

FACETS
OF
INDIAN
PHILOSOPHICAL
THOUGHT

Dr. Shashi Prabha Kumar

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DR. SHASHI PRABHA KUMAR

Reader, Deptt. of Philosophy
University of Delhi, Delhi-110007

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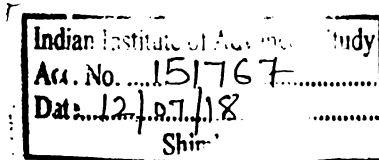
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Prof. Vachaspati Upadhyaya

Director

Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan .
Institutional Area, Janak Puri
New Delhi

Vice-Chancellor

Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri
Rashtriya Sanskrit Vidyapeeth
(Deemed University)
Katwaria Sarai, New Delhi

FOREWORD

I feel honoured to write a few words about the book entitled **Facets of Indian Philosophical Thought** authored by *Dr. Shashi Prabha Kumar*, Reader in the Department of Philosophy, University of Delhi. Dr. Shashi Prabha Kumar with her commendable background of Sanskrit definitely deserves plaudits for having chosen a theme which is related to some cardinal principles presented and interpreted in the Veda, the Vedānta, the Vaiśeṣika and Mīmāṃsā. I am specially impressed with this collection of her articles. The topics taken up are indeed indepth study of each problem which she has chosen. It is heartening to note that she has not concentrated on any one aspect of multi-dimensional thought complex of Indian wisdom but has devoted herself to a number of themes. In the realm of Vedic thought she is concerned with life and society, education and social justice, ecology and conservation and advocates very strongly the problem of gender bias banking upon Vedic sources. The essays on Vedānta and Vaiśeṣika are related to terse philosophical concepts. I feel happy to note that she has also given vent to her views on Mīmāṃsā system which by the bye happens to be a system which I had the privilege to study under the Lotus feet of my great Acharya Pt. Pattabhirama Shastri. I, therefore, feel that Dr. Shashi Prabha Kumar in the last three essays has shown promise to keep the Mīmāṃsā tradition intact.

I have reasons to believe that the present volume **Facets of Indian Philosophical Thought** will arouse interest in the scholarly fraternity and will attract the fascination of avid readers. I wish her all success in life.

(Vachaspati Upadhyaya)

PREFACE

This book is a collection of some of my research papers presented in different national and international conferences, a few of them published in philosophical journals.

The philosophical reflections in India have their source and sustenance in the Vedic thought. All subsequent philosophical developments took place either in confirmity with or in opposition to the Vedic thought. The Vedic thought itself presents an all comprehensive world-view. It contains both theory and praxis, a holistic world-view and an integrated life based on it. Five of the papers included here represent some significant aspects of life and reality based on Vedic thought.

The Vedic thought gets culminated in the Vedāntic philosophy. The Vedantic ideas permeate all facets of Indian culture and provide a foundation to the Indian modes of thinking and ways of living. The article on Vedāntic foundations of Indian culture focusses on this very point. The basic thrust of Vedāntic thought is self-realisation, constant experiencing of Pure Consciousness as the underlying essence of all beings, as revealed by the Upaniṣads. Śaṅkara's understanding of this basic Vedāntic viewpoint is explained in the chapter on the Kena Upaniṣad.

There are two lines of thought which have developed out of the Vedic reflections. One is the tradition of Sāṅkhya-yoga and the Vedānta, wherein the world-process is explained as evolution from one unitary principle into multiple reals. In this view, the impetus for evolution is

inherent in the proto-stuff which could be *prakṛti* or *Brahman*. The other point of view is advocated by Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika and Mīmāṃsā among other schools of Indian philosophy according to which the world process is a network of infinite number of conglomerations formed out of multiple reals or inalienable parts constituting many wholes. In this world view, motion is extraneous to matter and acts as one of the causal factors for the formation of conglomerations. In this process, the role of *karma*, as an unseen factor initiating motion has been emphasised in the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika and Mīmāṃsā traditions. Two of the papers included here deal with this issue.

The tradition of Mīmāṃsā, which is deeply rooted in Vedic thought, developed in two important schools headed by Prabhākara and Kumārila. Both these have enriched Indian philosophical thought immensely as will be evidenced from the three papers on Mīmāṃsā included in this volume. It would not be out of place to mention here that these papers are based on the deliberations which took place at three workshops sponsored by Indian Council of Philosophical Research where I acted as a rapporteur.

Additionally there is a small appendix on the philosophical contribution of a contemporary Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika scholar just to point out that Indian philosophical reflections are still vibrant in the traditional circles, though we may not be much aware of them.

This book, however is not exhaustive as the title suggests, since it covers only some facets of the rich and varied Indian philosophical thought. The remaining facets of the same will hopefully be followed in a subsequent publication.

Finally, it is both a duty and a pleasure to acknowledge with gratitude the contribution of those who made the book possible in this form. I am highly obliged to prof. Vachaspati Upadhyaya for developing my interest in Indian philosophy and also for writing a foreword to this book. I am deeply

indebted to Prof. S.R. Bhatt, my senior colleague for his persistent encouragement and genuine concern. No words will be sufficient to thank him for his unflinching support and scholarly suggestions. I am thankful to my family and friends for bearing with me and being there when I needed them. The book in its published form speaks for the labour and effort put in by Sri B.N. Tiwari of Vidyanidhi Prakashan. I sincerely thank him for the same.

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Shashi Prabha Kumar

CONTENTS

<i>Foreword</i>	<i>iii</i>
<i>Preface</i>	<i>v</i>
1. Vedic View of Life and Society	1
2. Vedic Philosophy of Education	11
3. Indian Feminism and Vedic Thought	25
4. Social Justice : A Vedic Perspective	44
5. Ecology and Conservation in Bhūmisūkta of Atharvaveda	56
6. Vedāntic Foundations of Indian Culture	70
7. Pratibodhaviditam as Sākśicaitanya	86
8. Matter, Mind and Motion in Vaiśeṣika Pluralism	101
9. Nature and Role of Adṛṣṭa in Vaiśeṣika Philosophy	115
10. Prakaraṇa-Pañcikā : A Mīmāṃsā Critique of Buddhist Definition of Pramāṇa	124
11. The Tarkapāda of Śāstradīpikā : An Analytical Study	138
12. Concept of Vidhi according to Vidhi-Viveka of Maṇḍana Miśra	147
Appendix	163

VEDIC VIEW OF LIFE AND SOCIETY

The word Veda is derived from *Vid*, to know and it means knowledge. The Vedas have been traditionally associated with the path of knowledge and looked upon as the repositories of the highest truths of life. The Vedas cultivate the noble qualities in man and insist on an integral view of life. Vedic philosophy demands the discipline of body and mind and the rousing up of the power of intellect through *tapas* (kindling of spiritual fire). Vedic view of life is an exhaustive one, it is not lopsided. It exemplifies a comprehensive attitude towards all the aspects of life i.e. physical and mental, material and spiritual, individual and social. It wants man to rise above the animal plane of existence to develop his physical and moral stamina as well as spiritual power and then utilise all this not for himself but for the society in general. A glance into the brilliant glimpses of Vedic view of life will reveal to us an all round optimistic philosophy with positive trends towards a civil society.

The Vedic sages prayed and endeavoured for a life of perfect happiness, strength, prosperity and progeny. They were never tired of life, rather they aspired to live a full course of hundred years¹. They express their gratefulness to the almighty creator for having given them this life and they want to enjoy to the very brim the joys of life on earth. This sentiment of positive aspirations seems to bubble up here and there on innumerable occasions in all the four books of Vedas. It would be interesting to note here some

of the prayers of the Vedic sages which are illustrative of their desires and ambitions. These are prayers for physical health, mental efficiency, sweet speech and fair days².

But it is to be noted that the Vedic seers, when they desired these pleasure of life, never begged for them but always aspired to achieve their ends by their own endeavour and heroic deeds. What they asked from God was only his blessings and his brilliance. The *R̥gveda* explicitly states that. 'God befriends and supports only him who works hard and sweats to his utmost capacity'. In the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*³ there is a tale of Rohit, the son of Harishchandra who was advised by Indra to work ceaselessly to accomplish his objective of life. The Veda wants man to be brave enough to deserve divine favour—'May Indra give you protection', it prays for soldiers but also tells them, 'Valiant be your arms, so that you may remain unconquered.'⁴ It describes the ideal hero as one 'who bows not to the firm or to the stiff, or to the challenger incited by the foe.'⁵ Only the man who works hard, personally deserves and is capable of enjoying the wealth and happiness conferred by the God.⁶ This is an advice given by the Vedic sages which is eternally true. It is a universal fact that men aspire for different things but they must strive personally to deserve them is one of the most admirable tenets even in the social ethics of today.

This is the crux of the triumphant philosophy of the Vedic people who believed in a robust attitude of life, It is because of their unflinching faith in the will to live, to live well that they emerged out successful in their journey of life. They were determined in their efforts; once they undertook some commitment, they would go to the end of it fearlessly without any regard to the price of sacrifice. This determination is undoubtedly a unique character of the Vedic Philosophy of life. In the *Atharvaveda* we get such expressions which are meant to encourage and inspire the heroes who have embarked upon great undertakings. The

prayer asks for the health and welfare of every limb and wants that the soul should remain unconquered.⁷ 'O Indra! in each and every fight give menly strength to our bodies and ever conquering Valour to us!' is another prayer in the Sāmaveda⁸.

It is clear from these references that the Veda believes in full biological growth and finds a virtue in the normal coordination of means and ends in instinctive life. But that is not possible unless one has some special mental traits too. The introspective outlook of the Veda finds real goodness in the springs of action in the mind and hence there is a repeated prayer in the Yajurveda where the Vedic seer wishes that 'May our minds resolve on what is good'.⁹ The Vedic sage desires a combination of 'winning intelligence and unimpaired and unsurpassable courage'¹⁰. There are prayers expressing the desire and anxiety never to fall in character and to shine in prowess forever which show the conviction of the Vedic people that one must strive for good and avoid the evil path in life¹¹.

The struggle between good and evil, truth and falsehood is eternal¹² but the gods protect and defend only the truth, while destroy the falsehood. Therefore the Vedic poet invokes his deity to make the path of truth easy for him¹³ and even his prayer for wealth carries the qualification that it should be obtained through good means¹⁴. Thus it is constant will of the Vedic prayers seeking the guidance of the gods to the right path which will lead their lives to perfection. 'We will follow the path of goodness like the sun and the moon' that follow cosmic *ṛta* most regularly¹⁵.

The Vedic philosophers have suggested that to avoid the path of evil, one must first desist from it and then should follow the path of goodness, 'Leave here those who are opposed to goodness' or those 'who are evil minded' and 'let us cross over to powers that are beneficent'¹⁶. But when the evil is aggressive and sends a challenge to good, the Veda advocates the acceptance of the challenge and

battle, with a will to victory. 'The races of mankind are great oppressors' says the R̥gveda and prays to *Agni*—'burn up malignity that strives against us'¹⁷. 'Hurl on him your bolt of thunder who treats us ill, the robber and the oppressor'¹⁸ is the prayer to *Indra* and *Varuṇa*, guardians of *ṛta*. The Veda emphasises that it is only against evil that man should fight. War is the final recourse in defence of *ṛta*—'To those who trespass against us we offer an unpleasant welcome', says the sage in the Atharvaveda¹⁹. The Vedic poet has expressed great indignation against him who threatens us without offence of ours, the evil minded, arrogant, rapacious man.'²⁰ On the other hand, good existence implies goodness and bliss and many Vedic hymns contain a prayer for this. The terms good heartedness, good-mindedness, imply the spirit of friendship and love for fellow-beings e.g. in the prayer—'May we be good-hearted all our days'²¹.

This is enough to show that while the Vedic people fully enjoyed the physical and material pleasures of life, they were never lost or fallen in moral stature and ethical character as the very basis of their view of life was positive and optimistic. That is why a sage in the third *maṇḍala* of the R̥gveda prays the almighty to transform the entire world into a truthful place.²²

This at once brings us to the Vedic idea of collective ethics or the corporate living in a society. The Veda inculcates the idea of civil society through mutual love and collective living. It propagates social concord and upholds social virtues like fidelity and friendship. It is in the happy and harmonious blending of the individual and social objectives wherein lies the excellence of Vedic philosophy. Coming to the consideration of the objectives and aspirations of the Vedic society, we get a broad idea implicit in the term '*puruṣārtha*'. Although the term itself is not extant used in the Vedas but the idea is latent there and developed from the Vedic thought. The term *puruṣārtha*'

literally means the aspirations of the individual. these individual aspirations have been classified in four categories, namely *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma* and *mokṣa*. Last of these four is specially considered to be the *summum bonum* to be achieved. This classification of individual objectives in the later tradition is rooted in the Vedas. Out of these four, the *kāma* symbolises the desires, passions and pleasures while *artha* denotes the means or instruments to achieve those pleasures. These two are the natural inclinations which are common among civilised men, brutes and beasts while the other two i.e. *dharma* and *mokṣa* are exclusive to men of higher level only. According to the materialistic philosophy, the earlier two, the comforts and the means to satisfy them are the highest objectives of human achievement. But on a little more thought this will not seem to be exclusively human, since it is present with animal life also. Hence these two cannot be called the covetable objectives of a civilised man. The problem therefore is not of total liquidation of these instincts but of circumscribing them, confining them to certain limits and devising the measures to upgrade them for collective interests. That is accomplished by the concept of duty or *dharma* in the Vedic philosophy²³ which epitomizes in the sacrifice of *yajña*. This *dharma* or the social duty makes a man out of an animal, the other two motives, namely selfish acquisition and indulgence in sense satisfaction being common to all creatures. It is for this reason that the Vedic ethics employs a very purposeful word *puruṣārtha* meaning the objectives of human achievement and there also it has placed *dharma* as the first aim. The last and the foremost objective of a man is of course the loosening of all selfish bonds and the attainment of complete release—*mokṣa*. This perfect synthesis of the two objectives, namely the total detachment of the self or the release from the bondage and the good of the society is admired by the Vedic ethics as the highest ideal²⁴. This is the right interpretation of the fourfold objective called '*puruṣārtha*'. This helps one to rise above the selfish ends and get involved in the social action, the

institution of sacrifice or *yajña* is the highest virtue which teaches one to sacrifice oneself for a noble cause. *Ṛta* and *satya* are the two keywords of Vedic religion and Vedic civilization. These are pursued through the social activities of *brahman* and *kṣātra* respectively who represent spiritual and ruling powers. An ideal society is that where both these powers move in unity.²⁵ Firmly lodged in *ṛta* and with the inner strength of *satya* the Vedic seer desires to cultivate friendship not only with all men but with all living beings.²⁶

The Vedic philosophers had recognised the natural fact that it was impossible to eliminate classes in this inequitable world. They tried to accept the fact and reconcile the inequalities and differences in their social structure. They wished that the inborn inequalities be minimised and the people live like brothers in a society.²⁷ For this they even suggested some kinds of social gatherings and upheld the collective dining and water taking at the same place. All the members of society should be tied with a knot of mutual understanding like an axle encircled by spokes.²⁸ It was an attempt to arrive at a harmonious compromise between the inequalities of nature that led them towards the fourfold classification. This is the organisation of society as a whole with the harmonious coordination of its spiritual, political and economic life. In the *Ṛgveda* the daily pursuits of men are stated to be *kṣātra* (political activity), *śravaś* (pursuit of fame, as a poet or sage), *iṣṭa* (search of an object desired) and *artha* (livelihood)²⁹. These anticipate the later description of life's fourfold aim as *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma* and *mokṣa* (Duty, necessity, desire and liberation).

The Vedic seers knew well that the spirituality which was averse to worldly interests represents only a partial view of life. The comprehensive Vedic view has been very clearly expressed in a *Ṛgvedic* prayer as follows:

Quicken the power of knowledge (*brahman*)
and rouse the intellect
Quicken protective power (*kṣātra*)

and rouse up the heroes
 Quicken the milch cow to put
 strength in the people
 Drive out marauders (*rakṣas*)
 and remove disease³⁰.

Here besides the spiritual and political interests (*brahman* and *ksatra*) the economic interest of society is also recognised and the need for military action against aggressions and of medical aid against disease is emphatically stated.

In another prayer it is said that one should avoid social evils like gambling etc.³¹. There is no doubt that even now this will appear to be a fairly complete view of civil society. Moreover in the Vedas we also find mention of some social institutions which appear to be very popular—the *vidatha* where poets recite their work and extol the deity³² and where *yajñas* are performed; of the festive *samana* attended by men and women; of the *sabhā* where debating contests are held and prizes won and public deliberations also take place; and of the *samiti* where matters of public interest are discussed³³. Then there are public rituals in which large numbers of priests take part, with chanting, singing and the playing of instrumental music that arouse devotion and enthusiasm in the masses of people assembled for worship. The marriage festival too is a very colourful thing, with the picturesque procession and the bride in her lovely garments. The funeral is a solemn yet graceful affair. Men and women, old and young, take part in it and pay their last respects to the departed with words of courage spoken to them to return to life of toil and merriment. Frequent references to dance by men and women prove the devoted cultivation of the arts of peace. At the background of the urban and rural life there are educational institutions in the quiet atmosphere of the forest where *ācāryas* teach and their young pupils live working in the field and begging from neighbouring villages.³⁴ All these go to show that the Vedic people lived a settled life and the Vedic society was a civilised one.

We may conclude with the famous *Samjñāna* hymn of Ṛgveda which presents a picture of social concord and gives the secret of united social life in the following words—

Let your aims be common
And your hearts of one concord
And all of you be of one mind
So you may live well together³⁵.

It means that the integration of aims and of intellectual and emotional life leads to a well integrated social life.

It is clear from the above that the Vedic view of life and civil society presents an integral and harmonious picture where everybody is free from bonds but tied to the collective interests, and all are equally important for the welfare of the society.

Notes and References

1. *Ṛgveda*, 7/66/16; *Atharvaveda*, 19/67/1-8
2. *Indra śreṣṭhāni draviṇāni dhehi
cittim dakṣasya subhagatvamahnām.
Poṣaṁ rayīnamariṣṭim tanūnām
svādmānaṁ vācaḥ sudinatvamhnām. Ṛgveda*, 2/21/6
3. *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, 7/15
4. *Pretā jayalā narā Indro vaḥ śarma yacchatu
Ugrā vaḥ santu bāhavo'nādhṛṣyā yathāsatha. Ṛgveda*, 10/103/13
5. *Ibid.*, 6/24/8
6. *Ibid.*, 8/47/6
7. *Vān ma āsannasoḥ prāṇaścakśurakṣṇoḥ śrotraṁ karṇayoḥ,
apalitāḥ keśā aśoṇā dantā bahu bāhvorbalam.
Ūrvo-rojo janghayorjavaḥ pādayoḥ,
Pratiṣṭhā ariṣṭāni me sarvātmānibhṛṣṭaḥ. Atharvaveda*, 19/60/1-2
8. *Sāmaveda*, 231
9. *Śivasamkalpasūkta, Yajurveda*, 34/1-6
10. *Tam nō dāta maruto vājinaṁ ratha āpānaṁ brahma citayaddive dive.
Iṣaṁ slotṛbhyo vjaneṣu kārave sanim medhāmariṣṭim duṣṭaraṁ sahaḥ.
Ṛgveda*, 2/34/7
11. *Yajurveda*, 1/5

12. *Suvijñānaṁ cikitṣe janāya saccāsacca vacasī paspṛdhāte*
Tayoryatsatyam yataradṛjyastaditsomo'vati hantyaśat,
Rgveda, 7/104/12
13. *Yathā no Mitro Aryamā Varuṇaḥ santi gopaḥ sugā ṛtasya panthaḥ.*
Rgveda, 8/31/13
14. *Samiddho adya rājasi devo devaiḥ sahasrajit,*
Dūto havyā kavirvaha. Rgveda, 1/189/1
15. *Ibid., 5/51/15*
16. *Aśmanvalī nṛyata sanrabhadvamultiṣṭhata prataratā sakhāyaḥ*
Atrā jahīma ya asannaśivā śivānvayamuttarembhivājān.
Rgveda 10/53/8
17. *Bhavā no agne sumanā upetau sakheva sakhye pitarēva sādhuḥ*
Purudruho hi kṣitayo janānam prati pratiṛdāhatādārātiḥ.
Rgveda, 3/18/1
18. *Ibid., 4/41/4; 8/25/5*
19. *Śuddhā na āpastanve kṣarantu yo naḥ sedurapriye taṁ nidadhmaḥ*
Pavitreṇa pṛthivī motpunāmi. Atharvaveda, 12/1/30
20. *Ūta vā yo no marcayādanāgasō rāṭivā maraḥ sānuko vṛkaḥ*
Bṛhaspate apa taṁ vartayā pathaḥ sugaṁ no asyai devavītaye kṛdhi.
Rgveda, 2/23/7
21. *Viśvādānīm sumanasāḥ syāma paśyema nu sūryamuccarantaṁ*
Tathā karadvasupatirvasūnām devāṇ ohāno 'vasāgamiṣṭhaḥ.
Rgveda, 6/52/5
22. *Pra sū ta Indra pravatā haribhyām pra te vajraḥ pramṛṣṇannetu śatrūn*
Jahi pratico anūcaḥ parāco viśvaṁ satyaṁ kṛnuhi viṣṭamastu
Rgveda, 3/30/6
23. *Yajñena yajñamayajanta devāstāni dharmāni prathamānyāsan*
Te ha nākaṁ mahimānaḥ sacanta yatra pūrve sādhyāḥ santi devāḥ.
Atharvaveda, 7/5/1
24. Balashastri Hardas, **Glimpses of the Vedic Nation** (Madras, Sri Kamakoti Publishing House), p. 401
25. *Yatra Brahma ca kṣatraṁ ca samyañcau carataḥ saha*
Taṁ lokam puṇyam prajñeṣaṁ yatra devā sahāgninā
Yajurveda, 20/25.
26. *Dṛte dṛiṇha mā mitrasya mā cakṣuṣā sarvāṇi bhūtāni samkṣantām*
Mitrasya cakṣuṣā sarvāṇi bhūtāni samikṣe mitrasy cakṣuṣā samikṣāmahe.
Yajurveda, 36/18
27. **Rgveda, 5/59/6; 5/60/5**
28. *Samānī prapā saha vo annabhāgaḥ samāne yoktre saha vo yunajmi*
Samyañco'gnim saparyatāra nābhimivābhitaḥ. Atharvaveda, 3/30/6

29. *Kṣātrāya tvam śravase tvam mahīyā iṣṭaye tuamartha.niva tvamityai
Visadrṣṇā jivitābhiṣpracakṣa ushā ajīgarbhuvanāni viśvā.
Rgveda, 1/113/6*
30. (i) *Brahma jinvatamuta jiavataṁ dhiyo hataṁ rakṣānsi sedhatamamīvaḥ*
(ii) *Kṣātram jinvatamuta jinvatam nṛhantaṁ rakṣānsi sedhatamamīvaḥ.*
(iii) *Dhenūrjñvatamuta jñvatam viśohataṁ rakṣānsi sedhatamamīvaḥ.
Rgveda, 8/35/16-18*
31. *Akṣairmā divyaḥ kṛṣimīt kṛṣasva viltte ramasva bahu manyamānaḥ
Tatra gāvah kitava tatra jāyā tanme
vicaṣṭāyanaryaḥ vicaṣṭe savitāyamaaryaḥ. Rgveda, 10/34/13*
32. *Katho nu te paricarāṇi vidvān vīryā maghavanyā cakarṣa
ya co nu nāvyaḥ kṛṇavaḥ śaviṣṭha predu tā te vidatheṣu bravāma.
Rgveda, 5/29/13*
33. *Sabhā ca mā samitiścāvalaṁ prajapaterduhitaraṁ samvidānḥ
yenā saṁgacchā upa mā sa śikṣāccāru vadāni pitaraḥ saṁgateṣu.
Atharvaveda, 7/12/1*
34. A.C. Bose, **Hymns From The Vedas** (Delhi, Asia Publishing House, 1965) p. 45.
35. *Samānī va ākūtiḥ samānā hṛdayāni vaḥ
Samānamastu vo mano yathā vch susahāsati. Rgveda, 10/191/4*

VEDIC PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

Philosophy, in India is termed as '*darśana*' and the word means realization or perception of the truth. '*darśana*' stands for true knowledge which is obtained by the seers after practising austerities.¹ Therefore, he, who has this knowledge, i.e. proper perception of the reality, is not to be bound by actions. But he, who is devoid of this perception, has to suffer bondage.² The study of *darśana* gives a corrective to the entire outlook of man, chastening and culturing all aspects of his personality. Such a training of the mind and spirit cannot be brought in just by a formal teaching of some specific subjects, it has to be a total transformation and 'manifestation of the perfection already in man.'³ This has precisely been the ideal of Vedic education which is holistic in its approach and perennial in its application. Since *darśana*, as a branch of knowledge, is merely an *upāṅga* or subsidiary of Veda, hence, the broad philosophy of Vedic education may be considered as the guiding principle of Indian Philosophy as well. The central thrust of this paper is to highlight the Vedic view of education which involves the subject, method and above all, the aims of teaching.

II

The basic nature of man, according to Vedic philosophy is spiritual, therefore true education should aim at revealing his spiritual potential. In other words, the principal objective of Vedic education has been to inspire man and inculcate in him both the curiosity and the capacity to comprehend

each and everything around him in its true form. From this point of view, education is not merely a collection of information, but realisation of the divinity inherent in man.⁴ The Vedic philosophy of education cultivates an integral view beyond the multiplicities of human experience, it strives not only for intellectual quest but also for spiritual satisfaction which is the main feature of Indian Philosophy. The word 'Veda' itself indicates that knowledge or source of knowledge which leads one to the highest spiritual end, which in turn, is not to be known by any other source.⁵ *vidyā*, another name for knowledge, is also derived from the same root *vid* (to know) and it signifies the supreme truth or integral knowledge of the reality. The Veda declares that *vidyā* or true knowledge is the knowledge of the self and it is the means for attaining liberation and immortality.⁶ The main subject of teaching, according to Vedic view is this philosophy of self or *Brahma-vidyā*,⁷ which is the science of sciences, he who does not know It, cannot achieve anything even after knowing everything else,⁸ but he who has known It, has known all that is worth knowing.

From this point of view, it may be emphasized that the Vedic philosophy of education is not only a view of life, but also a way of life, it lays greater stress on the knowledge of self, but does not negate the world. The Veda draws a clear distinction between *vidyā* and *avidyā*,⁹ the knowledge of essence and the knowledge of phenomenon; between the knowledge of self and the knowledge of things : *parā vidyā* and *aparā vidyā* to use the Upaniṣadic terminology.¹⁰ In fact, the Vedic philosophy of education admitted both, but there was never any doubt as to which was higher and more desirable. The wise ones knew "what knowledge is of most worth" to use Spencer's phrase, though not exactly in the sense in which he used it.¹¹ It was not merely a question of survival that the Vedic education focussed upon, but of course upon the question of significance, which was its prime concern. Knowledge of things and processes as also of many

more mundane subjects was very much there (as is evident from the exhaustive list of various professions enumerated in the 30th chapter of Śukla Yajurveda), but it was only secondary- the nature of reality or truth was the most important subject worthy of teaching and learning.

III

It is against this background that the Vedic sages are called *ṛṣis*, for they are the oldest and the first seers¹² of reality or truth. The *ṛṣi* or seer is a person who is possessed of vision, to whom the self-born knowledge of Veda is manifested. There are some other names also like *manīṣī* (intellectually powerful), *vipra* (the inspired one) *dhīra* (one in whom *dhī* or intellect has been roused), *vedhas* (the wise one) and *kavi*¹³ (poet-sage) which indicate the highest advancement of Vedic seers resulting from their concentrated contemplation called *tapas*.¹⁴ Yāska, in his Nirukta has mentioned that there were firstly the *ṛṣis* who were the direct seers of the reality. They were then followed by lesser men who were not capable of directly perceiving the truth but who became *ṛṣis* only through *śruti* or hearing the truths from their teachers, hence they may be called '*śrutarṣis*'¹⁵. When the later generations further deteriorated in their spiritual powers, then these *śrutarṣis* compiled the Veda, Nighaṇṭu and the Vedāṅgas¹⁶ for facilitating Vedic studies.

IV

When the Vedic seers themselves realized the truth, they evolved means and methods by which their knowledge could be acquired, conserved and transmitted to posterity. It is in this way that the stock of Vedic knowledge has been passed on from generation to generation through the process of oral transmission¹⁷ and with the help of Vedāṅgas. *śikṣā*, the Vedic word for education, is, in fact one of the six Vedāṅgas and it incorporates formal teaching processes of Veda and its oral practices. Since the Vedic texts were

regarded as sacred, a great value was attached to the very sound of their letters and syllables, hence the first step of Vedic education was correct recitation and proper pronunciation of the verses. Therefore, the first Vedāṅga was developed as the science of *śikṣā* which is held to be like the nose of *Veda-Puruṣa*.¹⁸ The word *śikṣā* is derived from *śikṣ*, to give,¹⁹ because the seers were, in this way, giving Veda or knowledge to their pupils by uttering it. An adequate training of *śikṣā* was essential for the study of Veda, the mastery of which depended upon its proper pronunciation and recitation.²⁰

It is worth mentioning here that memory played an important part in this process because the pupils had to learn by listening to their teachers and committing the *Śruti* to *smṛti*. This method of teaching involving twin methods of recitation and repetition has even inspired a whole hymn of the Ṛgveda wherein the recitation of Vedic words by the teacher and monotonous repetition by his pupils has been compared to the croaking of frogs exhilarated by the advent of rainy season.²¹ The word *sāktasya* in this hymn refers to the teacher who was possessed of the ability to teach by his knowledge of *śikṣā* according to which he was uttering and pronouncing the Vedic verses; the word *śikṣamāṇa* refers to the pupil who is learning to recite after listening from the lips of his teacher.²² In other words, this was the phonetic way of teaching applied by the Vedic preceptors which is still one of the very useful techniques of teaching.

It has to be clarified at the same time that although this *śravaṇa* or listening to the teacher and then correctly reciting the Vedic verses comprised an important part of Vedic education, yet it was not all in itself. The *maṇana* (contemplation) and *nididhyāsana* (comprehension) of their meanings was equally important.²³ Ṛgveda refers to such contemplation as a period of silence, during which the seers achieve enlightenment.²⁴ There are many more passages in the Vedic literature which not only condemn and ridicule

those persons whose knowledge is confined only to the repetition of its words without any understanding of their meaning but also emphasize the supreme need of realizing the hidden import of the words by continuous concentration and contemplation.²⁵ The word *mantra*²⁶ itself suggests the need for meditation and introspection on part of the seeker of truth. In fact, the individual as the seeker is the centre of education in Vedic view, therefore his inherent search for growing implies an orientation for self-development.

Accordingly questions played an important part in the process of teaching in Vedic philosophy. It was not a method of teaching by lecturing, instruction or imposition but by training the student in rousing his intellectual quest. In other words, education was learning-oriented and not examination-oriented. The Yajurveda declares that 'for the acquisition of knowledge, bring the questioning man.'²⁷ At another places, the Rgveda also lays emphasis on the questioning²⁸ method. The famous query 'who is the deity we shall worship with our offerings'?²⁹ is characteristic of this very inquisitive attitude. In fact, this constant urge to inquire and acquire some new knowledge has been the birthplace of philosophy as such and more so for the Vedic philosophy which is dealing with the highest truths of life and the world.

This brings us to the idea of *svādhyāya* in the Vedic texts, i.e. the student of *vidyā* (higher learning) should consistently and tirelessly indulge in self-study. The efficacy of *svādhyāya* is elaborately brought out in the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa which regards it as a form of sacrifice to the *Brahman* by which an imperishable world is gained³⁰. The Taittirīya Āraṇyaka also regards *svādhyāya* as *Brahmayajña* or sacrifice of devotion and lays down certain directions as to the exact place and time of study.³¹ But it is worth mentioning that the necessity of self-study did not preclude the student from going and finding a teacher for himself, the futility of mere self-study is also recognised by the Vedic

sages.³² Here *pravaçana*, or instruction by the teacher (of course, after appropriate degree of *svādhyāya*) is also indispensable to the acquisition of *Vidyā*, because this is not an ordinary knowledge which can be attained by anyone without the proper guidance of a *guru*. In short, we may say that **the seeker with a quest and the seer with a vision** are the two parametres of Vedic education. It is also to be noted that Vedic education was not regarded as an end in itself but as a means to an end, the attainment of *Brahmajñāna*, the sacred knowledge of the Supreme Reality.

