

SOME PROBLEMS IN SANKARA

Adi Shankara was born at a time when Buddhism appears to have been at its zenith in this country. The *Shankara Digvijaya* of Vidyaranya mentions that Shankara was sent on the earth to demolish the false philosophical doctrines of the Buddhas which were then prevalent. Tradition also confirms the fact that Shankara travelled on foot through the length and breadth of this country discussing the basic questions of religion and philosophy with learned men and giving discourses wherever he went; and that he was thus mainly responsible for the exit of Buddhism from this country. It is unquestionably a remarkable fact that Buddhism which was born in this country should have been prospering in the Eastern Asian countries like Siam, China and Japan but should have completely lost its hold on the people of the land of its birth. For this remarkable achievement no other person was responsible than the great Adi Shankara.

There are several stories prevalent about Adi Shankara. Vidyaranya Swami through his *Shankara Digvijaya* has familiarized us with the great philosophical controversy between Mandana Mishra and Adi Shankara; and how after defeating Mandana Mishra he was challenged by Saraswati his wife, who asked him questions about Kama Shastra the Science of Erotics, how by his yogic powers he entered the body of King Amaruka, and having attained the knowledge of this science also, how he defeated Saraswati.

Two stories of Adi Shankara, however, bear repetition even in this age. One is the story of the Chandal and the other is the story about how he performed the last rites of his dead mother.

It is said that one day at Banaras, finding that a Chandal i.e. an untouchable, was in his way, he asked him to move away from his path. The Chandal immediately asked him who he was thus asking to move away—his body or his soul. Shankara quickly understood the implications of this rebuff. It was clear to him that this action of his was inconsistent with his own philosophy. Shankara then fell at the feet of the Chandal as if, he was his Guru and composed his famous *Maniṣāpañcaka*, the gist of which is contained in the line.

Cāndāloṣlu Sa vā dvijostu guru rityeṣā maṇiṣā māma.

The other incident is regarding the funeral of his mother. On the ground that (Adi) Shankara was a Sanyasin and could not, according to orthodox religious injunctions perform any karma, the Brahmans of his village refused to give Shankara any help in performing the last rites of his dead mother. Shankara was helpless and contrary to orthodox practice, he cremated the body of his mother in one corner of the compound of his own house. All this is a testimony to the fact that Shankara was not only a humanist but had no blind faith in mere religious forms.

So much has already been written on the philosophy of Adi Shankara and so much praise has been bestowed on the logical subtleties of his arguments and the depth of his thought and reasoning that it is difficult to make any original contribution in regard to the interpretation of his philosophical teachings; and yet we shall find that merely because the literature on the subject is so vast and the teachings of Adi Shankara have so much influenced the life, the mode of thinking and even the speech and literature of the Hindus that we are apt to get lost in a mere maze of words. In the *Yoga Sutra*, one of the vrittis with which the chitta is supposed to be enveloped is vikalpa. Vikalpa means a state where we get merely the knowledge of words without there being anything real corresponding to those words. It seems to me that some such thing appears to be true of the vast literature that has grown up around the philosophy of Shankara. All manner of words have been used signifying concepts which are not always mutually exclusive and have overlapping areas of meaning and significance. Philosophy is a subject which suffers most from a riot of words. The only subject which has got an exact language appropriate for its understanding is Mathematics. One of the problems with which philosophy is faced to day is how to evolve a symbolism appropriate for the expression of philosophic thought. It will be my endeavour in what follows to express in simple language some of the main tenets of Shankara's philosophy so as to make it understandable to the ordinary man.

It is a curious fact in the history of philosophy both of the West and of this country that by an analysis of the epistemic process in and through which men get to know the external world, philosophers have come to conclusions about the nature of this

process which make all knowledge of the external world and other knowing minds impossible. It is true that all knowledge of an individual must in some sense be private to himself. But there must be an epistemic process by which we get to know physical things and communicate our knowledge of those to our fellow beings, however imperfect these means of communication may be.² How all this happens, how we perceive things, how we infer the existence of things we do not perceive and how we communicate our information to others is unquestionably a fascinating subject. As it happens, however, philosophers have, by an analysis of the cognitive situation, questioned the reality or the existence of the very physical things and other minds which was the basis or the postulate of their philosophical analysis. They began with the external world and ended in solipsism—in a closed world of ideas without any access to the outer world.

In England this process began with Locke. Locke's theory of perception was a very simple one—one which every commonsense man must hold in some form, that perception of physical things begins with an impact of physical things on our sense organs. Our mind, which, according to him, was a *tabula rasa*, gets an impression of the physical things which is the object of perception, and it is this impression or photograph which conveys to us the knowledge of the physical thing concerned.

