

FACETS
OF
INDIAN
THOUGHT

Betty Heimann

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FACETS OF INDIAN THOUGHT

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Indian and Western Philosophy: a study in contrasts. Allen and Unwin, London, 1937.

Studien zur Eigenart Indischen Denkens. Mohr und Siebeck, Tübingen, 1930.

The Significance of Prefixes in Sanskrit Philosophical Terminology. Royal Asiatic Society Monographs, Vol. XXV, London, 1951.

Also by the author: numerous essays in Western and Asian periodicals.

FACETS OF INDIAN THOUGHT

BY

BETTY HEIMANN

Ph.D.

*Late Professor of Sanskrit and
Indian Philosophy, University of Ceylon*

'Wherever we taste the ocean, at the
bottom, at the surface or in the
middle, its water tastes of salt.'
Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad II, 1, 12

London

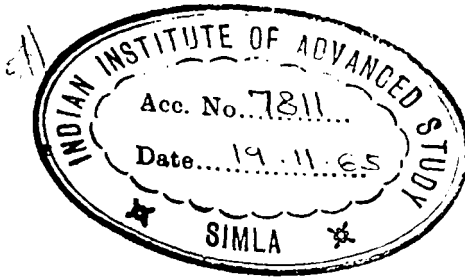
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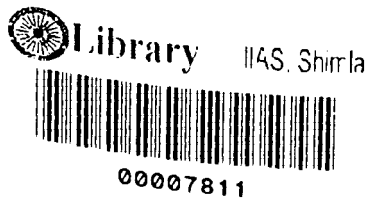
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INTRODUCTORY NOTE
BY THE EXECUTORS

RIGHT up to the time of her sudden death in May 1961, Professor Betty Heimann was in the midst of literary activity. She left two unpublished works, 'Hindu Thought in Illustrations', and the present collection of essays, *Facets of Indian Thought*, which she wrote over a number of years. It was not intended to be a textbook for the student, though in the end it may well become this. It illustrates her personal experience and her versatile, profound interpretation of Indian thought and life.

Professor Heimann might be described as a traveller between two worlds, the Western and the Indian. Starting as a Western classical scholar she was soon drawn to the language and philosophy of ancient India. This field turned out to be her life's work and she gained the respect of scholars of Sanskrit and Indian philosophy all over the world—foremost of course in India. She was a born lecturer and devoted teacher, and left many enthusiastic students behind her. She was also much sought after both as a speaker at international Oriental congresses and as a contributor to Asian and Western periodicals.

Our sincere thanks are due to Messrs. George Allen and Unwin, the publishers of her earlier work, *Indian and Western Philosophy: A Study in Contrasts*, for the interest they have shown in the publication of this volume. We also thank her old friend Professor R. N. Dandekar, of the Bhandarkar Institute, Poona, for his Foreword. We are grateful to Dr. W. Shayan, late of Warsaw University, for advice on certain Sanskrit expressions.

Above all, the publication of these essays could not have been accomplished without the devotion and concentrated effort of three of Betty Heimann's closest friends: Terence Gervais, her partner in

INTRODUCTORY NOTE BY THE EXECUTORS

philosophical discussion, Dr. Ruth v. S. Gaevernitz, her friend and spiritual companion since student days in Heidelberg, and Dr. Hilde Wolpe, her inspired helper and secretary. They have together edited the manuscript.¹ We extend to them our warmest thanks.

Executors of Professor Heimann's Estate

Thea E. Hochfeld,

Grete Blitz

London

December 1962

¹ The three editors who had to arrange a posthumous manuscript of essays, ask the reader's indulgence for any shortcomings.

T.G.

R.v.S.G.

H.W.

FOREWORD
BY PROFESSOR DANDEKAR

THIS foreword is intended to be a tribute of love and gratitude to the late Professor Betty Heimann from the land which she so dearly cherished and the religio-philosophical culture of which she expounded with such remarkable sympathy and perspicacity. Through her many writings, which reflect, in ample measure, her profound knowledge of Western philosophical thought and her extraordinary insight into India's speculative wisdom, Professor Heimann has presented the thought-worlds of India and the West in their proper perspectives. She has given, I believe, a correct orientation to the study of Indian and Western philosophy by emphasizing that India has developed the essentially cosmic view of the world which is to be contrasted with the predominantly anthropo-centric view of the West. The Indian mind looks upon Man as but a part and parcel of the mighty Whole and never regards him as 'the Measure of all things'. In the West, 'person' is a supreme and final value, while, in India, 'person' is viewed as of but relative significance, implying transitoriness and limitations. Correspondingly, the West is 'monotheistic', while India is 'henotheistic'—she believes not in a 'unique' god but in 'one' god for the time being. India definitely postulates the operation of supra-personal laws and processes.

Again, Professor Heimann has rightly pointed out that the Western idea of a static Absolute does not satisfy the Indian mind, whose fundamental concepts presuppose a dynamic Eternal. It is also to be noted that the Indian idea of unity may be a concept of balance of pluralities or polarities; it is never a concept of genuine uniqueness or simplicity.

Professor Heimann has ably underscored some of the characteristic features of the Indian way of thinking, which, she insists, is governed by the tropical heart of Indian culture. The Indian seeks to give a concrete expression

FOREWORD

even to the most abstract concepts. Often the formal means of expression are part of the meaning itself. Further, India believes that completeness can only be achieved by viewing a problem from its two counter-poles. As for Indian terminology, it has always shunned the rigidity of Graeco-Latin 'terms'.

Professor Heimann's approach to the study of Indian thought is refreshingly original. Attention may be specially drawn in this connection to her anthropo-geographical and linguistic-psychological standpoints as also to her insistence on viewing the various disciplines of Indian thought as having grown out of one basic world-view.

But let me not go on. Suffice it to say that Professor Heimann has re-presented the thought-world of India in a strikingly new light—a fact which will be evident to every reader of the following pages and for which all students of Indian culture will ever remain grateful to her.

hydā manīṣā manasābhikṣpto

ya etad vidur amṛtās te bhavanti

(Kaṭha Upaniṣad II, 3, 9)

Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute

Poona, India.

March 2, 1963

R. N. DANDEKAR

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AUTHOR'S PREFACE

A PRISM OF HINDU THOUGHT— INVESTIGATION IN FACETS

FACETS are illuminations of a complex Whole, they are only segments. Investigation in facets is based on the acknowledgement that from one angle alone the Whole never can be completely elucidated. Many repetitions and consonances will be the unavoidable outcome.

It may be expedient to throw light on the problem under discussion—Indian thought—in single facets. Each of them must be complete in itself, and all of these facets combined should contribute mutually to the elucidation of the problem and all its implications. The treatment in single facets lays bare the aspects selected for their significance in themselves and for their representative quality within the general problem.

India's history of thought lends itself, so the author claims, preferably to representation in facets. All through its traceable period of nearly four millennia India's thought centres around a few basic problems continuously illuminated anew. The main recurrent axiom is that of the fundamental unity in divergencies. This simple dogma demands clear formulations in the changing lights of India's 'Prism' of Thought. India's concepts are evasive and are still open to further investigation from other and yet other angles. Let us explore with heed and care those facets in their relative and co-operative values for gathering in single images the hidden Whole.

INTRODUCTION

THE TASK OF THE METAPHYSICIAN

SINCE the times of the ancient Greeks the Western thinker has been bent on research. As such he has emphasized empirical observation, and simultaneously he has tried to state the underlying unity (*stoicheia, prōton*) within all observable facts. Metaphysical patterns have often served as a leading hypothesis. Scientists, on the other hand, have, in later ages, often omitted metaphysics altogether from empirical research. The great scientists of the West, in combining empirical science and metaphysics, have certainly assumed a unity behind the phenomena. They may often resign themselves to the unapproachability of this last reality, and take refuge in its varied limited reflection in the single realities. The Western thinker does not venture to lose the measuring-rod of reasoning; withal he is conscious that this cannot reach the mystery of the all-inclusive Whole.

In our own time the West has in fact keenly taken up the problem of the relation between science and metaphysics. Modern physical science tries to establish exact conclusions about the universe. Side by side with it the modern scholar delves into metaphysics and into the essential phenomena of religion. The modern thinker thus evaluates all things, including Man and his attitudes in the various fields of his life, as a sum of causes and effects.

Separate from this analytical approach stands Religion itself and the religious postulate of Faith. Here the human being—and even the divine Being itself—is valued as a living person, and an indivisible integral entity. This double fact of Reason and Faith, side by side, is accepted. It is true that the Christian Middle Ages had a different perspective.

The modern scientist advocates another double position which he takes up conscientiously—the position between the single calculable phenomena and an incalculable principle. Here the 'Unknown' serves often as a stimulus for further scientific discovery. Western metaphysics are often considered as remote from the complex world of phenomena. Or they are accepted besides science as being useful to science.

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The Indian thinker, on the other hand, makes bold to recognize metaphysics as the only leading value of superior rank. Thus he never gives up the attempt to peer through all the veils of multifarious experiences in order to get a glimpse of the essential and absolute Truth in all true things (*satyasya satyam*, cf. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* II, 1, 20). It is participation in this ultimate and constant truth, from which all things that appear to be true, derive their truthfulness. The Indian metaphysician visualizes a higher power of cognition: though nourished by reason in its preliminary stages, it finally transcends reason. The *divya-dr̥ṣṭi* is acquired. The 'Divine Eye' opens. The true divining of supra-rational unity—within, before and after the manifestations of the universe—is now realized.¹

New attempts have been made to reconcile Eastern and Western realms of knowledge and to let them complement one another, in mutual fusion. Heinrich Zimmer's posthumous work, *Philosophies of India*,² has been enthusiastically welcomed by those who seek to point out the practicability of Indian philosophy even for empirical life and social conduct. Śri Aurobindo Ghose had recently taught that the absolute can be reached already here on earth. While in both, in Zimmer's book and in Aurobindo's thought, the superiority of India's transcendental philosophy to the attitude of the West is stressed, and while Zimmer has devoted a large part of his work to India's metaphysical Systems of Eternity, Zimmer endeavours to teach as a novelty India's philosophy of time and of practical conduct, i.e. her empirical values. But these empirical values are by no means independent standards of axiomatic significance, but only relative values derived from metaphysics. No fixed ethics of human arbitration and choice and no axiomatic social morality are taught. From Zimmer's analysis it is clear that the 'philosophy of time' measured on the 'philosophy of Eternity' gains only quite a relative value for all earthly happiness and earthly conditions. If all single phenomena are in continuous transitoriness and change, then they are not an end in themselves and of no decisive final importance. Thus human ethics cannot be the last and ultimate goal.

¹ Significant examples are provided by the *Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika* systems, by Indian logic and physics. Starting with logical deductions and physical observations they finally tend to transcendental supra-rational truth (*niḥśreyasā*).

² Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1951.

INTRODUCTION

India's traceable history of thought—of nearly four millennia—is a proof for this consistent metaphysical trend. Thus, for the true metaphysician practical philosophy of conduct has to remain secondary and inferior to the primary philosophy of eternity.

It is understandable that nowadays, when through political and technical conditions the Western and the Indian ways of life are thrown together, one tries to find a reconciliation and adaptation. This is not yet found, and also its future attainment would seem difficult.

Assuming, as the present writer does, that the role of India still is and remains to teach the wisdom of its metaphysics to mankind, let us examine this specific Indian contribution. As we have seen, India is traditionally imbued with the philosophy of eternity and assigns to transitory events only a relative and minor importance. India always seeks for the underlying unity within, before, and after all single things and events. This accounts for the fact that all empirical single things are considered as necessarily incomplete and relative. Taking this stand, the Indian metaphysician is a true realist always facing the fact of empirical limitation. The Western anti-metaphysician may interpret this Indian realism as a kind of escapism from our empirical life of present struggles and obligations. However, one can also argue to the contrary. Undismayed by momentary crises, the Indian thinker thus gains the strength of endurance, of indifference to temporary discomfort and imperfection. Rooted in a constant position outside this world, the metaphysician is able to live through periods of disaster and troubles. Though, as seen above, he does not assign a permanent value to human ethics and social conduct, he gains the higher ethical value of cosmic responsibility. This certainly also means his personal detachment from momentary egotistic feelings towards success or failure, towards pleasure or pain.

A further asset arises from this metaphysical attitude. Since the time of the Greeks the West tends to overestimate the power of human reason and human judgment: 'Man is the Measure of all things.'¹ The Indian, on the other hand, wisely and in humble resignation has always recognized the limited faculty of unaided Reason. He postulates a higher superrational cognitive power as a necessary complement. It is not negativism

¹ See chapters I, 1, p. 27, and VIII, 2, p. 114.

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and nihilism which underlies this conviction of Reason's limited capacity. On the contrary, a positive postulate arose from it. An acquiescence in limitation and its negative results is a resignation which the Indian, true seeker after completion and fullness (*pūrṇatva*), can never remain satisfied. Unending attempts at ever new approaches towards the latent *Summum* which is beyond limitation and beyond restriction of time and space—this is the stimulus for a life attuned to eternity.

The Indian overcomes yet another obstacle which is apt to debar Man from true insight beyond limitation. Western Man—and more and more so in the modern age—over-emphasizes the value of time. He sees little more than the limited, traceable period of history. He sets his task in the limited present and the limited, predictable future. He rarely takes into account the wider potentialities even of the near future. He seldom ventures beyond it. He hardly embraces the full concept of potentialities and their eventual future possibilities. India sees all stages of time in their interrelation and relativity. The Yoga-Sūtras 2, 16 and Commentaries, and 3, 14 do not acknowledge as final the limited present nor the limited past, but strive after the unlimited potentialities of the future, the only productive stage of time. Ever the dynamic, never the manifest inspires the Indian thinker.

I. INDIA'S PAST—A KEY TO INDIA'S PRESENT

FOR about 4,000 years India's civilization has developed in a continuous tradition. The same general attitude which inspired the India of the Middle Ages and that of modern times is already, in its salient lines, evident in the ancient Vēdic period of the second millennium B.C. Already in these texts, the earliest of all Indo-European literatures (*Vēda* = 'revelation of knowledge'), it is clear that they must have been preceded by a long oral tradition. The main traits of the Vēdic texts are still very much alive and still binding for the orthodox Indian of today. His most sacred prayer, still recited daily, is taken from one of these ancient hymns.

Natural phenomena are here elevated to the rank of gods; and this verse is an invocation to the Sun-God to instigate and to enlighten the activities and thoughts of the devotee with a new vigour at the beginning of the day. The ancient *Rgvēdic* religion was a Nature-cult, an acknowledgement of the superior power of the physical phenomena which determine the fate, the welfare and the handicaps of all beings on earth. Sun, moon, thunderstorm, rains and winds are the main extra-earthly factors which govern human life, as of old so today in an agricultural civilization like India's. All through the ages rural India has remained India proper. A few main cities like Calcutta, Bombay and—somewhat smaller—the government-centre in Delhi are, as it were, but artificial superstructures protuberant on the evenly dispersed agricultural foundations. In fact, the fourth capital-city of India, Madras, is not an actual city, but a collection of clustered villages, which accidentally have grown together but still retain their original village organization.

Linked with this is the fact that India's view is essentially biological.¹ As the minute seed slowly and gradually grows into its full adequate fruit, so human tendencies develop step by step in innumerable reincarnations, till their fulfilment is reached. One earthly life, one short present, cannot unfold the

¹ See chapter III, 1, p. 37.

full picture; the relatively brief span of some seventy years of human life is not considered sufficient to develop all innate tendencies and dispositions to their fullest fruition. Only a series of interconnected lives, extending backwards into the past and forward into the future, is able to develop and display the full volume of maturity. For each moment of the present is but an instant of transition from past to future.

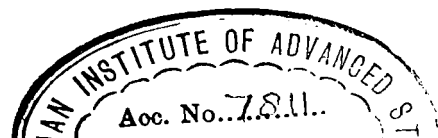
This basic biological idea has also its ethical side. Nothing gets lost, and every action, once started, goes on its development unimpeded and unavoidable till it reaches its acme. Then, its culmination-point once reached, its mission is fulfilled—and other tendencies, formerly of lesser strength, have in the meantime gained sufficient momentum to decide now the direction of future development. Thus from the biological starting-point arises an ethical warning. If you do not want the fruit, then be careful not to sow the seed. Everything, though harmlessly small in its beginning, will later on assume dangerous dimensions of efficacy and driving power.

From these concepts, already evident in the earliest Vēdic texts, several general conclusions can be drawn. Nothing stands isolated. Everything has its repercussions in a wider sphere of time and space beyond its immediate present. This immediate present is responsible for effects in a wider unlimited future, and, besides, every momentary present is already a result of a preceding past. This may give comfort for the iniquities of present sufferings, the present being a consequence of former deeds or tendencies; yet this provides no easy excuse for irresponsibility for the present action. On the contrary, it is based on the unbreakable law of development: the present negligible mistake has to be viewed with regard to its far-reaching future results. In addition, these ancient Indian teachings make for an entirely different outlook on personal happenings. Effaced are man's egoistic motives and passions of the day: they are elevated to the realm of cosmic events. Present feelings of immediate importance and urgency are to be looked upon with a super-personal and time-mellowed judgment. The moment of present urgency may in the future be of less urgent and pressing necessity. Thus Man is forced to distance himself from the actual momentary event, and to see his own life and that of his surroundings in another perspective, in the longer view of a vista into the distance. Impersonal laws are active, and his own

personality presents itself as a part only and as a transitional stage of cosmic happenings.

However, even this extension in time and space of one individual is for the Indian thinker not wide enough. Indian philosophy, side by side with these actual worldly events in past, present and future, views another factor of a fundamentally different nature. Transitoriness is confronted with constancy. Here in this world of visible phenomena, 'only one-quarter of the Universal Being is represented'. Three-quarters of the supreme principle of Being stand unchangeably aloof for ever from any manifestation, from any personal incorporation. The *Brahman*-principle lends only a relatively small part of Its Being to emanation from—and reabsorption into—Its vast reservoir. Beyond and beside stands the Infinite—untouched by the outflow and inflow of individual personal shapes. The European philosophies venture to include the Eternal and the Infinite into the framework of actual experience and of temporal happenings. The Indian philosopher, throughout the ages, lives, as it were, in two worlds simultaneously. On the one side stands for him the true and unchangeable *Real*; on the other, the lesser part of It which emerges, develops and finally merges into the indiscriminate general receptacle. The Indian thus has inherently the wider view on actual events in interrelated past, present and future, and, in addition, a permanent support and a resting-place (*ālambana*) in the unchangeable Infinite. The distance from his present transitory experience widens into an infinite dimension of space and time. He thus is bound to gain an unequalled detachment from personal events, feelings and passions.

No single form, not even the idealized super-form of a God, stands isolated. Beings on earth—humans, animals and plants—and even those postulated beings in heaven, all are interrelated and all in lesser or greater degree subject to the laws of changeability and transitoriness. No individual, not even the world itself—being, as it were, an extended individual—ever reaches uniqueness and absolute value. Many worlds lie side by side. From the destruction of the one, another emerges. Whatever our senses teach us and mirror before us, is yet but a minute part of the immeasurable Whole. Whatever Man sees, has seen or will see, is just one facet only of a crystal. Each of these facets from its due angle provides a correct viewpoint, but



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none of them alone gives a true all-comprehensive picture. Each serves in its proper place to grasp the Whole, and all of them combined come nearer to its full grasp. However, even the sum of them all does not exhaust all hidden possibilities of approach.

As such the Indian world-view cannot be stagnant, and can never be satisfied with the achievements yet reached. The Indian search has to go on incessantly. Still further potentialities will reveal themselves. In such a modest valuation of each individual human achievement, a further search remains for ever necessary. The result of this attitude implies an innate tolerance towards other viewpoints, a ready acceptance, not a repulsion, of new ideas. Hinduism in its innumerable high or low forms of cult, philosophy and scholarly achievements has gratefully absorbed them all, and still leaves the door open for fresh ideas infiltrating from without.

As already stated, in India's basically rural culture, atmospheric phenomena originally gained, and still retain, their importance for human life. As such they are approached as deities with veneration, appraisal, and—if needs be—with appeasement. Even such modern technical structures as the grand irrigation schemes of dams and sluices are never complete without the addition of images: images of the goddesses of rivers and their fertility, to which the masses still bring their daily offerings of flowers and prayers. Technique has not superseded and abolished ancient worship, but enriches, as it were, the perennial cult. The same holds good for the veneration of other animate beings on earth. In the early civilization, and again even today, animal- and vegetable-life have here an importance not easily to be realized in the temperate zone of the West. The elephant, the snake, the tiger, the cow and the goat still in India determine human life, well-being and perils. These other beings on earth are elevated to the rank of deities, to be venerated with gratitude and awe. In the banking centre of modern Calcutta all traffic comes to a standstill, when a cow wants to pass the road, and all the buzzing of cars and the nervous speed of business life can only start again after the great event of the crossing of the cow has slowly been performed.

Yet, in this embarrassing multiplicity of deified phenomena on earth and beyond, there is assumed—at least since 1000 B.C.

—one unifying principle: gods are manifold, and according to circumstances either one or another attains presently the highest rank.¹ Yet behind, before and within this pantheon of gods, that universal principle asserts itself. An interpenetrating life-force is assumed to be ever present. All these coming and going phenomena are only a minute part, of transitory momentary import. *Brahman*, the great 'It',² is the cause and the stimulus for all growth and change. It is the cause of primary emanation and of final reabsorption and of their intermediate stages as well. The male god and the female goddess are but accidental incorporations of the Neuter Principle. Just as all beings on earth are mere changing forms, so in the superstructure of heaven the divine beings are also assumed to be but temporary manifestations. The veneration of divine beings is in India not an 'idolatry' in the Western sense. It is not conceived as the final end, for it is always undertaken only as a symbol of the Highest, as but a way towards the final aim and ideal, the all-embracing formless 'It'. This all-comprehensive 'It' of the Universe is more than the sum of all its past, present and future manifestations, visible or postulated in the different layers of the Cosmos. Side by side with the Cosmos, which is populated by single distinct personalities of higher or lower rank, there exists untouched and unlimited the greater part of its ever-unmanifestable Principle. All persons on earth or in heaven are merely of derived and relative value. Symbols they are of a super-personal fulness—distinct and dispersed parts only, with individual names and forms in order to fulfil a certain function answering to momentary needs.

Many are the gods on earth, in heaven and in mid-air; each can temporarily attain the rank of highest importance. Yet none is ever assumed to be unique and for all times the permanent Supreme. Gods, just like men, animals and plants, are in some way subject to the law of change, of death and rebirth. Only the universal life-force itself is constant and in its very nature unchanging, while assuming those changing forms of manifestation.

These concepts conceived 4,000 years ago still impregnate the minds of modern Indian scholars. Nobel Prizes have been awarded to two Indian scientists and one poet because of their

¹ See chapter II, p. 31.

² See chapter VIII, 1.

originality of thinking, an originality actually due to ancient Indian concepts which are startling to the West.¹ Sir Jagadish Chandra Bose, the physiologist, examined the beating pulse or heart of the plant, following the ancient Indian dogma that whatever can be found in man and animal, must also be traceable in the plant. Again, the crystallographer C. V. Raman makes use of the dogma that not only so-called animate beings, but even seemingly lifeless stones, are imbued with the same *Brahman* life-force. After having assumed a certain shape, the crystals are still going on in continuous change, in unending movements from growth to decay. The poet Rabindranath Tagore has made his contribution to world literature mainly by adhering to the same inherited knowledge of the interwovenness of all cosmic forms: witness his richness of imagery.

Indian mathematics have given the world the basis of all modern scientific calculations—again as a consequence of ancient Indian cosmology. The Zero-concept is not only a mathematical discovery, but was originally conceived as a symbol of *Brahman* and *Nirvāṇam*. Zero is not a single cipher, positive or negative (growth and decay) but the unifying point of indifference and the matrix of the All and the None. Zero produces all figures, but it is itself not limited to a certain value. It is *śūnya*, the primary or final reservoir of all single shapes and numbers.²

The basic Hindu idea of the relativity of values plays its part also in the socio-political sphere. Thus, even the orthodox higher castes were not entirely adverse to the religious influence and external authority imported from the West. Orthodox Hinduism with its belief in *Brahman*, the super-worldly spiritual power, of which all worldly factors are but an emanation of transitory and relative value, is not inimical to innovations even from abroad. All religious creeds are for the Hindu but aspects, slower or swifter approaches to the absolute Divine which lies in an entirely different sphere. They represent merely diverse facets of the all-embracing Whole. None, even of the oldest Indian creeds, is considered to be of unique and exclusive importance, and as such new ways are welcome as yet another expression of search after the divine Principle; Christ thus is received as a new *guru*, an inspired teacher, side by side with the

¹ See chapter III, 1, p. 39.

² See chapter VII, 1 and 2, pp. 95 and 99.

former teachers of standing tradition. However, India's basic presupposition is this: Christ may be appreciated as one *guru*, but never does He become the only *guru* for the Indian masses.

Until recent days of nationalist struggle, India has only in a few cases—we think of the Rajputs, Mahrattas and Sikhs—produced ruling personalities and military leaders. Often Hindus have been reluctant to provide, from their own leading classes, responsible rulers and representatives of political might. They often did not care to assume for themselves the task of political defence and organization. Sometimes low-castes or outcastes were accepted for the unenviable tasks of external government. The cultural spiritual leadership, however, was zealously guarded as the privilege of the high-caste Brahmans, and it was the priest (*purohita*) who stood as the spiritual power behind, or beside, or even above the ruling king. Thus it was through no military weakness that, until recent times, conquered India was willing to leave the burden of government to the accidental external ruler. The Indians insisted only on maintaining cultural and spiritual leadership over the masses. The adroit British officials—especially the earlier ones, those of the East India Company—soon discovered and profited from this basic attitude. They studied the religious and legal texts of ancient Hinduism, and interfered as little as possible with this religio-cultural domain of traditional religious faith. This cultural privilege being reserved for themselves, the Indians tolerated external Western government.

Quite a different situation now arises when national consciousness has spread in Asia. Through the ages up to recent times, India has never been concerned with national feelings. True, since ancient days the sub-continent was united under one name as *Ārya-* or *Bharata-Varṣa*. (Aśōka, who in antiquity had endeavoured to unite India, was forgotten.) This collective name was based on a deep mythologico-cosmic concept of collective unity. Round the legendary mountain *Mēru* there were pictured as lying spread out the land-masses of the whole of India. Around these, a concentric water-belt was assumed, around this again a wider belt of land, and then again a further belt of water. Thus the ancient Indians claimed for their own country a central position. They considered themselves the centre of the earth, the hub of the Universe. However, they widened this concept in their early geographical world-view,

by adding concentric circle after circle of alternating land- and water-belts. Ancient Hindu cosmology, while assuming India as the centre, removed the implied limitations through an extension *ad infinitum*. The nucleus remained India, and around this nucleus other independent nuclei and other unification centres were assumed.

From this cosmic nuclear conception one may try also to understand the caste-system. This system represents a combination of such closed circles of society. The central intensity lies in the *Brahmans*. A wider and less intense circle is represented by the *Kṣatriyas*, the warriors. A further, still wider, still less intense circle are the *Vaiśyas*, the agricultural people and tradesmen, and yet a fourth circle of still wider extension and further diminishing intensity are the *Śūdras*, the servant classes. The nearer to the centre of forces, the smaller in extension and the greater in intensity is the respective social belt. From here the distinctions and limits of Hindu society fade away into the vague regions of a universal cosmic society. Such decentralizing concepts of the world are diametrically opposed to the Roman Empire's idea of *limites* or to the modern Western idea of a nation, which from outside, as it were, compresses the divergent social layers into a compact body of common interests and tasks.

Again: the traditional Indian idea of service to the community is not comparable with the Western concepts, derived from Plato's epoch, of service towards the State. Traditional Indian notions of community are either too wide or too narrow for the modern Western concepts of State and Nation. The focus of India's concept of society is either the whole Cosmos, heaven and earth combined, or it is the limited organization of a caste, or—still more limited—the community which a single enlightened saint and teacher has formed around himself in the loneliness of the Indian jungle. Such 'one-man's universities' were individual centres of society, disconnected and widely dispersed in the vast areas of the sub-continent. As already mentioned, only a few city communities were established in ancient India, and rarely before the Buddhist period of the later centuries B.C. The wide open areas of those river plains stretching eastward towards the Ganges-Delta alone provided the geographical conditions favourable for city development. Because India's landscape provided widely-dispersed rural areas and only rare possibilities for city organizations as

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community centres, the presuppositions for a modern State were hardly available.

By contrast, the West started from different geographico-climatic conditions. In ancient Greece political tendencies could develop early. The *poleis* began as self-sufficient political centres which fought among themselves for hegemony. In the temperate Western zone, early technical means of building and of sea-trade had to supplement the scarcer fruits of the soil, and to protect human physique against seasonal changes. Here Man, according to his needs and his consequent inventions, soon sensed his own importance in contrast to the lower beings and against Nature as a whole. In Greece, then, developed the concept of the *deinos anēr*, 'all-powerful Man'.¹ Here lies the basis of Western political institutions. The concept of a modern State is centred on capital cities, which are, in a way, the continuation of ancient Greek socio-political civic development. These firmly-established self-sufficient human settlements gave birth to the modern notion of the State with its strict technical, economic, social and constitutional organization.

Two of the main political movements in the modern West are both outcomes of these Greek institutions of organized life. Theoretically, Communism seeks to provide in equal measure for each member of the human society. Working on the postulate of equal rights for all, Communism theoretically takes human desires and needs as legal obligations. Ancient Indian economics, by contrast, tried to reconcile want and production by reducing the wants, not by raising production. This is abundantly clear from the fact that, even recently in India, the production did not rise in proportion to the imported technical improvements.² The ascetic ideal of ancient India is still present here subconsciously. In Russia, on the other hand, old religious fervour is now transferred to the aims of utmost technique. Here social justice acknowledges wants, and tries to balance production and wants in an ever-increasing speed of production.

The other main outcome of politico-social aspirations based on Greek ideals are the Nationalist movements. *Polis* nationalism has grown into State nationalism. Single historical personalities, powerful leaders, try, amid the rivalry of nations, to bring their own country into the foreground. This is again in

¹ See chapter VIII, 2, p. 114.

² H. Luft, *Britisches Weltreich*, 1930.

great contrast to India's inherited indifference to single personalities, unless they are world-remote saints. Besides, yet another innate concept stands against the Western attitude: India has taught her people, all through the ages, indifference towards ephemeral conditions. One has to realize India's traditional philosophical aloofness towards the momentary urgency of events: cf. the programmatic teaching of the *Rājataranginī*, *Waves of Dynasties*: the true historian has to become like the hermit in a lonely forest abode! India's main tendencies were directed towards cultural authority, not political ambitions. This trend of thought made her apparently an easy prey to outside conquerors. But was it inner weakness, or rather the pursuit of other ambitions, which up to recent days made India submissive to outsiders taking responsibility for her external government? It is indifference towards worldly events, retained even now, together with traditional over-emphasis on spiritual power, which confront, repulse and transform Western political ideals when imported onto Indian soil. Similarly, the striking contrast between the profusely rich and the appallingly poor has not troubled the Indian masses to the extent experienced in the West. They accepted their fate as deserved by earlier deeds in past existences—at any rate so long as the masses still adhered to their traditional belief in the *Karma* theory. In rural India, up till now, the sanctified power of the Brahmans has been unbroken, and they—the advisers of the princes—were the recognized leaders who never ceased to preach to the masses the constant value only of super-transitory might. India's main tendencies were directed by tradition and inheritance towards timeless, universal and transcendental values.

One may compare the concepts of political unity, diverse in India and the West, with similarly contrary dynamics of Indian and Western Logics. Western terms (see the meaning of Latin *termini*) are border-lines of distinction, secluding one term from another into individual closed circles. Each of them may touch another or cross another, but each remains in its own individual form of distinct contours. India's terminology, on the other hand—as the author has tried to show in this work and in several studies¹—is built up from within; nuclei, as it were, grow from the centre to the periphery, extending ever farther

¹ See chapter X, also my *Significance of Prefixes in Sanskrit Philosophical Terminology*, London, Royal Asiatic Society, 1951.

in expansion, but while expanding losing some of their inherent intensity. The verbal root radiates into divergent spheres of application. This logical process of dissemination may be likened to the political process of Indian decentralization—both standing in fundamental contrast to Western logical, and political, notions. The West *compresses from* outwards into the unity of a nation and into a single term of fixed, closed border-lines. Ancient India *expands* from an intensive nucleus into vague unlimited forms of growth and uncertain periphery. The concept of a nation of fixed border-lines is alien to Indian traditions of thought.

Here we may discover the cause of some difficulties of India's present development within a world of nations mainly based on Western political ideas. This is not because India had formerly no ideas of a State and social structure, but, on the contrary, because she has a fixed and endeared tradition diametrically opposed to that of the West. This it is which makes it difficult for her to compete and collaborate in a world built up on Western standards. Invasions issuing from the West, in earlier historical times, did not provide such dangers and difficulties as those which India has to face today. No sets of actual invaders on a bigger or smaller scale have forced her to defend herself so vigorously. This recent spiritual invasion, without arms but equipped with the armour of modern political persuasion, is for India the more disturbing element, the more challenging encounter.

It is not because the Indians had never visualized general ideas, but because they visualized ideas far more universal than those actually applicable to the world-process and to worldly human needs, that their difficulties arise in the World Assembly. India has now to insert herself into present-day world movements, and to adapt herself to a complicated machinery of highly-developed mechanized technique in science, economics and politics. All these are aims and achievements of long standing in the West, which the Indians in their transcendental flight of ideas had never before taken seriously as worth-while ends.

Individual and group concepts of the world now confront India's notion of the supra-human Cosmos. Her past is a key to her present and to her difficulties in becoming a modern State in the Western sense.

However, there is one task for which India, just through her

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inherited trend of thought, is best fitted in the Assembly of Nations. Her future contribution lies in making use of her inherited capacity for transcending day-to-day problems with her wider view of ever-valid general life-principles. Not only through her geographical position amidst the awakening Eastern nations with their new independence, not only because she lies on the crossing-point of Communist and Western spheres of influence, but through her inherited supra-temporal balance and detachment from worldly ambitions, is India predestined to be the pivot-point of the political scale.

II. VISIBLE THOUGHT

I. KATHENOTHEISM AND HINDU ART

MAX MÜLLER in his true understanding of the characteristic features of Hindu religion coined the happy phrase: all Hindu religion, practised from the earliest times of the *Ṛgveda* up to the present day, is a kind of 'Kathenotheism'. One god (*hen, heis*) is for a certain occasion or for a certain sect arbitrarily and momentarily selected as the supreme. All other gods or deified forces of Nature are subordinated to the one who is chosen freely (*iṣṭa-devatā*). Not at any moment in this act of exaltation of the one, are the existence and the importance of all the others—known or unknown—ever lost sight of. Deities change rank and position, but always the possibility is available at discretion, that yet another one can take in turn the highest place. Nature, too, provides and admits many possibilities of choice simultaneously or subsequently. It is nearly accidental on which object of Nature concentration is momentarily fixed.

In old *Ṛgvedic* times all forces of Nature which govern human, animal and plant-life are venerated or placated with hymns of praise or more concrete offerings, in order to obtain from the gods favourable treatment and the desired result for the worshipper. The functions of the sun, the moon, the stars, wind and thunderstorm may at the present moment be desired or unwanted. As such the deity ruling over these natural phenomena is called upon to function or implored to end their activities.

Soon, however, a changed attitude towards the gods of Nature is manifest. If the human agency of the worshipper is needed to influence the gods above, then soon the idea arises that the gods themselves are incapable of fulfilling their functions without the strengthening help of the devotee. One cannot overlook the fact that, as early as the *Ṛgveda*, the worshipper expressly states that through his cult-action the god is strengthened (*Vardhayate*) for his desired reaction. It is only a last consequence, evident in the *Brāhmaṇa*-texts of the ritual, that the primary action of the officiating priest is considered

more important and efficacious than that of the god, who merely reacts. The intent of the worshipper and the sacrificial means which he uses for the ritual performance are imbued with the productive power, and the god in question has no more to be implored, but is inevitably forced, to react in the desired sense. Here already there comes to the fore the importance of a super-personal power which governs the god and which is primarily invested in the knowing magician-priest. Impersonal natural laws, like that of inevitable causation from action to reaction, are presupposed.

Nothing gets lost; all poured-out energy, both of thought in concentration and of active deeds, is bound to have its due result.

The plurality of gods, their changing rank and accidental importance, reveals a fundamental law of Hindu thought. Polytheism and Pantheism are—paradoxical as it sounds—at the same time highly theistic, but also a-theistic or super-theistic concepts of religion. Each god is important, yet, through the embarrassing manifoldness of divine forms, only of a relative significance. Behind, and before, their various shapes and functions stands a unifying super-personal power which in fact lends only to each of them a part of its own efficacy. *Brahman*, the neutral 'It', is literally 'the growing or increasing force' (*br̥h*). All powers, the divine in heaven, the human and that of animal and plant on earth, are manifestations only of this *Brahman*-force.

Like sparks out of a central fire they lead for a relative period an apparently independent existence. They originally emanated from, and finally are reabsorbed into, the productive collective reservoir. From all times, through all times, and for all times the *Brahman*-force is active and creative, driven by an innate motive, but not by a purposeful power. All its emanations and reabsorptions are only a negligible part of the inexhaustible Infinite (*pūrṇatva*), which contains in itself much more than the sum of all possible manifestations of past, present and future.

Two ways are thus open to Hindu religion and philosophy. The way of concrete cult and contact between the beings in heaven and earth—and the other, the higher way, of abstract speculation on the ever unmanifestable fullness of the Divine.

As a consequence of the fundamental belief in the hidden force of *Brahman* for ever transcendent and, at the same time,

for ever immanent in all and every heavenly or earthly manifestation, Indian religion is at the same time and for the same reason of an unequalled abstractness and concreteness. The philosophers of the *Upaniṣads* and their later systematic interpreters attempt in an ever unsuccessful, but unending, effort to visualize the unapproachable true Transcendental. The cult-bound worshipper of lower standing, on the other hand, has to be satisfied with the second best, namely to concentrate on the Divine in any of its manifest aspects in the form of this or that god. Polytheism here is a kind of conscious or subconscious resignation or self-despair of ever reaching the ultimate goal.

As such, whenever the uninitiated outsider is surprised, embarrassed or repulsed by the exuberant paraphernalia of materialistic display in Hindu cult, he must keep in mind that, side by side with these, stands the utmost abstraction in religious feeling and thought, the search for the *Neti-Neti Brahman*, the 'not this, not that', which denies itself to all representations, higher or lower.

