

# Bhagavan Sri Sankara on God, the Soul and the Universe.

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(Continued from the previous number)

## MONISM VERSUS ATHEISM

**I**t is clear that, as all theistic systems of thought postulate not merely the existence of God but also the creation of the universe by Him, therefore Theism must logically and invariably lead us to the Monism (or, as Lord Tennyson calls it, the Higher Pantheism) of the Vedānta. But there is one ancient Religion—Jainism—and one modern fraternity—the Arya Samaj—which try to get over this difficulty (about God and the material with which He created the world) by simply denying God's creatorship of the universe. And each does this in its own characteristic way. These, too, therefore, we may briefly consider. As far as the merely rationalistic and moral aspects of this question are concerned, we may point out that the Jain position is much better than the Arya Samajic.

The Jain theologians say that an omniscient and loving God cannot possibly have created a world so full of sin and sorrow as we actually find it to be, and therefore they deny God's creatorship. This simply shows them to have been intellectually cowed down by the great Problem of Evil, which has been a bugbear to all metaphysicians; but their motive in denying God's creatorship of the world is one that we can appreciate, although we cannot accept the soundness of their argument. And ethically, too, their position is unassailable because unlike the Arya Samajists, who profess to believe in the Vedas, the Jains are emphatic non-believers therein, and

therefore they cannot be convicted of intellectual dishonesty or inconsistency in the matter, but merely of intellectual blundering therein. But the Arya Samajist is guilty of both. For, not merely the Upaniṣads but even the *संस्कृत*, which he always parades his faith in (and which says: 'सर्वप्रधानो बहुधा विद्यमानः', i.e. He, the birthless one, takes birth in many shapes) preaches pure Monism. And even Swami Dayananda Saraswati (the founder of the Arya Samaj) interprets this passage in the same way.

Apart, however, from this inconsistency with the scriptures which he professes faith in, let us analyse the Arya Samajist's argument from the merely rational standpoint and see what it is worth. He professes to believe in God and calls Him omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent and so on, but, denying His creatorship of the world, declares that Nature, too, (with the whole universe in its womb) was co-existent all the time with God and is therefore not His creation at all, and that all He does to deserve the proud title of Creator of the Universe is to rearrange the things already in Nature so as to give them their present topography, forms, shapes and names. To this, no more elaborate reply is necessary from us than that, if God and Nature were two co-existing powers with their separate and independent properties, He would surely be bound down in His activities by the limitations inherent in those independent properties of Nature and could therefore not be truly *omnipotent* and all the rest of it and

that, if the kind of creatorship attributed to Him by the Arya Samajist is the whole truth of the matter, then it is on the same level with—nay, from one standpoint, even inferior to—the potter's creatorship of a pot. For God has "created" the forest and human beings have "created"—in the same sense—the towns. And in this sense, like the little school-girl who in answer to the question of the Inspector of Schools as to who made her, nearly cupped her palms together to indicate a tiny baby and graphically replied, "God made me this much, sir, and I grew the rest myself," we may claim that God made all the crude and stupid things in the world and that we have made all the finer things, *i. e.*, the cities, the palaces, the trains, the electric bulbs, the scientific inventions, all the wonders and all the beauties of civilization, and are therefore the *Superior Creator* amongst the two! This is all the answer we need give to those who believe in a separate God and His independent Nature. And, as a matter of fact, there is no school of philosophic thought which admits God's existence and denies His creatorship. And this is because the two go together; and, once this is granted, the relentless logic of the arguments which we have already considered drives us to the overmastering and irresistible conclusion that God created the whole universe out of Himself, because He alone existed before creation and therefore there was nothing to create the world out of.

In further objection to this, some one may say—as the Dwaitis (the Realists and Dualists and Pluralists) do often say: "Yes, but God is omniscient and omnipotent; He therefore could have made the world out of *nothing*." Quite true; our question, however, is not about His knowledge or *capacity* to do things, but merely of the *material* which He has made them out of. Although the potter's knowledge, cleverness, skill and capacity are all there, yet surely they are not the *material* out of which he makes the pot.

