

The Real

AND

The Un-Real

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ADVAITIN LIST

Monthly Topic, July 2004

Message #

- | | |
|-------|---|
| 23505 | The Real and the Unreal - Part I - The Razors Edge |
| 23514 | The Real and the Unreal - Part II - The Reality Divide |
| 23556 | The Real and the Unreal - Part III - The Preamble |
| 23646 | The Real and the Unreal - Part IV - The Dream Analogy |
| 23791 | The Real and the Unreal - Part V - Authenticity and the Knot of the Heart |
| 23877 | The Real and the Unreal - Part VI - Prelude to Ontology |
| 23930 | The Real and the Unreal - Part VII - Ontology |
| 24016 | The Real and the Unreal - Part VIII - Advaita |
| 24050 | The Real and the Unreal - Part IX - Ishwara |

Message 23472 of 23904

Msg #

From: "Chittaranjan Naik" <chittaranjan_naik@yahoo.com>

Date: Thu Jul 1, 2004 5:28 am

Subject: A few words on the July topic

Namaste to all respected members,

The Real and the Unreal is the core topic of Advaita. I felt, therefore, that it would not be appropriate for me to venture into a discussion on the topic without prior preparation, especially as I seemed to be taking the less beaten track of saying that Advaita is a darshana of realism. I had accordingly planned, back in the month of March, to write down my thoughts in a systematic way before the time came for its discussion on the list, but for one reason or another, I was unable to get down to the task. Last week, I decided that I must do something about it, and accordingly I took a few days leave from the office and sat down to write. This effort has resulted in nine essays, and it is these essays that I shall be posting here ? in nine parts - to form the central thread for the discussion. While the first two parts are a kind of prelude, the actual topic of the Real and Unreal begins with Part III and reaches its culmination in Part VII. The last two parts deal with some related issues that I felt I should add for the sake of completeness.

I need to mention here that whatever I have written constitutes my own understanding of Advaita. I claim no authority for what I say ? they are simply what I have understood in the lucid moments of my life. My postings are therefore more in the nature of sharing a perspective, while also being an opportunity for me to learn from the enlightened comments and corrections from the respected members of this group. Last but not least, I thank the moderators for giving me the opportunity to present the topic on the list.

I shall begin posting shortly - within the next three days.

Warm regards,
Chittaranjan

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Message 23505

From: "Chittaranjan Naik" <chittaranjan_naik@yahoo.com>
Date: Sun Jul 4, 2004 4:30 am
Subject: **[The Real and the Unreal - Part I - The Razors Edge](#)**

INVOCATION

I bow down to Lord Shiva, who is of the nature of Sat-Chit-Ananda, and who, out of compassion for beings in this world, took birth as Jagadguru Sri Shankara Bhagavadpada for establishing the path of Self-Knowledge.

I bow down to Matha Annapurneswari, the Mother of the Universe, who sustains and nourishes us with Love, and whose infinite grace alone removes the veil of blinding darkness to Self-Knowledge.

I bow down to the lotus feet of my Guru, known as Tryambaka, who is none other than Lord Tryambakeswara in human form, whose infinite grace shows the way through Darkness to Light. I submit these essays as a humble offering to His lotus feet.

MISTS OF THE INEXPLICABLE

People often interpret Advaita by dissolving the great mystery that lies in the Heart of Reality. But Advaita cannot be spoken of without speech being shrouded in the mists of the inexplicable. As Adiji writes in her message, there is already a mystery in the "and" between the real and unreal. Lord Krishna says that "the unreal never is, the real never is not". I believe that the meaning of the "unreal" is known only on knowing the meaning of the "real", and that one is asleep to meanings until the Self, in which all meanings lie, is known. To know one must be awake, and to awaken one must know. The path of Advaita is called asparsa. It is also called the razor's edge.

The notion of truth lies within us. It is not given to us from outside. It is the heart of the discriminative capacity in us. It is the stamp within our souls by which we seek to know the world and understand the shruti. We cannot understand the shruti by violating this innate stamp of truth within us for that would be a ravishment of the intellect rather than an understanding of the shruti.

It is natural for us to ask questions about the world. A philosophy that seeks to answer these questions must explain the world and not negate the very thing that is to be explained. To negate the thing that is asked about is not answering the question. Experience is never negated. If I see a tree this morning, it is true for all time - for all of eternity - that I saw a tree this morning irrespective of the fact that any subsequent experience negates it or not. Sublation is the seeing of a different meaning in what was seen earlier and not the negation of the experience itself.

It is with these two guiding principles ? that the notion of truth lies within us, and that an answer must answer to the question that is asked ? that I shall attempt to proceed with this month's discussion. As I had mentioned earlier, the topic actually takes off from the third part, but I felt that one particular theme, which I have called the "Reality Divide" (and is included as Part II), would be a useful addition to the discussion as it attempts to uncover a certain conception about the world that comes to us from contemporary thought. I believe that it is necessary to dispossess ourselves of the "wrinkle" of this conception before we move on to a discussion of Advaita. I shall post the second part later today; as for the rest of the postings, I shall let the pace of the actual discussion decide the timing.

Throughout Advaita we find that there is a dialectical tension in which the world is expressed to be identical with Brahman and yet denied any existential reality. I believe that we must not lose sight of this dialectic when we seek out the meaning of Advaita. Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa used to say that a sadhaka on the path of Advaita discovers first that the world is unreal, and then later sees that the world is real. Perhaps, we must fall into the cauldron of perplexity before we can rise like a phoenix rising from the ashes into the Empyrean of pure Light.

With regards,
Chittaranjan

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Message 23514

From: "Chittaranjan Naik" <chittaranjan_naik@yahoo.com>

Date: Sun Jul 4, 2004 1:36 pm

Subject: **The Real and the Unreal - Part II - The Reality Divide**

Om Gurubhyo Namah

THE REALITY DIVIDE ? A HISTORICAL HERMENEUTIC

What is it that governs the sense of reality given to a thing? To be a realist in the modern sense, one has to assert the existence of the world independently of the perceiver. What divides the modern idealist from the modern realist is a certain dichotomy associated with the meaning of the word "reality": the dichotomy of the "outside world" and the "observed world". Today, anybody who claims that the seen world is the real world is liable to be termed a naïve realist. It is not surprising therefore that contemporary cognitive science talks about two worlds, the world of qualia-filled consciousness, and the world of independently subsisting entities. In contrast to this duality, there is of course the duality, or plurality, that is seen in the observed world itself. What is in focus here is not this observed duality, but the more vexed duality that has its dividing line on the horizons of our perceptual ability. It is this duality, or reality-divide, that seems to compel most Advaitins to call the experiential world an illusion because the experienced world is only "a product" of consciousness like a dream, in contrast to the other conceived reality of an "outside world" that cannot possibly exist. But such notions of duality did not trouble the ancients. Reality was then natural; it was the world they saw and experienced and lived in. Today when we look at the past through the nets of modern theoretical constructs, this unquestioning simplicity is often taken to be a sign of their nascent bicameral mind.

The theme of this post is the reality-divide. It is an attempt to recover the meaning of reality by tracing the origins of the reality-divide and following the locus of its movement through the history of human thought. This is not meant to be an ontological quest for the meaning of Being, nor is it an attempt to uncover the meaning of reality as used in Advaita, but is rather a historical hermeneutic that attempts to uncover the roots of a certain conception of reality that comes to us through modern schooling.

In a certain sense, the first signs of the reality-divide arose in the idealism of Buddhist philosophy, a doctrine that first creates the duality of the "outside world" and "inside world" only to negate the "outside world" as being an impossibility, and then adopts the one remaining world, that of idealism. Thus the duality rose and fell, but it left its impact on the Buddhist philosopher in a peculiar manner. The remaining world was not the same world anymore that he had perceived earlier. It remained abstracted of the physicality of the everyday world: metaphorically speaking, it had the character of a transparent nothingness, of forms suspended in the void. It was the remaining pole of an artefactual duality after the discarding of the other pole. Logically, when one of the poles of an artificially constructed duality falls, the entire duality collapses,

including both the opposing poles of the duality. The conception of the world should have returned to the pre-meditated natural world without the taint of the artificial construct. But the Buddhists adhered to the abstracted world of idealism. It was, I think, the Mimamsa Philosophers that dissolved the sophistry of this artificial duality and reverted back to the only world that is logically meaningful and possible ? the world that we see and experience. The Mimamsa Philosophies did not negate the abstractly conceived "outside world", but dissolved the duality in the resolution of the knots of the fallacy. This dualism, or reality-divide, has never occurred again as a thematic in Indian Philosophy, not even in the dualistic Nyaya-Vaisesika and the Dwaita Philosophies. The dualism that exists in Indian Philosophy is dualism of another kind, not of the uncognisable "outside world" and the "seen world". There are no inconceivable objects in all the six schools.

If we move to the Western theatre, we see a somewhat different story unfold itself. The seeds of the reality-sundering may be detected in Descartes' famous doubt about the existence of the world. The world almost divides into two, but stops short of the split as Descartes reverts back to the comfort of medieval scholasticism. It was the philosophical knife of John Locke that divided the world into two realities ? the world of secondary qualities that we perceive, and the world of primary qualities that lie beyond our senses in self-subsisting objects. But Locke's division was incoherent and ambivalent. Locke assumed that primary qualities comprised properties such as density and extension; he was unable to see that these were nothing more than categories like those of the primary qualities. But where Locke was ambivalent, Bishop Berkeley was ruthless. He demolished, as it were, the world of independently existing objects. Western Philosophy had arrived on the stage of idealism. Ever since then, it has been unable to cast off the yoke of this reality-severance even in its most idealistic non-dualistic philosophies. It is necessary to emphasise here that even in the conception of idealism, there is the notion of the independent world - a world that it goes about to deny. This is the schism. As long as this notion remains, the world has lost something of its intrinsic character and remains as one pole of a tensional duality that it has artificially constructed. In the mind of the philosopher, the world of idealism remains an ideated island sequestered from the imaged "outside world". It is this that modern and contemporary Philosophy has not been able to resolve satisfactorily and which has prevented it from reverting back to the only natural world that we see and experience and live in. The rubric of this divide has continued through British Empiricism, German Idealism, American Pragmatism, Continental Existentialism, and it continues today to colour the speculations of contemporary science.

Yet, there have been occasions when modern philosophy seemed on the verge of collapsing the divide. Edmund Husserl was perhaps the genius that almost succeeded in resolving this riddle where others had failed. He begins his philosophy on the note that it is fruitless to philosophise about the "outside world". As the first step to fruitful philosophy, he calls for a suspension of judgment about the outside world. He calls this suspension of judgment the "transcendental epoche" or the "transcendental reduction". The world and its objects

are primarily the forms of consciousness, and we must investigate it through an eidetic investigation of objects as objects of consciousness. In Husserl's Phenomenology, consciousness is an intentional consciousness and objects are objects of the intending consciousness. Thus arose the call of "back to the objects themselves". If we must understand objects, then we must find fulfilment of the meanings invested in those objects by the meaning-conferring acts of the intending consciousness. It is this ground prepared by Husserlian phenomenology that has influenced most of existentialism, from Martin Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty, to Jean Paul Sartre and others. Husserl's epoche is brilliant, but I am not sure if the reality-divide was satisfactorily effaced? the suspension of judgment in phenomenology fails to quell the tides of unrest within the rational man. Yet Husserl was a beacon of light in the dark abyss of the reality-divide. It was his intention to develop a scientific method to ground philosophy and science in a transcendental reason. But the Husserlian method was too abstruse for a scientific community where pragmatic compulsions to postulate "theories that work" more often than not overruled adventures into transcendental methods.

In some respects, it was Wittgenstein that came closest to resolving the reality-divide. Wittgenstein was nurtured in the field sown by Gottlob Frege, the philosopher who had sought to develop an ideal language to avoid the pitfalls of language-misuse. Frege had said that idealist philosophers do not use language the way it should be used when they say that the world doesn't exist. Frege differentiated thinking from the truth-assertion of what is thought. Thus sentences become propositions, and the assertions of their truth, the truth judgments. He developed a framework of symbolic logic in which proper nouns are the referents that point to objects in the world, and where abstract nouns are classes under which objects fall. Frege's system was the formal system of a new modern logic. The germ of this idea grew, in Wittgenstein, into a full-bodied philosophy of language in which language and the world are intimately connected to each other. The limits of the world are the limits of language. Language speaks the world, as it were. The reality-divide seemed to have collapsed. Wittgenstein said that language cannot point to its own internal structure; that the structure is mirrored in language. Therefore, metaphysics, which purports to speak about structures, begins when "language goes on holiday". The last pages of his Tractatus contain the following words: "There are, indeed, things that cannot be put into words. They make themselves manifest. They are what is mystical". Few understood Wittgenstein and fewer still understood the ramifications of his philosophy. The shadow of the reality-divide continued to haunt the fertile fields of philosophy.

Why does this reality-divide not appear as a theme in Indian Philosophy? I think the answer lies in the philosophical method of Nyaya, which was the common platform for philosophical debate in India. At its foundations, Nyaya is a philosophy of logos; it is tuned to the way language operates. The "outside world" cannot appear in its vocabulary because the other side of the reality-divide reduces to an absence of a referent. It does not remain a denotative symbol, but reduces to a meaningless warp in the use of language. Thus, reality remains as the world that we see and experience. Yet, idealism did arise in later Advaita. The reality-divide may have been

absent as a theme, but an unarticulated "parallel universe" lurked behind the language of the illusory world. Shankaracharya had already demonstrated the fallacy of "objects that only appeared to be objects" in his arguments against the Vijnanavadins, but somehow the illusory-world seems to have made a re-appearance. I believe it has something to do with the conflation between the descriptive and the prescriptive aspects of Advaita.

What comes to us today is not so much from the conceptions of philosophy, but predominantly from those of science. Science has borrowed many of its concepts from philosophy: the atomic theory came from the speculations of the Epicureans; the belief that all phenomena can be explained through natural causes can be traced to Lucretius and Bacon and to the further impetus it received through the demise of Scholastic philosophy after Descartes; the conception of space as a relation between mass-points (special theory of relativity) had its origins in Leibniz. All these conceptions, and many more, have come from philosophy. Yet, science is not metaphysics, it is physics, and it has never examined its own conceptions with philosophical clarity. Its approach is positivist and is articulated in the positivism of August Comte, who said that human progress is governed by three stages of development: the intuitive stage of religion, the speculative stage of philosophy, and the rational empirical stage of science. Ironically, it was a band of positivists called the Logical Positivists that tried to bring to science, in the early years of the twentieth-century, the analytical methods of philosophy. The story of Logical Positivism is too long to be told here, but its attempt to establish a "verifiability criteria" for the propositions of science turned out to be a failure, and with this setback the movement slowly came to an end. As a result, the gulf between science and philosophy remains to be bridged. The reality-divide is present in the theoretical formulations of science as an unarticulated implicit premise. Science does not have a clearly formulated conception of reality, but operates in a loose framework of a kind of Lockean duality. The reality-divide continues to lurk beneath our educational and pedagogical systems, and we are unconsciously schooled in its ways of thinking.

The metaphysics of illusion is fraught with danger. Yet we must admit that "illusion" has its use. The vision of the world as illusion brings home the truth that the world is not independent of the perceiving consciousness. It is the insight of an epiphany, a point of spiralling into the numinous ground of Self. But as a metaphysical description, I believe there is a need to recover the meaning of reality from the modern phantom of the reality-divide. If the world is real, it does not mean that the world is independent of consciousness. It merely means that we employ the natural locution that language has given us. The reality-divide makes two realities out of one: one harder than it can possibly be, and the other softer than the ether of vacuity. It is time we went back to the reality that we see and experience, the healthy and lusty reality that is joyful and painful, that stretches from the abyss of darkness in the hidden recesses of the mind to the exuberance of life bursting forth from the virgin fields of earth. She is the Reality encompassing the world of the mortals and the worlds of the immortals. She is the Great Mother, the eternal consort of the Lord.

