am’ is before the mind. ‘I am’ is not a thought in the mind “the mind happens to me; I do not happen to the mind. I am beyond time and space, eternal and omnipresent.”

Apparently, mere knowledge is not enough. The knower must be known. Otherwise, with all our advancement in knowledge, we are doomed to frustration and non-fulfilment. Peace, real peace cannot be attained without the knowledge of the knower. The question that arises at once is how does one come to know the knower? The answer the sage gives is necessarily autobiographical, – rooted in his own experience.

“I can only tell you what I know from my own experience. My guru told me: “You are not what you take yourself to be. Find out what you are. Watch the sense ‘I am,’ find your real self.” I obeyed him because I trusted him. I did as he told me. All my spare time I would spend looking at myself in silence. And what a difference it made and how soon! It took me only three years to realize my true nature. My guru died soon after, but it made no difference. I remembered what he had told me, and persevered. The fruit of it is

here with me. I know myself as I am in reality. I am neither the body, nor the mind, nor the mental faculties. I am beyond all these.”

The questioner is bewildered. What after all, is a man without his mind, his mental faculties? Like most of us, he too has been nurtured in the belief, that mind is man’s highest asset and, his identity. Hadn’t Descartes – the initiator of the modern and scientific adventure of man declared, that ‘I think, therefore I am’? Now here is this man, telling us in the most unambiguous language that we are beyond mind. What can be beyond mind except nothing? So he confronts the man who makes this rather absurd claim with what is axiomatic for him: “Are you just nothing” – he asks. But the sage, without the least sign of impatience with such a rude remark, answers – “come on, be reasonable. Of course I am, most tangibly. Only I am not what you may think me to be. This tells you all.” The questioner, quite unfazed, comes out at once with his ready-made rejoinder – “it tells me nothing.” ... “Because it cannot be told” – the master says – “you must gain your own experience. Faith is not blind. It is the willingness to try.”

But, what is it that the master wants him to try? It’s the practice of constant self-remembering. This is exactly what Jiddu Krishnamurthy too had insisted on throughout his life. This is what the great 20th century Armenian called Gurdjieff also keeps emphasizing as the only faith and the only resource for 20th century man, who has been irretrievably robbed of all traditionally sanctioned faiths. Nisargadutt is equally, in fact, much more certain, much more direct and authentic – authoritative about the only source of real life-nourishing faith, which is completely free from dogma-based faith. It is faith in something which every one can verify in his guts: it is faith in oneself – in the strong sense of identity pervading consciousness – the sense ‘I am.’ This identity, according to Nisargadutt and according to everyman’s constant experience, is the witness of the person, we take ourselves to be. This person with which we habitually identify ourselves is not at all stable. It goes on changing from moment to moment. How can such a changeable thing be our real self? Real meditation, real sadhana – to use the most prevalent term for spiritual praxis, – therefore consists in shifting the emphasis from the superficial and changeable person to the immutable and ever-present witness.

How does witnessing compare with faith? That is the inevitable next question that occurs to the questioner, who has been conditioned by a very different conception of ‘faith.’ It is unavoidably, and necessarily a dogma-based faith. Infact, it’s near impossible for him to

conceive of ‘faith,’ in any other way – least of all, what Nisargadutt suggests as “faith in oneself.” This must needs appear as something subjective, whereas, for the westerner, for all adherents of Christianity or Islam, faith – i.e., dogmatic faith is ‘objective.’ They dismiss every other understanding of faith or religious experience as subjective and therefore invalid. This questioner too, although by now, he seems to have established a rapport with Nisargadutt – disenchanted as he is with his so-called objective religion, – can’t help asking, “How does witnessing compare with faith?” he asks. Very natural query for someone who has never heard of ‘witnessing’ one’s own stream of consciousness as the only way, as the only directly experiential way to find meaning and salvation not through belief in a dogma, but through something as immediately present and palpable as observation of one’s own sense of ‘I am.’ Naturally, he finds himself wondering whether this witnessing of one’s own personal life and consciousness can lead to what he has so far understood as the only salvation possible to man – i.e. faith.

Nisargadutt is not at all what you call ‘intellectual’ or ‘scholarly.’ But by virtue of his sadhana, and subsequent solid self-realization, he can understand and empathize with all human endeavours towards the quest of meaning – i.e., all kinds of religious search for enlightenment. That’s why he understands the problem of his interlocutor and tries to meet him half-way thus:

The witnessing attitude is also faith; it is faith in oneself. Cease to be the object and become the subject of all that happens. When you have found yourself, you will find that you are beyond the subject and also beyond the object. They both exist in you, but you are neither.

If you are neither, then what are you? The so-called ‘subject’ and the so-called ‘object’ are still mental categories, This is not to denigrate and devalue the mind altogether. “To keep the mind in its own place and in its own work is the liberation of the mind.” What deflects the mind from its Right place and right orientation is its appropriation by the person. To quote the words of Nisargadutt himself – “once you know your mind and its miraculous powers, and remove what poisoned it – the idea of a separate and isolated person – you just leave it alone to do its work among things for which it is well – suited.”

So, Nisargadutt Maharaj is not against ‘mind’ as such, so long as it is not allowed to occupy the Centre-stage. His primary concern is with finding the root of that strong sense of Identity ‘I am,’ and, his discovery; his first-hand finding is precisely this: that, “looking with the mind you

can't go beyond it. To do so, you must look away from mind and its contents. Away from all that happens in your mind and bring it to the feeling 'I am.'"

Let's have a closer look at this mind-boggling discovery of this sage mind. It has to be presented in his own words. No paraphrase can describe it exactly as he sees it. Here is the key to the real transformative experience in his own words:

When the mind is kept away from its preoccupations, it becomes quiet. If you stay in this quiet, you find it is permeated with a light and a love you have never known; and, yet you recognise it at once as your own nature. Once you have passed through this experience, you will never be the same man again. The unruly mind may break its peace, but it is bound to return until all bonds are broken and life becomes supremely concentrated in the present. The mind is no more. There is only love in action. This state is recognised by its fearlessness. The entire universe is your body and you need not be afraid of it, just as you are not afraid of your body (which is itself full of mysteries and dangers). You have two bodies – the personal and the universal. The personal comes and goes, the Universal is always with you. But, blinded by the personal, you don't see the universal.

This is, then the central point of Nisargadutt's teaching – the central and of course, the most dauntingly difficult as well. It appears to be impossible; but the master assures you that it is within everybody's reach, because he himself – a man of very humble origin could attain it. Moreover, as he puts it, "the spirit is a sport and enjoys to overcome obstacles. The harder the task, the deeper and wider his self-realization."

For all his single-minded intensity, Maharaj is not without a sense of humour. He can prove more than a match for the smartest and the cleverest of his interlocutors. To give just an example of his ready wit, a disciple – Arjuna-like – approaches him with his problem of 'unsteady mind.' Maharaj tells him – "when you reach the deep layers of your true being, you'll find that the mind's surface play affects you very little." The disciple is disappointed and exclaims: 'Oh, there will be play all the same?' Maharaj responds at once – "A quiet mind is not a dead mind." Capital! isn't it?

Similarly, elsewhere, with yet another and bolder disciple, we find Nisargadutt expounding patiently his experience of a quiet mind – it's a comparatively rare occasion when we find him describing his own experience so directly. See how he deals with the self-righteously

intervening doubting Thomas this time. I'll quote the dialogue as it is:

Maharaj – "When the mind is quiet, it reflects reality. Motionless, it dissolves and only reality remains. This reality is so concrete, so actual, so much more tangible than mind and matter, that even diamond is soft butter before it. This overwhelming actuality makes the world dreamlike, misty, irrelevant."

Questioner: Callousness!

Maharaj: you are callous, not me. My world is free from opposition of mutually destructive discrepancies. Its peace is rock-like; this peace and silence are my body.

The intruding, yet rudely inquisitive guest is silenced. The compassionate master sensing his discomfiture, immediately enters his state of mind and reassures him of his innate capacity to overcome obstructions and grope his way towards self-realisation. What he says now is worth quoting in its entirety, because it sums up his whole achievement as well as procedure. This, by the way is the only fitting finale to this short essay on what Nisargadutt Maharaj was and will continue to be for all those, who care to listen to a unique sage of our times – to someone, who came to confirm and re-incarnate the best insights not only of the ancient rishis of this land, but also the living lessons that men like Aurobindo, Krishnamurthy, Mangatram and Gurdjieff have bequeathed to us in our own time – all of them his contemporaries. Nisargadutt pours out everything he has realised – concealing nothing. Here is the whole statement summarizing all he stands for:

Your only problem is the eager self-identification with whatever you perceive. Remember you are not what you perceive, use your power of alert aloofness. Only what is compatible with your real being can make you happy and the world as you perceive it is its outright denial. Keep very quiet and watch what comes to the surface of the mind. Reject the known, welcome the so far unknown and reject it in its turn. Thus, you come to a state in which there is no knowledge, only being, in which being itself is knowledge. To know by being is direct knowledge. It is based on the identity of the seer and seen. Same with happiness. True happiness is not the opposite of sorrow; it includes all sorrow and suffering.

Isn't that something astounding, unheard of? And yet, so deeply soothing and reassuring to our tormented, ever-anxious mind? A novel definition of what you call happiness. The question that forms itself immediately in your mind is: 'what is the difference between happiness

and pleasure?’ That’s the question that occurs to the foreigner too. See how the master deals with this question. He says:

Pleasure depends on things. Happiness does not. After all, the ultimate purpose of all sadhana is to reach a point, when this conviction (nothing is wrong with me, nothing to worry about!) is based on the actual and ever-present experience.

“Which experience?” – the inquisitor is quick to intervene. Very natural question – Isn’t it? Ponder this answer that the sage gives you. It constitutes the very essence of all he means and all he is:

“The experience of being empty and uncluttered by memories and expectations; it is like the happiness of open spaces, of being young, of having all the time and energy for doing things, for discovery, for adventure.”

Bal Gangadhar Tilak

Sri Aurobindo*

Neither Mr. Tilak nor his speeches really require any presentation or foreword. His speeches are, like the featureless Brahman, self-luminous, straightforward, lucid, never turning aside from the point which they mean to hammer in or wrapping it up in ornamental verbiage, they read like a series of self-evident propositions. And Mr. Tilak himself, his career, his place in Indian politics are also a self-evident proposition, a hard fact baffling and dismaying in the last degree to those to whom his name has been anathema and his increasing pre-eminence figured as a portent of evil. The condition of things in India being given, the one possible aim for political effort resulting and the sole means and spirit by which it could be brought about, this man had to come and, once in the field, had to come to the front. He could not but stand in the end where he stands today, as one of the two or three leaders of the Indian people who are in their eyes the incarnations of the national endeavour and the God-given captains of the national aspiration. His life, his character, his work and endurance, his acceptance by the heart and the mind of the people are a stronger argument than all the reasonings in his speeches, powerful as these are, for Swaraj, Self-government, Home Rule, by whatever name we may call the sole possible present aim of our effort, the freedom of the life of India, its self-determination by the people of India. Arguments and speeches do not win liberty for a nation; but where there is a will in the nation to be free and a man to embody that will in every action of his life and to devote his days to its realisation in the face of every difficulty and every suffering, and where the will of the nation has once said, “This man

*This article was published as an introduction to the book "Bal Gangadhar Tilak: His writing and speeches in 1918." Aurobindo personally knew Tilak and worked with him politically.

and his life mean what I have in my heart and in my purpose,” that is a sure signpost of the future which no one has any excuse for mistaking.

That indomitable will, that unwavering devotion have been the whole meaning of Mr. Tilak’s life; they are the reason of his immense hold on the people. For he does not owe his pre-eminent position to any of the causes which have usually made for political leading in India, wealth and great social position, professional success, recognition by Government, a power of fervid oratory or of fluent and taking speech; for he had none of these things to help him. He owes it to himself alone and to the thing his life has meant and because he has meant it with his whole mind and his whole soul. He has kept back nothing for himself or for other aims, but has given all himself to his country.

Yet is Mr. Tilak a man of various and no ordinary gifts, and in several lines of life he might have achieved present distinction or a pre-eminent and enduring fame. Though he has never practised, he has a close knowledge of law and an acute legal mind which, had he cared in the least degree for wealth and worldly position, would have brought him to the front at the bar. He is a great Sanskrit scholar, a powerful writer and a strong, subtle and lucid thinker. He might have filled a large place in the field of contemporary Asiatic scholarship. Even as it is, his *Orion* and his *Arctic Home* have acquired at once a world-wide recognition and left as strong a mark as can at all be imprinted on the ever-shifting sands of oriental research. His work on the Gita, no mere commentary, but an original criticism and presentation of ethical truth, is a monumental work, the first prose writing of the front rank in weight and importance in the Marathi language, and likely to become a classic. This one book sufficiently proves that had he devoted his energies in this direction, he might easily have filled a large place in the history of Marathi literature and in the history of ethical thought, so subtle and comprehensive is its thinking, so great the perfection and satisfying force of its style. But it was psychologically impossible for Mr. Tilak to devote his energies in any great degree to another action than the one life-mission for which the Master of his works had chosen him. His powerful literary gift has been given up to a journalistic work, ephemeral as even the best journalistic work must be, but consistently brilliant, vigorous, politically educative through decades, to an extent seldom matched and certainly never surpassed. His scholastic labour has been done almost by way of recreation. Nor can anything be more significant than the fact that the works which have brought him a fame other than that of the politician and patriot, were done in periods of compulsory

cessation from his life-work, – planned and partly, if not wholly, executed during the imprisonments which could alone enforce leisure upon this unresting worker for his country. Even these by-products of his genius have some reference to the one passion of his life, the renewal, if not the surpassing of the past greatness of the nation by the greatness of its future. His Vedic researches seek to fix its prehistoric point of departure; the *Gita-rahasya* takes the scripture which is perhaps the strongest and most comprehensive production of Indian spirituality and justifies to that spirituality, by its own authoritative ancient message, the sense of the importance of life, of action, of human existence, of man’s labour for mankind which is indispensable to the idealism of the modern spirit.

The landmarks of Mr. Tilak’s life are landmarks also in the history of his province and his country. His first great step associated him in a pioneer work whose motive was to educate the people for a new life under the new conditions, on the one side a purely educational movement of which the fruit was the Ferguson College, fitly founding the reawakening of the country by an effort of which co-operation in self-sacrifice was the moving spirit, on the other the initiation of the *Kesari* newspaper, which since then has figured increasingly as the characteristic and powerful expression of the political mind of Maharashtra. Mr. Tilak’s career has counted three periods each of which had an imprisonment for its culminating point. His first imprisonment in the Kolhapur case belongs to this first stage of self-development and development of the Maratha country for new ideas and activities and for the national future.

The second period brought in a wider conception and a profounder effort. For now it was to reawaken not only the political mind, but the soul of the people by linking its future to its past; it worked by a more strenuous and popular propaganda which reached its height in the organisation of the Shivaji and the Ganapati festivals. His separation from the social reform leader, Agarkar, had opened the way for the peculiar role which he has played as a trusted and accredited leader of conservative and religious India in the paths of democratic politics. It was this position which enabled him to effect the union of the new political spirit with the tradition and sentiment of the historic past and of both with the ineradicable religious temperament of the people, of which these festivals were the symbol. The Congress movement was for a long time purely occidental in its mind, character and methods, confined to the English-educated few, founded on the political rights

and interests of the people read in the light of English history and European ideals, but with no roots either in the past of the country or in the inner spirit of the nation. Mr. Tilak was the first political leader to break through the routine of its somewhat academical methods, to bridge the gulf between the present and the past and to restore continuity to the political life of the nation. He developed a language and a spirit and he used methods which Indianised the movement and brought into it the masses. To his work of this period we owe that really living, strong and spontaneously organised movement in Maharashtra, which has shown its energy and sincerity in more than one crisis and struggle. This divination of the mind and spirit of his people and its needs and this power to seize on the right way to call it forth prove strikingly the political genius of Mr. Tilak; they made him the one man predestined to lead them in this trying and difficult period when all has to be discovered and all has to be reconstructed. What was done then by Mr. Tilak in Maharashtra, has been initiated for all India by the Swadeshi movement. To bring in the mass of the people, to found the greatness of the future on the greatness of the past, to infuse Indian politics with Indian religious fervour and spirituality are the indispensable conditions for a great and powerful political awakening in India. Others, writers, thinkers, spiritual leaders, had seen this truth. Mr. Tilak was the first to bring it into the actual field of practical politics. This second period of his labour for his country culminated in a longer and harsher imprisonment which was, as it were, the second seal of the divine hand upon his work; for there can be no diviner seal than suffering for a cause.

A third period, that of the Swadeshi movement, brought Mr. Tilak forward prominently as an All-India leader; it gave him at last the wider field, the greater driving power, the larger leverage he needed to bring his life-work rapidly to a head, and not only in Maharashtra but throughout the country. The incidents of that period are too fresh in memory to need recalling. From the inception of the Boycott to the Surat catastrophe and his last and longest imprisonment, which was its sequel, the name and work of Mr. Tilak are a part of Indian history. These three imprisonments, each showing more clearly the moral stuff and quality of the man under the test and the revealing glare of suffering, have been the three seals of his career. The first found him one of a small knot of pioneer workers; it marked him out to be the strong and inflexible leader of a strong and sturdy people. The second found him already the inspiring power of a great reawakening of the Maratha spirit; it left him an uncrowned king in the Deccan and gave him that

high reputation throughout India which was the foundation-stone of his present commanding influence. The last found him the leader of an All-India party, the foremost exponent and head of a thorough going Nationalism; it sent him back to be one of the two or three foremost men of India adored and followed by the whole nation. He now stands in the last period of his lifelong toil for his country. It is one in which for the first time some ray of immediate hope, some prospect of near success shines upon a cause which at one time seemed destined to a long frustration and fulfilment only perhaps after a century of labour, struggle and suffering .

The qualities which have supported him and given him his hard-earned success, have been comparatively rare in Indian politics. The first is his entirely representative character as a born leader for the subnation to which he belongs. India is a unity full of diversities and its strength as well as its weakness is rooted in those diversities: the vigour of its national life can exist only by the vigour of its regional life. Therefore in politics as in everything else a leader, to have a firm basis for his life-work, must build it upon a living work and influence in his own sub-race or province. No man was more fitted to do this than Mr. Tilak. He is the very type and incarnation of the Maratha character, the Maratha qualities, the Maratha spirit, but with the unified solidity in the character, the touch of genius in the qualities, the vital force in the spirit which make a great personality readily the representative man of his people. The Maratha race, as their soil and their history have made them, are a rugged, strong and sturdy people, democratic in their every fibre, keenly intelligent and practical to the very marrow, following in ideas, even in poetry, philosophy and religion the drive towards life and action, capable of great fervour, feeling and enthusiasm, like all Indian peoples, but not emotional idealists, having in their thought and speech always a turn for strength, sense, accuracy, lucidity and vigour, in learning and scholarship patient, industrious, careful, thorough and penetrating, in life simple, hardy and frugal, in their temperament courageous, pugnacious, full of spirit, yet with a tact in dealing with hard facts and circumventing obstacles, shrewd yet aggressive diplomatists, born politicians, born fighters. All this Mr. Tilak is with a singular and eminent completeness, and all on a large-scale, adding to it all a lucid simplicity of genius, a secret intensity, an inner strength of will, a single-mindedness in aim of quite extraordinary force, which remind one of the brightness, sharpness and perfect temper of a fine sword hidden in a sober scabbard. As he emerged on the political field,

his people saw more and more clearly in him their representative man, themselves in large, the genius of their type. They felt him to be of one spirit and make with the great men who had made their past history, almost believed him to, be a reincarnation of one of them returned to carry out his old work in a new form and under new conditions. They beheld in him the spirit of Maharashtra once again embodied in a great individual. He occupies a position in his province which has no parallel in the rest of India.

On the wider national field also, Mr. Tilak has rare qualities which fit him for the hour and the work. He is in no sense what his enemies have called him, a demagogue: he has not the loose suppleness, the oratorical fervour, the facile appeal to the passions which demagogy requires; his speeches are too much made up of hard and straight thinking, he is too much a man of serious and practical action. None more careless of mere effervescence, emotional applause, popular gush, public ovations. He tolerates them since popular enthusiasm will express itself in that way; but he has always been a little impatient of them as dissipative of serious strength and will and a waste of time and energy which might better have been solidified and devoted to effective work. But he is entirely a democratic politician, of a type not very common among our leaders, one who can both awaken the spirit of the mass and respond to their spirit, able to lead them, but also able to see where he must follow the lead of their predominant sense and will and feelings. He moves among his followers as one of them in a perfect equality, simple and familiar in his dealings with them by the very force of his temperament and character, open, plain and direct and, though capable of great reserve in his speech, yet, wherever necessary, admitting them into his plans and ideas as one taking counsel of them, taking their sense even while enforcing as much as possible his own view of policy and action with all the great strength of quiet will at his command. He has that closeness of spirit to the mass of men, that unpretentious openness of intercourse with them, that faculty of plain and direct speech which interprets their feelings and shows them how to think out what they feel, which are pre-eminently the democratic qualities. For this reason he has always been able to unite all classes of men behind him, to be the leader not only of the educated, but of the people, the merchant, the trader, the villager, the peasant. All Maharashtra understands him when he speaks or writes; all Maharashtra is ready to follow him when he acts. Into his wider field in the troubled Swadeshi times he carried the same qualities and the same power of democratic leadership.

It is equally a mistake to think of Mr. Tilak as by nature a revolutionary leader; that is not his character or his political temperament. The Indian peoples generally, with the possible exception of emotional and idealistic Bengal, have nothing or very little of the revolutionary temper; they can be goaded to revolution, like any and every people on the face of the earth, but they have no natural disposition towards it. They are capable of large ideals and fervent enthusiasms, sensitive in feeling and liable to gusts of passionate revolt which are easily appeased by even an appearance of concession; but naturally they are conservative in temperament and deliberate in action. Mr. Tilak, though a strong-willed man and a fighter by nature, has this much of the ordinary Indian temperament, that with a large mind open to progressive ideas he unites a conservative temperament strongly in touch with the sense of his people. In a free India he would probably have figured as an advanced liberal statesman eager for national progress and greatness, but as careful of every step as firm and decided in it and always seeking to carry the conservative instinct of the nation with him in every change. He is besides a born Parliamentarian, a leader for the assembly, though always in touch with the people outside as the constant source of the mandate and the final referee in differences. He loves a clear and fixed procedure which he can abide by and use, even while making the most of its details, – of which the theory and practice would be always at his finger-ends, – to secure a practical advantage in the struggle of parties. He always set a high value on the Congress for this reason; he saw in it a centralising body, an instrument and a first, though yet shapeless essay at a popular assembly. Many after Surat spoke of him as the deliberate breaker of the Congress, but to no one was the catastrophe so great a blow as to Mr. Tilak. He did not love the do-nothingness of that assembly, but he valued it both as a great national fact and for its unrealised possibilities and hoped to make of it a central organisation for practical work. To destroy an existing and useful institution was alien to his way of seeing and would not have entered into his ideas or his wishes.

Moreover, though he has ideals, he is not an idealist by character. Once the ideal fixed, all the rest is for him practical work, the facing of hard facts, though also the overcoming of them when they stand in the way of the goal, the use of strong and effective means with the utmost care and prudence consistent with the primary need of as rapid an effectivity as will and earnest action can bring about. Though he can be obstinate and iron-willed when his mind is made up as to the

necessity of a course of action or the indispensable recognition of a principle, he is always ready for a compromise which will allow of getting real work done, and will take willingly half a loaf rather than no bread, though always with a full intention of getting the whole loaf in good time. But he will not accept chaff or plaster in place of good bread.

Nor does he like to go too far ahead of possibilities, and indeed has often shown in this respect a caution highly disconcerting to the more impatient of his followers. But neither would he mistake, like the born Moderate, the minimum effort and the minimum immediate aim for the utmost possibility of the moment. Such a man is no natural revolutionist, but a constitutionalist by temper, though always in such times necessarily the leader of an advanced party or section. A clear constitution he could use, amend and enlarge, would have suited him much better than to break existing institutions and get a clear field for innovations which is the natural delight of the revolutionary temperament.

This character of Mr. Tilak's mind explains his attitude in social reform. He is no dogmatic reactionary. The Maratha people are incapable of either the unreasoning or too reasoning rigid conservatism or of the fiery iconoclasm which can exist side by side, – they are often only two sides of the same temper of mind, – in other parts of India. It is attached to its social institutions like all peoples who live close to the soil, but it has always shown a readiness to adapt, loosen and accommodate them in practice to the pressure of actual needs. Mr. Tilak shares this general temperament and attitude of his people. But there have also been other reasons which a strong political sense has dictated; and first, the clear perception that the political movement could not afford to cut itself off from the great mass of the nation or split itself up into warring factions by a premature association of the social reform question with politics. The proper time for that, a politician would naturally feel, is when the country has a free assembly of its own which can consult the needs or carry out the mandates of the people. Moreover, he has felt strongly that political emancipation was the one pressing need for the people of India and that all else not directly connected with it must take a second place; that has been the principle of his own life and he has held that it should be the principle of the national life at the present hour. Let us have first liberty and the organised control of the life of the nation, afterwards we can see how we should use it in social matters; meanwhile let us move on without noise and strife, only so far as actual need and advisability demand and the sense of the people is ready to advance.

This attitude may be right or wrong; but, Mr. Tilak being what he is and the nation being what it is, he could take no other.

If, then, Mr. Tilak has throughout his life been an exponent of the idea of radical change in politics and during the Swadeshi agitation the head of a party which could be called extremist, it is due to that clear practical sense, essential in a leader of political action, which seizes at once on the main necessity and goes straight without hesitating or deviation to the indispensable means. There are always two classes of political mind: one is preoccupied with details for their own sake, revels in the petty points of the moment and puts away into the background the great principles and the great necessities, the other sees rather these first and always and details only in relation to them. The one type moves in a routine circle which may or may not have an issue; it cannot see the forest for the trees and it is only by an accident that it stumbles, if at all, on the way out. The other type takes a mountain-top view of the goal and all the directions and keeps that in its mental compass through all the deflections, retardations and tortuosities which the character of the intervening country may compel it to accept; but these it abridges as much as possible. The former class arrogate the name of statesman in their own day; it is to the latter that posterity concedes it and sees in them the true leaders of great movements. Mr. Tilak, like all men of pre-eminent political genius, belongs to this second and greater order of mind.

Moreover in India, owing to the divorce of political activity from the actual government and administration of the affairs of the country, an academical turn of thought is too common in our dealings with politics. But Mr. Tilak has never been an academical politician, a “student of politics” meddling with action; his turn has always been to see actualities and move forward in their light. It was impossible for him to view the facts and needs of current Indian politics of the nineteenth century in the pure serene or the dim religious light of the Witenagemot and the Magna Charta and the constitutional history of England during the past seven centuries, or to accept the academic sophism of a gradual preparation for liberty, or merely to discuss isolated or omnibus grievances and strive to enlighten the darkness of the official mind by luminous speeches and resolutions, as was the general practice of Congress politics till 1905. A national agitation in the country which would make the Congress movement a living and acting force was always his ideal, and what the Congress would not do, he, when still an isolated leader of a handful of enthusiasts in a corner of the country,

set out to do in his own strength and for his own hand. He saw from the first that for a people circumstanced like ours there could be only one political question and one aim, not the gradual improvement of the present administration into something in the end fundamentally the opposite of itself, but the early substitution of Indian and national for English and bureaucratic control in the affairs of India. A subject nation does not prepare itself by gradual progress for liberty; it opens by liberty its way to rapid progress. The only progress that has to be made in the preparation for liberty, is progress in the awakening of the national spirit and in the creation of the will to be free and the will to adopt the necessary means and bear the necessary sacrifices for liberty. It is these clear perceptions that have regulated his political career.

Therefore the whole of the first part of his political life was devoted to a vigorous and living propaganda for the reawakening and solidifying of the national life of Maharashtra. Therefore, too, when the Swadeshi agitation gave the first opportunity of a large movement in the same sense throughout India, he seized on it with avidity, while his past work in Maharashtra, his position as the leader of a small advanced section in the old Congress politics and his character, sacrifices and sufferings at once fixed the choice of the New Party on him as their predestined leader. The same master-idea made him seize on the four main points which the Bengal agitation had thrown into some beginning of practical form, Swaraj, Swadeshi, National Education and Boycott, and formulate them into a definite programme, which he succeeded in introducing among the resolutions of the Congress at the Calcutta session, – much to the detriment of the uniformity of sage and dignified impotence which had characterised the august, useful and calmly leisurely proceedings of that temperate national body. We all know the convulsion that followed the injection of this foreign matter; but we must see why Mr. Tilak insisted on administering annually so potent a remedy. The four resolutions were for him the first step towards shaking the Congress out of its torpid tortoise-like gait and turning it into a living and acting body.

Swaraj, complete and early self-government in whatever form had the merit in his eyes of making definite and near to the national vision the one thing needful, the one aim that mattered, the one essential change that includes all the others. No nation can develop a living enthusiasm or accept great action and great sacrifices for a goal that is lost to its eye in the mist of far-off centuries; it must see it near and distinct before it, magnified by a present hope, looming largely and

actualised as a living aim whose early realisation only depends on a great, sustained and sincere effort. National education meant for him the training of the young generation in the new national spirit to be the architects of liberty, if that was delayed, the citizens of a free India which had rediscovered itself, if the preliminary conditions were rapidly fulfilled. Swadeshi meant an actualising of the national self-consciousness and the national will and the readiness to sacrifice which would fix them in the daily mind and daily life of the people. In Boycott, which was only a popular name for passive resistance, he saw the means to give to the struggle between the two ideas in conflict, bureaucratic control and national control, a vigorous shape and body and to the popular side a weapon and an effective form of action. Himself a man of organisation and action, he knew well that by action most, and not by thought and speech alone, can the will of a people be vivified, trained and made solid and enduring. To get a sustained authority from the Congress for a sustained effort in these four directions seemed to him of capital importance; this was the reason for his inflexible insistence on their unchanged inclusion when the programme seemed to him to be in danger.

Yet also, because he is a practical politician and a man of action, he has always, so long as the essentials were safe, been ready to admit any change in name or form or any modification of programme or action dictated by the necessities of the time. Thus, during the movement of 1905-1910 the Swadeshi leader and the Swadeshi party insisted on agitation in India and discouraged reliance on agitation in England, because the awaking and fixing of a self-reliant national spirit and will in India was the one work for the hour and in England no party or body of opinion existed which would listen to the national claim, nor could exist, – as anybody with the least knowledge of English politics could have told, – until that claim had been unmistakably and insistently made and was clearly supported by the fixed will of the nation. The Home Rule leader and the Home Rule party of today, which is only the “New Party” reborn with a new name, form and following, insist on the contrary on vigorous and speedy agitation in England, because the claim and the will have both been partially, but not sufficiently recognised, and because a great and growing British party now exists which is ready to make the Indian ideal part of its own programme. So, too, they insisted then on Swaraj and rejected with contempt all petty botching with the administration, because so alone could the real issue be made a living thing to the nation; now they accept readily enough a

fairly advanced but still half-and-half scheme, but always with the proviso that the popular principle receives substantial embodiment and the full ideal is included as an early goal and not put off to a far-distant future. The leader of men in war or politics will always distrust petty and episodic gains which, while giving false hopes, are merely nominal and put off or even endanger the real issue, but will always seize on any advantage which brings decisive victory definitely nearer. It is only the pure idealist, – but let us remember that he too has his great and indispensable uses, – who insists always on either all or nothing. Not revolutionary methods or revolutionary idealism, but the clear sight and the direct propaganda and action of the patriotic political leader insisting on the one thing needful and the straight way to drive at it, have been the sense of Mr. Tilak's political career.

The speeches in this book belong both to the Swadeshi and the Home Rule periods, but mostly to the latter. They show Mr. Tilak's mind and policy and voice with great force that will and political thought now dominant in the country which he has so prominently helped to create. Mr. Tilak has none of the gifts of the orator which many lesser men have possessed, but his force of thought and personality make him in his own way a powerful speaker. He is at his best in his own Marathi tongue rather than in English; for there he finds always the apt and telling phrase, the striking application, the vigorous figure which go straight home to the popular mind. But there is essentially the same power in both. His words have the directness and force – no force can be greater – of a sincere and powerful mind always going immediately to the aim in view, the point before it, expressing it with a bare, concentrated economy of phrase and the insistence of the hammer full on the head of the nail which drives it in with a few blows. But the speeches have to be read with his life, his character, his life-long aims as their surrounding atmosphere. That is why I have dwelt on their main points; – not that all I have said is not well known, but the repetition of known facts has its use when they are important and highly significant.

Two facts of his life and character have to be insisted on as of special importance to the country because they give a great example of two things in which its political life was long deficient and is even now not sufficient. First, the inflexible will of the patriot and man of sincere heart and thorough action which has been the very grain of his character: for aspirations, emotion, enthusiasm are nothing without this; will alone creates and prevails. And wish and will are not the same

thing, but divided by a great gulf: the one, which is all most of us get to, is a puny, tepid and inefficient thing and, even when most enthusiastic, easily discouraged and turned from its object; the other can be a giant to accomplish and endure. Secondly, the readiness to sacrifice and face suffering, not needlessly or with a useless bravado, but with a firm courage when it comes, to bear it and to outlive, returning to work with one's scars as if nothing had happened. No prominent man in India has suffered more for his country; none has taken his sacrifices and sufferings more quietly and as a matter of course.

The first part of Mr. Tilak's life-work is accomplished. Two great opportunities have hastened its success, of which he has taken full advantage. The lavalike flood of the Swadeshi movement fertilised the soil and did for the country in six years the work of six ordinary decades; it fixed the goal of freedom in the mind of the people. The sudden irruption of Mrs. Besant into the field with her unequalled gift, born of her untiring energy, her flaming enthusiasm, her magnificent and magnetic personality, her spiritual force, for bringing an ideal into the stage of actuality with one rapid whirl and rush, has been the second factor. Indeed the presence of three such personalities as Mr. Tilak, Mrs. Besant and Mr. Gandhi at the head and in the heart of the present movement, should itself be a sure guarantee of success. The nation has accepted the near fulfilment of his great aim as its own political aim, the one object of its endeavour, its immediate ideal. The Government of India and the British nation have accepted complete self-government as their final goal in Indian administration; a powerful party in England, the party which seems to command the future, has pronounced for its more speedy and total accomplishment. A handful of dissentients there may be in the country who still see only petty gains in the present and the rest in the dim vista of the centuries, but with this insignificant exception, all the Indian provinces and communities have spoken with one voice. Mr. Tilak's principles of work have been accepted; the ideas which he had so much trouble to enforce have become the commonplaces and truisms of our political thought. The only question that remains is the rapidity of a now inevitable evolution. That is the hope for which Mr. Tilak still stands, a leader of all India. Only when it is accomplished, will his life-work be done; not till then can he rest while he lives, even though age grows on him and infirmities gather, – for his spirit will always remain fresh and vigorous, – any more than a river can rest before the power of its waters has found their goal and discharged them into the sea. But whether that end, – the end of a first stage of our new national life, the beginning of

a greater India reborn for self-fulfilment and the service of humanity, – come tomorrow or after a little delay, its accomplishment is now safe, and Mr. Tilak's name stands already for history as a nation-builder, one of the half-dozen greatest political personalities, memorable figures, representative men of the nation in this most critical period of India's destinies, a name to be remembered gratefully so long as the country has pride in its past and hope for its future.

A Great Mind, a Great Will*

A great mind, a great will, a great and pre-eminent leader of men has passed away from the field of his achievement and labour. To the mind of his country, Lokamanya Tilak was much more, for he had become to it a considerable part of itself, the embodiment of its past effort, and the head of its present will and struggle for a free and greater life. His achievement and personality have put him amidst the first rank of historic and significant figures. He was one who built much rapidly out of little beginnings, a creator of great things out of an unworked material. The creations he left behind him were a new and strong and self-reliant national spirit, the reawakened political mind and life of a people, a will to freedom and action, a great national purpose. He brought to his work extraordinary qualities, a calm, silent, unflinching courage, an unwavering purpose, a flexible mind, a forward casting vision of possibilities, an eye for the occasion, a sense of actuality, a fine capacity of democratic leadership, a diplomacy that never lost sight of its aim and pressed towards it even in the most pliant turns of its movement, and guiding all, a single-minded patriotism that cared for power and influence only as a means of service to the Motherland and a lever for the work of her liberation. He sacrificed much for her and suffered for her repeatedly and made no ostentation of his suffering and sacrifice. His life was a constant offering at her altar and his death has come in the midst of an unceasing service and labour.

The passing of this great personality creates a large and immediate void that will be felt acutely for a time, but it is the virtue of his own work that this vacancy must very soon be filled by new men and new forces. The spirit he created in the country is of that sincere, real and fruitful kind that cannot consent to cease or to fail, but must always

*This piece was written by Sri Aurobindo as an obituary for *The Independent* (15 August 1920) edited by Bipin Chandra Pal, after the death of Tilak on 1, August 1920.

throw up minds and capacities that will embody its purpose. It will raise up others of his mould, if not of his stature, to meet its needs, its demands, its call for ability and courage. He himself has only passed behind the veil, for death, and not life, is the illusion. The strong spirit that dwelt within him ranges now freed from our human and physical limitations, and can still shed upon us, on those now at work, and those who are coming, a more subtle, ample and irresistible influence; and even if this were not so, an effective part of him is still with us. His will is left behind in many to make more powerful and free from hesitations the national will he did so much to create, the growing will, whose strength and single wholeness are the chief conditions of the success of the national effort. His courage is left behind in numbers to fuse itself into and uplift and fortify the courage of his people; his sacrifice and strength in suffering are left with us to enlarge themselves, more even than in his lifetime, and to heighten the fine and steeled temper our people need for the difficult share that still lies before their endeavour. These things are his legacy to his country, and it is in proportion as each man rises to the height of what they signify that his life will be justified and assured of its recompense.

Methods and policies may change but the spirit of what Lokamanya Tilak was and did remains and will continue to be needed, a constant power in others for the achievement of his own life's grand and single purpose. A great worker and creator is not to be judged only by the work he himself did, but also by the greater work he made possible. The achievement of the departed leader has brought the nation to a certain point. Its power to go forward from and beyond that point, to face new circumstances, to rise to the more strenuous and momentous demand of its future will be the greatest and surest sign of the soundness of his labour. That test is being applied to the national movement at the very moment of his departure.

The death of Lokamanya Tilak comes upon us at a time when the country is passing through most troubled and poignant hours. It occurs at a critical period, it coincides even with a crucial moment when questions are being put to the nation by the Master of Destiny, on the answer to which depends the whole spirit, virtue and meaning of its future. In each event that confronts us, there is a divine significance and the passing away at such a time of such a man, on whose thought and decision thousands hung, should make more profoundly felt by the people, by every man in the nation, the great, the almost religious responsibility that lies upon him personally.

At this juncture it is not for me to prejudge the issue; each must meet it according to his light and conscience. This at least can be demanded of every man who would be worthy of India and of her great departed son that he shall put away from him in the decision of the things to be done in the future, all weakness of will, all defect of courage, all unwillingness for sacrifice. Let each strive to see with that selfless impersonality taught by one of our greatest scriptures which can alone enable us to identify ourselves both with the Divine Will and with the soul of our Mother. Two things India demands for her future, the freedom of soul, life and action needed for the work she has to do for mankind; and the understanding by her children of that work and of her own true spirit that the future India may be indeed India. The first seems still the main sense and need of the present moment, but the second is also involved in it – a yet greater issue. On the spirit of our decisions now and in the next few years depends the truth, vitality and greatness of our future national existence. It is the beginning of a great self-determination not only in the external but in the spiritual. These two thoughts should govern our action. Only so can the work done by Lokamanya Tilak find its true continuation and issue.