Indian art, then, by its very nature, is limited to the second, the concrete way of religion. It tries to represent in more or less comprehensive symbols the form-bound religion of divine shapes. As such it expresses Indian Poly- or Pantheism, and emphasizes the concept of the *Iṣṭa-devatā*, the momentary highest, but never the unique, divine manifestation. Hindu plastic art and architecture are based on the Hindu dogma of plurality, manifoldness and interrelation of all natural forms and aspects. The Hindu temple rarely, if ever, shows an isolated clearly-outlined design. Either, as in the tropical parts of the Malabar coast, the temple-building is swallowed up, as it were, by the exuberant palm-forests around it, or, as is the case with the *Gopuras* of the Koromandel coast, the abundance of the carvings on the outer stone walls nearly blurs out the distinct contours of the structure. Besides, the impressive construction is here loosened, as it were, by the influx of the scenery of the surrounding landscape. The *Gopuras* are not massive temples, but only open gateways through which the mass of worshippers, but also Nature, pour in from all directions. In the mountainous parts of the Deccan the temples are hewn out of the living rock and, significantly, parts of the natural masses of stone are left unhewn, untouched among the elaborate work of human

artisanship. In other places of worship man creeps, as it were, into the innermost depth of the earth. Cave-temples are hidden, and just because one cannot clearly see them or walk around them, they are doubly sacred. In Orissa the temple structures are, it is true, clearly to be distinguished; but they reveal such an exuberance of divergent and incongruous forms that they, too, represent more a natural fortuitous compilation than a structure of a regulated planned order of human artistic selection. Nature and her laws overrule aesthetic considerations. Productive manifoldness presents itself, and everybody may concentrate on this or that part, whichever responds best to his own special needs and taste.

The view of the outside of a Hindu temple may already satisfy the religious feeling of man. Humility and the relativity of all forms are taught by the embarrassing multitude of possibilities shown.

If one now enters the Hindu temple, the same impression repeats itself. There are many cult-niches, each of which attracts attention equally. And even if one has made one's choice among the many places of worship, within one and the same niche so many divergent shapes and forms meet the eye, that a selection provides new difficulties. In inter-twisted groups figures are woven together so that here also only an accidental choice decides on which you will fix your attention momentarily. Gods are represented in each niche in wild rhythm of movement and function. Furthermore, the male god is interlocked with his female counterpart and their attendants. Human form is intermixed with animal form, and, in addition, both are abundantly overlaid with ornaments imitating the prolific vegetation. Stone is used to express in its dynamic carvings life-forms of consonant or discordant rhythm. The exciting gaudiness of crude paint with which the sculptures are covered adds to the emotional bewilderment.

Not only are man, animal- and plant-form used in indissoluble mixture, but even inanimate mathematical symbols are employed to add to the complexity of movement, and as such to contribute to the multiplicity of divine representations. *Yantras* (literally 'instruments of movement or of concentration') are drawn and carved in intricate recurrent shapes and curves—a magical maze—as a means of concentration, and at the same time of bewilderment, for the seeker after the Divine.

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This is the embarrassing multiformity of the Hindu temple, even when no act of cult takes place. How much more are the senses aroused when the exciting ceremonies themselves are performed within these surroundings of stone-bound energy! The experience of the Hindu cult is unique. The harsh dissonance of the drums, the tense noises of the incantations stirring in their monotony of repetition, the clashing and splashing and cracking of the coco-nuts, offered as a libation of fertility, the indistinct humming of the masses of worshippers, mingled with the shrill cries of children, passing to and fro from one temple gate to the other, the aggressively stimulating scents of wildly fragrant flowers, the pungent odours of burning fat and butter, the sickly smell of overripe fruit offered to the gods and the priests, the continuous activities of the Brahmans attending to the gods, anointing, bathing, powdering and clothing the images, the flickering lights of oil-lamps and candles: all this ecstasy produced for the senses supplements the feelings aroused by the rhythm of the emotional architecture.

What have these divergent impressions, working on the senses, to do with the basic conception of the arbitrary selection of an *iṣṭa-devatā*? Each religious feeling, sensation and possible way of concentration is admitted at its adequate place for a certain person or occasion. Inclusivity, not exclusivity, is the immanent law of Hindu religious and psychological, social and artistic order. As originally the caste-system was meant as a division of labour only (see *Rgveda* 10, 90), just so in all other spheres of life, the principle of graded equality, momentary importance and co-operative plurality is maintained.

We find a parallel in Sanskrit grammar. The verbal root—the productive reservoir of a complex meaning¹—lends itself to application in divergent branches of knowledge while retaining its original richness in all its varied derivations, the application at hand being, as it were, only an *iṣṭa-devatā*, a momentary choice among its infinite latent possibilities, as its context tinges the term according to the import of its interrelated associations. Just so in all other fields of thought; an accent is laid now on one, and at the next moment on another, possibility of super-individual fullness. Each of them is significant and pregnant for the occasion, but none of them represents more than a part of the whole. Indian representative art then

¹ See chapter XI, 3, b, p. 172 ff.

displays through its manifoldness the possibility of many alternatives: it is, as it were, more tolerant towards the supplicant worshipper in providing him with a free choice for his own needs of devotion. In the West, the artist tends to force the onlooker into the limited range of his own selection, without leaving the worshipper a choice according to his own inclination. True, Western art appeals to the eye through its pre-conceived aesthetic order; Indian art is de-composed, dissolved or accumulated, but it is more generous to the recipient. Here not only the artist, but also the worshipper, has the free choice of an *iṣṭa-devatā* in the widest sense of religion and its artistic representation.

The same abundance of possibilities as in the figurative arts is left open in Indian poetry. The special object of veneration, the beloved maiden or the admired king, is not isolated. All the beauty of the whole universe—all divine attributes—are piled momentarily on the person adored. The soothing purity of the rays of the moon, or the fresh coolness of the lotus-flower, are to be found in the maiden's face. A religious reaction to her grace is assumed. Her beauty arouses such an exaltation of surrender that it purifies the receptive mind from the darkness and anguish of sin.

In a similar manner the shining majesty of the King inspires awe and humble devotion. In him are embodied the radiance of colours and blinding glamour of the sparkling jewel. Steadfast and unshakeable he stands in lofty height as Mount Meru towers over the lesser mountain-ranges of the earth.

On the *iṣṭa-devatā*, the object of individual devotion, all attributes of beauty and grace dispersed in the whole Universe are gathered up. Thus the one person is raised to the rank of a super-person, to an idea incarnate of all excellent qualities. Yet, as a person is bound to *nāma-rūpa*, name and form, he or she is only a momentary, transitory representative of the Divine. Other forms may be raised at the next moment in arbitrary choice to the same sublime rank. No uniqueness guarantees for the *iṣṭa-devatā* a constant supremacy. As long as form, as long as name, as long as person exist, we are still in the sphere of the Impermanent. However, beyond all these there lies for ever the postulate of the formless, cultless, unapproachable, unmanifestable, true Divine. Art in Hindu religion—since still bound to form—does not yet lead to the 'Other World'.

III. INDIA'S BIOLOGY

I. THE LIVING ORGANISM IN HINDU THOUGHT: A BIOLOGICAL WORLD-VIEW

FROM the preceding studies it turns out that in the Indian world the ontological viewpoint has been preferably favoured, while in the Western civilizations from earliest times the interest has been increasingly focused on single sciences. In the following outlines we shall try to investigate how far and from which angle also the Indian thinker concerned himself with scientific concepts and research. It will appear that in India, through all periods, the special sciences are rooted in and developed on the underlying unifying cosmic concepts and pre-suppositions, of which each single scientific result is only a special case and phenomenon—a demonstration and a facet, as it were, of the universal cosmic law. This universal vision in India has never been lost.

From the earliest times of the R̥gveda (about 1500 B.C.) Hindu thought is based on the law of functionalism. *R̥ta*, the World-balance or World-course is not, as for instance is its equivalent in ancient Greece, a purposeful order brought into the cosmos by a selective teleological plan laid down by the master-mind of a creator. Not before the things themselves come into being are they planned and then created, but *R̥ta* is the functional balance of already existent single phenomena of which each in its proper place functions in its own law of activity, and all of them collectively balance each other in mutually retarding or accelerating, limiting or expanding rhythm. Each single function is appropriate to the thing concerned, but serves at the same time to fulfil the purpose of the Whole. Apparently independent objects submit to the general rhythm of the Universe, interdependent objects as they are. While remaining in their own functions of development, growth and decay, they consequently fit into the general order of movement and balance. Order is here apparent in the Universe as an immanent, not as an externally determined, law of preconceived function.

In all the various branches of Hindu knowledge this functional co-operation of living organisms is assumed. Since Rgvedic times the social order of the human community is seen as a biological law. A huge cosmic organism is visualized, in which certain functions are allotted to its head, to its arms, to its trunk and its feet. Its head is the highest caste of the Brahman philosopher and thinker; its arms fulfil the protective function of the warrior; its trunk is composed of the agricultural class and tradesmen who provide the food: while the fourth caste, the feet, perform the lowly but necessary work of society as the servants. Each of these original four main castes functions in its proper place for the smooth collaboration of the Whole. As already mentioned, nothing can function in this world with a head alone, with arms and trunk alone, and indeed one would be a cripple without feet. Division of labour and improvement of work through a training accumulated and intensified by inheritance and adaptation, is a sound biologicoeconomic law, evident in the basic principle of the caste-system. The biological metaphor of the living organism of the community is made use of in the socio-religious order of ancient India.

Metaphors in India are indeed more than mere artistic means of expressive embellishment. They designate actual interrelationship between the object of comparison and the object compared. Biological metaphors, found throughout Indian philosophy, are assumed as manifestations of an innate relationship.¹ As early as the Upaniṣads (about 800 B.C.) the Indian philosopher was searching for the basic root which feeds all branches, sprigs and buds of the world-tree. *Brahman*, the growing and increasing force (from the verbal root *brh*, 'to grow') is responsible for all the outgrowth of forms derived from it. All manifest things are thus called its 'thrown-forth sproutings', *utpatita-sungas*, some of a larger size and of longer life, others of lesser vitality, but all of them grown and nourished by the fundamental root, *Brahman* itself. *Chāndogya-Upaniṣad*, chapter VI, 11, accordingly declares: 'If one cuts off one branch of a tree, it bleeds and withers; when a second branch, a third, a fourth is cut off, it bleeds, too, and withers; but the root itself, protected by fertile soil in hidden layers, cannot be touched by the axe which cuts off the outgrowth. Its potential life-force remains unhurt and serves future potentialities of growth:

¹ See chapter XI, 1, p. 154.

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“*Jīvo na mriyate*”, ‘the life-force itself never dies.’ The flow of its fertile sap never stops, and is ever bound to find and to appear as yet another outcome and growth.

Through all times Indian thought has produced its most fertile and far-reaching results from this basic law of living organisms. A source of knowledge up till now insufficiently tapped is, for instance, the Hindu quasi-intuitive science of pharmacology. In this tropical and sub-tropical climate the growth, the blossom and the decay of a plant impress themselves on the mind of the observer by their quick change of conditions. What is a bud in the morning, is a full-grown blossom at midday and a fading flower at sunset. It droops apparently dead during the night, but, behold, at the next morning yet another out-growth presents itself to the eye. The dead blossom, leaf or fruit seems to have served as a fertile manure from which a new manifestation of life has immediately arisen. Man and animal thrive on the vitality which they receive from the vegetables and fruit they have consumed. Man, animal and plant are for the Hindu interrelated and of essentially the same nature; all are part of the cosmic immanent life-force. As such the nourishment received from the plant's vitality transforms itself also, directly and indirectly, into the vigour of the animal and human body.

As such Indian pharmacology takes great note of the hour of the day or night in which the plant has been gathered for consumption. It may not be a mere legend that an Indian animal, say an elephant, when sick and deficient of a certain vital element in his body, disappears to a lonely valley where this needed medical herb grows. He plucks it, consumes it and reappears with revitalized vigour. The Indian *Kavi-Rāj*, the herb- and root-specialist, still has here more enthusiastic patrons than the Western-trained doctor with his approved brands of tablets and liquids artificially concocted according to a chemical formula in a Western laboratory.

In recent times Hindu scientists, trained on traditional lines, have surprised the Western intellectual world with their discoveries in plant-physiology and crystallogeny. Sir Jagadish Chandra Bose has succeeded, with the help of accurate modern Western instruments, in showing in his laboratories at Calcutta and Darjeeling the pulsating life-force in plants and their biological changes. Why is it that in his sober Western labora-

tories the walls are covered with mural paintings of scenes from the ancient Hindu epics—a striking contrast and combination of ancient and up-to-date achievements? Bose explained it to me, when we met: ‘It is nothing but a further consequence of the thought of my forefathers from Upaniṣadic times, from about 800 B.C., which has led me to my recent experiments in plant-physiology. Did not *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 1, 3, 22 teach that the *Ātman*, the life-force in Man, is equally operative in the ant and the gnat, in the plant and in all other animate and so-called inanimate parts of the Universe? If we have discovered a beating heart and pulse in man and animal, we had to find the same life-function also in a plant.’

Equally, the recent discoveries of Sir V. P. Raman on crystals can be traced back to the ancient Hindu theories of living organisms in all parts of the Universe. Jainism, the daughter-religion of Hinduism, has emphatically stated that there is a living soul in stones also, as in the higher organized beings. Raman’s latest experiments and observations of the continuous growth, and of visible biological changes, in crystals are yet another deduction from Upaniṣadic teachings of yore. The same law of biological movements and continuous changes can be observed in any object of the Universe, animate or so-called inanimate which we have wrongly termed ‘dead matter’. According to Indian thought there is no inanimate matter anywhere in the Universe.

The principles of Indian art are conceived from the same presuppositions. Indian temple-complexes are not, as it were, chess figures, arranged and planned from outside by masterful designers. They represent natural quasi-biologically grown complexes of irregular stone constructions, not aesthetically sundered, but organically vital. Examples can be found in Orissa and elsewhere. The stone itself is represented as a living organism bubbling with life-force like an active volcano. Each temple wall or temple gate, e.g. of the Gopuras on the Koro-mandel coast, depicts individual outgrowth in carvings which balance each other in a kind of immanent reciprocal rhythm. We think of the cosmic dynamic order of *Rta*. Each group of images within a Hindu temple bears witness to the same law. Living organisms are represented, not in aesthetically static order, but in a dynamic rhythm of intertwined congruent or dissonant bodies of Man, animal and plant.

Hindu rhetorics and poetry obey the same law. It is not qualities, statically presented, which are compared in imagery. An Indian poet makes his comparisons between the functions of different phenomena of the Universe; for example, the beloved maiden refreshes like a flower; she soothes like the cooling rays of the moon. She nimbly moves her eyes like the wandering bee. The living organism and its appropriate activities are here, as anywhere in Hindu thought, the starting-point of comparison. The full meaning of a verb, hardly ever the deadened one of an adjective, is used to provide the comparison.

The same laws hold good for even such an apparently remote and abstract field of thought as grammar. The Sanskrit term for grammar is *vy-ā-karāṇa*, 'analysis'. The grammarian is a kind of surgeon who carefully dissects the anatomical structure of the word. No cut-and-dried rules are here laid down. Language itself and each of its single manifestations, i.e. each single term, are understood biologically. The word itself is a living organism; when once set into being, it goes on growing and materializing. A reflection of this Hindu attitude towards words is to be found in Hindu Law, which significantly regards a word as of nearly the same functional import as a deed and accordingly punishes a verbal injury with almost the same severity as a corporal injury.

The notion of, and the very word for, 'grammar' itself are in Sanskrit connected with the root *kar*, 'to do', 'to act': *vy-ā-karāṇa*, for instance, really means separation, distinction, discrimination, explanation and detailed description—whilst all these meanings are related to the root *kar* in its sense of 'action'. Sanskrit grammar is a *functional* grammar. The verbal root (*kriyā*, 'activity') is the basic 'root' of all forms of grammatical morphology. The verbal adjective and the noun are, it is true, derivations in which dynamics are less felt than in the verb itself; but through the admirable analytical structure of Sanskrit grammar their verbal origin is still clearly traceable, and as such the noun can be revitalized by tracing it back to its verbal root. Prefixes and suffixes, too, have their own individual dynamic functional meaning (see, for instance, the discussion on this subject in *Yāska's Bhāṣya* Commentary). The verbal root can be compared with the pulsating heart which expands its life-force to the extremities, the limbs, the prefixes and suffixes. All of them fulfil their own individual functions, but

corroborate or modify each other in co-operation (a verbal *Rta*, as it were).¹

As in grammatical morphology so also in Sanskrit syntax are the functional dynamics vividly felt. The Greek word 'syntax' means literally: 'com-position', 'deliberate construction'. It is, like the Greek word 'system' (*sy-stasis*), an expression of Western stabilizing order, towards which the Indian feels ever reluctant. Accordingly, Indian 'systems' are modestly called viewpoints or aspects (*darśanas* or *dyṣṭis*). Sanskrit 'syntax', too, is felt as a living community—in this case of words. Each has its own dynamic direction and growth. However, when thrown together into a sentence, they have to balance each other and change each other by mutual adaptation. This is the immanent law of Sanskrit phonetics, which rules that a final hard or soft consonant assimilates to itself the soft or hard articulation of the new word. In progressive or retrogressive order an assimilation takes place between the different members of a sentence or of a word-compound. Pregnant single terms, too, though fully imbued with meanings of their own, assimilate themselves to the surroundings of their contexts. While essentially retaining their own individual meaning—their inheritance from their verbal root—they compromise, in a way, with their neighbours in modifying adaptation.

All manifestations of Hindu thought are but expressions of a dynamic universal force. The individual function of the one blends with the individual functions of the others, and results in a collective immanent balance of a living combined organism. Nothing is isolated and static; future possibilities are latent and work for their realization in connection with, or opposition to, the individual life-forces of the present. Movement and counter-movement keep the Universe in a dynamic balance.

2. ANNA: THE DOGMA OF TRANSFORMATION²

India's terms have such a wide range of applicability that the hasty translator rarely gets hold of all their implications. The majority of these students of Indian diction dwell only on the

¹ See chapter XI, Indian Grammar and Style.

² This chapter has already appeared in *The Journal of Oriental Research*, Madras, 1954, Vol. XXIII, Parts I-IV.

one meaning nearest to their present purpose and their individual understanding. In dictionaries from Sanskrit into Western languages, we very rarely come across the full width of the Indian term in question. Or else, if actually all its implications are enumerated, they are hardly given in the order which follows the inner development of the concept in hand.¹ The student seeking for synthesis, who is more concerned with the psychologico-historical development of *ideas* than with the accidental facts of historical events, feels it his responsibility to distinguish between the earlier and the later derivations latent in the term itself. One has to keep in mind the inner law of Indian lexicography, that the early and the later derivations of the term in question all still reveal the basic, productively vague meaning of the verbal root from which the term originated. If one ventures to establish an inner law within the development of a term, then one has to state that the more concrete and the more materialistic usages of the term are the earlier derivations, whereas the most abstract one is the latest. It is indeed not the case that the earlier derivations are extinct while the later ones have come into existence. However, the logico-psychological sequence of development must not be overlooked.

Three or more 'generations' of the term are still, in a way, living as 'contemporaries'. Instead of giving the 'grandfather', 'father' or 'son' in a reverse order of arrangement, one has to follow the inner historical law within the term itself.

Our concern in the present 'Facet' is the term *Anna* from the root *ad*, 'to eat', and as such meaning everything which in a literal or metaphorical sense can be understood as 'food'.

This term *Anna* plays a significant part in the Old Upaniṣads, and is never lost sight of in later systematic Hindu thought.

As is evident in several of these 'Facets', it is the biological foundation of Hindu thought which is retained even in later abstract consequences in metaphysics.² In recent years W. Ruben has undertaken to give a fundamentally primitive—and also in its consequences primitive and materialistic—interpretation of the Upaniṣads.³ He is aware of the importance of the term *Anna*, but, according to his outlook, he sees only the most

¹ See chapter XI, 3, b, pp. 172, 173.

² See chapter III, 1, pp. 38, 39.

³ *Die Philosophen der Upaniṣaden*, Bern, 1947.

concrete and earliest implications of the term. He neglects the fact that, already in the philosophically creative Upaniṣads, *Anna* means something more all-embracing and farther-reaching than just mere 'food'. Because of the bad economic conditions of those times, W. Ruben argues, *Anna* plays such a paramount part in the discussions of the Upaniṣads.¹ The philosopher [*sic*], he asserts, 'thinks of nothing so much as how to fill his stomach with food in order to keep himself from bodily starvation'. Similarly, Ruben devalues the frequent Upaniṣadic speculation on sleep (*susupti*), by claiming that the enervating tropical climate results in continuous tiredness and sleepiness. In other chapters also we have indicated the immense philosophical significance of the concept of *susupti*.² The speculation on *susupti* is the earliest known psychologico-philosophical research on consciousness: on the different stages of full empirical consciousness (wakening), empirical semi-consciousness (dream-sleep), and super-personal consciousness or awareness of the basic unity between object and subject in deep sleep (*susupti*).

In the following short survey I shall deal with the term *Anna* in a similar manner. True, its early concrete meanings are still in use in the Upaniṣads, but side by side with them stand other derivations of the same verbal root which transcend the merely materialistic range.

Anna means everything which is eaten, digested and transformed on the fundamental basis of mutations. In the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 6, 5, 1 ff. we have a quasi-materialistic, and yet in its consequences a supra-materialistic, interpretation of 'food'. The grossest portion of the food eaten is eliminated. The middle part is transformed into bodily structure. Its subtlest portion serves to build up the human mind. Just as food is broken up into its gross and subtle parts, all liquid, too, is dissolved into three parts: the grossest is again eliminated, the middle part transformed into blood, and the subtlest into *Prāṇa*, the essence of the respiratory organs and of their inner circulation. Here the interconnection between Body and Mind, evident in all Hindu philosophy, elevates the merely physical significance of 'food' into the sphere also of psychological elements and conditions.

¹ Cf., e.g. pp. 122 ff.

² See chapters IV, 1, p. 58, and XI, 2, p. 167.

Chāndogya Upaniṣad 6, 7, 1 ff. one could perhaps interpret in a more materialistic sense. Here it is taught that after sixteen days without food man's memory and functions of his mind stop working. If one adheres to the materialistic interpretation of 'food', the dogma is taught here that Matter is the *conditio sine qua non* also for the working of the Mind. It is Matter which conditions and establishes the Mind.

In other sections of the Upaniṣads the concept of 'food' has already gained a wider aspect. In the *Aitareya Upaniṣad* 2, 1 ff., hunger and thirst are the first impulses which after their coming into existence govern the deities. Man is their favourite object of Food. Thus the god *Agni* enters the human mouth as speech, the god *Vāyu* as *Prāṇa*, the *Ādityas* as sight, the *Dīś* as hearing, etc. We clearly see here that 'food' is understood as the basic necessity and ground of all functioning of the senses; but the term is already used metaphysically. The deities enter the human body to draw their strength from it. Their food, however, consists of sense-perception, no longer of gross Matter. For the interpretation of this difficult passage one has to refer to the Indian interrelation of the concepts of Food and Sacrifice. In the *Upaniṣads* and also in the *Bhagavad Gītā* and occasionally also in the *Rgveda*, the sacrifice can consist of gross Matter, but also of subtle Matter, like thought and concentration. Thus everything offered of bodily or spiritual energy is a discharge of matter in order to exchange for it something else (*do ut des*). In the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, love-union likewise is seen as a mutual discharge of forces, a sacrifice, as it were, offered from both sides for the sake of the result, the child. Accordingly, each act of intellectual perception is a sacrifice or oblation, a discharge of energy for the sake of a gain. The matter consumed transforms itself into something else, i.e. the aim to be attained. Nothing comes into being without drawing its force from something else that was formerly existent. In other words, the newly-produced thing is the result of another one which is sacrificed, as it were, for the sake of its result. Matter is transformed and consumed in order to produce a new condition and function. Its active faculties result in a new state.

To the same trend of thought belongs *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 1, 2, 1 ff. It teaches that in the beginning of the process of production the whole world was covered by Death,

which is Hunger. Out of Hunger or *Kāma*, 'desire' (cf. *R̥gveda*, X, 129), results all creation. It is not the material desire for Food, but cosmogonically the desire for gross Matter, which transforms itself into the wished-for result in a dynamic process. One form of Matter serves to produce another. Never is Matter 'dead'.

Attachment to Matter results in the manifold empirical forms. A variation of this cosmogonic concept, transferred into the psychological sphere, is the Buddhist concept of *Tṛṣṇā*. *Tṛṣṇā*, 'thirst', is the driving force, the Buddhists assert, which leads to attachment to Matter and transforms Matter into changeable forms.

Another metaphorical expression of 'Food' and its 'Enjoyer' is the term *Bhoktṛ*. Not only the material substance of food, but the enjoyment of all empirical happenings combined, is a matter for consumption, i.e. experience.

Yet a further metaphor used for 'Food' in the *Upaniṣads* is that of Honey. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 2, 5, 1 ff. sees the whole world under the simile of the 'Eater' and his 'Food'. The earth is the honey for all beings and, conversely, all beings are the honey for the earth. Out of the earth, as *Anna*, all beings originate, but in the end all beings, as *Anna*, are consumed, i.e. reabsorbed into earth. They provide the manure out of which a new outgrowth will come forth. This reciprocal process of 'Food-ness' is based on India's axiom of uninterrupted emanation and reabsorption of material substance in the sequence of growth and decay. *Katha Upaniṣad* 4, 5 uses similar metaphors. Here, too, rice and curry are referred to in order to elucidate the process of the reabsorption of all forms into the universal reservoir of *Brahman*. All beings are meant to be 'Its Food' in gross or subtler form. They were first built up out of a part of *Brahman*, and then, in the end, are reabsorbed. However, *Brahman* was never diminished by their emanation from Its infinite substance, nor does It increase in Its infinite substance through their relatively small additional influx. The Finite does not affect the Infinite.

The whole process of transformation of substance within the empirical cycle is laid bare step by step, in the *deva-* and *pitṛ-yāna*. *Kausitaki Upaniṣad* 1, 2 speaks of the transformation of Man after death into physical phenomena. According to his *karma*, Man rises up to sun or moon, and from there he

returns to the earth in stages. First, his substance is transformed into rain. As rain he nourishes the earth so that the plants can grow. The plants, for their part, nourish Man so that his semen can develop, and from his semen new human life will spring forth. Here 'Food' is nothing more or less than transformed substance of biological productivity.

In the theological sense *Anna* is an epithet of the god *Agni*, the consuming fire. Or else, the god *Savitar*, the Sun-god, is called *Anna* as the nourisher of the cosmic world. Characteristic is the designation of the god *Śiva* as *Anna*. He is the world-consumer in the reciprocal process of generation and destruction. One of his female aspects is the goddess *Anna-pūrṇā*, the goddess of bountiful opulence. This female deity is preferably seen as the active giver of Food, and less as its receiver—though, speaking biologically, she receives the semen and adds her own bodily substance for the ripening of the embryo, her fruit. . . . Passive and active forms of a verb are significantly interwoven in Sanskrit grammar—a reflection of India's basic dogma of mutual and reciprocal giving and receiving.

As stated at the beginning of this chapter, it is not that with the occurrence of later and wider meanings of a term the earlier, more limited ones are abandoned. Even in recent times *Anna* is used also in the restricted sense of 'Food', thus, in a way, closely connected with its early material meaning. In ancient *Rgveda* and in *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* the *Anna-jit*, 'the one who gains and attains Food', is a general honorific title. Here 'Food' comprises all desired achievements: again, a use of the term that is of a wider than merely materialist import.

As to the *Karma* theory,¹ here too the concept of Food is metaphorically employed. *Vipāka*, the 'ripening' of the *Karma*, is a term literally derived from the cooking or boiling of the rice, the staple food of India through the ages. Just as the rice is prepared for consumption by boiling, so the *Karma* slowly matures, till it is ready for fruition and immediate absorption. Here, beyond the originally limited concrete meaning of 'Food', *Anna* has widened into a universal cosmic law: What you have 'cooked' for yourself—be prepared to consume and to digest it!

Even in modern Hinduism, *Anna*, the 'Food', plays a most important role, especially when a magical significance is assigned to it. Man is what he eats. As such the food has carefully to be

¹ See chapters IV, 1, p. 52; IX, 1, p. 139.

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kept pure, and must be handled meticulously. Even if the privileged stranger is allowed to come near the main image of the Temple, he is strictly forbidden to enter the Brahman kitchen, for there his shadow even from a distance would unbearably pollute the purity of the Brahman food. A Brahman can only eat what a Brahman has handled and cooked. He cannot take his meal in the presence of an impure non-Brahman, neither in his home nor anywhere else.

A last, and only a modern, use of the term *Anna* is its designation as a coin of currency. An Anna is the sixteenth part of a Rupee, and suffices to provide for a Coolie's daily meal of rice. Here we have to understand *Anna* as the minimum expense for food (cf. the German *Zehr-pfennig*). Thus *Anna* now stands as a symbol and standard of value of livelihood. Salt also, and even other more precious objects of currency like pearls, can be understood under the term *Anna*, the substance of maintenance and the sustenance of living.

Anna, then, signifies 'Food' in all the various meanings of substance and sustenance. Thus the term lends itself to metaphysical, macrocosmic-physical and microcosmic-physical applications. From olden times up till today *Anna* is the *conditio sine qua non* for all transformation, process and progress, material, intellectual and spiritual alike.

IV. THE INDIAN ORIENTATION

1. SUBJECTIVISM AND OBJECTIVISM IN HINDU PHILOSOPHY: THE PROBLEM OF THE ĀTMAN

It is a widespread belief, not only among those who merely know some slogans about Indian philosophy, but also among specialists on the subject, that India has put forth the most subjectivist, solipsist, or egotistic systems within the whole history of world-philosophy. One tries to prove this assertion from the very fact that nearly all Indian philosophical systems centre, in one way or another, around the investigation of the *Ātman*. But is this *Ātman* always, or even ever, the exponent of any subjectivist outlook? Can we interpret *Ātman* really as a kind of individual 'Soul' in the Western sense? It is true that the term *Ātman* occurs already as early as the first awakening of philosophical thought in the R̥gvedic hymns. But, on the whole, these early religio-philosophical texts are more concerned with finding, than with defining, the position of Man in his wider surroundings. Man's dependence on other earthly beings, and on atmospheric phenomena as well, is the presupposition of these researches. Human conditions by themselves are thus not investigated in isolation. Besides, there is a general psychological law, evident at any rate in Hindu thought: it is not the thing which is near and therefore self-evident and unquestionable, but the more remote phenomena—felt none the less as highly influential on human life—which arouse the urge for investigation. Even in later times there prevails the well-known *Nyāya* maxim that he who counts the persons present in a room leaves himself out of the calculation (ten present, nine counted).

The term *Ātman* occurs in a technical sense¹ in *R̥gveda* 1, 115, 1. The passage runs as follows: *sūrya ātmā jagatas tasthuśaś ca*. 'Sūrya, the Sun, is the *Ātman*, the vital life-force, of everything which moves and which stands immovable.' This proves

¹ In this connection we have to deal only with the term *Ātman* as a philosophical concept and not with its grammatical use as a reflexive pronoun (*īmanā* or *ā-tmanā*, of frequent occurrence in the *R̥gveda*).

that a common life-principle is here assumed to underlie and to maintain everything animate and inanimate alike. During the subsequent period of the *Brāhmanas* and early *Upaniṣads* the term *Ātman* is similarly applied to anything which is considered to be the bearer of the essential life-force. Thus frequently, from an early materialistic outlook, the body, the visible exponent of all vital functions, is termed *Ātman*. Even when, in the more developed period of the *Upaniṣads* (cf. e.g. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 1, 3, 2), the psychological aspect of purely human capacities is more closely investigated, and when reason, will- and thinking power are made the centre of the research, the basic axiom once established is maintained: this human *Ātman* can never be truly separated from the *Ātman* accepted as existing also within all lower and higher animals. Or—going even further—the same is assumed to be the maintaining force manifest within all so-called inanimate parts of the Universe. Such a dogma is clearly expressed in *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 1, 3, 22: ‘This *Ātman* in Man is the same in the ant, the same in the gnat, the same in the elephant, the same in the clouds . . . the same in all three worlds, the same in the whole Universe.’ This axiomatic statement on *Ātman* as the functioning principle holds good throughout all periods of later systematic Hindu thought.¹ But are there not in the very same *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* other passages of equally axiomatic significance, which apparently take the merely subjectivist view, and which are therefore made the starting-point for all those assertions of India’s subjectivist, egotistic, or even egoistic bent of thought? Is *Ātman*, even in such passages, ever conceived as ‘Self’ in the limited Western sense of single individuality? I recall *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 2, 4, 5, where it is taught that only for the sake of the *Ātman* are husband, wife, sons and all other earthly and super-worldly beings dear and valuable. Even when taking this teaching as isolated and not, as it ought to be, in connection with the other *Upaniṣadic* passages concerning the *Ātman*, this question can never provide a basis for any assumption of a purely subjectivist outlook. For, even here in this isolated saying, the basic dogma of an inseparable connection of all human and extra-human entities is strictly maintained. The

¹ I thus ventured to use this saying as the motto for all studies in systematic Hindu ontology, theology, logic, epistemology, ethics, aesthetics, etc., in my *Indian and Western Philosophy: a study in Contrasts* (Allen & Unwin, 1937).

context, e.g. the following verse 12, proclaims that this *Ātman* underlies all psychic phenomena (*adhy-ātman*), but also all cosmic phenomena (*adhi-devatam* and *adhi-bhūtam*). This essence is compared to a lump of salt, which though dissolved in water still keeps its specific flavour, within all its emanations. Even this subjective wording¹ reveals once more the basic idea of the omnipresence of a super-personal life-force in everything that is known. Besides, we have to keep in mind that this *Ātman* is here, as everywhere, invariably identified—not only compared—with the all-embracing *Brahman*, the material cosmic universal force. Thus here too it is not merely the human entity which stands isolated. Each and every individuality is but a part of *Brahman*, i.e. of *Parama-ātman*.

As to the famous Upaniṣadic saying: *tat tvam asi* ('that art thou'): this formula, too, is sometimes interpreted in the sense of a subjectivist attitude. If under the *tat* is understood the universal *Brahman-Ātman*, or if it is taken to indicate any single other being of the empirical world, in neither case can this dogma be taken as a proof for the specific quality of any personal Self²; but it clearly shows the super-individual concept of the Self. In widening the Self to the All, the idea of a subject—which inherently implies the concept of limitation—is overstepped.

No essential distinction is ever acknowledged in India between Man and the other phenomena of the world. Throughout the periods of Hindu thought and throughout all Hindu systems, this is the one fundamental dogma. The law of reincarnation is based on the principle that an interchange of human form with animal- and even plant-forms continuously takes place. Thus no assumption of the exclusivity of the human being is ever established in Hindu thought.

In Hindu philosophical dogmas, furthermore, no postulate of any purely immaterial and ever-active, eternal individual soul is ever accepted. The Upaniṣads, which through the centuries are considered the texts of an eternally valid Revelation (*śruti*), teach that the psychic organs of perception, feeling, will- and thinking-power and all their functions are built up, maintained by, and dependent on, mere Matter. The finest

¹ Later on it will be shown in this Essay in great detail, that all problems are in India dealt with from both angles, the subjective and objective alike.

² Both these interpretations have been proposed.

parts of all food consumed form and provide the life-force for the *indriyas*, sense-organs, for the *manas*, the centre of perception, feeling and thinking, and for the *buddhi*, the passive and active bearer of consciousness (cf. *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 6, 5, 1 ff.). Even when the later systematic *Sāṅkhya* speculations arrive, in a way, at the distinction between Matter and Spirit, then, too, all psychic and so-called specific human capacities are taken to be mere emanations of *Prakṛti*, primeval Matter. It is true that here is also assumed, as a principle, a spiritual entity, the *Puruṣa* (or *Puruṣas*). But the *Puruṣa* is aloof and quasi-barren without having any immediately active part in the whole world-process. Only indirectly may the *Puruṣa*, through his mere existence, stimulate *Prakṛti*, Matter, to unfold her productive powers.

In India the notion of an *eternal* individual Soul, too, is no more considered than the concept of an immaterial and active Soul. All emanations of *Prakṛti* which, at a certain time, came into being, are bound at a certain time to come to an end. Thus also the intellectual faculties, the *sūkṣma-śarīra*, the subtle psychic aggregate, are believed to be reabsorbed in a final de-individualizing melting process (*pralaya*).

But is there not still another general Hindu dogma which presupposes the concept of a Soul endowed with constant psychic and ethical faculties? Yet this concept of *Karma*,¹ too, cannot be brought into agreement with any of our current Western notions. For *Karma* indicates originally nothing but the biological development of seed (*Karma-bīja*) into its adequate fruit (*Karma-phala*). As such the term *Karma* is significantly used in the *Vaiśeṣika* system as the technical term for the category of any physical motion. Each tendency grows and develops, till it finds its adequate shape of efficacy. No idea of reward and punishment originally underlies this *Karma* theory. The reincarnation of Man into an animal shape cannot be measured after our Western canons of value, say as a kind of degradation and punishment. It is to be regarded from the biological angle as a quasi-mechanical urge for attaining the least impeded form for the development of the innate main tendency by means of future manifestations. Here, too, our Western standards of human ethics fail to supply any equivalent concept.

¹ See also chapters III, 2, p. 47; VII, 2, p. 102; IX, 1, p. 139; XI, 3, p. 172.

Not even our Western ideals of development and accomplishment of the personality correspond to any Indian aim of perfection. Not only the *Vedānta*, not only the *Sāṅkhya*, but also the apparently subjective *Yoga* system hold the view that the *Ahaṁkāra*, the principle of individualization, is solely an empirical fiction which hinders natural, inborn true knowledge and has to be given up in the end. Even during the time of its effectiveness in action the *Ahaṁkāra* is never considered as a specific quality of the human individual alone, nor, in a wider sense, of an individual in the animate sphere alone. As the *Sāṅkhya* expressly teaches, the *Ahaṁkāra* is the property of any shape, even in its vague and slightly individuated form of *tanmātras* and *mahābhūtas*, subtle and gross elements, material basic constituents which in themselves have the possibility of later specified manifestation. To express this idea bluntly and sharply: the non-sentient elements of fire, water, etc., are also endowed with an *Ahaṁkāra*. *Ahaṁkāra* thus means nothing else but the principle of individuation, the distinction by name and form (*nāma-rūpa*), irrespective of its psychological or merely cosmic form of appearance. To repeat: *Ahaṁkāra* does not mean Ego-consciousness, but any physical individualization.

Thus no basis is given in Indian thought for any genuine subjectivism in a Western sense. No isolated importance or predominance is recognized for the human Soul, nor is the attempt ever seriously made to establish an immaterial, ever-existent and ever-active individual Soul. The individual empirical Soul is always an emanation of *Prakṛti* alone.

Closely related to our Western concepts of the human Soul is the notion of personality. Our concept of a 'person' is based on the distinction and evaluation between beings of lower and higher orders. We understand by the term 'person' a human or a super-human being, say a divine personality.

Now the question arises whether or not the concept of the Self, elevated to the idea of a God-self, may be accepted as a kind of super-Self, and thus whether—if not an ordinary subjectivist outlook—a sublimated subjectivist standpoint is traceable in Indian theological doctrines.