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Message 23556

From: "Chittaranjan Naik" <chittaranjan_naik@yahoo.com>
 Date: Tue Jul 6, 2004 2:18 pm
 Subject: [The Real and the Unreal - Part III - The Preamble](#)

Om Gurubhyo Namah

THE TOPIC OF THE PREAMBLE

It is generally believed that the adhyasa-bhasha of Shankara's preamble to the Brahma Sutra Bhashya points to the unreality of the world. This view has gained such wide currency that it seems almost sacrilegious to question its authenticity. Yet a careful scrutiny of the preamble belies such a reading of its pages. The subject matter of the preamble is the superimposition between the Self and non-Self as enunciated in the opening words of the bhashya:

"It being an established fact that the object and the subject, that are fit to be the contents of the concepts 'you' and 'we' (respectively), and are by nature as contradictory as light and darkness, cannot logically have any identity, it follows that their attributes can have it still less. Accordingly, the superimposition of the object, referable through the concept 'you', and its attributes on the subject that is conscious by nature and is referable through the concept 'we' (should be impossible), and contrariwise the superimposition of the subject and its attributes on the object should be impossible. Nevertheless, owing to an absence of discrimination between these attributes, as also between substances, which are absolutely disparate, there continues a natural human behaviour based on self-identification in the form of 'I am this' or 'This is mine'. This behaviour has for its material cause an unreal nescience and man resorts to it by mixing up reality and unreality as a result of superimposing the things themselves or their attributes on each other." (BSB, Pre)

The preamble goes on to explain the nature of superimposition. It says that this superimposition is of the nature of avidya and that the ascertainment of the real entity after separating the superimposed thing from it is vidya. It points out that all forms of worldly and Vedic behaviour have as their ground this superimposition, and that such superimposition is common to both animals as well as learned people. The preamble ends with the note that the bhashya is begun in order to eradicate the source of evil and to facilitate the knowledge of Self. Nowhere in the preamble do we come across the statement that the world is false. The focus of the preamble is clearly the superimposition between the Self and non-Self and NOT the unreality of the world.

THE NATURE OF SUPERIMPOSITION

What is it that is meant by superimposition? The Acharya answers: "It is an awareness, similar in nature to memory, that arises on a different basis as a result of some past experience. With regards to

this, some say that it consists in the superimposition of the attributes of one thing on another. But others assert that wherever a superimposition on anything occurs, there is in evidence only a confusion arising from the absence of discrimination between them. Others say that the superimposition of anything on any other substratum consists in fancying some opposite attributes on that very basis. From every point of view, however, there is no difference as regards the appearance of one thing as something else". (BSB, Pre).

Yes, superimposition is only the appearance of one thing as another. It is in the context of this mistaking of one thing as another that unreality arises - as a thing being unreal in posing (or appearing) as another thing. In other words, it is unreal because the real thing does not exist (at that place and time) in the locus where the object is cognised. The assertion of unreality ascribed to the thing ? and it may be noted that it is to a 'thing' that unreality is ascribed - is not a statement of the absolute non-existence of the thing, but a denial of a real thing of the world as being existent in a locus where it is in actuality not existing. Thus, in the superimposition of the non-Self on the Self, the non-Self is said to be unreal as the Self, but it cannot, logically, be said to be absolutely non-existent. It is important to make this distinction.

ERROR AND SUPERIMPOSITION

In speaking about superimposition, Shankara mentions the theories of error held by the other schools. I believe that it would be useful, in order to gain a proper understanding of Advaita, to examine these theories together with Advaita's response to them.

ANYATHAKHYATI is the Nyaya-Vaisesika theory of error. In this theory, the error occurs when there is an awareness of 'this', but due to either a defect of environment or instrument of cognition, and the similarity between the 'this' (rope) and the snake calls up the snake existing elsewhere through an extra-normal-sense-relation. This extra-normal-sense-relation is anyathatva, or otherwiseness, of the erroneous cognition. Both the rope and the snake are real, but the relation between the subject 'this' and the predicate 'that' in the cognition 'this is that' is false. According to Advaita, this theory is untenable because the perception of the snake (in the erroneous cognition) should then have the characteristic that snake is there (elsewhere, say in a forest).

AKHYATI is the theory of error held by Mimamsa according to which all knowledge is valid. There is no such thing as erroneous knowledge, for a contrary supposition will paralyse human action by raising doubt at every stage. In an erroneous cognition, we have two cognitions, one being of the nature of direct perception, and the other of the nature of memory, and fail to cognise the difference between the two. The two cognitions of 'this' and 'snake' synchronise without an apprehension of their difference. The memory, although essentially an apprehension of a previously apprehended object, presents itself as bare apprehension and the element of reference to the previous cognition is lost through some defect. Advaita rejects this theory because memory is never without a reference to place and

time even if such a reference is vague (as carrying the vague notion of having seen it in some place and time). (Yet I feel that Shankara's explanation on superimposition has a remarkable kinship to the Mimamsa theory except for the fact that here the erroneous cognition is due to 'an awareness similar to memory' rather than due to memory itself.)

SATKHYATI is the Vishistadvaita theory of error. The Vishistadvaitins hold that all objects of cognition are real, and that it is inconceivable that there should be cognition without a real cognitum. According to them everything exists in everything else through the process of quintuplication (see Sri Shankara's 'Pancikaranam' for more details on quintuplication) and the snake is as real as the rope. Advaitins reject this theory because it does not explain why only a snake should be seen in the rope rather than a cow or an elephant (as everything exists in everything else).

SADASATKHYATI, the Samkhya-Yoga theory of error is based on viparyaya, or false knowledge of a thing that does not correspond to its real form. The snake though real elsewhere is unreal when it is comprehended in this rope. At the transcendental level all things are real and are not contradicted in respect of their very nature. (I am not sure if and how Advaita rejects this theory).

It is to be noted that in all these theories, the unreality of the object seen in the error is parasitic upon the reality of the object in the world. In the instance of error when the false object appears real, that appearance of reality is grounded in the real object, for otherwise the error itself cannot take place. Thus, in Nyaya, it is transported to the site of error from a real snake that exists elsewhere. In Mimamsa, it is transported from the memory of the real snake. In Vishistadvaita, it is real even in the locus of error. In Samkhya-Yoga, it is a viparyaya, a mixing up of the attributes that a real snake has with the attributes of the rope. It is only in the Buddhist theories that we come across the absolute unreality of the objects of error. We now proceed to examine the Buddhist theories.

THEORIES BASED ON UNREALITY OF OBJECTS

ASATKHYATI is the error-theory of the Buddhist Madhyamikas wherein the non-existent snake appears on the non-existent rope. Thus according to them, both the snake and the rope are unreal. This theory is rejected by Advaita because such universal non-existence would be indistinguishable everywhere, and cannot cause perception of objects with distinguishable features. Says the Acharya:

"There is no distinction as regards the nature of non-existence, between the non-existence arising from the destruction of the seed and the rest, and the horn of a hare, both being equally unsubstantial. Had there been any distinction, only then would the assertion of such separate causality be meaningful as, 'This sprout comes out of the seed alone, and the curd out of the milk alone'. But when an indistinguishable non-existence is posited as the cause, the sprout and the rest may as well spring out of a hare's horn and the like. This is however, contradicted by experience. If, again,

distinctive attributes be ascribed to non-existence on the analogy of the lotus having blueness etc., then on that very analogy of the lotus etc., non-existence will turn into existence by the very fact of possessing distinctive qualities. Moreover, non-existence can never be the source of anything, precisely because it is non-existent like the hare's horn. Were existence to arise out of non-existence, all the effects would be imbued with non-existence. But that goes against experience, for all things are perceived to exist as entities with their respective distinguishing features." (BSB, II,II,iv,26).

ATMAKHYATI is the Buddhist Vijnanavada theory of error. In Vijnanavada, the object of an error is real as the content of an inner reflection of the subject. Due to past impression, there is simultaneous flow of external 'this' and internal snake and the two get mixed up. This theory may be rejected because it subtracts the attribute of 'externality' from the snake and hence the snake, which is internal, should be seen as extremely proximate resulting in some such cognition as 'I am a snake'. For according to the Vijnanavadins, it is the cognition itself that appears in the likeness of the object. To which the Acharya counters:

"Not that anybody cognises a perception to be a pillar, a wall, etc., rather all people cognise a pillar, a wall, etc., as objects of perception. And it is for this reason that all people understand the Buddhists as really assuming the existence of an external thing even while they deny it by saying 'That which is the content of an internal awareness appears as though external'. For they use the phrase 'as though' in the clause 'as though external' just because they too become aware of a cognition appearing externally in the same way as is well known to all people, and yet they want to deny any external object. Else why should they say 'as though external'? For nobody speaks thus: 'Vishnumitra appears like the son of a barren woman'." (BSB,II,II,v,28).

The last sentence is significant - the world is not unreal like the son of a barren woman. It is important to distinguish the difference between the unreality of the son of a barren woman and the unreality of the snake in the rope. The world in Advaita is unreal like the snake in the rope, and the snake in the rope is grounded on its likeness to real snakes in the world. To say that the world is absolutely unreal is to adopt the doctrine of the Buddhists.

CONDITIONS FOR THE OCCURRENCE OF ERROR

An error can take place only when there is a concealment of the true nature of the object. This concealment may be due to a defect of the sense organs, or it may be a defect in the environment. But apart from the condition of concealment, we find that there are two other necessary conditions in the theories of the Vedic darshanas without which the possibility of error (between objects) would be precluded. These are:

1. That there be a likeness between the real object and the unreal object, for example between the coil of rope and the coil of the

snake, or the glitter of nacre and the glitter of silver. It is the likeness of the objects combined with the defect in the environment or sense organs that makes possible the error. It is not possible, for example, to mistake a rope for an elephant or cow.

2. That the appearance of the unreal object be based on the reality of the object itself. The object is revealed as unreal only in the locus of the error. It is because there are real snakes in the world that a rope can be mistaken for a snake. We do not, for example, mistake a person to be the son of a barren woman.

Advaita does not deviate from the traditional Vedic schools in so far as an error between objects is concerned. It considers that the object of erroneous cognition has a likeness to a really existing object. It also affirms the reality of the object in the world, but accepts the unreality of the object in the locus of error in accordance with the empirical sublating cognition that the 'the snake is false'. It is to be noted that the falseness of the snake in the rope does not exterminate snakes from the world!

THE SUPERIMPOSITION BETWEEN SELF AND NON-SELF IS INEXPLICABLE

If one goes by the conditional factors that makes an empirical error possible, it becomes an impossibility for the non-Self to be superimposed on the Self because, the one being sentient and the other being insentient, there is no likeness between them. This is exactly what the Acharya says in the preamble - that the subject and object which "are by nature as contradictory as light and darkness, cannot logically have any identity, it follows that their attributes can have it still less. Accordingly, the superimposition of the object, referable through the concept 'you', and its attributes on the subject that is conscious by nature and is referable through the concept 'we' (should be impossible), and contrariwise the superimposition of the subject and its attributes on the object should be impossible." In other words, the superimposition between the Self and non-Self is inexplicable through empirical theories of error. Yet, this state of affairs is a natural (naisargika) continuation from a beginningless past. If the snake-rope or silver-nacre analogy is used to illustrate the superimposition between the Self and non-Self, it is merely to point out that one thing is seen as another. And it is this common feature that the Acharya points out after considering various theories of error: "From every point of view, however, there is no difference as regards the appearance of one thing as something else. And in accord with this, we find in common experience that the nacre appears as silver, and a single moon appears as two." (BSB,Pre).

THE DISLODGEEMENT OF MEANING

There is in the preamble what seems to be an almost passing reference to the possibility of superimposition between what is perceived and what is not perceived.

Question: "How, again, can there be any superimposition of any object or its attributes on the Self that is opposed to the non-Self and is never an object (of the senses and mind)? For everybody superimposes something else on what is perceived by him in front; and you assert that the Self is opposed to the non-Self and is not referable by the concept 'you'."

Vedantin: "The Self is not absolutely beyond comprehension, because it is apprehended as the content of the concept 'I'; and because the Self, opposed to the non-Self, is well known in the world as an immediately perceived (self-revealing) entity. Nor is there any rule that something has to be superimposed on something else that is directly perceived through the senses; for boys superimpose the ideas of surface and dirt on space (sky) that is not an object of sense-perception."

There is something subtle hidden in these lines. Why is it that it is only boys that are susceptible to this type of error? In the case of errors between objects, say the snake in the rope, the person subject to the error knows the meanings of both the snake and the rope, whereas in this case - what is it that the boy knows as the sky? An adult who knows what 'sky' means ? as that which is expansive and pervasive through and through objects ? can never superimpose ideas such as concavity and dirt onto the sky. It is only boys (children), who see the 'bowl' spread out above and take this bowl to be the 'sky', that ascribe concavity to the sky. In the case of the snake-rope error, one may say that two meanings, both of which are known, are confused one with another in the locus of the error, but not so in the case of the 'sky' that boys see when they attribute concavity to the it; they do not know the meaning of sky. There is a primal dislodgement of meaning here. And the superimposition of the non-Self on Self, being a superimposition of the perceived on the unperceived, is of this nature, for that is what the Acharya says. There is no reason that can be assigned as to why such a primal dislodgment of meaning should at all be there in Reality. It is inexplicable, anirvacaniya.

CONCLUSION

What emerges from this examination is that the unreal is more perplexing than what it at first seems. What is unreal is also somehow the real. One of the great deliberations in the history of mankind on the topic of the 'unreal' is to be found in the Thaetetus and Sophist of Plato. These dialogues are inconclusive, but they are masterpieces of dialectical philosophy. I believe that the same kind of dialectical tension is found in the Sariraka Bhashya of Shankaracharya. To read the bhashya with the singular notion that the world is unreal would be a sad derailment of Advaita, for it would denude Advaita of the element of mysticism that lies in its core.

Message 23646

From: "Chittaranjan Naik" <chittaranjan_naik@yahoo.com>

Date: Sun Jul 11, 2004 7:24 am

Subject: [The Real and the Unreal - Part IV - The Dream Analogy](#)

Om Gurubhyo Namah

DREAM AND REALITY

According to Shri Shankaracharya, the world cannot be said to be false on the basis of the dream analogy: "It has been said by those who deny the existence of the external things that perception of things like a pillar etc. in the waking state occur even in the absence of external things, just as they do in a dream; for as perceptions, they are similar. That has to be refuted. With regard to this we say, the perceptions of the waking state cannot be classed with those in a dream." (BSB,II,II,v,29).

The dream analogy presents us with an enigma. While Shankara affirms the existence of the world in the Brahma Sutra Bhashya, his commentary on the Gaudapada Karika seems to corroborate the view that the world is unreal like the world of a dream. I suspect that, more often than not, this seeming contradiction is resolved by assuming that the bhashya speaks from a position of provisional or vyavaharika sathya. While this thesis may not be entirely false, it would be a deflection from the intent of the Acharya's words if we abstain from examining the arguments provided. For, Shankara denies that the appearance of objects can arise without there being real objects. In order to reveal the full import of Shankara's words, we shall cite here the three reasons given in the bhashya to show specifically that the waking state is not like the dream state, alongwith one other quote taken from a slightly different context, but equally applicable to the case.

1. The objects of the waking state are not sublated under any condition unlike those of the dream state.

"To a man arisen from sleep, the object perceived in a dream becomes sublated, for he says, 'Falsely did I imagine myself in contact with great men. In fact I never came in contact with great men; only my mind became overpowered by sleep; and thus this delusion arose.' So also in the case of magic etc., adequate sublation takes place. But a thing seen in the waking state, a pillar for instance, is not thus sublated under any condition." (BSB,II,II,v,29).

2. Dream vision is a kind of memory whereas those of the waking state are perceptions of objects.

"Moreover, dream vision is a kind of memory, whereas the visions of the waking state are forms of perception (through valid means of knowledge). And the difference between perception and memory, consisting in the presence or absence of objects, can be understood by oneself, as for instance when one says: 'I remember my beloved son, but I do not see him, though I want to see'." (BSB,II,II,v,29).

