

## SOME PROBLEMS IN IDENTITY MYSTICISM\*

Professor Zaehner's *Mysticism, Sacred and Profane*<sup>1</sup> is one of the valuable and scholarly works in the area of comparative study of mysticism, Eastern and Western. Zaehner is undoubtedly one of the authorities on Christian mysticism; and his interpretation of Christian mysticism must, therefore, be given due consideration by any one who is interested in it. Three chapters in *Mysticism, Sacred and Profane* entitled "Some Hindu Approaches", "Monism versus Theism", and "Theism versus Monism" are extremely relevant to a consideration of some problems in identity mysticism. The title of the chapter "Monism versus Theism" or "Theism versus Monism" is significant as it clearly indicates Zaehner's standpoint on this problem. To Zaehner, monism and theism cannot go together. Zaehner's sympathetic interpretation of Christian mysticism is understandable. But his interpretation of Indian mysticism in general and Hindu Theistic mysticism in particular is not satisfactory; and his presentation of Advaita and identity mysticism is unfair. Professor Stace in his important book *Mysticism and Philosophy*<sup>2</sup> examines the nature and characteristics of the two types of mysticism, the extrovert and the introvert, and discusses some of the issues connected with identity mysticism with sympathy and understanding, though he holds the view that the monistic Vedānta of Śaṅkara leads to absurdities in the same way as a dualistic position lands its supporter in difficulties.<sup>3</sup> The issues raised by Stace are so important that Professor H. D. Lewis finds it necessary to devote a full chapter called "Mysticism and Monism" in his book *The Elusive Mind*.<sup>4</sup> Lewis pays special attention to the problem of the dissolution of individuality in mystical experience which Stace discusses in the context of introvertive mysticism. I shall discuss in this paper some general issues connected with Indian mysticism and certain specific problems bearing on identity mysticism raised by Zaehner, Stace, and Lewis.

## II

When we say that some one is a mystic, we mean that he is one who has mystical *experience*. A mystic, whether Eastern or Western, Christian or Hindu, extrovertive or introvertive, is one who has *direct* apprehension of the transcendent reality resulting in *unitive experience*, in whatever way the expression "unitive experience" is interpreted. Zaehner admits that mysticism implies, among other things, these two essential features, *viz* direct apprehension and unitive experience.<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, he holds the view that Indian mysticism is not the record of actual experience. He says: "When we come to discuss Indian mysticism, we will no longer be speaking entirely in terms of recorded experience. The Hindu mystical classics are not autobiographical and are not the record of actual experiences undergone by given individuals."<sup>6</sup> A statement of this kind, if it comes from any other person, may safely be ignored. But coming as it does from no less an authority than Zaehner, it merits consideration.

There are mystics in Hinduism who speak of God-experience attained by them all on a sudden or as a result of the pursuit of a rigorous discipline. Ramkrishna Paramahansa and Ramana Maharshi, to mention only two, are outstanding examples of mystics in modern times who speak of their God-experience. There are also cases of mystics who speak of their God-experience even in the pre-natal condition when they were lying in the womb. Poygai Ālvār is one such gifted soul to have not only the experience of God while lying in the womb, but also the extraordinary power to recollect that experience. This is how Poygai Ālvār speaks of his experience of God: "Even then (before birth) when I was lying in the womb did I worship with the hands united in the direction of the Lord who has taken his abode at Śrīraṅgam, and saw Him. Even for a moment I have not forgotten the Lord whose colour is like that of the ocean full of waves. O ye poor! How can I forget Him now?"<sup>7</sup>

It is necessary to note first of all the tone of certainty with which the Ālvār speaks of his experience of God. He says that he worshipped the Lord, and as a result of worship *saw* Him even while he was lying in the womb. There is no reason to think that the Ālvār mis-reports his experience. Another feature to be stressed here is that the Ālvār did not attain the direct knowledge of God through any process of reasoning. His condition when he was in the womb was such that he had neither a developed mind nor the instruments of knowledge fit enough for action at that time. Nevertheless, he recollects the God-experience he had at that time, and claims that he was in touch with a reality outside and beyond himself. Though his experience is subjective, the object of his experience is trans-subjective. It is, therefore, wrong to treat the mystical experience of God which PoyagiĀlvār, and also other mystics, had as an emotional state and nothing else than that. The experience he speaks of is the direct experience of God. He is more certain about the *presence* of God which he has experienced than we are of the things of the external world in our normal waking consciousness. It is just like Wordsworth's claim, "I have felt a presence . . . . a spirit that impels all thinking things, all objects of all thought, and rolls through all things."