But even the God (or gods) are in India conceived as in some way dependent on the general cosmic laws. Very few, and on the whole unconvincing, descriptions are given here of God as the

Creator of the world. He is mainly, even in the cosmogonies, conceived as the disposer or ruler of the world which came into being before, and without, Him. (God as *vidhātṛ* or *vidhartṛ*: 'dispenser' or 'arranger'.) In *Rgveda* 10, 129 the world, even in its distinct shapes, is assumed to exist *before* the God or the gods, and they, the gods, are on *this*, the empirical, side of the world (*arvāg visārjanena*, lower than the world-emanation). In later systematic thought the concept of a God is either omitted altogether (cf. the atheistic *Sāṅkhya*), or He is only introduced as a *laukika* concept for the understanding of the masses (see early *Vedānta* and Śaṅkara). Or else, the one God is submerged in a plurality of equally important other deities and at the utmost gains the significance of a *primus inter pares*. The different personal divine forms, the He's, are subordinated under the all-embracing concept of a divine 'It'.¹ The Neuter stands in Indian thought higher than the persons. In the West, the neuter generally indicates objects lower in rank than persons; in India, the Neuter expresses something higher, more widely-embracing than all single subjects and specified objects. The Neuter is even *more* than the *coincidentia oppositorum*, even more than the sum or falling-together of all distinct forms of opposites. *Brahman*, the Neuter, stands for the *coincidentia plus* an X, the X being the 'three-quarter *Brahman*' which never lends itself to any manifestation.

As to our Western presupposition of the independent and self-responsible acts of all persons, human and divine, there always stand in India beside, or beyond, them the supra-personal laws of Nature like *Karma* with its quasi-mechanical development. With it no person can interfere. Higher even than this supra-personal law, this process of *Karma*, stands the *Brahman* which disdains to manifest itself fully.

Having dealt with the idea of the prominence of a person or a subject, and having come to the conclusion that no outstanding prevalence is attributed to either of them, we have now to approach the problem of 'subject' and 'object' apart from the question of value. Now we must explain the actual relations between subject and object from the merely factual angle. A continuous co-operation between subject and object is assumed, and their reciprocal influence is emphasized. Here one comes across the Indian theory of perception. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upani-*

¹ See chapter VIII, 1, p. 107 ff.

śad 3, 2, 1 ff. terms the perceiving subject the *graha*, 'the grasper', but the objects are called the *ati-grahas*, 'the super-graspers'. The *ati-grahas* have a wider sphere of efficacy, while grasping and influencing more than one limited subject simultaneously or consecutively. The sense-organs are the lowest in the scale of entities. The sense-objects are, for the reasons shown, one step higher (cf. *Kātha Upaniṣad* 3, 10 ff.). At the top of the scale stands the Divine. The Yogin concentrates on a certain object, either on a part of his own body or on any external object. Only then can he comprehend, through the intensive study of the one in hand, the essence of them all (cf. also the teachings of the *Mīmāṃsā* that the specimen implicitly reveals the species). The mastery of the objects, which is the Yogin's aim, does not end in an accumulated subjective power. Even if he has attained *siddhi*, the highest personal efficiency, he is not satisfied with being an outstanding personality, but he uses his acquired perfection to become a receptive vessel for the influx of all dispersed life-forces. From the fundamental idea that all phenomena contain parts of the cosmic vital force, his subjective mastery lies in his recollecting, summarizing power. He, as a subject, draws as many objects as possible into his range, in order to accumulate more than his own limited subjective capacities. The perfected subject becomes the receptacle for all objects.

Even if one applies the measuring-rod of ethics, then too no prevalence of, or distinction between, subject and object in favour of the subject will result.¹ Giving up his notion of subjective isolation, the Yogin gains perfection and far-reaching power in *jīvan-mukti*, liberation from limitation already in one lifetime. India through all periods still adheres to the pre-Socratic cosmic ethics, later given up in the West. The decisive factor for India is not our subjective attitude towards a deed, say a crime; it is here not the *dolos*, the subjective intention, but it is the actual transgression, the overstepping of one's allotted place, committed consciously or unconsciously. This it is which causes the disturbance of the cosmic balance and as such demands atonement.

Besides, subjective elements like will and intention are

¹ Cf. my *Studien zur Eigenart Indischen Denkens*, pp. 160 ff. and *passim*; also cf. my *Indian and Western Philosophy: a Study in Contrasts*, pp. 75 ff. and *passim*.

considered by the Indian as an objective material factor. Thought and its expression in words are just as material in their effects as a concrete action. Thus ancient Ṛgveda values the dedication of a hymn like a concrete material offering. Consequently, Hindu law throughout all periods of orthodox thought, considers verbal injury almost as equivalent to bodily injury and punishes it accordingly. The ontological foundation of Hindu thought leads to an emphasis on the objective, not on the subjective, aspect. A striking example of this is given in Indian epistemology: the term for the subjectively true is *satyam*, which means 'objective being'. Everything which exists has through its very existence the quality of truth—so claims India. India's positivism¹ pulls the weight into the direction of the objective. Western critical scepticism, on the other hand, with its questioning of all existent objective phenomena, finds its positive hold in the *Cogito, ergo sum*.

India's so-called sceptical religions, like Buddhism, however, never arrive at the complete denial of external empirical data; they only repudiate their permanent value. Thus Buddhism on the whole rejects the belief in permanent values contained in, or gained from, empirical phenomena. However, their actual existence is acknowledged, while powers of intellect and will are mobilized to counteract their efficacies. This devaluation of the permanent value of objects is then in true Indian manner also extended to a scepticism towards the permanent value of the subject. De-individualization is the aim of the Buddhist *Nirvāṇam*.

To conclude: if in India any predilection for subjectivism or objectivism can be stated at all, then a tendency is evident to take the objective as stronger than the subjective. In the end objective and subjective phenomena are both re-absorbed in *Nirvāṇam* or *Brahma-Nirvāṇam*.

India is ever reluctant to accept any one-sided statement. One of her fundamental axioms is that of polarity, which implies that one part of a pair of opposites cannot be exclusively taken into account. Each statement is based on the simultaneous acknowledgement of its counter-statement. Truth can only be gained through *saṃvāda*, 'the gathering of conclusions from several aspects'. Natural ambiguity is never excluded. Thus the *Vedānta* moves consciously on the double levels of transcendent

¹ *Ibid.*, *op. cit.*

and empirical aspects simultaneously. The *Ātman Brahman* is immanent, and at the same time, external with regard to the phenomena. Similarly the *Sāṅkhya* views the empirical and transcendental aspects of *Prakṛti* and *Puruṣa* simultaneously. Thus, too, *Mīmāṃsā* comprises in its investigation of *artha* three different aspects: *artha* is the pre-empirical idea, the empirical sense, and the teleological final purpose, all in one. The *Vaiśeṣika*, the system apparently limited to mere explanation of finite physical data, nevertheless introduces at the same time one, or better two, transcendental concepts. The *Vaiśeṣika* inserts within its physical statements of visible facts also concepts of the Unseen, characteristically subdivided in polar dimensions: the infinitely small atom, the *aṇu*, and the infinitely extended ether, the *ākāśa*, are dealt with together and in contrast to the distinct empirical data lying between these two limits.¹ Ultimately the empirically distinct and the empirically indistinct (*aṇu* and *ākāśa*) are confronted with the *niḥśreyasā*, the non-comparable Beyond which lies entirely outside the empirical range of distinct expansion and measurement. In a similar fashion, the *Nyāya*, the so-called formal logic of India, proclaims in its programmatic teaching of *Nyāya-sūtra* I, 1, that all rational intricacy of logical discussion is established for the gaining of an irrational and extra-worldly aim: a quasi-religious perfection and salvation (*niḥśreyasā*). Even in its single logical investigations the *Nyāya* is anxious not to overlook the natural ambiguities present. The summarizing stage of *Tattva-jñāna*, the knowledge of 'thatness', gained from all logical distinctions and definitions, leads as a threshold, as it were, from the world of the Empirical into the world of the Transcendental.

Here already in their preliminary stage, terms are not accepted as arbitrarily fixed, like the Latin *termini*. As such *prasaṅga* is either used in a positive or in a negative sense: it means either 'correct logical consequence' or 'wrong association'. 'Terms' in India have primarily a neutral meaning. Besides, one and the same word will be used as a genuine technical term and from another aspect it may be used even in the same sentence also in a wider and non-technical import. Accordingly, *Yoga-sūtra* II, 34 and Commentary deal in the very same passage with *mukta* in the technical sense of ideal release and in the

¹ See chapter VII, 1, p. 98.

colloquial sense of a *mukta*-fire, a free fire, i.e. an unguarded and destructive one. A third example of this ambiguity of meaning: *jaḍa* means either 'non-sentient' as not yet sentient Matter, or, in the *Yoga* and *Vedānta* systems, also as 'more-sentient', after all personal feelings of pleasure and pain are finally overcome. Here 'non-sentient' gains the meaning of 'lower or higher than the ordinary sentient'.

In the empirical sphere another kind of ambiguity arises with regard to subject and object. The causal function in itself is what matters. Subject and object are only instrumental in this process. As such the agent can in Sanskrit syntax be expressed either in the subjective case of a nominative or in the instrumental case as an indirect object (*na mayā bhetaṣyam*, 'I should not fear').

India's fundamental dogma is that subject and object are only emanations from a substance which in a pre- or post-actual stage includes both possibilities. Characteristically the *Advaita* theory of *suṣupti*, 'deep sleep', teaches that finally or temporarily a unity without distinction between subject and object is reached as an achievement of liberation.¹ All phenomena and all activities are considered to be emanations from this productive reservoir of forces. The Upaniṣadic doctrine of *suṣupti* already, at least temporarily in the empirical stage, teaches that all distinction of subject and object merges into one. In deep sleep, when no single phenomena are any more perceived and not even any more reflected and received as in dreams, then a stage is reached when object and subject are re-united. This temporal non-distinction is considered to be a reflection of pre- and post-empirical conditions, in which subject and object are not yet, or no more, separated. This non-distinction is experienced as the highest bliss, which is assumed to be not an object or subject of feeling, but a combination of both. A significant image of this assumed highest stage of non-distinction is given in *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 4, 3, 21 ff. Here the metaphor of union in love is used, where consciousness of separation between subject and object is lost.

The same *Upaniṣad* describes this highest stage of no-more or not-yet distinction of subject and object by another image from the empirical sphere, by the simile of the drum and the drummer. Both, the potential object, the drum, and the poten-

¹ See chapters III, 2, p. 44, and XI, 2, p. 167.

tial agent, the drummer, virtually contain already all their later results of combined action, all the single and perceivable sounds of their combined future. In grasping the drum and/or the drummer before, or after, their activities, all potential beats of the drum are implicitly grasped. Similarly, all subjects and objects can be potentially understood in a kind of 'vessel-consciousness' or 'witness-consciousness'. Both expressions are equivalent; the one, the 'witness-consciousness', is a metaphor from the subjective sphere (the potential agent or receiver), while the term 'vessel-consciousness' is chosen from the objective realm. Both together circumscribe the range of their potentiality in its fullness, i.e. when both, subject and object, lie already together, since they are not limited to a single accidental activity or passivity.

This problem of pre-actual or post-actual unity between potential subject and potential object leads to further questions of characteristic ambiguity. For instance it throws light on the various Indian shades of the problem of causality. The *causa efficiens*, the agent, and the *causa materialis*, the material cause, are in Indian philosophy not strictly separated from each other. Even in the systematic *Nyāya* the process (*vyāpāra*) in itself is of greater importance than the defining act between subject and object. Besides, things, not persons, are preferably taken to illustrate the process of causation. In the standard examples the threads are shown as the *causa efficiens* of the effect, the cloth. Persons and things are alike with regard to their qualifications as potential agents. The potter himself is the cause of his product, the pot. But also the donkey which carries the clay and the clay itself are accidental accessory instrumental causes. I may also recall here the *satkārya* theory of the *Sāṅkhya*. All effects, both subjects and objects, are potentially contained in the great reservoir of primary Matter before, and after, their actual manifestation. *Prakṛti* is their common efficient and material cause.

A similar non-distinction between subjective and objective factors may be found in the Buddhist formula of causation. The *pratītya-samutpāda*, the twelve-fold chain of causation, represents—in a way strange to the Western mind—an intermixture of psychological, subjective, and material, objective causes, which are equally effective to produce the texture of existential forms.

India, then, because of her basic sense of objectivity and potentiality—and more so through her basic concept of polarity—has no predominantly subjective bent of thought. The concept of the *Ātman*, as we have shown, cannot be isolated and separated from the cosmic *Brahman*-principle. Empirical actuality is only a transitory phase, the middle stage between pre- and post-empirical indistinct unity.

2. FIXITY OR FLOW, DETERMINATION OR FLUX: TWO HUMAN ATTITUDES

Through the turmoil of events each civilization seeks guidance. India, too, searches for some firm support (*ādhāra*, *ālambana* and *āśraya*) to which one can cling and adhere. The West believes to have found this reassuring support in a system, a tenet, a dogma, a Person. The Upaniṣads, the foundation of all later Indian philosophical thought, have found their leading principle in *Brahman*, the constant substratum behind its continuously changing manifestations. As such their *saṃvādas*, their progressive discussions, accept one or the other of visible phenomena as the momentarily final, and afterwards dismiss each result as not yet all-embracing enough. Ultimately the Indian seekers rest in nothing but in Brahman Itself, which is beyond all persons and beyond all definitions and distinctions.

Indian thinking finds its last hold in the ever-elusive X. Even the last stand attainable is still evasive. Everything in the empirical world is continuously flowing and changing in its own conditions and in its relationships with other phenomena. However, even the postulate of the 'no-more form' and 'no-more name' can never reach beyond hypothesis, beyond an arbitrary supposition, beyond the sheer assumption of an eternal substance. The transcendental substratum defies any predictable fixation. Thus Indian thought culminates in an apparently negative statement. The true *Brahman* can only be grasped as *neti-neti*, 'the not-this, not-that', i.e. as an indefinable potential. This is a much vaguer and loftier assumption than any God-Person accepted in Western religions. All God-Persons, so the Indian claims, still lie in the sphere of individual limita-

tions, and thus do not reach the ultimate Oneness—Oneness and basic unity, the postulate of all religions.

The West, since the heights of ancient Greece and the Bible, claims to have found finality in a supreme personality of eternal and divine rank—a quasi-static, yet dramatic, result and fulfilment. India, on the other hand, does not venture beyond an expectation—one never fulfilled and never satisfiable. Here no concept of God as an ever-present support and as a sure goal is the final end. God-Persons, even in Indian Henotheism, do not reach exclusivity and finality. No God-Persons, though belonging to the transcendental sphere, nor even the supra-personal *Brahman* Itself, are free from continuous flow and transformation. Even *Brahman's* nature is prone to ambiguity. It is bound to a double aspect: constant reality and yet changing activity. *Brahman* is the *satyasya satyam*, the 'reality of all existent realities', i.e. the essentially constant factor within all changes. Indian metaphysics have the courage, born of resignation, to discard the firmness of a personal support and of reliance upon an omnipotent God. Nor does India find a hold in the assumption of the eternal survival of a transformed human personality. In fully developed Hinduism, no personal survival of liberated Man is ever hoped for, nor does Hinduism rely on the constant support of any God-Person. Even the Gods are subject to the law of change, appearance, disappearance and reappearance. The god *Viṣṇu*, the god *Śiva*, and also the divine Buddha of *Mahāyāna* Buddhism and the *Tīrthāṅkaras* of Jainism, all are bound to rebirth. If even the gods, the super-Men, cannot for ever remain in an unchangeable state, how then can human beings expect that their lesser selves are going to be preserved in nearly unaltered shape and form in a heavenly abode? Final destiny after many rebirths is certain for all beings. However, each individual is to be swallowed up, as it were, into the indistinct oscillating mass of the cosmic reservoir, from which everything in the beginning found its temporary form and shape. Out of this productive reservoir individual forms may, in yet another world-period, be thrown out again as single forms with single names. Uncertainty and transitoriness are the accepted axioms for India's scale of personal values. Fluctuation and continuous change are visibly experienced in this world, and from here transferred into all time-periods from the Present to the Beyond, but always under the presupposition

that 'Something', *Brahman*, underlies all, as a constant substance, as an eternal source for inflow and outflow of the single cosmic waves.

While India transfers empirical laws of change into the world of invisible forms, the West, too, assumes kindred laws for the empirical and transcendental ranges alike. India, with her keenness of sense-perception, does not dare to stabilize phenomena and cosmic events against the obvious experience of her tropical climate. The West, by contrast, born and developed in the temperate zone, does not feel so strongly the impact of cosmic changes. As such it imposes fixation, arbitrary selection, limitation and predestined order onto happenings on earth, and consequently postulates an even higher degree of ordered harmony for the ideal of perfect existence in the divine sphere. Both, India and the West alike, establish the same or similar laws for the visible and supra-visible spheres. While India transfers experiences of this world into the transcendental world, the West projects its ideal of Reason and Order, Stability and Purpose upon the world of changes and chaotic events. Human reason tries to master and to subsume under its laws and regulations the happenings of the external world. Western reason stabilizes the flow of events for the sake of certain results and pre-established aims. It postulates static validity. If in this moment the figures 2 plus 2 result in 4, then—so the Western logician claims—this result remains valid for all times. India, too, may undertake the same calculations, but always under the presupposition that these fixed figures 2 and 4 are only values of accidental significance. The only mathematical symbol which extends beyond every temporary value is Zero, the No- or All-figure. It is no accident that it is India which discovered the import of Zero.¹ Zero is the symbol of *Nirvāṇam*; the very same Sanskrit term is used for the mathematical and the metaphysical range, *Nirvāṇam* and Zero, both are called *śūnyam*. *Śūnyam* is not bound to any fixed size; it includes plus and minus. Zero adds everything or nothing to any sizeable cipher. It can introduce supra-dimension in time and space without changing the character of its dual value. The same holds good if we introduce, instead of figures, the symbols A, B, C. What once is A, remains for ever A—so claims the West. India, on the other hand keeps open the possibility of change from A to

¹ See chapter VII, 1 and 2, pp. 95 and 99.

B and C, etc. For the West, generally, between A and non-A insuperable barriers are fixed for all time, while India envisages the possibility that A can, and even will, change in the next moment to B or C. For the Indian thinker A is established conditionally, i.e. fixed by position and situation only. True, this fixation of A may presently be confirmed by the consensus of many men, but only by men—whom India regards merely as part and parcel of the Whole, as a certain class of animate beings. But there are many more, higher or lower, animate beings than Man himself within the Cosmos, the Whole. India's logic and mathematics, again, are viewed under the cosmic law of innumerable potentialities of position which Man in his present status has not conceived, but which either the Man-class or any other class of beings may reach in the future.

The Western logical law of 'Excluded Middle' has no final meaning for India. Fixation as A or non-A is based on arbitrary human judgment; such judgment as of anything having a constant value contradicts India's fundamental law of change and flow. The backbone of Western logic is unchangeability, India's basic axiom is continuous change. Thus her logic is not the result of valid reasoning, no axiomatic static science, but it is epistemology. Epistemology is a psychological theory of examining the varied processes of knowledge. Epistemology shows the ways and the approaches towards results, but does not include the absolute statement of a fixed result.

True, the Indian also is concerned with the main method of Western logic, with definitions. India defines ever anew, but just the unending search after definitions shows her despair of ever finding conclusive solutions. India's mania for new definitions originates from the same passion which gives rise to ever new Indian deities with divine functions and names. None of them is considered sufficient fully to embrace the Divine; yet another, and yet another, attempt is made to encircle the for ever elusive centre of creative divinity. This very manifoldness is an expression of despair. No certain name or form can ever fulfil the longing for finality. Indian definitions in both logic and theology are attempts, courageous attempts, against the innate knowledge (*Brahmavidyā*) that the Highest is for ever unattainable by any finite being. Indian religiosity is a continuous endeavour towards, a seeking after, the for ever hidden and for ever unobtainable 'It'. Therefore no stand, no abiding

in any position, no easy contentment with any definition and fixation of the Divine in personal form, is here the last word and end. It is only flow, dynamic progress towards blissful fulfilment, which activates India's search. It is belief in continuous promise, but equally a despair at ever attaining the goal. This humble attitude towards the truly Divine is evident in the millennia of India's philosophy striving after truth. By contrast, the West has always taken a firm stand on a definite step of evolution, giving up and leaving behind the step formerly reached for the sake of the new one just acquired. In a way the West breaks up the continuity of development into single steps of progress. All too rashly the West tends to eliminate, instead of including, former results.

Thus the West has gone through many stages or forms of knowledge which are more or less independent among themselves. From time to time, and particularly in our age, the West has fathomed that there is such an interconnection between the various departments of knowledge, including both metaphysics and physics, that all single results serve only as relative factors towards grasping the intricate laws of the Universe. Max Scheler¹ has stated seven progressive stages of knowledge, stages which the West has temporarily accepted and then overcome. The first step concentrated on myth and legend, the second on folk-belief, the third on religious knowledge, the fourth on mystical knowledge, the fifth on metaphysical knowledge, the sixth on positive knowledge or mathematics, and the seventh on technical knowledge. Each of these attitudes has been accepted as the foremost for one period or another. Now at last the West advances beyond technical knowledge and mathematics, recognizing the relativity of all single knowledge.

India, on the other hand, has never thought in distinct independent steps, but in radiations from a productive centre, which radiations naturally diverge in their further development. All of them are simultaneously valid, and all can equally be traced back to their common nucleus. Thus India has remained, and it may well turn out justly remained, in the sphere of primary mythological knowledge, into which she has embedded and inserted as mere subdivisions all the later roundabout ways of Western intellectual achievements.

¹ Quoted in K. P. Mukerji's *Implications of the Ideology-Concept* (Bombay, 1955).

Mythology, as the Indian sees it, is the field of continuous change and inexhaustible possibilities of form without the arbitrary limitations of rationalized empirics.¹ Mythology does not debar itself from the width of potentiality. It does not limit itself to a certain range of space, nor does it uphold man-made barriers. Mythology loosens and oversteps the boundaries of social status between the different classes of Man, and furthermore disregards the natural differentiations and qualifications between Man and other beings. Animal and plant on earth and demons and gods below and above earth are here interwoven. All conceivable forms are interconnected, endowed with their special gifts and a common, though graded, capacity of feeling, thinking and acting. The width and value of mythology lie in its elusiveness, in its interchange and disguise of form, in its supra-rational and supra-reasonable abundance of events. While not arbitrarily establishing an evaluation of beings with a fixed supreme value, mythology keeps the way open for a continuous change in evaluation, and disregards the standard of constant value. As such mythology can make the claim to paint a canvas valid for all times, through not being bound to one certain moment of time alone. Continuity of happenings implies the validity of all happenings, but denies finality to any single fixed event. Each event is but a temporary coagulation of circumstances which the next moment may again dissolve. The mythological diction of 'time ever after' or 'once upon a time' dismisses the limitation of static time.

India sees Time as a series of time-waves. We think of the Greek *chronos*, a time-concept which the Greeks have complemented with their concept of *kairos*, the 'fertile moment of decision'. Disguise and interchange of form and function, as accepted by mythology and by all Indian thought, remove the arbitrary certainty and constancy of each single form. Gods and demons here change places in importance and power. Vitality and creative urge in themselves (Sanskrit *līlā*, 'play and display of forms') are the expression of the Divine without man-made arbitration between good and evil, or desirable and undesirable. *Brahman*, the Indian result of mythological cosmic thinking, is the ever-active *Werdekraft*, the ever-assailing life-force expressed in generation and destruction alike.

It is true that sometimes in later Hinduism the god *Śiva*, the

¹ See chapter VIII, 5, p. 134.

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Mahā-deva, 'the Great God,' is taken as a substitute for the impersonal *Brahman* Itself. However, in this case He is endowed with all the apparently contradictory attributes of Nature herself. *Śiva* represents supra-ethical and supra-personal dynamic evolution. He is the most pregnant expression of a mythological power of transformation. He is all in one: the combination of all opposites, of generation and destruction and the consuming and the consummation of all opposites. He destroys while generating, he generates while destroying, and with the same detached smile of indifference he looks upon his work of destruction and generation. *Śiva* is significantly called the *Ardhanariśvara*, 'the combination', and as such culmination, 'of all male and female forms'. He, the *Mahā-deva*, comes near to *Brahman*'s neuter qualities, not being bound to this or that form alone, to this or that ethical judgment. In him the positive and negative, generation and destruction, and the active and receptive, the male and female, elements are equally contained, neutrally and mutually supra-personalized and overcome.

The West, according to its belief in the preponderance of a powerful person—on earth or in heaven—thinks, in history, too, in decisive sections of time and space, and steps from one powerful person to the next historical period-builder. India, on the other hand, thinks in series and types. Constitutional or general biological types include many individuals of similar characteristics. Typology widens the concept of individuality. Besides, India extends the classification of temperamental types beyond the human species into the whole sphere of the Cosmos.¹ On earth, Indians attribute to animals and plants human psychological characteristics, which are usually transferred in sublimated and intensified form to the kingdom of gods and demons. The strange Indian custom of plant-marriage is a striking example of this all-embracing classification. If a widower or a widow wants to get married again, the unmarried partner must first win the same status as his consort in symbolically marrying a tree or a shrub. If his extra-human partner fades or dies, then he has attained the equality in status with his widowed associate, and no impediment now stands in the way of their union. The Indian dogma of the essential unity of all beings is here carried to the extreme. After this example of extreme belief in equality between Man and plant in their

¹ See chapter XI, 1, p. 155 f.

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conditions and relationships, one cannot be surprised to find in the Tanjore Library a comprehensive department on animal-psychology. Very much in conformity with human temperaments is the treatment of the constitutional types of animals. In verbal and graphic descriptions, elephants and horses are subdivided into sanguine, choleric and asthenic types.

Types instead of single individuals, series of time instead of single events, are India's foci of research and investigation. India seeks for the combining and unifying factor within diversity and individuality. Her series and types are based on the dogma of an underlying unity beyond the accidental appearances of individuals and specific instances. An inherent similarity binds together all life-expressions, visible or postulated. Each single member of a class serves as a symbol of the underlying characteristics common to the whole group. Beyond that, all individual representations of one group function also to elucidate the working of all groups in their co-operation. Each manifestation of the universal life-force helps first to represent its own class, and—beyond this—it serves to comprehend the working of the Whole.

The phenomenon of the Indian caste-system—not yet deeply shaken even by modern reforms—is often condemned as a sign of India's rigidity and fixation in thinking. How can her teaching of caste-barriers be compatible with her otherwise evident tendency towards flowing transitions, flexibility and interchange of forms and events? India's caste-distinction is in conformity with her inherent belief in types, instead of single personalities. Physical inheritance of qualities, acquired through environment and professional specification, is acknowledged as an outcome of the evolution of types. Each individual caste-member is like a cell in the living whole of an organic body. It develops and dies to give room to yet another similar individual. The caste-system has a biological foundation, the belief in inherited accumulation and refinement of faculties. Certainly it has also an economic aspect in the advantage of subdivision of labour. Ancient Vedic texts teach that the living organism of the Cosmos depends on the specific functions of head (Brahmans), of arms (warrior-caste), of trunk (*Vaiśyas*) and of feet (*Śudras*). Theoretically at least, each caste-function is regarded as of equal importance for the smooth working of the universal living organism of dynamic development. The caste-system in a

wider sense oversteps limitation: while each caste is regarded only as a cog in the moving wheel of the general mechanism, each limited function, when performed efficiently, helps to sustain the manifestation and completion of the cosmic Whole.

In observing empirical phenomena, the West is never satisfied till it has found a formula for their recurrent happening. The West tries to master the Unknown by imposing on it the law of predictability—a law dictated to Nature by human Reason which prescribes to Nature a repetition of herself according to human calculation. Thus far the Western empiricist is also a meta-empiricist. Western Man feels himself the master, and not part and parcel, of the Universe. As such he ventures to stop, as it were, or purposefully to accelerate, the natural flow of phenomena and appearances by man-made fixations, attributions and arbitrary selections. Human needs and human well-being are the foremost tasks to which Nature is expected to respond. In short, Western Man superimposes his demands on the neutral dynamics of natural change. Human purpose and rational order transfer to Nature their own choice of desirability and undesirability. Nature's divine wastefulness and wilfulness—so evident in a tropical zone—remain, here in the less obtrusive temperate zone, either unobserved or ignored, or contemptuously disregarded. Higher efficacy, actual or postulated, provides the standard of value. In applied science, receptivity towards natural phenomena or their source, Nature herself, is rarely shown.

According to Western concepts, the laws of this world are imposed by Divine Reason: natural happenings, as well as those of history, are supposed to work in subjection to a personal Will. This Will is conveyed in Revelation. The natural flow is stopped and regulated by the axiom of fixation, i.e. purposeful order.

India too believes in Revelation, *śruti*, 'infallible truth', to which submission is demanded. *Śruti*, however, proclaims as final truth her axiom of *neti-neti*, the never-fixed solution and the Bliss of limitlessness.

To end with a graphical metaphor: the West thinks in straight lines from A, which is known, to B, which is knowable. Hinduism, on the other hand, starts with the Unknowable, with the pre-empirical indistinct A, and proceeds, via the transitory distinctness of empirical phenomena (the B world), towards the

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indistinct *post*-empirical A², which is essentially the same as the *pre*-empirical A¹. Hinduism thinks in a circle or a spiral of continuously developing potentialities, and not on the straight line of progressive stages.¹

¹ Buddhism, though generally called the 'Philosophy of Flux', is somehow nearer to Western understanding than Hinduism, the philosophy of continuous Flow. Buddhism also starts with the empirical world, from which it progresses to the transcendental sphere. But here lies the difference from Western postulates: it aims, like Hinduism, to reach in its *Nirvāṇam* the final solution and dissolution of all personal forms. Unlike Hinduism, Buddhism does not run the full circle in continuous dynamics from the pre-empirical via the empirical to the final supra-personal limitless end. Buddhism starts with a flux, the transitoriness of all phenomena (*kṣāṇa-vāda*), but it ends in a standstill without a further outflow of new beginning. Buddhist *Nirvāṇam* is final. Hinduism, even for the goal, assumes the possibility of a new beginning, inflowing and outflowing waves of cosmic creation without pause or end. Advaitic *Brahman*, the *Summum* of all Hindu thought, is visualized as the Ocean, ever in motion, pregnant with never-ending possibilities of creativeness.

V. RELIGIOUS SOCIOLOGY

I. THE EDUCATIONAL ROAD TO TRANSCENDENCE

THE unique characteristic of Indian thought is a simultaneous moving on two levels: the empirical and the transcendental side by side. The transcendental is assumed to be ever present. *Brahman*, the 'It', is postulated to be before and after, yet also within, all empirical phenomena. All beings on earth are on the way to realizing the immanent Absolute and its pre- and post-empirical stages. Salvation through realization is certain for all in an earlier or in a later moment of time (time being an infinite series sequential in this or any future incarnation).

This certainty of final success provides the possibility of, and the justification for, educational training. This can be attained either by self-effort or, better still, with the help of a *guru*.

It is an undeniable fact that no philosophy outside India makes such a varied and manifold use of instruction in order to visualize the supreme Truth. It is the very metaphysical bent of Hindu thought which makes room for this practical educational training. Already in the *Ṛgveda* exegesis is abundantly applied. The nouns used in the text are interpreted and explained within the text itself, by confronting them with other derivations from the very same verbal root from which the noun originated. For instance, in *Ṛgveda IX*, 89, 9, and *V*, 85, 5, the difficult term *māyā* is taken up three times also by other derivations from its root *ma*, 'to measure' (*mānan*, *mamire*). As such the noun in question is illumined by linguistic forms of kindred descent. This eminently useful device is subsequently borrowed from the early texts by later commentators in their *bhāṣyas* to the Scripture. Again and again they introduce other derivations of the term under discussion. In order to revive its root-meaning, they supply also its full verb or its related past participles or adjectives, as these, more than the noun itself, retain the living import of its root. At other times, synonyms are used which throw light on the term by their coextensive meaning and equivalence.

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Sometimes this use of synonyms is widened into the application of metaphors and similes. The exceptional richness of imagery in Indian literature is an outcome of this method.

Yet another way of emphasizing the term of greatest import is provided in the poetical version with the help of the metre. In the *Bhagavad Gītā*, for instance, the main term in question is repeatedly used in the most effective places: either it stands at the beginning of a verse, or at its end, or at the end of the half-*pāda*, the metrical pause or *caesura*. Repetition, then, signifies importance and provides special stress.

A simple method is that of the so-called pointing-out of the small *Arundhati*-star, when the untrained eye cannot see it immediately. The teacher points out the easily recognizable Great Bear; then he looks for neighbouring stars of medium light; and only then is the eye trained to proceed to the small *Arundhati*, following the path from the easier to the more difficult problem.

The same *Arundhati* device underlies the typically Indian research by means of *saṃvādas*, methodical 'discussions'.¹ In gradual stages the investigation proceeds. First are proffered the crudest views on the concept concerned. The next speaker repudiates the former by his more advanced notion, and he too is in turn rejected by yet another and yet another higher concept, till in the end the best and subtlest interpretation is established. As in single *saṃvādas*, so in the histories of Indian philosophy, e.g. in the *Sarvadarśanasamgraha*, this method of gradation from lower to higher is applied.

From the known, teaching slowly proceeds to the less-known, and finally to the unknown. The main teaching of the *Upaniṣadic Brahman*, as already mentioned, is the *neti-neti* doctrine. This is beyond all our known empirical definitions and arbitrations. First, the known empirical predicates are stated, then they are eliminated, and *Brahman* is thus indirectly attained by accepting the not-rejected vagueness of notions as Its true nature. *Brahman* is the no-more qualified and unqualifiable Highest.

All instructions and elucidations proceed in stages. Salvation is hardly ever attained in a spontaneous flash. It implies a slow way of *krāma-mukti*, 'a liberation step by step'. First, for instance in the *Yoga* system, *yama* is demanded, i.e. the

¹ See chapter XI, 3, p. 171, also X, p. 145.

elimination of the undesired results; then one has to abide (*ni-yama*) on the path of desired tendencies, and by degrees ascend to the ultimate aim of *kaivalyam*, 'final isolation from empirical bonds'. Eight *bhūmis*, 'foot-holds', are prescribed as supports for the ascent in the 'mountaineering' (*ārūḍha*) process of the *Yoga* system. Education, as generally accepted, is a slow schooling, a training towards a pre-established ideal.

India's dogma of liberation makes use of India's dogma of reincarnation. What is the final goal may not be reached in one incorporation alone, but may mature in the future series of further reincarnations.

An advance in degrees has, moreover, to take place within the span of one individual life. According to psychological and physical preparedness, various stages of training are prescribed. I here refer to the *āśrama* doctrine of Hinduism. In the receptive years of adolescence, the higher caste Hindu has to be a student of the Scriptures under a recognized *guru*. When adulthood is reached, the disciple becomes a *gṛhastha*, a householder, concerned with the practical affairs of establishing a family and providing for its maintenance. After these worldly aims are accomplished, after his physical productivity has diminished and his mind has found calm and maturity, the former householder has now to return to the studies of his youth. Deepened by life's experience, he is prepared to become a *guru* himself. The sublimation of this third stage of a *vāṇa-prastha*, a 'dweller in the forest', is the fourth stage, that of the *sannyāsīn*, the 'renouncer of all worldly contacts'. This *āśrama*-doctrine is eminently pedagogical and socially sound. It provides adequate satisfaction (*āśrama*) for all stages of physical and psychological development; it allows for the unimpeded development of one's own and one's family interests. The interference of the senior of the family in the new arrangements of his juniors is also excluded by his removal to the forest.

Theological concepts, too, are psychologically graded according to individual capacities. Those still on a lower stage of spiritual maturity may follow concrete, perhaps even crude, forms of religion. Animism and Fetishism are included in the complex religion, Hinduism. Better an undeveloped concept of the Divine than none at all. It is already a welcome tendency to raise one's mind beyond one's own limited ego. Other more mature souls can pursue the worship of natural phenomena,

recognizing in them a personification and representation of the Divine. Still more advanced souls venerate the dispersed divine forces in the concrete, or the more abstract, image of a god, in their *iṣṭa-devatā*, their favourite chosen deity on whom all divine attributes and predicates may be piled up as in Henotheism (one's own supreme, but never unique, form of Godhead). Only those in which the *divya-dṛṣṭi*, the 'divine eye', has developed no longer need the concrete personal form of a god. They are matured to see immediately the *Arundhati*-star, imperceptible to the untrained, uninstructed eye. Śaṅkara speaks of two paths: the *laukika*, the popular concept of the religious man; and the *paramārthatas*, the supreme vision of the *Brahman*, no more bound to any male or female form. The *sa-guṇa Īśvara*, 'the god endowed with qualities', is not yet the highest form of realization of the Divine which is *paramārthatas*, essentially *nir-guṇa*, 'quality-less', 'freed from qualities'.¹ As educational aids for its realization, one first invests it with *upādhis* and *adhyāropas*, 'super-impositions'. The final stages of visualization of the Divine is beyond all our reasoning, which can only provide preliminary supporting props. *Divya-dṛṣṭi* is effortless and supportless. It is final *sākṣātkara*, 'immediate vision and intuition', the fruit of former painstaking training. Only here, so the Indian metaphysician claims, is reached the state of effortless bliss (*ānanda*).

The gap between the highest and the lower concepts of spiritual values is filled, as it were, with bridges of intermediate stepping-stones. Because the Indian is simultaneously conscious of the lower and the higher spheres, he is forced to develop educational methods of support and encouragement on the necessarily long road of progress to the final aim. In the end the *Arundhati*-star, the ultimate aim of investigation, is clearly seen.

2. THE CONCEPTS OF A SAINT IN INDIA

All religions deal with similar fundamental problems: Man, God, and the Universe. They treat these three universal factors, however, with different accentuations: with emphasis or neglect of one or another of these aspects.

¹ See chapter II, pp. 31-33.

FACETS OF INDIAN THOUGHT

The Christian type of Saint is characterized by his holiness, purity of heart, inner vision, nearness to God, and his achieving—often after struggle—a state of blessedness which radiates on to other men, and often allows him to work miracles to the benefit of sufferers. He may even sacrifice his life. After death, he holds a special rank of nearness to the Deity in the Beyond, and thus can be appealed to for intercession by those in trouble. The Catholic Church has recognized such men and women with special honours for their unique sanctity, by canonizing them—which suggests that Christians should turn to them both as a model and for intercession.

On entirely different presuppositions rests the Indian notion of a Saint. According to the tropical conditions of India's landscape, human beings are inserted into a wider cosmic community which does not isolate the human person and his aspirations from the functions of the surrounding cosmos. Human aspirations and cosmic functions are not altogether on different levels.

Besides this, a different kind of relationship is assumed between the 'Here' and the 'Beyond'. For the Indian the 'Here' and the 'Beyond' are not successive stages, but are conceived simultaneously. The 'Here' is temporary and relative, but the constant Absolute is ever immanent, though hidden and diluted, as it were, in all human, super- and subhuman manifestations. Both religious attitudes, the Christian and the Indian, strive to overcome imperfection for the sake of the final goal of lasting values. The basic difference, however, lies in these two problems: whether any individual can ever attain the aim of final perfection in any distinct shape; and, viewed from the opposite angle, whether even the lowest gross-material emanation, say the stone, is not already imbued with a portion of the divine Soul.

Throughout the Indian world of thought *nomen* is always *omen*. The literal translation of a Sanskrit term shows in a nutshell the range of innate complex meaning with all its implications.