3. Objects cannot appear from mere internal impressions.

"And the assertion has to be refuted that even in the absence of objects, the diversity of experience can be explained on the strength

of the variety of tendencies (or impressions). To this we say: The tendencies cannot logically exist; for according to you, objects are not perceived externally. It is precisely owing to the perception of objects that a variety of (mental) tendencies corresponding to the diverse objects can arise. But how can a variety of tendencies arise when no object is perceived? Even if these tendencies have no beginning (on the analogy of the seed and sprout), this infinite regress will amount to a baseless assumption leading us nowhere like the blind leading the blind, and it will thus cut at the roots of all human dealings, so that your aim will remain unfulfilled. And it is to be noted that the positive and negative instances that were adduced by those who would deny the existence of external objects by saying, 'All these experiences are caused by tendencies and not objects' ? those instances also stand refuted from this standpoint; for no tendency can arise unless there be a perception of some object. Moreover, from the admission that apprehension of objects is possible even in the absence of past tendencies, and from the non-apprehension that tendencies are possible in the absence of perception of object, it follows that such positive and negative instances (adduced by you) also prove the existence of objects. Besides, what you call a tendency is a kind of impression (or predisposition); and from common experience it is known that a disposition cannot be imagined to exist unless it has some basis to stand on, whereas you have nothing to supply this need; for nothing can be found (by following your view) to stand as an abode for dispositions." (BSB,II,II,v,30).

4. Objects are not unreal because they have distinguishing characteristics.

"There is no distinction, as regards the nature of non-existence, between the non-existence arising from the destruction of the seed and the rest and the horns of a hare, both being equally unsubstantial?.. If, again, distinctive attributes be ascribed to non-existence on the analogy of the lotus having blueness etc., then on that very analogy of the lotus etc., non-existence will turn into existence by the very fact of possessing distinctive qualities." (BSB,II,II,iv,26).

Objects of the waking state are not like those of a dream. What remains empirically valid cannot be superseded by a mere analogy. In Shankara's words: "Moreover, one who cannot speak of the waking experience as naturally baseless, just because that would contradict experience, wants to speak of them as such on the strength of their similarity with dream experiences. But anything that cannot be the characteristic of something in its own right cannot certainly be so because of a similarity with another. For fire, which is felt to be warm, does not become cold because of some similarity with water. As for the difference between dream and waking states, this has already been shown." (BSB,II,II,v,29).

These are not provisional statements. They are to be resolved with other statements in the bhashya through samanvaya, reconciliation, by finding the higher truth in which the seeming contradictions are

resolved. I believe that the dream analogy has been used with a certain lack of caution to 'prove' that the world is unreal. It is true that in Advaita the world is considered unreal in a certain sense, but it is this very meaning that is to be illuminated in the light of the discriminative knowledge of the real and the unreal. Until then the meaning of unreality lies hidden by darkness, as much as does the meaning of reality.

THE INFERENCE USED IN THE KARIKA

The Karika does not derive the unreality of the world on the basis of the dream analogy. The Karika bases its proof on the method of syllogistic inference (anumama) and not on upamana (comparison). The dream analogy appears in the syllogism as an adaharana (example) to illustrate the vyapti (invariable concomitance) that provides the hetu (ground or reason) for deriving the conclusion. The hetu here is the fact of 'being perceived' ? the waking world is unreal because 'it is perceived' just as is the dream world. If we closely examine this inference, we find that there is something the matter with the vyapti, or the invariable concomitance, that is used in the Karika, because, for an invariable concomitance to be valid, it must be an apriori perceived fact. It must be remembered that in all Vedic philosophies there is a Platonic element in the 'attainment' of knowledge i.e., the knowledge that is to be attained is in a sense prior to the attainment. Thus, the knowledge derived from inference is not something new or alien, but is the application of a prior knowledge to the particular instance of observation. For example, the smoke, the fire, and the invariable concomitance between smoke and fire must have been perceived apriori for the fire to be inferred from the smoke because such inference is based on the invariable concomitance: 'where there is fire, there is smoke'. The syllogism only employs the prior knowledge to establish the presence of one of the elements based on the observation of the other in the instance where the former is hidden. If we examine the vyapti that is employed in the Karika, it is obvious that the invariance of the relation between 'being perceived' and 'the unreality of objects' is violated in the waking state because objects in the waking state are perceived to be real. Thus, the vyapti used in the syllogism to prove the unreality of the world is NOT VALID for a person who sees the world as real in the waking state. I think the entire argument calls for a closer scrutiny.

Vyapti is an invariable concomitance between two perceived objects. But there is a peculiarity to the vyapti used in the Karika because the component 'being perceived' is not a perceived object. And it is this peculiarity that provides us with a clue to the entire riddle. If 'being perceived' is fit to be an object, then the perceiver must abide as a witness not merely of the object of perception, but also of the apperception of perception. Such a 'perception' is possible only for the Self that remains as the unmoving witness - it is the Turiya that is spoken of. Therefore, we must recognise that we are here in the presence of an extra-normal cognition. The entire Karika speaks from a standpoint of extra-normal perception in which the unreality of the world is seen as a prior truth and it is thus that 'being perceived' bears an invariable relation to 'the unreality

of what is perceived' and becomes a vyapti for the syllogism. The validity of the syllogism is thus preserved in the Karika based on an extra-normal vyapti as would obtain from a yogi or jnani (for it is said that their perception is not through the sense organs). But this does not really provide us with the meaning of 'the unreality of the world' as seen in the extra-normal perception. For that, we turn to the Brahma Sutra Bhashya.

ILLUSION AND REALITY - THE SURFACE AND THE DEEP

According to Shankara, the unreality of the world, and world-sublation, has no meaning in isolation from knowledge of the Self:

"Here our question is: What is meant by sublation of the universe of manifestations? Is the world to be annihilated like the destruction of the solidity of ghee by coming into contact with fire; or is it that the world of name and form, created in Brahman by nescience like many moons created in the moon by the eye disease called timara, has to be destroyed through knowledge? Now if it be said that this existing universe of manifestation, consisting of the body etc. on the corporeal plane and externally of the earth etc., is to be annihilated, that is a task impossible for any man, and hence the instruction about its extirpation is meaningless. Moreover (even supposing that such a thing is possible, then) the universe, including the earth etc., having been annihilated by the first man who got liberation, the present universe should have been devoid of the earth etc. Again, if it be said that this universe of manifestations superimposed on the one Brahman alone through ignorance has to be sublated by enlightenment, then it is Brahman itself that has to be presented through a denial of the manifestation superimposed by ignorance by saying, 'Brahman is one without a second' (Ch.VI.ii.1), 'That is truth, That is the Self, That thou art (O Svetaketu)' (Ch.VI.viii.7-16). When Brahman is taught thus, knowledge dawns automatically, and by that knowledge ignorance is removed. As a result of that, this whole manifestation of name and form, superimposed by ignorance, vanishes away like things seen in a dream. But unless Brahman is (first) taught, neither does the knowledge of Brahman dawn nor is the universe sublated even though the instruction, 'Know Brahman, sublimate the world', be imparted a hundred times." (BSB,III,II,v,21).

These words point to the subtle and perplexing nature of negation that is involved in Advaita. The 'unreal' truly has to be a 'nothing' if Advaita is not to devolve into a kind of duality. Yet it is not possible to negate without having a distinctive thing to negate, and if there is such a distinction, then that distinguished thing 'will turn into existence by the very fact of possessing distinctive qualities'. The answer to this riddle lies in carefully discriminating what it is that Advaita negates. The object of negation being both 'something' as well as 'nothing' is resolved only if we recognise that the denial of the world is a denial of the surface when the surface itself is seen as constituting the depth of its true nature. When the depth is known the surface is not false, but the falsity of taking the surface as the true nature is negated. Thus, the object of negation is the surface, and in the ultimate

analysis, there is nothing that is negated because the surface is ultimately subsumed in the Reality. Therefore, the sublation of the world is nothing but the knowledge of the Self that subsumes the world. Therein lies the meaning of world-negation. This view is reinforced by the following words of Shankara's commentary in the Advaita Prakarana (Chapter II of the Karika):

"Thus the definite conclusion arrived at by hundreds of Vedic texts is that the reality of the Self that is a CO-EXTENSIVE WITH ALL that exists within and without, and is birthless, is one without a second, and there is nothing besides. It is now said that this very fact is established by reason as well." And then follows these pregnant words of the Karika:

Verse #27: "The birth of a thing that exists can reasonably be possible only through Maya and not in reality. For one who holds that things take birth in a real sense, there can only be the birth of what is already born."

Verse #28: "There can be no birth for a non-existing object either through Maya or in reality, for the son of a barren woman is born neither through Maya nor in reality."

What is striking here ? and it appears again and again in Advaita ? is the significant assertion that the 'unreality of the world is not like the son of a barren woman' for such a thing is possible 'neither through Maya nor in reality'. Maya can possibly only 'give birth' to what is already existent. Again, if we read this in juxtaposition with Shankara words that the Self is 'co-extensive with all that exists within and without..', the meaning that emerges is surely that the denial of the world is a denial of the surface as constituting the true depth of its nature in which it abides in identity with its substratum.

The Mandukya Upanishad says (1,2): "All this is surely Brahman. This Self is Brahman. The Self, such as it is, is possessed of four quarters." And commenting on this, Shankara says that "Turiya is realised by successively merging the earlier three, starting from Visva." How can Visva be merged with Taijasa, and Taijasa with Prajna, and Prajna with Turiya if each is not in reality subsumed in the next?

Knowing objects in truth is to know the depth of objects and not their surface. It is the seeing into the heart of things, and the heart of an object is its 'self'. Therefore is the suffix 'self' attached to a thing to describe its true nature ? for then we say that it is it-self. Negation is the negation of a thing's surface posturing as the thing it-Self. In other words, the truth of the world is its soul, and the seemingly soulless world is a superficial facade of its reality. It is this 'corpse' of the world, this death as it were, that is what is negated! The SLEEP OF DEATH characterises the three states of jagrat, swapna, and susupti, whereas the Self is ETERNALLY AWAKE. The Self never sleeps because its nature is Consciousness. And in that consciousness shines the REAL LIVING WORLD!

THE CONTEXT OF ADHYASA

There is an objection that rises up here: If the validity of the syllogism in the Karika is preserved based on an extra normal vyapti, then how can it be sustained in the light of the assertion that when the Truth is seen the entire world is Real? For there must be a component of unreality in the perceived world if the invariable concomitance between 'being perceived' and 'the unreality of that which is perceived' is to be valid. In order to counter this objection, we need to analyse what adhyasa is, for it is in the context of adhyasa that Advaita says 'jagat is mithya' or that the entire world is a superimposition on Brahman like the snake on the rope. What exactly is the superimposition that is spoken about in Advaita? A slightly different analogy than the snake-rope analogy is here used to illustrate the superimposition.

Imagine that you are sitting by a lake on a perfectly calm and pleasant day. You become aware of something floating on the water, and as it drifts closer, you see its coarse brown surface barely visible above the water and take it to be a log of wood. You go back to my thoughts, and after a while, you hear a splash in the water. When you turn towards the source of the sound you catch a glimpse of a thrashing crocodile before it disappears into the water. What you had taken to be a log was actually a crocodile!

What was the superimposed thing here? It was the log that was never there. But the features that you saw of the thing ? the coarse, brown surface - were not false, but what you imputed to the features - as that object to which it belonged - was a superimposition. And then, when you saw that it was a crocodile, the superimposition of the log disappeared and the truth of the crocodile, which was what it always was, became revealed. The coarse brown attribute remained throughout, both before and after.

Here the crocodile is Brahman. The log that you saw in the water is the superimposed world. The cause of the superimposition is the concealment of avidya regarding the true nature of what was there. The features that you saw ? the coarse brown surface - are the features of the world. They are not false or an illusion. The illusion is the false log that was 'seen'.

What is often missed out while considering the snake-rope error is that the attribute that was responsible for the error ? the coil ? is not sublated when the error is sublated. That similarity on account of which the mistake took place persists through the error and continues to be seen after the real thing is revealed because it is what the real thing has as its attribute. It cannot disappear with the disappearance of the unreal. Therefore, when the world is said to be a superimposition on Brahman, like the snake on the rope, it calls for a sifting of the elements involved in the error. What is it that is 'the snake of the world' on the Reality of Brahman?

When something is seen, what is seen of the thing is its attributes. The name of the thing, say 'rope', points to the core existential which is described as this or that wherein the 'this' and 'that' are

the predicates seen as belonging to it and as being coterminous with it because they are the descriptions of the existential itself. In the perception of the world, the attributes discerned are not false, but the core that is grasped of the world is grasped as a self-subsisting thing. In other words, the existence of the world is seen to be independent. This independence cannot be sustained in the vision of non-dual Truth, but it is nevertheless a characteristic seen of the world. It is this 'independence' that is the falseness, the 'snake' that is superimposed on Reality and is the 'unreality' that no more deludes but is seen when the Truth is seen. It is the unreality that forms a component of the extra-normal vyapti used in the Karika.

The negation of the superimposition of the world on Brahman does not negate the world in so far as the world is the attributive mode of Brahman, but negates the world in so far as it is perceived as independently subsisting. Therefore, the negation is truly the negation of duality. The vision that it presents at this stage of our enquiry is non-duality as in Vishistadvaita. To move to Advaita, we need to examine the nature of 'bheda' or 'difference'. Difference is the most difficult topic of all, and I believe that it is due to this difficulty that the conception of Brahman as Nirguna becomes one of the biggest stumbling blocks in our attempts to understand Advaita. I am of the conviction that there is a way to sameness through understanding the nature of difference. God willing, we shall attempt an enquiry into the mysteries of 'difference' later on in these discussions.

RECONCILIATION - THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Before we close this section, it would be in order to look for the reasons why the Karika takes a different perspective on the dream than does the Brahma Sutra Bhashya. For this, I think we must see the Karika in a historical context. The Karika was written before the Mimamsa philosophers had pulled down the citadels of the Buddhist fort, and there seems to be an overriding emphasis in its pages to refute the nihilism of the Buddhists. If we go back to the tradition of tarka-shastra, we find that one of the accepted ways of refutation is to begin with a common tenet with the opponent ? called the siddhanta - and then proceed to demolish the conclusion of the purva-paksha. I believe that this is the approach taken by the Karika. Such a thesis is supported by the following words of Shankara (Karika IV.27):

"The text starting with, 'In accord with the perception of its cause, knowledge..' and ending with the previous verse, which represents the view of the subjective-idealists among the Buddhists, is approved by the teacher (Gaudapada) in so far as it refutes the view of those who believe in the external world. Now he makes use of that very argument as a ground of inference for demolishing their own points of view".

Again, it is significant that immediately after establishing the illusoriness of the world in the first ten verses of the Vaitathya Prakarana, the Karika moves on directly to a refutation of the Buddhists:

Sutra #11: "If the objects cognised in both the conditions (of dream and of waking) be illusory, who cognises all these (illusory objects) and who again imagines them?"

Sutra #12: "Atman, the self-luminous, through the power of his own Maya, imagines in himself by himself (all objects that the subject experiences within and without). He alone is the cogniser of objects (so created). That is the decision of Vedanta."

These words are obviously aimed at the nihilists. The demonstration of the reality of Self by accepting the siddhanta of world-unreality is a succinct and effective way of achieving the goal. As for Sri Shankaracharya's Sariraka Bhashya, it takes the traditional approach of leading to the Truth through a path that does not ignore tattva-jnana as is evident from these words: "But anything that cannot be the characteristic of something in its own right cannot certainly be so because of a similarity with another. For fire, which is felt to be warm, does not become cold because of some similarity with water." (BSB,II,II,v,29).

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Message 23791

From: "Chittaranjan Naik" <chittaranjan_naik@yahoo.com>

Date: Sat Jul 17, 2004 2:11 pm

Subject: **The Real and the Unreal - Part V - Authenticity and the Knot of the Heart**

Om Gurubhyo Namah

THE QUESTION OF AUTHENTICITY IN THE BHASHYA

It would seem that the topic of authenticity is out of place in a discussion on Advaita, but the bhashya of Sri Shankaracharya lays such great stress on authenticity that our study of the bhashya would not be complete if we do not make an attempt to examine its meaning in the context of Advaita. This is what Shankara says in the bhashya:

1. "And it cannot be that the very thing perceived is non-existent. How can a man's words be acceptable who while himself perceiving an external object through sense-contacts still says, 'I do not perceive, and that object does not exist', just as much as a man while eating and himself experiencing the satisfaction arising from the act might say, 'Neither do I eat, nor do I get any satisfaction?' " (BSB.II.II.v,28).