V

In keeping with this concern for final ends, Vedic philosophy of education accepts *brahmacarya*, a system of self-discipline as a pre-requisite for everybody aspiring to attain higher knowledge or *Brahman*. The conception of *brahmacarya* laid greater emphasis on discipline (*caryā*) than mere learning³³ or knowledge (*Brahman*). Actually *Brahman* signifies the Supreme Reality, the highest truth. In order to attain this highest knowledge, the *brahmacārī* or a man of spiritual training was required. Stern simplicity, selflessness and sublimation of the sensual instinct assisted by the quiet natural surroundings of forest life were an essential part of this education that aimed at an integral development of physical and moral stamina as well as spiritual power.³⁴ It wants man to rise above the animal plane of existence by being born 'a second time' (*dvija*) on the spiritual plane. The first is the natural birth from natural parents but second is from the *guru* who initiates the disciple into the course of *brahmacarya*.³⁵ The parents give birth to the physical body but it is in *upanayana* that the preceptor blesses the disciple with a second and better birth of learning and knowledge.³⁶ This process of initiating is not merely a ritualistic practice but a kind of preparation, both physical and mental, on the part of the student. This is called a *samskāra* which was supposed to be a purifying and ennobling operation prior to the admission of the

brahmacārin to the *āśrama* of the *ācārya*.

In fact, this method of purifying the individual through *saṁskāra* is also a very important feature of Vedic education well reflected in the practices and austerities prescribed for the *brahmacārin*.³⁷ The *Brahmacārin* was required to put the sticks (*samidhā*) in fire as if to inspire him to kindle the fire of intellect within him.³⁸ This was meant to be an initiation into an eventful and enraging life of self-reliance, self-confidence and controlled thought as well as action. The disciple was invigorated with a spirit of confidence that he will succeed with self-determination and tireless perseverance.³⁹ The rituals created in him a faith that the supernatural powers were at his back to bless his endeavour with success; they instilled in him an ambition to become as powerful as Indra, as lustrous as the Sun, whom he offered his prayers morning and evening, and as shining as the Fire, whom he worshipped; there was nothing impossible to achieve for such a disciple, who imbibed a conviction and the confidence that he was powerful enough to face even death, who could dare not touch him.⁴⁰

According to the Vedic philosophy of education, the student, disciplined through *brahmacarya*, did not live a cloistered life, cut off from society. On the other hand, after being consecrated, he takes hold of the work and constantly brings them near him.⁴¹ It was the usual practice for him to go about begging for the upkeep of the *āśrama* of his *ācārya*;⁴² this rule was prescribed for the student to produce in him a sense of humility. Hence, whatever his social status, the student had to beg alms in the neighbourhood, as if he was poor and become devoid of shame.⁴³ Briefly put, the *Brahmacārin* after his initiation into a new life, whereby he is recreated by his *guru*, had to undergo a dual course of discipline, physical and spiritual. This was, in other words, the Vedic way of education in which the studentship was evolved into a science or art of life. It was evidently and essentially a method of self-direction for the student, guided by an enlightened teacher, of course.

It is a psychologically proven fact that nothing can be taught to an unwilling person or to one who is unable to comprehend what is being conveyed to him. It is reinforced by the fact that the striving towards perfection has to come from preponderant and appropriate efforts of the student. Therefore the Vedic system of education very clearly restricted the right of admission to the field of learning by an effective programme for testing the eligibility of the seeker. He who does not have the inclination towards knowledge, he who cannot practise the essentially prescribed austerities for attaining It, and he who does not have the suitable disposition for learning, should not be given this knowledge according to Yāska.⁴⁴ It means that the intellectual and spiritual quest was to be aroused by the pupil within himself, hence there is a difference of level in the learning capacity of the students depending upon the degree of their desire to learn. The Veda accepts this fact and states that the disciples are great or small according to their spiritual advancement.⁴⁵ In this way the Vedic system of education was standardized on the basis of certain universally admitted and established ideals and practices connoted by the term *Brahmacarya*.

VI

Although education in Vedic philosophy puts the primary responsibility on the student, yet there is no doubt about the fact that the teacher was regarded in high esteem. The Veda speaks of the teacher as a spiritual mother who is a guide for his disciples.⁴⁶ The blessings of instructions by the learned teacher are explicitly mentioned in a Vedic verse⁴⁷ and it is said in another one that the seeker of truth should always have great sense of reverence towards his teacher, since the truth can be obtained by reverence⁴⁸ alone. The teacher, on his part, was not merely an instructor or a preceptor but an *ācārya* who taught more through his conduct than through his words.⁴⁹ The hermitage of the *ācārya* was the centre of learning, the *gurukula*, where the

disciples had to live as his *antevāsins*. The *ācārya* himself is a *Brahmacārin*⁵⁰ in the sense that he was always engrossed in the spiritual knowledge, *Brahman*. In other words, he was known as *Brahmavid*, knower of *Brahman*. He, therefore, by the *tapas* of his own *Brahmācārya*, seeks the pupil who is also a *Brahmacārin*.⁵¹ The *ācārya* would not accept any fees from the pupils under his guidance, since teaching was his mission and not a profession. Every teacher felt that his primary and paramount concern was to discharge himself of the sacred obligation he owed to the *ṛsis*, his predecessors; hence he took to his profession as a supreme religious duty and since he used to take a number of pupils, he would have the satisfaction of finding that he has been able to transmit in them several centres and sources of knowledge where there was earlier only one such centre and source, i.e., himself.

Every teacher's home was as if a separate school for learning some particular branch of Veda. Hence, the system was based upon a continuous personal contact between the teacher and the taught which could be cultivated only at home. Moreover, this system helped the teacher to address himself separately to the instruction of each pupil. This was in fact the secret of education as a character-building, value-based method of instruction. The teacher took complete charge of the pupil and promised to purify his physical as well as mental traits.⁵²

VII

In simpler terms, the Vedic view of education had a proper perspective, i.e., the overall development of the individual to grow into the highest possibilities : physical, mental, intellectual, ethical and spiritual. It was a demand for self-determination by the individual which was consistently and systematically resolved by the integral and character-building principles of Vedic education. The fundamental aim of Vedic education was a pursuit for perfection, search for truth and a will to realize the higher

and holistic development of personality. The Vedic seers were sure that no education is successful if it does not bring a radical change in human consciousness and character; true education transforms the knower in the process of knowing, since it is a harmonious method of understanding rather than piece-meal collection of some subjects and topics prescribed in the syllabus. Hence, while laying a great emphasis on the role of the teacher as a guide and an example himself for inspiring and enkindling the quest within the students, Vedic philosophy of education also envisages that the basic, inherent tendency of the learner is the most important factor in the process of learning.

VIII

To conclude, it may be said that the Vedic ideal of education is to transcend one from high to higher and then the highest,⁵³ it teaches the path of liberation and leads one towards immortality. In other words, true education according to Vedic philosophy, teaches **man** not only to become **human** but to reach the **divine**;⁵⁴ the aim of Vedic education is not only humanization, but divinization of man against the tendency of mechanization and industrialisation in today's world.⁵⁵ Until that goal is achieved, man's education is not complete, it must continue uninterruptedly. The essence of education is ever the same. The forms may change and the details may differ but the central insights always remain the same. Although it is true that we should not make a fetish of the past, as an anonymous thinker has aptly put it in these words, 'We do not belong to the dawns of past but to the noons of future.' But at the same time we should also look back and see if the old ideals can offer some new insights.

The crisis of contemporary education is that today 'our knowledge is provisional, empirical, specialised, knowing more and more about less and less, a scheme of limited

orderliness but quite unrelated to any first principles or purposes'.⁵⁶ Rightly did Eliot lament that 'Where is wisdom in all this profusion of knowledge; where is knowledge, in the crowd of informations?'⁵⁷

True education does not cease with the getting of a degree from some recognised university, rather it starts from the point where one has been stimulated towards life and the totality of the being. It is here that the Vedic philosophy of education comes to our rescue, since it is basically a training in totality, an attempt to lead man towards his own evolution, a quest of the spirit behind this universe. That is what makes it perennial, a philosophy of life for ever and so it is relevant upto the period of humanity and the point of universality. The man-making nature and the character-building aspect of this education is the eternal need of mankind.

To sum up in the words of Manu, 'Let all men of this earth learn the lessons in their characters from the learned ones in this country, India!'⁵⁸

Lastly, let us pray in the words of Veda itself,

*"That which is in the firmament, in the air
that which is in trees and in foliage,
by listening to which creatures are on the move
May that spiritual knowledge Brahman,
come to us again."*⁵⁹

Notes and References

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2. *Saṁyagdarśanasampannaḥ karmabhir na nibadhyate.
Darśanena vihīnastu saṁsāraṁ pratipadyate. Manusmṛti*, 6/74
3. Vivekanānda on Education
4. *Śṛṇvantu viśve amṛtasya putrāḥ. Rgveda*, 10/13/1
5. *Pratyakṣenānumityā vā yastūpāyo na vidyate.
Etaṁ vidanti Vedenā tasmād Vedasya vedatā.
Sāyaṇa in introduction to Yajurveda Bhāṣya*

6. *Vidyayā amṛtamaśnute. Yajurveda*, 40/11.
7. *Brahmavidyām sarvavidyāpratīṣṭhām. Muṇḍakopaniṣad*, 1/1
8. *Yastanna veda kim ṛcā kariṣyāti? Rgveda*, 1/164/39
also-*Vedanasadhanena Vedena vedyamaviditvā kim sadhayatīti?*
Sāyaṇa on the above.
9. *Vidyāñcāvidyāñca yastadvedobhayaṁ saha. Yajurveda*, 40/11
10. *Dve vidye vedītavye-parā caivāparā ca. Muṇḍakopaniṣad*, 1/4.
11. Quoted by Sisirkumar Ghose in his address at the Yale University, USA.
12. *Rṣayo mantradrāṣṭāraḥ, Rṣirdarśanat. Nirukta*, 1/6/5
13. Bose, A.C., *Hymns from the Vedas*, (Bombay, 1966) p. 4
14. (i) *Devā etasyāmadantā pūrve sapta rṣayastapase ye niṣeduh . Rgveda*, 10/109/4
(ii) *Tapasā ye anādhṛṣyāstapasā ye svaryayuh. Tapo ye cakrire mahastānścīdevāpi gacchatāt. Rgveda*, 10/154/2
15. Durgacarya in his commentary on Nirukta, 1/6/5
16. *Nirukta*, 1/20
17. Macdonell, A.A. *History of Sanskrit Literature*, p. 14.
18. *Śikṣā ghrāṇam tu Vedasya ... Pāṇinīya Śikṣa*, 41
19. Mookerjee, Radha Kumud, *Indian Education*, p. 57
20. *Svaravarṇādyuccāraṇaprakāro śikṣyāte upadisyāte yatra sa śikṣā. Sāyaṇa in introduction to Rgvedabhasya*
21. *Rgveda*, 7/103.
22. *Yadesām anyo anyasya vācam śaktasyeva vadati śikṣamāṇaḥ. Ibid.*
23. *Ātma vāre draṣṭavyaḥ śrotavyo mantavyo nididhyāsilavyaḥ. Brhadāranyakopaniṣad*, 2/4/5
24. *Samvatsaram śaśayāyā brāhmaṇa vratcārīṇaḥ vācam parjanyaḥ pramāṇāḥ pra mandūkā avādiṣuḥ. Rgveda*, 7/103/1.
25. (i) *Adhenva carali mayayaṣṭā vācam śuśruvam aphalamapuṣpām, Rgveda*, 10/71/5.
(ii) *Sthāṇurayaṁ bhārahārah kilābhudadhitya Vedam na vijānāti yo' rtham. yo arthajñāḥ sa it sakalam bhadramaśnute nākameti jñānavidhūlāpāpma. Nirukta*, 1/18
26. *Mantrā mananāt, Nirukta*, 7/3/6
27. *Āśikṣāyai praśninam. Yajurveda*, 30/10.
28. (i) *Acikitvāncikituṣāścidatra kavīn pṛcchāmi na vidmane na vidvān Vi yastatambha śadimā rajānsyasyajasya rupe kimapi svidakam. Rgveda*, 1/164/6
(ii) *yo naḥ pitā janitā no vidhātā dhāmāni veda bhuvanāni visva yo devānām nāmadhā eka eva tam sampraṣnam bhuvanā yantyanā. Ibid*, 10/82/3

29. *Kasmāi devāya haviā vidhema?* Ibid, 10/82/3
30. *Svādhyāyo vai Brahmajājñah. Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* 11/5/6/3.
31. **Taittirīya Āraṇyaka**, 2/9-15
32. **Kathopanishad**, 2/8; **Muṇḍakopniṣad**, 1/2/3. 3/2/3
33. Vedamitra, **Education In Ancient India**, p.14 (Delhi, 1964)
34. Bose, A.C., **Hymns From the Vedas**, p. 55
35. *Ācārya upanayamāno brahmacāriṇaṃ kṛnute garbhamantaḥ
Taṃ rātrīstisra udare bibharti.....*
Atharvaveda, 11/5/3
36. *Sa hi vidhātāḥ taṃ janayati tā śreṣṭham janmaśarīrameva mātāpitarau
janayataḥ. Āpastamba Dharmasūtra*, 1/1/5/17
37. *Brahmacārī samidhā mekhalayā śrameṇa lokānstapasā pīpartī.*
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38. *Yathā ha vā agnih samiddho rocate evaṃ ha vai sa snātvā rocate
brahmacāryaṃ carati. Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* 11/3/3/1.
39. Balashastri Hardas, **Glimpses of the Vedic Nation**, p. 252.
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sampradadau. Gopatha Brāhmaṇa*, 2/6.
41. *Brahmacāryeti samidhā samiddhah..... lokāntsaṃgrbhya
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45. *Akṣāṇvantaḥ karṇavantaḥ sakhāyo manojaveśvasamā babhūvuḥ
Ādadhnāsa upakakshāsa u tve hṛdā iva snātvā u tve dadṛše.*
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46. *Taṃ rātrīstisra udare bibharti Atharvaveda*, 11/5/3
47. *Akṣetrād hyaprāt sa praiti kṣetravidanuśiṣṭaḥ.*
Etad vai bhadramanuśāsanasyola śrutim vindatyanjasinām.
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48. *Vratena dikṣāmāpnoti dikṣayāpnoti dakṣinām.*
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49. *Ācārāṃ grāhayati ācīnoti artgān buddhimiti vā. Nirukta*, 1/2/3
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Manusmṛti, 2/20
59. *Yadyantarikṣe yadi vāta āsa yaḍi vrkṣetu yadi volapeṣu*
yadaśṛavan paśava udyamānam tad Brāhmanam punarasmānupaitu.
Atharvaveda, 7/66/1.

INDIAN FEMINISM AND VEDIC THOUGHT

The present paper attempts to reconstruct a positive theory of feminism in the context of ancient Indian social situation obtaining during the Vedic times. The purpose of this delineation is to sketch an outline of the predicament in which we, the women of India, are placed today vis-a-vis the happy position of women in the Vedic society. This historical reference is undertaken with a view to be benefitted and to derive inspirations from the gender relations prevalent during those days, to draw upon the status and roles assigned to women in a society which was just and egalitarian so that in modern times when we are deeply concerned with the issues of gender-equality, gender justice, dignity and self-determination of women etc., we may emulate the social structure of those days.

To a modern positivistic mind this account may appear to be idealistic but in view of the established fact that it was in practice during the hoary past it may provide new insights, new intuitions and new attitudes to the contemporary world which is beset with the vexed problems of subjugation and exploitation of women in almost every society in every part of the globe. So the Vedic view should not be regarded as just historical, something of the past, it may provide a blueprint for any future social organisation as in all normative generalisations, the take off point is the actually lived

situations and their universalisability can be substantiated on the ground of human nature being the same all through.

II

The universal aspiration that women and men should be treated equally, is scarcely contentious today. More than anything else, feminist demand for gender-equality is based on this very central point. Feminist thought has emerged in this century as the most challenging issue of social organisation and therefore it is too important and demanding to be ignored by anyone. It may be said without exaggeration that feminism is one of the expressions of the sensibilities of the contemporary society as a whole to which nearly all of the most important debates of the day, do make some reference.¹

Feminism as a movement may be understood in terms of a need and a desire that women be recognised as individuals in their own right. From this point of view, it is an expression of female dignity and self-determination.² Whether or not we subscribe to the philosophies expressed in the different types of modern feminist movements,³ we are all influenced by the changes in values that have taken place because we are passing through a period of major transition. In fact, feminist movement has been necessitated by the present day social situation. It has been partly successful in generating social awareness for equality of status and opportunities to women who constitute the vital half of the society. But it has not been able to bring about gender equality and women's liberation. This fact is amply evinced in a report of the Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs as follows :

"While women represent 50 percent of the world population, they perform nearly two thirds of all working hours, receive one tenth of the world income and own less than one percent of the world property."

This clearly establishes the need to look for alternative approaches to women's issues, such approaches which are

not only efficacious and practicable but which can also bring about social harmony and solidarity, which do not envisage any gender bias and which treat women at par with men. It is from this point of view that Vedic feminism seems to have relevance in modern times.

The central thrust of this paper, therefore, is to present a holistic and organic picture of the social organisation as it is propounded, propagated and practiced during the Vedic period consisting in perfect parity between man and woman in every sphere of life and existence. The Vedic view of the status and role of women may be termed as '*Vedic feminism*', which is positive and constructive, healthy and balanced, based on the principles of mutual complementarity and respect. Even if a doubtful mind might question as to whether it was ever really practiced, it is worth practising and emulating. No doubt there is biological disparity between the sexes and therefore some difference in role-play has to be accepted but this is not to be regarded as a hindrance to social equality, since this equality is a psychological phenomenon rather than a physical trait. In this way, Vedic feminism, in a great deal, speaks well beyond the concerns of what is usually thought today to be feminism in other parts of the globe. Although the delineation attempted here is more descriptive than analytical but the social situation and the projected aspirations therein may be of great relevance to the contemporary world.

It is worth mentioning here that the Vedic view of feminism is quite convincing in the context of present needs and aspirations of the women around the world as they are being reflected in the demands for more and more empowerment and equality of status and opportunities. The glimpses of women that we get through Vedic verses are enough to show that they had a noble role-model in the past and to encourage that they shall prove themselves even more worthy in the future.

III

Indian feminism is basically different from the Western feminism in the sense that it has never been aggressive or militant like its European counterpart perhaps because it did not have to face much opposition.⁴ At the same time, it must be admitted that the role of Indian women in modern times has been full of contradictions. On the one hand, we hear of the glorious and enviable position of women in the Vedic age while on the other, we see everywhere that they're being exploited as the weaker sex having no economic or social access nor political equality. But things have and are being changed-albeit slowly and the new, confident Indian woman is emerging on the world scene, coming back to the mainstream of social life to reassume her rightful place.

To quote from the report of the Committee on the Status of women in India : "Traditional (Post Vedic) India had seen a woman only as a member of the family or group-as daughters, wives and mothers, and not as an individual with an identity or rights of her own. The radicalism of the constitution and its deliberate departure from the inherited social system lay in its implicit assumption that every adult woman, whatever her social position or accomplishments, will function as a citizen and as an individual partner in the task of nation building."⁵ This has to be understood in the historical setting of the Indian freedom movement under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, who declared himself to be "uncompromising in the matter of women's rights."⁶

In fact, this merging of the Indian women's movement in the freedom movement gave it a wider perspective and hence the women's movement in India has got an identity distinct from similar movements in other countries. The decision to work for the general liberation of all the oppressed and exploited, rather than women alone, prevented the Indian movement from the self-defeating and alienating elitism of its Western counterparts.⁷ This peculiar

nature of Indian feminism has to be kept in mind before we proceed further to analyse its roots in the Vedic perspective.

IV

Vedic feminism is characterized by a spiritual outlook which is at the core of Vedic philosophy. Women here are depicted as craving for the eternal and the immortal knowledge⁸ rather than the material and the mundane things. It can be well substantiated that women in those days had a free and fair access to education and they even had the courage and conviction to challenge the intellectual giants like the sage Yājñavalakya. The names of Gārgi and Maitreyi are very well known in the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad. The searching cross-examination of Yājñavalakya by Gārgi shows that she was dialectician and philosopher of a high order.⁹ There are no signs of disparity between sexes at this level, no gender bias is visible here. Women participated in the learned assemblies as well as in the battle.¹⁰ There are more than twenty female seers of Vedic hymns mentioned in the Bṛhaddevatā.¹¹ There are good many passages in the R̥gveda which are sufficient to prove that women enjoyed equal rights with men in the early Vedic period.¹² They were not denied any right.¹³ They were regarded with due respect in every sphere of life and they were not subject to any of the merciless laws of an unsympathetic society.¹⁴

From this point of view, women do not seem to be standing on an antagonistic pedestal, rather they are portrayed as essentially complementary to men. This idea of complementarity is very well reflected in the later metaphysical conceptions of *prakṛti* and *puruṣa* (though metaphorical) put forth by the *Sāṃkhya* system of Indian Philosophy. The idea of *śakti* and *śaktimān* enunciated in the Indian mythology does not envisage any difference in the sexes, but it is a relation of total identity or inseparability - none can do without the other, this is the core of Indian feminism which led to the Indian myth of '*Ardhanārīśvara*'.¹⁵

In fact, the Vedic philosophy does not conceive any sort of discrimination between man and woman since as per the Vedic cosmogony, the Supreme Being divided Himself in two equal halves for their creation.¹⁶ Therefore male and female are like two parts of the same substance, two sides of the same reality,¹⁷ and there should be no basis for disparity or bias.

This metaphysical presupposition leads to the high social status which is assigned to a woman in the Vedic society. She herself boastfully declares that : 'I am the flag of the society, the very high forehead of it.'¹⁸

Woman is even said to be the creator of the world,¹⁹ she is noble, pious and worthy.²⁰ She had full freedom to choose her husband,²¹ and this means that she was married at a mature age and child marriage was not prevalent. She was not confined to hearth and home, nor was she secluded in purdah, but was an equal partner in family as well as public life. There is no evidence to show that a girl was regarded as unwanted baby, rather we have a prayer for the birth of a scholarly daughter²² and also a sense of pride in having such a daughter.²³ The available evidence is enough to show that the woman could be initiated in Vedic studies and the marriage or remarriage of a daughter was also not a difficult problem, hence it may be deduced that the birth of a daughter was not a source of consternation to the family in the Vedic and Upaniṣadic ages.²⁴

This fact is very well reflected in the Vedic marriage ceremony where friendship is solicited between the husband and wife.²⁵ During *saptapadi*, an important ceremony in the marriage rituals, the bridegroom says to the bride "*Sakhā saptapadī bhava*". It proves that in the household as well as in the society, she has the place of *sakhā*, i.e., of a friend of equal status. So, it is clear that she was really a *sahacharī* and not *anucharī*. There is a perfect parity between the two which is expressed in the Vedic prayers where oneness of hearts is sought between the husband and wife.²⁶ Here there is no

better half or the worse half but just the two equal halves. Marriage in Vedic philosophy is not a compromise or a contract undertaken for physical pleasures or material comforts, but a sacrament, a fulfillment of the highest goal of life, a perfect companionship. It is therefore designated as *āśrama* meaning total functional dedication to the cause of the familial and religious duties. Both husband and wife have equal rights as well as duties for the welfare of society; there is no difference at all²⁷ - they act as if they are one single unit, hence the name *dampatī*²⁸ (both are owners of the house). The Veda goes even a step further and declares that it is the wife who symbolises the house²⁹ and not vice versa. It is in this background that she is called as *samrājñī* (illuminant, empress) of the house.³⁰ Can a nobler depiction of womanhood be thought of?

As stated above, marriage in Vedic society was deemed as a religious duty, hence it was laid down as a rule that the husband cannot perform any religious sacrifice without his wife sitting by his side.³¹ In fact he is incomplete until he unites with his wife³² and the wife is called a *patnī* only because she partakes with her husband in the sacrificial rituals.³³ She is designated as *dharmapatnī* whereas the husband is merely a *gṛhapati*.³⁴ Not only that, he cannot even desire to ascend to the heaven alone, he calls his wife to accompany him there too.³⁵ In this way, Vedic marriage is an inseparable bond which gives equal status to both husband and wife. Here woman was viewed not as a thing of pleasure, but as a partner in the religious duties. Hence there is no scope for subjugation or exploitation. In Vedic period, both the husband and the wife lived in perfect harmony and both were regarded as a unit of society. This is evident from the hymn of the R̥gveda embodying the nuptial ceremony, as well as from many other references to the wifhood of a woman, where she is depicted as sharing the burden of her husband, not only in domestic life but in social and religious ceremonies as well.³⁶ From this it

may be presumed that husband and wife denote an ideal couple, a perfect pair, equal partners in domestic and social life.

It is noteworthy that in the Vedic literature although a woman's prime role is portrayed as a wife only, yet several other forms of feminine role are also suggested by various names and epithets used to denote a woman. It is quite interesting to derive the exact meaning of these words because it may help in giving a better idea of different roles of woman in home and in society. For instance, a woman as wife is denoted by three words : *jāyā*, *jani* and *patnī*. Of these, *jāyā* is the woman who gives birth to one's progeny, *jani* is the mother of children and *patnī* is the co-partner in the religious duties.

Similarly woman is designated as :

1. *Aditi*, because she is not dependent (Nirukta, 4/22)
2. *Aghnyā*, for she is not to be hurt (Y.V. 8/43)
3. *Bṛhatī*, for she is liberal (at heart) (Y.V. 11/64)
4. *Chandrā*, because she is happy (Y.V. 8/43)
5. *Devakāmā*, since she is pious. (A.V. 14/1/47)
6. *Devī*, since she is divine (A.V. 14/1/45, Y.V. 4/23)
7. *Dhruvā*, for she is firm (Y.V. 11/64)
8. *Havyā*, because she is worthy of invocation (Y.V. 8/43)
9. *Idā*, for she is worshippingable (Y.V. 8/43)
10. *Jyotā*, because she is illuminating, bright (Y.V. 8/43)
11. *Kāmyā*, because she is lovable (Y.V. 8/43)
12. *Kṣamā*, for she is tolerant/indulgent/patient (A.V. 12/1/29)
13. *Mahī*, since she is great (Y.V. 8/43)
14. *Menā*, because she deserves respect (Nirukta 3/21/2)
15. *Nārī*, for she is not enimical to anyone (A.V. 14/1/59)
16. *Purandhī*, for she is munificent, (Y.V. 22/22)

17. *Rantā*, because she is lovely (Y.V. 8/43)
18. *Ṛtāvarī*, *Ṛtachit*, for she is the preserver/fosterer of truth (R.V. 2/41/18)
19. *Sanjāyā*, since she is victorious (R.V. 10/159/3)
20. *Saraswatī*, since she is scholarly (Y.V. 20/84)
21. *Simhī*, since she is courageous (Y.V. 5/12)
22. *Śivā*, for she is benevolent (A.V. 14/1/64)
23. *Śivatamā*, since she is the noblest (R.V. 10/85/37)
24. *Strī*, since she is modest (R.V. 8/39/9, Nirukta 3/21/2)
25. *Subhagā*, because she is fortunate (Y.V. 8/43)
26. *Subudhā*, for she is knowledgeable (A.V. 14/2/75)
27. *Sumangalī*, since she is auspicious (A.V. 14/2/26)
28. *Suśevā*, for she is pleasant (A.V. 14/2/26)
29. *Suvarchā*, since she is splendid (A.V. 14/4/47)
30. *Suyamā*, since she is self disciplined. (A.V. 14/2/18)
31. *Syonā*, for she is noble (A.V. 14/2/27)
32. *Virinī*, since mother of brave sons (R.V. 10/86/9, 10)
33. *Viśrutā*, since she is learned (Y.V. 8/43)
34. *Yaśasvatī*, for she is glorious (R.V. 1/79/1)
35. *Yoṣā*, because she is intermingled with man, she is not separate (Nirukta 3/15/1)

All of these words have separate connotations and various shades of their meaning can be grasped exactly only by referring to the context. Still a hint is given here with a view to denote the respectable status of woman in the Vedic society.

V

Human equality is, no doubt, a mark of civil society. In a civil society, there must be respect for human rights and right to equality is a fundamental right. In contemporary society, we are rights-oriented and therefore we talk in terms

of human rights, women's rights etc. But the Vedic view is basically different from this standpoint in that it is not right-based, rather it is duty-oriented. A social set-up based on duties is naturally more harmonious than the one based on rights. It is so because in duty-consciousness there is a feeling of sacrifice and co-operation, but no conflict or antagonism. In a sustainable democratic society where there is inevitable need for mutual care, regard and consideration, one may legitimately talk of rights in general and human rights in particular, which are inalienable, non-negotiable and politically universal, but for a smooth social structuring and functioning, duty-centric approach may be more conducive for the strengthening of family bonds and social solidarity. It may have another added advantage of developing environmental awareness.

VI

Even if we forget about duty-centeredness and talk of rights only, then also in Vedic perspective, neither individual rights nor equal rights are to be sought after, rather joint rights are to be proposed for all the human beings³⁷ and more so for the husband and wife.³⁸ The Veda teaches us to be 'humans' and not to be 'he-mans' or 'she-mans'.³⁹

Moreover, a human rights' claim should begin first with equality of status between man and woman, otherwise the claim of human rights will be self-deceit. In other words, a human right is fake without human dignity and human dignity is above gender-bias. Hence each and every human being is to be respected as an individual in his/her own right.

In the West, during Renaissance period, there has been a revolt against social inequality and in the French Revolution the three ideals of Equality, Liberty and Justice were prominently put forth, but it seems ironical that even while projecting Equality, Liberty and Justice as ideals of humankind, no attention was paid to equality between man

and woman. Unfortunately, even at the fag end of the twentieth century, all calls for promotion and protection of women's rights have been mostly usurped by menfolk in spite of all tall talks of Equality, Liberty and Justice.

On the other hand, when we talk of women's empowerment, we have to be very cautious and careful about its limits, otherwise it will prove to be a political slogan only. Empowerment should be accompanied with disempowerment, if one section of the society is to be empowered, it should automatically disempower the other. Secondly, empowerment should be facilitated alongwith suitable opportunities and conducive conditions for its efficacious employment.

In Vedic society, there was no need felt for any talk of empowerment, since it was a gender-just, duty-oriented society. But in the present scenario, when the social mindset is rights-oriented, we have to talk of empowerment of that section of humanity which is oppressed or suppressed. In the history of humankind, more often than not, the status of woman has been relegated to a subordinate position and her role confined to the private, rather than the public, the reproductive, rather than the productive.⁴⁰ At the same time, in idealistic projections and in some recognised situations, she has been assigned a status and a role, equal to, if not higher than the man. There have been social organisations of the matriarchal type in some places. But these have been more as exceptions than as a general rule.

Both man and woman are an integral part of society. If the humanity's future has to be revitalised, women have to cast off the shackles of social taboos, superstitions, and above all, ignorance, and thus become equal partners with men in shaping its image. Male and female have to live in co-ordination as has been argued by Laclau, one of the modern scholars : "Politics of pure difference would be self-defeating." In his provocative essay, "Beyond Emancipation" he states : "We are today coming to terms with our finitude

and with the political possibility that it opens. This is the point from which the potentially liberatory discourses of our postmodern age have to start. We can perhaps say that we are at the end of emancipation and at the beginning of freedom."⁴¹ On the contrary, there are some other contemporary scholars who argue for the cause of feminism but they do not address the question of relationship and connectedness between men and women. They probably think that one can live in a world of differences without the need for any coordination whatsoever and it seems as if for them to talk of a system of coordination is totalization.⁴² Scholars with this differentiated approach tell us that no assumptions can be made about the character, function and definition of the relationship between men and women.⁴³

It is at this crucial point that the holistic philosophy of the Vedas comes to our rescue according to which both the male and female are inevitably complementary to one another and this would be a different world, if only both of them could lead a harmonious life and work together, not in confrontation but with cooperation. But while Vedic philosophy can provide us a gender-just situation in the form of a theory, we have to cultivate and demonstrate an inner preparedness for participation in a humane and dignified society. "Both theory and practice now have to be given radically transformative meanings. Making our home and world just for women requires fundamental structural transformation and the striving towards the overcoming of ego has to be practised alongwith structural transformation of patriarchy without wasting our time in deciding which one should come first and which one should come later."⁴⁴ Hence collective action and critical reflection on gender justice today has to strive towards the evolutionary ideal of self-transformation, an ideal which is a challenge for the humanity as the 'Mother' (Pondicherry) has observed in this context : "The problem of woman is as old as humanity in its appearance.... In any case the indubitable fact is there...