Here are the main Indian terms which can be taken as equivalents for the English term 'Saint'. Let us take these in a kind of historical order. In the *R̥gveda* (about 1500 B.C.) first appears the term *R̥ṣi* or *D̥ṣi*, the 'Seer' of cosmic unity and the author of inspired texts. Already from early times onwards the

grammarians as well as the poet is a kind of *Rṣi* imbued with religious dignity. For instance, *Pāṇini*, the past-master of Indian grammar, is called a *Rṣi*, a Saint, to whom pious veneration is due. As the interpreter of divine language, as a devotee of the deity *Vāc* (language and speech), he is invested with divine power. Significantly it is not only the sacred Vedic language, the *Śruti*, Holy Revelation, that provides for the function of the Grammarian-saint. Even colloquial language and its interpretation are included in the sacred task of the inspired linguistic scholar.

Another term which may be rendered as 'Saint' is *Yogin*. *Yoga*, from the same root as the English 'yoke', means 'Union'. The *Yogin*, the seeker after union, has a threefold and a gradual way to perfection. First, he has to establish union, i.e. harmony, in his external and internal bodily functions. He has to practise postures in which the extremities of his limbs are closed together in an uninterrupted life-circle, so that the radiations of his nerve-centres in toes and fingers are concentrated in a kind of closed circuit and their forces are not wastefully diffused. After this external physical unity is established, the same process of conscious unification is achieved for the inner circulations of breathing and of the blood-stream. Only in a body thus prepared can the psychological unification-process be undertaken. After these acts of unification, too, have been consciously performed, body and mind are prepared to strive for the higher union with all universal empirical forms. Then the *Yogin* is matured to reach out for the mental and epistemological union with the source of all emanations and manifestations: with the Divine, be it in a personified form, or be it with the supra-personal *Summum*, the transcendent and immanent *Brahman*. The *Yogin* thus has developed mastery of his own divergent tendencies both of body and mind. By controlling his body, his senses, and his mind, he has gained a higher platform (higher *bhūmi*) from which he can survey his own and other worldly activities in detachment and due perspective.

To this sphere of Yogic development belong also other terms which may be compared with the Christian notions of a Saint. *Muni*, literally 'the Silent one' (from *maunam*, 'silence'), is a term for a monk in an organized religious community, but also for the lonely-going Self-liberated one. When personal desires are mastered, he can abstain from speech and attains *tūṣṇīm*,

'satisfaction and silence', i.e. he has reached a stage beyond personal requests. The highest perfection of a *Muni* is gained by the *Kevalin*, the one who has isolated himself from all accidental worldly matters, and thus has restored, or realized, the unity of the Cosmos. Indifference attained thus is the recognition of the equal value, or equal insignificance, of all that has name and form (*nāma-rūpa*). The *Kevalin* is the Outsider of earthly society with its transitory wants, and by this act of separation has become a true member and participant in super-personal constant cosmic values. He who keeps to the straight, direct way towards Liberation is a *Sādhu*, an 'Accomplished one', or a *Siddha*, a 'Perfected one'. Here the epistemological cognition of a super-personal, super-transitory unity in the Cosmos gains an ethical meaning. Via knowledge ethics is reached.

Similar terms for a Saint are preferably used also in the two daughter-religions, Jainism and Buddhism. The *Tathā-gata*, he who 'has thus gone', is the model wayfarer, a term designating the Buddha or the Jina. They in their attitude towards life have provided the standard of conduct for their followers.

The notion of a Saint is also contained in other terms of veneration and appreciation used in Jaina and Buddhist hagiology. The Buddha himself, and also his most advanced followers, are called *Arhats*, 'the Capable', 'the Worthy', and as such 'the Venerable ones', the efficient leaders in spiritual and epistemological matters. The very terms applied to the founders of these two religions express their saintliness. Buddha, literally, 'the Enlightened One', is the one who has awakened from the dream of worldly confusion and embarrassing worldly experience. He has gained the *divya-dṛṣṭi*, the 'Divine Look' or Insight into things, while surpassing all attachment to momentary values and giving up the 'fiction' of individuality. He renounces empirical knowledge. The Buddha thus becomes an epistemological Saint. The Jainas, according to their general tendency, represent more the ideal of physical, ascetic saints. *Jina* means: 'the one who has conquered', e.g. who has mastered his body and its desires. As such the Buddha and the Jina and all other saints of similar detachment are *Ava-dhūtas*, literally 'those who have shaken off the fetters (*granthas*) of desire and self-indulgence, or else—more in the Buddhist sense—they have removed the veil of ignorance. They have freed themselves from the

'sin', or better from the fiction, of isolated self-importance.

Similarly, since the times of the *Bhagavad Gītā*, the Hindus use as a term for mature isolation from the fictitious values of this world the term *San-ny-āsin*, literally 'the one who has thrown down and together', and has thus renounced, these transitory worldly values. He discriminates no more in likes and dislikes between the various beings, objects and conditions. After this stage of detachment is reached, the Saint, or his heavenly counterpart the God, becomes a *Bhaga-vān*, the participant in bliss and giver of bliss beyond personal demand and desire (cf. the *Bhagavad Gītā*, the 'Song (*gītā*) of the *Bhagavān*'—in this case the God *Kṛṣṇa-Viṣṇu*). It is significant that the Self-liberated one on earth attains the same divine status as the personified God: both, though blessed and constantly happy through renouncing further needs and desires, are still, so long as they are persons, bound to form and name. No Saint and no God is already in the state of the final impersonal Divine, the 'It', the *Brahman*.

To the above list of designations of a Saint may be added a few more minor terms—minor, because they are not functional names but only honorary epithets. Gandhi, for instance, is called the *Mahātmā* (*mahā-ātmā*), 'the great *Ātman*', the expansive cosmic soul, the one who has freed himself from the limitation of his own isolated significance. Other honorific titles, which emphasize the saintly status of the person thus named, are prefixed or suffixed to his proper name. *Śri* . . . or *ji* are added, as a blessing to the venerated name (e.g. *Śri-Aurobindo* or *Gandhi-ji*), *Śri* meaning 'the Blessed one' and *ji* 'the Living one' who may live for ever; but these last epithets are more attributes of affection than a statement of the functional deeds of the Saint.

If the functions of an Indian Saint are to be summarized according to the terms given above, one arrives at the following range of saintly activities. A Saint is the inspired person, poet or grammarian, or the lawgiver like *Manu*—in short, any person who is imbued through self-perfection or by revelation with values of timeless and unchanging significance. Other terms for a Saint indicate perfection which is not attained spontaneously, but gradually acquired.

To this category belong all the terms of a Saint gained from the Yogic sphere. External-physical, internal-physical, intel-

lectual or psychological stages lead up to final saintliness step by step (*karma-mukti*). In the end, but still bound to bodily incorporation, *Jīvan-mukti* is attained. A psychological *Nirvāṇam*, a psychological detachment from all the fetters of empirical life, precedes the *Pari-nirvāṇam*, the complete—including the physical—annihilation of the seeds of any *Karma* for further incarnation.

With regard also to the social status of a Saint, the study of the relevant terms is informative. The *Kevalin* is the 'Outsider in society', and yet—amazingly for the West—is considered the true leader of society, being beyond its transitory changing values.

India does not think in single historical events and personalities, not in a progressive material evolution, but in recurrent waves of history (cf. India's main historical chronicle, the *Rājataranginī*, literally 'The Recurrent Waves of Dynasties'). The true leader of society, then, is the one who shows indifference towards, and even contempt for, momentary happenings and worldly power. He has attained detachment from success and failure. As such the Indian Saint, through his very isolation from society, leads society to the true evaluation, or depreciation, of changing historical institutions.

The survival of the caste-idea in India can be explained accordingly. In its essence it is still valid today, despite all the reforms of modern sects and of Government legislation. Caste is not considered as a momentary historico-social institution, but as a permanent cosmic law of division of labour. It thus gains an importance more lasting than all historical events and regulations.

As pointed out before, in India the status of a Saint is assigned to the founders of religious sects or of new religions (such as the Buddha and the Jina). Yet a quasi-democratic attitude is evident here. Not only the Founder himself, but also any of his followers can attain the very same status of saintliness if he, too, has achieved for himself self-salvation through self-enlightenment. The Saint is the model who encourages and stimulates the impetus towards sanctity in others.

Still further conclusions can be drawn from the study of the Sanskrit terms for a Saint. They have a bearing on ethics and epistemology. Ethics, in a way, is only a special case of, or a result from, true cognition. It is intuitive knowledge of the

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latent universal unity which provides for the Indian (cf. *Bhagavad Gītā* 4, 33 ff.) the *sine qua non* for ethics. Indian Saints are predominantly epistemological saints. The essential quality of a Saint is here the true understanding of, and inserting himself into, the whole Universe; it is not devotional surrender to an acknowledged religious faith which the Saint follows to the last consequence of even sacrificing his life. Discrimination between constant, true values and those of mere transitory and relative import, intuitive knowledge of the ultimate Reality of Being and the relative reality of beings—these are the starting-point for all efforts towards inner development. In fact, self-salvation is never a final purpose in itself; it is only a means. Preservation of individuality, even in a purified form, never represents the ultimate ideal.

The urge towards the ultimate Beyond is ever present. Even such 'realistic' and world-bound systems as *Nyāya* and *Vaiśeṣika*, Logic and Physics, tend towards a final and ideal stage. Even these realistic systems strive for the annihilation of all the distinctions and definitions established by their preliminary doctrines. Their final aim is *Niḥśreyasā*, the indistinct *Ultimum Bonum*—an assumption on which they negate, as it were, the very values they had formerly proclaimed.

Indian saints are indeed never 'martyrs' in the Christian sense of voluntary suffering for the sake of faith. They are 'martyrs' ('witnesses') in the earlier Greek sense of proclaiming and witnessing what they have discovered as the truth. Indian saintliness lies in the recognition of super-personal cosmic values, independent from any personal final aims. Be it a perfected human being, a God, none represents the *Summum*, the *Brahman*.

The same attitude which the Indian accepts for his own systems of knowledge and achievement, he also applies—at least theoretically—to the religions of others. Each distinct way towards true knowledge is helpful at its proper place. All of them are only 'facets', visible forms of approach which, while recognizable, have not yet reached the final stage of indefinite width and unlimited greatness. It is no accident that the Indian reform-sects of the nineteenth century tried to combine Indian religions with non-Indian creeds which had reached India. Ramakrishna and Keshab Chandra Sen acknowledge and recognize Christianity as an equally valid facet of religious

experience. They seek to establish a universal world-religion which combines Indian, Christian, Jewish and Islamic ideas. True, they give individual preference to one or another. Christ is accepted as a *guru*, a teacher of mankind, but never as the only *guru*. He is here not the Son of God and God, Beginning and End, but one of the many pathfinders towards the final end. The Indian's inclusion of the founders of other religions into their own range of reverence, however, is entirely different from the Moslem inclusion of Abraham, Moses and Christ into Islam. For the Moslem these other prophets are forerunners of Mohammed, the last prophet; and he, too, is a pathfinder. The Islamic ideal ends in a personal God, in Allah. The Moslems believe in this personal culmination-point, and the founders of Judaism and Christianity represent gradual stages leading to the final stage, the Islamic revelation.

For the Hindus, on the other hand, their own religious leaders also are of only preparatory significance. Even their own gods with personal attributes are but preparatory to the *Summum Bonum*. As such the Indians have many *gurus*, many saints, within, and also outside, their own religious fold. In India one sees veneration, and even religious rites, offered to Islamic *Pirs* (leaders of mystical groups), or to Christ, or to any outstanding personality. Reliable sources narrate that even to a certain well-loved English officer a kind of cult was offered in some districts of India.

Here it is not the person of the Saint which is venerated, but the Saint is a symbol of an ideal; his qualities of knowledge and consequent morality are what elevates him beyond the average man.

Legend and history stand in India on an equal level of reliable truth. What can be thought, has the same value of experience as what can be seen or perceived by the senses. The Indian Saint is thus a reality accepted for his inspiring qualities, independently of his provable or unprovable life-story. This fact has its bearing on the representation of a Saint in India's religious art. There are some localized centres of the cult of a Saint, but he is not bound to a particular place of his historical life or to fixed specific attributes in his presentation. The Indian Saint is hardly ever a special protective guardian of a certain city or temple or of a particular guild or caste.

The Saint is not canonized as a *beatus* or a *sanctus* as in

Christianity. He may be a scholarly saint, a political saint, or a social saint—as, for instance, Snehalatā in Bengal, who reduced *ad absurdum* the rigid laws of the dowry-system, through her voluntary death.

The Indian Saint may have won exceptional holiness and veneration on earth, but he does not gain a permanent place in heaven. He gains no lasting individual survival: this survival is only temporary. He acquires the rank of a divine personality, but, like the Gods, he has finally to free himself even from a survival in the heavenly abode.

Most significant is the concept of saintliness in connection with sinlessness. The Indian notion of 'sin' implies an alienation from divine fullness and contentment with mere singleness. 'Sin' is satisfaction in working only for one's own subjective self-interest. Freedom from 'sin', then, lies in the recognition of universal cosmic laws and submission to them. Freedom from 'sin' is gained by a kind of cognitive process, not by a primarily ethical self-denial. The Saint shall be a 'martyr' in the original Greek sense of confessing the cosmic truth which has been found. This knowledge the Saint has to profess with all its subsequent results.

The Indian Saint is no miracle-worker. By prayer, or rather through magically accumulated powers, he may make himself insensitive to suffering; he may accelerate or retard natural happenings. But neither Saint nor God can alter the essential course of Nature. The Saint—through revealed or acquired knowledge—can survey his own and other incarnations, past and future, but he cannot remove or avoid future incarnations which are predestined by his earlier deeds. He can only attain a psychological detachment and indifference towards impending events. It is knowledge which decides his personal attitude towards happenings, but the events themselves follow higher impersonal laws.

Indian Saints—like Indian Gods—are quasi-impersonal or supra-personal stepping-stones towards the ideal of perfection. Purified and quasi-depersonalized individualities show the way to final perfection beyond the limitations of singleness and distinct form.

VI. RELIGIOUS PSYCHOLOGY

I. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF PRAYER IN INDIAN RELIGIONS

PRAYER in the Western sense serves to establish an immediate contact between the person of the devotee and the person of his devotion, to whose authority the worshipper humbly submits. In this definition are already included some presuppositions which do not hold good for the Indian kind of prayer, especially not for later Indian thinking. True, in the early texts of the *Ṛgveda* which probably have their origin mainly in religions outside India, such personal contact between God (or Gods) and the worshipper is evident. The *Ṛgvedic* priest prays for help and support in the name of the layman. Significantly, the layman himself does not venture to approach the deity directly. Only the expert priest himself knows the right form by which to communicate with the deity.

Another difference from the Western concept of prayer is also evident already in these Indian personal invocations. It is not one supreme God alone to whom all invocations are directed. All phenomena of Nature which from outside govern human life are personified and deified. Either one appeals to one's own permanent *iṣṭa-devatā*, one's chosen and favourite deity, or one addresses any natural phenomenon which is thought to be the right authority for the special purpose of the moment. Or else, one invokes, not a single, but an interrelated dual deity (of heaven and earth, morning and evening stars); an accidental dual deity (two of the main gods); or finally, one prays to the *Viśve-devās*, the 'All-gods'—named or unnamed. The object of the prayer may also be a god of the middle sphere (winds, thunderstorm and rain), or one of the heavenly sphere, like the various aspects of the god of the sun or of stars. Other gods, like rivers, forests, or the guardian deity of cattle, are assumed to govern on earth. In all these three spheres, independent agents of higher powers are presumed to be localized. All of them are offered veneration, praise and appeasement. In this first period of personal worship, concrete materialistic needs—a

good harvest, many healthy cattle and sons, or a long happy life for oneself—are the stimuli and aims of prayer.

Yet, in this first period of the veneration of gods, a notion of *do ut des* finds an expression which, in a way, detracts from the omnipotence of the deity approached. The worshipper offers hymns and—in addition, for better help—he presents concrete gifts to the gods: invigorating drinks of soma-juice, oblations of honey, butter and rice-cakes, or sacrifices of animals—all of them objects which would nourish and strengthen the worshipper himself. Thus prayer, pure and simple, hardly ever occurs. It is not considered enough to move the deity. In order to gain the necessary strength for an efficient response, the god himself needs these additional offerings of food and drink. I give (*do*) so that you, the god, will or can give (*des*) in return. The gods, then, are either unwilling or unable to grant the desired gifts without the primary oblation of their worshipper. Thus prayer addressed to personal gods is in these R̥gvedic times not offered to divine authorities who are by nature omnipotent, benevolent, or disinterested benefactors. Gifts of material substance bring assistance in a double way: firstly for the efficacy of the prayer itself, and secondly for the god himself in his desired reactions.

As to the contents of these R̥gvedic prayers, they are nearly always prayers for future needs or desires, and hardly ever prayers of pardon for past sins. Only in the seventh book of the *R̥gveda* (cf. VII, 88), the *R̥ṣi* Vasiṣṭha questions his god whether he, the singer, has formerly offended his protector through unconscious neglect for which the god now punishes him with non-attention. This is not a humble prayer of repentance, but, again, it is the notion of a mutual contract which underlies these hymns, a contract which the devotee has unconsciously broken. Here is no humble surrender to a higher authority and dejected confession of sin, as befits the lower being when faced with the higher, the god; but it reflects once more the notion of the relationship of nearly equal partners bound together in an agreement. However, two kinds of mediators are needed between beneficiary and benefactor: first the officiating priest, and secondly a god, *Agni*, the sacrificial fire. He transforms the worldly material gift into a substance appropriate to the gods. This middle position of *Agni* accounts for the frequent occurrence of hymns dedicated to him.

This basic attitude of partnership without due submission to the higher authority leads to yet another aspect of the relationship between God and Man, an aspect not favoured in Western religions. The Jewish God is omnipotent, all-knowing and all-wise. He has once given voluntary promises to His people which, as an act of Grace, He is sure to keep and fulfil. As a God of Justice, on the other hand, He is expected to give sooner or later to every person what is his due. However, the worshipper has no means and no rights to compel his God to His actions. And yet another point: each single one of His people can approach Him directly, without the mediation of a priest. The Jewish priest does not pray exclusively *for* the community, but mainly in unison *with* the community. The chief Jewish prayer for forgiveness of sin is to be performed by each individual sinner personally and immediately. But no worshipper can force God into actions, either present or future, against His own free will and judgment. He can only try to induce Him by prayer.

In India, on the other hand, gods can be enticed, even forced, into a reaction, by the initiative of the devotee or his representative, the priest. If the R̥gvedic God is strengthened for, and bound to, His response, He is not entirely a free agent of His deeds. Prayers and offerings have a magical force in themselves. The officiating priest is a knowing magician who starts an action to which he is sure to attract the due reaction. The god is less an agent than a factor within the process of causality. The god is under the influence of the process and indirectly under that of the priest who started the process. In the *Brāhmaṇa* times, the *Brahmans*, the priests endowed with the *Brahman* power, have gained the lead and initiative and are called the 'Gods on Earth'. They can directly attain their desired results in cosmic happenings without the mediation of the gods in this causal process. Already here the foundation is laid for the merely relative value and power of the gods. All persons, even the divine, are only media in the supra-personal process of events. The creative power lies in *Brahman* (neuter), in the growing process. Prayer thus is a magical force of concentration and attraction, and less of a surrender to a higher person. Prayer is an accumulation of forces, a kind of lodestone which attracts and directs the external objects towards itself, the starting-point, into its own sphere of efficacy. Prayer thus

is not a means for approaching higher forces, but it becomes a self-efficient and independent power-centre in itself.

Paradoxical as it sounds, this self-concentrated will-power has by its very extended subjectivism transcended the range of personal relationship. The person is submerged in his own emanations of accumulated energy and power. Ethics, on the other hand, tend towards one's own spiritual improvement or towards aiding fellow-beings on earth. Ethics present a personal responsibility towards higher personal powers, the God or the gods. Discrimination between 'good' and 'evil' is bound to the arbitrary judgment of individual beings and objects. Magic, the accumulation of power, is primarily indifferent towards ethical aspects and individual achievements. Instead of being concerned with qualities of discrimination, magic is fundamentally concerned with supra-personal quantities of connection, collection and accumulation. Belief in magic is based on the assumption that the very same forces are active in so-called inanimate objects as in animate and conscious soul-endowed persons of higher or lower rank. 'In-fluence' can only take place if the magic force flows into, and between, inter-related emanations of the same universal life-force. The magical sphere extends beyond the limited range of personal ethics. Ethics may secondarily originate within this magic circle. Concentrated will can elevate Man over his own personal feelings of like and dislike, and can establish a fellow-relationship with others. However, the result is a quasi-neutral fellowship. Significant for this are the various Sanskrit terms for ethical relationship. *Mitram* (neuter) is the word for 'friend': literally it means a neutral acknowledgement of equality and subsequent exchange of understanding and tolerance. The main Buddhist ethical concept is that of *maitrī* (*mettā*), a derivation from the term *mitram*. The three main ethical attributes recommended in the Upaniṣads are the three *Das* (cf. *Byhadāranyaka Upaniṣad* V, 2, 1 ff.): sympathy with others, generosity towards others, and the basis of these two—*dama*, self-control, self-concentration, and self-inclusion into cosmic fullness.

In the *Upaniṣads*, the magical epoch of the *Brāhmaṇas* and *Yajur-* and *Atharva-Vedas* is replaced by lofty speculations on the universal *Brahman* power and its lower emanations of the god-persons, man-persons, animal- and plant-individuals. In consequence of the former process of depreciation of gods, here

in the Upaniṣads, especially in the *Advaita*-interpretation of the Upaniṣads, all individual persons are only—to a higher or lower degree—relative values which are confronted with the true constant value, the supra-personal *Brahman*.

After the period of these lofty world-transcending speculations there comes again to the fore an era in which the masses and their urge for concrete support reassert themselves. Though the *paramārtha* is retained as the highest aim, we now find the reintroduction of *laukika*-aims, worldly ends, for the understanding of the masses. Again, personal gods are now approached—but always under the presupposition that these do not represent the highest and final goal. *Iṣṭa-devatās*, the chosen personal deities, are reinstated as necessary stepping-grounds to the Highest.

Then the *Bhakti* movements¹ develop and introduce relative, not absolute, aims of worship. The term *bhakti* cannot simply be translated as 'devotion', 'love' and 'prayer' to single deities. *Bhaj* means literally 'to participate' and 'to contact'. The *Bhakti* devotee contacts his deity in prayer to which the deity addressed is due to respond. *Bhakti* is not a submissive unconditional surrender to the deity in question, but, once again, it is an agreement of a former *do ut des* or a magical incitement for contact. *Bhakti* does not primarily imply a humble submission of the lower to the infinitely higher being, but it presupposes an agreement between two partners—like partners in human love. True, the *Bhakti* devotee feels himself the weaker, the female partner in this love-union; the God is accepted as the stronger, the male partner. But still the *Bhakti* movement is based on the concept that such a union between Man and God is possible, and can be expected, as between nearly equal associates; and again, the devotee is the one who through his call establishes the relationship, to which the God is bound to respond. *Bhakti* prayers are not the expression of a passive and humble surrender to unknown higher forces, but *Bhakti* is a passionate approach, yea a demand, for union with the deity chosen by the worshipper. It is significant that the *Madhva* school of *Dvaita*, of duality and accepted essential difference between God and Man, is the only Indian theistic school which concedes that no *Bhakti* between God and Man is possible, because the God is too high for such a personal relationship to

¹ See also chapter VIII, 5, p. 132.

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be forced upon Him. *Bhakti* prayers, on the other hand, are passionate demands for personal love and for a near union between Man and God. Man offers his love and expects love in return as in human relations.

Salvation and spiritual uplift, it is true, are aimed at by this individual relationship with the personal Divine; but it lies in the hand of Man, and it is the result of his effort, that participation with the Divine is established and quasi-enforced.

Man is capable of reaching up to the higher spheres, and he uses the personal union with the deity finally to draw himself even higher than to such a personal relationship. His ultimate expectation is to overcome every attachment, even to the person of a God. He sees the final goal in his being reabsorbed into the supra-personal reservoir of the great 'It', *Brahman*. After once the final ideal of a supra-person had been established, never has it been abandoned in Indian religions.

All personal relationship is only a means, and not the finally desired end. Prayer to a personal Divine, then, only leads up to a half-way perfection and salvation, not to the final ideal state. Prayer to a God is a preparation for de-personification; but, while resting still in the God, the final immersion is not yet fulfilled.

As regards purification and atonement for sin, the union with the deity is a step towards perfection, but not yet an absolute Liberation. It is a widening only of one's own personality, but not yet the entire renunciation of personality itself, which for the Indian is the ultimate content of his prayer. Thus the Indian prayer aims at a gradual overcoming of all individuality and personality; it does not end in prayer to a divine Person, high though He may stand. The essential prayer of later Indian periods is a prayer to the Unknown and Unknowable. It is an urge for reabsorption into the primary and final unification-ground. Emphatically the old Upaniṣads already, e.g. *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* III, 9, 23, assert that the Highest is productively vague and indiscriminate in form and person. As long as a person, even the lofty personality of the God *Prajāpati*, is assumed, the Ultimate is not reached. The God, too, is still considered limited. Therefore, even the God does not only receive, but He Himself has also to offer, sacrifices in order to strengthen and to complete His own potentialities.

The last end of prayer is not to attain a purified personality,

but to attain a no-more personality. Prayers finally aim at the no-more-Ego, the abolition of the 'Fiction' of the *Aham-kāra*. Non-ego and the absorption into the formless *Nirvāṇam* is the necessary goal also for god-persons.

The relative value even of a god-personality excludes even the God, or the gods, from being the ultimate aim of spiritual prayer. The self-activity of praying man does not endow the God with the authority of absolute divine activity and omnipotence. No God-Father, no Divine Spirit, no Divine Son can release Man from self-responsibility and self-atonement.

God can be approached for material help, but always under the presupposition that all material wants have to be abandoned in the end. Immanent dangers, temporary as they are, call for a prayer of assistance from the appropriate higher power and guardian. Permanent release and salvation from individuality, as it is the final aim, can only be attained by contacting forces which are for ever permanent and supra-personal. India adheres to the magical principle that only the homogeneous can approach, influence and achieve the homogeneous. India thus conceives of two entirely different kinds of prayer: the prayer of Man to temporary divine persons for temporary wants; and, beside and above it, the prayer for eternal Salvation by de-individualization and enlightenment, so as to visualize the timeless and formless union and re-union with the 'It'.

2. THE SECRET AND THE ENIGMA AS AN APPROACH TO THE DIVINE

THE Western thinker aims at clarification and distinctions. Indiscriminate complexity is for him a preliminary stage of research, a confusion which in the end has to be resolved. Not so for the Indian. Is it through his humility towards the for ever unrecognizable Divine, that he accepts this non-solution? Is it that in the complexity he sees an approach to the innumerable possibilities of manifestation of the *Summum Bonum*? As long as Man is bound to name and form and Reason, he is still in the human sphere and far apart from the last end of the All and the None. Not only in the early times of so-called primitivity, but at all times, is the Indian thinker content with the search for the Unknown. He does not venture to claim ever

to have explored it. His only true solution is the final dissolution in the All beyond individual personality. The Highest is *na-iti*, *na-iti*, 'not this, not that', nor any distinct definition and arbitration. Gods have a thousand names (*sahasra-nāma*); the term 'thousand' stands here as a symbol for the infinite number. Western cult-hymns employ the piling up of metaphorical names and similes mainly as artistic devices, as an enrichment or an emphatic expression of passionate devotion to the one unique personality of God.¹ The Indian, on the other hand, derives from this complex description of God's personality a serious philosophical deduction. If, as stated, the god-personality is manifested in so many interrelated and divergent forms, then the personality in itself cannot represent the ultimate aim and cannot be of unique significance, while the Ultimate is still veiled and entangled in this multiformity. The manifold divergent and interrelated appearances, the Indian concludes, cannot yet be the ultimate value. The *Ultimum Bonum* is not grasped yet, but only reflected in definite forms. The secret and the enigma are the protective guise which the for ever elusive Highest has chosen to hold Man's Reason in distant awe and humble expectation.

India's ever-changing physical conditions and her all-pervading jungle have impregnated her way of thinking. The Hindu notion of the Highest is too tinged with resignation ever to find fixation and clarity and a direct path towards it. The Indian jungle contains not single trees of outstanding clearly visible height, but low scrubs or trees, scarcely higher than the horizontal base of the intertwined branches and roots. It is not like a Western forest of dome-like vertical heights. The Indian jungle is a thick undergrowth of an intertwined plant-system in *chiaroscuro*, unexplorable in its many by-paths which in an inextricable maze meet and cut each other. Here one feels a life-force at work in never-ending transition of growth and decay. However, this natural hidden force never reveals itself in a distinguishable single light.

With this fundamental notion in mind we have to approach India's search for the Divine. It is manifest everywhere, but nowhere in particular exclusivity.

¹ Cf. Leo in his *Agnostos Theos*, ed. Norden, Berlin, 1913. However, he adds an argument from reason for the manifold appellations of God: it may be that He just prefers to be called by the one name not included.

As already observed by many scholars, the *Ṛgveda* contains plain hymns of praise and appeasement to certain single gods, but also vague addresses and oblations to all gods or all divine forces, named or unnamed. These anonymous forces are called the *Viśve-devas*, the 'All-gods'. In addition, the *Ṛgveda* offers many dark passages or hymns accidentally obscure with forgotten obsolete terms and complex constructions.

Such changeability with which already the main gods are endowed, is in a much higher degree invested in *Brahman* itself. The *Ṛgveda* presents an intermixture of legends, historical events and mythology, which we can no longer clearly reconstruct. Furthermore, it is full of intentionally enigmatic statements: questions are asked which are not intended to be fully and finally answered. There is, for instance, the famous 'Ka-hymn', with its refrain: 'Who (*Ka*) is the god to whom we shall offer veneration?'

Even more relevant to our problem are the so-called *Brahma-udyas*, the 'Brahman words', a significant technical term for 'riddle' and 'enigma'.¹ No solution is offered for them, nor apparently even attempted. Many possibilities and potentialities of interpretation are admitted here side by side—all equally conclusive, or rather, non-conclusive. The main gods, like Indra and Agni, are called *puru-rūpavat*, 'having many forms', all of equal importance. Because of this, their capacity of assuming many forms simultaneously and successively, they are also called *māyā-vat* or *māyin*—a term generally translated as 'sorcerer' or 'fraudulent illusionist' (though *māyā*, a derivative of the root *mā*, 'to measure', indicates only that many measurable, visible forms, *meyas*, all transitory in their existence, are ascribed to them). The measurability, visibility and manifoldness are a reflection or manifestation of the Ultimate, but never the Ultimate itself. This lies before, and after, all its emanations. The *Summum Bonum* is hidden while manifested in apparent multiformity.

The narrative contents, too, are complex. The later *Kena Upaniṣad* (again, the name is derived from the unanswered question, *Kena*; cf. the previous *ka*, 'who') describes the incomprehensible *Brahman* power in its divine and productive elusiveness. *Brahman* is here called a *yakṣam*, an uncanny daemonic Something, which changes its form every moment

¹ Cf. also the *Dirghatamas* hymn, *Ṛgveda* I, 164.

from human shape to a blade of grass, etc. In the moment the gods *Agni*, *Vāyu* and *Indra* have recognized its present form and thus could be able to act on it, *Brahman* has already changed into yet another form, thus remaining for ever elusive, for ever the insoluble riddle, inconceivable, unapproachable. Even the gods have no capacity for getting a hold on 'It', the incomprehensible Highest.

This 'jungle' notion of the *Summum* finds its expression also in Indian rhetorics. They revel in the artistic device of *śleṣas*, or 'intertwined meanings', which are already used in early *Ṛgveda* and are still favoured in the late *Alaṅkāra-saṣṭram*, in the intricacies of later rhetorics. Similar sound is the inter-relating medium between words of different origin and construction. The *Sandhi*, the phonetic connection, can be dissolved in different ways, and results in diverse meanings. Out of one and the same context various interpretations can be deduced. This is not only an elaborate artistic play on words, but a deeply-rooted notion from India's world-view: forms and shapes, objects and persons, as various expressions of the inexpressible 'One', are all interrelated. This idea also underlies India's unequalled use of metaphors and similes. It is not distinction and discrimination, but aggregation and multiformity, which are taught by Nature's Protean variability. Imagery in words is stimulated by her multiformity of form and sound. In India, art does not venture to select from and master Nature, but strives to imitate her.

Another unifying device in Indian literature, also evident already in *Ṛgveda*, is the combination of objects and persons according to visible categories. Very often, instead of a distinctive proper name, man, animal and plant are called after their characteristic visible appearance. *Hari*, 'yellow', *kapila*, 'reddish', and *babhru*, 'golden brown', are apparent proper names used for a certain man, animal or vegetable; only the context makes it clear to which kingdom of beings the name at present belongs. Colour descriptions provide these general appellations.

Secret names are of greater magical value than openly designated names. The ancient Vedic texts frequently assert that the god *Indra*'s true name is not *Indra*, but a more obscure form, say *Indha*. Here some etymologies are at work, which are philologically wrong but psychologically correct. *Indra* is *Indha*, the stimulating force which 'kindles' thoughts and deeds.

More significant, however, are those secret names which are attributed to the Highest, the *Brahman*. Either It is called by an intentionally vague and all-comprehensive word, the *Tat*, the great 'That' (cf. the well-known Upaniṣadic formula, *Tat tvam asi*, 'that art thou'), or else, even less comprehensibly for the reasoning mind, *Brahman* is called the *Tyat*—a word which defies any philological analysis.

Other designations of *Brahman* are provided by images pregnant and yet vague. A frequent metaphor for *Brahman* is the 'Ocean', the ever-changing fullness, continuously alternating in the form of outgoing and incoming waves, inexhaustible and unchangeable in its contents in spite of accidental emanation and reabsorption.

In India, ambiguity is an expression of productivity, never exhaustible in fixed realities. It is potentiality which is the highest value, a potentiality not limited to a fixed and certain result. This is one of the main difficulties which faces the translator of Indian terms into a Western idiom.

Accordingly, notions also of theological import are different in India and the West. Western theology accepts a definite, and for ever established, creation, performed by a Creator with a certain purposeful design. Indian creation is ocean-like: it is never fixed and is never finished. Man and the gods alike are within, and not above, this whirlpool. All single beings and forms are accidentally thrown out and accidentally sucked back in continuous movements of periodical tides and ebbs. Creation here is not a purposeful single act, teleologically fixed, but a *līlā*, a play and display of never-resting forces. Rabindranath Tagore, the poet who brought to the West a reflection of ancient Indian creative thought, has retained this basic Indian idea of creation, when he speaks in poetic metaphors of the various worlds and their ever-changing forms which, like pebbles on the sea-shore, are playfully collected and playfully discarded by careless children. Western theologians are troubled and embarrassed by this notion. They try to introduce their own concept of purposeful creation. Here, for the Indian, there lies no problem. He accepts without questioning the endless rhythm of world-formations and world-dissolutions. He does not venture to introduce his own problems of 'good' and 'evil' into the mind of a Creator. Creation and destruction are equally necessary and ethically neutral factors in the world-process.

There lies a continuous value in transformation and in change itself, in the productive rhythm of coming and going events. Change in itself is of positive value, as it reveals the restless productivity of the universal life-force. Even destruction is accepted as the *conditio sine qua non* for future productivity. This does not imply a negativist trend in the Indian mind: for destruction is only an intermediate stage between one construction and the next; it is never an end in itself.

Children are creative when they follow their instinctive impulse, unhampered by cold, restrictive reasoning. They are nearer to the grasp of the eternal riddle of interrelated growth and decay than the adults who ponder on fixed purposes and results. The old Upaniṣads (cf. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 3, 5, 1) advocate *bālatva*, 'child-likeness' (not *balatva*, personal strength) as a means to the Highest. The *Kāṭhaka Upaniṣad* 2, 9, accordingly emphasizes that *tarks*, 'intermittent and strenuous reasoning', cannot lead up to the goal. Reason is only a preliminary stage (contrasted with *līlā*, 'effortless rhythmical play'); it precedes the final intuitional knowledge, the *divya-dṛṣṭi*, the 'divine vision'. Troubled reasoning then gives way to joyful awareness (*ānanda*). This final stage is a gift from the gods—or rather from the 'It' (cf. *Kāṭhaka Upaniṣad* II, 23 ff.). For this final gift of enlightenment Man has to prepare himself (see *Yoga-Sūtras* 3, 1).

Here lies also the significance of Indian fables, riddles and mythological allegories. They lead beyond the single ephemeral cognitions of empirical reality. Fiction is of a wider range, more richly embracing, and thus in a way higher, than the reality of facts which are limited and defined. Nor is it in Man alone that all the highest qualities are represented and revealed. Universal wisdom and its innate latent forces may be expressed also in the guise of animals.

In Nature nothing stands isolated. Equivalent and kindred forms appear everywhere. This visible law of Nature is transferred into literature. Hence the use of the psychologico-educational and artistic device of repetition with, or without, slight alterations in form and content, so as to illustrate cosmic laws by literary means.

The Indian thinker strives after the mystic and the mysterious for the sake of finding unity in divergency. The Greek term *muō-myō* originally means the closing of the eyes to the distract-

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tion of visible singleness, and thereby opening the 'Divine Eye' (*divya-dr̥ṣṭi*) to the interrelated Whole.¹ This mysticism naturally leads to the mysterious, which is obscure to Reason, but clear to the receptive inner eye. The Indian, since the times of the Upaniṣads, indeed first pierced outwards (*vyatṛṇat*), but soon realized this as an insufficient approach (cf. *Kāṭhaka Upaniṣad* 4, 1). Leaving behind the preliminary stage of external vision, Man is then prepared to accept forces beyond Reason. Enigma and riddle ever remain, and have finally to be left untouched and unquestioned in their pristine simple chastity.

¹ See chapter VIII, 5, p. 130.

VII. INDIAN MATHEMATICS

I. THE DISCOVERY OF ZERO AND ITS PHILOSOPHICAL IMPLICATIONS IN INDIA

IN the third century B.C. Bhāskara, the great Indian mathematician, wrote a treatise on mathematics which deals in great detail with the concept of *Nirvāṇam*. How does such a metaphysical notion come into the range of a mathematical treatise in a prominent, indeed fundamental, position?

The word for *Nirvāṇam* is significantly the same as the word for 'Zero': both are termed *śūnya* or *śūna*, 'the Void' (or 'the excessive and swollen'). Taken from both aspects they mean 'the not yet or the no-more single distinct form'.¹

India is the country which has developed 'Algebra' long before the Arabs named it and transferred these Indian arithmetical achievements to the West. It has been proved that the Arabs were not the discoverers, but only the mediators, of this special science which they had developed from earlier Hindu basic notions. The Arabs brought the zero concept to the West.

India's thought is deeply tinged with magical concepts. The magic of number plays a part in all early science. India revels in the exploration of the significance of, e.g. the number 'three'. In India's social sphere there is the importance of the three stages of *āśramas*, the foundation of society on three successive stages. First there is the period of the receptive study of the Brahmachārin, the initiated student of Vedic texts, then follows the stage of the *gṛhastha*, the householder, who cares for the continuation and the economic well-being of the family, and the third stage is that of the *vāna-prastha*, the forest-dweller, who—after his duty towards the family is fulfilled—returns to the forest to deepen and to promulgate the studies of his youth and adolescence.²

¹ For a fuller treatment, see this chapter, VII, 2.