Peyālvār goes into raptures in his description of the divine form of Viṣṇu, which he experienced. Instead of just declaring "I saw God", he gives details of what he witnessed in his mystic experience. In a hymn of matchless beauty, unsurpassed vividness, and inspiring declaration, he says: "Today, in the Lord who is of the colour of the sea, I saw Śrī; I saw the body shining like gold; I saw the luminous light like that of the sun; I saw the lustrous disc which displays its supremacy in the battlefield; I saw the conch."<sup>8</sup>

Like the Ālvārs, Saint Mānikkavācakar too speaks of his God-experience. He says: "Behold Him who is manifested in the forms of the male, the female, and the neuter. Note that I too saw Him with my eyes. Behold God-Ambro-

sia yielding grace in abundance. Note that I saw the greatness of His grace.”<sup>9</sup>

It is necessary to invite attention to three important features in this declaration of Māṇikkavācakar’s. First, it expresses the view that the transcendental reality appears in different forms such as male, female, etc., echoing what has been stated in a text of the Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad, IV, 3: “You are woman. You are man. You are the youth and the maiden too...” Second, it emphasizes that God is the embodiment of grace. Third, it is a record in no uncertain terms of the authentic God-experience which Saint Māṇikkavācakar had.

It should not be thought that Poygai Ālvār, Peyālvār, and Māṇikkavācakar are just isolated cases. There are quite a few mystics in Hinduism. Every mystic in the Hindu tradition, as in the case of other traditions, has his or her authentic God-experience. There is a long, continuous succession of mystics in the Hindu tradition right from the time of the Vedic seer who declared, “I know this great *Puruṣa* shining like the sun beyond the darkness. He who knows Him thus becomes immortal in this life. There is no other way to immortality.”<sup>10</sup> So there is no justification for Zaehner’s view that Indian mysticism is not the record of actual experience undergone by the concerned individuals.

### III

I shall now consider another problem raised by Zaehner. According to Zaehner, monism and theism are opposed to each other. With reference to Ramkrishna Paramahansa, Zaehner writes: “(Ramkrishna) was torn between two doctrines, between the Vedānta which he officially professed in its extreme non-dual variety on the one hand, and an intense devotion to a personal God, usually conceived of as Kālī (the Mother) on the other.”<sup>11</sup> In another place he says that for a monist “any theistic experience would have to be written off by him as ultimately illusory, since personal gods are little more than convenient fictions.”<sup>12</sup> Lewis refers to the same problem in another

way by joining issue with Stace. Though Stace does not accept the monistic position, he nevertheless holds the view that God is both personal and impersonal. Lewis thinks that it is a contradiction to think of God as both personal and impersonal, and that only if the contradiction could be allowed Stace could hold the view that God who is personal as an object of worship is also impersonal as an undifferentiated unity. But the contradiction, according to Lewis, cannot be admitted as true.<sup>13</sup> It will be of interest to refer to Zaehner's observation in this context. Zaehner says: "On the question whether God is personal or impersonal, it seems to me that a great deal of nonsense has been talked."<sup>14</sup> What emerges clearly from the views of Zaehner and Lewis is that according to both of them monism and theistic mysticism cannot go together. Let us consider this issue.

