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Origins of Indian Thought

by

Vidyalankara

Prof S. K. Ramachandra Rao



Suramā Prakashana
Bangalore - 11

**The Origins Of
Indian Thought
And Some
Related Writings**

Vidyānāṅka
Prof S. K. Ramachandra Rao

Surama Prakashana
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The Origins of Indian Thought and Some Related Writings, by Vidyalankara Prof S. K. Ramachandra Rao; published by Dr. S. R. Sudarshan for the **Surama Prakashana**, the publication wing of the Prof S. K. Ramachandra Rao Memorial Trust®, 305, 6th cross, I Block, Jayanagar, Bangalore 560011.

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Preface to the New Edition

The book 'Origins of Indian Thought' originally emerged out of a series of special lectures delivered by my father at the Bangalore University in 1972. The first edition was published by Sri K. C. Shivappa, the co-ordinator, the Department of Publication and Extension Lectures, Bangalore University.

This book along with some other articles was reprinted as '*Darshanodaya-Early Indian Thought*' by the Kalpatharu Research Academy in 1999. As this book as also the 'Origins of Indian Thought' are both out of print, it was thought desirable to reprint it. It was felt that some of the articles in '*Darshanodaya*' like '*Yoga –tantra in the Middle Ages*', '*A Note on Nadi and its Examination*' and '*Indian Medicine in Tibet*' did not seem compatible with the main text. We have therefore included some other more relevant articles while retaining the '*Mind in Bhela Samhita*'.

I thank Sri N. Prasad of Vagartha for composing the stray articles and Bhavish Graphics for the excellent printing.

6-09-2013

S. R. Sudarshan

Vijaya Samvatsara,
Bhadrapada Pratipat.

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THE AUTHOR

Prof S. K. Ramachandra Rao (1925-2006) was born in a conservative Madhva Brahmin family. He studied Sanskrit in a pathasala in Nanjangud, and then learnt the prasthanaya trayas under Palghat Narayana Sastri in Mysore.

He also studied Pali and Tripitakas from Sri Narada Mahathera of Sri Lanka, and learnt Tibetan in order to learn Tibetan Buddhism. He obtained an M.A. in psychology from the Mysore University, and started his career as a research assistant in the Indian Institute of Science. He later headed the department of clinical psychology in NIMHANS in Bangalore.

A born teacher, he was a visiting professor at the Bangalore University, teaching in the departments of psychology, philosophy, indology, social work and education. He headed the department of Indian Culture at the the Callison college, University of the Pacific, Bangalore Centre. He was a senior associate of the National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bangalore, and was on the guest faculty of the Indian Institute of Management.

He was a member of the Karnataka State Lalita Kala Academy and Sangita Nritya Academy, had served on the Agama Board of Karnataka and was on the advisory Committee of the T.T.D. He had been honored with the 1986 Karnataka Rajyotsava Award.

He was a prolific writer, artist, sculptor, musicologist, scholar and orator. He had written more than 150 books in English

and Kannada apart from a play in Sanskrit and books in Pali on various aspects of traditional Indian Culture. His books, 'Murti Shilpa, Nele mattu hinnele' on Iconography and 'Tirupati Timmappa' on Tirupati were given the state Sahitya Academy awards. He had authored 17 volumes on the the English translation and analysis of the Rig Veda.

He had been honored with the titles Vidyalankara, Sangita Kalaratna, Vachaspati, etc and had received the Veda Ratna Samman from the Swami Gangeshwaranandaji Trust, Mumbai.

FOREWORD

This book deals with the foundations of Indian thought. It inquires into the nature and contents of the thought-complex that provided the initial framework for the later well-known 'systems' (*darśanas*). The author takes a cue from Kullūka-bhaṭṭa, Manu's commentator, and works out the details of the two traditions in India — the indigenous Tāntrik and the Aryan-Vedic. He seeks to establish that the Sāṅkhya-Yoga ideology was not only anterior to the Upanishadic thought but was preparatory to it. The basic values formulated in the Upanishadic texts have been discussed in detail; in fact it forms the major portion of the book. The trend of thought has been followed up with an elaborate treatment of the development of Indian medical ideas from the same Tāntrik source.

Although the book is mainly descriptive in nature, it explains that the Indian thought is heavily indebted to the Tāntrik tradition. The author has provided for the benefit of both scholars and students extensive references in support of this explanation. The publication marks an original contribution to the understanding of the sources of Indian philosophy, psychology and medicine.

Prof. S. K. Ramachandra Rao, the author of this book, is a scholar and reputed writer. The Bangalore University is privileged to publish this book based on the lectures delivered by Prof. S. K. Ramachandra Rao under the auspices of the University. I thank him heartily for his co-operation in the publication activities of our University.

H. NARASIMHAIAH
Vice-Chancellor
Bangalore University

PREFACE

This book has grown out of a course of lectures that I delivered to the post-graduate students of Education in the Bangalore University during December 1971. The lectures were kindly arranged by Dr. N. V. Tirtha, Professor and Head of the Department, and the then Vice-Chancellor Sri T. K. Tukol evinced great interest. My friend Sri K. C. Shivappa, Co-ordinator, Department of Publications and Extension Lectures, Bangalore University, interested himself in my talks with his usual courtesy and enthusiasm; he not only worked out the details of the lectures-schedule but has allowed me to expand my thesis for this publication. I am grateful to all three of them for making this publication possible.

I have thought fit to add some new matter to the original manuscript that represented my actual lectures concerning the first phase of Indian philosophy. And this has been done with a view to render the treatment comprehensive and more useful not only to the students of Education but to all those interested in the development of Indian thought.

I am grateful to Dr. H. Narasimhaiah, Vice-Chancellor of the Bangalore University, for his foreword to my book.

The nature and complexity of my manuscript have no doubt presented a challenge to the printer. I thank Mr. R. K. Murthy of the W. Q. Judge Press, Bangalore, who has handled this work with competence.

S. K. RAMACHANDRA RAO

Bangalore
January 15, 1973

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ORIGINS OF INDIAN THOUGHT

THE TWO TRADITIONS

It is hard to identify the period when thought in this country began to be systematised. The Vedas (about 3000 B.C.) do not betray this tendency; the Upanishads (early ones, about 700 B.C.) do, though faintly. But the Upanishads represent doctrines taught principally by the immigrant Āryan conformists, and conclusions arrived at in conferences following the Vedic tradition. There were, however, non-conformists and protestants even during the earliest of periods, even among the Vedic philosophers themselves; and there were thinkers and leaders who were altogether outside the Vedic fold, and who belonged probably to a pre-Vedic tradition. These were collectively designated as 'Vrātyas,' today an expression of uncertain meaning. But included in the collection were magicians, medicine-men, physicians, mystics, materialists, mendicants, wandering madmen, fire-eaters, poison-swallowers, libidinous pleasure-seekers as well as austere ascetics.

The Vrātya comprehends a multiplicity of local traditions and regional cults that resisted or were more or less unaffected by the Vedic impact. Some of them were monstrous and primitive, violent and erotic, and others sophisticated and refined, evolved and austere. The great tradition known as the Tantra, with its almost infinite ramifications all over the country, is a survival of this Vrātya culture. Although it came to be associated rather closely with the Vedic tradition in course of time, it was recognised widely and consistently as non-Vedic, if not in fact as anti-Vedic. The Tāntric tradition must have been so widely spread and so deeply rooted that the new culture could not brush it aside, much less wipe it out; the laws of co-existence prompted not only recognition but assimilation.

It would appear that while Vrātya was the folk nomenclature, Tantra was the cult word. Tantra connoted not only a characteristic way of thinking and knowing but signified a set of practices and exercises. The two aspects naturally supplemented each other, and together they made for an integrated religious philosophy. There are indications that this religious philosophy, broad-based and multi-faceted, was current when the Upanishads were being composed, perhaps in a different region but within the zone of contact.

There has been much speculation as to who Vrātyas were at all. J. H. Hauer has hazarded a guess that the Vrātyas were the forerunners of the latter-day Yogis. Gough thought that Yoga was derived from the 'ecstatic rites of savages.' S. K. Belvalkar and R. D. Ranade, who agreed with him, described his savages as 'wandering swarms of ascetics.' These were no doubt clever conjectures and, although convincing evidence came much later and from other sources, they were responsible for the general belief that the origins of the Yoga system, far from being bound with Patañjali (about 200 B.C.), were lost in remote antiquity, stretching anterior to the Vedic period. Patañjali, as is well known, was only an editor, not the founder of the system (even according to his commentators).

The Yoga that we are acquainted with today, that is to say the Yoga that was accepted and sanctified by the Vedic tradition, is clearly a late arrival, a modification of the earlier one, with a strong theistic bias. *Vyāsabhāṣya* on Patañjali's *Sūtras* (about 400 A.D.) it was that gave the Yoga the present outlook and attitude. Vācaspati, Vijñānabhikṣu and Bhoja followed his lead and made Yoga acceptable to the Vedānta. This is a development which began around the tenth century and reached its completion in the sixteenth century, i.e., the period of Vijñānabhikṣu, the author of *Yogavārttika* which fully reconciled the Yoga ideology with the Vedāntic standpoint. The process took several centuries and had a background of several thousands of years, during which period

there was a shift even of the major premises with a view to achieving conformity (however artificial) with the Vedic tradition.

If Yoga in its early phase represented the ascetic and ecstatic practices of the Vrātyas, its theoretical groundwork was supplied by the Sāṃkhya. Parallel to the transformation of Yoga from primitive, atheistic, heterodox practices to the sophisticated theistic orthodox system, was the development of the original materialistic Sāṃkhya of the pre-Vedic Tāntric tradition into the later theistic Sāṃkhya of the *Mahābhārata* and *Bhagavad-Gītā*. Īśvarakṛṣṇa's Sāṃkhya (about 200 A.D.) marked a significant stage in the systematisation of this viewpoint, even as Patañjali's Yoga was in the systematisation of Yoga. The Sāṃkhya that the Vedic tradition found somewhat acceptable (however unwillingly) is the work of Īśvarakṛṣṇa; but the unknown author of *Kapila-sūtras* (about 1400 A.D.) and his commentators Aniruddha (15th century) and Vijñānabhikṣu (16th century) worked out fully its compromise with Vedānta, involving a theistic orientation.

Both Sāṃkhya and Yoga have been regarded since the sixteenth century as orthodox (*āstika*) systems, that is to say systems within the Vedic tradition, in contradistinction to the Lokāyata or Cārvāka, Jainism and Buddhism which were dubbed as heterodox (*nāstika*) systems. But if one considers the fervour with which the *Brahma-sūtra* (about second century B.C.) and the great commentators like Śaṅkara, Rāmānuja and Madhva attack Sāṃkhya, and the suspicion with which Śaṅkara looks upon Yoga, the acceptance of Sāṃkhya and Yoga within the orthodox fold seems rather strained, and was with reservations. Even if the two systems were not hostile to the Vedic tradition (*vedaviruddha*, as Śaṅkara makes out in the case of Sāṃkhya), they were at least non-Vedic in their origin and early development. They were probably rooted in the Vrātya-Tantra culture of the pre-Vedic period.

The relation of Sāṃkhya-Yoga to the two other heterodox systems Buddhism and Jainism is too obvious to be ignored and too intimate to be regarded as accidental. One may not agree with Emilé Senart's contention that Buddhism is a branch of Yoga but the Buddha is certainly a Yogi-type, and his teachings have heavily incorporated the old Yoga particulars of askesis, control, restraint, release and freedom. Early Buddhism preserved the yogi-ideal of 'nirvāṇa'. In fact, the expression Yoga is really an equivalent of 'samādhi' (one-pointedness of consciousness) which is described as 'soullessness' (*nirātmatvatvam*), a detail which received great consideration in Buddhist philosophy. Likewise the Sāṃkhya entered into Buddhism in a significant way; Gotama the Buddha's teacher, Ārāḍa Kālāma, was a Sāṃkhyan master.

And Jainism based its theory almost entirely on the Sāṃkhya, and practice on the Yoga. The Sāṃkhya-Yoga ideal of 'isolation' (*kaivalya*) was destined to play an important role in Jaina thought. It was a variant of 'cessation' (*nirvāṇa*) or 'absolute inner quiet' (*mokṣa*), terms signifying alike the withdrawal of the individual spirit from all hindrance and extraneous matter. The Sāṃkhya dualism, pluralism and realism provided the groundwork for Jaina ideology; and in the Jaina thought the goal is to be achieved by a severe programme of askesis and self-torture — more so than in later Yoga and early Buddhism.

In the historical perspective Sāṃkhya-Yoga and Jainism-Buddhism were derived from a common nucleus that was outside the Vedic tradition, at least in its early phase. It does not, however, mean that these ways of thinking developed entirely independent of the Vedic tradition. No; there was in fact a series of successful contacts between the Upanishads and these systems. The Sāṃkhya and Yoga ideas can be discovered in the Upanishads, and the Upanishadic impact can be seen in Buddhism and Jainism. While there is some truth in the argument of Max-Müller and Garbe that the Sāṃkhya system emerged as a reaction against the monistic idealism

of the Upanishads, it is possible, as Anima Sen Gupta has shown,¹ to trace the beginnings of the classical system in the Upanishads themselves. Jennings has demonstrated that Buddhist thought is heavily indebted to the Upanishads.

The Upanishads in fact may be regarded as the most productive and highly significant period in the Vedic tradition, inasmuch as it provided the inspiration for all systems of thought in the country, orthodox or heterodox. But the systems as they were structured in course of time were vastly different from their beginnings and the beginnings of the Sāṃkhya-Yoga and Jainism-Buddhism were different from what they came to be as a result of reconstructions, redactions and systematisation. The stimulus for systematisation along with the direction perhaps came from the Upanishadic aspect of the Vedic tradition.

The nucleus which in course of time developed as Sāṃkhya-Yoga and Buddhism-Jainism was distinguished by an absolute reliance on human effort. Man is the focal interest; his striving is what matters and the goal of his striving is within the human framework. Gods were kept out and grace was dispensed with. The four great ways of thinking what we are concerned with here either rejected or minimised the involvement of supernatural principles; they were uncompromisingly realistic and pragmatic. Those who were committed to these ways concerned themselves with elimination, reduction, tranquillity, withdrawal, isolation, release from distractions and hindrances.

The basic ingredients of this nucleus were of course the Sāṃkhya and Yoga. There is hardly any doubt that the two had a joint career from the earliest of times and even when the two were independently systematised they retained their twin-relationship. Even in a late compendium like Mādhava's *Sarvadarśana-saṅgraha*, Yoga is described as a Sāṃkhya, 'śeśvara-sāṃkhya' or 'pātañjala-sāṃkhya'.² In terms of chronology it is probable that Sāṃkhya as a system was older than Yoga as a discipline, and that is why it is frequently

asserted that the Yoga was directly indebted to the Sāṃkhya for its theoretical framework. But Yoga as askesis must indeed be of much greater antiquity as it was based on the most primitive urges and inclinations.

It is hard indeed to determine the exact period or circumstance of this interdependence. Even the *Mahābhārata* contents itself by describing them as "the immemorial twins" (*sanātane dve*). The Yoga ideal of isolation or emancipation as a human achievement by human effort must have promoted the exploration into human nature, the understanding of its dimensions and potentialities, and the appreciation of its limitations. It is in this context that understanding or knowledge (*jñāna*, gnosis) becomes essential for the work of askesis (*karma*). While Yoga concerned itself with the latter, Sāṃkhya sought to specialise in the former. It was inevitable thus that the two systems had to function as twins, as equally valid, and as interdependent.

The expression 'tantra', applied to Sāṃkhya as well as to Yoga, in fact comprehends both the aspects: knowledge and askesis. The image of threads being mounted on the loom, resulting in uninterrupted weaving, was in the background of this expression. The derivative meaning of the word stands for 'extension', 'expansion', 'continuity', 'propagation', or more simply 'knowledge'. But it also signifies an esoteric under-current of magical rites and practices. It is no accident that an early Sāṃkhya text, now however lost, was called *Ṣaṣṭhitantra*; and Śaṅkara explicitly mentions that Sāṃkhya is called a 'tantra' (*tantrākhyā*).³ It is well-known that Yoga went usually by the name of 'Pātāñjala-tantra'. The Tāntric involvement of the feminine aspect was indeed responsible for the 'pradhāna-vāda' (doctrine of the productive Mother Nature) of the Sāṃkhya, and the intriguingly helpless rôle played by the male *puruṣa* in it. Again, the preoccupation of the 'tantra' with human constitution, and especially body, is to be seen in the Yoga. Sāṃkhya-Yoga thus continued the Tāntric interest in understanding human nature and in effect-

ing improvements in it.

The scene for consistent psychological speculations in India was set when from the nucleus of amorphous Tāntric perceptions and practices, Sāṃkhya and Yoga emerged as a theory-practice complex with little theistic preoccupation and religious involvement. The Upanishads were infected with this interest, and when this happened it marked a significant stage in the development of the Vedic tradition. Marked psychological orientation was the distinguishing feature of this stage.

SĀMKHYA-TANTRA

It is hard at this point of time to identify the presuppositions of the pre-Āryan Tāntric cults. Probably, the usual involvements of magic, animism, agricultural rituals, fertility ideas, emphasis on the feminine, worship of the mother-goddess figures, and possession-intoxication complex were all there. R. P. Chanda, J. Marshall and K. N. Sastri have discovered some of these involvements in the Indus Valley finds. It is possible to read these elements in Ṛgvedic references to the religion prevailing among the non-Āryan masses of those days. *Atharvaveda* is especially full of descriptive material concerning regional and tribal beliefs and practices answering Tāntric ideology. The mediaeval Tāntric cults in the eastern regions of India and the Himālayan ranges probably represent continuation of the older Tāntric cults. Many of the elements of Tāntricism have survived to this day in the rural and tribal religions of the land. But the Tāntra as systematised and as contained in classical and Buddhist Tāntric texts cannot be credited with great antiquity; it bears a clear impact of Vedāntic ideas. Many of the cults were so corrupt and so brimming with antinomian ideas that no serious philosophical system would care to own them; they survived merely as regional perversities.

The characteristic features of the Tāntric tradition, however, is its reliance on the ultimacy of the feminine principle

and on the mediacy of intoxication. It is this that distinguishes this tradition from the Vedic tradition with its heavily masculine orientation. The *Brahma-sūtra* upheld the *brahma-vāda* (or doctrine of the Spirit) in contradistinction to the *pradhāna-vāda* (or doctrine of Nature) of the Sāṃkhyan thinkers. Nature is essentially the creative principle, it is inevitably linked up with evolutionary change (*pariṇāma*). We are reminded of the Tāntric view that the entire cosmos evolves out of the primal sounds (*mātrkā*), the sounds themselves undergoing changes to become mystic formulae (*mantra*) and mystic diagrams (*yantra*). The Vedāntic view as propounded by the *Brahma-sūtra* and as interpreted by Śaṅkara favoured the transformation-view (*vivarta-vāda*), and criticised the evolutionary theory of the Sāṃkhya (*pariṇāma-vāda*). It also emphasised the rôle of *puruṣa* (the Male), which in Vedānta stood for Brahman, in bringing about the phenomenal world. Even when the Sāṃkhyans conceded the existence of theistic *puruṣa* (or rather *puruṣas*) it was but secondary in importance (*apradhāna*).

Based on the Tāntric foundation, Sāṃkhya emerged as a strong protagonist of the materialistic, naturalistic and pluralistic viewpoints. Having these viewpoints and not perhaps being excessively preoccupied with religious practices, it could develop easily into a psychological system. And the psychological orientation formed so early in the history of Indian thought was bound to leave its clear impress on the subsequent ways of thinking. It is not unlikely that the Upanishads themselves were indebted to an extent to the Sāṃkhya outlook, the crystallisation of which was in all probability contemporaneous with the Upanishadic thought. It is undoubtedly the Sāṃkhyan orientation that inspired the early Buddhist psychology and influenced the Jain psychological speculations.

It is difficult at this point of time to reconstruct the Sāṃkhya ideology of the Upanishadic period, more so the pre-Upanishadic Sāṃkhya thought. There is a persistent be-

lief that the beginnings of the Sāṃkhya system can be traced in the Upanishads themselves.⁴ And attempts have been made to recover the Sāṃkhya ideology in *Kaṭha* and *Śvetāśvatara-Upaniṣads*. Sāṃkhya as a system, of course, became well-known even in orthodox circles—from the days of the *Kārikas* of Īśvarakṛṣṇa, which according to S. N. Dasgupta were composed only around 200 A.D.⁵ Mention is made of two ancient texts,⁶ now however no longer extant: *Māṭhara-bhāṣya* and *Ātreya Tānta* which were in importance only next to the celebrated *Śaṣṭhitānta*, a work also lost.⁷ *Caraka-saṃhitā* (about 78 A.D.) contains an account of Sāṃkhya, very different from the account of Sāṃkhya in Īśvarakṛṣṇa's *Kārikā*; and Caraka continued the tradition of Ātreya-Punarvasu, the Ātreya probably of the lost Sāṃkhya Tānta mentioned above. *Ahīrbudhnya-saṃhitā*, *Mahābhārata* and *Bhagavad-Gītā* contain Sāṃkhya accounts. Several *purāṇas* including *Bhāgavata* find occasion to mention and explain the Sāṃkhya thought. These accounts are not only not identical but contain significant variations despite the protestations of *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* (11. 22) to the contrary. The claim of the commentators about the unbroken continuity of the Sāṃkhya tradition is hard to maintain. The *Mahābhārata* itself mentions three distinct schools of Sāṃkhya,⁸ one postulating twenty-four categories (*tattvas*) which were all material leaving no room for the spirit, the other twenty-five including the *puruṣa* as conscious self, and the third twenty-six including God as supreme being. The last mentioned school is the theistic Sāṃkhya, acceptable to the Vedic tradition and advocated in the epic.—The second of the schools is identified with the classical dualistic Sāṃkhya, propounded by Īśvarakṛṣṇa and attacked by orthodoxy. The first school appears to have been the original stratum—materialistic and atheistic, the Sāṃkhya type ascribed to Pañcāsikha and represented in *Caraka-saṃhitā*.

The Sāṃkhya tradition ascribes its first formulation to sage Kapila who communicated the doctrines to his disciple

Āsuri, who in turn taught them to Pāñcaśikha. Not much is known about Kapila or Āsuri. There are *sūtras* in the classical style ascribed to Kapila, but they are clearly of late origin. If we may judge by the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* account of Kapila's Sāṃkhya, it was theistic in orientation.⁹ There is an argument¹⁰ that Sāṃkhya was originally theistic and that it was Pāñcaśikha that gave the atheistic slant to it. The argument, however, is based on accounts occurring in avowedly theistic works like *Mahābhārata*, *Bhāgavata*, *Ahīrbudhnya-saṃhitā* and the *Purāṇas*. It appears more probable, as already noted, that the tradition was originally atheistic and continued to be so during the days of Pāñcaśikha and Caraka, until Īśvara-kṛṣṇa (200 A.D.) carved out what is known as classical Sāṃkhya by the introduction of a quasi-theistic element.¹¹

It has not been sufficiently appreciated that Pāñcaśikha, who is said to have lived contemporaneously with early Buddhism, was a brilliant psychologist who gave Sāṃkhya its characteristic outlook. *Mahābhārata* (12. 219) contains an account of Pāñcaśikha's Sāṃkhya.¹² Hariharānanda-Āraṇya has edited and annotated the *Sāṃkhya-sūtras* of Pāñcaśikha.¹³ One may glean from these accounts that he it was that set the scene for psychological speculations in our country. It was but natural that the medical writer Caraka relied heavily on his analysis and explanations. Āyurveda as a practical discipline naturally profited much by adopting the Sāṃkhya ideology of Pāñcaśikha. We shall consider the basic ideas of Āyurveda in a later section and note its indebtedness to Sāṃkhya.

Pāñcaśikha and Caraka retained the relationship with the Tāntric tradition by subscribing to the primacy of body-principle (*dehatattva*). Unlike the Lokāyatas or the early Buddhists, they believed in the existence of soul or self (or *person*, *puruṣa*); and they even admitted that the soul or self could occur as the transcendental self or *puruṣa*, uncaused and eternal, unmanifest and beyond comprehension. But more important in their system was the empirical or the phenomenal self (sometimes called *jīvātmā* or embodied self, in contradis-

inction with the transcendental *puruṣa*, called *paramātman*). The expression *puruṣa* here comprehends both these aspects or rather states. And *puruṣa* is not a principle of consciousness, as it is in the other systems of thought. Not that Pāñcaśikha and Caraka brush aside consciousness as merely an expression or as a mere accidental occurrence; the principle plays a very important rôle in their system. But consciousness is an emergent phenomenon, arising out of the mind-body complex that is alive; the phenomenal self merely upholds it. We shall return to this discussion a little later.

For Pāñcaśikha and Caraka, human constitution is of great interest and pragmatic value, for emancipation (*apavarga*) as well as health (*ārogya*). They recognise in man's constitution several elements, organised meaningfully and purposefully. The elements entering into this organization are technically known as 'categories' (*tattvas*). And they are counted as twenty-four, in two groups, *prakṛti* (nature, in the sense of causative factors) and *vikāras* (modifications thereof, in the sense of effects). Included in the former are eight categories — five subtle elements, consciousness-stuff (*buddhi*), egoity (*ahamkāra*) and the unmanifest (*avyakta*). The latter group consists of sixteen factors: five gross elements with specific characteristics, five organs of knowledge, five organs of action, and mind. What we call man is only a conglomeration (a heap, *rāśi*), a *gestalt*, a configuration, a pattern composed of discrete but interrelated items. It is a body-mind complex. While the soul partaking of the nature of divine spirit or of the nature of an inner controller is not acceptable to this school of Sāṃkhya, they do accept the phenomenal self, which is the real experiencer. The expression 'heap-person' (*rāśi-puruṣa*), which these thinkers employ, is an interesting one. It is psychologically very suggestive and significant.

The phenomenal self is not pure consciousness, the reflection of which is caught up in the consciousness-stuff (*buddhi*) — as some schools of Sāṃkhya hold. The self somehow¹¹ gets related in a characteristic manner with the elements mentioned

above and renders them organised, integrated, enlivened, patterned. And consciousness emerges *sui generis* from this organisation — which is described as the phenomenal self or the 'heap-person'. Consciousness belongs to this organised heap, but is in no sense the essential nature (*svarūpa*) of the Self. In its transcendental aspect, there is no consciousness. Consciousness is a quality that emerges incidental to the involvement of Self in the phenomenal mass. Pañcaśikha holds that consciousness continues only as long as one is alive; at death it ceases. In this sense, it may be said to belong to the Self, to be founded on the Self. It is likened to a light that radiates all around. The entire body-mind complex becomes aglow with consciousness.

The phenomenal self in this way becomes aware of the world around and feelings within, because of the involvements of sense-organs and mind. Experiences occur within this framework; knowledge, feeling and action as also pleasures and pains are events that occur only here. The ancient Sāṃkhyan thinkers coined a remarkably modern expression, 'field' (*kṣetra*). The psychological complex that we call man represents essentially a field wherein the body, senses, mind, ego and the elements operate as forces; all the dimensions of experience are to be located in this field and are explained as due to the operation of the field forces. However, both Pañcaśikha and Caraka recognise that the field, the forces of which are in an incessant flux, retains continuity and identity as long as the phenomenal self is involved in it, and that consciousness which occurs as a general field-quality has a source or core on which it is founded, but which does not become manifest or get committed to the field in an absolute manner. This unmanifest (*avyakta*) aspect of the field is its necessary background and support. This is figuratively spoken of as 'the field-knower' (*kṣetrajñā*). But knowledge here does not involve the instrumentality of the senses and mind or of the ego: it is mere awareness. There is an intriguing statement ascribed to Pañcaśikha,¹⁵ wherein he refers to "the fourth prin-

principle of unconditioned awareness" which does not mutate and which is an unconcerned witness, (the three other principles being the *guṇas* which constitute the fabric of phenomenal existence). The commentator explains¹⁶ that consciousness of the details or the phenomenal world (*saṃvedana*) is possible only because of the subliminal awareness which is inverted on itself (*pratisaṃvedana*). This latter is called pure self-consciousness or mere I-feeling, different from the ego but basic to it. This inverted process of awareness itself is styled consciousness-stuff (*buddhi-tattva*). It is dynamic, being composed of the three *guṇas*. But the subject of this awareness, static and beyond the influence of the modes of being or *guṇas*, is the unconditioned person (*puruṣa*). Pāñcāsikha and Caraka regard the ultimate truth as 'the unmanifest in the state of person' (*puruṣāvasthamavyaktam*): it is a unified category, comprehending both nature (*prakṛti*) and spirit or person (*puruṣa*). We do not find in their thought the absolute dualism that we find in the later classical Sāṃkhya; and their conception of the 'unmanifest' also is characteristically different. Nature involves the spirit in an unmanifest condition; it is therefore that Caraka groups the categories only into nature (*prakṛti*) and the modifications thereof (*vikāras*). The involvement of the unmanifest in the psychological complex is brought about by the inverted awareness (*pratisaṃvedana*).

The relationship between the psychological 'field' and the unmanifest 'field-knower' constituted an issue in the later Sāṃkhya discussions. The field-knower was identified in the epic Sāṃkhya with an independent category, the twenty-fifth, the 'unmanifest' being made a corporate part of the field (in the sense of original nature). It was the living principle within the body-mind complex. Field-knower functions as the foundation (*adhiṣṭhāna*) for the field, as water for the fish. But this thought is a later development, necessary for a theistic interpretation; but early Sāṃkhya explains the relationship on the basis of inverted awareness, as mentioned above.