² This third stage is later subdivided into two. Thus a fourth stage is added as the culmination of the third. The *sannyāsīn*, who finally renounces everything, even the contact with his students, is the truest *vānaprastha*, the lonely hermit in the forest, bent on meditation alone—in expectation of bodily death and ultimate liberation.

In the philosophy of the Sāṅkhya three constituents of all our worldly happenings are taught. All our activity is a mixture of the innate inertia (*tamas*), the driving force of tendency and passion (*rajas*), and the balance between both, the harmonizing medium (*sattva*). In this way the special importance of the number 'three' is philosophically interpreted: a union between two opposites is finally established by a third harmonizing element.

The magical import of this number 'Three' is connected also with a logical law of balance. It is no accident that Indian linguists also make use of tri-partition. Singular, the distinct singleness, and plural, the indistinct multiformity, are in Indian grammar bridged together by a fully developed dual form for conjugation and declension. Indicative, the neutral statement, is linked with subjunctive, the conditional statement, and with optative, the mood of wishing. The different stages of inter-connection between subjects are either given as a statement of the positive, or of the comparative, or of the superlative and elative.

In the theological sphere also tri-partition is employed as the stating of two opposites and their intermediate stages. In later Hinduism a *Trimurti*, a 'Threefold Form' of main gods, is established. The God of Creation and the God of Destruction of the world are opposed, but inter-related with each other. The transition between these two opposites is expressed by a God of Maintenance of the world.

In the empirical sphere a trinity is represented in the relationship of father, mother and child, or—in true Indian manner—there is assumed a trinity of teachers: Mother, father, and the spiritual *guru*.

In the cosmogonic range three primary elements (which later are extended to five) are introduced. Earth is the solid element, water is the fluid element and fire participates in both opposites, being part of solid and fluid matter at the same time.

Another fundamental number, probably imported from Babylonian early astronomical observations, is that of the holy 'Seven'. Seven is the symbol of the seven planets (including Sun and Moon) and thus of the seven days of the week. Already in *R̥gveda* seven holy *R̥ṣis*, divine seers, are enumerated. To keep this sacred number of seven, the different sects sometimes omitted one or the other of the original set of seven seers and

replaced him by yet another divine seer or saint who had come into predominance.

As to the gods, the number 'seven' or any other prime number appeared to be too limited and fixed. The *Upaniṣads* (e.g. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* III, 91 ff.) speak of 33 gods or 3,306 gods or 6 gods or, on the other hand, of 3 or 2 or $3/2$ gods, or lastly of one.

The magic of the 'Three' evidently plays here its part, but is extended beyond fixation. Here the limitation is removed either in the direction of innumerable great numbers or, significantly, in the direction of split, broken, or fractional numbers. The last consequence of this process we shall see in our investigations of the Zero concept.

Quantity is quality, and as such the connection of a thing with a certain numerical unit is a part of the essential being of the thing concerned. Therefore all things connected with the number three or the number seven or with any other definite number containing a multiplication or addition of these fundamental numbers are interrelated among themselves. They share the same qualities of the magical numerical unit, the 'root' number on which, or out of which, they are built up.

The participation in number is, as said before, a participation in a magical unit, and magical units are, in a way, biological roots which give some characteristic mark to all their descendants, all their results. Magic and mathematics are deeply akin to biology because of their latent productivity. Number here is not an external accidental, not a fortuitous label, but an innermost potential of dynamic properties.

In India, no science, nor any other expression of thought, stands for itself alone as an independent separate factor. This explains why those are the best representatives of their own category which show the connection of the matter in hand with other universal matters either existing or imaginable. As to the numbers, there is one outstanding only which alone fulfils this purpose completely because of its widest import and impact. It is the number and symbol Zero. All positive and negative numbers are inherent in it. The concept of Zero has its position in all branches of Indian thought, primarily in metaphysics and cosmology, secondarily in mathematics and science. Zero is the transition-point between opposites, it symbolizes the true balance within divergent tendencies. Zero has now taken on, in

a more deepened and philosophical way, the functions earlier assigned to the number Three. Zero is the productive All and None, the matrix of positive and negative, of addition and subtraction, of generating and destroying capacities. It is the productive point of indifference and balance. It is the no-more-and-not-yet-distinct thing.

The temporal concept of Zero is its future potentiality which does not reveal itself in past and present.

Its spatial concept is the Infinite of which the logical aspect is termed the Indefinite. All distinct prime numbers from 1 to 9 gain by the addition (and additions) of the apparently void, of Zero, an infinite power of expansion. It is this irrational faculty of Zero which—paradoxically as it sounds—has resulted in its incomparable practical calculation-value for mathematical operations. All sciences, dependent on figures and their combinations, could only develop and expand after the Zero concept was introduced. Zero is the irrational and super-natural number by which all natural and rational numbers are made fruitful.

Zero is—like *Brahman* and *Nirvāṇam*—the sum of all distinct forms and, in addition, an irrational Something not expressible in any number, nor yet in their combinations.

All fractional numbers also, diminutive as they may be, can never reach Zero's immeasurable smallness. Zero can be compared to, and yet it cannot be reached by, the Upaniṣadic term *anūtva*, the atom-likeness, or its opposite the *ākāśatva*, the all-comprehensive and all-embracing space and ether (cf. the Vaiśeṣika system). And yet, as the *Vaiśeṣika* explains, the immeasurably small (*anu*), and the immeasurably great (*ākāśa*),¹ both though being *adr̥ṣṭa*, invisible, are still of a concrete material substance, though beyond the range of our perceptibility. It is significant that the *Vaiśeṣika* takes *anu* and *ākāśa* as not yet the final metaphysical entity. They are distinguished from the final *niḥśreyasā*, literally: that from which a 'better comparison, indeed any comparison, is removed'.

Zero is the true balance like *niḥśreyasā* between the two opposites of extreme greatness (*ākāśa*) and extreme smallness (*anu*). Thus we have to go beyond the Upaniṣadic metaphor of *anūtva* for *Brahman* (and for Zero). *Anu*, the atom, or even the split-atom of modern science, is not yet the fulfilment of the

¹ See chapter IV, 1, p. 57.

concept of Zero, *Brahman* and *Nirvāṇam*. True, one of its attributes, that of intangibility, is reached in *anu* and *ākāśa* alike, but the *niḥśreyasā* (*Zero, Brahman* and *Nirvāṇam*) goes further—it tends to the *Summum* which is a genus of its own: no more is it greatness or smallness alone, no more is it negative or positive numbers of specified or specificable quantity, but it is a *na-iti, na-iti* (neither this nor that), a productivity beyond all definitions, a fullness (*pūrṇatva*) beyond all arithmetical categories of addition, subtraction, division and multiplication.

Zero transcends all empirical data, all ciphers and forms, and yet, just because of this, it is the basis of all empirical data.

2. COUNTER-TENSION OF THE ZERO-POINT¹

In the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Upaniṣad* 2, 1, 19 there is the pregnant simile of the spider which is sitting in the central point of its cobweb, emitting and sometimes re-absorbing threads from its body. These threads extend in concentric circles and form wider and wider visible circumferences. This simile is considered so important that it is once and again repeated in the later Upaniṣads, e.g. in the *Muṇḍaka*, *Śvetāśvatara* and *Maitrāyaṇa*. *Brahman*, the principle of all beings, is likened to a spider. Its cobweb is the visible world. Let us concentrate on this simile, which contains the essence of India's world-view. Its implications have developed in detail through all subsequent periods of India's classical thought based on the *Upaniṣads*. In the process of the extension of this cobweb, the supporting 'crosswebs' form diameters of concentric circles, all cross-threads lying either on the same level of one concentric circle or in further expanding planes, according to the pattern. Beside these diametrical lines there are also divergent, but adjacent, radii of these circles: extreme opposites and the lines in between all starting from the central point of the texture of this cobweb.

Now yet another aspect of this simile. All the different points of this structure—near or far as they may be from the centre—are interconnected, caught, as it were, in the general framework. Not one of them oversteps the periphery, and all of them can

¹ This chapter has already appeared in *The Journal of Oriental Research*, Madras 1954, Vol. XXIII, Parts I-IV.

be traced back to the central starting-point. This is the Zero-point, which is the potential All-point.

With regard also to the transitoriness of all worldly structure, this simile of the spider and its web is instructive. The spider emits a flimsy structure. This may finally be destroyed, but the productive capacity of the spider remains for ever active. The present kind of cobweb and later another kind spread and are destroyed, and yet an infinite number of further constructions is potentially ever feasible.

This brief and apparently playful simile has its application in all different branches of fully developed Hindu thought. We can apply it to Hindu religion, metaphysics, physics, logic, ethics, and to the mathematical, grammatical and historical conclusions of India's world-view.

Śunya and *śuna*, the swollen and the void, are other terms of contrary or even apparently paradoxical meaning.¹ For the pure philologist these two terms cause difficulties. Though he admits that they probably both belong to the same root, *śun*, he is reluctant to accept their interconnected meaning. How can the 'swollen' which transcends the distinct form and the 'void' which has not yet taken on a distinct form, belong to the same root? Both are philosophically the same, as both are outside the range of clear visibility. The spider which has not yet emitted its threads, and the spider which extended its threads into infinite expansion, are actually the same spider.

In Indian *metaphysics* the same tension of diametrical or nearly divergent opposites is evident. *Brahman* is the productive Zero-point infinitely extended and infinitely contracted. It is, as the true 'It', no single personal and individual form alone, not even the mere sum of all future, present and past individual forms. With three-quarters of its being it stands for ever outside the range of manifestation (*Puruṣa-sūkta Rgveda* 10, 90). It is immanent in, and at the same time transcendent of, all worldly structure (cf. the spider).

Another term of early Indian religions, pregnant with similar ambiguous meaning, is to be found in the *Rgveda*. *A-bhva*, literally, is something which has no *bhva*, development (*bhū*). As such *abhva* means something uncanny which one cannot grasp and find out. It may as such be good or bad, or both, but always beyond our reach.

¹ See chapter VIII, 1, pp. 110-112.

General primitive thought outside India has also produced an ambiguous concept—that of Taboo. 'Taboo' means a thing secret and/or accursed. This same complexity of thought is reflected in the *numen* of Roman religion. The working of the deity is awe-inspiring, venerable and awful. From early Ṛgvedic times the Sanskrit equivalent of Taboo is *ugra*, a thing terrible or blissful in its effect. The basic meaning of *ugra* is 'powerful', a neutral force which may make itself felt in good or bad effects. Deities and demons (*asuras* and *devas*) are exponents of this ambiguous concept of power. In the Avesta and the Ṛgveda, in both of these interrelated Aryan religions, the good and the bad deities change places according to the viewpoint of the spectator. (Ṛgvedic *deva* corresponds to Avesta *ahura*, and vice versa).

In India's philosophy another essential distinction is found lacking, much to the amazement of Western logicians. Matter and Spirit, the two basic substances which Western philosophy tried through the centuries to keep distinctly apart, have in Indian thought always been considered as but two aspects of the central principle of universal efficacy. True, the so-called dualistic *Sāṅkhya* system established *Puruṣa*, Spirit and *Prakṛti*, Matter, as two transcendental distinct substances. However, in the world of manifestation they work indiscriminately. Here in the empirical sphere it is *Prakṛti* which functions visibly; pure Spirit serves only as its *stimulans*.

From the biological sphere also, yet a further conclusion can be drawn from the spider-simile. Quasi-mechanically, through a purely biological urge, the spider emits or reabsorbs its vital production. In rather the same way, Brahman is said to have created the world in a mood of mere *līlā*, the play or display of latent forces.

In the realm of logic proper, the spider-simile has also its validity for the Indian. As the cobweb develops and extends from the productive point of the neutral Zero, so the complex verbal root develops in contrary or divergent directions. Indian logic does not form 'termini' in the Western Latin sense of border-lines with fixed contours which compress from outside the meaning of a term into a unity; on the contrary, the Indian term develops all its latent possibilities from inward outwards. Like the unfolding of flower-petals in ever-wider circumferences the term grows from the centre, and the wider the

circles of its application grow, the more divergent become its derived meanings.

The Western logician thinks in *Aut-aut*, in a distinctive *Either-Or*; the Indian, on the other hand, thinks in *Sive-sive*, in *This as well as that*. All the diametrical opposites are actually interrelated diameters of the same framework. The clear logical distinctions are here interwoven, effacing the Western logical dogma of the 'Excluded Middle': a thing, for the Indian thinker, can be at the same time an A and a non-A.

In Indian thought, even negations are not always full exclusive negations; they may also be only partial negations in Time or Space.¹ *Vidyā*, knowledge, is not diametrically opposed to *A-vidyā*, non-knowledge. True *vidyā*, complete knowledge, lies before and after the incomplete empirical knowledge (*a-vidyā*) which is stained or veiled by the embarrassing multitude of actual experiences.

Single terms, like for instance *śīla*, character or behaviour, also contain in themselves a neutral complexity.² According to the context it may take on the meaning of 'good' or 'bad' character. Indian ethics, too, are nourished and built upon this notion of a neutrally productive centre. The spider fulfils its task of construction and destruction unconcerned. Indian ethics only see action as a neutral whole, which may be directed to a positive or a negative end. The *Yoga-sūtras* 4, 7 state that the *Karma*, the action of an average man, is either black (bad) or white (good) or a mixture of both. The perfected Yogin, however, stands beyond all *Karma*, good and bad alike. First he converts all *Karma*, external action, into *Pari-Karma*, inverted action. Finally, no action at all matters. Contemplating with detachment personal good and bad alike, he comes to the stage of utter indifference towards the pleasure and distress which may befall himself and his fellow-beings as mere accidentals.

Good and bad, both can be traced back to the same neutral centre, the Zero starting-point of the universal structure. Thus the favourite God of Hindu theology, God Śiva, fulfils his inter-related functions of destruction and generation with the same detached smile of indifference.

¹ Cf. more details in my 'Significance of Negations', B. C. Law Vol. II, pp. 408 ff., Poona, 1946.

² See chapter XI, 2, p. 158.

The empirical distinctions of Physics, too, lose their contrary meaning for Indian (as for some Greek) physicists. Heat and cold, health and illness are no fixed opposites, but only gradations of one and the same matter. Past and future are actually the same extension around the Zero-point of the present. A significant example of this view has been retained even in the modern language of Hindustani. *Kalē*, literally 'in time', means 'yesterday' or 'tomorrow', and its reduplicated form of *kalē-kalē* accordingly indicates 'the day before yesterday' or 'the day after tomorrow'. The Zero-point of time is the present¹.

Zero, the mathematical discovery significantly made by the Indian thinkers, is the productive point of indifference between positive and negative numbers, between destructive and constructive development. It is the All and it is simultaneously the None, and thus the term *śunya*, zero, is adopted for the metaphysical concept of *Nirvāṇam*: the Buddhist reabsorption-point, or, as *Brahman-nirvāṇam*, the reabsorption- and also the emanation-point.

Concrete evidence of this basic ambiguity of meaning can be found in such factual sciences as Indian Grammar and Rhetoric. All worldly objects are interwoven and can be exchanged among each other in similes. The king's splendour (*tejas*) can be compared with the scorching fire of the sun, into which no one dares to look directly, and vice versa.

Besides these cosmic laws of interchangeable forms which efface differences and distinctions of existing phenomena, Indian Rhetoric revels in *ślēṣas* (intertwined meanings)—another outcome of this fundamental doctrine of complexity and interrelations of contrary and divergent aspects or meanings. The same aggregate of words and sounds can be dissolved in various interpretations according to the contexts in hand.

Sanskrit Grammar, too, bears witness to the acknowledged value of ambiguity and productive complexity. In Indian diction most of the basic verbs are used over and over again, and are not bound to one single fixed meaning. They relate to more than one sense-function. Similarly with nouns: *Varna*, for instance, means both 'colour' and 'sound'. *Khyā* is 'to say' and 'to see'. Other verbs contain even opposite meanings: *yū* means 'to unite' and 'to separate'. *Vas* is 'to dwell' and 'to speed'. These two last examples seem to embrace the widest

¹ See chapter XI, 3, p. 176.

range of opposites; they stand for two different stages of the same process, i.e. for two different moments of the same function. To give further instances: *ṛj* means 'to move' and 'to stand still' (on reaching the goal): *hā* is 'to attain' and 'to give up' (what has been attained). Here our initial simile of the spider is again effective: the widest expansion is also the turning-point back to compression.

It is not only the rational meaning which determines the significance of a Sanskrit word. The irrational and unphilological relation between similar sounds produces similar meanings: for instance, *dyut* and *jyut*; *cud*, *trut*; *tud*, *tuj* and *nud*—all these mean 'to pierce' and 'to push'. Sensitivity towards sound and the previous state of sound-production results in similar psychological effects, even in philologically unrelated verbal roots. The psychological connection of similar articulation establishes relationships between these roots. India's keen sense for onomatopoeia accounts for this ambiguity of meaning and blurring-out of distinctions.

Action in itself matters more than our subjective attitude towards it. In contrast to Western languages, Sanskrit prefers to express action by using the passive form of the verb, and to express the actual agent not as the all-important subject (Nominative), but only in the secondary case of the Instrumental, an indirect case.

The intentional complexity of Sanskrit concepts is in general valued negatively by the Western observer. He sees in this ambiguity a primitive form of an as yet unattained maturity of clear distinction. But have we in our so-called progressive thinking not barred ourselves from the full potentialities of indistinctiveness? Like the cobweb of the spider, primitive productivity of thinking can further and further expand. The Westerner has bound himself to limitation, separation and distinction, which by their very arbitrariness impede the productive flow of further potentialities. We have broken the spider's web into isolated bits, destroying thus the natural efficacy and beauty of continuous growth.

VIII. INDIAN METAPHYSICS

I. THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE 'IT'¹

EACH fully developed civilization naturally contains the same complex of problems. However, one cannot easily dismiss the differences of the various civilizations in pointing out that the very same problems can also be found in other civilizations. It is not the problem itself, but it is its position in the centre or only at the periphery, its validity only for one time or at all times, its traditional or imported development, which account for the difference of the philosophies and religions concerned.

In surveying the Indian way of thought, there is one problem, nowhere else in the world so persistently and consistently pursued through the ages: that of the significance of the 'It'.

True, in the R̥gvedic literature of about 1500 B.C., the manifoldness of personal forms first meets the eye. Polytheism or even Pantheism is revealed in the personification and deification of natural phenomena in heaven, mid-air and earth. Significantly, also, abstracts and objects of so-called inanimate Nature are included in this pantheon of manifold deities. Already here, however, a specific trend of Indian thought is evident. Not earthly persons alone—man, animal and plant—are exalted to divine rank, thus widening the range beyond the recognized order of personalities endowed with Reason; not only personalities in heaven are assumed as intelligently-functioning, or at any rate, purposeful divine beings, but also in mid-air the natural phenomena (rainstorms, winds, etc.) are invested with conscious and effective faculties.

In addition, gods and goddesses of virtue and vice are included in this complex Indian pantheon. The wide range of innumerable personalities accounts for the merely relative value of each of these single gods. Moreover, these deities are more than only the sublimation of special human qualities. Everything in nature and in thought lends itself equally to be raised to the rank of a deity. Positive and negative qualities,

¹ This chapter has already appeared in *Purāna* (All-India Kashira Trust, Fort Ramnagar, Varanasi), July 1961, Vol. III, No. 2.

both still participate in the essence of the Highest, fractions of which are dispersed in visible or imaginable cosmic forms. Innate intelligence or consciousness of function is not in itself a *conditio sine qua non* for deification. Vitality and intensity, carried by an intelligent, or a non-intelligent, representative count in themselves as divine factors. Nor is our human arbitration of 'good' and 'bad' the canon for their supreme values. Everything is divine which is *ugra* (from the root *vaj*, 'to be strong'), powerful and awe-inspiring. Actually it seems that the destructive forces of nature overpower in might the benign deities who favour human life. *Rudra*, the howling tempest, in its destructive function, becomes in later Hinduism the *Mahā-deva*, the 'Great God', under the euphemistic name *Śiva*, the Blessed. Ancient Hindu belief in gods is actually less man-centred, i.e. not exclusively concerned with the human fate, than are the gods of other religions.

Moreover, even in another aspect, early Hindu religion does not yield to human *hybris* (human conceit and self-sufficiency). Early Hindu religion does not create its highest god as the ideal of a 'super-man' whose main concern is human happiness, human ethics and human aspirations. Man is part and parcel of the whole and cannot exclusively be taken as the model—though a less perfect one—of his god. Other worldly phenomena, animal and plant, serve in the same way to produce divine prototypes. Again, as mentioned before, it is not one single god nor one single form which is ever considered to be unique. There is no trend of thought which ever leads from Hindu Pantheism or Pan-en-theism or Theopanism to Monotheism (recognized as the ideal concept of Western religions). Kathenotheism,¹ as Max Mueller termed it, is the nearest to, but fundamentally different from, Western Monotheism. One god of human or animal origin or of a merely impersonal abstraction may temporarily, for a certain occasion or a certain sect, attain the supreme rank—but never to the exclusion of all other gods established or imaginable. It is Nature itself with its dynamic functions, irrespective of Reason and irrespective of personal consciousness, irrespective of ethics or non-ethics, and indifferent to solely human concern and purpose, which is accepted as the highest power. Man, just as his less intelligent fellow-creatures, has submissively to surrender to Nature.

¹ See chapter II, p. 31 f.

INDIAN METAPHYSICS

Furthermore, can Nature ever be grasped under the symbol of one single person and name alone? Nature emits personal forms, low and high, out of its quasi-neutral fullness, and re-absorbs them in the end into its indiscriminate fullness, *pūrṇatva*. Nature acts with pitiless dynamics. Nature is even more impressive in its destructive and awe-inspiring aspects than in its beneficial and gentle powers. If Nature is accepted as the highest Divine, the god *Śiva*, originally the representative of destruction, then truly is called the *Mahā-deva*, the Great God, the *Mahā-īśvara*, the Great Lord. The highest personal deity is a detached dispenser of natural functions without personal concern. The supra-personal, the supra-godly, the all-embracing neutral power of Nature is ultimately symbolized in the 'It'. Nature is the true 'It', the not-bound to one single form of male or female, the *Ne-uter*, the not One or the Other, but the All combined: the all-emanating, the all-absorbing Force.¹

The cult of Nature, it is true, has been practised all over the world as an early form of religion, but what distinguishes Indian nature-religion from other similar forms of cult is that in India, early Nature-worship is never abandoned, not given up when the later religion rises to lofty heights. In India the veneration of Nature has never been discarded as outdated and primitive. On the contrary, primitivity is here appreciated in its productive ambiguity and inexhaustible potentialities. Nature-cult is the fundament of the earliest forms of Indian religions and remains the basis even of the highest and the most exalted speculations of Indian philosophy. Already in the late books of the *Ṛgveda*, Nature is sublimated and evaporated, as it were, beyond the grasp of its visible appearances; beyond Nature's manifest forms it is furthermore valued as a principle of universal dynamics, thus being within, and outside, all phenomena at the same time.

In the mainly tropical climate of India, with its never-resting, ever-changing dynamic phenomena, doubly impressive in their sudden transformations from one state to the other, with the abrupt growth and decay, with the sudden transition from darkness and light without lingering twilight, Nature holds its sway over the human mind and its imagination. It is not astonishing, then, that India formed a notion more ingenious and adequate to Nature's ambiguous aspects of visibility and

¹ See chapter XI, 2, p. 159 f.

invisibility, of growth and decay, than any other civilization known.

It is the concept of *Brahman* (neuter!), a concept so all-embracing, so expressive of each single natural phenomenon, of the sum of them all and, in addition, of the hidden further potentialities which are never—in Time and Space—all fully revealed. All these visible and invisible aspects are elements of the one concept, *Brahman* (from root *brh*, 'to grow' and 'cause to grow'). The *Brahman* itself is *a-gunavat*, ultimately quality-less. Only in its manifestations, qualities seem to appear. Its true essence is nothing but *Sat*, Being or Reality, vague and indiscriminate. Significantly, this very term *Sat* is also used in the meaning of 'good'. This 'good', however, is not bound to any ethical limitation and arbitration. It is pure existence in itself, which is valued as positive—not subject to any human standards of ethical merits and demerits. Nature—*Brahman*—represents as the highest value the life-force itself, the dynamics of which may be expressed in generation or destruction.

Brahman has a double, or rather a triple, aspect. Its greater part, the three-quarters of 'It', is for ever unmanifestable (*Rgveda*, 10, 90, 3 ff.). Only 'Its' minor part lends itself to manifestations in heaven or earth, in the past, present, or future, to the process of generation and destruction. 'Its' major part is for ever beyond our reach; 'Its' minor manifest parts follow its course of destruction and generation unconcerned with the fate of single individuals or genera, say Man.

Far-reaching religious conclusions result from this basic concept. How then can Man (or animal) venture to influence the *Brahman* principle by prayer and appeasement? The pure ideal of the *Brahman*-cult excludes the possibility of personal devotion and direct approach in prayer. *Brahman* lends itself only to unegoistic, wantless submission in meditation. The worshipper with his personal wants, personal prayers and offerings, can only approach *Brahman*'s minor manifestations—deities, personal forms nearer to human beings, though graded as higher than their devotee. Deities are sublimated images of human concepts. This explains the apparent human *hybris* (self-righteousness) even towards the gods. The human agent, the worshipper, forces his god to react, to respond to his prayers. *Hybris* can be exercised towards man-conceived deities—but never towards the *Brahman*-principle.

There is yet another aspect of this mutual relationship between gods and men. The single gods, though in an elevated form, are also, in a way, subject to the law of re-incarnation. Later Hinduism, too, speaks of occasional descents (*avatāras*) of, for instance, the god *Viṣṇu*, who can be re-born in the form of a man, animal, or bird, in order to fulfil momentary cosmic needs. It is true that these divine re-incarnations are not strictly obligatory for the god, but more beneficial for the other cosmic beings. *Brahman* itself, unapproachable as it is, can never be expected to re-appear for a certain single purpose in a certain single form. *Brahman* creates the world or worlds as its *Līlā*, purposeless play or display of its creative powers, in a child-like manner. The 'It', the *Brahman*, constructs and destroys in a purposeless activity.

World-creation is significantly termed *visarga*, emanation, outflow and secretion (this very same term *visarga* is used for any ordinary biological process—outflow and urge for secretion—in all physical bodies). Is this purposeless and maybe insentient quasi-biological process of emission, assumed for the *Brahman* principle, a degradation and profanation of the Highest? This is not a problem for the Indian thinker. Not for him who denies the divinity of functions limited by purpose and consciousness. Nature proves its superior power by its ever-productive urge and neutrality of vital dynamics.

In later Hinduism a trinity of deities is assumed, in which the god *Śiva* represents either generation and destruction combined (continuous dynamics in transformation and change), or he stands for the destructive power alone, or else, his third aspect is that of the Master-yogin, who with indifference and detachment, fulfils smilingly his opposite functions. His middle aspect is that of unperturbed balance. If the trinity is sub-divided into three different gods, then the god *Viṣṇu* is responsible for the maintenance of the world (as the stabilizing power within change). If *Śiva* is considered only as a destructive power, then another co-related symbol is introduced as a creating force. This, an off-shoot of the *Brahman* principle, is the god *Brahmā*. However, very few temples are dedicated to this god *Brahmā*, the creator—a fact astonishing for the Westerner, for whom Creation is the highest postulate of the divine functions. The god *Brahmā*, though related in name to the highest principle *Brahman*, is for the Indian of lesser importance than the god

Viṣṇu, or even the god *Śiva*. Creation is but an accidental moment, continuously repeated and annihilated. Since Ṛgvedic times, Creation alone never plays a predominant part in Hindu religion. The world, like any other individual, comes into being, develops, vanishes, and is re-born in yet another shape. Creation is not a unique act; never does Creation spring forth from a Nothing; nor is it endowed with a definite and final purpose. For the Indian, Creation is but a transitory emanation which inevitably is re-absorbed in the end. As such the god of Creation is here not worshipped as the highest power. The god *Brahmā* is only one passing phase of *Brahman's* ever-productive life-force. All forms in heaven and on earth, in the past, present and future, are but negligible parts of the immeasurable and inexhaustible *Brahman*.

Buddhism, too, the daughter-religion of earlier Brahmanism, in spite of some of its reforms, is nourished by the fountain-head of former Brahmanic thought. In variant expression the basic concept of *Brahman* is retained. The idea of the productive 'It' is upheld. True, Buddhism does not speculate on the primary 'It', the source of all manifest forms, but it adheres to the conclusions drawn from it. Buddhism starts to investigate the natural phenomena as they are found in the world, and evaluates them as but changeable transitory forms, moments (*kṣaṇas*). However, for the end also Buddhism postulates an all-embracing neutral concept, the *Nirvāṇam*, the dissolution (lit. the blown-asunder) of single persons, of single names, of single definitions and arbitrations. The Buddhist speculations on the *Nirvāṇam* are very much akin to the Brahmanic speculations of the final *Brahman*, which is significantly also called *Brahma-Nirvāṇam*. The Buddhist *Nirvāṇam* (very much akin to the Brahmanic concepts) is visualized as the No-thing (not a Nothing, but not a single thing). It is noteworthy that *Nirvāṇam* is also termed the *Kṛtsnam*, 'the Whole', or the *Śuklam*, 'the indiscriminate Whiteness'. Single colours then are no more distinguishable in their former specific hues. Emptiness of colour is produced by the accumulation of all colours. This simile serves to grasp the concept of the All and the None. The all-embracing Neuter absorbs all distinctions. The Buddhist uses for this postulated final state the pregnant term *Śūnyam*, 'the void'. *Śūnyam* is most probably a derivation from the same root *Śun* (cf. K. F. Brugmann in his Comparative Gram-

mar) from which also *Śūnam*, the excessive, the swollen, has its origin.¹ How then can Void and Swollen be inherent in the very same root? Both are beyond the distinct single form and size, the one being a negative, the other a positive expression of the very same fact of no-more or not-yet distinct shape, or no-more or not-yet name and dimension. *Kṛtsnam*, Whole, and *Śuklam*, White, and *Śūnyam*, Void, all of these terms are neuter in grammar; all of them alike indicate the lying-together or the falling-together of singleness within, or into, an indiscriminate Whole. The Buddhist *Nirvāṇam* is yet another expression of the pre-Buddhist and post-Buddhist Hindu philosophy of the 'It'. No more single form of a person, or of a single thing, no more specific qualities of a special phenomenon, can be traced in this all-embracing reservoir of the 'It'.

True, Buddhism starts with a careful investigation of the single individuals and their continuous development in the course of their *Karma*-sequence in re-incarnations. However, the final postulate lies in the annihilation of all individual personality, quality and tendency. The evaluation of all personal forms and of all historical moments of event is the same in Buddhism as it is in the *Brahman* speculations. Apparently Buddhism emphasizes more strongly the temporal middle stage of world-phenomena than the cosmic vision of Brahmanism, but in the result it comes to the same conclusion, that the only constant factor is the 'It', the supra-personal and supra-changeable *Pūrṇatvam*, fullness of the All, which is no more a Something. Man, animal, plant and gods are finally re-absorbed into the all-embracing form-destroying 'It'. In spite of the impressive manifoldness of visible forms on earth and postulated forms in heaven—or just because of all this embarrassing multitude—the Indian Hindu and the Indian Buddhist are unimpressed, or even oppressed by, and try to detach themselves from, the abundance of appearances. The Indian longs for the state of absolute transcendence and unchanging constancy as the final aim. The Buddhist, too, strives after the amorphous 'It'.

Intensive observation and the ensuing depreciation of empirical phenomena finally lead the Indian beyond the empirical world of transitoriness. And yet, by this very negation of all practical and practicable phenomena as finalities, India

¹ See chapter VII, 2, p. 100.

has produced a scientific notion which, far beyond her own world of thought, has influenced the modern Western world, which is based on entirely different presuppositions. The Indian postulate of transcendental *Śūnyam* has become the cardinal point of mathematical science.

The concept of *Śūnyam* is the concept of Zero¹. Actually the term for Zero in Sanskrit is *Śūnyam*, the same term as for the no-more differentiated All, the *Nirvāṇam*. Zero is the no-number or the matrix, and the falling-together of all numbers. Zero is the sum of all numbers, positive and negative combined. It is the productive point of indifference between the negative, the destroying, and the positive, the generating, elements. It is No-number by comprising all numbers. It is no-more a number and yet the reservoir of them all. It is mathematically represented under the symbol of a circle, self-contained and enclosed in itself. It may accidentally embrace a smaller or greater spatial content, but essentially it remains the same. It is simultaneously the geometrical and algebraic basis for all calculations and dimensions. Zero is the mathematical expression of the 'It', beyond single name and form, beyond quantity and quality. It is not to be grasped and determined by any method of definition and measure. It is like *Brahman* and *Nirvāṇam*, an amorphous principle, active within and potential without the empirical facts and factors.

Other consequences of the Indian concept of the 'It' pertain to human ethics. Good and bad are bound to arbitration, limited by conscious selection. *Brahman*, the 'It', combines them in the transcendental realm of no-more distinction. It is the life-force which functions as *ugra*, awe-inspiring vitality. Destruction and generation are ambivalent expressions of this neutral energy. Only the human observer provides the positive or negative evaluation to it. The *Yoga*-system in its *Sūtras*, 3, 22 and commentary, ventures to state that the highest notion is beyond human limitation of good and bad. 'The *Karma* of the average man is either good (white) or bad (black), or a mixture of both. The perfected *Yogin*, however, is no more bound to any human discrimination between good and bad.' The highest state of mind leads to the annihilation even of ethical evaluation. Here, too, a kind of Zero, an ethical Zero, as it were, is assumed as the Highest.

¹ See chapter VII, 1 and 2, pp. 95 and 99.

A puzzling deduction of this doctrine can be found also in Indian drama—I think of an episode in the *Mychakatikam*. There the burglar first hurries, and then stops before committing his offence. In order to observe his religious professional duties, in an initiation-ceremony for his burglary, he first meditates and carefully and devoutly recites verses from his *Caurya-sāstram*, lit. the 'Sacred Text of Robbery'. Only then he feels dutifully prepared for his theft. How can one explain this ethical neutrality towards, or rather, this subversion of, acknowledged standards of human society? One may even add here the 'Holy Murder' of the Thugs. They felt religiously justified to commit even murder as a sacrifice to the destructive deity *Dūrgā*, the consort of the god *Śiva*. Does there here appear—though perverted—an ideal which allows us to destroy in order to approach and accelerate the state of annihilation? If thereby the amorphous 'It' is pursued, then the extreme conclusions, when applied not to the transcendental, but even to empirical conditions, truly are dangerous.

The cult of the *Ne-uter*, the 'Not-this', 'Not-that' alone, has found its classical formulation as early as Upaniṣadic '*Na-iti, Na-iti*', the teaching of the absolute *Brahman*. The Brahman is 'not this nor that', not any fixed notion of empirical knowledge and valuation. Not any of them, nor all of them combined, do justice to the all-embracing *Summum*. Is therefore the Latin term '*Ne-uter*' or the Upaniṣadic formulation '*Na-iti*' an essentially negative concept of the Highest? In other words: does a fundamental Pessimism and Nihilism underlie the Hindu and the Buddhist world of thought? It is not an absolute Negativism or Pessimism which reveals itself here. Though nothing of the limited sphere of empirical knowledge is considered as being sufficient, a positive postulate for the Beyond is maintained. The positive notion is reserved and accepted for the transcendental world. The embarrassing multiformity, the transitoriness, the continuous change between enjoyment (*Priya*) and suffering (*A-priya*) do not answer the hankering after a complete and constant Bliss (*Ānanda*). Pessimism towards this changing world is born from an innate Optimism which postulates a perfect state of happiness beyond human conception. The 'It', the *Brahman*, is for the Indian the claim for the certainty of undivided and undiminishing Bliss, *Ānanda*, in the Beyond. *Ānanda* is *Ananta*, the Unlimited. No person, human or divine,

can fully do justice to the limitless, indefinite Infinite, to the Supra-Person.

2. THE POSITION OF THE INDIVIDUAL IN WESTERN AND INDIAN RELIGIONS

Since the time of the ancient Greeks, even in pre-Socratic thought, a strong accent is laid on Man as the master and the elevated being on earth. The relationship between Man and his fellow-beings, animals and plants, is examined one-sidedly from the human point of view. The pre-Socratics ask what use can be made of the special capacities of the animals so that they can serve Man. From the spider we may learn how to weave a net, from the fish how to swim in water and, in later times, from the birds how to fly. Here the animal does not directly serve human purpose and use, but Man has to imitate the specific capacity of the animal, and thus the animal, indirectly also, serves Man's purpose. In fact the master of creation—for whose benefit creation has come about—is Man and Man alone. God created the world for Man's sake: so the West, already since the times of the ancient Greeks and the Bible, insists. Man conceives of God as an ideal of his own kind, a Super-Man with human qualities, but in perfection without human frailties. Long before the pre-Socratic thinker Protagoras coined it, his motto has been the Western axiom: 'Man is the measure of everything on earth.' God, or the gods, are his ideal counterpart. True, the pre-Socratic Xenophanes senses the limitation of such a divine ideal when he proclaims: 'If cows or horses visualize their deity—their ideal counterpart—it would be the perfect cow or the perfect horse.' However, as the presupposition of Western Man is that only the human being is endowed with reason and imagination, this assertion is but a hypothetical question. Man is the *deinos anēr*, the all-powerful, around whom the world circles. The temperate zone of the Western world has soon taught Man how to use his special capacity of thinking and purposeful technique to master Nature and to employ it for his own needs. City-civilizations (*poleis*), as mentioned already, developed in early times in order to find protection against the hardships of Nature. In most parts of the world Man constructed

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dwelling, surrounded by walls, for close cohabitation in firmly established organized communities. The political element naturally developed from this accumulation in human settlements. Leaders of the community were chosen according to their physical or intellectual predominance. They were the guardians of the communal life, the defenders of their own settlement against invasion from outside. They were the law-givers within their community and arbiters during internal strifes and struggles, and they were also administrators of the common property. Beasts, when wild and ferocious, were warded off; less powerful animals were tamed and domesticated for human use. Vegetation, less vital and prolific here than in a tropical country like India, was uprooted, and re-cultivated for human consumption. The soil had to be nurtured so as to improve its productivity. Man, satisfied and elevated through his own achievement and mastery over the lower beings on earth, thus gained his dominating position and indulged in an inflated self-esteem and self-assurance. Proudly did Thales, the earliest known pre-Socratic thinker of the West, acclaim his researches on the eclipse of sun and moon, on tides and ebbs, on rivers and the sea. All these observations on natural phenomena Man has turned to practical use. Physical training in competitive games was early developed and appreciated by the Greeks to display superior fitness and strength. Significantly the political and intellectual leaders of pre-Socratic Greece measure their own achievements by the physical excellence of the 'heroes of the nation' (Olympic Games). External perfection of the human body is nearly equalized with intellectual eminence. Both are needed for the prosperity of the community. Fitness and proportionate bodily perfection are valued as necessary and, beyond that, as an aesthetic ideal. Beauty in appearance is nearly as much admired as beauty of the soul and the mind. The beauty of the animal, on the other hand, is hardly ever perceived and appreciated for its own sake. The animal is considered as truly beautiful, only if in addition it is useful. True, we find the most aesthetic representations, e.g. of horses, on the Frieze of the Parthenon. But they are inspired by the human necessity of acquiring a quicker movement in transportation through the horse's speed. In Assyria, the representation of the animal is awe-inspiring. In ancient Egypt, on the other hand, the animal is presented, not merely for purposes of

aesthetic appearance or of use, but in addition as a symbol of religious and ritual significance—a creature of super-human power.