Similarly, our question is not about God's capacity but only about the *substance*; and our contention is that, as the only *material* which was then available to Him was Himself. He must therefore have made the universe out of that only thing which then existed, *viz.*, Himself. The verse of the *Śaṅkara* quoted earlier *ब्रह्मैव कुटुम्बकम्* etc. (i. e. the presentation of the sacrificial oblation is God, the oblation itself is God, the fire that receives it is God, the presenter is God, his concentrated meditation is God and the fruit to be obtained thereby is God) puts this beyond all possibility of the least doubt.

And, if one still obstinately insists that God did not create the universe out of Himself, as described by the text "यद्योर्णनाभिः सृजते गृह्णते च", but out of NOTHING, even then our Vedantic position remains unaffected. Because even then, just as the pot made out of clay is nothing but clay, even so a universe made out of nothing can only be of the nature of NOTHING! And this is only another way of stating the Vedantic theory known as *Māyāvāda* (which we have already alluded briefly to and shall deal with again in detail presently). And it practically means the re-proving of *Advaita* by another method, because it practically means: "God alone is, nothing else exists!" And what more can a Vedantist desire than this volunteered argument of the *Dwaiti* (Realist) in favour of his own *Advaita* Doctrine or Absolute Monism?

And besides, once you grant that there was a time when God alone was and nothing else existed, you are up against the stone wall of the *Gītā*-doctrine of "नसतो विद्यते वाचः" (corresponding to the Physicist's dictum about the uncreatability and the indestructibility of matter). What was not, can never come into being; and what was, can never go out of existence. So, if God alone was, then obviously God alone is and God alone can be! In other words, put it positively that "God and the Universe are one" or describe

the same thing negatively and say: "God alone is and nothing else exists," Q. E. D.

### THE FIVE BHŪTAS (PRIMORDIAL ELEMENTS)

To make this clearer, let us take the case of the five Bhūtas—*Akāśa*, *Vāyu*, *Agni*, *Jala* and *Prthivī* (Ether, Air, Fire, Water, and Earth)—with which creation began. As God Himself made them, we are compelled to infer that He must have created them out of Himself. On the principle of the Upaniṣad: 'वृत्तिकेलेव सत्यम्' (i. e., the truth is that the real material within is the clay), the Earth is only an emanation from or manifestation of water and therefore one with it; water is similarly a mere emanation from or manifestation of Fire and therefore one with it; Fire, too, is only an emanation from or manifestation of, and therefore one with Air; Air in its turn is only an emanation from or manifestation of, and therefore one with the Ether; and finally, Ether is merely an emanation from or manifestation of, and hence one with God. Thus all things can be traced back to and equated—nay, *identified*,—with God.

Now let us take the properties of matter, viz., शब्द, स्पर्श, रूप, रस, गन्ध (i. e., sound, touch, shape, taste, and smell), and deal with them, too, in the same way. *Akāśa* has only one quality, viz. शब्द; *Vāyu* has two, viz., शब्द and स्पर्श; *Agni* has three, viz., शब्द, स्पर्श and रूप; *Jala* has four, viz., शब्द, स्पर्श, रूप and रस; and *Prthivī* has all the five, viz., शब्द, स्पर्श, रूप, रस and गन्ध. Now, let us begin our destructive process of analysis of these qualities, as to where they come from and so on. Starting with *Prthivī* (Earth), we see that its fifth quality, viz., गन्ध (smell) was not in the preceding element, to wit, *Jala* (water) and is absolutely new. But the *Gītā* says: "नासतो विद्यते भावः" and Physics, too, says: "Nothing that was not, can newly come into existence." Therefore, we knock out गन्ध

(smell) either as मिथ्या (illusory) or as being already in *Jala* (water); in the former case, *Prthivī* (earth), whose definitive definition is the fifth *guṇa* (गुण), is itself मिथ्या (an illusion); and, in the latter case, *Prthivī* and *Jala* (having all the five qualities) become identical. Similarly, if we take up the fourth quality रस, which appears newly in *Jala*, we follow up the same process of either eliminating it as मिथ्या or as being already in *Agni*, with the result that Earth and Water either get knocked out as illusions or identified with Fire. Next, we take up the third quality रूप, knock it out as मिथ्या or postulate its existence in *Vāyu*, too, thereby making earth, water and fire as illusory or identical with *Vāyu*. Fourthly, by the same argument with the second quality स्पर्श, we either eliminate it as illusory or detect its hidden existence in *Akāśa*, thus ruling out earth, water, fire and air as मिथ्या or as being identical with *Akāśa*. And, finally, we may deal out the same knock-down blow to the first quality शब्द, eliminate it as illusory or as being in God already (unmanifested, of course) and thus either kill out all the five Bhūtas as illusions or as being the same as God.