According to Śaṅkara, one and the same reality, Brahman which is the Absolute, is viewed in two ways — as what is associated with the distinctions of name and form arising because of the adjunct and as that which is free from every adjunct.<sup>15</sup> It may be stated here that according to Śaṅkara there are not, numerically speaking, two Brahmanas — Brahman as *nirguṇa* and Brahman as *saḡuṇa*. From the relative standpoint conditioned by *avidyā*, we view the undifferentiated, non-dual, non-relational reality as differentiated, dual, and relational, and bring in distinctions such as the worshipper and the worshipped. It may also be noted that the numerous gods and goddesses of the pantheon, according to Advaita, are the manifestations of one and the same reality, and that the question of hierarchy among these gods and goddesses is, therefore, meaningless, though it is legitimate and significant to accept the concept of personal God (*iṣṭa-devatā*) which is a remarkable feature of Hinduism. Advaita admits the need for the worship of God and provides an important place for it in the scheme of discipline leading to the attainment of liberation (*mokṣa*). Theism which involves the concept of personal God and the worshipper — worshipped relation is

an important stage in the life of a spiritual aspirant. According to Advaita, the goal to be attained is Brahman, the non-dual, non-relational reality. It is a state of unity devoid of distinctions and relations which constitute empirical existence. It can be attained by means of right knowledge alone. It is spoken of as the state of enlightenment (*vidyā*) with a view to contrast it with the state of empirical existence which is referred to as the state of ignorance (*avidyā*). So the real position is that Advaita is not anti-theistic, but trans-theistic. It means that the alleged conflict between monism and theistic mysticism can be reconciled, according to Śaṅkara, in terms of the difference between absolute and relative standpoints, the former being the standpoint of *vidyā* and the latter that of *avidyā*.

It must be borne in mind that Śaṅkara is not the only person to make such a distinction between the state of enlightenment and that of ignorance to solve the problem of the one and the many. The distinction which Meister Eckhart introduces between the level of understanding and the level above understanding corresponds to the distinction between the relative and absolute standpoints (*i.e.* states of ignorance and enlightenment) spoken of by Śaṅkara. according to Eckhart, when a person sees one thing as different from another, he is at the level of understanding; but when he intuitively grasps the oneness of all things, he is at the level above understanding.

Let us consider the testimony of Saint Kumaraguruparar who, though born dumb, got the power of speech when he was five through the grace of God at Tiruchendur, one of the six *paṭai-vīḍus*. Kumaraguruparar's *Kandarkali-veṇbā* which is full of philosophical and mystical significance is a devotional hymn of great importance. It explains the nature of the transcendent reality both in its essential nature (*svarūpa-lakṣaṇa*) and accidental attributes (*tatastha-lakṣaṇa*). It speaks of the goal and the way thereto. Kumaraguruparar says: "The Absolute is eternal bliss and knowledge without beginning, middle, and end; it is of the nature of supreme knowledge without any limita-

tion. Being free from name, attribute, and form which are associated with it by the *jīva*, it is the all-pervasive Śiva. It is beyond comprehension by the intellect. It transcends the fivefold function. It is beyond the reach of mind. . . ."<sup>17</sup> Kumaraguruparar who gives the *svarūpa-lakṣaṇa* of the Absolute in the above passage describes it in the sequel most vividly in its manifestation as *Subrahmaṇya* from head to foot. He also describes the spiritual rule of the Lord giving an account of His "ten limbs". The standpoint of Kumaraguruparar is relevant to the problem of the relation between monism and theism which we are considering here. It testifies to the fact that there is no conflict between monism and theism, between the conception of the Absolute as one and non-dual, as undifferentiated, as devoid of name, form, and distinctions on the one hand, and its conception in a differentiated form with name and qualities on the other.

Since every form of God is a manifestation of the One, it is wrong to think of one form of God as superior and another as inferior. Śiva and Viṣṇu which are manifestations of the Absolute are one, though it is open to a devotee to worship any one of these two forms, or both, or any other, according to his inclination and training. Poygai Āḷvār testifies to the oneness of the Absolute, the supreme Being, manifested as Śiva and Viṣṇu. He says: "Hara is the name of the one, Nārāyaṇa that of the other. Bull is the vehicle for the one, and the white-headed kite for the other. (*Śaiva*) Āgama is the source of our knowledge of the one, and the *Veda* that of the other. The (*Kailāsa*) mountain is the abode of the one, and the milky ocean that of the other. While the one performs the function of destruction, the other that of protection. The one is armed with the trident, and the other with the disc. The form of the one is like the glowing fire, while that of the other is like the dark cloud. The body of both is one."<sup>18</sup> In this passage there is an implicit reference to the concept of *śaṅkara-Nārāyaṇa*, i.e. to the idea that Śiva and Viṣṇu are one, because they are manifestations of one and the same



reality. Peyālvār explicitly refers to this concept in one of his hymns. It is a great wonder, declares Peyālvār, that the Lord of Tirumalai appears uniting the two forms Śiva and Viṣṇu.<sup>19</sup>