Locke was followed by Berkeley; and Berkeley argued that if this impression of the so-called physical thing is all that we can really be aware of in perception, then we simply do not perceive physical things which must, therefore, be a mere figment of our imagination. What we call physical things are merely a series of such impressions or ideas which have a certain order; and beyond and apart from these series, there is no separate physical thing. Berkeley was followed by Hume who applied the same logic even to mental phenomena. Whenever he looked into his own mind he found only a succession of mental states. Descartes before him had found that he could doubt everything but not the existence of the self. According to him, it was correct to say that *cogito, ergo sum*—I think, therefore I am. Hume suggested that all that Descartes proved on the examination of inner experience was merely the existence of a succession of mental states. But where was the I? What was there, he argued, to show that one state of

thinking was in any way related to another state of thinking, in the same individual? Hume, therefore, doubted even the very existence of the self or the knower. A particular type of analysis of the cognitive situation, thus, led the English Empiricists to complete scepticism.

On the European continent also, having more or less accepted this analysis of the cognitive situation, Malebranche was led to his doctrine of Occasionalism. It was for him a hard intellectual pill to swallow that there were no minds other than his own, with whom he could communicate. One could well get rid of physical objects, he thought, but what would become of minds other than our own; and if there are other minds then there must be a possibility of communication between them. How was that possible on such a theory as that of Berkeley? He, therefore, argued that corresponding to and on the occasion of the perceptual series in one mind, there was a corresponding appropriate perceptual series in another, and in this way communication was possible. The great mathematician-philosopher Leibniz arrived at a similar conclusion. The whole world according to him consisted of monads, independent of one another, each unfolding its own series of successive mental experience and there was what he called pre-established harmony amongst these independent unfoldings of the monads by virtue of which communication of one monad with another became possible.

It was obvious that these philosophers had to have re-course to these various devices and philosophic concepts because they felt an inherent hesitation in supposing that all that existed was their own selves and their mental states. They were unable to pursue their logic relentlessly which would have landed them only in solipsism. The modern representatives of this theory are Bertrand Russell and the Logical Atomists. With them physical things are merely logical constructions out of the material of sense which they call sense data.

In this country too, there have been several schools of Buddhistic philosophy which hold the same or a similar view. Shankara calls them Vaiśiṣṭika or Vijñānavādin and he has discussed their theory in his Commentary on Nābhāva Upalabdheḥ B. S. 2.2.28. This subject, however, would itself be a subject matter of another article.

Another line of argument against the reality of the physical world is from our experience of dreams. There is nothing, it was argued, by which we can truly distinguish between our dreams and the waking experience. Gaudapada, for instance, before Shankara appears to have argued in the same strain. He says, "Dream experiences are on a par with the waking ones. If the dream states do not fit into the context of the general experience of our fellow men or of a normal experience, it must be understood that it is not because they fall short of absolute reality but because they do not conform to our conventional standards. According to him life is a waking dream." Gaudapada does recognise that the objects of waking experience are common to us all while those of dreams are the private property of the dreamer. Yet he says "as in dreams so in waking the objects seen show the same characteristics, namely, that of evanescence"³.

There is yet another type of analysis of the cognitive situation which regards the knower, as an object of knowledge like any other object of knowledge. We have already seen how Hume looking at the knowing process from without, as it were, landed in a situation where he saw nothing but discrete mental states, unconnected with one another and questioned the abiding identity of the 'knower' through all these states. There are still others who treat the knower like any other physical object. The question of the pre-conditions of the possibility of all knowledge does not worry them. It is sufficient for them to say that knowledge of objects is merely a matter of the special application of the category of cause and effect. We shall have to refer to such views later as we proceed.

It is the great merit of Adi Shankara that he was not a victim to this analysis of our cognitive experience; nor has he failed to distinguish between our dream and waking experiences.

With regard to dream experiences, he says⁴: a dream experience is based on the memory of a previous experience. Not so a waking experience. A dream experience can be contradicted. Not so a waking experience. Moreover, the distinction between dream and waking experience, is itself a matter of personal experience. Therefore it is not proper that those who call themselves intelligent should conceal what is a patent fact.

In the same way with regard to the contention which is the same contention as that of Berkeley, viz., the esse of sensible things is their percipi, Shankara⁵ says that the objects of perception are there even if there is no perception. Nor does anybody confuse between the object and the perception of the object.

In the end, Shankara concludes by saying⁶ that the existence of the commonsense world which is proved by all the *pramanas* i.e., evidence, cannot be denied without having recourse to a higher principle, since where no exception exists a rule must be held to be proved.