That is why no law can liberate women unless they are free themselves; men too likewise cannot, inspite of all their habits of domination, cease to be slaves unless they are freed from all their inner slavery."⁴⁵

There is no denying of the fact that the question of gender-justice is a double-edged, open and universal question which involves its so called oppositional elements, that is both male and female. It is both a man or woman's problem as well as a human problem; we cannot undermine the significance of either. Nor can the laws and constitutions bring forth any magic solution to this age-old problem. If the legal framework alone was an evidence of a gender-just society, India would not be found lacking. As far as the legal rights of Indian women are concerned the constitution not only grants equality to men and women under article 14, it also empowers the state to "adopt measures of positive discrimination in favour of women to assist them to overcome cumulative socio-economic, educational and political oppression faced by centuries." It means that even the law-makers of our land were aware that women had to live a life of oppression and exploitation for centuries starting from the post-Vedic period. It is not possible at this juncture to go into details of the reasons for this changed scenario in the Indian society, but this much is obviously certain that laws and further legislation are hardly the answer today. "The hurdle now is a non-conducive mindset rather than an unfavourable legal framework. In such a scenario, it becomes obvious that more than the provisions of bills and directives, the need of the hour is a change in the mindset. One that does not look at emerging female empowerment as a threat ... Instead, as Naomi Wolf states : "Women just want to share. Equality makes the world better, for men as well as women."⁴⁶

Women have come a long way in terms of their constitutional and legal equality, but the path to equality of access is still a long one. The lag between the theory and

practice of equality between the two genders may be attributed to several factors : social and familial prejudices, ethnic and regional differentials, absence of adequate vocational training and skill vise-a-vis men. Last but not the least, the women's self-perception of their own potential, often underrated, determines to a great extent the priorities.

Among the various factors affecting women's emancipation today, perhaps the crucial one has been changes in the life-style as a result of the technological revolution, particularly in the developed countries.⁴⁷ Barbara Ward's list of the major catalysts of social change including modern medical measures, improved communications, increasing urbanization, new opening of paid employment, education, political emancipation and legal change⁴⁸ seems to be fairly exhaustive in this respect.

All that is required today is to give women of the world what they have been deprived of, i.e. to inculcate in them a sense of self-respect. They need to be self-propelled, able to take decisions and then to act on them... Let woman grow in self-esteem, self-respect and let her be conscious of her rights when she is performing her duties... Let her also be recognized as a respectable, moral, responsible human being.⁴⁹ Let us all join hands and work hard to see that "no woman feels the degradation of being a woman - not the degradation of being that 'God' made her a woman but what 'man' has made her."⁵⁰ If only the women were also provided equal opportunities in all walks of life, the picture of the present world would have been very different. Ernestine has rightly echoed the same feeling :

"Humanity recognises no sex, mind recognises no sex; life and death, pleasure and pain, happiness and misery recognise no sex. Like man, woman comes involuntarily into existence; like him she possesses physical and mental and moral powers: ... Like him she has to pay the penalty for disobeying nature's laws, and far greater penalties she has to suffer from ignorance; like men she also suffers or

enjoys with her country. Yet she is not recognised as his equal."⁵¹

Finally, it may be said that in the intricate and complex web of social relationships nothing has been more conflicting and contradictory than the relation between man and woman as well as woman and woman or man and man. But the blatant discrimination and social exploitation of women under various social set-ups has given rise to feminist movements. As for India today, its gender development index rank is an abysmal 103 of 137 countries. India is among the few countries in the world where the proportion of the women in the total population is smaller than men. What is more disturbing, this proportion has been declining steadily over the last 100 years, from 972 per thousand males in 1901 to 930 in 1971.⁵² That is why feministic studies are attracting greater attention in Indian context too. To quote Andre Beteille : "Few developments in recent years have generated as much enthusiasm in the Indian academic world as women's studies. What gives vitality to women's studies is that they are not just a branch of scholarship but part of larger social movement. The ablest exponents of the subject see themselves as contributing simultaneously to a new type of theory and a new social practice."⁵³ It can no longer be regarded as though it was concerned exclusively with women's interests. Rather it has to be looked upon as question of wider complexity in relation to the entire society.

In the light of these changing trends, one might conclude that the emancipation of women is closely linked up with a perception of the place for women in the social order. Women's rights, roles and norms of behaviour as also those of others towards them, are still greatly influenced by cultural factors like the institutions of family, religious and other traditions. In the Indian context, the processes of social change, development and modernization are more complicated by the ignorance of our own heritage and the impact of Western lifestyle has superimposed certain

imprints which have resulted in a conglomeration of complex problems. The problem of Indian woman today is only one of these contradictory as well as complementary patterns of change. Hence it should be viewed in consonance with ancient Indian tradition and we should explore some typical Indian solutions for that. We have to keep in mind that all said and done, happy family alone can create a healthy society and so there should be cooperation between the family members with equal opportunities and responsibilities in all walks of life for both males and females; a perfect parity between the two sexes in the family can alone bring harmony in the society.

Viewed in this way, Vedic feminism is not only a theoretical idea, but a complete code of life and society where woman is the equal partner of man, neither of them is subordinate to the other.

As we move towards a new century which also signifies the commencement of a new millennium in human history, it is appropriate that we work hard to build a new India of the 21st century in which woman and man shall be treated as equal partners. In this context we can be enriched by the ancient Indian Vedic view of participatory existence in which both woman and man partake not for their individual rights but for the preservation and furtherance of familial and social duties at all levels. The current issue of women's empowerment could be amicably settled if we are able to shed gender bias and care for a gender-just world in which woman and man share **power with** rather than **power over** one another. Both the sections of society have to be free from their inhibitions and prejudices to live with mutual regard and dignity. Vedic seers offer valuable insights in urging us to adopt and consider this fact. Vedic feminism suggests that the striving for gender justice today cannot be fulfilled in a particularistic manner, it has to have some sort of holistic approach incorporating all webs of social relations and their mutual transformation. From this point of view

feminism should not be understood as a women's movement alone, but as a total human quest. This is very well reflected in the following verse of the Veda⁵⁴ where mutual love and family concord has been bestowed upon the couple :

*"The union of hearts and minds
and freedom from hate I'll bring you,
Love one another as the cow
loves the calf that she has borne!"*

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SOCIAL JUSTICE : A VEDIC PERSPECTIVE

Social justice is relatively a new concept in the field of socio-political philosophy. The term first appeared in political debate in the early nineteenth century. It was employed, among others, by John Stuart Mill and its use has since become widespread¹. This caption emphasises on justice and justice is the first virtue of social institutions.² A just society is a more or less self-sufficient association of well ordered individuals who have disparate aims and aptitudes but the shared conception of justice establishes a bond of civic friendship amongst them. The principle of social justice provides a solid foundation for social structure; it tries to establish that basically all human beings are equal and there should be no discrimination amongst them on the basis of religion, caste, colour and creed.³ In other words, social justice is based on social equality, i.e. it envisages that no section of the society should be debarred from its fundamental rights and everybody must get ample opportunities for the development of his personality. It is an accepted fact that inequalities are inevitable in the basic structure of any society, but for a mutually cooperative and balanced society the principle of social justice is very relevant. It does not mean that there will be no disparities at all or the persons of higher capabilities should be degraded from their positions, but that all efforts must be made to upgrade those who are weaker and less privileged than others⁴ In

this respect, social justice demands social security also⁵. It means that social structure should be such in which every member gets a fair share according to his capabilities and necessities and none is deprived of basic living facilities. This is the idea of society laid and depicted in the Vedas. Hence an attempt has been made here to present a brief account of social justice in the Vedic perspective.

Vedas are the oldest source books of Indian culture. The ancient moral, spiritual, as well as social norms of life are rooted in them. Vedas suggest the idea of collective living through mutual cooperation and promote social harmony by upholding social virtues like equality and fraternity. The justice of a social scheme depends essentially on how the imposed inequalities are minimised and the optimum economic and social conditions are created for the various sections of the society. From this point of view, we can study three aspects of social justice in the Vedic perspective, namely gender equality, class equality and economic equality, since these are the three main parameters of social justice and also try to throw some light on the administration of social justice according to Vedic tradition.

Gender Equality

The equality between man and woman is the cornerstone of social justice and the Vedas distinguish themselves from all other Indian literature by the high regard in which they hold woman. It will, therefore, be very interesting and useful to look at the glorious status which a woman was accorded in the Vedic society : 'What they call a wife is the half of a man' the assertion of the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa⁶ at once states categorically the rights and role of a woman in the life of a society. The Vedic people never underrated her capacities and status, nor ever imputed religious disability to her. On the other hand, there are references to show that a person who did not marry was considered to be incompetent to perform a sacrifice⁷. The Vedic word *patnī*⁸ itself connotes a sense of equality and

justice which are due to a woman. In the Vedic age there is ample evidence to show that women not only studied the Vedas but also figured among the authors of Vedic hymns.⁹ According to the Taittirīya and Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, a woman was required to be initiated along with the man, before the start of a sacrifice. The Ṛgveda describes man and wife performing equal and selfsame functions in the sacrifice.¹⁰ Sacrifice was the most important affair of the Vedic family and in that the women had been accorded a dignified and equal position with the men. There is no doubt that they were equally regarded in the routine and normal conduct of everyday life. The Ṛgveda in fact considers wife as the very essence of household.¹¹ The honourable position of the woman in the Vedic society has been described in the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad which survives as a pattern of ideal womanhood even to this day.¹² It was the conviction of Vedic sages that life becomes perfect whole with the joining together of two complementaries. This can be very well gathered from the exemplary attitude of the Vedic people, how they regarded and adored woman as an equal half in all the functions of life. Even in the Sūtra period, the position of woman was of reverence and respect.¹³

Class Equality

Social justice demands that the different classes of society should be treated equally and there should be no discrimination between man and man on the basis of class or caste. Believing in the united collective life, the Vedas uphold the comprehensive view of society. It can be clearly inferred from various Vedic expressions that there were no classes such as castes; the whole Vedic society was a classless one from this point of view. In fact, the Vedic society was founded on the just, dutycentric approach and was accordingly divided in four *varṇas*, which were based on choice of vocation in accordance with one's aptitude, and not on birth in a particular caste or class. Besides the same amount of *vergeld* prescribed for each, irrespective of sex,

testifies to the classless society during the period.¹⁴ In the tenth *maṇḍala* of the Ṛgveda a well integrated concept of society is given by splitting up the common people into two groups; (a) the *vaiśya*—the farmer and the trader, (b) the *śūdra*—the labourer. It is said that the *brāhmaṇa*, *kṣatriya*, *vaiśya* and *śūdra* are respectively the head, arms, thighs and feet of the body of *Puruṣa*—the Supreme being, who sacrificed himself (i.e. his absoluteness) in order to be manifested through creation in nature and in the society of men.¹⁵ This social concept is the basis of justice and it has two implications : one, that four main functions must be performed by a society in order that it may survive in the struggle for spiritual, political and economic existence; another that each of the four functionaries has a divinity about him (being a manifestation of *Puruṣa*) and the functions are equally sacred. The *Brhadāranyaka* Upaniṣad explaining this fourfold Vedic division of society says that these functions can be successfully performed when all the four are performed side by side and in accordance with *dharma*, i.e. social justice¹⁶ Thus according to the Vedic concept, no society can survive in the struggle for existence unless it organises four types of work. A society without the *brāhmaṇa* would be as bad as one without the *kṣatriya* or without the *vaiśya* or without the *śūdra*. But it should be noted that this Vedic idea of functional cooperation is different from that of the federation of tribal and occupational groups of later ages known as the caste system. It took a long time before this social division of labour hardened into hereditary caste, not only through the multiplication of functions but also through the accession of various tribal and racial units into the society. The strength of the Vedic society, however lay in the differentiation of functions without dividing the people into exclusive social groups.¹⁷ It was in the scientific and balanced arrangement of these different occupations and trades as well as their thoughtful distribution in the different occupations and trades as well as their thoughtful distribution in the different sections of the

society that the whole idea of justice evolved so that the most effective and fruitful results of common wealth were enjoyed by all without any conflict. It is also worth mentioning here that in later times there developed the theory, opposed to the Veda, that the *śūdra* is the servant of other classes. But the Veda does not say so. It recognises the dignity of manual work skillfully done by the *śūdra*. Describing the work in the corn field the Veda speaks of the field labourer as '*kavi*' or the creative worker. Similarly, the chariot maker has been described as a '*maniśin*' or 'wise man', another term for the Vedic seer.¹⁸ The Atharvaveda invokes the deity presiding over harvest gathering and associates him with *śūdra* labourers by saying that 'He dwells in the homes of those who do not sacrifice'¹⁹ The *vaiśya* merchant seeks splendour like the spiritual and the kingly man by pursuing his own vocation, 'the winning of wealth though wealth'.²⁰ Another Yajurvedic prayer shows an equal attitude to all four types of workers.²¹ There came to be developed a theory in Purāṇic times that the *śūdra* cannot be permitted to hear the Veda. But in Vedas it is made only too clear that the Veda was preached to one and all and in the list of social groups the *śūdra* was sometimes mentioned before the *vaiśya*, e.g. in 'So may I speak the sacred world to the masses of the people-to the *brāhmaṇa* and the *rājanaya* (*kṣatriya*), to the *śūdra* and the *vaiśya*, to our own men and to the stranger.'²² In the Vedic society, the basic occupations and resources of life were agriculture; plough culture was already a serious social concern in the Ṛgvedic age.²³

Complimentary to agriculture, cattle breeding with special attention to cow and her progeny, was an engaging occupation of the Vedic people. Besides these, there are more than sixty expressly named professions which enumerate the diverse callings of the society. Various are the thoughts and diverse the callings of man; the carpenter seeks what's broken, the physician, the diseased, the priest, the *soma* presser.²⁴ But the more important aspect of Vedic

society is that the men of all professions had the same status, more or less. It is a well recognised fact that in the Vedic society there has never been any competition or strife between the different people in the matter of their professions. Among various other professions of the R̥gvedic period may be mentioned those of the tanner (*carmamna*)²⁵, the Barber (*vapṛ*)²⁶ and to women are ascribed sewing, the plaiting of mats from grass and reeds and the weaving of cloth. What is noteworthy in this connection is that those who practised these arts were not in any way regarded as inferior members of community in the Vedic society.²⁷ A poet of the R̥gveda very frankly says, 'I am a poet, dad is a physician, my mother throws the corn upon the grinding stones; having various occupations and desiring riches we remain (in the world) like cattle (in the stalls)²⁸. This description expressly shows that in the Vedic society, each member of the family had freedom to choose his vocation according to his aptitude and that is possible only when there is an atmosphere of social justice prevalent in the period. Elsewhere it is said in the R̥gveda that variety is the natural form of the society-two hands are alike but their work is not alike, two sister cows do not give milk alike, of two twins the powers are not similar and two kinsmen are not equally pleasing.²⁹

Economic Equality

A social structure, if it is said to be just and conducive to the general welfare, must depend on a very sound and solid foundation of social economics. This economic function must be complete without any seeds of conflict between the different classes constituting the community : The Vedic seers, who were great social philosophers gave a very serious thought to the basic principles which contributed to the evolution of an unshakable structure of social justice. There is a whole hymn in the tenth *maṇḍala* of the R̥gveda which is titled '*dhanānnadāṇam*' i.e. support the needy, where it is said that he is not a friend who does not give to a friend,

to a comrade, who comes imploring for food; let the rich man satisfy one who seeks help and let him look upon a larger pathway; wealth revolves like the wheels of a chariot, coming now to one, now to another. He does not cherish a comrade or a friend, he is all sin who eats alone.³⁰ The plain implication of these words is that it was considered to be the duty of every citizen to see that all members of the society were fed as well as himself. The Vedas have declared that whatever a man partakes after feeding his fellow beings is *amṛt* which makes him immortal, but what he eats alone, without sharing, is a sin or poison which kills him.

Administration of Social Justice

It is also worth mentioning that in Vedic view the head of the state, namely the king, was considered to be the protector of social justice. In Ṛgveda, he has been called the protector of the society³¹ In this ideal of 'protection of social justice' emphasis was not merely on the physical protection from some external aggression but mainly on the maintenance of social order between different professions and vocations of classes and communities. This was considered to be one of the primary functions of the king, namely the maintenance of social equilibrium.³² The Atharvaveda clearly says 'O, king, you are sitting in such a high place of authority that we want you to distribute the wealth equally and impartially amongst your subjects'.³³ In another place the king is assured that all the gods and deities will back him if he performed with devotion and determination his function of right distribution of wealth among his subjects.³⁴ This is enough to indicate how high was the sense of equity and impartiality in the minds of the Vedic philosophers and kings who gave the lead to nation. That famous verse in the Chāndogya Upaniṣad has also a bearing upon the economic conditions of the society where the king Aśvapati declares that there were 'no thieves in his kingdom, no misers, nor any beggars'³⁵.

Even in the later Vedic tradition of the *smṛtis*, the king

was deemed to be the administrator of justice. In fact, administration of justice was held to be a very sacred duty of the king. Manu personifies the administration of justice as *dharma* incarnate³⁶ and states that a king who punishes those that do not deserve to be punished and who does not punish those that deserve punishment incurs great opulency and goes to hell.³⁷ Yājñavalkya declares that the impartial administration yields the same rewards as solemn Vedic sacrifices would do.³⁸ Even in the Arthaśāstra of Kautilya, it is stated that the king must see to it that conditions conducive to performance of duties pertaining to various *varṇas* and *āśramas* are created in the state.³⁹ In several other texts following the Vedic tradition, the king's court of justice is called *dharmasthāna*, *dharmāsana* or *dharmādhikaraṇa*⁴⁰. This clearly shows that the Indian concept of *dharma* is highly suggestive of social justice⁴¹ and there was a prevalence of justice even in the later vedic society.

It is clear from the above that the Vedas represent a fair picture not only of social justice but also of social integrity and cosmic harmony. The idea of justice or *dharma* was a development of very ancient Vedic conception of *ṛta*⁴². In the Ṛgveda *ṛta* denotes the supreme transcendental law or the cosmic order by which the universe and even the gods are governed and which is intimately connected with sacrifice⁴³. This idea of cosmic harmony envisages equilibrium not only amongst men but amongst all elements of cosmos.

In fact the Vedic concept of society is very characteristic and much higher than the so called social justice of today which is mere lipservice of some politically motivated, selfish persons. The Veda believes in a mutually cooperative, integrated, harmonious society. The Vedic prayers are not for individual happiness but for the collective well being of the society. In a Vedic prayer five things are wanted for the society : (a) That there should be active pursuit of knowledge and spiritual interest; (b) that the society should be ruled and defended in accordance with *ṛta* or *dharma*; (c) that the

people should be well nourished and strengthened; (d) the aggression should be effectively resisted; (e) and the disease should be eliminated.⁴⁴ Even today this will appear to be a fairly complete view of social life if we compare this Vedic view with the socialist objectives of modern political theory⁴⁵. The famous *saṁvānana* hymn of Ṛgveda gives the secret of united social life.⁴⁶ It states that the integration of aims and of emotional as well as intellectual interests leads to a well integrated social life.⁴⁷

Hence it may be concluded that although there is no clear term like 'social justice' used in the Vedic literature yet we find an ideal and inspiring concept of a just society where everybody is free for his own upliftment but complimentary to others, there is equality among all human beings and welfare of the whole mankind is prayed for. There seems to be no place for inequalities and disparities in the Vedic society; in fact it presents a harmonious, homogenized and unified view of life not only for all the human beings but also for the whole world. To sum up, it may be said that the Vedic philosophy does not advocate social justice only, but also social concord which is much more meaningful and essential for the development of the society.

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Upastin pārṇa mahyaṇ tvam sarvān kṛiṇvabhito janān.*
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- (ii) *Sirā yuñjanti kavayo yugā vitanvate pṛthak
Dhīrā deveṣu sumnayau.* **Atharvaveda**, 3/17/1
19. *Vedāham payasvantam cakāra dhānyam bahu
Sambhṛtvā nāma yo devastam vayam havāmahe.
yo yo ayaivano grhe.* **Atharvaveda**, 3/24/2
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Tanme bhūyo bhavatu mā kanīyo'gne sātaghno devān haviṣā niṣedha.*
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Rucam viśyeṣu śūdreṣu mayi dhehi rucā rucam.* **Yajurveda**, 18/48.
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brahmarājanyābhayaṇ śūdrāya cāryāya ca svaya cāraṇāya
Priyo devānām dakṣiṇāyai dāturiha bhūyāsa-
mayam me kāmah samṛdhyatāmupa mādo namatu.* **Yajurveda**, 26/2
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Takṣāriṣtam rutam bhiṣagbrahma sunvanta-
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Adhaspadā iccaidyasya kṛṣṭyaścarmamā abhito janah...* **Rgveda**, 8/5/38
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yadā te vāto anuvāli śocirvapleva śmaśru vapasi pra bhūma.*
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Nānadhīyo vasūyavo' nu gā iva tathimendrāyendo paṇṣrava.
Rgveda, 9/112/3
29. *Samau ciddhastau na samāṁ viviṣṭaḥ sammātarā cinna samāṁ duhāte*
Yamayościnnā samā vīryāṇi jñātī cit santau na samāṁ prṇītaḥ.
Rgveda, 10/117/9
30. (a) *Na sa sakhā yo na dadāti sakhye sacā bhuva sacamānāya pitvaḥ.*
 (b) *Prṇīyādinnādhāmānāya tavyāndrāghīyaṁsamānu paśyeta panthām*
Āā hi vartante rathyeva cakrānyamanyamupatiṣṭhantu rāyaḥ.
 (c) *Moghamannaṁ vīndate aparacetāḥ satyaṁ bravīmi badha ita tasya*
Nānyamaṇaṁ puṣyati no sakhāyaṁ kevalāgho bhavati kevalādī.
Rgveda, 10/117/46
31. (a) *Niṣasāda dhṛtavrato Varuṇa pastyā svā Sāmrajyāya sukratuḥ.*
Rgveda, 1/25/10
 (b) *Śa ghā rājā satpatih śūśuvajjano rātaḥavyaḥ prati yaḥ śasaminvati*
Ukthā vā yo abhi grṇāti rādhasā dānurasma uparā pinvate divaḥ.
Rgveda, 1/54/7
 (c) *Āā no deva śavasā yāhi śuṣṁinbhavā vṛdha Indra rāyo asya*
Mahe nṛṇnāya nṛpate suvajra mahi kṣatrāya paṇsyāya sūra.
Rgveda, 7/30/1
 (d) *Yadgrāme yadarāṇye yat sabhāyaṁ yadindriye*
yacchūdre yadārye yadenaścakṛmā vayaṁ
yadekasyāūdhi dharmāni tasyāvayajanamasi.
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Varṣman rāṣṭrasya kakudī śrayasva tato na ugrā vibhajā vasūni.
Atharvaveda, 3/4/4
34. *Aśvinā tvāgre mitravaruṇobhā viśve devā marutastvā huayantu*
Adha mano vasudeyāya kṛṇuṣva tato na ugro vibhajā vasūni.
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Nānāhīlāgnīmāvidvān na svairī svairīṇi kulaḥ.
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ECOLOGY AND CONSERVATION IN THE BHŪMISŪKTA OF ATHARVAVEDA

Vedas are the oldest source of Indian culture and tradition. They propound the most complete, holistic perspective of the universe. In our present problem of ecological imbalance, it is necessary that we refurbish our fund of ancient Vedic knowledge so that some integral means towards the goal of sustainable growth be achieved. The present paper is a modest attempt in the same direction.

I

Ecology is the study concerned with the interrelation of living organisms and their environment while **conservation** means the management, protection and preservation of earth's natural resources and the environment.¹ In the Vedic world-view all life in the cosmos is inter-related and interwoven; the process of transmutation and cyclic degeneration and regeneration of life is an accepted postulate. The Man-Nature relationship is at the centre of Vedic vision enunciated through sacred incantations and articulated as rituals for repeated reminding of the need to sustain and foster the ecological balances of Nature.

II

The *Bhūmisūkta* of Atharvaveda is one of the oldest and the most important sources of information on the relation of man to his environment and his duty to preserve

it. In the sixty three verses of this hymn, the seer Atharvan has presented a beautiful picture of Mother Earth, the basis of our sustenance and a symbol of entire environment. The symbolic significance of its verses reflects a sensitive comprehension of ecology and conservation.

Bhūmi, i.e. the Earth is invoked here as the personified Mother Goddess; she supports us by her abundant endowments and riches; it is she who nourishes us all like a loving mother who nurtures her sons.² What could be a more lucid depiction for the intrinsic relationship of Man to the Earth! These sentiments clearly denote the bond between the Earth and human beings and exemplify the true relationship of human beings to other forms of life.

In fact, Earth in the *Bhūmisūkta* does not merely mean the land, she represents all that is part of the environment. She symbolises the three principal components of environment: solid, liquid and gaseous as well. She is described here as born out of the waters of ocean. Surrounded by space, She is the creator and the sustainer of the world.

In its solid form, *Bhūmi* is the land and abode of all living and non-living beings, is the guardian and protector of all that is born and is to be born,³ she supports and sustains all, furnishes wealth and is the foundation of the world.⁴ The rock, stone and dust constitute the Earth, its soil is brown, black and variegated.⁵ The ascents, advances and planes of land belong to the Earth.⁶

On the liquid level of environment, *Bhūmi* is the sustainer of oceans, rivers and waters;⁷ she is the wife of the clouds and is enriched by rains.⁸ The various water resources such as sea, rivers and waterfalls flow on the Earth.⁹

The gaseous aspect of earth is expressed by saying that the air '*mātariśvan*' blows on the Earth and the light of the flame follows the wind which is blowing forward and backward. All the birds and bipeds fly to the Earth.¹⁰ She

bears whatever is heavy, breathing or stirring,¹¹ all the four quarters belong to her.¹²

Bhūmi is called '*agnivāsa*',¹³ covered by fire; she also represents the energy of fire element of the environment. She bears the universal fire which is present in the herbs, waters, stones, men and horses.¹⁴ *Agni* gives heat and shine to the Earth. The Earth also has rich treasures of gold, gems and metals,¹⁵ she carries the seasons brought by her ally, Sun.¹⁶

The physical and material aspect of the Earth includes agriculture; fertility of the Earth is symbolized here through the image of the brimming vase, the bowl of plenty. Foliage and lotus emerge from this bowl, the waters flow the life giving forces of regeneration and energy of sun blossoms as the vegetation is the sap of life. She bears the herbs of various virtues, food and ploughings of rice and barley come into being on the Earth.¹⁷ In this way, the Earth is a figure of fecundity.

The Earth is the source of all life, the world of the living beings. The five races of men belong to her, they are her children; she bears in many places people of different speech and of diverse customs and manners.¹⁸ The great trembling and stirring vibrations of the earth render the diversity into a closeknit unit. All are born on the same land and all move in the same land, the land treats them all alike like a cow.

Not only human beings, but the ferocious animals too are the children of the same Mother Earth. The serpent and the harsh-biting scorpion may lie hidden in a torpid state; the worm too stirs in the early rainy season with a lively form. The man-eating lion, the tiger, the jackal, the wolf, the scorpion and the reptile are all on the earth,¹⁹ but it is aspired that they should not harm or crawl on Man, mainly because all of them should live together for ecological balance. According to this integral view, nothing in this

universe is devoid of utility; each and every species has to be protected for its own sake so that the equilibrium of Nature is not disturbed.

It is against this background that the land, water, air, fire, plants, animals, human beings and the divine beings come together in various images of the Goddess *Bhūmi*, Mother Earth. Heaven, Earth and the atmosphere have given this vastness of vision to the seer of *Bhūmisūkta* while the fire, sun, waters and the gods have given him wisdom.²⁰ Therefore he gratefully reveals the sublimity and divinity of *Bhūmi*, the all-encompassing principle of Nature and its resources.

III

We have come a long, long way since the Vedic period. At the turn of the 20th century, environmental issues have emerged as a major concern for the survival and welfare of mankind on this planet Earth. Modern civilization armed with rapidly advancing technology and fast growing economic system is under increasing threat from its own activities causing pollution of air, water and soil.²¹ The ozone hole, acid rain, nuclear and other toxic wastes, chemical and pesticide industries, the fear of global warming, pollution of rivers and oceans, deforestation and the accompanying soil erosion, the loss of bio-diversity are just a few highlights of the development model sweeping across the globe and causing ecological concerns.

The multiplying demands upon the ecosphere which supports all life are rapidly exhausting the resources of planet Earth. The list of ecological threats has assumed overwhelming dimensions. The prevailing world order has linked much of its productive economy to energy intensive techno-culture which is ecologically destructive. We stand at the threshold of an environmental disaster in a manner never before faced by man, who has used his power to transform, or rather destroy the environment. The single

factor of man which distinguishes him from all living matter is his distinctive power to reflect, to articulate and be wise, has been the very instrument of these ecological imbalances-imbances which threaten the very existence of man. As an eminent scientist puts it in the context of India : "Even more than population explosion, the imbalance in the environment and ecology is the greatest threat to the continent. We may be able to control the first, but the process of devastation we have begun in the second may bring final doom."²² "Our land, compared with what it was, is like a skeleton of a body wasted by disease." What Plato said of Attica in the fourth century B.C. could well be description of desertification, the main environmental problem in the modern world's drylands, arid, semi-arid and dry subhumid areas totalling about 5 billion hectares.

IV

This brings us to the point where we have to pause and ponder over the ecological imbalances threatening the modern world and the ways to cure and curb them. The question to be asked is what are the diverse components of the disturbance and what methodologies and strategies were suggested and adopted in the past to sustain the ecological balances. Can we, even at this crucial stage, learn any lessons from our ancient Vedic lore for equipping ourselves to face the human predicaments of today?

First and the foremost is the pollution of the land, our mother Earth, the floating free ball beneath the most gleaming membrane of bright, blue sky. Fouling the air and poisoning the water are not our only trespasses against the elements. Nor were they the earliest. "Man's first onslaught was against Earth itself."²³ The Earth is a unique and irreplaceable planet, the most beautiful and the bountiful. But what have we done to it? Arid lands have increased, soil which was venerated by our ancestors has been eroded and infertility, sand and salt have taken over.

It is estimated that in this sub-continent alone, a million hectares are being desertified each year. Desecration of the bowls of Earth through excessive quarrying is common. Man's power has asserted its most destructive tendencies and the collective greed of man has hollowed the still centre of life. *Bhūmi*, the eternal mother has been polluted and desecrated.

Related to this is the massive, unprecedented deforestation : the soil's ability to absorb and hold water has diminished. The disturbance in earth, water, vegetation, river and mountain ecology systems has resultantly threatened all types of life. Man has disturbed the cosmic order, the rhythm of the movement of the earth, water, air, ether and *agni* i.e. the five elements whose interaction and interdependence is the basic rule of Nature.