The Indian civilization, born in and inspired by mainly tropical Nature and unmastered atmospheric and physical phenomena, goes even further than the above-mentioned countries of the Near East. In India the human being is regarded but as part and parcel of the whole of Nature. The old *Upaniṣads* of about 800 B.C. emphatically state that Man is included in the animate Universe. The *Ātman*, the essence in Man, is the same as the vital force present in the ant, in the gnat, in the elephant, in the clouds, in the sun—that is, in all the various phenomena of heaven, earth and mid-air.

No human *hybris*, self-elevation and self-conceit, can here develop where Man is regarded as but another expression of Nature's all-embracing forces. The other beings on earth or in the other regions of the Universe remain of unbroken power and influence on human life, unmastered or untamed by Man himself. They stand side by side with Man; they can even interchange with Man in shape and form. Animals, plants, and also gods, are taken as inter-connected links in the series of re-incarnation. Certain qualities as seed—*karma-bīja*—develop and increase till they find their most adequate form in *karma-phala*, final fruition. In course of this increasing development certain qualities in Man, say his strength or violence, are more fully expressed in an animal-form than in a human incorporation. This is not considered to be an ethical fall from human perfection to the degradation of an animal-shape, but it is taken as a more adequate manifestation of the prevailing inclinations. Gods, too, the Super-Men, find sometimes the animal-shape more adequate to their main purposes and capacities than any human form. *Śiva* in his aspect of fertility and productivity is appropriately represented as the *Nandi* bull. Or the Divine is visualized as a huge monster, half man and half lion or half fish and half man. Or else, the god *Viṣṇu* is depicted in one of his incarnations as an immense Boar who in this form can most efficiently fulfil his role of lifting with his protruding snout the whole earth out of the primordial mire into which it had been thrown down. Or, similarly, the whole world in its uninterrupted convulsions is pictured as a giant snake on which the god *Viṣṇu* lies in masterly repose unperturbed by its

continuous contractions and expansions. Each single cosmic form stands for a certain physical faculty, and some of these functions are more perfectly displayed in animal-shape than in a human body. The specific capacity of Man, his reasoning, is not singled out as the most select and the most divine of all universal capacities. Each individual is but a representative of a certain function which forms part of Nature's universal powers, and the human individual is not the only, and not the highest, expression of Nature's all-embracing divine forces.

Religion in the classical sense of '*re-ligio*' binds the single individual to a higher Absolute, to a supreme authority to which Man submits his own limited authority. Here lies the fundamental difference between the Western and the Eastern, especially the Indian, dogma. The way towards perfection, aimed at by all religions, leads in the West to the exclusive development of the human kind, while in the religions of the tropical zone the full expression of the Divine may be equally found in the animal or even in the vegetable kingdom. Here even today Man has been unable, with all his refined technique, fully to master Nature and to use it mainly for his own needs and purposes. Unbroken and untamed Nature rules by its own laws, to which even the highest class of single beings has to submit and to obey.

Man in Western civilization is the 'crown of creation', and he is considered to be so perfect in himself that even in the last stage of achievement, in his culminating salvation, his specific personality is hoped to be retained. Even at the highest stage the ideal is that of the perfected Man and of the all-powerful God-personality. In India, on the other hand, Man's specific capacities are not elevated to the exclusive rank of the highest development towards perfection. Other beings also can be representatives of perfection, in functions outside the human range. Not only via Man and via personality does the way here lead towards perfection. All individuals, even the highly developed Man or God, are valued only as an accidental expression of the supra-personal Divine. It is the Divine which makes use of all kinds of beings as its possible manifestations. And yet, no single individual and no combination of all imaginable individuals are sufficient fully to express the Divine. The greater part of *It* remains for all times unrepresentable.

True salvation lies in a conscious process of de-individualiza-

tion. For the Indian all personality, even in its deified form, remains on the lower level of limitation, and as such still belongs to the sphere of empirical concepts. To repeat: *Brahman*, the Highest, is fundamentally *na-iti, na-iti*, not bound to such or such definition and arbitration, not bound to such or such name and form of individual appearance. It defies all predication and discrimination. It is constant, and yet dynamically changing in visible existence. It is supra-consciousness which is no more divided into subject and object. It is, lastly, complete satisfaction resting in itself without any wants or tendencies. The only permanent 'individual' is *Brahman* itself, while being 'in-divisible' in its unity—even when manifesting itself in the Universe through particles of its essence.

3. THE INDIAN CONCEPT OF THE INFINITE

In India's traditional thought, quantity stands for quality. The gods of the *Ṛgveda* can be measured in their relative importance according to the proportion of hymns which are devoted to each of them. Through this merely external arithmetical means it becomes evident that *Indra* is the main *Ṛgvedic* god, *Agni* the second in rank, etc. Furthermore, throughout all Indian history the *guru*, literally 'the weighty one', is a teacher of venerable value; his spiritual quality is expressed in measure of quantity.

These measurements, taken from the empirical world, are transferred metaphorically also into the world of metaphysics. *Brahman* (from the root *brh*, 'to grow' and 'to increase') is as such the highest transcendental concept. Śaṅkara, in commenting on the text of *Aitareya-Upaniṣad* 1, 3, explains *Brahma* as *brhattatamam*, as the greatest, the most extended (*tatamam*), or as the most penetrating (*vyāptatam*). A pregnant synonym for *Brahman* is *pūrṇam*, 'the full and complete'. Significantly the beginning of the *Īśā-Upaniṣad* states in emphatic repetition of this very term, employed seven times in one verse, that out of the fullness the manifoldness of all beings comes into existence, and is re-absorbed in the end into the absolute fullness, i.e. into the reservoir of *Brahman*. This fullness of Brahman, though the concept is taken from the empirical, quantitative sphere, is not,

however, limited to this world alone. It transcends the sum of all discernible forms. The *Puruṣa-sūkta* of the *Rgveda*, again under the application of an arithmetical simile, asserts that all the three worlds, Heaven, Mid-air and Earth, and their inhabitants, all past, present and future incarnations, represent only one quarter of the true Being, which stands alone in complete fullness at the beginning and end. Three-quarters of the 'It' remain for ever unmanifestable and only one quarter lends itself to the possibility of any manifestation. Thus the sum of all manifest forms comprises only a small, or even a negligible, part of the Whole. True fullness is a notion of Transcendence, of super-empirical completeness. Everything which has name and form, i.e. which can be experienced in empirical reality or in the vision of a God-form, is yet limited by name and form, and represents a part only of the infinite fullness from which it emanated into shape and existence. The Whole, the *Brahman*-principle, is of an immeasurable and unrealizable dimension. The *Brāhma-Sūtras* once and again put the question whether through the outflow of forms the infinite reservoir of the *Brahman* can at any moment be diminished. They answer in the negative: the outflow is not only simultaneously replenished by the present inflowing of forms, but all of them—taken together—represent only a negligible part of the Infinite, which actually is not touched in its essential nature by increase and decrease, i.e. by the movements of empirical change, growth and decay.

The reservoir of Being exists before any single form came into existence, the gods included. *Rgveda* 10, 129 therefore asserts that at the beginning was the *tuccha*, the chaos, alone. It is the not-yet-formed and not-yet discernibly-shaped substance of the world. At the beginning there was nothing but the infinite Space in amorphous extension, which only later divided itself into discrete contours which are singly perceivable. First there existed only an oscillating mass of matter which swings to and fro in circular motion, driven within, and at the same time repulsed by, its own approaching and receding waves. In the end, after all single forms have been extended into their specific shapes, they are sucked in again in the *pralaya*, literally 'the tendency of melting-together'; they disappear into a once more indiscernible mass. These movements from the indiscernible fullness back into the indiscernible fullness form the Indian

concept of world-creation and re-absorption (see for instance the *Sāṅkhya* system). To use a simile: in the womb of the infinite Being peristaltic movements of contraction and expansion take place, but all of them are only inner automatic changes and motions in the enclosure of the body of the Infinite, which does not decrease or increase in substance by this cosmic process of change and transformation.

The infinite Being cannot be grasped, except under naturally inadequate empirical images. The metaphor of a body is taken from *this* world. All single empirical forms, for instance the social one of castes, are seen as parts of the huge primary Being. The *Brahman*-caste, as already outlined, is its head, the warriors its arms, the tradesmen and the agricultural classes its trunk, and the servant-classes its feet. But the cosmic phenomena also are visualized as part of its body. The moon is its mind, the sun its eye, the main gods *Indra* and *Agni* spring forth from its mouth and god *Vāyu* (wind) from its breath; the earth is its feet, the sky its head, and the mid-air its navel. (Cf. *Puruṣa-sūkta* vs. 15 ff.) Matter and spirit, combined, form the transcendental and super-empirical fullness. Spirit alone is considered not wide enough a concept to suffice to represent the Whole, the *pūrṇatva*.

Western philosophers also have occasionally visualized the origin of the world from a chaotic productive mass not limited by person or number. But this is the difference. The primary chaos is often in the West also connected with the concept of a divine person, is taken as a divine latent idea which is not yet developed. Besides, the primary chaos is not always, as in India, conceived together with its natural counterpart, an equally indiscriminate state of culmination in the end. In the West each chaotic state is negatively valued as against a not-yet reached ideal of a planned and purposeful order. Evolution into specialized single forms is here maintained as a stage of higher development. India, on the other hand, sees her higher values in the opposite: in the indiscrete fullness and completeness beyond limitations, specializations and individualizations. No purposeful selection and restriction are here the supreme task. For the Indian the *a priori* and *a posteriori* of all world-emanations are ideal states and stages of indiscriminate *pūrṇatva*.

With regard also to other conceptions of *a priori* and *a posteriori* India takes a different standpoint. It is this actual world which mainly matters for the Western thinker. *A priori*

and *a posteriori*, then, are conceived as necessary presuppositions for the understanding of this empirical world alone. Space and Time are taken in the West, for instance by Kant, as logical *a priori*s, as necessary antecedents for all conceptions of empirical forms. Furthermore, in the modern West there is assumed a predominance of the concept of *Time*. Continuity, the constancy of this 'one given world', is based on the postulate of a temporal notion. In India, on the other hand, this present world is not regarded as an eternal or constant entity. Many worlds are accepted subsequently and even simultaneously. All of them, as said before, are for the Indian only transitory impermanent constructions of automatic conglomerations which do not reach the true Infinite. In the West, an ethical and metaphysical support is sought in the postulate of the eternity of this world centred around its God-Creator. With Him rests the hope for the eternal salvation of the human soul. Through Him His reflection, the human soul, participates in Eternity. Not so in India, where the very concept of a person and of an individuality, even in its loftiest form of a God, is depreciated as an innate limitation and bound to transitoriness.

Also from the logical point of view it is not Time, but if anything then it is Space, which is here the primary notion. It is significant that all terms for Time are in Sanskrit primarily spatial notions.¹ *Kāla*, the technical term for Time, literally is only 'a portion of Space'. *Agre*, 'at the beginning', is literally 'the top-point'; *adhvan*, 'course of Time', has originally the meaning of 'the way travelled through'. *Tatas*, 'then', means literally 'from there'. Space is here the essential notion, and Time is only considered a special case of Space. Space, it may well be, is more than the pre-supposition for the empirical world alone. For the Indian metaphysician, Space seems to reach up to the Transcendental. Most terms of Indian metaphysics are formed with the prefix *ati*, the 'going beyond'. For instance, *ati-indriyas* is the postulate of reaching beyond the sense-perceptions; *ati-tarati* is the transcending of the empirical world. *Ākāśa*, 'the ether' or 'infinite Space', is a concept of the *aḍṛṣṭa*, 'the invisible', which in the *Vaiśeṣika* system may still be material, but too wide to be grasped. Otherwise, the Invisible is taken as a merely transcendental postulate. If, as we pointed

¹ For the ancient Persians Time, *Zervan*, was an independent original concept.

out before, *pūrṇatva* is the only predicate appropriately to be attributed to the *Brahman* principle alone, then even here, a concept of extension and infinite dimension in Space is retained for transcendental values. Completeness in dimension beyond the sum of all present, past and future accumulated forms is assigned to the Highest only. Innate movement is accepted for *Brahman* in all its empirical and supra-empirical stages, and movement can take place only in Space. *Ananta*, 'the endless', is *ānanda*, 'the highest Bliss'. When limitation in all name and form is surpassed, then only the highest Being, true Reality, is reached. *Brahman* is *neti-neti*, 'not this, not that', not even good alone; it is beyond all human arbitration, i.e. beyond the limitation and definition of human reason and ethics. The Infinite is boundless, but is still conceived under a vague notion of Space. The Buddhist *Nirvāṇam*, too, is visualized as an infinite reservoir and thus as the widest spatial notion, into which all single forms are absorbed in the end. It is *śūna*, 'the excessive', 'the swollen'. Extension is here assumed—infinite extension, which includes the All, but actually can be also regarded as the None, the No-form. Its synonym is *śūnya*, 'the void'. Void is not a nothing, but a no-single thing, or else more than only the sum of all discernible things. A significant use of the Sanskrit term *śūnya* in popular language is *śūnya-madhya*, indicating a reed which is hollow in its middle, but has a visible extension. The contents of the stalk, the juice, fibre and air, may not be discernible by the naked eye of the observer, but the existence of the unseen contents in this hollow tube is proved by dynamic growth. *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 6, 11, 1 ff. uses for the Highest the simile of a tree: the top branch may wither and die, but *Jīvo na mriyate*, the life-force itself goes on for ever and produces innumerable other accidental outgrowths. The possibility of extension in Space is assumed for ever; but none of these, nor yet the sum of all discernible forms, remain for ever in distinguishable shape.

Mathematics play a part in all Hindu thought of empirical, but also of metaphysical, import. In our former essays we dwelt at length on the empirico-mathematical significance of Zero. Here now we have to facet it from its metaphysical aspects. In fact, Zero was primarily a metaphysical symbol. It represents the closed circle of pre-empirical beginning and post-empirical end. Zero embraces the Infinite, while in between lies an in-

definite number of distinct ciphers. Zero—a significant synonym for *Nirvāṇam*—is not a negative or a positive number, nor their sum—neither growth nor decay; but it comprises all of them in its vague and vast reservoir. It is only the Jaina system, the system of the *Kriyā-vāda*, that of practicable empirical realities and activities, which assumes that the Infinite is incalculably great and therefore outside the range of human computation; but yet, while being a figure, Zero is here included in the empirical world. In all the other religio-philosophical systems of India, the Infinite is visualized under the symbol of Zero, the no-or-all-number, i.e. as a supra-empirical, supra-visible notion. In Indian metaphysics, then, Arithmetic is raised to a transcendental level by the Zero-concept which annihilates, but at the same time comprises, all other arithmetical symbols. As Ananda Coomaraswamy in his essay (Bull. School of Oriental Studies, London, 1934) rightly points out, Zero has to be combined with the concepts of *nabha* ('nave of a wheel') and *kha* ('cavity' or 'emptiness'). *Nabha* is the hub or smallest central part of a wheel, which potentially comprises also the length of its spokes and even that of its felloe, thus denoting at once the smallest and the largest measurement of the wheel. Therefore *nabha* may well be used as a synonym for zero, as being both absence and matrix of all numbers ($O = x-x$).

Geometry, too, serves Indian metaphysics through its notion of comprehensive space when understood as working not only in the linear, but also in the three- or more-dimensional spheres. In this connection one may explain the denomination of the Highest as *Kūṭa-stha*, 'the outstanding' in varied directions, 'the exuberant'. Sometimes, for instance in the *Bhagavad Gītā*, *Kūṭa-stha* is applied as an epithet to *Brahman*. Like horns (*kūṭa*) on the head of an animal, or like the peak of a mountain (*kūṭa*), *Brahman* protrudes and pierces through the limits and the contours of the given empirical shapes. It stands immovable (*kūṭa*) outside and inside the lower spheres to which all empirical things are pressed down in revolving motion. *Brahman*, the *kūṭa-stha*, alone extends beyond and transcends the three-dimensional world. The Infinite is not bound to a certain quantity or dimension. As such *Brahman* in the old Upaniṣads is called greater than the greatest and smaller than the smallest of our known measurements. It is beyond this world, and at the same time within this world, located in the innermost subtlest

part of the heart, to speak in Upaniṣadic metaphors. It is *tirohita*, literally 'laid across' (cf. our former explanations of *kūṭa-stha*). *Tirohita* means accordingly: something which is hidden and indiscernible, i.e. something which cannot be grasped in our usual framework of distinct shapes. It is *parokṣa* (*paras-akṣa*), 'beyond our eye', not to be ordered into, and classified by, any empirical instrument of perception and reasoning.

The Infinite is by its very nature *sva-tantra*, not to be caught into the network of empirical entanglement which binds its lower manifestations. It is self-dependent, self-sufficient and self-produced, (*svayam-bhū*), working according to its own laws in all visible spheres and beyond.

The Infinite is akin to, but not the same as, the Indefinite. The Indefinite is a notion borrowed from the narrower logical sphere. The Indefinite is beyond logical definition, as the very term suggests, but it is not unlimited. The Indefinite is for the Western logician a drawback, an embarrassingly impracticable thing, while also for him the Infinite—if ever posed in its widest spatial sense—is an asset. However, even into the logical sphere the Indian philosopher transmits his reluctance to define and to restrict.

A tendency to transcend the limitation of fixed border-lines, 'termini', is also evident in Indian logical method, which significantly—in contrast to Western logic—is ever reluctant to fix a term to one possible meaning only.¹ The productive verbal root from which a term, a noun is derived, is kept elastic enough to assume different meanings according to the context and to diverse spheres of application. The basic meaning of the verbal root is maintained, but varied according to the schools and branches of thought. For instance, *jaḍa*, 'the insentient', may be the quality of the coarse and unintelligent Matter, but also, on the other hand, it may be used for the highest state of Yogic concentration in which the Yogin has made himself insentient, i.e. unattached to, and undisturbed by, pleasure and pain, success and failure. Thus the very same term gains a positive or negative import according to its sphere of application. Similarly, *Kaivalyam*, 'isolation', may, when viewed from the empirical angle, designate 'detachment' from material bondage. Its consequence is 'Union' with the Divine. Here the

¹ See chapter X, p. 147; consider also p. 172f.

counterparts, isolation and union, are simultaneously or successively expressed by the very same term. To the same group belongs the term *māyā*. *Māyā*, literally 'the measurable' world as a whole, the combination of all *māyās*, has a reality for this sphere of visible shapes. However, when confronted with the postulate of absolute permanency and constancy, it gains the meaning of transitoriness and thus, in its last consequence, that of illusionary reality only.

Sometimes it appears that, already in the verbal root itself, ambiguity, or even contradictory meanings, are contained. One single verbal root can comprise several divergent functions. For instance, *yu* means 'to unite' and also 'to separate'; *lī*, 'to cling' and also 'to be unsteady' (in the intensive form of the root). *Vas* means 'to dwell' and also 'to speed, run away'. Other verbal roots apparently have within themselves contradictory meanings, especially those which represent cause and effect, i.e. they comprise two different stages of the same function. Other verbal roots of apparently contradictory meaning can be understood as cause and effect, i.e. sequences which follow each other in a fixed progress and process and cannot change places. *Pṛj* is 'to move' and also 'to stand still' (after reaching the goal). *Hā* is 'to attain' and also 'to give up' (what has been attained). Nothing remains static in this empirical world, and the last moment of reaching fruition is the first moment of the reverse process, annihilation. Thus, in its last consequences, there is no final logical contradiction included in the root-meaning of the verb, but it comprises both movement and successive counter-movement, which display those apparently contradictory effects.

The Indian thinker is always reluctant to fix a term and to pin it down to one meaning only, thus cutting off all its further latent possibilities. As such, one verb or noun may be applied to more than only one sense-organ. *Khyā* is 'to see' and 'to say', i.e. to express in words what the eye has seen. *Varna* designates 'colour' and 'sound': it appertains to both faculties, that of the eye and that of the ear. Indian landscape appeals to both sense-organs in equal strength. Its rhythm of colour and sound is perceived with conjoined intensity through each of the organs.

However, even in the West—except in the field of strict logic—the Indefinite is not always valued negatively. In the sphere of mathematics it is accepted as a puzzling axiom. The circumference of the circle is expressed in an indefinite irrational

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series of fractions (3,14159 . . .), never to be accurately fixed and expressed in definite figures. Here 'irrational' does not transcend the empirical sphere, but is an empirical fact and border-line of mathematical calculability, which, though reluctantly, the Western mathematician accepts. The Indian, on the other hand, is less worried with this problem of empirical proof gained by accurate calculations. He gladly accepts and dwells on general speculations beyond the empirical sphere. For the Indian, mathematics and the exact sciences are not an end in themselves, but only auxiliary means and metaphors or symbols of the one 'True Reality', the Beyond. Western mathematics and astronomy, since the time of the ancient Greeks, certainly venture beyond the sphere of this earth, but only as far as visibility reaches. Astronomy answers to a human quest. Man and his needs remain here the starting- and end-point of research. The *deinos anēr*, the 'all-powerful Man', with his faculty of reason, *logos*, is characteristic of the Western scientist's attitude. Ontology, the science of Being, is for the Western thinker generally a science of beings on earth and its surroundings; whilst in India Ontology is always the teaching of Universal, Supra-personal Being, of which all and every personal being is only a special and, in a way, a negligible, case. Indian logic, epistemology, physics and mathematics, just like theology, psychology and ethics, are only subsidiary sciences, each helping in its place to understand the true Being of the Beyond—the only thing which truly matters. It alone fulfils the postulate of permanency and constancy.

The Indian Infinite comprises the un-attainable and un-calculable.

4. SUPRA-THEISM OR A-THEISM?

Western theistic religions are inclined to call the Indian religions, pursuing other ideals than their own, Atheism or 'Nihilism' in the sense of a primitive paganism. Can this verdict stand? Ancient *Rgveda* proffers a theology of many gods—too many for Western liking—so many, indeed, that Western Theists call it Nihilism as the opposite to their Monotheism. In the beginning Indian deities are but the gods of sun and

moon, morning- and evening-stars, thunderstorms and rains, and gods of rivers, forests and cattle as well. This multiformity of deities is very often subdivided into single aspects of their functions, e.g. Viṣṇu, in his role as sun-god, stands only for the solar movements. His are the three strides from the point of ascent to the Zenith and down to the sunset. Besides these specified gods, deities—known or unknown—of a vaguer description are also venerated: the *viśve-devās*, the All-Gods. A kind of unification of this multiformity of gods is expressed in this vagueness of the All-Gods, but also in the stereotyped appeal to dual deities whose functions are interrelated, e.g. *Mitra with Varuṇa*. Or else, combinations of gods are made according to the rank of supremacy: the highest god, say Indra, is combined in invocation with his second in rank, say *Indra with Varuṇa* or *Indra with Agni*. This early period of Hindu thought cannot be called a-theistic, but rather polytheistic or even pan-theistic. Besides these forms there stands the characteristically Indian *Heno-theism*: One God is at present supreme, but always under the presupposition that others exist besides *Him* who can in the next moment supersede him.

A further unification of this pantheon of gods is already evident in early *R̥gveda*. Pan-theism can turn into *Theo-panism*. God is everything, or rather: Everything is God, permeated as it is by divine forces. True, from this axiom of Pantheism or Theo-panism the further consequence follows that the significance of each single god is effaced or lowered down to yet a fleeting phase or accidental manifestation. Each god is inferior to, or contrasted with, but derived from, the ultimate *Summum*, the nameless, continuous divine life-force. This alone is greater than the sum of all its known or postulated emanations. Already in these early times Indian thought embraces the ideal of 'Supra-Theism'. Supra-Theism presupposes a divine force which transcends all names and forms and all recognizable functions. It is not A-theism or Nihilism which determines Indian religiosity. It is an urge to transcend all definitions and human arbitrations, even as to the gods, in the postulate of the *Summum*. The great 'It', the *Brahman*, is neither this form alone nor that form alone, neither a male god nor a female god of however elevated capacities. *It*, the Highest, is not fully manifest in any human or any other animal form nor in their combinations. It is not bound to human arbitration of good or evil,

but it is the inexplicable, *neti-neti*, the 'not this, not this'. It is the completion of all known forms and of further unknowable potentialities. One may call this, it is true, a nihilism or elimination of all known attributes in the sense of a denial of their final value. Can one term this Nihilism in a merely negative sense? Or is this not rather the all-embracing inclusion and submersion of all beings into a greater All-beyond outside the grasp of human possibilities and conceptions?

Hinduism and its daughter-religions, Jainism and Buddhism, are by their Western critics called a-theistic—a wrong statement, both from the aspect of the actual presence of gods and from the higher metaphysical aspect of indiscriminate Wholeness (*pūrṇatva*).

The so-called a-theistic Buddhism acknowledges and postulates gods as a class of elevated beings of greater power than the beings here on earth, animals and men. But here lies the basic difference from Christian theology: the Indian gods are also only a certain class of beings, not something entirely beyond and different from their human counterparts. The Indian gods are not the consequences, not the final and last postulates of the *Summum*. The gods are still bound to laws which are in a lower degree manifest on earth. The so-called a-theistic Jainism also adheres to the concept of gods, *devās*. But it provides for them a complement in the form of counter-gods, *prati-devās*, demons of equal potencies. In short, Buddhists and Jains are not a-theistic in the sense of negating gods, but, conversely, they often supplement the gods with complementary counter-beings. All these beings and counter-beings on earth, in heaven and in the lower spheres are still beings—an outflow of the Being, but not yet the Infinite and Indefinite itself.

India's lofty speculations on *Brahman*, since the times of the *Upaniṣads* and through all later periods of her thought, adhere to the postulate that whatever has name and form, even in the most lofty notions of Western Theism, has not yet reached the final goal of Supra-Personalism and as such Supra-Theism. A person, even that of the highest God, is for the Indian still too limited and too much a concept derived from the human standard of value, to be able ever to attain the rank of the highest Entity. Moreover, the highest God or even the One God alone, is still linked up with empirical measurement, with the Number 'One'. The Indian postulate of the Highest (neuter!) is, it is

true, an elimination, i.e. the removal of *limites*, limits, but this does not imply that it is nothing but a nihilistic Void. This Void is conceived as the All-Fullness (*pūrṇatva*) in *Nirvānam*: the productive void of all potentialities, not exhausted *in actu*. Its symbol is the Zero, the *śūnya* and *śūna*, the excessive void.¹ Zero is the potential All and None, inclusive of good and bad, of growth and decay, of positive and negative numbers alike. Zero is the embryo, the ever-swelling germ, not yet developed in a distinct form, but potentially containing all future forms—a No-Form of productive potentiality (see our former interpretations of the Zero-concept). India's Polytheism, Pantheism or Theo-panism is not an A-Theism, not a merely negative concept. It is not only an annihilation but, in addition, it is a completion and culmination of all specific Theisms—an A-Theism in the sense of Supra-Theism, a no-form or all-form for the sake of transcending all single forms. Fetishism, Animism, Polytheism—or whatever the Western observer conceives as primitive paganism—are only humble ways of India's search for the amorphous supra-form. Even the acknowledged higher forms of Western Theism are for the Indian also only preparatory stages of an approach to the Highest.

Not being content with any of the many forms of Theism alone, the Indian strives, in ever new tentative efforts, to investigate yet ever new avenues of approach. Each form of theism, as he sees it, is still only a limitation and an arbitrary form of selection. All religions are only an accidental expression of the No-and-All-form. Each religion develops its own congenial variation on the basic, general theme of religious urge and rhythm.²

5. THE INDIAN CONCEPT OF MYSTICISM

The Indian mentality—a constant and solid block in itself—is by the Western interpreter too often and too lightly termed

¹ See chapter VII, 1 and 2, pp. 95 and 99 passim.

² After having laboured for years to find a formula for India's relativism within Theism, I arrived finally at the term 'Supra-Theism'. Now I am happy to see in the publication *The Religions of the Hindu* (New York, 1953) that some of the contributors to this work have also used the very term Supra-Theism for India's highest religious aspirations.

'mystic' in the sense of abstruse, not accountable for by pure Reason. However, can the student of Indian mentality, with his knowledge won through detailed studies of Sanskrit classical texts and thought, be satisfied with this rather superficial statement?

If we go back to the original Greek meaning of this term 'mystic' from *muō*¹-*myō*, we arrive at two implications that are widely different, of which only one, and that the less frequently used, can be applied to Indian thought.

In the religious sphere of the Greco-Asian or Greco-Egyptian development of secret sects, the *mystēs* is the initiated member of such a sect. These *mystai* met in lonely places, often in dark grottoes or caves, in order to celebrate the ritual of their esoteric service. These *mystai*, then, were outsiders of the generally acknowledged society. The *mystai* were conscious of their lonely ways; their emotional revelation could only be gained by voluntary seclusion from ordinary life. Their community—small in number—was regarded by official society with suspicion and dislike because of their 'otherness'.

Mueō, 'to initiate', *mueomai*, 'to be initiated', are derived from the Greek root *mu*, (doric *muaō*, *muaomai*). The basic verb *muō* means 'to close the lips', 'the eyes' or—in medicine—'the closing of a wound'. Accordingly, *mus* means a 'gag of the mouth'. This meaning is evident also in its equivalents in other European languages, e.g. Latin *mutus*, 'silent', and in Sanskrit *muka*, also 'silent'. One has to combine this philological meaning in the Sanskrit world of thought with *muni* (*maunam*): the monk and the saint keep silent, because they are beyond wants. One has to think also in this connection of *tuṣṇim* and *santoṣa*, both derivations from the root *tuṣ*, 'to be silent', and as such 'satisfied and happy'.

The term *muō* is thus significantly used in early Greek medicine—medicine being the earliest developed science in ancient Greece—and in this context it means: 'to sew together the edges of a wound', i.e. to restore original unity which by accident had been torn apart.

Muō, *muomai*, thus stands in connection with other sense-perceptions, e.g. with the faculty of seeing. As such, it means closing the eyes to the embarrassing multiformity of external phenomena. In fact we find the same implications also in Indian

¹ The author prefers this English phonetic spelling of Greek.

thought. *Kāthaka Upaniṣad* 4, 1 states that the average man first looks outwards, but that the 'true seer' looks inwards with an inverted eye (*āvṛtta-caḥṣus*).

Restraint from all empirical perceptions leads to true mysticism, i.e. to concentration on latent, ever-present unity.

However, it appears that in the Western and Near Eastern world the meaning of mysticism is preferably limited to the eye as such: closing of the eye. Is this closing of the eye a need to ignore all happenings of the outside world and to exclude all contact with one's empirical surroundings? Is it the means of forcing the accumulated emotion and concentration into a new channel, through which a world-remote vision is spontaneously breaking forth?

India's 'mysticism'—as philologico-epistemologically outlined in V, 2—has its sociological implications. First, the Indian mystics are undeniably the leaders of their community, officially acknowledged and generally venerated. They do not represent a quasi-suspect movement, they are not undesirable social elements. The Indian mystics are a kind of Saints: yet not like the Christian Saints who are men of outstandingly admirable deeds, often connected with self-sacrifice as a martyr. The Indian mystics, nearly all of them, are epistemological Saints, spiritual leaders towards knowledge. Another point of difference between the Indian mystic and the *mystēs* is, that in India hardly ever is the enlightenment of the mystic attained by a spontaneous uprush of feelings. To speak rightly about an Indian mystic, we have to underline his graded development, an achievement in a process, a clarification gained step by step, first arising from the exact observation of the empirical world, then arriving at abstractions and general laws. Buddhism comes to its final concept of *Nirvāṇam* not by an *a limine* exclusion, but by a most accurate observation of all empirical data. Only then, after having examined the phenomena, evaluated them and assigned them to their proper places under consideration of their results, the moment is reached when the essence of them all and the underlying principle immanent in and transcending them all is visualized: an epistemological process of gradual elimination by Reason, and not by spontaneous emotion. Buddhist, and also Hindu, mysticism starts with the world, deduces truth from the world and enters into the transcendental sphere with this knowledge of the world. Not a spontaneous-

emotional mysticism, but a graded deductional one, is evident. As such, there are no abstruse and dark irrational emotions which begin and continue on the Indian mystic path. Śaṅkara, the greatest Indian philosopher, is wrongly compared to the lonely emotional mystics of the Western Middle Ages (cf. *West-Östliche Mystik* by Rudolf Otto, 1926). Some of these spontaneously entered into the emotional experience of Vision without gradual epistemological training as a preparatory means. True, there are also Plotinus and Augustine—each of a range which might be compared to Śaṅkara. However, their highly developed intellectual training is often accompanied by a zeal for ascetic self-mortification. Those combinations of high intellectual training and dismal self-mortification characteristic of some Christians are not aimed at by the saintly leaders of Hindu and Buddhist society. They developed their concepts of mystical revelation with steady serenity and a well-balanced mind.

If one wishes to compare Indian with Western religious mysticism, one has to turn to the mystic *Bhakti* movements of India's Middle Ages. Here, too, the urge is directed towards the contact with a personal God. Here we have also the lonely seekers, outsiders in Society with little influence on the Indian community. Neither self-mortification, however, nor yet a graded intellectual training, is here required. Firstly, these *Bhaktas* are not the acknowledged leaders like the philosopher-mystics of Śaṅkara's type. Secondly, these *Bhaktas* are not 'closing their eyes' to all empirical experiences. They elevate and transfer their emotional longings towards higher divine persons. They strive after a love-union with their *iṣṭa-devatās*, their divine lovers. Noteworthy it is, that the male Bhakta considers himself in this love-union as the feminine, i.e. the weaker, partner. A passionate demand for participation (from the root *bhaj*) is here expressed. The fruition of the desired union is postulated and expected for certain. Love given attracts counter-love, as Ṛgvedic sacrifice attracted its desired result. Here again the reaction of the beloved god is enforced. It is not, as in Catholic mysticism, an act of Divine Grace which establishes the contact between the God and the Bhakta. And—more important still—the contact between man-*person* and God-*person* is not yet the ultimate goal. For all times and all movements, the Indian axiom remains that the ultimate Summum is supra-personal.

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Contact between beings on earth and beings in heaven is still a preliminary stage. All 'I'- and 'Thou'-relationships are only steps towards the last aim of the 'It'-experience and of the final vision and total re-absorption into the 'It'. Sensual life-nearness is here carried through to its highest possible approach—but under the presupposition that even the highest postulated person still does not fulfil the ultimate longing. Besides, it is not in lonely grottoes, but in the acknowledged temples of the masses that these devotees appeal to their divine lovers. Even this form of Indian mystic is not abstruse and inarticulate in his emotional outbursts.

No darkness, no abstruseness, no self-mortification is the ideal of the Indian philosopher-mystics and founders of religious movements which bridge over sectarian divisions, even between Hindu and Moslem religiosity.

The philosopher, the mystic in the Indian sense, is the ideal leader of Indian society. The cosmic view—basic to all Indian thought—is that of the interconnection of all empirical phenomena. All of them emanate from the same pre- and post-empirical unity which is only veiled, dimmed and obscured by apparent empirical singleness, but is yet latent and active in divergent appearances. By studying single persons and objects, the Indian philosopher tries to find the common ground in all of them. Step by step in uniting them by tracing their common essentials, the Indian mystic tries to restore the healthy primary unity, like the accurate surgeon who uses his knowledge and skill to heal the wound of accidental singleness and disturbing divergency. The split-up segments of the basic Oneness are reunited. All the 'Heres' in present, past and future manifestations are only evidence and proof of a constant unifying and unified supra-temporal Beyond. The Indian philosopher-mystic undertakes an epistemological research with a clearly thought-out method and precise formulation, in order to deduce from the 'Here' and all possible 'Heres' the primary and latent unity. It is the latent unity which is the life-force and the creative impetus for all time-bound emanations, which are yet in timeless continuity. Thus the Indian mystic helps to lead the masses beyond their imagined isolation in feelings and conditions, and he strives—not after a personal emotional satisfaction alone—but after a general enlightenment, gradually acquired, so as to make visible the Unity behind all appearances. This

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search helps him and all his followers to the right evaluation of events, past, present and future. In India the mystics, then, are not self-secluded single individuals, no 'mystic Few', but the 'mystic all-in-one'. The mystic is the leader, the educator. He is responsible for the whole of society and its enlightenment. He teaches the common truth of basic supra-personal Reality and Unity.

APPENDIX

*Mythology and Mysticism*¹

I tried in the preceding pages to elucidate the true import of mysticism as understood and frequently applied in Hinduism and its daughter-religions. It turned out that this domain, too, apparently so subjective and personally emotional, still is of supra-personal, cosmic concern.

From this angle also we have to reconsider the usual notions about mythology: for mythology, too, is not based solely on the subjective fanciful imagination.

Mysticism, as we interpreted it, is in India the natural tendency towards unification of all apparently distinct and independent empirical phenomena. Yet, because all distinct forms are *paramārthatas* dependent on the primary, final and immanent Divine, they are as such each of them essentially interrelated, and the mystic view tries to find the common denominator of all these fractions. Here a kind of 'metaphysical' mathematics is at work (cf. our investigations of the Zero, VII, 1 and 2). Mysticism, then, as we endeavoured to make clear, is in India never to be understood in the depreciatory sense—sometimes found in the West—of abstruse and disordered confusion.

It is rightly observed in West and East alike that India gives also to mythology a predominant position in her thought. Again we cannot evaluate or devalue India's mythological tendency in a Western sense. Nobody any more accepts Macaulay's ridiculing attitude towards India's belief in giants of enormous height and her assumption of concentric circles of seas of salt and treacle surrounding the earth. (Cf. D. C. Boulger, *Lord William Bentinck*, in 'Rulers of India').

¹ See also the discussion on Mythology in chapter IV, 2, p. 80.

In India, mythology does not only play its part in early 'primitive' times, but it is still alive and still appreciated—a fact which the daily recitals of parts of Indian Epics and *Purānas* stand to prove.

As I pointed out in my 'Reality of Fiction',¹ fiction in itself is also considered as a kind of reality. Whatever can be thought and imagined, has a material reality, and this in hardly a lesser degree than that which can be seen and heard in everyday life. Mythology is a kind of exaggeration, or let us call it sublimation and accumulation, of happenings and of phenomena beyond the actual observable facts. Mythology, then, like mysticism, is a natural tendency towards unification and adaptation of super-empirical facts and capacities, in order to illustrate potentialities which go beyond empirical actualities. The demons, the gods and the heroes, all provide a kind of link to fill the gap between events among limited beings and the infinite possibilities of the Divine.

While mysticism and mythology are each nourished by the urge for transcending the limited sphere of empirical happenings and conditions, there is, however, a deep difference between them. Mysticism is gained by giving up the 'fiction' of separate individuality. Mythology introduces new fictions of wider individualities, in order to bridge over the distance between the empirical world of limited forms and the unlimited All. Furthermore, there is at work here not a single enlightened mystic, but the indistinguishable mass of the common creative imagination. Mythology is a kind of 'objective' mysticism in so far as it unifies individual emotion in a multiform objective representation in narrative guise. Mythological personalities in their exaggerated expansion are, as it were, steps from the 'Here' to the 'Beyond'.