Ambedkar-Gandhi-Interface: Significance of Uttarakatha (Counternarrative) in 1936 and Now

Sudhir Kumar*

I. “Prak-kathan” by way of Preface: The need to understand the significance of Ambedkar-Gandhi-interface or samvada in the context of the suicide of Rohith Vemula (17 January 2016)

This paper is being written against the backdrop of the traumatic incident of Rohith Vemula’s suicide (17 January 2016)¹ that has unleashed in the media, on the one hand, a national debate on the implications of being a Dalit in India at present, whereas, on the other, it has blazed a trail of mutually competing, contesting, converging, condemnatory and opportunistic views and voices sometimes marked by either grotesque display of political correctness and sheer opportunism ranging from revising the ogre of the caste-system and its inner contradictions, “instant vilification” of almost all Hindus, Hinduism and the ruling party of the day, the BJP, for all the ills and evils emanating from the caste-system, conduct of the political establishment and the brazen politicization of the Rohith-suicide case etc. Moved by the heart-rending textuality of Rohith Vemula’s suicide note,² I, however, decided to pay my tribute to his sacred memory by focusing in my paper on the following points raised by him in his brief suicide-note:-

“I loved science, stars, nature, but then I loved people without knowing that people have long since divorced from nature. Our feelings are second-handed. Our love is constructed. Our beliefs coloured. Our

*Sudhir Kumar, Professor of English, DES-Multidisciplinary Research Centre, Panjab University, Chandigarh-160014 (India); kumarsudhir_pu@rediffmail.com; Mob: 09876675149. Address: F-27, Sector 25 (P.U. Residential Complex) Chandigarh-160014 (India)

valid through artificial art. It has become truly difficult to love without getting hurt. The value of a man was reduced to his immediate identity and nearest possibility. To a vote. To a number. To a thing. Never was a man treated as a mind. As a glorious thing made up of stardust. In every field, in studies, in streets, in politics, and in dying and living.”

It will not be an exaggeration to state that, since independence, but for the highly questionable and socially indifferent role of the political elites in India, there would have been millions of unwept, unsung youths, belonging to the economically and socially deprived sections in India, who might have loved life, nature and stars, like Rohith Vemula, and dreamt of meaningfully contributing to the much-needed socio-cultural transformation in India. One may further state that if the awakened and educated youths belonging to the deprived sections are inspired by the enabling and life-affirming vision of Jyotiba Phule, Sri Aurobindo, Swami Vivekananda, Rabindranath Tagore, Narayana Guru, Gandhi, Ambedkar, Lohia and other equally important thinkers and practitioners of ethical values, who waged their struggles against all forms of oppression and humiliation, they will never commit or be forced to commit “suicide” even when pitted against the heaviest odds. Thus, to make this point in the limited space of this paper, I intend to underline the relevance of the life-affirming vision of Gandhi and Ambedkar with special reference to 1936 – the year of their peculiar interface on the issue of the annihilation of caste-system.

The paper, therefore, proposes, with logic and evidence, that it is the need of the hour to understand the continuing relevance of the Gandhi-Ambedkar-discursive interface (*vaimarshik samvada*) caused by the publication of Ambedkar’s *Annihilation of Caste* (1936). The Indian narrative framework – “katha-uttarakatha” (narrative-counter-narrative) has been used to characterize the open-ended and complementary nature of the seemingly contradictory discourses of Gandhi and Ambedkar. In the Indian civilizational contexts, “katha/uttarakatha” (narrative³/counter-narrative) interface has been one of the salient features of our polyphonic, polycentric and argumentative “parampara” (which is often wrongly translated into English as “tradition,” pejoratively connoting the fossilized past – its musty ideas, old institutions, cultural deadwood in the form of rituals/rites and customs etc.). It is worthwhile to remember that *Parampara*,⁴ in the Indian contexts denotes as well as connotes which is marked by and also the key terms. The paper is an attempt to critically analyze how Ambedkar’s seminal essay *Annihilation of Caste* (1936) may also be

considered as an important “katha or narrative” – that represents the convergence of different forms/discourses of socio-cultural consciousness in the context of India in 1930s. How Ambedkar’s essay also points to what may be considered as a “narrative-convergence” – where narratives having political, literary/cultural/filmic consciousness converged in order to catalyze the project of the elimination of the exploitative caste-system that has for long been the root cause of the continuous oppression of the lower castes and dalits (SC/ST/OBCs including the people who have historically been subjected to any kind of oppression systematically). In order to underline the great significance of Ambedkar’s narrative intervention in the caste-question, the paper also seeks to contextualize the discourses of Ambedkar’s contemporaries, Gandhi and Premchand (*Godan*, published in 1936) and analyzes the filmic narrative – *Achhut Kanya* (*The Untouchable Girl*, 1936).

II

II. *Annihilation of Caste* (1936) as an Uttarakatha (Counter-narrative) of the Inhuman Caste-System

(A) Narrative Convergence in 1916 as a Prologue to “Annihilation of Caste”

First, in order to prove how open-minded and objective Ambedkar is (or tries utmost to be) in his writings, speeches and actions, one may cite what he candidly affirms in his essay, “*Caste in India* (written in 1916 and published in 1917)”:-

“We must, however, guard against approaching the subject with a bias... For myself I shall find as much pleasure in a positive destruction of my own ideology, as in a rational disagreement on a topic, which, notwithstanding many learned disquisitions is likely to remain controversial forever. To conclude, while I am ambitious to advance a Theory of Caste, if it can be shown to be untenable I shall be equally willing to give it up. (262)”

It cannot be denied that there have been very few intellectuals/thinkers/leaders in the world-history, let alone the intellectual history of India, who mustered up the courage to announce, a la Ambedkar, their “tatasthata” (unbiased but rational positionality) and readiness to accept “oppositional reception/criticism” from those who even disagreed with them in such a frank manner as cited above. Suffice to say, Ambedkar, like all other great thinkers of the world, on the one hand, is always eager to articulate his version of “truth” or “meaning” through his narratives or counter-narratives (kathas or uttarakathas), on the other,

he is also prepared to welcome and accept constructive criticisms of his own positions. In this essay, I have used the hugely popular Indian term – “katha” that permeates almost the entire fabric of Indian culture and society – the literate as well as the illiterate masses of India, irrespective of their various geographical/regional, socio-cultural and religious differences, in place of a seemingly more difficult/more elitist term “narrative” in the sense that most of the Indian people in rural areas may hardly understand what a narrative is until it is explained to them that a narrative is also a form of “katha.” The polyphony or the semantic plurality of the people-centric or popular term – “katha” that includes so many, including even conflicting positions of “knowing” and “telling” – which characterize the etymology and epistemology of “narrative” also (see *The New Book of Knowledge* Vol II. 873) “narrative” comes from Latin – “narrare” (to tell) and “gnarus” (to know). And the construction “uttarakatha” is a combination of “uttara” and “katha.” Interestingly enough, Gandhi-Ambedkar narrative-convergence or interface in 1936 carries the traces of all the significations mentioned above. Their narratives/counter-narratives of caste in India, as we will see in later in the paper, were characterized by their fierce yet ethical argumentation, full of great ideas and directions for the realization of radical socio-cultural transformation, conversational tone, attempt to go beyond the commonplace or the given in their acts of interpretation and action etc.

It is evident from the etymological examination of “katha” and “uttarakatha” that Ambedkar’s discourse on the highly iniquitous caste-system as reflected in the text and texture, tone and timbre of his *Annihilation of Caste* (1936) may justifiably be interpreted or read as “katha” as well as “uttarakatha” as it remains a magnum opus of “knowing” and “telling” (narration) having positions and counter-positions on the issue of destruction of caste-system, that, in turn, invite a host of “kathas” and “uttarakathas” (for example, Gandhi and Premchand also wrote their own counter-narratives or uttarakathas on the caste-question). Needless to say, one may easily notice throughout the history of India, in its ancient, medieval, modern or the so-called postmodern contexts, the continuing significance of the protestant or non-conformist “kathavachakas or narrators” who continued and still continue to maintain perennial popularity among the people of India who hardly ever accorded that kind of reverence to any highbrow, institution-based Indian intellectual/theorist. In that sense, Ambedkar’s image remains etched in the imagination of millions of Indians, not as

much an eminent theorist/intellectual/scholar as a great person endowed with amazing intellectual and spiritual power through which he constructed and reconstructed the so many “kathas” (narratives) and “uttarakathas” (counter-narratives) asking for the true swaraj or socio-economic-economic-cultural freedom for the millions of the oppressed and low caste people or dalits in India. In this restricted sense, it would not be wrong to consider Ambedkar as a modern “kathavachaka” who, like Vyasa, Valmiki, Suta, Kabir, Basava, Meerabai, Guru Nanak, Tulsi, Swami Vivekananda, Rabindranath Tagore, Sri Aurobindo, Shri Narayana Guru, Tilak, Gandhi, Rammanohar Lohia, Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyaya, Premchand, Nirala, Ajnyeya, Basheer, U.R. Anantamurthy, Mahashweta Devi, Nirmal Verma and a host of other writers, dared to challenge the oppressive power-structures through his creative as well as social work.

Prior to discussing Ambedkar’s *Annihilation of Caste* (1936), I would like to refer to his 1916 essay (published 1917) *Caste in India* in which he describes/defines “caste” in the context of its insidious impact on the low-caste people:- “Caste in India means an artificial chopping off of the population into fixed and definite units, each one prevented from fusing into another through the custom of endogamy (245).” Moreover, he goes on to remind us that “caste in the singular number is an unreality. Castes exist in the plural number. There is no such thing as a caste; there are only castes” (260). He underlines how, for example, the Brahmins, “while making themselves into a caste” created non-Brahmin castes; or ... while closing themselves in they closed others out” (260). This mechanistic practice, which also gives rise to a process of mimicry, of “closing in” in order to close out” others, through artificially installed hereditary, hierarchical and religious discourses, has for long been a bane of caste-ridden Indian society.

Now, interestingly enough, what Ambedkar was writing in the form of a “katha” or his essay – *Caste in India* highlighting the pernicious impact of caste-system on Indian culture and society – implying a case thereby for its elimination, was being not only written but also practiced also in the public domain, though on a small scale, by Gandhi in his Kochharab Ashram (set up in 1915) that subsequently was shifted near Sabarmati (in 1917). This Ambedkar-Gandhi narrative-convergence, as Gandhi was translating Ambedkar’s radical narrative-act or “kathavachan” that was condemnatory and ethically critical of caste-system into daily practice at his Kochharab-Sabarmati Ashram at the same time (1915 onwards), has scarcely been noticed by researchers

and scholars situated in the centres of institutionalized research and education. One may hardly miss out how Gandhi's "katha" or narrative of "Ashram Observances" (12 in number) being practiced in his Kochharab/Sabarmati Ashram, was an equally radical yet first of its kind attempt/experiment, in the public sphere, to annihilate the caste-system. Even a cursory reading of the Ashram Observances of "Removal of Untouchability" and "Varnashrama Dharma" will prove my point:-

Removal of Untouchability

Untouchability which has taken such deep root in Hinduism, is altogether irreligious. Its removal has therefore been treated as an independent principle. The so-called untouchables have equal place in the Ashram with other classes

Varnashrama Dharma

In the Ashrama, *caste-distinction has no place. It is believed that caste distinction has caused harm to Hindu dharma. The idea of the superior and inferior status and pollution by contact implied in caste distinction serves to destroy the dharma of non-violence. However, the Ashrama does believe in Varna and the Ashrama Dharma. The division of Varna is based upon occupation.*(source: www.gandhiashram accessed on 10 January 2016; italics mine for emphasis)

Thus, it is evident from the above examples, that in 1916, whereas Ambedkar's "katha" or narrative (*Caste in India*) posed an intellectual and social challenge to the perpetrators of exploitative and anti-human caste-system in India, Gandhi's "uttarakatha" or counter-narrative of caste-system as practiced in his Kochharab-Sabarmati Ashram, almost at the same time or even a little bit ago, not only anticipated, and confirmed Ambedkar's narrative on caste but also translated his "katha-karma" narrative-act into samajik and naitik karma social and ethical action by evolving, though at a micro level, an implementable moral and non-violent strategy to address and annihilate the monster of caste in Indian society.

It is in this historical context when the evil of "caste-system" was being questioned by Gandhi and Ambedkar both through their different yet converging kathas or narratives that one may bring into play the significance of Premchand, who in his famous Hindi journal/magazine-*Hansa* in 1913 included "Hira Dom Ki Kavita" (Hira Dom's Poem) which preceded both Gandhi and Ambedkar's "uttarakathas" or counter-narratives" of caste-question. Premchand may well have included this

protest-poem (written in Bhojpuri) in 1913 in *Hansa* in order to foreground the numbed social consciousness of the upper-caste or of the privileged sections of Indian society and the simmering protest in the hearts of the Dalits. The reader immediately realizes how "caste" dehumanizes a vast mass of humanity in India:- "Day and night we are languishing in deep pain and sorrow. We keep on requesting one and all. Even God is not caring for our grief and we are in this condition for times unknown.../ We are prohibited to go even near a well and we are drinking the water from the mud. We are beaten and our hands and legs are broken. Why is it that we are so much tortured?" (source of translation in English: <http://sudhanshushekhkar.wordpress.com/2009/01/02/hira-dom-ki-kavita/> accessed at on Feb. 11, 2014). Premchand, one of the greatest writers in world literature, makes Hira Dom an iconic "kathanayak" or hero, who gives voice to his bruised consciousness and also simultaneously sounds a warning to the oppressive power-structures asking them to radically transform this highly iniquitous caste-infected Hindu social order. It is interesting to note here that neither Premchand nor Hira Dom, neither Gandhi nor Ambedkar, is haunted by such an esoteric, rather acutely intellectualized (read jargonized) question as "Can the Subaltern speak?" which becomes an overwhelming question for Gayatri Chakravathy Spivak, an eminent diasporic "deity," (in terms of her intellectual stature) of postcolonialism, feminism and contemporary cultural studies who goes on to malign the Vedic tradition by asserting that the *Rigveda* sanctions the Sati pratha or custom (the burning of a widow on her husband's funeral pyre) without even caring to cite the concerned verses. On my reading the text of *Rigveda*, I found out that instead of legitimizing or validating the Sati pratha or custom, it inspires, in no uncertain terms, a young widow to re-start her life with new energy and courage in order to shoulder her responsibilities towards her children, family and society at large!!⁵ Hira Dom speaks, and speaks emphatically in his own Bhojpuri language, about the ogre of caste-system and the well-entrenched social indifference and apathy towards injustice, exploitation and inequality so often inflicted on the dalits/ or low-caste people. In 1916, Premchand published two important stories-*Panch Parmeshwar* (Panchas Are Gods) and *Sajjanata Ka Dand* (Punishment of Goodness). The latter represented how the privileged Indians were becoming corrupt and materialistic, and therefore, they ridiculed goodness and truth, whereas on the other, the former stands for the cultivation of truth, non-violence, fraternity and goodness in order to usher in a good society through the characters of Jumman

Shekh and Alagu Chaudhary. It is, therefore, necessary for the people to purify their character and attain the required moral strength to ensure how caste is abolished in society and all the people are made to realize that they are the equal human beings bestowed with equal self-respect as well as equal self-dignity.

(B) Narrative Convergence in 1936: Reading “Annihilation of Caste,” Gandhi and Premchand as Uttarakathas

The year 1936 is remarkable from the perspective of narrative-convergence which this essay is concerned with. What is attempted here is to critically examine how different “kathas” or “uttarakathas” (narratives or counter-narratives) created the narrative convergence, that is an important indicator of “lok-chetana” or collective consciousness of the people in 1936, through the reading of Ambedkar’s *Annihilation of Caste* (published in 1936 – twenty years after his essay – *Caste in India*), Premchand’s *Kafan* (short-story) and *Godan* (novel), and even a filmic narrative – *Achchut Kanya* (starring Ashok Kumar and Devika Rani in lead roles).

Ambedkar in his essay – *Annihilation of Caste* (1936) expands the scope and deepens the multiple significations further of his 1916 essay (cited above). In brief, he launches his well-argued attack on the caste-system in his 1936 essay on the following grounds:-

- (a) Caste-system is a systematically constructed socio-cultural mechanism used to exclude, humiliate and exploit the low-caste people. If it remains only a division of labour, it may exist in a civilized society. But, he asserts, that it is “also a division of labourers. Civilized society undoubtedly needs division of labour. But in no civilized society a division of labour accompanied by this unnatural division of labourers into watertight compartments” (263).
- (b) Furthermore, the existing caste-system is “not merely a division of laborers which is quite different from the division of labour – it is a hierarchy in which the division of labourers are graded one above the other” (263). Hierarchy coupled with equally illogical heredity principle makes the caste-system even worse.
- (c) The caste-system, Ambedkar rightly diagnoses, has “completely disorganized and dehumanized the Hindus” (267). It has stunted and paralyzed the Hindu society as it “prevents common activity

and by preventing common activity it has prevented the Hindus from becoming a society with a unified life and a consciousness of its own being” (268).

- (d) Ambedkar does focus on the urgent need to love and accord equality not only to the low-caste or untouchable people but also to the aborigines or adivasis or scheduled tribes of India in order to make a samataparok samaj or egalitarian society. It is intriguing to note that in most of the contemporary discourses of dalit consciousness, the conditions or the voices of the scheduled tribes of India remain ignored. Ambedkar aptly castigates the dominant Hindus:- “Civilizing the aborigines means adopting them as your own, living in their midst, and cultivating fellow-feeling, in short loving them. How is it possible for a Hindu to do this?” (270).
- (e) Appreciating the social cohesiveness characterizing the Muslim and Sikh communities that make them a formidable force, because of the overt absence of the caste-system, Ambedkar singles out the prevalence of the caste-system as the primary reason for the non-existence of any “Sangathan or unity” (273) among the Hindus. Because of the caste-system, the Hindus suffer from the disease of “indifferentism” which has “made Sangathan and cooperation even for a good cause impossible” (274).
- (f) Fulminating against the horrendous effect of caste, Ambedkar says that it has “killed the public spirit....destroyed the sense of public charity.... Has made the public opinion impossible... Virtue has become caste-ridden and morality has become caste-bound..... Have not Hindus committed treason against their country in the interest of their caste?” (275). His words do have a ring of incontrovertible truth and are more applicable to understand the cause of the prevailing social and cultural anomie and the ills and evils of Indian society manifest in the widespread use of casteist vote-bank politics resorted to by all kinds of political parties including those that pose themselves as the keepers and protectors of the rights and aspirations of the Dalit people.
- (g) Ambedkar’s ideal society or the India of his dreams has got to be based on the democratic principles of “*Liberty, Equality and Fraternity*” (276) without even the faintest trace of caste.

- (h) Articulating with reason and evidences, Ambedkar directs his valid ire and anger against the hereditary and hierarchical Chaturvarna System (Varna-Vyavastha) rampant in Indian society: “The names Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra, are names which are associated with a definite and fixed notion in the mind of every Hindu. The notion is that of a hierarchy based on birth” (278). Further still, he holds the varna-system responsible for the moribund state of Indian society: “It is the system which deadens, paralyses and cripples the people from helpful activity. This is no exaggeration” (283).
- (i) Ambedkar also suggests the method of annihilating the caste in India. After considering their pros and cons, Ambedkar rejects the policies of the abolition of the sub-castes and the promotion of inter-caste – inter-dining as inadequate steps to eliminate caste. Then he suggests that the “real remedy is inter-marriage... *The real remedy for breaking caste is inter-marriage. Nothing will serve as the solvent of caste*” (289).
- (j) Ambedkar is also disarmingly self-critical and in his self-criticism lies the rationale of connecting him with Gandhi and Premchand: “Caste is a notion, it is a state of mind. The destruction of caste does not mean the destruction of a physical barrier. It means a notional change” (289).
- (k) Ambedkar asks the Hindus to deny the authority of their Shastras that legitimize the caste-system. Here, Ambedkar seems to throw the baby with the bathwater as they say. The Hindu Shastras he refers to in his essay in connection with the perpetration of caste-system are the *Vedas* and the *Manusmriti*. What he tends to forget that in their present form, these texts are full of interpolations and their resultant inconsistencies. If there are some parts of a particular *Veda* or the *Manusmriti* that seem to support the hierarchical and hereditary anti-human caste-system, these are, to the contrary, many other equally vocal and vibrant parts or passages that uphold the essential oneness (unity or advaita) of all humanity as well as all creation on the one hand, and overtly affirm that the varna of an individual is dependent, not on one’s heredity and hierarchical position, but on one’s guna, karma and svabhav (quality, action and nature). Even going by the universally accepted logical method of interpretation, one cannot understand the meanings of any text as a whole by merely focusing on a particular part

- of the text – which may even be an interpolated one. Ambedkar sounds quite unreasonable when he takes a quite extremist stance vis-à-vis the Hindu Shastras: “... if you wish to bring about a breach in the (caste) system then you got to apply the dynamite to the Vedas and the Shastras” (297) which deny any part to reason and morality. He takes the most extremist position when he instructs the people to “destroy the religion of the *Shrutis* and the *Smritis*” (297-98). Not unsurprisingly, he, at times, betrays an alarming lack of reason and morality himself as a narrator or kathavachak/writer when he says that the word “Dharma as used in the Vedas in most cases mean religious ordinances or rites” (299). It will be interesting indeed to critically examine Gandhi and Ambedkar samvad/vartalap or dialogue on this issue which is of crucial significance in order to understand the nature of their “kathas” or “uttarakathas” which may provide vital clues to the idea of narrative convergence.
- (l) Most importantly, Ambedkar was emphatic in his assertion that “Reason and morality are the two most powerful weapons in the armoury of a reformer” (297). In his vision, Hindu religion should, therefore, be based on the democratic principles of liberty, equality and fraternity in order to be recognized as a true religion.
- (m) Ambedkar, after having shown the method and mechanism to destroy both the caste-system and its logical basis – the Hindu religion, takes a critical and crucial u-turn and points to the *Upanishads*, the great Shastras of the Hindus, as the unmistakable sources of spiritual wisdom from which the Hindus could draw the spiritual and democratic principles of liberty, equality and fraternity (301) to reconstruct a new egalitarian Hindu society.
- (n) Ambedkar does emphasize the significance of constant change taking place in life at all times. Accordingly, he appeals to the Hindus to realize that nothing is eternal or sanatana in this world and change is the law of life.
- (o) At the end of his essay, Ambedkar warns the Hindus about the futility of political swaraj or freedom without having a social and cultural swaraj (freedom) through the realization of a casteless society. On this issue, it will be seen how Gandhi and Ambedkar are one.

II

Ambedkar, Gandhi, Premchand and *Achhut Kanya*: Contours of Narrative Convergence

Understanding the urgency of responding to Ambedkar's radical narrative or *katha* – *Annihilation of Caste* (1936), Gandhi in the *Harijan* of July 11, 1936 and July 18, 1936 published his “uttarakatha” or counter-narrative. Appreciating Ambedkar's position on the caste-system and his onslaught on the Hindu Shastras and religion, Gandhi rightly pointed out:-

One can only judge a system or an institution by the conduct of its representatives. What is more, Dr. Ambedkar found that the vast majority of Savarna Hindus had not only conducted themselves inhumanely against those of their fellow religionists, whom they classed as untouchables, but they had based their conduct on the authority of their scriptures, and when he begins to search them he had found ample warrant for their beliefs in untouchability and all its implications. The author of the address has quoted chapter and verse in proof of his three-fold indictment – inhuman conduct itself, the unabashed justification for it on the part of the perpetrators, and the subsequent discovery that the justification was warranted by their scriptures. (*Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar: Writings and Speeches* Vol.1, 1979, 81)

Gandhi too warned the people belonging to upper caste against their inhumane indifference to the condition of the low-caste people:- “The Savarnas have to correct their belief and their conduct. Above all, all those who are by their learning and influence among the Savarnas have to give an authoritative interpretation of the scriptures” (ibid., 82). In his article included in the *Harijan* of July 18, 1936, Gandhi gave a detailed response to Ambedkar's condemnation of Hindu religion as a whole and rejection of all the Hindu Shastras which, in turn, may be read as Gandhi's “uttarakatha/counter-narrative” of a combative “katha” narrated by Ambedkar first. Gandhi also supported Ambedkar's position on scriptures, as he did underline this position so many times in his life, by re-affirming that “Nothing can be accepted as the word of God which cannot be tested by reason or be capable of being spiritually experienced” (ibid., 82). Placing his faith not in the interpretations of scriptures done by the scholars with derivative or acquired learning, but in the spiritually enlightened lives and sayings of Hindu saints and seers, Gandhi made the observation that “when all the most learned commentators of the scriptures are utterly forgotten, the accumulated experiences of the sages and saints will abide and be an inspiration to come” (ibid., 82-83).

Contrary to Ambedkar, Gandhi is firm in his determination when he upholds that:-

Caste has nothing to do with religion. It is a custom whose origin I do not know and do not need to know for the satisfaction of my spiritual hunger. But I do know that it is harmful both to the spiritual and national growth. Varna and Ashramas are institutions which have nothing to do with castes.... Arrogation of a superior status by any of the Varna over another is a denial of the law. And there is nothing in the law of Varna to warrant a belief in untouchability. (ibid., 83).

Gandhi continues to construct a corrective and complementary “uttarakatha” by way of pointing to possible errors of interpretation made by Ambedkar:-

In my opinion the profound mistake that Dr Ambedkar has made in his address is to pick out the texts of doubtful authenticity and value and the state of degraded Hindus who are no fit specimens of the faith they so woefully misrepresent. Judged by the standards applied by Dr Ambedkar, every known living faith will probably fail. (ibid., 83).

Affirming that Ambedkar errs in advancing his plea for the wholesale destruction of the Hindu religion and its Shastras, Gandhi says:- “Can a religion that was professed by Chaitanya, Jnandeo, Tukaram, Tiruvalluvar, Ramkrishna Pramahansa, Raja Rammohan Roy, Maharshi Devendranath Tagore, Vivekananda and a host of others who might be easily mentioned, so devoid of merit as is made out in Dr Ambedkar's address? A religion has to be judged not by its worst specimens but by the best it might have produced. For that alone can be used as the standard to aspire to, if not to improve on” (ibid., 84-85).

In his write-up published in the *Harijan* of August 15, 1936, Gandhi also goes a step further and declares that he is ready to abandon Hinduism if it supports untouchability and its all the Shastras validate the caste-system in its present form:

I have certainly meant when I have said that if Shastras support the existing untouchability, I should cease to call myself a Hindu. Similarly, if the Shastras support caste as we know it today, in all its hideousness, I may not call myself a Hindu since I have no scruples about interdining or intermarriage, I need not repeat my position regarding Shastras and their interpretation. (ibid., 85)

It was now Ambedkar's turn to offer his “uttarakatha” in response to Gandhi's narrative-response. Ambedkar again commits the error of critical judgment or interpretation by lumping together all the saints as the “staunch believers in the System of Castes... “and saying that”

The saints have never according to my study carried on a campaign against Caste and Untouchability” (A Reply to The Mahatma by Dr B. R. Ambedkar’ in *Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar: Writings and Speeches*, Vol. 1, 87) How can one justify that statement that such great saints as Swami Vivekananda, Sri Narayana Guru, Sri Aurobindo, Maharshi Devendranath Tagore, Basava, Kabir, Akka Mahadevi, Andal, Ravidas, and others were the “staunch supporters” of the caste-system? All these saints, in their life, actions and creative works represent a non-dualistic human existence and thereby attack the processes of othering engineered through inhumane caste-system!! Ambedkar also alleges that the Mahatma (Gandhi) hardly practices what he preaches (ibid., 90). What, in fact, is argued and alleged by Ambedkar in his counter-narrative was actually practiced by Gandhi in his Kochharab /Sabarmati Ashram (in 1915-17 onwards) through his 12 Ashram Observances which necessitated the Ashram-inmates to practice castelessness in their daily life and hold the Varna as the occupational division of society as referred to above.

This enabling and ennobling narrative convergence between Gandhi and Ambedkar affected both of them – Gandhi became more sensitive towards the urgent need to destroy the caste-system through non-violence or ahimsa and Ambedkar became more sensitive of the urgent need of self-purification and ethical conduct on the part of the untouchables and low-caste people.

Premchand, an eminent Hindi writer and a contemporary of both – Gandhi and Ambedkar, in his novel *Godan* and his short-story *Kafan* (The Shroud – both published in 1936), delineates how the prevailing caste-system dehumanizes and oppresses the people belonging to low-caste/OBC and other equally deprived sections of Indian society. In *Godan*, what happens to Hori, Dhania, Gobar, Jhunia, Silia and other low-caste-characters is a proof of how the caste-system grinds the vast mass of deprived humanity ruthlessly and protects the interests of the upper-caste people and the privileged section of society. The Silia (a young girl that comes from the Chamar community) – Matadin (A Brahmin young man) affair inscribes the primary logic of Ambedkar’s *Annihilation of Caste* in the sense that the Dalits are now ready to transform the caste-ridden Hindu society either by becoming the Brahmins or by converting the Brahmins to the Chamar community – reaffirming the importance of the Ambedkarite formula of intermarriage. In a revealing scene in the novel, the father of the Chamar girl Silia, Harakhu and other members of his low-caste community threaten to annihilate the caste-divide either by destroying the Brahmin caste or the Chamar caste:-

“There is no quarrel, Thakur! We will either make Matadin a Chamar this day or bleed our blood with the blood of Brahmins.... *If you cannot make us the Brahmins, well, we can make you Chamars. Make us the Brahmins, all of us are ready. And if you have no time for this, be ready to become Chamars. Let us celebrate our interdining and intermixing. If you are ready to rob us of our honour then be prepared to hand over your dharma to us as well !!*” (*Godan*, 228)

Premchand’s portrayal of Dalit-protest in a nondescript village against their humiliation and exploitation by the upper-caste people in *Godan* resonates with the message of Ambedkar’s *Annihilation of Caste*. Not content with this, Premchand published in 1936 his quite open-ended (in this sense a post-modernistic) short-story – *Kafan* (The Shroud) that remains unrivalled in its depiction of the untouchable Chamar (Dalit) characters – Ghisu and Madhav who are caught up in the vortex of extreme dehumanization and deprivation. Weighed down by the socio-economic circumstances beyond their control, they insulate themselves against the considerations of good and evil, right or wrong, and wait for Budhia, Madhav’s wife, to die:-

“A strange life was theirs! They owned nothing except for some clay pots; a few torn rags was all that covered their nakedness. They were free of worldly cares! They were loaded with debts, people abused them, beat them, but they didn’t suffer” (233).

Intoxicated and having wasted the donated money given to them to buy Budhia’s funeral, they revel and mockingly rebel against the unjust social order in their absurd manner:-

“If she doesn’t go to heaven then will those big fat people go, who rob the poor with both the hands and swim in the Ganges and offer holy water in the temples to wash away their sins?” And the two of them stood up and began to sing.

“Deceitful world, why do you dazzle us with your eyes?
Deceitful world!” (240).

Premchand’s *Kafan* is, indeed, one of the most subversive stories ever written in the entire range of world literature. It is an excellent example of an uttarakatha or counter-narrative that has multiple layers of meaning and it has, therefore, rightly become a site of contesting discourses of Dalit consciousness, anti-Dalit consciousness, existentialism, Marxism, inverted mysticism and parody of human condition. What surprises a reader in 2016 is the question- “Did Premchand write this counter-narrative or uttarakatha under the influence of Ambedkar who also narrates in his essay – *Annihilation of*

Caste (1936) how the caste-system deadens and paralyses the Hindu society.

Lastly, the filmic narrative of *Achhut Kanya*, (1936) produced by Himanshu Rai and directed by Franz Osten starring Devika Rani and Ashok Kumar. The uttarakatha of the film based on the caste-system revolves around an unsuccessful and tragic love affair between a Brahmin boy – Pratap (Ashok Kumar) and Kasturi (Devika Rani), an untouchable girl. Even when they get married, Pratap to Meera, and Kasturi to Manu, they wish to break the shackles of insidious, soul-killing caste-system, in order to get united as lovers forever. While the two characters, namely, Pratap and Manu, fight to possess Kasturi, the *achhut kanya* (untouchable girl), Kasturi sacrifices her life by throwing herself before a rushing train and saves both of them. The village community, particularly the Savarnas, the upper-caste people are not ready to accept an untouchable girl as an equal human. Through the cinematic translation of Ambedkar's counter-narrative of the caste-system, *Achhut Kanya* gives yet another realistic dimension to the event of narrative convergence that serves as a creative space to register the contemporary state of social, cultural and political consciousness.

Epilogue: The need to read Savarkar in conjunction with Gandhi and Ambedkar on the questions of caste and communalism

What emerges from the preceding discussion that in 1936, as well throughout their lives, Gandhi, Ambedkar and Premchand continued to work, through their writings and actions, which may well be read as complementary “kathas/uttarakathas” (narratives /counter-narratives) for the establishment of a casteless and egalitarian society based on truth and non-violence.

Driven either by the metropolitan intellectual temptations of political correctness or by the rewards of political opportunism, some of the critics/writers tend to classify, categorize and even cauterize the complementary vision of such thinkers as Gandhi, Ambedkar and even Savarkar in mutually hostile ideological camps or schools often ignoring the points of their narrative-convergence despite their different approaches to the problems at hand. Setting aside the dangers of violating the pulls and pressures of political correctness, one may notice the quality of narrative-convergence that marks the vision of Savarkar and Ambedkar both on the issue of caste and communal questions, their differences notwithstanding. How both Ambedkar and Savarkar, despite their perspectival differences, resonate and modify each other's

positions in many constructive and creative ways in their kathas and uttarakathas (narratives/counter-narratives) of caste/and caste-destruction, and communalism does prove the point. It is not a mere coincidence that Dhananjay Keer, one of the foremost biographers of India, in his book, *Dr Ambedkar: Life and Mission* (2005, First published 1954)⁶ refers to Veer Savarkar-Ambedkar-interface, the interconnectedness and interdependence of their “kathas/uttaraksthas” and devotes about 40 pages to analyze the significance of their narrative-convergence on different aspects related to casteism and communalism. Offering his appreciation of Dr Ambedkar's scholarship and leadership qualities, manifest in his satyagraha (soul-force) for the annihilation of caste-system, Savarkar aptly said:-

“Ambedkar's personality, erudition and capacity to lead and organize would have by themselves marked him out as an outstanding asset to our Nation. But in addition to that, the inestimable service he has rendered to our Motherland in trying to stamp out untouchability and results he has achieved in instilling a manly spirit of self-confidence in millions of the Depressed Classes, constitutes an abiding, patriotic as well as humanitarian achievement. The very fact of such a towering personality among the so-called untouchable castes could not but liberate their souls from self-depression and self-digression and animate them to challenge the surrounding claim of the so-called touchables.” (DA 346).

Similarly, one should not be surprised to note how Dr Ambedkar praised Savarkar's bold Temple-entry-initiative in which he led the Mahars (initially he had invited Dr Ambedkar to lead the campaign also but he could not come because of his previous engagements) to enter the temple in 1931 in the Ratnagiri district:-

I however wish to take this opportunity of conveying to you my appreciation of the work you are doing in the field of social reform. If the untouchables are to be the part and parcel of the Hindu society, then it is not enough to remove untouchability, for that matter you must destroy chatuvarnya. I am glad that you are one of the very few who have realized this. (VS, 190)

If one studies Ambedkar's views represented in his *Annihilation of Caste* and compares them with Savarkar's own position in his essay – *Vartaman Jatibhed Ka Auchitya-Anauchitya*⁷ (Appropriateness or Inappropriateness of Present-Day Caste-Discrimination) on the caste-system and the need to destroy it in order to reconstruct a new Hindu

society, one cannot help noticing how he also shares with Ambedkar the urgency to eliminate the caste-system:-

“The entire Hindu society is now in a shambles as it is now afflicted with the deadly disease of consumption manifest in the prevailing caste-generated inordinate arrogance, malice and hatred. Therefore, along with our efforts to destroy the other causes of our decline as a nation, we should spare no pains in eradicating this widespread consumption or tuberculosis called the caste-system from our society. Even if our nation which has already been plagued with the epidemic of the caste-system, manages to achieve the desirable goal of freedom without eliminating this malaise, it will soon give rise to the forces that will again swallow our freedom.” (English translation mine)

Furthermore, in his essay, *Puranapanthi Jatibhed Unmoolak Samajik Kranti Ghoshana* (Declaration of the Annihilation of the Orthodox Caste-System), Savarkar reiterates his uttarakatha of caste-destruction, much like Gandhi and Ambedkar, in order to create a new social order based on equality, liberty and freedom:-

“The hereditary caste system as it is prevailing among the Hindus now is not natural; it is merely textual, manufactured, and hence, untrue. ... Even among Mahars there have been saints like Chokhamela and savants like Ambedkar...Dr Ambedkar was a Mahar. If he was forced, under the dictates of caste-system or varna system, to do the tannery-related work only, our nation would have been deprived of a matchless, unique legal luminary and a great political stalwart ... Social divisions such as division of labour should be based on an individual’s manifest qualities. The worth of an individual should never be ascertained on the basis of her/his birth in a particular family. In order to destroy the caste-system, it is imperative to break the following seven kinds of shackles or prohibitions: 1. Prohibition of Reading Scriptures (Vedoktabandi), 2. Prohibitions of doing business (Vyavasayabandi) 3. Prohibition of touching (Sparshabandi) 4. Prohibition of undertaking sea-voyage (Sindhubandi) 5. Prohibition of purification or reconversion (Shuddhibandi) 6. Prohibition of Eating/Interdining(Rotibandi) 7. Prohibition of intercaste marriages (Betibandi)” (SVD, pp.129-138).

Surprisingly, Dr Ambedkar in his important essay – *Annihilation of Caste* also considered the above-mentioned seven prohibitions as highlighted by Savarkar to be the bane of Hindu society. To Savarkar, Ambedkar and Gandhi, annihilation of caste will be a reality only when these seven prohibitions are done away with. Moreover, if one reads Savarkar’s essay – *Kaha De- Chhuoonga! Apanaoonga!! Sweekar Kaoonga!!* (Declare- I will Touch! I will Make Them My Own!! I will

Accept!! (SVD, 139-144), one cannot fail to notice how the uttarakathas (counter-narratives) of untouchability narrated by Savarkar, Gandhi and Ambedkar attack, with equal gusto and truth-force, (satyagraha) the narratives or kathas of caste-driven social discrimination and social division. Isn’t this a sufficient proof of the narrative-convergence? Much to the discomfiture of the present-day ideology-driven, dogmatic social-scientists and peddlers of political correctness and political opportunism, hogging the media and institutions of higher learning, these three great thinkers/activists cannot be kept in the prison-houses of mutually hostile ideologies as their uttarakathas or counter-narratives of caste, if studied without prejudice, will show an unmistakable narrative-confluence or congruence, without removing their perspectival differences.

In order to further underline the intertextuality and narrative-convergence that marks the vision of Ambedkar and Savarkar, Dhananjay Keer, in his biography of Savarkar, *Veer Savarkar*, (2012; First published 1950)⁸, refers to Savarkar-Ambedkar-interface and the interconnectedness of their vision in about 36 pages!! It is interesting to see how these three contemporaries, that is, Gandhi, Ambedkar and Savarkar attacked the caste-system using their own strategies and publicly criticized those parts of the scriptures that supported the hereditary and hierarchical caste or varna system – finally asking for the dismantling of the caste-system. First, Gandhi (on 16 November 1935) wrote an article – *Caste Has to Go* in which he minced no words in criticizing the caste-system asking for its annihilation and attacking the anti-human and unethical positions inscribed in some parts of the Shastras or scriptures:-

“Nothing in the Shastras which is manifestly contrary to universal truths and morals can stand. Nothing in the Shastras which is capable of being reasoned can stand if it is in conflict with reason.... The present state of caste-system is the very antithesis of *varnashrama*. The sooner the public opinion abolishes it, the better. As I have repeatedly said there is no such thing as untouchability by birth in the Shastras. I hold the present practice to be a sin and the greatest blot on Hinduism. I feel more than ever that if untouchability lives, Hinduism dies. The most effective, quickest and the most unobtrusive way to destroy caste is for reformers to begin the practice with themselves and where necessary take the consequences of social boycott.”⁹

Gandhi, in his “uttarakatha” of “caste-system” anticipates Ambedkar’s position on the destruction of caste-system reflected in his essay – *Annihilation of Caste* (1936) as already discussed above. How beautifully and powerfully Ambedkar in his seminal essay, *Annihilation*

of *Caste*, while foregrounding his differences with Gandhi, ends up echoing Gandhi's own "uttarakatha" of caste in order to highlight the event of narrative-convergence or confluence! To me, in the context of the urgency of the project of the annihilation of caste-system at present, the narratives of Gandhi, Savarkar and Ambedkar do represent the three interrelated, interdependent and mutually engaging uttarakathas or counter-narratives despite their differential discursivities. In the cyclic, and therefore, sanatan (eternal) notion of parampara (tradition in its broadest Eliotian sense), deriving its strength and vitality from the practice, and not the mere intellectual theorization, of sadachara (good/ethical conduct) in the Indic civilizational contexts, the kathas and uttarakathas of caste as narrated by Gandhi, Savarkar and Ambedkar, though marked by their differences, form a vaichark-sangama or confluence of ideas.

When will be the time for our politically-correct intellectuals and power-hungry politicians to listen to and address Rohith Vemula's scathing comments on our society in general and on our intellectual community in particular?:- "Our beliefs coloured. Our originality valid through artificial art. It has become truly difficult to love without getting hurt. The value of a man was reduced to his immediate identity and nearest possibility. To a vote. To a number. To a thing. Never was a man treated as a mind" (ibid.)