The upshot of all this discussion is that but for a particular philosophical theory of the relationship of the commonsense world with the Being that creates it (Janmādyasya Yataḥ B. S. 11.1.2), Shankara would have been a Realist through and through like any other modern Realist. He takes the commonsense world for granted. He does not like Berkeley or the Buddhists resort to the philosophical analysis of the cognitive situation which must end in solipsism. He asks himself the great metaphysical question of all time as to the source or the primordial cause of the creation of this world. For obviously the Jagat or the world does not appear to us to be self-created. And if it does not create itself there must be something else that creates it. Shankara says, this principle is what the Upanishads call Brahman and that it is the same as the individual self.

It should be obvious that if it had not been Shankara's own view, that the individual self is identical with Brahman, he could have explained and commented upon the Brahmasūtras in a different way as the other commentators have done. It stands to reason that he must have arrived at this conclusion by his own independent reasoning and must have interpreted the Vedic texts in a manner which would support his view. He explicitly says⁷ : Be that as it may, in any case it is possible for us as rational beings to treat this as a hypothesis about the nature of Reality and test its truth in and through facts of experience and rational philosophic analysis.

What then is the grand Hypothesis which Shankara puts forward about the nature of Ultimate Reality and its relation to the world of commonsense and the individual knowing self ?

The hypothesis is this : (i) Brahman is the ultimate reality—it is Nitya-śuddha-buddha-Mukta-Svabhāvam, Sarvajñam-Sarvaśaktisamanvitam i.e., that it is eternal, pure or homogeneous, conscious and free, that it knows everything and it is capable of doing anything. (ii) That this Brahman is the same as the individual soul and (iii) that the relationship of Brahman to the world of common sense is not that of cause and effect in the ordinary sense—that is, it is not a Vikāra of Brahman but is related to it as its Vivarta. And here we must clear up the distinction between Vivarta and Vikāra. Vivarta is defined as *Atatvato Anyathā prātha* while Vikāra is defined as *Sa tatvato anyathā prātha*. Vivarta is “that kind of causality where the cause without undergoing any change produces the effect”. Vikāra or Parīnamopadāma is “that kind of causality where the cause itself is transformed in producing the effect.

Shankara is all the while conscious that a mere statement like this cannot be forced down the throat of men who are rational. He says elsewhere—*Na hi Śrutiśatām Śīto agniḥ aprakāśo Vā iti bruvat pramāṇam upaiti.* (G. B. Adhyaya 18).

He, therefore, supports this hypothesis first by examining all the rational arguments that could be put forward against this view and secondly by an examination of all other possible hypotheses and showing by arguments that none of these hypotheses can hold the ground even for one moment. This he does in the first two Padās of the second Chapter of the Brahma Sūtra Bhāṣya.

Shankara begins by saying that this Brahman is not known either through the senses by way of direct perception or by inference. Shankara is careful to point out that although in this sphere Sruti is the main pramāṇa i.e., authority or evidence, it is not true to say that reason or logic has no place in determining its nature. He says this in a long passage⁸. The substance of this passage is that Brahman or the ultimate reality is an existing entity with certain characteristics. It is not like Dharma that is to say religion which has merely got to be followed or acted upon. Therefore, in a discussion about the nature of the Brahman, Tarka or logic has a proper place. It is a different matter whether the use of Tarka or logic will yield any results in regard to the subject of Brahman—whether it will give us any positive information about it.

Let us pause here for a moment and consider whether the attributes which Shankara ascribes to Brahman are in the nature of mere praise or Arthavāda or whether they are characteristics which reason must attribute to the primeval cause or the source of the universe assuming that the universe is not self-created.

Take first the characteristic *nitya*, or eternal. Can we conceive of any moment of time when Brahman might not have existed, that it began to exist at a particular point of time—that it was not there or did not exist before that point of time? The fact that something exists itself presupposes that there must be something which precedes it and so on. That is to say, in the series of existence there can be no member of the series which can truly be said to be its first member. It is sometimes said of mental events that they just make their appearance at a certain moment, for a certain span of duration and then disappear. In the same way, in dreams we come across things which merely occupy a span of time. They are there neither before nor after. In saying this we tend to forget that in these circumstances we always conceive of them as fleeting against some background which has got a larger temporal span and that this background is always related to some thing that precedes it. So much then can be said to be known to a rational mind *a priori* if this phrase is at all appropriate in this context.