2. "Accordingly, those who accept truth to be just what it is actually perceived to be, should accept a thing as it actually reveals itself externally, and not 'as though appearing outside'." (BSB.II.II.v,28).

3. "This conclusion is not honest, since the possibility or impossibility of the existence of a thing is determined in accordance with the applicability or non-applicability of the means of knowledge to it, but the applicability or non-applicability of the means of knowledge is not ascertained in accordance with the possibility or impossibility (of the thing)." (BSB.II.II.v,28).

4. "As for the view of the absolute nihilist, no attempt is made for its refutation since it is opposed to all means of valid knowledge. For human behaviour, conforming as it does to all right means of valid knowledge, cannot be denied as long as a different order of reality is not realised; for unless there be an exception, the general rule prevails." (BSB.II.II.v,31).

5. "That being so, it cannot be asserted by a man, who feels the difference of the two, that the perception of the waking state is false, merely on the ground that it is a perception like the perception in a dream. And it is not logical for those who consider themselves intelligent to deny their own experience." (BSB.II.II.v,29).

6. "Moreover, one who cannot speak of the waking experience as naturally baseless, just because that would contradict experience, wants to speak of them as such on the strength of their similarity with dream experiences. But anything that cannot be the characteristic of something in its own right cannot certainly be so because of a similarity with another. For fire, which is felt to be warm, does not become cold because of some similarity with water." (BSB.II.II.v,29).

Why is it that authenticity is so important in Advaita? Why does Shankaracharya call us back to the world when the world is said to be unreal? If the world is false, then surely there would be no efficacy in returning back to the world. And it is also not reasonable to assume that Shankara, the boldest votary of truth, is being untrue to his own philosophy by discordantly shifting his stand against the Buddhists merely as an expedient measure. It appears to me that there is a logical connection between philosophy and authenticity.

AUTHENTICITY AND THE LAW OF IDENTITY

Authenticity leads us back to the truth of experience. A thing seen in experience is what it is seen to be. The truth is not seen by rejecting the world, because such rejection is nothing but a twisted affirmation of the world ? it affirms the world by making it the object of negative attention. Rejection leaves the rejected to be accounted for and that sows the seeds for 'REDUCTION'. Thus, objects become nothingness, or impressions, or quantum phenomena. All these are not truths but reductions of what is seen into something else.

Reduction is the weapon of darkness with which Maya bewitches the mind. It is the perpetuation of the primordial confusion between 'sameness' and 'difference'. But a thing is what it is; it is not another. This is the central axiom of logic, and points to the inviolable truth that a thing is itself. It is the fundamental law of identity. The law of non-contradiction is posterior to this law, for unless a thing is identical to itself, and unless such identity remains persistent, the law of non-contradiction does not hold, for without the law of identity the thing may be not-itself and hence can

legitimately be contrary to itself. The law of identity is thus the first and most fundamental law of logic. Reduction contradicts the law of identity and is therefore illogical and false. Reduction is known as viparyaya, the mixing up of the meaning of one with the meaning of another, and a corruption of the vritti whereby the object is not true to its name. And it is this propensity for reduction that Shankara attacks when he refutes the doctrine of the Buddhists, which holds that objects are internal impressions. An internal impression is not an external object. The meaning of the phrase 'internal impression' presents a different form than the phrase 'external object' and the two are not the same. The words 'internal' and 'external' are the attributions of space, and a metaphysic that holds that objects are only internal impressions contains the fallacy of ascribing reality to space and denying it to objects in space. But an object is just what it is seen to be. An object that we perceive such as a pillar is a pillar in space to be sure and not any other thing known by any other name like 'impression' or 'idea'. For the contrary would mean that we could, with equal justification, call a 'cow' a 'horse'. A cow is a cow, known as a cow through its cowness than because of any other reason. It is the same theme that we find in the dialogues of Plato ? in Socrates' unrelenting convergence to absolute forms, as illustrated beautifully in these words from the Phaedo:

"It seems to me that whatever else is beautiful apart from absolute Beauty is beautiful because it partakes of that absolute Beauty, and for no other reason. Well, now, that is as far as my mind goes; I cannot understand these other ingenious theories of causation. If someone tells me that the reason why a given object is beautiful is that it has a gorgeous colour or shape or any other such attribute, I disregard all these other explanations - I find them all confusing - and I cling simply and straightforwardly and no doubt foolishly to the explanation that the one thing that makes that object beautiful is the presence in it or association with it of absolute Beauty."

Reduction is non-abidance by the law of identity. It has its roots in the unknowingness of the known-ness of objects. A thing seen in experience is what it is seen to be. It is therefore already known. It is known, for otherwise we could not question it, for we can't question what we don't know. Yet it is not known because we have questions about it. Thus, it is known and it is not known. We cannot know it by rejecting it, because that would be a rejection of what is to be known. We cannot know it by bringing alien characteristics to it, for that would be the knowing of an-other and not knowing what was to be known. To know it, one has to pierce the mysterious darkness that hides what is already known.

The world is Maya, and Maya is Stree. She likes to be looked at. But when we look at Her through eyes cast with sleep, She hides behind the veil of Otherness. But when we awaken our eyes, She sublimates into our very Self, and Her otherness dissolves into the mists of nothingness.

The truth cannot be seen through the mind that warps in seeing. It is seen through the mind that is transparent to the Witness of seeing. Reduction is a warp of the mind. It is the non-acceptance of the

object of experience and the consequent bending of the object into another because its non-acceptance leaves the fact of experience to be still accounted for. Such reduction is a violation of the pramanas, for according to the epistemological order of the pramanas, a fact of pratyaksha cannot be negated on the grounds of reason.

THE PERVASIVENESS OF BRAHMAN

Abidance by the law of identity fixes the reality of the world and directs the intellect to the expansive nature of Brahman. It fixes the universe 'as it is' in its true nature so that in contemplating Brahman as the material cause, the aperture of our vision may enlarge to know the sweeping compass of Its presence. Brahman is the material cause of this world and It pervades the universe like the yarn pervades the cloth. It pervades the vast expanse of hills and rivers, mountains and oceans, and everything from the familiar earth to the farthest galaxies. Brahman is large enough to accommodate the universe as we see it, and does not require that the universe be compressed into a restricted conception of what the mind thinks is possible or impossible of the world to be. The word 'Brahman' comes from the root 'brmh' which means growth, and with the suffix 'man', it points to an absolute freedom from limitation. Brahman goes farther than conception can go and stretches farther still beyond the farthest horizons. It is absolutely not contained or limited by anything else, as is beautifully articulated in these words of the Svetasvatara Upanishad:

"The whole universe is filled by the Purusha, to whom there is nothing superior, from whom there is nothing different, than whom there is nothing either smaller or greater; who stands alone, motionless as a tree, established in His own glory." (III.9)

"All faces are His faces; all heads, His heads; all necks His necks. He dwells in the hearts of all beings. He is the all-pervading Bhagavan. Therefore he is the omnipresent and benign Lord." (III.11)

"He, indeed, is the great Purusha, the Lord who inspires the mind to attain the state of stainlessness. He is the Ruler and the Light that is imperishable." (III.12)

"The Purusha with a thousand heads, a thousand eyes, a thousand feet, compasses the earth on all sides and extends beyond it by ten fingers' breadth." (III.14)

"The Purusha alone is all this ? what has been and what will be. He is also the Lord of Immortality and of whatever grows by food." (III.15)

"His hands and feet are everywhere; His eyes, heads, and faces are everywhere; His ears are everywhere; He exists compassing all." (III.16)

"Grasping without hands, hasting without feet, It sees without eyes,

It hears without ears. It knows what is to be known, but no one knows It. They call It the First, the Great, the Full." (III.19).

"I know this undecaying, primeval One, the Self of all things, which exists everywhere, being all-pervading, and which the wise declare to be free from birth. The teachers of Brahman, indeed, speak of It as eternal." (III.21)

"That is Agni; It is Aditya; It is Vayu; It is Chandrama. That Self is the luminous stars; It is Hiranyagarbha; It is water; It is Virat." (IV.2)

"Thou art woman, Thou art man; Thou art youth and maiden too. Thou as an old man totterest along on a staff; it is Thou alone who, when born, assumest diverse forms." IV.3)

"Thou art the dark-blue bee; Thou art the green parrot with red eyes; Thou art the thunder-cloud, the seasons, and the seas. Thou art beginningless and all-pervading. From thee all the worlds are born." (IV.4)

Authenticity leads us to the Infinity and not to the 'nothingness' of Brahman.

THE KNOT OF THE HEART

The mind of a jiva is warped by avidya. It is the primordial warp that has 'shrunk' the self into the confines of the body. When a jiva tries to conceive of the Self, it is trying to conceive the Infinite through the same warp that has compressed the Infinite into the finite cage of the body. I believe that this knot is what Tantra calls the coiled kundalini shakti. It is the knot of the heart that must be released before the self is set free of the shackles of the finite. It is a knot of contraction. It has contracted the Infinite into the finite. Thus, when the jiva says that the world is not separate from consciousness, it is susceptible to the fallacy of contracting the world to fit into the contracted notion of self it has created by the warp of its avidya. Brahman cannot be limited to the consciousness of an individual jiva until that consciousness 'expands' to encompass the consciousness in all jives, in all of the universe, in the trees and birds, in the roving animals of the wild, in the hearts of the immortals of heaven, in short to attain identity with Brahman. How can Self-knowledge limit the superabundance, power and grandeur of the Infinite Self? The Supreme Knowledge is the 'expansion' of consciousness to engulf the universe rather than its 'compression' into the nothingness of nihilum. The Self is All-knowing. How can one realise the Self that is All-knowing if the All has been negated?

Message 23877

From: "Chittaranjan Naik" <chittaranjan_naik@y...>
Date: Thu Jul 22, 2004 7:44 am

Subject: **The Real and the Unreal - Part VI - Prelude to Ontology**

Om Gurubhyo Namah

THE ONTOLOGY OF PRESENCE

In his seminal book, the 'Critique of Pure Reason', Kant examines the term 'existence' and concludes as follows: "If the question regarded an object of sense merely, it would be impossible for me to confound the conception with the existence of the thing. For the conception merely enables me to cogitate an object as according with the general conditions of experience; while the existence of the object permits me to cogitate it as contained in the sphere of actual experience." Thus Kant places the meaning of existence in the fact of aposteriori experience rather than in the conceptual cogitation of a thing. It is this same distinction that was formalised later by Gottlob Frege through his symbolic framework, which later went on to become the foundation for analytical philosophy and modern logic. Frege was trying to counter the manner in which idealist philosophers employed language whereby they said that objects don't exist because they are ideas in the mind. Frege reasoned that in the realm of language we apply the word 'existence' to objects only when these objects are concrete facts in the world and not when they are mere ideas. He thus made a distinction between pure thought (propositions) and the assertion of existence (existential judgement) to what is thought about. Accordingly, the thing that is thought about is a concept or an abstract class, and its existence is the concept instantiated as a fact in the world. In a sense, both Kant and Frege were reinforcing the ontology of presence by restricting the meaning of existence to experienced facts of the concrete world.

Another variant of the ontology of presence is found in the philosophies of existentialism, which may be summarised as follows: All things are nothing but their presence to consciousness. But the term 'existence' does not properly belong to consciousness because consciousness is always consciousness of something, i.e., consciousness is intentional. Thus, in Heideggerian terms, existence translates into what may be called 'being-at-hand'. But existentialism does not stop at merely positing such an ephemeral 'existence', but goes further to state that 'existence precedes essence'. What this means is that there is no such thing as essence that can persist in an un-intentional state. Thus, the doctrine of 'existence is prior to essence' dissolves everything into 'a nothing' that lies behind the nature of things. The main problem with such a hypothesis is that it cannot account for the recognition of sameness, as such recognition needs the persistence of the notion of things by which sameness is seen, as say when we experience: 'This is the same tree that I saw yesterday'. If the tree has no essence, then there is no persistence of the notion of the tree, and the next instance of a tree that I see can have no likeness to the prior instance of the tree. Indeed, without universals, it would be impossible for anything to have a presence in as much as the world would dissolve into an amorphous void. It is because of the metaphysical need to account for sameness that scholastic philosophers had postulated essences, for in scholastic philosophy a thing may cease to exist but its essence remains forever. Recognition

of sameness is possible only if universals are admitted, but then this would negate the doctrine that 'existence precedes essence'. Unfortunately, many modern philosophers have discounted scholastic philosophy without a deeper understanding of its metaphysics. It would seem that there was much more light in the 'dark ages' than most modern philosophers are willing to admit.

By saying that the world is unreal, Advaita seems to negate the ontology of presence. But it is our contention that Advaita affirms both the ontology of presence as well as the ontology of absence in an overarching ontology of Existence. Before we move on to a deeper examination of ontology, we must segregate the question of existence from the other related questions that rise up in its guise to confound us, and this necessitates making certain metaphysical distinctions.

THE DISTINCTION OF THE TATTWAS

What does it mean to say that an object exists? The first thing that is to be distinguished in this question is that there are two terms employed in it: the 'object' and the 'existence' that is predicated of the object. These two terms are so interleaved in everyday language that we are wont to disqualify an object as an object unless it is also such as to be qualified as existent ? for otherwise we say that it is a mere 'idea' or 'concept'. Thus there is already an apriori notion of existence due to which we deny existence to 'objects in the mind' and affirm it to 'objects in the world'. We say that the one is insubstantial and the other is substantial. It would seem that the word 'substance' is grounded in the idea of existence. All these words ? object, idea, concept, mind, substance ? are so inextricably linked with one another that it is easy to be trapped in the mire of words if we do not discriminate between them through a study of the tattwas.

WHAT IS AN OBJECT?

The English word 'object' comes from the Latin 'objectum' which means 'a thing put before the mind'. The current usage ? and this includes scientific usage ? is that an object is something 'concrete' that is perceptible to the senses. The first thing that strikes one here is the restrictive sense of the modern usage of the term. But if we trace back to the etymology of the word, we find that the original meaning is more encompassing ? an object is the goal to which the mind is directed. In other words, it is the object of the directedness of the mind. Thus, in the original sense of the word, there is no difference between an object that is thought and an object that is perceived in so far as they are objects. Again, a particular object when ideated and when seen are the same object, for if they were not, it would lead to a contradiction to say that the SAME object that is seen is thought. For then, the tree in the yard that I think about would not be the same tree that is in the yard and hence the object of my thought would be contrary to the object in the yard which would make the tree in the yard that I think about not conform to the tree in the yard and hence I would not have thought

about the tree in the yard, which is self-contradictory. Therefore there are no two disjunct realities, one in the mind and the other in the world. There is no difference between the object of thought and the object of perception, in respect of them being objects, but the difference lies in the modes of cognition, the one being a conception and the other being a perception. The same object when it is conceived is called a concept and when it is perceived is called a percept.

The taxonomy of objects includes all that is known. It is not restricted to sense objects only - it is whatever is perceived as well as thought. It is an object irrespective of the predication of existence that is given to it. That which I think about is not a mere 'concept' whereby it loses its dignity of being an object. Joy and sorrow, motion and rest, doubt and certitude, are also objects ? because they are objects of the mind. Modern philosophers have been foxed by the padarthas of Nyaya, which includes in its repertoire such entities as object of cognition, instrument of cognition, discussion, disputation, etc. This perplexity is primarily because they translate padartha as 'ontological category'. The words 'tattwa' and 'padartha' have no exact English equivalent, but I believe that the term 'logos' is as good a translation as is possible.