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Notes

1. Rohit Vemula, a research scholar and an activist of Ambedkar Students' Association (ASA) at Central University of Hyderabad committed suicide on 17 January 2016 under suspicious circumstances after his suspension (he was barred from staying in the university hostel but was allowed to attend his classes) from the university. This paper does not make an attempt to discuss the student-politics and other administrative issues associated with the case.
2. See 'My suicide note' written by Rohith Chakravarthy Vemula, The Indian Express, January 19, 2016, p.9.
3. For the semantic implications of "narrative" and suffix "counter," see A Dictionary: English and Sanskrit (Ed. Monier Williams), Delhi, Motilal Banarasidass, 1976 (First published in 1851), p.139 and p. 525. Further cited in the text as ADES with page numbers in parentheses.
4. See Sanskrit-Hindi Kosh (Ed. Waman Shivram Apte), Delhi, Motilal Banarasidass Publishers, 1997, pp.577-578. Further cited as Apte with page numbers in parentheses.
5. See Rigveda Samhita, Vol.4 Chapters 9-10, (Ed. Pandit Shri Ram Sharma, Mathura, Yuga Nirman, Yojana, 2010, p.29. (Chapter 10.18.7 & 10.18.8)
6. Dhananjay Keer, *Dr Ambedkar: Life and Mission*, Mumbai, Popular Prakashan, 2005 (F.P. 1954). Further cited in the text as DA with page numbers in parentheses.
7. V.D. Savarkar, *Savarkar Vichar-Darshan*, (Trans. C.B.Kelkar), Lucknow, Rashtradharm Pustak Prakashan, 1970, p.115. Further cited as SVD with page numbers in parentheses.
8. Dhananjay Keer, *Veer Savarkar*, Mumbai, Popular Prakashan, 2012 (First published-1950). Further cited in the text as VS with page numbers in parentheses.
9. Rudragshu Mukherjee (Ed), *The Penguin Gandhi Reader*, New Delhi, Penguin Books, 1993, pp.222-223.

Dr. Ambedkar on the Trio of Principles: Liberty, Equality and Fraternity¹

Pradeep P. Gokhale*

A Methodological issue

While studying Ambedkar's thought we have to face two types of questions.

(1) One question is that of giving an internally consistent and coherent picture of Ambedkar's thought. Ambedkar's intellectual career was multidimensional. He was an economist, a socio-political thinker, a religious thinker, a lawyer and a constitutionalist. He was also a dynamic thinker. He was vibrantly and militantly responding to the complex and turbulent socio-political situation often with equanimity. Therefore his thought reveals apparent tensions and a multipolar effort to balance individual interests, group interests, national interests and interests of the human kind as a whole. In doing so, he was trying to maintain a balance among contradictory interests with a focus on the interests of the downtrodden. We also find that his thought was firmly grounded in materialism, but it was not antireligious. In spite of accepting a materialist explanation of consciousness he emphasized the importance of mind in bringing about social transformation. Hence, it is a challenging task to give a consistent and coherent picture of the diverse thought of Dr. Ambedkar. One has to see whether and how 'the thought' of Dr. Ambedkar can be reconstructed from his 'thoughts.' Giving a consistent and coherent picture of Ambedkar's thought is particularly important in the present context, because one of the common threads running through his diverse thoughts has been the trio of liberty, equality and fraternity. It is common to Ambedkar's socio-political thought, religious

*Pradeep P. Gokhale is Research Professor, Central University of Tibetan Studies, Sarnath, Varanasi.

thought and constitutional thought. But in giving a consistent and coherent picture, there is a risk (which is explained below) and this poses the second challenge before an Ambedkar theorist.

(2) Bringing out consistency in what is dynamic and even dialectical, may amount to treating dynamic as static, what is changing as constant. While theorizing Ambedkar's thought, one has to keep track of its dynamism and dialectical development. I suggest that we can identify three major phases in Ambedkar's intellectual development. The first phase could be called the Hindu Reformist phase, which continued upto 13 October 1935, when in a conference at Yeola he declared that though he was born as Hindu, he will not die a Hindu. The second phase marks Ambedkar standing at the threshold of Hinduism with one foot outside Hinduism, but without a firm decision as to which religion is to be embraced. It can be called the phase of transition during which Ambedkar's inclination towards Buddhism steadily increased. This phase continues upto 1948² or 50³ by which time he made up his mind that he had to join Buddhism and no other religion. The last phase can be called the Buddhist phase, though technically it consists of two sub-phases – would-be-Buddhist and Buddhist. For the sake of brevity we call the three phases the Reformist phase, the Threshold phase and the Buddhist phase. Though Ambedkar's thought consistently revealed some core elements during these phases and sub-phases, it was also discontinuous in some important ways. The point is that Ambedkar's thought should be studied not as a crystallized or fossilized body of ideas but as a dynamic, flowing and developing intellectual process. It is against this general background that I want to study Ambedkar's theorization of the trio of principles. What was Ambedkar's approach to the three principles? In this context, scholars often quote the statement in which he correlates his social philosophy and the three principles with Buddhism. He says :

"Positively my social philosophy may be said to be enshrined in three words — liberty, equality and fraternity. Let no one, however say that I have borrowed my philosophy from the French Revolution. I have not. My philosophy has roots in religion and not in political science. I have derived them from the teachings of my master, the Buddha."

How we should interpret this statement is a crucial problem. Dr. Ambedkar has referred to these principles at different stages of his life. I am suggesting that Ambedkar's above statement may not be taken as applicable to all the phases of the development of his thought. Ambedkar

makes the above statement in a talk which he gave in 1954 on All India Radio. At this stage he had made up his mind that he was going to adopt Buddhism. Before that, in his article *Buddha and the Future of his Religion* which was published in the Mahabodhi Society Journal in 1950, he refers to these principles, but there he regarded adherence to these principles as a criterion of ideal religion. He also claims that Buddhism fulfils this criterion. But he does not say that he has derived these principles from Buddhism.

Ambedkar's earliest reference to the three principles can be found in his masterpiece *Annihilation of Caste*, which he wrote in 1936. In this essay he refers to the three principles as foundations of an ideal society. But he does not refer to Buddhism in this context. However, he does refer to the French Revolution. While discussing equality as one of the principles, he admits that it had been the most contentious part of the slogan of the French Revolution.⁴ So at this stage, he was treating these principles as occasioned by the French Revolution. Even at a later stage, when he wrote *The Hindu Social Order: Its Essential Principles*,⁵ he discusses the three principles in the context of the French Revolution (p. 95). Even here he does not refer to Buddhism as the source of these principles. Though the date of this work is not known to us, it is much later than *Annihilation of Caste*. Hence, when Dr. Ambedkar says that he has derived his social philosophy, which was enshrined in the three principles, from the teachings of the Buddha, his statement is not to be taken literally; it should be interpreted in the context of the would-be Buddhist phase in which he was making this statement.

I want to suggest that though primarily Ambedkar accepted these socio-political principles from the context of French revolution, gradually he reinterpreted them, as religious principles, and when he came to the conclusion that Buddhism is the ideal religion, he re-appropriated them as principles rooted in the Buddha's message. I would say that in the post-1950 phase, he rediscovered the principles, as those rooted in the Buddha's message. This once again underlines the need to understand Dr. Ambedkar's thought, not as a static or constant view-point, but as a dynamic flow of thought. Hence, in the present context we need to do two things.

(A) We need to see how Ambedkar's thinking about the three principles developed and matured over a period of time. Here we will be dealing with Ambedkar's texts belonging to the Threshold phase.

(B) Given that Ambedkar finally said that the principles are rooted in the Buddha's teachings, we need to see in what form they can really be found in the Buddha's teachings. Here we will have to deal with the texts belonging to Ambedkar's Buddhist phase.

The present paper will be limited to the first task mentioned above.

Development of Ambedkar's Thinking

The development of Ambedkar's analysis of the three principles can be sketched on the basis of his relevant writings. When he presented them first in *Annihilation of Caste*, he may not have been fully clear about all aspects of these principles. He was convinced that they were centrally important as the basic principles of an ideal society, an ideal democracy, and an ideal religion. But he was also facing some issues concerning them. In later formulations he seems to have found an answer to some of the issues. So we can at least say that though his understanding of the principles did not undergo a radical change, it at least got matured and enriched in later formulations. Broadly speaking, Ambedkar addressed three theoretical issues concerning the three principles:

(1) What is the exact nature of the three principles?

(2) Are these principle justified? If they are, on what grounds?

The question of the nature of the principles and the question of their justification are interrelated; because a principle may be justified if its nature is understood is one way, but may not be justified as having some other nature.

(3) The third issue pertains to the interrelation among the three principles. This issue is theoretical as well as practical. Theoretically the question is whether the three principles are independent of each other or one of them is basic and others can be derived from it. Practically the question is that these principles, when brought into practice, are not necessarily in harmony with each other; they also conflict with each other. Which principle should have an upper hand in order to resolve the conflict is an important practical issue.

All these are complex issues. The issues occur in Ambedkar's writings in various places and they were handled by him in various ways. His various formulations of the issues, at least prima facie, are not fully consistent. However, inquiring into these formulations, the consistency and inconsistency among them and their developmental order is important for having a realistic picture of Ambedkar's thought.

Though Ambedkar has referred to the three principles in numerous places, he has discussed them together in three works. It is important to consider the three discussions together, because the three works have a common pattern.

(A) *Annihilation of Caste*: In *Annihilation of Caste* Ambedkar raises a question regarding the principles foundational to an ideal society and answers it in terms of the three principles. He argues how Hindu scriptures such as the *Manusmriti* violate all the three principles.

(B) *Philosophy of Hinduism* : This book is included in *Writings and Speeches*: vol. 3 as chapter I.⁶ The aim of this work is to critically examine the philosophical position of the Hindu religion. The central argument of this book is as follows. Any religion can be critiqued in terms of two criteria: utility and justice. Which criterion is to be applied is determined by the question as to what is central to the religion – society or the individual. In ancient religions, society was at the center. Hence while critiquing such religions, utility would be the main criterion. As against this, modern religions are individual-centric. Hence, modern religions can be critiqued by using justice as the criterion. Against this background, Ambedkar critiques Hinduism first by applying justice as the criterion and then by applying the criterion of utility. Ambedkar shows that Hinduism does not measure up to either of the two criteria. This is because according to him Hinduism is neither individual-centric nor society-centric. It is class-centric. Here by ‘class’ Ambedkar means ‘caste.’ Here the relevant question is: what does Ambedkar mean by justice? According to him, justice is nothing but the three principles namely: liberty, equality and fraternity. Like in *Annihilation of Caste*, Ambedkar explains in this book how the three principles are violated in Hinduism.

(C) *Hindu Social Order and Its Essential Features*: This essay is included in ‘Writings and Speeches,’ Vol. 3 as chapter II.⁷ The central concern of this essay is whether Hindu social order can be called a free social order? Naturally the question is: what are the essentials of a free social order? Here Ambedkar states two essentials: (1) Individual is an end in himself/herself. The development of the individual is the aim of the society. (2) The associated life of the members of a society should be based on liberty, equality and fraternity. Having explained the essentials, Ambedkar examines Hinduism in their light and shows how these essentials are not found in Hinduism.

The feature shared by these three texts is that they are critical estimates of Hinduism. *Annihilation of Caste* is the first of these texts.

But the exact chronology of the later texts is not known. The editors have published them in the order in which they found them. Since in the manuscript *Philosophy of Hinduism* occurs earlier and *Hindu Social Order* later, they have published them in that order, hence it is very likely that they were written in that order. If we read the three texts in this order, it appears clear that Ambedkar’s thoughts on the three principles must have gradually developed through these three texts. So let us briefly see how the discussion of the three principles develops in the three texts.

(1) Fraternity: In *Annihilation of Caste*, Ambedkar discusses fraternity first. He describes it as associated life, mobility, consciously communicated interests. He also describes it as an attitude of respect and reverence towards fellowmen.⁸ In *Philosophy of Hinduism*, he identifies it with fellow feeling and also contrasts it with individualism. “Individualism would produce anarchy. It is only fraternity which prevents it and helps to sustain the moral order among men.” He also claims that fellow feeling is a natural sentiment.⁹ In *Hindu Social Order*, he brings out the religious element in fraternity.¹⁰ Hence, we find a gradual development of the concept of fraternity from an emphasis on the social aspect to the moral aspect and then to the religious aspect.

(2) Liberty: In *Annihilation of Caste*, Ambedkar introduces the concept of liberty as right to life and limb and also as the right to property and the right to choose one’s profession.¹¹ In the later texts he reflects on the concept by bringing out other aspects of it. In *Philosophy of Hinduism*, he discusses the conditions which make liberty possible. These conditions include social equality, economic security and knowledge.¹² In *Hindu Social Order*, he classifies liberty into civil liberty and political liberty and elaborates on it. Civil liberty includes liberty of movement, liberty of speech which is the same as freedom of opinion and freedom of action. Freedom of action, when fully realized, implies absence of exploitation, suppression, unemployment and poverty. Political liberty consists in the right of the individual to share in the framing of laws and in the making and unmaking of governments.¹³ Hence, about the concept of liberty we can say that it does not change substantially but only gets clarified and refined.

(3) Equality: Ambedkar’s discussion of equality is most complex and challenging. In *Annihilation of Caste*, Ambedkar admits the problematic character of the principle of equality and accepts equality not on factual grounds, but as a pragmatic necessity.¹⁴ In later writings

we find that he was still struggling with the problematic character and trying to find a solution. In the later writings he was aware that we cannot talk of equality among human beings in the way we can talk about equality in physics or mathematics. But now he is more constructive and affirmative about the notion. In *Philosophy of Hinduism*, he defines equality among human beings as their common essence which entitles them to the same fundamental rights and equal liberty.¹⁵ In *Hindu Social Order*, he accepts Professor Beard's view that the fundamental common characteristic among human beings is moral equality, which has to be accepted against the inequalities, in terms of physical strength, talents, industry and wealth. It is due to this moral equality, that no one has a right to oppress others, however superior he may be in terms of physical strength, talents, industry or wealth.¹⁶ I suggest that this moral equality can be understood as equality of human beings qua human beings or equality of moral status or moral worth of human beings — which is rather abstract in nature. Hence, we can say that Ambedkar's approach to equality, which was initially negative and pragmatic, becomes constructive, moral and abstract in the later period. He must have thought that it is only in this way that equality can be justified.

The Question of Justification of the three principles

As already noted, in *Annihilation of Caste*, Ambedkar expresses doubt about acceptability of equality as a principle. The question was, if equality is contrary to facts, how can it be a value? Ambedkar's answer in *Annihilation of Caste* seems to be that sometimes a value can be accepted if it is beneficial to humanity, even if it is not supported by facts. In later writings, as we saw, he gives a more sophisticated justification by distinguishing what he calls moral equality from other kinds of equality such as physical, intellectual and economic equality. It seems that at this stage he equates moral equality with the essence of a human being. With regard to the justification of the other two principles, Ambedkar does not seem to have any serious problem. In *Annihilation of Caste* he asserts that there need not be any question about their acceptability.¹⁷ He raises the question of the essential character of these principles in *Hindu Social Order*. Here his justification of the principles is moral and religious in nature. He does not just talk about each principle separately, but all the principles together and claims that they follow from a more fundamental tenet, namely that of the individual as an end in himself. He describes this tenet as the sacredness

of human personality and in this way suggests a kind of religious justification of these principles.¹⁸

Here the notion of religious justification needs clarification. Ambedkar's notion of religion in its ideal form does not imply a belief in transcendent metaphysical entities such as God, soul or other worlds. Even his notion of the sacred does not imply them. Similarly, in the Buddhist phase, the distinction Ambedkar makes between religion and Dhamma, is meant to draw a line of demarcation between the popular concept of religion and Ambedkar's understanding of the ideal religion. At this stage Ambedkar defines Dhamma as Morality, which is universal and sacred. Dhamma as morality was sacred not because it implied God, an immortal soul or any such transcendent element, but because it was inviolable and universal. Further, when Ambedkar says that the three principles can be derived from the sacredness of the human personality, his use of the term 'sacred' connotes nothing beyond the universal human essence. As a modernist thinker, Ambedkar believed in such an essence and tried to derive the three principles from it. For Ambedkar, religion in this sense was a secular or this-worldly force, leading to the progress and well-being of humankind. To him, religion in its ideal form, was a progressive social force.

Interrelation among the three principles

We find that in his later writings, Ambedkar was also concerned with the question of interrelation among the three principles. He approaches the issue in diverse ways and it is difficult to decide as to what was his exact answer. Sometimes he regards one of the principles as fundamental and derives other principles from it. Sometimes he asserts interconnectedness or interdependence instead of any kind of reductionism. In *Philosophy of Hinduism*, he asserts that fraternity and liberty are derivative notions; the basic and fundamental notions are equality and respect for human personality. Then he goes one step ahead and says that equality is the original notion and respect for human personality is a reflection of it. In *Hindu Social Order*, while discussing the principles of a free social order, Ambedkar does not stop at the trio but acknowledges another principle namely that the individual is an end in himself. We have seen that he explains the principle as sacredness of human personality and regards this principle as basic to the trio of principles.¹⁹ We find that in his later thought Ambedkar attaches special importance to the principle of human being as an end in himself. For example it is the first pillar of political

democracy which he states in the Memorandum to be submitted to the Constituent Assembly.²⁰ This makes the picture more complicated. I think the complexity can be reduced if we consider this principle and the principle of Fraternity in their interrelation. Fraternity implies treating human beings as objects of reverence and love, paying regard to others, seeking the good of others and so on. Similarly, treating human beings as ends in themselves implies sacredness of human personality. Hence, treating human beings as ends in themselves and treating them as objects of veneration, respect and love are two shades of the same feeling. In this way the question of interrelationship of principles can be brought back within the jurisdiction of the three principles. Now we can say that within the framework of the three principles, Ambedkar presents three different approaches.

i) We have seen that in *Philosophy of Hinduism*, he regards equality as basic.

ii) In *Hindu Social Order*, he regards 'the individual as an end in himself' as the basic principle, which means in a sense that fraternity is the basic principle. Another important text in this context is Riddle No. 22 in Ambedkar's work *Riddles of Hinduism*. Here Ambedkar regards fraternity as the basic principle which sustains equality and liberty. He says there:

"Without fraternity, liberty would destroy equality and equality would destroy liberty. If in Democracy liberty does not destroy equality and equality does not destroy liberty, it is because at the basis of both there is fraternity. Fraternity is therefore the root of Democracy."²¹

This raises a problem. Is equality basic or is fraternity basic? I think that the apparent paradox can be resolved by regarding both equality and fraternity as basic but in two different ways. I think equality is basic from a logical point of view. For example, Fraternity as a principle logically presupposes equality, because fellow-feeling consists in regarding the other as equal to oneself. Liberty in itself, if it is a self-regarding principle will come in conflict with equality, but it will be a harmonious principle if it is understood as equal liberty to all. In this sense equality is logically at the basis of the other two principles. But at practical and psychological level, Fraternity is basic. Equality and liberty can be sustained if they are practiced through fellow-feeling. And this is what Ambedkar is saying.

iii) This brings us to the third approach which is more comprehensive. According to this approach, when Ambedkar

says that Equality is basic or when he says that Fraternity is basic, it is not reductionism, nor is there any paradox. Ambedkar was trying to articulate complex relation of interaction and interdependence between the three principles. Ambedkar expresses this complex relation in his concluding speech given in the Constituent Assembly in 1949. He says:

"These principles are not to be treated as separate items in trinity. They form a union of trinity in the sense that to divorce one from a union of trinity in the sense that to divorce one from the other is to defeat the very purpose of democracy. Without equality, liberty would produce the supremacy of the few over the many. Equality without liberty would kill individual initiative. Without fraternity, liberty and equality could not become a natural course of things."²²

As a general comment on the development of Ambedkar's analysis of the trio of principles, I will say this: Ambedkar's theorization on the trio of principles was initially focused on a critique of the unjust social order legitimized by Hindu religion. He used the trio as a three-fold measuring rod for this critical estimate. But as an independent social thinker he was also concerned with the question of the exact nature of the three principles, their justifiability and their interrelation. The guiding framework in which he theorized on the three principles was that of social democracy. Social democracy was a continuing theme in Ambedkar's thought. In his scheme, social democracy has two correlates. One correlate is political democracy. About political democracy Ambedkar says that it is not sufficient, it should be transformed into social democracy. Rather political democracy cannot last unless social democracy lies at its basis.²³ The other correlate of social democracy is Religion. In Riddle No. 22 of his work *Riddles of Hinduism*, Ambedkar discusses the three principles, underscores fraternity as the sustainer of the other two principles and locates the roots of fraternity in Religion.²⁴ In this way religion becomes the basis of social democracy. This, I think is a culmination of Ambedkar's thought. It is at this stage that Ambedkar said in 1954 on All India Radio that his philosophy had roots in religion and not in political science. At this stage Ambedkar was convinced that the Buddha's Dhamma is the ideal religion. Therefore, I would like to say that at this stage Ambedkar relocates the three principles as those rooted in Buddhism. So let us consider in brief, how the three principles can be found in Buddhism according to Ambedkar.

The Trio of Principles as found in Buddhism

Here we have to note one point at the very outset. We have seen that Ambedkar tries to show systematically and elaborately how all the three principles are violated in Hinduism. However, we do not find Ambedkar making such a systematic endeavour to show how all the three principles are rooted in Buddhism. We find him making a general claim to that effect, but not arguing it out. Among the three principles, we find him making an explicit case for equality as advocated by the Buddha. But about the two other principles, Ambedkar is more suggestive and cryptic rather than explicit and elaborate. Hence, it is necessary to carry forward and complete Ambedkar's task of demonstrating how the three principles can be found in Buddhism. For doing this we have to depend mainly on the texts he has presented in his last phase, which I have called the Buddhist phase. The main text of this period is *The Buddha and His Dhamma*. But we can also refer to two other texts which Ambedkar cites/invokes in the 'unpublished preface' of *The Buddha and His Dhamma*.²⁵ They are (1) 'Buddha and Karl Marx', and (2) 'Revolution and Counter-revolution in Ancient India.' Both are available in an incomplete form. I will also add another text to this list, namely, *Riddles of Hinduism*, which he must have completed after 1947.²⁶

In *The Buddha and His Dhamma*, Ambedkar gives a new perspective for understanding Buddhism. After narrating the traditional approaches to Buddhism, Ambedkar asks new questions about Buddhism in the light of which a social perspective on Buddhism can be developed. He asks: Did the Buddha teach liberty? Did the Buddha teach equality? Did the Buddha teach fraternity?²⁷ Obviously, Ambedkar's answers to all these questions were in the affirmative though he did not explicitly say so.

Equality:

Out of the three principles, Ambedkar explains how the Buddha teaches equality explicitly and elaborately. Book III Part V Section IV of the text is devoted to the discussion of equality in the Buddha's teaching.

The Buddha as interpreted by Ambedkar also advocates gender equality. According to Ambedkar, the Buddha offered to Ananda the following clarification of his position on Mahaprajapati's conversion: "Ananda! Do not misunderstand me. I hold that women are as much capable as men in the matter of reaching Nibbana.I am not an upholder of the doctrine of sex inequality."

Fraternity: Ambedkar does not talk explicitly about fraternity as discussed in Buddhism. But in another work, namely *Riddles of Hinduism*, (Riddle No. 22) Ambedkar explicitly identifies fraternity with the Buddhist principle called Maitree. I quote:

"... what sustains equality and liberty is fellow feeling what the French Revolutionists called fraternity. The word fraternity is not an adequate expression. The proper term is what the Buddha called Maitree."²⁸

This gives us a key to understand how Ambedkar was locating fraternity in Buddhism.

Liberty: Like fraternity, Ambedkar also does not discuss liberty explicitly in Buddhism. Here we have to notice one problem about liberty as a principle of social life. The concept of liberty can be understood in terms of freedom of speech, freedom to choose one's profession and so on, even if we avoid the language of rights. So the question of liberty can be reframed in terms of freedom. Now we can ask the question whether the Buddha supported freedom of thinking, freedom of speech, freedom to choose one's profession, freedom to acquire property and so on. In *the Buddha and his Dhamma*, Ambedkar tries to show that the Buddha did support freedom of various kinds. Though the Buddha was committed to morality, universal and sacred morality and moral disciplining of oneself, the morality he prescribed was not based on scriptural authority or divine commandment. It was based on free and rational thinking. Hence, in the Buddha's thought human freedom and morality went together.

In his interpretation of Buddhism, Ambedkar highlighted freedom of thought. He depicted the Buddha as anti-authoritarian. He insists that the Buddha claimed no place for himself in his own Dhamma.²⁹

Again, there is no explicit discussion of freedom of speech or freedom of action in *The Buddha and His Dhamma*; but the way Ambedkar depicts the personality and life of the Buddha, shows how Bodhisattva Gotama emphasized these democratic forms of freedom. When there was a conflict between the Shakyas and the Koliyas over the distribution of the water of the river Rohini and there was pressure on Bodhisattva Gotama to participate in war, the Bodhisattva opposed this pressure by exercising the freedom of speech and action. Even after attaining Enlightenment, the Buddha did not thrust his views on others by working miracles or claiming a supernatural authority, but by entering into dialogue and discussion and by encouraging discussion.

Again with reference to the right to choose one's profession, there is no explicit statement to that effect in *The Buddha and His Dhamma*, but the principle of right livelihood, (*samyak-ājīva*) implies that one may choose one's profession by applying moral criteria. This can be contrasted with the Brahmanical approach to the choice of profession which imposed caste criteria, gave more freedom to higher castes and no freedom to the lowest caste and in this way imposed an immoral and unjust hierarchy.

Last in the list would be the right to property. Ambedkar has a complex approach (which could be called an ambivalent approach as well) to this and it is also reflected in his writings on Buddhism. As an advocate of liberty, he advocates the right to property, but due to the influence of Marxism, he has also before him the ideal of abolition of private property. And he sees both these approaches reflected in Buddhism. In his interpretation of Buddhism, Ambedkar emphasizes that the Buddha did not glorify poverty.³⁰ This was indirectly Buddha's acknowledgement of the right to property. On the other hand, the Buddha exhibited an ideal form of social life through the establishment of the Sangha in which the members possess the bare minimum private belongings. Ambedkar assimilated this ideal with the Marxist ideal of abolishing private property. Ambedkar was clearly aware of this duality of approaches in Buddhism³¹ and he seemed to appreciate both. In fact this was the question of a possible tension among the two principles and of cutting a balance between them. Ambedkar seems to have believed that the balance between liberty and equality can be reached through fraternity which was another name of the Buddhist principle of Maitrī.

I will conclude simply by saying that the Buddhist phase of Dr. Ambedkar's thought is marked by the inclusion of the trio of principles namely liberty, equality and fraternity in Dhamma, which is elevated to Saddhamma. In this way the three principles get re-rooted in an ideal religion. Here it should be noted that though Ambedkar distinguishes between Dhamma and Religion, it only means that Dhamma is not religion in the narrow sense of the term. But Ambedkar also defines Dhamma as universal and sacred morality, which amounts to saying that Dhamma is religion in its wider and nobler sense.

Bibliography with Abbreviations

- 1) AC: Ambedkar, B. R., *Annihilation of Caste with a Reply to Mahatma Gandhi*, published by Dr. Bhalchandra Mungekar

for Dr. Ambedkar Institute of Social and Economic Change, 2011

- 2) BAWS: Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Writings and Speeches, Vol. 3 and 4, Compiled by Vasant Moon, Education Department, Government of Maharashtra, 1987
- 3) Joshi, B. R., "The Philosophy of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar as reflected in the Indian Constitution", included in Pradeep Gokhale (Ed.), *The Philosophy of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar*, SugavaPrakashan, Pune, 2008
- 4) Rathore, Akash Sing and Verma, Ajay (Eds.) B. R. Ambedkar: *The Buddha and His Dhamma*, (Critical Edition), Oxford, New Delhi, 2011
- 5) TBHD: Ambedkar, B. R., *The Buddha and His Dhamma*, Siddharth Publication, Bombay, 1974 (Second Edition)

Notes:

1. It is the revised version of the paper presented as a talk entitled "Liberty, Equality and Fraternity: Dr. Ambedkar and Buddhism" given in Acharya Nāgārjuna University, Guntur on October 8, 2014
2. This was the year when he wrote an introduction to Laxmi Narsu's book, *The Essence of Buddhism* where he declared that he was working on Buddhism independently.
3. This was the year in which his article "Buddha and the Future of His Religion" was published in Mahabodhi Society Journal, where he argued that Buddhism is the ideal religion.
4. AC, Section XIV, p. 49
5. BAWS, Vol. 3, pp. 95-115
6. BAWS, Vol. 3, pp. 1-92
7. BAWS, Vol. 3, pp. 95-115
8. AC, p. 48
9. BAWS, Vol. 3, p. 44
10. He explains fellow-feeling in Christian Religious terms on BAWS, p. 97
11. AC, p. 48
12. BAWS, Vol. 3, pp. 38-39
13. BAWS, Vol. 3, pp. 98-99
14. AC, pp. 49-50 His conclusion there is: "The doctrine of equality is glaringly fallacious, but taking all in all, it is the only way a statesman can proceed in politics, which is a severely practical affair and which demands a severely practical test."
15. BAWS, Vol. 3, p. 25
16. BAWS, Vol. 3, pp. 96-97

17. "What objection can there be to fraternity? I cannot imagine any." and "Any objection to Liberty? Few object to liberty in the sense of a right to free movement, in the sense of a right to life and limb....", AC, p. 48
18. BAWS, Vol. 3, p. 99
19. Ibid
20. Joshi, B. R., (2008), p. 169
21. BAWS, Vol. 4, p. 283
22. Joshi, B. R., Op. cit., p. 168
23. Ibid
24. "...That question is- wherein lie the roots of fraternity without which Democracy is not possible? Beyond dispute, it has its origin in Religion.', BAWS, Vol. 4, p. 284
25. Initially the preface was not published along with The Buddha and His Dhamma. It was discovered later on. It has been included in Rathore and Verma (2011)
26. This is my conjecture based on the reference Ambedkar makes in this book (BAWS, Vol. 4, p. 214 (fn)) to a work published in 1947 (Ancient Indian Education by Radha Kumar Mookerjee, Macmillan and Company, London)
27. TBHD, p. 159
28. BAWS, Vol.4, p. 283
29. TBHD, III.I.1
30. "The Buddha has not said, "Blessed are they who are poor,"" TBHD, III.III.4.4
31. "A Bhikkhu cannot have private property, a layman can have."- TBHD, V.IV.3.46

Ambedkar: The Philosopher

Dr. Nishikant Kolge* & Mr. Biplab Debnath**

Introduction

Despite several decades of marginalization by India's political and intellectual elite, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar (1891-1956) occupies a major position in the pantheon of Indian thinkers. In the present political and academic discourses, Ambedkar and his legacy have acquired a greater presence than ever before. It appears that the days of debate over whether Ambedkar was a 'stooge of British imperialism' or not is also over. However, the present nature of discourse on Ambedkar is not an encouraging one. What we witness today is the sorry spectacle of various political parties trying hard to claim Ambedkar as one of their own. Such attempts by political parties to fit Ambedkar within their ideological framework are undoubtedly an injustice to one of the most scholarly political thinkers of India. In academia too things are not much different. The current trend is basically quoting Ambedkar selectively and tactically to establish their own point of view. As a result, he is being claimed alike by Rightist, Marxist, Nationalist, *Dalit*, Feminist and Liberals as one of their representative.

Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar (1891-1956), popularly known as 'Babasaheb,' was born on April 14, 1891 at Mhow – a small cantonment town in the Indore district of Madhya Pradesh. He belonged to the Mahar community, an untouchable caste of Maharashtra. His ancestral village was Ambadave in the district of Ratnagiri in Maharashtra. Ambedkar was an intellectual colossus with extraordinary erudition and talents. He was the first graduate untouchable. He had an MA degree in economics from the prestigious Columbia University, New York from

*Assistant Professor, Department of History, Tripura University.

**Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, Tripura University.

which he also obtained a Ph. D. degree. Apart from this he was awarded an M. Sc. and a D. Sc from London School of Economics and Politics. He also held the degree of Barrister-at-Law from Gray's Inn, London.

Ambedkar made his entry into the social and political life of India around 1919. In order to institutionalise the socio-political struggle for the emancipation of the *Dalits*, he formed the *Bakishkrit Hitkarini Sabha* on July 20, 1924 in Bombay. He continued his struggle for the emancipation of the *Dalits* with the help of Bombay Legislative Council, to which he was nominated as a member in 1927. He remained a member for ten years. During this period, he was not only just active in the Council, but he also started a unique *satyagraha* in 1927 to assert the rights of *Dalits* to drink water from the Choudartank at Mahad. In 1930, he guided a Temple Entry *satyagraha* at Kalaram temple, Nasik, launched by *Dalits*. In order to protect the political interests of the weaker sections, Ambedkar founded the Independent Labour Party in 1936 and the Scheduled Caste Federation in 1942. In July 1941, he was nominated as a member of the Defence Advisory Committee set up by the Viceroy. A year later, he entered the Executive Council of the Viceroy as a Labour member. He was also appointed as the Law Minister in the first government of Independent India in 1947 and later appointed as the president of the 'Drafting Committee' for drawing up of the Constitution of India. Ambedkar is widely appreciated for his unique contribution to the drafting of the Indian Constitution. However, his real contribution lies in his effort to challenge the patronage of the upper caste reformers including Gandhi. He presented an alternative strategy for emancipation of the oppressed communities and an alternative vision of society with emphasis on civic equality and economic-political empowerment for the *Dalits*.

There are a few other trends that are popular among academic circles. For instance, one popular trend in Ambedkar discourse is to place him along with Gandhi's life and work in order to have better understanding of his own. In some of these works, Ambedkar is merely reduced to being a barrier in Gandhi's process of creating a joint force against colonial power. Conversely in some other studies Ambedkar is being projected as a greater politician than Gandhi who could firmly reject both the Gandhian ideology and cultural politics that had dominated the nation at least till 1947 and who could propose an alternative model of tackling the problems of the downtrodden. Though there are some merits in such approaches, it has its own inherent limitations as well. Because such an approach entails one to take sides,

to condemn one in order to extol the other. This paper does not want to judge Ambedkar at the cost of Gandhi or for that matter any other Indian thinker.

Yet another trend is to stress the main political events between 1920s and mid-1950s to depict his lifelong struggle against the caste system. For instance, Christophe Jaffrelot in his paper, *Dr. Ambedkar's Strategies Against Untouchability and The Caste System* tells us that Ambedkar implemented the following four different strategies in the course of his almost four-decade long struggle against the caste system in India – Identity building: untouchables as sons of the soil; Electoral politics: from separate electorate to party-building; Working with the rulers: from the British raj to the Congress raj and Conversion: the ultimate strategy (Jaffrelot 2009, 2-11). Though such works successfully depict Ambedkar's heroic struggle against the caste system, it fails to reveal Ambedkar as a visionary political thinker who had an ideology and a vision for social and economic transformation of the *Dalits* and other weaker sections of the Indian society.

Contrary to the above trends, the present paper treats Ambedkar as a thinker or philosopher and *Dalit* is a departure from the conventional approach of understanding the life and work of Ambedkar. It is pertinent to note that Ambedkar was not an armchair philosopher but a man of action, a political leader who fought a battle for the rights of the most marginalized people in India. What we mean by treating Ambedkar as thinker or philosopher? It is basically to emphasise the aspect of Ambedkar as a thinker who had an ideology and vision for mankind and not only his heroic life-long struggle against the caste system in India which he waged on behalf of socially and educationally backward but economically subservient and culturally oppressed group of people. Most of the scholars who perceive Ambedkar basically as a philosopher or a thinker generally tend to place Ambedkar, the untouchable, in either of the following two categories. One is as an heir to the anti-caste intellectual tradition that goes back to 200-1000 B.C. and one who had identified three men as his teachers: the Buddha, the medieval poet Kabir and Jyotiba Phule, the nineteenth-century Maharashtrian social reformer. The other category is as a radical modernist who owned his intellectual debt to the philosopher viz. John Dewey, his mentor at Columbia University, along with many other western scholars. This paper argues that for a careful and cautious analysis of Ambedkar's philosophy or vision, he must be understood on his own terms. Ambedkar no doubt, borrowed from different traditions of thought,

both Eastern and Western. However, he could not have assimilated them fully if he had lacked a perspective of his own. He had his own viewpoint and his own analytical acumen which he employed to weave them into a coherent organically linked structure of thought.

Dr. Ambedkar's was a multi-faceted and multi-dimensional personality who made significant contribution to the modern India society in the various facets of life. The present paper restricts itself to explain Ambedkar's vision of a 'good society' which is one of the most important and least explored theoretical contributions of Ambedkar. It is important to understand his ideals of 'good society' and also his determined action and strategy which he employed in his lifelong struggle against different kinds of exploitation and hierarchy present in the Indian society. In Ambedkar's vision of 'good society', this paper examines the following two categories of thoughts: social democracy and re-interpretation of Buddhism both of which were central to his vision of good society.

Social Democracy: Ambedkar's Vision of a good society for India

Ambedkar's vision of "good society" was closely related to his idea of democracy. Therefore, in the political field, Ambedkar prescribed the idea of democracy as a means to provide social justice and equality to the downtrodden masses of India. This is what distinguished Ambedkar from the rest of the mainstream Indian freedom fighters who were struggling primarily for the liberation of the country (political freedom) from the yoke of the British Empire. Ambedkar prescribed the idea of democracy because he knew that democracy is inconsistent or anti-thesis to the traditional four tiered *Varna* system, whose apex consisted of Brahmins and at the bottom there were the untouchables. From a theoretical point of view, democracy is a powerful alternative to the caste-system because it is most sensitive to the demands for political participation and equal rights of every individual. Though equal rights for political participation is an important aspect of democracy, for Ambedkar democracy is something more than a franchise-based election of representatives at regular intervals. For him, it is a way of living; a way of sharing a common life with other human beings. Ambedkar said: "Democracy is not merely a form of government. It is primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience. It is essentially an attitude of respect and reverence towards fellowmen" (Ambedkar, 104-105).

He emphasised that political democracy has no value without social democracy. In the speech given by Ambedkar in the Constituent Assembly on November 25, 1949, he said: "we must make our political democracy a social democracy as well. Political democracy cannot last unless there lies at the base of it, social democracy. What does social democracy mean? It means a way of life, which recognizes liberty, equality and fraternity as the principles of life..." (Quoted in Chitkara 2002, 24). On the 26th January, 1950, the day when independent India officially adopted the Constitution, he said: "we are going to enter into a life of contradictions. In politics we will have equality, in social and economic life we will have inequality... we must remove this contradiction at the earliest possible moment..." (Quoted in Omvedt 1993, xi.). Therefore democracy for Ambedkar basically meant social democracy. It would be wrong to judge Ambedkar solely by his demand that Indian Constitution mandate reservations in administration, in the legislature, and in the executive. These were basically transitory strategies that Ambedkar applied to make sure that wealth, political power, knowledge and other real as well as symbolic sources of higher status should not remain a privilege of only a few. He believed that such a state of affair is a great obstacle in achieving social endosmosis among the different groups of people. Therefore, he argued that it is the responsibility of an elected democratic government to make sure that everyone has an equal access to all real and symbolic source of higher status in the society so that a process of social endosmosis between different groups of people becomes possible. In other words, it was his attempt to promote social endosmosis through the use of government power. Therefore, what Ambedkar stood for and what he wanted to achieve was nothing but social democracy.

Scholars who emphasise on political democracy, their idea of democracy is perceived through isolated individual with some abstract rights as the starting point, but for Ambedkar whose emphasis is on social democracy, the starting point is the individual as member of a social group. Group membership, so as to say, is an individual's destiny. He is born in as a member of a particular family that belongs to a certain caste or class. This then leads to his membership in several other social groups. When there is uninterrupted free social interaction among these various groups and people can move through them easily, according to Ambedkar, is a characteristic of democratic society. Therefore the problem, according to Ambedkar, is not that human beings create groups, but rather that some of these groups go on to become exclusive

and shut the entry of so called 'others' to assimilate in their group. Ambedkar knew very well that in a caste ridden society like India, where interaction among various groups is frozen in the century old stratified structure of the Hindu social order, the idea of social democracy is worth pursuing.