The whole process just explained may be geometrically summarized thus:—

*Prthivī* = *Jala*; *Jala* = *Agni*; *Agni* = *Vāyu*; *Vāyu* = *Akāśa*; and *Akāśa* = God.

∴ By तदमित्तामित्तस्य तदमित्तत्वनियम (corresponding to Euclid's First Axiom that "things which are equal to the same thing are equal to one another", God ≡ the Universe (the triple-parallel-line symbol used denoting not mere equality but absolute and mathematical identity). Q. E. D.

### GOD'S OMNIPRESENCE

Apart from the story of creation and our inference from the texts of the Upaniṣads and the Bible thereon, even God's omnipresence, which all theists



thing else is unreal), what do we mean by it? Do we mean that the world which we see around us is false? Here there are really three categories—real, unreal and false; and, not understanding the fine distinction between them, we generally confuse and muddle them all up. It is owing to their misunderstanding of the Idealistic Philosopher's real position that all Realists—Johnson-like—thunder at us and seek to convict us of a terrible lack of the most rudimentary fundamentals even of the most elementary common sense. Now, the Sanskrit word 'सिद्ध' (as applied to the world) does not mean "False" (in the sense that you are deliberately telling a lie and pretending to see, hear, smell, taste, touch and feel things when you are not really doing so). No one denies that we have a seemingly actual experience of the things around us; but what these things really are, no one can say (except through the lens or refracting medium of his own mind). For example, let us examine any object and see what actions we can examine it by. We can see, hear, smell, touch and taste it or, without the aid of any of these five senses, merely think of it. Thus, six actions are possible—all of them, however, of a subjective nature, i. e., from within our own mind. And so no evidence—coming from outside of us—can possibly help us without first going into our mind and thereby becoming subjective. In other words, what seems to be, we all see and feel and experience; but what is (i. e., the *noumenon*, as the philosophers call it) behind what seems (i. e., the *phenomenon*), no one can postulate definitely. This is what we mean by saying that the whole thing is subjective, not objective. And this is why, in his wonderful work the *Advaitasiddhi*, the great Madhusūdana Sarasvatī defines 'सिद्धात्मम्' as 'सत्यत्वासत्यत्वाभ्यामनिर्वचनीयत्वम्', i. e., as that which one can neither accept as true nor reject as false!

#### BIMBA-PRATIBIMBA-VĀDA

To make this clear, let us take up, for example the relationship between an

object and its reflection. When a boy looks into a mirror for the first time in his life and sees his own reflection there, he imagines that another person—just exactly like himself and with only the right and left sides transposed—is standing on the other side of the mirror at the same distance as separates him from it. He goes round to see who the other boy is; but not merely is there no other boy there, but the mirror itself has not got the thickness corresponding and equal to the distance at which he was himself standing in front of the mirror. This experience convinces him that the reflection is unreal. At the same time, it is not false (in the sense that there is no actual experience thereof and that a deliberate falsehood is being told). For it was after actually seeing the reflection that he thought of it, honestly investigated it and found it to be unreal. Nay, when he goes again in front of the mirror and looks into it, he is tantalized to see the same unreal boy staring at him again from within. What, then, is the true position? The reflection is real in the sense that it is the object of an actual experience, but it is not true in the sense that it has an independent existence of its own apart from the object of which it is the reflection. This is exactly what is meant by the technical term "unreal" as we use it in Geometrical optics. And this is exactly what 'सिद्ध' means in the Vedānta. In other words, if two things are so connected with each other that the very existence of the one depends on the existence of the other but not vice versa, then we have what is called *विम्बप्रतिविम्बभाव*, i. e., the relationship of an object to its reflection. The latter is dependent on, and can never exist without, the object whose image it reflects; but the object is independent of and can exist without casting a reflection. Secondly, every change in the *विम्ब* necessarily produces a corresponding alteration in the *प्रतिविम्ब*; but you may shake the mirror and the *Pratibimba* to your heart's content without shaking the man's face