In considering an object, it is important to realise that the relation between words and objects are not mediated through an intermediate entity called the 'sense', but that an object is the immediate object of the word. It is therefore called 'artha' which means both 'meaning' as well as 'object'. The modern sense-reference theory (due to Frege), which states that words have an intermediate sense and that this sense points to objects in the world, is not logically sustainable. Firstly, the sense of a word can have no meaning unless the 'objectness' is contained in the sense, and if the objectness is contained in the sense it would need no separate object as a reference, for if it did, the object would have to contain something more than the objectness and hence objectness would not define the object, which is absurd (because objectness is the essence of the object). The positing of the duality of sense and object is therefore superfluous, and going by the principle of parsimony it would obviate the need for a separate sense. Again, an intermediate 'sense' necessitates a binding between the word and sense, and between the sense and object, which in turn would need four more binding relationships, and so on ad infinitum. Therefore, the sense-reference theory is superfluous.

The marriage between a word and its object is sacred and mystical. They are united together as elucidated by Shankara in the Agama-Prakarana of Gaudapada Karika (I.1):

"Though the word and the thing signified are the same, still the presentation in the text, 'This letter that is OM is all this' was made by giving greater prominence to the word. The very same thing that was presented through an emphasis on the word is being indicated over again with a stress on the thing signified, so that the unity of the name and the nameable may be comprehended."

MIND AND OBJECT

The mind is a sea of objects. There is no separate thing called the mind. For it is not possible that there be a perturbation in consciousness without there being objects as modes of that perturbation. Yet, the word 'mind' has a sense of being internal and as being associated with the subject. Therefore it is called an internal tattwa ? antahkarana - which apart from the objects cogitated, is inferred as the internal instrument of cognition. This is perhaps due to the subliminal sense of 'vrittis' in consciousness from which all objects arise. Yet the mind itself is an object because it can be thought of as the reference of the word 'mind'. In other words, whatever is thought is an object, and because the mind itself can be thought about, it too is an object. But in every thought, the mind is inferred to be the subjective instrument of thinking. Thus there is a dual aspect of mind ? as an object and as an inferred internal entity. It is this dual aspect of mind ? as the manifold of objects and as the internal cognising instrument ? that generates a kind of false duality. For objects that are cogitated are not called 'objects' but 'ideas', and objects that are perceived are distinguished from 'ideas' and called 'objects'. But there is no duality between mind and objects. The object is the target of the mind, and the mind as the internal instrument is the obverse side of the target. They are the object and its vritti. They are like the concave and the convex. And when the mind itself is thought about, it is both an object and the internal instrument inferred as operating in the thinking. In the pages of Western Philosophy, we find this kind of conception about the unity of mind and body in the philosophy of Spinoza:

From the 'Ethics', Part II - Of the Nature and Origin of the Mind:

Proposition 7: The order and connection of ideas is the same as the order and connection of things.

Proposition 11: That which constitutes the actual being of the human mind is basically nothing else but the idea of an individual actually existing thing.

Proposition 12: Whatever happens in the object of the idea constituting the human mind is bound to be perceived by the human mind i.e. the idea of that thing will necessarily be in the human mind. That is to say, if the object of the idea constituting the human mind is a body, nothing can happen in that body without its being perceived by the mind.

Proposition 13: The object of the idea constituting the human mind is the body - i.e. a definite mode of extension actually existing, and nothing else.

Scholium to Proposition 7 (Part II): Consequently, thinking substance and extended substance are one and the same substance, comprehended now under this attribute, now under that. So too, a mode of extension and the idea of that mode are one and the same thing, expressed in two ways. This truth seems to have been glimpsed by some of the Hebrews, who hold that God, God's intellect and the things understood

by God are one and the same. For example, a circle existing in nature, and the idea of the existing circle - which is also in God - are one and the same thing, explicated through different attributes.

There has been much confusion in modern philosophy because of the inability to bridge the seeming divide between mind and body leading to problems such as 'the ghost in the machine' and the 'hard problem of consciousness'. Much of the problem has its roots in the stimulus-response theory of cognition, for this theory divides reality into the 'outside world of objects' and 'the internal world of sensations' ? the world of bodies and the world of mind. We have already seen how the reality-divide is false, but we must now treat the subject logically.

REFUTATION OF THE STIMULUS-RESPONSE THEORY OF COGNITION

The stimulus-response theory of perception is one of the most persistent dogmas in the history of human thought, and one that continues to persist even in the pages of modern science; it is the dogma that the human sensorium is a tabula rasa, a passive thing that is invoked into response by the sensory signals that impinge upon it. This is an old Epicurean doctrine, and surprisingly, it has not been subjected to a serious examination since its emergence on the philosophical-scientific scene - except perhaps indirectly through the brilliant phenomenology of Edmund Husserl who showed that we reach objects directly without mediation. Yet Husserl did not make an attempt to dislodge the dogmatic theory of cognition. I had, in an earlier post titled 'Advaita and the Brain' (Msg.#20931), provided the reasons why the stimulus-theory of cognition is illogical, and I reproduce here below some extracts from that article with some minor modification:

"The brain-centric model of perception postulates the brain as the cause of perception and ideation -- as the 'intelligent' centre where the various input signals from the environment are processed and 'displayed' as the manifold phenomena of the world. Thus, logically, it follows that all the things I perceive, and have ever perceived, are only forms 'displayed' by the brain, for it is no more possible for me to perceive anything except through the machinations of the brain. For whatever be the entity that I may point to, or think about, it would necessarily be part of the manifold that is presented to me, including the thing pointed to, the act of pointing, and the comprehending of the thing. But this leads to a logical circularity because the brain, which is supposed to be presenting this manifold 'from behind' phenomena, is also a perceived or ideated thing that is part of the self-same phenomena, as are other objects of the world. Thus, the brain that we know, in so far as it is a perceived or ideated thing, would necessarily be a product of the machinations of whatever 'processing mechanism' is presenting it. If we are to avoid this circularity, the presenter of the manifold of phenomena must lie outside the manifold. Therefore the brain is not the transforming mechanism that we conceived it to be ? it is the output, so to say, and not the transforming mechanism that presents

the output. Thus the notion of the brain as the 'central processing mechanism' collapses. When logic forces circularity it becomes imperative to look at the premises of the theory. Here it becomes necessary to dispense with the stimulus-response model of the brain altogether and say that we reach objects directly without mediation."

"Everything appears quite logical in this hypothesis except for one source of discomfort. The discomfort arises from the fact that the brain has an observed correlation to perception. That is, the manner of perception can be modified by human intervention in the workings of the brain - by the administration of drugs, or the injection of certain electrical signals. Experiments conducted on the brain show that the electro-chemical-neural mechanism of the brain has a correspondence to the manner in which we perceive. We are therefore presented with an enigmatic problem. On the one hand, placing the cause of perception in the brain creates a logical conundrum and demands that the cause of perception be placed outside phenomena. On the other hand, there is a definite causal relationship between the brain and our perception of the world."

"A valid theory of cognition must ensure that the logical circularity deriving out the stimulus-response model is avoided while at the same time accounting for the causal relationships that are seen to exist. The refutation of the brain model demonstrates that there is no transforming mechanism between the perceiver and the perceived world. Thus there is the seer and the seen, and the seer sees the seen intimately and directly. The seen ? the world and its objects - are empty in themselves without the ground of consciousness. That is, objects in themselves (without the consciousness that ensouls them) are 'nothingness'; they derive their being and meanings only by virtue of consciousness. These 'empty' objects cannot influence one another. To assign causality to objects of the world would be as naive as assigning causes to the things we see on the screen when we watch a cinema. The causes of events on the screen are not in those events or screen-things, but in the transcending source from where they derive their existence and meaning. Similarly, there are no causes in the world, except by virtue of causality being bestowed upon them by the bestowing consciousness. Thus, it would be true to say that something in the world is a cause of another only in so far as this is the manner of ordering of the world, and not because the cause is something intrinsic in the object. Thus, in the physical world, the brain is the cause of perception, not because of any intrinsic capacity in the brain to influence or be influenced by the world, but because the Transcending Causality that orders phenomena manifests the brain as the seat of a certain causal-nexus within the schema of the world. It is in this wise that the brain becomes a 'cause' of perception ? not as a real cause, but as bestowed upon it by the Real Cause."

THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE WORLD

There is thus one continuum of Consciousness in which mind and body appear as manifest features of experiential reality. This is the world. These are the objects and these are the thoughts. And these are the causal relationships between the things of the world. They

all exist as features of the continuum. The body as the seat of our experience arises in this continuum, marked off from the rest of the world as 'I am this'. The individual soul is a luminous clearing within the world and is circumscribed by the mind and body. This is the manner in which it is bestowed. It is He Himself that has created the body as the abode of the soul and bestowed upon it the causal nexus between the senses and the objects.

"He desired: 'May I be many, may I be born. He performed austerities. Having performed austerities, He created all this ? whatever there is. Having created all this, He entered into it.'" (Tai.II.vi.1).

"Of all these living beings, there are only three origins: those born from egg, those born from a living being, and those born from a sprout. That Deity thought: 'Let Me now enter into those three deities by means of this living Self and let Me then develop names and forms.'" (Ch.VI.iii.1-2).

The individual soul's power of determination in the world is limited to the particular mind and body that delimits it and their capacities thereof. The soul can affect the world only in so far as it can act through the body. The individual soul cannot determine the world into being; neither can it directly affect the world except through the body. Its determinations are limited to the capacity it is bestowed with to bring forth objects to the presence of the mind but not to bring forth objects to the presence of the senses. Even in a dream, the dream-objects are not brought forth by the volition of the individual being, but by that same bestowing Cause that operates in the totality of the world.

The individual soul cannot bring forth objects to the senses. In other words, the individual soul cannot create objects; it can only affect the objects that it already finds around it as the furniture of the world. The world is already endowed with objects of sense-perception prior to the individual's determinations, and the individual soul as a limited clearing within the body can only reach out to them with the help of the body. The capacity of the Transcendental Cause to project the world as a sensual manifold of objects is its vikshepa shakti. This is the creation that is held in place for the individual to sense and live in. For according to Shankara, what differentiates Brahman from the individual soul is the difference in characteristics ? Brahman is He whose Will is the ineluctable translation of ideas into actuality, and the individual soul is he who is trapped in the mire of avidya.

ON PERCEPTION (PRATYAKSHA)

It is in the context of the divide between the individual soul and the rest of the world that the theory of cognition must be seen. The tripod of knower, known and knowledge is a feature within the continuum of Consciousness. How does this knower ? the self within the body ? perceive the world? We have seen that it is not reasonable to posit inconceivable 'objects-in-themselves' from which signals arrive to the body because such a hypothesis necessarily leads to a logical circularity. If we say that the sense of an object is somehow

carried from the object to the senses within the continuum itself, then we should be seeing objects within the body and not out there in space where it is actually perceived. The mind cognises it as being out-there because the mind has reached out to the space there and conformed with the form of the object, and the there-ness of the object is a composite part of the cognition. It cannot be said that the object is perceived as-if it is there, for the necessity of bringing in the as-if-ness in the argument itself proves the attribute of spatial location that the mind has conformed to in perceiving the object, and when the mind has conformed to its object, it is illogical to deny the attribute that is perceived of the object. Moreover, the pseudo-logic of 'as-if-ness' is a self-refuting device because it lays the ground for anything to be stated as anything else by effacing the difference seen in perception by ascribing it to 'as-if-ness'. Therefore, the only logically sustainable thesis is that objects are perceived through contact between the instruments of cognition and the object whereby the mind and senses conform to the form of the object. This is the Advaita theory of perception - objects are perceived by the mind along with the senses reaching out and making contact with the object. (Swami Satprakashananda has treated this subject admirably in his book 'Methods of Knowledge'.) The actual comprehension of the object takes place in the intelligent light of consciousness. Thus, in Advaita, the human sensorium is not a tabula rasa, but comprises the mind and senses as the active instruments of cognition. It is the actually existing object that is perceived - just as it is - and the object is not a 'thing-in-itself' in an inconceivable 'outside world'. The schism between mind and body, and the schism between primary and secondary qualities are dissolved in the metaphysics of Advaita.

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Message 23930

From: "Chittaranjan Naik" <chittaranjan_naik@yahoo.com>
 Date: Tue Jul 27, 2004 4:42 am
 Subject: [The Real and the Unreal - Part VII - Ontology](#)

Om Gurubhyo Namah

DRAVYA (SUBSTANCE)

We have attempted so far to uncover the meaning of the word 'object' by extricating it from the predication of existence that is attributed to it, as well as by separating it from the different modes of cognition through which it is cognised (such as conception and perception). Now, an object that is seen or conceived as an existing thing is a substance, for substance (dravya) is that which is brought forth as an existing thing, wherein the prior notion of existence is already constituted in the thing cognised. Therefore, the question of whether a substance exists is, in Kantian language, an analytical judgement, because a substance is that which is known a priori as existing, and the judgement of its existence reduces to a tautology. But it is necessary to explicate the nature of substance in greater depth before the meaning of substance can shine.

Substance is revealed in the perception of an object as the existing

thing, but substance, qua substance, is never experienced by itself, for substance is immanent as the ground in the things experienced. What does ground here mean? Firstly, substance is the existential core of the thing. It is this existence that is expressed as substantiality. For we say that a horse seen in a dream is insubstantial while the horse seen in the world is substantial. That reality which is immanent in the perception of the latter horse is the existentiality of substance. Secondly, substance is a unity of existence. Substance is the unity of all sensual and non-sensual predicates that characterise a thing. We do not, in actual experience, perceive mere sensations as Hume presumed, but we perceive objects as possessing sensual attributes. We do not see complexes of colours and shapes floating about; rather we see an apple, a table, a tree, as possessing these qualities. There is no valid basis to argue, as some empiricists do, that sensations, or sense data, are agglomerated into objects through association. These empiricists may be held guilty of an 'empiricist violation' in professing that complexes are agglomerated into an object - because no such process of agglomeration is actually experienced. When I perceive a tree, I have no experience of a process whereby sensations are bundled into a unity - on the other hand the perception of the tree is immediate. The proposition of agglomeration is based on inductive reasoning from a premise not given in the empirical and the empiricists that postulate it seem to violate the very premise on which empiricism is constructed by putting forth an inference that supersedes an empirical fact.

Substance, as the ground, is the unity of all the attributes, and we may rightly say that attributes are coterminous with the substance. Shankara affirms this nature of substance while refuting the Vaisesikas: "But in the case under discussion, the substance itself being known as possessed of the respective attributes in such perceptions as, a 'white blanket', 'a red cow', 'a blue lotus', and so on, there can be no such perception of difference between a substance and a quality as between fire and smoke. Hence the quality is one with the substance." (BSB II, 2.3.17). Again, Shankara refutes the duality of substance and attributes by refuting the relationship of inherence: "Because this leads to an infinite regress on a parity of reasoning" for "inherence itself, which is absolutely different from the inhering things, should be connected with the inhering things through a separate relationship of the nature of inherence, since the fact of similarity of absolute difference exists here as well. And from this it follows that for those successive relationships, other relationships of inherence have to be imagined. In this way, the door is laid open for an infinite regress." (BSB II, 2.3.13)

Substance is therefore the existent, and attributes are the descriptions of that same existent. For it cannot be that the description of a thing becomes existentially other than the thing it describes. It is this truth that is imbedded into the structure of language wherein identity is predicated between the substance and attribute by its subject-predicate form: 'An apple is red'.

SUBSTANCE AS THE GROUND OF BEING

When existence is predicated of a thing, it is on account of the thing being seen as substantial i.e., as an existing thing. But that which is seen as existing at one time may be seen as non-existing at another time, for example, the horse seen in the dream. The predication of existence therefore seems to have no ground to stand on except for its manifestation as existent and non-existent. In this respect, the ontology of presence would appear to be false as an absolute nature of existence. Yet, substance as the existential core is not merely a form. Substance, qua substance, is bare. It cannot be said what substance is because the thing said of it becomes its description, and a predicate is not the substance in its capacity as pure substance. Substance, as abstracted from attributes, is indiscernible. Substance is noumenal. Every manifestation has an existential core, even the water in a mirage, because while the water is seen to be lacking in substantiality, the form itself called by the name 'mirage' is not seen as non-existent. The horse in a dream is seen as insubstantial, but the form itself called the 'insubstantial form of a horse' is not seen as non-existent. The mirage-water and the dream-horse are not like the son of a barren woman that can never be. They are beings, all of them - the unreal mirage-water, the unreal dream-horse, the real water, and the real horse. All these are in the noumenal ground of Existence. The noumenal ground is One and not many, because substance, qua substance, is bare and indiscernible. And there cannot be difference between indiscernible 'things' because difference is nothing but a discernible. Therefore substance is One and indivisible. Thus, there is nothing that is non-existent, but only Existence showing forth non-existence as a manifest feature of its multitudinous attributions, i.e., non-existence is a mode of Existence. In accordance with the unfolding of experience, things may exist or may not exist, but at a deeper level, they are all unreal as belonging merely to the chimera of substantiality as bestowed upon them by names and forms. And yet, at the deepest level, they are ultimately all real in accordance with their existential core being the noumenal ground of Existence, for it is not possible for a thing to not be. There is nothing but Existence, even in the unreal, it being only a mode of the Real. Now this same conclusion may be arrived at through the doctrine of vivartavada.