Therefore, in order to achieve social democracy in India, Ambedkar suggested that there should be free social interaction among various groups and people should be able to move through them easily. R. Srivatsan (2008, 99) wrote: "Ambedkar argued that only a common cycle of participation in a way of life can overcome the strangeness one feels for the other. Social unity, 'which we are all striving after' will come only with understanding and a sense of bonding that arise in an associated way of life." Ambedkar in his famous treatise *the Annihilation of Caste*, wrote:

Another plan of action for the abolition of Caste is to begin with inter-caste dinners.... I am convinced that the real remedy is intermarriage. Fusion of blood can alone create the feeling of being kith and kin, and unless this feeling of kinship, of being of being kindred, becomes paramount, the separatist feeling—the feeling of being aliens—created by Caste will not vanish (Ambedkar, 116).

Now we have the image of Ambedkar who is striving for 'creating the feeling of being kith and kin' and who wanted a 'fusion of blood,' which is entirely different from his popular image of one who in the field of politics wanted a separate electorate for *Dalits* and who always emphasised that difference between caste Hindus and *Dalits* were real and fundamental. Now the question is that if Ambedkar really strived for 'creating the feeling of being kith and kin,' and 'fusion of blood,' how to understand his conversion to Buddhism. How his act of conversion to Buddhism can stimulate the process of 'creating the feeling of being kith and kin' or the process of creating a society full of channels for movement from one place to other parts.

Conversion to Buddhism: A Search for Righteous Moral and Social Order

As early as 1935, desperate with the Hinduism's inability to abolish the caste-system and remove the stigma of untouchability, Ambedkar declared his intention to convert to a religion that did not endorse caste hierarchy. While delivering a speech to a rally at Yeola, Nashik, on 13 October 1935, he declared: "I was born a Hindu; I had no choice.

But I will not die a Hindu because I do have a choice" (Quoted in Verma 2010, 56). Over the period of time, Ambedkar tested every old and new religion available in India and made a comparative study of Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam. Finally, on 14 October 1956, Ambedkar along with a large number of followers publicly adopted Buddhism at a *deeksha* (conversion) ceremony held in Nagpur. Over the years the scholars have looked upon the act of conversion from a strategic point of view. For some scholars, Ambedkar's *deeksha* (conversion) was a political gesture and hardly a religious phenomenon at all. And for some others, Ambedkar's conversion to Buddhism was perceived more as a negative act of rejecting Hinduism rather than a positive acceptance to the doctrine of compassion and rectitude that Buddhism stood for. It is a fact that conversion to Buddhism was part of Ambedkar's larger struggle aimed at regaining *Dalit* selfhood, and at the same time, an assertion against oppressive, hegemonic and appropriating forces of Brahmanism. But at the deeper level it was also an effort to create a righteous moral and social order for India. He even declared that he would make India a Buddhist nation. In other words, it was an attempt to give a new doctrinal basis to religion that according to him 'will be in consonance with liberty, equality and fraternity, in short, with democracy.'

For quite a long period of time, Ambedkar treated the problem of *Dalits* basically as a political problem and he attempted to look at its solution within the periphery of politics. However, soon he realized that he was mistaken in his analysis. He observed that despite Constitutional guarantees, individual belief systems related to caste practices in the social sphere remained the same in India. He also felt that despite modernisation, institutional religion continued to influence everyday lives of the people. He therefore sensed the importance of religion in creating his ideal society based on the conception of social democracy. He believed that a reformist and revisionist Buddhism may be able to achieve what Western values have failed to do – that is changing India's attachment to a caste-based social order. However, from the days of Buddha, the goal of Buddhism has been primarily seen as attainment of inner peace though the experience of enlightenment often described as *nirvana* (liberation). In the course of time, many ritualised ordinances had also entered into the stream of Buddhism. It means that Buddhism as it was practiced during Ambedkar's time in India was not only other worldly but was also burdened with ritualised ordinances. Therefore, the task for Ambedkar was not just to convert himself to

Buddhism and induce his followers and the nation to do so but also to re-interpret Buddhism to make it in consonance with the ideas of liberty, equality and fraternity, in short with democracy. Ambedkar also accepted personal challenge of re-interpreting Buddhism in a new light. Ambedkar's first major statement on Buddhism appeared in 1950, in an article in the Journal of the Maha Bodhi Society, published from Calcutta, titled, *Gospel of Equality: The Buddha and the Future of His Religion*, the article should be read in close conjunction with Ambedkar's magnum opus, *The Buddha and his Dhamma* as Ambedkar's effort to re-interpret Buddhism.

In his work *The Buddha and his Dhamma*, Ambedkar states that after attaining enlightenment, Buddha "realised that what is necessary is not to escape from the world. What is necessary is to change the world and to make it better." Ambedkar further added that in his sermons, Buddha expounded "by saying that his path had nothing to do with life after death. Nor has his *Dhamma* had nothing to do with life after death. Nor has his *Dhamma* any concern with rituals and ceremonies. That at the centre of his *Dhamma* is man and the relationship of man to man in his life on earth." Ambedkar further elaborated that "what the Buddha calls *Dhamma* differs fundamentally from what is called religion" (Ambedkar, 379). Instead of seeing religion as a 'personal' matter which has no role to play in the public life, he argued that it is basically 'social.' Ambedkar further elaborated that "the centre of religion lay not in the relation of man to god. It lay in the relation between man and man. The purpose of religion is to teach man how he should behave towards other men so that all men may be happy" (Ambedkar, 381). In this way, Ambedkar re-interpreted Buddhism to re-emphasise Buddhism as religion where the principles of justice, reason and concern for the other would be the guiding principles of organising social life. Ambedkar's re-interpretation of Buddhism was indeed an attempt to give a new doctrinal basis to religion that according to him 'will be in consonance with liberty, equality and fraternity, in short, with democracy.'

Conclusion:

In this paper, an attempt is made to deconstruct the 'known and popular image of Ambedkar' in which he was generally perceived only as a leader of the downtrodden communities of India and whose primary concern was obtaining minority status and representation in central and state assemblies and government jobs for the *Dalits*. As such, Ambedkar was presented as a political leader of *Dalits* who tried all

kind of strategies for eradicating the caste-system, and more importantly, for emancipating the *Dalits* from oppressive social system. The paper tries to explain that such views failed to focus on Ambedkar's visionary personality, as a political philosopher with a specific agenda for social and economic transformation of human society. Ambedkar was not only a civil rights activist, social revolutionary, constitution maker and political leader but also a political philosopher who had a vision and ideology for bringing about revolutionary changes in the life of an individual and in human society. Thus, the philosopher Ambedkar stood for social democracy, where everyone would have an equal access to all real and symbolic source of higher status in the society and where a process of social endosmosis between different groups of people would be possible.

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Veer Savarkar: Exponent of Hindutva

Dr. Shreerang Godbole*

Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, commonly known as *Swatantryaveer* Savarkar was a freedom fighter, social reformer, rationalist, writer, dramatist, poet, historian, political leader and philosopher. Savarkar has expressed and penned his thoughts on a wide range of issues. These include but are not limited to patriotism, armed revolution, political science, ethics of non-violence, religion and scriptures, rituals, untouchability and caste, social reform, mechanization, defence matters, foreign affairs and economic policy, education, reform of language and script, prison reforms, role of woman, Sanskrit and Yoga. Even seemingly minor issues such as festivals, exercise and oratory do not escape his notice. Savarkar's speeches and writings are available in his literary corpus that runs into nearly 6000 pages. Savarkar's writings are in Marathi and English. His major works have been translated into major Indian languages. All his poems are in Marathi though he is said to have penned a few Urdu *ghazals*. His writings on social issues and rationalism are in Marathi, written as they were in the confines of Ratnagiri district of Maharashtra. Savarkar's writings on Hindutva are largely in English as is his acclaimed book on the Indian War of Independence 1857. His speeches on the Six Glorious Epochs of Indian history were delivered in Marathi and subsequently reduced to print. Considering the breadth and depth of his contribution to Bharat, the epithet *Swatantryaveer* given to him is woefully inadequate. This essay is limited to his exposition of the philosophy of Hindutva.

Literary corpus as a reflection of his personality

While several stalwarts have developed the philosophy of Hindutva, the credit for making a fundamental, systematic, detailed and lucid

*Dr. Shreerang Godbole is a pune based medical specialist. He has written books on Islam, Buddhism, and religious demography, besides two books on Savarkar.

exposition of Hindutva goes to Savarkar. Savarkar's writings on Hindutva reflect his multi-faceted personality. Savarkar's views are based on sound scholarship. Savarkar was a historian. Besides his well-known book *The Indian War of Independence 1857*, Savarkar was one of the first authors to write on Maratha history in English. He was the first Marathi author of Sikh history. It is not surprising that he gives numerous illustrations from Maratha and Sikh history while writing on Hindutva. Savarkar's rationalist and scientific bent of mind finds expression in his writings on Hindutva. Contrary to popular misconception, Savarkar was a humanist. His humanism was undimmed even while he vigorously espoused Hindutva. However, Savarkar's humanism was grounded in realism. Savarkar never lost sight of ground realities while writing on Hindutva. Savarkar's deep scholarship is only matched by his extraordinary literary qualities. It is doubtful if he would have been as effective an exponent of Hindutva had he not been a litterateur. While his status as a Marathi writer is legendary (besides being a reformer of language and script, Savarkar is the only writer to have ably handled all forms of literature such as poetry, essay, story, novel, drama, autobiography and journalism), his command over English is commendable (Nobel laureate Winston Churchill had hailed Madan Lal Dhingra's last words as the finest ever made in the name of patriotism. Dhingra's last words were penned by Savarkar.) The scholar-poet in Savarkar also finds expression in his writings on Hindutva. Savarkar chose to define a Hindu not in prose but in Sanskrit verse! Lastly, one should never lose sight of the fact that Savarkar had studied to become a Barrister (he was not called to the Bar only because of his anti-British activities). Savarkar's arguments are those of an able lawyer; his choice of words always precise.

Multi-pronged contribution

Savarkar is the philosopher *par excellence* of Hindutva. However, Savarkar was no armchair philosopher. He hated sterile discussions. Writing notices and minutes of Hindu Sabha meetings, keeping records and receipts, drawing a hand-cart of *swadeshi* goods on the streets of Ratnagiri, running a pan-Hindu café, teaching ex-untouchable children to read and write, bringing up an ex-untouchable girl in his own house in spite of meager personal means were some of Savarkar's contributions as a field-worker of Hindutva. Savarkar was a born leader. Savarkar's associate in revolution Niranjan Pal illustrates this aspect thus, "He was the sun; we were his satellites." But Savarkar was not only a

leader; he was a leader of leaders. His seminal writings on Hindutva have influenced some of the tallest Hindu leaders. Little wonder then that even a Tilakite like Dr. Moonje who was Savarkar's senior exclaimed, "In Maharashtra, Savarkar's place is next only to that of Shivaji!" One of the first persons to lay his eyes on Savarkar's seminal book 'Hindutva' was Dr. K.B. Hedgewar, the founder of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh. The book impressed Dr. Hedgewar so much that he worked personally to popularize it. It is a fact that Savarkar is the intellectual bed-rock of the present-day Hindutva movement. Thus, Savarkar's contribution to Hindutva is that of a philosopher, field-worker, leader and leader of leaders.

Scholarship and inspiration

Savarkar has been sometimes accused of drawing his views on Hindutva from Western concepts. His Hindutva has been described as reactionary and essentially anti-Muslim. There are those who love to paint him as a Hindu version of the Westernized Jinnah. In contrast to the "spiritual" Vivekananda or Aurobindo, Savarkar is supposed to be the atheist (or at best agnostic), an out and out political Hindu devoid of any spiritual content. Savarkar's version of Hindutva has been misrepresented as being some sort of a Semitized Hinduism with the Hindus and Muslims being the proverbial "we and they." It is true that Savarkar opposed meaningless rituals. It is also true that he subjected religious texts to the stern test of reason and modern science. But it is equally true that while he never made a song and dance about his spirituality, he was a deeply spiritual person. There is plenty of evidence that Savarkar was an *âstik* (though it would have been immaterial even if he had been an atheist or agnostic). Savarkar had studied Western philosophers such as Mill and Spencer, Darwin and Huxley, Gibbon and Macaulay, Carlisle and Emerson, Mazzini and Garibaldi, Lenin and Trotsky and the revolutionary movements in France, Italy and Russia. But there is no evidence that he relied on them to put forth his views on Hindutva. Not once does he quote any Western philosopher in his writings on Hindutva. It is necessary to know the breadth and depth of Savarkar's scholarship to understand his inspiration.

Savarkar had made a deep study of the Vedas, Upanishads and Puranas. In his *My Transportation for Life*, he writes that he spent night after night in his cell meditating on the ten principal Upanishads, thereby completing their study in a year's time. Savarkar's last article ends with a couplet from the little-studied *Avadhoot* Upanishad! Savarkar

had studied Hindu law-books or the smritis such as Manusmriti and Devalsmriti. He had studied Yogavasishta. He knew Patanjali's *Yogasutras* by heart (incidentally, Savarkar regularly meditated and had experienced *kundalini jagriti*). Savarkar had made a deep study of Ramayana and Mahabharata. He had studied Sankara and Ramanuja. He was deeply influenced by the Marathi saints Dnyaneshwar, Tukaram and Ramdas. Savarkar's political thoughts were shaped by Tilak, Vishnushastri Chiplunkar and Shivramant Paranjpe (editor of *Kaal*). Maratha history was Savarkar's passion; Shivaji was his hero. Savarkar also drew inspiration from Sikh history and particularly from Guru Gobind Singh and Banda Bairagi. While in England, Savarkar studied Gurumukhi and read Adi Granth, Panth Prakash, Surya Prakash, Bachitra Natak and other literature on Sikh philosophy and history. In 1909, Savarkar wrote a 200-page history of the Sikhs in Marathi. Unfortunately, the book was destroyed and is not available today. While in internment at Ratnagiri, Savarkar had studied Buddhist scriptures (*Boddhisatva* is the title of Savarkar's unfinished play). Swami Vivekananda and Swami Ram Tirth influenced the philosopher in Savarkar. He had minutely studied Dayananda's *Satyartha Prakash*. Savarkar had read theosophy. The poet in Savarkar was enchanted by Kalidas, Bhavabhuti, Marathi poets Moropant and Waman Pandit and of course Tagore (he said that he knew half of Tagore by heart and Tagore's *ekala chalo re* had kept him alive in the Andamans). The one personality who perhaps influenced Savarkar's life and thought the most was Bhagwan Sri Krishna. He considered Sri Krishna to be the preceptor and original practitioner of utilitarianism. The Bhagwad Gita was his favourite book. *Nishkam karmayog* was Savarkar's guiding principle throughout life. It will be a grave error to suppose that Savarkar's mind was 'colonized;' Savarkar was a Hindu to the core!

Scholar of Abrahamic ideologies

One of the deficiencies of Hindu scholarship has been the failure to study and grasp Abrahamic ideologies. Savarkar was an outstanding exception in this regard. Savarkar had studied the Bible. He would frequently read Thomas à Kempis' *The Imitation of Christ*. Very pertinently, Savarkar was one of the few Hindu leaders who cared to study Islam from its primary sources. While in England, Savarkar had read an English translation of the Quran. Subsequently, he read the Quran in its Bengali and Marathi translations. Responding to the opinion of his Muslim friends that the real beauty of the Quran lies in its original,

Savarkar had them read each page of the original and then translate it into Hindi for his benefit. As Savarkar describes, he heard them recite the Quran with great concentration and after keeping his mind clean and pure like that of a devout Muslim. In later life, Savarkar read several books written by Western authorities on the Quran. Savarkar's deep study of Islam is evident from his articles on Kemal Pasha, Khilafat Movement and various Islamic sects. Savarkar had learnt to read and write Urdu. Savarkar's uncanny insight into the "Muslim problem" was a result of his deep study of the Muslim mindset which in turn has been shaped by Islamic scriptures.

History of Savarkar's literature on Hindutva

Savarkar's views on Hindutva are largely available in three books from his Collected Works: *Hindutva*, *Hindu Rashtra Darshan* (his six Presidential addresses to the Akhil Bharat Hindu Mahasabha sessions) and *Hindutvache panchapran* (a collection of his articles on Hindutva written in Marathi). The last book substantially contains all the points covered in the first two books. It would hence suffice to refer to the first two books to understand Savarkar's views on Hindutva. Originally written in English, the two books are available in their original, in several translations and online on http://www.savarkar.org/content/pdfs/en/essentials_of_hindutva.v001.pdf and <http://www.savarkar.org/content/pdfs/en/hindu-rashtra-darshan-en-v002.pdf> They are compulsory reading for any student, sympathizer or sincere opponent of Hindutva. Savarkar was at once a historian and a maker of history. His life was full of uncommon drama. Little wonder then that most of his books have dramatic history behind them.

Savarkar landed on the Indian mainland from the Andamans on 06 May 1921. After being kept in Alipore Jail for a week, he was shifted to Mumbai and thereafter lodged in Ratnagiri Jail. Savarkar remained in Ratnagiri Jail for under two years. Contrary to the disinformation campaign, Savarkar's release from the Andamans was not an act of mercy on part of the British. Conditions in Ratnagiri jail were so bad that Savarkar confesses that he thought of committing suicide there. It was in such trying conditions that he wrote *Hindutva* under the pen name 'Mahratta.' The book was smuggled out of jail. From the viewpoint of the Hindutva movement, it is fortuitous that Savarkar's *Essentials of Hindutva* was smuggled to, of all places, Nagpur. Savarkar's close associate in *Abhinav Bharat* Advocate Vishwanath Vinayak Kelkar who also happened to be Savarkar's distant relative and Rashtriya

Swayamsevak Sangh founder Dr. Hedgewar's close friend was the first to receive this book. It was Kelkar who published the book.

Expressing his admiration for Savarkar's definition of 'Hindu,' Swami Shradhananda exclaimed, "It must have been one of those Vedic dawns indeed which inspired our seers with new truths that revealed to the author of *Hindutva this mantra*, this definition of Hindutva." The eminent Constitutional expert C Vijayaraghavachariar, who was at different times President of the Indian National Congress and the Hindu Mahasabha expressed his admiration for Savarkar's book thus, "Especially this last chapter is inimitably eloquent and patriotic. I am afraid I am unable to find suitable words to describe my ideas regarding the book, especially the last chapter."

Speaking on 16 May 1963 at a public meeting in Mumbai to mark the 80th birthday celebrations of Savarkar, Golwalkar Guruji said, "...I found that the principles of pure nationalism were explained in a scientific manner in Savarkar's great book *Hindutva*. In my view, it a *pâthya granth*; a *shâstra grantha*."

Savarkar was President of the Akhil Bharat Hindu Mahasabha sessions on six occasions viz. Karnavati (1937), Nagpur (1938), Calcutta (1939), Madurai (1940), Bhagalpur (1941) and Kanpur (1942). It must be remembered that Savarkar had tendered his resignation prior to three sessions (1940, 1941 and 1942) due to ill-health. In fact he was brought to the Madurai session (1940) on a stretcher. An acute attack of bronchitis confined him to bed and caused him to refuse the Presidentship for the seventh time in Amritsar (1943). That he delivered some of his best speeches in such ill-health is testimony to his single-minded devotion to the Hindu cause. Compiled under the title *Hindu Rashtra Darshan*, these English speeches or their translations deserve to be read again and again for they lay the basic tenets and aspects of the Hindutva movement.

Why define a 'Hindu'?

Unlike the words 'Muslim' or 'Christian,' the word 'Hindu' does not lend itself to an easy definition. There are some who feel that defining something is a Semitic or an unHindu concept. Savarkar and before him Tilak have, among others, attempted to define a 'Hindu.' Surely Tilak was not a Semitized thinker! So there does not seem to be anything inherently Semitic in defining a Hindu. There are some who refuse to define a 'Hindu' saying that this is impossible. Savarkar himself says that the rule for defining a Hindu must neither be too rigid nor too

elastic. He admits to specific exceptions like Sister Nivedita or Annie Besant. Though Savarkar was alive to the perils of defining a Hindu, he stuck his neck out and insisted on defining one. He says, “The whole superstructure of the mission and the function of the Hindu Mahasabha rests on the correct definition of the word ‘Hindu.’ It removes a number of misgivings in our own camp and a number of misunderstandings and objections raised against us are met and silenced”. Savarkar warns against the loose and harmful misuse of the word ‘Hindu’ and its misuse in any sectarian sense. Savarkar once famously said that confusion in words leads to confusion in thoughts. He hence clarifies the meaning of Hinduism, Hindutva and Hindudom. Savarkar says that the word ‘Hinduism’ refers to the school or systems of religions the Hindus follow; it refers to the religion or religions that are peculiar and native to this land and these people. The word ‘Hindutva’ is far more comprehensive; it refers not only to the religious aspects of the Hindu people but comprehends even their cultural, linguistic, social and political aspects as well; it embraces all the departments of thought and activity of the whole Being of the Hindu race. ‘Hinduism’ is thus a fraction or a derivative of ‘Hindutva.’ The word ‘Hindutva’ is more akin to ‘Hindu polity’ and its near exact translation would be ‘Hinduness.’ The word ‘Hindudom’ refers to Hindu people spoken of collectively; it is a collective name for the Hindu world.

Who is a Hindu?

According to Savarkar, every person is a Hindu who regards and owns this Bharat Bhumi, this land from the river Sindhu to the Seas, as his Fatherland (*pitrubhu*) as well as his Holyland (*punyabhhu*). The term ‘Fatherland’ refers to the land of his patriarchs and forefathers; his first discernible source must be the land of the Saptasindhu. The term ‘Holyland’ refers to the land of his prophets and seers, holy men and heroes, piety and pilgrimage. To some, Savarkar’s use of the term ‘Fatherland’ is reminiscent of Hitler’s Fatherland. This is of course, complete nonsense. The term ‘pitr’ refers to ancestors; it is customary to describe ancestral land as being one that belongs to one’s forefathers (not foremothers). Perhaps the alliterative effect of ‘pitrubhu’ and ‘punyabhhu’ may have influenced the poet in Savarkar. Savarkar wrote his book in 1923 when Hitler was not even on the horizon. The same Savarkar has composed heart-rending poems addressed to his *matrubhu* (incidentally, the word ‘motherland’ has been associated with Mother Russia; it seems one can attribute negative qualities to perfectly

harmless words!). Though the word ‘Fatherland’ is nowadays used in association with Nazi Germany, fact is that the word ‘Vaterland’ simply means ‘homeland’ in German and prior to Nazism, the word was used extensively in Germanic language countries without any negative connotation.

Savarkar’s definition of ‘Hindu’ is more inclusive than Tilak’s definition which required acknowledging the authority of the Vedas, multiplicity of spiritual paths and no fixed object of worship as the defining feature of ‘Hindu.’ Savarkar thus included non-Vedic Indic traditions within the ambit of Hindutva which Tilak’s definition excluded (interestingly, the word ‘Hindutva’ was not coined by Savarkar; Tilak had used it before him).

To Savarkar, the word ‘Hindutva’ has three components: a common *rāshtra* and *jāti* (both denoted and connoted by *pitrubhu*) and *sanskriti* (preeminently implied by *punyabhhu* and connoting common language, history, literature, art and architecture, ceremonies and sacraments, rites and rituals, fairs and festivals). Savarkar defines a ‘Hindu’ thus:

आसिंधु सिंधु पर्यन्ता यस्य भारतभूमिका ।

पितृभूः पुण्यभूश्चैव स वै हिंदुरिति स्मृतः ॥

“Everyone who regards and claims this Bharatbhumi from the Indus to the Seas as his Fatherland and Holyland is a Hindu”

Savarkar had been apparently thinking of elucidating Hindutva for several years before he actually wrote his book. As early as 1908, he composed a Marathi poem ‘Priyakar Hindusthan’ (Beloved Hindusthan). The following line from that poem is a forerunner of his definition:

पुण्यभूमि तू! पितृभूमि तू! तू अमुचा अभिमान

Thus, according to Savarkar, the word ‘Hindu’ encompasses Vaidiks, Sanatanis, Jains, Bharatiya Bauddhas, Sikhs, Aryasamajis, Vaishnavas, Shaivas, Veershaivas, so-called animists. From the Santhal to the Sadhu, all are Hindus, declared Savarkar

Who is not a Hindu?

It is nowadays fashionable in Hindutva circles to say that the word ‘Hindu’ is not exclusivist and that it is all-encompassing. While the word ‘Hindu’ is admittedly very broad, it is only logical that there are limits to the scope of the word ‘Hindu.’ Savarkar was very clear on this point. He emphatically puts Mohamedans (Muslims), Christians, Parsees

and Jews outside the pale of Hindutva. He says that “their mythology and Godmen, ideas and heroes are not children of this soil; their names and outlook smack of foreign origin; their love is divided.” He offers a solution. He exhorts the non-Hindus, “Come ye back to the fold of your brothers and sisters who with arms extended are standing at the open gate to welcome you – their lost kith and kin; you only have to render whole-hearted love to our common Mother and recognize her not only as *pitrubhu* but even as *punyabhu* and ye would be most welcome to the Hindu fold.” But he cautions, “But so long as they are not minded thus, so long they cannot be recognized as Hindus... *it would not be justified to strain it in its application to suit any preconceived notions or party convenience*” (emphasis mine). He makes an important point, “We have to determine the essentials of Hindutva in the sense in which the word is actually used by an overwhelming majority of people.” Savarkar refuses to give the word ‘Hindu’ a meaning which is incomprehensible to the Hindus themselves. The genius of Savarkar lies in the fact that the Constitution of India (vide Hindu Code) implicitly accepts Savarkar’s definition. While one can do nit-picking with Savarkar’s definition (for example, what are followers of Donyi-Polo in Arunachal Pradesh?) it may be called a near-perfect definition.

Savarkar’s basic points

Savarkar is emphatic that the word ‘Hindu’ is not of foreign origin. To Savarkar, territorial unity without cultural and historical affinity is meaningless; territorial unity does not imply nationhood. Further, the Hindus constitute a nation by virtue of common country, history, culture, literature and language. Savarkar’s Hindutva has been dubbed as reactionary. The following passage nails this lie, “The Hindu Nation is not a mushroom growth. It is not a treaty nation. It is not paper-made toy. It was not cut to order. It is not an outlandish makeshift. It has grown out of this soil and has its roots struck deep and wide in it. It is not a fiction invented to spite the Moslems or anybody in the world. But it is a fact as stupendous and solid as the Himalayas that border our North.” The point has already been made that Savarkar was not a Semitized Hindu. Speaking on ‘Hindu Sanghatan’ at a public meeting in Pune (07 July 1937), Savarkar said, “It is good that we do not have One Book because that did not stop our *Dharma* from developing. The tenets of our *Dharma* cannot be bound between the two covers of a Book. Our *Dharmic* scriptures shall be as vast as all the truth and wisdom that can be found between the two covers of this Universe.”

Savarkar closes his “Essentials of Hindutva” with the following lofty passage, “Equally certain it is that whenever the Hindus come to hold such a position whence they could dictate terms to the whole world — those terms cannot be very different from the terms which Gita dictates or the Buddha lays down. A Hindu is most intensely so, when he ceases to be Hindu; and with a Sankara claims the whole earth for a Benares ‘*Varanasi Medini* !’ or with a Tukaram exclaims ‘My country! Oh brothers, ‘the limits of the Universe — there the frontiers of my country lie?’”

Was Savarkar a protagonist of the two-nation theory?

Savarkar has been accused of being a protagonist of the two-nation theory that led to the Partition of India. The entire case of the Savarkar-baiters rests on a solitary sentence culled out from his nearly 6000-page literature. Fortunately, Savarkar has himself answered this charge. The sentence in question can be found in Savarkar’s Presidential address to the 19th session of the Akhil Bharat Hindu Mahasabha at Karnavati (Ahmedabad) in 1937. Savarkar stated: “India cannot be assumed today to be a unitarian and homogenous nation, but on the contrary there are two nations in the main; the Hindus and the Moslems, in India.”

Savarkar’s Presidential address is not a run-of-the-mill political speech. After dwelling on the definition and significance of the word ‘Hindu,’ the status of the Hindus as a nation unto themselves, the mission of the Hindu Mahasabha, unified Indian State and the cooperation of the minorities, Savarkar turned his attention to the attitude of the Muslims. He stated: “As it is, there are two antagonistic nations living side by side in India, several infantile politicians commit the serious mistake in supposing that India is already welded into a harmonious nation, or that it could be welded thus for the mere wish to do so. Our well-meaning but unthinking friends take their dreams for realities... The solid fact is that the so-called communal questions are but a legacy handed down to us by centuries of a cultural, religious and national antagonism between the Hindus and the Moslems. When time is ripe you can solve them but you cannot suppress them by merely refusing recognition of them.” It is in that context that he made that statement. The Islam-scholar, historian and hard-headed realist in Savarkar was simply stating a bland fact and not endorsing it. This is further confirmed two sentences later when he referred to the options before the Hindus under the circumstances. He stated: “...to form an Indian State in which none is allowed any special weightage of representation and none is

paid an extra price to buy his loyalty to the State. Mercenaries are paid and bought off, not sons of the Motherland to fight in her defence. The Hindus as a nation are willing to discharge their duty to a common Indian State on an equal footing.” It is noteworthy that the President of the Hindu Mahasabha was not seeking any rights for the Hindus that he was not willing to grant to the Muslims! Throughout his life, Savarkar advocated equal rights for all citizens in a unified Indian State.

Savarkar’s defence

Misunderstanding was created after Savarkar made the above utterances. Hence, Savarkar clarified his statement to journalists on 15 August 1943 in the office of the Marathi weekly *Aadesh* in Nagpur. He also clarified his position in an interview given in Mumbai on 23 August 1943. The interview was published in the *Aadesh* dated 28 August 1943. Given below is an English translation of Savarkar’s clarification as published in the Marathi weekly *Aadesh* dated 23 August 1943.

“I had clarified this (my statement that there are two nations in Hindusthan) in my Nagpur interview. But instead of reporting this, journalists simply reported that I accept the two nation theory. This has resulted in the whole misunderstanding. I am surprised that a storm has been raised now on this issue. Because I have always been referring to the two-nation theory right from my Ahmedabad speech. It is a historic truth that the Mussulmans are a nation. I had clarified the historical and racial background of this theory in Nagpur. Islam is a theocratic nation based on the Koran right from its inception. This nation never had geographical boundaries. Wherever the Mussulmans went, they went as a nation. They also came to Hindusthan as a nation. Wherever they go, Mussulmans shall either remain foreigners or rulers. As per the Koran, those who are not Mussulmans are *kafirs*, enemies of Islam. Even today, after praying in the mosque, Mussulmans ask for atonement for committing the sin of living in a *kafir*-ruled state. As per the principle of Mussulmans, the earth is divided into two nations: *Dar-ul Islam* (land of Islam) and *Dar-ul Harb* where Islam does not rule (enemy land). As per their religious command, their campaign on Hindusthan was as a separate nation. They conquered the Hindu Nation as an enemy nation, not as One Nation. The Hindu Nation arose again and having defeated the Mussulmans at various places, saved the whole of Hindusthan to establish Hindu Padpadshahi also as a separate Hindu Nation opposed to the Muslim nations. This history certainly cannot be denied. In the recent past, the educated class among the Hindus

mostly through the vehicle of the Congress tried its utmost to champion territorial nationalism by saying that at least in Hindusthan, Hindus and Mussulmans are one nation because they reside in one country. Though the effort was well-intentioned, the Mussulmans never gave up their principle of theocratic or scriptural nationalism and the feeling of being a nation separate from the Hindu Nation. And they never shrank from stating this right. Seizing the right opportunity and taking advantage of the Congress. policy of surrender, the Muslim League once again emphatically put forth that same old theory of the Mussulman nation being a separate nation. If one turns a blind eye to this reality, the Hindu Nation is bound to be divided. So we do not care if you consider yourself to be a separate nation. The effort towards Hindu consolidation is to emphatically state that the Hindu Nation is a self-evident and unified Nation. The Mahasabha came forward as a separate and mighty national organization of the Hindu Nation. Hindu Nationalism gave a cutting edge to the effort of consolidation.

People still do not understand the important thing that stating the fact of Mussulman and Hindu nations being present in Hindusthan is not to accept the Pakistani adamancy of carving a country of the Mussalmans (emphasis mine). If I call someone a *grihasta* (householder), it does not make him a resident of my *griha* (house). Whether the Mussulmans consider themselves a separate nation or not, at least as far as Hindusthan is concerned, they are a minority compared to Hindus. Like the English, they have come here as foreigners and **if they want to stay in Hindusthan, they should do so only as a minority community. An independent, unified, indivisible and single State should be established in Hindusthan** (emphasis mine). Hindusthan is the Fatherland and the Holyland of Hindus and even today they are an overwhelming majority in this country. Hence, even if there are in this country, by force or tyranny, the English, Portuguese, French or those invaders such as the Americans or Japanese who call themselves a nation, Hindusthan should be considered politically a nation of the Hindus as per the principle of peoples’ power. If they want, minorities may stay here merely as minority communities. This is the objective; this is the oath of Hindu consolidation. This objective should be achieved through consensus if possible. Else, by strength and should opportunity arise, by force, this or the next generation of Hindus shall achieve this objective. **While two or two hundred nations that consider themselves separate from the Hindus have presently entered Hindusthan by force and are demanding Partition of Hindusthan, it is not by a**

woolyheaded and cowardly denial of this fact but rather by understanding, facing and changing it shall an independent, undivided and indivisible Hindu nation alone shall without doubt, remain in Hindusthan (emphasis mine). But as in our history when the Hindu Nation successfully rallied under the Hindu Flag, the Hindus should come forward and rise unitedly.”

Savarkar was then asked that if Hindus and Mussulmans are two nations, how will they form a single nation? He answered, “We should not confuse between Nation and State. Even if the State goes, the Nation remains. When the Mussulmans were ruling over us, the government (State) was theirs. But the existence of the Hindus was most certainly intact. Even so, there is no problem in a common State of Hindus and Mussulmans. In the past, we had nations (*rashtra*) such as Maharashtra, Saurashtra, Devrashtra (near Berar). Where are these nations? They mingled with each other. The Shakas and Huns came to Hindusthan as nations. But what is the evidence of their existence today? We digested them. So if the Mussulmans want, they could amicably stay with Hindus as a minority community. In the past, nations such as Prussia, Bavaria etc. existed in Germany. But today, they have all together formed the German nation. By law, no one in Germany may call himself Prussian or Bavarian but German only.”

“Regarding the Mussulmans in Hindusthan, it may be said that you (Hindus) are trying to rope them with you but do the Mussulmans so desire? In the end, desire is the most influential and important factor for a nation. If they consider themselves separate, what is achieved merely by saying that you consider them your own? And hence, we need not worry whether they come with us or not. And there is no reason why we should sacrifice Hindu interests and plead with them to perforce say that they are not a separate nation. Hindus are a nation unto themselves. Considering this, the Hindus should continue the freedom struggle by consolidating themselves irrespective of whether the Mussulmans come with them or not. If they so desire, they may stay here, else they shall go where it pleases them.”

Savarkar’s consistent view on this subject was best summarized by him in his Presidential address in Nagpur in 1938. He said: “It is absurd to call us (Hindus) a community in India. The Germans are the Nation in Germany and the Jews a Community. The Turks are a Nation in Turkey and the Arab or the Armenian minority a Community. Even so the Hindus are a Nation in India – in Hindusthan and the Moslem minority a Community.”

It is undeniable that Muslims consider themselves as a nation or Ummah. It was not Savarkar’s invention nor did he ever endorse this Islamic concept. It is noteworthy that the Afro-American religious movement started by Wallace D. Fard Muhammad in Detroit, Michigan in 1930 was named ‘Nation of Islam’.

Jinnah’s inspiration?

Savarkar-baiters have gone so far as to say that Mohammed Ali Jinnah got his idea of Pakistan from Savarkar’s two-nation theory. To say that Jinnah adopted Savarkar’s idea is arrant nonsense! Can these Savarkar-baiters quote a single sentence from Jinnah’s speeches or writings where he has named Savarkar as his source of inspiration? In a letter to the newly elected Congress President Badruddin Tyabji (1888), Sir Syed Ahmed wrote: “Is it supposed that that the different castes and creeds living in India belong to one nation, or can become nation, and that their aims and aspirations be one and same? I think it is quite impossible.” The answer given by Tyabji, the former President of Congress is even more revealing. Tyabji writes: “**Now I am not aware of anyone regarding the whole of India as one Nation and if you read my Inaugural address, you will find it distinctly stated that there are numerous communities or nations in India...**” (Source Material for a History of the Freedom Movement in India, Vol.2, pp70-73). The idea of an independent, sovereign Islamic State carved out of India was first publicly stated by Sir Muhammad Iqbal in his Presidential address to the Muslim league in 1930. Iqbal said: “I would like to see the Punjab, the North West Frontier Province, Sind and Baluchistan amalgamated into a single State. Self-Government within the British Empire or without the British Empire, the formation of a consolidated North-West Indian Muslim State appears to be to me the final of the Muslims at least of the North-Western India.” Zulfikar Ali Bhutto accurately observed that “the starting point of Pakistan goes back a thousand years to when Muhammad-bin-Qasim set foot on the soil of Sind and introduced Islam in the sub-continent.”

Savarkar’s epochal contribution to the philosophy and practice of the Hindutva movement needs dispassionate study by students and scholars of all or no ideological persuasions.

The author is a Pune-based specialist in diabetes and endocrinology. He has authored books on philosophy of Islam, religious demography of India and contemporary Buddhist-Muslim relations. He has authored two books on Savarkar.

A.K. Coomaraswamy: A Call for *Metanoia*

Brijendra Pandey*

Ananda Kentish Coomaraswamy (1877-1947) was a profound thinker and prolific writer of the early twentieth century. By the end of his life, Coomaraswamy was thoroughly versed in the scriptures, mythology, doctrines and arts of many different cultures and traditions. He was an astonishingly erudite scholar, a recondite thinker and a distinguished linguist. He left an intellectual legacy that enriched a variety of disciplines like geological studies, history and theory of art, linguistics and philology, social theory, psychology, mythology, folklore, religion and metaphysics. An arch critic of modernism, Coomaraswamy was a versatile genius and a seminal influence. He left an indelible imprint on his age and an oeuvre that will enlighten successive generations. His writings reaffirm and renew the faith of those who, in their different ways, are attempting to uphold what is sacred. Meyer Schapiro observes his significance in these words:

He was one of the luminaries of scholarship from whom we have all learned. And by the immense range of his studies and his persistent questioning of the accepted values, he gave us an example of intellectual seriousness, rare among scholars today.¹

We can recognise three aspects in Coomaraswamy's life and work which shaped his ideas and writings: a concern with socio-political issues connected with the conditions of daily life and work, and with the problematic relationship of the present to the past and of the 'East' to the 'West'; a fascination with traditional arts and crafts which impelled an immense and ambitious scholarly enterprise; and thirdly, an emerging preoccupation with religious and metaphysical questions which was

*Author is Associate Professor, Political Science; VHPG College, University of Lucknow, and Secretary, Coomaraswamy Foundation, Lucknow, India; e-mail: brijendra_pandeyji@yahoo.co.in; Mobile: 09451155116.

resolved in a 'unique balance of metaphysical conviction and scholarly erudition.'² In simple words, we can recognise three roles in Coomaraswamy's intellectual life: social commentator and Indologist, historian of Indian art, perennial philosopher. Each of these roles was dominant during a certain period in his life; 1900 to 1917, 1917 to 1932, and 1932 to 1947 respectively. The three strands eventually became interwoven in Coomaraswamy's life and his work.

Ananda was born in Colombo on August 22, 1877 to Sir Mutu Coomaraswamy and Elizabeth Clay Beeby, an English lady of good standing. After his father's death, barely two years later, Ananda was brought up and educated at Wycliffe College and at London University in England, where he studied Botany and Geology. He graduated with First Class Honours and earned D.Sc. from London University in 1906. As part of his doctoral work, Coomaraswamy carried out a scientific survey of the Mineralogy of Ceylon. He became the first director of the newly formed Mineralogical Survey of Ceylon. Distressed to note the state of decay in social and cultural life of his countrymen and their indifference to native arts and crafts, he founded the Ceylon Social Reform Society with an inspiring manifesto. From here his interests took another turn. He became absorbed in a study of the traditional arts and crafts of Ceylon and of the social conditions under which they had been produced.

During 1909-1913 he travelled extensively in India, a time of political and social unrest that accelerated the tempo of the nationalist movement, leading to non-violent resistance eventually culminating in self-rule. Coomaraswamy wished to stay on in India and offered his valuable collection on condition that a Museum of Indian Art be created; but he did not find a haven in his home country. This was largely due to the outbreak of war (1914), the reluctance of the influential class to associate with a known proponent of *Swadeshi* and the indifference and inability of the nationalists to appreciate the value of the treasure.