In the Vedic view, the sustenance of ecological balance is regarded as the first and last duty of Man, since only then the moral order of the world, i.e. *ṛta* could be sustained. This concept of *ṛta* is nothing else but the law of ecological balance as envisaged by the Vedic seers. The emphasis is both on the notion of cosmic regularity as also on purity and non-pollution. The Vedas dedicate many hymns to *Varuṇa* who is considered the great superintendent of the cosmic moral order, he is the guardian of *ṛta*, he sees all that is between Earth and Heaven and even that which is beyond them.²⁴

There is another prayer in the Atharvaveda which draws our attention once again to ecological balances and how the Earth, like *Varuṇa*, is herself the upholder of moral order. Truth and moral order sustain her.²⁵ She is called the sacred environment, '*Devayajani*'²⁶, God's design unfolding. Man has been given the capacities for its conservation and growth which would promote his own development also. The conception of the Earth as the Mother in the *Bhūmisūkta* even goes further and prescribes that we should always recount and never forget the glories

of mother Earth in all assemblages and meetings of the people,²⁷ since she prefers virtuous men of great abilities to those ones who obstruct the good.²⁸

This is to warn us that we have 'only one Earth'. Our science may increase its bounty and our husbandry make its resources go further but its capacity to support life cannot be indefinitely extended. Hence our generation, as custodians of the present and trustees of the future, must take responsibility to sustain it. If life on earth is to be sustained, we shall have to care for our planet and share it better than we have. We no longer live in a world with infinite ecological resources, we must be conscious of the ecological bottom line. The time is now ripe to give back to Mother Earth what we have taken from her because whatever comes from Nature, must go back to her many times over' is the message of Vedic verses. This 'Good Earth' would not get better tomorrow unless we act today. Now that we are aware of our wrong doing and its consequences, we must change the ways we encounter Nature.

V

The ecological concern of the relationship between man and Nature is deep rooted in the history of mankind and the sense of responsibility of human beings towards it is tied up with the knot of conservation. The theory of conservation has to be the science of totality which moves from segmental knowledge to the integrative wisdom of our Vedic seers. This means that the Earth and its resources have to be protected for its own sake and not merely to preserve its potential for man's development. The concern for conservation or stewardship of natural resources is linked to the notion that human respect for Nature is lost today in the pursuit of material gains. The greatest challenge that confronts the present generation is the sustained development and intelligent management of the planet Earth. Fundamental to this sustainable development is the

concept of inter-generational equity which is the mainstay of Indian culture; it teaches one to meet the needs of this generation, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It reminds us that the primary responsibility for our common future on this 'only one Earth' is in a very real sense 'in our own hands'. As has been remarked very succinctly by Dieter Frisch, Director General of Development Commission of the European Community, (Brussels). "We have not inherited the land from our ancestors, we have borrowed it from our children."²⁹

The seer Atharvan of the *Bhūmisūkta* has also echoed the same feeling when he prays to the Mother Earth that may we and our children live long and be free from sickness and consumption.³⁰ For that, he clearly remembers his own obligation and says,

*"Whatever I dig from thee, O Mother Earth,
May it have quick growth again ; Purifier,
May we not injure thy vitals or thy heart!"³¹*

This conditional qualification about living according to the Eternal Law of Nature clearly implies that the course of development of human history is open-ended. Man has been given the freedom to make this Earth a paradise by aligning with the divine design, but there is the clear realisation that man has to carve his future through his conduct today. The Veda declares that for one who lives according to Eternal Law, the winds are full of sweetness, the rivers pour sweetness. So may the plants be full of sweetness for us!"³²

Many of us consider that the ecological awareness has developed in the recent past only but this becomes unfounded when one reads just the *Bhūmisūkta* of Atharvaveda, what to talk of the whole Vedic literature. It is probably the first of its own kind scripture among all living traditions on earth which presents such a wide spectrum on

ecology and conservation. It aims at conserving the environment in its broadest sense, not only on the physical level, but also on the moral, mental, religious, spiritual and above all the cosmic level and that too not merely by checking or controlling the pollution, but by changing the attitudes and perceptions of people towards Nature. In this way, the *Bhūmisūkta* depicts a theory of environmental stewardship, eco-spirituality which is not found in any other religion, tradition or belief.³³

The *Bhūmisūkta* envisages that the world can be redeemed only by redeeming the character of man and this is possible only if ecological thinking instead of being confined to the plane of expediency, delves deep into both the philosophical thought and the religious sensibility. This is more important today, when the Earth is teaching us a moral lesson through the ecological crisis. The very opening verse of the hymn states that the Earth is sustained by truth, by the eternal order, by penance, austerity, knowledge and sacrifice.³⁴ These are the six qualities which sustain the Earth and its firmness. In other words, love of the Earth is grounded in the ethical and religious conceptions. An austere life of discipline devoted to the pursuit of higher values, truth and *ṛta* makes this love of Earth really significant and valuable. These two presuppose *dīkṣā* which issues into *tapas* and *yajña*. These six principles are enumerated here as constituting the basic principles on which the balance of ecology has to be founded. These factors make us understand that the Earth has a certain divinity about her and we must protect it by way of sacrifice and self-control. Such a pure and protected Earth alone can bestow strength, lustre and authority on the *rāshtra*.³⁵ Mother Earth or Nature is expounded here not only as a source of sustenance but also as a means to spiritual enlightenment. According to the modern environmental science, the concept of conservation has following three stages, all of which are incorporated in the simple verses of *Bhūmisūkta*:

(i) Preservation of Natural Resources

There are again two views about the preservation of natural resources :

(a) **Utilitarian Conservation** : According to this idea, the natural resources should be used for “ the greatest good, for the greatest number and for the longest time.” In this view, man is the central point of the universe, the purpose of saving forests is not because they are beautiful or because they shelter wild creatures but only to provide homes and jobs for people.

(b) **Biocentric Preservation** : It emphasizes that Nature deserves to exist for its own sake, regardless of its usefulness to humans. In this view habitat protection is the fundamental right of other species than humans as well.³⁶

The *Bhūmisūkta* of Atharvaveda combines both of these aspects in its implicit concept of conservation. There is an interdependence between human beings and other forms of Nature, but humans being dominant species have destroyed the environment for their own greed and uncontrolled desires. It is their weakness for over-consumption and wasteful habits that could ultimately be the cause of elimination not only of other species but also of their own race. Unless the human beings change their attitudes towards the Earth and its resources, damage and destruction will continue. One way of controlling their behaviour is that they believe in God and his creation. Those who responsibly defend and protect the natural resources are in turn showered with divine blessings³⁷ but those who pollute the environment and indulge in hatred, violence and selfishness must be regulated immediately. Such control plays an important role in shaping the attitude towards Earth and its resources. This step of conservation has to be practised at individual level by one and all.

(ii) Environmentalism

It is concerned with the entire environment built as

well as natural and emphasizes upon the links between science, technology and society as well. It aims at promoting a sense of interdependence amongst all the elements of creation. The *Bhūmisūkta* also throws some light on this side of conservation by mentioning that urban cities should be planned in such a manner that the Earth remains as a place worth living, full of prosperity and natural beauty even for Gods.³⁸ Those who destroy the environment of Mother Earth and are detrimental for the growth of its flora and fauna are told to run away; she herself has shaken all such persons in the same way as the horse shakes off dust from his body.³⁹ The environmentalism of seer Atharvan is so robust that he prescribes the exploiter of Earth to be punished and even vanished.⁴⁰

The prayer for preservation of original fragrance of Earth borne by herbs and waters, shared by all the creatures including men and women, horses, deer and elephants⁴¹ also denotes that we should not exploit the natural resources beyond the capacity of environment. This fragrance is not the physical odour which is also a specific characteristic of the Earth, but it signifies here the bewitching loveliness of the land, strengthened by the constant reference to honey⁴² or the nourishing aspect of Nature. This has to be shared by all.

(iii) Global Citizenship

The third step of conservation focusses not only on particular pieces of wilderness but about the life-support systems of the whole planet. A key concept of this wave is the 'sustainable development' a term introduced in 'Our Common Future' and defined in the Brundtland Commission Report as "to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." United Nations' Conferences such as the 'Earth Summit' held at Rio De Janeiro in 1992 have been organised to address this very wide phase of environmental protection.

The *Bhūmisūkta* of Atharvaveda goes a step further when it propounds that every entity and organism is a part of large, extended family presided by the eternal Mother Earth. The Mother has always supported her children and has been the source of fulfilment for their unending desires. She has never demanded anything in return. But we, as her children, must not exploit her and violate her line of control. These sentiments denote a family bond not only between the Earth and the human beings, but all forms of life. The *Bhūmisūkta* enjoins us to have a universal code of conservation so that the case of God's creation is undertaken in right earnest. In fact the traditional Indian ideal of '*Vasudhaiva kuṭumbakam*', i.e. the whole cosmos being one single family is even wider than the global citizenship. In the cosmic vision of the Vedas, all animate beings and inanimate things are part of one and the same principle. This concept has been well enunciated by Dr. Karan Singh when he says that "the planet we inhabit and of which we are all citizens 'Planet Earth' is a single, living and pulsating entity, that the human race, in the final analysis is an interlocking, extended family '*Vasudhaiva Kuṭumbakam*' as the Veda has it."⁴³

To sum up, it may be said that the *Bhūmisūkta* of Atharvaveda is a lucid expression of the emotions of a true son of the soil. Mother Earth is depicted here as a symbol of the Natural resources bestowed upon man and it is aspired that the same may remain steadfast, gracious, pure and propitious.⁴⁴ *Bhūmi* is worthy of homage, she never decays and fulfills all our wishes.⁴⁵ The creator supplies her with whatever she lacks.⁴⁶ It is the duty of us human beings that we should never trouble her whether we are arising, sitting, standing or striding forth, with our right or left feet;⁴⁷ May she bless us with all that is good! May God, the lord of universe, make the Mother Earth of ours pleasant in every quarter!⁴⁸ May that Earth thus prospering advance our prosperity!⁴⁹ But for that we have to be watchful, cautious and ready to sacrifice our best for her, the Mother Earth :

'*Vayam tubhyam balihṛtaḥ syāma*' :⁵⁰

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VEDĀNTIC FOUNDATIONS OF INDIAN CULTURE

I

‘Culture’ is a very wide and comprehensive notion which covers the entire gamut of human existence. It is the total way of life, inclusive of philosophy, religion, art, science as well as human relationships. Culture is not a ready-made gift of nature, it results from human cultivation of nature. It has been defined as ‘transformation of the uncultivated into the cultivated humanity, the concretisation of the possible system of human aspirations’. Its Sanskrit equivalent *saṃskṛiti* is even broader in scope and essence, it signifies the sum total of peoples’ endeavours that are purified and refined. But it is not merely the refinement of his empirical nature. It is in fact the unity of the physical and the intellectual, secular and the spiritual, actual and the ideal.

II

Every culture has some basic elements which are relevant to a particular period and a specific society. At the same time there are also some vital elements in every culture which provide continuous strength and sustenance to human life irrespective of its place and time. The web of Indian Culture like many other cultures in the world, is interspersed with certain unique features which have transcended their spatio - temporal confinements and are perennial in their appeal. The aim of this paper is to highlight those very foundational elements of Indian culture.

that are universal in character and that could provide a strong and solid base to a new world order in the coming millennium.

Indian culture has been moulded in a special manner in the sense that from times immemorial Veda has been its life and force ². The pattern of Indian culture is therefore one of the mightiest experimentation of all aspects of life, social, religious, philosophical, economic and aesthetic in which billions of men for thousands of years over vast stretches of land have participated to evolve an integration of life and a technique to live amicably in concord and harmony. All this has been achieved by the potent force of some great ideals embodied in the earliest literature of man under the Indian sky, namely, the Vedas. In fact Vedic ideas have been pervasive of the Indian mind through the ages and it is the persistent vitality of the Vedic ideas that has kept India culturally alive and unified for long. As the Himalayas are to the physical history of India, so are the Vedas to its cultural history.³

III

It has to be observed at the outset that the word Veda is not only indicative of the four ancient Indian texts but in its wider implications, the term has a broad meaning and covers all the branches of knowledge as also all the aspects of human life.⁴ Etymologically the term is derived from the root *Vid*⁵ and it symbolises all that is, and is to be attained. From this basic idea it is clear that Vedic knowledge is not just a theoretical quest but a practical pursuit as well because it not only stands for *Vid* (to know), but also comprises *Vidh* (to attain).

Vedas are the source as well as the sustaining power for all the subsequent systems of Indian thought ; they are the fountainheads of Indian culture.⁶ The Indian thought has been usually divided into two main groups :

1) That which believes in the authority of the Vedas and

2) That which does not

It is interesting to note that even those who do not profess any direct allegiance to Vedas, are nevertheless influenced by them in one way or the other. Their tradition in fact, grew in opposition to the Vedic thought. That is why the Indian culture has always developed for or against the Vedic thought but never without it. The opponents of Vedic view also did not attack the basic, foundational propositions of Veda, but rather the distortions in its external form. Actually Indian culture has never been a closed but open-ended stream of thought and life, ever ready to grow and imbibe everything that is good and noble.⁷

Vedānta is the quintessence and culmination of Vedic thought, the Vedas constitute the core of Vedānta. Generally it is believed that Veda and Vedānta are two separate streams of thought but it has to be clarified and emphasised that they are one and the same in essence, rather two ends of the same thread. The term Vedānta literally means the end of the Veda, i.e the last or concluding portion of Vedic lore, the Upaniṣads, But actually 'Vedānta would comprise not only the Upaniṣads and their predecessors the Vedas, but also their successors'⁸. In other words Vedānta contains all the essentials of Vedic culture and so in its broader and wider reference it is denotative of the whole process of its development, right from the Ṛgveda upto modern times. So the Vedānta here is not to be seen as some religious or regimented lineage, but as the treasurehouse of Indian cultural heritage. This broad concept of Vedānta has to be taken into consideration before proceeding any further.

IV

The identity of Indian Culture is to be determined on the basis of elements derived from Vedāntic thought since the cultural foundations of India are rooted primarily in these ancient monuments; it is by following their lead that India has survived the 'ravages of time'⁹. India has stood

like 'Rock of Ages' weathering many a fierce storms because her foundations are the eternal values of Vedānta. Throughout its rigorous journey of evolution Indian culture kept its inner continuity with Vedāntic origins, although it changed a lot in its colour and contents. A continuous development of Indian culture was more of an inward transformation rather than an outward revolution. Even at a point of time during the course of its development, when it seemed as if Buddhism was out to reject all continuity of Vedic thought, it was less in reality and more in appearance. The Buddhist ideal of *nirvāṇa* was only a negative and exclusive statement of the highest Vedāntic spiritual experience ; the ethical system of the eight-fold path was an austere sublimation of the Vedic notion of the right, *ṛta* and the *mahāyāna* stress on universal compassion and fellow feeling was an application of the spiritual unity which is the essential idea of Vedānta. In fact Indian culture absorbed all that it could of Buddhism but rejected its exclusive positions and preserved its own continuity, casting back to the ancient Vedānta.¹⁰

Generation after generation, these inherent foundations of Indian culture may have altered in form and fashion, but their direction and objective has remained intact. The history of Indian culture is not the story of how it underwent alien invasions but how it overcame them and eventually expressed itself with unabated vigour time and again. Vedāntic culture of India is a pulsating entity endowed with immense flexibility and vitality for an indomitable identity, irrepressible growth and formidable continuity.

V

The heart and soul of this continuity of Indian culture is to be found in a constant intuition of unity of all life. Vedāntic thought regards the realisation of this unity as the highest good, the final goal of life. It is this 'Vedic unitive vision'¹¹ which is one of the foremost foundations of Indian

culture and determines the whole character of her tradition. This is an insight into the underlying unity of all phenomena and an intuitive perception of all things in the self and the self in all things'¹². The divine reality is one and yet capable of manifesting itself as many¹³, it is formless and has infinite forms, it is personal and at the same time impersonal. This inseparable unity of the two opposites is well reflected in the recognition of *abhyudaya* and *niḥśreyas*, *preyas* and *śreyas*, *aparā* and *parā vidyā*, *bhoga* and *tyāga* in Vedāntic thought.

VI

In fact what distinguishes Vedānta from all other pursuits is its attempt to sum up the whole of human knowledge, it ignores or discards nothing of human experience. There are different degrees or may be different views of the same truth¹⁴, but it aims at the highest or all unifying truth¹⁵. It is that on knowing which everything becomes known and after attaining which nothing remains to be achieved¹⁶. This doctrine of unity of all life : one source, one essence and one goal, is the foundation of Indian culture which is the warp and woof of its life-fabric. The positive ideal of Indian culture is the impersonalization and universalisation of the truth. It is not in the form of nullity but a sublime totality of the being¹⁷. This 'universalism' is well ingrained in the Vedāntic statements like '*Tat Tvam Asi*' and '*Aham Brahmāsmi*'¹⁸ and is based on strong metaphysical foundations. The world of things in its multiplicity is revealed as a unity according to Vedāntic thought and so the vision of true self is at the same time a vision of unity. This deep thread of unity is underlying the apparent diversity of race, religion, language, philosophy, art and custom in the life of Indian people. A richer and fuller unity in which all diversities lose themselves with their several contributions towards the development of a common life as a thousand streams merge themselves in the sea¹⁹. This underlying unity of Indian culture is verily, the Indianness, the identity of India which is not a biological

or a sociological notion but a peculiar, indescribably inherent element. Beneath the manifold diversity of physical and social type, language, custom and religion which strikes the observer in India there can still be discerned a certain underlying uniformity of life from the Himālayas to the Cape Comorin. There is in fact an Indian character, a general Indian personality which we cannot resolve into its component elements.²⁹

VII

This fundamental element of unity that runs through all the stages of Indian culture, from the earliest to the latest, from the lowest to the highest, is a continuous and distinct feature of all the aspects of Indian culture. Material pursuit or spiritual realisation, science or religion, art or architecture, rituals or philosophy, literature or folklore - all are permeated with this unity of thought and are traceable to Vedic tradition in their rudimentary form, albeit their explication is subsequent and variation is dependent on contemporary challenges. In fact Vedic knowledge is foundational to the modes of thinking, ways of living and also forms of feeling of Indian people. The cognitive, conative and the affective aspects of human life are rightly expressed and beautifully idealised here at a later period as *Satyam*, *Śivam* and *Sundaram*.

The unitive approach of Veda to life and reality is trifurcated in these ideals of truth, good and beauty, but there is no discordance or exclusiveness in their realisation; they are three phases of the single absolute reality : the truth is reality as experienced by the seers, the good is reality as practised by the saints and the beauty is reality as expressed by the poets and the artists. The noetic faculty, ethical conduct and the aesthetic emotions are not different in the ultimate sense according to Vedānta. Indian culture firmly regards that the absolute truth, absolute goodness and absolute beauty tend to reveal the rhythm of Single

Supreme Spirit - which is equally manifested in all. So the above three ideals of *Satyam*, *Śivam* and *Sundaram* are not actually different parts of a whole, but the three constituents of the same single truth which is also referred to as *Sat*, *Cit* and *Ānanda* in Vedāntic tradition.

VIII

Jñāna, *karma* and *bhakti* are the three modes for actualisation of the same truth and all of these are perfectly reconcilable, therefore synthetic outlook towards these is a vital element of Indian culture. The *trayī* of *Rk*, *Yaju* and *Sāma* - the triple manifestation of Vedic verses is also to be rendered as an expression of the same²¹. The verse form called *ṛk* signifies *jñāna*, *Yaju* verses symbolise *karma* while *Sāma* verses epitomise *bhakti*, but they all are merely different ways to express the ultimate divine principle which is unitive in nature.²²

Jñāna although is accorded the highest place in Indian tradition, yet it is not merely the rational acquisition of some facts, but a self-realisation of the Supreme, which in turn is not different from the truth itself. Knowledge and reality are from this point of view identical and infinite in nature. In other words, it is a life-based knowledge and experience is the centre-stage in this tradition. One has to realise himself to know the truth, mere reasoning cannot reveal it²³. *Jñāna* is not only an intellectual thinking, but a direct seeing, an intuitive perception of the truth and a total living in it, a spiritual seizing and an identification with the object of knowledge. Self knowledge, World knowledge and God knowledge are all formulations of the same truth.

Vedas have traditionally been associated with knowledge and are held to be the repositories of the highest truth. But Vedic knowledge is not a lopsided theory, it is holistic in nature. It cultivates and insists upon an integral view beyond the multiplicities of phenomenal experience. The knowledge

of reality is nothing but discovering this underlying unity in diversity and realising this inherent consistency in experience. Accordingly, all the subsequent systems of Indian thought are to be taken as alternative approaches to the reality which is unitive in character, they are various affirmations of the same truth.

IX

Vedic knowledge is multi-dimensional, it is not based on any mechanistic or reductionist method, rather it is an organic perception of the reality. An integrated vision and a cultured life requires an allround development as also the perfect harmony among all the aspects of life. Hence in Vedāntic tradition, a total synthesis of spirit and soul, flesh and mental afflictions is envisaged to attain the advanced spiritual enlightenment. The goal of self-realisation and the path of necessary self-discipline is the gradual ascent of culture. In other words, human beings have to progress not only horizontally as other objects of the world but also vertically as consisting of several layers of reality : matter, life, mind, intellect and spirit²⁴. Man has to begin from his own self, the cosmic spirit is to be realised within one's own being ; that is the true import of *adhyātma*²⁵ which in fact is the most solid foundation of Indian culture.

X

As stated above, Indian culture is integral in its approach, so the cognitive content of Vedic thought finds expression in the conative aspect of human life. The Indian view of life has always been purposive and teleological, hence the perfect harmony between *jñāna* and *karma*, *satyam* and *Śivam* is envisaged here. Cognate Vedic concepts like *śam*, *śānti*, *maṅgala*, *bhadra*, *yajña* and *kratu* etc.²⁶ convey the same noble ideas which are universal in character. True culture, according to Veda lies in the spring of action, the will or mind of man. The psychological foundation of this attitude is beautifully revealed in the Vedic hymn called

'*Śivasamkalpasūktā*'²⁷ where the divine nature of the spirit of man is said to be the immortal essence of all ; knowledge, intellect and memory are but the many expressions of the same peerless spirit, the centre of divinity lying in the heart of his being. It is this noble will which leads to the right course of action and that in turn enables one to acquire true knowledge according to Vedic thought. Hence it is aspired in several verses that the mind should not only be free of all types of ill will, but also full of pure and pious intentions.

The various *samśkāras* prescribed in Vedic scriptures for an ideal life are actually the external marks of a cultural course of life. They are not only some sort of ritualistic practices but quite logical and intrinsic principles of gradual development for a goal-oriented, purposeful life. The *samśkāras* provide an adequate training for the spiritual growth of life, the recipient realises through them that all life, if properly understood, is a sacrament and every physical action should be referred to and conducted with the spiritual reality. It is in fact the way in which an active worldly life is to be reconciled with spiritual realisation.²⁸

The Vedic notions of *ṛta* and *satya* signify the same principle and form a strong foundation for cosmic as well as individual discipline²⁹. The first and foremost among the constituents of *samśkāras* according to Vedic view of life is *Agni*, which is always to be kindled and worshipped, since it symbolises the divine spirit and is said to be the destroyer of evil forces³⁰. This reverence for *Agni* epitomised in the Vedic tradition of *yajña* or sacrifice which is stated to be the best form of activity³¹. The *yajña* is expected to have a twofold influence: one physical, building up vital power and health; another raising the spiritual stature, making the mortal man immortal.

The concept of *yajña* is actually demarcative of the deep vision of Vedic seers. According to them life itself is a great sacrifice where the individual has to do everything

with a sense of dedication to the divine. In its etymological sense, *yajña* is an act of offering to the divine, sharing with fellow beings and giving alms to the needy³². Viewed from this wider angle, *yajña* came to be identified with all the duties and obligations of individuals which the social system demanded of them. In fact the whole world is based on this feeling of *yajña* and the cosmic creation itself was a form of *yajña*³³. Accordingly one has to share all that he has, since he, who eats alone, is an enemy of the society.³⁴ It is only by inculcating this *yajña* - feeling of '*Idam na mama*' that one can be free of the three eternal debts incurred from the parents, preceptors and the divine forces³⁵. This is the Vedic technique for a beautiful blending of knowledge and action, truth and good.

XI

Satyam and *śivam*, *jñāna* and *karma* culminate in *sundaram* and *bhakti* respectively, they are all harmonised at the highest level of *Ānanda*. That is why this harmony amongst the three principles is not brought about by negating their identity or by crushing their multiplicity, but by accepting them to be parts of the same whole, which is ultimately real and the basis for all consistency in experience. From this point of view everything has its place, every being has its function and all take part in the divine concert of harmony, all the differences merge here, this is the level of *Ānanda*, not different from the Supreme itself.³⁶ This *Ānanda* is not to be found in petty, limited experiences, it is only to be felt in the unlimited vastness of the ultimate truth.³⁷ The intellectual activism and the physical practices reach a state of spiritual ecstasy here through the divine rhythm of art that integrates with devotion.

In Indian culture aesthetic experience is never sought to be divisive, it is always unitive. From the depths of millions of eyes, we meet the look of the one, as Tagore has sung in his immortal lines :

*I shall find hidden thy infinite joy
in every splendour of smell and vision and sound
Even while a thousand fetters still bind me to the wheel
I shall taste thy infinite liberty.*³⁸

In fact, art in Indian culture is no less than a form of *yoga*, the union or concentration of body, mind and the spirit. The word *kalā* itself is derived as that which brings happiness of the highest order³⁹ and so all the five forms of art are seen to be different visions of the supreme harmony. In music the initial variety of *śvarās* is ultimately synchronised in symphony while in literature the apparent differences merge in *rasa* which again is not separate from the Supreme⁴⁰. The experience of poetic *rasa* has been equated here with the realisation of *Brahmānanda* : "It is pure, indivisible, self-manifested, compounded equally of joy and consciousness, free of admixture with any other perception, the twin brother of mystic experience and the very life of it is supersensuous wonder."⁴¹

But it has to be marked that this aesthetic ecstasy '*lokottara*' (supersensuous) is not anti-sensuous, rather a harmony of sensuous and supra-sensuous. In fact the artistic experience is also an intuition of reality and of identity ; as in perfect worship, so in art, there is an identity of subject and object, cause and effect. This idea of unity is also important at the level of aesthetic experience where the joy of universal partaking is important, the experience is not subjective but shareable by all who enjoy it. The infinite diversity of souls and desires is brought into accord with the eternal rhythm of the Supreme which holds them in one great current, constantly travelling on to unity, where the absolute is manifested equally in the little and the great, good and the evil. This is not done by way of denial of things, but only by learning to see things as they really are: infinitely beautiful. The artist reveals this beauty in all things by seizing the reality behind them, the doctrine of the universal presence of reality is that of immanence of the

Absolute. That is why the *rasa* called *śānta* is accorded the highest significance by some Indian thinkers where the tone is purely monistic. Thus the theory of *rasa* set forth by Indian aestheticians belongs to totalistic monism, it matches with the Vedānta⁴².

The vitality of the Vedāntic view of Indian culture persists in the fact that it finds its inspiration everywhere, every natural object is an immediate realisation of His being. Therefore there are no degrees in aesthetic experience, it is a spontaneous expression of the same undivided truth ; an intuitive discovery and not a mere physical creation mark this idea of art. It is in this form that art becomes a form of devotion, identifying beauty of everything with the Supreme itself. From this point of view, Indian art is not merely a pursuit of pleasure, but an experience of bliss and beatitude. It is not to be achieved through any external signs, but by awakening the internal aesthetic emotion.

“It is an intuitive and spiritual art and must be seen with the intuitive and spiritual eye. This is the distinctive character of Indian art and to ignore it is to fall into total incomprehension or into much misunderstanding”⁴³.

XII

On the basis of above we may observe that the basic ideational foundations of Indian culture in all its forms are characterised by an inherent spiritual approach which stands for fundamental unity of all existence, a corollary of which is harmonious and peaceful coexistence among all the elements of universe: nature, human beings and others. It adopts an attitude of toleration not as a matter of policy or expediency, but as a principle of spiritual life. “A spiritual aspiration was the governing force of this culture, its core of thought, its ruling passion.”⁴⁴

Although spirituality was accorded the highest place in Indian culture, yet it does not neglect material progress, rather advocates a casting of thought and action into a total

and around development ; man cannot arrive immediately and directly at that higher elevation, at first he does require lower supports and stages. That is why the Indian culture set up no single narrow path, it is a continuously growing tradition of different spiritual endeavours leading to the one eternal. The peculiarity of this outlook is that it left out no part of life as alien to this spiritualism, the Indian mind has always perceived that the Spirit must present itself in endless variety of aspects. This synthetic spiritualism of Indian culture permeates the popular mind as well as the scholastic thinkers and is nourished on the high sublimities of Vedic scriptures. This is the core of Indianness and the soul of Indian culture which has sustained it for centuries and shall be her contribution to the world culture in future too.

Today when we stand at the threshold of the new millennium and human history is taking its major turns, the form of Indian culture may seem to be in need of revival and reform but its Vedāntic foundations are as strong as ever and its spirit is powerful enough to provide guidance and inspiration to the new world order based on freedom, fraternity and equality. 'Universalism' and 'inter-culturality' notions of contemporary world are well engrained in Vedāntic thought. Vedic ideals of world as one single nest⁴⁵, family or village⁴⁶ and the Vedic concept of togetherness and co-operation⁴⁷ are in fact even deeper and wider in approach.

This is the kind of direction that the new curve of world culture aims at. The change of dimension in our thinking, feeling and willing has to be brought about earnestly and comprehensively since the exigency of the present times presses for a serious reconsideration of the soundness and amplitude of Indian culture. But before we can undertake this work we have to go through a conscious and very deliberate process of denudation of removing of veils of superimposed values with which we cover ourselves.

A deep self-examination of ourselves is our first urgent necessity. We have to recover our poise with effort and sensitivity, and having done that, to attend to current problems in a spirit of originality. No real creativity is possible unless this basic premise is fulfilled.⁴⁸

Let us, then come forward with a refreshing view of eternal and universal foundations of Indian culture⁴⁹ and join hands to make all out efforts for giving a new look to the castle of humanity in the 21st century. May we sum up in the words of Veda by a prayer like :

"Saṁjñānam naḥ svebhiḥ saṁjñānamaraṇebhiḥ

*Saṁjñāmaśvinā yuvāmihāsmāsu niyacchatam."*⁵⁰

Let us have concord with our own people and concord with those who are strangers to us. O Āśvin Gods, create between us and the strangers a unity of hearts!

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PRATIBODHAVIDITAM AS SĀKŚI CAITANYA

'*Pratibodhaviditam*' is a very subtle and poignant term which occurs in the Kena Upaniṣad and has been interpreted as *Sākṣi Caitanya* by none other than the great Śaṅkara himself after positing and rejecting several other interpretations of the term. It is intended here to analyse the various *pūrvapakṣas* rendered by Śaṅkara in both of his commentaries on the Kena Upaniṣad and the nature of *Sākṣi Caitanya* as advocated by him in the explanation of this term. The present paper has accordingly been divided into two sections:

- (i) Section one will deal with various views referred to but repudiated by Śaṅkara regarding the term *Pratibodhaviditam*.
- (ii) Section two will discuss Śaṅkara's own viewpoint wherein the nature of *Sākṣi* will be enunciated.

I

Kena Upaniṣad is a small but important text of Vedānta which deals with the nature of *Brahman*, the Supreme Reality and the Highest Consciousness. In the first two sections of this Upaniṣad, the nature of unqualified *Brahman* is pointed out, while the last two sections of the text propound the qualified *Brahman*. Since the term *Pratibodhaviditam* appears in the second section of Kena, hence the present paper is primarily concerned with the first two sections of the

The text under discussion is titled 'Kena', for it starts with the word *kena* (by whom) itself. The Upaniṣad begins with a query of the disciple as to who is the propeller of sense organs, motivator of mind and propagator of vital air and how can one know It?¹ To this, the preceptor replies that *Brahman* is the motivating principle of all the sense organs, mind and vital air.

In other words, It is the Ear of the ear, Eye of the eye, Mind of the mind.² *Brahman* is the Supreme Reality to be known but it is not possible to know It like ordinary objects by ordinary means, since the sense organs cannot reach It and the mind cannot comprehend It. In the words of *śruti*, *Brahman* is neither *viditam* (known) nor *aviditam*³ (unknown), it has to be understood as *pratibodhaviditam*⁴ (to be known as an underlying principle of all cognitions). It is only after one has realised It in this form that he attains immortality, the highest goal of life.

From this point of view, *pratibodhaviditam* is the key term of Kena Upaniṣad in the sense that it provides a clue for realisation of *Brahman* within one's own self as an ever-present, all comprehensive awareness.⁵ To realise that highest truth in this form is the real knowledge according to this scriptural statement which is highlighted by Śaṅkara in two of his commentaries of the Kena Upaniṣad, namely *Padabhāṣya* and *Vākyabhāṣya*. He explains the term *pratibodhaviditam* in various ways but then accepts and interprets it as the realisation of *Brahman* in the form of *Sākṣi Caitanya*. Therefore the term *pratibodhaviditam* signifies a technique for self-realisation. To grasp it in its fullest depth, an enquiry into several meanings ascribed to the term is envisaged here.