Besides, mythology is an educational means to this end, while exploring step by step the undiscovered, unmapped range of imaginable possibilities. Mythology serves to fill the universal 'map' with further details of potential facts. All realities, actual and fictional, thus acquired, have their origin and their end in the all-comprehensive Divine. The mythological narratives are a supplement to historical happenings. They provide also a supplement to and elevation of human qualities. As in the *Avesta* qualities are personified and deified in

¹ Bhandarkar Vol., Calcutta, 1940, pp. 97 ff.

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the *Amēša Spēntas*, Immortal Spirits of affluence, prosperity, heroism, etc., so too in Indian mythology are human qualities lifted to a higher sphere as demi-gods, demons, and the like. Indian mythology, however, does not, like the *Avesta*, restrict heroic and divine qualities to a limited number, but over and over again creates such divine spirits anew. These exalted personified qualities serve an ethical aim: they provide the stimulus for further development towards perfection and super-human vitality and efficiency. As such they approach the Divine, and fill in the gap between the imperfect and limited world and the absolute Fullness of postulated *pūrṇatva*.

All Indian search for reaching the Divine is an endless way (*yāna*) towards transcending limitation. The visualized and imagined personalities of supra-Man with stronger than human capacities are intermediate beings serving as a medium, as it were, between the feeble and dependent beings on earth and the all-powerful Highest, the *Summum*.

IX. INDIAN ESCHATOLOGY

1. PROMISE AND FULFILMENT IN RELIGION

PROMISE is the assurance given by a higher authority, or at any rate by somebody in power, to help a person in need. Seen from the angle of the recipient, promise implies a certain expectation. The Christian religion is the proverbial religion of promise—promise for the future. The life after death will bring betterment and happiness in the other world. Here the question arises whether the recipient has deserved this by his own action—partially or wholly—or whether it will be given to him entirely as an act of Grace by God or His Son Christ. The problem is whether this future 'better state' is the result of Divine action, a kind of due re-action resulting from the gracious act of God allowing the gracious act of His Son—the self-sacrifice of Jesus. Or is it that the future betterment is a due or generous reward of man's own former good deeds—Grace partly or wholly deserved?

The Indian religions, on the other hand, especially Hinduism, are religions of fulfilment—an entirely different concept to that of promise. Fulfilment is a consummation, the carrying-out of a thing properly and intentionally started, a completion of a course in its final result. From the standpoint of the notion of Time here, the present and the future are interrelated as a sequence and consequence. Hinduism sees actions and persons, through the three stages of time, as a continuous series.¹ The past is the mother of the present and the present is the mother of the future. Significantly, however, the Indian systems of religious philosophy, especially the Yoga-system, see the culmination of the stages of time in the future, i.e. in the ever-present further potentialities of development of growth and completion. Here an unavoidable biological law is the basis, not a hopeful expectation. The past, while having given its productive germ, as it were, to the present, has fulfilled its function and as such outlived its mission. The present now takes over and, after having in its turn fulfilled the past, stands

¹ This natural series Hinduism continues into the hereafter.

now at its place to prepare for the future. Past and present are only preparatory stages for the not-yet-fulfilled or not-yet-realized future.

Christianity—and other Western religions—take their starting-point from the world as it now presents itself. Christian theology starts with the present state of 'sinful man' and the necessity for him to be healed from sin. Recognizing his imperfection and need for being made whole, Christianity promises remedy and betterment in the future. The original perfect state in Paradise before the Fall of Man is near-to-forgotten, or at any rate not taken into consideration for future development. Hereditary Sin stands like a barrier between former Paradise and future Salvation. Hinduism, on the other hand, with its basic dogma of the *Brahman* principle, recognizes an ideal state ever present though—through our actual worldly experience—veiled or dimmed, but never entirely lost. Only part of the *Brahman* is engaged in the worldly functions of Its manifestations, but Its greater part remains for ever untouched and unstained outside the world. The final ideal stage is for India the re-gaining or re-realizing of the complete unity of all manifestations on earth or in heaven with their essential substance.

Christian theology provides for individual salvation, Hindu theology for cosmic final unification in which each single individual plays only the part of an accessory to the Whole. As such the Hindu lives simultaneously in the three stages of empirical time, and also in the timeless constancy of the ultimate Reality of the Beyond. The single manifestations on earth, man, animal and plant, are here taken as of essentially the same nature, being all imbued with the universal life-force. Western theology is mainly concerned with the functions of the conscious, immortal human soul; Indian religions, on the other hand, are concerned mainly with the full realization of the supra-personal Divine Substance. Single manifestations also in the higher or lower spheres, named gods or demons, while still bound to the limitations of assumed name and form (*nāma-rūpa*), are for the Indian only manifestations of, but not identical with, the Pure Substance itself. The world of Becoming is interrelated with, but not the same as, the world of constant Being. Gods too, while assuming forms, are only transitory and ever-changing in their conditions. The postulate of final fulfilment lies beyond each individual form. As such the Hindu concept of fulfilment

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contains a paradox for the Western thinker. The highest individual fulfilment is the Super-individual, the re-absorption into the general reservoir of No-more-forms, out of which all forms have emanated. The empirical individual fulfilment goes from growth to decay and decay to growth; the transcendental supra-individual fulfilment goes from the Unmanifest via manifestation back to the Unmanifest.

The empirical fulfilment follows the law of causation; each action results in its due effect. Man, the agent of the initiatory action, is self-responsible for the results of his deeds. His transcendental aim of fulfilment, however, lies beyond the range of all his deeds. The Indian *Karma*-theory teaches responsibility towards actions. In the end, however, with the fruition of action, the force of action exhausts itself and gives room for freedom from the bonds of action. Hindu salvation is self-activity; first it demands the fruition of the individual *Karma*-seed (*Karma-bīja*) into its adequate *Karma*-fruit (*Karma-phala*). When the full fruit has developed it powerlessly droops in its state of fulfilment, either to serve as a manure for further growth, or—when finally (maybe through one, maybe through many lives) all its productive urge is exhausted—then it is free from any individual fruition and can be re-absorbed into the super-individual reservoir. ¹The final salvation lies in formless re-absorption. Here the problem arises whether the individual himself or any other outside power can ever interfere with this objective process of fruition and fulfilment. It is an impersonal law of causation which governs the development on earth. The agent is only an accidental instrument for contributing at his proper place to the functioning of this general causation-process. (It is significant that Sanskrit grammar prefers to present the agent not in the Nominative case of the direct subject, but in the indirect case of the Instrumental.) The impersonal action is preferably expressed as the subject in the passive form of the verb: 'the pot is being made by the potter' (as mentioned before). It is action in itself which matters, and the accidental agent is only an accessory to this action. However, this does not mean passivity. Indian religion is based on the law of self-activity of man or creature or matter. No interference from without is admitted in this quasi-neutral process of development. How, then, can the concept of divine

¹ See chapters III, 2, p. 47; IV, 1, p. 52; XI, 3, p. 175.

interference be introduced into this religion? The notion of the active Grace of God as a free agent of Redemption and Salvation for Mankind does not find a proper place in the Indian supra-personal system of thought. True, certain medieval schools of mainly atheistic trend have a kind of later theistic appendix, where they introduce the Grace of God as an accelerating or retarding element in the natural process of self-salvation. However, no God of Hindu religion can perform miracles or decisive actions against the law of natural development.

According to Hindu thought, no God has created the world out of Chaos or out of Nothing in accordance with His own purposes and plans (cf. *R̥gveda* 10, 129: 'The Gods are later than the world's emanation'). God or gods cannot interfere with the world's immanent course. The Christian concept of vicarious Atonement of the sins of mankind is alien to this world of 'automatic' Nature. For the orthodox Hindu no promise of the higher authority of a divine Person can decisively help mankind or other beings in their needs. Without compassion, bound to her laws of cause and effect, Nature fulfils her course with or without intervention from an external power. Nature fulfils herself in bringing about the fruition of action and reaction. Only when the fruition-process on earth has exhausted itself, does the law of causation stop and emanation revert into re-absorption.

Does this unbreakable law of cosmic process result in discouragement, scepticism and pessimism? Is it devoid of ethical implications? A cosmic, not only an individual, responsibility is laid upon each being on earth. If you do not want the fruit, be careful not to sow the seed. Humility, and not reliance on any personal power capable of interfering in the world's course, is impressed upon, and ever-present in, the Hindu mind. But is this a pitiless and depressing teaching without any further scope and hope? The great optimism of all Hindu religions lies in their insistence on a final—and primary—ideal state. Though not always realized, it is yet latent—only obscured to our view—even in this imperfect middle stage of the world-expansion. Instead of negativism and pessimism, energetic activity is called for from each single being, consciously to contribute by responsible action to attaining or regaining the desired end: Cosmic Bliss (*ānanda*).

2. THE IDEAL OF COMPLETION (PŪRNATVA)
AGAINST THE IDEAL OF PERFECTION

The postulates of the *Summum* are rightly formulated on the whole in negative terms, in order to indicate something which cannot be grasped under any formulation of value (or devaluing) gained from the empirical level. The Indian *neti-neti* proclaims that *Brahman*, the Highest, is neither great nor small, neither subtle nor coarse. In short, it is something which cannot be comprehended by any of the senses, nor by all the senses simultaneously, nor yet by pure Reason alone. This does not, however, imply that all such means of empirical perception and thinking are valueless for preparing the ultimate intuition. They all lead up to the threshold, as it were, of higher vision. Through these empirical achievements one gathers the momentum, so to speak, for the jump into the transcendental sphere, which has its foundation in the lower, empirical level, but in the end transcends it.

Only very few positive statements are ventured about the Highest. It is called the true *satyam* or the *satyasya satyam*, 'the reality of the reality'. Significantly, the term *satyam* lends itself to an ontological and, at the same time, to an epistemological interpretation. *Satyam* is an adjectival derivative from the present participle *sat*, 'being', of the root *as*, 'to be'. As such it means 'the truly existent', the Real in a universal cosmic sense, and hence something fundamentally true. As R. S. Singh in his book on *Śaṅkara's Vedānta* points out,¹ *satyam* includes also an axiological value. Reality is a value in itself. Yet, not even all empirical things, while bound to transitoriness in form and condition, are of the same full value as the underlying constant reality, which exists in fullness before, and after, all phenomenal existence. The postulate of the *Summum*, then, is *satyasya satyam*, the reality of the relative realities which, in a way, participate in It.

Another positive postulate of the Highest is that it is an 'It', including all personalities but transcending them. Here again all empirical conditions, say of objects or persons, are not excluded from, but included in, the *Summum*. Not yet are they complete realities, even if the sum of them all—all possibilities

¹ Jaipur, 1949.

of past, present and future—are taken together. Thus all empirically known data are included in, not excluded from, the postulate of the Highest. But all their known possibilities are not considered as sufficient and all-embracing enough to establish the true concept of the Highest.

Another predicate or postulate of the *Summum*, stated in the Upaniṣads and applied in all later speculations of Indian systems, is the description of the *Brahman* as the *aṇutva*, the 'atom-like subtlety'. Here again the *Summum* is not limited only to subtlety and minuteness, but at the same time is extended to all potential quantity and quality of greatness: *ākāśatva*, 'vague like the ether', beyond the distinct perceptibility of empirical forms, persons and objects.

In Indian philosophical diction repetition is used to emphasize the importance of a concept or dogma. Not by accident does the *Īśā Upaniṣad*, in its programmatic opening, use seven times in one verse a single predicate or metaphor to designate the Highest. It is the term *pūrṇa* or *pūrṇatva*, 'the full' or 'the fullness', which stands for the highest value. Wrongly this term *pūrṇa* is rendered as the Latin term *Perfectum*. *Perfectum* must be translated as 'done through and through' (*per*), till the very final end of its possibilities is reached. This ideal of the final goal of Perfection is a Western postulate, not an Indian one. The West thinks on results, believes in facts which ultimately can be reached and fulfilled. The West, even in stating its ideal postulates, works by eliminating, not by accumulation. Other possibilities, less efficient, are excluded. Valuation in the West tends to be selective, not collective. Western axiology hardly ever ventures to give up the mental and spiritual support of gradation and order. Western thought clings to a clear-cut and distinct *Summum*. The orderly Western mind is perturbed and confused by too many equally valid possibilities side by side. The Indian mind, on the other hand, rejoices in dynamic changes and divergent possibilities as a congenial expression of divine productivity. The West is afraid of the embarrassing complexity in which one may lose one's own clear direction and certain position. From this angle of voluntary limitation to one single path, the Western ideal rests in perfection, the fulfilment of a distinct aim which can be accomplished by limitation and selection only. The end, the ideal, is static and changeless in its perfected individuality.

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By contrast, the Indian is never satisfied with any static end. Death for him is not the end of an individual, but a new beginning in the dynamic series of growth and decay. Nothing perfects itself without turning into its opposite, and as such starts a new way of development—endless and for ever insatiable. The Indian does not believe that any object or person can find fulfilment in itself alone. For him there cannot be a resting-place in a personal perfection, in a distinct single survival. The end of development is for all phenomena a final re-flow and in-flow into the general receptacle of the 'Ocean', the *Brahman*, the universal reservoir out of which all forms sprang forth and into which all of them, in the end, are re-absorbed.

There is no static perfection for any distinct entity individually. But what about the indiscriminate *Summum*, *Brahman*? Is it static in the end? It is certainly not static in the beginning, for all phenomena of the world are emanations out of 'It'. But can there ever be conceived a final static end, after all outflow has been reabsorbed? It is not in one single world-creation, but through innumerable repetitions, that the emanating and re-absorbing process goes on endlessly. The great metaphysical quest of all Indian religions is as follows: Is there a static end, an ultimate stop of dynamic flow in the 'Ocean' of final *Nirvāṇam* or *Brahma-Nirvāṇam*? When all persons and objects have reached this *Summum* of *pūrṇatva*, complete and indiscriminate fullness, do motion and dynamics still remain? Can no further outflow into another world, and into other individual forms, be expected in the near or even in the most distant future? Does the continuous cosmic flux actually ever cease? Does the dynamic motion finally end in static rest? Or does a kind of oscillation ever remain? It is significant for this last question that the most frequent metaphor for *Brahman* is that of the 'Ocean'. Are these small waves swallowed up within the vast water-reservoir before they can again take on single shapes? Or does the infinite receptacle outbalance within itself these outward movements? In short: is this recurring process of emanation and reabsorption ever to be ended and fulfilled? Does the completeness of fullness, *pūrṇatva*, the accumulation of the cosmic ball, as it were, ever stop to enlarge itself in circumference? The Infinite can never be conceived in any imaginable finite dimensions.

FACETS OF INDIAN THOUGHT

The Indian postulate of true divine bliss is not a static perfection, to be attained individually. For the Indian it is not a painful thought that no individual form ever comes statically to rest and permanence. It is distressing for him, however, to think that anything can for ever rest in limitation, in an unnatural distinction and unnatural fossilization of form. In the West, Man is the centre and the measuring-rod for his surroundings, which subserve human purpose and serve only as his frame. Thus Man isolates himself, cuts himself off from the surrounding Cosmos, and prescribes cosmic laws according to his own arbitration. He establishes and stabilizes ideals of perfection in singleness—interrupting, as it were, for his own sake, the horizontal dynamics of universal cosmic movements. The Western ideal lies in the vertical line leading up to a summit-point. In India, on the other hand, Man with humility accepts also for himself the same dynamic laws of indiscriminate change, and avoids putting himself into an elevated isolated position, away from the cosmic waves below his level. In India Man, and even his God, are swallowed up in the whirlpool of revolving equalizing motion, like other cosmic phenomena. No individual, high as it may stand, is all-embracing enough to fulfil the ideal of *pūrnatva*, 'all-completion', 'all-inclusion', and final statics.

X. INDIAN LOGIC

1. THE ROLE OF LOGIC IN INDIAN RELIGION

In a recent book on Buddhism,¹ Edward Conze states that 'the interest in Logic in Buddhism was stimulated by its great value of propaganda. Huge audiences were pitted against each other in debate, and victory in debate carried with it enhanced prestige and increased patronage. A training in logic gave the Buddhists an advantage over their rivals, and the Hindu sects were soon compelled to elaborate logical systems of their own.' For the scholar of Hinduism, this utilitarian interpretation is astonishing. It certainly does not apply to the use of Logic already flourishing in pre-Buddhist times.

Already in the early Upaniṣads the dialectic method was employed to grasp empirical and transcendental truths.

Knowledge about *Brahman* was gained in so-called *samvādas* (lit. 'discussions'),² and was developed stage by stage in discussions from the more concrete empirical to more abstract and transcendental interpretations. No utilitarian purpose underlies this truly Indian research for final values. True, the legend has it that the victor in discussion (e.g. Yājñavalkya) gains cattle as the price for his spiritual gifts. Through all times the Indian trend of thought has been based on the dogma that truth does not lie in one way of interpretation alone. A kind of tolerance towards the viewpoints of fellow-thinkers is inherent in these dialectical digressions. For the Indian, truth (as I pointed out in a former book)³ is only the crossing-point of straight-drawn radii; each of them contributes in its due place to finding the centre, but none of them alone can establish the centre. Each aspect serves as a facet, as a segmentary part through which the hidden Whole reveals itself. This is the reason why India did admit new ideas from abroad (for instance those of Christianity), and accepted them as yet another

¹ Edward Conze, *Buddhism*, p. 165; Oxford, Cassirer, 1951.

² See chapters V, 1, p. 71, and XI, 3, p. 171.

³ Betty Heimann, *Studien zur Eigenart Indischen Denkens*, Tübingen, 1930.

welcome way of approach, another auxiliary to the true and hidden Divine.

No uniqueness of thought or of form is ever stabilized by the Indian thinker—according to his basic dogma of the relativity of all empirical phenomena. Since R̥gvedic times all given shapes on earth, or even in heaven, are only reflections or manifestations of the 'True Being' which with its greater part remains for ever unmanifestable (*Puruṣa-sūkta*, *R̥gveda* 10, 90). The *Brahman* principle, the 'It', is more than any—and more than the sum—of all distinct forms of individual manifestation in person and in thought. *Brahman* is the *coincidentia oppositorum*, the falling-together of all opposites. It is the 'Yes' and 'No' simultaneously of each single contention. *Brahman*, as already emphatically stated and repeated in the old pre-Buddhist Upaniṣads, is the *na-iti, na-iti (neti, neti)*. Each definition of It, taken from our empirical experience, is insufficient. *Brahman* is not great or small alone, neither good nor evil alone, but it is all qualities and definitions combined. One may quote here also the—at first sight strange—statement of the *Yoga-sūtras* 4, 7, that the average man has black (bad), good (white) *Karma* or a mixture of both, while the perfected Yogin is beyond these ethical human arbitrations of good and evil.

Dialectics are implicitly contained in all statements made from our empirical standpoint with which we try to grasp the Absolute. The Absolute includes, and at the same time defies, all our possible interpretations. Logical dialectics as such are naturally called for from the moment the *Brahman*-principle is conceived as transcendent of, and at the same time immanent in, this world. The world of the Becoming (*bhava*) is only a lesser part, an emanation of the constant *Sat*, Being, excelling all empirical times of past, present and future. As such a relativity of values is implicitly accepted for Indian logic since the earliest speculations on the *Brahman*-principle were ventured upon. Each object or thought has its own reality or truth, but, being only one of the many changing empirical forms, it has merely a relative and limited truth and reality. Here we come across some features of Indian logic which are embarrassing for the Western logician. I speak of the backbone of Western logic, the 'Excluded Middle'. For the Western logician a thing is either 'A' or 'non-A'. For the Indian logician, thinking at the same time on the empirical and transcendental levels, a thing may

empirically be an 'A' or a 'non-A', but transcendently it is neither, or else both of them combined. Even in the empirical sphere a thing is not constantly fixed to one definition alone. In the mainly tropical climate in which—as already indicated—India's thought developed and on which it is invariably based, natural conditions defy any fixed and permanent position: they change before our eyes from growth to decay and again from decay to growth—a phenomenon not easily observable in the temperate zone of the West.

The Western thinker keeps to distinct, fixed terms; he is interested mainly in the static result which can be stated clearly. The Indian thinker, on the other hand, forms his notions in accordance with the changeability and rhythmic dynamism of his surroundings.¹ He sees the way clearly and cannot linger on the transitory result, which for him is but a passing phase of the general course of movement. An altogether different law of thinking prevails here. This is evident when one tries to compare equivalent terms of India and the West: in India they are fluid, in the West static. It is thus no accident that the dogmas of Indian thinking are given as 'ways' towards an aim, as *yānas* (cf. *Mahā-yāna*, *Hina-yāna* in Buddhism). Already from earliest Vedic times this basic difference in outlook between India and the West can be traced. Let us compare the Greek and the Indian words for 'cosmic order'. The Greek word *kosmos* implies a pre-established harmony, a stabilized order brought within the phenomena from outside. An artist, *Dēmiourgos*, adorns (from *kosmein*), and fixes to a point according to his pre-conceived plan, the course of Nature and the unruly phenomena of the world. The Sanskrit equivalent for 'Cosmic order' is *Ṛta* (from the root *ṛ*, 'to go'). No fixed plan of a ruling and creative deity exists before the appearance of the world. The Indian cosmic order is self-sufficient and is fluid, a dynamic balance, a co-operation or action and counter-action of ever-changing phenomena and their conditions. No external disposition, intention and purpose are pre-conceived and superimposed on the natural dynamic motion. Accordingly, *R̥gveda* 10, 129 states that the gods are later than the world's emanation; they have not created, nor have they regulated, and as such stabilized, the rotating functions of the Universe. The Indian is ever reluctant to accept fixed notions, concepts and terms in

¹ See chapter VI, 2, p. 88.

the sense of the Latin *termini*. Such fixation and conclusiveness do not exist in natural dynamics. As this finality never meets the eye of the dweller in a tropical climate, he does not venture to introduce it into his thoughts.

Logic, the science of actual reasoning, has no final place in India. With the keen sense-perception of creative primitivity, the Indian thinker grasps natural laws and adapts them to human understanding, only to elevate them in the end to a higher intuitive vision (*divya-dṛṣṭi*), the divine contemplation. Philosophy on the whole is significantly called *ānu-īkṣikī* (literally: 'the look along'), the perspective and collective view along all things. Reasoning, called *tarka*, the de-composing and selecting analysis, is for him only a passing phase for the attainment of final true knowledge. The *pramāṇas* (literally 'the measurements'), the canons of truth in Indian logic, are based on *praty-akṣam*, 'sense-perception'. Inference or deduction, the main part of Western logic, is for the Indian only a memory (*ānu-smṛti*) of former direct perception, *Uḥa-māna*, 'comparison of phenomena', is his third equally valid canon of truth. *Sabda*, the 'word of revelation or of authority', is his fourth and final standard of knowledge.

Reasoning or deduction is not his ultimate means for gaining truth. Truth is based on perception, and is finally replaced by yet a new and higher kind of perception, intuition and revelation. Indian logic is widened into a transcendental and empirical logic combined. Besides, in the empirical sphere alone it contains logic proper and epistemology (theory of gaining knowledge). Different stages of knowledge are laid down. First, the Indian reacts receptively to the phenomena. These impressions are then consciously acknowledged as sense-perceptions which are next interpreted by the reasoning mind. The single perceptions are hereby combined and compared with former experience, and only from this results the collective view on them all and the realization of their immanent laws (*ānu-īkṣikī* and *divya-dṛṣṭi*, see above).

As regards also the logical process and the varied evaluation of its stages, the single axioms of logic are different in India and the West. As mentioned before, the axiom of the 'Excluded Middle' does not entirely hold good for Indian logic. The Indian regards not even mutual negations as one-sidedly fixed opposites. In the transcendental sphere no distinction at all between 'A' and 'non-A' exists. But also for the empirical sphere as such

the Indian is reluctant to split up 'A' and 'non-A' into opposites of mutual exclusion. Life and death are combined in a series of an interrelated sequence of growth and decay, without definite boundaries between them. The culminating point of growth is already the first starting-point of its decay, and, conversely, the completion of decay is the potential starting-point of a new growth. 'A' and 'non-A' are not only interrelated, but even become congruent. It is therefore no accident that India has developed different shades of negation, and treats them as full—or more often—as but partial negations.¹ *Vidya*, the 'complete knowledge', lies before, and after, each single manifestation. *A-Vidya*, literally 'the non-knowledge', is actually only an incomplete, dimmed, stained and veiled knowledge resulting from our actual experience. Only the perfected Yogin, fully detached from subjective feelings, can even while still alive already attain true knowledge (*jīvan-mukti*).

In the *Sāṅkhya* system all manifest form is called *vy-akta*, literally 'curved-apart singleness'. Primary Matter, which exists in its fullness before and after its manifestations, is called *Aivyakta*, 'the not-yet or no-more curved-apart Matter'. Here a negation limited by Time and Space is expressed with the negative prefix *a-*.

Yet another difference between Western and Indian logic can be indicated by the comparison between Greek and Sanskrit terms. The Greek term *heteros* means literally the 'other'. As such it gains with Aristotle² the meaning of 'the worse', 'the lesser'. Western logic clings to the established order and is reluctant to accept the vague otherness. The Sanskrit equivalent is *para*. It, too, means the 'other' but as such the 'higher and better'. It is here where the fundamental difference between Western and Indian logic and its ethical implications lies. The thing in hand, while being clearly observable and distinct, is of a definite value for the Westerner. The 'other', for him, is thus something disquietingly vague, while the 'other' is of a positive value for the Indian because of its very vagueness. It opens the view on further unlimited potentialities. For the Indian, the visible phenomenon remains always something transitory and insufficient and therefore lacking ideal complete-

¹ See my 'Significance of Negations', B. C. Law, Vol. II, pp. 408 ff., Poona, 1946.

² Cf. Bonitz, *Index of Aristotle's Terminology*.

ness and final value. The 'other', the vagueness, while being unlimited or less limited and less defined, is for the Indian the higher value and the final postulate (cf. *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* VII, 24, 1 ff., and elsewhere in the Old Upaniṣads). Western logic clings to distinction, Indian logic avoids it or surpasses it. Accordingly and consistently there is a different evaluation of terms in the two respective logics. The Latin *terminus* is taken from the agricultural term for setting fixed border-lines between the different areas of neighbouring acres. Indian 'terms', on the other hand, are radiations from a central root, growing in circumference by further development and potentially ever-expanding. Indian terms can overlap or mutually cover each other like the overgrowth of plants in the jungle. Again no fixed contours of a pre-conceived plan separate one term from another in India. Western logic fixes the terms statically with strict border-lines. By contrast, the Indian term grows, as it were, from inside, and expands in layers of petals. It is not bound to fixed limits, but potentially—in its later derivations—deviates in all directions. However, all these divergent derivations and later growths can be traced back to the very same productive verbal root. The Greek thinkers, even the cosmic philosophers like Plato, reproached the Sophists because they devalued the acknowledged 'better case' and elevated the despised 'worse case' (*ton hēttō logon kreittō poiein*). Would the Indian thinker not readily accept the Sophist's implicit dogma of the relativity of empirical values? Fixation, limitation and distinction are generally taught by Nature to men of a scantier soil; abundant interconnection and never-ending growth in dynamics are the pregnant features of a tropical clime. Evidence has imbued the Indian thinker with the striving after indiscriminate boundless growth, and with a reluctance towards, and defiance of, limitation.

This Indian attitude to logic, so different from that of the ancient and modern West, has also resulted in a strange combination of Logic and Mysticism. Western logic is mainly based on Reason, definition and separation. Never can these differentiations genuinely lead to mysticism. Mysticism in its true original sense is based on the postulate of gaining or re-gaining the unification of all distinct phenomena. The term *mud*, as said before, is originally a medical term;¹ indeed, many pri-

¹ See chapter VIII, 5, p. 130.

marily medical terms later gained philosophical implications. While in the West mystic sects have usually been considered as outsiders of society, being single individuals with, or without, a limited number of followers, entirely different is the position of the mystic in the social community of India. All mystics defy the acknowledged Western ideal of definition and distinction between phenomena. As stated above, India believes in primary unity as the basis of all her thought and of all her philosophical and religious conclusions. First, a unity between the empirical world and the Beyond is here implicitly acknowledged and maintained. Secondly, there is also accepted a unity within all divergent phenomena themselves. As such, mysticism in its original sense of 'unification' is here the presupposition of all statements, in logic, rhetoric, visual art and religion. The Indian aim is to show from all angles the interrelation and mutual collaboration of all worldly and super-worldly persons and objects. Even within a single phenomenon the unity of its divergent conditions of growth and decay is observed. Mysticism in the West is often regarded as a confusion or muddle of things and thinking, as prevalence of emotion over the acknowledged value of Reason. For the Indian, as pointed out before, Reason is only a passing phase in the middle of primary receptive and final creative perception or vision. Besides, it is never an emotional basis alone which here establishes mysticism. India has developed a gradual, a deductive mysticism which only in the end jumps spontaneously into the emotional sphere. *Tattva-jñāna*, 'slowly acquired distinct knowledge', leads up to the postulate of the *niḥśreyasā*, 'the utmost indistinct Highest.' The best example for the latter way of thinking is the greatest Indian philosopher, Śaṅkara, the *Advaitin*, the non-dualist. It is he who consistently developed the notions of unity between the world-principle, *Brahman*, and the single personalities, *Ātmans*. He tries to prove philosophically the unity between the principle and its manifestations, while yet claiming a higher value for the fullness of the principle than for its lesser parts, its transitory manifestations. Mysticism in the sense of primary unity has to be realized and cultivated by every human means of understanding. It is not only an emotional postulate, but also an epistemological truth to be gained step by step. In India even Logic is not bound to the empirical sphere alone. Logic and Mysticism can here be

reconciled, and both are working to the same ends of final transcendental knowledge, *niḥśreyasā*.

In this context of logic, a word may be added about the controversial attitude of India towards Optimism and Pessimism. Here again—from their own cut-and-dried distinction of opposites—the Westerners introduced into Indian thought an interpretation alien to the Indian himself. India thinks on both planes, the empirical and the transcendental, simultaneously. From the outset a lower valuation for the empirical world is accepted unquestioningly. The fullness and the constancy of the Transcendental are, with regard to quality and quantity, superior to the limited and transitory aspects of the empirical world. But, with regard to that world, no absolute Pessimism or Negativism is assumed. All conditions of single things or persons on earth, in mid-air or in heaven are by their very nature but transitory. However, as decay is the *conditio sine qua non* for a new outgrowth, even for the empirical interconnected series of conditions, the Indian thinker does not stop at the negative. Besides, all empirical things, being nourished by and connected with the ideal state of the Transcendental, are for this very reason never entirely negative and worthless. Pessimism here is only a relativism of value. Each single thing is in its singleness insignificant, but as a part of the Whole, as a manifestation and symbol of the higher transcendental being, it escapes an entirely negative evaluation. Furthermore, the immanent belief in an ever-constant ideal Being in the Beyond proves clearly a basically optimistic outlook in Indian thought. Some Western thinkers, again introducing their own incompatible view into the Indian sphere of thought, interpreted Buddhist and Brahmanic *Nirvāṇam* as something wholly negative, as a "Nothing". *Nirvāṇam*, however, in the end, and *Brahman* also in its indistinct beginning, represent the super-worldly fullness and completeness. Not a 'Nothing', but a No-single-thing.

Śūna, 'the excessive', and *śūnya*, 'the Void', are for the Indian logician and metaphysician essentially the same, both equally lying beyond the range of the single perception of limited phenomena. The All and the None are the productive Zero-point of the positive and negative numbers.¹ Here Indian as well as Western logic relies on mathematics. But again how

¹ See chapter VII, 1 and 2, pp. 95² and 99.

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differently do the two logics employ mathematical concepts! Western logic adheres to definite single, distinct numbers. Indian logic, on the other hand, dwells on one basic mathematical notion: the All- and No-number, the Zero. Zero is the sum, and more than the sum, of all single perceivable phenomena. Pessimism and Optimism, then, are Western terms inapplicable to India's trend of thought. Western Pessimism and Optimism are mutually exclusive. In India they are inclusive and interdependent, while each of them has its justification when viewed from their merely transitory nature or from their constant reality respectively.

We may thus gather that the utilitarian outlook on logic as mere means of rivalry and prestige which Dr. Conze applies in his book, does not do justice to India's comprehensive natural dialectics, which reach beyond practical, momentary aims. Dialectics are not a purposeful worldly end in themselves, but represent an immanent urge to combine, collect and contrast all various facets of life and thought in the Here and the Beyond. Indian Logic, then, combines and confronts empirical and metaphysical logic.

XI. INDIAN GRAMMAR AND STYLE

I. METAPHORS AND SIMILES IN HINDU THOUGHT—ANIMALS IN LITERATURE

THE West thinks in exclusive valuations; India thinks in inclusive ambivalence. The West thinks in *aut-aut* ('either-or'), India in *sive-sive* ('be it this way, be it that'.) The West discriminates between its experiences and facts and grades them by means of Reason. India, as repeatedly stated, does not assign to Reason and empirical facts such an authoritative position, always in the end aiming at the *niḥśreyasā*, the Summum of transcendental indistinct, complete value, *pūrṇatva*.

The West accepts three distinct capacities of the human soul: reasoning, will-power and feeling. The spheres of each of them are separated. Here, reasoning alone is the foremost means of acquiring truth. This is not so in India. All these three human capacities are here equally valid means of attaining knowledge and are always complementary to each other.

There is another distinction upheld in the West and fused in Indian thought: a nearly equal valuation of reality and fiction is accepted. Whatever can be thought and visualized, is as such a reality in itself. Already in the R̥gveda thought, word and action are shown as of nearly equal efficacy. Concentration on the deity concerned (*dhī*), the praise of the deity in hymns, and concrete sacrificial oblations, are equally useful means to attain the desired result.

In the metaphysical systems, like the *Vedānta*, too, Matter and Spirit are nearly equivalent manifestations of the Summum: *Brahman* is indeed the material cause of the world and at the same time its spiritual governing principle. Matter and Spirit are co-active. Similarly, facts, fiction and thought are complementary and co-active. Experience can be gained by each. Each of the three are factors in the process of acquiring knowledge.

Thus, it is not only the charm of poetical fiction and the beauty of aesthetic formulation which shine in India's meta-

phors and similes. The use of metaphors and similes is necessary as part and parcel of an implicit dogma. One of the main axioms of Hindu thinking is that of *Unity in Divergency*. All beings of the Universe are among themselves interrelated as manifestations of an underlying all-pervading Life-Force. As such, all living forms are comparable one to another and complement each other. All microcosmic shapes find their equivalents in the Macrocosm. The lustre of the maiden's face is only fully understood when taken together with the lustre of the heavenly bodies, moon and stars. The lesser degree of the individual manifestation is elevated and becomes clearer through the comparison with those manifestations of wider cosmic dimensions. The scorching majesty of the powerful king enthroned is the manifestation of the same overwhelming glory as the pitiless splendour of the tropical sun.

Mythology and legend are thus wider and more embracing than the meagre facts of provable reality. Mythology and legend thus are stepping-stones from the world of limited order and standards towards the neutral cosmic Limitlessness. Indian gods and demons, unrestricted by laws of aesthetics or of ethics, often seem to overstep all empirical notions of values. The Indian artist never assigns a separate, independent value to aesthetics, as only in the tremendous Summum is all perfection invested. The wild tumult of rhythmic movements and functions in Indian sculpture originates from the same attitude as the exuberant piling up of similes and metaphors in the works of fiction and even of history. All of them serve in their turn to reflect the abundance of the Summum.

One of India's special gifts is her enrichment of literature through animal-fables and animal-allegory. In India animal-fables are a consistent and natural expression of her very trend of thought. These animal-fables are not only artistic and psychological means of illustrating human characters—as in the West since the ancient Aesop—but they are a genus deeply rooted in her view of the Universe. Gods, men, animals and plants are, all of them, equal manifestations of experience in fact or fiction, in reality or in imagination. Śaṅkara, the most representative and consistent thinker of India, proclaimed that all beings on earth and in heaven alike, whether existing, postulated or imaginable, are only symbols or reflections of the universal principle of thought and reality, the *Brahman*. This

way, animals are beings in their own right, not made for the use of men. The study of animals' psychology is thus equally revealing as that of humans. As mentioned (p. 67), one of the greatest treasures of the Tanjore Library are the illustrated books on the constitutional types of elephants, horses, etc. The same categories and inter-mixtures of physio-psychological types as amongst men are traced amongst animals. The Indian villagedweller has the opportunity and the necessity to study the variant behaviour of animal-individuals. Like men, they are distinguished in their reactions as of sanguine, choleric, melancholic or asthenic temperament. Animal stories thus are an essential chapter in the 'story' of the Cosmos.

Animals—in India—are acknowledged as equal partners with Man, though in different positions and with different purposes in the working of the Universe. This has never been thought of in the Western world. Their main function for the ancient Greeks, for instance, has been their usefulness to men. A single spirit, like St. Francis of Assisi, is surely an exception. It is not sentimentality, but a metaphysical dogma, which dominates the Indian attitude to animals. If Man is apparently superior to them in reason, some of them are superior to him in various instinctive gifts and in their physique.

It is no accident that this appreciation, this respect for animals is alive in a country like India, where animal creatures, mighty, cunning or nimble amidst a prolific vegetation debar Man from easy domination. It is no accident that India's powerful gods are often depicted as appearing in animal-form. Nor is it by chance that the Buddhist *Jātakas*, the stories of the various incarnations of Buddha on earth, visualize the highest living Being sometimes in the form of a deer, a parrot, or a woodpecker, or other animal creatures. Neither is it fortuitous that in all religions of Indian origin, Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism, the dogma of *ahiṃsā*, of non-injury to the animal, has developed and is still alive.

To sum up, fables and allegories are not merely artistic devices invented to please men, but they are investigations into the nature of the cosmos. Since the times of the Ṛgveda, the inventors of fables and allegories are amongst those called Ṛṣis (*ṛṣis*), Seers. They are not composers of fiction as in the West, but seers of a given reality which the average man cannot perceive and for which he has no organ. Indian allegory and

fables are images seen and presented in words, for the guidance of less enlightened men. In short, similes, metaphors and fables are not poetical devices, but they are receptively conceived—received by the fortunate seer through a glance into a world existing but hidden from average man. People who may not be able to find the way to this richer world by themselves, happily follow the guidance of those who possess the *divya-dṛṣṭi*, the 'divine look' of all-comprehensive, truly cosmic inclusion.

2. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE NEUTER IN SANSKRIT GRAMMAR AND IN THE GENERAL TREND OF INDIAN THOUGHT

Grammar is the psychological indicator of a way of thinking. Indian literature is particularly conscious of linguistic psychology and, more than most Western literatures, has developed, cultivated, and pronounced on its significance.