VIVARTAVADA AND ONTOLOGY

The world is said to be unreal because it exists in the middle but not in the beginning and the end. It is indeed not possible for non-existence to come into existence or for existence to become non-existence. Therefore, when things are seen to exist in the middle and not in the beginning and end, it can mean that things are non-existent because they were not there yesterday and will not be there tomorrow, or it can mean that it was always there, and that its coming into existence is merely a seeming, and that this seeming of things coming to be is false. The latter alone is the Advaitic truth, and the former is the falsity of superficiality that Advaita negates. The former is not the Advaitic truth because it is what Advaita negates, and Advaita cannot be assumed to negate an Advaitic truth!

What is it that is meant by creation and destruction? What indeed is change? The most fundamental ground of logic is that a thing is itself; a thing is identical to itself. This apparently obvious and seemingly trivial statement yet has something to say: that a thing cannot be other than itself. This compels us to conclude that a thing can never be other than itself even in change.

It is an empirical fact that we see an object changing. But an object changes without ceasing to be itself because otherwise it cannot be the SAME object that changes. This seems to lead to the question: what is an object that it is identical to itself even in displaying various and diverse forms and attributes. An object therefore cannot be a mere constitution of attributes, because if it were, the change in constitution would not be seen as the same object, unless there be a unifying unchanging principle identical to itself through the change. That is, if the being of the object is not other than the being of the variety of attributes that it may assume or manifest, wherein the attributes are each identical to themselves in form, but not separate in existence from the object, but existentially subsumed in the object. This 'being of the object' is substance as we have seen.

An object does not change. Let us take, as an example, a hypothetical circular coin made of wax. Its shape is a circle. The shape circle can never be another shape without ceasing to be itself. Now let us deform the coin till it assumes a square shape. We say that the object (coin) has changed from being circular to being square. When the shape of the coin changed, did the shape 'round' become the shape 'square'? That is never possible, for circle can never become square even as square can never become circle for it is the nature of a circle to be circle even as it is the nature of square to be square. The circle was not destroyed even as the square was not created. Thus, the attributes seen when the object changes, themselves do not change. Each of the attributes that the object displayed was not generated, but different attributes, each of which is unchanging, was displayed in the 'change' attributed to the object. Thus, the law of identity is not violated and yet change is possible as the showing forth of attributes that are pre-existent in the substantial ground. Change is the manifesting dynamism of things that are each unchanging. It is not an ontological 'it' that constitutes change, but the actualisation of 'its' manifest possibilities. Which dynamism is real, and is called 'Time' (Kala). Time is the bewitching power of Maya that drapes itself over eternally unchanging forms. She is Mahakali, the Great Night behind creation.

In truth, there is nothing born, nothing destroyed, for everything is eternal in the infinite nature of Brahman. But let us now hear Shankara speak, and I quote at length here because of the importance that this commentary bears to the understanding of Advaita:

---- Quote---- (Brahadaranyaka Upanishad, Chapter I, Section II)

Shankara: The effect too exists before it is produced.

Question: How?

Reply: Because its manifestation points out its pre-existence. Manifestation means coming within the range of perception. It is a common occurrence that a thing, a jar for instance, which was hidden by darkness or any other thing and comes within the range of perception when the obstruction is removed by the appearance of light or in some other way, does not preclude its previous existence. Similarly this universe too, we can understand, existed before its manifestation. For a jar that is non-existent is not perceived even when the sun rises.

Objection: No, it must be perceived, for you deny its previous non-existence. According to you, any effect, say a jar, is never non-existent. So it must be perceived when the sun rises. Its previous form, the lump of clay, is nowhere near, and obstructions like darkness are absent' so, being existent, it cannot but appear.

Reply: Not so, for obstruction is of two kinds. Every effect such as a jar has two kinds of obstruction. When it has become manifest from its component clay, darkness and the wall etc. are the obstructions; while before its manifestation from the clay the obstruction consists in particles of clay remaining as some other effect such as a lump. Therefore, the effect, the jar, although existent, is not perceived before its manifestation, as it is hidden. The terms and concepts 'destroyed', 'produced', 'existence' and 'non-existence' depend on this two-fold character of manifestation and disappearance.

Objection: This is incorrect, since the obstruction represented by particular forms such as the lump of the two halves of a jar are of a different nature. To be explicit: Such obstructions to the manifestation of a jar as darkness or the wall, we see, do not occupy the same space as a jar, but the lump or the two halves of a jar do. So your statement that the jar, although present in the form of the lump or the two halves, is not perceived because it is hidden, is wrong, for the nature of the obstruction in this case is different.

Reply: No, for we see that water mixed with milk occupies the same space as the milk which conceals it.

Objection: But since the component parts of a jar such as its two halves or pieces are included in the effect, the jar, they should not prove obstructions at all.

Reply: Not so, for being separated from the jar they are so many different effects, and can therefore serve as obstructions.

Objection: Then the effort should be directed solely to the removal of obstructions. That is to say, is, as you say, the effect, the jar for instance, is actually present in the state of the lump or the two halves, and is not perceived because of an obstruction, then one who wants the effect, the jar, should try to remove the obstruction, and not make a jar. But as a matter of fact, nobody does so. Therefore your statement is wrong.

Reply: No, for there is no hard and fast rule about it. It is not

always the case that a jar or any other effect manifests itself if only one tries to remove the obstruction; for when a jar, for instance, is covered with darkness etc., one tries to light a lamp.

Objection: That too is just for destroying the darkness. This effort to light a lamp is also for removing the darkness, which done, the jar is automatically perceived. Nothing is added to the jar.

Reply: No, for the jar is perceived as covered with light when the lamp is lighted. Not so before lighting of the lamp. Hence this was not simply for removing the darkness, but for covering the jar with light, for it is since perceived as covered with light. Sometimes the effort is directed to the removal of the obstruction, as when the wall, for instance, is pulled down. Therefore it cannot be laid down as a rule that one who wants the manifestation of something must simply try to remove the obstruction. Besides, one should take such steps as will cause the manifestation for the efficacy of the established practice regarding it. We have already said that an effect which is patent in the cause serves as an obstruction to the manifestation of the other effects. So if one tries only to destroy the previously manifested effect such as the lump or the two halves which stand between it and the jar, one may also have such as the potsherds or tiny pieces. These too will conceal the jar and prevent its being perceived; so a fresh attempt will be needed. Hence the necessary operation of the factors of an action has its utility for one who wants the manifestation of a jar or any other thing. Therefore the effect exists even before its manifestation.

From our divergent notions of the past and future also we infer this. Our notions of a jar that was and one that is yet to be cannot, like the notion of the present jar, be entirely independent of objects. For one who desires to have a jar not yet made sets oneself to work for it. We do not see people strive for things which they know to be non-existent. Another reason for the pre-existence of the effect is the fact that the knowledge (of God) and the Yogins concerning the past and future jar is infallible. Were the future jar non-existent, His (and their) perception of it would prove false. Nor is this perception a mere figure of speech. As to the reasons for inferring the existence of the jar, we have already stated them.

Another reason for it is that the opposite view involves a self-contradiction. If on seeing a potter, for instance, at work on the production of a jar one is certain in view of the evidence that the jar will come into existence, then it would be a contradiction in terms to say that the jar is non-existent at the very time with which it is said it will come into relation. For to say that the jar that will be is non-existent, is the same thing as to say that it will not be. It would be like saying, 'This jar does not exist.' If, however, you say that before its manifestation the jar is non-existent, meaning thereby that it does not exist exactly as the potter, for instance, exists while he is at work on its production, then there is no dispute between us.

Objection: Why?

Reply: Because the jar exists in its own future form. It should be

borne in mind that the present existence of the lump or the two halves is not the same as that of the jar. Nor is the future existence of the jar the same as theirs. Therefore you do not contradict us when you say that the jar is non-existent before its manifestation while the activity of the potter, for instance, is going on. You will be doing this if you deny to the jar its own future form as an effect. But you do not deny that. Nor do all things undergoing modification have an identical form of existence in the present or in the future.

Moreover, of the four kinds of negation relating to, say, a jar, we observe that what is called mutual exclusion is other than the jar: The negation of a jar is cloth or some other thing, not the jar itself. But the cloth, although it is the negation of the jar, is not a non-entity, but a positive entity. Similarly, the previous non-existence, the non-existence due to destruction, and absolute negation must also be other than the jar: for they are spoken of in terms of it, as in the case of the mutual exclusion relating to it. And these negations must also (like the cloth, for instance) be positive entities. Hence the previous non-existence of a jar does not mean that it does not at all exist as an entity before it comes into being. If however, you say that the previous non-existence of a jar means the jar itself, then to mention it as being 'of a jar' (instead of 'the jar itself') is an incongruity. If you use it merely as a fancy, as in the expression, 'The body of the stone roller', then the phrase 'the previous non-existence of a jar' would only mean that it is the imaginary non-existence that is mentioned in terms of the jar, and not the jar itself. If, on the other hand, you say that the negation of a jar is something other than it, we have already answered the point. Moreover, if the jar before its manifestation be an absolute nonentity like the proverbial horns of a hare, it cannot be connected either with its cause or with existence (as the logicians hold), for connection requires two positive entities.

Objection: It is all right with things that are inseparable.

Reply: No, for we cannot conceive of an inseparable connection between an existent and a non-existent thing. Separable or inseparable connection is possible between two positive entities only, not between an entity and a nonentity, nor between two nonentities. Therefore we conclude that the effect does exist before it is manifested.

---- Unquote----

THE REAL AND UNREAL IN ADVAITA

There is nothing that is unreal. The absolutely unreal is only the 'son of a barren woman' ? a purely meaningless term. The real is the opposite of the unreal ? and hence it is all that has meaning. It is all that is seen and conceived. This is in perfect harmony with Sri Shankaracharya's commentary on the Brahadaranyaka Upanishad.

The second meaning of unreal - which arises within this overarching reality of the All - is the mistaking of one thing for another. It

pertains to the lack of genuineness of a thing that is seen. It is that unreality whereby what is seen is not what is genuinely there. We must now reassess the meaning of superimposition in the light of these meanings.

The theory of adhyasa arises in the context of the second meaning of unreality. The articulation of unreality in the Preamble is to be seen in the light of this meaning of reality. Now, the question that arises in the context of the 'reality of all' is: Why does one thing get mistaken for another? Why does the snake ever get mistaken for a rope? It is true that the rope lies concealed in the dim light of dusk; it is also true that the coil has a likeness to a snake; yet, why does the mind does not rest in suspension when it vaguely sees a coil in the dim light of dusk? Why can't it contain itself in the admission that the object is not known rather than rush to the conclusion that it is a snake? The answer lies in the manner in which we cognise things. We do not perceive mere attributes, but we perceive attributes as belonging to a thing. Substance is the 'thing' that is perceived, and the attributes are perceived as being 'of the thing' that is perceived. Cognition never sees only attributes. The mind and the senses both partake in the cognition and while the senses grasp the sensible attributes, the mind grasps the thing in which the attributes inhere. Adhyasa takes place when there is concealment - when the attributes are seen but the thing of which they are the attributes are not seen. Since the mind always sees attributes as 'of a thing', it rushes out to grasp the thing without the ascertainment of its truth and THAT IS THE SUPERIMPOSITION that is spoken about in Advaita.

Vyavaharika is the state when the substratum of the world lies concealed. The sentient Substance of the world is concealed and the mind rushes out to grasp the insentient prakriti as the substance. The mistaken existential core that it grasps is the falseness of jada when in reality the existential core is the sentient Brahman. This is the 'world' that is superimposed on Brahman, and which Advaita says is false. Advaita does not say that superimposition is the nature of the world, but merely points out that adhyasa is a natural feature that characterises people in this world. It is what is to be removed through adhyaropa apavada. The world as adhyasa is what Advaita rejects as false. The world as ensouled by Brahman is the reality of Advaita. The truth of Advaita is the continuum of Brahman. This whole universe abides with Brahman as its Heart. There is no superimposition in the continuum ? Brahman is here All.

"He who inhabits the earth, yet is within the earth, whom the earth does not know, whose body the earth is, and who controls the earth from within ? He is your Self, the Inner Controller, the Immortal."
(Br.Up.III.vii.3)

There is now the final question that we need to answer now: If the entire universe is real then how can it be said that Brahman is nirguna and formless? We shall try and attempt this topic in the next part. Meanwhile we take leave of this long post with the words of the Goddess in Parmenides' 'Way of Truth':

"Welcome, O youth, that comest to my abode on the car that bears thee, tended by immortal charioteers. It is no ill chance, but right and justice, that has sent thee forth to travel on this way. Far indeed does it lie from the beaten track of men. Meet it is that thou shouldst learn all things, as well the unshaken heart of well-rounded truth, as the opinions of mortals in which is no true belief at all. Yet none the less shalt thou learn these things also ? how, passing right through all things, one should judge the things that seem to be." (Fr.1)

"Come now, and I will tell thee ? and do thou hearken and carry my word away ? the only ways of enquiry that exists for thinking: the one way, that it is and cannot not-be, is the path of Persuasion, for it attends upon Truth; the other, that it is-not and needs must not-be, that I tell thee is a path altogether unthinkable. For thou couldst not know that which is-not nor utter it; for the same thing exists for thinking and for being." (Fr.2)

"One way only is left to be spoken of, that it is; and on this way are full many signs that what is is uncreated and imperishable, for it is entire, immovable and without end. It was not in the past, nor shall it be, since it is now, all at once, one, continuous; for what creation wilt thou seek for it?" (Fr.8)

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Message 24016

From: "Chittaranjan Naik" <chittaranjan_naik@yahoo.com>
 Date: Mon Aug 2, 2004 2:24 pm
 Subject: [The Real and the Unreal - Part VIII - Advaita](#)

Om Gurubhyo Namah

AT THE GATES OF MYSTERY

"Turiya is not that which is conscious of the inner world, not that which is conscious of the outer world, not that which is conscious of both, not that which is a mass of consciousness. It is not simple consciousness nor is It unconsciousness. It is unperceived, unrelated, incomprehensible, uninferable, unthinkable, and indescribable. The essence of the Consciousness manifesting as the self, It is the cessation of all phenomena. It is all peace, all bliss, and non-dual. This is what is to be known as the fourth (Turiya). This is Atman, and this has to be realised." (Ma.Up.7)

The problem of difference is the final frontier of philosophy. In confronting it, we are at the limits of logic, which is the same as the limits of language, for the word 'logic' is derived from the word 'logos'. When it is said that difference is false on account of it being by name only, it is surely because logos cannot point deeper than itself to the subterranean waters from which it springs forth as the lush fountain of Reality. And yet, names and forms are not other than Reality itself, for they are of the same living waters. In contemplating the nature of logos, we are verily knocking on the

doors of mystery ? for beyond lies Sacred Space.

THE PROBLEM OF DIFFERENCE

It is said that Brahman is the material cause of the universe just as the yarn is the material cause of the cloth. It is said furthermore that as yarn alone it is true, and as the cloth, being only a name for a peculiar condition of the cause, it is false. But the mere fact that the cloth is only a name for a peculiar condition (vishesha) of the causal substratum (yarn) does not seem to be an adequate reason for its falsity because if the cloth is only a name for the vishesha of the substratum, then such is its very nature - to be thus by name - and it does not behove us to deny a thing's own nature. For, a thing is what it is by its own nature.