PSYCHO-PHENOMENOLOGY

Vyāsa cites an unidentified authority: "The phenomenal process on the part of the primal material is for the purpose of self-expression."¹⁷ And it is explained that self-expression is twofold: involvement of the static and unconditioned self in the phenomenal existence (experience, *bhoga*), and realisation that the self in fact is distinct from phenomenal existence (discrimination, *viveka*, or isolation, *kaivalya*). The former expression results in evolution (*sarga*) while the latter is spoken of as involution or dissociation of the Self from phenomena (*apavarga*). Both modes of self-expression involve ceaseless and continuous change from one state to another, one projected plane (*āyatana*) to another. This change or mutation is technically termed 'evolution' (*pariṇāma*), and is of great significance in the Sāṃkhya-Yoga thought. The progressive involvement in phenomenal existence comes in for discussion in the Sāṃkhya, while Yoga is especially interested in the progressive disengagement of the self from phenomenal involvement.

The basic propositions of early Sāṃkhya were really simple. The world that we experience is real; it is evolved, and is subject to incessant change. There are subjects of experience (*puruṣas*), objects of experience (*artha*) and instruments of experience (*indriya*). The subjects are numerous, each distinguished by a psychological complex called 'body' (*deha*). For evolution, or for experience, these subjects are not really important, they do not materially matter. What matters is nature and that is really important (*pradhāna*). The expression *pradhāna*, almost an equivalent of *prakṛti* (nature in the sense of primal constituent or essential materiality) acquired great significance in the Sāṃkhya thought, so much indeed that the system came to be known as *Pradhānavāda*.

Nature, in contradistinction with the unmanifest spirit, is productive (*prasavadharmī*) and this is so because of the *guṇas* that constitute it. *Guṇas* are objective, ultimate, constituent elements of experience; they are the modes of being.

They are infinite in number, but are, for the sake of understanding, grouped into three types according to perceptibility (*sattva*), mutability or activity (*rajas*), and inertness (*tamas*). The *guṇa* theory in Sāṃkhya was always important. In the classical Sāṃkhya and theistic Sāṃkhya, it developed into an elaborate doctrine. *Guṇas* are frequently substituted for the expression *prakṛti*¹⁸; the real dualism is between the *guṇas* (becoming) and *puruṣa* (being). Even Pāṇcaśikha the early teacher, spoke of *guṇas* as real doers (*kartārah*) as opposed to the inactive *puruṣa*¹⁹. They are actors in the sense of productive agents; they are the factors that are responsible for evolution as well as involution. They coöperate, interact and act together; they also strive for survival and dominance. The Sāṃkhya theory regards the phenomenal world as a restless network of substances and activities; and as a tangled scene of the primal constituents, each struggling for expression and ascendancy.

These constituents patterned in one manner become responsible for the material world of physical objects and events; patterned in another manner, they result in the mental world of perceptions, feelings, thoughts and desires. These are two different lines of development, but the stuff of development is the same, the source is a common one. Physics and psychology thus have a common origin and the fundamental laws are the same, although the lines of development are necessarily different.

It is interesting that the Sāṃkhya thinkers again strike a modern note when they postulate that all evolution starts from the disturbance of an original state of equilibrium (*sāmyāvāsthā*), wherein the primal constituents (*guṇas*) are all perfectly balanced. But then somehow²⁰ there is disturbance, and consequently the struggle for ascendancy is instituted among the primal constituents. Like the Lokāyatas the Sāṃkhyans, in keeping with the Tāntric tradition, hold to natural laws (*svabhāva*) as responsible for evolution; they do not think it necessary to posit any cause beyond nature

(*nimittāntaranirapekṣa*). As a result of this disturbance *mahat* takes shape; from the general ground of the unmanifest, as a figure emerges this 'great one' (for that is what *mahat* means). The ground-figure analogy is a perfect one: the unmanifest, like the ground, is without characteristics (*alīṅga*) or natures, while the *mahat*, like a figure, is really a sign or a symbol (*liṅga*); and the former is static and stays behind while the latter is dynamic and moves forward. It is called 'the great one' because of its universality. It is a category that is common to all persons, like the 'common human archetype,' and is therefore responsible for the objective character of the world for all of us alike. Experiential reality for all is projected from this source within each one of us. In its public or world aspect it is called *mahat* ('the great one'), and in its private or individual aspect it is called *buddhi* (consciousness-stuff). The former aspect is cosmic while the latter is psychological. But in reality it is but one category (*buddhi-tattva*).

Mahat or *buddhi* is the primary phenomenon or evolute; it is the very first category to appear above the threshold of manifestation. And it is made up of the primal reals, viz., *guṇas*, which have been shaken up, and therefore each of which has started struggling for ascendancy; and the *sattva* prevails here over the other two. This represents the first phase of evolution at the cosmic as well as the individual levels. It is, for this reason, described as the "seed of the phenomenal extension' (*prapañcabīja*). It is determinate, with ascribable qualities and identifiable function. Pañcādhikaraṇa, a Sāṃkhya teacher who came after Pañcaśikha but before classical Sāṃkhya, held that out of the womb of the unmanifest *pradhāna* emerges a category which is altogether indeterminate and without any specificity whatsoever, prior to the formation of *mahat*.²¹ Shall we call this the urge for expression coming closely on the heels of disturbance, or is it a homeostatic impulse, projecting the entire series of evolution so that the creation (*sarga*) will ultimately bring about

the elimination of the disturbing factor (*apavarga*)? In a sense, Sāṃkhya considers evolution and elimination as complementary to each other. It is important to remember that the emergence of phenomena is not only a cosmic affair; more significantly it is an individual affair. The Sāṃkhya thought recognises a sort of psycho-phenomenology (*pratyayasarga*) which is a descriptive analysis of subjective processes, eight primary mental dispositions and their derivative dispositions, all answering to a four-dimensional psychic model, the dimensions being misperceptions (*viparyaya*), inadequacies (*aśakti*), satisfactions (*tuṣṭi*) and achievements (*siddhi*).²²

The 'great one' is obviously exceedingly subtle: it is not extended in space, and cannot be perceived by senses or mind. It is 'great' in the sense of being the recipient of knowledge of all things. It has no limitations as regards comprehension, and, in fact, it is fundamental to knowledge of whatever kind. Pāṇcāśikha and Caraka take it in 'the sense of mere 'I-ness' (*asmītimātra*); it is the subjective counterpart of the objective 'mere is-ness' (*tan-mātra*) of things.²³ Functionally this is the linking factor between the objective particulars and the 'self' (*puruṣa*), which are otherwise totally isolated. According to Vācaspati's interpretation, it is so transparent and so dominantly *sāttvic*, that the reflection of the 'self' is caught in it, and, when this is done, the process acquires the quality of consciousness. The changes that occur in the *buddhi* are necessarily, though erroneously, ascribed to the self, and they are construed as the Self's experiences. In reality, however, the self is neither the agent of action nor its locus. The apparent identification of the self with the consciousness-stuff is responsible for all phenomenal existence. The Sāṃkhya speaks of the emergence of a 'phenomenal self' (*pratibimba-puruṣa*), which is in the nature of an image of the self caught in consciousness-stuff; it is a reflex image that forms the core of individual existence, and becomes involved in all experiences, subjective and objective.

The *buddhi* being the link between the self and nature,

partakes of the nature of both. It 'knows' as well as 'works'. It is mere awareness and also an inclination for phenomenal involvement; there is in it an activity-orientation, although it is primarily *sāttvic* in constitution. It is interesting that in this system of thought life-force (*prāṇa*) is looked upon as an aspect of this principle. If *buddhi* emphasises the consciousness aspect of the *mahat* category, *prāṇa* symbolises its power as activity. Vijñānabhikṣu, a later authority, regards the five-fold vital currents (*vāyu*) as merely different functions of the *mahat* in an extended sense.

Arising from the consciousness-stuff (*buddhi*) and projected from it is the egoity (*aḥamkāra*), the dynamic principle of specific individuation. This projection is said to be necessitated by a stress condition (disturbance) within the consciousness-stuff. The mere I-ness of it has within itself a preparedness or set in favour of more determinate, that is to say better structured, figure, *viz.*, the egoity. The function of this egoity which is characterised by awareness of phenomenal involvement is to produce a self-regarding sentiment or what is known as 'self-assertion' (*abhimāna*), or 'self-love'. If *buddhi* is predominantly *sāttvic*, egoity is *rājasīc*; it consists of activities of continual adjustment to the changing situational involvements. It would be wrong to regard egoity as purely a subjective affair. The subject-object distinction of the experiential world is necessary for the functioning of the *buddhi*. This involves phenomenological structuring, which is an achievement of egoity. The 'mere I-ness' in the prior state is undifferentiated subjectivity, while in egoity the objectivity extension is provided for it so that there comes about a well-defined sense of individuality, an ego-sense in the context of the objective world of events and experiences. This egoity is functionally an urge for self-preservation, not only for survival of individuality but for its continuous growth in relation to the changing situational involvements. Egoity in Sāṃkhya is not looked upon as a substance but as a process (*vṛtti*), a ceaseless process as long as life continues in the

body.

Contrary to the modern viewpoint that ego is a growth incidental to maturation, the Sāṃkhya theorists hold that egoity is an equipment even at birth, and it is because of this dynamic principle that individuation takes place and is completed. Individuation is acquirement of characteristics (*liṅga*) when associated with the body. Caraka includes the body composed of five elements (air, ether, water, fire, earth) in the category of eight-fold nature (*prakṛti*) alongside consciousness-stuff and egoity. This is, according to him, the fundamenal psychophysical equipment. The senses and the mind belong to a different category: they are agents of knowledge and action. Each sense-organ is a product of the five elements; it is a physiological structure. It achieves its fulfilment only when mind works along with it: otherwise, knowledge or action is impossible. The senses thus constitute further differentiation within the individualised field for purposes of communication and self-expression. Vācaspati prefers to consider the senses and mind as evolved from the *sāttvic* aspect of egoity, incidental to individuation; Vijñānabhikṣu, on the other hand, takes only mind as an evolute of the *sāttvic* aspect of egoity, senses being evolutes of the other two aspects. They, however, agree with the general Sāṃkhya position that mind and senses work together, and that both senses and mind are evolutes from egoity. Structuring of the individualised field is the import of this position.

The three internal organs, consciousness-stuff (*buddhi*), egoity (*aḥamkāra*) and the mind (*manas*) together constitute a continuum, a psychological field that is both subjective and individualised. They are three aspects or phases of one 'internal instrument' (*antaḥkaraṇa*), and represent a movement towards greater specificity and particularity, better structuring, and more efficient transaction with the world (or in other words, greater phenomenological involvements). It is significant that the Sāṃkhya school regards the five-fold life-force that preserves and upholds the psychophysical constitution as

signifying the joint operation of these three phases or aspects of the internal instrument. The biomotor force, it follows, is essentially psychological energy. The three aspects of this energy are said to contain within themselves the power to open and close the 'field' (*kṣetra*). The analogy of the birds in the cage by their conjoint flight lifting up the cage and carrying it away has been given by the commentators.

Consciousness-stuff, egoity and mind constitute the human personality (*saṃyogi-puruṣa*), and its natural inclination is for involvement in the phenomenal world. The Sāṃkhya theorists as well as the Yoga teachers regard this inclination as pain-provoking (*kliṣṭa*), as an impairment or disturbance of the original state of equipoise (in the pre-*mahat* state), as a perversion leading to errors in knowledge and action. Five such disturbances have been listed: 'lack of correct insight' (*avidyā*), 'ego-dominance' (*asmitā*), 'attachments' (*rāga*), 'aversions' (*dveṣa*), and 'love of life' (*abhiniveśa*). The first among these is of course the foundation for the rest: the utter isolate character of the Self and its essential non-involvement with the psychophysical constitution or with the phenomenally presented world is lost sight of in the progressive process of individuation. What in reality is a mere conglomeration (*rāśi*) of categories comes to be projected as an integrated field of experience and action with ego as the core. Approach tendencies and withdrawal urges constitute the twin processes of involments and disengagement, of construction and destruction, of love and hate, of building-up and breaking-down. As a result of this involvement, there is a certain clinging to life, an urge to preserve oneself against odds, to persevere in the involvement, and to dread isolation. This is no doubt an excellent statement of the basic dimension of man's personality; this is also a statement of his problems of aspiration, anxiety and frustration.

This thorough-going analysis of human constitution distinguished the Sāṃkhya system. There was also an attempt within the Sāṃkhya fold to formulate a method whereby the

pain-provoking conditions could be eliminated. The well-known methodology in Yoga and Āyurveda deals with the statement concerning the painful condition (*heyam*), the diagnostic formulation of the causative factors thereof and the attendant conditions (*heyahetuḥ*), the statement concerning the elimination of the painful condition (*hānam*), and the prescription of a curative procedure, whereby the elimination is achieved (*hānopāyaḥ*). This methodology is to be ascribed to the early Sāṃkhyan thinkers like Pāñcāsikha.²⁴

Contact (*saṃyoga*) between the self and the phenomenal appearances, between being and becoming, between existence and occurrences is the real source of the world, our involvement in it and our continued participation in its perseverance. Elimination of this contact, and the consequent isolation (*kaivalya*) of the self are held out as the goal of human life. This is what is called 'detachment', 'unburdening', release, liberation, freedom (*mokṣa*). The systematic and progressive undoing of the evolutionary process (that is to say, the work of the senses, mind and egoity) so as to regress into the original state of mere I-ness (*asmītimātra*), undifferentiated, unconditioned, unqualified and non-particular is the method prescribed. Evolution is an onward process of increased ramification, greater and more complex structuring, multiplication of co-ordinates and dimensions, projection of more planes of experience; it is a 'spreading out'. The method that the Sāṃkhya indicated and the Yoga developed is an involution, a backward process of attenuation, closing in, and concentrating the consciousness into an undifferentiated mass (*saṃādhi*). The world then becomes a mere 'is', and the individual a bare 'am'.

This being the goal, one was advised naturally to remove himself as completely as possible from all involvements with the phenomenal world, to exercise control over the senses, to discipline the mind and to starve egoity. The eight-fold Yoga is a systematisation of this prescription in course of time. It is remarkable that Indian thought, in all its manifold schools.

accepted the fundamental theoretical position of the Sāṃkhya and the basic discipline of Yoga. The Sāṃkhya-Yoga provided the framework for all philosophy and askesis in this sub-continent; that it was heavily psychologically oriented was an immense advantage.

ATTITUDES AND ISSUES

UPANISHADIC SOURCES

The ultimate recorded source of all Indian wisdom is the hymnal mass collectively known as the Veda, the earliest of human documents anywhere on earth. It consists of praises and prayers, myths and legends (*Samhitā*), sacrificial formulae and ritualistic tracts (*Brāhmaṇa*), and finally philosophical speculations and psychological inquiries (*Upaniṣads*). The Vedic poets and seers were impressed not only with the vastness of the universe but by the orderliness involved in the cosmos. While they conjured up a multiplicity of divinities connected with magico-religious functions, physical phenomena and economic activities, they also had an intuitive understanding of the One Real, of whom these divinities were but aspects or expressions. The One Real was the spirit enlivening the entire universe, as also the essence of individuality in every being.

It is small wonder therefore that the emphasis soon shifted from rituals to abstract contemplation, from the knowledge of the world around to the understanding of one's own self within. The Upanishads mark this shift. Formally appended to the Veda and recognised as its culmination and therefore called *Vedānta*, they were nevertheless independent tracts based on direct experience and inspired intuition. They contain philosophical speculations and psychological inquiries, laying emphasis on the individual, on the analysis of human personality, on contemplation and tranquillity rather than worldly competence and success. They were in the nature of confidential documents of mystic wisdom, revealed only to the earnest and the adept.

While the Upanishads, the ten principal ones which are also of great antiquity, do not contain any consistent or uni-

form teaching, they have, all of them, a distinctive and characteristic flavour: inward achievement of unshakable equilibrium by releasing the self from the phenomenal limitations. They all alike speak of the Self as the principal aspect of ultimate reality if not the ultimate reality itself: the Self whose nature is everlasting, pure, and undifferentiated consciousness. The world around was viewed as a cloud that sits upon and hides the Self from itself; and the dissipation of this cloud was sought to be achieved by abstract contemplation. The Upanishadic emphasis on the liberating wisdom instead of the old observance of ceremonials cleared the way for the emergence of new ideologies like Vedānta and Buddhism.

The Upanishads are no doubt remarkable treatises containing profound reflections. But their diversity of approach, multiplicity of concepts, and apparent inconsistency necessitated an attempt at reconciliation and harmony (*samanvaya*) and this was provided by the celebrated *Vedānta-sūtra*, also called *Brahma-sūtra* (after the subject matter) and *Bādarāyaṇa-sūtra* (after the editor Bādarāyaṇa-Vyāsa). This short work of four books, each comprising four chapters, each of which contains a number of topics for discussion in the form of cryptic aphorisms (*sūtras*), sought not only to condense the Upanishadic teachings but to resolve the apparent inconsistencies in them. Brahman, according to this work, is the ultimate reality: source of the world, it is also the goal of all wisdom.

The work made a profound impact on the subsequent thought pattern in the country; utterly divergent viewpoints were foisted on this self-same work because this work not only stimulated inquiry but was regarded as endowed with scriptural authority. Of the many interpretations, those by Śaṅkara (788-820 A.D.), by Rāmānuja (1017-1137) and by Madhva (1197-1276) are important inasmuch as they came to be defended by three philosophical schools represented by three large sects in the country. Śaṅkara's viewpoint, known

as 'non-dualism' (*advaita*), holds that the ultimate and absolute reality (*Brahman*) is also the immediate self (*Ātman*) which is self-luminous (*svaprakāśa*), which is one although appearing as many and which can never be the object of consciousness being the very source of it (*draṣṭā*). Identification of self with body etc. is illusory and erroneous, and is responsible for phenomenal involvement. The world-appearance is likewise illusory (*māyā*), although it cannot be regarded either as 'being' (*sat*) or as 'non-being' (*asat*): it *is* for the present but *is not* for all time; it both *is* and *is not*, and different from either *is* or *is not* (*sadasadvitakṣaṇa*). The Upanishads, according to Śaṅkara, teach that self alone is real and that all else is unreal.

Rāmānuja, on the other hand, interpreted the *Vedānta-sūtra* as teaching the doctrine of 'qualified non-dualism' (*Viśiṣṭādvaita*). Rāmānuja distinguishes between the absolute and ultimate reality called God (*Brāhman*), individual souls and the physical world; but God as embodied in, or qualified by, the other two factors is one, non-dual; there is nothing else that is real (*viśiṣṭāntarbhāva eva aikyaṁ*). It is in this sense that Rāmānuja's non-dualism is qualified. But in Rāmānuja's system, unlike in Śaṅkara's, God as ultimate reality is by no means unqualified or without qualities; omniscience, omnipotence, omnipresence and so on are truly God's characteristics. The phenomena involving individual souls and the physical world are, in fact, the God's body (*śarīra*). The individual soul, the *jīva*, is regarded as different from *Brahman* or God, but not as independent of Him: it is an accessory (*prakāra*) of God, who guides and controls it as an inner director (*antaryāmin*).

Madhva's system, like Rāmānuja's, is theistic: but it is avowedly pluralistic and in no sense non-dualistic. Difference (*bheda*) is the *leit-motif* in this system: God, individual souls, and the physical world are distinct realities from one another although God (*Viṣṇu*) is supreme; there is difference among individual souls, and among material things in the physical

world. Thus, a five-fold difference is affirmed: between God and soul, between God and the physical world, between soul and soul, between soul and the physical world, and between the things in the physical world. Madhva is emphatic that the physical world is no illusion, and that the individual soul can never be identified with God. Even in emancipation (*mukti*) the individual souls not only retain their distinction from God but retain difference among themselves (a point on which Madhva sharply differs from Rāmānuja).

These three interpretations gave rise in due course to a mass of philosophical literature, especially in South India. Controversies incidental to these conflicting interpretations are still being held. Each interpretation has developed its own peculiar viewpoint with regard to the overall basic issues in Vedānta. The three Ācāryas mentioned above have not only written commentaries on the *Vedānta-sūtras* ascribed to Bādarāyaṇa but have sought to strengthen their positions by writing commentaries on the *Bhagavad-Gītā*, a scriptural text of immense religious and philosophical significance in this country. Two of them (Śaṅkara and Madhva) have commented on the principal Upanishadic texts also. The three works together, *Upanishads*, *Brahma-sūtras* and the *Gītā*, constitute what is known as the 'triple source-literature' (*prasthāna-trayī*).

The *Gītā*, formally incorporated into the great epic *Mahā-bhārata* but operating essentially as an independent text, claims to be the quintessence of the Upanishadic teaching; it is in fact itself described as an *Upaniṣad*. There can be no doubt that coming closely on the heels of the classical Upanishads, the *Gītā* contains the Upanishadic tradition but assimilates the Sāṃkhya, Yoga and Buddhist teachings which were in their turn indebted to the Upanishads. It is this synthetic character of the *Gītā* that has made it the most popular text in the country. It is a curious but effective link between the Vedic traditionalism and the later thought systems.

Thus, the triple source-literature for the traditional philo-

sophical systems in this country is mainly Upanishadic; the *Brahma-sūtra* as well as the *Gītā* have drawn heavily on the Upanishads for their content as well as attitude. We have therefore, to turn to the Upanishads for the basic concepts in all the philosophical schools that have developed in our country.

BASIC ASSUMPTIONS

Although the Upanishads do not attempt to set forth any consistent philosophical doctrine, although each Upanishad has a thought-structure of its own, all the Upanishads alike seem to have been inspired by certain identifiable assumptions. These assumptions as crystallized by the Upanishads provided the basic framework for all philosophical schools that developed subsequently in this country. The most basic of the assumptions is that reality is essentially spiritual. That it is unknown and undefined does not make its importance any the less for the earnest seeker; in fact, it has a strong attraction for him for this very reason. While the Upanishads are divided on the question of the reality of the material world, they uniformly emphasise the spiritual essence of it. They also point to the essential unity of this spiritual essence with the essence in the individual that seeks it.

The former is represented by the abstract word '*brahman*' and the latter by '*ātman*'. The *brahman* comes in the Upanishads to be greatly emphasised, not as a god or as the God-head but as the basic, universal principle, as an undifferentiated whole, as the very salt of existence. The concrete universe emanates from this abstract principle as "the web does from the spider."¹¹ And this universe of bewildering multiplicity of names and forms again dissolves into the *brahman* even as "the rivers flow into the sea, losing their individual identities."¹²

This is not to be construed as a denial of the historical man or of the physical universe. Although the Upanishads

are undoubtedly preoccupied with the ultimate, the universal, the stable, the essential, the Being, they do not ignore or reject the phenomenon of becoming, of multiplicity, of change. The knowledge that is directed towards 'the effective unity of things' (the expression of Sri Aurobindo) is styled as *vidyā*, while the awareness of, and involvement in, the world of multiplicity is *avidyā*.³ They are no doubt different in their approaches, but they are, as the *Īśa Upaniṣad* points out, related to each other. Unity is underlying and multiplicity is manifest.

The Upanishads do not ignore the individual and the particular. The word *ātman* is employed as frequently as the word *brahman* in the Upanishadic texts, and is used in its concrete as well as abstract connotations. However, the particularity of it, the discrete identity of it, or the separate individuality of it (*vyakti*) is greatly minimised in preference to its universality (*jāti*). The individual or the particular has no absolute value of its own; it is intimately and inextricably related to the universal, in which alone rests the absolute value. Torn from the universal, if such tearing is possible at all, the particular is nothing, in fact, inconceivable.

The individual is determinate, is perceived as a concrete being, as differentiated by qualities and qualifications. It is apprehended by sense-organs and mind, by our knowing processes. The world with a multiplicity of particular entities is presented to us, and is represented by our individual consciousness. We are therefore prone to regard it as real, as ultimate, and we proceed to involve ourselves in it; in the words of an Upanishad, 'it is natural to have an extrovert orientation, for man's instruments of knowing are fashioned that way. It is the world of materiality, sensations, imaginations and volitions that we are interested in, and involved in. We are so engrossed with the particulars that the underlying unity is easily lost sight of. We have, in order to perceive that, to make bold and look within; it is the introvert orientation that will pierce through the unreal, or rather less real,

multiplicity and give us an insight into the effective unity.

We are not concerned here with the psychodynamics of the development of this grand insight, which means for the individual a total and critical transformation of his very being: it is in the nature of a religious phenomenon. What is of interest to us is the mental preparation that this transformation necessitates: an analytical rejection of all particulars that are objectively presented and subjectively represented. Nakamura⁵ observes that Indians have a fondness for the negative expression, and he rightly connects it with their stress on the universal: "The Absolute is expressed as the Infinite or the Negative by the Indians." The Upanishads no doubt describe the *brahman* as indescribable and list all imaginable qualifications only to negate them.

The negative approach assumes a methodological stature in the Vedāntic "Not-this, Nor-that" (*neti, neti*). The initial formulation of this method is ascribed to Yājñavalkya and the Advaita school of Vedānta relies heavily on it. The method involves systematic calling up to mind of all the differential qualifications of an objective entity or phenomenon, and as systematically rejecting each one of them in connection with *brahman*, which is not only an impersonal principle but indeterminate as well. The Upanishads describe it as 'indeterminate' (*anirdeśyam*), 'incomprehensible' (*agrāhyam*), 'imperishable' (*akṣaram*), 'unborn' (*ajātam*), 'uncharacterised' (*avarṇam*), 'hidden in the secrecy of the supreme ether' (*nikītam guhāyām parama vyoman*), and so on.

The method of negation suggested in broad outline in the Upanishads is interesting inasmuch as it appears to have entered into the very mental make-up of Indians. It has become almost a cultural trait here, and Indian languages abound in negative expressions. Ethical ideals are negatively recommended, as illustrated in expressions like 'non-injury' (*ahimsā*), 'non-stealth' (*asteya*), 'non-possession' (*aparigraha*), 'non-attachment' (*virāga*), with no desire (*niṣkāma*), 'non-interest' (*virati*), 'restraining' (*viramaṇa*) and so on.

The negative orientation is easily mistaken for escapism, which the Indians have often been accused of. But it should be remembered that the Upanishadic method of negation really points to the attainment of an existence that can never be denied or doubted. The idea is to reject all non-essential particulars of Becoming so as to arrive at the most positive Being. It is Being and not Becoming that has appealed to the Indian mind; the urge is to seek the real amid the appearances. Reality is reached by negating the appearances.

Another point that is often lost sight of in the Western appraisal of Indian thought is that negating is really overcoming, transcending. When a qualification is negated, the mind does not withdraw, but transcends. It is in this sense that Reality is described as all-comprehensive, all-inclusive and transcendental (*pāramārthika*). While appearances are partial, fragmentary and 'transactional' (*vyāvahārika*), Brahman is 'beyond', above (*parā*), and the knowledge that treats of it is higher knowledge (*parā-vidyā*). And the knowledge that deals with appearances only is 'lower' or literally 'non-higher' (*aparā*): it pertains to life, and not to Reality. To reach Reality, life has to be negated, that is to say, transcended. What makes for this negation is the positive *vidyā*, while what prevents this necessary negation is the negative *avidyā*.

BEING AND BECOMING

With these basic assumptions, the problem before the Upanishads was to explain how the transcendental or real becomes the transactional or appearances. This was of course a theoretical issue, and the Upanishads were more interested in the practical problem of how to resolve the transactional into the transcendental, and naturally we do not find in the Upanishadic texts any consistent, comprehensive or logical philosophy concerning this theoretical issue. But speculations have been there. Even in the earlier hymnal literature of *R̥gveda*, we find interesting attempts at explanation which

provided the ground-work for Upanishadic inquiries.

The earliest of Indian thinkers of importance, Aghamarṣaṇa was a Vedic sage whose reflections are contained in a hymn in the tenth Maṇḍala of *R̥gveda*; it is well known as a purificatory hymn.⁶⁷ The hymn recognises that the universe is orderly and has a real being. Orderliness (*ṛtam*) and being-ness (*satyam*) emanated from the action of Warmth (*tapas*); then darkness of the night came into being, from that the oceans and from the oceans the time-principle (year, *samvatsara*); and rest of the universe proceeded by this division of night and day. Warmth, for Aghamarṣaṇa, was the generative urge, the urge to manifest, multiply and concretise: this urge it was that transformed Being into Becoming, unspeakable and unknown unity into the visible multiplicity that we call world; and at the back of it all is 'order'. This was an important discovery: that the universe is founded on 'law' (*ṛta*) and that it evolved in an orderly way.

It was this discovery that minimised the rôle of the capricious gods of the early Vedic period, and helped India develop not only a philosophy altogether independent of the pantheon but also an ethics likewise free from theistic influence. The reflection on the primaeval warmth or initial energy as responsible even for Being is intriguing, and its implications are important. There is another hymn in the same Maṇḍala of the *R̥gveda*,⁶⁸ the so-called 'Hymn of creation' (known to us, however, as 'Nāsadiya-Sūkta' after the words with which the hymn commences) which also reflects on the transformation of Being into Becoming. There was, according to this hymn, 'desire' or 'will' (*kāma*, interpreted by the Vedic commentator Sāyaṇa as *sisṛkṣā*, 'desire to create') at the back of this transformation. This desire, described here as the 'seed of mind' (*manaso rtaḥ*), is located in the undifferentiated watery mass that was unfathomable and mysterious, enveloped in dense darkness, and in the background of this desire is the "one, breathless, who breathed by its own nature" (*ānīdāvātām svadhyā tad ekam*). The hymn pos-

tulates an immanent but obscure energy of nature or Being that provides the motive force for all evolution, for all Becoming. The Being somehow becomes warm with self-consciousness, and then gets involved in Becoming.