Take now the characteristic of being *shuddha* or pure or homogeneous. It may be said that here there is some difficulty. Why must Brahman have only one characteristic namely that of purity or homogeneity? Why could we not *a priori* conceive of the Ultimate Reality as having more than one quality or a complex of qualities? The answer is that in the present context we are not thinking of what characteristics Brahman may have but the irreducible minimum which it must have. Even if there are other characteristics which Brahman has, we cannot know them. But we do know that it must have at least one quality or characteristic in order that we may at all distinguish Brahman from mere Space and Time. If Brahman did not have even one such quality then it would be impossible to distinguish it from Space and Time.

Moreover, we have in our own experience something which appears to be pure or homogeneous in this sense and this is the Pratyagātman or the inner self or the knower. The Pratyagātman or the knower appears to be a mere sāksi—an observer of all that goes on in our inner experience. He is pure self-consciousness which retains its purity and unchangeability, while there is an incessant whirl of mental events, all moving around it, as it were. If, as it is postulated, Brahman is identical with the individual self—it stands to reason that it should have at least that quality or characteristic which distinguishes the individual self from all that is known, namely, the objects of knowledge.

Let us now turn to the third characteristic viz.—Buddha. If Brahman is the source of all that we perceive as Jagat, can we think of it as not having the characteristic of self-consciousness? We attribute to the animate world intelligence and consciousness. Can we reasonably say that its source nevertheless must be unintelligent and devoid of consciousness? As Dr. Radhakrishnan puts it, “Surely the non-conscious cannot be the cause of the conscious. If anything, the conscious must be the cause of the non-conscious”. This characteristic then must be attributed to Brahman or the ultimate reality.

In the same way we must conceive of the Brahman as Mukta, i.e., unconditioned by anything else simply because there can be nothing beyond it which can condition or control it.

It would thus be observed that in describing the Brahman or the ultimate Reality as Nitya, Śuddha, Buddha and Mukta, Shankara is not saying something which is opposed to Reason. He is not attributing to Brahman what may be called a positive secondary quality such as can be known to us only by the senses. It is one thing to say that to exist at all, a thing must have a secondary quality and quite another to say that it has such and such specific secondary quality. It is clear then that, in describing Brahman as he has done, Shankara has not travelled beyond the legitimate limitations of reason.

Let us now take the other proposition that Brahman is the same as or identical with the individual self; and in this context the word identical must be taken to mean not only identical in quality but existentially identical.

Now it must be admitted at the outset that there are obvious difficulties in this view. For instance, if all the individual selves are just one and existentially identical with Brahman then it should follow that all knowledge of the one should be knowledge of the other, and that they should share a common memory. This, however, does not appear to be the case. As Shankara himself puts it*, we do not in experience find that while one person has an experience, someone else can remember it.

Looked at from this point of view, there is a real difficulty in this hypothesis, and in fact this is one of the reasons why the Sāṅkhya system has to postulate a multiplicity of puruṣas. This is also the reason why Leibniz has in his philosophical system conceived of an infinite series of monads culminating in the monas monadum, i.e., a monad of the highest order.

Let us, however, examine this point a little more closely. If, as we have seen, in our everyday experience there appears to be no logical passage from the multiplicity of individual selves to the Unity of Brahman or the Eternal Consciousness, nor is there any such passage from the Unity of the Eternal Consciousness or Brahman to the existential multiplicity of individual selves. It will be observed that in pointing out the difficulty as stated above, we have already assumed the existence of physical bodies in Space which condition the Unities of the individual consciousness or individual selves with which they are associated. But in testing Shankara's Hypothesis, it will not do merely to argue from the nature of the actual world as we find it in Space and Time. To prove that the Hypothesis is untenable, it will have to be shown that in all possible worlds and even in a Spaceless world, along with the Brahman or the Eternal Consciousness must also co-exist Unities of Individual Consciousness or Selves, apart from and independent of it, without being related to physical bodies in Space. In other words, it will have to be shown that even in a Spaceless world co-existence of the Eternal Consciousness or Brahman and Individual Consciousness was not only possible but necessary and inevitable. The question is, is it possible to show this?

Let us then start on the assumption that there does exist Brahman which is pure Eternal Consciousness. Assuming further that other Selves also co-exist along with Brahman,

which are as pure, how will they come into being and what would be their relationship with Brahman? The one thing to note about this situation on the analogy of our own Conscious experience is that neither of Brahman nor of the Individual Selves could we significantly predicate that they have any relation to Space. What relationship then could exist between Brahman on the one hand and the Individual Selves or the Unities of the Individual Consciousness on the other hand? That relationship could not obviously that of a whole to its parts, for the simple reason that Brahman, not having any spatial quality could not be divided into parts.¹⁰ We have to remember that in order to be divisible at all a thing must be in Space. Nothing that abides merely in Time can be divided into parts. It is true that in Time there can be a succession of mental states one following the other. But succession of moments of spans in Time is not a division of a span of Time into smaller spans or moments of Time; and what we are concerned with in this content is whether at any moment of Time this Eternal Conscious could be conceived of as having parts.