In England he found his own social ideas anticipated and given forceful expression in the work of William Blake, John Ruskin and William Morris, three of the foremost representatives of a fiercely eloquent and morally impassioned current of anti-industrialism. These writers and others like Thomas Carlyle, Charles Dickens and Matthew Arnold, had protested vehemently against the conditions in which many were forced to carry out their daily work and living. Coomaraswamy picked up a catch-phrase of Ruskin's which he was to mobilise again and again in his own writings: 'industry without art is brutality.'³ This was more

than a facile slogan and signals one of the key themes in Coomaraswamy's work. For many years he was to remain preoccupied with questions about the reciprocal relationships between the conditions of daily life and work, the art of a period, and the social and spiritual values which governed the civilization in question.

Coomaraswamy always remained deeply concerned about the social and educational questions. However later in life Coomaraswamy turned less often to explicitly social and political questions. By then he had become aware that 'politics and economics, although they cannot be ignored, are the most external and least part of our problem.' But, he never surrendered the conviction that an urbanised and highly industrialized society controlled by materialistic values was profoundly inimical to human development. Coomaraswamy's work on social theory has, as yet, received scant attention. It has been overshadowed by his work as an art historian and as a metaphysician. This is right and proper but it should be remembered that Coomaraswamy was profoundly concerned with social questions throughout his life. A close inquiry into his fully developed ideas about education, literacy, social organization and government would make a fascinating study. In this respect, we can say that he anticipates some of the more percipient of present day social critics who realise that our most fundamental problems derive from a progressive etiolation of authentic moral and spiritual values.⁴

As far as his role as an art historian is concerned, for him the most humble folk art and the loftiest religious creations alike were an outward expression not only of the sensibilities of those who created them but of the whole civilisation in which they were nurtured. His interest in traditional arts and crafts, from a humble pot to a medieval cathedral, was always governed by the conviction that something immeasurably precious and vitally important was disappearing under the onslaught of modernism in its many different guises.

After spending some time in England, he settled down in America where he joined the Boston Museum as Curator of Indian Art in 1917 and later as Research Fellow in Indian, Persian and Mohammedan Art. Until his death in 1947, he immersed himself in painstaking scholarship there (the appellation 'Boston Brahmin' gained circulation). As a Curator at the Boston Museum, Coomaraswamy performed a mighty task in classifying, cataloguing and explaining thousands of items of oriental art. Through his professional work, his writings, lectures and personal associations, Coomaraswamy left an indelible imprint on the works of

many American galleries and museums and influenced a wide range of curators, art historians, orientalist and critics.

Traditional art, in Coomaraswamy's view, was always directed towards a twin purpose: a daily utility, towards what he was fond of calling 'the satisfaction of present needs,' and towards the preservation and transmission of moral values and spiritual teachings derived from the tradition in which it appeared. Traditional art does not deal in the private vision of the artist but in a symbolic language.⁵ Modern art, which from a traditionalist perspective includes Renaissance and all post-Renaissance art, is by contrast, divorced from higher values, tyrannised by the mania for 'originality,' controlled by 'aesthetic' (sentimental) considerations, and drawn from the subjective resources of the individual artist rather than from the well-springs of tradition.

After writing and commenting extensively on oriental and medieval art, his focus shifted to Vedic exegesis and traditional metaphysics. He became more austere in personal lifestyle, partially withdrew from the academic and social worlds in which he had moved freely over the last decade, and addressed himself to the understanding and explication of traditional metaphysics, especially those of classical India and pre-Renaissance Europe. Coomaraswamy remarked in one of his letters that 'my indoctrination with the *Philosophia Perennis* is primarily Oriental, secondarily Medieval, and thirdly classic.'⁶ His later work is densely textured with references to Plato and Plotinus, Augustine and Aquinas, Eckhart and the Rhinish mystics, to Shankara and Lao-Tse and Nagarjuna. He also immersed himself in folklore and mythology since these too carried profound teachings.⁷ The vintage Coomaraswamy of the later years is to be found in his masterly works on Vedanta and on the Catholic scholastics and mystics. It is often laden with a mass of technical detail and with linguistic and philosophical subtleties which test the patience of some readers. Of his own methodology as an exponent of metaphysics Coomaraswamy wrote:

We write from a strictly orthodox point of view...endeavouring to speak with mathematical precision, but never employing words of our own, or making any affirmation for which authority could not be cited by chapter and verse; in this way making our technique characteristically Indian.⁸

It is true that there is no finer exegesis of traditional Indian metaphysics than is to be found in Coomaraswamy's later works.

His influence radiated out in many directions; his compelling impact on traditional studies was decisive. Even a severely attenuated list of

some of the well-known figures on whom he exercised a significant influence testifies to his impact: Eric Gill, the English designer and writer; the judge, Christmas Humphreys, early populariser of Buddhism in England; the influential Indologist Heinrich Zimmer; Joseph Campbell, the Jungian student of the world's mythologies; René Guénon himself; Joseph Epes Brown who has helped to bring to light some of the esoteric traditions of the American Indians; the comparative religionist Mircea Eliade; and, of course, other traditionalists, including Titus Burckhardt, Marco Pallis and Whitall Perry.⁹

Ananda Coomaraswamy explores the issue of Indian socio-political tradition in his unique all-comprehensive style and crystal clarity. He observes that in Plato's thought there is a cosmic city of the world, the city state, and an individual body politic, all of which are communities (Gr. *Koinonia*, Skr. *gana*). 'The same castes (Gr. *genos*, Skr. *jāti*), equal in number are to be found in the city and in the soul (or self) of each of us;¹⁰ the principle of justice is the same throughout, viz. that each member of the community should perform the tasks for which he is fitted by nature; and the establishment of justice and well-being of the whole in each case depends upon the answer to the question, which shall rule, the better or the worse, a single Reason and Common Law or the multitude of moneyed men in the outer city and of desires in the individual (*Republic*, 441, etc.)?'

Who fills, or populates, these cities? Whose are these cities, 'ours' or 'God's'? What is the meaning of 'self-government'? Philo says that 'As for lordship (kyrios), God is the only citizen' (*monos polites*), and this is almost identical with the words of the *Upanishad*, 'This man (*purusha*) is the citizen (*purushaya*) in every city,' (*sarvasu purshu, Brihadāranyaka Upanishad*, II.5.18), and must not be thought of as in any way contradicted by Philo's other statement, that 'Adam' (not 'this man,' but the true Man) is the 'only citizen of the world' (*monos kosmopolites*). Again, 'This city (*pur*) is these worlds, the Person (*purusha*) is the Spirit (yo'yam pavate = *Vāyu*), who because he inhabits (*sete*) this city is called the "Citizen" (*puru-sha*),' *Shatapatha Brāhmana*, XIII.6.2.1 — as in *Atharva-Veda*, X.2.30, where 'He who knoweth Brahma's city, whence the Person (*puru-sha*) is so-called, him neither sight nor the breath of life desert ere old age,' but now the 'city' is that of this body, and the 'citizens' its God-given powers.'

These macrocosmic and microcosmic points of view are inter-dependent; for the 'acropolis,' as Plato calls it, of the city is within you and literally at the 'heart' of the city. 'What is within this City of God

(*brahmapura*, this man) is a shrine and what therein is Sky and Earth, Fire and the Gale, Sun and Moon, whatever is possess or unpossess; everything here is within it.' *That* is the 'true City of God;' *That* is our Self, unaging and immortal, unaffected by 'hunger and thirst' (*Chhāndogya Upanishad*, VIII.1.1-5), 'That art thou' (*Ibid.*, VI.8.7); and 'Verily, he who sees *That*, contemplates *That*, discriminates *That*, he whose game and sport, dalliance and beatitude are in and with that Self (*ātman*), he is autonomous (*sva-rāj*, self-governing), he moveth at will in every world; but those whose knowing is of what is other-than-*That* are heteronomous (*anyarāj*, subject), they move not at will in any world' (*Ibid.*, VII.25.2).

Thus, at the heart of this City of God inhabits the omniscient, immortal Self, 'this self's immortal Self and Duke,' as the Lord of all, the Protector of all, the Ruler of all beings and the inward-Controller of all the powers of the soul by which he is surrounded, as by subjects, and 'to Him (*Brahma*), thus proceeding in Person (*purusha*), as he lies there extended, and enthroned, the powers of the soul (*devatā, prāna*), voice, mind, sight, hearing, scent, bring tribute' (*Jaiminiya Upanishad Brāhmana*, IV.23.7-23.10).

Not only are these worlds a city, or am 'I' a city, but these are populated cities, and not waste lands, because He fills them, being 'one as he is in himself there, and many in his children here' (*Shatapatha Brāhmana*, X.5.2.16). 'That dividing itself, unmeasured times, fills (*purayati* = causative of *pr*, the root in *pur* and so 'populates' or even 'civilises'.) these worlds ... from It continually proceed all animate beings' (*Maitri Upanishad*, V. 26). Or with specific reference to the powers of the soul within the individual city, 'He, dividing himself fivefold, is concealed in the cave (of the heart). ... Thence, having broken forth the doors of the sensitive powers. He proceeds to the fruition of experience. ... And so this body is set up in the possession of consciousness, He is its driver' (*Ibid.*, II.6.d).¹¹ This 'division,' however, is only as it were, for He remains 'undivided in divided beings' (*Bhagavad Gitā*, XIII.16, XVII.20), 'uninterrupted' (*anantaram*) and thus is to be understood as an undivided and total presence.

The 'division,' in other words, is not a segmentation, but an extension, as of radii from a centre or rays of light from a luminous source with which they are con-tinuous (Hence *viraj*, literally 'distributive shining' = 'ruling power'). Con-tinuity and intensity (*samtati, syntonía*) are, indeed, a necessary quality in whatever can be tensed and extended but, like the immanent Spirit, 'cannot be severed'

(*achchhedyā, Bhagavad Gītā*, II.23) — ‘no part of that which is divine cuts itself off and becomes separated, but only extends itself’ (Philo, Det. 90). It is then, the same thing to say that the Person ‘fills’ these worlds as to say that *Indra* saw this Person ‘as the most widely extended (*tatamam*) *Brahma*’ (*Aitareya Āraṇyaka*, II.4.3). In this way all the powers of the soul, projected by the mind towards their objects, are ‘extensions’ of an invisible principle (*Republic*, 462E), and it is this ‘tonic power’ by which it is enabled to perceive them. Our ‘constitution’ is a habitation that the Spirit makes for itself ‘just as a goldsmith draws-out-for-himself from the gold another shape’ (*Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad*, IV.4.4).

This is an essential aspect of the ‘thread-spirit’ (*sutrātman*) doctrine, and as such the intelligible basis of that of the divine omniscience and providence, to which our partial knowledge and foresight are analogous. The spiritual Sun (not that ‘sun whom all men see’ but that ‘whom few know with the mind’, *Atharva-Veda*, X.8.14; ‘Sun of the sun,’ *Mahābhārata*, V.46.3; ‘Light of lights’, *Bhagavad Gītā*, X.2.17) is the Self of the whole universe, (*Rig-Veda*, I. 11.5.1) and is connected to all things in it by the ‘thread’ of his luminous pneumatic rays, on which the ‘tissue’ of the universe is woven — ‘all this universe is strung on Me, like rows of gems on a thread’ (*Bhagavad Gītā*, VII.7); of which thread, running through our intellect, the ultimate strands are its sensitive powers. So, just as the noonday sun ‘sees’ all things under the sun at once, the ‘Person in the Sun,’ the Light of lights, from the exalted point and centre wherein everywhere and everywhen is focussed is simultaneously present to every experience, here or there, past or future, and ‘not a sparrow falls to the ground’ or ever has or ever will without his present knowledge. He is, in fact, the only seer, thinker, etc., in us (*Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad*, III.8.23), and whoever sees or thinks, etc., it is by *His* ‘ray’ that he does so.

Thus, in the human City of God which we are considering as a political pattern, the sensitive and discriminating powers form, so to speak, a body of guardsmen by which the Royal Reason is conducted to the perception of sense objects, and the heart is the guardroom where they take their orders (Plato, *Timaeus*, 70B). These powers — however, referred to as Gods, Angels, Aeons, Maruts, Rishis, Breaths, Daimons etc. — are the people (*visha*) of the heavenly kingdom, and related to their Chief (*vishpati*) as are thanes to an Earl or ministers to a King; they are a troop of the ‘King’s Own’ (*svā*), by which he is surrounded as if by a crown of glory — ‘upon whose head the Aeons

are a crown of glory darting forth rays’ and ‘by “thy glory” I understand the powers that form the bodyguard’ (Philo). The whole relationship is one of feudal loyalty, the subjects bringing tribute and receiving largesse — ‘Thou art ours and we are thine’ (*Rig-Veda*, VIII.92.32), ‘Thine may we be for thee to give us treasure’ (*Ibid.*, V. 85.8).

What must never be forgotten is that all ‘our’ powers are not our ‘own,’ but *delegated* powers and ministries through which the royal Power is ‘exercised;’ the powers of the soul ‘are only the names of His acts’ (*Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad*, I.4.7, I.5.21). It is not for them to serve their own or one another’s self-interests — of which the only result will be the tyranny of the majority, and a city divided against itself, man against man and class against class — but to serve Him whose sole interest is that of the common body politic. Actually, in the numerous accounts we have of a contest for precedence amongst the powers of the soul, it is always found that none of the members or powers is indispensable to the life of the bodily city, except only their Head, the Breath and immanent Spirit.

The right and natural life of the powers of the soul is then, precisely, their function of bringing tribute to their fountainhead, the controlling Mind and very Self, as man brings sacrificial offerings to an altar, keeping for themselves only what remains. It is the task of each to perform the functions from which it is fitted by nature, the eye seeing, the ear hearing, all of which functions are necessary to the well-being of the community of the whole man but must be co-coordinated by a disinterested power that cares for all. For unless this community can act unanimously, as one man, it will be working at all sorts of cross purposes. The concept is that of a corporation in which the several members of a community work together, each in its own way; and such a vocational society is an organism, not an aggregate of competing interests and consequently unstable ‘balance of power.’

Thus, the human City of God contains within itself the pattern of all other societies and of a true civilization. The man will be a ‘just’ man when each of his members performs its own appropriate task and is subject to the ruling Reason that exercises forethought on behalf of the whole man; and in the same way the public city will be just when there is agreement as to which shall rule, and there is no confusion of functions but every occupation is a vocational responsibility. Not, then, where there are no ‘classes’ or ‘castes’ but where everyone is a responsible agent in some special field.¹² A city can no more be called a ‘good’ city if it lacks this ‘justice’ than it could be were it wanting wisdom, sobriety or courage; and these four are the great civic virtues.¹³

Coomaraswamy puts that the Indian philosophy of work is identical. "Know that action arises from *Brahma*. He who on earth doth not follow in his turn the wheel thus revolving liveth in vain; therefore, without attachment to its rewards, ever be doing what should be done, for, verily, thus man wins the Ultimate. There is nothing I needs must do, or anything attainable that is not already mine; and yet I mingle in action. Act thou, accordingly, with a view to the welfare of the world. Better is one's own norm,¹⁴ however deficient, than that of another well done; better to die at one's own post, that of another is full of fear. ... Vocations are determined by one's own nature. Man attains perfection through devotion to his own work. How? By praising Him in his own work, from whom is the unfolding of all beings and by whom this whole universe is extended."¹⁵

After giving an intermingled framework of city, vocation and justice, Coomaraswamy puts forth the idea of traditional polity and its universalistic content. He supports that 'the city can never otherwise be happy unless it is designed by those painters who follow a divine original;¹⁶ 'The crafts such as building and carpentry ... take their principles from that realm and from the thinking there;¹⁷ 'Lo, make all things in accordance with the pattern that was shown thee upon the Mount;¹⁸ 'It is in imitation (*anukriti*) of the divine forms that any human form (*shilpa*) is invented here;¹⁹ 'There is this divine harp, to be sure; this human harp comes into being in its likeness (*tad anukriti*);²⁰ 'We must do what the Gods did first.²¹ This is the 'imitation of Nature in her manner of operation,' and like the first creation the imitation of an intelligible, not a perceptible model.

But such an imitation of the divine principles is only possible if we have known them 'as they are,' for if we have not ourselves seen them, our mimetic iconography, based upon opinion, will be a fault; we cannot know the reflection of anything unless we know itself.²² And seeing that God alone is truly beautiful, and all other beauty is by participation, it is only a work of art that has been wrought, in its kind and its significance, after an eternal model that can be called beautiful. And since the eternal and intelligible models are supersensual and invisible, it is evidently not by observation but in contemplation that they must be known. Two acts, then, one of contemplation and one of operation, are necessary to the production of any work of art.²³ In other words, the necessities to be served by art may appear to be material *or* spiritual, but it is one and the same art, or a combination of both arts, practical and philosophical, that must serve both body and soul if it is to be admitted in the ideal city.²⁴

Therefore, as Coomaraswamy puts it, to reform what has been deformed means that we must take account of an original 'form.' Forms are by definition invisible to sense. The form of our City of God is one 'that exists only in words, and nowhere on earth, but is, it seems, laid up in heaven for whomsoever will to contemplate, and as he does so, to inhabit; it can be seen only by the true philosophers who bend their energies towards those studies that nourish the soul rather than body and never allow themselves to be carried away by the congratulations of the mob or without measure to increase their wealth, the source of measureless evils,²⁵ but rather fix their eyes upon their own interior politics, never aiming to be politicians in the city of their birth' (*Republic*, 591E,F).²⁶

Coomaraswamy opines that the Vedic doctrine is neither pantheistic nor polytheistic, nor a worship of the powers of Nature except in the sense that *Natura naturans est Deus* and all her powers but the names of God's acts; that *karma* is not "fate" except in the orthodox sense of the character and destiny that inhere in created things themselves, and rightly understood, determines their vocation; that *māyā* is not "illusion", but rather the material measure and means essential to the manifestation of a quantitative, and in this sense "material", world of appearances, by which we may be either enlightened or deluded according to the degree of our own maturity; that the notion of a "reincarnation" in the popular sense represents only a misunderstanding of the doctrines of heredity, transmigration and regeneration; and that the six *darshanas* of the later Sanskrit "philosophy" are not so many mutually exclusive "systems" but, as their name implies, so many "points of view" which are no more mutually contradictory than are, let us say, botany and mathematics. We shall also deny in Hinduism the existence of anything unique and peculiar to itself, apart from the local colouring and social adaptations that must be expected under the sun where nothing can be known except in the mode of the knower. The Indian tradition is one of the forms of the *Philosophia Perennis*, and as such, embodies those universal truths to which no one people or age can make exclusive claim. The Hindu is, therefore, perfectly willing to have his own scriptures made use of by others as "extrinsic and probable proofs" of the truth as *they* also know it. The Hindu would argue, moreover, that it is upon these heights alone that any true agreement of differing cultures can be effected.²⁷

What is God? Answering this question Coomaraswamy puts that whether we call him Person, or *Sacerdotium*, or Magna Mater, or by any other grammatically masculine, feminine or neuter names, "That"

(*tat, tad ekam*) of which our powers are measures (*tanmātrā*) is a syzygy of conjoint principles, without composition or duality. ... And since this finite totality can be only logically and not really divided from its infinite source, “That One” can also be called an “integral Multiplicity”²⁸ and “Omniform Light.”²⁹

Considered apart, the “halves” of the originally undivided Unity can be distinguished in various ways according to our point of view; politically, for example, as *Sacerdotium* and *Regnum* (*brahmakshatrau*) and psychologically as Self and Not-self, Inner Man and Outer Individuality, Male and Female. These pairs are disparate; and even when the subordinate has been separated from the superior with a view to productive cooperation, it still remains in the latter, more eminently. The *Sacerdotium*, for example, is “both the *Sacerdotium* and the *Regnum*” — a condition found in the *mixta persona* of the priest-king *Mitrāvarunau* or *Indrāgni* — but the *Regnum* as a separated function is nothing but itself, relatively feminine, and subordinated to the *Sacerdotium*, its Director (*netri*). The functional distinction in terms of sex defines the hierarchy. God himself is male to all, but just as *Mitra* is male to *Varuna* and *Varuna* in turn male to Earth (*Prithivi*), so the Priest is male to the King, and the King male to his realm. In the same way the man is subject to the joint government of Church and State; but in authority with respect to his wife, who in turn administers his estate. Throughout the series it the noetic principle that sanctions or enjoins what the aesthetic performs or avoids; disorder arising only when the latter is distracted from her rational allegiance by her own ruling passions and identifies this submission with “liberty.”

The most pertinent application of all this is to the individual, whether man or woman: the outer and active individuality of “this man or woman, So-and so” being naturally feminine and subject to its own inner and contemplative Self. On the one hand, the submission of the Outer to the Inner Man is all that is meant by the words “self-control” and “autonomy,” and the opposite of what is meant by “self-assertion:” and on the other, this is the basis of the interpretation of the return to God in terms of an erotic symbolism, “As one embraced by a darling bride known naught of ‘I’ and ‘thou,’ so self-embraced by the foreknowing (solar) Self known naught of a ‘myself’ within or a ‘thysself’ without;” because, as Shankara remarks, of “unity.”³⁰

Coomaraswamy’s preoccupation with the interdependence of the sacred and the profane, the transcendental and the mundane, the spiritual and the temporal, however, is not new. He draws attention to

the relation of the authorizing mind or the reason to the efficient power — that of the inner to the outer man as enunciated in the earliest text of the Indian tradition, the *Rig-Veda*. We must premise that *Mitrāvarunau*, and likewise *Indrāgni* or *Indra*-brihaspati, are syzygies or progenitive pairs (*mīthun’ni*). The juxtaposition of *Mitra*, *Agni* and *Brihaspati* as Divine archetypes of spiritual authority (*Sacerdotium*) and *Varuna* and *Indra* of the temporal (*Regnum*) as also the analogy of the marriage of the *Purohita* to the king unfolds the implicit as also explicit relationship of spiritual authority and temporal power. The Indian theory of government is expounded on the basis of the textual sources, mainly of the *Brāhmanas* and the *Rig-Veda*. We shall for the most part, make use of the *Brāhmanas*, but it must not be overlooked that the institutions therein more fully described and explained are often referred to in the *Rig-Veda*. The *mantra* in the *Aitareya Brāhmana*, VIII.27 by which the Priest addresses the King, spells out the relationship between the spiritual authority and the temporal power. To contemporary scholars of political theory the very first sentence of his book *Spiritual Authority and Temporal Power in the Indian Theory of Government*, namely, ‘the whole of Indian political theory is implied and subsumed in the words of the marriage formula, “I am That, thou art This, I am Sky, thou art Earth”’ would come as a thunderbolt and yet, as the reader peruses the closely argued, densely written text, richly supported with references from primary material, Coomaraswamy’s assertion becomes a revelation. This ‘marriage formula’ has its analogous applications in the cosmic, political, family and individual spheres of operation, in each by the conjunction of complementary agencies.³¹

The welfare of the community in each case depends upon a succession of obediences and loyalties; that of the subjects to the dual control of King and Priest, that of the King to the Priest, and that of all to the principle of an External Law (*Dharma*) as King of Kings. The King is such by Divine Right, but by no means an absolute monarch. He may do only what is correct under the Law. Self-control is the *sine qua non* for the successful government of others; the primary victory is that of the Inner Man.

With sharpness, Coomaraswamy identified the series of correspondences between the *Sacerdotium* and the *Regnum*. The *Sacerdotium* corresponds to the *Ashabda* Brahman and the *Regnum* to the *Shabda* Brahman. As is well known, the role of *Vac* (speech) is primary and fundamental in the early Indian speculative thought: primacy is given to the silent and silence; the articulated *Sound* is secondary

(silence is golden, speech is silver) (See *Jaiminiya Upanishad Brāhmana*, II.9.6 and I.43.3). *Anahat* and *hata* sound are the musical counterparts. In this context, King is the voice that gives effect to the purpose of silent, inarticulated spiritual authority. Logically, the royal voice or what is done vocally, is almost the Will of God.³²

As one reads and reflects on the deep insight of Coomaraswamy, it is clear that what is extracted out of these texts are essentials of a theory of governance, which transcends historical time and locale. Pertinently, he points out that the King is not a constitutional ruler whose actions merely reflect the wishes of a majority of the subjects or those of secular Minister; nor is he the King by virtue of social contract but a ruler by Divine Right. However, (as told earlier) this does not imply that he is an ‘absolute ruler.’ On the contrary, the King himself is the subject of another King (we may add, ‘a higher King’). This is law (*Dharma*), the very principle of royalty and justice.³³ This notion differs from the theory of divine right of Kingship or of the King representing or replicating God. Pertinently through a circuitous argument, Coomaraswamy returns to the original marriage-hymns. He reminds us of the Sky and the Earth, the universal parents upon whose harmonious cooperation the prosperity and the fertility of the universe depends; they are to be taken to be the norms and archetype of all marriages. Thus, the analogy of marriage between the *Purohit* and the King becomes clear, for the *Purohit* here represents *Sacerdotium* and the King, the *Regnum*. The Priest and the *Agni* are representatives of the Sky and the King of the Earth and their marriage is an insurance against privation and death of the Kingdom. The two are complementary and interdependent and not one representing the other. Coomaraswamy underpins the perennial questions of an outer social order and an inner psychical order or ‘He’ or those empowered to govern. Through a series of analogies of ritual marriage of the Priest and the King and the dimensions of the *Sacerdotium* and the *Regnum*, we are reminded that a temporal order can be sustained only if the centre of authority has its centre in a sacred-moral order.³⁴

The *Regnum* is not its own principle, but is controlled by another, the Eternal Law, the Truth (*dharma, satyam*), the ‘Kingship of the Kingship’ (*kshatrasya kshatram, Brihadāranyaka Upanishad*, I.4.14). This, incidentally, provides the sanction for the well-known Cambodian doctrine of the *Dharmarāja*, as the Real and persistent Royalty, to be clearly distinguished from the King’s own temporal personality. Even a righteous emperor is not without an over-lord; and ‘Who is this King

above the King? The Eternal Law’ a Law that equally rules the Sage, and as is the King to his vassals, so are these to their own followers, so is the patron to the artist and the man to the wife, each in turn a servant and a master in a feudal hierarchy stemming from the King of Kings. That the King is feminine to the Priest but male to his own Realm is thus nothing strange, but only a special case of Order. In any Hierarchy, the individual is necessarily related in one way to what is above him, and in another to his own domain.³⁵

We have so far discussed only the cosmic (*adhi-daivatam*) and political (*adhirājyam*) aspects of the science of government and with reference to the individual as a subject. But this doctrine has also a self-referent (*adhyātmam*) application; the question is not only one of a universal and a national or civic order, but also one of an internal economy. In the last analysis the man himself is the ‘City of God’³⁶ and it can as well be said of him as of any other city that ‘The city can never otherwise be happy, unless it is drawn by those painters who copy a divine original’ (Plato: *Republic*, 500E, cf. *Katha Upanishad*, V.1). Here also, there must exist a government in which the factors of disorder must be ruled by a principle of order, if the goals of well-being in this world and the other are to be reached. That man has two selves in a universal doctrine; these are respectively natural and supernatural, the one outer and active, the subject of passions, the other inner, contemplative and serene. The problem of the internal economy by which the man’s ends (*purushārtha*) can all be attained is one of the relationship of the psycho-physical Ego to the spiritual Person, the Outer King to the Priest within you:³⁷ for as Plato so often puts it, the welfare of ‘the entire soul and body’ depends upon the unanimity of the mortal and immortal selves within you as to which shall rule.³⁸ That the *Purohita* is the instigator and the King the agent, reflects the individual constitution in which the Inner Person is the *kārayitri* and the elemental self (the Outer Man) the *kartr* (*Maitri Upanishad*, III.3; *Kaushitaki Upanishad*, III.8; *Bhagavad Gitā*, XVIII.16).

What, then, is meant by ‘autonomy’? In the case of a King, to rule and not to be ruled by the multitude of those who should be vassals and subjects; at home, to rule and not to be ruled by one’s family; and within you, to rule and not to be ruled by one’s desires. ‘He whose pleasure is in the (spiritual) Self, whose love-sports are with the Self, he whose bride-groom is the Self, and whose bliss is in the Self (*ātmaratir ātma-krida ātmamithuna ātmānandah*) becomes autonomous (*svarāj*) and a mover-at-will (*kāmāchārin*) in every world: but those whose

knowledge is heteronomous become heteronomous (*anyarāj*), and do not become movers-at-will in any world' (*Chhāndogya Upanishad*, VII.25.2)³⁹ : for 'Here on earth the children of man dwell in subjection to command, since whatever it be that they desire, whether a kingdom or field (i.e. whether it be a King or any other man), it is on that very thing that they base their life' (*Chhāndogya Upanishad*, VIII.1.5), and 'why then,' as St. Augustine exclaims, 'should men venture to pride themselves on their freewill before they are set free? For by whom a man is overcome, to him he is assigned in slavery' (*De Spir. et. Lit.*, 52; cf. *Maitri Upanishad*, II. 1-2). When this mystical union (*ātmanithunam*) of the inner and the outer man has been consummated, when the two fires that hated one another (*Taittiriya Samhitā*, V. 2.4.1-2) have been made one (*ekam bhavanti*), in this affectionate, unanimous, and cooperative marriage, then it can be said that 'This self offers itself' (*ātmanam samprayachchhati*) to that Self, and that Self to this self. They unite with one another. By this (earthly, feminine) form, he (the aforesaid Comprehensor of Indra as Overlord) unites with yonder world and by the form with this world (*Aitareya Āranyaka*, II.3.7); thus both worlds are gained for both selves, this world without and that other within you.⁴⁰

The only royal road to power is to become one's own master; the mastery of whatever else follows. This is the traditional 'secret of government,' Chinese and Platonic as much as it is Indian.⁴¹

Thus, from the standpoint of Indian sociological theory and that of all traditional politics, an individual tyranny, whether that of a despot, that of an emancipated artist, or that of the self-expressive man or self-sufficient woman, effects in the long run only what is ineffectual (*akritani*, 'misdeeds'): all self-importance leads to the disintegration and finally the death of the body politic, collective or individual. The essence of the traditional politics amounts to this, that 'Self-government' (*svarāj*) depends upon self-control (*ātmasamyama*), Rule on ruliness.

The King is such by Divine Right and Appointment, and by the same token the Executive of a higher than his own will; or if he rules only by might and does his own will, he is a Tyrant and must be disciplined. The same applied to the individual who, if only concerned with the good of the work to be done and not with himself, and if he thinks of 'himself' only as an instrument governed by his art, is worthy of all honour, but if he asserts and seeks to express himself, worthy of all dishonour and shame.

The Kingship envisaged by the Indian and traditional doctrine is thus as far removed as could be from what we mean when we speak of

an 'Absolute Monarchy' or of 'individualism.' Whatever sovereign, even one whose dominion extends to the ends of the earth, is of perverted disposition and ungoverned senses (*viruddhir vrittir avāsyendriyah*)⁴² must quickly perish. The Whole of this Science has to do with a Victory Over the Powers of Perception and Action.

The application is to the 'king,' 'the man of action' and 'artist' in any domain whatever; there is nothing that can be truly and well done or made except by the man in whom the marriage of the *Sacerdotium* and the *Regnum* has been consummated, nor can any peace be made except by those who have made their peace with themselves.⁴³

There are frequent references, need not to re-mention, in the Vedas where it is emphasized that the King is the King only in so far as he acts within the paramount principles of *Dharma*. The *Brihadāranyaka Upanishad* (I.4.14) speaks of the *Dharma* as the '*kshatrasya kshatram*;' which idea has been elaborated in *Manusmriti* by pointing out that the good of all people depends upon the *Dharma*. That is why, *Arthashāstra* has its supra-human origin; Lord Shiva (*Vishālāksha*) being the original preceptor of politics and morals. Amongst the greatest of the names of Shiva is *Natarāja*, Lord of Dancers or King of Actors. The cosmos is His theatre; there are many different steps in His repertory. He Himself is actor and audience:

When the Actor beateth the drum,
Everybody cometh to see the show;
When the Actor collecteth the stage properties,
He abideth alone in His happiness.

How many various dances of Shiva are known to His worshippers, cannot be said. No doubt the root idea behind all of these dances is more or less one and the same, the manifestation of primal rhythmic energy.⁴⁴

Though it has been dealt efficiently, the question of *Varnāshrama* has been made crucial in contemporary India. But one should not forget that a traditional social order, like that of India, is not a haphazard development but imitative of a theory or body of principles or values that are understood to have been revealed and of which the truth is taken for granted. Institutions represent an application of metaphysical doctrines to contingent circumstances, and take on a local colour accordingly, changing with the times but maintaining throughout a high degree of stability, comparable to that of a living organism in which, by the repeated process of death and rebirth that we call "becoming" or

“life,” an existing order preserves a recognizable identity and produces order from order. In the traditional society one respects established institutions, and if anything goes wrong one does not assume that it can be put right by institutional revolutions, but only by a change of mind, repentance, leaving the order itself unchanged; “reformation” can only imply, what the word itself imports, a *return* to some form from which a deviation has taken place.⁴⁵

Institutions may be defined as means to the perfectibility of the individual. They are to be judged accordingly by the standard of whatever are held to be the immediate and ultimate ends of life; as good if they conduce to their realization, or otherwise evil. By Hindus, the purpose of life, “man’s end” (*purushārtha*), is defined in a fourfold way and at the same time as regards the active and contemplative lives respectively. These immediate and final ends are listed in the order of their hierarchy, but should not be thought of as independent of or fundamentally opposed to one another. The last end of liberation is, nevertheless, in a manner contrasted with the three categories of purpose proper to the active life; and this contrast is reflected in the fact that it is recognized both that a man has binding social responsibilities (often thought of as a debt to be repaid to his ancestors) and that he can have done with these responsibilities once and for all. Provision is made accordingly both for the life of the householder who practises a trade (whether sacerdotal, royal, pastoral or mechanic), and for the life of poverty, that of the mendicant *Sannyāsi* who “gives up” at the same time all social rites and duties and, having no possessions whatever, lives on “charity,” in the purest sense of the word, that of the love of his fellow men, for whom it is a privilege to feed him.

These two ways of life, in the world and apart from it, have been aptly called the “ordinary” and the “extraordinary” norms of the cultural pattern; and it is with a view to the fulfilment of both lives that the institution of the “Four *Āshramas*” developed.⁴⁶

In that (Hindu) life all are but coordinate parts of one undivided and indivisible whole, wherein the provision and respect due to every individual are enforced, under the highest religious sanctions, and every office and calling perpetuated from father to son by those cardinal obligations of caste on which the whole hierarchy of Hinduism hinges. We trace there the bright outlines of a self-contained, self-dependent, symmetrical and perfectly harmonious industrial economy, deeply rooted in the popular conviction of its divine character, and protected, through every political and commercial vicissitude,⁴⁷ by the absolute power and

marvellous wisdom and tact of the *Brāhmanical* priesthood. Such an ideal order we should have held impossible of realisation, but that it continues to exist, and to afford us, in the yet living results of its daily operation in India, a proof of the superiority, in so many unsuspected ways, of the hieratic civilization of antiquity over the secular, joyless, inane, and self-destructive, modern civilization of the West.⁴⁸ Hereditary service has been painted in such dark colours only because it is incompatible with the existing industrial system.⁴⁹ To do away with caste, to reduce all men to the condition of the modern proletarians who have no vocations but only “jobs,” would not be a solution, but much rather a dissolution.⁵⁰

Indeed, concepts of *Dharma* and *Sva-Dharma* are the basis of the forms of Indian society. One is the universal pattern and law of all order under the Sun; the other is that share of this Law for which every man is made responsible by his physical and mental constitution. It will serve to illustrate the “massive agreement” of the common tradition that has been all men’s heritage if we point out that it is in the same way that in scholastic philosophy the distinction is made of Eternal from Natural Law. In the words of St. Thomas Aquinas: “all things under Providence are regulated and measured by the Eternal Law, but those of the individual, who participates in this Law, by the Natural Law: not that these two are different Laws, but only the universal and the particular aspect of one and the same Law.” In either sense, the participation determines the part that the creature “ought” to play in the world; and it is only one example of this that the craftsman is “naturally inclined by justice to do his work faithfully” (St. Thomas Aquinas: *Summa Theologica* II-i.92.2, etc. It should be noted especially that the Natural Law is that share of the Eternal Law which directs each creature to its own proper activities and ends.).⁵¹ In the more unified life of India it is not only in special rites that the meaning of life has been focussed; this life itself has been treated as a significant ritual, and so sanctified.⁵²

On the other hand, where all work is economically determined and leisure is devoted to the hectic pursuit of the pleasure that was not found in the work, the common functions of life and thought are profaned, and only some things and some times – if any – are held sacred; and that double or half-life is the outward symptom of our modern schizophrenia and amnesia.⁵³

The Buddha himself was following an ancient Way. Coomaraswamy quotes:

The idea of *Dhamma* as the interpreted order of the World ... *that* which the Buddha preached, the *Dhamma* was the order of law of the universe, immanent, eternal, uncreated, not as interpreted by him only, much less invented or decreed by him, but intelligible to a mind of his range, and by him made so to mankind. ... The Buddha (like every other great philosopher and other Buddhas ...) is a discoverer of this order of the *Dhamma*, this universal logic, philosophy, or righteousness in which the rational and ethical elements are fused into one (Pali Text Society's Dictionary).⁵⁴

This Justice (*Dhamma*) is, explicitly, the King of Kings.⁵⁵ It is both timeless (*akālika*) and present (*samditthika*).⁵⁶ The just man is *dhammattha* (as in Sanskrit, *dharmasthita*); whatever takes place naturally and normally is *dhammata*, whatever takes place properly is *dhammena*. That the Law of life is both timeless and secular corresponds to the distinction of the absolute *Dharma* that is the ruling power of God himself from the immanent Law that is, within us, our own standard of truth and conduct. And this is also the distinction of *Dharma* from *Svadharmā*. This doctrine about the (perfection in) active life is best and most fully developed in the *Bhagavad Gitā*, where the division of castes is from God, and made according to men's natural (*svabhāva-ja*) diversity of qualities and corresponding functions.⁵⁷

Herein, of course, "perfection" or "success" does not mean the accumulation of a fortune; we have already seen that in old age a man looks forward, not to an economic independence, but to a being independent of economics. It should be noted, moreover, that what is meant by a devotion to one's work is what is meant by "diligence," the opposite of "negligence;" "diligence": implying a being fond of, and a caring for one's work, is by no means the same as to be merely "industrious;" all this is not, in fact, a matter of working hard, but rather one of working easily, and naturally (*sahajam*), or, in the Platonic sense, a working at leisure.⁵⁸

The "sanctification of craftsmanship" has been called "the most significant contribution of the Middle Ages to the world;" it might better have been said, significant heritage of a world-wide past that has been sold for a mess of pottage, and has no longer any meaning in one world of "impoverished reality." From the Hindu point of view, the castes are literally "born of the Sacrifice": that is to say from the "breaking of bread," the primordial Sacrifice of the One whom Gods and men made many; and therefore also from the ritual that re-enacts the original Sacrifice and that corresponds to the Christian Mass. The deity

who is and at the same time makes the first Sacrifice, "dividing himself to fill these worlds" with his total and omnipresence, is called, in his capacity as the Demiurge through whom all things were made, the "All-worker," *Vishvakarmā*: and he, indeed, performs all those diverse works, *vishva karmani*, that the Sacrifice, the Mass, itself requires, if it is to be correctly celebrated,⁵⁹ for example, those of music, architecture, carpentry, husbandry and that of warfare to protect the operation.

Where there is agreement as to the nature of man's last end, and that the Way by which the present and the paramount ends of life can be realised is that of sacrificial operation; it is evident that the form of society will be determined by the requirements of the Sacrifice; and that order (*yathārthatā*) and impartiality (*samdrishti*) will mean that everyman shall be enabled to become, and by no misdirection prevented from becoming, what he has it in him to become. It is to those who maintain the Sacrifice that the promise is made that they shall flourish. The politics of the heavenly, social and individual communities are governed by one and the same law. The pattern of the heavenly politics is revealed in scripture and reflected in the constitution of the autonomous State and that of the man who governs himself.