There is yet another hymn in *Rgveda*,⁹ ascribed to Brahmanaspati, which deals with this problem of Becoming. This hymn roundly declares Non-Being (*asat*) as productive of Being which in due course transformed itself into Becoming. Non-Being, Sāyaṇa explains, is not non-existence for that can never function as cause of Being; it is negatively worded only to suggest its being the foundation (*adhiṣṭhāna*) of, and therefore distinct from, Being (X, 5-7). It is the indeterminate, infinite, unformed essence of nature (also called *aditi*): it is spoken of as 'eternal law'. The hymn says that it was from this foundation that the cosmic force (*dakṣa*) emanated and brought into being all actual and possible (*sacca asacca*) particulars. The apparently paradoxical statement that the cosmic force sprang forth from the infinite essence, and that the infinite essence in its turn sprang forth from the cosmic force¹⁰ merely emphasises the involvement of Being in Becoming and Becoming in Being.

These and similar reflections in the Vedic hymns provided not only the inspiration but the subject-matter also for the Upanishadic thinkers. However, their general interest was in piercing through the veil of Becoming and experiencing the Being. Becoming with its phenomenal presentation of particulars was regarded by them as less real and as of lesser value than the One Being, something to be set aside or pierced through. Non-involvement with the phenomenal process was therefore considered essential for reaching the Being: what was important was not the knowledge that merely explains, but the knowledge that liberates, that reveals.

What hides the Being from Becoming is at the very core of the individual's individuation. The phenomenal presentation is ingrained in the individual, in his thinking and feeling; and the Upanishadic expression for the seat of this thinking-

feeling complex is heart (*hṛt*). It is there that the Being rests, but concealed as if in a cave; and it is from the heart again that the individual meets with the world and transacts with it. In the Upanishadic language, there are 'knots in heart' (*hṛdayagranthi*) wherein the strings of the world are contained. The Upanishads speak of 'cutting' asunder these 'knots'¹¹ for liberation. The liberation is from the excessive involvement with the tangled web of Becoming, which is described by an effective expression *samsāra*; and liberation itself is spoken of as *mukti*, *mokṣa* (release, escape, freedom). What is meant here is that the Being is freed from the burden of Becoming: the Being reveals itself (*ātmā vivṛṇute tanūm svām*) and is not clouded by the phenomenal limitation.

The Upanishadic 'heart' is not the physical organ that we commonly call heart. It is the psychic core of the entire constitution, responsible for all vital functions as well as for all higher intellectual functions. It is in this sense that the 'heart' is called stability: everything is founded ultimately on the 'heart' and it is foolish to ask on what the 'heart' is founded, for it is nowhere else than ourselves.¹² Verily this self is in the heart; it is for this reason that the word means etymologically 'this one is in the heart' (*hṛdi ayam*).¹³ There are a hundred and one channels of the 'heart' connecting man with the whole world. In deep, dreamless sleep one creeps into these channels (*nāḍīṣu śṛpto bhavati*) and then he does not transact with the world at all. In waking life, all our actions are made possible by the 'creeping out' of the self through these channels. This is how the self inside the 'heart' can be subtler than the worlds.¹⁴ Inside the 'heart' is supposed to be 'a sky' or 'space' (*ākāśa*), which is metaphorically described as a 'cave' (*guhā* or *dahara*); the self is hidden in this cave, concealed in the secret place of the 'heart', dwelling in the depth.¹⁵

The 'heart' and the subjective space within it are symbolic. The elementary consciousness is known as *buddhi* in Vedānta. It is usual to translate this Sanskrit word as 'intellect', but

with the development of modern psychology, the expression smacks of a mental faculty. The word *buddhi* is intended in the Upanishads to signify a principle that is nearest to Self,¹⁶ that animates mind and the senses, that stirs and makes for the phenomenal world.¹⁷ The meaning of the word *ākāśa*, according to Śaṅkara, is that which shines around, 'all-pervasive luminosity' (*ā samantāt kasute prakāśate iti*). This is the stable, still, deep consciousness that is unaffected by disturbances of differentiation; this is the consciousness that is not broken up into particular perceptions, being beyond the reach of senses and mind.

The 'heart' thus is the principle of individuation, that mediates between the Being and Becoming. It is the meeting place of the Self within and the world outside. There is an Upanishadic expression of intriguing significance: *ātmanvin*, 'an embodied one', one who possesses the Self (*ātmanvān*) and therefore is self-conscious.¹⁸ This is considered a state wherein the first experience of self-consciousness is had, and which sets into motion the process of individuation, of evolution, of involvement. The commentator Śaṅkara takes the expression to signify the 'deity in the heart', the state of Self as the lord of creation (*prajāpati*), the principle activating the *buddhi*.¹⁹ Consciousness cannot go beyond this state, for this is the plank of awareness on which all conscious states and conscious acts depend. When, in the very beginning, nothing was there, hunger covered it over, and then there was the urge: 'May I have a self'. This, according to an Upanishad, was the first act in the drama of creation. Undifferentiated consciousness turning on itself, got a form, the form of self-consciousness, or personal consciousness, and this subjectivity was the precursor to all other forms in the world.

This in short is the Self individuated, embodied and actualised. This is the bridge or dam that separates and keeps apart the worlds,²⁰ the world of phenomenal presentation and the world of the Self that is ultimate and isolated. The universal existence in this way acquires an individual context.

THE INDIVIDUAL CONTEXT

HUMAN CONSTITUTION

Concerned as they are with man's welfare, the Upanishads naturally deal with man at length. Human constitution, instruments of knowledge, nature of bondage and factors of freedom have come in for discussion. While some Upanishads do attempt to furnish physiological details and psychological explanations, the emphasis is on the fundamental nature of man's self (soul or spirit). All the Upanishads appear to agree with Yājñavalkya's outburst — "Verily, the Self it is that must be seen, heard, reflected upon, pondered over; and when Self is understood everything is understood."

The Upanishads give a general impression that the existence of the Self has been accepted without a question, almost axiomatically. While the texts do recognise the value of axiomatic assumptions, as in *Taittirīya-Upanishad* when it says, "Know that it exists, and then you can know its nature,"² the problem has certainly been raised. For instance, the *Kena-Upanishad* has clearly formulated the question: "Prompted by whom does the mind go about its task? Yoked by whom does the vital current move forward? Impelled by whom do we speak at all? Who indeed makes the eye see and the ear hear?"³ It seeks to go behind the senses and mind, and points to a principle that must necessarily be present for the senses to perceive, for the mind to think, for the vital current to function. It is described as the eye of the eye, ear of the ear, mind of the mind, speech of the speech, life of the life.⁴

Senses and mind provide us with an awareness of the outside world, and our life seems to be the main plank on which they operate. There is a quaint story in one of the Upanishads about the quarrel among the senses.⁵ Once, the senses began disputing who amongst them was the best; and when Brahma

was approached, they were told that the sense, which by leaving will render the body useless, was the best. Speech left the body, but the body survived, only as dumb; the eye left, but the body continued, only as a blind one; then the ear left, but the body survived, if as deaf. The mind, in its turn, went off; still the body lived on, stupidly though. When it was the turn of the vital current (or breath) to leave, it "pulled up all the other senses as a strong Sindhi horse tears away the pegs to which it is tied." It was at once, without a murmur, adjudged as the best, for bereft of the vital current senses cannot function, and the body is dead. Another Upanishad, in a similar strain, mentions that without any of the senses or organs man can live but not without the life-principle (*prāṇa*) and adds: "As from a blazing fire sparks fly in all directions, even so from the Self the life-principle stems forth, and from the life-principle the senses acquire their particular powers, and from these powers spring up the world that we experience."¹⁶

In the Upanishadic thought, senses (including mind) are nothing more than special modifications of the life-principle (*prāṇas*); that is why the senses are also sometimes called *prāṇas*. The senses have their own specific capacities and domains of operation; each sense thus provides us with a world, like the eye presenting the visual world, ear the auditory world, and so on. The mind, which is an internal and common sense, organises and configures these several worlds into an interconnected, related, meaningful world that is in our experience. Senses are said to light up the worlds, and it is in this sense that they are called 'devas' or agents of illumination.⁷

While the senses are merely modifications of the life-principle, we find it necessary to recognise the life-principle coeval and identical with life itself (*āyu*), different from the senses. We live on without one or more of the sense-modifications of the life-principle, but we live only as long as the life-principle itself lasts in the body. It is described as the 'un-

failing power in a person, like the unwearying air': the sun might set, fire go out and water dry up, but air moves without rest or a stop. Comparable to air among the elements is the life-principle (*prāṇa*) among the sense modifications.⁸ It continues all through life in all its states, including deep sleep and swooning.

Mahidāsa-Aitareya, an Upanishadic sage, regards the body as an organisation, as a system with the life-principle as its potentiality.⁹ Every organ is in its place and the senses discharge their appointed tasks. And according to him the life-principle is five-fold in its functions: up-breathing (*prāṇa*) corresponding to the respiratory system, down-breathing (*apāna*) corresponding to the alimentary system, back-breathing (*samāna*) or the metabolic activities, out-breathing (*udāna*) or the special senses, and finally on-breathing (*vyāna*) corresponding to the circulatory system. This ideology of the five-fold life-principle (*pañcaprāṇa*) came to be accepted in all the Upanishads.

It is interesting that the fundamental life-principle is identified with general awareness or consciousness (*prajñā*)¹⁰ and it was but a short step to identifying it with the all-pervading self.¹¹ In *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upanishad*, Yājñavalkya explains to Uṣasti-Cākrāyaṇa that the self in all things (*ātmā sarvāntaraḥ*) breathes in when you breathe in, breathes out when you breathe out, and so on for all the five-fold breathing processes. This Self is the seer of seeing, hearer of hearing, thinker of thinking, understander of understanding, and for the same reason we cannot see it, hear it, think of it or understand it.¹² The Sense-modifications and the five-fold breathings have their own distinct domains of function and cannot overreach them.

The Upanishads frequently refer to our inability to describe it, or to perceive it. The *Kena Upanishad*, for example, says: "That which the eye cannot see, but that which makes the eye see, that which ear cannot hear, but that which makes the ear hear; ... that which the mind cannot think, but that

which makes the mind think — know ye that to be the Brahman (or the real).”¹³ In the same context, the breathing processes are also included as mere figures on a ground that is beyond them. The senses and the mind do not reach this substrate which is indispensable for their existence and function. The Upanishad summarily rejects any possibility of our ever knowing it.¹⁴

Śaṅkara has recorded a dialogue from an Upanishadic source hitherto unidentified: king Vashkalin goes to the sage Bādhva and asks him to explain the real nature of Brahman. Bādhva remains silent. The king asks a second time, but Bādhva does not break his silence. When the king repeats his request for the third time, Bādhva replies: “I am telling you, but you do not understand.”¹⁵ The real nature of the Self is thus unspeakable — its only description is silence, quiet. This Self, unknown and unknowable, is the groundwork of our being; and our entire constitution with a physical frame, psychological functions, sense activities, mind and understanding is only this self writ large. Mahīdāsa-Aitareya speaks of ‘the expansion of the Self’ (*ātmanām āvistaram*)¹⁶; and the commentator Sāyaṇa explains the word ‘expansion’ as ‘special manifestations’ (*atiśayena prakāṣam*). Thus it is interesting that we do not have in India a dichotomous division of human nature into body and spirit: the two are not two distinct principles at all, but two aspects of the same principle. It is the spirit itself that manifests as body. Human nature is really an organisation of emanations and appearances at various levels of the one self which is itself formless. The concrete particulars and the abstract ground are like one substance; like waves and the ocean, like the hill and the level ground below.

In *Chāndogya Upanishad*,¹⁷ the well-known dialogues between Uddālaka Āruṇi and his son Śvetaketu emphasise the oneness of the self and its emanations. Even as the great fig tree arises from, and subsists in, the unseen finest essence within the tiny seed, the whole world comes out of, and rests

in, the finest essence, the Self. We are again in the realm of Being and Becoming. The Upanishads have an expression for this Becoming: *ātmabhūyam gacchati* (*Aitareya*, 2, 4, 2). We have seen how the Vedic hymns explained the transformation of Being into Becoming. It would be interesting to note that in the dialogues between the father and his son mentioned above there is an explanation by inference. "Also, my dear, around a sick man about to die the relatives gather and ask: 'Do you know me?' 'Can you recognise me?' So long as his speech does not go into his mind, his mind into his breath, and his breath into the warmth, the warmth into the transcendental divinity — so long he knows. Then when his speech goes into his mind, his mind into his breath, and his breath into the warmth, and the warmth into the transcendent divinity — then he knows not."¹⁸ This is an account of death, of transformation of Becoming into Being. Speech here is power of expression; it is the highest stage of Becoming, at once manifold and transient. Mind is the thinking-feeling structure that provides the basis for all expressive activities. And mind is rooted in, or has emanated from, the life-principle (*prāṇa*), which in its turn has come out of the fundamental warmth (*teja*). The warmth signifies the urge for manifestation on the part of the transcendent divinity, namely the Self, which is Being. While Being sustains Becoming as distinct from itself, transaction with the world is possible; when once the structure of Becoming is withdrawn into Being, the individuation collapses and transaction ceases.

INDIVIDUATION

The Upanishads are concerned with the problem of individuation, of how the abstract and formless Self becomes the multi-dimensional psychophysical constitution. In the *Taittirīya Upanishad* we have what is known as the *Kośa Theory*.¹⁹ The Sanskrit word '*kośa*' means a sheath, a covering, casing, something meant to conceal and contain. The

theory as propounded in the *Taittirīya* mentions five coverings for the Self representing five successive orders of reality. They are termed the Food (*annamaya*), the Life (*prāṇamaya*), the Mind (*manomaya*), the Consciousness (*viññānamaya*) and the Bliss (*ānandamaya*). The Food represents the physical aspect of reality, matter, the material principle. In man, it is the physical body with the physiological functions. This is the outermost sheath or covering, the grossest and the most concrete, depending on nutrition (food) for its subsistence. Concealed by this, but activating this, is the life-principle which enlivens matter and keeps it going. The five-fold breathings mentioned above as well as the senses are comprehended here. Subtler than this, and covered by it is the mind-sheath, composed of psychological processes including thinking and feeling, having their foundation in the data procured by the sense organs. Subtler than this is the sheath of individual consciousness, awareness or understanding, which in fact is the foundation for all psychological processes. It is not to be confused with the object-consciousness or ego-consciousness which is necessarily involved in our mental activities, but it is the subliminal, incipient or bare consciousness. This is more fundamental than mind, and nearest in evolution to the original nature of Being.

The subtlest covering in the whole group is in the old language termed Bliss, not to be mistaken for hedonistic pleasure: it is the state of Being undisturbed by processes of Becoming. If there were not this Bliss, the Upanishad asks, "who could breathe in and who could have the strength to breathe out?"²⁰ And this Bliss is located in the space within the heart (*antarhṛdaye*), the ether within the being, the innermost core of Being. The Bliss is not an experiential category, for it is basic even to consciousness; consciousness in fact conceals it and covers it. The Bliss here is substantially identical with the warmth or 'urge to manifest', the *kāma* of the 'Nāsadiya-sūkta' and the *tapas* of the 'Aghamarṣaṇa-sūkta'. This particular Upanishad elaborates: "It desired — may I become

manifold. It became warm with heat and then created all this, whatever there is. And having created it entered into it. . . . And so whatever there is is Being only."²¹

Thus from the Being the progressive grades of manifestation are the urge to manifest, the incipient consciousness, mind, vital functions and the physical forms and activities. This is true not only on the cosmic plane, but is equally true in the individual context. This is the process of individuation; this is the course of development, of growth, of concretisation. This drama is enacted in every instance of birth, in the emergence of every thought and every feeling. The Being that becomes, that assumes a concrete form, is in the language of the Upanishad, *Śārīra ātmā*, an embodied spirit.

What is of interest to the philosophers here is the thought that despite Becoming, Being remains incorporeal (*anātmīya*), unsupported (*anīlayana*), invisible (*adrśya*) and undefined (*anirukta*),²² in short unaffected in any manner by all the processes and products of Becoming. As Yājñavalkya puts it, "The eternal greatness of the Being neither increases by these effects, nor decreases."²³ The Being, according to the *Taittirīya Upanishad*, when it transforms itself into Becoming is both actual and emanation (*sacca tyacca*), defined and undefined (*niruktaṁ cāniruktaṁ ca*), both supported and unsupported (*nilayanam cānilayanam ca*), both real and false (*satyam cānṛtaṁ ca*).²⁴

Let us consider an account of individuation as given in *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upanishad*.²⁵ The world in the beginning was unmanifest and undifferentiated (*avyakta*); there was only the Self and nothing else besides. He 'saw' all round (*anuvīkṣya*) and found only himself. He realised: "I am." As soon as the realisation dawned on him, he got frightened (*abhibhct*). Loneliness brings on dread, says the text. But then, why should one be afraid, when there was no one else? Fear therupon departed (*vīyāya*). However, the one Self was still lonely and had no "delight" (*na reme*); he desired company. Then he 'desired' (*so'kāmayata*), and the desire was

indeed great: he immediately became large as if a man and a woman were locked in embrace. Being great, he split into two pieces, one was male and the other female. The female hid herself, but the male insisted on getting at her. In this drama of female withdrawal and male aggression, the entire creation came into Being.

This is a powerful imagery, symbolically as well as psychologically. The individual in the womb is secure, being covered over by the mother's being; as soon as delivery takes place, the individual becomes all alone. The security of the mother's womb having gone, the new-born infant is frightened, scared, shocked. This is indeed a traumatic experience, not mental or emotional in the differentiated sense, but involving the whole being in a fundamental way. The process of growth dissipates this fear, but longing for 'delight' in company sets in, and stimulates the process of maturation.

The text not only mentions 'desire' as an organismic inclination, but suggests that in each individual there is a male aspect as well as a female aspect, an introvert tendency as well as an extravert tendency. Every man is both a cow and a bull, a she-goat and a he-goat, a woman and a man. All this is for the satisfaction of the Self, for manifestation and differentiation in terms of names and forms. When the self becomes individuated not only by his body and mind which are forms but by a variety of psychical processes (*names*) such as the ego, dread, desire, masculinity and femininity, there will emerge worlds within oneself. The self is said to make for himself mind (*mana*), speech (*vāk*) and breath (*prāṇa*); and these three are the worlds (*lokāḥ*) of our experience.²⁶ And the self is composed of these three factors, differentiated into these three aspects; and this is all that can be experienced; 'known, to be known, and unknown'.²⁷

THE BREATH AND CONSCIOUSNESS

The self thus is regarded as the hub in which all the worlds

are compared to the threads that come out of the spider, to the sparks that come out of the blazing fire.²⁸ The doctrine that the unmanifest self and the manifest, differentiated world are in essence one does not prejudice the Upanishadic inquiry into individuation. But the sage was not impressed by the manifold details of human constitution, but attempted to comprehend the details in broad universals. *Āraṇyakas* enumerated as many as a thousand and eight parts of the human body.²⁹ But the Upanishads spoke of only two major manifestations of the Self, namely the living principle or breath (*prāṇa*) and consciousness (*prajñā*).³⁰ In the former were included the physical body, nutritive functions, sense perceptions and mind. Raikva explains to Jānaśruti in *Chāndogya Upanishad*³¹ that even as air among elements is a 'snatcher-unto-itself' (*saṁvarga*) so is Breath among the senses. The meaning of 'snatching-unto-oneself' is containing within one's own nature the activities of others, grasping and collecting (*saṁgrahaṇa*), taking on oneself the nature and work of others (*saṁvarjana*), absorbing in oneself the peculiar functions of others. The text explains: "Breath, verily, is a snatcher-unto-oneself. When one goes to sleep his speech, eye, ear and mind just go to Breath."³² They are all snatched up by Breath, contained and retained by Breath.

On waking up, these functions are resumed by specific faculties. Breath therefore is fundamentally the stuff out of which the cognitive and active senses are made; or, as a text describes, it is "the beam on which the eye, ear, mind etc. rest."³³ It was Udaṅka Śaulbāyana's view that this Breath is Brahman itself: what can one do without it?³⁴ It is in this sense that the Breath is like the wind that never stops or rests while one is alive.

This Breath is indeed sometimes equated with the Self, as for instance in *Kauṣītaki*, and mind is said to be its messenger, eye its watchman, ear the announcer and speech the handmaid.³⁵ All the senses (including mind) bring it offerings without its begging for them; that is to say, they procure for

the Self data from the world without the Self active involving itself in such procurement: The faculties are active and they discharge their functions as if on their own; but their ultimate stimulation is from Breath, and it is the purpose of Breath that they serve. They all pour their matter into it and that is how the Breath becomes 'all-obtaining' (*sarvāpti*).³⁶

For this Breath, the physical body is the home, where it occupies a central position; all the organs and instruments are located here. Its covering is said to be the head; breathing (respiration) is the post which sustains it, and food is the rope that holds it.³⁷ The Breath in this description is manifest, it has a concrete form, although not so gross as the forms that senses and mind assume. The identification of Breath with the Self, mentioned above, is rather figurative. Bhṛgu Vāruṇī learns from his father that Breath is Brahman,³⁸ but only one of five phases: it is only proximate identification. The Upanishad clearly holds that the Self dwells in the Breath and is different from it; Breath is Self's body, and is controlled by Self from within, and the Breath cannot reach it or perceive it.³⁹

The other manifestation of Self is individual consciousness (*prajñā*), which is also referred to as 'conscious individuality' (*prajñātman*).⁴⁰ While this consciousness is coeval, and thus regarded in a way as identical, with the Breath, the special function of consciousness in cognition and deliberation has been noted. Even the Upanishad that identifies them speaks of "the two together residing in this body, and the two together departing from it (at death)."⁴¹ The Breath is described as the reason for our survival (or 'immortality in this world' in the language of the Upanishad) while consciousness makes for all 'true conceptions',⁴² or what we should call meaningful experiences. The Breath is involved in the physiological functions including sensation. Sensations are processes that occur at specific sense-seats, and these processes are involuntary, spontaneous and unconscious. As soon as there is an object outside stimulating a sense-organ, sensa-

tions occur, provided the sense-organ is not defective. This is the function of Breath. But what is thus prehended by the sense-organ requires another processing by means of which the sensations are transformed into conscious perception or meaning-laden experiences. And this is the function of 'individual consciousness'.

The Upanishad says: "Devoid of consciousness, the eye cannot perceive any form whatever, nor the ear any sound, the tongue any taste, . . . one would say, 'My mind was elsewhere, I did not see, hear. . . .'"⁴³ There is also a suggestion that consciousness would *mount on* (*samāruhya*) the Breath-modifications, before the latter can discharge their functions appropriately.⁴⁴ That this consciousness is not to be confused with mind is clearly brought out by the inclusion of mind (as the thinking faculty) in the list of Breath-modifications along with eye, ear, nose, speech, tongue, body-basis of cutaneous sensations), hands, feet and the generative organs. The forms of the Breath which we recognise as the special senses are said to be outwardly correlated (*parastāt prativihita*) with the physical elements existing in their own right outside the individual (*bhūtamātra*); each of these senses is an aspect (*ekam aṅgam*) of the individual consciousness insofar as perceptions occur.⁴⁵

The rôle of consciousness becomes clear in the Upanishadic discussion on waking and sleep. When we are awake, the senses are active, and they are specific in their activities; each has its own domain, and its own characteristic modalities. A sense-function will never transgress its specificity, and the Upanishads call this 'fixed observance' (*vrata*).—When, however, the individual sleeps, the senses are no longer active, despite the potentiality. They are no longer correlated outwardly, and the external stimulations fail to be perceived. This is because the aspect of consciousness which makes a sense alert while awake is withdrawn in sleep. "When a person falls asleep, the individual consciousness takes away consciousness from Breath-modifications and rests in the

space inside the heart."⁴⁶ This is how the senses are 'restrained' (*grhṇāti*). The Breath 'snatches up' the sense, while consciousness 'restrains'. The two expressions bring out the physiological and psychological nature of these functions: one provides the core and the other content, one the ground and the other figures thereon.

Consciousness here is identified with fundamental 'thought-processes' (*citta*), and the entire group of thought-processes is said to be interwoven with Breath-modifications.⁴⁷ Breath impressed with consciousness is what in experience is involved as self. Enlivened and stimulated by consciousness, the Breath becomes differentiated. "When consciousness (*citta*) departs from the body, then (as in stupor or a man weak and about to die) one does not hear, nor see, nor speak, nor think . . . becomes unitary in Breath."⁴⁸ This breathing spirit is the conscious self, says an Upanishad.⁴⁹ In another Upanishad, Yājñavalkya is asked by Sākalya: "On what are you and the self based?" and Yājñavalkya replies, "On the Breath."⁵⁰ Śaṅkara commenting on this takes 'you' to mean the body, and the 'self' the 'heart'; the two are founded on the processes of the Breath. Sākalya's problem refers to the conscious and embodied individuality that is experienced by every one as his self. In this individuality, consciousness and the vital processes are inextricably involved. This is what is characterised as phenomenal involvement.

CONCERNING KNOWLEDGE

KNOWLEDGE: LOWER AND HIGHER

In the Upanishads we frequently meet with earnest seekers who approach wise men for instruction. Janaka, King of Videha, goes to Yājñavalkya with the request — “Please, Sir, instruct me.”¹ Jānaśruti the nobleman approaches Raikva, the man with the cart: “Now Sir, teach me Divinity”.² Satyakāma Jābāla of unknown lineage wants to learn the sacred doctrine at the feet of Hāridrumata-Gautama³; and Upakosala Kāmalāyana dwelt as a student of the same lore with Satyakāma.⁴ The great householders Prācīnaśāla-Aupamanyava and others approach Uddālaka-Āruṇi, and he takes them to Aśvapati-Kekaya for instruction in the nature of self and spirit.⁵ Nārada goes to Sanatkumāra: “Om, teach me, Sir.”⁶ Bhṛgu Vāruṇi goes to his own father Varuṇa for being taught about Brahman; Naciketas, the bold boy goes to Yama himself for instruction.⁷ King Bṛhadratha seeks out Śākāyanya, who was ‘aglow like a smokeless fire’ and asks to be taught about the true nature of self.⁸ Sukeśa-Bhāradvāja and others, who were all devoted students, came to Pippalāda for instruction.¹⁰ Not infrequently do we hear of scholars who think they know, but on encounters, settle down as students. Śvetaketu-Āruṇeya’s encounter with Pravāhaṇa-Jaivali,¹¹ and Gārgya-Bālāki’s meeting with Ajātaśatru¹² are illustrations.

They all want to *know*, and they all go to the *seers* of celebrity with ‘fuel in hand’ symbolising devotion and dedication. A few of them, like Nārada and Śvetaketu of the *Chāndogya Upanishad*, were proficient in all the branches of sophisticated learning and could pass in learned assemblies as the very best scholars; but even they had to recognise that their learning was of a lower kind and altogether inadequate for understanding problems of Being and Becoming. The

Upanishads make a distinction between the higher knowledge (*parāvidyā*) and the lower knowledge (*aparāvidyā*).¹³ Vedic studies, grammar, rituals, prosody, astrology, ancient lore, mathematics, polity, logic, fine arts and so on (a long list is given in *Chāndogya Upanishad* 7, 2, 2) are all included in the lower variety; and they fall short of *real knowledge* which enables one not only to *know* his own self but cross over the sea of sorrowing (*śokasya pāram tārayati*).¹⁴

The Upanishads do not brush this complex of 'lower' knowledge aside as utterly useless or as irrelevant. On the other hand these disciplines are recognised as of great merit in the transactional world, although their value in developing the transcendental insight is questioned. The 'lower' knowledge deals with the phenomenal world which is a manifest, presentational aspect of Brahman (*aparabrahman*, *mūrtarūpa*), while the higher is concerned with the Brahman in his transcendental, unmanifest aspect (*parabrahman*, *amūrtarūpa*). The former is necessary for success in life, but the skills it involves pertain only to 'this world' outside (*idam*). But the Upanishads are concerned with the world within, organised around the 'I' (*aham*), regulated and covered over by the inner controller (*Īśa*). The realisation that the phenomenal world of objectivity is animated and sustained by an inscrutable principle of transcendental subjectivity is the starting point of Upanishadic inquiry.¹⁵ This is how the higher knowledge acquires value.

