

The Inclusiveness of Adwaita.

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The supreme tolerance and catholicity of Śrī Śankara's outlook is seen in his great and characteristic utterance:—

‘तेषां (द्वैतिनां) द्वैतदृष्टिरस्माकमद्वैत-
दृष्टिः ।’ ‘तैः अस्मदीयोऽयं वैदिकः सर्वानन्य-
त्वादात्मैकत्वदर्शनपक्षो न विरुद्धयते ।’

(*Māṇḍūkya-Kārikā-Bhāṣya III. 18, 17.*)

Ānandagiri follows this view by saying:—

द्वैतमद्वैतकार्यम्; न च कारणं तत्कार्यप्रति-
भासैर्विरुद्धयते; कार्यस्य कारणातिरेकेण सद्भावात् ।
अतः द्वैतपक्षैरद्वैतपक्षो विरुद्धो न भवति ।

It is therefore clear that the Adwaita of Śrī Śankara gives room within its capacious fold for an infinity of spiritual experiences and realizations while affirming the supreme realization of the identity of what appear as separate, viz., *Paramātmā, Jīva* and *Jagat*.

Śrī Śankarāchārya's doctrine of *Māyā* has come in for much criticism and ridicule, but it is really simple and well-founded and has therefore got a deep hold over the Indian imagination. What he says is not that the world is an illusion, but that it is non-different (*ananya*) from *Brahma*. He does not say that the world is *Brahma*. That

would be pantheism. Nor does he say that the world is non-existent. Just as a pot is non-different from clay (*सृष्टिकेत्येव सत्यम्*), so the universe is non-different from *Brahma*.

यस्य च यस्मादात्मलाभो भवति स तेनाविभक्तो
दृष्टः, यथा घटादीनि मृदा ।

(*Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Bhāṣya*)

Just as a wave is non-different from the sea, so the universe is non-different from *Brahma* (*सल्लिखफेनदृष्टान्तेन परिहृतत्वात्*).

(*Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Bhāṣya III. 5*)

न च तेषां (फेनतरंगादीनां) मितरेतरभावानापत्तावपि समुद्रात्मनोऽन्यत्वं भवति ।

(*Brahma Sūtra-Bhāṣya II. i. 13*).

Similarly, a golden ornament is gold all along, and a spark is but fire. The cause does not lose its being by appearing as the effect. So you can neither deny the relative reality of the effects nor the *absolute* reality of the cause. Does a cow remain a cow while sitting or standing, and a horse when sleeping ?

न हि लोके गौस्तिष्ठन् गच्छन् वा गौर्भवति
शयानस्त्वश्वादिजात्यन्तरम् ।

(*Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Bhāṣya II. i. 20*).

When you think of the elephant in a wooden elephant, the wood disappears from cognition but is there always; and, when you think of the wood, the elephant disappears, but the wood is there as it has always been and will be.

दन्तिनि दारुविकारे दारु तिरोभवति सोऽपि सर्वत्र ।
जगति तथा परमात्मा परमात्मन्यपि जगत्तिरोधते ॥

In fact, Śrī Śankara explicitly says that the *Śruti* takes the world as we see it and then shows its identity with *Brahma*, and that it does not affirm or negate the world—(संसारस्य) सत्यतामसत्यतां वा ना-
चष्टे न च वारयति । (*Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Bhāṣya* II. i. 20). This is the real meaning of the famous word *Anīrvachanīya*, which is used in regard to *Māyā*. He also says:—अहो अतिगंभीरा दुखगाह्या विचित्रा माया
चेयम्... (*Kāthopaniṣad-Bhāṣya* I. iii. 12). The world is not *asat* (non-existence, illusion) or *sat* (unchanging reality like *Brahma*). It is a dependent and relative reality which is stultified in the case of the Realizer of *Brahma* and in his case alone. *Brahma* is the cause of such relative reality and is also its basis and sustainer. A famous stanza says:—

अस्ति भाति प्रियं रूपं नाम चेत्यंशपञ्चकम् ।
आद्यत्रयं ब्रह्मरूपं जगद्रूपं ततो द्वयम् ॥

When we view his doctrine from yet another viewpoint, it is only the anterior state of the manifested world of names and forms (परमेश्वराधीना स्त्रियमस्माभिः
प्रागवस्था जगतोऽभ्युपगम्यते...अव्यक्ता हि सा माया... ।
—*Brahma Sūtra-Bhāṣya* I. iv. 3). Just as a seed contains the potency of the tree, so the *avyakta* state contains the potency of the whole manifested universe (वटकणिकायामिव वटवृक्षशक्तिः.....)