in the least. So, not merely the existence but the activities, too, are dependent in the one case (*i. e.*, of the reflection) and independent in the other (*i. e.*, of the object). Thirdly, suppose you have two mirrors on opposite sides and a man is standing between them. His reflection in the first mirror may be reflected by the second mirror, that reflection again by the former, and so on ad infinitum. One object, therefore, can have many reflections, but one image cannot be the reflection of several *different* objects. Applying these three Laws of Reflection to the main question before us, when we speak of God as being the only Reality and all other things as being *unreal*, we mean that God has an independent and eternal existence of His own, while they have all emanated from Him—just like the प्रतिबिम्ब from its बिम्ब—and have no independent existence apart from Him. This is really what is meant by the word 'बिम्ब'. The बिम्ब and the प्रतिबिम्ब are *identical* because the latter has no independent existence from the former; and at the same time they are also *different* from the standpoint that the latter is *unreal* but the former is real.

#### परिणामवाद VERSUS बिम्बप्रतिबिम्बवाद AND विवर्तवाद

At this juncture, one may ask: Yes, but why should we not go further and, accepting परिणामवाद (as was done by Śrī Vallabhāchārya), say that God is not merely *reflected* in the objects of the world (as an object is in its reflection) but actually *becomes* those things for the time being? The answer to this question is fourfold:—

(1) The ज्ञानिमन्त्र at the very commencement of the Upaniṣads of the Śukla Yajurveda (and therefore of the very first Upaniṣad, *i. e.*, *Īśāvāsyopaniṣad*) clearly says:—

पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदं पूर्णात्पूर्णमुदच्यते ।  
पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते ॥

[*i. e.*, He is a perfect (or complete) whole; these (things of the Universe) are

Perfect Wholes; these have all emanated from Him; and, even after the emanation of all these innumerable Perfect Wholes from Him, He continues to be a Perfect Whole]. Now, Parīṇāmavāda bases itself on the example of the clay, the thread, the wood and the gold of the crude shape not merely looking like, manifesting themselves as or being reflected in the pot, the cloth, the chair and the golden ornament of the refined shape, but actually *becoming* so for the time being and at the same time continuing simultaneously to be the clay, the thread, the wood and the gold. Yes, but when the finished products have been manufactured out of the raw material, the original raw material is no longer left in the raw shape, but has to be found *only in its new shape*. The मन्त्र just cited, however, clearly says that, after innumerable Perfect Wholes (in the shape of Jivas and the world) have emanated from God, He continues as a Perfect Whole. This is obviously impossible in परिणामवाद—where whatever is put into the वस्तु (the finished product) is lost to the ऋतु (the crude stock) and thus the sum-total alone is constant, but the parts are complementary. In the subject on hand of God and the world, however, you have, on the contrary, the seeming miracle of a box containing a million rupees from which you go on taking out a million rupees an innumerable number of times and yet the balance in the box always remains a million! This is only possible in विवर्तवाद, which regards the whole thing as an illusion (like the serpent which one mistakes a rope for) or in प्रतिबिम्बवाद, where, even though innumerable pictures or reflections—all of them complete wholes (whether miniature or full-size)—may be taken out, nothing is taken away from the original object. This मन्त्र, 'पूर्णमदः' etc., therefore, clearly rules out परिणामवाद.

(2) If we say God *becomes* a particular object, its death would mean God's

death. And if it be contended that inasmuch as other things remain, therefore He still lives, even then He can only be said to be partly dead and to live partly mutilated! But Advaita is free from this defect because the death of any number of प्रतिबिम्ब (reflections) involves no death to the बिम्ब (original object).

(3) And besides, if परिणामवाद were correct and God Himself becomes the things of the world, then the Jagat would be सत्य. If so, why should the Vedāntas condemn नामरूपात्मकजगत्त्वम् (belief in these things) as अज्ञान (ignorance), मय (illusion), मोह (folly) and so forth and prescribe such laborious, long-drawn, difficult and irksome Sādhanas of वर्णाश्रमवर्ण (the path of works for the different castes and stages of life), उपासना (worship), श्रवण (study), मन्त्र (investigation) and निदिध्यासन (concentrated meditation) and so on and so forth, for removing all our persistent experience and consciousness of the world and for obtaining the unceasing vision of God alone?