Gifted as they are with mystical intuition, Poygai Ālvār and Peyālvār are able to realize the oneness of Śiva and Viṣṇu. Though Śiva and Viṣṇu are distinct at the level of understanding, they become one at the intuitive level of mysticism which is above the level of understanding. Blades of grass, wood, and stone are no doubt different when we view them through reason. But they become one to a mystic like Eckhart at the level of mystical intuition. Distinctions cease to exist, and opposites coincide in mystical experience. This may appear to be absurd and untenable to us at the level of understanding; and so we fail to see the truth realized by Eckhart and the Ālvārs. We will see only distinctions, when we look through the many coloured glass of reason which is stained by *avidyā*. To realize oneness which Ālvārs and other mystics experienced, one must rise to the level of mystical intuition which is a medium altogether different from reason. One, therefore, fails to see how there can be any conflict at all between monism and theism, or between oneness and difference, which are assigned to different levels.

#### IV

I shall now consider the problem of the dissolution of individuality in mystical experience. Every mystic speaks of union with God. What does this expression "union with God" mean? Theistic mysticism and identity mysticism answer this question differently. According to theistic mysticism, union with God does not mean identity of the released soul with God. For example, Viśiṣṭādvaita, which is a theistic system, explains *sāyujya* or oneness with God, which the soul attains at the time of release, in terms of experiential unity between the released soul and God; union with God does not annul their entitative difference. The liberated soul is only united with God, and there is insepar-



able union between them (*viśiṣṭa-aikya*). The soul does not become God; and so there is no absolute identity (*svarūpa-aikya*) between them. Since there is existential difference between the liberated soul and God, there is no loss of the individuality of the soul even in the state of release.

According to Stace, the nucleus common to all kinds of mystical experience is the experience of unity or oneness. He maintains that, though the mystic experience does not point to duality of soul and God, it is nevertheless interpreted dualistically by philosophers who belong to theistic tradition. He is of the view that the mistake lies in the interpretation. It may be stated here that Stace does not support the standpoint of Advaita, and that he is interested only in defending the position that there is the dissolution of individuality in mystic experience.

Lewis joins issue with Stace on the question of the dissolution of individuality in mystic experience. Committed as he is to the theistic position, Lewis considers that the individuality or the separate identity of the mystic is not dissolved in the so-called union with God, though there is the appearance of its elimination at that time. The mistake, according to him, lies in the interpretation of the experience. He says that the mystic, in the rapture and intensity of his consciousness of God to the exclusion of all other things from his consciousness, "could genuinely feel, as no doubt many of them did, that their own being, at the very core of it, had been wholly taken up into the being of God. In this they (the mystics) would be quite mistaken, there could hardly be a greater mistake. But it is a mistake which we can easily understand."<sup>20</sup> In another place he says that "there seems to be a case for maintaining that oriental mystics are misrepresenting their case"<sup>21</sup> when they talk of their oneness with God.

Lewis gives the following arguments in support of his position. First, a sound view of the transcendent as well as finite beings seems to preclude from the start any possibility of our being strictly identical with God. The claim that we are so is bound to be mistaken whatever the mystic may

feel or experience. Second, it is hard to describe mystical experience; and the peculiarly distinctive character of the mystical experience will make a mystic reluctant to modify the terms in which he describes his experience. But a careful examination of the mystic experience, Lewis argues, will convince us that the mystic is wrong in his interpretation of the experience of oneness with God. But this is not to question, he says, the "merits and importance of mystical experience." Third, the Western mystics have a sounder view of what the experience in all its forms is bound to be in essentials."<sup>22</sup>

None of the arguments given by Lewis are convincing. The first argument proceeds on a presupposition which is questionable. On the assumption that his view of the transcendent and finite beings is sound, Lewis denies the identity of the soul with God in mystic experience. One may, however, hold the opposite view that the individual soul in its essential nature is identical with God, and claim that this view which is sound is corroborated by the experience of the mystics. Mystic experience is not irrelevant to the consideration of the issue whether the individual soul is identical with God or not. So the first argument given by Lewis will not avail him. Nor does his third argument hold good. In fact it is no argument at all, but only an assertion, for without any supporting arguments Lewis holds the view that the Western mystics have a sounder view of the essentials of the mystical experience. Lewis does not give us any criterion for deciding the soundness of the essentials of the mystical experience, Eastern or Western.