To know the self, therefore, is the purpose of Upanishadic knowledge. This is the *leit-motif* of all the discourses and dialogues here. "Know that one alone, the Self, and leave off all other talk!" admonished an Upanishad curtly.¹⁶ And knowledge of the Self is sharply distinguished from other kinds of knowledge; and it is called knowledge only because there is no other word that is as impressive or as meaningful. The expression is more suggestive than denotative. And the knowledge here is not a mere activity of the senses or of the mind, it is sometimes described as a total perception (*dr̥ṣṭi*

or *darśana*). Yājñavalkya paraphrases it: "The Self indeed is to be seen, heard, thought of and meditated upon."¹⁷

But it is made amply clear that the Self cannot be apprehended either by the senses or by mind. The *Kena Upanishad* has an entire section devoted to the task of impressing on us that the eye cannot see the Self (or Brahman), the ear cannot hear it, the voice cannot express it, the mind cannot think of it, and the Breath cannot breathe it; it is because of the Self that the eye sees, the ear hears, the voice expresses, the mind thinks, and the Breath breathes.¹⁸ "No one ever perceives it by the eye (etc.)," Yama tells Naciketas¹⁹: "Speech comes back without reaching it, along with mind."²⁰ Senses, including mind, are designed to give us information about the outside world; they are outward-oriented. It is not in their nature to turn back unto themselves, and it is certainly impossible for them to apprehend the very principle that animates them. Yājñavalkya roundly asks, "Who can know the one by whom everything is known? O, Who can know the knower?"²¹ The eye sees, not only because of the Self but for the Self; it is an agent, an instrument. This is true of all the senses and of the mind. That is why the Self is described as the eye of the eye, ear of the ear, mind of the mind, Breath of the Breath, and speech of the speech.²² "The self indeed is the perceiver, toucher, hearer, thinker, knower and doer."²³

KNOWLEDGE OF SELF

The Self is eternally the subject, and it can never become an object of knowledge. Whatever is known by the senses and mind is characterized as 'this' (*idam*), non-Self; it pertains to the presentational world. All ordinary knowledge involves necessarily a dichotomy between the knower and the known, which are brought together by the process of knowing. It can be direct (*pratyakṣa*), when brought about by the sense-function, and as such is bound to the presented ob-

jects in space and time; or it can be indirect (*parokṣa*), when mind (memory, imagination, reasoning etc.), is involved, as in inference or analogy. In either case, the 'known' is the sense apprehended as external objects or ideas, while the knower is the sense or mind-conditioned ego; and the 'knowing processes' include sensations, perceptions, apperceptions, remembrances, ideations, conceptions and evaluations. Thus the 'known', the 'knower' and the 'knowing processes' are all aspects of the phenomenal world. And they are all alike sustained by the primary consciousness which serves as both background and ground. This self which is never the object of knowledge is nevertheless involved in every act of knowledge; its presence has to be assumed.²⁴

The Self-knowledge must therefore be different from direct as well as from indirect types of knowledge. The Upanishads employ an expression, 'immediate, non-indirect' (*sākṣāt aparokṣa*).²⁵ Non-indirect, however, is not the same thing as 'direct'. Direct knowledge has certain limitations like the availability for senses, presence in time and adequacy of form; it is dependent on the object outside (*vastutantra* in later Vedāntic thought). These conditions do not apply to Self-knowledge, because Self is the very principle behind sense function, it has no recognisable form, and is beyond the normal conception of time; it can in no way be construed as an object. In fact, it is the unfailing subject in all knowledge. And this knowledge does not involve any processes, agent, or medium. It is in this sense that it is described as 'immediate'. The immediacy here is perfect inasmuch as the dichotomy between subject and object is non-existent.

Then how should we approach this Self? The 'immediate, non-indirect' knowledge does not dawn of its own accord; it must be achieved. That is why the Upanishads command: 'know!' (*vijijñāsasva*), and the method is described as an extremely difficult one, 'sharp like the razor's edge, hard of accomplishment, a difficult path indeed'.²⁶ We shall deal with the involvements of the method in a later section, but we

should note here that the Upanishads insist on the acquirement of this knowledge by every man, and that they are therefore certain of its possibility. That the knowledge of the Self is a distinct kind of actual knowledge is made clear in the Upanishads.

If Self is the real knower, how can it be known at all? And paradoxically enough, the Upanishads say that it can be known only by the 'mind' and that there is no other way.²⁷ That the expression, mind, here is employed not in the narrow sense of an 'internal sense-organ' but in the general sense of consciousness (*cetas*) does not make the position any less paradoxical. The Upanishads are aware of this paradox, but confess helplessness about it. "We do not know; we do not understand how one can communicate it. It is different from what is known, and aye, different from what is unknown too! It is not understood by those who understand it, and it is understood by those who do not understand it."²⁸ The important point here is that it can be known, that it can be understood. And how is the problem.

There is an interesting dialogue recorded in *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upanishad*: Janaka, King of Videha, asks and the wise Yājñavalkya answers. What is the light in which a person lives and moves? The Sun. But when the sun sets? The Moon. When the moon also sets? Fire. When fire too goes out? Speech. When even speech is hushed? The Self indeed! It is the unfailing light. But what is this Self? Made of knowledge, working through the senses, Self is the light inside the 'heart' remaining unchanged but transacting with the worlds within and without.²⁹ There can be no light to show up the Self; in fact Self is the light which shows up everything else. "There is no sun, moon, stars, lightning or fire there; the Self shining, everything shines after it; all this shines by that light only."³⁰ And the description that Self is the smokeless fire³¹ emphasises that this light is independent of conditions (like fuel) and free from changing states (like smoke); it is bright, unchanging, and does not generate states which negate itself.

Self is luminous by its very nature, and this luminosity remains utterly unaffected by the processes and conditions that obtain in the world.

The Vedāntic expression for this Self-luminosity is *sva prakāśa*: luminosity is a figurative expression for consciousness. Upanishads have several words to denote consciousness: *cit*, *caitanya*, *samvit*, *viñāna*, and *saṁjñā*. They all alike signify 'to observe', 'to perceive', 'to know', 'to be aware'; the image of sun, moon, fire or a lamp which lights up the objects is frequently met with in the texts. Consciousness not merely lights up (reveals) the world for us; it is responsible for all our thoughts and actions, itself remaining inactive. The simile of the lamp is pressed here with advantage. But the image of a pure light, not lighting up anything else but lighting up itself, the mere presence of light, uniform and still, formless and all-pervasive, is hard for the mind to conceive. That is why the Upanishad says that the mind turns back from it. There must be some other way of reaching it.

The Upanishads pose the problem: How do we approach the Self, which is pure consciousness? And another problem: Who or what is this Self that we seek to approach?³² The ways of intellect, learning and logic are rejected; for the ordinary man with the transactional consciousness, the Self does not 'shine' at all, although present in all things hidden.³³ Its presence is not perceived in our normal level of consciousness which is always object-bound. So the first step in the approach, according to the Upanishad, is to know that it exists, that it *is*; there is hardly an alternative to this.³⁴ The Self that *is* is in fact to be known in terms of "I am".³⁵ This consciousness of the self (*ātmapratyaya*) is considered an intuitive, direct knowledge, "ascertainable by the notion that every individual person entertains towards his own Self" (*ahampratayayagamyatvāt*).³⁶ No one ever 'feels' that he *is not*; that he *is* is known in every act of cognition (*pratibodhaviditam*). Even the doubt whether one *is* or *is not* pre-

supposes the self that doubts. The existence of Self is not a matter for reasoning or for intellectual apprehension; it must become the subject of consciousness, a matter for 'an absolutely direct' (*parampratyakṣam*) knowledge.

How this kind of knowledge can become reality in one's experience is the practical issue in the Upanishads. Self-consciousness, however, is not the achievement of a new state of existence; Self is always conscious of itself, nay it is itself consciousness. But it is hidden; and what happens in the event of 'the intuitive direct knowledge' mentioned above is that the Self reveals itself.³⁷ This revelation is what is signified in expressions like *drṣṭi* and *darśana*. The Being, before getting transformed into Becoming, got this consciousness of itself: 'I am', and then the whole creation emerged out in stages. What was it that Brahman knew whereby he becomes all this (world)? "In the beginning indeed the Brahman alone was there; and it knew only itself: 'I am Brahman'. Then it was that it became all this."³⁸ This revelation marks return to this initial state, so that the individual gets into the very source not only of his own being but of the whole world.

THE TOTAL AND THE PARTICULAR

There is a picturesque description of the creator and of the individual in one of the texts.³⁹ The Creator (*prajāpati*) is composed of sixteen parts. If he is construed as the year, fifteen parts of him are nights; his sixteenth part only (day) is steadfast. He is increased and diminished by his nights. The day here stands for the light of consciousness, which is unchanging. This is a small part in the sense of being very subtle. In contrast to this is the phenomenal world, which is considerable in size (composed of fifteen parts), that is to say, gross. The night stands for ignorance (*avidyā*), which brings about the world of multiplicity. The creator increases (becomes increasingly manifest) and diminishes (becomes hidden) due to the nights. In the individual context, of the

sixteen parts he is made of, fifteen parts are the wealth, and only one part is the Self. The wealth here is the physical and physiological equipments that make for all action, that is to say body, senses, mind and relations and possessions. The individual is said to increase or diminish as a result of this wealth, but the sixteenth part, namely Self, is steadfast, unchanging. The Self is likened to the hub of a wheel, while the wealth is like the felly (containing the spokes). The individual's increase signifies the presentational world.

Our ordinary consciousness is on the way of increase, and it is therefore that the subtle and steadfast Self is lost sight of; we are living in the creator's night. "Many men are drowned in the wealth's way."¹⁰ This way of increase in phenomenal involvement is termed *avidyā* in the Upanishads, as opposed to *vidyā* which is knowledge of the Self. "The two, *vidyā* and *avidyā*, are widely divergent in their ends, in fact opposed to each other."¹¹ Sri Aurobindo in his commentary on the *Īśa Upanishad* explains *vidyā* as the consciousness of unity of things and *avidyā* as the consciousness of multiplicity: "Those who are aware of only the multiplicity of forms and not their reconciling oneness and live in line with that understanding are closed to the light of true knowledge and sink into obscurity."¹² The Upanishads point to *vidyā* as the course open to the earnest seeker: one who would understand reality, or reach the Self, should necessarily diminish his worldly involvement. Austerity, penance, sacrifice and privations involved in what the Upanishads call '*brahmacharya*' are all intended to diminish the individual's 'wealth component' so that the subtle Self would reveal itself, would blaze forth. "By austerity (*tapas*) Brahman becomes built up," says a text.¹³

The consciousness of unity (*vidyā*) and the consciousness of multiplicity (*avidyā*) although divergent in their ends and opposed to each other in their direction are really different grades of the same reality. For the Upanishads, reality is one. Consciousness, whether of the Self or the presen-

tational world, is one. But there are levels of consciousness, grades of reality. The phenomena in which we are engaged in our normal lives is the coarsest layer of existence; the pure consciousness of the Self ('the smokeless fire') is the subtlest. The transactional level of consciousness is preoccupied with 'this' (*idam*). One who believes that 'this' is everything and that there is nothing beyond comes again and again into death's grip, for the 'beyond' does not occur to him; he is too much engrossed in the 'wealth' and neglects the subtle self.⁴⁴

In a dialogue between Yājñavalkya and Bhujya Lāhyāyani,⁴⁵ the expressions totality (*samaṣṭi*) and individuality (*vyāṣṭi*) are employed; and it is shown how the wind can be a totality (as all-pervading) as well as an individuality (as Breath). This is the prevailing orientation in the Upanishads, and facts of observation are analysed both from the total and individual standpoints. This necessarily involves heavy symbolism. Consider for instance the interesting conversation between Gārgya-Bālāki and Ajātaśatru.⁴⁶ In answer to Ajātaśatru's question (Who is Brahman?) Gārgya successively lists sun, moon, lightning, space, wind, fire, water, mirror, sound, quarters of space, shadow, and body as containing the person (*puruṣa*) who is to be regarded as Brahman. These are not to be regarded as merely natural phenomena; the import is essentially symbolic. The commentator Śaṅkara has related them all to the individual.⁴⁷ Sun, which is preëminent and the head of all living beings really stands for the *eye*; moon is the *mind*; the brilliant flash of lightning is the *skin* which is spread all over the body; space is the full but non-active space within the 'heart' (*hṛdayākāśa*); wind which is like 'an unconquered army' is the Breath in man; fire, the vanquisher, is *speech*; water is the *vital fluid* in the body related to sex; mirror, which is bright and shining is the *nature of transparency* (*prasādasvabhāva*); sound which follows one as he goes is *life* (*asu*); quarters of space represent *cars*; shadow which is described as death is really

the 'veiling ignorance' (*āvaraṇātma-ajñāna*); and finally the body (*ātman*) signifies individual consciousness. Gārgya stops here. And while Ajātaśatru agrees that each of these is an aspect of Brahman, he does not think that this is the whole story. "This is not all," he tells Gārgya, "the real of the real (*satyasya satyam*) transcends all that is manifest; it is of the nature of pure consciousness (*viṁānamayah*), but enlivens all organs which awake and in sleep withdraws from them into the 'space within the heart' and rests there."⁴⁸

The *person* that is referred to in the above dialogue is according to Śaṅkara the individual that acts in the world and is reacted to by the world (*kartā bhoktā ca*). The problem thus would be in what part or organ or function of the individual is contained the animating spirit, the Self. Each of the bodily structure-function complexes enumerated above is a level of consciousness, a degree of reality; but to get at the *real* reality, *viz.*, the Self, one has to transcend all these levels and degrees. This becomes clear when we examine the very course the Self has taken in its manifestation: the various elements mentioned in the cosmological speculations of the Upanishad, represent different stages in evolution, and the Self has to transcend each stage before he unfolds himself more.

A highly suggestive formulation occurs in the course of a dialogue between king Janaka and the sage Yājñavalkya concerning light for the individual,⁴⁹ where sun, moon, fire, speech and the Self are in a sequence mentioned as lights. The symbolism here is clear. Sun represents sense perception (eye etc.), moon mind, fire powers of intuitive understanding, speech faculty of reason and Self pure and free consciousness. These are different levels of consciousness, each level being transcended by the next during the course of evolution. From sensations to thinking, from thinking to intuition, from intuition to reasoning and from reasoning to the total, free consciousness, the development is progressive, the manifestation is gradual and graded. The higher level includes the lower

level and transcends it, so that the highest level, *viz.*, that of total, free consciousness includes all the preceding levels. It is in this sense that the Self is described as "the person composed of mind, with the nature of light, subtle like a grain of rice or barley, ruling over everything and governing the whole universe, whatsoever there is."⁵⁰

KNOWLEDGE-LEVELS

Each of the lights mentioned above is a level of consciousness; knowledge of the Self must not only include all these levels, but must proceed in that order. Sense-organs provide the individual with knowledge. The sense-organs are called information-procurers (*avarodhinī*),⁵¹ or object-apprehenders (*grahas*).⁵² Eye, ear, nose, tongue, skin, and mind are mentioned as cognitive sense-organs; and they are described as modifications of Breath. Besides the different physiological systems that the five-fold Breath is associated with, different sense-functions are also related with it. *Prāṇa* proper, *viz.*, up-breathing, is represented in the eye; *vyāna* (on-breathing) with the ear; *apāna* (down-breathing) with speech in one text⁵³ and with mind in another⁵⁴; *udāna* (out-breathing) with skin in one text⁵³ and with speech in another⁵⁵; and *samāna* (back-breathing) with mind in one text⁵¹ and touch in another.⁵¹

Although the sense-organs have their own specific functions and areas of functioning, mind works with all these sense-organs and is commonly involved in their functioning. But it has its own functions, which are altogether different from those of any of the senses. The Upanishads enumerate several of these functions: perception (*ājñāna*), intelligence (*prajñāna*), wisdom (*medhas*), conception (*samkalpa*), thinking (*mati*), discrimination (*viññāna*), perseverance (*dhyti*), thoughtfulness (*manisā*), purposiveness (*kratu*), desires (*kāma*), will (*vaśa*), memory (*smṛti*), and impulsiveness (*jūti*),^{56a} doubt (*vicikitsā*), faith (*śraddhā*), shame (*hrīh*).

fear (*bhīḥ*) and meditation (*dhīḥ*).^{53b} Broadly, all these are comprehended under 'thought' (*manas*), the processes that occur within the individual for comprehending and manipulating the data received from the 'procurers' (*viz.*, senses).

It is interesting that in these old texts mind has been intimately connected with the expressive faculty, namely speech; and their interdependence has been recognised. One of the familiar Upanishadic prayers has: "May my speech get settled in mind, and may my mind get settled in speech."⁵⁵ Mind is primarily a receptive apparatus and speech an expressive, communicative apparatus; the two together constitute the psychic person who knows, feels and wills. It is interesting too that mind is located in the 'heart'⁵⁷ where also Self is said to reside. This explains the Upanishadic insistence that one knows the self whose form is not to be seen, only by the heart and by the mind.⁵⁸

Reference has here to be made to an account in the *Taittirīya Upanishad*⁵⁹ where the bodily Self (*śārīra-ātman*) is described as progressively composed of food (*anna*), Breath (*prāṇa*), mind (*manas*), consciousness (*viññāna*) and bliss (*ānanda*). Food represents materialised covering; Breath the life-energy; mind the power to cognise objects and control sense-organs; consciousness the knowledge that is not bound by the mind-and-senses but subliminal or supramental awareness; and bliss the free and essential consciousness, aware of its own existence. Each one of these constitutes a 'person' (*puruṣa*): material person, vital person, mental person, consciousness-person and bliss-person. These are also grades of reality in manifestation, the different tiers of Becoming.⁶⁰ And what is of interest to us here is that they represent levels of knowledge.

That these levels are not mutually exclusive fields of action but that the thread of consciousness runs through them all alike is the position of the Upanishads. Yājñavalkya asks Pātañjala-Kāpya: "What is the thread by which this world (inside man) and the other world (outside) and all things

are tied together?", and himself answers: "Wind." And "What is the inner controller who from within controls this world and the other world and all the things?" The answer is: "Dwelling in the senses, but other than the senses, whom the senses do not know but whose physical body the senses are, viz., the Self, the unseen seer, unheard hearer, unthought thinker, un-understood understander."⁶¹ The wind here is the Breath vitalising the body and senses, but it is itself vitalised and guided by consciousness which is more fundamental and nearer to the Self. The Upanishadic concept of *puruṣa* (person) is one of totality. Breath is the mechanical aspect thereof, and consciousness is the teleological aspect. Vitalisation and direction are both involved in this concept.

CONDITIONS OF CONSCIOUSNESS

While individual experiences and the discrete contents thereof are not denied as unreal, the Upanishads seek to emphasise that the underlying reality is one, and that this is consciousness. It works at different levels according to the materials and media available at those levels, without losing its essential identity. They are modes of knowledge, but basically consciousness or knowledge is without modalities. It is this basic consciousness that Upanishads describe as 'bliss' (*ānanda*).

The nearest approach to this 'bliss' experience is in deep, dreamless sleep, an apparently unconscious state. Sleep is an experience, not an absence of experience, but an experience that does not involve knowledge-modes dependent upon senses or mind. "When one is asleep, one knows nothing at all, for he has crept out through the 72,000 heart veins (*hitā*) into the pericardium (*purītat*) and is resting there."⁶² The heart-veins are partly mystical and partly physiological; the same text in another context, explains that a vein or channel through which consciousness flows is 'minute, as a hair subdivided a thousand-fold'.⁶³ 'Heart' here is to be taken as the

physical organ called heart,⁶⁴ and pericardium (*purīta*) is a sort of intestine within the heart, or the 'field of heart' (*hṛdaya-pariveśṣanam*) as Śaṅkara explains it. Consciousness flowing out of heart into this pericardium signifies the movement from the concrete to the abstract, from the form to the formless, from outward orientation to a withdrawal of it. It is a shift in the levels of consciousness. When the text continues to describe that when consciousness is withdrawn from the heart into the pericardium, it is, "beyond desires, free from evil, without fear...the individual when in complete union with the Self, knows nothing within or without."⁶⁵ The import is that consciousness has been withdrawn not only from the phenomenal involvement but from individualisation also, so that consciousness is free, without modalities, without dimensions, altogether unrelated. The Sanskrit word for sleep means 'gone to his own' (*svam apītaḥ*), 'has become Being' (*satā sampannaḥ*).⁶⁶ That is to say, the entire structure of Becoming, which we experience while awake, is withdrawn into Being. This is how we are not aware either of the world or of our individuality, when we are asleep. This state is technically termed 'cessation of development' (*prapañcōpaśama*) in Vedānta.⁶⁷

The Breath in this state continues without modifications into senses or mind, as a 'snatcher-unto-itself',⁶⁸ and consciousness therefore becomes disconnected with concrete presentations, and remains pure. It will just exist (*sat*), and is therefore 'without fear or desire', that is to say quiet (*śānta*) or in the Upanishadic language, 'in bliss' (*ānanda*); it is beyond cognition.

For the Upanishads, therefore, knowledge in sleep is mass-knowledge (*prajñānaghana*); all other knowledge involves modalities. There is in *Bṛhadāranyaka Upanishad*, an outline of the doctrine known as *Mantha-vidyā*⁶⁹ which suggests that all normal knowledge and action involves a mixture (*mantha*) of elements. Nature itself is a fine mixture of elements: earth (*bhūh*), atmosphere (*bhuvah*), and sky (*svah*). And in the

individual these factors occur as body, physical Breath, and consciousness. They are inseparably mixed, integrated, configured; and ordinary knowledge reflects this mixture of contents in experience. Each sense is a 'uniting-field' (*ekāyanam*) of discrete experiences of a kind, mind the 'uniting field' of all intentions (*samkalpas*), heart of all knowings (*vidyās*), even as the sea is the uniting field of all rivers.⁷⁰ Physical sensations and practical experiences get mixed up or integrated in what we call knowledge. Senses are instruments of this integration, but the actual integrator is the mind. For when mind is elsewhere, one cannot see or hear; it is in fact with the mind that one sees or hears.⁷¹

Senses are modifications of Breath, but it is the mind that is actually fastened to the Breath. While awake, mind flies here and there, directing the senses and apprehending objects in search of a resting ground (*āyatanam*), but gets only strained thereby, even as a bird fastened with a string flies hither and thither and gets tired. Just as the bird at last settles down upon its fastening, mind rests in the Breath and this is what we call sleep.⁷² But dreaming is regarded as 'waking within sleep'. If wakefulness is being in this world, dream is being in the 'other' world. Experiences in wakefulness provide the material (*mātrā*) for dreams, wherein the mind 'tears apart and builds anew' this material.⁷³ Dream-experiences are projections, but they are based on pleasure and delight.⁷⁴ They are real experiences, which the self projects through the mind, although sense-perceptions are absent. "What is bodily has been struck down; senses are asleep. But the mind is sleepless and looks down on the sleeping senses."⁷⁵ Mind here is the creator, fancy is its principle, and pleasure its purpose.

The three conditions of consciousness, viz., wakefulness, sleep and dreaming, are thus three distinct processes of knowledge. Sleeping and wakefulness are considered to be 'two banks for the river of consciousness' (with Self as the great fish moving hither and thither). In the waking condition one has desires and transacts with the world outside; in sleep,

however, he has no desires whatever, he neither transacts with the world nor does he project a dream-world of his own.⁷⁶ The Upanishad insists that even though transactions and projections are absent in the condition of sleep, it is knowledge nevertheless, "for knowing on the part of the knower never ceases."⁷⁷ And the important distinction, according to the Upanishad, is the absence of dualism (between knower and known) in the state of sleep — dualism which is necessarily involved in waking experience. The expressions *dvaita* (dualism) and *advaita* (non-dualism) have been employed by Yājñavalkya only in this context: wakefulness is dualistic, while sleep is non-dualistic.⁷⁸ The former is object-bound knowledge, ordinary knowledge consisting of experiences of ourselves as interacting with the phenomena, senses and mind as major instruments. The Upanishads classify all arts and sciences under this category, where perceptions, intentions, intellect and reason play their rôles. The latter, however, is the high state, wherein the Self experiences itself directly, without any instrumentations whatsoever. This, according to Upanishads, is the total and real experience, experience of reality as such. While they do not reject the partial experiences involved in ordinary knowledge as unreal or illusory, the value they attach to the total experience is uncompromisingly important.

FREEDOM AND ITS MEANS

SELF AS ULTIMATE VALUE

This brings us to the problem of values in the Upanishadic thought. The problem of purpose of existence bothered the Vedic poet. He conjured up the grand vision of 'universal and eternal order' (*ṛta*) which is sustained by all the high gods (especially Varuṇa), who are in fact children of that order: and man's duty was, according to him, to keep and reflect that order in his life. Closely related to, and mostly identical with the *ṛta* was the *satya*, which is declared by the Sun (Sūrya or Savitr); whose very nature is this *satya*.¹ If *ṛta* is the expression for essential and unchanging reality, *satya* is the truth as an absolute value in human life. *Satya* (or its variant *sat*) in later times got mixed up with *ṛta* and was identified not only with Brahman but with the 'person composed of mind, subtle and residing within the heart'.² This 'person' who is described as the light (*bhāh*) is the Self, the ground of human existence. In relation to this intrinsic value man's obligation was to lead the career of *satya*, a life in consonance with, and leading to, *satya*.

Even in the Vedic period, *ṛta* as an order that the gods had to protect by valour and steadfastness naturally evoked the negative concept of 'death' (*mṛtyu*). If the order preserves, creates and builds up, death destroys and breaks down. The fear of death, the all-devouring monster who challenges even the high gods, looms large in many of the Vedic hymns. *Ṛta* in this sense is described as 'deathlessness' (*amṛta*). The *Rgveda* also spoke of the pair *sat* (real, truth) and *asat* (unreal, falsehood), corresponding with *ṛta* (order) and *mṛtyu* (death). Identified with Brahman and the Self, *Sat-ṛta* was light (*bhārūpa*) while *asat-mṛtyu* was darkness (*tamas*). The Vedic poet and the Upanishadic seer alike pictured a state of

affairs where the light was hidden and darkness prevailed, where death swept across and deathlessness was covered over, and where the unreal held the real in captivity.

The familiar Upanishadic prayer, "Lead me from unreal to the real, from darkness to light, and from death to deathlessness"⁷³ illustrates the career of truth which was mentioned earlier. Man in normal life is caught up in the unreal, feels dull and clouded, threatened by death, and torn with anxiety and sorrow. The imagery of people, "dwelling in the midst of ignorance, deluded, and running aimlessly about like blind men being led by the blind, but puffed up with unfounded confidence"⁷⁴ is a telling one. There are also references in the Upanishadic texts to the "sunless worlds, covered over with blinding darkness in which men wander,"⁷⁵ to "delusion (*moha*) and sorrow (*śoka*),"⁷⁶ to 'confusion' (*sammoha*),⁷⁷ to 'fetters' (*bandhana*),⁷⁸ to 'fear' (*bhaya*)⁷⁹ and to evils (*pāpa*).⁸⁰ Normal life is characterised by anxiety and agitation, ignorance and infatuation. But the Upanishads point out that this state of affairs is not intrinsic to existence. Existence as such, *viz.*, the Self in its natural condition, is free, fearless, immortal, beyond sorrow and evil, immutable and sinless. That is the only absolute value that the Upanishad knows of; that is held out as the end, the goal of human endeavour, the *summum bonum*. To get free, to become deathless, to get rid of impurities, to overcome confusion are involved in the career of *satya*.

The Self (variously called *satya*, *brahman*, *ātman*, and *puruṣa*) is the value that dominates Upanishadic literature. Search for the Self, knowledge of the Self, delight in the Self, experiencing of the Self form fond themes in all the texts. The story of Naciketas illustrates the ways of the earnest seeker after the absolute value (called 'the better course' *śreyas*) as contrasted with the way of the ordinary mortal (called 'the pleasanter course' *preyas*) who has inadequate substitutions of proximate values in the shape of pleasures and possessions. Both ways present themselves to us. The

dull choose the latter way, intent on 'the getting-and-keeping', whereas the wise choose the former, intent on the highest value.¹¹

The attainment of Self as the absolute value is in Indian thought called liberation (*mukti*, *mokṣa*). The Upanishadic texts contain numerous descriptions of the state of liberation, but essentially it is 'getting united with the Self', or more properly 'becoming the Self'. After this is done there is nothing more to be done: one is truly fulfilled. "Having attained the Self, the sages are content with that knowledge; themselves perfected and freed from all passions, completely tranquil indeed are they: obtaining the self that is everywhere and in all shapes, these devout ones become all (enter into the Self)."¹² Such a one tides across the sea of sorrow, crosses over sin, and freed from the knots of the heart becomes immortal.¹³ The Upanishads speak of this state as a calming down, a quieting down, tranquillization of the heart (*śāntahṛdaya*),¹⁴ or the tranquillity of all thought.¹⁵ It is a state of utter and absolute composure: the individual has neither desires nor urges to action, and this is considered 'the choicest essence of the choicest treasure'.¹⁶ This is bountiful tranquillity.¹⁷

The expression may suggest a denial of all that we are, a rejection of the normal consciousness with its phenomenal involvement. But the Upanishads insist that the "knower of Brahman gains the highest... enjoys all desires along with the wise Brahman himself."¹⁸ In other words, the attainment of the Supreme is a fulfilment, a positive gain. The ordinary, limited, and low consciousness that we have now is transformed, on this attainment, to an all-inclusive, unlimited and high state. It is not a mere detail of comprehension, but a new vision, a new power, a new 'compulsion to change' (Sri Aurobindo), an actualisation of a greater being, a more worthwhile being, a 'real' being. "Knowledge," says Sri Aurobindo, "does not end with knowing, nor is it pursued and found for the sake of knowing alone. It has its full value only when it leads to some greater gain than itself, some gain of being."¹⁹

Self-knowledge in this sense is an instrumental value: it is inseparably related with the consequence of that knowledge, namely 'Delight' (*ānanda*). The Upanishads speak of Delight as the highest value — identical with the very Self. To quote Sri Aurobindo again: "Delight of being is the continent of all the fulfilled values of existence which we now seek after in the forms of desire." The Upanishadic Delight is by no means a vulgar hedonistic pleasure complex: it is the fundamental nature of all existence, the very principle responsible for the entire evolution. This is implied in the outburst: "Indeed, who would breathe, and who would live, if Delight were not in the space (within the heart)?"²⁰ The unfoldment of Self into the phenomenal world is rooted in the Delight, but involved in the phenomenal world and caught up in its meshes, the Delight is lost sight of. We go about care-worn and agitated, altogether unconscious of the Delight, which is our essential nature. But when one gains the essence (by becoming the Self) he is 'Delighted'²¹; for this essence it is that generates Delight.²²

Thus Delight is the fundamental principle, the first principle, the core of existence, the innermost of the sheaths which constitute a being. The Upanishad provides a scale of gradation of Delight starting from human pleasures and ending with the essential Delight mentioned above. The discourse that describes this scale is curiously termed the 'Calculus of Delight' (*ānandasya mīmāṃsā*). It is interesting that in this scale, the initial unit, namely human delight (*mānuṣa ānanda*) is explained thus: "A youth, good natured, well-read, sharp, firm and strong, ready to benefit by the whole world — this is one measure of human delight." And a hundred measures of this would be one measure of the delight of a man disciplined in the higher knowledge and free from desires. And so on. A thousand measures of the human delight would be one measure of the Brahman-Delight, which is the essential reality. A continuity is thus established between the ordinary pleasure that we enjoy and the highest Delight which is the

very core of existence. In the transformation of human nature on the wake of the liberating knowledge, there is also a progressive sublimation of the factor of delight. Absolute existence (*sat*), undifferentiated consciousness (*cit*) and supreme delight (*ānanda*) are but three aspects of the same reality which is the highest value in the Upanishadic thought, an objective steadily pursued. The existence thereof is unquestioned, but the attainment of it (or the realisation of it) has presented to the Upanishadic thinker a practical problem: this is in fact his preoccupation. The aspect of Delight emphasises that the value is subjective. Nevertheless, inasmuch as it is not a mere feeling, but a total experience, it is both intrinsic and ultimate.