The cloth exists in the yarn. Then how indeed does the cloth become false when the yarn is true, for if the yarn is true, the cloth as a condition of the yarn cannot be untrue. I feel that this question should not be dismissed under the mere assertion that whatever pertains to names and forms is false because such an assertion, merely on the strength of the assertion, would amount to a dogma. For it would be a complete surrendering of Advaita to the void of nihilism to say that the world is absolutely negated ? because such a thesis makes the comprehending intellect converge to Brahman as the limit of nothingness rather than expand the intellect unto its dissolution in the expansive Heart that sees Brahman as beyond all limits. That is the identity of the Heart (self) with Brahman.

Difference is bewildering. It is seen, and yet it is not logically sustainable, whether it be the difference of the effect in the material cause, or it be the distinctiveness of attributes in substance. For if difference were true, it would need a relation to bind the distinctively different 'things' into the identity that is seen. But such a relation is not sustainable, because, like the relation of inherence, it would lead to an infinite regress. Neither can identity-cum-difference be asserted because that would prevent the identity from being seen, for the difference being real, it would persist and prevent the perception that 'the cloth is nothing but yarn' from taking place. The Acharya has thus refuted the doctrine of identity-cum-difference in his debate with Bhatta Bhaskara.

But there is one unique conception of 'difference' which says that it is 'the difference that can be spoken about'. Now, we may rightly ask: Does this difference belong to the thing itself, or does it arise in speaking about it? If it is the former, then one will have to admit a duality between substance and attributes and this would lead to the position of the Nyayaikas necessitating a relation for binding them together, and like in the case of inherence, that would lead to an infinite regress. Therefore difference cannot belong to the thing itself. If it is the latter, then it would mean that difference does not belong to the innate nature of the thing, but has its origin in the speaker's ignorance in so far as he speaks about a thing attributing to it what does not belong to it. Therefore, difference is not justifiable. It has been said by some others that attributes have some kind of 'own' existence because it is possible

for us to think of them separately from the substance. But this argument is not valid, for the mental cogitation of an attribute is not the same as the perception of an existing thing with attributes ? the objects of cognition in the two cognitions are not the same. In spite of this, if it is said that the attributes in a substance have some kind of 'own' existence even when the substance is cognised, then that would make the description of a thing not itself i.e., the description would be another existent and not the description of the first existent. And this would make it impossible for anything to be ever described, for any description that is predicated of a thing would be an attribute which would have its 'own' existence, and these attributes in turn cannot be said to be what they are because that would need their attribution which would manifest other 'own' existences, and so on ad infinitum. Therefore, difference is false.

Difference is false, yet it is seen. Therefore difference is an admixture of truth and falsity - and indeed it is not possible to speak of the true nature of that which partakes of falsity. It is therefore called 'anirvacaniya'. The confusion between 'sameness' and 'difference' is the primordial confusion that was brewed in the cauldron of creation, nay even earlier than creation, in the incomprehensible dimness of a beginningless past.

Difference is not logical. Yet the heart does not accept what the intellect determines ? because difference IS SEEN. We must now approach difference from another direction.

WORDS AND DENOTATION

According to Advaita, a word does not point to the particular; it points only to the universal. The thesis that words point to particulars (or individuals) is not logical because it would then be impossible to recognise two individuals as belonging to a species for there would be nothing to bind them into a commonality. Therefore, a word necessarily points to the universal. And it is thus that an object is the same object, and is referable by the same name even when it 'changes'. Alice is the same Alice when she is young and when she is old because of the same Alicehood. While discussing the eternity of words, Shankara says:

"And words are connected with the general characteristics (i.e., genus) and not with the individuals, for the individuals are infinite, and it is impossible to comprehend the relation of a word (with all of them). Thus, even though the individuals are born, the distinctive general characteristics remain constant, so that this creates no difficulty with the eternity of the words cow, etc." (BSB, I,III,8.27).

The Nyayayikas and the Grammarians, as also other schools of Vedanta, hold that words point to both the universal and the particular. Advaita refutes this by saying that if this were the case, then it would occasion a new name every time a different attribute is seen, as the combination (C) of universal and particular (U+P) would then have changed and it would be a new combination requiring a new name. Thus an infinite number of names would need to be applied to the

object, for no two instances of the object ever show the same particular attributes; there is always a difference in an object as it shows itself in the field of experience. Thus it is not reasonable to posit that words point to the combination of universals and particulars. But there is an old Nyaya objection to the Advaitic theory, and we must consider this in so far as this objection seems to invoke an important element related to ontology. Gautama, the founder of Nyaya, says this about the Advaita doctrine of words pointing to universals: "This is not right because the manifestation of a universal depends on individuality and configuration" (NS,II,2.67). Vatsayana, the commentator, expands on this objection: "There can be no apprehension of a universal by itself unless the individuality and configuration have been apprehended. Hence the universal cannot be regarded as constituting the denotation of a word."

The Advaita response to this objection would be that there is no difference between the samanya and vishesha, because if they were different and disparate, then a vishesha could never belong to a species, because the samanya could never come into conjunction with the vishesha. And the theory that the relation of inherence binds the two has already been discounted on the ground that it leads to an infinite regress. Again, if the truth were to be found in individuality, the shruti would not have proscribed the senses, and recommended a turning away from the objects of sense, for it would be a contradiction to say that we should find truth by turning away from where it lies. And the shruti definitely aims to lead one away from the senses:

"Svayambhuh, the great Lord, injured the outgoing senses. Therefore, one sees the outer things and not the inner Self. A rare discriminating man, turns his eye away and sees the indwelling Self." (Ka.Up. II,i,1)

"When a man, renouncing all thoughts, is not attached to sense-objects and actions, then he is said to have attained to Yoga." (Bh.G. VI,4).

And we find the same theme in Plato: "Philosophy takes over the soul in this condition and by gentle persuasion tries to set it free. She points out that observation by means of the eyes and ears and all the other senses is entirely deceptive, and she urges the soul to refrain from using them unless it is necessary to do so, and encourages it to collect and concentrate itself by itself, trusting nothing but its own independent judgement upon objects considered in themselves, and attributing no truth to anything which it views indirectly as being subject to variation, because such objects are sensible and visible but what the soul itself sees is intelligible and invisible." (Phaedo).

Thus, according to the shruti, the truth is revealed when we withdraw from the world of sense objects. And it cannot be said here that the shruti is not talking about the truth of the world, for the aim of the shruti is to lead to that Truth by knowing which All this is known. So, the question is, how can all this be known by turning away from all this? In other words, how is it that by knowing the Self

everything comes to be known? We have seen how Advaita holds the world to be co-extensive with the Self, and yet the preamble to the bhashya begins by pointing out the disparity between the subject and object "which are by nature as contradictory as light and darkness" and thus "cannot logically have any identity".

Where does the day meet the night?

SAMANYA AND VISHESHA

"What is night to all beings, therein the self-controlled one is awake. Where all beings are awake, that is the night of the sage who sees." (Bh.G. II,69)

Words denote only universals, but what is a universal? Universals cannot be other than these objects themselves for otherwise words cannot point to objects. Yet in some sense they are not objects, because if they were, there would be no need for something called universals. But universals necessarily exist, because without universals there cannot be recognition, and it follows that in the ultimate analysis there cannot be anything discernable without universals. For the distinguishing characteristic by which anything or any attribute of a thing is cognised as 'this' cannot take place unless the 'thisness' can be denoted i.e., recognised.

A universal cannot be thought, because the very act of thinking particularises the universal, and a universal is not a particular. Therefore, the cognition of a universal brings forth a contradiction in so far as cognition particularises the object to which it is directed. It is the failure to see the nature of universals as the unthinkable, and that thinking is always particularised, that has caused much befuddlement in modern philosophy. Yet, the universal is cognised in the object because otherwise the object cannot be cognised as 'this', the object. And this brings us to the mystical nature of Vak.

A universal, in its capacity as universal, has no form ? it is not spatio-temporal - and yet it is the very essence of form for without it there can be no form. For without 'cowness', there can be no cow. And it cannot be that there are some unspecified things called particulars into which universals enter or 'participate', for there can be nothing except amorphousness without universals; for what is it that can be described as the particular without any feature (for feature would need the universals of the feature) or form? Universals therefore do not participate in things; they are the things themselves and the term 'participate' is to be understood as a metaphorical use of the word.

The Brhadaranyaka Upanishad, Chapter I, Section VI, starts with the following words: "This universe indeed consists of three things: name, form and action. Of those names, speech is the Uktha (source), for all names spring from it. It is their Saman, for it is common to all names. It is their Brahman (Self), for it sustains all names." (Br.Up. I, VI,1)

And commenting on it, Shankara mentions about universals and particulars in the context of names: "For all names, the differentiations such as Yajnadatta and Devadatta springs from it, this generality of names, like particles of salt from the salt rock. And an effect is not separate from its cause. Also particulars are included in the general. How does the relation of general and particulars apply here? It, sound in general, is their Saman, so called because of sameness. For it is common to all names, which are its own particular forms. Another reason is that the particular names, being derived from it, are not different from it. And we see that something that is derived from another is not different from it, as a jar, for instance, is not different from clay."

A universal is that which makes a thing what it is. And it is not possible for the particular to be more than the universal because that would mean that the universal is not that which makes a thing a thing (as there would be something more than the universal needed to make it the thing). Thus there is no difference between the universal and the particular in so far as the capacity of a universal to be a particular is concerned. That is, the particular is nothing more than the universal. But if we look at it the other way round ? a particular is not the universal itself because the particular, say a particular cow, can be absent in another instance where the universal is seen i.e., in another cow. Thus, universals are present wherever there is a particular, but the particular need not be present wherever there is the universal. But a particular is wholly nothing but a universal. Thus what emerges here is that particulars, in being nothing but universals, and not containing them, are nothing but a partial vision of the universal. The universal is the complete infinitude of attributes of the thing, of say 'cow', and it pervades all particulars; thus, the particular is nothing but that same universal showing forth as particular instances in its manifestations. And a universal is so capable of manifesting simultaneously in all the instances of its particulars because the universal has no form and is not spatio-temporal. Words denote universals. Therefore, the world of forms that is denoted by names is the sameness of universals ? not contained by form and limitations. It is formless, so to speak, and is the infinite repository of all the forms that it characterises. The universal is the formless whole of all its particulars, the very knowledge of things, as it were, in the omniscience of Brahman. The formless Brahman therefore contains the infinitude of all that was, is, and will be. It is, in its immutable formlessness, the alpha and the omega, complete, purnam, perfect, uncontained and infinite. It is the intelligence that carries infinite universals in its ineffable formlessness and undisturbed sameness. It is Akshara, the immutable.

"O Gargi, the knowers of Brahman say this Immutable is That. It is neither gross nor minute, neither short nor long, neither red nor oiliness, neither shadow nor darkness, neither air nor ether, unattached, neither savour nor odour, without eyes or ears, without the vocal organ or mind, without the vital force or mouth, not a measure, and without interior or exterior. It does not eat anything, nor is It eaten by anybody."

And yet, Brahman is all this too.

"He is the sun dwelling in the bright heavens. He is the air dwelling in the mid-region. He is the fire dwelling on earth. He is the guest dwelling in the house. He dwells in men, in the gods, in truth, in the sky. He is born in the water, on earth, in the sacrifice, on the mountains. He is the True and the Great." (Ka.Up.II.ii.2).

"What indeed is here, is there; what is there, is here likewise. He who sees as though there is difference here, goes from death to death. By the mind alone is Brahman to be realised; then one does not see in It any multiplicity whatsoever. He goes from death to death who sees multiplicity in It. This, verily, is That." (Ka.Up.II.i.10-11).

AVACCHEDAVADA

The world of sense is the world of 'concrete' particulars. It is the world of the limitedness of the unlimited in the sphere of actuality, the limited vision of the Great Being. This is avachedavada, the doctrine of the falseness of the seeming limitedness of the unlimited. What is seen is the limited, the particular, and this limitedness is false as being the true thing, for the thing is the universal that is unlimited by particularisation. Therefore, the negation that the entire world is false is a negation of the limited as the true form of the unlimited? it is abhasavada - and yet, in a perfectly logical manner, there is nothing excluded from Reality in the negation. Reality is full. It is purnam. Does not the Acharya say this in the bhashya on the Mandukya Upanishad?

Mandukya Upanishad (I,1): "This letter that is Om is all this. Of this a clear exposition is: All that is past, present, and future is verily Om. And whatever is beyond the three periods of time is also verily Om."

Shankara explains: "The very same thing that was presented through an emphasis on the word is being indicated over again with a stress on the thing signified, so that the unity of the name and the nameable may be comprehended. For otherwise, the nameable having been grasped as dependent on the name, the doubt may crop up that the identity of the nameable with the name is to be taken in a secondary sense. And the necessity of understanding their identity arises from the fact that (once the identity is established), one can by a single effort eliminate both the name and the nameable to realise Brahman that is different from both."

Now how is Brahman different than both? Shankara explains in the commentary to the next verse:

Mandukya Upanishad (I,2): "All this is surely Brahman. This Self is Brahman. The Self, such as it is, is possessed of four quarters."

Shankara's commentary: "In the text, 'This Self is Brahman', this very Self that will be presented as divided into four parts is being pointed out as one's innermost Self by the gesture of hand. Sah ayam atma, that Self that is such, that is signified by Om and exists as

the higher and lower Brahman, is catuspat, possessed of four quarters, like a coin (karsapana), but not like a cow, As the fourth (Turiya) is realised by successively merging the earlier three, starting from Visva, the word pada (in the case of Visva, Taijasa, Prajna) is derived in the instrumental sense of that by which something is attained, whereas in the case of Turiya the word pada is derived in the objective sense of that which is achieved".

It is significant that Visva, Taijasa and Prajna are successively merged into Turiya. Thus the elimination of both name and form that is different than Brahman, is the limitedness of the names and forms of the world of sense, and what is attained is the unlimited world in which all the three starting with Visva gain identity. And it is this meaning that is sought to be explained by saying "possessed of four quarters like a coin, but not like a cow." Swami Ghambirananda explains beautifully in the footnote: "The word pada may mean either foot or quarter. The second meaning applies here. A karsapana is divisible into sixteen smaller units. Four of these form a quarter. The smaller units lose their individuality in the bigger ones, as it were. So Visva merges in Taijasa, Taijasa in Prajna, and Prajna in Turiya."

Brahman being different from both name and form is Its transcendence from them. The word 'transcend' does not mean a spatial or temporal separation, but a distinction of the subsuming principle from that which it subsumes. There is nothing that is not there in the Great Formless Being. There is nothing negated here, not a blade of grass, not a speck of light nor a mite in the moonbeam, not a thought nor even the dark abyss of the great void. What is experienced as nirguna Brahman is also gunapoorna.

"As a lump of salt dropped into water becomes dissolved in water and cannot be taken out again, but wherever we taste it tastes salt, even so, my dear, this great, endless, Infinite Reality is Pure Intelligence alone. This self comes out as a separate entity from these elements and with their destruction the separateness is also destroyed. After attaining oneness it has no more consciousness. This is what I say, my dear. So said Yajnavalkya." (Br.Up.II.iv.12)

"Then Maitreyi said: `Just here you have bewildered me, venerable Sir, by saying that after attaining (oneness) the self has no more consciousness'. Yajnavalkya replied: Certainly I am not saying anything bewildering, my dear, this is enough for knowledge, O Maitreyi.'" (Br.Up.II.iv.13)

"Because when there is duality, as it were, then one smells another, one sees another, one hears another, one speaks to another, one thinks of another, one knows another. But when to the knower of Brahman everything has become the Self, then what should one smell and through what, what should one see and through what, what should one hear and through what, what should one speak and through what, what should one think and through what, what should one know and through what? Through what indeed should one know That owing to which all this is known ? through what, O Maitreyi, should one know the knower?" (Br.Up.III.iv.14).