(4) And fourthly, there is the clinching factor that बिम्बप्रतिबिम्बवाद is categorically propounded in the Rāsa-pañchaka of Śrīmad Bhāgavata with the words:—

‘यथार्थकः स्वप्रतिबिम्बविभ्रमः ।’

(i. e., the Lord's relationship with Cosmos is compared to a boy's playing with his own reflections).

In passing and in answering to those who profess to be of one or other Vaiṣṇava denomination of Sanātana Dharmis and accuse the Lord Śrī Śankarāchārya of having newly manufactured the मायावाद and विवर्तवाद (the Theory of Optical illusions) from his own imagination, i. e., unsupported by the ancient Scriptures, we need only point out that this accusation is absolutely false and that the Vedas, the Bhāgavadgītā and even Śrīmad-Bhāgavata (which these Vaiṣṇavas always

pay lip-homage to) are all equally emphatic in proclaiming the doctrine of Vivarta in the most unmistakable terms and, in fact, are themselves the Pramāṇas relied on by Bhagavān Śankara in support of His doctrine. Thousands of texts may be cited in proof hereof; but a few quotations will suffice:—

1. ‘मायां तु प्रकृतिं विद्यान्मायिनं तु महेश्वरम् ।’  
(Veda)

(Know Nature to be an Illusion and the Almighty Lord as the Master thereof).

2. ‘अज्ञानेनावृतं ज्ञानं तेन मुह्यन्ति जन्तवः ।’

3. ‘नाहं प्रकाशः सर्वस्य योगमायासमावृतः ।’

4. ‘दैवी ह्येषा गुणमयी मम माया दुरत्यया ।

मामेव ये प्रपद्यन्ते मायामेतां तरन्ति ते ॥’

(Gītā)

(Knowledge is covered over by ignorance. Hence do all creatures fall into delusion.

Being enveloped by My Divine Māyā, I am not visible to all.

This Divine three-qualified Māyā of Mine is difficult to surmount; but those who seek Me alone—they transcend it.)

5. ‘मायां ततान जनमोहिनीम् ।’

6. ‘मन्यमान इदं सृष्टमात्मानमिह सज्जते ॥’

7. यदिदं मनसा वाचा चक्षुर्भ्रुवो श्रवणादिभिः ।

नश्वरं गृह्यमाणं च विद्धि मायामनोमयम् ॥

(He spread forth His Māyā which deludes all.

Imagining himself and the world to have been created, man attaches himself thereto.

Whatever perishable things you grasp with your mind, speech, eyes, ears and other senses,—know them all to be purely mental and illusory.)

What clearer texts need be quoted? And yet, we may cite one more passage from Śrīmad Bhāgavata itself—

सर्वत्र नैवेद्यं सर्वत्र नैवेद्यं सर्वत्र नैवेद्यं

(Just as the serpent appears in and disappears from the rope, wherein not merely is the rope accepted, but it is propounded by means of that very illusion which the Lord Śrī Śankarāchārya and other Advaitis use in explaining this Theorem. And, after all, it is as if saying that Optical Illusions are acknowledged facts of Science and that not merely dreams and the unreal reflections in a mirror but, according to modern mathematical Astronomy, even sunrise and sunset are Optical Illusions. Why, then, this fighting shy of Māyāvāda as if, even in the secular transactions of the world, the evidence of our senses is actually reliable in all respects ?

#### EVIDENCE OF SANSKRIT GRAMMAR

In the next place, it is worth noting that in Sanskrit grammar the word *Atmā* (Soul) is नित्यैकवचन (i.e., always in the singular number). Are we not justified in our inferring from this, too, that the *Atmā* (Soul) is one and not many ? As, however, there is no such direct and clear rule in other languages, we shall now proceed to a brief analytical study of *number* under the grammars of all languages, from which a similar inference is irresistible.