THE END AND MEANS

Self as Delight is no doubt an experience, besides being an existence or a fact. The knower's consciousness is lifted out of the phenomenal involvement, freed from the limitations of ordinary object-bound ego transactions, and elevated to the highest state of our being, which in the words of Sri Aurobindo, "is not a denial, contradiction and annihilation of all that we now are; it is the supreme accomplishment of all things that our present existence means and aims at, but in their highest sense and in the eternal values."²⁴ It is always described as a "gaining (*labdhi*), an 'achieving' (*āpti*), a 'becoming' (*sambhūti*) — a positive something added to normal consciousness which makes all the difference.

This becomes clear when we consider the expressions of the obligation in relation to this ultimate value. The end not merely exists but prompts the individual to strive for it, to earnestly desire for it and work for it. The Upanishads ask us to obtain (*nibodhata*),²⁵ to know (*viñānata*, *viññā-sasva*),²⁶ to meditate (*upāsita*),²⁷ to 'contemplate' (*nididhyā-sasva*),²⁸ to 'strike' (*viddhi*),²⁹ to 'think' (*dhyāyatha*)³⁰;

the end is to be 'known' (*viññāsītavyam*),³¹ to be 'seen' (*anudraṣṭavyam*),³² to be acquired (*āptavyam*),³³ to be 'struck' (*veddḥavyam*),³⁴ and to be 'sought after' (*anveṣṭavyam*).³⁵ And there is an air of urgency about the call, for unless one gets it here and now, 'great indeed is the loss'.³⁶ Naturally enough, the texts not only mention but dilate upon the means to attain the objective, upon the instrumental values.

A keen desire is of course indispensable. Naciketas, the hero of *Kaṭha Upanishad* illustrates this desire: steadfast was his wish, altogether earnest, and unshaken. Satyakāma Jābāla, Maitreyī, Ajātaśatru, Uddālaka-Āruṇi, Śvetaketu, Jaivali Pravāhaṇa, and several others are distinguished by their earnest application. The numerous episodes in the Upanishads which provide the background for the lively dialogues suggest the importance of intent inquiry and search, for "it is only for the person that seeks, the Self unfolds itself, it is obtained only by him."³⁷ Desire to learn, to know and to experience constitutes the very spirit of the Upanishadic sages. Yājñavalkya explains: "Man is made of desires. As he desires, so he wills; and as is his will so is his action, and as he acts so he obtains."³⁸ And the same sage justified the desire for reaching the Self on the ground that nothing is dearer than Self: Self indeed is the 'honey' (*madhu*) in all beings.³⁹ Love of Self (*ātmakāma*) is said to be the foundation for all other desires: "Verily it is not for the love of all that the Self is dear, but it is for the love of Self that all is dear."⁴⁰

Not only is the Self the foundation of all our desires and levels of consciousness, but everything is centred in it, as "spokes of a wheel in the hub."⁴¹ All objects, all thoughts, all sensations, all physiological processes are sustained only by the Self: it is verily the beam. And knowing the Self, one would know everything.⁴² Therefore, Yājñavalkya insists, one must desire to know the Self.

SĀDHANĀ

The desire when earnest and intense assumes the form of striving (*sādhana*), and for striving to be successful the entire being must be prepared and geared up. Upanishads employ two expressions which are significant: *dhātuprasāda* (equilibrium of all humours and pacification of all faculties),⁴³ and *sattvasuddhi* (purity of the whole being).⁴⁴ These processes are said to result in 'firm mindfulness' (*dhruvā smṛtiḥ*), which in its turn would snap all fetters of the 'heart'. The two expressions are employed in the texts as values in themselves: they are really contributive values. They constitute the essential traits of a person in whom the ultimate value has become operative. They do not, however, stand on their own. They would be meaningless without reference to the Self-realisation, to which in fact they contribute and for which they are in the nature of a preparation.

If this is the preparation for the ultimate attainment, the Upanishads prescribe a training programme to perfect this preparation, and this is called '*brahmacaryā*' or pursuit of the highest reality. The seekers in the various Upanishads are frequently described as 'living the chaste life of a student of the sacred knowledge'.⁴⁵ The expression *brahmacaryā* came in due course to acquire the meaning of stage in life (*āśrama*) devoted to learning and preparation for the next stage, viz., the householder's, and later to acquire the narrower meaning of celibacy. But the Upanishadic *brahmacaryā* is more a matter of discipline, *askesis*, a dynamic involvement with contemplation. It has little to do with celibacy or with the student's stage in life. Anyone, in whatever station, who felt inclined to reach the highest would bind himself to a teacher under the vow of *brahmacaryā*. It is followed by a resolution: "I shall live *brahmacaryā*" (*brahmacaryam vivatsyāmi*) with the consent of a teacher. It would appear that for the Upanishadic mind a teacher was indispensable for *brahmacaryā*.

Seekers after truth always gather round a good teacher, like Yājñavalkya, Varuṇa, Hāridrumata Gautama, Satyakāma Jābāla, Sanatkumāra, Uddālaka-Āruṇi and Raikva. The teacher was said to be the prior form and the pupil the latter form; knowledge their conjunction, teaching being the connection.⁴⁶ The teacher had a firmly established role in the Upanishadic society: he could aspire to be "glorious among men, better than the very wealthy."⁴⁷ A good teacher had always a great congregation of students who came to him from all sides 'as waters run downward, as months run into the year'.⁴⁸ For the universally accepted notion was that "only he knows, who has a teacher."⁴⁹

The teacher was not a mere master of the sacred lore; he had no doubt intelligence (*medhā*) delivered by Indra, but his prayer was to become the possessor of immortality.⁵⁰ The ideal teacher, according to the *Taittirīya Upanishad*, was one whose body was vigorous, and tongue exceedingly sweet; his ears heard abundantly; and he was a living sheath of the sacred knowledge covered over by intelligence. He helped the student by posing challenging propositions and ticklish problems; he stimulated his inquiry and led him on to hitherto uncharted fields of thought. There are many instances of teachers having done all this in the Upanishadic texts. But more important is the teacher's guidance in the practical application of truths intellectually comprehended by the pupil.

The *brahmacaryā* programme with a teacher did not end with discourses. It included attending, inquiring, contemplating, concentrating. The general term for all this is *tapas*, which normally is translated as austerity. Varuṇa tells his son Bhṛgu: 'know the highest by austerity, for austerity is the highest!'⁵¹ Elsewhere we read: "It is by austerity that the highest is built up."⁵² Sometimes austerity is mentioned alongside *brahmacaryā*,⁵³ burning faith (*śnaddhā*),⁵⁴ restraint (*dama*),⁵⁵ learning (*vidyā*) and meditation (*cintā*).⁵⁶ These are in fact elements of austerity or aspects thereof, which are only spelt out

in the above references. It is more usual to refer to austerity in its inclusive character, as in Varuṇa's injunction cited above or in the *Śvetāśvatara* statement: "It is by austerity that one finds Self in himself — as oil in the sesame seeds, as butter in cream, as fire in the friction-sticks."⁵⁷

This statement incidentally suggests the nature of austerity. Oil is no doubt in the sesame seeds; but for it to appear, seeds have to be pressed; butter comes out only when cream is churned; and fire sparks out only when the sticks are rubbed hard enough. Likewise, for the highest in the individual to be realized, one must struggle, put forth effort, and persevere. It is a process of drawing out, a dynamic transformation of being into becoming. The word '*tapas*' means heat, warmth, creative urge, incubation. As a result of effort or energy the ordinary consciousness of man is heated up and what was latent in it comes up when consciousness works on itself, rubs against itself, applies its whole force on itself; the entire being is concentrated; and this is austerity or *askesis*. To quote Pandit: "Tapas is the ingathering of all of one's consciousness and concentrating its force upon the object in view; as a result of this heat of creative incubation there is a release of energy, a dynamism which goes to effectuate the purpose undertaken."⁵⁸

Austerity together with restraint (*dama*) and work (*karma*) is said to be the foundation of the secret doctrine,⁵⁹ the three together constituting a whole. This is the grand means that the ancient texts frequently speak of. Sometimes *tapas* itself is credited with the characteristic of an end. But it is unmistakably the major instrumental value with reference to the ultimate objective of Self-realisation. It is an actual experience and contributes to directly enhance life. In this sense it has an intrinsic worth, while also being an instrument. It is to be noted that it is subjective, being dependent solely on the individual's experience and not existing outside him. It has reference only to the motivations and purposes of the individual; in fact, this is what mobilises all his energies and provides

him with the necessary driving force. It activates him: it not only stimulates him but sustains his efforts. This is what is meant by the statement that the highest is built up by austerity.

Austerity is looked upon as more or less an abstract value though concrete action patterns like restraint and meditation, faith and effort are associated with it. However, there is at least one reference where it occurs as a practical programme. "Just study and teaching — says Nāka Maudgalya — that is austerity."⁶⁰ The *Taittirīya Upanishad* attaches great importance to study and teaching, and regards these as essential conditions for the development of all other virtues. Study in this context is not to be mistaken for acquisition of information concerning secular branches of knowledge: it is an old Vedic expression signifying a sort of sacrifice for the sake of sacred knowledge (*brahmayajña*) as a means for the obtainment of the eternal world.⁶¹ The study is said to calm one's mind (*yuktmanāh*), heal all his ills, render him independent of others; his intelligence is sharpened and his attitudes get constant, with senses under control. It is not so much learning as deep reflection on what has been learnt. Here is an interesting observation that the great Patañjali has made: "What has been learnt from the teacher becomes fruitful in four stages — first while receiving it from the teacher, next while studying it, then while teaching it to others, and finally when applying it to life situations."⁶² This observation applies equally to sacred and secular studies: they are both meant for life. *Brahmacarya* as a preparatory stage was even in the Upanishadic period devoted to the acquisition of literary and technical skills under competent teachers. It was an accepted social institution. But *svādhyāya* was largely outside this institutional framework, and its objective was not so much the acquisition of skills as the obtainment of knowledge that saves.

So this kind of special study was not conducted in the usual schools but in small groups of earnest seekers sharing the uncommon enthusiasm for deeply spiritual matters. These

groups, called *pariṣads*, were occasional, sometimes accidental, and did not survive a few meetings. There was no fixed location, nor were the participants constant. These were in the nature of closed conferences, usually dominated by a celebrated sage of extraordinary attainments, but conducted through debates, disputations, interrogations and inquiries. The results of the transactions in such sessions have been enshrined in the Upanishads. The Upanishadic texts frequently mention such academic sessions and record the deliberations therein. Yājñavalkya figures prominently in several of the conferences. The expression '*Upanishad*' in fact signifies 'approaching for instruction', a session 'wherein is contained the highest good'.⁶³ Owing to the nature of the subject matter of discussion in these meetings, the transactions were confidential and esoteric; and hence the Upanishads were styled secret doctrines (*guhya ādeśa, rahasyam*).

The important point to note is that these meetings were occasions for 'study and teaching' which formed essential features of austerity, and which contributed to austerity as an instrumental value. Although these meetings were occasional and short-lived, the attitude of the participants was full of faith and zeal. Faith (*śraddhā*) comes in frequently for mention as an important factor in the understanding of the highest truth; it is an essential orientation that makes the seeker open to subtle but significant experiences. It is defined as the complete cleansing of the mind (*cetasah samprasādaḥ*) for the purpose of containing the truth.⁶⁴ And its foundation is the 'heart' for "it is by the 'heart' that one knows the faith."⁶⁵ It is interesting that in the context of faith being founded on the 'heart', there is mention of sacrifice (*yajña*) being founded on gifts (*dakṣinā*), and gifts on faith. Sacrifice here is the earnest effort represented by *brahmacaryā* (restraint) and *tapas* (austerity); and gifts symbolise dispossession of oneself, giving up the wealth (involvement with the phenomenal world) deliberately and with an undisturbed mind. Unless one

is willing to give up, restraint and austerity do not become fruitful; and one cannot give up well unless one has an abiding faith.

For the self composed of understanding, the Upanishad says, faith is the head.⁶⁶ That is why Aruṇa tells his son Śvetaketu, "Have faith, my dear."⁶⁷ The Sanskrit expression '*śraddhatsva*' actually means more than having or possessing faith: it signifies exerting faith, putting forth faith, making faith *become*, using faith as a powerful instrument. It is in fact regarded as a contributive value which is subjective. The whole being of a person is well integrated and directed towards the end, the person now responds as one whole, the multitudinous thought-processes and action potentials are all resolved into a unitary response. The world of stimulations is severely narrowed down as also the reaction patterns of the individual. Faith is a state of readiness to receive, a preparatory set geared up for effort. Devoid of this faith, knowledge although communicated through expert instruction will remain but a bundle of pieces of information. Naciketas, into whom 'faith entered'⁶⁸ asks Yama to instruct him for he is full of faith⁶⁹; in other words, he claims he is in a fit condition to receive.

The consideration of faith takes us to the problem of the 'method of approach', viz., *upāsana*. The expression *upāsana* means 'coming very near a thing' or 'approaching'. In Indian tradition, there is a long-standing controversy whether knowledge (*jñāna*) or action (*karma*) is the effective instrument of liberation. Knowledge aims at identity, while action involves separation. The Mīmāṃsakas emphasise the importance of action, especially the action enjoined in the scriptural texts, and reject on the same count the value of knowledge as an instrument to reach the highest end. The Vedāntins led by Śaṅkara, on the other hand, hold fast to knowledge as the sole means of liberation and dismiss action as irrelevant or unimportant. Older thinkers like Bhartṛprapañca, who follow closely the Upanishadic thought, seek to reconcile the two

views (*samuccaya*) by calling attention to the fact that both knowledge and action are equally relevant and involved in the approach that is styled *upāsana*.⁷⁰ The expression in the Upanishad 'the two together' (*ubhayam saha*) is taken to justify this stand. Not entering into the ticklish details of this controversy, we may point out that the Upanishads do underline the role of action (*kriyā* or *karma*) in the production of the knowledge that liberates. We need only refer to the well-known injunction at the very commencement of the *Īśa-Upaniṣhad*: "doing actions only one must desire to live a hundred years."⁷¹

The action in the Upanishad is spoken of in terms of uninterrupted effort or practice (*abhyāsa*, *prasaṅkhyāna*, *upāsana*). Śaṅkara commenting on the *Chāndogya* defines *upāsana* as follows: "It is a steady maintenance of one-pointedness of thought, uninterrupted by any awareness different from this, concerning some object supported in scriptural texts."⁷² It is not mere absorption or concentration, but devoted attention upheld by strong motivation. It is by no means passive or automatic — it is to be actively upheld, maintained, furthered; it is a matter for perseverance. This is what Rāmānuja describes as firm mindfulness, or constant remembrance (*dhruvānusaṁr̥ti*)⁷³ and Vedānta-deśika following him interprets it as meditation (*dhyana*).⁷⁴ Thus the Upanishadic *upāsana* is a deliberate, active, meditative absorption.

It is interesting that the Upanishads suggest that an *upāsana* could be weak or strong. The strong or effective *upāsana* is said to rest on three factors: right knowledge (*vidyā*), faith (*śraddhā*) and a certain intuitive understanding (called *upānishad*).⁷⁵ These three are dynamic involvements, and they are responsible for the 'action' (*karoti*) that the Upanishad speaks of. With faith as a preparatory set, knowledge as a directing force and understanding as the leading light, the approach becomes effective.

When the approach is effective, the veil of ignorance which

hides reality is removed, and concurrently the individual's vision breaks through the limiting particulars and extends beyond the confines of ordinary individualised consciousness. The barriers that are projected by the ego, the mind and the sense-organs are pulled down, and consciousness begins to flow out, flow on and flow through. This is what the Upanishads call the attainment of the Self, which is the ultimate and absolute value.

ORIGINS OF MEDICAL THOUGHT

CONCERNING THE ANTIQUITY

Indigenous Indian medicine has four major lines of development, all of which go back in their origin to a very remote past. Two of them, represented by the physician Caraka and the surgeon Suśruta (both of whom lived in centuries prior to the Christian era), are collectively designated as Āyurveda (or the Science of Life) and sought to be integrated into the Vedic tradition. The third is the system of therapeutical alchemy known as *Rasavaidya* (or the Rasāyana school) where use of metals and mercury is extensive; this is the meeting place of Indian chemistry and Indian medicine. This system developed almost independent of the Vedic tradition, and profited by contact with such cultures as the Arabian, the Persian and the Chinese. The fourth line of development is the Siddha (or the adept) system, the origin of which is obscure but was distinctly outside the Vedic tradition; at present it is prevalent only in South India, especially in the Tamil country. There can be little doubt that all these systems were rooted in the Tāntrik culture, and were to a great extent influenced by the Sāṃkhya-Yoga complex.

The fear of death which has plagued man all along his career here was the most potent motivation for the development and discovery of techniques to prolong life: the goal of all spiritual endeavour as well as all the worldly activities of man is deathlessness (*amṛta*) or continuity of existence. In fact, religions which believe in after-life and immortality of soul have sprung from this deep longing. The early attempt was to prolong the physical existence itself, to make the body strong enough to survive the odds, to make the body itself immortal, to transform the essence (*rasa*) of the fleeting

physical existence into a firm diamond-like substance (*vajra*). Alchemy works within this framework. If death is productive of a strong sense of fear, disease is likewise a source of concern. Death is inescapable, but disease could be prevented and cured. When the causes of disease were largely unknown evil spirits, malevolent deities, black magic, witchcraft and sorcery gained importance in man's imagination. Not only religions have passed this stage, but all science has gone through it. Medicine, in particular, was in its early phases of development intimately involved with these irrational procedures. It was only gradually that medicine was extricated from this involvement.

In Indian medicine the passage from the irrational to the 'rational' was not only very gradual but in a sense was never complete. It does not, however, mean that in India medicine remained stagnant and tied up with primitive beliefs. Far from it, it made marvellous progress, especially Āyurveda; its diagnostic methods, therapeutic procedures, employment of a large number of materials most of which are commonly used in the Hindu kitchen, discovery of the excellent medicinal properties of herbs, plants, trees and the spices, and the determination of the dosage and the manner of taking the medicine are all very well thought out, tried out, codified and systematised. And more than all this, Āyurveda developed a neat and consistent philosophy, which again is a marvel considering its antiquity. This philosophy is singularly free from 'the primitive mentality' which sustained magical practices. The old ideas of deathlessness, bodily continuity for all time, and immunity from all possible forces of disintegration were in Āyurveda brought down to the idea of sound health. There could be little indeed that was mystical in a medical system. But intuition had its own rôle to play, and many of the basic ideas of the philosophy of Indian medicine were obtained, not by reason or observation, but by a differ-

ent process which may be described as 'irrational'. Notwithstanding the accumulations of significant data, refinement in treatment methods, improvement in the methods of drug preparation, the ideological position remained substantially the same throughout the ages. While the practice was thoroughly rational, the theory remained 'irrational' (in the sense of being beyond reason and intuitionally justified). And the use of precious stones, amulets, talismans, and mystic diagrams for curative ends continued alongside an elaborate pharmacopoeia. It is curious, if also somewhat paradoxical, that magic and medicine could coexist for such a long stretch of time, in a country that has been for ages intellectually alert.

The two lines of development of medicine in India represented by Caraka (about 200 B.C.) and Suśruta (about sixth century B.C.) are together known as Āyurveda and go back to a hoary antiquity. There are legends which seek to establish a continuity between the Āyurvedic tradition and the Vedic tradition, with an assumption that the Vedic tradition is without an identifiable beginning. Sometimes Āyurveda is regarded as the fifth Veda; but it is more usual to regard it as a supplementary Veda (*upaveda*). According to *Mahābhārata* (2, 11, 33 spelt out by the commentator Nīlakaṇṭha), it is one of the four *upavedas*, others being archery (*dhanurveda*), musicology (*gāndharva*) and political science (*arthaśāstra*). Within the Āyurvedic tradition itself the medical science is regarded as an appendage (*upāṅga*) of the fourth Veda, viz. *Atharvaveda*. There is a belief that this appendage originally comprised 1,000 sections (while the Veda itself consisted of a little more than 6000 verses); but in consideration of the brevity of human life and poverty of our wisdom, this immense mass was supposed to have got attenuated in course of time to just eight divisions, the extant *aṣṭāṅga-Āyurveda*. Whether it is regarded as an appendage (as Suśruta does) or as a supplementary portion (as Vāgbhata

does) or as an independent Veda (as Caraka does), its association with *Atharvaveda* is a generally accepted proposition.*

It is well known that *Atharvaveda* is outside the classical Vedic complex which originally was only threefold (*trayī*) — *Ṛk*, *Yajus* and *Sāman*. Although *Atharva* came to acquire the Vedic status at a later date the content is clearly more ancient than the *Ṛks* themselves.¹ It has been shown that the *Atharva* really goes back to the Indus age.² Indeed, the outlook of magical spells, amulets, charms, incantations, curative abracadabra, witchcraft and sorcery that we find predominant in this Veda reflects a primitive mentality. *Atharvāṅgiras*, the old name for the *Atharvaveda* suggests a twofold approach: pacificatory-curative practices (*śānta*) and the practices of witchcraft and sorcery (*ghora*). Both practices were equally in the hands of priestly magicians and medicine-men (the *atharvans*) who dominated the scene before and during the *Ṛgvedic* period. The situation has continued to our own day, after nearly seven thousand years, in the rural parts of our country and among the tribal folk. Kul-lūka-bhaṭṭa, Manu's commentator, was right when he said that there are in this country two distinct traditions, Tāntrik and Vedic.³ The latter is generally, but not necessarily, associated with the Āryan achievement of an abstract, other-worldly, sacrificial-symbolic, intellectual-philosophical outlook; and the former is identified with the numerous pre-Āryan folk cults with a ritualistic involvement especially related to the mother-goddess and strongly oriented to the satisfaction of natural instincts. There is little doubt that *Atharvaveda* emerged out of this mass of popular beliefs and practices, in an attempt to accommodate them within the Vedic tradition.

It is highly significant, therefore, that Āyurveda relates itself to *Atharvaveda*. Of the nine classical recensions (*śākhās*) of this Veda, only two (Paippalāda and Śaunakīya) are

available now. The ninth recension, called 'Cāraṇavaidyā', no longer extant, presumably contained the lore of wandering medical practitioners and also curatives (*bheṣajāni*). Probably the wandering doctors of this age were responsible for the creation of a school of medical thought, expounded and defended later by the Ātreya-Caraka line of development. It is interesting in this connection to note that *Caraka-saṃhitā* argues that there was no time when medical knowledge and practices were not current among the people. Āyurveda in his view has a beginningless continuity; when it is related or affiliated to Veda it is in the nature of a concession to sophistication. It would be wrong to regard Āyurveda as a development of the *R̥gveda* or of *Yajurveda* as the Vedāṅgas (like Nirukta, Jyotiṣa, Chandas and Śikṣā) were. In fact it belongs more naturally to the amorphous heterogeneous Tāntric tradition, which in point of time was pre-Vedic. When we find characteristically Āyurvedic ideas like the circulation of multiple breaths inside the body or the three pathogenic factors (*tridoṣa*) or the medicinal properties of the herbs and plants (*oṣadhi*) in the Vedic literature, it is to be assumed that the Vedic culture found it necessary or expedient to assimilate these meaningful or prevalent ideas belonging to the people outside its own fold.

It is psychologically significant that Vedic references with regard to physicians and medical practice in general betray an ambivalent feeling. It was necessary to accept medical aid, and that is how medical knowledge was incorporated in the Vedic group although this knowledge came from the folk that they frequently fought with. Rudra, clearly a divinity belonging to the Tāntric culture, was the 'first physician' (*prathamō daivyo bhiṣak*) and the Vedic poet prays: "O Rudra, may we not make you furious! You are indeed a bull! We hear you are the best among physicians, and may our children grow up with your remedies!"⁴

Aśvins are again the first physicians who protect and rescue the blind, the weak, the aged and those 'that have fallen into the pit'.⁵ But they are impure (*apūtau*) 'like the physicians that wander among men': and physicians are unclean, unworthy of sacrifice'.⁶ *Rgveda* includes a hymn to the healing herbs (*Oṣadhīstuti*, 10, 97), ascribed to the 'cure-man' (*bhīṣaja*) and addressed to Soma, the divine king of plants who is represented on earth by the psychedelic drink (Indian hemp? asclepiade?) which the Vedic poets drank and offered to the gods. But the stigma against the healing art continued till the period in which the *Dharmaśāstras* were prepared; medicine was considered an ignoble profession which no high-born should condescend to take up. It was a service which was no doubt vital, but in the vocational set-up it was assigned an inferior status.

Whatever the reason for the initial taboo, in later times when drinking became morally reprehensible and was considered a vice which heralded the other vices, the healing art which extolled the virtues of wine (as illustrated in *Caraka-* and *Bhela-saṃhitās* where a good case for liquor is made out) was naturally looked down upon. *Āyurveda* not only includes alcohol in its pharmacopoeia (*āsavas* and *ariṣṭas*), but had use for meat and drugs extracted from animal bodies. *Caraka* lists as many as 170 medicines of animal origin. The *Āyurvedic* notion of a happy life was not exactly to the liking of the austere, ascetic and puritanical lawgivers. They naturally frowned upon such advice coming from *Āyurvedic* sources as: "There is no sin in eating meat, in drinking liquor, or in sex-indulgence: they are natural inclinations. But there is merit in self-restraint".⁷ Belonging as it does to the Tāntric tradition, *Āyurveda* looked upon body as the home of enjoyments (*bhoga*) and also of ailments (*roga*). Drinking can be for enjoyment: it is hearty, makes one light, good for all beings, removes worry, pain and fatigue,

expands the mind and corrects the disorders of phlegm;⁸ but excessive drinking (*pānātyaya*) can be seriously disturbing and all Āyurvedic texts contain a section of treatment procedures for alcoholics. Health for them was the highest consideration, and proper enjoyment was after all a part of sound health. Clean life, good food, normal pleasures and vigorous health constituted the major part of Āyurvedic ethics: deprivation and over-indulgence were equally wrong in this outlook. If austerity was prescribed, it was in consideration of health, and not because of religious reasons.

And the physicians naturally attached an enormous importance to the body, its preservation and improvement (*yoga-kṣema*). A physician was expected to understand human constitution (*dehatattva*) and human nature (*dehasvabhāva*); and his job was to secure the efficiency of the physical apparatus that we call the body (*kāyasādhana*). These ideas were directly drawn from the Tāntric tradition; the emphasis on nature and on the need to improve upon it were basically related to the Sāṃkhya-Yoga complex. The Vedic culture, on the other hand, regarded the body as something to be suppressed, ruled over with an iron will, and denied its natural demands to the barest minimum. Phenomenal existence (*lokatattva*) for it was unimportant even if not illusory, while for the Tāntric tradition it was all-important. The outlook that gained currency in the wake of Vedic influence, but at a much later period, looked upon the body as essentially an evil, a snare, a home of dirt, a habitation of the satanical forces of lust, greed, envy and wrath; by and large it was considered impossible for soul to reach salvation until the physical body was eliminated or sufficiently weakened. But Āyurveda held that the body was the foundation of all wisdom and the source of all the supreme objectives (*dharmā, artha, kāmā and mokṣa*);¹⁰ apart from his body there is nothing that is of great help to man. If one does not realize the Absolute in this very body,

argued Āyurveda, it is even more difficult for him to realize it when he has gone beyond the body.