Śaṅkara has given the following interpretations of the term *pratibodhaviditam* :

(1) The first explanation of the term treats the compound as an instance of *tritīyā tatpuruṣa* and breaks it as:

pratibodhena veditam (known by the process of knowing)

This interpretation seeks to establish an independent self as the agent of cognition, just as air is a mover of trees etc.⁶ In this sense, self is an agent in the form of a knower, but is different from knowledge as such. This *pūrvapakṣa* may be formulated as follows:

Bodhakriyāśaktimān ātmā

bodhotpādakatvāt

yo vṛkṣaśākhāś cālayati sa vayuriti tadvat.

Śaṅkara rejects this view by pointing out that the above argument clearly leads one to the acceptance of an unconscious self because it tends to prove the self on the basis of knowledge, but not in the form of knowledge itself. Moreover this view is not in accordance with the basic philosophy of Upaniṣads, for it purports to present the self as transitory, non-eternal and impure. Knowledge, if it is separate from the eternal self and is merely in the form of knowing process, has to be transitory.⁷ Hence when that knowing process is over, then the self in the form of unqualified substratum would be left.

It may be mentioned here that the above view does not seem to belong to any particular philosophical school, it seems reflective of the common-sense view of the self.

(2) Śaṅkara now addresses himself to the task of analysing the second interpretation of the term *pratibodhaviditam*. He says that improving upon the first viewpoint, the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣikas may put forth their own conception of *ātman* stating that although it is not of the nature of knowledge or consciousness, yet the self is immutable. For example, the application of heat to a black pot makes it red in colour, but there is no change in essence of the pot. Similarly, Knowledge (as a quality) inheres in the *ātman* (a substance), but it does not bring about any change, in the essence of its substratum. This view may be put in the form of an argument as follows:

*Ātmani boddhṛtvam na tu vikriyātmaka ātmā
yataḥ atmamanahsaṁyogajo bodha ātmani samavaiti
draṣṭavyamātrastu bhavati ghaṭa iva rāgasamavāyi*

To refute this view Śaṅkara has given the following arguments:

- (i) First of all, the proposition that '*ātman*, or for that matter, *Brahman*, is not conscious by nature and consciousness or knowledge is an adventitious quality of It' - is not consistent with the scriptures because it contradicts the Upaniṣadic statements like '*Vijñāna-mānadam Brahma*'.⁸

- (ii) Secondly, the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣikas postulate that knowledge arises in the self as a result of conjunction between mind and the self.

But the self is supposed to be partless even in the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika view and so how can there be any conjunction between the self and the mind? Conjunction presupposes some space or scope for a gap and this is not possible in the case of partless substance i.e. the self.⁹

- (iii) Moreover, mind is accepted as an eternal self by the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣikas and so there will be a contingency of ever-presence of memory in each and every soul¹⁰ which would be difficult to resolve.

- (iv) Lastly, *ātman*, according to *śruti* and *smṛti*, is unqualified, undifferentiated and unique by nature. Therefore, it is quite illogical to hold that It, even though It is *asaṁga* (unattached or unrelated), conjoins with something which is not equal to it (i.e. the mind).¹¹

In this way, Śaṅkara has tried to prove that the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika explanation of the term *pratibodhāviditam* is not acceptable because it does not suit to the basic philosophy of the Upaniṣads.

(3) The third standpoint alluded to by Śaṅkara while explaining the term *pratibodhaviditam* is regarding self-awareness of knowledge, i.e. the self is to be known (*viditam*) by itself (*pratibodha*).¹² Some corresponding *śruti* statements are also cited in support of this view.¹³

But Śaṅkara clarifies that this explanation is also not correct, since *Brahman* or the highest truth is one and unconditioned, there is no possibility of self-awareness at this level. As far as the *śrutis* quoted above are concerned, he points out that they refer to the empirical level only where *ātman* is conceived of as conditioned by *buddhi* etc, since pure consciousness can never turn to grasp its own nature. In essence the self is one and only one, not different from knowledge, it is in fact in the form of knowledge itself, so it does not require another knowledge just like a light does not require another light to illumine it.¹⁴ In Śaṅkara's words, the highest truth is neither *sva-saṁvedya* nor *para-saṁvedya* because it is above all such conditions.

(4) Now, it may be argued that the Buddhist *Vijñānavādins* also hold the same view. i.e. *vijñāna* is the only reality, it is self-luminous and self-evident and does not require anything else to illumine it.

But there is a basic difference in the Buddhist and the Advaitic views in so far as the former does not subscribe to any eternal principle of consciousness; for them everything is momentary while in the latter view, *ātman* is eternal and indestructible as propounded by the scriptures.¹⁵

Therefore Śaṅkara rejects the above view also by saying that it is in contradiction to various *śrutis*.

(5-6) The next two interpretations of the term *pratibodhaviditam* referred by Śaṅkara are as follows:

- (i) According to one view, the realisation of happiness during sound sleep where no external factor is available for generating the feeling, is *pratibodha*.¹⁶ Explaining this view, Ānandagiri, in his gloss on

Śaṅkara's commentary, has stated that '*asamprajñāta samādhi*' is the real import of the term *pratibodha*.¹⁷ The second meaning of the term referred here by Śaṅkara is that *pratibodha* is 'instantaneous salvation', which is also explained by some scholars as *sakṛdviññānam*.¹⁸ It means that the attainment of knowledge causes salvation at that very moment and there is no necessity of a second knowledge.

Śaṅkara has not given any argument in rejection of these two explanations but has just disposed them of as unacceptable by using the word '*apare*' which is often used as a demarcative of dislike.

(7-8) In his commentary called '*Vākyabhāṣya*', Śaṅkara, after giving the first meaning of the term as *sākṣī caitanya* acceptable to himself, has cited two more meanings of the term *pratibodhaviditam* as follows:

- (i) The first one is a conventional, commonsense view which is based on a similitude, i.e. *pratibodhavad veditam*.¹⁹ Here *pratibodha* means awakening; just as a person who awakens after deep sleep, is free of all his false impressions in the dream, similarly one who has realised *Brahman*, is free of all the false views at once.
- (ii) The second one explains *pratibodha* as instruction of the teacher:

‘*Gurūpadeśaḥ pratibodhaḥ
tena veditam pratibodhaviditam*’

It means that *Brahman* is to be known only by the instruction of the teacher.²⁰

After citing both the above meanings, Śaṅkara rejects them without giving any reason whatsoever. He simply states.

‘*Pūrvam tu yathārtham*’²¹ i.e. the meaning which was given earlier, is correct and acceptable. By *pūrvam*, he intends to say that the first meaning which he has referred to in the beginning, prior to those later explanations which he is

citing and refuting now, does actually convey the exact sense of the *śruti*. And that first interpretation of the term *pratibodhaviditam* put up by Śaṅkara in both of his commentaries on Kena Upaniṣad is verily the *Brahman* as *sākṣi caitanya*, which forms the second section of this paper.

II

It is worth mentioning here that although Śaṅkara, while explaining the term *pratibodhaviditam*, has not explicitly used the term *sākṣi*, but on analysing all the epithets that he uses therein, it is more than clear that this is precisely his view. It is not without reason then, that Ānandagiri says it conclusively in his commentary of Śaṅkara's following words:

(a) *Pratibodha eva hi saḥ*.²²

(b) *Sarvathā api paramātmā pratibodha eva bodham prati bodham prati sākṣitayā bhātīti*.²³

According to Śaṅkara, the term *pratibodha* is to be understood as an *avyayībhāva* in the sense of *yathā* :²⁴

bodham bodham prati vidadam

is a case of *vīpsā* (repetition) and that which is known as *pratibodham* is *pratibodhaviditam*. From this point of view, the word literally means 'that which is revealed in all cognitions;' i.e. the seer of all knowledges, '*sarvapratiya-yadarśi*' in Śaṅkara's own words and technically it may be known as the *sākṣi caitanya*. In fact this is the meaning which Śaṅkara has subscribed to in both of the his commentaries on the Kena upaniṣad. It is also noteworthy that it is only in this explanation that the word *prati* has a special significance, otherwise in all the interpretations quoted and repudiated above, the word *pratibodha* is simply an equivalent to *bodha*. Therefore, Śaṅkara's own view has a linguistic justification too.

In its common import, the word *sākṣi* means 'seeing or experiencing without being agent of the act concerned.'²⁵

It is admitted to be the evidencing consciousness which reveals the object by imparting immediacy to it. This fact is well substantiated by the grammatical formulation of the word *sākṣī* too.²⁶ Accordingly Śaṅkara has expounded the nature of *ātman* as *sākṣī*. Only this *ātman* or *Brahman* can be truly regarded as self-evident and self-luminous or directly perceptible²⁷ which is the essential feature of *sākṣī*.

In fact the Upaniṣads declare *Brahman* as Pure Being, Pure Consciousness and Infinity;²⁸ these words imply one another, since the being is not essentially different from consciousness. In other words, consciousness is not a contingent quality of the being, *Brahman* or *ātman*. It eternally shines forth in an unabated form.²⁹ It is the light that illumines uniformly and reveals the objects when the veil of nescience is removed from them; this light of consciousness never ceases or wanes. Viewed from this angle, knowledge is self-luminous as also the illuminator of all that is. It is called *sākṣī* because it not only perceives things directly but also because it remains unchanged and unaffected.³⁰ According to Śaṅkara, nothing other than *Brahman* is real and *Brahman* is not different from *ātman* whose essence consists in consciousness, the *sākṣī* who is certainly self-luminous, is held to be so because it is taken as representing the unity of consciousness and thus it predates and sustains all representations. Although we do not come across the term '*sva-prakaśa*' in Śaṅkara's writings, yet he explicitly uses the term *sākṣī* in his *bhāṣya* on the *Brahmasūtra*.³¹ It is also clear that he treats *ātman* or self as *sākṣī* when it enlightens the manifold states of *antaḥkaraṇa*.³² Thus, we may say that for Śaṅkara, *sākṣī* is a kind of enduring, passive and unchanging awareness, which observes and reveals mental cognitions and physical objects as well as witnesses all changes and activities.³³ In other words, *sākṣī* or the self does not really do anything, it can yet reveal, like the sun, which has no illumining activity, and yet illumines or heats objects, by its mere presence.³⁴

In the light of the above, when we look at Śaṅkara's commentaries on Kena upaniṣad, the following points emerge with regard to the concept of *sākṣi*:

- (i) According to the reference of the term *pratibodhaviditā*, it is worth noting that Śaṅkara here is talking of *Brahman* as the highest innermost consciousness which is ever-present and self-evident in all forms of knowledge.³⁵ It may be taken as a representative of the scriptural epithet '*satyam*' with regard to *Brahman*.
- (ii) The word *prati* in the compound '*pratibodhaviditā*' implies each and every cognition, it is a very significant qualificative, since *Brahman* is not a *sākṣi* in the ordinary sense of the term who might evidence some particular position.³⁶ It is a witness to all cognitions in the sense that all cognitive processes emanate and culminate in this very Supreme Consciousness; In other words, it is the underlying substratum of all cognitive processes but it is not different in identity from knowledge or consciousness.³⁷ In this sense, it may be understood to signify the term '*jñānam*' of the *śruti*.
- (iii) This brings us to the acceptance of the eternal, ever-conscious principle which knows everything not through any sort of cognitive activity but by its being everything. If it is not everlasting, then it ceases to be '*sarvapratyayadarśi*' as Śaṅkara himself highlights in his commentary on the Kena Upaniṣad.³⁸ Thus, while consciousness appears in modes as varying and temporarily determined, it is found constant and invariable in its aspect of transcendental evidencing.³⁹ Put in simpler terms, this principle may be expressed as a witness to all agencies, though not an agent itself. This is possible due to its infinity or transcendental unity, which is termed as '*anantam*' by the *śruti*.

Although *Brahman* is being described here as 'seer of all cognitive processes', yet it has to be emphasised

that the adjunct of 'seer' is just being used at the empirical level only; at the transcendental level this seer is not different from seeing, in fact it is seeing proper.⁴⁰

- (v) That is what Śaṅkara himself has repeatedly clarified in so many terms:

*Pratyayaireva pratyayeṣu aviśiṣṭatayā lakṣyate.*⁴¹

It means that there is no difference at the level of Pure Consciousness or *Brahman*; It is Itself known as undifferentiated knowledge through knowledge, for knowledge is its own essence.

- (vi) In other words, *Brahman* is being described as a witness or an observer in the sense that all our cognitions are pervaded by the innermost eternal consciousness which is in the form of knowledge itself. Just as the Sun is self-luminous but it is termed as illuminator only when there is a reference to something else being illuminated, similarly *Brahman* is Pure, One and the Supreme Reality which is undifferentiated but we talk of It as *sākṣī* only with reference to *sākṣya*⁴² i.e. objects of knowledge.
- (vii) *Brahman* is all-pervading like *ākāśa*, which is to be experienced as present in a pot, cave or mountain etc; they are simply said to be the limiting adjuncts of an omnipresent reality, but they cannot in fact limit It.
- (viii) We can experience It's presence in all beings as *pratibodhaviditam*: this is a unique way of self-realization and Śaṅkara illustrates this in the following manner: Just as the existence of fire can be felt in a piece of hot iron, similarly we can experience *Brahman* in each one of our cognitions. In case of hot iron, we cannot separate heat from iron but at the same time we cannot negate it. In the same way we cannot discriminate the knower from knowledge and the known, but we can't

negae It too. This is what is meant by Śaṅkara when he says that the *Brahman* has to be known in the form of *pratyagātmavijñāna* and not as *viśayavijñāna*.⁴³

In other words, there are two ways of looking at a piece of hot iron.

- (a) It is a piece of iron which is hot
- (b) There is heat permeating in the iron which is illuminating it.

The first way of looking is known as *viśayavijñāna* and is the cause of ignorance and suffering while the latter one is *pratyagātmavijñāna* and is the means to immortality.⁴⁴ Heat is unchangeable, all-pervasive and illuminating while iron is changeable, delimited and dark. Similarly, *Brahman* itself in the form of knowledge is eternal, but not the objects which are illusory and transitory. Hence one who knows It in this form, rises above death and reaches immortality.

- (ix) It is also noteworthy in this connection that the term in question denotes *Brahman* or the highest truth only as *sākṣi*, it does not deal with lower or limited forms of consciousness such as *Īśvara*, *Jīva* etc. It envisages the Supreme Reality in the nature of Pure consciousness which is self-luminous, no amount of means or modes can describe It as such. On the contrary, It is ever-effulgent in all our experiences as an underlying witness thereof.
- (x) It is not the doer (*karṭṛ*), enjoyer (*bhokṭṛ*) or knower (*jñatṛ*) but a mere observer (*draṣṭṛ*) in the form of *sākṣi*.⁴⁵ It is termed *sākṣi* because of Its being immediately conscious of everything, without in any way, being affected by them. This witness is Absolute Consciousness in the form of unchanging intelligence underlying all our experiences. It is the all-evidencing seer, but It remains untouched and unmoved by affections of any kind because of its being only a silent observer;⁴⁶ nescience can keep away everything from

view but not the witnessing consciousness.⁴⁷ Such an underlying principle in the background may be characterised in terms of ‘knowing by way of immediate evidencing (*sākṣātkārijñānatva*)’.⁴⁸ The said evidencing principle may prove to be the transcendental precondition in all particular instances of perceiving or experiencing.

To conclude, we may say that after analysing Śaṅkara’s commentaries on the term *pratibodhaviditam* in Kena Upaniṣad, it is quite clear that although he has given several interpretations of the term,⁴⁹ yet he has approved of the view that this term conveys the idea of *Brahman* as *sākṣi Caitanya*. The fact will be more substantiated when we look at his own words in both the commentaries:

- (i) *Sarve pratyayā viṣayābhavanti yasya sa ātmā sarvabodhān prati budhyate.*⁵⁰
- (ii) *Tasmāt pratibodhāvabhāsapratyagātmataḥ yad vidadm tad Brahma tadeva matam jñātam.*⁵¹

Hence, there is no doubt about the fact that *pratibodhaviditam* is the most important and most subtle term of the Kena Upaniṣad. If we dwell upon the six traditional factors for interpreting the Vedāntic texts, we might even go to the extent of saying that the verse containing this particular term in the Kena Upaniṣad is the *upasaṃhāra* (conclusion) for the main text. That is why many scholars opine that the remaining text of Kena is only interpolation.

To sum up, it may be said that according to the Upaniṣads *Brahman* is *ātman* or the light which is ever-effulgent in the nature of consciousness in all our cognitions and this is exactly the meaning of *pratibodhaviditam*, which is explained by Śaṅkara as ‘*sarvabodhaboddhṛtvam*’ in the following words.

*Tasmān nityāluptyajñānasvarūpajyotirātmā Brahmetyayamarthaḥ sarvabodhaboddhṛtve ātmanaḥ siddhyati nānyathā.*⁵²

Notes and References

1. *Keneṣitaṃ palati preṣitaṃ manaḥ
kena prāṇaḥ prathamāḥ praiti yuktaḥ
kenesitāṃ vācamimāṃ vadanti
Cakṣuḥ śrotraṃ ka U devo yunakti* **Kena Upaniṣad, 1/1 (KU)**
2. *Śrotasya śrotraṃ manaso mano yad
vāco ha vācam sa U prāṇasya prāṇaḥ
Cakṣuḥścakuratimucya dhīrāḥ
pretyāsmallokādāmṛtā bhavanti.* Ibid 1/2
3. *Anyadeva tadviditādatho aviditādadhi.* Ibid 1/3
4. *Pratibodhaviditāṃ matamamṛtatvaṃ hi vindate.* Ibid, 2/4
5. Sri Aurobindo, **Kenopaniṣad**, p. 85
6. *Yadā punarbodhakriyākarteti bodhakriyālakṣaṇena tatkartāraṃ vijānātīti
bodhalakṣaṇena viditāṃ pratibodhaviditāṃ vyākhyāyate yathā yo
vrkṣāsāṅkhāścālayati sa vāyuriti tadvat.*
 Śaṅkara Padabhāṣya (SPB) pp. 80-81 (Gitapress Edition)
7. *Tadā bodhakriyāśaktimānātmā dravyaṃ, na bodhasvarūpa eva. Bodhastu
jāyate vinasīyati ca.* Ibid, p. 81
8. *Asmīn pakṣe pyacetanaṃ dravyamātraṃ Brahmeti 'Vijñānmanandaṃ
Brahma', 'Prajñānaṃ Brahma' ityādyaḥ śrutayo bādhitāḥ syuḥ.*
Ibid, pp. 82-83
9. *Ātmano niravayavatvena pradeśābhāvād.* Ibid, p.83
10. *Nityasaṃyuktatvācca manasaḥ smṛtyutpattiniyamānupapattiraparihāryā syāt.*
Ibid, p.83
11. *Saṃsargadharmitvaṃ cātmanaḥ srutismṛtinyāyaviruddhaṃ kalpitāṃ syāt.*
Ibid.
12. *Yatpunaḥ svasaṃvedyatā pratibodhaviditāmityasya vākyasyārtho varṇyate,
tatra bhavati sopadhikātve ātmano - - - - saṃvyavahāraḥ.* Ibid, p.84
13. (i) *Ātmanyevātmānaṃ paśyati* (Brh, Upa., 4/4/23).
(ii) *Svayamevātmānātmānaṃ vettha tvaṃ puruṣottama* (Gita, 10/15) iti.
Ibid, p.84
14. *Samvedanasvarūpatvāt samvedanāntarāpekṣā ca na sambhavati yathā
prakāśasāya prakāśāntarāpekṣayā na sambhavaḥ tadvat.* Ibid, pp.84-85
15. *Bauddhapakṣe svasaṃvedyatāyāṃ tu kṣaṇabhanguratvaṃ nirātmatvatvaṃ
ca vijñānasya syāt - - - - śrutayo bādhyeran.* Ibid, p.85.
16. *Yatpunaḥ pratibodhasabdena nirnimitto bodhaḥ pratibodho yathā
suptasyetyarthaṃ parikalpayanti.* Ibid.
17. *Yāḥ paramānandasākṣātkāraḥ sauṣuptānandasākṣātkāravat so'
sāmprajñātasamādhiḥ pratibodha ucyaḥ.* Anandagiritikā on the above,
pp. 19-20 (Ānandāśrama Edition, vol.VI)

18. *Sakṛdvijñānam pratibodha ityāparae*. SPB, p.85
19. *Sakṛdevaśeṣaviparītanirastasaṁskāreṇa svapnapratibodhavad-viditam tadeva mataṁ jñātaṁ bhavalīli*. Śaṁkara in *Vakya Bhasya* (SVB) on Kena Upaniṣad, p. 87
20. *Suṭpaṭratibuddho guruṇā pratibodhita iti*. Ibid.
21. SVB, p. 88
22. SPB, p. 86
23. Anandagiriṭikā on the above, p.20
24. SVB, pp. 78-79
25. *Akarṣṭve sati draṣṭṛtvam*. **Advaitadīpikā**, 1, p. 439
26. *Sarveṣāṁ bhūtanāṁ sākṣī, sākṣād draṣṭari saṁjñāyām*. Pāṇini, 5/2/91
27. Nataliya Isayeva, **Śaṁkara and Indian Philosophy**, (State University of New York Press, USA, 1993), p. 184
28. *Satyam jñānāmanantam Brahma*. **Taittirīyopaniṣad**, 2/1
29. *Tacchubhram jyotiṣāṁ jyotiḥ*. **Muṇḍakopaniṣad**, 2/9
30. *Sākṣādikṣāṇāt nirvikāratvācca*. **Siddhāntaleśasamgraha**, 1
31. **Brahmasūtrabhasya** on *Adhyāsa*.
32. S.S. Sāhā, *Svapraṁkṣatva, Sākṣijñāna and sākṣin*, in **Perspectives of Śaṁkara**, Ed. R. Balasubramanian (Department of Culture, Ministry of H.R.D, Govt. of India,) p. 51
33. Bina Gupta, **The Disinterested Witness** (North western University Press, USA, 1998), p. 48
34. A.K. Chatterjee and R.R. Dravid, **The Concept of Sākṣī In Advaita Vedānta** (BHU, 1979), p.20
35. (i) *Sardvapratyayadarśī cicchaktisvarūpamātraḥ* - - - - .
SPB. pp. 78-79
(ii) *Tasmātpratibodhāvabhāsapratyagātmatayā yadviditam tad Brahma*.
SVB, pp. 79-80
36. **Nyāyakośa**, pp. 989-90
37. *Asya sākṣīṇaḥ sadā asandigdha-aviparītasya nityasākṣātkāratā anāgantuka-prakṣāṭave ghaṭale*. **Bhāmatī on Brahmasūtra** 2/2/28
38. *Sarvapratyayadarsitve copajanānāpūyavarjitadṛkṣvarūpatā nityatvam*. SVB, p.79
39. **Pañcadaśī** , 4/24
40. *Sākṣīno draṣṭṛsvarūpamadhayastamityanīyam dṛṣṭisvarūpatvam tu nityam*. Sitanath Goswami, **Vivaraṇa on Kenopaniṣad**, p.140
41. SPB, p. 79
42. *Jñānasvarūpasyaiva sākṣyapekṣatayā sākṣitvamucyate, vastutastvasau sākṣātkārasvarūpaḥ*. **Vivaraṇa** on KU, p.140
43. *Somyagjñānavatpratyagātmanavijñānam, na viṣyavijñānam*. SVB, P. 80

44. *Viṣayātmavijñāne hi mṛtyuḥ prārabhata iti ātmavijñānam amṛtatvanimittam.*
Ibid. PP. 80-87
45. **Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad**, 6/11
46. A.O. Fort, **The Self And Its States**, (MLBD, New Delhi,) pp. 117-118
47. M.N. Sircar, **Vedantic Thought and Culture**, p.156
48. Debabrata Sinha, **The Idealist Standpoint, A Study In The Vedantic Metaphysic of Experience** (Śāntiniketan, 1965), p. 75
49. It is also to be noted in this connection that in his commentary called *Padabhāṣya*, Śaṅkara has given some philosophically more significant meanings of the above term, hence it is more useful in discerning the exact meaning of the same. In this way, it justifies the title of the commentary. i.e. *Padabhāṣya*.
50. SPB, p. 78
51. SVB, p.80
52. SPB, p. 84

MATTER, MIND AND MOTION IN VAIŚEŚIKA PLURALISM

The present paper aims at an analysis of the theory of Matter, Mind and Motion according to the Vaiśeṣika school of Indian Philosophy.

Philosophy in India is aimed at understanding the diversity of the visible world and reaching at the underlying essence. In this process, the philosophers have found that the universe may be broadly divided under two heads—material and non-material. Hence, no philosopher can neglect the material side of the world and more so a pluralist. Like all other pluralistic schools, the Vaiśeṣika has also delved deep into the delineation of matter.

The problem of matter is intimately connected with that of motion conceived either as *kriyā* (action) or *parispanda* (movement) and with that of *śakti* (energy) and has been approached from various angles in different schools of Indian Philosophy. Motion is also described as a distinctive feature of mind (*manas*) or internal organ in the Vaiśeṣika system, since mind is a minute but corporeal substance here. It is intended here to give a brief account of the idea of matter, mind and motion according to Vaiśeṣika Philosophy.

The Vaiśeṣika system is a pluralistic realism which propounds that the reality consists of multiplicity as

evidenced by our experience. This school does not try to reduce the diversity of experience to any universal principle on the basis of mere abstract thought or logical coherence; the entities it admits are taken directly from experience.¹ The roots of Vaiśeṣika are in cosmology and its basic interest is in the enumeration of irreducible elements and world constituents.² The cosmological orientation of the Vaiśeṣika also determines its access to the problem of matter, mind and motion.

Presuppositions of the Theory

- (i) The Vaiśeṣika school believes that the world is created out of its constituents. At every moment, certain things are created in the world, while others are dissolved.
- (ii) The law of change is operating in this world. Except the eternal forms of matter i.e. *akāśa*, *kāla*, *dik*, *manas* and the *paramāṇus* of first four substances, all the material products of the world undergo gradual change.
- (iii) Every change that takes place in the world has got a cause behind it which shows that the Law of Change is rooted in the doctrine of causation, i.e. every event has a definite cause.
- (iv) The effect does not pre-exist in its cause, it is a new product. In other words, there is a substantive difference between a cause and its effect, although they are bound together by an inseparable relation called inherence. This theory of relation between cause and effect is called *āramabhavāda* or *asatkāryavāda*.
- (v) Substances are the substrate of properties and both are essentially different. This essential differentiation between the properties and their substratum *dharmadharmibheda* is the cornerstone of Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika realism.³ Substratum (*dharmīn*) is mostly in the form of a substance (*dravya*). But the properties residing in it

are of various kinds. Some properties like colour, smell, etc. appear to be of the nature of stationary attributes of their substrate while others are of an evanescent nature like the motion of body.

- (vi) Besides the everyday production and destruction of the material products of the world, there are universal creation and universal dissolution also.⁴ The cycle of creation and dissolution is eternal, it has neither any beginning nor any end; it continues *ad infinitum*.
- (vii) Matter is generally understood to be a name assigned to the mixture of five types of elements. i.e. solid (earth), liquid (water), gaseous (air), luminous (light), etheric (*ākāśa*). These five are termed as *bhūta-dravyas* in Vaiśeṣika terminology. The first four out of these *bhūta-dravyas* alongwith *manas* are known as *mūrtadravyas*. Motion is associated only with the *mūrtadravyas* which have finite magnitude and not with all the *bhūta-dravyas*. That is to say, motion is not to be ascribed to *ākāśa* which has infinite magnitude, even though it is a material substance. Hence, it is to be clarified that the Vaiśeṣika theory of motion pertains to the five *mūrtadravyas* only.
- (viii) There are four kinds of ultimate particles of matter, namely, the *paramāṇus* (=atoms) of earth, water, fire and air which are the material cause of the physical world. Besides these, *manas* is also a *mūrtadravya* which has motion (of a special kind).
- (ix) These *paramāṇus*, (when put into motion, through the instrumentality of the divine will and the cumulative *adrṣṭa* of the individual selves) result in various conglomerations in the form of *dyāṇukas* (=dyads), *tryaṇukas* (=triads) and so on.
- (x) God (assisted by the cumulative *adrṣṭa*⁵ of the *jīvas*) is the efficient or instrumental cause of the world. Motion is the non-inherent cause of creation; without motion

there can be neither production nor destruction of the material world.

- (xi) Motion is always related to matter and mind; the latter may even exist without motion, but the former must have a substratum to inhere in. Matter and mind are the very substrate of motion.
- (xii) It is through matter and mind that the existence of motion is known.

Statement of The Theory

Kaṇāda defines *dravya* as an entity in which all motions, qualities and effects inhere.⁶ The first characteristic of *dravya* is mentioned here as motion or action. Therefore, it may be said that according to the Vaiśeṣika theory, a *dravya* is what possesses motion. Although this definition is limited to five finite substances only and does not apply to *ākāśa*, *kāla*, *dik* and *ātman* which are immobile by their very nature,⁷ yet it definitely provides the essential link between matter, mind and motion in the Vaiśeṣika system.

Matter⁸ is usually sought to be defined as intrinsically unconscious and essentially substantive and is described by means of size, shape and movement. Such peculiarities are present in five finite substances only, namely, earth, water, fire, air and *manas* which are termed as *mūrta* (corporeal).

Motion is the third category⁹ in the Vaiśeṣika list of categories and is defined as the unconditional cause of conjunction and disjunction.¹⁰ The disjunction of an object from one point of space and its conjunction with another, i.e. its change of position in space, is possible only through motion. Motion can, therefore, belong to those substances only which have limited magnitude.¹¹ Ubiquitous substances like *ākāśa*, *kāla*, etc. are incapable of changing their positions, since they are non-corporeal like *sāmānya* etc. even though they are substances. Hence, it is clearly stated by Praśastapāda that motion belongs to five *mūrta* (corporeal) substances only.¹²

Of these five substances also, first four are said to be material, physical and non-eternal in the form of *avayavins* (composites). They are constituted of *avayavas* (parts) in which they inhere; *paramāṇus* are the ultimate, minutest parts of these four substances and they are eternal. The fifth finite substance *manas* is said to be the internal organ and being eternal, it has no parts.

The first of these substances, earth is described to have motion which generates velocity. Water also has motion with liquidity added to it. Fire or *tejas* particles always move upwards, they possess intense velocity; on account of extreme lightness the velocity of *tejas* is simply unthinkable, as soon as the sun rises on the peak of the eastern hill, immediately light enters into the houses.¹³ Air or *vāyu* possesses oblique or transversal motion but no weight. Therefore it does not come down naturally and there is nothing to check its movement which continues to get impetus from the velocity it possesses. Air is said to be always in motion. Amongst the physical substances it has the swiftest motion. The fifth *mūrta* substance, *manas*, is atomic in size; it also possesses motion and velocity like all the finite and corporeal forms of matter, with the difference that its motion is quickest of them all and is to be inferred.¹⁴

Paramāṇūs and Motion

According to the Vaiśeṣika theory, matter exists either as *paramāṇus* or their composites. As stated earlier, *paramāṇus* are the ultimate constituents of gross bodies, they are invisible and eternal. On the other hand, composite forms of matter are divisible and transient, they are produced out of conjunctions which are brought about by motion, the cause of conjunction and disjunction. Motion in turn, is produced by weight, effort, conjunction and liquidity.¹⁵

The atomic theory as propounded by the Vaiśeṣika states that initially two *paramāṇus* combine to produce a *dvyaṇuka* and three such *dvyaṇukas* make a *tryaṇuka* or *truti*.

This *tryaṇuka* is the remotest visible molecule and constitute of this sensible world.

The motion of *paramāṇus* is supposed to be of two kinds - creative motion and non-creative motion.¹⁶ The creative motion is one which produces such conjunctions of *paramaṇūs* as contribute to the formation of gross bodies and eventually of the world of concrete existence. This motion is produced in *paramāṇus* only at the eve of a fresh cosmic creation after the period of cosmic rest or *pralaya* is over.