We are now left with only the second argument. Lewis admits the validity and importance of mystical experience. It is true, as he himself states it, that it is hard to describe mystical experience. Though he does not question the authenticity of the mystic's experience, he questions the mystic's interpretation of his experience. The mystic, according to Lewis, is wrong in his interpretation of the experience of his oneness with God.

Though it is hard to describe mystical experience, it does not follow that it cannot be or has not been described, however inadequate the description may be. If mystical experience is important, one has to accept the mystic's account of his experience as given by him without questioning his account and interpretation of it. Since we cannot have access to the experience of a mystic, which we consider to be important and authentic, we have to accept the account which a mystic gives of his experience.

We may refer to the description of mystical experience drawn from two different sources. The *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* (VII) gives the following account of the mystical experience of the transcendent reality: "The wise say that the Fourth is unseen, beyond empirical dealings, beyond the grasp of the organs of action, uninferable, unthinkable, indescribable. It is pure, unitary consciousness. It is free from the phenomenal world. It is ineffable peace. It is the supreme good. It is non-dual. It is the self." According to this description, mystical experience is the experience of oneness without distinctions and plurality. It is free from subject-object relation, I-thou relation, and so on.

Let us now consider how Saint Māṇikkavācakar describes the nature of God-experience in his *Tiruppadaĩatci*. In the state of union with God, the divine Fisherman, there is no longer delight in the vision of His anklet-girt feet, no association with the life of the jīvas, no worship of the Lord's feet, no scope for dance and song, no room for grace, no fear in respect of merit and demerit, no association with the good, no distinctions of caste, no notions such as good caused by *māyā*, no thought that we are slaves of His slaves, and so on. Only some of the things which Māṇikkavācakar speaks of as absent in mystical experience are stated above. The list which the Saint himself gives is only illustrative, not exhaustive. In fact, it cannot be exhaustive at all. The point which Māṇikkavācakar wants to drive home is that in the mystical experience of union with God, there is no scope for subject-object relation, I-thou relation, worshipper-worshipped relation, servant-master relation, and so on.

In that state, there is the absence of the mind; consequently the sense of individuality, the notion of 'I', what Rāmānuja would call *ahamārtha*, cannot persist at that time.

Either one accepts the authentic character of mystical experience or rejects it as spurious. It makes no sense to say that the interpretation of one's own experience given by the mystic is wrong and cannot be accepted while at the same time admitting the authenticity of mystical experience. It is not for others to say that the mystic is wrong in the interpretation of his experience of oneness or union with God. No one who does not have the mystic's experience is competent to sit in judgement on what the mystic says about his experience.

Does the loss of individuality or personal existence in the state of release mean the annihilation of the Self? Rāmānuja, for instance, argues that it does, in the course of his objection against the standpoint of Advaita.<sup>23</sup> Advaita holds the view that the loss of individuality or the sense of "I" when the individual soul (*jīva*) attains liberation does not lead to the annihilation of the self. According to Advaita, the individual soul in its essential nature is no other than Brahman, the ultimate reality. But on account of ignorance (*avidyā*) it thinks that it is different from Brahman, and is involved in the empirical existence. For realizing its identity with Brahman all that is required is the removal of *avidyā* which has caused the status of individuality (*jīvabhāva*). When *avidyā* is destroyed by the right knowledge, the individual soul realizes its essential nature as Brahman, *i.e.* it remains as Brahman. In this explanation there is scope for both endeavour and attainment. There is the endeavour to remove the *jīvabhāva*, the false role which the Self plays due to ignorance; and consequent on the removal of the *jīvabhāva* there is the attainment of the original status from which there has been a lapse. It means that identity mysticism can account for both destruction (*fanā*) and survival (*baqā*) which are considered to be important features in God-realization according to theistic mysticism.<sup>24</sup> What is annihilated is

avidyā and the false status of individuality (*jīvabhāva*) caused by it. What abides is the ever-existent Brahman-Ātman in its true form. It may be stated here that Advaita does not explain the attainment of oneness with Brahman by the *jīva* in terms of the "merging" of the *jīva* in Brahman as Zaehner seems to think.<sup>25</sup>