In a conceivable Spaceless world there could be otherness but no division into parts. But *ex-hypothesi* we have assumed that Brahman or Universal Consciousness is qualitatively the same as the Individual Consciousness. In this state of things could we distinguish or separate off the Universal Consciousness from the Individual Consciousness? The concept of division which pre-supposes that the thing to be divided must be in Space is fundamentally distinct from the concept of otherness in Time. It is true that a succession of moments in Time has some mathematical characteristics in common with a series of points in a straight line in Space. But we cannot say that a span of Time as being in a sense composed of smaller spans of Time, necessarily involves the division of the entities or events in Time. Mental events have a pattern but cannot be divided into parts in the same sense in which physical things in Space can be.

Even in the case of Space, a division of an entity into parts or an integration of parts into a whole are not just cases of arithmetical subtraction and addition. If we cut a brick into two, each part of the brick begins to have an individuality of its own; and the putting together of these two parts again into one brick

is not just a sum of these two parts but an integration—something more than a sum. All things in space have got to be fitted into one integrated tri-dimensional pattern which is the characteristic of Space.

The same is true of Time. As we experience them all mental events are woven into one Temporal pattern and they cannot be isolated from that pattern.

We must, therefore, distinguish between divisibility and otherness. Mental events are in a sense wholes which have no parts. Division involves and pre-supposes simultaneity, otherness does not. In a purely temporal Spaceless world, therefore, it would be difficult, if not logically impossible to conceive of one individual pure consciousness as being a separate part of the pure Eternal Consciousness. Nor could we conceive of it as distinct from and other than another Individual Consciousness because *ex-hypothesi* there would be no characteristic which could distinguish the one from the other. If in the world as it is, we do distinguish between the consciousness of one person from that of another, it is because these consciousnesses are associated with particular physical bodies which are in Space. That is to say, it is only in the realm of the created or the Sopadhika universe that we can distinguish between the Consciousness of A from the Consciousness of B. Looked at this way the problem before us is not in a sense different from the third problem as to how the whole universe arises from the Brahman and what its ontological status is. Qualitatively, the individual consciousness or the pratyāgātman does not appear on Shankara's hypothesis to be different from Brahman, but if we pose the question whether it is existentially different from the universal consciousness then question must form part of a larger question namely the relationship between Brahman and the Jagat simply because the individual consciousness conditioned as it is by its association with physical bodies in Space must form a part of the Jagat or the Universe.

Moreover, it is difficult to see why in a purely Spaceless world the Individual Selves could not be an Amśa of Brahman without being existentially separate from it, on the analogy of cells in a multicellular organism.

Let us now turn to a third most important question namely the nature of the relationship between the Brahman and the Jagat, i.e., the world of commonsense; here also we find that Shankara has not transgressed the limitations of reason. Here too he is a complete rationalist. He says in effect that this relationship is neither the relationship of identity nor of otherness; and it is beyond the power of speech, or unique, and cannot be explained in terms of the categories of experience. If it is said that the world is an illusion, then it must be understood that the world 'illusion' here is used in a very special sense, in a sense quite different from the one in which it is used to explain common illusions such as seeing a piece of rope as a serpent or seeing silver where there is only the mother-of-pearl. At the commonsense level, illusion is just seeing a thing as something else with which we had previous acquaintance. Here both the objects, namely the real object and the object as it appears to us are matters of previous experience. But in the case of the relationship between Brahman and the world, the Brahman is not a matter of experience at all. How then do we know that the world is an illusion, if the reality is unknown to us either by direct perception or by inference? Shankara¹¹ says that it is impossible to describe this relationship in terms of any categories of experience. The world is neither identical with Brahman nor can it be described as other than Brahman.

Had Shankara dogmatically said as other philosophers do that the relationship of Brahman or the primordial cause to Jagat or Nature or universe is explicable in terms of the known categories of experience like causality etc., that would be a different matter; but he is fully conscious of the fact that this relationship is, if anything, unique and here again he has shown himself to be a perfect rationalist.