During the period of *pralaya*, *paramāṇus* remain separated from one another, so that they cannot produce any effect for some time, till the cosmic order begins. According to one view, the *paramāṇus* are not in motion during this period. But there is another view indicated in the system which states that even during the period of cosmic rest, a sort of motion exists in the *paramāṇus*¹⁷ which is non-productive of any conjunction and hence is called non-creative motion. This kind of motion simply disjoins the *paramāṇus* from points of space occupied by them and conjoins them with the contiguous points of space. It may occasionally lead to a sort of juxtaposition called *pracaya* (loose grouping) of *paramāṇus*, but never brings them close enough to be actually combined into composite bodies.¹⁸ This may be called incessant vibratory motion, an infinitude of continually whirling or vibratory particles.¹⁹ *Paramaṇūs* get their name '*patatra*', since they are constantly in motion.²⁰ But this non-creative motion which has no bearing upon the process of creation, is possible for *paramāṇus* only during the period of *pralaya*, so long as there is no divine urge for creation. It is, however, superseded by creative motion when the necessity for a fresh creation arises. The only purpose which is supposed to be served by this non-creative motion is to mark the duration of cosmic rest in terms of *kṣaṇas* (the minimal units of time) determined by each unit of such motion.²¹ In fact, it is not the type of motion which is

responsible for formation of gross bodies, so it is better not to call it *karma* proper but *parispanda* or vibration only.²² In other words, the *paramāṇus*, even though they possess *kriyā* (motion), do not possess causal efficiency in terms of conjunction and disjunction.²³

It is just on the eve of creation that motion leading to the production of a *dvyaṇuka* is generated in the *paramāṇus*. In other words, even though during the period of dissolution atoms are all dynamic, still the requisite activity which would ultimately bring them together so as to produce a *dvyaṇuka* is found wanting.²⁴ So, for the purpose of creation of the universe such activity is engendered in *paramāṇus*, which, through mutual conjunction, gives rise to *dvyaṇukas*.

Here a question arises as to how such creative motion is suddenly initiated in the insentient *paramāṇus*. The Vaiśeṣika steers clear of this difficulty by postulating that this motion in the *paramāṇus* must be contingent on some conscious, intelligent being because any activity in insentient entities requires some sentient principle.²⁵ As, for example, an axe requires the guidance of the cutter so that it may be set into motion. Similarly this conscious principle through whose guidance *paramāṇus* are made active is God, according to Vaiśeṣika theory. Individual souls cannot serve that purpose because they are insensate at the time of cosmic rest, i.e. they neither have the physical body, nor the consciousness which is an accidental quality of the self and is itself contingent on the body and the sense-organs. Therefore they are not expected to have the capacity to set *paramāṇus* into motion. Motion is contingent on volitional effort or *prayatna* and whosoever possesses this volitional effort at that time is God alone.²⁶ If it be said that *paramāṇus* come into contact by themselves without any extraneous instrumentality, then *paramāṇus* would turn out to be conscious entities, which will be against the accepted theory of Vaiśeṣika.²⁷ Therefore, God has to be accepted as the instrumental cause of creation.

But, when God takes to creation, he is influenced by the deserts of actions of individual souls i.e. *adr̥ṣṭa*. This metempirical force guides the course of creation and it is due to the operation of *adr̥ṣṭa* that a sort of motion is produced in the *paramāṇus* and they start moving to conglomerate in order to form various composites. Hence, *adr̥ṣṭa* is also the instrument for imparting creative motion to the *paramāṇus*.²⁸ As soon as the cumulative *adr̥ṣṭa* of individual souls matures for fructification, the will of God, which is eternal, becomes, as it were, creative and immediately the *paramāṇus* group themselves round the *manas* to form organisms one for each. This initiation of motion in *manas* and *paramāṇus* is attributed to *adr̥ṣṭa* quickened by God's will. In this way, it seems that there are, so to say, two kinds of motion in the *paramāṇus* before any effect is produced out of these. One appears to be intrinsic, while the other extrinsic.²⁹ With the help of such a motion *paramāṇus* group together to form bigger parts till composites are formed and the cosmos comes to exist.

In the process of this cosmic creation, the Vaiśeṣika maintains that motion tending to the formation of gross bodies starts at first in the *paramāṇus* of air and then gross air is produced through air-*dvyaṇukas* and air-*tryaṇukas*. Thereafter, through these respective courses of *dvyaṇukas* and *tryaṇukas* the air, the water, the earth and the fire are produced in due order. It is clear from this description that these four gross materials are produced gradually and not simultaneously. But at the beginning of creation, when God desires to bring this cosmos into existence, motion tending to creative conjunction is produced in all *paramāṇus* so that *dvyaṇukas* may be created out of them. At that time all the *paramāṇus* are active and the conjunction resulting from them should necessarily be regarded as *ubhayakarmaja* (due to the action of both of them).

It is also to be noted that according to the Vaiśeṣika theory, the combining *paramāṇus* must be homogenous in

character. That is to say, when creative motion is generated in an earth *paramāṇu*, it must unite with another *paramāṇu* of its own class. An earth *paramāṇu* can never combine with a water *paramāṇu* to form a *dvyaṇuka*. The logical reason behind this theory is given by Uddyotakara by saying that combination of *paramāṇus* is meant for the formation of gross bodies for the purpose of enjoyment of finite selves.³⁰ That is why the metempirical force or *adṛṣṭa* of the finite selves is given as the accessory cause of creation. Now, if two heterogeneous *paramāṇus* combine together to produce a *dvyaṇuka*, it would not have definite colour or taste and as such no purpose would be served by it. Therefore it is accepted that heterogeneous *paramāṇus* do not combine, only homogenous *paramāṇus* combine to produce a *dvya-ṇuka*.

On the other hand, the non-creative motion of *paramāṇus* is supposed to be produced in a different way. It is only as the result of a violent shaking or impact that a body is dissolved. But the effect of the impact is not lost with the dissolution of the body, for it sets the *paramāṇus* of the dissolved body in motion. This motion in its turn produces in the *paramāṇus* the quality of impulse or *vega* which keeps them moving, vibrating continually during the whole period of cosmic rest.³¹

Manas and Motion

Manas, according to the Vaiśeṣika, is the ninth substance and is held to be atomic in size. Its existence is proved for the production of pleasure, pain and other cognitions.³² These are possible only when this internal organ, *manas*, comes in contact with the individual self or the external sense organs. This, again, is not possible, unless there is motion in the *manas*. The first motion in *manas*, at the beginning of creation, like that of *paramāṇus*, was due to some *adṛṣṭa*.³³ When the merit and demerit, the auxiliaries of one's life, being fully experienced, get exhausted or become ineffective due to their mutual suppression, the vital air stops functioning and the present body falls down

as dead. Then, again, another set of merits and demerits which would produce experiences in the next body, becomes operative. This force, aided by the *ātman* and *manas* contact, produces a motion called *apasarpaṇa* which causes the disjunction between the dead body and the *manas*. Here, the contact of the *ātman* and the *manas* is the non-material cause, the *manas* is the material cause and the fresh set of merits and demerits, which is now operative, is the instrumental cause.

Manas, after leaving the previous dead body, comes into contact with a fresh, subtle body, called *ātivāhikaśarīra* which is produced by a fresh set of merits and demerits. Through this subtle body, the *manas* enters heaven or hell and comes in contact with another body which is produced according to the past deeds of the person whose *manas* is moving. It is meant for the experience of pleasure and pain by the *ātman*. Since the *manas* is atomic, it is not possible for it to come in contact with that body which will cause the *ātman* to experience pleasure and pain. Moreover, the *manas* alone, without the help of any organism, cannot go out to such a distance; for, there cannot be any motion of the *manas* without an organism. Hence the existence of a very subtle body has to be assumed. This subtle and imperceptible body is produced out of *paramāṇus*, which have been moved by *adr̥ṣṭa*. As it leads the *manas* to heaven, hell etc., after leaving the dead body, it is called *ātivāhika* body. The motion which brings the *manas* in contact with this *ātivāhika* body, is called *upasarpaṇa*.³⁴

It can be said on the basis of above description that the *manas* must have an organism while moving; i.e. *manas* does not go out of the organism as long as the latter is in a living state. In other words, there can be motion in the *manas* which is not in any organism, except during the state that follows immediately after the final universal dissolution (*mahāpralaya*).³⁵ Although the *yogins* have the powers to send their *manas* to desired places, which certainly goes out of

the organism and returns to it, that is also due to *adr̥ṣṭa* only; yet in the case of ordinary people, the *manas* cannot leave the physical body and go out as long as the particular body is said to be living. If it goes out at all, the body will surely fall down as dead due to its own inherent weight.³⁶

It may be asked here that the ordinary causes of motion, namely, weight, fluidity and elasticity,³⁷ not being found with the *manas*, how can there be any motion in it. The argument of the Vaiśeṣika is that *manas* has limited magnitude, so there should be motion in it, does not seem proper. Regarding the velocity of the *manas*, it may be said that first the motion is produced in the *manas* and after that it gets velocity associated with it.³⁸ The standard Vaiśeṣika reply to these questions is that even in the absence of these ordinary causes, motion is produced in the *manas*, for the first time after the dissolution, due to the contact of the *ātman* with *adr̥ṣṭa*³⁹ and in other cases it is born due to human efforts. Conjunction of what is eaten and drunk and conjunctions of other efforts are also attributed to this *adr̥ṣṭa*.⁴⁰

As regards the motion of *manas* within the living physical body, it is through the instrumentality of efforts due to desire and aversion that a contact between the *ātman* and the *manas* takes place which produces motion at later stages. This motion of the *manas* is only to connect it with external sense-organs. When the *manas* is put into motion by a desire to know something, or by contemplation, or by *adr̥ṣṭa*, an effort is produced, which, in its turn, produces a motion in the sensory nerve (*manovahā nāḍī*) which is an object of sense-perception, and possesses touch and velocity. This motion of the sensory nerve causes velocity in it and forces the *manas* to move and come in contact with the external sense organ through which the desired object is to be cognised.⁴¹ The impression thus placed on the sense organ is transmitted to the *ātman* through the *manas* and a particular cognition takes place. This cognition is not

possible without the contact of internal sense-organ, *manas*, hence, it is inferred that through the efforts undertaken due to desire and aversion, motion is produced in the *manas*.

It is also important to mention here that according to the Vaiśeṣika theory, all physical action consists in motion alone, since it does not accept force or power (*śakti*) except as modes of motion.⁴² Moreover, although in the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika theory, all action of matter on matter is resolved into motion, conscious activity is sharply distinguished from all forms of motion.⁴³

It is clear from the above that in their effort to explain the creation and dissolution of the phenomenal world, the Vaiśeṣikas have deliberated in detail about the problem of matter, mind and motion. Pluralists as they are, they have established that the innumerable, indivisible eternal *paramāṇus* of earth, water, fire and air as well as the countless internal organs are eternal forms of matter which act as the substrate of motion. It is through these forms of matter alone that motion is known; so, motion depends on matter. On the other hand, different products of matter are dependent upon motion, it is the motion which brings about the conjunctions between *paramāṇus* and the various composites of the world are born. There can be neither production nor destruction of the material world without matter or motion. Not only for the cosmic order but even for the objective aspect of the psychic world, the problem of matter, mind and motion is relevant. Hence, there is no doubt about the fact that matter, mind and motion are intimately related.

It is in this background that a very modest attempt has been made here to hint at the basic concepts of matter, mind and motion according to Vaiśeṣika pluralism. There is a whole lot of details about the process of material products and causes, varieties of motion, which have been discussed in different Vaiśeṣika classics, but it is not possible to contain all that in a paper of this size. Therefore, only

the broad parameters of the theory are drawn here with the hope that it will generate more interest and quest amongst the scholarly fraternity.

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NATURE AND ROLE OF ADRṢṬA IN VAIŚEṢIKA PHILOSOPHY

The present paper aims at an analysis of the concept of *adrṣṭa* in the Vaiśeṣika school of Indian Philosophy.

All the systems of Indian Philosophy (except the Cārvāka materialists) are based on two cardinal doctrines—

- (a) The law of *Karma*
- (b) The law of Rebirth or Transmigration of souls.

These laws are considered in India as demonstrated and proved laws of Nature, as self-evident facts. The theory of *karma* and transmigration represents the law of causality, i.e. the law of relation between the cause and effect, and rests on the fact that all causes lead to certain effects. According to it, every action leads to an effect which in turn produces some sort of unseen power or force that destines the lives of all beings in this world. This unseen power is called *apūrvā* by the Mīmāṃsakas, *prarabdha karma* by the Vedāntins, *dharmādharmā* by the Naiyāyikas and *adrṣṭa* by the Vaiśeṣikas.¹

I

The term *adrṣṭa* (as well as *darṣana*) is derived from the root *dṛś*, meaning 'to see' and is first used by Kaṇāda in this sense in his Vaiśeṣika sutras. All the categories that he describes are founded on *dṛṣṭa* (experienced) and those

unexplained by known experience are due to *adr̥ṣṭa*. He divides the entities of the world into known or unknown ones and distinguishes them by the term *dṛṣṭa* and *adr̥ṣṭa* respectively.² He has used the twin methods of comparison and contrast to discover the truth and his method of investigation is one of our finest heritages. Literally, *adr̥ṣṭa* means 'not seen' and hence the term represents all the unseen forces or causes for various phenomena of Nature or Spirit. In other words, non-acquisition of truth is called *adr̥ṣṭa*. This is also supported by the statement of Vātsyāyana.³ So, the word *adr̥ṣṭa* is here used primarily in the simple etymological sense, i.e., 'not seen', 'not observed' or 'not experienced'.

II

In the Sūtras of Kaṇāda, *adr̥ṣṭa* also represents the law of causality; the divergent character of this world or its effects is to be traced to their respective causes. The effects are usually known, but the causes may not always be known and when the cause is not known, Kaṇāda uses the term '*adr̥ṣṭakārita*' with regard to that effect. Whatever cannot be accounted for, is assigned to *adr̥ṣṭa*. The motion of the jewel towards a thief, the movement of the needle towards the magnet, the circulation of moisture in the plants, the upward motion of fire, the motion of air and the original motion of mind and atoms, are all traced to *adr̥ṣṭa*.⁴ In other words, certain motions not due to material contact, of which the mechanical causes are unknown, are ascribed to the universal final cause, *adr̥ṣṭa*.⁵ *Adr̥ṣṭa* has been declared to be the cause also of earthquake and other terrestrial disturbances and of other effects. It is, as its name implies, an unseen principle, capable of initiating changes. But as is evident from above, *adr̥ṣṭa* in this sense denotes purely mechanical, unseen causes only.

In the older tradition of Vaiśeṣika itself, we also come across many references of *adr̥ṣṭa* or unseen power as the underlying basis of diversity amongst living beings. This

visible world is full of variety, a mixture of happiness and suffering, and we have to look for the causes of this variety. The philosophers of Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika have postulated *adṛṣṭa* as an explanation for diversity of this phenomenal world.⁶ In other words, *adṛṣṭa* is that unseen or unascertained cause which brings about differences in conditions of human life and explains the variety in its conditions. From this point of view, *adṛṣṭa* might seem to be rooted in the Vedic notion of *ṛta*, the universal ground for cosmic order, but basically it pertains to the principle of causation.

III

The next aspect of *adṛṣṭa* in a moral, though general sense is demonstrated in the following manner : a voluntary act is an act done with a definite purpose or end. Such ends are visible in case of some acts like cooking, milking etc., while results of certain other acts such as sowing, ploughing, planting etc., appear in the near or distant future, as the case may be, but definitely on this earth, and generally within the life-time of the agent. But there are other acts such as sacrifice, charity, pure living, high thinking, religious observances etc., the results of which are not to be obtained on this earth. These acts can neither be purposeless, nor can name and fame be the fruit of them, for they are not performed with that motive. On the other hand, as the Veda declares, 'Exaltation' (*abhyudaya*) is the fruit of such acts, for which the purposes are not within sight — their results obviously accrue in the most distant future, so that they cannot be directly or immediately connected with their respective causes. Hence it follows that in case of such acts which speedily vanish out of existence, there is an intermediate, common substratum between the action and the result, and this is *adṛṣṭa*.⁷

IV

In the later tradition of the Vaiśeṣika school beginning from Praśastapāda, we come accross a new, specified

connotation of the word *adr̥ṣṭa* which is prevalent since then. Here *adr̥ṣṭa* is said to signify merit and demerit⁸ (*dharma* and *adharma*), the qualities of the soul, by virtue of which it enjoys happiness or suffers misery. Praśastapāda preserves Kanada's sense of *adr̥ṣṭa* as the cause of initial motion of atoms, but seems to equate this cause with the agency of merit and demerit of the selves.⁹ The operation of merit and demerit, a transcendental cause, has to be posited in explaining the conjunctions and disjunctions of souls with their organic vehicles or bodies, which cannot be ascribed to natural causes, but presuppose the law of *karma*, or the operation of moral causation, as superimposed on the natural order.¹⁰ In this sense, *adr̥ṣṭa* is the unknown quality of souls which guides their destiny according to their *karma* and requires them to be provided with properly equipped bodies¹¹ and an appropriate objective world for the experience of pleasure and pain.¹² The formation of embryo in the womb is dependent on the *adr̥ṣṭa* of parents.¹³

In the form of *dharma* and *adharma*, *adr̥ṣṭa* inheres in the individual souls, but being a quality, is devoid of consciousness or knowledge, since qualities do not inhere in the qualities according to Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika theory.¹⁴ So the principle of *adr̥ṣṭa* remains ever unconscious and has to be guided by some sentient agent.¹⁵ Obviously, the individual soul lacks omniscience and as such it does not possess the capacity for cognising *adr̥ṣṭa*, therefore the omniscient God comes in the picture who renders the operation of *adr̥ṣṭa* possible. God is conceived here as custodian of *adr̥ṣṭa* only.

V

In the atomistic pluralism of the Vaiśeṣika scheme, atoms are the material cause, God is the efficient cause and *adr̥ṣṭa* or merits and demerits of individual souls are the non-inherent cause of this world.¹⁶ *Adr̥ṣṭa* is also the cause of creative motion in atoms. It is due to the operation of this metempirical force that atoms start moving to get

together in order that they may be integrated into countless varieties of things. Earlier Vaiśeṣika tradition was not explicitly theistic, but when several objections were raised against the principle of *adṛṣṭa*, which was assumed to be unconscious and still held responsible for the first creative motion in atoms, the later thinkers of the Vaiśeṣika school accepted the reality of God and *adṛṣṭa* became the vehicle through which God's will operates. Udayana, in his famous compendium on theism, posits the moral argument¹⁷ for the existence of God which is based on *adṛṣṭa* itself. He contends that when God creates this world, he is assisted by these individual deserts of actions, i.e. merits and demerits of individual souls. Hence, the postulation of God as an intelligent agent on whom rests the operation of *adṛṣṭa* is not without foundation.

VI

It may not be out of place to mention here that according to Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika theory *adṛṣṭa* resides in the individual souls and not in the things to be known.¹⁸ It is a very important assumption, since the plurality of souls is posited here and each soul has to bear the fruits of its own actions. If *adṛṣṭa* is accepted to inhere in the things, then 'A' might have to enjoy the fruits of 'B's deeds. Therefore, *adṛṣṭa* is strictly said to inhere in the souls only.

VII

It follows from the above that *adṛṣṭa* in the form of *dharma* and *adharma* is transmigratory, since it travels beyond this life in the form of *pāpa* and *puṇya*¹⁹ and is responsible for the bondage of a person in the form of rebirth. For man, this law represents the justice which rules his destiny, throughout successive lives according to the merit or demerit of his past lives and its effect extends across the whole cycle of earthly existence.²⁰ It is in fact, the law of equity which prescribes that which one sows in one life must be reaped in the same or in a later life. It is intended to explain the

potential after-effects of volitional acts performed in previous births. The concept of *adr̥ṣṭa* here appears to be based on the law of *karma* which includes causation and conservation of results of actions. In this sense, *adr̥ṣṭa* seems similar to the Mīmāṃsā concept of *apūrvā*.²¹

It is also to be clarified here that in the earlier Vaiśeṣika tradition, *adr̥ṣṭa* was held to be an autonomous principle, but later on, when God was incorporated in the system, *adr̥ṣṭa* was not considered to be independent in the matter of apportioning of results of *karma*. Even though the result is produced by the *karmas*, apportioning of the results is necessarily supervised by God according to it.

VIII

As far as the reason for contraction of the meaning of *adr̥ṣṭa* is concerned, we see that Kaṇāda uses the term *adr̥ṣṭa* in a wider sense of unknown causes, while Praśastapāda uses it in the sense of *dharma* and *adharma* only without adducing any reason for changing the equation. Hence it seems that either he might have received the clue for this from the then available Vaiśeṣika literature, which is no more available to us or he might have been influenced, at least in this case, by the Nyāya phraseology prevalent at that time, where the terms *dharma* and *adharma* are used in the sense of *adr̥ṣṭa*. This can also throw some new light on the chronology of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika writers.

IX

As far as the original literal sense of the term is concerned, the doctrine of *adr̥ṣṭa* is thus based on the law of causation and stands for 'unknown cause' or 'unexplained nature'. Various kinds of motion and natural properties are ascribed to *adr̥ṣṭa*, the 'final causality', provided the cause cannot be ascertained by observation or inference.²² But the acceptance of *adr̥ṣṭa* does not necessarily mean that perceived causes should not be taken into account.²³ Jayanta in the Nyāya-Maṇjārī notes that *adr̥ṣṭa* is resorted to in explanation

of observed phenomena only when these cannot be derived in any way from the operation of known causes.²⁴ This clearly repudiates the charge levelled against the *Vaiśeṣika* theory that 'to accept *adṛṣṭa* is to surrender all possibility of philosophical speculations'.²⁵ It merely states that things occur and occur due to certain conditions but when the conditions responsible to bring out the effects could not be ascertained, they were honestly classified as due to *adṛṣṭa*. Moreover, what is *adṛṣṭa* today, may be *dṛṣṭa* tomorrow and what is *adṛṣṭa* to A, may be *dṛṣṭa* to B. When Kaṇāda uses the epithet '*adṛṣṭakārita*' in the cases above mentioned, he means to say that the causes of these effects could not be ascertained upto his time. Now that the scientists have causally accounted for the events like the upward motion of the flames and the zigzag course of wind, they should not be regarded as *adṛṣṭakārita*. This shows that the *Vaiśeṣika* thinkers had firm faith in the gradual progress of human knowledge.²⁶

X

To sum up, it may be said that the concept of *adṛṣṭa* has undergone subtle and gradual changes in its nature in the course of *Vaiśeṣika* development. In the earliest tradition, the term was first used by Kaṇāda in purely etymological and wider sense. He also used it in reference to all those unseen forces or powers which are the underlying principle of a varied but inexplicable phenomena of Nature and which serve the ends of creation and of created beings. In this sense, *adṛṣṭa* symbolises simply any unseen cause and represents the theory of causation. In the third stage *adṛṣṭa* signifies the unseen moral force or destiny which enables the selves to reap the harvest of their past actions. Here it appears to be the ground of human conduct in general, which is related to the law of *karma*. But in the later tradition of *Vaiśeṣika*, it came to signify the two moral qualities of the souls. In other words, the older tradition about *adṛṣṭa* was of a descriptive sort, while in the later view of *Vaiśeṣika*, the concept took a normative nature.

Notes and References

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Dr̥ṣṭesu bhāvadar̥ṣṭesvabhāvāt. V.S. 8/2/2.
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3. *Adarśanam khalvadr̥ṣṭamucyate adr̥ṣṭakārita*. N.B. (N.S. 3/2/68)
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14. **Kārikāvalī**, 14.
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16. **Vyomavatī**, p. 298.
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PRAKARAṆA PAÑCIKĀ :

A MĪMĀMSĀ CRITIQUE OF THE BUDDHIST DEFINITION OF PRAMĀṆA

Introduction

The development of classical Indian philosophical thought witnesses a constant conflict between the *ānātmavāda* of the Buddhists and the *ātmavāda* of the non-Buddhist schools, each one offering a *pūrvapakṣa* to the other and thus enriching each other by mutual criticism. The interaction between the two has been so subtle and intricate that it is not possible to understand and appreciate the doctrines and arguments of the one without properly understanding the viewpoints of the other. In almost all the non-Buddhistic schools, the Buddhist position has been put forth as the *pradhāna pūrvapakṣa* and this trend continued till the time Buddhism was absorbed by the Advaita Vedānta.

Like other non-Buddhistic schools, the school of Pūrva Mīmāṃsā interacted with the Buddhist thought and borrowed from it quite a lot in its epistemological reflections. The Buddhist influence is quite evident in the epistemology of Prabhākara. The Prābhākara school has made some innovative contributions under the Buddhist influence while the Bhātta school reacted more negatively.

I

The present paper aims at putting forth a critique of the Buddhist definition of *pramāṇa* as it is available in the text 'Prakaraṇa Pañcikā'. The Prakaraṇa Pañcikā is an important landmark in the Pūrva Mīmāṃsā literature representing the Prābhākara school. It is an independent treatise composed by Śālikanātha. This work is indispensable for a comprehensive study of the Prābhākara school. It presents an authoritative and classical exposition of the views of Prabhākara after putting forth a subtle and logical examination of rival positions in the form of *pūrvapakṣa*. The importance of Śālikanātha can be judged from the fact that but for this work as also his other commentaries on the works of Prabhākara as an abstruse thinker he would have remained unintelligible to us.

As opposed to the Buddhistic view of '*meyādhīnā mānasiddhiḥ*,' Mīmāṃsā adheres to the view of '*mānādhīnā meyasiddhiḥ*' and therefore it regards epistemology as propaedeutic to metaphysics and moral philosophy. That is why it has taken elaborate pains to structure a theory of knowledge upon which the edifice of metaphysics and moral philosophy could be based.

Prabhākara follows the Mīmāṃsā tradition in general but makes very significant and innovative improvements. His analysis of the nature of *pramāṇa* understood both as knowledge and the mode of knowing has touches of originality and evinces his penetrating understanding of the proceeding Mīmāṃsa, Nyāya and Buddhist positions on some basic epistemological issues.

Like the Buddhist logician Dinnāga, Prabhākara also does not draw a rigid distinction between *pramā* and *pramāṇa*. This is because of his advocacy of *svataḥ-prāmāṇya*. The *prāmāṇya* of a *pramā* is intrinsic to it and does not stand in need of extraneous evidence. *Pramā* is not *prāmāṇyavān* as a Naiyāyika would maintain; it is *prāmāṇ-*

yarūpa. The conditions which give rise to *pramā* also guarantee its *prāmānya*. If for practical purposes a distinction is to be drawn between *karana* (the most efficient causal condition), *vyāpāra* (causal operation) and *phala* (result), or for that matter between *pramāṇa* and *pramāṇaphala*, then *pramāṇa* is the most efficient originating condition and *pramāṇaphala* is the resultant knowledge. Both Prabhākara and Buddhists, however, would not have any dispute with the Naiyāyikas on this. However, against the Naiyāyikas they argue that since no distinction can be drawn between the originating and evidencing conditions of knowledge, it can very well be said that *pramāṇa* is the same as *prāmā*.

Another similarity between Prabhākara and the Buddhist thinkers belonging to the tradition of Diñnāga and Dharmakīrti is that they both accept the doctrine of *svapṛakāśa*. There is very close resemblance between Prabhākara's theory of '*triputī samvit*' and Diñnāga's theory of '*dvairūpya jñāna*'. According to Prabhākara, the cogniser, the cognised and the cognition are simultaneously apprehended; though of course the object is apprehended as accusative (*karma*), the cogniser is cognised as nominative (*kartā*) and the cognition is cognised as verb (*kriyā*). The proof for this triple apprehension is experience itself. All the three are directly revealed in every object-cognition. The first two always stand in need of a revealer and the third is self-revealed. In other words, the cogniser and the cognised are not self-luminous and depend for their cognition on illumination. Cognition alone is self-illuminating. Cognition is required for the manifestation of the cogniser and the cognised, but for the manifestation of cognition, nothing, not even another cognition, is required.

According to Diñnāga, every cognition cognises an object and also cognises itself. So whenever an object is cognised, both the object-cognition and self-cognition take place at once. Every cognition, thus cognises itself; cognition is just like a lamp which illuminates objects as well as itself:

*Dvyābhāsaṃ hi jñānamutpadyate-
svābhāsaṃ viṣayābhāsaṃ ca.*¹

But there is a basic difference between Prabhākara and Diñnāga; Diñnāga obliterates the distinction between *saṃvit* and *saṃvedya* because of his idealistic commitment while Prabhākara, on the other hand, on account of his realistic standpoint, draws a distinction between *saṃvit* and *saṃvedya* :

*Samvittayāiva saṃvit saṃvedyā
na saṃvedyatayā, na asyāḥ karmābhāvo vidyate.*²

i.e. *saṃvit* is always known as *saṃvit* and never as an object. The object is invariably an accusative of the act of knowing, but *saṃvit* is never known to be such an accusative.

Another notable point of difference between Prabhākara and Diñnāga is that according to Prabhākara cognition by itself is formless while the object is apprehended as having a form, cognition and the cogniser are apprehended without a form. Diñnāga on the other hand insists that every cognition has a form of its own right from its very inception.

While offering a critique of the Buddhist definition of *pramāṇa*, Śālikanātha, following Prabhākara, disputes the Buddhist understanding of *pramāṇa* in terms of '*avisamvādi jñāna*.' The main objection is that such an understanding would either have overpervasion to memory or non-pervasion to *anumāna*. The Buddhists regard *pramāṇa* to be *anadhigata* but Śālikanātha points out that such an understanding would also result in exclusion of *dhārāvāhikajñāna* from the sphere of *pramāṇa*. Of course, *dhārāvāhikajñāna* is not acceptable to the Buddhists for their theory of momentariness but the Mīmāṃsakas, relying upon common-sense experience, regard *dhārāvāhikajñāna* as valid and therefore do not accept the Buddhist view in this regard.

The following extract from the text contained in the *pramāṇa-pārāyana* section of Prakaraṇa-Pañcikā deals with an interesting debate between the Prabhākaras and the

Buddhists. Therefore the relevant portion is being reproduced here in Sanskrit with its English translation.*

II

PRAKARAṆA-PAÑCIKĀ : Text and English Translation (Pramāṇa Pārāyaṇa)

Text 1 *Svarūpasamkhyārthaphaleṣu vādiḥhir
yato vivādā bahudhā vitenire/
tato vayaṁ tatpratibodhasiddhaye
pramāṇapārāyaṇam ārabhāmahe//*

Since divergent views upheld by different schools have resulted in conflicting positions regarding the nature, number, objects and result of *pramāṇas*, we begin with the exposition of *pramāṇas* to arrive at a definite understanding about them.

Refutation of the Buddhist³ definition of *pramāṇa*

Text 2 *Kim punar idaṁ pramāṇaṁ nāma? Na tāvad
avisamvādi-jñānaṁ⁴ pramāṇam. Smṛter api
tathābhāvaprasakteḥ.*

Now the question arises : what is *pramāṇa*? It is not correct to say that non-discrepant cognition is *pramāṇa* because in that case this definition will apply to memory also.

Buddhist reply

Text 3 *Atha smṛtir vikalparūpatayā paramārthasat⁵
svalakṣaṇam⁶ agrhṇantī samvṛtisantam ākāram
avastubhūtam ullikḥantī dvicandrādibodhavan
nāvisamvādinī iti mataṁ.*

* The English translation of Prakaraṇa-Pañcikā given here was an outcome of the ICPR sponsored workshop held at the Saṁskṛit Vidyapeeth, Tirupati in 1996 and was prepared under the guidance of Prof. S.R. Bhatt, with the help of Dr. Mithilesh Chaturvedi and Dr. Kanchana Natarajan. The author of this paper is pleased to acknowledge their invaluable co-operation in this venture.

Memory cannot apprehend the *svalakṣaṇa* (unique particular) which is the ultimate real as it (memory) is in the form of *vikalpa*. Moreover, it refers to that form which is only phenomenally real and points to an object which is not ultimately real. Therefore, it is not non-discrepant and is like the cognition of two moons etc. (Thus, the Buddhist definition will not suffer from the fault of over-pervasion in respect of memory).