THE MYSTICAL REALITY

The nature of Reality is mystical. The magic of words plays upon the screen of non-duality and hold us enrapt to the siren songs of plurality. A word is essentially one with Brahman. That is para vak. It springs from Its living waters into the formless embryo ? the pashyanti ? the causal seed that is ready to sprout into manifest form. In its middling state - madhyama ? it presents the forms in ideality before it springs into the luxuriance of the created world as vaikhari.

These are the four stages of Vak ? para, pashyanti, madhyama and vaikhari. The mystery is that there is no difference in what it points to in all these stages, because if there were a difference, the word would not point to the same object in all its stages. We may give a name to this paradoxical nature of words and feel satisfied that we have found the truth, but the moment we attempt to determine its truth, it negates itself in the very determination. Difference arises through Vak, and yet there is no difference in its forms. Its difference is the mystery of its own 'difference', as it were, and the world springs into being in the womb of this great mystery. It is the heart of the mystical - the inexplicable power of the Lord to make many out of One while still remaining immutably One. That is His Maya. It needs the eye of a mystic to see the One in All and the All in One. It is the sahaja samadhi spoken of in Vedanta.

With regards,
Chittaranjan

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Message 24050

From: "Chittaranjan Naik" <chittaranjan_naik@yahoo.com>
Date: Tue Aug 3, 2004 3:01 pm
Subject: [The Real and the Unreal - Part IX - Ishwara](#)

Om Gurubhyo Namah

THE RG-VEDA HYMN OF CREATION

Existence then was not, nor its opposite,
Nor earth, nor heaven's blue vault, nor aught beyond,
The subtle elements that are the veil
Of this so insubstantial world, where then
Might they find out a place? by whom be known?
The deep abyss of waters ? where was that?
Death was not yet, nor deathlessness; the day
Was night, night day, for neither day nor night
Had come to birth. Then THAT, the primal font
Of life ? breathless ? to its own primordial power joined -
Brooded eternally. Itself beside,
In the wide universe there nothing was,
In the beginning gloom ? gloom hidden in gloom!

From its cause undistinguished stood the world:
 But lo, thereafter, from its darkling state ?
 Yet undistinguished from its cause ? it rose,
 By the pure will of THAT made manifest.
 Whence came this will? From out a seed it came
 Asleep within the heart of THAT ? the seed
 Of vanished worlds that have in order wheeled
 Their silent courses of eternity:
 The manifest in the unmanifest they found ?
 The sages, searching deep within themselves?
 Ah, what are words, and what all mortal thought!
 Who is there truly knows, and who can say,
 Whence this unfathomed world, and from what cause?
 Nay, even the gods were not! Who then can know?
 The source from which this universe hath sprung,
 That source, and that alone, which bears it up ?
 None else: THAT, THAT alone, Lord of the worlds,
 In its own self contained immaculate
 As are the heavens, above, THAT alone knows
 The truth of what Itself hath made ? none else!

ISHWARA, THE EFFICIENT CAUSE

The shruti assigns the origin of the universe to Ishwara.

"Brahman is omniscient because of Its being the source of the scriptures". (BSB, I,I,3).

Shankara explains: "Brahman is the yoni (i.e., the material and efficient cause) of great scriptures like the Rg-Veda etc. which are supplemented by other scriptures that are themselves sources of knowledge, which reveal all things like a lamp, and which are almost omniscient. For scriptures like the Rg-Veda, possessed of all good qualities as they are, cannot possibly emerge from any source other than an all-knowing One. For it is a well recognised fact in the world that the person from whom the scriptures dealing with multifarious subjects emerge is more well informed than the scriptures themselves; for instance grammar etc., emanating from Panini and others, represent merely a part of the subject known to them. It goes without saying that, that great Being has absolute omniscience and omnipotence, since from Him emerge the Rg-Veda etc. ? divided into many branches and constituting the source of classification into gods, animals, men, castes, stages of life, etc., and the source of all kinds of knowledge ? and since the emergence of these Vedas from that Being occurs as though in sport and without any effort like the breath of a man, as is stated in the Vedic text, 'Those that are called the Rg-Veda, are but the exhalation of this great Being'."

Again Shankara says: "The Upanishads teach thus: Starting with the text, 'O amiable one, before its creation, this universe was but Existence, one without a second.' (Ch.VI,ii,1), it is stated, 'That (Brahman) visualised, 'I shall become many, I shall be born' That Brahman created fire' (Ch.VI,ii,3). In that text, the universe, manifested as names and forms and referable by the word 'it', is

first ascertained to be identified with Existence 'before its creation'; then the text shows that the creatorship of fire etc., that follows the visualisation of future creation, belongs to that very entity, called Existence, which is under consideration. So also elsewhere: 'In the beginning this universe was but the one Self alone; there was nothing else whatsoever that winked. He visualised, 'Let me create the worlds'. (Ai.I,1,1-2)."

ON THE MEANINGFUL USE OF WORDS

There is in science a principle called the law of entropy that states that the world continuously tends to chaos and disorder. Evidence of this universal tendency towards disintegration is everywhere - cars rust, stereos break down, people become old, mountains erode, and buildings collapse. If one were to place the parts of a clock in a box and shake it, the probability of the pieces falling together as a working clock is so negligible that it can be discounted. Yet, if we open our eyes and look around us, we see that the principle of entropy is being violated with such impunity that it is astonishing that we don't see it. The evidence is all around us - ordered structures of beehives come into existence, honey is gathered from diverse flowers and accumulated, anthills come into being, seeds germinate and grow into beautiful trees, cars get made, particles of sand turn into microchips, aeroplanes fly and reach their intended destinations, activities coalesce into coherent organisations, human beings are born and grow - the list is endless. The loci of these tendencies to order are living beings - wherever we find life there we find that the most wondrous order of things are brought forth from the chaotic dispersions of inanimate matter. The element that makes this possible is life, for intelligence is the mark of life.

If one who wanted to make a clock were to sit shaking the pieces in a box hoping that they would become a clock, we would not call such a person intelligent. On the contrary, it would be quite fitting with his actions to call him 'ignorant'. It is possible to create things only by discerning the operative causes and acting accordingly. In Shankara's words: "We have already said that an effect which is patent in the cause serves as an obstruction to the manifestation of the other effects. So if one tries only to destroy the previously manifested effect such as the lump or the two halves which stand between it and the jar, one may also have such effects as the potsherds or tiny pieces. These too will conceal the jar and prevent its being perceived; so a fresh attempt will be needed. Hence the necessary operation of the factors of an action has its utility for one who wants the manifestation of a jar or any other thing." (Br.Up.I.2)

Discussions on efficient causality have often been obscured because words are used in manners that violate their meanings. Thus it is said that omniscience is to be understood as being contained in the manifestations of avidya. It is not reasonable to speak of omniscience as being a manifestation of avidya, for that is a mere application of the word 'avidya' without a consideration of its meaning. It is as if one who, on seeing a remarkably beautiful woman, were to state that that beauty is contained in, or is a manifestation

of, ugliness. Apart from the wounded reaction that this might draw from the charming woman in question, it would only go to show that the person who speaks thus is not speaking meaningfully. Words must be employed in consideration of their meanings; otherwise one may as well call a cow a horse and a horse a door and say that flying is a kind of walking, and the only thing that this manner of speaking would achieve is universal confusion.

One does not attain to the desired result through avidya, for by definition avidya is lack of knowledge. Driving a car without knowing how to drive would most likely result in a consequence that is graver than the intended one of reaching the destination. Attempting to cook without knowledge of cooking may result in something not quite palatable to the senses. But when these same tasks are undertaken with knowledge, they lead to the intended goals even if the law of probability does not give them much of a chance. Intelligent goal-oriented actions are disruptive of the closed systems within which the principle of entropy operates. Moreover, the law of probability would completely rule out the possibility of repeatability. It may happen by a rare chance that one clock may somehow fall into place and get assembled, but the chances of clocks getting repeatedly assembled with clocklike regularity would need an extraneous factor for sure. That extraneous factor is the directedness to the result that is provided by intelligence. Order and regularity can only be brought about by vidya. The word vidya has all these connotations of intelligence, design and goal-orientation, etc. Avidya on the other hand has neither intelligence nor directedness. Avidya is darkness, sloth, sleep, inertia. Avidya may contribute to the rise of chaos, but would certainly not account for the regularity that we see in the world. Therefore, it is Intelligence rather than avidya that is the efficient cause of the universe. And Maya is to be understood as the power through which Brahman brings forth this universe. Maya is not avidya. The efficient cause of the universe is the Intelligent Brahman and Brahman only.

MAYA AND AVIDYA

The confusion between avidya and Maya arises from a misinterpretation of the bhashya, wherein it is stated that the omniscience and omnipotence of God are contingent upon the nescience of the jiva. How is this statement to be interpreted? The word 'contingent' here implies a condition upon which something else happens. Avidya is the condition and what happens is the response of Reality to that condition. And that response springs by its innate power given the contingency of avidya and the accumulations of karma caused by avidya. Just as in the Yoga Sutra it is mentioned:

"Good and bad deeds are not the direct causes in transformations, but they act as breakers of obstacles to nature, as a farmer breaks the obstacles to the course of water, which then runs down by its own nature." (YS,IV,3).

Similarly avidya is not the cause, but is the contingent factor upon which the very nature of Brahman 'acts'. And it is because Brahman acts by His nature that Brahman is actionless in His actions, because

that action is not through the sense of agency but by His own immovable nature, for His nature is unmoved even by the greatest of deeds and is hence truly omnipotent. He does the greatest of deeds with the greatest of ease ? without the least affection to His being. That is His aishwarya - His controllership. Therefore He is called Ishwara, for Ishwara is the repository of aishwarya.

ISHWARA AND MAYA

Ishwara is not a product of Maya. Maya is Ishwara's incomprehensible power of creation. There is no avidya in Ishwara.

The seeing of the Seer is not avidya. It is the very nature of Brahman. It is the eternal and unbroken seeing of Brahman: "For when it appears that it does not see, it is seeing even though it appears it is not seeing; for there is no cessation of the seeing of the seer, but there is no second thing apart from it that it can see." (Br.Up. IV,III,23).

Shankara says in the bhashya (BSB,I,v,5): "For like the effulgence of the sun, Brahman has eternal consciousness by Its very nature, so that It has no dependence on the means of knowledge. Moreover, in the case of the transmigrating soul, subject to ignorance, the rise of knowledge depends on body etc., but not so in the case of God whose knowledge is free from obstacles. And thus it is that the following two mantras show how God is not dependent on body etc., and how His knowledge has no covering: 'He has no body and no organ; none is seen to be either equal or superior to Him. The Vedas speak of His diverse supreme powers as also of His spontaneous action that is accomplished by His vigour arising from knowledge.' (Sv.VI.8)." And the next sutra reinforces this by stating that this eternal seeing is not spoken in a secondary sense.

Now, the capacity by which the 'created' universe is brought forth into the luminosity of seeing is not avidya. For avidya is nescience which means sloth, or sleep, or inertia. Inertia cannot bring forth; it can only mask and hide. That is the meaning of avidya. The capacity to bring forth has to be the capacity to illuminate to the senses ? it has to be a power of projection. Its name must derive from the etymological root that evokes the meaning of projection. That word is vikshepa. And the power by which it brings forth is vikshepa shakti.

What is brought forth to be illumined to the senses also hides what is not illumined, in so far as it is not so illumined. Particularization hides the infinitude of the universal. That showing forth of a particular also conceals the universality, and that concealment is a concomitant of vikshepa. It is its avarana shakti. It is the obverse side of vikshepa.

The knowing eye ? the third eye ? is never befooled by avarana. It knows the infinity even in seeing the particular. It is only the cloud of unknowing that takes the finite for the infinite. That cloud of unknowing is avidya. It is not a 'thing' for it is the privation of knowing. It is the veil of indescribability that has its seat in

the jiva.

The third eye is the eye of Ishwara. Therefore Ishwara has no avidya. Vikshepa and avarana are the capacities of His infinite power ? the awesome power of Maya. They are not two - Ishwara and His Maya ? they are Existence and the magical power of Existence. They are Shiva and Shakti.

What Ishwara brings forth is Himself. That is His own form showing forth. It is His Prakriti. They are not two ? Ishwara and His Form ? they are Existence and the Prakara of Existence. They are Purusha and Prakriti.

In our lucid moments, we may glimpse that the world is only in consciousness, that it has no existence in itself, but in spite of such a vision, one cannot, by one's will, determine the world into being. That power of aishwarya remains with Ishwara. A fraction of that power may come to a yogi through the eight siddhis, but the power of creation remains with Ishwara alone.

"For the Supreme Lord alone has competence for activities concerning the creation etc., of the universe inasmuch as the fact of creation etc., is taught in connection with Him alone, and the word `eternal' is attributed to Him. The Upanishads mention that others get the divine powers of becoming atomic in size etc., as a result of search and hankering for knowing Him." (BSB, IV,IV,vii,17).

The world springs from a deeper level than one's conceptions and conception cannot negate the very Will from which it springs forth as conception. The weft and weave of the cloth cannot negate the cloth. The jives with their minds are identified with so many layers or sheaths of Reality, and from amidst the weave of these sheaths one cannot negate the filaments of the weave, nor see the deep springs from whence the world has come. The weave is already woven and it is Ishwara that has brought it forth and it is He that projects and holds the universe in place. How then can the jiva that cannot see the well-springs of the world deny the world? When the jiva challenges the creation of Ishwara, it is questioning the truth of its own inner Self, and the answer to the challenge may as well be like the words that came out of the clouds when Job challenged God in the Old Testament:

"Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge? Gird up now thy loins like a man, for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me. Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?? Who laid the cornerstone thereof, when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy? Or who shut up the sea with doors?. And said, Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further; and here shall thy proud waves be stayed??. Canst thou bind the sweet influence of the Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion??. Knowest thou the ordinances of heaven? Canst thou set the dominion thereof in the earth? Who hath put wisdom in the inward parts, or who hath given understanding to the heart?" (Job 38:1-40:2).

None can dislodge the universe from the firmament in which Brahman holds it aloft as the three created worlds. For is it not seen that

it is held in place?

"Under the mighty rule of this Immutable, O Gargi, the sun and moon are held in their positions; under the mighty rule of this Immutable, O Gargi, heaven and earth maintain their positions; under the mighty rule of this Immutable, O Gargi, moments, Muhurtas, days and nights, fortnights, months, seasons, and years are held in their respective places; under the mighty rule of this Immutable, O Gargi some rivers flow eastward from the White Mountains, other flowing westward continue in that direction, and still others keep to their respective courses; under the mighty rule of this Immutable, O Gargi, men praise those that give, the gods depend on the sacrificer, and the manes on the independent offerings."

With regards,
Chittaranjan

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Message #s refer ONLY to Sri Chittaranjan-ji's postings/replies

23488	Re: A few words on the July topic	Chittaranjan Naik
Fri 7/2/2004		
23498	Re: A few words on the July topic-the Real and the Unreal!	Sat 7/3/2004
23505	The Real and the Unreal - Part I - The Razors Edge	
23508		
23510		
23511		
23513		
23514	The Real and the Unreal - Part II - The Reality Divide	
23524		
23528		
23534		
23555		
23556	The Real and the Unreal - Part III - The Preamble	
23557		
23568		
23569		
23574		
23580		
23593		
23596		

23598

23616

23617

23624

23625

23628

23634

23639

23640

23643

23644

23645

23646

The Real and the Unreal - Part IV - The Dream Analogy

23660

23662

23664

23668

23669

23670

23671

23672

23685

23686

23687

23693

23711

23715

23720

23728

23730

23737

23744

23768

23769

23774

23775

23787

23789

23791

23798

The Real and the Unreal - Part V - Authenticity and the Knot of the Heart

23801
23803
23804

23829

23833
23838
23839

23850
23851

23868

23877 The Real and the Unreal - Part VI - Prelude to Ontology

23886
23888

23894
23896

23905
23907
23908
23909

23910

23928

23930 The Real and the Unreal - Part VII - Ontology

23931
23932
23933

23943
23949

23961
23962
23964

23971
23976
23977
23979

23982

23992
23993
23994

24001

24005

24016

The Real and the Unreal - Part VIII - Advaita

24017

24024

24025

24048

24049

24050

The Real and the Unreal - Part IX - Ishwara

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