The fact of the matter appears to be that Shankara was more concerned with his main thesis that Brahman was the primordial cause of the world, and that it must be regarded as having the characteristic of self-consciousness such as we experience in our cognitive experience, than with working out in detail the positive relationship of Brahman with the commonsense world, which, he knew, was an impossible task. To do so would have been to contradict his fundamental contention that this matter was

beyond logic and reason. He was rather concerned with refuting the objections that could have been put against his view, and in my humble opinion there he has succeeded to a remarkable degree. He has defended his thesis with such logical subtlety and with such wealth of illustrations that we can have nothing but silent and reverential admiration for his great intellectual power. It is obviously impossible in a short paper to do justice to the genius of the great thinker and to the original and ingenious manner in which he has defended his thesis.

Let us now turn to the alternative hypotheses that could have been put forward to explain the nature of the Ultimate Reality. These are of two main types—One set of philosophers begin with their own experience and find that it consists of a succession of mental states and that beyond these mental states there can exist nothing. We have already referred to some of these philosophers like the British Empiricists and certain schools of Buddhist philosophy whom Shankara calls Vaiśiṣṭikas or Vijñānavādins. Shankara has shown how these philosophers fail to explain the fact of knowledge. All knowledge involves the knower or self, who, in some sense, is the same at different moments of time. We have also referred to the intellectual uneasiness which some of these philosophers have felt at finding that on their theory solipsism was inevitable and that communication with other knowing minds was impossible. This was in fact a *reductio ad absurdum* of their theories; and to avoid it they had to have recourse to theories like occasionalism and pre-established harmony. These theories need not detain us now. We have already found that Shankara has rightly rejected them; and has stated unequivocally that the commonsense world does exist in the ordinary sense of the word; and that if it is to be regarded as unreal that could only be in relation to Brahman. Just as a dream experience is real to us so long as we continue to be in a dream but on waking we realise the unreality of the things experienced in the dream, so, enveloped as we are by what Shankara calls Avidya which incapacitates us from knowing the Reality, the world is real to us. So long as Avidya stands as a sort of screen between us and the ultimate reality there can be no realisation of the nature of Brahman and of the truth that Brahman is identical with the individual self or the knower.

The other type of theories believes in the world of commonsense consisting of animate and inanimate beings and tries to explain even knowledge in terms of natural laws and the category of causality. It is true that the Parināmavāda of the Sankhyas or the theory of emergent evolution is an improvement on the theory of the Vaiśeṣikas who seem to explain every natural phenomenon in terms of the conjunction and disjunction of the atoms. The question, however, is whether the nature of the Ultimate Reality and its relation to the commonsense world can be explained on the basis of this theory. Even before such theories can be made applicable to these ultimate problems, these should be capable of explaining at least the known facts of everyday experience. Looked at from this point of view, it is plain that these mechanical theories cannot explain the fact of knowledge or the *epistemic freedom* that it involves. As we have already stated elsewhere, it was mainly because of these difficulties that the Sankhya system postulated a plurality of puruṣas. The fact of knowledge could not be explained as the Vikṛti of the Mūla-prakṛti.

35. It should be obvious to every thinking mind that knowledge is not and cannot be a mere mechanical interaction between the knower on the one hand and the object known on the other. Knowledge is unique—it is *sui generis*. If it had been a mere mechanical product it could not possibly have given us any awareness of the characteristics of the objects which would produce it. It would then not be knowledge at all of the object but something quite different like pain or pleasure. We would then not be in a position to assert negative propositions like—“This is *not* the case”, or hypothetical propositions like—“If so and so is the case, then so and so would be the case”. Shankara was convinced that knowledge as a physical fact was something unique, *sui generis*, that it involved self-consciousness, and the identity of the ‘knower’ through the passage, of time, which could not be explained by any mechanical theory like causation. It was this uniqueness of knowledge that impressed Shankara and it was our cognitive experience that gave Shankara the clue to the nature of Brahman.

In fact, it appears to me that it was only on the basis of the analogy of the individual self and its relationship with the mental states as we experience them that Shankara conceived of the

relationship between Brahman and the Jagat or the universe. He had to imagine not only what kind of Being Brahman must be but had also to explain what relationship such a Being must have with the commonsense world. What better analogy could he think of for this purpose than to compare the relationship between Brahman and the Jagat with the relationship in our own experience between the knower—the self and the whirl of mental events. The individual self was not as such an object of experience. So was Brahman. The self was known only as I in our experience, though at one place Shankara does say that it was not absolutely the case that it was not an object of Experience; The self was only a Sākṣin or observer unaffected by all the whirl of mental states that moved around it. It was moreover identical with itself through the passage of time. (See the commentary on the Sūtra Anusmṛteḥ). It is significant that these are precisely the characteristics that Shankara attributes to Brahman.