In this man, in whom the sacramental life is complete, there is a hierarchy of sacerdotal, royal, and administrative powers, and a fourth class consisting of the physical organs of sense and action, that handle the raw material or "food" to be prepared for all; and it is clear that if the organism is to flourish, it is impossible if divided against itself. It is in precisely the same way that the functional hierarchy of the realm is determined by the requirements of the Sacrifice on which its prosperity depends. In the sacramental order there is a need and a place for all men's work: and there is no more significant consequence of the principle, Work is Sacrifice, than the fact that under these conditions, and remote as this may be from our secular ways of thinking, every function, from that of the priest and the king down to that of the potter and scavenger, is literally a priesthood and every operation a rite. In each of these spheres, moreover, we meet with "professional ethics." The caste system differs from the industrial "division of labour," with its "fractioning of human faculty," in that it presupposes differences in kinds of responsibility but not in degrees of responsibility; and it is just because an organization of functions such as this, with its mutual loyalties and duties, is absolutely incompatible with our competitive industrialism, that the monarchic, feudal and caste system is always pointed in such dark colours by the sociologist, whose thinking is

determined more by his actual environment than it is a deduction from first principles.⁶⁰

Agni, “Fire”, appears in the Vedic liturgies as the preferred designation of the First-manifested Principle, on the one hand because of the fiery nature of the Supernal-Sun, and on the other because of the primary importance of fire in the sacrificial ritual. *Agni*, as the Son of God, is commonly called *Vishvānara*, “Universal,” with reference to his manifestation in the terrestrial, intermediate, and celestial regions; and is pre-eminently “First-born” and “Youngest” because perpetually brought to birth in the sacrificial fire at the dawn of every temporal cycle and the dawn of every day. In any case, it is an elemental fiery Energy (*‘tejas’*) that underlies and typifies all other manifestation.⁶¹

It is said that in recent years there has been a return of the Grand Theory and it sounds strange that thinkers as diverse in views and outlook as John Rawls and Jacques Derrida, Jurgen Habermas and Michel Foucault, Hans-Georg Gadamer and Louis Althusser have all been brought together to reveal this scenario. Derrida’s deconstructionism and Foucault’s genealogical analysis cannot in any case be examples of grand theorization, except indirectly so by provoking further reflection on our existential predicament by exposing the grand pretensions of scientific rationality and the idea of human progress.⁶² The return of the Grand Theory would require a revival of the perennial philosophy and of the concept of the Great Chain of Being implying the notions of universality, eternity, hierarchy, continuity and plenitude. This is possible only if there is a radical transformation of our noetic consciousness, a *metanoia*, which means ‘a transformation of our whole being from human thinking to divine understanding.’⁶³ In other words, it requires a true and re-formed understanding about ‘tradition’ which is a compendious term representing an integral and consistent view of the world (*weltanschauung*), intrinsic to the deepest nature and meaningfulness of man’s life. It signifies a total outlook, concerning man’s place and purpose in the order and nature of things. However, under the reign of Quantity and Modernity, ‘the very idea of tradition has been destroyed to such an extent that those who aspire to recover it no longer know which way to turn’ (René Guénon).

Etymologically, ‘tradition’ simply means ‘that which is transmitted,’ virtually covering the entire gamut of socio-cultural and politico-economic fabric. The origin and ground of this transmission, universally understood in all traditions, presupposes a trans-human origin, regardless of modality, and is treated as ‘Eternity breaking into Time.’ The hallmark of tradition is a belief in and dependence upon First

Principles (simple axiomatic Truths that cannot be proved or disproved), divine Truths revealed ‘at the dawn of time’ (The *Bhagavad Gītā*). Tradition is primordial and universal, coeval with Time (Timeless, ever contemporaneous): it has been variously called, *Akālika Dhamma*, *Hagia Sophia*, *Lex Aeterna*, *Din al-Haqq*, *Tao*, *Philosophia Perennis*, *Sophia Perennis*, *Theosophia Perennis*, better known in India as *Sanātana Dharma*.

Tradition has diverse forms: it is sustained by constant renewal; otherwise, it is likely to decay. A complete tradition ‘will entail the presence of four things, namely: a source of inspiration or, to use a more concrete term, Revelation; a current of influence or Grace issuing forth from that source and transmitted without interruption through a variety of channels; a way of “verification” which, when faithfully followed, will lead the human subject to successive positions where he is able to “actualize” the truths that Revelation communicates; finally there is the formal embodiment of tradition in the doctrines, arts, sciences and other elements that together go to determine the character of a normal civilization’ (Marco Pallis).

In this sense, tradition becomes synonymous with a perennial philosophy which is eternal, universal and immutable.⁶⁴ ‘Tradition’ in its most pristine sense is this primordial truth and as such, takes on the status of a first cause, a cosmic datum or a kind of principial reality woven into the very fabric of the universe. As such, it is not amenable to ‘proof.’ It is self-evident, self-validating principle in the face of which it is possible only to understand or not understand.⁶⁵ As Ananda K. Coomaraswamy points out, ‘a first cause, being itself uncaused, is not probable but axiomatic’.⁶⁶

By “uncaused,” Coomaraswamy here means unconditioned, outside the realm of phenomenal contingencies. Thus, the Primordial Tradition or *sophia perennis* is of supra-human origin and is in no sense a product or evolute of human thought: it is ‘the birth-right of humanity.’⁶⁷ Perennial Philosophy may be explicated as the metaphysic that considers a divine Reality underlying all manifestation; the psychology that recognizes a spark of Divinity in every organism; and the ethic that places man’s final end in the knowledge of the immanent and transcendent Ground of all being. Therefore, as Ananda Coomaraswamy rightly observes: “to re-form what has been de-formed is to take account of an original ‘form.’”⁶⁸

As Coomaraswamy remarks, the philosophy, or metaphysics, provided the vision, and religion the way to its effective verification

and actualization in direct experience.⁶⁹ Metaphysics, therefore, is immutable and inexorable, and the ‘infallible standard by which not only religions, but still more “philosophies” and “sciences” must be “corrected” and interpreted.’⁷⁰ In this sense, the *Vedānta* is not a ‘philosophy’ in the current sense of the word, but only as the word is used in the phrase *Philosophia Perennis*. Modern philosophies are closed systems, employing the method of dialectics, and taking for granted that opposites are mutually exclusive. In modern philosophy things are either so or not so; in eternal philosophy this depends upon our point of view. Metaphysics is not a system, but consistent doctrine; it is not merely concerned with conditioned and quantitative experience but with universal possibility.⁷¹ In other words, there is nothing of the ‘art for art’s sake’ type of thinking about the pursuit of metaphysics: it engages the whole person or it is as nothing.⁷² Symbolism is a language and a precise form of thought; a hieratic and a metaphysical language and not a language determined by somatic or psychological categories. Its foundation is in analogical correspondences. Symbolism is a calculus in the same sense that an adequate analogy is a proof.⁷³ Thus, there is the intimate nexus between the ideas of truth, goodness and beauty. The harmony of truth, beauty and virtue will find its richest expression in explicitly sacred art. As Aquinas affirmed, beauty relates to the cognitive faculty and is thus connected with wisdom.⁷⁴ In other words, religion and culture are normally indivisible and where everyone thinks for himself, there is no society (*sāhitya*) but only an aggregate.⁷⁵ It has never been supposed by Oriental artists that the object of art is reproduction of the external forms of nature. Such a conception, in modern Europe, is the natural product of a life divorced from beauty. It is for the artist to portray the ideal world of true reality, the world of imagination, and not the phenomenal world perceived by the senses.⁷⁶ Coomaraswamy calls for a *metanoia* with a mighty indomitable force of the conviction:

‘...whether or not a battle of religion against industrialism and world-trade can ever be won is no question for us to consider, our concern is with the task and not with its reward, our business is to be sure that in any conflict we are on the side of justice.’⁷⁷

About this ‘warrior for *dharma*’, Eric Gill rightly observed: ...there was one person...to whose influence I am deeply grateful; I mean the philosopher and theologian, Ananda Coomaraswamy. Others have written the truth about life and religion and man’s work. Others have written good clear English. Others have had the gift of witty exposition.

Others have understood the metaphysics of Christianity and others have understood the metaphysics of Hinduism and Buddhism. Others have understood the true significance of erotic drawings and sculptures. Others have seen the relationships of the true and the good and the beautiful. Others have had apparently unlimited learning. Others have loved; others have been kind and generous. But I know of no one else in whom all these gifts and all these powers have been combined...I believe that no other living writer has written the truth in matters of art and life and religion and piety with such wisdom and understanding.⁷⁸

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- ³ Roger Lipsey: *op. cit.*, p.114.
- ⁴ Kenneth Oldmeadow: *Traditionalism: Religion in the Light of the Perennial Philosophy*, Sri Lanka Institute of Traditional Studies, Colombo, 2000, pp. 30-31.
- ⁵ See A.K. Coomaraswamy: *Christian and Oriental Philosophy of Art*, Dover, New York, 1956.
- ⁶ Letter to Artemus Packard, May, 1941 in Rama P. Coomaraswamy and Alvin Moore, Jr. (ed.): *Selected Letters of Ananda Coomaraswamy*, Indra Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, New Delhi, 1988, p. 299.
- ⁷ Kenneth Oldmeadow: *op. cit.*, p.33.
- ⁸ Quoted in V.S. Naravane: ‘Ananda Coomaraswamy: A Critical Appreciation’ in S.D.R. Singam (ed.): *Ananda Coomaraswamy: Remembering and Remembering Again and Again*, Privately Published, Kuala Lumpur, 1974, p. 206.
- ⁹ Kenneth Oldmeadow: *op. cit.*, p. 35.
- ¹⁰ Plato’s Immortal Soul (Self), and two parts of the mortal soul (self), together with the body itself, make up the normal number of ‘four castes’ that must co-operate for the benefit of the whole community. See Ananda K. Coomaraswamy: *What is Civilisation?*, Indra Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, New Delhi and Oxford University Press, Delhi-Bombay-Calcutta-Madras, 1989, p. 1 (See also p. 9, note 2).
- ¹¹ Ananda K. Coomaraswamy: *op. cit.*, pp. 9-10, note 11.
- ¹² *Ibid.*: p. 11, note 20.
- ¹³ *Ibid.*: pp. 1-6.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*: p. 11, note 22.

- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*: p. 7. See also Ananda K. Coomaraswamy: *Art and Swadeshi*, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 1994, pp. 3-9; Ananda K. Coomaraswamy: *Essays in National Idealism*, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 1981, originally published in 1909, p. ii, p. 206; and Ananda K. Coomaraswamy: *What is Civilisation?*, *op. cit.*, p. 8.
- ¹⁶ *Republic*, 500E.
- ¹⁷ Plotinus: *Enneads*, V.9.11, like Plato: *Timaeus*, 28A.B.
- ¹⁸ *Exodus*, XXV.40.
- ¹⁹ *Aitareya Brāhmana*, VI.27.
- ²⁰ *Shāṅkhāyana Āranyaka*, VIII.9.
- ²¹ *Shatapatha Brāhmana*. VII.2.1.4 etc. Also see Ananda K. Coomaraswamy: *Figures of Speech or Figures of Thought*, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 1981, p. 15.
- ²² *Republic*, 377, 402; *Laws*, 667, 668; *Timaeus*, 28A, B; *Phaedrus*, 243A, B; *Republic*, 328C; *Republic*, 601.
- ²³ The contemplative *actus primus* (Skr. *dhi, dhyāna*) and operative *actus secundus* (Skr. *karma*) of the Scholastic philosophers.
- ²⁴ Ananda K. Coomaraswamy: *Figures of Speech or Figures of Thought*, *op. cit.*, p. 12.
- ²⁵ Ananda K. Coomaraswamy: *What is Civilisation?*, *op. cit.*, p. 12, note 32.
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- ²⁷ Ananda K. Coomaraswamy: *Hinduism and Buddhism*, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 1986, pp. 3-4.
- ²⁸ *Rig-Veda*, III.54.8, *vishvam ekam*.
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- ³⁰ Ananda K. Coomaraswamy: *Hinduism and Buddhism*, *op. cit.*, pp. 12-13.
- ³¹ See Ananda K. Coomaraswamy: *Spiritual Authority and Temporal Power in the Indian Theory of Government*, Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, New Delhi and Oxford University Press, Delhi, Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, 1993, pp. 1-2, p. 19.
- ³² *Ibid.*: see editorial notes by K.N. Iengar and Rama P. Coomaraswamy and Foreword by Kapila Vatsyayan.
- ³³ *Ibid.*: see text on pp. 7-8.
- ³⁴ *Ibid.*: pp. vi-vii.
- ³⁵ *Ibid.*: pp. 17-18.
- ³⁶ *Atharvaveda Samhitā*, X.2.30 - *Puram yo brahmano veda yasyah purusha uchyate*, He who knows the fullness of *Brahma*, from which (fullness) He is called *purusha*; *Brihadāranyaka Upanishad*, II.5.18 – *Sa vaa ayam purushah sarvamsu purshu purishayah*. He on account of his dwelling in all bodies is called the *Purusha*.

- ³⁷ Ananda K. Coomaraswamy: *Spiritual Authority and Temporal Power in the Indian Theory of Government*, *op. cit.*, p. 24 and pp. 117-118, note 82.

³⁸ *Ibid.*: p. 24 and p. 118, note 83.)

³⁹ Cf. *Mundaka Upanishad*, III. 1.1.

द्वा सुपर्णा सयुजा सखाया समानं वक्षं परिषस्वजाते ।
तयोरन्यः पिप्पलं स्वाद्वच्च्यनश्नन्नन्यो अभिचाकशीति ॥

That, man has two selves, is a universal doctrine; these are respectively, natural and supernatural, the one actor and active, the subject of passions, the other inner, contemplative and serene.

Thus, the language is equally applicable to the political economy of *Regnum* and *Sacerdotium*, and to the individual economy of the 'two selves', Outer King and Inner Sage.

- ⁴⁰ Ananda K. Coomaraswamy: *Spiritual Authority and Temporal Power in the Indian Theory of Government*, *op. cit.*, pp. 28-29. See also pp. 122-123, notes 89-94.
- ⁴¹ *Ibid.*: p. 33.
- ⁴² *Ibid.*: p.125, note 106.
- ⁴³ *Ibid.*: pp. 36-37 and pp. 125-126, note 108.
- ⁴⁴ Ananda K. Coomaraswamy: *The Dance of Shiva*, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 1991, p. 83.
- ⁴⁵ Ananda K. Coomaraswamy: *East and West and Other Essays*, Ola Books Ltd., Colombo, 1940, p. 13.
- ⁴⁶ *Ibid.*: pp. 17-18.
- ⁴⁷ *Ibid.*: p. 5.
- ⁴⁸ Quoted from *Ibid.*: p.16.
- ⁴⁹ *Ibid.*
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- ⁵² *Ibid.*: p. 43.
- ⁵³ *Ibid.*
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- ⁵⁵ *Anguttara Nikāya*: I.109.
- ⁵⁶ *Sutta Nipāta*: 1139.
- ⁵⁷ Ananda K. Coomaraswamy: *East and West and Other Essays*, *op. cit.*, p. 28.
- ⁵⁸ *Ibid.*: pp. 29-30.
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Krishnamurti and the Direct Perception of Truth

Prof. P. Krishna*

Krishnamurti was one of the most original thinkers of our time, who investigated fundamental questions about the purpose of life, the true meaning of love, religion, time, and death without seeking answers in any books or scriptures and without accepting any belief, organized religion or system of thought. Like the Buddha, he sought the answers to these questions through observation, inquiry and self-knowledge and arrived at a direct perception of truth which lies beyond intellectual concepts, theories and descriptions. He was not a scholar or an intellectual; he did not deal with theories and concepts, he spoke only from his own investigations and observations. What he has said may have been said earlier by others, but he came upon the truth of it for himself. In an age dominated by science and the intellect, he has pointed out the fundamental limitations of thought and knowledge as a means of real change. In this article I propose to reflect on some of the essential aspects of his teachings and some of the great truths he has expounded.

1. The source of all human problems, big and small, lies in the psyche of the individual

Over the million years or more that man has existed on this planet, his knowledge of the external world has evolved greatly and increased his power and ability to cope with natural calamities. Inwardly, in his consciousness, man has not evolved very much. He is still very much like the primitive man – fearful and insecure, forming groups (religious

*Prof. P. Krishna, Rajghat Education Centre, Krishnamurti Foundation India, Varanasi 221001, India and writer is author of a recent book: "A jewel on a silver platter: Remembering J. Krishnamurti" Pilgrim Publishing, Varanasi (2015).

and national), fighting and preparing for war, seeking advantages for himself and hating others. He is now able to travel to the moon and communicate around the globe in a matter of minutes, but he still finds it difficult to love his neighbour and live in peace. Modern man is as brutal, selfish, violent, greedy and possessive as the primitive man of a million years ago, though he may now be able to hide himself behind a lot of noble-sounding words and thoughts.

This lop-sided development of the human being has brought him close to self-annihilation. He now stands on the brink of nuclear war, just a hair's breadth away from total extinction. The power that his increased knowledge has given him has not been coupled with the right kind of intelligence and vision that are necessary. Why? Why have we not evolved psychologically? Is it because we have never directed our attention inwards, to understand our own mind, thoughts and feelings? We are so satisfied, so dazzled by our achievements, our 'progress' in the outer world, that we have completely neglected the inner world of our consciousness. Hatred in the primitive man could do only little damage; in modern man with all his power it is much more devastating and we are seeing the disastrous consequences of it every day all around us.

It seems to us that we can resolve this problem if we can organize things better in society. This is a deep-rooted illusion. One is of course not against efficient organization of daily life; but you cannot produce a non-violent and peaceful society with a million violent, aggressive, self-seeking individuals, however you may organize them. If you have a communist society, you will have the violence of communism; if you have a capitalist society you will have the violence of capitalism. You can contain the violence in some directions, but it will express itself in others. Revolutions have come and gone but man's tyranny on man has not ended, it has only assumed other forms.

A truly peaceful, non-violent society is only possible if the individual transforms psychologically and fundamentally. Any other change is trivial and temporary, it will never resolve the problems, it will only enable us to cope with them for a while in certain directions. Society is what the individual is. Just as the characteristics of a bar of copper are determined by the characteristics of the atoms constituting it, the characteristics of a society are determined by those of the individuals. All problems that we see in society today are reflections of problems in the psyche of the individual. Therefore, we must concern ourselves with the inner transformation of man and not just the outer organization of society.

2. The individual changes only when his consciousness changes. Virtue cannot be practiced

All religions have tried to change man but they have failed. Had they succeeded, we would not have today so much cruelty, war and hatred. We must examine why religions have failed to change man and learn from this. Essentially, every religion has prescribed a path, a set of virtues to be practiced and vices to be eschewed. And man has struggled for thousands of years to do what they prescribed, but it has not worked. The practice of virtuous acts does not in itself alter the consciousness of man. The practice of pre-meditated kind acts does not produce kindness in one's consciousness. It becomes another achievement, another aim in life, another method of seeking self-satisfaction. On the other hand, if there is kindness in the heart, it will express itself in every action, every thought, word and deed. Then it does not have to be 'practiced.' Similarly, one cannot practice non-violence, so long as one is aggressive, hateful, violent inwardly. Then non-violence becomes only a facade, a hypocritical exterior, a cold calculated performance. It is only by observing the causes of violence in oneself and eliminating them (not through effort but through understanding) that there can be an ending of violence. And when there is the ending of violence, there is no need to practice non-violence. Only a lazy mind needs to discipline itself! So, virtue cannot be practiced, it cannot be cultivated. It is a state of mind, a state of consciousness which comes upon when there is self-knowledge, understanding, clarity and vision. It cannot be achieved through willful effort, it requires insight. And insight comes through observation, through reflection, through sensitive awareness. It is the perception of truth that liberates consciousness from its ignorance and illusions; and it is ignorance that generates disorder in the psyche. Goodness must be spontaneous, otherwise it is not goodness. Any change in the outward conduct of man, brought about through fear, coercion, discipline, conformity, imitation and propaganda does not represent a true change in his consciousness and is therefore both superficial and contradictory.

3. Truth, liberation, illumination cannot be secured through another

Man has from times immemorial depended on a Guru, a religion or a book to show him the way. Krishnamurti has pointed out that truth is a pathless land and no Guru, no path, no belief, no book can lead you to

it. You have to be a light unto yourself and not seek light from another. The role of the Guru is only to point out, it is the individual himself who has to learn. And the ability to learn is far more important than the ability to teach. In this field, no one can really teach anything to anyone else. Each one has to come upon the truth for himself and one must begin with knowing oneself. Without understanding the workings of one's own thought-process and the conditioning one has acquired from one's own experiences, traditions, culture, religion etc., one cannot find the true answer to any serious question. Our beliefs, our opinions, conclusions, prejudices, prevent us from seeing things in their true perspective because they colour our vision. One must be aware of this fact and doubt every opinion, every conclusion that comes to the mind for it may not represent the truth. When one inquires into oneself in that way, with the intention of seeking the truth and not merely seeking satisfaction, learning takes place. And one must live with that state of inquiry, questioning and doubting all through one's life, without seeking to arrive.

What one can receive from another is a thought, a question; but the exploration has to be one's own. Unless you come upon the truth for yourself it is not the truth for you, it is only a description of the truth. That is the difference between the Buddha and the Professor of Buddhist philosophy. The former has the actual insight, the consciousness, the latter has only a description of it. Man has often confused the symbol, the word, the concept for the real thing. A true Christian is one who lives by the sermon on the Mount (and you can only do that if you have the consciousness of Christ), not the man who joins a church and performs all its rituals. A true Buddhist is one who partakes of the consciousness of the Buddha, not one who obeys the Buddhist church. All churches, all organized religions have only succeeded in reducing the great truth to a mere system, a symbol, a ritual. What matters is not the garment, the label, but the content of the consciousness within.

The role of a teacher (the Guru) is that of the lamp on the roadside. One must not sit and worship the lamp, one must walk the way. Krishnamurti repeatedly emphasized that it had very little significance if we either accepted or rejected what he said. It is only when we consider it, question it, examine it and find out for ourselves if it is true that it has value. Since truth and liberation are something the individual has to come upon by himself, through his own inquiry, any organization that tries to propagate "truth" through belief, conformity or propaganda

only serves to further condition the mind of the individual and enslave him. A meaningful inquiry requires freedom from all belief, prejudices, conclusions and conditioning. It requires a deep awareness of oneself as one is. Since truth cannot be organized and spread, spiritual organizations which try to do this have no value.

4. Intellectual understanding is not real understanding

We are often satisfied with an intellectual answer to a question, and that puts an end to our inquiry. When that happens, intellectual understanding is a hindrance to the discovery of the truth. It is easy to see intellectually that one must not worry when one's child is ill. The worrying does not help the child. What helps him is our fetching a doctor and giving the patient the medicine. Of course we do that, but does this logical conclusion prevent us from worrying? Does the knowledge that anger is evil prevent anger? The truth is much deeper than mere logic and reason; and the intellectual answer is not a complete answer. So when one has understood something only intellectually, one has understood but little. Intellectual understanding may be useful in some matters but it is trivial. It can be secured through a book or through another but it is only a thought-pattern held in memory; it should not be mistaken for the realization of the truth of something.

So if intellectual understanding is a limited thing, then what reveals the truth? For this, one must observe oneself and one's thought process like a true scientist observes a phenomenon in which he is interested. He doesn't want to change it, he observes it without choice, without letting his own desires interfere with his observation. When one observes oneself in that way, with choiceless and passive awareness, without a desire to quickly form an opinion or come to a conclusion, hesitantly, patiently and with skepticism, for the sake of understanding oneself and life, only then can one discover what is true and what is false; and the false drops away by itself without any effort of will. Ignorance then dissolves in the light of understanding. Without such an objective and yet passionate investigation of oneself, of all one's conclusions, beliefs, attachments, desires and motivations, it has very little meaning to intellectually identify oneself with some group, some theory, some belief and plead for it like a lawyer for the rest of one's life. It is as absurd as saying, "My country is the best country because I was born in it." Yet, that is what nationalism implies.

It is a tragedy of our life that we are never educated to look at ourselves in the right manner. We are only educated to learn about the

external world and to somehow cope with its problems. Therefore, one grows up knowing so much about the external world and yet being totally ignorant of oneself, one's desires, ambitions, values and outlook on life. We may be very skilled at our jobs but we are totally confused whether pleasure brings happiness, whether desire and attachment are the same thing as love, and why differences between men turn into inequalities. Happiness, love, non-violence, humility are not something one can work for directly. They come as a by-product of inquiry, self-knowledge and understanding, which inwardly cleanse our consciousness without imposing on it any fixed opinions, beliefs or patterns of thought. If one sees very clearly, through close and careful examination, that the pursuit of pleasure does not lead to happiness, then one's outlook towards pleasure in life alters at the source and the pursuit of pleasure drops away without any effort, sacrifice or suppression. Then there is a natural austerity which is totally different from the self-imposed practice of austerities. Similarly, if one actually realized, through one's own observation and investigation, that one is not essentially different from other human beings because one shares with them the same problems of fear, insecurity, desire, greed, violence, loneliness, sorrow and self-interest, which operate in the consciousness of all of us, then one would not feel so different from another human being. Through our ignorance we give tremendous importance to the relatively superficial differences between us, like the differences in belief, in property, in knowledge, in ability, which are all only acquisitions. We have not asked ourselves why we give such a tremendous importance to our acquisitions, why we let them divide one man from another, when in reality we share the same human consciousness. If you mentally strip a man of all his wealth, possessions, status, beliefs and knowledge and look into his consciousness, is it really very different from that of another human being? Just as the caste, colour or creed of a human being do not change the composition of his blood, our acquisitions whether mental or material do not alter the content of our consciousness. If we do not prevent ourselves from seeing the truth of this we would actually realize the underlying unity of all mankind. It is ignorance that divides us, not the differences between us.

5. Conclusion

Mankind is caught in a great illusion. It thinks it can solve its problems through legislation, through political and social reform, through scientific and technological progress, through greater knowledge, greater wealth,

greater power and greater control. It may solve some problems with all this; but those are all trivial problems and temporary curse. They will have the effect of aspirin but they will not cure the disease. We shall go on creating new problems on the one hand and trying to solve them on the other, to maintain the illusion of "progress." And not much time is left now, for the disease is growing at a wild pace and is about to consume Man. If man does not transform inwardly, though a mutation in his psyche, he will soon join the list of those unfortunate creatures that lives a million years or so on this planet and then became extinct for they could not adapt themselves. It is not certain yet if the evolution of man from the ape was really a step in the direction of survival or a retrograde step. Only time will tell.

On J. Krishnamurti

Satish Inamdar*

The other day I met an American friend of mine, a professor of philosophy. He is an ardent Buddhist and has studied Krishnamurti (K) very well. I asked him, "have you any courses on K." With hesitation he accepted that he has not been able to do it. However, he refers to him while teaching the Buddhist texts. He finds it difficult to fix K in a system and frame him in any category.

Krishnamurti does stand alone. He never refers to any past mystic or to a book. He does not refer to any scripture or mythology. He never explains anything but, urges the listeners to explore on their own. He goes by his perceptions but, does not consider them to be personal or something individualistic. To him there is nothing like an individual. There is no individual brain but, only a collective one. May be out of some compulsions he has been categorized as an educational psychologist. In fact the attempt is to put him in a frame for conveniences. He did start a few schools by giving up all other institutions. He considered a family too as a small selfish unit of the society.

He wants us to understand and change the human mindset, the human psyche, or the human consciousness. He does not consider the western psychology as something that can be considered reliable or deep. He made a very pertinent remark once. He said, 'In the east the body is an illusion and in the west the shadow has become concrete. In the west the ego is an accepted matter. One has to caress it and tame it and organise it.' For him, the ego is just a matter of fiction. This does seem to be an eastern approach. So, was K a mystic of the east? It does not seem so. He was a real world citizen and perhaps a world teacher too? Can we consider him to be part of the mystic lineage of the Indian soil? It was not acceptable to him.

*Dr. Satish Inamdar, Director, The Valley School, Thatguni Post, Kanakpura Road, Bengaluru, Karnataka-560082; Ph.:080-28435241.

The Buddha basically talks about, Sheela, Samadhi and Pragyna. In simple English words it is, good conduct or sensitivity. That takes one to meditation and later on to awakening of intelligence. It is obvious that these are not linear steps. For good conduct or sensitivity to be there, the seed of intelligence is a basic necessity. Hence, it is a cyclical movement. Krishnamurti would not express in the same way. In the awakening of intelligence all other factors of thought, matter and spirit will fall in place. He urges us to start building the bridge from the other side, from the unknown to the known and not the other way round. This is where the mystery lies. At times it does seem that there is no emphasis on sensitivity. Morality, ethics, justice, equality are products of our thought and hence become relative. The social dimension itself is a false premise. That does not mean the opposite of it is true. It is thought that creates the opposites and keeps the human beings in perpetual bondage. Most of the mystics, in the history of man have accepted that there is the relative or the mundane or the practical truth to our living. K just completely brushes it away. It is absolute truth that the relative will get organised. But, in separating the mundane and the profane a dual situation is created and one is ever trapped in it. This approach has unnerved many a people who are on the path of inquiry. He refuses the path itself but, does accept that the inquiry is in our day today living in every moment of it.

A brief anecdote may throw a bit of light on to this dimension. Mrs. Mary Cadogan, Secretary of Brockwood Park for several years suggested to K that can he hold her hand and make her learn to walk and then run? He totally refused it and interjected, 'I want you to fly and not walk.' Rumi put it in a very poetic way. When you jump off the cliff the wings are born. This is what has been scary for all of us. This fear of survival is deep in the old brain. This can be considered as the primordial conditioning of ours. Then there is the cultural conditioning created by our religions, caste creed and gender. However, today the conditioning created by our lifestyle or the environmental conditioning is equally binding. To move out of one conditioning and getting caught in another is the most unacceptable kind of a situation. A prison is a prison. The bars of the prison are self invited by our attachments and beliefs. So, we see there is this perpetual duality in between various forces. The old brain has its own conditioning and the neocortex is having contradictions with that memory of the past. One enigmatic aspect of Ks teachings is that he denies there can be any psychological evolution.

The other aspect we need to understand is the gradual and the sudden. These dimensions are well accepted in all our traditions. It seems there is a doing that has no goal and the happening may not be related to that. The analogy from the old texts was also used by K. You have to leave the window open, the breeze may flow or not. You cannot invite the breeze.

Krishnamurti stands alone in another area. To me, no mystic has addressed the school students to the extent that K has done. In addressing them he points out at the beauty of a flower and cajoles them to look at it without the name or the form of it. In this the seeing without a word or a thought. In this seeing one sees a thing as it is. To put his teachings briefly, he asks, can you see a tree without a thought? Can you see an intimate person without thought and finally can you see your self without a word or a thought? At times we feel he takes an approach of an absolute advaitist. Though one sees he moves closer to the approach of Nagarjuna. To negate all that is false. To negate what ever psychological thought creates. He talks of the emptiness and the miracle in it. But, he then talks of the 'other'. His dialogues are Socratic and we can consider him to be a universal person. Neither of the East or the West. His concern was for every human being.

In his seventy years of interaction all over the planet, except the countries having totalitarian governments, he was deeply involved in unconditioning all human beings. If one analyses his talks in US, they are more about consumerism. His talks in Europe are about racism and in India they are about tradition and superstition. His mission was perhaps, to uncondition every brain that he met with. His talks were not based on rhetoric knowledge. They were always spontaneous and were related to the conditioned brains that made the audience. In his life time he conversed with all kinds of people. There were the hippies, nuclear scientists, businessmen, housewives, teachers, parents and students.

He had elaborate talks with some Catholic priests, Bhuddists and Hindu sanyasis. He was ruthless about the new gurus who were articulate, erudite but just kept repeating words. So, was K just an admixture of the old with a new vocabulary? He and even the Buddha has accepted that something totally new cannot be said. What is of value is to express from perception. Ultimately, Truth is not only a pathless journey but, is beyond words, thought and feelings. We usually get caught in words. K said it very precisely, 'Truth repeated is a lie.' He had marathon dialogues with the Buddhist scholars in India and abroad. While talking to Rev. Rahula, an eminent scholar from Sri Lanka, K asked him about what the

Buddha says relating to meditation? The scholar repeated verbatim, 'Meditation is to see a thing as it is and transcend.' K very quickly retorted that those are his words. The scholar with a smile replied that this was said by the Buddha 2500 years back. To which both give a very hearty laughter. The laughter had a sense of communication and understanding.

Many scholars fall into comparative analysis. The usual comparisons have been with the Buddhist texts. But, there is a deception to all these comparisons. They still remain in the realm of thought and words. Theoretical philosophies, sciences and social areas can be analysed and compared. The spiritual teachings are beyond time and hence outside the bondages of the mundane. Then the fear of abstraction too is a fact. We need to navigate in these areas very carefully. The fundamental question is can there be a measure for the spiritual dimension at all? What tool we have when word, form, time space are to be denied? The core teaching of K, is about, Truth is a pathless land. That no religion, organisation can lead to that. There have been several scholars who have debated that, that perfection is not possible as long as the structure of the human body is existing. There have been eastern mystics who have not only considered the body to be a limitation but, it is just a bag of bad blood and pus. My understanding of K is to look at the human body like a well tuned musical instrument. There has to be a harmony of the body, brain, mind and consciousness.

We do see with common sense what chaos the organisations have brought about. The organised religions, organised nationalities and now the organised consumerism. There has been continuous wars in relationship to all these man made organisations. If organisations cannot change human beings, if systems do not change humans then, what will change us? Is there going to be a miracle or some psychological evolution? Is there going to be a collective change or so called individuals can realise for themselves and find their personal moksha or salvation? This idea of an individual is not acceptable to K. He goes to the extent to say that the brain is not your personal property but, a collective responsibility. The mystic aspect of his teachings is reflected in this writing of his. He has used the age old metaphor of the river. This life is just a river of suffering. You cannot change it by being in it. You have the freedom to step out of this river. However, when you step out of the river there is no shore. The bank is a fiction of thought. A similar story is there about an Indian mystic. He narrates that he stepped out of the stream of suffering and later turned back to look at the river. He found out that the

river never existed. These aspects do not fall into any logic or intellectual ideas. We may read such stories and get mesmerised. This does not take us anywhere. It only points out at a different dimension which is not of thought. Such stories and explanations can be a danger to our exploration in our day today living.

K has used a very simple language. The words have to be understood in proper context. He avoids traditional words like wisdom, moksha, nirvana, salvation etc. The word sacrifice is not a proper word to him at all. He considered sacrifice as a waste of time. He has preferred the terms such as naturalness, austerity, freedom, flowering of goodness and awakening of intelligence, art of living, the future is now, reincarnate now. He talks about a silence that has creativity, a space in the brain that gives understanding. That understanding is an action and is related to intelligence. Thought analyses and can create paralysis. Thought can never create action. Thought has a place in building skills and organising mundane life. However, it becomes an enemy in the psychological arena. It is intelligence that can keep thought in its right place. Thought on its own is incapable of that. These are the insights of K that need to be meditated upon. If knowledge cannot change a human being, if thought is a limited field, then, what will change human beings? Organisations religious or otherwise have created more strife and conflict in the name of peace or God. These wars are going on for more than a millenia. Will there be a collective change at all in the given society? Or it is the freedom of a few to move out of this river of suffering and then only comprehend what is a change? K points out that you may step out of this river of suffering, however, there is no shore. The bank is just a fiction of thought. The thought of liberation once and for all is just a concept. Life is in every moment, dynamic and changing. In the awakened intelligence the thought and knowledge are kept in their appropriate places and hence do not crowd and confuse the brain all the time.

A very often asked question to K was what happens to the world if just a few change? He repeatedly and intensely pointed out that one knows only when one has changed. The concept of a change is not the truth. In the scriptures there is the story of a mystic who stepped out of the river of suffering. Then, he just turned round to see the river again, but, to his amazement the river never existed. These are very mystical dimensions that cannot be understood while one lives in the world of thought, time and space. Krishnamurti uses very contemporary words. He avoids words that are traditionally established. Yet, he means something that is beyond words and the meaning of words. He reminded

again and again that word is not the thing, description is not the described. Understanding comes when one sees beyond words and meanings. To reach the very source of the intent, one has to be free of all prejudices and opinions. This observation can happen when the brain is clean and pure with no conditioning whatsoever. The conditioning of the brain has been in the evolution of the brain itself. There is the cultural conditioning of the religions and nationalities. And, the conditioning of the life style and the environment too is very deep. To be free of all these layers of conditioning is the challenge to the human brain. Thought cannot bring about this revolution. It is only in awareness, in awakened intelligence that it may happen. This happening cannot be invited or forced. The change in the human brain has to be of its own volition. It is only in the mutation of the brain that it can happen. In this state, thoughts, feelings, words fall in the right place. The action is born not in thought but, in understanding that comes with awakened intelligence.

It is in silence that there is creativity. This creativity is not in music, poetry, mathematics. This creativity has no expression. This sacredness has no shadow and it can be understood in total freedom. The freedom is not only social, political or economical. It is freedom from fear, insecurity and ignorance. This ignorance is self invited by our conditioning. This freedom has responsibility and compassion. K began quite a few of his talks by asking the audience why at all they are attending his talks? The talks are not sermons or some entertainment. His purpose was to strike a dialogue with each one of the audience. In such a dialogue there is no authority. There has to be a dynamic movement in togetherness. The togetherness is lost when people are holding on to dogmas and superstitions and want to convert others to their set of beliefs. He did not want any faith or belief. Yet, he claimed that he was not an atheist. He put it in a very simple way. "I would like to point out that we are not entertaining you. We are not indulging in some kind of intellectual game or trying to point out what kind of belief we should have. We are not doing any propaganda to persuade you to think in a particular direction or to convince you of a particular point of view. But we are observing together the problems, the crisis, that we are facing...war, destruction, corruption, and all that nonsense that goes on in the name of religion, God and so on. What we are going to do is to observe carefully what is happening in the world outside us, the environment, the social condition, the immorality of the society in which we exist, it's contradictions, and so on. So this is not a lecture, something you listen to, agreeing or disagreeing; but rather you and the speaker together are going to look at

all the problems that man is facing now, look at the crisis, in our consciousness, in our mind, in our behaviour, in our relationship with each other.” For him such a dialogue was not a debate of stating the opposites, an argument that is disruptive or a conversation that is casual. Such a dialogue is between friends, where there is affection, openness, to express without bias, dogma or judgement. A dialogue happens when fundamental questions are asked. These fundamental questions have no intellectual answers. But, in holding them with intensity, only the question remains suspended and the entities you and me do not exist.

K’s teachings are in creating an approach, creating a change in the mindset of human beings, in human consciousness and human psyche. The socio, politico, economic changes can be a by-product of such a radical, fundamental change. It is obviously seen that poverty and war and exploitation has not changed over the centuries when addressed directly by the politicians, economists, social philosophers or social workers. Life of Krishnamurti too is filled up with mystery. The Theosophical Society was initiated by Mme. Blavatsky a Russian and Col. Henry Alcott an American. Though it started in USA in the year 1875, it was soon shifted to India. They found the American culture not prepared for a religious understanding. Their aim was to have a universal brotherhood and to bring all religions on one platform. At the same time to understand that Truth is above all religions. They also awaited the coming of a messiah, a world teacher. It was in 1911 that Dr. Annie Besant and Bishop C.W. Lead beater found the young Krishnamurti on the Adyar beach. It was in the year 1911. K was 16 yrs. old.

K was later asked as to what did they see in him, a dark malnourished boy? The only answer he could give was that in his eyes that saw that boy was incapable of selfishness. The same question was asked to him by Iris Murdoch, a noble laureate. She calls him a freak and he does not accept it. He said that what has happened to him can be shared by any human being. To which she states that it could be some benediction. To which he says that to receive such a benediction, one must be selfless. It is worth paying attention to the dimensions pointed out by K. We are aware of the war outside, violence, terrorism and the anger in the society and the brutality all over. We see it only outside. We are not perceptive enough to see the seed of it in us in our world within. The elements of jealousy, desire, fear are seeds we hold. However, when these seeds flower in the outer world we are perplexed and are lost. K. Met a lady in Europe whose one son was killed in the war. The other son too had to join the army. She was naturally keen that her second son by any miracle

should be saved by the wisdom of K. He asked her if she can psychologically not participate in any religion or nationality and live a life of simplicity? She immediately and honestly answered that that was impossible. To which K replied that he cannot save the second son too.

It appears very harsh when K points out that parents do not love their children. Maybe children are by-products of sexual desire, social and family acceptance and a desire to perpetuate our ambitions through the children. And, of course the attachment to family and property. There is a dimensional difference in understanding intellectually and actually, to understand the world within and the world outside. We are perpetually caught in a world of thought and myth. We do not accept our double standards and the ingrained hypocrisy in the gap in between that which is intellectual and that which is actual.