(*Kāthopaniṣad-Bhāṣya* I. 3. 11). It derives its reality from *Brahma*, but *Brahma* is not affected by it. Thus it cannot be equated to the *Pradhāna* of the Sāṅkhyas, which is co-ordinate with *Puruṣa*. In its causal form it is non-separate from *Brahma*. In its form of united names and forms and effects, as dichotomised by our minds, it is not realized as one with *Brahma*, and such a concept of its limitation and of its non-identity with *Brahma* constitutes its essential unreality, which is only another way of expressing its relative reality. *Māyā* is *Parīṇāmi Nītya*, while *Brahma* is *Kūṭastha Nītya*. It is *Brahma's Aīśvarya* and, by having it, *Brahma* becomes *Īśvara*. That is why the *Śvetāśwatara* says:—

मायां तु प्रकृतिं विद्यान्मायिनं तु महेश्वरम् ।

The *Bhagavadgītā* says:—

प्रकृतिं स्वामधिष्ठाय संभवाभ्यात्ममायया ॥

In fact, corresponding to our waking state and dream state and dreamless sleep in the microcosm we have in the macrocosm the gross or manifested state (*Sthūla*) and the subtle state (*Sūkṣma*) and the causal state (*Kāraṇa*). All these three states proceed from *Brahma* as the cause. Such *Māyā* is the universal power or energy of *Brahma*. Śankara sometimes calls it also *Avidyā*. But it is different from our individual *Avidyā* or *Adhyāsa* which superimposes *Nāma-Rūpa* on *Brahma* in our limited mental state. Individual *Avidyā* can be stultified by *Vidyā*. But the cosmic *Māyā* or *Avidyā* is the power of *Brahma* and cannot be negated or sublated by individual *Vidyā*. If one Vāma-

deva or Śuka attains *Mukti*, it does not lead to the disappearance of the world. The *Mūlāvidyā* or *Mūla Māyā* continues and will continue. *Māyā* has *Āvaraṇa Śakti* (which conceals the real nature of *Brahma*) and *Vikṣepa Śakti* (which projects the universe). *Mukti* leads to the disappearance of the former, but not to the disappearance of the latter. *Māyā* is *Bhāvarūpā* and not *Asat* or *Abhāva*. It is objective and not merely subjective. Call it *Māyā* or *Prakṛti* or *Śakti* or *Samasṭi Avidyā* as you like. It is the *Upādāna Kāraṇa* of the universe and not a mere figment of our imagination or mere nothingness.

After thus relating the universe to *Brahma* in a relation of absolute identity persisting in the midst of relative differentiation, Śrī Śankara proceeds to apply the same method to the individual souls. Each soul is separate from every other soul, just as every bit of matter is separate from every bit of matter. But, just as every bit of matter has its being and reality only from the infinite *Brahma*, even so every individual soul has its being and reality only from *Brahma*. The mind and the senses and the body form a totality of limiting adjuncts (*Upādhis*), just as material qualities form the limiting adjuncts in the case of matter. The same Self in its process of self-identification with the five *Koṣas* regards itself as *Kartā* (doer) and *Bhoktā* (enjoyer) and has a succession of *Vṛtti-jñānas* (mental states) which obscure its real nature as *Brahma*. It is such *Adhyāsa* (superimposition or self-identification) which leads to the experience of pleasures and pains, which really belong to the plane of

Prakṛti. This is made clear by Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa in Chapter XIII of the *Gītā*, wherein He classes इच्छा, द्वेष, सुख, दुःख, संघात, चेतना and वृत्ति along with the *Mahābhūtas*, as forming the *Kṣetra*, He being the *Kṣetrajña*.