Dr. Radhakrishnan says that Shankara arrived at this proposition through intuition. That may be so, provided we use the word intuition in a sense in which it is not opposed to reason; or we do not identify intuition with a faculty analogous to our senses as if it were a sixth sense which gives us immediate knowledge of existent things which are not known through the five senses. After all, existent things are known to us and are knowable only through senses or through inferences based on knowledge by acquaintance.

This is also perfectly legitimate from the logical point of view. I quote here a passage from an article which my brother Dr. Surendra Burlingay has written in the commemoration volume dedicated to Dr. Mahadevan. He says :

“ The Indian Logic, including the Buddhist one, is essentially a metaphysical system, logical arguments are used only as a means of proving the categories of reality. The conclusions in such a system of logic are bound to have an existential import. Thus, it is quite in keeping with the ideal of the metaphysical nature of the enquiry that only those logical principles which are consistent with the existential conclusions, positive or negative, are employed, and not the others.... Merely the rule of implication must be turned into a rule of inference in order to make an inference

possible. This precisely seems to be the function of *dr̥ṣṭānta* in Indian Syllogism. Without *dr̥ṣṭānta*, *vyapti* would be merely equivalent to a hypothetical major, and the minor would be merely a member of the class." [Ref. : Essays in Philosophy presented to Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan pages 165 and 169.]

I have tried to give so far a bird's eye view of some aspects of the philosophy of the great Ādi Shankaracharya. I am one of those who believe that Shankara was a rationalist through and through and in this respect he was as modern as any Rationalist of today. In truth, Rationality can be neither modern nor ancient. It is unaffected by the passage of time. To my mind, there is little doubt that of all the various hypotheses with regard to the nature of ultimate Reality, Shankara's metaphysics is the most satisfying to the human intellect. It is true that according to Shankara his hypotheses cannot be tested by ordinary logic. Here of course he was right, and in fact as already shown above, it could only be on the basis of an analogy (*Dr̥ṣṭānta*) that we could conceive of the nature of Ultimate Reality.

It may, moreover, be the case that there are many truths which are known to us by what may be called instinct or intuition; and the proposition about Ultimate Reality may be known to us in this way. This instinct or intuition is not necessarily something other than or opposed to Reason. When the various steps in a system of reasoning are compressed, so to speak, so that the intellect can jump over the many intermediate propositions which form the link between the premises and the conclusion, the reasoning process shrinks into an instinct or an intuition. In the same way an instinct or an intuition in this sense could be expanded into a chain of propositions which form a reasoning process. We have known cases in actual life, as for instance, that of the great mathematician Ramanujan, to whom, it is said, remote mathematical conclusions were as immediate as the proposition 2 plus 2 make 4; and it may be that the nature of Reality is known to us through intuition in this sense.

The philosophy of Shankara, moreover, is of special significance to us. His metaphysics provides a true and positive basis for democracy. Democracy, to be real must be founded on the socio-political equality of all the citizens. What is the logical foundation for this proposition? It is true that John

Stuart Mill did say that in a democracy, everyone was to count for one and nobody for more than one. By this he meant that everybody should have the same social and political value in a democracy. It is submitted, however, that in saying this he was merely giving an expression to his benevolent instinct and to the fact that if all men are not treated as equal in a democracy, that would lead to social conflict. Social justice in a modern Democracy appears to be based on the fear of the other fellow with whom we associate in a democracy. It appears to be based on the principle, *Dvitiyāt dvai Bhayam bhavati*. A second person is always a source of fear. The great Ādi Shankaracharya has provided a true metaphysical foundation for democracy inasmuch as on his theory every person is an 'amśa' or part of the same eternal consciousness.

Few thinkers have had a greater impact on our social, religious and cultural history than the great Ādi Shankara. His teachings have influenced not only our literature and thought but have permeated our entire social life. It is no exaggeration to say that he has infused into Hinduism a life and a soul in the shape of his philosophy such as no other single person has done. It is difficult to say what survival value Hinduism would have had in modern times without the philosophic teachings of Shankara. There was hardly any saint in Maharashtra whose philosophic teachings were not founded on that of Ādi Shankaracharya. So was the case in Bengal and elsewhere. It is not an exaggeration to say that probably he has said the last word in speculative philosophy.

Nitibag,
New Delhi.

W. S. Barlingay

NOTES

1. I have deliberately substituted Vā for *tu* just before Dvijostu because in my view *tu* before Dvijostu is obviously a mistake.

2. This is the reason why Prof. G. E. Moore used to say that he believed that physical things did exist and that any analysis of the cognitive situation by which it was sought to prove that they do not exist, was likely to be more mistaken and unreliable than the belief that they do exist.