K went on to address the school children very often. He was introducing to them affectionately what is sacred, that which is beyond words and form. He never wanted them to seek any security and hence any authority. Perhaps, it is worth it for readers to know the intent of the Krishnamurti schools in his own words. “It is becoming more and more important in a world that is destructive and degenerating that there should be a place, an oasis, where one can learn a way of living that is whole, sane and intelligent. Education in the modern world has been concerned with the cultivation, not of intelligence, but of intellect, of memory and its skills. In this process little happens beyond passing information from the teacher to the taught, the leader to the follower, bringing about a superficial and mechanical way of life. In this there is little human relationship. Surely a school is a place where one learns about the totality, the wholeness of life. Academic excellence is absolutely necessary, but a school includes much more than that. It is a place where both the teacher and the taught explore not only the outer world, the world of knowledge, but also their own thinking, their behaviour. From this they begin to discover their own conditioning and how it distorts their thinking. This conditioning is the self to which such tremendous and cruel importance is given. Freedom from conditioning and it’s misery begins with this awareness. It is only in such freedom that true learning can take place. In this school it is the responsibility of the teacher to sustain with the student a careful explanation into the implications of conditioning and thus end it.

A school is a place where one learns the importance of knowledge and its limitations. It is a place where one learns to observe the world not from any point of view or conclusion. One learns to look at the whole of

man's endeavour, his search for beauty, his search for truth and for a way of living without a conflict. Conflict is the very essence of violence. So far education has not been concerned with this, but in this school our intent is to understand actuality and its action without any preconceived ideas, theories or beliefs which bring about a contradictory attitude towards existence. The school is concerned with freedom and order. Freedom is not the expression of one's own desire, choice or self-interest. That inevitably leads to disorder. Freedom of choice is not freedom, though it may appear so; nor is order conformity or imitation. Order can only come with the insight that to choose is itself the denial of freedom.

In school one learns the importance of relationship which is not based on attachment and possession. It is here one can learn about the movement of thought, love and death, for all this is our life. From the ancient of times, man has sought something the materialistic world, something immeasurable, something sacred. It is the intent of this school to inquire into this possibility. This whole movement of inquiry into knowledge, into oneself, into the possibility of something beyond knowledge, brings about naturally a psychological revolution, and from this comes inevitably a totally different order in human relationship, which is society. The intelligent understanding of all this can bring about a profound change in the consciousness of mankind."

Education has been an aspect of his teachings. He was a world teacher as conceived by the Theosophical Society. He neither accepted it nor rejected it. But he was a world citizen. He was psychologically free from the attachments to a religion, country or to a lifestyle. The total unconditioning that he mentions is freedom from the evolutionary conditioning of fear, desire, still existing in the old brain. The freedom from cultural conditioning about our cultures and religions, creed and the environmental conditioning that is in the lifestyle. This conditioning is the primordial ignorance. And, ignorance is self invited.

I would end this note by quoting the core of his teachings. In whatever I may write there can be my interpretations and lack of understanding too. To read or listen to K directly is a chance to each one of us. The core of Krishnamurti's teachings are contained in the statement he made in 1929 when he said: "Truth is a pathless land, man cannot come to it through any organisation, through any creed, through any dogma, priest or ritual, nor through any philosophical knowledge or psychological technique. He has to find it through the mirror of relationship, through the understanding of the contents of his own mind, through observation and not through intellectual analysis or introspective

dissection. Man has built in him images as a fence of security – religious, political, personal. These manifest as symbols, ideas, beliefs. The burden of these images dominates man's thinking, his relationships, and his daily life. These images are the cause of our problems, for they divide man from man. His perception of life is shaped by the concepts already established in his mind. The content of his consciousness is his entire existence. This content is common to all humanity. The individuality is the name, the form, and superficial culture he acquires from tradition and environment. The uniqueness of man does not lie in the superficial but in complete freedom from the content of his consciousness, which is common to all mankind. So he is not an individual.

Freedom is not a reaction. Freedom is not choice. It is man's pretence that because he has choice he is free. Freedom is pure observation without direction, without fear of punishment or reward. Freedom is without any motive; freedom is not at the end of the evolution of man but lies in the very step of his existence. In observation, one begins to discover the lack of freedom. Freedom is found in the choiceless awareness of our daily existence and activity. Thought is time. Thought is born of experience and knowledge, which are inseparable from time and the past. Our action is based on knowledge and therefore time, so man is always a slave to the past. Thought is ever limited and so we live in constant conflict and struggle. There is no psychological evolution.

When man becomes aware of the movement of his own thoughts he will see the division between the thinker and the thought, the observer and the observed, the experienced and the experience. He will discover that this division is an illusion. Then only is there pure observation, which is insight without any shadow of the past or of time. This timeless insight brings about a deep radical mutation in the mind. Total negation is the essence of the positive. When there is negation of all those things that thought has brought about psychologically, only then is there love, which is compassion and intelligence."

Krishna Chandra Bhattacharya: A Constructive Interpreter of Indian Idealism

Ripusudan Srivastava*

Idealism has been a popular movement both in the East and in the West. The nineteenth century western Philosophy, largely dominated by idealism, was in a complacent ascendancy in Britain, Germany and America even at the turn of the Century. Indian soil has particularly been fertile for idealistic growth, and it is only a truism to say that contemporary Indian thinking is out and out idealistic in its temperament. However, it is not proper to say that the contemporary Indian philosophising is a mere revival of ancient speculation. The cultural contact India had with the west through British rule and introduction of English education made it possible for Indian thinkers to forge ahead of mere revival of the ancient views and endeavour for reinterpretation and adding new ideas based on the climate of cultural assimilation. Some of the Indian thinkers tried to develop a synthetic philosophy on the structural base of idealism. K.C. Bhattacharya is one of those important thinkers who have attempted to evolve a constructive philosophy of their own out of the assimilated elements of Indian and European system of thought.

K.C. Bhattacharya was born on 12th May 1875 at Serampur in Bengal in a family of Sanskrit Scholars. A brilliant student from very beginning he passed the matriculation in 1891 and was admitted in the prestigious Presidency College of Calcutta (presently Kolkata). He received all the higher degrees including the most honoured title of Premchand Raichand

*Ripusudan Srivastava former Vice-Chancellor, B.N. Mandal University, Madhepura-852113 (Bihar); Pravaas, Parao Pokhar Lane No. 2, Aamgola, Muzaffarpur-842002 (Bihar); Mobile: 09431241274.

Scholar (P.R.S.). He joined Bengal Education Service and after serving in various colleges, he finally retired in 1930 from the post of acting principal of Hoogli College. He was offered the post of Director of Indian Institute of philosophy of Amalner where he worked till 1935. Ultimately Calcutta University showed its grace by appointing this great thinker as George V Professor of Philosophy where he continued till 1937. He died on 11th December 1949. Professor Bhattacharya's two sons, Gopinath Bhattacharya and Kalidas Bhattacharya have carried on the philosophical tradition of the family and grand-daughter Prof. Bhuswab is writer.

Professor K.C. Bhattacharya was not a prolific writer, but whatever he has written is analytical and abstract; and at times difficult to comprehend. According to Dr. D.M. Datta, he has invariably impressed as a remarkable thinker, and like Whitehead, profound even when baffling. His analytic intellect would remind one of Moore, but his originality and the comprehensive range of his analytical insight and penetration of both the objective, and subjective spheres, entitles him to be placed among the classic masters.¹

Professor Bhattacharya's philosophy can be best understood by going through his most important small book *Subject as Freedom*. The book is so difficult and abstract that many brilliant students of philosophy whom I requested to select for the interpretation of this book as a thesis of Ph.D. degree, all declined. His various essays have been included in two volumes of *Studies in Philosophy*, due to efforts of Professor Gopinath Bhattacharya. He has delivered many significant lectures including one in Hoogli in 1929 on 'Re-interpretation of Jaina's Anekantvada,' later published in 1954 in Vishvabharti Journal. Another brief but important essay is 'Place of Indefinite in Logic' in which he envisages a radical change in the outlook of traditional logic.

Prof. Bhattacharya had a deep knowledge of the Indian philosophical systems right from Vedas to the six systems. He was also a well-known exponent of Kantian philosophy. In Bengal, there was almost a fashion to talk about Kant and KCB. KC Bhattacharya's philosophy can be explained in two parts – (i) His interpretation, explanation and note on various systems – Indian and Western: and (ii) his own original, constructive and creative ideas. In the first we can have his interpretation of Vedanta, Samkhya, Yoga, Jaina and other systems, while in the second part his original ideas about the nature of philosophy, negation, theoretic consciousness, grades of consciousness

in logic etc. The subject and the object, and subject as freedom. We shall confine ourselves to the second part only.

Bhattacharya makes a difference between science and philosophy proper. According to him the domain of science is fact while philosophy, correctly conceived is not concerned with facts. "By fact is meant what is perceivable or has necessary reference to the perceivable is speakable in the form of a literal judgment and is believed without reference to the speaking of it."² This approach has some resemblance of the logical positivists' view but it is, perhaps, an indirect product of Kantian influence. After dislodging philosophy from the sphere of facts he comes to the conclusion that philosophy deals with the 'contents of pure thought, in the objective, subjective and transcendental attitude'. Philosophy then, cannot be said to yield any knowledge of facts, any synthetic judgment. It is analytic thought. Self-evident contents of pure thought are simply analysed and formulated by philosophy, and their inner meanings systematically elaborated. Thus, according to Bhattacharya. Philosophical judgments cannot be called judgments in the literal sense. They are judgments only in a metaphorical sense. They may better be called symbolic Judgments.

Bhattacharya has his own ontology as well as epistemology. In his epistemology he discusses the nature of knowledge in the following manner – "it is in introspection into knowledge ... that we realize that we believed before we knew – and that there was no awareness of the distinction of 'the object believed' from the belief. Knowledge as distinct from mere belief involves the awareness of this distinction."³ It appears from this that Bhattacharya treats knowledge in the background of belief. In the later part of the 20th century there has been epistemological discussion regarding 'Knowledge & belief.'⁴ According to Bhattacharya one cannot know anything unless there is belief in it from before; however he maintains that by knowledge we mean an awareness of the distinction between 'the belief' and that which is believed. This is why he says. "Knowledge and truth have to be defined in terms of each other, the former as what alone is true, and the latter as what alone is known."⁵

It has always been a difficult task to define knowledge and Bhattacharya could not take a clear position while defining knowledge. Before coming to his ontology we find that 'negation' is the base of his metaphysics as dialectic is the base of Hegel's Philosophy. Bhattacharya takes the ultimate Reality to be Absolute which he calls 'The Absolute Indefinite' To quote Bhattacharya. "The region of Negation is the region

of the Indefinite."⁶ The idealists who believe in Absolute Idealism maintain that the Absolute, the ultimate Reality, is Infinite, but according to K.C. Bhattacharya the Absolute is Indefinite. The conception of the indefinite has been reached in history in different ways. To quote Bhattacharya. "The indefinite has found in fact a place in metaphysics in many forms. To mention only a few at random, there is the negative matter of Plato, the Maya of the Vedantists and the Sunyam or 'void' of the Buddhists. There is the notion of objective chance in Aristotle, and of the inexplicable change of direction of the atoms in Lucretius. There is the conception of the indeterminate will, specially in the extreme form of unmotivated or irrational activity as presented by a Duns Scotus, a Schopenhauer or a Bergson, and there is finally the unknowable whether of Kant or of Spener."⁷ But few have clearly and consistently grasped the deeper significance of the indefinite. Most of them have given the indefinite a place among positive entities, treated them as a real among reals. To Kant and Spencer belongs the credit of brining out "the transcendent character of the indefinite but both uncritically take this indefinite to be unknowable reality."⁸ Bhattacharya follows Kant to some extent but he disagrees with Kant's view of taking Reality as unknowable. He maintains that unknowable cannot be treated as Reality, it cannot be taken even as a thinkable. So, Bhattacharya takes reality to be not unknowable but indefinite. This approach of Bhattacharya is comparable with Hegel's concept of Absolute as the indeterminate. However, there is a difference between 'indeterminate' (Hegel) and indefinite (K.C. Bhattacharya). Hegel considers indeterminate as a positive object of thought while K.C. Bhattacharya maintains that the Absolute is neither positive nor negative, neither being nor non-being but indefinite thought free from all determination⁹ Bhattacharya supports his theory of indefinite with logical difference between objects known and the knowing process. Knowing is distinct from or other than the known. It must, therefore, be admitted to be unknown and so to be indefinite. This stand of K.C. Bhattacharya may be subjected to criticism by Realists. They say that even if knowing is other than the known it is not necessity indefinite, it is definite, it is definite at least what is other than the known. To this Bhattacharya replies that in that case the realist must admit that knowing is known as other than the known, i.e. the unknown. So, a distinction is still be maintained by him between the known as known and the known as unknown. And if this latter "is not a contradiction knowing can only be understood, as indefinite that is known as the indefinite."¹⁰

Bhattacharya discusses elaborately about the place of indefinite in the logic which I am deliberately avoiding keeping in view the space limitation of paper.

Bhattacharya's 'Subject as Freedom' is the masterpiece of analytical thought. Metaphysical insight and speculative originality. His theory of Absolute indefinite moves round the distinction between the subject and the object. The Absolute is the subject and the facts are the object. He shows that there is no absolute distinction between the objective and the subjective. The boundary between the two is a shifting one. It is comparable to the Upanisadic discussion of relation between Atman (Subject) and jiva (the object). According to Bhattacharya there are different grades of subjectivity and corresponding grades of objectivity. The concept of an object is inseparably connected with that of the subject. The object is that which the subject feels or knows to be distinct from itself, that from which the self withdraws itself; the object is to the subject as shadow is to light.

According to Bhattacharya, there are three broad stages of subjectivity. The first is the bodily subjectivity. Bodily subjectivity means identification of the subject with the body and dissociation from all extra-organic objects. Within bodily subjectivity there are two grades. (i) Psychical subjectivity, and (ii) Spiritual subjectivity. Identified with the felt body I sometimes dissociate myself from the perceived body which then appears as an object external to the self. This is psychical subjectivity. Identified with the psychical life of presentation (of image, idea, meaning) I may dissociate myself from all objects, including the body. The dissociation of the subject or consciousness from this presentation conceived as a kind of object is spiritual subjectivity. As Bhattacharya says. "To spiritual subjectivity, the psychical is objective and so to psychic subjectivity, the bodily and to bodily subjectivity, the extra organic is objective. Thus the subjective and objective are relative terms. As the boundary between the two is changing, one passes into the other causing the possibility of the subject withdrawing itself from what it was identified, which implies the possibility of the subject's gradually freeing itself from the object." Spiritual progress, according to Bhattacharya, is the gradual process of the realization of this freedom, the inwardisation of consciousness by stages. Absolute freedom is possible only when the subject has dissociated itself from the object, empirical and pure, and thus also ceases to be a subject, since subjectivity is relative to objectivity. We can say that concept of freedom is similar, to some extent, as we find in Samkhya, the total dissociation

of Purusa from Prakrit, or in Jainism, the total dissociation from Pudgal. However, the Jiva originality of expression and the terminology used by Bhattacharya places him in the rank of world-philosophers. This is brief is Prof. Bhattacharya's philosophical approach and contribution.

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Philosophical Contributions of Ranade

Sanjay Kumar Shukla*

I

Professor Ramchandra Dattatraya Ranade is a mystical idealistic philosopher with saintly temperament. His philosophy is deeply influenced by Upanisadic and Vedāntic thought. He had given primacy to immediate intuitive experience (*aprosānubhūti*) over reason (*tarka buddhih*) for realization of truth. He was born in Jamkhandi on July 3rd 1886 and he left for heavenly abode on June 6th 1957 at Nimbai in Bijapur district. He has done his graduation from Deccan College and post-graduation from Bombay University. He was fellow in Deccan College and later on appointed lecturer in Ferguson College, Pune, and afterwards discharged the responsibility of Curator in Charge of Manuscript Library in Deccan College. It is after serving in Ferguson College Pune, he joined the Department of Philosophy in Wellington College, Sangli. Professor Ganga Nath Jha, Vice-Chancellor of Allahabad University, was a great admirer of Ranade's scholarship, and he made a request to join him the Philosophy Department in Allahabad University as Professor. Professor Ranade served the Department from December 1927 to June 1946. He was also officiating Vice-Chancellor of this University. He was conferred honorary Degree of D. Litt. by University of Allahabad, recognizing the immense contributions which he made in the field of higher education. It is after his retirement that he was appointed Professor Emeritus in Philosophy.

Professor Ranade has immensely enriched the philosophical literature. His scholarship can be easily gleaned from valuable works done by him listed in the appendix.

*Dr. Sanjay Kumar Shukla is Associate Professor in the Department of Philosophy, Ewing Christian College, Allahabad (U.P.)

Ranade's personality is a perfect amalgamation of classical Indian philosophical texts and spiritual practices. We find blending of rationalism and spiritualism in his deliberations and worldly discourse. He has reconciled Indian and Western philosophical tradition in his philosophical literature. He is a multi-lingual personality having command over different languages like Hindi, English, Sanskrit, Greek and other regional languages like Marathi and Kannada. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan has correctly pointed out that 'with Ranade, philosophy is the pursuit of wisdom, not a mere intellectual exercise. It is for him meditation on the Spirit, a dedicated way of life.' For Ranade, intuition is the philosophical tool of spiritualistic experiences. Intuition is not diametrically opposed to reason, feeling and desires, rather it has the capacity to synthesize these different human faculties.

II

Professor Ranade is against this philosophical approach that East is East and West is West and, therefore, there cannot be any point of convergence (meeting). The problem of philosophy is, for him, identical all over the world and there is no distinction of country or race in the world of thought. He advocated a definite correlative study of Indian and European Philosophy. Ranade in his article *On the Study of Indian and European Philosophy* (1914) upholds that the Absolutism of Bradley has numerous points of contact with the Advaitism of the Śamkarācārya. Both suppose that the Absolute is the only ultimate reality and God is unreal as compared to the Absolute. They consider that our souls, our bodies, the worldly objects that we see, are ultimately appearances. Space and time are only phenomenal and are transcended in the Absolute. Such a dictum involves that the Absolute be super-moral, beyond good and bad, which amounts to saying that it transcends moral relations. Moreover, with regard to the content of Absolute, both Śamkara and Bradley hold that it is of the nature of intuitive experience (*aparoksānubhūti*). Rāmānuja's system, which is numerically pluralistic but a qualitatively monistic system, has its best parallel in the theism of James Ward and in personal idealism of Rashdall. Rāmānuja's Absolute is God and the world, the world including souls. Similar conception is to be found in the theism of James Ward. We find a great resemblance between the plurality of souls (*Purusa*) without a ruling God (*Īśvara*) in the Sāmkhya System, and the 'system of selves or spirits, uncreated and eternal, forming together a unity but not a conscious unity' of the

non-theistic Idealist, Mc Taggart. Both of these differ from the theistic monadism of Leibniz, who postulates a God, as pre-establishing the harmony between one monad and another, and between microcosm and macrocosm. Not only is metaphysical correlation possible, but also epistemological and ethical. We can easily locate parallels in European philosophy for the nihilism of Mādhyamikas, the subjectivism of Yogācāras, the representationism of the Sautāntrikas and the presentationism of Vaibhāsikas. The Hedonism of Cārvakas may be compared to Aristippus and Epicureans; the rigorism of Bauddhas to that of Stoics, and the threefold ethical ideals of Bhagvad Gītā, namely, its activism, its ideal of duty, and its self-realization by those of Eucken, Kant and Green respectively.

Professor Ranade wrote a thought stimulating small book over Greek philosophy entitled *Herakleitos* (1916). Heraclitus maintained that there is no absolute distinction between night and day, between life and death, between good and bad and, therefore, he has propounded the law of Relativism. But for Ranade relativism breaks in reference to God. Hence, relativism has no application to Divine Life, while its proper sphere of application is only phenomenal and ephemeral sphere. He has nicely summarized the Aristotelian argument against relativism. "If a thing is coming to be, there must be something from which it comes to be, and something by which it is generated, and this process cannot be *ad infinitum*." So it is evident that there is something whose nature is changeless, and if it were given the only alternative between the "rest" and "change" as predicate of the cosmos, we should rather decide for "rest" than for "change." The most important criticism that Aristotle passed upon relativism was that it did not take any account of "Differences of Value" and that it had no adequate theory of "Truth." Ranade readily agrees with Aristotle's view about Absolute Truth and the issue of Degrees of Truth and Error that there can be only Degrees of Error. Truth is one, absolute, and immutable, and that is God. Ranade in his famous essay on *Aristotle's Critique of Protagoreanism* (1916) maintains that "metaphysical consideration of Aristotle's conceptual schema leads to the philosophical standpoint that sublunary things are capable of motion and so are emblems of infinite error, the First Mover is himself unmoved and so is the emblem of Absolute Truth."

Ranade has beautifully drawn the parallels between Parmenides and Śamkarācārya as both of them have offered similar attacks on the conception of the Universal. Is the Idea of the Universal fully immanent in the particulars, or not? If it is fully immanent, it is distributed in so

many particulars. If it is partly present in the particulars, then it is divisible. It is, therefore, either many or divisible, and hence is not entitled to the name of "Universal." Parmenides has identified Thought and Being which is quite analogous to the Indian identification of "Sat" and "Cit." Zeller and Burnet has interpreted Parmenides in a materialistic fashion. Ranade demonstrated the fallacy lurking in the materialistic interpretation in his essay on *Aristotle's Criticism of the Eleatics* (1919). "The merging together of substantival and adjectival existence has, for Parmenides, not merely a logical significance, but a metaphysical significance as well. As, from the logical point of view, he asserted the unity of subject and predicate, so, from the metaphysical point of view, he asserted the unity of thought and being. Plato and Aristotle understood these expressions quite correctly as implying an identification of the real and the rational. Burnet thinks it a mistake to call Parmenides the father of Idealism; on the contrary, he says that all materialism depends on his view of reality. For Ranade, Parmenides is undoubtedly the first idealist philosopher in the history of Western philosophy as in Eleatic school Being is considered as without beginning, and is indestructible. It is universal, existing alone, immovable and without end." Ranade in this context refers to other commentators on Parmenides who were not affected by this materialistic jaundice. Adamson understood Parmenides to have at least risen to the conception of the Non-corporeal, if not to that of the In-corporeal, that is mental or psychical existence. Gomperz interpreted Parmenides' philosophy in a Spinozistic fashion. The material being of Parmenides was incontestably a spiritual being as well: it was universal matter and universal spirit at once.

III

Ranade in his magnum opus *Constructive Survey of Upanisadic Philosophy* (1925) discusses about the epistemological significance of "Self-consciousness." The various passages of the Upanisad upholds that "it would not be possible for us to know the self in the technical meaning of the word 'knowledge.' This might bring to mind the fact that Kant equally regarded Reality, as consisting of God and the self, as technically unknowable. These were, he said, merely matters of faith. The Upanisadic answer is that it is true that God and the self are unknowable, but they are not merely objects of faith, they are objects of mystical realization. The Upanisads do not regard the self as unknowable in the agonistic sense of the word that is in which Spencer

understands it. Rather, it is 'unknowable' from the standpoint of philosophic humility."¹

1. The *Ātman*, says the Upanisadic philosophers, is unknowable in his essential nature. Taittirīya Upanisad says that from which our speech turn back along with mind, being unable to comprehend its fullness, is the ultimate reality. Kenopanisad maintains that it is beyond all that is known, and beyond all that is unknown. The Upanisad speaks in an Augustinian mood that he who thinks he knows does not know, while he who thinks that he does not know does really know (*cognoscendo ignorari, et ignorando cognosci*).
2. The *Ātman* is unknowable, because he is the Eternal subject who knows. How could the Eternal knower be an object of knowledge? In the Brihadāranyakopnisad Yajñavalkya makes bold observation "that by whom everything is known, how could he himself be known ? It is impossible to know the knower."
3. It is truism to state that self is the eternal knower of objects, granted that there is no other knower of him, would it be possible for the knower to know himself? Yajñavalkya maintains that it is quite possible for the knower to know himself. In fact, Self-knowledge or Self-consciousness is the ultimate category of existence. He regards both introspection and self-consciousness as the verities of experience. Introspection is a psychological process corresponding to self-consciousness as a metaphysical reality. Self-consciousness is possible only through the process of introspection. The self is endowed with the supreme power of dichotomising or dividing himself into the knower and known. Ranade has made a pertinent remark regarding Kantian philosophy that as to how Kant could posit the 'I am I' as the supreme metaphysical category, which he designated as 'transcendental synthetic unity of pure apperception' without acknowledging (accepting) the process of introspection.

Ranade moves ahead to ethical and mystical sides of self-realization after dwelling upon self-consciousness as a metaphysical category. The Upanisadic seers treat self-realization as the unfoldment and realization of *Ātman* within us, instead of the insipid and soul-less realization of the various "faculties" of man, such as the intellectual, the emotional and the moral, as envisaged by perfectionism. It is invariably connected

with the enjoyment of bliss. This bliss cannot be measured in terms of pleasure and happiness and therefore it is absolutely *sui generis*. Ranade has tried to reflect Rashdall's statement that self is realized already to be a metaphysical statement. But when it is said that the self is to be realized then we are supposed to take recourse of the ethical and mystical process by which the human being is gradually weaned from the allurements of the not-self, and the self to be realized in its native purity and grandeur. Chāndogya Upanisad narrates that the real happiness is the happiness which one enjoys in the vision of the Infinite, and that every other kind of happiness is only so-called, and of really no value whatsoever as contrasted with it. There are two radically different kind of happiness namely the great and the small. Great happiness consists in seeing, hearing and meditating upon the *Ātman*, while little happiness consists in seeing, hearing and meditating upon other things besides the *Ātman*. It is for this reason Great happiness is immortal whereas little happiness is perishable. Ranade had firm conviction that he who has realized the triune unity of the Infinite as existence, consciousness and bliss, the identity of I and the *Ātman* (*Soham Ātman*), is alone entitled to enjoy the highest happiness or bliss.

The pressing question at this juncture has to be whether there is any faculty in man by which self-realization is to be attained. Indian seers have recognized from time immemorial that we have such faculty of intuition for realizing one's own self. Professor Ranade has discussed this issue in detail in his work entitled *Indian Mysticism* (1932) as mysticism denotes that attitude of mind which involves a direct, immediate, first hand, intuitive apprehension of God. Mystical experiences are regarded as ineffable because it implies a silent enjoyment of God. Intuition does not contradict Intelligence, Feeling or Will, rather it does penetrate and lie at the back of them all. It is this combined character of mystical experience, namely, its ineffable and intuitive character, which has served to make all God-aspiring humanity a common and hidden society, the laws of which are known to themselves if at all. It can be even stated that they are known only to God. It is often debated that as to how far mystical experience is linked with morality. It has been urged by critics of mysticism that it tends on the one hand to be a life of amorality, and on the other, to a life of passivism. Dean Inge has pointed out that there are two dangers to which a mysticism is liable-Antinomianism and Quietism. Antinomianism teaches that he who is led by the spirit can do no wrong, and that the sins of

the body cannot stain the soul; while Quietism teaches a life of contentment with anything whatsoever by sitting with folded arms. For Ranade, there would be no mystical experience and no development in it, unless there is a corresponding heightening of the moral sense. We find that a true life of mysticism teaches a full fledged morality in the individual, and a life an absolute good to the society. Plotinus insisted upon perfection of moral virtues in mystical life as in this state the perfect soul begets-like God himself-beautiful thoughts and beautiful virtues. Jñāneśwari talks about mystical experience as full of moral virtues and therefore such experiences can scarcely be regarded as teaching the ‘effacement of all distinctions between right and wrong.’

IV

Beatificism (*Ānandavāda*) is the metaphysical foundation of Ranade’s philosophy. It is a seminal philosophical notion that is well exhibited in Upanisadic and Vedāntic Philosophies. Bliss (*Ānanda*) is a state of being, of realizing or experiencing one’s identity with Supreme Reality (*Brahman*) of the Vedāntic quest. The essence (*Svarūpa Laksana*) of Absolute (*Brahman*) is considered to be existence, consciousness and bliss (*saccitānanda*). Ranade, in his metaphysical predilection, had equated *Brahman* only with *Ānanda*. His beatificism is not only well supported by scriptures but also it can be easily substantiated through mystical experiences or inward realization. It is beautifully presented in Taittirīya Upanisad (3,6) as from bliss everything (*bhūta*) originates, they after originating from bliss are sustained by it and finally enter (dissolute) in it (*Ānandādvaiva Khalvimāni Bhūtāni Jāyante! Ānandena Jātāni Jīvanti! Ānandam Pratyabhisamviśantī!*). It is in fitness of things to compare Ranade’s view about ultimate reality with Spinoza and Hegel. Spinoza considers Being to be bare existence (*sat*), whereas Hegel maintains Absolute to be conscious (*cit*) in nature. Ranade’s position is different from both by equating bliss (*ānanda*) with Absolute (*Brahman*). Hegel has gone beyond Spinoza by establishing the identity between ‘thought’ and ‘being’ by his famous dictum “whatever is real is rational and whatever is rational is real.” Hegel has remarked against Spinoza’s Absolute that it should be knower also, meaning thereby, Absolute must be endowed with the property of consciousness, otherwise it cannot retain the status of being Absolute. The rationale for making such remark is not difficult to seek as the Absolute being not knower (*Jñata*) will be mere object (*Viśaya-mātra*), and therefore not independent rather always expecting knower. Ranade has extended

the Hegelian logic that as Being (Absolute) always expects for itself consciousness and in the similar fashion knowledge (consciousness) has expectation about bliss. Hegel could establish the identity (*tādātmya*) between being (*sat*) and consciousness (*cit*) but failed to equate Absolute with bliss. This is not only the Hegelian limitation, rather it is the shortcoming of almost entire Western philosophical tradition that is of not recognizing immediate intuitive experiences (*aparoksānubhūti*). If *saccit* is *ānanda* in itself then there is absolutely no problem, but if it is not *ānanda* in itself then it has to be an instrument of bliss and not an independent entity. Hegel has enlarged the Being (*sat*) to consciousness (*cit*), similarly Ranade has subsumed *saccit* into *ānanda*. There is nothing wrong in making this observation that Spinoza’s Substance or Absolute is rectified by Hegel, and in similar manner, Ranade could make an improvement in Hegelian idealism by transforming it into beatificism.

The metaphysics of beatificism regards bliss as an underlying principle or reality. It is endorsed by mystical experiences. In Māndūkya Upanisad it is stated that sages see him by the help of the light of knowledge, for he manifests himself, the immortal one, in the form of bliss (*Tad Vijñānen Paripaśyanti Dhirāh Ānandarūpamamritam Yadvibhāti*). Mystics derive bliss or joy from their meditation and therefore their mystical experiences are valid grounds for accepting bliss (*ānanda*) to be an ultimate reality. Self-realization, according to the Upanisads, is invariably connected with the enjoyment of bliss. This bliss cannot be measured in terms of pleasure and happiness. It is an experience of its own kind.² According to Jñānadev “Ānanda comes of itself to the seeker.... It is so powerful in its effects that at the hearing of it the worldly existence ceases and eternity forces itself upon us.”³ He further maintains that true bliss is to be found only in self-vision. This bliss is designated as *Brahman*, and whatever joy or pleasure we derive from our association or contact with the person or object is mere fragmentary part of this bliss (*ānanda*). Hence, it is from the experience of saints and seers the bliss as ultimate reality is firmly established or proved. *Brahmbhāva*, *Īśvara Prāpti*, *Ātma-Sāksātkāra*, *Moksa*, *Aparoksānubhūti* are truly speaking blissful in nature. There is not an iota of doubt that through immediate intuitive experience is experienced pure bliss (*Kevalānanda*) as an ultimate reality. Ranade has differentiated this bliss (*Ānanda*) from poetic and other kinds of aesthetic enjoyment (*Rasa*) and maintains that Upanisadic ‘*Raso Vai sah*’ is metaphysical or mystical in nature. The *Rasa* of poetry and even of spiritual poetry is

but a faint echo of *Rasa* in God.⁴ *Ānanda* is not an attribute of God (*Īśvara*), Self (*Ātman*), or Absolute (*Brahman*). It cannot be brought under the category of either substance (*dravya*) or attribute (*guna*), rather *ānanda* itself is an ultimate reality. It is at this juncture one can raise such issue that whether Ranade has established bliss to be an ultimate reality only upon verbal testimony (*Śabda Pramāna*) or he himself has undergone through such experiences. He has clarified his philosophical position that he is bringing into account the experiences of those saints, which he himself could experience. Hence, for Ranade, the mystical experiences of saints and seers are not mere verbal testimony, rather also his own experiences or felt realization.

V

The attempt will be made in this section to offer rational justification for beatificism. We come across such evidences in the experiences of ordinary persons that justify bliss (*Ānanda*) to be the ultimate reality.

1. Every person feels joy or happiness with meditating upon or seeing or enjoying the desired object. This happiness or bliss can never be the property of objects because it is experienced at mental plane (*manas*). But it cannot be treated as an attribute of mind (*manas*) because in the situation of non-availability of the desired object "*ananda* cannot be experienced or felt by *manas*. Further "*ananada* is not the attribute of self (*Ātman*) because it is qualityless (*nirguna*). Hence, bliss ("*ananda*) is not an attribute but it is only the self (*Ātman*).
2. In the experiential domain of human being one can easily locate two varieties of pleasure or happiness one of limited duration (*Sāvadhik*) and another of unlimited duration (*Niravadhik*). Normally what is available to all of us is *sāvadhik ānanda* which is conditional and accidental. It cannot be pure and unadulterated as it is always mixed with pain during and after enjoyment. The correct expression for it would be worldly sensuous pleasure and the predicament with such pleasure is that even after enjoyment there still remains an unsatisfied desire for it. *Sāvadhik* or *Sātiśya ānanda* is limited and short lived, while *Niravadhik* or *Niratiśay ānanda* can be only that which is infinite (*ananta*) and permanent (*nitya*). Chāndogya Upanisad (7-13-1) states that which is definitely infinite is bliss, there cannot be happiness in finite (small) objects. *Bhūman* is

happiness or bliss and therefore *bhūman* alone has to be known (*Yo Vai Bhūman Tad Sukham Nālpe Sukhamasti! Bhūmaneva Sukham Bhūman Tvaiva Vijñāsitya Iti!!*). In this way for limited pleasure (*sukh*) making use of the term bliss (*ānanda*) is inappropriate. All beings enjoying worldly pleasures can be only fleeting and fragmentary glimpses of bliss. Brhadāranyaka Upanisad (4/3/32) points out that it is only on a particle of this very bliss other beings live (*Aitasyaivānandasyānyāni Bhūtāni Mātrāmupjīvanti!*).

3. It is seeing from the perspective of action that we find happiness or bliss to be an ultimate reality. Professor Ranade has pointed out that happiness is the spring of all actions; action is the cause of faith; faith of belief; when a man believes he thinks, when he thinks, he knows, and when he knows, he reaches the truth.⁵ It is truism to state happiness is the goal of all human endeavour and creativity.
4. Bliss is the ultimate reality from love (*prīti*) point of view. The attachment or love towards worldly objects is always limited and conditional, while boundless and unconditional love can be only of one's own self. Hence, bliss (*ānanda*) is an unconditional desirability (*Nirupādhika Istatā*) grounded in love.
5. If we make an attempt to analyse psychologically the nature of self (*Ātman*) then it is disclosed that self is bliss. The self is an uncontradicted reality (*Avyabhicārī Tattva*) and it witnesses (*sāksī*) all mental modifications (*citta Vrttis*). There are numerous modification associated with the waking (*Jāgrat*) and dreaming (*Svapna*) state but they are completely absent in sleeping (*Susupti*) state. If self is only witness of *vrttis* then the absence of self will be proved during sleep. We have to accept the existence of self without *vrttis* otherwise personal identity and memory will be impossible. A person during dreamless sleep has the experience of *ānanda* which proves the existence of witness consciousness (*Sāksī Caitanya*). Hence, modifications (*vrttis*) are accidental (*Āgantuka*) and subject to destruction, while beatific experiences are always present not only in the waking, dreaming and sleeping states but also in the fourth state (*Tūrīyāvasthā*).

It is generally seen that enjoyment is said to have trichotmous form (*triputi*)- enjoyer (*bhoktā*), enjoyed (*bhogyā*) and enjoyment (*bhog*)

and this form is eternal. Professor Ranade speaks about the dissolution (*laya*) of *tripuṭī* and here dissolution does not mean destruction. *Tripuṭī laya* signifies two things-1. There is a perfect identity or non-difference between enjoyer and enjoyment. 2. There is a difference between enjoyment of bliss (happiness) and object enjoyed and at the same time object enjoyed (*bhogya*) always requires someone to enjoy (*bhoktā*). Ranade has given the term creation (*srsti*) to objects of enjoyment (*bhogya*). He has conceived the creation as emanation (*sambhūti*) and all emanated entities are blissful. He has initially granted some reality to everything which can be easily seen in this passage: “Greater reality than the reality of the world of illusion belongs to the world of dream. Greater reality than the world of dream belongs to the world of life; greater reality than the world of life belongs to the world of Self or God or the Absolute, which are ultimately identical with one another.”⁶ He maintains that both *Jīva* and *Jagat* are mere illusions in the context of blissful Brahman. Śamkarācārya’s Advaita Vedānta and Rāmāyācārya’s Viśiṣṭādvaita can not lend support to Ranade’s thesis of *Jīva* and *Jagat* being mere illusions. It is quite possible to have alternative models of beatific metaphysics and one can be of Kāśmīr Śaivism where world is presented in perfect harmony (*Sāmrasya*) with blissful Brahman. Apart from this Śamkara, Vācaspati Mishra and other Advaitins consider bliss (*ānanda*) to the nature of self (*Ātman*) and world (*jagat*) to be non-different (*ananya*) from it. The relation of non-difference is from the view point of blissful Brahman, while from the perspective of world non-difference refers to indescribability (*anirvacnīyatā*) meaning thereby *sadasadvilaksana*. Hence, there can be several alternative formulations of world in beatific metaphysic.

VI

Beatificism (*Ānandavāda*) is not confined to metaphysics alone, rather its ramifications or implications can be easily demonstrated in axiology and epistemology. It can be safely stated that apart from metaphysical orientation beatificism has axiological dimension. The beatific metaphysics provides similar definition of bliss (*ānanda*) as we come across in Advaitic literature. The concept of bliss is not psychological but metaphysical. Bliss is a complete expression of Being.⁷ Being or reality is subsumed under bliss. Ranade had firm conviction in metaphysics of beatificism as he maintains that intuitive bliss alone deserves to be regarded as the source of Reality or in other words it is beatific consciousness which has to be regarded as the source of all

things whatsoever.⁸ Beatificism considers bliss to be of supreme value (*Param Purusārtha*) and other values are only emanation of bliss. Hence, whatsoever is considered as real must contain the value content of bliss (*ānanda*). It is from the epistemological perspective also one can analyse beatificism. Every object in order to be known requires all the time the knower, and knower (*Jñāta*) is self (*Ātman*). The *Ātman* is full of bliss and therefore it can be safely stated that apart from self whatever is real or exists is due to the object of enjoyment. Knowledge (*Jñāna*) can be broadly classified as *savisayak* and *nirvisayak*. *Nirvisayak Jñāna* is designated as immediate experience (*aparoksānubhūti*) and it is also beatific experience (*ānandānubhūti*). We all have dim or faint experience of it in deep sleep (*susupti*). The experience of sublimity (*udātt anubhūti*) is to be found in aesthetic and devotional (mystical) experiences. Here we find the state of ecstasy or bliss. *Savisayak Jñāna* is a lower order mediate knowledge, although it also provides some happiness or joy. Bliss is an immediate experience (*Pratyagbodh*) and without it no object (*visaya*) or modification (*vrtti*) is possible. The purpose of knowing the object is always to have happiness (*ānandalābha*). Hence, *Savisayak Jñāna* is also rooted in beatific experience. Professor Ranade maintains that all sorts of knowledge are reduced or subsumed (*antarbhāva*) in beatific experiences. We can explain this *antarbhāva* in two ways-identity or non-difference (*abheda*) and cancellation (*bādhā*). This non-different reduction simply means that all modes of knowledge and reality are reduced to blissful (*Ātman*) – which remains uncontradicted (*avyabhicāri*) throughout. Cancelled form of reduction refers to the process in which we find that what is extra to blissful *Ātman* in all mode of knowledge and reality stands cancelled. It is a quite logical to raise the issue here that if Ranade upholds that the only reality is blissful self (*Ātman*) then how do we have reality and knowledge of different sorts in the form of individual selves (*jīvas*) and world (*jagat*)? The cogent reply from the side of Ranade will be that they are emanations of bliss and this can be compared with *elan vital* of Bergson.