ASSIMILATION AND SYSTEMATISATION

The antipathy entertained by orthodoxy towards Āyurveda must be considered in this background. And when Āyurveda had to be accommodated within the Vedic complex, *Atharvaveda* was naturally where it belonged. Caraka's protestation that Āyurveda is superior to other Vedas, because it deals with life which is the foundation for all happiness and profit,¹⁰ is symptomatic of the sensitivity of the medical practitioners of that period; and their affiliation to *Atharvaveda* was in the nature of a challenge, for that Veda also enjoyed a dubious reputation in the orthodox circles. Caraka's commentator, Cakrapāṇi-datta, boldly suggests that *Atharvaveda* became Āyurveda by focussing its attention on the curative aspect.¹¹ The orthodox view, however, was slightly different. Dārila-bhaṭṭa, an early commentator on *Kauśika-sūtra* belonging to the Śaunakīya recension of *Atharvaveda*, says: "There are two kinds of diseases, one kind caused by eating unwholesome food and the other caused by evil spirits. The former are treated by Āyurveda while the latter are dealt with in this science (viz., *Atharvaveda*)."¹² Diseases caused by unnatural conditions and beyond easy or clear diagnosis were generally ascribed to the wrath of spirits, infection by unwholesome elements, influence of evil forces, effect of magic, or transgression of tribal laws. The treatment of such ailments naturally involved the employment of supernatural agencies to one's own advantage. The curative procedures in *Atharvaveda* includes magical spells (*mantra*), amulets (*maṇḍhārāṇa*), expiation (*prāyaścitta*), magical potions (*auśadha*), sacrifices (*bali* and *homa*), pacificatory rites (*maṅgala* and *svastyayana*), fasting (*upavāsa*) and pilgrimage (*yātrā*). All these have survived in

Hinduism despite their rejection in the later Vedic tradition and most of these practices go back to pre-Vedic tradition. The other downright occult practices of magicians and sorcerers (which figure prominently in this Veda) have, however, been confined to the unsophisticated and pre-literate folk.

One of the eight branches of classical Āyurveda was the treatment of ailments caused by supernatural agencies (*bhūtavidyā*); another was toxicology (*agadatantra*), counter-acting poisonous bites and evil influences; still another was virilification (*vājīkaraṇa*), restoring lost or reduced vitality, by medical and magical means. These three branches belong more naturally to *Atharvaveda* than to classical Āyurveda. The other five branches, internal medicine (*kāyacikitsā*), surgery (*śalya-tantra*), treatment of diseases of ENT (*śālākya-tantra*), paediatrics (*kaumāra-bhṛtya*), and rejuvenation (*rasāyana*), were specialised in Āyurveda: they developed altogether independently of the *Atharvaveda*.

Although Indian medicine sought to wean itself out of Atharvanic practices and ideology at a very early age it retained its Tāntric complexion for a long time. Even classical Āyurveda accepted Sāṃkhya as its theoretical basis, and Sāṃkhya has already been shown to be the view-point of the Tāntric tradition,¹³ uncompromisingly atheistic and materialistic in its early phases at least and therefore anti-Vedic. We find in *Caraka-saṃhitā* in its present form (about 100 B.C.) the earlier Sāṃkhya of Pañcaśikha whereas in *Suśruta-saṃhitā* as redacted by Nāgārjuna (about third century A.D.) the Sāṃkhya is of the classical type (Īśvara-kṛṣṇa's). There is, in both *saṃhitās*, a considerable softening of the anti-Vedic fervour and an attempt to reconcile the Sāṃkhya with the general orthodox orientation. We have to note that both these *saṃhitās* are only reconstructions and redactions of earlier Tantras which have been lost. We can

never conjecture what the orientation of these lost Tantras was like. The very expression 'Samhitā' in the works ascribed to Caraka and Suśruta betrays an anxiety to fall in line with the orthodox texts belonging to the Vedic literature. Caraka's *Samhitā* was a reconstruction of a tantra, *Agniveśa-tantra* (as in the colophon "*ityagniveśakṛte tantrē caraka-pratīsamskṛte*"). Of the 1500 medical tracts listed in Aufrecht's catalogue a good many are styled tantras: *Jīvaka-tantra*, *Kāpila-tantra*, *Sātyaki-tantra*, *Karāla-tantra* and so on. Even the eight branches (*aṣṭāṅga*) of classical Āyurveda were called tantras: *Śalya-tantra*, *Agada-tantra*, *Rasāyana-tantra*, *Śālākya-tantra*, *Vājikara-tantra*, etc. It is not accidental that all these were called *tantras*. The belongingness of Āyurveda to the Tāntric tradition has been consistent.

Indian medicine was actively cultivated during several centuries (seven to eight centuries according to Filliozat)¹¹ before the birth of Christ. We have the evidence of Megasthenes the Greek ambassador who visited India in the fourth century B.C., that the Śramaṇas (a group of philosophers and ascetics outside the Vedic fold) were practising medicine and were greatly honoured by the people for this service. There is a suggestion in Strabo (15, 170) that these Śramaṇas (*pramanai*) were also magicians: here is another clue to the belongingness of Indian medicine to the Tāntric tradition.

It is customary to recognise two major lines of development in Āyurveda, one specialising in internal medicine (*kāya-cikitsā*) and the other with a basis in favour of surgery (*śalya-tantra*). The two branches have much in common; and the basic theoretical framework is the same for both. The former line of development reached its culmination in the *Samhitā* of Caraka while the latter achieved its perfection in the *Samhitā* of Suśruta. These two compendia are regarded as supreme authorities in Āyurvedic theory and

practice, and their authority has been unrivalled despite numerous eminent authors in the field. We do not know for certain if they were historical personages at all. Caraka is said to be a class-name for wandering physicians who were popular even during the time of Pāṇini.¹⁵ Suśruta, which means 'learned', may not in fact be a proper name. However, Indian tradition takes them as real medical authors and they are supposed to have lived during the later Vedic period. The line of development represented by Caraka is called the Ātreya school and Suśruta's school is named after Dhanvantari. We are again not sure who Ātreya or Dhanvantari really was. It is helpful to follow the traditional lead. Both Caraka and Suśruta agree that Āyurveda was first formulated by the self-born Brahmā, who communicated the system to Prajāpati, and he to the twin-divinities, the Aśvins, who in their turn passed it on to Indra. The Aśvins who are regarded as the 'divine physicians' (*devānām bhīṣajā*) are described as having cured Indra, the mighty Vedic hero-god when he had fallen ill due to excessive Soma drinking (the ailment later nomenclatured *pānātyaya*). The Sautrāmaṇi ritual puts the Aśvins into close relation with Indra, but otherwise their relation is not very intimate in Vedic literature.

After Indra, however, the lines branch off. On Caraka's side, Indra handed over Āyurveda to the sage Bhāradvāja, and he taught Ātreya-Punarvasu and other sages. Ātreya had six disciples: Agniveśa, Bhela, Jatūkarna, Parāśara, Hārīta and Kṣarapāṇi. Each of them composed their own versions of Ātreya's teaching and the first to compose was Agniveśa. It was Agniveśa's work (*tantra*) that was reconstructed (*pratisamśkrīta*) by Caraka. On Suśruta's side, Indra taught Āyurveda to Dhanvantari, appearing as the king of Kāśī, Divodāsa, and he taught the system to a group of students among whom Aupadhenava, Vaitaraṇa, Aurabhra, Pauṣkalāvata, Gopura-rakṣita and Suśruta are mentioned. After Indra, Bhāradvāja

was the founder of Caraka's line and Dhanvantari-Divodāsa of Suśruta's line. It is interesting to note that both Bhāradvāja and Divodāsa have been mentioned in *Rgveda* as contemporaries who were together protected (and whose 'routes were made circular') by the Aśvins.¹⁶ This would make Suśruta an earlier authority, for Caraka was removed at least by two generations after Bharadvāja, Ātreya and Agniveśa.

It is unfortunate that all these early medical treatises have been lost, excepting Bhela's which has survived in a single manuscript mutilated and fragmentary. Both Bhela and Caraka rely heavily on Ātreya (Ātreya-Punarvasu) and claim to follow him closely. As has been mentioned already, the work of Agniveśa (who was a contemporary and fellow-student of Bhela under Ātreya) is no longer extant in its original form; what we have today is only a reconstruction of it by Caraka, or more probably a redaction by Dr̥ḍhabala (about ninth century A.D.) who completed the work undertaken by Caraka by writing the seventeen sections of the Sixth Book (*Cikitsāsthāna*) as well as the remaining two books (*Śiddhisthāna* and *Kalpasthāna*), presumably planned by Caraka.¹⁷ Cakrapāṇi-datta's commentary on this work known as *Āyurveda-dīpikā* (about 1050 A.D.) is very informative. There is another commentary, written about the same time, by Śivadāsaśena. Our knowledge of Caraka's school of thought is principally based on the Dr̥ḍhabala's redaction and Cakrapāṇi's commentary.

Likewise, Suśruta's work is no longer available in its original form. What we have is a revision by one Nāgārjuna.¹⁸ We have in the history of our thought at least three Nāgārjunas, and it is hard to identify the redactor (*pratisaṃskartā*) of Suśruta. Perhaps he was the Siddha-alchemist who lived about the third century A.D. We have other works by him, *Rasaratnākara* being the well-known one. Ḍalhaṇa (about the tenth century A.D.) wrote a splendid commentary, *Nibandhasaṅgraha* on Nāgārjuna's revision of *Suśruta-saṃhitā*. There

is another commentary by Cakra-datta (about the same time). Ḍalhaṇa mentions many previous commentators like Cejjata, Gayādāsa, Bhāskara; but their works have been lost.

The fusion of the two lines of the development was attempted by Vāgbhaṭa (about seventh century A.D.) who compiled his *Aṣṭāṅgahṛdaya* incorporating the views not only of Caraka and Suśruta, but also Bhela and Hārīta as well as the Rasāyana system. This work it was that gave Āyurveda its definition. If this medical school has survived as a unitary discipline and as a perfect synthesis of theory and practice it is due to this work of Vāgbhaṭa. Another great help in equipping Āyurveda with an excellent diagnostic tool came from Mādhavakara (eighth century A.D.) who prepared his clinical guide-book *Rugviniścaya* (familiarily known as *Mādhavanidāna*). During the time Vāgbhaṭa and Mādhavakara lived Āyurveda became highly systematised, its pharmacopoeia expanded, and treatment procedures refined. The system continued to grow vigorously about the thirteenth century after which there has been a steady stalemate; the beginning of the thirteenth century "marked the end of an era of growth and standardization."¹⁹ In the mediæval ages, the Rasāyana system was, by a curious combination of circumstances, rejuvenated and the drugs and remedies evolved in this system became popular. Although there was considerable interaction between Āyurveda and Rasāyana, Āyurveda as a growing discipline appears to have lost its vitality about this period.

BASIC ORIENTATIONS

For Caraka, Āyurveda was just a "science of life": it "instructs us about life."²⁰ Suśruta, on the other hāṇd, suggests that Āyurveda is that "by which life is obtained or examined."²¹ Life in both definitions stands for health, or diseaselessness (*ārogya*). And the basic postulate is that man is a conglomeration of elements, a pattern of factors: and when these elements or factors are properly balanced (*samyagyoga*) it is

beneficial (*hita*) and pleasant (*sukha*). The balance involves the sense-functions (*kāla*), sense-objects (*artha*) and the three-fold behaviour (*karma*—bodily, vocal and mental). Treatment (*cikitsā*) becomes necessary when the effective balance gets weakened (*hīna*) or distorted (*mithyā-yoga*). While Āyurveda in theory concedes the curative value of Atharvanic practices (*daiva-vyapāśraya*) emphasis is almost exclusively laid on the treatment based on man's reason (*yukti-vyapāśraya*) like medicine, diet and habits. Among the Indian systems of thought it is Āyurveda that openly recognises reasoning as an independent and important instrument of knowledge (*pramāṇa*). This naturally marks a point of departure from the primitive mentality of reliance on magic, and signifies the dawn of what may be called the scientific spirit. The methods of Āyurveda are interesting: observation (*pratyakṣa*), examination (*parīkṣā*), inference based on reason (*anumāna* or *yukti*), discussion with colleagues (*sambhāṣā*), formulation of hypotheses (*pratiñā*), and diagnosis (*nīdāna*). There is a special value assigned to advice from competent authority (*āptopadeśa*).²²

Āyurveda accepts another treatment procedure based on Yoga ideology, 'mastering the mind' (*sattvāvajaya*). This consists in restraining oneself from excess, from unwholesome sense-functions, and controlling one's own mental states. Caraka argues that most of our troubles are due to folly or errors of judgment (*prajñāparādha*): and to avoid or eliminate the troubles, one must 'live correctly' (*sadvṛtta*). Correct living, according to Āyurveda, does not involve supernatural sanction or Vedic authority. It is wholesome, integrated living which adequately satisfies the three fundamental motivations: urges for self-preservation, desire for material provisions which make life comfortable, and longing for better states of existence, here and hereafter. Ethics is thus judiciously subordinated to pragmatic considerations.

Although Āyurveda is by its Tāntric background committed to the body-principle (*dehatattva*) and to the idea of

making the body efficient (*kāyasāadhanā*), there is in it an acceptance of what may be called the 'psyche' (*ātman*), a spiritual principle different from, and independent of, the body. The person (*puruṣa*) who is regarded in this system as the frame of reference for all medical speculation and object of treatment is a configuration (*samavāya*) of the body (including the sense-organs), mind, and the psyche, organised into a single system in the manner of a tripod.²³ The body is grossly material made up of the five physical elements (*pañcabhūtas*): space (or ether), air, fire, water and earth. Senses are sockets in the body made up of the same elements. Mind too is likewise physical, but subtly so. It transcends the sense and is therefore termed meta-sensory (*atīndriya*); the senses are activated by it, guided by it, and in that capacity it is described as 'supporting' or 'furnishing the ground' (*adhiṣṭhāyaka*). The 'psyche' upholds, bears up, preserves these factors, and therefore it is 'the upholder' (*dhārin*); and in so doing it actively binds the factors into a single system; in other words, it is a designer (*anubandha*). Life (*jīvita*) is thus an organisation, a phenomenological unity (*samyoga*).

The individual person who is thus essentially dynamic and is a product of transaction is known in Āyurvedic literature by two expressions: *karma-puruṣa* (Caraka) and *samyogi-puruṣa* (Suśruta). The former word emphasises the activity aspect of the individual, while the latter, the integrational aspect. Both words bring out the phenomenological, transactional, and dynamic characters of the individual. The person may be viewed as the field of activity, providing motivation for all action and organising the physical factors that go to make up the body.²⁴ In this sense it is described as 'one with a body' (*śarīrin*). The psyche is involved in this field as a factor, no doubt as an important factor but as one of the factors nevertheless.

Āyurveda explains the function of this factor which 'upholds' the other factors (known collectively as the body-mind

complex). The psyche when active excites the mind (*manas*) into action, for the psyche is invariably associated with the mind (which incidentally is a doctrine peculiar to Āyurveda).²⁵ The cognition occasioned by mind may not necessarily be of the external world, for, as explained by Caraka's commentator Cakrapāṇi, there can be no cognition of the external world without the participation of sense-organs. In the absence of sense participation, cognition of the psyche as is occasioned by the mind alone persists. This is not transactional cognition, but introverted cognition (*ātmañāna*), independent of objects (*nirviśaya*), indeterminate, unstructured and devoid of form. But this introverted cognition is not to be construed in terms of *ātmañāna* of the Vedānta. Here it is purely a psychophysical process, only unstructured and indeterminate. And Caraka specifically subscribes to the notion of psychophysical parallelism.²⁶ And his doctrine of invariant association of mind with the psyche would adequately explain his formulation of the phenomenological person (*samyogipuruṣa*).

Āyurveda's indebtedness to the Sāṃkhya school of thought has expressed itself in the concept of the 'subtle-body' (*sūkṣma-śarīra* or *līṅgadeha*).²⁷ Constituted by consciousness, ego, eleven senses, and five subtle elements, this body is said to survive the physical body and transmigrate; "like a little thing no bigger than a thumb, yet pervading the entire body even as a small lamp lights the whole room."²⁸ This body is called 'līṅga' because it merges thoroughly with the constitution. In Āyurveda, this body is composed of air, fire, water, earth and mind: it is exceedingly subtle and is carried over (*ātivāhika*). This is sometimes referred to as 'elemental consciousness' (*bhūtātma*), a mass of fine particulars integrated and directed by the psyche (*jīva*). The individuals as determined by this subtle mass of directions within is, according to Suśruta, the *karma-puruṣa* whose disorders medicine seeks to correct.²⁹ The subtle body is a substrate, a foundation, a ground for the psychophysical constitution to take shape and

function. The foetus is said to be formed as a result of the father's sperm (*śukra* or *sattva*) and the mother's blood (*śoṇita* or *rajas*) coming together but not until the subtle body has migrated into this union.³⁰

This subtle body, mind, heat-power (*agni*), watery contents (*soma*), breath (*vāyu*), and the five senses (cognitive functions) are together described as the vital currents (*prāṇāḥ*), which are located in one hundred and seven vital centres (*marmas*), of which head, heart and pelvis (*vasti*) are considered most important.³¹ Sensory and mental functions are associated with the head, while consciousness (*citta*) is located in the heart. It is interesting that Caraka calls heart by the characteristically Sāṅkhyan word for elemental consciousness, '*mahat*'. In heart it is that all modes of consciousness are gathered, and all vital currents are centred.³²

Human constitution, according to Suśruta, is distinguished by the following functions: physiological functions (like breathing), reflex actions (like winking), sensory functions (*viśayopalabdhi*), intellectual functions (like decision, *niścaya*, inquiry *vicāraṇā*, scrutiny and apperception *viijnāṇa*, memory *smṛti*) and energetic application (*adhyavasāya*). These functions are organised on the basis of a network of elemental modifications that work together to 'uphold' the body (*dhātu*). There is a normal pattern that may be described as 'health'. When in this normal pattern all processes are properly balanced in an equilibrium the flow is unitary and at an even pace (*samyogavāhī*); the factors that 'uphold' the body, viz., *dhātus*, are in their proper natural proportions (*prākṛta-māna*) so that the balance (*sāmyāvasthā*) is maintained. When, however, these factors are deficient or in excess, the balance is disturbed and disease results.

Disease thus is essentially in the nature of departure from normalcy or disturbance (*vikāra*). There are forces within the body that make the body foul (*mala*) and disturb its processes. It is important to note that there are also forces within the

body' which strive to keep the body clean and its processes even (*prasāda*). The aim of Āyurveda as a curative discipline is to strengthen the 'prasāda' forces against the 'mala' forces. The struggle between them is normal and natural, and health is a necessary concomitant of this struggle. The job of a physician is merely to aid nature in its normal struggle³³ so that the proper balance of the basic design in the body (*dhātu-sāmya*) is secured.

Important in Āyurveda is the notion of equivalence of macrocosm (*brahmāṇḍa*) and microcosm (*piṇḍāṇḍa*), inherited from the Tāntric tradition. The structure of the individual organism is essentially similar to the structure of the universe.³⁴ This refers to the five primary elements (*pañcabhūtas*) that enter into composition: earth (density, solidity), water (cohesion, liquidity), air (expansion, movement), fire (heat, light), and ether (space, extension). The body is as material and physical as the world around it: its growth, maturation, decay and disappearance follow the same natural laws. The primary elements combine and modify to produce and maintain the inorganic as well as the organic world. In the organic world, however, their modifications assume a particular pattern, best illustrated in the human body. But the Āyurvedic theory applies equally to human beings as to the lower animals or even to plants. There are not only branches of Āyurveda to treat elephants (*Hastyāyurveda*), cows (*Gavāyurveda*) and horses (*Aśvavaidyaka*) but there is a discipline which specialises in maintaining and correcting the health of plants (*Vṛkṣāyurveda*). There are treatises written on these branches and there is no doubt that these specialities were once actually practised.

THREE-FACTOR THEORY AND TYPOLOGY

Suśrutta quotes an ancient opinion: "The constitution (*prakṛti*) of human beings is physical: it is made up of air, fire and water."³⁵ Of the five classical elements (the *pañcabhūtas*) these three were held in high regard even by the Vedic

poets who personified them as wind-gods (*maruts* or *vāyu*), fire-god (*agni*) and water-divinities (*varuṇa*). The wind-god is the most powerful; it is indeed the soul of all gods, essence of the very worlds, first-born of the natural order, king of the cosmos.³⁶ The fire-god of course was the living divinity in a sacrificial society. And waters were "the causes of creation," rich in *rasas* and containing the 'liquor of immortality'.³⁷ Perhaps this recognition follows an earlier thought-complex. In any case, the five primary elements in the cosmos were supposed to be represented by these three in man. In the Tantra-Sāṃkhya speculation each of the elements is characterised by one or more of the three modes of being (*guṇa*): *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*, discussed in an earlier chapter. The earth element is characterised by *tamas*, air by *rajas*, ether by *sattva*, water by *sattva-tamas* and fire by *sattva-rajas*. In the human body the air factor is composed of the elements ether and air; fire factor by the element fire, and water factor by the elements earth and water. These factors are named in Āyurveda *vāta* (or *vāyu*), *pitta*, and *kapha* (or *śleṣman*), characterised by the three modes *rajas*, *sattva* and *tamas* respectively. It is usual to translate these factors as wind, bile (gall) and phlegm (mucus), following the humoral doctrine of the Greeks. While the Indian factors theory and the Greek humoral theory are not identical, we may take these expressions as meaning more or less what the Sanskrit terms connote.

These factors are the component parts of the functional system that we call an organism; and in their normalcy they support the body-mind complex, and therefore they are called 'dhātus'. But when they are thrown out of balance, or are excited, they can be troublesome. They become, in that condition, pathogenic and so called '*doṣas*'. In Āyurveda, the expression 'dhātu' (elements or component parts) is confined to the seven structural aspects; plasma-tissues or chyle (*rasa*), blood (*rakta*), flesh (*māṃsa*), fat (*medas*), bone (*asthi*), marrow (*majjā*) and sperm (*śukla*). And, therefore, the three

factors that we spoke of earlier are generally, though incorrectly, called *doṣas* (pathogenic factors).³⁸ It is essential to distinguish *dhātus* from *doṣas*: the former are structural while the latter are entirely functional. *Dhātus* are body-constituents while *doṣas* are behavioural processes. It should, however, be noted that some authorities have taken even *dhātu* as not so much structural as functional aspects; an even proportion of the *dhātus* (*dhātu-sāmya*), for instance, is interpreted in terms of satisfaction in sense-function (*prīṇana*), a quality of chyle; a contribution to vitality (*jīvana*), a characteristic of blood; production of oiliness (*sneha*) representing fat; support of the burden (*dhāraṇa*), namely bones; filling up of cavities (*pūrāṇa*), the work of marrow; and reproduction (*garbhotpāda*) by means of the sperm. Even then, the *dhātus* are essentially specific in their function, and actually bound with physical organ. The *doṣas*, on the other hand, are rather abstractions. When *vāta* is referred to as wind, *pitta* as bile and *kapha* as the phlegm, they are not to be taken in their actual specific connotations; it would probably be nearer the Āyurvedic intentions if we regard them as the windy aspect, the fiery mechanism and the watery network in the organism respectively. But they are not merely philosophical expressions without actual parallels in the body; their areas of function have been specified, their ascendance periods have been noted, their excitation, deficiency and distortion have been described.

The *doṣa* concept is really very old, as old as *R̥gveda* and probably older. We have references to wind and bile in *R̥gveda* itself, and phlegm in *Śatapathabrāhmaṇa*.

We read in the *Ātharvaveda* about bile being the liquid fire (*agne pittaṁ apām asī*, 18, 3, 5). Kātyāyana's *Vārttika* on Pāṇini (5, 1, 38), prepared about 300 B.C., mentions the appeasement (*samana*) and excitation (*kopana*) of the three *doṣas*. And there may have been different schools with regard to the nature and function of the *doṣas*. There was a line of

thought which regarded the *doṣas* as merely discrepancies, as the expression really means, and counted the three factors mentioned above under *dhātus* (constituents). Suśruta, for instance, held the three as responsible for the formation of the body, with the active co-operation of blood (and sperm, according to his commentator Ḍalhaṇa).³⁹ Caraka, on the other hand, was inclined to emphasise that these three factors were indeed agents of discrepancies and causes of all morbidity, quite distinct from the *dhātus*.⁴⁰ By the time, however, when Āyurvedic thought became crystallised, *dhātus* and *doṣas* were regarded as structural constituents and functional factors respectively of the human body, viewed as both basic to health and as sources of disturbance. The notion of 'mala' as the group of waste products (faeces, urine and sweat) that render the body foul unless they are promptly eliminated, highlighted the constituent elements that contribute to health (*prasāda-dhātu*) and those that cause disturbance and disorder (*mala-dhātu*). The *doṣas* in balance (*svamāna*) are bound up with the former, while out of balance they relate to the latter. The *dhātu* by itself is regarded as neutral, preserved and destroyed by *doṣa* and *mala*. This explains the paradoxical interpretation in Āyurveda of 'discrepancy' (*doṣa*) as a constituent factor. The 'tridoṣa' theory is as valid in understanding normal health as in pathology.

The factors (*doṣas*) are said to depend upon *dhātu* and *mala*, and when they themselves become errant they disturb and pollute the latter two. They are essentially emergent and functional, although each of them is associated with different bodily areas and physiological functions. Each factor is in actuality a complex of processes working in a common direction and resulting in a common benefit or disturbances. A *doṣa* has its emergent aspect (*caya* arousal in its own specific areas), excitational aspect (*prakopa*, overflowing from their own areas into other regions), and the normalisation or tranquillization aspect (*prśamana*, returning to their own

areas of action). Normal health involves necessary and sufficient arousal of the *doṣas*, disease is a result of excitation and treatment consists of the normalisation of the *doṣas*.

The three constitutional factors are intimately interconnected in a complex network of behaviour patterns. In the life-span of an individual, early years are dominated by phlegm, middle age by bile and old age by wind. During the first four hours of the day (morning) and of the night phlegm will be in ascendance; the hours between 10 and 2 during day and during the night will be marked by the ascendance of bile; and between 2 and 6 both during day and during night is the period of the ascendance of wind. Ascendance of a factor is a natural phenomenon all through an individual's life, and in all his activities. Even when he eats his food, for instance, in the beginning phlegm will predominate, but when food starts getting digested bile will become important; and then wind will take over. The involvement of human constitution in the natural order is emphasised by the periodical ascendance of the three *doṣas* in the several seasons of the year. In winter (*hemanta*, November-December), rains (*varṣa*, July-August) and the cool season (*śiśira*, January-February) wind is said to be the king; in summer (*grīṣma*, May-June) bile rules; and in spring (*vasanta*, March-April) phlegm dominates. The occurrence of diseases as well as their treatment procedures take into consideration the individual constitution with reference to the ascendance of the factor and the time of the year. Health is considered to be the result of a proper balancing of the factors (*samadoṣa*), for disease is symptomatic of an imbalance in them (*doṣavaiṣamya*).

In the body, the area of arousal of wind is below the navel (between the pelvic region and the rectum); the area of bile is the region between the heart and the navel (mid-stomachic region and the small intestines); and the area of

phlegm is the region above the heart (chest and throat). While wind fills all the interspaces in the body (like bladder, intestines, ear, skin etc.) bile is active in liver, blood, spleen, heart, eyes, and skin; and phlegm in the upper parts of the stomach (*āmāśaya*). Wind is related to the element air and ether; bile to the fire element and phlegm to earth and water. To repeat what was said earlier, the three factors in the body are comparable to the three principle elements air, fire and water in the cosmos. And they represent the *rajas*, *sattva* and *tamas* modes of being respectively. Of these, wind is the most important factor; it is the prime mover. It is because of this factor, the other two factors become active. But the bile factor (fire in the body) is principally associated with digestion, and there is a school of Āyurvedic thought that regards all ailments as fundamentally due to indigestion.⁴¹ But even this 'fire' is fanned by wind,

Because the excessively unstable nature of the wind, the factors get frequently thrown out of balance: disturbances of the factors are thus inherent in nature. Causes of health, they can be causes of troubles also. What is important in health or in disease is the particular pattern of the factors, for the three factors always function together although they occur in varying proportions and intensities. It is interesting that Āyurveda emphasises that the factors combine with the modes of being (*guṇa*) in various ways to bring about special states. When, for example, the phlegm (already dominated by *tamas*) flares up and gets combined with the general *tamas* of the body, sleep (*nidrā*) results. The bile (dominated by *sattva*) flares up and combines with the general *rajas* to produce delusions (*bhrānti*); an excited wind (*rajas*) also enters into it. The same bile combining with *tamas* results in the fainting spells (*mūrchhā*). The phlegm (dominated by *tamas*) and wind (*rajas*) together combine with the general *tamas* and bring about drowsiness.