3. The argument of Gaudapada has been put by Jacobi in a very interesting manner. Things seen in the waking state are not true (Pratijñā) because they are seen. This is the reason (Hetu) Just like things seen in a dream (Drṣṭānta). As things seen in a dream are not true so the property of being seen belongs in like manner to things seen in the waking state. This is application of the reason (Upanara) Therefore, things seen in the waking state are also untrue. This is the conclusion. (Nigamana) Cf. Dr. Radhakrishnan's Indian Philosophy Vol. II.

४. न स्वप्नादिवत् जाग्रत्-प्रत्यया भवितुमर्हन्ति । कस्मात् ? वैधर्म्यात् । वैधर्म्यं हि भवति स्वप्नजागरितयोः । किं पुनर्वैधर्म्यम् । बाधाबाधौ इति ब्रूमः । बाध्यते हि स्वप्नोपलब्धं वस्तु । ... नैवं जागरितोपलब्धं वस्तु कस्यांचिदपि अवस्थायां बाध्यते । अपि च स्मृतिरेषा यत्स्वप्नदर्शनम् । उपलब्धिस्तु जागरितदर्शनम् । स्मृत्युपलब्ध्योश्च प्रत्यक्षमन्तरं स्वयमनुभूयते । तत्र एवं सति न शक्यते वक्तुं मिथ्या जागरितोपलब्धिः उपलब्धित्वात् स्वप्नोपलब्धिवत् इत्युभयोरन्तरं स्वयमनुभवता । न च स्वानुभवापलापः प्राज्ञमानिभिर्युक्तः कर्तुम् ।

—ब्र. सू. भाष्य २.२.२९

५. ननु नाहमेवं ब्रवीमि न कंचिदर्थं उपलभे इति । किन्तु उपलब्धिव्यतिरिक्तं नोपलभे इति ब्रवीमि । यतः उपलब्धिव्यतिरेकोऽपि बलात् अर्थस्य उपगन्तव्यः उपलब्धेरेव । न हि कश्चित् उपलब्धिमेव स्तंभः कुड्यंच इत्युपलभते ।

—ब्र. सू. भाष्य २.२.२८

६. न ह्ययं सर्वप्रमाणप्रसिद्धौ लोकव्यवहारः अन्यत्त्वं । अनधिगम्य शक्यते अपन्होतुं अपवादाभावे उत्सर्गप्रसिद्धेः ।

—ब्र. सू. भाष्य २.२.३१

७. श्रुत्यादयोऽनुभवादयश्च यथासंभवमिह प्रमाणम् अनुभवादसानत्वात् भूतवस्तुविषयत्वाच्च ब्रह्मज्ञानस्य ।

—ब्र. सू. भाष्य १.१.२

८. कुतः पुनरस्मिन् अवधारिते आगमार्थे तर्कनिमित्तस्य आक्षेपस्य अवकाशः ।
ननु धर्म इव ब्रह्मणि अपि अनपेक्षः आगमः भवितुमर्हति ।
भवेदयमवष्टम्भो यदि प्रमाणान्तरानवगाह्य आगममात्रप्रमेयोऽयमर्थः स्यात्
अनुष्ठेयरूप इव धर्मः । परिनिष्पन्नरूपं तु ब्रह्म अवगम्यते । परिनिष्पन्ने च
वस्तुनि प्रमाणान्तराणामस्त्यवकाशो यथा पृथिव्यादिषु ।

—ब्र. सू. भाष्य २.१.४

९. अनुस्मृतेः अनुभवं उपलब्धिं अनूत्पद्यमानं स्मरणमेव अनुस्मृतिः । सा च
उपलब्ध्यैककर्तृका सती संभवति । पुरुषान्तरुपलब्धिविषये पुरुषान्तरस्य
स्मृत्यदर्शनात् । कथं हि अहमदोऽद्राक्षम् इदं पश्यामि इति च पूर्वोत्तरदर्शनि
एकस्मिन् असति प्रत्ययः स्यात् ।

—ब्र. सू. भाष्य २.२.२५

१०. रूपाद्यभावाद्धि न्यायमर्थः प्रत्यक्षगोचरः
लिगाद्यभावाच्च नानुमानादीनाम् ।

—ब्र. सू. भाष्य २.१.११

11. At this stage a distinction must be made between what may be called an *Amśa-Amśi* relation and an *Avayava-Avayavi* relation, which is very often overlooked. The *Amśa-Amśi* relation is homogeneous and appears to be possible in a Spaceless world, not so the *Avayava-Avayavi* relation which is heterogeneous and has reference to Space. I must add that I owe this distinction to my brother, Dr. Surendra Barlingay.