The philosophical importance of beatificism can be demonstrated in such a manner that it does not engage itself in a futile discussion regarding the nature and status of world and God nor in the different paths of liberation. Similarly the controversy of *Sagunavāda* and *Nirgunavāda* is beautifully resolved in beatificism as both contemplate upon realization of absolute bliss (*nirpeaksa ānanda*) and the difference can be only of realizational-method (path). There is no difference in

Kabirdās and Tulsidās as far as the nature of bliss is considered, but when our intellect (*Buddhi*) interprets immediate experience (*aparokṣānubhūti*) then it makes immediate experience mediate (*parokṣa*) by categorizing into *Nirguna* and *Saguna* respectively. Beatificism makes a bold attempt to reconcile different schools of Indian philosophy on the ground of beatific experiences (*ānandānubhūti*). There is an agreement amongst them regarding bliss as supreme value although they differ in terms of path realizing the bliss. Hence, we can state that beatificism of Ranade establishes the immediacy of bliss as reality, the mystical practices (*sādhana*) for realizing or experiencing the bliss, it works for the development of intellect, upholds moral ideals or morality and finally maintains worldly (*laukika*) significance of immediate experience (*aparokṣānubhūti*).

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Vasudevsharan Agrawal: Reminders and Proposal

Udayan Vajpeyi*

1

I begin by bowing my head to the wisdom and memory of Vasudevsharan Agrawal. Years ago, when I was struggling to understand the signs and symbols of Indic civilization strewn around me and staring at my face to respond to them, when I was finding myself in the darkness of ignorance about ourselves, there were only very few writers, artists and thinkers who illuminated my way. Vasudevsharanji along with my teachers Mani Kaul, Nirmal Verma, J. Swaminathan and Dharampalji were among them. It was fortunate for someone living in modern India with stupid and therefore arrogant political leadership guiding the country to an ever deeper level of catastrophe with each passing day, to have found the text of writers like Vasudevsharanji which can, if we so want, take us out of the mess this country is turning into almost unstoppably. His writings are capable of performing the same role as was performed by various art-forms like *Yakshagaan*, texts like *jatipurān* or traditions like *shramans* which tried to put forward traditional wisdom and values before their audiences by reminding them of their own histories, mythologies.

* Udayan Vajpeyi is a poet, short-story writer, essayist and editor. He has published two collections of poems, three collections of short-stories and three books of essays. He has lectured on arts, literature and the questions of democracy in India and in many other countries. His writings are translated into around fifteen languages of India and abroad. He edits a journal of arts, literature and civilization called 'Samaas'.

2

I write this essay to make my readers aware of the texts of Vasudevsharan Agrawal. Here the attempt is not to give some kind of gist of his books. That, in any case, is beyond my capacity and also intention. Vasudevsharanji has written a lot and on wide range of subjects. It would almost be impossible to bring out some clear cut idea about his huge intellectual undertaking. Imagine a boy of about 18 or 19 years of age studying in undergraduate classes in Varanasi, going to his hometown in vacations and starts writing *bhashya* or exegesis of one of the most complex poetry written in *Awadhi* by Malik Mohammad Jaisi for the sake of fun. Such was a person of Vasudevsharan. I thought it is better to introduce readers to some of his writings which invariably carry the mark of his multi-layered wisdom. I intend to do so also because Vasudevsharan Agrawal's writings are now almost forgotten from the mainstream discourse of Hindi literature and philosophy. This means that we are in the process of forgetting even those writings whose very purpose was to enliven our memory to various insights of the tradition in the modern world. We have become the kind of people who manage to forget even the insights of writers who spent all their lives in reminding us of the intricacies of the culture we belong to.

3

Many years ago I was working with the great film maker of India, Kumar Shahani on a film on *Meera*. We wanted to connect Meera to Madhavi, the daughter of *Yayati*, the famous Pauranic King of Mahabharat who asks for youth from his son and gets it. For the purpose of our film, I was searching some ancient texts, where a certain *yajna* was described. On that occasion when I came to read *Shatpatha Brahman*, I noticed that the text is trying to explain the poetic rationale of certain sacrificial and other ritual practices associated with and described in Vedas. These were the rituals which, in fact, were practiced or should have been well-known thoroughly in that society. And yet it was found necessary, of course, by the writer or writers of *Shatpatha Brahman* that they need to be explained. By reading this act of explaining one can easily infer that the inner meanings or significances of these rituals were either totally or partially forgotten by then or they have gone so deep into the consciousness of the people that they were not visible even to them.

This often happens.

Every society tends to forget the significance of certain basic values and insights on which it is actually based. In time these in a manner of saying, values could somewhat be hollowed out. It is then that they need refilling. Revitalising. Or in other words then the society needs to be reminded of the significance of those values and insights. Such a cycle of forgettings and reminders go on happening in every civilization, if, at all, it intends to create new ways of unfolding and yet wishes to remain rooted in the past wisdom, that is if it intends to remain a civilization of some consequence. Any civilization which grows without leaving its moorings behind, which grows new flowers of multiple manifestations on its tree-tops without severing its deep going, ever nourishing roots, needs new reminders, imaginative reminders and equally imaginative critique of its dynamic past, reminders and critiques which could connect the wisdom of the past to the possibility of the present and the future.

4

We need to remember again and again, the intellectuals and thinkers who spent all their lives in reminding us of the salient features of our civilization. This has become more urgent in the present circumstances, particularly in India. This time of ours is leading us to the absolute oblivion of the key figures of our civilization, more so by the political apparatus of those who claim to be knowing this civilization more than anyone else. We are told all kinds of nonsense about this civilization which the literate and yet uneducated, oblivious middle classes of India believe to be truthful and thus create a pressure on the polity to turn the lies into truths. We are at a strange juncture of our history where our civilization is being forced to become something else from within. Around hundred and seventy years of anglicized education has already caused its serious damage on the literate people of this country and over and above all this, the illiterate and power hungry political and so-called cultural organizations are doing their own absurd interpretations of this civilization which the nostalgic middle classes are accepting because it suits their own power greed. Why should anyone be surprised if those who ran away from this country in search of wealth and not knowledge any more, to West and United States are being painted as the most authentic voice of the Indic civilization. It may look demeaning to some of us but it remains a fact of our modern country. We need the

act of reminding because only then we can come in a position to decide whether to continue those values and insights or there is a need to transform or even replace them. Whatever may be the recourse that the society takes, would then depend on the informed decision and not on ignorance as it has happened in independent India.

5

Vasudevsharan Agrawal has written on mainly two axes. If we try a kind of gentle generalization to categorize all his writings, they can be plotted on these two axes. One axis is that of the reminders, reminders of the past wisdom of Indic civilization, reminders of our founding texts and also their multilayered resonances, their hidden significances, their possible unfoldings. On the other axis he tried to explain the very nature of Indian society and its future possibility. Here he tried to examine as to how was this society organized and functioned and thus what are the options available for us to reorganize it to make it sensible and functional. On one axis he goes into details and writes commentaries of texts like *Mahabharat*, *Padmavat*, *Meghadutam*, *Kadambari*, *Harshcharit* etc. On this axis he attempts to explain the key concepts of India like *dharmā*, *rit*, *shri*, *amrit*, *satya*, *kaal*, *anant* etc. and he introduces his readers to the great writers of the past like Tulsidas, Surdas, Valmiki, Maharshi, Vyas etc. He writes about the tradition of fine arts in India, paintings of Rajasthan, Mughal and what he calls Himachal styles. He tries to explain the key pauranic instances like poison drinking by Shiva or the presence of Krishna in the court of Dhritrashtra etc. or figures like Shaktirupa Devi, Garud, Saraswati etc. On the other axis he envisaged the dominant social fabric of India.

6

In his essay called *Dharma Ka Vastavik Arth* (The real meaning of Dharma) he writes:

In the Indian lexicon, Dharma is such a word which is employed in every step of our lives. From Rigveda to this day, word has lived a long life on four thousand years... In the Indian texts, it was first found in Rigveda... It is used in the sense of *niyam* (principles) of the nature or divine. The real word of *Rigveda* (for dharma) is *rit* which is used for principles (*niyam*) pervading the endless space-time of the created world... whatever is there in the universe, it is being governed by *rit*...

(Later) for the unbreakable principles of the world, instead of *rit*, the use of the word dharma became more popular... In *Guhyasutra* dharma is used in the sense of customs... In this way customs were to be followed by society at large and the state and they would take the form of law in the courts and panchayats... In Dharmashastra collection of such social customs was done under the heading of dharma... The word for court was Dharmasan (seat of dharma) and for judge it was Dharmastha (the one located in dharma)... It was evident to people that woven in the foundations or roots of Man, society and universe, there is only one truth which is called dharma.

This analysis of a extremely significant and, in fact, key concept of dharma opens it up to an entirely new way of examining it. I say new because it has become new to most of us who have forgotten the ancient connotations and related practices of such a concept. We are paying very heavy price for that in terms of destroying our everyday living brutally. Let me explain: If we could have acted in our personal and social lives according to the understanding of dharma that Vasudevsharanji was proposing or reminding us of, we could have seen and felt the continuity between man, society and the nature and thus could have avoided the Semitic way of looking at the nature which attempts to see the man as opposed to nature as if these two phenomena have two different truths as their basis. In that case we would have tried to find an entirely new way for modernizing India. But that could not be done. We went on semitizing our traditional thoughts and ended up in completely overlooking the words of geniuses like Vasudevsharanji. What is known as Hinduism in our times is a poor semitized formation or call it proselytized version of Hinduism or Sanatan tradition. Nothing can be worse than to *depaganize* the traditions like Sanatan. We must remember that Europe had to take a long winding road through Christianity and had to retrieve Hellenic thought to recover its paganism in the modern age which, as everyone knows led to great upheaval of arts, science and literature, that is of all kinds of creativity in Europe.

Ours is an essentially intellectual tradition. It actually needs a lot of efforts to decode it, understand it, particularly in the kind of times that we are in, where a thick layer of forgetting has set in on our minds. This is what Vasudevsharanji has to say about the way in which this tradition could be understood:

The style of description of the Indian narratives is other than normal. The threads of the narrative are interwoven everywhere. If someone wants to understand a narrative completely, he or she would have to interpret all the *puranas*. The philosophical connotation of this fact is that all *puranas* are divided into either *Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh or sat, raj and tam* or *aadhyatmic, adhibhautik and adhidaivik* categories. Out of *sat, raj, and tam* only one becomes central and the others are peripheral. All narratives are about centrality of one of these three gods, but Brahma would always be with Vishnu and Shiva, Vishnu would always be with Brahma and Shiva and Shiva with Brahma and Vishnu. **(Garuda)**

He is suggesting that in our tradition if one is trying to understand a certain character or a concept, he/she would have to go on consulting a number of texts because such characters or concepts go on being refined or reconnected within several texts which obviously means that if one is not conscious of various connotations of a certain character (lets say like Ram) one would have to undertake quite a huge task of going through various texts to come to an understanding of it. Vasudevsharanji's writings would be a great help in such an endeavor.

Now lets take another act of reminding by Agrawal. Here he talks about the vehicle of Vishnu, Garuda. He starts by asking a simple question: What is the essence (*tatva*) in the narrative of Garuda? Is the narrative, which was told in time by Badarayan, or Vaishampayan or Lomharshani contains some scientific or philosophical essence or is it filled with narrative waste?

To understand the phenomena of Garuda, the vehicle bird of the caretaker of the world, Vishnu, Vasudevji goes not only to the traditional Indian texts, but also to the insights of modern science. Let me add here that his knowledge of modern science of his time was not sketchy, but was thorough. From his perspective of Indian wisdom it was not difficult for him to negotiate with the principles of modern science. He is one of those rare thinkers of the tradition of India who could enter into dialogue with modern science and could show its possibilities and limitations in relation to findings of the traditional knowledge and thus could reestablish the fact that the traditional knowledge systems were not just bundles of hollow imagination, but were thorough insights into human and cosmic existence, arrived at by detailed investigations into what can broadly be called reality. He further writes in his essay on *Garuda* :

Scientists say that the diameter of the entire universe is 91 billion and its periphery is 500,000,000,000 light years. This means that a ray of light which travels at the speed of 1,86,000 miles per second would take five billion billion years to go round the circumference of the universe. Vishnu has to keep the option of travelling this much distance in no time. Who knows when does some deep crises befalls on a certain devotee of his... Garuda travels distances like man(as) or mind... Garuda reaches everywhere only by his desire... Garuda represents the speed beyond one's experience... That whose or which travels in the sky is *khag*... Birds are therefore *khagas*, Sun too is. Actually sun is the king of *khagas*, *khagendra* in *Sauryamandal*, Garuda is also *khagendra*... a kind of *khag*... In the mind of the writers of *puranas* it was clear that Garuda is another name of sun.

I am quoting extensively from Vasudevji's texts only to show how did his mind work. He would take his readers to a long sojourn of various *puranas* and other Indian texts along with various texts of modern science and philosophy to establish what he was intending to do. Thus, he would succeed in indicating that how each concept or the term undergoes major or minor transformations throughout the history of its existence and also how these transformations are the result of various individual visions.

Thus, his textual performances of reminders were not simple acts. They require the reader to go with Vasudevji on a long journey of his or her history and interpretations. In other words he inspires us to go deep into each and every concept not only to understand it but to recreate it, reconfigure it. The acts of reminders for him are simultaneously also acts of imaginative interlinking, the acts of imagination.

7

The other axis on which some of the writings of Vasudevji could be plotted against are his descriptions of Indian society as composed of *Janpadas* and his insistence on the need to study *Janpadiya* arts, artisanship and literature, and also reconfigure India in terms of *Janpadas*:

The word used by Priyadarshi Emperor Ashoka for Indian people living in villages, was a respectable word, *Janpad jan*.

Vasudevji evokes the wisdom and programmes of Ashoka to develop a detailed theory of *Janpadiya* life. He writes :

We have to restart the studies of (Ved) Vyas, Kalidas and Tulsidas, Charak and Panini from the point of view of *Janpadas*. There was a time when the life of *Janpadas* was deeply entrenched in the works of these writers.

(*Janpadon ka Sahityik Sangathan*)

He has enlisted a number of tasks to be done under the heading of *Janpadiya Kalyan Yojna* (The plan for the betterment of *Janpadas*) in which he proposes to study its literature, arts, linguistics, history, archaeology, vegetable, trees, animals, ores, rocks, institutions, customs, artisanship, festivals, food habits and many more things. All these studies need to be done, according to him, to pave the path of creating a new order in India based on *Janpadas*.

This is the proposal that Vasudevji made. It, in a sense, resonates with Gandhi's ideas of *Panchayati* system etc. Vasudevji in this way defines India through *Janpadas* and without directly doing so, questions the mindless urbanization of the country (which is the other word for Europeanization) which our planners are engaged into for the past few decades and which the present planners want to speed up as much as they can.

To remember Vasudevji's wisdom and insights is perhaps, in Rammanohar Lohiya's words : the responsibility of the one who has lost the hope (*nirasha ka kartavya*)!

The Grand Design of Stephen Hawking and Cosmology of the Upanishads

S. P. Rai*

Chapter III

Chapters I and II appeared in the previous Volume (17:1) of Dialogue. Chapter I discussed the philosophy of Cosmology and various related questions raised in the introductory para of Stephen Hawking's book *Grand Design*. Chapter II briefly summarised Stephen Hawking's concept of cosmology in the *Grand Design*. Now chapter III discusses the cosmology of Upanisads in the light of the previous two chapters.

The Upanisads, though remote in time from us, are not remote in thought, says Dr. Radhakrishnan. The problems of human life and destiny, which they deal with, have not been superseded by the striking achievements of science and technology. One marvels at the questions they raised, which are strikingly similar to those raised by Stephen Hawking. The answers given are not the same or similar but not wholly different in essence either. This does not mean that we should stubbornly commit ourselves to their hypotheses about the structure of the world and philosophy of man. A distinction has to be made between the message of the Upanisads and their mythology. Though the latter is subject to change, the former has eternal values. It is with this spirit that the Cosmology of Upanisads is presented in comparison and contrast of what Stephen Hawking has said in the *Grand Design*.

The Upanisads represent the greatest chapter in the history of human spirit. I can do no better than quote Winternitz: "For the historian, who pursues the history of human thought, the Upanisads have yet a far greater significance. From the mystical doctrines of the Upanisads

*Shri S.P. Rai, Indian Postal Service (Retd.) is a post-graduates in Physics and is a keen student of Indian history and culture.

one current of thought may be treated to the mysticism of the Persian Suffism, to the mystic theosophical logos doctrine of the Neoplatonics and the Alexandrian Christian mystics, Eckharf and Tauler, and finally to the philosophy of the great German mystic of the 19th Century Schopenhauer" (A History of Indian Literature, ET Vol I, page 266). It is said that Schopenhauer had the Latin text of the Upanisads on his table and was in the habit, before going to bed, of performing his devotions from its pages. He has said: "From every sentence of the Upanisads, deep original and sublime thoughts arise, and the whole is pervaded by a high and holy and earnest spirit. In the whole world, there is no study so beneficial, and so elevating as that of the Upanisads. They are product of the highest wisdom. They are destined sooner or later to become the faith of the people."

The importance of Upanisads lies, to quote Rabindranath Tagore: "because they are based not upon theological reasoning, but on experience of spiritual life. And life is not dogmatic, in it opposing forces are reconciled – ideas of non-dualism and dualism, the infinite and the finite, do not exclude each other. Moreover, the Upanisads do not represent the spiritual experience of any one great individual, but of a great age of enlightenment, which has a complex and collective manifestation, like that of the Starry World."

It was necessary to emphasize the nature of this spiritual, experience which transcends all human faculties, to bring home the point that man is not a mere biological machine or collection of fundamental particles, as Stephen Hawking has argued in the previous section. He is sentient, he is conscious, holistic well beyond the sum total of his physical faculties.

It is generally agreed, by common consent, that the principal Upanisads are pre-Buddhistic. They represent Vedant in its pure original form and are earliest philosophical compositions of the world. Upanisads belong to what Karl Jaspers Calls the Axial Era of the World 800 to 300 BC, when man for the first time simultaneously and independently in Greece, China and India questioned the traditional pattern of life.

As a part of the Veda, the Upanisads belong to the Sruti or revealed literature. They are immemorial, sanatana, timeless. Their truths are said to be breathed out by God or visioned by the seers. They are the utterances of the sages who speak out of the fullness of their illumined experience. They are not reached by ordinary perception, inference and reflection. The truths revealed to seers are not mere reports of introspection which are purely subjective, says Dr. Radhakrishnan. It is revealed to them without effort. Dr. R. D. Ranade has succinctly put the

meaning of revelation as not any external message delivered to man from without but a divine afflatus springing from within, the result of inspiration through God intoxication.

While discussing Stephen Hawking's concept of knowledge a distinction was made between higher (para) and lower (a-para) knowledge or vidya, higher knowledge, the gyan kand of the Vedas. They were not the outcome of sense experience as in the case of experimental inferences. They have to be accepted as authentic because they occurred to God intoxicated souls in a state of divine madness world over in all ages and climes.

Upanisads form a literature which has been growing from early times. There are controversies about their dates, number and time. For the purpose of this analytical presentation, we will confine ourselves to what are called the principal Upanisads commented on by Adi Sankaracharya. Dr. R.D. Ranade has classed them together in five groups:

1. Brihdaranyaka and Chhandogya
2. Isa and Kena
3. Aitareya, Taittiriya and Kaushitaki
4. Katha, Mundaka and Svetasvatara
5. Prasna, Maitri and Mandukya

This presentation is proposed to be divided in three Sections, almost identical to that of the *Grand Design*. In section (i) the concept of man, in section (ii) the concept of absolute reality will be dealt with and section (iii) will deal with the Cosmogony and Cosmology of the Upanisads.

(i) The Concept of Man

I quote a para from the introductory observations, Chapter 6, by Dr. Radhakrishnan in his monumental work. The Brahma Sutra – The Philosophy of Spiritual Life.

“Duality of human nature:

The question of the nature of the self is raised only by human beings. Animals cannot ask this question and redeemed spirits know the self and do not pose the question. The naturalistic world view reduces man to an object utterly insignificant in the vast magnitude of space time. Man is not exhausted by body and mind. In the complex of personality there is something which uses both and yet is neither. The waxing years and the waning strength are quite powerless to dim the brightness of spirit. Any change which may spell decay for the body or even for mind, may yet be irrelevant for the spirit, which is essentially man himself.”

That man is a collection of fundamental particles or biological machine is self evident and needs no proof. Strictly speaking, man is nothing more than a sequence of physical and mental processes, a chain of events, a series of thoughts, perceptions, emotions and other responses to impressions received from outside. But if this were all, human mind would be like an animal. But we are aware of the fundamental difference and that is man's consciousness.

Consciousness says Dr. Radhakrishnan, cannot be defined. It is awareness of thinking, imagining, sensing. Mandukya Upanisad, consisting of only 12 verses, has beautifully expatiated the four states of consciousness, correlating microcosm and macrocosm. It eventually became the bed rock of later vedanta, commented upon by Gaudapada and Sankar.

The mystical syllable “AUM” which is the symbol of Brahman stands for the manifested world, the past, the present and the future as well as the un-manifested Absolute. The self is Brahman, which has four quarters. These are *visva*, – the waking state; *taijas*, – the dream state; *pragna*; – the states of dreamless sleep and *turiya*, – which is the state of spiritual consciousness. The knowledge of the fourth is achieved by merging the previous three. The fourth or turiya is a state of super self consciousness; there is neither subject nor object; it does not reflect any other reality than itself. It is a state in which the experiencer is in possession of super sensuous faculty, intuition, which goes beyond reason and puts him in possession of things unknown to reason.

The validity of such experience lies in its Universality. Dr. Radhakrishnan has quoted Plotinus:

“Standing transcendent above all things that follow It, existing in Itself, not mixing or to be mixed with any emanation from itself, veritably the one, not merely possessing oneness, as an attribute of Its essence – for that would be a false oneness – a Principle overpowering all reasoning, all knowing – a principle standing over all Essence and Existence Only when it is simplex and First, apart from all, can it be perfectly self sufficient” Enneads, V, 4.1

The unity of Brahman – Atman will be dealt with in the next section when we take up – what is Reality?

We may briefly allude here to the concept of time in Upanisadic literature. It may be recalled that in the presentation of the *Grand Design*, Stephen Hawking considers time to start with the Big Bang and end with the Big Crunch. This is because his mathematical formulation breaks down before Big Bang and after Big Crunch.

As against this the Upanisads conceive time as the streaming flux, which moves unceasingly. It is conceived as Eternity, a perpetual now without any past or future. Past and future are only dots on the march of Eternity. Big Bang and Big Crunch, are just mile stones. There may be several Big Bangs and Big Crunches in its streaming Flux. Stephen Hawking admits that there are several Universes other than our own. Upanisads consider Time as just one aspect of the Divine Supreme.

We find a beautiful presentation of this in chapter XI of the Bhagvad Gita. This Chapter is considered by thinkers world over as the finest example of sublime experience in religious literature.

A terrified Arjun says:

“Devouring all the words on every side with Thy flaming mouths, Thou slickest them up. Thy fiery rays fill the whole universe and scorch it with their fierce radiance, O Vishnu!

B. GXI (30)

“Tell me who Thou art will forms so terrible. Salutations to Thee, O Thou Great Godhead, have mercy. I wish to know Thee (who art) the Primal One, for I know not thy working”

B. GXI (31)

The Lord then answers:

“Time am I, world – destroying, grown mature, engaged here in subduing the world. Even without thee (thy action), all the warriors standing arrayed in the opposite armies shall cease to be”

B. G. XI (32)

Arjun was so terrified at the naked vision of Supreme that he started trembling and prayed to see back the sight of God with His usual four arms His Crown, mace and disc in His hands.

This is a beautiful illustration of Time as Sublime Eternity in Upanisadic literature.

Stephen Hawking has time and again denied the existence of God in favour of the laws of nature. I have briefly contradicted him there. But it is only appropriate that we present the positive aspect of the concept of God. In monotheistic religions e.g. Christianity and Islam it is based on revelation to Prophets and recorded in the Bible and the Quran. It is therefore, a unitary concept, so to say. But in Sanatana Dharma, popularly called Hinduism, the concept of God is “One in Many” and “Many in one.” It is all pervasive, all inclusive. It is a misnomer to call Hinduism as polytheistic. Max Muller has beautifully traced its evolution in stages: From Polytheism to Henotheism to monotheism to Monism. This evolution is from Rig Veda to Upanisads, which mark the culmination of Hindu thought: The concept of God is both personal and impersonal beautifully intertwined as two aspects of the same Reality. The Bhagvad Gita has successfully integrated the various currents of

thought into a comprehensive synthesis. The personal and the impersonal are synthesised in Super-personal. The following verses of Bagvad Gita are the finest illustration of this synthesis.

“I am the father of this world, the mother the supporter and the Grand sire. I am the object of knowledge, the purifier. I am the syllable Aum and I am the rik, the sama and the yajus as well”

B. G. IX (17)

“I am the goal, the upholder, the lord, the witness, the abode, the refuge and the friend. I am the origin and the dissolution, the ground, the resting place, and the imperishable seed”

B. G. IX (18)

Stephen Hawking is a theoretical physicist with little spiritual experience, not even that Cosmic feeling which Einstein calls God. I sincerely feel that the area of faith should not be encroached by a scientist, particularly of his stature.

(ii) The Upanisadic Concept of Absolute Reality

It may be recalled that Stephen Hawking in his presentation of the *Grand Design* has conceived reality as a Model Dependent Realism, elegant and amenable to mathematical formulation. This model is subject of alteration. The Upanisadic concept of Primal Eternal verity is one which is the source of all, and the entire phenomenal existence is exhausted in it though it remains itself un-altered and well beyond.

The Upanisads consider Brahman as the Absolute Reality. It is defined in Chapter III 1.1 of Tattiriya Upanisad, called Bhrigu Valli, as “That, verity, from which these beings are born, that, by which, when born they live, that into which, when departing, they enter. That, seeks to know, that is Brahman.”

Thus, the Absolute Reality is that verity from which the origin, continuance and dissolution of the world comes.

It is in the form of a dialogue between Bhrigu and his father Varun. The son asks the father to give him the knowledge of Brahman and the latter gave the above definition leaving him to find out for himself what “That” means. He was advised to practice penance, austerity of thought, to realise it.

Bhrigu after performing penance reported to his father Varun with the answer, annam, matter as Brahman. For truly, beings here are born from matter, when born they live by matter, and into matter, when departing they enter. The first suggested explanation of the Universe is that everything can be explained from matter and motion. In fact Stephen

Hawking in his definition of Reality is at that stage only. On second thought Bhrigu realized that there are phenomena of life and reproduction which require another principle.

He performed further penance and came back with the suggestion 'Life'. For truly beings here are born from life, when born they live by life, and into life, when departing they enter.

But Varun did not accept and on further thought Bhrigu realized that the principle of life cannot account for conscious objects. In the earlier two suggestions the progression was from materialism to vitalism.

So after further penance he came back with the suggestion *mano*, mind. He knew that mind is Brahman. For truly beings here are born from mind, when born they live in mind and into mind, when departing they enter.

As the life outreaches matter, so does mind outreach life. Bhrigu realized that animals do have rudimentary mind but lack reason. So he performed further penance and came back with a fresh suggestion *Vignanam*, intelligence as Brahman. For truly, beings here are born from intelligence, when born they live by intelligence and into intelligence, when departing they enter.

But after further austerity of thought he realized that intelligence does not exhaust the possibilities of consciousness and cannot be its highest expression. Man's awareness is to be enlarged into a super consciousness with illumination, joy and power. The crown of evolution is this deified consciousness.

So by gradual principle of elimination and repeated efforts through penance or austerity of thought, he firstly hit upon *anand*, bliss as the ultimate Reality.

So Varun lead Bhrigu to realize through repeated penance that Brahman is bliss. For truly, beings are born from bliss, when born they live by bliss and into bliss, while departing they enter.

The word Brahman is derived from a root "brih," meaning burst forth, or "to grow or expand." This, in essence, is the concept of Reality from objective side which spontaneously manifests itself as Universe.

In the previous section it may be recalled the search for Reality was subjective, where a super conscious self realization, a state of bliss, emerged as the Ultimate Reality. Its aim was the discovery, not of cosmic principle – the source of the world as a whole, the Brahman but of the psychic principle – the inner essence of man, the Atman.

If we carefully look at this analysis both subjectively as well as objectively we find a striking convergence viz. bliss, *anand* in both the cases as the Ultimate Reality.

It is this happy identification of the two principles, Brahman and Atman, the cosmic and the psychic, which constitute the essential teaching of the Upanisads. It is represented by the well-known sayings, that thou art, *Tat tvam asi*, and I am Brahman, *Aham Brahma asmi*. They mean that the principle underlying the world as a whole, and that which forms the essence of man, are ultimately the same. Here ended the long Indian search for "that by knowing which all will be known."

It is necessary to understand the full significance of this identification. Brahman, as the ultimate cosmic principle or the source of the whole Universe, is all comprehensive. But such a principle need not be spiritual in nature, and may well be a material or physical entity, as in Stephen Hawking. Further an objective conception like the above is little more than a hypothesis to account for the origin of the Universe; and there is nothing compelling us to regard it as actually existing, there being no logical absurdity in denying it. But its identification with the spiritual principle removes uncertainty about its existence as well as its spiritual character. For our own self is known to us as spiritual and there is an intuitive obligation to recognize it as such.

If we start from the idea of the self instead of that of Brahman, we meet with a similar difficulty. Whatever view we may take of its nature, it is determined on the one side by the world of nature and on the other by the other selves, pointing to its plurality. It is this deficiency of plurality or finiteness which is made good by its identification with Brahman or the all comprehensive first cause of the Universe. The outcome of the identification therefore, is that the ultimate reality which may indifferently be termed either Brahman or atman, is spiritual and that it accounts for not only all the selves but also the whole of the physical universe. That is the meaning of monism which was earlier referred to in Maxmuller's evolutionary spiral viz. polytheism, henotheism, monotheism to monism.

(iii) The Cosmogony and the Cosmology of the Upanisads

At the outset, I would like to remind our readers that Stephen Hawking had categorically stated that the Universe was created out of nothing in accordance with the laws of nature. The idea of creation *ex-nihilo* seems to be wholly repugnant to the Upanisadic thinkers. Another significant difference is the concept of creation itself. The Upanisads believe in evolution not creation. The Universe as we see it today has evolved for which we have a number of theories, one rising above the other, as Alps over Alps.

The most remarkable account of a Superpersonal monism is to be found in Nasdiya Sukta, Hymn of creation in Rigveda (X-129). It seeks to explain the Universe as evolving out of one. The hymn declares that all gods e.g. Indra, Varuna etc. are of secondary origin. They know nothing of the beginning of things. The first principle, that one, tad ekam, is uncharacterisable. It is without qualities or attributes, even negative ones. To apply to it any description is to limit and bind that which is limitless and boundless. That one breathed breathless. There was nothing else. It is not a dead abstraction but an indescribable perfection of being, says Dr.Radhakrishnan. Before creation all this was darkness, an impenetrable void or abyss of waters? Until through the power of tapas, or fervour of austerity, the one evolved into determinate self conscious being. He becomes a creator. Noting outside himself can limit him. He only can limit himself. He does not depend on anything other than himself for his manifestation. Thus, creation is interpreted in the Vedas as development rather than the bringing into being something not hitherto existent.

The Upanisads do not accept the naturalistic theory of evolution. The world is not to be viewed as an automatic development without any intelligent purpose or intelligible aim. Matter, life, mind and intelligence are different forms of existence with their specific characteristics and modes of action, each acting on the other but not derived from each other. The evolution of life, in the context of matter, is produced not by material principles but by the working of a new life-principle which uses the conditions of matter for the production of life. Life is not the mechanical, resultant of the antecedent coordination of material forces, but it is what is now called emergent. We cannot, with complete knowledge of the previous conditions, anticipate the subsequent result. There is an element of the incalculable. Life emerges when the material conditions are available, which permit life to organize itself in matter. In the sense, we can say that matter aspires for life, but life is not produced by lifeless particles. So also life may be said to be aspiring for mind, which is ready to emerge when conditions enable it to organize itself in living matter. Mind cannot be produced from things without mind. When the necessary mental conditions are prepared, intelligence qualifies the mental living creatures. Nature is working according to this fundamental intention, which is being accomplished because it is essentially the instrument of the Supreme Being, denied categorically by Stephen Hawking.

With these brief observations, based largely on the introductory observations in Dr. Radhakrishnan's monumental work, *The Principal Upanishads*, it is proposed to take up the various theories of creation. The probable theories have been summed up in Dr. R.D. Ranade's

Constructive Survey of Upanisadic Philosophy. He has grouped them into two main categories – the personalistic and the impersonalistic. The impersonalistic theories include those that regard elements as the substratum of things, either one or all the elements taken together. Also included are some abstract conceptions like Being or not-Being and – Life –force. Among the personalistic theories are the theories which account for the origin of creation from Atman or God, and insist in various ways either on the dualistic aspect of creation, or the emanatory, or even the highly philosophic aspect implied in Theism proper. An important point to note is that when they talk of elements, it means elements proper and not the deities corresponding to them:

(i) Water as the sub-stratum: It was but natural for the ancient thinkers to look into the abundant elements for the possible essence of creation. Brihadaranyaka Upanisad, the oldest of them all, tells us that water was the source of all things whatsoever: “In the beginning, verily, the Waters alone existed; from the waters was born Satya or Truth; Satya produced Brahman, Brahman gave birth to Prajapati and from Prajapati were born the gods; these gods worship Satya alone” Br.V. 5.1. This passage does not talk of Atman or any personal being existing originally, but the waters and everything else came from them. It is worth noting that Brahman, the primal Reality, as we understand later is not implied in the Brahman here. Similarly Satya has to be understood as ultimate “concrete” existent. Satyam here is said to consist of three syllables: the first is Sa, the second is Ti, and the third is Yam, the first and the last being real and the second unreal. Br. V. 5.1. Freely interpreted says Dr. Ranade, this passage would mean that unreality is enclosed on both sides by reality, the present which is evanescent is enclosed on both sides by an eternity which is real, we move from eternity to eternity halting for a short while in caravansary of present.

(ii) Air: After water comes Air. Here Air is conceived as the final “Absorbent” of things and therefore, probably the origin.

A passage in Chhandogya Upanisad says: “When the fire is extinguished it goes to air; when the Sun sets it goes to air; when the moon sets it goes to air; when the waters dry up, they go to air; thus verily Air is the final absorbent of all things” Chh. IV.3.1-2.

(iii) Fire: On a prima facie view Fire should not be considered as the source as it is a destroyer, in so far as it burns everything. But verse VI.8.4 in Chhandogya Upanisad says that Fire was the first to evolve from the primeval Being, and that from Fire came water and from water the earth. Even in the theory of Big – bang, there was very high temperature initially which took considerable time to cool down. So fire is not the source but the first evolute from the Supreme Being with further emanations from it.

(iv) Space or Aakash: The earlier sources are tangible but Aakash as "arche" of all things is intangible and requires a somewhat philosophical conception of higher category to comprehend. That is why it was relatively later to emerge, which incidentally is also the position in Greek philosophy. Chhandogya Upanisad states: "All these beings emerge from space and are finally absorbed in space; space is verily greater than any of the things; Space is the final habitat." Chh 1.9.1. Another passage in the same Upanisad makes out that: "Space is verily higher than Fire. In space are both the Sun and the Moon, the lightning and the stars. It is by space that man is able to call In space and after space all things are born. Meditate upon space as the highest reality" Chh VII.12.1

(v) Not Being: there are certain passages in the Upanisads which suggest Not Being as the primary existence. The Tattariya Upanisad tells us that "At the beginning of all things what existed was Not Being. From it was born Being. Being shaped itself on its own accord. It is thus that it is called well made or self made" Tat II. 7; Does this bring us to the Stephen Hawking's theory of coming out of nothing in accordance with the laws of nature. Far from it! We have to clearly understand concept of Not Being. Like existence there are four forms of non-existence. One, wholly non-existent like the son of a Barren Woman. Two, nothing exists in common as a chair and a fan. Three, prior non-existence or potential existence. Four, posterior non-existence i.e. in the beginning it was but later became latent or non-existent. Here Not Being does not mean absolute Not Being but only relative Not – Being, the primal semblance of existence as contrasted with later concrete existence.

Interestingly, the Chhandogya Upanisad connects the theory of Not Being with the myth of Universal Egg. It says: "What existed in the beginning was Not – Being. It then converted itself into Being. It grew and became a vast egg. It lay in that position for a year, and then it broke open. Its two parts were, one of gold and the other silver. The silvery part became, the earth, and the golden part became the heaven. The thick membrane of the egg became the mountains; the thin membrane became the clouds; the arteries became the rivers; the fluid in the interior became the oceans; while what came out of the egg was the Sun. When the Sun was born shouts of hurrah arose." Ch.III. 19. 1-3. There are similar myths in other mythologies also e.g. Babylonian, Egyptian, Persian etc. But they are of no philosophical value, hence we may not attach much importance. It is only a biological reproduction replicated on a cosmic scale.

(vi) Being: Chhandogya Upanisad categorically states that Being alone existed at the beginning of things. It questions: "How could

being come out of Not-being; existence from non-existence." It further asserts that at the beginning it was Being alone, one without a second. The Primeval Being reflected I am alone, let me be by many and he produced elements like earth etc. This concept was later developed by Vedanta as the Brahman the primal being, Ishwar as the creative urge and Hiranya Garbh as the First Born.

(vii) Pran: Dr. R. D. Ranade asserts that when we come to the conception of Pran, we rise to a higher conception than was reached in Greek Philosophy. Pran originally meant breath and as breath seemed to constitute the life of man. Later the life principle in the universe came also to be designated as Pran. It thus meant, either life-force or Cosmic Force. Chhandogya Upanisad in verses IV.3.3 and IV 3.4 brings out a correspondence between the Macrocosm and the Microcosm where it is said that just as air is the life principle of the universe, similarly breath is the life principle of man. Verse VII.15.1 of the same Upanisad asserts: "just as all the spokes of a wheel are centered in its navel, similarly all these beings, and in fact, everything that exists, is centred in Pran."

(viii) Evolution of Pran as bio-psyco– Metaphysical Conception: It is noted that, in the first place, Pran is directly identified with life (Ayuh). It amounts to saying that life exists as long as Pran exists and life departs as soon as Pran departs. Then again Pran is identified with consciousness (Pragna). It may be further noted that consciousness is distinguished from life as the higher category of existence. There may be forms of life without consciousness; but wherever there is consciousness there has to be life. Kaushitaki Upanisad clearly recognizes this distinction. It describes Pran not merely as the Principle of life but as the principle of consciousness also. It not only stops at this. It ultimately elevates Pran as Atman itself, the ultimate Reality, which is ageless, changeless and immortal. Kau. III.2-9

We thus see how Pan is life from biological point of view, consciounsee from phycological point of view and Atman itself from metaphysical point of view. This verily is the "philosophical apotheosis of Pran."

(ix) Personalistic and Theistic Theories of Creation: Mundak Upanisad states: "At the beginning of the creation, there existed a heavenly Formless Person, who unborn, without a mind, lustrous, and super – immutable. From him more born life, mind, senses, space, air, light, water and earth..... " Mu II. 1.2-9. This however, is not truly theistic because it describes the person as impersonal and speaks of emanation or generation instead of creation. It is Svetastara Upanisad which treats Rudra as the Supreme Godhead and States: Rudra alone rules the world by his powers, who stands before every being at the

time of destruction and creates the Universe at the time of its origin, can be regarded as the Creator of all things that exist. He is the Supreme Godhead, to whose power is due the whirling round of the wheel of the Universe. Sve III.2.

While discussing the concept of God as Personal or Impersonal, we found that both the concepts in essence are the same and are reconciled in Super-Personal. Here also there is an identical situation. The personalistic and the impersonalistic theories in essence are the same. In the former a Supreme God head is implied while the later depend on non-personal principles.

We may now sum up the settled position of the Absolute Reality and the ultimate Creative Principle in Vedant. We have (1) The Absolute, (2) God as creative power, (3) God immanent in this world. These are not to be regarded as separate entities. They are arranged in this order because there is a logical priority. The Absolute must be there with all its possibilities before the Divine Creativity can choose one. The Divine Choice must be there before there can be the Divine Immanent in this world. We thus get the four poises of statuses of reality (1) the Absolute Brahman (2) the Creative Spirit, Iswara, (3) the World Spirit, Hiranya-Garbha, and (4) the World.

We thus have four sides of one whole. They are co-existent and not alternating poises, where we have either a quiescent Brahman or a Creative Lord. These are simultaneous sides of one Reality.

While Stephen Hawking has confined himself to materialistic plane, Vedanta rises well above. A number of eminent scientists do marvel at the findings and derive inspiration from these ancient texts called Upanisads, collectively known as Vedant.

Books consulted:

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