Counter-argument by the Siddhāntin

Text 4 *Evam api nānumānam pramāṇam syāt. Tasyāpi vikalparūpatvāt.*

In that case, even inference (*anumāna*) will not be a *pramāṇa*, because it is also in the form of *vikalpa*.

Buddhist reply

Text 5 *Atha vikalparūpam⁷ anumānam avastuviṣayam api vastuviṣayam ivādhyavasīyate ityadhyavasīyamānavastubhūtasvalakṣaṇavisamvāditayā tat pramāṇam.*

Inference, no doubt, is in the form of a mental construct (*vikalpa*) and has a non-existent entity as its object, still it is construed as having a real entity as its object. Since this construed object is not in discrepancy with the real object, *anumāna* is valid cognition.

Siddhāntin's rejoinder

Text 6 *Smṛtir⁸ api tathā syāt. Sā'pi hi svalakṣaṇādhyavasāyinyeva jāyate. Api cāvastubhūtaṁ svaviṣayaṁ vastutayādhyavasyacchuktikāryatābodhavat katham anumānam avisamvādi. Kiṁ ca yadyanumānam vikalparūpatayā svalakṣaṇam nā grhṇāti, katham tarhyadhyavasyatyapi. Na hi grahaṇād anyo'dhyavasāyo⁹ nāma. Yo hyākāro na grhyate sa katham adhyavasīyetāpi. Pratītiviruddham*

*cedam uchyate smṛtir anumānavad bāhyaṃ
vastu na viśayīkurute iti. Vikalpabhūtayor api
tayoḥ pratyakṣapratīta-vastugrāhakatvapratītaḥ.*

Then memory would also have to be accepted as *pramāṇa* because it also arises as apprehending the *svalakṣaṇa*. This apart, how can you say that *anumāna* is non-discrepant when it conceives its object as real although it is not real? This is just like conceiving silver in a conch-shell.

Further, if inference being in the form of *vikalpa* (mental construct), does not apprehend *svalakṣaṇa*, then how can it even conceptualize? The conceptualization is not different from apprehension; how can you conceptualize a form which is not apprehended? And this is against all commonsense that memory like inference does not cognise an external object. Because even though both of them are in the form of *vikalpa*, they are experienced as cognising the object which is directly perceived.

Buddhist reply

Text 7 *Athocyeta, na vyaṃ yathāvasthitārthagrāhakam
avisamvādakam abhidādhmahe, kin-
tvarthakriyāsamaarthavastupariprāpakam.¹⁰
Yathābhūtaṃ hi yena vastūpadarśitam,
pravṛtto'pi yadi tathābhūtaṃ eva
pratilabhate tadā tad avisamvādiññānam
pramāṇam ucyate. Tathā cōktam-*

Pramāṇam avisamvādiññānam arthakriyāsthitih/

Avisamvādanam //

*Tathā-na hyābhyāṃ arthaṃ paricchidyā
pravaratamano' rthakriyāyāṃ visamvādyata iti ca.*

It may be said that by non-discrepancy we do not mean apprehension of an object as it exists, but apprehension of an object which is capable of bringing about fruitful activity. If an object is apprehended in a cognition in a particular

form and if it is found to be the same after being engaged in activity, then alone it is a non-discrepant cognition and is called a *prāmāṇa*. As has been said :

"*Pramāṇa* is non-discrepant cognition and non-discrepancy consists in the attainment of fruitful activity."¹¹

Elsewhere also it is said

"One who is engaged in activity after determining an object as it is by both of these (perception and inference) does not fail."¹²

Siddhāntin's objection

Text 8 *Evam api smṛteḥ prāmāṇyāpattiḥ.*

Even then, this will lead to the contingency of having to accept memory as *pramāṇa* (because the person having remembered the object engages in the activity and successfully attains the object).

Buddhist reply

Text 9 *Atha mataṁ smṛtvārthaṁ pravartamāno niyamenārthaṁ na pratilabhate iti.*

It is not always the case that a person having remembered an object engages in the activity and successfully attains the same.

Siddhāntin's rejoinder

Text 10 *Evam api bhūtarthviṣayam anumānam apramāṇam syāt. Na hi tadupadarśitārthasya pratilambho'sti.*

Even then the inference relating to the previously experienced object will not be *pramāṇa*, as the object referred to by it is not attained.

Buddhist reply

Text 11 *Atha yadyapyanumānapratītyasya bhūtasya vastunaḥ prāptir nāsti, tathāpi tatpratibaddha-liṅgajanmatayā tasyā prāptiyogyatā tāvad*

astyeva, tāvatā ca tasya prāmāṇyam iti.

It may be replied that no doubt the past object referred to in inference is not available now, nevertheless, its cognition arises due to logical mark (*liṅga*) which is necessarily related to it and therefore it has the capacity of being achieved (had it existed). Hence, it is *pramāṇa*.

Siddhāntin's rejoinder

Text 12 *Evam api smṛtiḥ pramāṇam āpadyate. Smṛtir api hyanumānavad arthe pāramparyeṇa pratibaddhaiva. Yathā vahnisvalakṣaṇād dhūmasvalakṣaṇam; tataśca dhūmavikalpaḥ, tasmāccānumānam ityanumānam arthena pāramparyeṇa pratibaddhatvād arthāvi-samvādyarthaprapāṇasamarthaṁ tathā smṛtir api—arthād anubhavaḥ, tataḥ saṁskāraḥ saṁskārācca smṛtir ityarthapratibaddhaiveti tatprāptiyogyatayā pramāṇam āpadyeta.*

In that case, memory also would have to be regarded as *pramāṇa* because like inference, memory also is mediately and necessarily related to its object. For instance, the *svalakṣaṇa* of fire gives rise to the *svalakṣaṇa* of smoke, then there is perception of smoke, then follows the conceptualization of smoke and from that arises inference (of fire). Thus inference is mediately related to its object and being non-discrepant with the object, it is capable of reaching us to the object. Same is the case with memory. (Here also) object gives rise to its experience, then follows its impression (retention) and from impression memory (recollection) takes place. In this way, memory is also necessarily related to its object and since it has the capacity to lead us to the object it could be regarded as *pramāṇa*.

Buddhist reply

Text 13 *Yadi manvīta satyām api prāptiyogyatāyām smṛter yat tayā prāpayitavyam svalakṣaṇam tad anubhavenaiva prāpitam iti. na pramāṇam*

*smṛtiḥ, anumānam tvaprāptasvalakṣaṇa-
rāpakatayā pramāṇam iti.*

It may be contended as follows : granted that memory has the capacity to reach us to the object, but the *svalakṣaṇa* so apprehended, is in fact already apprehended by experience itself and therefore memory is not *pramāṇa*. As for *anumāna*, it is *pramāṇa* because it reaches us to the *svalakṣaṇa*, hitherto not known.

Siddhāntin's objection

Text 14 *Evam apyarthakriyāsamartha-vastu-pariprāpa-
katāmātram na pramāṇalakṣaṇam kintu
viśeṣaṇam upādeyam, aprāptaprāpakam
avisamvādiññānam pramāṇam iti.*

Even so, in the definition of *pramāṇa*, it is not enough to say that it reaches us to the attainment of an object which is capable of causal efficiency, but we have to add the following adjective :

"*Pramāṇa* is non-discrepant knowledge which leads us to an object hitherto not apprehended."

Buddhist reply posited

Text 15 *Athocyate prāptam prati prāpakatvam evāparasya
nāstīti.*

It may be said that there is no later cognition apprehending something already apprehended (and therefore, there is no need of adding this adjective, for it would make no sense to say that there is apprehension of the apprehended).

Siddhāntin's objection

Text 16 *Tadasat, arthapratibaddhatā hi prāpakatā sā ca
jñānātarsyāpi nānupapannā.*

This is not true, because apprehensibility means 'to be related to an object' and that (apprehensibility) will hold good for the other cognition (memory) as well.

Buddhist reply posited

Text 17 *Yadyuchyate, na prāpakatāmatreṇa aprāmāṇyam api tu pravartakatayā'pi, yat prāpayati pravartayāti ca, tat pramāṇamiti.*

If you say that *pramāṇatva* (state of being *pramāṇa*) consists not only in making us apprehend (reaching to) the other but it also consists in urging a person to act; whatever reaches us to the object and propels us to act, is *pramāṇa*.

Siddhāntin's rejoinder

Text 18 *Etad api na kiñcit. Pravartakatāpi jñānāntarasyāpi ghatata eva. Pravṛttiyogyārt-hopadarśakatāvam eva pravartakatvaṁ tacca bhūtārthaviśayānumānasyeva smaraṇasyāpyasti. Pravartakatve ca pramāṇalakṣaṇānupraveśinī nirvikalpakajñānānām apramāṇata syāt svayaṁ vyavahārapravartakatvābhāvāt. Tadutthās tu vikalpā eva prāpakatayā pravartakatayā ca pramāṇabhūtāḥ syuḥ.*

Even this makes no difference as the urging to act (*pravartakatā*) is found in other cognition (memory) as well. 'Urging to act' means to point at an object which is capable of being acted upon (*pravṛtti*) and that is found in memory as well, like inference pertaining to a past object. If 'urging to act' (*pravartakatva*) is included in the definition of *pramāṇa* then the indeterminate cognitions will not be *pramāṇa* because they do not urge any one to act by themselves. Only determinate cognitions arising out of them, will be *pramāṇa* as they alone will have the capacity to reach us to the object and to urge to act.

Another objection regarding Buddhist definition

Text 19 *Dhārāvāhikajñāneṣu¹³ ca pūrvajñānviśayārthatvād uttareṣāṁ pramītitvaṁ na syāt.*

Moreover, in continuous cognitions, the subsequent cognitions will not be valid knowledge because they have as their object the same which is the object of the preceding cognitions.

Buddhist reply posited

Text 20 *Athocyeta, iṣyāta eva teṣāṃ apramāṇateti.*

Well, their invalidity is acceptable to us.

Siddhāntin's rejoinder

Text 21 *Tad ayuktam. Loke teṣu pūrvasmād aviśiṣṭatvāt-pramāṇabhāvasya. Laukikaṃ ca pramāṇaṃ parīkṣakairapyanusaraṇīyam.*

This is not correct because in common experience the subsequent cognitions are non-different from the preceding ones and therefore, they are *pramāṇa*. And, the testimony of the common experience has to be followed even by the learned.

Buddhist reply posited

Text 22 *Atha bhinnatvād arthakṣaṇānāṃ sarveṣāṃ apyaprāptaprāpakatvam astīti.*

It may be said that since the object-moments are different, all the cognitions have the property of apprehending the unapprehended.

Siddhāntin's final rejection of the Buddhist definition

Text 23 *Tad asat. Kṣaṇabhedasyāparamarśān na tadapekṣāpramāṇatociteti. Kṣaṇikatā ca Mīmāṃsājīvarakṣāyām pratikṣiptaiveti kṛtam ativistareṇa.*

This is not true. As we do not discern the difference of moments, the validity depending on them is not tenable. And the doctrine of momentariness is refuted in the section entitled 'Mīmāṃsā jīvarakṣā'. Therefore, there is no need for further elaboration.

Notes and References

1. **Pramāṇasamuccaya**, Pratyakṣa-parichheda
2. **Prakaraṇa Pañcīkā**, P. 63
3. This is the first *pūrvapakṣa* which pertains to the Buddhist viewpoint, taken up for examination by Salikanatha.
4. **Avisaṃvādi Jñānam**
The Buddhist logicians like Diinnāga have defined *Pramāṇa* (knowledge) as *avisamvādi jñānam* (non-discrepant cognition).
5. **Paramārthasat and Samvrtisat**
According to Diinnāga only *svalaksana* is transcendently and objectively real (*paramarthasat*) and *sāmānyalakṣaṇa* or *vikalpas* are only empirically or subjectively real (*samvrtisat*). In other words, the objects of inferential cognition are *samvrtisat* only, since they are mental constructions and hence they are not objectively real.
The *svalaksanās* alone are *paramārthasat*, they exist in themselves and cause perceptual cognition. They are also the basis of all mental constructions by causing their sensations. Thus they have practical efficiency and are therefore real.
6. **Svalakṣaṇam**
The Buddhists of the Diinnāga-Dharmakīrti tradition maintain that there are only two types of object of knowledge, viz. *svalakṣaṇa* (the unique particular) and *sāmānya-lakṣaṇa* (its generalised image or mental construct).
Objects have a twofold nature : in some respects they are unique and in some respects they are alike. Perceptual knowledge apprehends only the unique particular while the generalised image is conceived in inference only.
The *svalakṣaṇa* alone is objectively real, it is free from all conceptual impositions. It is devoid of determinations by thought and language. On the other hand, the *sāmānyalakṣaṇa* is a mental construction of the object in the form of substance, quality, relation or action, class character or words. These are the five types of possible mental constructs (*vikalpas*). They are superimposed upon the object by the cognising consciousness (*citta*). *Sāmānyalakṣaṇa* is a mode of thought and not a mode of existence. Our modes of thinking or categories of thought are external to things in themselves; they cannot touch the real.
7. **Vikalpa**
According to the Buddhist, there are two types of objects of cognition, viz. *svalakṣaṇa*, which is ultimately real and *vikalpa* which is a mental construct. A *vikalpa* is not ultimately real for the Buddhist, the object of perception is *svalakṣaṇa* while the object of inference is

vikalpa. It stands for the concept and process of conceptualization. All conceptualizations are mental constructions.

8. **Smṛti**

It is the revival of and necessarily refers to past experience. It presupposes a direct experience of the remembered object on some past occasion. The basis of memory is some impressions left on the consciousness by an experience. The impressions remain dormant in the consciousness and when they are aroused by some stimuli, they get revived in consciousness.

Smṛti may be true or false as it revives a past fact accurately or inaccurately but it is not a form of valid knowledge because it does not have novelty or freshness.

9. **Adhyavasāya**

It is imposition of conceptual categories and verbal expressions on the *śvalakṣaṇas*. The *śvalakṣaṇas* are pure existence bereft of all conceptualization and verbalization. They are beyond the categories of thought and language. The moment they are conceptualized and verbalised, they come under *sāmānyalakṣaṇas*. All conceptual knowledge is thus *adhyavasāya* only.

10. **Arthakriyāsamarthavastupariprāpakam**

According to the Buddhists, knowledge is sought for the sake of successful practical activity. Therefore that cognition alone is knowledge which presents an object capable of fulfilling pragmatic needs : *arthakriyāsamarthavastupradarśakam samyagjñānam*.

(Nyāyabindutīkā by Dharmottara)

11. **Pramāṇa-Vārtika**, I/3.

12. **Hetu-Bindu-Tīkā**, p. 40.

13. **Dhārāvāhika Jñāna**

It is a continuous cognition of an object for more than one moment. We have such perceptual cognitions very frequently when we attend to an object uninterruptedly for quite some time. In such cognition series what the perception reveals in the subsequent moments does not appear to be different from what it revealed in the first moment. For example when I hold a pen in my hand and look at it continuously for some moments, I see the same object all the while and I find no difference in the contents of the first and subsequent cognition.

Here the Buddhist poser is that if novelty is accepted an essential condition of knowledge, then in a continuous cognition the subsequent apprehensions after the first one should not be regarded as knowledge since they are no longer novel but only repetitive.

To this the Mīmāṃsakas reply that newness marks each one of those cognitions because though the object of all such cognitions is identically the same, yet it is cognised as existing at different moments of

time. Thus, because every cognition reveals a new object, it is knowledge. The other answer coming from the Vedāntins is that the continuous perception of an object is one single cognition and not a series of successive cognitions because the mental mode that assumes the shape of the object is one and lasts till another mode arises. Thus the cognition is one and has one object throughout its duration. The numerical difference among the cognitions should be based on that of their objects and not on the moments of time. If I perceive a jar continuously for five seconds, I do not have five cognitions, but one only, contends the Vedāntin.

THE TARKAPĀDA OF ŚĀSTRADĪPIKĀ : AN ANALYTICAL STUDY

The Mīmāṃsā system has developed a theory of hermeneutics which is helpful in linguistic analysis and textual interpretation. Though these rules were formulated by the ancient seers belonging to the Vedic tradition, they have universal application in so far as they provide objective principles to bring out the intended meaning of a text. That is why Mīmāṃsā has been regarded as a *Vākyaśāstra* in which every classical scholar was obliged to be an expert along with other disciplines. In fact in modern times even though we in India may not be economically much advanced, but we had reached great heights in spiritual advancement and systematic analysis in remote past; this fact has drawn the attention of the scholars all over the world. Vedic Philosophy was the unifying force throughout the length and breadth of the country and Vedic lore provided sustenance to all subsequent thought and literature in different languages of India. Among the Indian thinkers, the Mīmāṃsakas are the only ones who studied the theory of language very seriously and analysed the *pramāṇa* of language to its logical conclusion without accepting the authority of God. The *tarkapāda* of the text taken up in the present paper provides the basis for all those rigorous logical and linguistic exercises.

According to Mīmāṃsā, a word has an in-built capacity to imply its meaning and not only the word is eternal, the

relation between word and meaning is also eternal. The Vedic wisdom and the language expressing this wisdom are eternal because the Vedas are not authored by any individual being including God. Even though human language is authored by individual human beings so far as the relation between word and its meaning is concerned, the language is autonomous. Once the discourse is over, the author is out of it and the language speaks. The autonomous functioning of language is made possible by the syntactic and semantic unity brought about through the principles of *ākankṣā*, *yogyatā*, *saṁnidhi* and *tātparyā* and some of these principles have been formulated for the first time in the Mīmāṃsā system. *Ākankṣā* plays a dual role of effecting the unity of a sentence and excluding the irrelevant or unnecessary words. It also plays a very significant role in the understanding of rituals by way of *jahallakṣaṇā* (transference of meaning) and *ajahallakṣaṇā* (extension of meaning). There are many words in the Vedas which cannot be 'learnt through *vṛddhavyavahāra* (usage) and therefore *samabhiṣyāhāra* (juxtaposition with familiar word) has to be resorted to in order to make out the meaning of an unfamiliar word occurring along with familiar words. A notable point made in the text is that foreign words should be used in the same form without giving any twisted formation for them. Likewise, scholastic usages and popular usages should be honoured in their respective discourses.

The Mīmāṃsā tradition provides a methodical study of any topic in four stages namely 1) *viśaya* 2) *saṁśaya* 3) *pūrvapakṣa* and 4) *siddhānta*. Among the two well known schools of the Mīmāṃsā system spearheaded by Prabhākara and Kumārila Bhatta, the role of the text *Śāstradīpikā* needs to be highlighted in understanding the Bhāṭṭa school. The *Śloka-vārtika* of Kumārila Bhatta is one of the most terse texts of Indian philosophical thought comparable in importance to Dharmakīrti's *Pramāṇavārtika* and Bhartṛhari's *Vākyapadīya*. The significance of *Śāstradīpikā*

lies in clarifying the import of Kumārila's text which may be unintelligible at places to intelligent minds as well. By studying Śāstradīpikā one can get interested in the Śloka-vārtika in particular and in Mīmāṃsā studies in general.

The first section of Śāstradīpikā is known as *tarkapāda*, since it deals with the *tarkas* or *pramāṇas* acceptable in the Bhāṭṭa school of Mīmāṃsā as also posits and repudiates various *pruvapakṣas* in a logical manner. The first sūtra-

Athāto dharmajijñāsā (that is, henceforth we undertake an enquiry into the nature of *dharma*) begins with a discussion of the controversy as to whether knowledge of *vidhi* is an essential pre-requisite for performance of a purposive action and reiterates the Mīmāṃsā position that just as barley cannot be used for eating unless its sheath is first peeled off, likewise study of the Veda is necessarily pre-supposed for the performance of righteous conduct, that is, *dharma*. On the basis of the distinction between *ārabhyādhīta* and *anārābhyādhīta karmas* it is only the former which can generate *apūrva* and this is a sufficient justification for undertaking the study of the Vedas. In the beginning of this text, there is a discussion of the four *anubandhas* which are always kept in view by all Indian classical scholars while composing any text. Thereafter is a very significant pedagogical issue as to whether the study of the *śāstra* has to be undertaken from the point of view of the preceptor or from the point of view of the pupil. Keeping Prabhākara's standpoint as the *pūrvapakṣa*, the author of Śāstradīpikā first puts forth the same in a most objective and critical form. The first issue debated is whether after *vedādhyayana*, the pupil should stay on with the preceptor and investigate into the nature of *dharma* or proceed to the household and undertake such investigation there. The position of Pārthasārathi Miśra is that one should follow the latter while Prabhākara opts for the former.

The second issue discussed therein is with regard to

the objective for *vedādhyāyana* whether it is something empirical or transempirical (*apūrvā*). According to Prabhākara the only objective of *vedādhyāyana* is acquisition of *apūrvā* whereas some others maintain that when an empirical reward exists, to suppose *adṛṣṭa* as reward is not right. Pārthasārathi Miśra rejects both these positions and argues that the object of *adhyāyana* is to restrict the performance of sacrifices to certain classes of people who are competent to undertake the study of Vedas. Thereafter while analysing the *adhyāyana*, it is pointed out that three essential conditions for *vākyarthajñāna*, namely, *apeksā*, *yogyatā* and *sannidhi*, are necessary and only the competent persons can possess such an ability to comprehend the meaning of a Vedic sentence. Herein comes the discussion whether injunctive sentence enjoining the study of the Vedas should be understood from the point of view of the preceptor or the pupil. Prabhākara is of the view that it should be for the preceptor and therefore *adhyāpanavidhi* should be attended to whereas Kumārila and Pārthasārathi favour the latter and concentrate on *adhyāyana*. According to Prabhākara *apūrvā* is the main subject-matter of *vedādhyāyana* because all *vidhis*, as stated in the Vedas, enjoin an action to be undertaken by an agent. On the other hand, according to Pārthasārathi Miśra it is to be undertaken for the purpose of realization of *adṛṣṭa*.

In the second *sūtra*, the text takes up the twofold analysis of the expression, *Codanālakṣano artho dharmah* as well as *Codanā-pramāṇako dharmah* meaning thereby that *codanā* is at once both *svārūpanirūpaka* of *dharma* and also a *pramāṇa* for *dharma*. Both of these explanations are correct and complimentary to each other. Then is discussed the twofold placement of *eva* as *codanāiva pramāṇam* and *codanā pramāṇameva* in the form of *anyayogavyavaccheda* and *ayogavyavaccheda*. Coming to the term *artha*, one may specify that it stands for *abhyudaya* as well as *niḥśreyas*, it is used here in the sense of *viṣaya* (object) and not in the sense of

prayojana (objective). In the context of Mīmāṃsā, *dharma* and *karma* are synonyms and that is why Pūrvamīmāṃsā is also known as *Dharmamīmāṃsā* and *Karmamīmāṃsā*. Accordingly only that human action is enjoined by *Codanā* which is conducive to the realization of *Vedavihita dharma*.

There is difference of opinion among the Mīmāṃsā scholars whether *codanā* stands for *pravartakavākyas* alone or *nivartakavākyas* are also to be included in it. The examination of the rule that *niṣedha* constitutes a part of the Veda, is undertaken here. In other words, whether *codanā* is only *pravartaka* or *nivartaka* as well. Some difficulties are pointed out in comprehending *niṣedhavākyas* under *codanā* in so far as they do not lead to any positive results. They only save one from undertaking any activity which is detrimental to well being. However the inclusion of *niṣedha* is accepted only to the extent that it acts as a contra-positive to the *vidhi*. But once *niṣedha* is treated as contra-positive, the obligatoriness of the injunction gets weakened and it is relegated to the state of mere description. In the formulation of a *niṣedhavākya*, generally negative particle is used but in such cases where it is not so done, it has to be brought in. As regards Prabhakāra's position, a negative statement does not have optativeness because optativeness is inherent only in a *liṅ* and the import of a *liṅ* being a *kārya*, this *kārya* finds its own agent (*niyojya*) for its own accomplishment (*anuṣṭhāpakatva*). In *kāmyakarma* there is a specific will on the part of the agent, but the obligatoriness for accomplishment is not there. In other words, it is *rāgataḥ prāpta* and not *Vedavihita*. In disagreement with Prabhākara, Kumārila argues that it becomes descriptive only in terms of withdrawal from harmful activity. No doubt in *niṣedha* or prohibition there is no prescriptivity in the form of accomplishment of action and therefore it is not *vidhi*, nevertheless it has a negative prescriptivity. In fact both of them dilute the optativeness of an injunction but in a

different form, both of them do not treat *vidhi* and *niṣedha* at *pār*.

The third *sūtra* explains the reason why the investigation into the nature of *pramāṇa* known as *codanā* is to be undertaken for the knowledge and acquisition of *dharma*.

Therefore, the IV *sūtra* puts forth the view that perception and all other sources of knowing based on perception are not competent to give the knowledge of *dharma* as through knowledge of *codanā* alone this is possible. In this context a detailed analysis of the perceptual cognition is undertaken taking the Bhāṭṭa, the Buddhist, the Advaitic and the Nyāya standpoints in the form of *pūrvapakṣa*.

It is also to be pointed out that out of the six *tātparyā-līngas* only *upapatti* (*abādhitatva*), *apūrvatā* (*anadhigatatva*) and *phala* (*prayojanavatva*) are to be treated as *pramāṇas*. According to the author of *Śāstradīpikā*, the fourth *sūtra* does not purport to give the definition of *pratyakṣa* and therefore the Nyāya objection of its suffering from *ativyāpti* does not hold good. It only rules out the possibility of *pratyakṣa* being a *pramāṇa* for *dharma*. However, this *sūtra* can be treated as a *lakṣaṇā* according to Śābara by transposing the words *sat* and *tat*. According to other scholars even without this transposition, it can be treated as its *lakṣaṇa*.

The study of the fifth *sūtra* constitutes the very backbone of the *Tarkapāda*. The central issues of the *sūtra* are two-fold :

- (i) First it argues for the eternality of the Veda and of the word and of the relation between word and meaning.
- (ii) Secondly it dwells in great detail upon the *pramāṇas* accepted in the Bhāṭṭa school of Mīmāṃsā. Interspersed in this discussion are several epistemological, metaphysical and soteriological doctrines both of the *pūrvapakṣa* and the *siddhānta*. The sections on *arthāpatti* and *abhāva* are also particularly notable where elaborate

and *abhāva* are also particularly notable where elaborate classifications of *arthāpatti* are given and in the context of a six-fold division incorporating the other accepted *pramāṇas* several philosophical issues of significance are discussed threadbare. In fact there are many such points which still need close examination with the help of the commentary entitled *yuktisnehaprapuraṇī*, for both *arthāpatti* and *abhāva* (*anupalabdhi*) have played an important role in the Pūrvamīmāṃsā theory of morals (*dharmajijñāsā*).

A very crucial problem pertaining to the nature of *jāti* (class) and its relation with the individuals is also discussed in the text under study. This issue has great bearing on metaphysics, epistemology and theory of language. Almost all the schools of philosophical thought in India have taken keen interest in the analysis of this issue and these have been put forth here in the form of *pūrvapakṣa* and *siddhānta*. The *sphotavāda* of Bhartṛhari has also been presented in the text as one of the *pūrvapakṣas*. In fact in the formulation of Advaitic metaphysics and in stimulating the analysis of language the Vākyapadīya of Bhartṛhari has played a pioneering role. The author of Śāstradīpikā also takes serious cognizance of Bhartṛhari's views.

In the text Śāstradīpikā although Prabhākara is the *pradhānamalla* and the Buddhists occupy the second place, yet a proper study of Buddhism is a philosophical requirement; the Buddhist viewpoint is *anātmavāda dṛṣṭi* compared to *ātmavādadṛṣṭi* of the rest. The Buddhists consider that whatever is given in experience as effectuation has a cause (*pratītyasamutpāda*). The cause is not eternal and immutable. The Buddhists define *sat* as *arthakriyākāri*. They advocate the process view of reality as distinct from the entity view of reality formulated by non-Buddhistic thinkers. There is the continuum of particular type of inter-relationship in terms of similars (*santati*). 'A' *santati* and 'B' *santati* have some similarity which is mistaken by us to be

identity. To sum up this part we may say that : 1) everything is *pratitya samutpanna* (ii) everything has *arthakriyākāritva*; iii) from this it follows that everything is non-eternal, *anitya*. If everything is non-eternal, there would be no enduring principle. The Buddhists say that *sarvam anātmam*, 'there is no real endurance. We only hypostatize permanence in our wishful thinking.

The *dharmadharmibheda* which is essential for the *ātmavādadṛṣṭi* is repudiated by the Buddhists. The concept of *nirvāṇa* takes one beyond the ken of mind, words and senses. The Buddhists identify *dharma* (existence) with time. These *dharma*s can be basically of two types *bhūta* and *bhautika*, *citta* and *caitta*. All inanimate objects taken to be permanent are quasipermanent. Every physical object is a *sanghāta* of *bhūtasantati*. Thus the treatment of the Buddhist theory of *pratyakṣa*, *ksaṇabhaṅgavāda* *nirālambanavāda* etc. presented in the text *Śāstradīpikā* can be properly appreciated only if we have a correct understanding of the Buddhist thought. Prof. S.N. Dasgupta has rightly observed that unless we study the Buddhist thought, we cannot properly understand any philosophical system. This is more so because the entire development of Indian philosophical thought took place by way of *ghāta* and *pratighāta* with the Buddhists.

On the basis of above, we may conclude by saying that according to Mīmāṃsā there is a sharp distinction between descriptivity and prescriptivity. The realm of morals is a realm of prescription and description is only instrumental in the accomplishment of the former. Therefore, knowledge is to be contrasted from the modes of knowing pertaining to facts and values. Perception and other modes of knowing based thereon can give us the knowledge of facts which is incurably subjective, relative and descriptive, hence liable to falsification. They can never give us the knowledge of values which is beyond the ken of senses. In contradistinction with this, another mode of knowing has to be postulated

which can provide a knowledge of values which is objective, infallible and universalisable. Such a source of knowing is termed as *codanā* in the Pūrvamīmāṃsā system. It is impersonal (*apauruṣeya*), categorical (*nirapekṣa*) and obligatory (*bādhya*). While the values (*sādhya*) are universalisable, the means and modalities of attaining the same may be situational. It is the values which have to determine the choice of means and modalities, of course, subject to their availability.

To sum up, the basic principles of Mīmāṃsā are universalisable and should not be understood in a relativistic sense. These principles have tremendous contemporary relevance and significance and stand applicable to all the empirical spheres of human existence, particularly in bringing about an appropriate and conducive organisation, society and the world.

THE CONCEPT OF VIDHI ACCORDING TO VIDHIVIVEKA

The Mīmāṃsā system has been one of the prominent schools of Indian philosophy covering different aspects of philosophical 'reflection. Although the basic objective of Mīmāṃsā school has been to analyse concepts, doctrines and arguments pertaining to moral conduct, yet the thinkers of the school not only evolved a set of principles to regulate moral conduct, but also construed a system of metaphysics, epistemology and linguistic analysis in keeping with its ethical requirements. There are, therefore various Mīmāṃsā traditions in each of these fields. In the field of ethics also, we come across several Mīmāṃsa traditions among which Prabhākara, Kumārila and his follower Maṇḍana Miśra are some important representatives. Vidhi-Viveka is a difficult but important text of Maṇḍana Miśra where the nature of *vidhi* or moral injunction is discussed in a profound manner.

The central theme of Mīmāṃsā system is the analysis of *vidhi* or moral injunction. There has been a subtle and sophisticated analysis of the concept of *vidhi* and the *vidhi-vākyas* (injunctive statements) in the entire moral discourse of Mīmāṃsā which is much more profound than the contemporary meta-ethical thinking prevalent in the West. It is primarily because of this consideration that the text Vidhi-Viveka has been taken up for study in the present paper. It is a profound text pertaining to the analysis of language and logic of moral injunctions. True to his epithet

'*alpavādin*', Maṇḍana Miśra has written it in a cryptic and terse style which makes its reading quite difficult.