One indication of Sanskrit's consciousness of psychological factors is its wide use of onomatopoeia. True, in all languages, especially ancient ones, where reasoning has not yet dimmed the keenness of sense-perception, we find onomatopoeic formations of terms (like 'murmur', 'hiss', 'grumble', etc.). Sanskrit, however, goes some steps deeper into the physico-psychological sphere. It is not only aware of the effect of the words spoken, but it is also alive to the physico-psychological reaction of the preliminary stage of articulation. As such one could speak of Sanskrit's inwardly-bent onomatopoeia. Articulation with a hard or soft initial consonant, and also of the subsequent consonants used in the middle of a word, gives the tinge of the suggested meaning: for instance, *vīcī* and *ūrmī*, in which the circumflex bending of the vowel and the character of the following consonant express the slow turning of the 'big wave', while *taraṅga* in its very formation of short vowels and composite consonants indicates the compressed short 'wave' of water. Similarly, *khadga*, 'the sword', illustrates in its very formation the quick and exact cutting activity. *Karkara*, 'the chalk', expresses by its very sound the scratching and crumbling of a brittle substance. Similar physico-psychological reaction is felt

in the articulation and pronunciation of *karkaṭa* and *kaṭhōra*—words of nearly synonymous meaning. It is a fact, astonishing to the Westerner, that according to these phonetic laws the Indian student is able to gather the meaning of a sentence and paraphrase its contents, before his reasoning and grammatical knowledge enable him to form a word-correct translation. The pre-rational suggestion and subsequent physiological reaction precede and direct his understanding in terms of reasoned explanation.

The final rational interpretation, too, is in Sanskrit—and less so in its more recent daughter languages—more conscious and more conscientious than in most Western tongues.

The easily dissectable anatomy of Sanskrit words into their verbal root and prefixes and suffixes reveals, in the literal translation of its technical terms, social and anthropological features effaced in modern Western tongues. For instance, the Sanskrit terms for 'king' unfold in their literal translation various anthropological layers of society. The king is the *bhūpāla* or the *nrpa*, i.e. either the 'owner of the territory' (*bhū*) or the 'protector of man' (*nr*). The king's appellation of *rājā* (from *rāj*, 'to shine') emphasizes his outstanding splendour in the role of leader. Family relationships, too, are revealed in their varied aspects. *Bhartr*, 'the husband', is, as the very term shows, considered as the supporter of the family. Accordingly, his wife is called *bharyā*, 'the one to be supported'. *Bhrātar*, 'the brother', is allotted a similar duty. The woman in the neuter gender of *kalatram* (cf. *kaḍa*, 'vessel') indicates the woman in her capacity as a physiological receptacle. The son is called *nandana*, 'the joy'—a sentimental name—or *sūta* and *sūnu*, indications of his biological coming into existence, or he is called *putra* in his function of magico-religious significance as an instrument for cleansing his ancestors in the funeral rites which he performs for them.

Other characteristics of Sanskrit diction can be gathered from its tendency to keep terms intentionally wide and indistinct, so as to be capable of expressing all shades of positive and negative applicability. *Avasthā* means 'a state of existence', a condition of neutral quality. Conversely, *śīla*, *ācāra*, and *caritram* are all designations of character in the sense of a fixed datum or of development in the course of life. *Dharma*, then, comprises all shades of fixation—it means an intellectual

tenet and/or psychological, social and religious attitudes, all in one. The value of these main terms of Hindu and Buddhist thought lies—astonishing for the Westerner—just in their intentional vagueness and ambiguity. *Aśuras*, 'demons', are divine, i.e. vital and powerful, just as the *devas*, 'gods'—both being of equal significance for the fate of man. The non-distinct is the non-limited, and as such the unrestricted by positive or negative specifications. This dogma of Vagueness as Value leads us to some observations on grammatical gender, especially on the significance of the neuter gender in Sanskrit diction.

Most Western languages use the masculine gender for all male persons and the feminine gender for their female counterpart. The masculinity of Western civilization is inclined to stress the higher importance of the masculine as the truly virile and active determinant. True, most of them, especially the ancient idioms, also employ the feminine for the formation of abstract nouns (cf. Latin *virtus*, *fortitudo*, etc.). This widened use of the feminine is, however, more pronounced in Sanskrit. Here it is the feminine which is considered more creative and more continuously productive. Later Hinduism, for instance the *Sāṅkhya* system, speaks of *Prakṛti*, the feminine creative power, as the only productive force within the empirical world. It is she who displays her productive transforming capacity. In the transcendental world the *Sāṅkhya* assumes two leading principles: *Puruṣa*, the male, and *Prakṛti*, the female, here stand side by side as equals. However, the *Sāṅkhya Puruṣa* is *akartr*, 'barren and inactive' in the empirical processes. Only indirectly does he stimulate *Prakṛti* to her endless functions. Already in R̥gvedic times all male gods are inseparably associated with their feminine counterpart. The god *Indra* is only truly divine, when conceived together with his *Indrānī*, and *Vāruṇa* in later stages is conceived together with his *Vāruṇī*. Hinduism always combines the male god with his *śakti*, his feminine creative power. *Śiva*, the *Mahā-deva*, the 'Great God', is significantly called the *Ardhanarīśvara*, 'the deity half male and half female'. It is the feminine aspect of this main god which is considered as the more violent, the more ferocious, the more impulsive and as such the more creative power. In Buddhism also, especially in its Far Eastern coinage, it is the *Kwannon*, the female expression of creative Buddhahood, which is prevalent in the representation of the Divine. Or else, the masculine Buddha

figure is preferably depicted here with feminine physical attributes (feminine breasts), in order to display his creative productivity. No masculine preponderance is ever asserted in later Hindu creeds and in their daughter-denominations. Only masculine and feminine features combined can do justice to the wider aspects of creativeness. The culmination and most adequate expression of divine fullness is indicated, when even the combined symbols of masculine and feminine distinction are overstepped. Then the state of the indistinct Neuter is reached.

A most significant expression of the culmination in formlessness and emptiness can be found in the representation of the Buddhist friezes. From all sides an abundance of figures crowds towards the middle, the central point of attention and concentration. But what has here the place of highest rank? An empty space, bare of any distinct form.

All Indo-European languages of the West differ from the Indian outlook with regard to the evaluation of the neuter gender. In the West the Neuter is felt as a depreciation, a culmination not yet reached of 'dead matter', and as such incomparably less valuable than beings endowed with human intelligence. An entirely different attitude towards objects is taken in India. Firstly, the strict distinction between persons, animals, plants or stones on the scale of value is never adopted here. Human beings, even divine beings, can change places and forms in the course of reincarnations with animals or even less developed phenomena. In civilizations born and nurtured on tropical soil, Man does not stand in splendid isolation above all other beings of the cosmos. It is vitality which here counts most, and the powerful beasts and the prolific vegetations may express vitality and productivity in a greater degree than the vitality and activity of Man. The higher power of human reasoning is acquired together with the loss of physical strength and with limited keenness of sense-perception. With regard to dynamic possibilities, plants and animals may enjoy a fuller measure of divine vitality.

From yet another angle the indistinct Neuter gains a higher value in India than the person who is limited by distinctness. Logically, everything that is vague and indistinct opens the way for wider potentialities. *Brahman*, the unlimited power of Becoming, is significantly Matter and Spirit combined, not

narrowed down to a decisive shape established in past and present, both knowable and known. It is the grand X, unexhausted and inexhaustible. In the West, everything vague and indistinct is valued negatively as against the higher value of the Personal and Individual. Think, for instance, of the Aristotelean use of the term *to heteron*, the neutral 'other'. Its equivalent in Sanskrit is *param*, the object of the highest value. Just because *param* is not limited to one or another distinct person, it is assumed to be the Highest, the all-embracing *pūrṇam*, indistinct through its inexhaustible fullness. It is no accident that the *Īśā Upaniṣad*, in its programmatic introduction, praises the true Divine in seven-fold repetition as the *pūrṇam*, the infinite and indefinite All and None. Everything which has distinct name and form (*nāma-rūpa*) is—and this is India's main philosophical dogma—not yet the *Summum*, not yet the culmination-point. Even the highest personal god, when seen in personal isolation, is but a second best, a *laukika*, that is an empirical reflection of the Highest. In India, 'Person' has never attained, even in its loftiest divine form, the value of the all-embracing *Summum*.

Again, it is no accident that the main concepts which govern Hindu, Buddhist and Jainist thought are always given in the neuter gender. *Brahman*, the all-embracing dynamic power, is a neuter term. *Ne-uter*, *na-iti*, the 'not this nor that' personal form alone, is the *pūrṇam*, the complete fullness which is beyond all limited 'He' or 'She' forms. Jainism accordingly first widens the concept of the *devas* in complementing them with *prati-devas*, 'counter-*devas*'. Further, in its characteristic philosophical dogma of *syād-vāda*, the 'Maybe' theory, it loosens the fixed position of all conditioned persons and objects in five-fold or seven-fold variations. This theory of relative possibilities thus neutralizes distinctions, as it were, by a kind of catalytic power of varied circumstances.

Accordingly *karma*, again a neuter, is the supra-personal law which governs the fate of all empirical beings, whether human or other animates. It is no accident that also Buddhism and Jainism, the two daughter-religions of Hinduism, have kept to this supra-personal, all-embracing law. Each single person is only a cog, only an accessory to the universal working of the whole supra-personal process. Already in the early sacrificial times of *Brāhmaṇa* ritual, the sacrificer and his goal of venera-

tion, his personal god, are only instrumental causes of the supra-personal process. The moment the process is started, no will of the sacrificer—nor even that of his god—can interrupt or interfere with the natural course of events. This overstepping of a single person reveals itself also in details of these early sacrificial manipulations. Details of grammar, prosody, etymology, geometry and algebra, astronomy and astrology, all the so-called *Vedāṅgas*, the 'limbs of the Veda', are scrupulously laid down, in order that no mistake in the process of sacrifice and rite may accidentally bring about another result than that which is desired. How, then, can we explain that in spite of this fastidiousness *aja*, the 'he-goat or she-goat', is sometimes used intermixed in gender? (cf. Bollée, *Sadvimśa-Brāhmaṇa*, Utrecht, 1956, p. 94). Probably not by mistake but by intention, the feminine and masculine genders are here promiscuously employed in order to grasp both alternatives in one, and thus to procure the full volume of possible sacrificial objects. If even the status of empirical objects, animals and things, is widened beyond their natural distinctions of masculine and feminine, in order to give them an all-comprehensive value, how much more is it essential to represent the Divine in its utmost dimensions. *Brahman*, the ever-productive principle, and *karma*, the ever-active law, are by necessity neutral, i.e. not bound to any accidental limitation of personal forms.

Opposites are not distinct and separate forms, but inter-related stages of one and the same process of ethically neutral import. *Kubera*, the god of the dead, is at the same time the god of continuous fecundity (cf. Bollée, *ibid.*, p. 108). *Pattinī*, the goddess of fertility, is at the same time the goddess of mortal disease, and the god *Śiva*, the main deity, is both generator and destroyer in one. The first moment of birth is the beginning of the process of decay, and every decayed thing serves as a manure for a further outgrowth. No pessimism is here attached to the concept of decay, as in its due turn it leads back to new production. Birth and decay are momentary accidents in the continuous process of Becoming, seen from the angle of the revolving Universe.

From this angle we have to view the main ideal of Buddhist dogma. *Nirvāṇam*, significantly again a neuter, is the leading concept of Buddhism. *Nirvāṇam* is the indistinct, the no-more personal, but neutral, aim of dissolution and solution of all

personal and accidental He- or She-manifestations. While in Hinduism birth and decay are valued as neutral cosmic stages of interrelated significance and recurrence, in Buddhism the neutral Indistinct of the *Nirvāṇam* gains the final value of emancipation, of liberation from further rebirth in distinct form. Here the Neuter is no more a complementary vagueness, but the final ideal of accomplishment.

Already in the later Hindu systems a negative evaluation of the *Ahaṁ-kāra*, the 'ego-maker', is introduced. The classical *Sāṅkhya* system widens and loosens the *ahaṁ-kāra* beyond the notion of ego-consciousness. The *Sāṅkhya* system teaches that the *ahaṁ-kāra* conditions equally the course of the *adhy-ātman* and that of the *adhi-bhūtam* ranges of phenomena. The *ahaṁ-kāra* is the cause of the intellectual evolutes: *manas*, 'mind', and of the ten sense-organs (*adhy-ātman*), but significantly the *ahaṁ-kāra* is also the producer of the five gross elements and the five subtle elements of Matter (fire, water, earth, air and ether). *Ahaṁ-kāra* thus is the efficient cause of all intellectual capacities, but equally the cause of all material manifestations in form and name, i.e. of any individuation. Even objects have in the same degree as persons an *ahaṁ-kāra*, a so-called ego-maker. It is only a further step in the same direction to devalue the ego-maker as a mere fiction, in the sense of a deliberate cutting into pieces of the indistinct continuum. Anonymity of creative forces is arbitrarily interrupted by assuming selective temporary stopping-points.

Hindu cosmology, since the epochs of Ṛgvedic speculations, accepts as the only true datum *satyam* (neuter!), 'Being'. This indistinct Being may be divided into actual momentarily existent and potentially existent reality. *Satyam* comprises all material and intellectual existence, potential and actual reality. The Upaniṣads make use of this neutral term of an intentional vagueness in their *mahā-vākyas*, 'Great Sayings', when they acclaim *Brahman* as the *Satyasya satyam*, 'the reality of all realities' of this world, of epistemological, intellectual and also material manifestations.¹ *Brahman* is the all-embracing Neuter, the potency of all possible 'He's' and 'She's' nameable and knowable, which primarily and finally are submerged in the grand 'It'.

¹ See also chapter IX, 2 'The Ideal of Completion against the Idea of Perfection' p. 141.

FACETS OF INDIAN THOUGHT

Up till now we stressed the preponderance of neutral concepts in Indian grammar and Indian metaphysical theology. If, as we claim, the neutral concept plays an all-decisive part in Hindu thought, then we must find reflections of these tendencies also in all other spheres of Indian thinking. A main trend is bound to have its reflections in all domains of life and thought. Let us therefore look for the characteristic Indian and un-Western traits in the domains of Indian law, applied science and medicine.

In Indian public law we find a surprising position assigned to the king. He is a quasi-anonymous, because all-inclusive, representative of the community. This is evident in all legal spheres: religious and social laws and juridical administration. In the eyes of ancient Indian law, State and King are identical. Therefore, the king is also the religious authority. A Brahman as his main adviser (*purohita*) assists him in his theologico-legal authority. He is the highest judge, the supervisor for the smooth working of the community in all its jurisdiction. This symbolic and supra-personal position of the king, probably common to all early societies, has been preserved all through classical Hindu times. The king is the god on earth (*deva*) with functions of law-giving, mercy, justice and social necessities, and, in addition, with the help of his *purohita*, he is also the dispenser of divine law. The king is responsible for all lawfulness and lawlessness within his realm. If a theft is committed, say of cattle, and the criminal cannot be traced, it is the king who has to repay the damage. On the other hand, if no direct heir of a vacant fortune can be discovered, the property goes to the king in his capacity of general representative of all his subjects.

Such a role of the king has its bearing also on private social matters. It is a crime if a mature girl cannot fulfil her natural function through marriage. Thus, if no elder relative is available to find a husband for the girl, it is the king's duty to select a suitable marriage-partner. Similarly, the king has to function as the *pater familias*, if no private male member of the joint family is alive.

As administrator of jurisdiction he is responsible for supervising all legal proceedings. He has to be present all day long, when his court is in session, even if this means that his private comfort (body-massage) has to be performed in the public court-room. Thus the highest person, the king, is no more just a

person with privacy and an individual's rights and duties. The highest person is the no-person or all-person. He is a quasi-neutral person, an instrument of the community.

The overstepping of the human sphere is evident also in other injunctions of Indian law. One of the chief rules of Indian family-law is the strict adherence to seniority. If by any chance a younger brother intends to get married, before his elder brother has chosen a wife, then this elder brother must first be wedded symbolically. He has to embrace the trunk of a tree; the tree then is assumed to be his wife.¹

Even the relation between debtor and creditor is transferred from the individual into the cosmic sphere. If a debtor cannot repay the money due to his creditor or his heirs because of their deaths, and if no Brahmanic community is available to act as claimants, then the money has to be thrown into the water. The supra-personal obligation of repayment has to be fulfilled, irrespective of its usefulness to the persons in question. The neutral balance has to be restored.

Laws of magic, too, widen and overstep personal relationships. A strict injunction of Indian marriage-law is the endogamy within the caste, but exogamy within the family. Thus strange blood-relationships are effected by the mere similarity of names. Accordingly, no man is allowed to marry a girl who bears the same name as his mother, since through the very name mother-in-law and daughter-in-law are blood-relations in the magical sense and the intended marriage would constitute an illicit union. Here again the individual persons are subject to a status wider than the purely personal. Name in itself constitutes a relationship—vague, but valid and binding beyond the accidental persons who have part in it.

India's reluctance to accept selection and the distinction of the human person alone, and her repugnance towards his separation from his wider surroundings, have also benefited the all-comprehensive Indian outlook on science in general, including medicine and physiology.

When applying India's basic law of interrelation between man, animal and plant, Sir Jagadish Chandra Bose gained his results in the discovery of sap-circulation in plants. He made

¹ This seemingly odd ancient injunction comes from regarding animals and plants symbolically as members of society.

use of the old Upaniṣadic teaching, dating from 800 BC, that the same vital essence (*Ātman*) which is dominant in human beings, must also be found in all other animals, in plants and in atmospheric phenomena. Thus he established for the sap-circulation in plants the same laws which had been discovered and observed for the circulation of the blood-stream in man and animal. Once again, Man is taken out of his splendid isolation.

One of the recent Nobel prizewinners is Sir V. C. Raman, the physicist. Raman too makes use of traditional Indian laws, those of the continuous transformation from growth to decay, and those of an animate soul even in stones (see the Jaina doctrines).¹ Accordingly, in the fixed shape of a crystal Raman examines with up-to-date instruments its ever-changing formation. His thesis is that no fixation to a distinct and static form eliminates the law of transformation. India's traditional belief in a non-distinct neutral force which supersedes name and form, i.e. personified and fixed shape, stimulated his research.

Another recent Nobel prizewinner of Indian extraction was Rabindranath Tagore, the world-famous poet. His richness of imagery has delighted the West. His pregnant similes, which connect human beings with all other phenomena on earth and within the atmosphere, are, however, but pale reflections of still more pregnant comparisons contained in classical Indian literature. Nurtured by the basic law of interrelation of all phenomena—all of them are but symbols and representatives of the universal vital functions—these poetical similes came into being and freely developed. All personal formations, all 'He's' and 'She's', are mere fleeting expressions of the neutral all-embracing force which pervades the Universe.

The central role of the Neuter shows repercussions also in Indian psychology. First, India has developed animal-fables and fairy-tales, which via the Buddhist and the Islamic realms, and probably also via the Greeks, spread all over the world and over all ages. One of the treasures of the traditional Tanjore Library is its volumes, enriched with many illustrations, on animal psychology. The elephant and the horse are here depicted and represented in most detailed descriptions of the choleric, the sanguine, the phlegmatic and the melancholic horse and ele-

¹ See chapters I, p. 24, and III, 1, p. 40.

phant.¹ The same subdivisions as in four constitutional types of Man are carried through for animals also. Thus, in widening the concept of 'Person' beyond the human and divine spheres, 'Person' loses its boundaries and merges into a world of universal animation. This recalls a characteristic trend of Indian theology. Pantheism, and polytheism too, remove the strict contours of the Divinity of a single being. The embarrassing multitude of persons and animated objects takes away the exclusive significance of each of them.

Object and subject are not distinguished as counterparts in outside and inside confrontation. The West, when seeing subject and object as isolated factors, uses human reason to select among the phenomena. A prevalent Indian psychological theory, which can be dated back to Upaniṣadic times, is the dogma of *susupti*. Here the highest state of consciousness is no more bound to the distinction between subject and object. The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* and the *Kauṣītakī Upaniṣads* advocate a tripartition of consciousness. The waking stage is filled with the empirical consciousness of single events; the dream-state represents the memory of former empirical experiences. But infinitely higher than both of these is the state of *susupti*, the dreamless, the intensified sleep (*su-sup*, reduplicative root of *sup*, 'to sleep').² Thus, *susupti* is the *Summum*, the truly divine state in which subject and object are no more—wrongly, so the Indian claims—separated in duality. Here, as the Upaniṣads teach, the 'fiction of isolation' is overstepped. Later in Indian psychological philosophy, *susupti* is sublimated into a *turiya*, the fourth, the absolute state, in which all bonds with single experiences are for ever severed. *Turiya* is then likened to *Brahman-Nirvāṇam* and Buddhist *Nirvāṇam* (neuter!), the dissolution and solution of all singleness and of all limitation through singleness. In *susupti* or *Nirvāṇam* the inside and outside notions of subject and object have disappeared. Thus subject and object become united again in a vague receptacle, as they had been in the pre-empirical state of a productive, oscillating and quasi-chaotic mass (see the first philosophical hymn of *Rgveda* 10, 129, and its speculations on *tuccha*, 'the fullness and void').

From this psychologico-metaphysical angle of the removal of

¹ See chapter XI, 1, p. 156.

² For a description of *susupti* see also chapters III, 2, p. 44, and IV, 1, p. 58.

distinctness, one can reach the logical axiom of India's method of thinking. The West thinks in *aut-aut*, the disjunctive 'either-or'; India, on the other hand, visualizes a continuous stream of interrelated moments of *sive-sive*, the 'this as well as that', in an endless series of changes and transformations.

The *sive-sive* axiom co-ordinates; the *aut-aut* axiom dissects. The 'Ne-uter' is the symbol of *sive-sive*.

3. INDIAN GRAMMAR, A GUIDE TO INDIA'S GENERAL TRENDS OF THOUGHT

a. Positive, Comparative and Superlative in their Philosophical Implications.

Grammar in Sanskrit, as in other languages, is not merely 'grammar' but points to general trends of thought. Let us examine in this sense the pattern of Positive, Comparative and Superlative adjectival forms (e.g. English *good, better, best*).

The Positive is an absolute and unlimited statement. As regards time it is assumed to be valid for ever. In the philosophical sense it presupposes a positive existence which endures. As such the Positive covers the highest principle of unchanging Being, *Sat*. Sometimes this Positive is expressed in a corroborating formulation as *Satyasya Satyam*, the 'true Being of all Being'. Modern Existentialism also speaks of Being as the highest value, but of Being limited to existence only, i.e. to the empirically Present. India, on the other hand, in her definition of *Sat* means the eternally Present, i.e. that beyond, and within, all momentary experience. As such India distinguishes between *Sat*, constant Being, and its evolute *Bhava*, Being in the different stages of development, i.e. Being seen in variant transitory notions. The grammatical Positive in all languages accepts only the second kind of these two alternatives. *Bhava* is Being susceptible to further development in comparative and superlative degrees. Beyond this lies yet another, i.e. the philosophically true, Positive: that not only of constant quality, but also of constant quantity. *Sat, Brahman*, is visualized under the symbol and simile of the ocean which never loses or augments its volume. Or else, to use a modern scientific simile, the bloodstream, flowing into the heart and away from the heart, remains not only qualitatively, but also quantitatively, the

same in its opposite movements. *Sat*, thus interpreted, is in India a supra-empirical constancy of absolute and transcendental Positivism, i.e. positivism beyond changing empirical factors: it is the constant fact. The grammatical use of the term Positive is but an offshoot of this all-embracing unchangeable transcendental Positive. The *grammatical* Positive is but an empirical application of this *absolute* Positive, because it is subject to further development in comparative and superlative forms. Thus, from the Indian point of view, the Positive comprises two statements in one—primary and final constancy on the one hand, and on the other the varying degrees in between.

In grammatical terminology the Positive is limited to the empirical sphere, and designates the starting-point only for a process of quantitative change of one and the same quality, with alternately and alternatively ensuing stages of intensity and dimension. Thus the Indian notions of the Positive actually are two: the absolute and constant Positive which is postulated as ever valid and unchangeable, and the grammatical empirical Positive open to varying degrees of manifestation. The Positive, then, to the Indian mind, functions both in a single sphere and in two spheres.

The Comparative, on the other hand, clearly belongs to one sphere alone. The Comparative pertains solely to the empirical range, though in this sphere it has many-sided applications within the world of pluralities. *Brahman*, the transcendental Positive, is *advitīyam*, 'without a second', unique and outside any comparison. Comparison, and as such the Comparative, is based on the existence of single phenomena and distinguishable plurality. Only between two separate things can a confrontation and comparison be made. The Comparative, then, refers only to empirical factors, visible phenomena. Only here in the world of pluralities can two different objects be put on a par, i.e. accepted as of equal, or nearly equal, grade. Only in so far as both are transformations or manifestations of the underlying Absolute, are they essentially of the same quality, though not of the same quantity. Measurable and comparable they are, as being derivatives and participants of the same underlying quality, which in their case, however, is changeable in volume. They are different, but lend themselves to comparison as regards their specific dimension or degree of the quality indicated. The Comparative, then, works always in the sphere of the *dvitīya*,

'duality and plurality'. The comparative suffixes in Sanskrit grammar are: *-tara* and *-īyas* added to the Positive (with the necessary phonetic variations). Both suffixes denote a further degree of extension (*tara* = 'extended') of the quality laid down by the Positive. Thus the notion of augmentable quantity comes into play. A further or lesser progress in a certain direction is expressed. Significant it is that, in Indian more than in other Indo-European languages, the Comparative and Superlative are sometimes formed from another root than that employed in the Positive. It may be that here the basic difference between the ambiguous Positive and the merely empirical concepts is still felt and still operative. Is it that subconsciously the Positive of transcendental and empirical import shall be separated from the stages which hold good only in the empirical sphere—the Comparative and Superlative? In the metaphysical teachings of the *Kāthaka Upaniṣad* the beginning of the second *Valli* is startling. Here the *preyas* and the *śreyas*, the 'more pleasant' and the 'more ethically satisfying', are confronted as the two aims of Man's worldly aspirations. Certainly, the *Upaniṣad* recommends the ethically better instead of the more pleasant, but these two different longings of mankind still both refer to the empirical ends of relative values. When it comes to the truly final goal, it is not the better, nor even the *śreṣṭha*, 'the superlative Best', which stands for the *Summum Bonum*. In all Indian systems, even in the realistic systems of *Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika*, the final goal of Liberation is expressed not as *śreṣṭha* but as *niḥśreyasā*, the 'breaking up', and 'breaking away from' (*nis*), all notions of comparison. The metaphysical aim does not admit of any comparative notion which is still felt even in the Superlative. The Superlative, too, works on the scale of quantitative value which vanishes in the sphere of the Absolute.

The term *śreṣṭha*, 'the Best', is reserved for the social scale of the community, denoting the position of the leader in society. *Śreṣṭha* or *śreṣṭhin* never amounts to *niḥśreyasā*, the final and absolute goal.

The method applied in Indian epistemology is that of gaining higher knowledge through discussion. One standpoint is first pronounced, and then confronted and denounced by a second, a third or further *pakṣas* 'wings' or 'viewpoints'. Finally the highest, or at any rate the at present no-more-refutable, notion

is reached. The Indian textbook of philosophical systems, the *Sarva-darśana-saṁgraha*, 'the compilation of all viewpoints', is so arranged that the first mentioned is the worst, and the last the best, from the Vedāntic standpoint which is here proclaimed. It is divergency which helps to elucidate the comparatively higher, i.e. the wider, grasp of the problem in hand. *Samvāda*, 'discussion', instead of *vivāda*, 'dispute', is the methodical means of gathering all the different facets of the truth, which is only indirectly and gradually approachable.¹ Here comparison (and in a way also the highest gradation at present attainable) is applied to an attempt to reach beyond merely empirical factors. The true *Summum*, however, still lies beyond, and not within, the relative sphere of all formulation. As long as formulation prevails, the *Summum*, the *neti-neti*, the 'neither this nor that alone', i.e. the truly *pūrṇam*, indistinct fullness and the all-embracing Highest, is not yet reached. All formulations and definitions (Latin *fines*) are still bound to form and limitation, and do not penetrate into the core of truth. The transcendental Divine lies beyond all gradations and comparisons within the unalterable transcendental Positive.

The Superlative, it is true, tries to approach the infinite sphere. As such two different kinds of Superlative are introduced: the fixed Superlative of empirical gradation and the unfixed Superlative, the so-called Elative of vague import. The Superlative proper designates the highest degree of the quality known, for which a higher quantity is stated via Comparative and Superlative. This kind of Superlative is comparison developed to its highest quantity. Here we remain in the range of empirical values. Śāṅkara, the Vedāntist philosopher, makes use of this empirical Superlative in his *laukika* interpretation for the understanding of the masses. As such he assigns to *Brahman* the term *tatama*, 'the most expanded' (from the root *tan*).

The second kind of Superlative is the Elative, the elevation or sublimation. Here the Superlative does not express the highest knowable degree, but the raising of quantity to an infinite value. The Elative is the highest attainable value tending to transcend through quantity the fixation of the Finite. The summit of fixation postulates the no-more fixable. The incalculable beyond human conception is expressed by the highest possible human concept. Highest conceivable dimension stands for supra-

¹ See chapters V, 1, p. 71, and X, p. 145.

dimension. The Superlative tends to a Beyond, but still somehow belongs, like the Comparative, to the empirical sphere. It is only the timeless and gradeless Positive which functions actually in two spheres.

b. Verbs and other Terms: the Width of their Root-Meaning.

The Sanskrit term for 'verb' is significantly *kriyā*, 'activity' and 'development'. As such, Sanskrit grammar in the very term used designates the verb as endowed with an active function; in our Western grammars its usage as a static word of predication is more strongly felt (e.g. 'its usage . . . is felt').

In our title, the term 'root' actually implies a biological metaphor. As out of the root of a plant ever new sprouts and offshoots spring forth in variant shapes and forms, some nearer to the earth, some further up, expanding away from the root, just so Indian grammar regards the basic word as latent and still active in all its derivatives. In the end the root-meaning brings forth also abstract and less material derivations, but all of them without fail can be traced back to their origin, the basic and material root. Western grammar in its tendency to logical abstraction and generalization is prone to dwell preferably on the later logical result, dismissing and forgetting the original meaning. Western languages are concerned with the latest historical usage, thus debarring themselves from the productive ambiguity of the root-meaning itself. Not so Indian grammar, which never loses sight of the manifold original implications of the verbal root. As such Western grammars and dictionaries do not pay sufficient attention to the inner psychological development of the verbs themselves. The principle should never be neglected, that the material meaning is the first and the most productive. In arranging a dictionary, these concrete derivations nearer to the basic root should all be stated first; only then should the present abstract applications find their place in the list. Secondly, Western dictionaries, and Western thinking in general, do not do justice to the fact that these early concrete meanings are still alive even when later abstractions and generalizations have developed. Indian grammar does not overlook these two fundamental laws: that of primary concrete meaning, and that of the survival of the concrete meaning even after the process of abstraction has set in. The inadequacy

of the translation of Sanskrit terms into Western idioms is partly due to the neglect of these two principal laws. There is, further, the general difficulty that each translation is a 'transfer' from one idiom into another without due respect for the irrational sound-consciousness of one language, which may not be equally strong in the other language to which the term is adapted. Moreover, what for the one language is a newly acquired term and a newly acquired notion may be for the other a notion of long standing and inherited meaning. Such equations of terms in transfer are thus misleading. For all these reasons, the explanation and interpretation of Sanskrit terms in relation to terms of modern Western languages are never congruent. We can achieve a paraphrase only, but not a fixation and identification of Sanskrit with Western terms. It is no accident that, whenever we seek to apply a fixed Western 'ism' to Indian philosophical trends of thinking, we have to supplement this 'ism' with a quasi-paradoxical adjective. For instance, when we speak of Indian Materialism and Positivism, we have to call them *transcendental* Materialism and *transcendental* Positivism; a vagueness has to be introduced which defies, and in a way removes, the Western notion implied in the noun employed.

The Sanskrit scholar must at the outset feel repelled when, for example, the Indian concept of *Māyā* is translated as 'Illusion'. The Western mind, according to the present use of 'illusion', sees here something unreal, deceptive and delusive. Yet this is not even the primary meaning of the Latin word *illusio*, from the root *ludere*, 'to play'. *Illusio* originally, though this is now forgotten, meant 'interplay'. As such, but only in its original meaning, it is a near equivalent to *Māyā*. *Māyā*, the 'world of the measurables' (from the root *mā*, 'to measure'), is a relative and transitory display of forms. In this sense it actually corresponds to *illusio*, interplay in variant shapes and forms, manifestations of the underlying substance. *Illusio*, thus interpreted according to its original meaning, truly is analogous to the Sanskrit term *līlā*, 'play and display' of the creative urge for world-formation and elusive world-manifestation, as taught in Indian cosmogony. *Illusio* and its Indian equivalents do not originally refer to unreality and illusion, but to the purposeless interplay of cosmic forces. The Western thinker, however, in his tendency towards purposeful order and fixation, is reluctant to accept vagueness, ambiguity and indetermination; he is

inclined to dismiss and forget the original Latin meaning, and dwells only on its later interpretation. For him, illusion is a term of negative import, implying deceit. The root-meaning is intentionally forgotten and replaced by a later narrowing-down of the meaning in a particular direction.

A similar tendency holds good for the Latin term *fictio*. *Fictio*, from the Latin *ingere*, shaping or fashioning of pre-existent matter, has again developed into a predominantly negative meaning. It is generally used to mean just 'fancy', because it applies to something not to be verified by the senses. By contrast, India does make use of the term *fictio* in its positive import. The reality of sense-perception is here never the last and final reality. Like all empirical canons of truth, it is of only relative import. True reality lies in the constant transcendental sphere. A visualization and imagination of this highest truth is the utmost achievement to which the Indian thinker can penetrate. As such the *kavi*, the 'poet', is the true *ṛṣi*, 'seer and saint'. *Fictio*, 'imagination', is the positive mental faculty which forms images beyond the external objects—presentations only of the hidden ideas and ideals which are never fully realizable and verifiable in this world. From this angle the author wrote on *The Reality of Fiction in Indian Thought*, which states potentialities that are immanent, though not provable through sense-perception. Pre-existent Matter, true Reality, has more possibilities than those of present or of past and future realizations.¹

There is yet a further ancient Western term which only in its original and concrete meaning is applicable to Indian ways of thought. Since the times of the ancient Greeks and of Biblical theology, 'Person', the individual, has developed to be the ideal and summit of value within the Universe. The individual inventor, scholar or artist, and still more so the personal God, has the rank of absolute value. No research, no longing can venture to strive further. Not so in India. Here all personification, even that of the *iṣṭa-devatā*, the 'chosen personal god', is only an adaptation to the understanding of the masses, a *laukika* conception, a second best. Śaṅkara, the Vedāntist philosopher, ventures to reach further towards the *paramārthatas*—truth, the supra-personal principle. Once more India can make use only of the earliest and long forgotten meaning of the Latin

¹ See D. R. Bhandarkar Jubilee Volume, Calcutta, 1940.

word *per-sona* (from the root *sonare*, 'to sound'): the Mask, through which the actor breathes and 'sounds'. Originally the mask, the *per-sona*, is only a transitory disguise which is successively donned and abandoned. This is a notion of 'person' still valid in India. For the Indian, personification in this or another form is but a momentary appearance which in the following moments may be cast off or exchanged for another form in the cosmic course of events. 'Person', thus interpreted, never gains the value of constancy and finality. Here again the West has entirely changed its original notion during the further development of its historical usage. What in the original meaning of the Latin term had only the import of momentary characterization has gained the sense of a fixed character with constant features.

Up till now we have considered Western terms which have lost their original width of implications in the course of their historical development. Only in their first and vague root-meaning are they adequate to Indian notions. Let us now investigate Sanskrit terms which the West, following its own trend of thought, has narrowed down to one only of their possible meanings. One of the main Sanskrit terms with which the West has become familiar is *karma*. *Karma*, from the root *kar*, means 'to act and develop'. It has entered Western thinking only in one of its latest and most specialized uses. The Indian *karma*-theory is interpreted by Western scholars as an ethical law of reward and punishment, not in its wider sense of a biological law.¹

In fact, the Western interpretation of *karma* is inaccurate in several aspects. Firstly, the wider meaning of the Sanskrit term is wrongly narrowed down to an ethical law. Secondly, it is seen in merely one of its specialized aspects. It contains many more potentialities than the one considered. In the *Vaiśeṣika* system the very same term *karma* is employed as the *terminus technicus* for the category of 'motion'. *Karma* here expresses continuous physical activity and dynamics, without any fixation onto individual characteristics. Similarly, Indian grammar in several derivations from the same root *kar* (as

¹ See chapters III, 2, p. 47; IV, 1, p. 52.

FACETS OF INDIAN THOUGHT

kriyā, verb, or *karma*, accusative object, or *karmadhāraya*, adverb) designates function and change in all their implications. The same holds good for the use of *kriyā* in the *Jaina* system. Here the theory of the *kriyā-vāda* indicates all activity of empirical practicability. Thus the Western interpretation of *karma* in a merely ethical sense is not only incorrect in its specified context, but also overlooks the wider possibilities. Even when it is taken in an ethical sense, Indian and Western types of responsibility are incongruous because of the different evaluations of the Person. Western ethics sees individual responsibility towards fellow-men and God only; Indian ethics feels a quasi-neutral responsibility towards all cosmic growth. Nothing gets lost, and everything—thought and deed alike—equally materializes and attracts its due results. In India it is assumed that Nature works *via* 'Person', and not for the sake of 'Person'. Persons and objects alike are carriers of cosmic dynamics.

Yet another leading Indian term has suffered from the same limited understanding and interpretation in the West. *Dharma* comes from the root *dhar*—the same as the Latin *tenere*, 'to hold', whence the English *tenet*. It means 'position' in all the implications of that word. The term *dharma* remains relative and elastic. There are many *dharmas* standing side by side. They are all, even in the sense of definite systems and dogmas, only *darśanas* and *dr̥ṣṭis*, viewpoints and aspects of nearly equal validity. Moreover, there are many further implications contained in the term *dharma*. *Dharma*, 'law', implies both human law and Nature's laws. As such *Jaina* physics use this term as the law of natural dynamics and its continuous motion and change. Its opposite, *a-dharma*, accordingly stands for the un-natural laws of statics and non-motion. From this dynamic standpoint, *dharma* develops an ethical evaluation. *Dharma*, 'motion', as being natural is 'good'; conversely, *a-dharma*, as being against the law of dynamics, stands for 'evil'. It is not that out of the meanings 'position' and 'tenet' the ethical meaning has developed, but that just from its dynamic and unfixed meaning of 'motion' an ethical significance can be traced. The ethical sense comes in from the cosmic law of continuous movement, transformation and change. Buddhist metaphysics has used the term *dharma*, and its equivalent, *dhātu*, ambiguously. It denotes either the momentary empirical

fixations or the transcendental basic elements—*Dharma* thus has the dual aspects of fixation and fluidity, a position that is either momentary or transcendently eternal.

Among the diverse aims of human aspiration, *kāma*, 'desire', and *artha*, 'gain', are the two lowest. Beyond these stands the higher aim of *dharma*, the duty assigned to each person and caste. *Dharma* means functioning in accord with Nature. *Dharma* is the middle ground between the lower empirical aspirations and the highest supra-individual position. *Mokṣa*, the transcendental aspiration, is the longing for liberation and de-individualization, the return into the supra-personal reservoir, *Brahman*, the *Pūrṇam*, the indistinct fullness.



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