## V

One more issue to be considered relates to the role of the mystic in society. C.E.M. Joad is of the view that a mystic, though a precocious child, is an "unprofitable servant"<sup>26</sup> as he withdraws himself from society. He has a specific charge against the Eastern mystics. While the Western mystics realized the importance of the world of affairs "looking upon mysticism not as a permanent vocation but as the joy and refreshment of a life of effort and endeavour", the Eastern mystics, according to him, have either missed or deliberately ignored it.<sup>27</sup>

Zaehner has objections specifically against the identity mysticism of Advaita. He remarks that, while there is place for love in theistic mysticism, in the identity mysticism of Advaita there is absolutely no place for love. His point is that identity mystics to whom non-dualism is the ultimate truth do not care for the welfare of the world and that they do not endeavour to remove the misery of the people through social reform. Further, there is, according to Zaehner, a theoretical difficulty in the position of Advaita so far as a mystic helping others in society. He says: "It does much credit to the heart of the ultramonist Vedāntins that they have always been ready to help others towards liberation; it does very little credit to their head, for what logic can there possibly be in seeking to free from illusion a person who, from the point of the would-be liberator is by definition illusory? Moreover, it is contrary to the quite logical advice of Gauḍapāda that one 'should behave in the world like an insentient object'."<sup>28</sup>

What Joad says about mystics in general and Eastern mystics in particular is untenable. It is not true to say that

mystics in India have been, and are, indifferent to the problems of others in society. Consider the case of Ramana Maharshi, one of the mystics of our own time. The gracious look of the Maharshi has been a solace to those who have met him. What is true of Ramana Maharshi is equally true of other mystics. The greatness of a mystic is not to be judged exclusively in terms of moral and social activities. Moral and social activities are not the only ways through which a mystic has to outwardly show his concern for others. By his thought and word, by his benign look and gentle touch, and also by his "eloquent silence" a mystic comforts the agonized mind and soothes the aching body of those who seek his guidance. Ramana Maharshi used to say that only those who have realized the Self can serve others. Moral activity, social reform, and community service undertaken by the rest are more often than not much propaganda and little service.

While Zaehner's bias for theism is understandable, his criticism of identity mysticism is unfounded. It is anything but truth to say that great mystics like Śaṅkara, Ramana Maharshi, and others withdraw from society with a view to enjoy the emotional ecstasy of bliss all by themselves. What a mystic speaks and does is at once an example and an inspiration to others. In his commentary on the *Bhagavad-gītā*, III, 25, Śaṅkara observes that a person who has realized the Self should work for the welfare of others, though for himself he may have nothing to do.

"Who can rescue whom?" is the most important question to be considered in order to answer the logical difficulty raised by Zaehner. The wise man alone who has realized Brahman-Ātman, who is liberated-in-life (*jīvanmukta*), can rescue one who, because of ignorance, is in bondage. Gauḍapāda whom Zaehner has quoted refers first of all to the qualifications of the person who realizes the non-dual reality. He says: "This Self, which is trans-phenomenal and non-dual, which is free from all imagination, is realized by the wise, who are free from attachment, fear, and anger, and who are well-versed in the meaning of the Vedas."<sup>29</sup> How would the man of wisdom, *i.e.* the God-

realized person, behave in the world? Gauḍapāda himself answers this question in the next verse from which Zaehner has quoted. He says: "Therefore, after knowing it thus, one should fix one's attention on non-duality. Having realized the non-dual reality, one should behave in the world like an insentient object."<sup>30</sup> What does Gauḍapāda mean when he compares the behaviour of the liberated-in-life (*jīvanmukta*) to that of an insentient object? In his commentary on this verse, Śaṅkara says that a *jīvanmukta* will not broadcast his realization to the world; he will behave as though he has not known the truth; he will not tomtom to others what he is and what he has attained. Zaehner seems to think that a *jīvanmukta* will remain inert like a stone, and that he cannot, therefore, go to the help of others in bondage. It is obvious that Zaehner has misunderstood the point of Gauḍapāda.