It has to be admitted at the outset that due to subtlety of argumentation and brevity of expression, the Vidhi-Viveka is unintelligible by itself and so it is only with the help of Nyāya-Kaṇikā (the brief commentary of Vācaspati Miśra thereon) that one may try to understand the text. But the difficulty with Nyāya-kaṇikā is that it is equally cryptic in style and at places reproduces the expressions of the text without elaborating or expounding their true import. In other words, it is of very little help; as the name suggests, it is a mere *kaṇikā* as far as the *viveka* of *vidhi* is concerned. Vidhi-Viveka, as the name itself means, deals mainly with the analysis of moral injunctions, i.e. the *vaidika vidhi vākyas*, for in the Mīmāṃsā view, *dharma* is to be known only from *vaidika vidhi vākyas*. *Vidhi* is understood not only as *ajñātārthajñāpaka* but also as *mānāntarāprāpta*. This fact is clearly mentioned by Kumārila in his Tantra-Vartika as:

Vidhiratyantamaṇḍanāḥ niyamnaḥ

It means that *vidhi* cannot be known by any other means than *codanā* and it is because of this reason that Maṇḍana takes up the analysis of *vidhi-vākyas*. As per the rules of Sanskrit grammar, a *vidhi-vākya* is to be expressed in *liṅ lakāra* but even if it is expressed in any other *lakāra* like *laṭ* etc. it is to be understood in the sense of *liṅ* only, Pāṇini, as is well known, has pointed out six possible usages for *vidhiliṅ* in the *sūtra* :

Vidhi-nimantraṇa-āmantraṇa-adhīṣṭa-saṃprāśna-prārthanēṣu liṅ (3.3.161)

It is debatable as to whether all these convey the same meaning or all these are reducible to *vidhi* or all these are expressive of different states of human mind. It would be interesting to analyse the logical properties of each of these states and to study their inter-relation in a modern context. A similar linguistic analysis can be undertaken to distinguish *vidhi* from *ājñā*, *anujñā*, *upadeśa* and *abhyarthanā*.

The symbiotic relation between knowing and doing or *jñāpakatva* and *kāraakatva* has been a point of perennial concern in moral reflections. One has to know a moral norm before one can adhere to it and accomplish the objective through its adherence. But how to make a transition from knowing to doing and what are the intervening factors conducive to this transition, need to be analysed thoroughly. This gap between knowing and doing has been succinctly pointed out in a classical form as follows:

Jānāmi dharmam na ca me pravṛttiḥ

Jānāmyadharmam na ca me nivṛttiḥ. (Mahābhārata)

A moral norm is not only to be known, it should also be practised and in this process language comes in to play a very vital role to communicate the moral norm from its source to its adherents. This whole knowledge-based and action-oriented episodic structure involves a few key terms, the logic of the use of which needs to be sharply distinguished. Maṇḍana Miśra therefore draws clear distinction in respect of expressions like *jñāpaka*, *kāraaka* etc. But the problem with the text *Vidhi-Viveka* is that its style is very terse and obtruse and therefore it is not always possible to comprehend its real import.

While beginning his commentary *Nyāya-Kaṇikā* on the *Vidhi-Viveka*, Vācaspati Miśra has discussed the purpose for composition of this text because the wise people do not act without a purpose. According to Vācaspati Miśra, three alternatives are available in this regard, namely:

- (i) establishment of the validity of Vedic injunctions
or
- (ii) knowledge of the interrelation of different
categories of reality.
or
- (iii) knowledge of the means for realisation of good
and avoidance of evil.

These three may be the causes of being engaged in

action or withdrawal from action. After refuting all the three positions, Vācaspati Miśra has accepted that the objective of this study is to understand the nature of *vidhi* for the sake of knowing the means of *puruṣārtha*:

Mā bhūvannanyāni prayojanāni vidheḥ.

Puruṣārthasādhanatāvabodhastu Vidhi-nibandhanah.

The study of Mīmāṃsā is useful for the proper performance of actions conducive to the realisation of objectives of human existence. The understanding of import of a statement containing moral injunction stimulates a moral agent to undertake the performance of an appropriate activity and therefore the question arises as to what is the nature of moral injunction and how one understands its import.

How does a moral injunction stimulate an agent to act? In other words, What is a *vidhi*? This is the basic point raised in the first part of *vidhi-viveka* and Maṇḍana Miśra here has discussed three viewpoints such as:

- (a) *vidhi* is a particular kind of word (*śabdabheda*)
- (b) *Vidhi* is an activity belonging to that word (*śabdavyāpāra*)
- (c) *vidhi* is a specific type of meaning (*arthabheda*)

Rejecting all these viewpoints as *pūrvapakṣas*, Maṇḍana puts forth his own standpoint known as *Iṣṭāsādhana-tājñāna*.

(1) He propounds that according to the first theory cited above, mere apprehension of *lin*, which expresses moral injunction, the agent gets stimulated and engages in undertaking the accomplishment of the act just like a magnet which attracts a piece of iron by its sheer proximity. Maṇḍana Miśra has given five arguments to refute the first position, i.e. *vidhi* is a particular kind of word.

(i) Pramāṇatvāt

The first argument is that a *vidhivākya* or *codanā* is

regarded by the Mīmāṃsakas as a *pramāṇa* and a *pramāṇa*, according to them, is always a *bodhaka* or *jñāpaka* and never a *kāraka*. Therefore, *vidhi* cannot be regarded as mere linguistic structure because in this case it will not have *jñāpakatva* and therefore it would cease to be a *pramāṇa*.

(ii) Pravṛtṭeḥ aniyamāt:

The second argument is that if mere apprehension of *vidhivākya* were sufficient to stimulate action, then whosoever apprehends *vidhivākya*, should get stimulated to act. But our experience testifies that this is not so. A moral agent possesses freedom of will and therefore even after apprehension of a *vidhi-vākya*, he may choose to act or choose not to act.

(iii) Samvidāśrayāt:

The third argument states that the knowledge of relation between the impelling word and the particular activity denoted by it is essential before the moral agent undertakes it. If, mere apprehension of *vidhivākya* were sufficient to generate action without knowing the relation, then even a person ignorant of the meaning of a particular word contained in *vidhivākya* would be motivated to do it.

(iv) Samabhivyāhārāt:

The grammatical rule of *samabhivyāhāra* or co-ordination implies that a suffix should act in coordination with its root, then only it acquires the significatory power. If the suffix can stimulate action independent of its root, then the role of the root will become redundant. Therefore, if *vidhi* is accepted to be as a particular type of word, this rule of *samabhivyāhāra* would be rendered futile.

Maṇḍana Miśra as well as Vācaspati Miśra, while commenting on this point of Vidhi-Viveka have clarified that there may be different purposes for which a suffix is used: one, employment of the suffix is for reiteration of what the root has already said (*anuvāda*); the other is for

pointing out the gender etc (*dyotaka*); and the third is for revealing some related meaning of the root (*sambandhyarthāntarābhidhānāt*).

(v) **Kāryakalpanāt**

The fifth argument against the *śabda-vidhi-vādins* is that there are some *vidhi-vākyas* which do not mention the fruits accruing from the actions stimulated by them. In such cases the fruit is to be assumed or postulated. If the *liṅ* were not to possess this significatory power of postulation, then these *vidhi-vākyas* would become meaningless, since they will not initiate any activity for the want of fruits.

The upshot of all these arguments is that *vidhi* is not mere *śabda*, a linguistic structure or a phonetic sequence, but an awareness of the fruits as well.

(2) The second theory taken up as *pūrvapakṣa* is that *vidhi* is not *śabda* but *sabdayāpara*. It is the function of a word to stimulate an agent. The upholders of this theory maintain that there is some cognitive content or awareness element inherent in *liṅ*. *Vyāpāra* means some kind of activity that is performed through the use of the word; the *vyāpāra* of *liṅ* is *preraṇā* or *pravartanā*. The *liṅ* therefore has significatory power and it consists in stimulating action in the agent.

Maṇḍana Miśra refutes this view by pointing out several defects including the above ones. They are as follows:

(i) **Prayogānirūpyatvāt**

Maṇḍana's first argument against *śabda-vyāpāra-vādins* is that the *śabda-vyāpāras* like command, etc, cannot be treated as the function of *śabda* or its *vyāpāra* because these are the properties belonging to a person and therefore insentient words cannot be said to possess these.

(ii) **Vaiyarthya**

The second argument is that if insentient words can

per force stimulate action like windstorm etc., then this would imply the futility of *śabda-vyāpāra*.

(iii) Pūrvadoṣataḥ

Moreover, in that case, any word should stimulate any action irrespective of its particular meaning. Hence, all the fallacies shown in the arguments of *śabda-vidhi-vādins* would apply here also.

(iv) Apravṛtteḥ

Even if we accept that the insentient words have the capacity to motivate a person, a sentient agent has to be there to whom there is a prescription with regard to desirability or undesirability.

(v) Phalāyogāt

The next argument is that there cannot be any awareness of a desirable consequence by mere apprehension of the *śabda-vyāpāra*. If it be said that this awareness is made known through the *śāstratva*, the question will be that on what basis do we prove the authority of that *śāstra*. Now if we accept that the authority of *śāstra* is based on *phala*, then it involves the fallacy of mutual dependence.. This is because the *śāstratva* is dependent on *phala* and *phala* will be dependent on *śāstra*.

(vi) Rūpakteḥ

Finally, if the *vyāpāra* of *vidhi* is to stimulate action, then any word should stimulate action. To avoid this eventuality, if it is said that a particular type of *liṅ* generates a particular type of action, then this would mean that the *śabda* or *liṅ* not only expresses itself but it also expresses the particular type of activity which is intended to be generated. Here the question would be: does the formal structure of words inspire a person to act or the meaning aspect inspires him? Since both are in close proximity, there is no clarity as to which motivates a person.

Thus, Maṇḍana refutes the theory of *śabda-vyāpāra* and concludes by saying that *abhidheyā bhāvanā* is not *vidhi*. After rejecting both the above positions i.e. *śabda vada* and *śabda-vyāpāravāda* of a particular type in which the linguistic structure and the semantic import are taken together, Maṇḍana proceeds to refute yet another variety of *śabda-vyāpāravāda* according to which semantic import alone is the meaning of *vidhi- abhidhaiva bhāvanā*. For refuting this particular view, he puts forth the following arguments:

(i) **Pravṛtteḥ Sarvataḥ Prasāṅgāt**

The first argument is that if semantic import alone is the meaning of *vidhi*, then every word should be having motivating power because even the ordinary words have semantic import.

(ii) **Arthe Vā:**

If it is said that not only the general meaning of the words, but some specific meaning of instigating one into action is meant here, then that specific meaning itself will have to be accepted as *vidhi* and the above view that *abhidhā* as such is *vidhi* shall be rendered rejected.

(iii) **Kāryato gateḥ:**

The third argument for rejecting the above view is that if the *śābdī bhāvana* or *abhidhā* is accepted as *vidhi* then there will be a violation of the general semantic rule that the meaning is not revealed through any other means but through *śabda* alone: '*ananyalabhyaḥ śabdārthaḥ*' because in that case *abhidhā* will be inferred through its *kārya* i.e. the meaning and not through the word.

(iv) **Asthānāt:**

Maṇḍana Miśra gives the next reason for refuting the *abhidhāiva vidhi-vāda* by stating that if *abhidhā* of a word is accepted to be the meaning of *liṅ*, then the *abhidhā* of *liṅ* will also have to be accepted as its meaning and there would

be the fallacy of infinite regress. Hence the above view cannot be accepted.

(v) **Niyateḥ hetorabhāvāt:**

If the *pūrvapakṣin* replies to the above objection by saying that it is only the *arthābhīdhā* that requires another *abhīdhā* and not the *abhīdhā* alone i.e. *abhīdhāiva* and hence the fallacy of infinite regress will not apply to my view, then Maṇḍana puts forth his next objection which means that there is no proof for accepting such a position that only *abhīdhā* is being stated and the *puruṣa* gets motivated.

Vācaspati Miśra has elaborated this point further in his *Nyāyakaṇikā* and put forth three alternatives:

(a) Is the *arthābhīdhā* got from another *abhīdhā* or from itself? If it is from itself then the proper import cannot be conveyed.

(b) If it is from some other *abhīdhā* then also the meaning should either be simultaneous or in succession. Now it cannot be accepted as simultaneous because a *phala* cannot generate another *phala* at the same time; there is no sense in cooking the food that is already cooked.

(c) The *pūrvapakṣin* might argue that let us accept succession as the alternative in this case i.e. first of all the *liṅ* etc. may convey their meaning and from this meaning, *abhīdhā* will arise. But Vācaspati Miśra does not agree to this view also and says that the meaning accruing from some other *abhīdhā* can also not be accepted to be in succession to the first *abhīdhā* because the *śabda-vyāpāra* and the process of knowledge have to have some continuity, otherwise they can not produce the desired result.

Hence the view that *abhīdhā* itself is *vidhi* is also not acceptable to *Vidhi-Vivekakāra*.

(3) The third view undertaken for examination in *vidhi-viveka* is that *vidhi* is the meaning expressed through the *liṅ* suffixes and it is to be understood in various senses like

nimāntraṇa, *āmantraṇa* etc. all of which have *pravartanā* as their common meaning. Maṇḍana here raises the objection that all these terms are expressive of human intentions while Vedas are *apauruṣeya* and therefore these *pauruṣeya* meanings cannot be attributed to a Vedic injunction. Otherwise it will tell upon their very nature and they will cease to be authoritative.

It may be contended by the *pūrvapakṣin* that *preṣaṇā* etc. have no doubt their own specific meanings but there is a general meaning also and *pravartanā* alone would be that general meaning of the injunctive sentences in the Vedas.

To this, Maṇḍana Miśra says that although *pravartanā* is common to all forms of *liṅ* but *preṣaṇā* etc. do have their individual meanings and we cannot overlook these. These specific meanings are based on the intentions of human speakers, but if these are accepted in the Vedic utterances, then the Vedas would lose their *apauruṣeyatva*. Hence, these particular types of meanings, i.e. *preṣaṇā* etc. cannot be accepted in Vedic injunctions.

If it is said by the *pūrvapakṣin* that the meaning of *vidhi* is not in the form of human intention but the result of the activity (*preṣaṇā* etc.); by *pravartanā* is meant the desirability inherent in the result and it is this desirability which is the motivating factor-this is impersonal, not personal.

But this view also is not acceptable to Maṇḍana Miśra. He enquires as to whether this desirability (*arthitā*) is either desire (*icchā*) or association with desire (*icchāyoga*) or inseparability with desire (*icchāsamavāya*). All of these are properties of human beings and not of the result (*phala*).

Therefore it can't be said that the desirability is inherent in the result.

Moreover, even if the motivation is regarded as the desirability inherent in the result, then the question will

arise as to why do we choose a particular result in preference to the other. The simple answer to this question is that the choice is done by a moral agent only, not just on the basis of result but on the basis of an action being instrumental in realization of the desired result. He continues his objection by saying that if the *pravartanā* were located in the result, then how is it that we look for the appropriate instruments conducive to the realization of desired results rather than to results themselves.

In this way, Maṇḍana has rejected all the three *pūrvapakṣas* regarding the nature of *vidhi*.

Of course, while deliberating upon the moral issues many *vipratipattis* (conflicting views or alternative approaches) are possible and it has also been realised that even wise people get baffled in what is to be done and what is not to be done. Nevertheless, for practical guidance one has to arrive at some definite viewpoint.

From this point of view, in this text, several philosophical positions have been put forth in the form of *pūrvapakṣas* and after their thorough and critical examination the author has formulated his own official standpoint. The arguments adduced by him are subtle and numerous. Even though Prabhākara's position constitutes the principal *pūrvapakṣa* in Vidhi-Viveka, the viewpoints of Grammarians, Naiyayikas, Buddhists, Sāṃkhyaites, Yoga philosophers and Advaitins also figure at different places in the text. Out of these, the Buddhist, the Advaitin and the Prābhākara positions regarding the notion of *vidhi* and their rejection by Maṇḍana Miśra are being discussed briefly.

According to the Buddhists, the source of *vidhi* is the *Buddha-vacana*. The *Buddha-vacanas* are authoritative in their view because Buddha is *sarvajña*, omniscient and omniscience is one of the types of *pratyakṣa* in Buddhist epistemology. It is to be mentioned here that out of the four types of problems, namely the source of *vidhi*, the nature of *vidhi*,

the motivation power of *vidhi* and the result of *vidhi*, the Buddhists have taken deep interest in the first problem only. But the Buddhist explanation of the source of *vidhi* is not acceptable to Maṇḍana Miśra, because *Buddha-vacanas* are *pauruṣeya* whereas *veda*, the source of *vidhi-vākyas* is *apauruṣeya*.

The Advaita Vedantic *pūrvapakṣa* is referred to in the text where Prabhākara comes forth with a theory that in case of self-knowledge, *pratipatti-vidhi*, i.e. injunctive knowledge be accepted as a means. So, in the example: *Ātmā vāre draṣṭavyaḥ* etc. the knowledge of *ātman* is enjoined according to him. Maṇḍana Miśra criticises this theory by pointing out three alternatives as to whether such *pratipattis* should be *śrutamayī* (verbal knowledge) *cintāmayī* (meditative) or *sākṣātkāramayī* (immediate apprehension). Then Maṇḍana proceeds to refute all the three alternatives on the ground that in all these cases *vidhi* is impossible to be enjoined. However, he gives room to the position that *pratipatti* of the meditative type can be accepted.

Prabhākara's view, as stated above, is the principal *pūrvapakṣa* in Vidhi-Viveka. Regarding the nature and role of *vidhi*, Prabhākara advocates a non-consequentialist view known as *niyogavāda*. It approximates the deontic position formulated by some Western thinkers like Kānt. According to Prabhākara, *vidhi* stands for a moral injunction as also for moral impetus towards performance of a certain action which is conveyed by that moral injunction. He defines *niyoga* as an action which engages its agent for its own accomplishment. Another term used in Mīmāṃsā tradition for *niyoga* is *apūrva* which also refers to the act impelling its agent to undertake its own performance leading to some effect. The moment a moral agent is exposed to a *vidhi-vākya*, his psychology gets motivated with the idea, 'I ought to do it.' Prabhākara takes into account this moral motivation which is inherent in the moral injunction itself.

According to Prabhākara a moral act is to be performed

not with any intention to get a desired consequence but only on being motivated to do so. Thus, every moral injunction is directed towards a moral agent to impell him for undertaking accomplishment of an action. The person so engaged in the accomplishment of the action undertakes an activity not because he desires it or he has some intended fruits to be realised but simply because the moral injunction has a motivating force which impells the agent to undertake an activity.

The *niyoga* stands for that accomplishment which is capable of its own realisation through the agency of a moral agent. The agent is only capable of undertaking an activity but needs motivation from a moral injunction for doing something as well as for desisting from doing it. Thus Prabhākara advocates autonomy and supremacy of moral action which stems from a *vidhi-vākya*, i.e. *codanā*.

The key element in a *vidhi-vākya* is the root verb and within that the *liṅ* element which has optativeness and which alone motivates the moral agent to undertake an activity for its accomplishment. In a moral situation, it is the *liṅ* which has to play a pivotal role, the moral injunction which gets expressed through *liṅ* or the moral agent who undertakes the activity or the moral consequences of a moral act, all are subservient to the *liṅ*. The place of consequences in a moral situation is not denied by Prabhākara, he only insists that we do not undertake an activity for getting some desired consequences but he does not exclude the place of consequences in a moral situation. Every act must have some consequences and therefore the consequences cannot be ruled out from the performance of an action. But according to Prabhākara, they are not the motivating factors or the intended goals. The consequences are inherent in the moral action, they are intrinsic to it and therefore they will have to accrue the moment an activity is undertaken.

Maṇḍana Miśra does not accept the above viewpoint put forth by Prabhākara regarding the nature of *vidhi*.

According to Maṇḍana, every wise person undertakes an activity with the view to achieve some desired goal. All moral actions, therefore have something desirable as the intended goal. The moral activity is a means for realisation of a desired intention in so far as it stimulates and motivates a moral agent to undertake such activities which are conducive to the accomplishment of the desired goal. The desired goal is *puruṣārtha* and the knowledge of *vidhi* is the means to attain the *puruṣārtha*. Hence, in Maṇḍana's view of *vidhi*, the primacy is to be assigned to *iṣṭasāadhanatā* rather than to *kartavyatā* or *kāryārthasādyatā* as advocated by Prabhākara.

In other words, a moral agent ought to undertake only such activities which yield desired consequences. Then only he becomes a *niyojya* or a moral agent. In fact, which activity is conducive to moral good and which activity is detrimental to moral good, is determined by *vidhi*.

Thus, according to Maṇḍana Miśra, the meaning of *vidhi* lies in *iṣṭasāadhanatā* only; *iṣṭasādhanta* implies *kṛtisādhyaiva*, i.e. only that action which is accomplishable and which leads to the desired goal, can be regarded as *iṣṭasādhana*. What is *iṣṭasādhana* and what is not so, is known only through *vidhi*. However, what is realizable and what is not realizable is known through worldly experience.

Maṇḍana Miśra states that the meaning of *vidhi-vākya* is known through the elements like *liṅ* etc. which are the bearers of the desires, motives and other psychological factors engendering action. *Niyoga* stands for motives and intentions of a reliable person, human or divine. *Vidhi* embodies the motives and intentions of such reliable persons and therefore it is *iṣṭasādhana*, i.e. conducive to the realisation of desired goal. Maṇḍana Miśra, in contradistinction with Prabhākara, assigns significant role to desires, motives and intentions of the agent in so far as they are directed by reliable and knowledgeable persons. So, *liṅ* is expressive of *icchā* according to Maṇḍana Miśra.

On the basis of the above, we may conclude that the concept of *vidhi* is discussed in great detail by *Vidhi-Vivekakāra* and the contents of this text cover not only the entire Mīmāṃsā system but also other systems of Indian philosophy in the form of *pūrvapakśas*. A study of this text also reveals that *Vidhi-Viveka* is solely concerned with the analysis of *liṅ* which expresses *śābdī bhāvanā* ; it does not pertain to the analysis of *āsthī bhāvana*. *Āsthī bhāvana* is analysed by Maṇḍana in his another work called *Bhāvana-Viveka*. Just as *śābdī Bhāvanā* and *āsthī bhāvanā* are complimentary to each other, these two works of Maṇḍana Miśra are also complimentary to each other and study of any one of these is incomplete without the study of another.

To sum up, *Vidhi-Viveka* is a difficult but important text of Mīmāṃsā philosophy and it contains rich and profound thought regarding meta-ethical issues. In fact the system of Mīmāṃsā has tremendous practical bearing and it can be applied to almost all walks of empirical existence, yet it has long been overlooked, perhaps because of its ritualistic concerns. On the whole, it may be said that the development of meta-ethical thinking took place in the West very recently, Indian ethical thinkers took interest in it right from the Vedic times. Apart from enquiring into the meaning and purpose of human existence and the cosmic process, they also concentrated upon the question as to what is morally right conduct, what ought to be done and what ought not to be done were the issues of enquiry not only in philosophical classics, but also in literary writings. The debatable questions were, why should we be moral and what is the source of moral injunctions? While reflecting on these issues the Indian mind put forth diverse viewpoints regarding the source, the nature, the functions and the objective of moral injunctions. A corollary of the above issue is the inquiry concerning the source and nature of moral authority since a moral injunction has prescriptivity with obligatoriness or a sense of ought essential to it. It was

felt that adherence to moral norms is conducive to both worldly prosperity and spiritual realization. Maṇḍana Mīśra himself has stated in his prefatory remark that the knowledge of and adherence to moral injunction are the sole means to realize the human objective;

Sādhane puruṣārthasya saṁgirante trayividhaḥ

Bodhanī vidhau samāyattamataḥ sa prāvivicyate.

APPENDIX

A CONTEMPORARY INDIAN PHILOSOPHER WITH MODERN THOUGHT AND APPROACH

Philosophical enterprise in India has a pretty long and continuous history, and perhaps without any break, right from the Vedic times upto modern period throughout the length and breadth of the country. In the course of this vast spatio-temporal span there might have been periods when philosophical reflections were either at their peak or at their lowest ebb but as the historical records of India evince, philosophical activity never came to an end. It may be that because of the adverse geo-political conditions a large amount of philosophical literature has been lost in the oblivion and only scanty references or fragments of these works are now available, nevertheless there are conclusive evidences for continuity of philosophical thinking. Not only at every period of time and in every part of the country, there has been an incessant philosophical activity, there have also been innovations either in the contents or in the modes of philosophizing and therefore even though the development of philosophical thought mostly look place by way of writing commentaries and subcommentaries, the commentators inspite of not making any claim to originality, were quite innovative and not merely repetitive. This accounts for the richness of philosophical thought in India.

This apart, diverse ways of knowing and various methods

of philosophising, empirical and trans-empirical, human and trans-human, rational and trans-rational etc. have been accorded acceptance and recognition and this has also contributed to the depth, subtlety and vastness of Indian philosophy. Moreover, there has not been any regimentation of thought in India; the earliest treasurehouse of philosophical thinking, the Veda declares :

Ekam sad viprā bahudhā vadanti

Therefore we have a wide variety of philosophical reflections getting crystallized in different schools and systems of thought. In each school, right from its formulation, there has been unbreaking continuity. It will be beyond the scope of this paper to point out the continuity of all the philosophical schools upto the modern times. Hence only an attempt will be made here to highlight a unique and distinctive contribution of one contemporary living Vedānta scholar who is also a reputed Naiyāyika. His name is Sri Goḍā Subramanya Sāstrī of Tamilnadu. Sri Sāstrī is an author and editor of several learned treatises, some of which are as follows :

1. Satpratipakśavaibhavam (सत्प्रतिपक्षवैभवम्)
2. Kroḍapatrasaṁgrahaḥ (क्रोडपत्रसङ्ग्रहः)
3. Nañarthavichāraḥ (नञर्थविचारः)
4. Mādhvakudūṣaṇapeṣaṇam (माध्वकुदूषणपेषणम्)
5. Brahmasūtrabhāṣhyapradīpikā (ब्रह्मसूत्रभाष्यप्रदीपिका)

In this paper, the last work viz. Brahmasūtrabhāṣyapradīpikā is taken up to illustrate the modern thought and approach of Srī Sāstrī, an innovative philosophical thinker of contemporary India who is writing in Sanskrit. This is but just a representative sample account and scores of such examples can be cited in each school of philosophical thought where modern thinkers have made original contributions either in the language or logic or content of

philosophizing. The development of philosophical thought in India took place by way of argumentation, mutual criticism and mutual responses. In this process *pūrvapakṣas* have been posited and their positions have been examined. Such *pūrvapakṣas* could have been historical ones or may have even been hypostatized by the thinker himself. In recent times, we had an example of hypostatization of such *pūrvapakṣas* for the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika system by the eminent Naiyāyika Pt. Badrinath Shukla. The postulations of such *pūrvapakṣas* are meant to stimulate further philosophical thinking. The point to be noted is that the philosophical activity, though may have become feeble in modern times, it has not come to an end inspite of the weaning away of young minds by the glamorous Western philosophy in English medium Universities.

As stated earlier, the present paper aims to highlight the distinctive contribution of Sri Goda Subrahmanya Sastri in his exposition of Brahmasūtras by employing *tarka* drawn from the earlier Vedantic literature or by formulating new *tarkas*. In Advaita Vedanta, *tarka* also known as *yukti*, *anumāna* etc., occupies a very important position and is referred to as '*anumārdhavigraha*' by Śaṅkara himself. The respective role of *tarka* and *śruti*, the other part of the *vigraha*, has been a favourite topic of discussion among the Vedāntic thinkers. *Śruti* is the codification of *ātmānubhava*. *Ātmānubhava* also known as *ātmajñāna* or *aparokṣānubhūti* is the aim of all Vedāntic learning. It is a matter of self realisation and for this, both *śruti* and *yukti* are only the aids. *Śruti* is the primary aid because it is linguistic expression of *ātmānubhava*. *Yukti* is subservient to *śruti* as its role is only to corroborate and to substantiate what is expressed in *śruti*. *Yukti*, therefore has to be *śrutyavirodhinī*, *śrutyānukūla* or *śrutyānugrihīta*. Even though *yukti* plays a second fiddle, it's importance cannot be belittled and that is why Advaita Vedāntic thinkers have quite often resorted to the employment of *yukti*. Sri Goda Subrahmanya Sastri has

pointed out that Ādi Śaṅkara has composed his commentary by taking help of both *śruti* and *yukti* :

श्रीमद्भगवत्पादाश्च श्रुतियुक्ती उभे अवलम्ब्य भाष्यं व्यररचन्। सर्वत्र श्रुतिमुदाहृत्य उपपत्तिमपि प्रादर्शयन्। स्वयञ्च 'तर्कोपकरणा प्रस्तूयते' इत्युक्तवन्तः।

Srī Śāstrī in his Brahmasūtra-Bhāshya Pradīpikā has not only identified such *yuktis* in the traditional literature but has also made use of them in his exposition. In his preface he points out the uses of *yuktis* available in Ratnaprabhā, Nyāya-Nirṇaya, Śāstra-Darpaṇa etc. The uniqueness of Sri Sastri's work is that in every *adhikaraṇa*, he has made use of *anumāna* to substantiate the Advaita view on the topic under discussion.

One example will suffice to illustrate the innovative use of *anumāna* by Sri Sastri in his exposition. The *upodghāta* of Śaṅkara's commentary on Brahmasūtra begins with the contrast of *yuṣmat* (the object) and *asmat* (the subject). Srī Śāstrī uses the word *anātmā* for *yuṣmat* and *ātmā* for *asmat*. First he gives an argument to differentiate *anātmā* from *ātmā* and then by way of contrast gives another parallel argument to differentiate *ātmā* from *anātmā*. The *pakṣa*, *hetu* and *sādhya* of one argument are just the opposite of the *pakṣa*, *hetu* and *sādhya* of another argument. This enables one to clearly differentiate *anātmā* from *ātmā* and thus explicate Śaṅkara's contention that *yuṣmat* and *asmat* are of opposite nature.

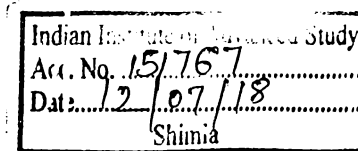
Sri Śāstrī now proceeds further to explicate the first argument in the form of a six-stepped polysyllogism in which there is such a concatenation of *hetu* and *sādhya* that the *hetu* of the preceding syllogism becomes the *sādhya* of the succeeding syllogism. He formulates this polysyllogism upto the sixth step wherein the issue of contrast gets clinched. The whole employment of *anumāna* is as follows :

1. अनात्मा आत्मतादात्म्याध्यासाभाववान् आत्मतादात्म्यप्रमाजन्यसंस्काराविषयत्वात्।
एवमात्मा अनात्मतादात्म्याध्यासाभाववान् अनात्मतादात्म्यप्रमाजन्यसंस्कारा-
विषयत्वादित्युत्तरत्राप्युभयपक्षकानुमानानि द्रष्टव्यानि।

2. अनात्मा आत्मतादात्म्यप्रमाजन्यसंस्काराविषयः आत्मतादात्म्यप्रमाविषयत्वाभावात्।
3. अनात्मा आत्मतादात्म्यप्रमाविषयत्वाभाववान् आत्मतादात्म्याभावात्।
4. अनात्मा आत्मतादात्म्यशून्यः आत्मविरुद्धस्वभावत्वात्। यः यद्विरुद्धस्वभावः स तत्तादात्म्यशून्यः यथा प्रकाशविरुद्धस्वभावं तमः।
5. अनात्मा आत्मविरुद्धस्वभावः विषयत्वात्।
6. अनात्मा विषयः युष्मत्प्रत्ययगोचरत्वादित्यनुमानुषवं युष्मदस्मदित्यादि मिथ्येत्यन्तग्रन्थेन सूच्यते।

Though he does not explicate the second *anumāna* pertaining to *ātmā*, yet he has clearly stated that one can continue this exercise on the same pattern and make additives.

The chief feature of this exercise is that it provides subtle, sophisticated but neat reasons of the differential understanding of the contraposed concepts. This is a new technique introduced by him for conceptual clarity and better understanding. There are many philosophical concepts which are shrouded in vagueness and opacity. This has been pointed out by the contemporary analytical philosophers in the West. By using this technique, Srī Śāstrī has been able to remove the ambiguity in concepts and words. This is his noteworthy contribution and its utility has to be acknowledged in the contemporary Indian modes of philosophising.





VIDYANIDHI PRAKASHAN

D-1061, Gali No. 10
(Near Shri Mahagauri Mandir)
Khajuri Khas, Delhi-110094
Phone : 2175638