The combinations and the ascendance of the factors in

the constitutions are responsible for personality types (*prakṛtis*). Āyurveda speaks of the pure wind-type (*śuddha-vāta-prakṛti*), the pure bile-type (*śuddha-pitta-prakṛti*) and the pure phlegm-type (*śuddha-kapha-prakṛti*). These are types in which the mentioned factor is obviously assertive, the other two being subordinate to it. But pure types are rare; more frequent are the mixed types. Although this classification was originally with reference to the pathogenic factors only, it assumed a general significance in course of time. When two of the factors combine in equal proportion to determine a type, it is called 'pair-determined' (*dvandvaja*). And when all three factors are involved more or less significantly but not equally, the constitution is miscellaneous assorted (*samnipāta*).⁴² When, however, the three factors combine in equal quantity and strength, the type is perfectly balanced (*sama*). The ascendance tendency of the factors commences even at the foetal stage of development and becomes settled in late childhood. Influencing factors include heredity (*kula*), vocational affiliation (*jāti*), climate and country (*deśa*), age (*vayas*), and 'the inclinations of the subtle body'.⁴³

The wind as a factor sustains the whole bodily system, the physical machinery as well as the physiological functions (including psychological processes): efficiency of the sense-organs and alertness of mind are alike dependent upon it. Being associated with *rajas*, it is described as red in colour, productive of energy and highly unstable (or constantly in motion). Dryness, lightness, instability, cold, roughness and solidity are given as its characteristics. In function it is five-fold: 'forward breath' (*prāṇa*, breath that governs respiration and prevails in the whole body from toe to nostrils, especially located in the head and moving in chest and throat, contributing to mental alertness and sense efficiency), 'downward breath' (*apāna*, prevailing in the lower regions but moving in navel, intestinal canals, sex-organs and legs, contributing to production of sperm, and responsible for expelling

faeces and urine), 'pervading breath' (*vyāna*, prevailing in the heart but pervading all over the body, characterised by great speed in circulation, helping sensory-motor functions, blood circulation, reflexes like winking, all sensory perceptions, and distribution of the vital sap to all parts of the body), 'ascending breath' (*udāna*, prevailing in the chest but moving in throat, nostrils, palate, skull and navel, responsible for speech, intentions, energy, strength, memory and complexion) and 'equalising breath' (*samāna*, prevailing in close proximity to the 'stomachic fire' and moving in the digestive organs, heart, navel and the joints, helping digestion and assimilation). The concept of multiple breaths, as was mentioned earlier, is an old one, perhaps pre-Vedic. In Vedic literature, especially in the early Upanishads, we find that breaths three to ten in number are mentioned; but later Upanishads fixed the number to five.⁴⁴ Āyurveda has defined its functions as well as its anomalies. When wind as a factor is excited, sense function is weakened, insensibility for touch sets in, pain in body is felt, constipation results, one feels thirsty and restive, palpitation and trembling are noticed, and one gets weak and is emaciated.

The constitution that is dominated by this factor, known as 'vāta prakṛti' is identified by several physical and psychological traits. Scanty hair, lean and fragile figure, high body-temperature, dry skin, dark complexion and low voice suggest this type. The person belonging to this type has a weak constitution and has frequent trouble with his digestion; his resistance is low and immunity poor, with the result that he is often sick. His ailments are mostly of the nervous system. His intelligence, however, is above average, and receptivity high; he is imaginative. But he is likely to be nervous, timid, suspicious, jealous, quick in his likes and dislikes, fickle-minded, and rather talkative. He is a light sleeper and when he dreams, he soars in the sky.

The second factor *pitta* (bile) is described as 'bodily fire'

(*dchāgni*, *kāyāgni*). According to Suśruta this is the only fire in the body. It cooks all that we eat and is responsible for warmth, digestion and metabolic changes. The concept of bodily fire is a collective one: it includes 'cooking heat' (*pācakāgni*), the five elemental fires (*bhūtāgnis*) and the fires of the seven constituents (*dhātvaṅnis*), covering enzymes and hormones of metabolism.⁴⁵ It is described as a hot, yellow liquid exuding an unpleasant odour; it is a 'fiery liquid'. The five-fold aspects of this factor are: 'cooking' (*pācaka*, prevailing in the midregion between the upper and lower parts of the stomach, composed of the five elements, responsible for assimilation and digestion, and contributing to the other *pittas* in the body), colouring (*rañjaka*, prevailing in the upper parts of the stomach where undigested food is received, liver, and spleen, responsible for the conversion of chyle into blood,⁴⁶ 'realising' (*sādhaka*, prevailing in the heart, and responsible for intellection, memory and self-regarding), 'perceiving' (*locaka* or *ālocaka*, shining in the eyes and responsible for visual perceptions), and 'irradiating' (*bhrājaka*, lustre-giving and illumining, occurring as a quality of the skin as complexion). When this factor is excited one is dejected, feels thirsty, sweats much, and may even faint; there appear on the face pimples, and there is excessive heat within the body.

The constitutional type determined by this factor is characterised by good appetite and good digestion, unsteady muscles, loose joints, glowing complexion, and premature greying. His body tends to be soft and odorous. He frequently has burning sensations in parts of his body, and his urine is often high in colour; his eyes too have a yellowish tinge. His sleep is easily disturbed. He is intelligent and inclines to be imaginative. He is irritable, impatient and rather boastful. He is proud, sometimes haughty; he is prone to anger and can be cruel. His perseverance, however, is poor, and his moods change quickly. His dream-contents reveal association with heavenly bodies (sun, moon, and stars). He has greater

stamina than the previous group, but is susceptible to ailments of the digestive system.

The third factor, *kapha* or *śleṣman* (phlegm), is related to the earth and water elements and to the *tamas* mode of being. Therefore, it inclines its possessor to heaviness, dullness and indolence. Its main function appears to be to neutralise the heat that is produced by *pitta*, which would otherwise burn the system down; it also unites the joints (and that is why it is called *śleṣman*, from the root *śliṣ*, to connect) and eliminates friction. It is this factor that gives firmness and strength to the body, and also the capacity to resist disturbances within the organism. Its five-fold functions are: permeation of the entire body with watery essence (*kledaka*, moistening, with stomach as its principal centre and enhancing the activity of the other phlegm centres), supporting the action of the heart (*avalambaka*, located in the chest, imparting energy and strength); salivation etc. (*bodhaka*, chief centres being throat and tongue, ensuring gustation), co-optation (*śleṣmaka*, located in the joints, uniting them firmly and lubricating); and cooling the sense-organs (*tarpaka*, located in the head and favouring all sensory activities). When this factor is excited, the body becomes dense and hard, with a tendency towards cold and numbness of limbs; digestion is disturbed and sleep becomes excessive; there is an inclination to be drowsy and the skin pales.

This constitution, being dominated by the element of lubrication and connection, is distinguished by a well-integrated body mechanism. Persons belonging to this type are endowed with a robust physique, well-proportioned and rather heavily built. They are inclined to obesity, vigorous in sex-activity and rather sluggish in habits. They are generally strong, courageous, and free from envy and greed. They are the healthiest of the three groups; their powers of endurance are great. They do not sweat much; their gait is firm and steps even. Their digestion, however, is rather weak. Their

sleep is heavy and not easily disturbed. When they dream, it is usually about watery stretches like lakes and rivers. When they do fall ill, the ailments are usually of the respiratory and lymphatic systems. Dominated by *tamas*, their temperament tends to be indolent and indulgent.

THE 'FIRE' WITHIN

Interesting in Āyurveda is the consideration of what is known as 'the stomachic fire' (*jāṭharāgni*) or 'the bodily fire' (*kāyāgni*, according to Bhela). That there is a fire within man that keeps him alive and active is indeed a very ancient notion, by no means peculiar to Indian people. That the organism is enlivened by a mysterious fire that glows within, concealed in the dark recesses of the heart is a belief that is almost universal. Vedic literature contained this notion: "This pan-human fire (*agnir-vaiśvānarah*) inside man, by means of which the food that we eat is cooked. ..." ¹⁴⁷ The association between fire and water is likewise an old belief. The Veda considers fire as the descendant of water (*apām napāt*); there is mention of 'the fire of the clouds'. Āyurveda developed this ancient idea into a semi-scientific concept.

Within the stomach, at a distance of about two inches from the navel, to the left in men and to the right in women, is supposed to be the seat of this 'fire'. Although small like a grain of paddy or of barley, it lights up the whole being, and its heat pervades the entire body. In obese persons it is said to be of the size of a barley-grain while in slim persons it is atomic in size. It is present in all living beings; in minute organisms like flies and insects, it is 'like mere air'. Another view locates this fire in the mystic space within the heart-lotus (*dahara-puṇḍarīka*), extremely subtle and yellowish, flaming like a light. A third view regards it as a spring of sour water located in the visceral cavity. Bhela records Atreya-Punarvasu's view: the 'bodily fire' which is of the nature of heat (*uṣmā*), and light (*tejas*) digests the food

we eat. Even as the sun quickly dries up the puddle and small water holes by his rays, the 'fire' in the stomach digests all food that enters.⁴⁸ This is the principal agent not only in cooking (*pāka*) but in specially cooking (*vipāka*) so that the food is absorbed into body tissues. It is responsible for the transformation of what we eat into organic juices (*rasas*), which are the primordial substances of the organism, and the essence of which is water. Caraka cites the opinion of the ancient Vāyor-vidas: "Organisms are born of *rasa* and so also the various diseases, because waters are rich in these juices—they are the causes of creation".⁴⁹ Bhela makes the position more explicit: "The heat, residing in the organic juices in the body, continues gathering up life; man is after all born of these juices, and therefore it is the juices that go by the name of life".⁵⁰ One is reminded of the Vedic description of fire as the descendant of water (*apām napāt*). That the stomachic fire is intimately connected with the 'fiery liquid', bile (*pitta*), is also to be considered in this context. Bhela speaks of the five-fold functions of this 'fire' but his explanations are more intriguing and psychologically significant.

'Perceiving' (*ālōcaka*) as a function of stomachic fire is two-fold, according to Bhela; one specialised in the visual apparatus, and the other covering general consciousness. The former generates knowledge by the contact of the sense-organs with ego and mind, while the latter, located in between the eyebrows on a mound (or at 'the road-cross'), is responsible for the subtle 'thoughts' which are not only prehended, but retained, remembered, recalled, and projected as occasions demand. 'Irradiating' (*bhrājaka*), in Bhela's opinion, refers to the specific characteristics and functionings of the various organs in the body. 'Colouring' (*rañjaka*) is appropriating the external sense-objects as one's own, because of the ego, and inclining towards them with an emotional set. 'Performing' or 'relating' (*sādhaka*) is achieving of the proximate and

distant objective, with regard to object thus appropriated. Cooking (*pācaka*) is digesting the various kinds of food eaten, a physiological function but with a mental involvement.⁵¹

Bhela's analysis opens up an interesting mass of psychological speculations (to be dealt with by the present author in a separate publication), but it is sufficient here to note that Bhela preserves an old tradition of the association of the stomachic fire with waters within the viscera. He likens it to a lamp that is placed in the hollow of a bitter-gourd (*ikṣvāku-kośa*) and set floating. When the water is undisturbed the lamp burns steadily, but when it is disturbed the lamp is no longer steady and constant.⁵² The concept of stomachic fire in Āyurveda is an important one. We live by this fire, and glow in it. All the three essential factors (*vāta*, *pitta* and *kapha*) are involved in it; they determine its nature, although it is a fire that burns by its own fuel.⁵³ The excitation or disturbance in the factors bring about changes in the 'fire'. An excitation of the wind will produce 'irregular fire' (*viṣa-māgni*); an excess of bile will intensify the fire (*tīkṣṇāgni*); and when the phlegm is excited we have the 'sluggish fire' (*mandāgni*). The changes in the 'fire' have their direct impact on the digestive process. When, however, the three factors are evenly distributed in the body, the fire will be steady and even (*samāgni*) which makes for sound health. Man's life rests on this 'fire'. His strength, vitality, health, pleasures and sorrows are all rooted in this. The warmth (*uṣmā*) that makes man alive indicates the presence of this 'fire'; when it cools, he dies.

The Āyurvedic concept of 'stomachic fire' is an important aid in reconstructing the early phase of *ātmavāda*, which matured in the Upanishads. The *śaktivāda* of the Tantras is undoubtedly related to it. The five fundamental elements (*pañcabhūta*), the three constitutional factors (*tridoṣa*), the seven essential substances that emerge from the organic juice (*rasādi-saptadhātu*), the three modes of being (*guṇa*), the

intra-organic energetics and psychological integration are all involved here. The notion of 'the fire within the visceral waters' appears to hold the key for understanding the transitional stage between the old Tantra culture and the classical Vedic tradition. Being a practical discipline, Āyurveda was interested in understanding the causes of disturbances of the fire as well as in the methods of restoring its normalcy. The Āyurvedic regimen and treatment procedures are meant to calm the waters within (and this signifies the purification of the constitution, *sattvaśuddhi*) so that the fire in it retains or resumes its natural glow (and this is the prototype of the Vedāntic 'getting back to the original nature', *svarūpāvasthānam*). The importance attached to nature (*sva-bhāva*, being in one's own natural mode) in Āyurveda is to be considered in this context. Health is significantly termed 'abiding in oneself' (*sva-stha*), 'composure', 'being at ease', 'comfort'. This refers to the even and steady 'fire' in the still waters deep within the constitution. The early Sāṃkhyan concept of *puruṣāvasthānam-avyaktam* already explained in a previous section, has probably relevance here. The state of equilibrium (*sāmyāvasthā*) of the Sāṃkhya school of thought and the process of perfect setting down (*samādhi*) of Yoga are no doubt intimately related to the 'even fire' (*samāgni*) of Āyurveda.

ALCHEMY AND MEDICINE IN INDIA

If Āyurveda emerged out of the Tāntrik tradition for an independent career, the alchemical systems of Indian medicine, *Rasacikitsā* and *Siddha*, continued their involvement with Tāntrik ideas. It is not easy to identify the origin of alchemical ideas in India. It is supposed that contact with China, the first home of alchemy (around 3rd century B.C.), was responsible for the development of this theory-practice complex here. But the twin objectives of alchemy, viz. transmutation of base metals into noble metals (like gold and silver) and the prolongation of life by an elixir, are suggested

even in the Vedic records. Alchemic ideas were prevalent here since possibly pre-Vedic times, although they did not produce a system — as they did in China, Egypt, Arabian countries and Western Europe — until three or four centuries after Christ. The use of metals, minerals, precious stones and herbs for both medicinal and magical ends was known to the poets of *Rgveda*, and to the authors of *Atharvaveda*. Chinese influence was certainly there, especially during the early centuries of the Christian era, and *Mahācīna* (the great China) was a familiar land to the Tāntriks as well as the alchemists of India. Siddha-Nāgārjuna is supposed to have gone there; and the Tamilian Siddha Bogar is said to have come from there; and both were eminent masters of Indian alchemy, during the fourth and fifth centuries. But it would be wrong to assume that India borrowed alchemy from China. It is possible that cinnabar (mercuric sulphide), on which the Chinese alchemy was based, was first discovered in India: called *darada*, *yaśada*, or *rasasindūra*, it was known to the Tāntriks both in its natural mineral form and in its manufactured form. One cannot, however, dogmatise on the issue. But it is a fact that Indian alchemy was mercury-oriented, and contrary to the Chinese belief that mercury is female and sulphur male, Indians regarded mercury as male and sulphur female. And even this appears to have been a passing position; the view that survived was that mercury was composed of all the five elements (*pañcabhūtas*).

Basic to Indian alchemy (*rasavāda*) is the Siddha ideology. *Siddha* is an adept, a Tāntrik practitioner; *siddhi* is achievement, and generally the expression refers to the eight-fold magical skills: abilities to become minute like an atom (*aṇimā*), to become excessively light (*laghimā*), to obtain everything (*prāpti*), to be irresistible in will (*prākāmya*), to get magnified (*mahimā*), to be a lord over everything (*iśitva*), to subdue and overpower everything (*vaśitva*), and to suppress the passions (*kāmāvasāyikā*). There is a classical

list of eighty-four historical siddhas, accepted by the Hindu, Buddhist, Tibetan and Nātha traditions, which became popular in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries A.D. The first of these Siddhas was Matsyendranātha (Minanātha, or Lui-pā of the Tibetans) who is said to have lived in the ninth century, and most of the Siddhācāryas mentioned in the list belonged to the eleventh century. But the Siddha tradition itself dates back to a remote past, and was connected with wizards and shamans of the Vedic and the pre-Vedic times. The common objective of these siddhas was the transubstantiation of the body (*kāyasādhana*), and various methods were evolved for the realisation of this objective. *Rasavidyā* (alchemy) was a method that was thus evolved: it was a physical process designed to make the body an efficient instrument both for material prosperity (*bhoga*) and for spiritual 'upliftment' (*uddhāra*). It is said that the element of alchemy was introduced into the Siddha cult by Nāgārjuna, who was himself both a siddha and an alchemist (and his date is given as 23 A.D. by some authorities while others variously place him in the third, eighth, or tenth century). There is a work ascribed to Nāgārjuna, *Rasaratnākara*, which belongs to the early strata of Mahāyāna-tantras. Another work with the same name (by a Nitya-nātha) mentions that Nāgārjuna prepared this work for 'the benefit of the ailing' (*vyādhitānām hitārthāya proktam Nāgārjunaena yat*). This makes clear the general orientation of Indian alchemy within the Siddha culture: there was greater emphasis on the medical aspect rather than on material prosperity. This distinguishes the development of Indian alchemy from that of alchemy elsewhere.

In support of the superiority of this system, it is claimed that while other systems of philosophy describe the state of emancipation (*mukti*) as possible only after death of the physical body, the alchemic system advocates the obtainment of this highest state even while the physical body is functioning. *Mukti* in this system is a matter of direct experience, as

an object held in one's own hand. The highest purpose of alchemy, therefore, is not merely to transmute metals but to lead to emancipation by 'binding the body' (*dehabandha*).⁵⁴ There is no doubt that transmutation of metals became a favourite preoccupation of Indian alchemists during the middle ages, and several works came to be written on this subject. In fact, chemistry and iatrochemistry in India developed out of this interest. But work on metals was regarded as in the nature of an experimentation, and the frequent admonition found in alchemical works is: "First, test with the metals; and then apply to the body".⁵⁵

Mercury is the important idea in Indian alchemy. The word for it, *pārada*, signifies that it helps one to cross the ocean of transmigration;⁵⁶ it is also the 'essence' (*rasa*), the 'essence of Siva's own body',⁵⁷ in particular his 'seminal essence' (*Harabīja* or *Śivavīrya*), and therefore the 'great essence' (*mahārasa*). If mercury thus represents Śiva (the Male), sulphur represents his consort Gaurī (the Female).⁵⁸ The creative conjunction of Male and Female is involved in the *rasa-siddhi*. Mercuric sulphide (cinnabar, *rasasindūra*) becomes important in this context. Alchemists in the middle ages believed that all things in the world, especially metals, are ultimately made up of two principles: mercury (the water element, representing fusibility) and sulphur (the fire element, representing combustibility). These two were described as male and female, and the whole world was the result of their union. This is substantially the Śaivite Tāntric position, and Indian alchemy is heavily oriented in favour of the male-female symbolism; and its peculiarity is that mercury, the male principle, is composed of the five primary elements.⁵⁹

Interesting in Indian alchemy is the preparation of a mercurial icon in the form of a phallus (*rasaliṅga*), to represent the male principle of Śiva. There are elaborate instructions in texts like *Rasaratnasamuccaya* and *Mātrkābheda-tantra* for preparing this icon which symbolises a kind of esoteric per-

sonality involved in the rite known as 'worship of mercury' (*rasārcana*). Usually this icon was prepared by a compound of mercury and sulphur in this method. It was intimately mixed with an extract of *Barberia cristata* (*jhinti*), and stirred vigorously until mud consistency is obtained, and then it is shaped into a phallic form (*līṅga*), covered all over with sulphur powder, and heated slightly over the fire of cowdung so that it becomes hard. *Rasaratnasamuccaya*, composed by Vāgbhāṭa, son of Simhagupta, gives an alternate procedure for the preparation of *rasalīṅga*: gold leaf three *niṣka*s in weight and mercury nine *niṣka*s are rubbed with acids for three hours and the amalgam is shaped into a *līṅga*.⁶⁰ This *līṅga* is installed in the alchemist's laboratory (*rasaśālā*) and worshipped for both material prosperity and immortality. This worship is said to be more efficacious than worship of *līṅga*s at Banaras and other holy places.⁶¹

It has been pointed out that *līṅga* which is the creative emblem is associated with mercuric sulphide (cinnabar, *rasa-sindūra*). In fact the Tamil word *līṅga* means only this substance. In Chinese alchemy this is described as a compound of *yang* and *yin* (male and female). It is interesting to note that in the ceremony known as *Aṣṭabandha* employed in the installation of icons in temples, this substance is one of the eight constituents. This provides an important clue to the origin of *līṅga* worship in India, and the Śaivite-Tāntric cults that prevailed before iconic worship became accepted by the Vedic tradition were no doubt greatly influenced by alchemic ideas, especially the male-female symbolism. The usual form that *līṅga* takes in the classical period is always in conjunction with the *yoni* (female procreative organ) as the base, and the *līṅga* is a symbol of not only Śiva but Śiva-Śakti, the two being regarded as inseparable. The early *līṅga*s, however, were merely erect pillars or posts in shape (*sthānu*) symbolising the upward sperm (*ūrdhva-retas*) and the *rasa-līṅga* of the alchemists probably supplied the prototype.

Curious is the employment of the expression 'karma-yoga' in connection with what is known as the 'fixation of mercury'.⁶² This yoga is said to work with mercury on the one hand, and with wind on the other; both are to be 'bound' so as to yield the desired results. The Indian alchemists speak of 'swooning of mercury' (*mūrçhāna*) and 'killing of mercury' (*māraṇa*). The former is to transform mercury into a multicoloured substance, devoid of excessive fluidity and mobility; and the latter is to deprive mercury of wetness, thickness, brightness, heaviness and mobility. Its natural state is removed from it so that it could be taken into the body without harm or danger. It is usual to list eighteen processes (*saṃskāras*) by means of which mercury is transformed into an article of utility and absorption. Mercury, when properly treated, can be assimilated into the human system and can rejuvenate it. Working with the wind means regulating the breath and suspending it (*prāṇāyāma*), a yogic technique. The twin techniques not only preserve the body but make it a 'glorious one' (*divyatānu*); and a 'glorious' body is a necessary precondition for 'salvation' here and now, in this very body and in this very life. It is in this sense that alchemy was considered as an adjunct of yoga: if yoga worked with troubles inherent to mind, alchemy dealt with the removal of the natural infirmities of the body. It is significant that Patañjali, the earliest authority on yoga, is also considered an alchemist.⁶³

The employment of mercury for its uncanny therapeutic effect on the organic juices (*rasa*) within the body was attempted early. The word *rasa* meant not only the juices of the body which are responsible for blood and other *dhātus*; but fluid extractions and concentrated decoctions. *Rasāyana* signifies in Āyurveda 'the way of the fluids or juices', which are designed to prevent aging and prolong life. In the early phase of medical thought, the fluids and juices referred to herbal extractions and mineral preparations; but in due course,

they meant exclusively mercurial medicines.⁶⁴ Āyurveda developed the art of combining metals with herbs in the preparation of medicines; and it was known as *kalā* (*dhātvausadhānām samyogakriyā*).

The use of metals, minerals and particularly mercury in medicines is an ancient practice in India; and this was a part of the Tāntric legacy inherited by Āyurveda. This legacy is conspicuous in the so-called Siddha system of medicine which is now prevalent mostly in South India, especially in Tamiḷnāḍu. An old system, dating back to pre-Āyurveda period and strongly Tāntric in orientation, it got mixed up with the cult of the nine million Siddhas (*navakoṭisiddhas*). These alchemist-Siddhas 'who defied death' preached a philosophy of transmuting the gross physical body composed of impure matter (*aśuddhamaya*) to the refined body of naturally pure matter thereby rendering the body immutable and free from disabilities and limitations (*praṇava-tānu* or *baṇḍava-tānu*). 'Liberated while alive' (*jīvanmukta*), the person who is possessed of this refined body, transacts freely with the world of impure matter as well as the world of pure matter; he is distinguished by the skills (*siddhis*) that facilitate these transactions.

In the classical list of Siddhas, two are of especial importance to the Tamiḷ Siddha system.⁶⁵ Bogar, supposed to be a pre-Christian Taoist Chinese, came to India and settled down on the Paḷani Hills in Tamiḷnāḍu. He has left not only his works on alchemy and medicine in the Tamiḷ language but a tradition of what is known as the 'pure path' (*śuddhamārga*), respected alike by the adherents of *Śaivāmnāya* and *Śāktāmnāya*. Another Chinese who accompanied him and became an authority on medical alchemy here is known in Tamiḷ as Pulippāri. Besides these two, the name of Tirumūlar, whom tradition assigns to 3,000 B.C. (?) is associated with the founding of the Siddha school. Agastya, an Āryan sage who came down from the Himalayan region and did his life's work

in South India, is also mentioned in connection with the early development of this school; he is said to have established a centre on the Siddhakūṭa-hill in the present day Tirunelveli district in Tamiḷnāḍu. An important Tamil work on which the Siddha-physicians rely is ascribed to this sage: *Agattiya-Carakku*. However, it is difficult to determine the origin or development of this remarkable system, especially because most of the *Siddha-vaidya* works in Tamiḷ have not been critically studied; very few indeed have been even published. But there is no doubt that it was once a very prevalent system. Numerous medicines rich in mineral content, especially mercurial preparations, in extensive use today among the rural folk in the South are to be traced to this system. The employment of mercury and arsenic as medicinal agents, extractions from minerals, preparation of essences, calcination, and the use of animal products with healing properties distinguish the Siddha practitioners. There is considerable impact of Āyurveda on the Siddha medical thought as we find it today; but that is a later achievement.

Of special interest in the Siddha system is the rôle of *muppu*, a preparation peculiar to Tamiḷ alchemy, in making mercury pills of exceedingly high potency intended to prolong life. The exact significance of the Tamiḷ expression, *muppu*, is rather obscure, but it is generally described as the Indian version of 'the philosopher's stone'. Its employment is twofold: transmutation of base metals to gold, and rejuvenation of the human system. The *muppu* used in the Siddha system is known as the 'medicinal' one (*vaidya-muppu*); but another kind of *muppu* is employed in South Indian alchemy (*vāda-muppu*). Two other kinds of *muppu* are mentioned in Tamiḷ literature which do not appear to be substances at all; they may be mere abstractions—*yoga-muppu* and *jñāna-muppu*, meant to be used by spiritual aspirants. However, it is possible that these two kinds of *muppu* were psychedelic

drugs, effective not only in producing visions but in stimulating the psychic centres.