The individual (*jīva*) who is to be rescued is one who, without knowing his real nature, is subject to illusion, and suffers from various wrong notions about himself. Advaita does not say that the *jīva* is illusory. On the contrary, it says that what the *jīva* thinks of himself is illusory; i.e. his status as a finite individual (*jīva-bhāva*) is illusory. A prince, not knowing his real status, thinks of himself from his childhood as a hunter and behaves accordingly. While his status as a prince is real, his role as a hunter is illusory. One who knows the truth cures him of the illusion he suffers from by telling him the truth that he is not a hunter, but only a prince and thereby rescues him. Likewise, a God-realized person, i.e. a *jīvanmukta*, out of compassion for one who suffers from wrong notions due to *avidyā*, tells him in the same way as Uddālaka instructed Śvetaketu that he is not a *jīva*, a limited and finite being, but only Brahman which is "real, knowledge, and infinite."<sup>31</sup> So Zaehner's question, "what logic can there possibly be in seeking to free from illusion a person who, from the point of view of the would-be liberator, is by definition, illusory?" betrays lack of understanding of the standpoint of Advaita.

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## NOTES

- \* This paper was presented in the Seventeenth All-India Seminar organized by the Centre for Advanced Study in Philosophy, University of Madras, Madras.
1. R. C. Zaehner, *Mysticism, Sacred and Profane* (Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1957).
  2. W. T. Stace, *Mysticism and Philosophy* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1961).
  3. *Ibid.*, pp. 237 and 240.
  4. H. D. Lewis, *The Elusive Mind* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1969).
  5. *Op. cit.*, pp. 31-32.
  6. *Ibid.*, p. 130.
  7. *First Tiruvantādi*, verse 6.
  8. *Third Tiruvantādi*, verse 1.
  9. *Tiruvandappakuti*, 57-60.
  10. *Puruṣasūktam*.
  11. *Op. cit.*, pp. 131-132.
  12. *Ibid.*, p. 189.
  13. *Op. cit.*, p. 318.
  14. *Op. cit.*, p. 140.
  15. See Śaṅkara's commentary on the *Brahma-sūtra*, I, i, 12, at the beginning of the *ānandamayādhikaraṇa*.
  16. Stace, *Op. cit.*, p. 64.
  16. Stace, *op. cit.*, p. 64.
  17. Kumaraguruparar, *Kandar-kalivenbā*, lines 4-10.
  18. Poygai Ālvār, *First Tiruvantādi*, verse 5.
  19. Peyālvār, *Third Tiruvantādi*, verse 63.
  20. Lewis, *op. cit.*, p. 309.
  21. *Ibid.*, p. 314.
  22. *Ibid.*, p. 314.
  23. See Rāmānuja's *Śrī-bhāṣya*, I, i, 1.
  24. See Zaehner, *op. cit.*, p. 150.
  25. Zaehner, *op. cit.*, pp. 139-140. The examples of the juices constituting honey and the rivers merging in the ocean given in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, VI, ix-x, in the context of *sat-sampatti* are mentioned by Zaehner in support of his view. He says that this portion

of the *Chāndogya* is the *locus classicus* of the non-dualist Vedānta. The passages mentioned by him in this connection do not lend support to his conception of "merging" of the *jīva* in Brahman. Had he taken into consideration the issues that are raised in the context and the answers to them contained in these illustrations, his conclusion would have been quite different.

26. C. E. M. Joad, *Matter, Life and Value* (London: Oxford University Press, 1929), p. 409.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 410.
28. Zaehner, *op. cit.*, p. 164.
29. Gauḍapāda, *Māṇḍukya-kārikā*, II, 35.
30. *Ibid.*, II, 36.
31. *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, II, i, 1.

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