#### GRAMMATICAL EVIDENCE FROM ALL LANGUAGES

We refer now—partly in jest and wholly in earnest—to yet another simple method whereby, on the basis of grammar of all languages, we may come to the same conclusion about the oneness of the Soul. And this is based on an amusing and, at the same time, instructive peculiarity in all the languages of the world, which alas! most people do not notice. In your grammar not merely of Sanskrit but of every conceivable language in the world when you read about the personal pronouns, there is a remarkable thing

with regard to the singular and the plural forms of the first, second and third persons, which we would draw everybody's attention to. What is the plural of the third person—'he', 'she' or 'it' ? It is 'they'; and 'they' means 'he' plus 'he', 'she' plus 'she', 'it' plus 'it' or any other combination of two or more of them. Similarly, if we take up the second person plural, 'you' means 'you' plus 'you' plus 'you' to any number of terms. But what about the first person plural ?

It is really a false plural. Because, when you say 'we', you mean 'I plus you', 'I plus he', 'I plus she', and so forth; but it can never be 'I plus I'. Now, note this and meditate on what it means. A plural (in the case of every noun and of the second and third personal pronouns, too,) means a number of things of the same particular kind added (and spoken of) together; but in the case of the first person alone it is not so. In fact, 'I' is incapable of having a real plural and 'we' is an awful fraud, masquerading as the plural of 'I' when, in reality, it is nothing of the sort. Now, let us remember that we have already defined 'Soul' as that thing which one has in one's mind when one uses the word 'I'; and the Lord Śrī Śankarāchārya, too, in the very opening sentence—nay, the first word—of his *Brahma-Sūtra-Bhāṣya* (commentary on the Vedānta aphorisms) 'युष्मद्स्वप्नप्रत्ययगोचरयोः' has used this very definition of the 'Soul'. And the reason for this is that we are conscious only of that something within ourselves which is called the Soul; and, as for other things, we have no such innate consciousness but only make an inference. In other words, the actual perceptual knowledge—or knowledge of the nature of realization—(as Cardinal Newman, too, like Śrī Śankara, admits) is of our individual Inner Self alone (not of other souls), i.e., of the First Person alone. And, as regards this First Person, we have just seen that the grammar of every language agrees in telling us that 'we' can never be so many 'I's or even two 'I's



~~It is not that 'I' has, no doubt,~~  
~~the meaning but fraudulent plural 'we',~~  
~~but it can never have a real plural. And~~  
~~this shows that the 'Soul' (represented~~  
~~by the word 'I') seems to be many but is~~  
Q. E. D.

Thus Grammar, too, contributes its quota of evidence in helping us to equate *Paramātmā*, *Jīvātmā* and *Jagat* (God, the individual Soul and the universe) and to realize the oneness of soul underlying all the infinite multiplicity of manifestations around us.

#### FUNCTIONAL IDENTITY

At this point, one may ask: If God and we are one, how is it that He and we are so dissimilar in function? The question is perfectly natural but arises from want of meditation and realization that He and we are *not* really dissimilar, but intensely similar in function, too. If we keep in mind the previously adduced illustration about a vessel and a small crevice through which a ray of light comes forth, we can easily see that we are functioning exactly like God, but under the limitations imposed by the body, the senses, the mind and the intellect enveloping and concealing Him within us and from our gaze. Now, let us see what we are really doing all the time.

When the sun sets, what happens to his rays which he was casting forth outside so long? You may say that, when he goes away, he carries away his rays with him. Yes, but this can be true only of those rays of his which are still inside; what, then, happens to those rays that he has thrown out already? Do they continue outside? No, he takes them also back with him. Evidently he, too, works with his rays like the silkworm with its cocoon. When we go to sleep, we, too, similarly carry inside with us the 'external experiences' of the world—(as we call them); we sometimes keep these wrapped there in a mixed up and muddled condition and we are then said

to be 'dreaming'; sometimes we keep them away safe somewhere within ourselves and are then said to be in deep 'slumber'; and, when we 'wake' up, we come back to the worldly things and bring along with us—as the worm its cocoon or the sun its rays—the thoughts we had carried inside back with us. What is all this that we are doing? Is it not what *Paramātmā* (God) does? Do we not, every time we go to sleep and wake up again, destroy our world (for the time being)—as He does in *Pralaya* or the last deluge—and re-create it (for the time being)—as He does at the time of *Sṛṣṭi* or creation? And when we keep on awake, are we not going on with, *i. e.*, protecting our world (even as He does between *Sṛṣṭi* and *Pralaya*)? When thus we go on daily performing all His three functions of creating, protecting and destroying, what more similarity in function do you need?