Śrī Śankara's unique greatness is to be seen also in his masterly analysis of the three daily recurrent states of *Jāgrat* and *Swapna* and *Suṣupti*, which form the *Triṣura* which has to be overcome by the attainment of the *Turiya* state. In the waking state we are in the region of panoramic and progressive diversity due to the antiquity of the senses and the objects borne along by time's unhalting and unresting flow. In the state of dream, the empire of Time is arrested, reversed, speeded, amplified, and contracted for each dreaming ego, though the forward flow of external events goes on. The mind of the ego is engaged in reconstructions made out of the *Vāsanas* of its waking life. But in deep sleep even this inner activity is gone. Each ego reaches its true and essential Brahmic state; but it is surrounded by circumambient nescience with its potentiality of future projections of waking and dreaming states and is again thrust into individual egohood with its five sheaths and its mental *Vṛttis* and with the possibilities of future *Samsāra*.

But the *Brahma* is not something different from the *Jīva*. If the *Jīva* divests itself of its *Sheaths*, what remains is not *nothing*, but *Brahma*, which is pure *Chaitanya*, pure *Sachchidānanda*, pure and infinite *Satyam* and *Jñānam*, नित्यशुद्ध-बुद्धमुक्तस्वभाव. The Pure Eternal Infinite Being is only as partially expressed through Ego as through matter. It is above

all dichotomy of Subject and Object. It has no form or name or limitation or modification or differentiation. The mind and the senses go outward and cannot see the innermost reality.

पराञ्चि खानि व्यतृणत् स्वयम्भू-
स्तस्मात् पराङ् पश्यति नान्तरात्मन् ।
(*Kaṭhōpaniṣad II. iv. 1*)

The mind and the senses are the cause of the variety of नामरूप. If we look at the sky through multi-coloured window panes, the sky does not become multi-coloured, but maintains its infinite blueness all the same and for ever. We can be wandering in नामरूप for ever or we can use them as stepping-stones to rise from the state of effects to the state of the Absolute Cause.

What, then, is the means of ascent to a realization of our true nature as *Brahma*. Śrī Śankara's Adwaita lays emphasis on the Sādhanas, *i. e.*, ethical life and devotion to God, in at least as ample a measure as any other faith in the world. The nearest approach to the highest realization of unity is in love. In the highest form of love the lover loses his sense of separateness from the Beloved. Even so in devotion our sense of separateness from God vanishes. The *Avidyā* which has caused our sense of separateness from *Brahma* is removed by *Vidyā*. Both the means of bondage and the means of liberation cancel each other (कनकरोषुवत्) and what is left is the illimitable and infinite bliss of Pure Being. Can we not—should we not—let out and reveal the *Paramātmā* now self-imprisoned in the *Jīvātmā*? Śrī Śankara says:—

जीवः परमात्मांश एव सन् तिरस्कृतज्ञानैश्वर्यो भवति ।

(*Brahma Sūtra-Bhāṣya III. ii. 6*)

किं पुनर्जीवस्येश्वरसमानधर्मित्वं नास्त्येव । न नास्त्येव । विद्यमानमपि तिरोहितमविद्यादिव्यवधानात् । तत् पुनस्तिरोहितं सत् परमेश्वरमभिधायतो यतमानस्य जन्तोर्विधूतध्वान्तस्य—तिमिरतिरस्कृतेन दृक्शक्तिरौषध-वीर्यात्—ईश्वरप्रसादात् संसिद्धस्य कस्यचिदेवाविर्भवति न स्वभावत एव सर्वेषां जन्तूनाम् ।

(*ibid. III. ii. 5*)