Why talk of sleeping and waking? Even while awake, you can and do perform all these three functions of God. At times, after you have put out all the light and made your room utterly dark, and just before you go to sleep, you close even your eyes, concentrate your mind on the form of your departed father or a friend or some other person and endeavour to visualize him, and that *ṛtī* presents itself before you. If strength of *sankalpa* and skill in concentration are there, you create those *Mūrtis*. Is that not *creation*? How else can you see in a dark room and that, too, with closed eyes?

On the other hand, even when you are awake and there is plenty of light, too, by merely closing your eyes and refusing to see, you do not see. Nay, when you are concentrating your mind on something else or your mind has wandered elsewhere, is it not a fact that, although your eyes and ears are wide open, you see nothing and hear nothing? Even if a robber comes in and purloins

something invaluable of yours, you know nothing about it.

There is a beautiful *śloka* (verse) in 'श्रीकृष्णकर्णामृत' which, on the one hand (from the literal and historic standpoint), merely describes a *śloka* (sport) of the Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa's childhood and, on the other hand (from the allegorical point of view), teaches us this most beautiful moral, psychological and metaphysical Lesson of Lessons that we have just been dealing with. The *śloka* runs thus:—

मातः किं यदुनाथ देहि चषकं किं तेन पातुं पय-  
स्तन्नास्त्यद्य कदास्ति वा निशि निशा का वान्धकारोदये ।  
आमीत्याक्षियुगं निशाप्युपगता देहीति मातुर्मुहु-  
र्वक्षोजांशुककर्षणोद्यतकरः कृष्णः स पुष्पातु वः ॥

The Lord's foster-mother Yaśodā used, it seems, to give him milk (to drink) at specific times every day. One day, just for the fun of it, the child Śrī Kṛṣṇa called her at an unusual hour of the day and asked for milk. She said, "You cannot have it now." The boy asked, "When then can I have it?" She replied, "At night." Śrī Kṛṣṇa again interrogated her, "And what is night?" She replied, "When darkness comes in." But, as soon as she said so, He simply closed His eyes and said, "Oh mother, darkness has come; now give me my milk."

Thus, even though to the minds and even the eyes of so many hundreds of people around you, lots of things exist, they do not exist for you, simply because you are absent-minded (through mind-wandering or deliberately). What does all this show? It only proves that it is the *mind* on which, in reality, the whole show (of this world) depends. The sights

that we see, the sounds that we hear and so forth mean nothing to us except through the medium of our mind and what it says about them (right or wrong). This is why we find, in the history of modern Western philosophy, too, that not merely the old whole-hogging school of Realism but even Sir William Hamilton's half-way house yclept Transcendental Realism have been exploded for ever and beyond hope of resurrection and the Idealistic School has come in. It was good old Bishop Berkeley of Ireland who practically set the ball of Idealistic philosophy rolling in Europe; and the greatest philosophers of modern times—including Carlyle, Emerson, Kant, Hegel, Thomas Hill Green, Prof. Deussen and others—are all Idealists to the core. And the great Psychologists of the New Thought movement in Europe and America to-day—including Ralph Waldo Trine, Marden, Dr. Sydney Flower, Ella Wheeler Wilcox, William Walker, Atkinson, Professor James, R. Kenny and so on are all staunch believers in and exponents of Idealism. Of course, as we have pointed out already, they—including even that intellectual and metaphysical giant of modern Germany, to wit, Immanuel Kant—have not been able to reach out fully towards Absolute Monism like the Lord Śrī Śankara; but, in view of the traditions of Realism which they inherited from centuries ago and have had to contend and struggle against, and the fact that they are beginners on this path yet, this is not to be wondered at; and it is fervently to be hoped that the highest philosophical thought of Europe and America will soon come into line with the full-fledged Advaita of Bhagavān Śrī Śankara.

(To be continued.)