Hence Śrī Śankara is not a fatalist or a determinist. He knows and shows the force of our *Vāsanās* and our *Karmas* forming our *Prakṛti* or nature. But there is infinite potentiality in the *Ātmā*. If it is evoked by our effort, such evocation will break through our imprisoning *Vāsanās* like a tongue of flame through surrounding smoke, and soon the smoke will give way to flame. Inhibition (प्रतिपक्षभावना), ethical life, and seeking God's grace will lead the ego to shed its egohood and attain to God-realization and attainment of identity with *Brahma* here and now (अत्र ब्रह्म समश्नुते). In the blessed *Bhagavadgītā* the ascending gamut of higher effort (*Samsiddhi*) is shown as *Niṣkāma Karma* and *Dhyānayoga* and *Bhakti* and *Jñāna*. We must attain the *Daiṛī Sampat*. We must meditate on the *Vibhūti*s of the Lord and eventually attain the *Viśva-rūpa-Darśana*. The Adwaitī's life is not a life of inertia or repose or fatalism, but a life of strenuous spiritual effort until the highest realization (*Avagati* or *Anubhava*) is attained.

Śrī Śankara has given *Īśvara* an exalted place in his system, because it is

Īśvara that is the creator and protector and destroyer of the universe and distributes rewards and punishments in regard to *Karma* (स हि सर्वोद्यक्षः सृष्टिस्थितिसंहारान् विचित्रान् विदधद् देशकालविशेषाभिज्ञत्वात् कर्मिणां कर्मोत्तरूपं फलं सम्पादयतीत्युच्यते ।—*Brahma Sūtra-Bhāṣya III. ii. 38*). No doubt, in some places he says that Īśvara is *Avidyā-kalpita*. A famous stanza says:—

चिन्मयस्याद्वितीयस्य निष्कलस्याशरीरिणः ।
उपासकानां कार्यार्थं ब्रह्मणो रूपकल्पना ॥

However much we may exalt the description of Īśvara in the Adwaita, there is no getting over the implication, and sometimes even explicit statement, that the *Rūpa* of Īśvara is only a कल्पना (our assumption or creation). The sting of this statement cannot be lessened by merely saying in terms of praise that Īśvara is all-in-all and that Īśvara alone gives the *Adwaita-anubhava* (ईश्वर-नुग्रहादेव पुंसामद्वैतवासना). In some places Śrī Śankara uncompromisingly asserts that *Brahma* has one *Rūpa* alone (ब्रह्मण एकत्वादेक-रूपत्वाच्च—*Brahma Sūtra-Bhāṣya III. iii. 1*). But elsewhere he says:—

द्विरूपं हि ब्रह्मावगम्यते नामरूपविकारभेदोपाधि-
विशिष्टं तद्विपरीतञ्च सर्वोपाधिविवर्जितम् ।

(*Brahma Sūtra-Bhāṣya I. 1*)

The Upaniṣads declare again and again that *Brahma* is *Mūrta* and *Amūrta*. They declare Īśvara with as much power of affirmation as they declare *Nirguṇa* or *Nirākāra Brahma*.

Śrī Śankara's *Brahma* is not a mere nothing or a mere abstraction. It is *Sachchidānanda*, *Satya*, *Nitya Śuddha-Buddha-Mukta-Swabhāva*. Such is its nature (*Swabhāva* or *Swarūpa*). *Sat* (being) is the same as *Chit* or *Bodha* (pure consciousness) which is at the same time *Ananda* (bliss). It is the cause of everything. The cause is never exhausted by the effects. The effects are different from one another, but are all one with the cause. The universal liability to change is its unreality from the absolute point of view or its relative reality from the relative point of view. But *Brahma* is unchanging and absolute and is therefore the only Reality. It is not affected by *Nāma-Rūpa* any more than an actor is by his nocturnal self-assumed part. It is not Herbert Spencer's Unknowable. It is realizable here and now and is the Ultimate Reality.

दृष्टिं ज्ञानमयीं कृत्वा पश्येद् ब्रह्ममयं जगत् ।

The Triple Gate of Hell.

Triple is the gate of this hell, destructive of the Self—lust, wrath, and greed; therefore let man renounce these three.

A man liberated from these three gates of darkness, O son of Kunti, accomplisheth his own welfare, and thus reacheth the highest goal.

(*Gītā XVI. 21-22*)