There is some knowledge available about the medicinal *muppu*. There are three ingredients that go into the preparation of *muppu*: mixture of carbonates (*pūnīru*), rock salt (*kal-uppu*), and calcium carbonate (*aṇḍak-kal*) — which are obtained naturally. This substance it is that gives mercury its effective property; and therefore it is described as 'guru'. Of the three ingredients of it mentioned above, important is the *pūnīru* (water exuded from earth). *Muppu* is effective in proportion to the quality of this *pūnīru*, which is a fluid, whitish in colour, an efflorescence from the soil. Although it is naturally got, its occurrence is restricted to certain places like Kāḷahasti, Tiruvalaṅgāḍu, Vaḍamadurai, Śivagaṅgai, Tenkāśi, Tillaivānaṁ and Kanyākumāri. The efflorescence, useful to a Siddha physician, is to be collected in the early hours of the morning at these places; for it is the result of the action of full moon on earth. Tāmilian alchemy works on the male-female (*āṇ-peṇ*) principle, in common with the alchemical thought in the rest of the country. The Siddha ideology looks upon the male-female symbolism in terms of *bindu-nāda* differentiation. *Pūnīru* is said to be the result of the union of male and female: full moon (male) acts on the earth (female) at some places in a peculiar way to produce this fluid. The collection is done in a ritualistic manner, and the preparation of *muppu* from it is even more heavily ritualistic. There are numerous works in Tamil⁶⁶ describing the several methods of *muppu*-preparation (*bhasmaṁ*, *cendūram*, *cunṇam*), but the methods are preserved as closely guarded secrets. It is necessary that these works must be carefully studied before the rôle of *muppu* in South Indian alchemy can be fully understood.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

ORIGINS OF INDIAN THOUGHT

1. Anima Sen Gupta, *The Evolution of the Sāṃkhya School of Thought*, 1959 Patna, p. 11 f.
2. *Sarvadarśanasamgraha*
3. Śaṅkara, *Brahma-Sūtra-Bhāṣya*, 2, 1, 1
4. Anima Sen Gupta, *op. cit.*
5. S. N. Dasgupta, *History of Indian Philosophy*, Vol. I
6. By Guṇaratna (14th cent.) in his comm. on Haribhadra's *Śaḍdarśana-Samuccaya*.
7. An account of this work attributed to Kapila occurs in *Ahīrbudhnya-Saṃhitā* ('Tattvasamāsa' section). But we cannot be sure if this was the same as the ancient *Śaṣṭitantra*.
8. *Mahābhārata*, 12, 318
9. S. N. Dasgupta, *op. cit.*, Vol. iv, p. 36. Also Anima Sen Gupta, *op. cit.*, p. 102.
10. cf. Anima Sen Gupta, *op. cit.*
11. A. K. Majumdar argues that classical Sāṃkhya was theistic. See his *Sāṃkhya Theory of Personality*, Calcutta. But orthodoxy does not concede this claim.
12. Summarised in S. N. Dasgupta, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 216 f.
13. Apart from Caraka's account being an elaboration of Pāṇcāsikha's Sāṃkhya, Vyāsa's *Sāṃkhyapravacana-bhāṣya* has preserved twelve statements ascribed to Pāṇcāsikha, and these have been collected and annotated by Hariharānanda-Āraṇya, *The Sāṃkhya Sūtras of Pāṇcāsikha and Other Ancient Sages*, Calcutta, 1934.
14. By will, aversion, ignorance and action.
15. In Vyāsa's *Sāṃkhyapravacana-bhāṣya*, 2, 18, (अकर्तारं च पुरुषे ... चतुर्थे क्रियासाक्षिणि ...)
16. Hariharānanda-Āraṇya, *op. cit.*, p. 97 (सापि अस्मीतिरूपा आत्म-बुद्धिः येन प्रतिसंविदिता भवति स पुरुषः)
17. In *Sāṃkhyapravacana-bhāṣya*, 2, 23 (प्रधानस्यात्मरूपापनार्थप्रवृत्तिः)

18. As, for instance, in the expression गुणपुरुषसंयोगात्सर्गः.
19. Cited in Vyāsa's *Sāṃkhya-pravacana-bhāṣya*, 3, 18 (अयं तु खलु त्रिषु गुणेषु कर्तृषु अकर्तरि च पुरुषे . . .). It is to be noted, however, that for Caraka the three *guṇas* are merely three different mental states.
20. There is no extraneous reason for this disturbance (निमित्तान्तर-निरपेक्ष); the explanation is that the disturbance is natural (*svabhāva*). Contact with *puruṣa* is sometimes given as the reason, such contact resulting in *avidyā*.
21. Pañcādhikaraṇa's view is described in *Prapañcasāra-tantra-vyākhyāna*, 1st paṭala, verse 94. His name figures prominently in the list of *Sāṃkhya* teachers given in *Yukti-dīpikā-Kārikā*, 71.
22. *Sāṃkhya-Kārikā*, 44-52
23. cf. Pañcaśikha's aphorism quoted in Vyāsa's *Sāṃkhya-pravacana-bhāṣya*, 1, 36 (तमणुमात्रमात्मानमनुविद्याऽस्मीत्येव तावत् सम्प्रजानीते)

ATTITUDES AND ISSUES

1. *Muṇḍaka-Upaniṣad*, 1, 7
2. *Ibid.*, 3, 8
3. *Īśa-up.*
4. *Kaṭha-up.*
5. Nakamura, Hajime, *Ways of Thinking of Eastern People*, Hawaii, 1968, p. 52
6. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-up.*, 4, 5, 15
7. 'Aghamaśaṇa-Sūkta'
8. 'Nāsadiya-sūkta', *Rgveda*, 10, 129
9. *Rgveda*, 10, 72
10. *Ibid.*, 10, 72, 3 अदितेर्दक्षोऽजायत, दक्षाद् उ अदितिः परि ।
11. e.g. in *Kaṭha-up.*, 2, 3, 15
12. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-up.*, 3, 9, 24-25
13. *Chāndogya-up.*, 8, 3, 3. (Also in *Praśna-up.*, 3, 6 and *Kaṭha-up.*, 12, 17)
14. *Ibid.*, 3, 4, 3
15. *Kaṭha-up.*, 2, 12 (Also *Taittirīya-up.* 1, 6 and *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-up.*, 4, 4, 22)

16. *Ibid.*, 1, 3, 3: 1, 3, 10
17. *Ibid.*
18. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-up.*, 1, 2, 1. cf. also Śaṅkara's comments:
आत्मवानहमनेनात्मना मनसा मनस्वी स्यामित्यभिप्रायः।
19. Śaṅkara on *Ibid.*, 2, 1, 13 आत्मनि प्रजापतौ बुद्धौ च हृदि एका
देवता। यस्याः आत्मनि आत्मवानिति विशेषणम्।
20. *Chāndogya-up.*, 8, 4, 1

THE INDIVIDUAL CONTEXT

1. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-up.*, 2, 4, 5
2. *Taittirīya-up.*, 2, 6, 1
3. *Kena-up.*, 1, 1
4. *Ibid.*, 1, 2
5. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-up.*, 6, 1, 7 ('prāṇasaṁvāda'). Elsewhere,
there is the following account. The senses started disputing
amongst themselves in the matter of superiority. All of
them left the body and the body lay, not breathing but
dry—like a log of wood. The speech, eye, ear and mind
entered it one after another. These senses became active
but the body did not get up. It is only when Breath entered
that the body arose (*Kauṣītaki-up.*, 2, 14).
6. *Kauṣītaki-up.*, 3, 2.
7. *Ibid.*, 3, 2
8. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-up.*, 1, 5, 22
9. *Aitareya-Āraṇyaka*, 2, 1, 4, 11
10. *Kauṣītaki-up.*, 3, 3
11. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-up.*, 3, 4, 1
12. *Ibid.*
13. *Kena-up.*, 1, 4, 8
14. *Ibid.* —
15. *Brahmasūtra-bhāṣya*, 3, 2, 17
16. *Aitarya-up.*, 2, 3, 1, 1
17. *Chāndogya-up.*, 6, 11, 1-2
18. *Ibid.*, 6, 15, 1-2
19. *Taittirīya-up.*, 2nd anuvāka
20. *Ibid.*, 2, 7
21. *Ibid.*, 2, 6
22. *Ibid.*, 2, 7

23. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-up.*, 4, 4, 23
24. *Taittirīya-up.*, 2, 7
25. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-up.*, 1st adhyāya, 4th brāhmaṇa
26. *Ibid.*, 1, 5, 3-4
27. *Ibid.*, 1, 5, 8
28. *Ibid.*; 2, 1, 20
29. *Aitareya-Āraṇyaka*, 3, 2, 2, 7
30. *Kauṣītaki-up.*, 3, 2
31. *Chāndogya-up.*, 4, 3, 3
32. *Ibid.*, 4, 2, 3
33. *Aitareya-Āraṇyaka*, 3, 1, 4, 1
34. Cited in *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-up.*, 4, 1, 3
35. *Kauṣītaki-up.*, 2, 1
36. *Ibid.*, 3, 4
37. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-up.*, 2, 2, 1
38. *Taittirīya-up.*, 3, 1-6
39. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-up.*, 3, 7, 16
40. As in *Kauṣītaki-up.*, 3, 3
41. *Ibid.*, 3, 4
42. *Ibid.*, 3, 2
43. *Ibid.*, 3, 7
44. *Ibid.*, 3, 6
45. *Ibid.*, 3, 5
46. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-up.*, 2, 1, 17
47. *Muṇḍaka-up.*, 3, 1, 9
48. *Kauṣītaki-up.*, 3, 3
49. *Ibid.*
50. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-up.*, 3, 9, 26

CONCERNING KNOWLEDGE

1. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-up.*, 4, 2, 1 f.
2. *Chāndogya-up.*, 4, 2, 1 f.
3. *Ibid.*, 4, 4, 1 f.
4. *Ibid.*, 4, 10, 1 f.
5. *Ibid.*, 5, 11, 1 f.
6. *Ibid.*, 7, 1, 1 f.
7. *Taittirīya-up.*, 3, 1, f.
8. *Kaṭha-up.*, 1, 1 f.
9. *Maitrī-up.*, 1, 2

10. *Praśna-up.*, 1, 1 f.
11. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-up.*, 6, 2, 1
12. *Kauṣītaki-up.*, 4, 1
13. *Muṇḍaka-up.*, 1, 4
14. *Chāndogya-up.*, 7, 1. 3
15. *Īśa-up.*, 1
16. *Muṇḍaka-up.*, 2, 2, 5
17. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-up.*, 2, 4, 5
18. *Kena-up.*, 1, 2, 8
19. *Kaṭha-up.*, 2, 3, 9
20. *Taittirīya-up.*, 2, 4
21. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-up.*, 2, 4, 14
22. *Kena-up.*, 1, 2
23. *Praśna-up.*, 4, 9
24. *Kena-up.*, 2, 12
25. Govindagopal Mukhopadhyaya, *Studies in the Upanishads* (The Sanskrit College, Calcutta, 1960), p. 114.
26. *Kaṭha-up.*, 3, 14
27. *Ibid.*, 2, 2, 11. Also *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-up.*, 4, 4, 18 and *Muṇḍaka up.*, 3, 9.
28. *Kena-up.*, 1, 3 and 2, 3
29. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-up.*, 4, 3. 1-7
30. *Kaṭha-up.*, 2, 2, 15
31. *Ibid.* 2, 1, 12
32. *Aitareya-up.*, 2, 5, 1
33. *Kaṭha-up.*, 1, 3, 12
34. *Ibid.*, 2, 3, 12
35. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-up.*, 4, 4, 12
36. This view was later well propounded by Upavarṣa, an Upaniṣadic philosopher who influenced the great Śaṅkara. Jayantabhaṭṭa has preserved a brief statement of Upavarṣa's viewpoint : तत्र प्रत्यक्षमात्मानमौपवर्षाः प्रपेदिरे । अहंप्रत्ययगम्यत्वात् . . (Nyāyamañjarī). Nākamura, *op. cit.*, p. 99.
37. *Kaṭha-up.*
38. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-up.* 1, 4, 9-10
39. *Ibid.*, 1, 5, 14 and 15
40. *Kaṭha-up.*, 2, 1, 3
41. *Ibid.*, 2, 1, 4

42. M. P. Pandit, *The Upanishads* (Ganesh and Co., Madras, 1968), p. 68
43. *Mūṇḍaka-up.*, 1, 8
44. *Kāṭha-up.*, 1, 2, 23
45. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-up.*, 3, 3, 2
46. *Ibid.*, 2, 1, 1-20
47. Also in *Chāndogya-up.*, 3, 18, 3-6 where speech, Breath, eye and ear are respectively associated with fire, light, sun and the quarters of the space. And in *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-up.*, 5, 19, 1 f. the five-fold modifications of Breath are related to bodily functions and physical elements (*prāṇa* with eye and sun, *vyāṇa* with ear and moon, *apāṇa* with speech and fire, *samāna* with mind and rain-god, and *udāna* with skin and wind) cf. *Aitareya-up.*, 2, 4: "Fire became speech and entered the mouth; wind became breath and entered the nostrils, the sun became sight and entered the eyes; the quarters of space became hearing and entered the ears; the moon became mind and entered the heart..."
48. *Ibid.*, 2, 1, 17
49. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-up.*, 4, 3, 2-6
50. *Ibid.*, 5, 6
51. *Kausītaki-up.*, 2, 3
52. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-up.*, 3, 2, 1
53. *Ibid.*, 5, 19, 1
54. *Taittirīya-up.*, 1, 8
- 55a. *Aitareya-up.*, 4, 5
- 55b. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-up.*, 1, 5, 3
56. वाङ्मे मनसि प्रतिष्ठिता मनो मे वाचि प्रतिष्ठितामाविशवीर्म एधि ।
57. *Aitareya-up.*, 2, 4 (Also *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-up.*, 5, 6)
58. *Śvetāśvatara-up.*, 4, 20
59. *Taittirīya-up.*, 2nd valli (Brahmānanda-valli), Anuvākas 1-6
60. M. P. Pandit, *op. cit.*, p. 147
61. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-up.*, 3, 7, 1 and 2, and 16-23
62. *Ibid.*, 2, 1, 19
63. *Ibid.*, 4, 3, 20
64. So Śaṅkara on *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-up.*, 2, 1, 19: हृदयं नाम मांस-
पिण्डस्तस्मान्मांसपिण्डात् पुण्डरीकाकारात् पुरीततं हृदयपरिवेष्टनमाचक्षते ।
65. *Ibid.*, 4, 3, 21

66. Cf. *Chāndogya-up.*, 6, 8, 1
67. The Upaniṣads describe sleep as 'the Brahma-world', to which all of us go day by day; but we do not find it, even as the persons who do not know that a treasure is hidden in their homes, walk over it frequently but do not find it. Cf. *Chāndogya-up.*, 8, 3, 2.
68. *Ibid.*, 4, 3, 3
69. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-up.*, 3, 6, 1-13
70. *Ibid.*, 2, 4, 11
71. *Ibid.*, 1, 5, 3
72. *Chāndogya-up.*, 6, 8, 2
73. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-up.*, 4, 3, 9
74. *Ibid.*, 4, 3, 10
75. *Ibid.*, 4, 3, 11
76. *Ibid.*, 4, 3, 18 and 19
77. *Ibid.*, 4, 3, 30
78. *Ibid.*, 4, 3, 32 and 4, 5, 15

FREEDOM AND ITS MEANS

1. *Rgveda*, 10, 34, 8
2. As in *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-up.*, 5, 5, 1 and 5, 6, 1
3. *Ibid.*, 1, 3, 28
4. *Kaṭha-up.*, 1, 2, 5 (Also *Muṇḍaka-up.*, 1, 2, 8)
5. *Īśa-up.*, 3
6. *Ibid.*, 7: 'moha' and 'śoka'
7. *Maitri-up.*, 6, 38
8. *Svetāśvatara-up.*, 5, 13
9. *Kaṭha-up.*, 2, 3, 3
10. *Taittirīya-up.*, 2, 9
11. *Kaṭha-up.*, 1, 2, 1 and 2
12. *Muṇḍaka-up.*, 3, 2, 5
13. *Ibid.*, 3, 2, 9
14. e.g., *Chāndogya-up.*, 8, 8, 4
15. *Maitri-up.*, 6, 20 and 36
16. *Ibid.*, 6, 30
17. *Taittirīya-up.*, 1, 6, 2
18. *Ibid.*, 2, 1
19. 'Readings in the Taittirīya Upanishad' (*Arva*, 5, 4)

20. *Taittirīya-up.*, 2, 7
21. *Ibid.*
22. *Ibid.*
23. *Ibid.*, 2, 8
24. Sri Aurobindo, *op. cit.*
25. *Kaṭha-up.*, 1, 3, 14
26. *Ibid.*, 2, 1, 15; *Taittirīya-up.*, 3, 1.
27. *Taittirīya-up.*, 3, 10, 4
28. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-up.*, 2, 4, 4,
29. *Muṇḍaka-up.*, 2, 2, 3
30. *Ibid.*, 2, 2, 6
31. *Chāndogya-up.*, 8, 1, 1.
32. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-up.*, 4, 4, 17
33. *Kaṭha-up.*, 2, 1, 11
34. *Muṇḍaka-up.*, 2, 2, 2 and 4
35. *Chāndogya up.*, 8, 1, 1.
36. *Kena-up.*, 2, 5
37. *Kaṭha up.*, 1, 2, 23
38. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-up.*, 4, 4, 5
39. *Ibid.*, 2, 5, 14
40. *Ibid.*, 4, 4, 5,
41. *Ibid.*, 2, 5, 15
42. *Ibid.*, 4, 5, 6
43. *Kaṭha-up.*, 1, 2, 20
44. *Chāndogya-up.*, 7, 26, 2
45. e.g. *ibid.*, 4, 4, 1; 8, 5, 1; 8, 11, 3; *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-up.*, 5, 2, 1,
Kaṭha-up., 2, 15; *Praśna-up.*, 1, 1 and 15; *Muṇḍaka-up.*;
3, 1, 5
46. *Taittirīya-up.*, 1, 3, 1
47. *Ibid.*, 1, 4, 3
48. *Ibid.*
49. *Chāndogya-up.*, 6, 14, 2
50. *Taittirīya-up.*, 1, 4, 3
51. *Ibid.*, 3, 1
52. *Muṇḍaka-up.*, 1, 8
53. As in *Praśna-up.*, 1, 15
and *Muṇḍaka-up.*, 3, 1, 5
54. As in *Muṇḍaka-up.*, 1, 2, 11
and *Praśna-up.*, 3

55. As in *Kena-up.*, 4, 8 (33)
56. As in *Maitri-up.*, 4, 4
57. *Śvetāśvatara-up.*, 1, 15
58. M. P. Pandit, *op. cit.*, p. 152
59. *Kena-up.*, 4, 8 (33)
60. *Taittiriya-up.*, 1, 9, 6.
61. *Śatapatha-brāhmaṇa*, 11, 5, 6, 3
62. Patañjali's *Mahābhāṣya*, ed. Kielhorn, p. 6. चतुर्भिश्च प्रकारैर्विधौ
उपयुक्ता भवति—आगमकालेन स्वाध्यायकालेन प्रवचनकालेन व्यवहारकालेनेति ॥
63. Sāyaṇa explains the word : उपनिषणमस्यां परं श्रेययः ।
64. Vyāsa on Patañjali's *Yoga-sūtra*, 1, 20
65. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-up.*, 3, 9, 21
66. *Taittiriya-up.*, 2, 3
67. *Chāndogya-up.*, 6, 12, 3
68. *Katha-up.*, 1, 1, 2
69. *Ibid.*, 1, 1, 13
70. In the *samuccaya* view, there is a further division into *sama-samuccaya* and *viśama-samuccaya* viewpoints. The former holds that knowledge and action are equally important for achieving the final end, while the latter holds that one is more important than the other. The latter viewpoint is again sub-divided into two camps, one holding that knowledge is the principal means and that action is subordinate to it, and the other holding that action is important, knowledge being only an accessory to it.
71. *Īśa-up.*, 2
72. Śaṅkara on *Chāndogya-up.*, 1, 1, 1 उपासनं तु यथाशास्त्रमर्थितं
किञ्चिदालम्बनमुपादाय तस्मिन्समानचित्तवृत्तिसन्तानकरणं तद्विलक्षणप्रत्ययानन्त-
रितं इति विशेषः ।
73. Rāmānuja, *Śrībhāṣya*, p. 34 : उपासनं स्याद्भुवानुस्मृतिर्दर्शानां निर्वच-
नाच्च ।
74. Vedānta-deśika, *Satadūṣaṇi*, p. 136 : वेदनं ध्यानविभ्रान्तं ध्यानं
भ्रान्तं ध्रुवस्मृतौ ।
75. *Chāndogya-up.*, 1, 1, 10

ORIGINS OF MEDICAL THOUGHT IN INDIA

1. S. N. Dasgupta, *A History of Indian Philosophy*, Vol. II, pp. 280-81.
2. K. N. Sastri, *New Light on the Indus Civilization*, Vol. II, p. 67.
3. *On Manu*, 2, 1 (He calls them *śrutis*)
4. *Rgveda*, 2, 33, 4: मा त्वा रुद्र चक्रुधामा नमोभिर्मा दुष्टदुती वृषभ मा सहूनी ।
उन्नो विरमर्षय भेषजेभिर्मिषक्तमं त्वा भिषजां शृणोमि ॥
5. *Ibid.*, 10, 39, 3.
6. *Taittiriya-samhitā*, 6, 4, 9: तौ देवा अत्रुवन् अपूतौ वा इमौ मनुष्य-
चरौ भिषजविति । तस्माद्ब्राह्मणेन भेषजं न कार्यं अपूतो ह्येषोऽमेध्यो यो भिषक् ॥
7. न मांसभक्षणे दोषो न मध्ये न च मैथुने । प्रवृत्तिरेषा भूतानां निवृत्तिस्तु महाफला ॥
8. *Bhelasamhitā, Cikitsāsthāna*, 30.
9. आयतनं विद्यानां मूलं धर्मार्थकाममोक्षाणां । श्रेयः परं किमन्यत् शरीरमजरामरं
विहायैकं ॥ अस्मिन्नेव शरीरे येषां परमात्मनो न स वेद । देहत्यागाद्ध्वं तेषां
तद्ब्रह्म दूरतरम् ।
10. *Caraka-samhitā*, 1, 1, 42
11. अथर्ववेदस्य आयुर्वेदत्वमुक्तं भवति । Also अथर्ववेदैकदेश एवायुर्वेदः ।
12. Dārila-bhaṭṭa on *Kauśika-sūtra*, 25, 2: द्विप्रकारा व्याधयः, आहार-
निमित्ता अशुभनिमित्ता चेति, तत्र आहारसमुत्थानां वैषम्य आयुर्वेदं चकार
अधर्मसमुत्थानां तु शास्त्रमिदमुच्यते ॥
13. Deviprosad Chattopadhyaya, *Lokayata, A Study in Ancient Indian Materialism*, New Delhi, 1959
14. J. Filliozat, *The Classical Doctrine of Indian Medicine*, p. 194
15. For he has a special sūtra : कटचरकाल्लुक् (*Aṣṭādhyāyī*, 4, 3, 107)
16. *Rgveda*, 1, 116, 18: यदयातं दिवोदासाय त्रिर्भिर्भ्राजयाश्चिन्ता ह्यन्ता ॥
17. तत्रेतान् कापिलबलः शेषान् दृढबलोऽकरोत् ।
तन्त्रस्यास्य महार्थस्य पूरणार्थं यथायथम् ॥
18. उपदिष्टा तु सम्यग् धन्वन्तरिमहर्षिणा ।
सुश्रुताय सुशिष्याय लोकानां हितवाञ्छया ॥
सर्वत्र भुवि विख्याता नाम सुश्रुतसंहिता ।
आयुर्वेदत्रयीमध्ये श्रेष्ठ मान्या तथोत्तमा ॥
सा च नागार्जुनेनैव ग्रथिता गन्धर्पतः ।
19. D. M. Bose et al., *A Concise History of Science in India* (Indian National Science Academy, New Delhi), 1971, p. 262.

20. *Caraka*, 1, 30, 20 : आयुर्वेदयतीति आयुर्वेदः ।
21. *Suśruta*, 1, 1, 14 : आयुरस्मिन् विद्यतेऽनेन वाऽऽयुर्विन्दतीत्यायुर्वेदः ।
22. आतो नामानुभावेन वस्तुतत्त्वस्य कात्स्थेन निश्चयत्वात् रागादिवशादपि नान्यथा-वादी यः स इति चरके पतञ्जलिः ॥ quoted in Nageśa-bhaṭṭa's *Laghumañjūśa* as the opinion of Patañjali in his commentary on *Caraka-saṁhitā* (?).
23. *Caraka*, 1, 1, 45 : सत्त्वमात्मा शरीरं च त्रयमेतत् त्रिदण्डवत् ।
लोकस्तिष्ठति संयोगात्तत्र सर्वं प्रतिष्ठितम् ॥
24. *Suśruta*, 1, 1, 21 : पञ्चमहाभूतशरीरिसमवायः पुरुष इत्युच्यते, तस्मिन् क्रिया सोऽधिष्ठानम् ॥
25. *Caraka*, 4, 3, 26 : न ह्यसत्त्वः कदाचिदात्मा सत्त्वविशेषाच्चोपलक्ष्यते ज्ञान-विशेषः ॥ The psyche cannot at any time be without mind, so that there is always some sort of knowledge or other. Cakrapāṇi, the commentator, explains: यत्तु केवलमनोज्ञं आत्म-ज्ञानं तद्वत्त्वेव सर्वदा । Cf. also इदमेव चात्मनश्चेतनत्वं यदिन्द्रियसंयोगे सति ज्ञानशालित्वं न निकृष्टस्यात्मनश्चेतनम् ।
26. *Caraka* : शरीरमपि सत्त्वमनुविधीयते सत्त्वं च शरीरम् ।
27. Cf. *Īśvarakṛṣṇa's Sāṁkhya-kārikā*, 40.
28. Cf. *Sāṁkhya-pravacana-bhāṣya*, 5, 103: यथा दीपस्य सर्वगृहव्यापित्वेऽपि अङ्गुष्ठपरिमाणत्वम् ।
29. *Suśruta*, 3, 1, 16 स एष कर्मपुरुषः चिकित्साधिकृतः ।
30. *Caraka*, 4, 2, 3 : cf. Cakrapāṇi, यद्यपि शुक्ररजसो कारणे तथापि यदैवा-तिवाहिकं सूक्ष्मभूतरूपशरीरं प्राप्नुतः तदैव ते शरीरं जनयतः नान्यथा ॥ Also cf. *Suśruta*, 3, 1, 16.
31. Cakrapāṇi on *Caraka*, 8, 9, 16 : हृदिः मूर्ध्नि च वस्तौ च नृणां प्राणाः प्रतिष्ठिताः । Elsewhere (4, 7, 9) head, heat, throat, navel, rectum, bladder, vital fluid, sperm, blood and flesh are given as the seats of *prāṇa*.
32. *Caraka* : हृदयं चेतनाधिष्ठानमेकम् । The entire body is said to be founded (*samsṛta*) on the heart (1, 30, 5) ... तत्र चैतन्यसंग्रहः ... प्राणवाहानां श्रोतसां मूलम् ... अन्तरात्मनः श्रेष्ठमायतनम् ॥
33. योगक्षेमौ शरीरस्य स्वभावपरिकल्पितौ । स्वभावस्य तु साहाय्यं कर्तव्यं भिष-गुत्तमैः ॥ Cf. *Caraka*, 1, 1, 52 : धातुसाम्यक्रिया चोक्ता तन्त्रस्यास्य प्रयोजनम् ।

34. ब्रह्माण्डकलितं सर्वं पिण्डाण्डेऽपि च वर्तते । सारूप्येणोभयं ज्ञेय उभयत्र गुणाधिकम् ॥
35. *Suśruta*, 3, 4, 80 : प्रकृतिमिह नराणां भौतिकीं केचिदाहुः । पवनदहन-
तोयः कीर्तितास्तासु तिष्ठः ॥
36. *Rgveda*, 10, 168, 3-4
37. *Ibid.*, 10, 129, 1 and 3; 1, 23, 19.
38. Thus *Aṣṭāṅga-sūtra* 1, 13, and 1, 6 : रसामृद्भांसमेदोऽस्थिमज्जाशुक्लानि
धातवः । वायुः पित्तं कफश्चेति त्रयो दोषास्समासतः ।
39. *Suśruta, Sūtrasthāna*, 1, 5, 12 देहसम्भवहेतवः । Dalhaṇa comments
शुक्रार्तवादि सहकारितया देहजनका अभिप्रेताः ।
40. Vāgbhaṭa, for instance, looks upon the factors as polluting
agents (*doṣas*) while the *dhātus* are the things that are pollut-
ed (*dūṣya*). The body, according to him, is an organisation
of *doṣas*, *dhātus*, and *malas* (शरीरं च दोषधातुमलसमुदायः)
41. As illustrated in *Āyurveda-sūtram* (edited with Yogānanda-
nātha's commentary, by R. Shama Sastry, Oriental Library
Publications. University of Mysore, 1922)
42. Bhela speaks of the mixed types as 'Samsṛṣṭa-prakṛti'
According to him, 'pure' types are the best, 'pair-determined'
are of middling quality, and the 'miscellaneous' the worst.
संसृष्टप्रकृतिं विद्यात् संमृष्टैश्चापि लक्षणैः । निवृत्त (एकात्म)-प्रकृतिर्धन्या इन्द्रा
भवति मध्यमा । सन्निपातात्मिका यातु जघन्या सा प्रकीर्तिता ॥ (*Bhelasam-
hitā*, *Vimānasthāna*, 4, 26-27)
43. Cf. S. Venkataraghavan, "The Scope and Importance of the
Doshas", *Cakra* (New Delhi), Vol III, 1971, pp. 124-127.
44. For instance, three *prāṇas* mentioned in *Br.-up.*, 3, 1, 10 and
Ch.-up. 1, 3, 3, four in *Br.-up.*, 4, 4, 1, six in *Br.-up.* 1, 5, 4,
seven in *Br.-up.* 2, 2, 3 and ten in *Br.-up.* 3, 9, 4. In *Maitrī*
2, 6, five are described : *prāṇa* that goes up (य ऊर्ध्वं उत्क्रामति),
apāna that goes down (योऽयं अवाग् संक्रामति), *vyāna* that favours
other breaths (येन वा एता अनुगृहीता), *samāna* that sends the
thickest part of nourishment into *apāna* and brings the
minutest in each member (योऽयं स्थविष्ठो धातुरन्नस्यापाने प्रापयति
अनिष्ठो वांगीरे समानयति), and *udāna* which disgorges and
swallows what is drunk and eaten (योऽयं पित्ताशितं उद्गिरति निगरति)
45. Cf. S. Venkataraghavan, *op. cit.*

46. Chyle is the subtle essence of fiery nature which results from well digested food (आहार्यस्य सम्यक्परिणतस्य यस्तजोभूतः सारः परम-सूक्ष्मः स रस इत्युच्यते—*Suśruta*, *Sūtrasthāna*, 14, 1). Dalhana explains it as the 'heated thing' (*ghṛta*), a fluid which softens, nourishes and vitalises the body. Located in the heart, it proceeds through twenty-four arteries (*dhamanīs*) to all parts of the body, keeping them alive. When it reaches liver and spleen it acquires the red colour and becomes blood (स खत्वाप्सोरस यकृत्प्लीहानौ प्राप्य रागमैपति, *Suśruta*, *ibid.*)
47. *Br.-up.*, 5, 8, 1 : अयं अग्निर्वैश्वानरो योऽयं अन्तःपुरुषे येनेदमन्नं पच्यते यदिदमद्यते ॥
48. *Bhelasamhitā*, *Śarīrasthāna*, 4, pp. 85-86. (Girijadayalu Śukla's ed.)
49. *Ibid.*, 4, 13-14 देहिनां भोजनं भुक्तं नानाव्यञ्जनसंस्कृतं । सूर्यो दिवि यथा तिष्ठन् तेजोयुक्तो गभस्तिमिः । विशेषयति सर्वाणि पल्वलानि पयांसि च । तद्वच्छरीरिणां भुक्तं जाठरो नाभिसंस्थितः ॥ Cf. the typical Ayurvedic view of *jātharāgni* : नाभेरूर्ध्वं द्रव्यञ्जले वामभागे नृणामग्निर्जाठरे । योषितां तु भात्येवायं दक्षिणे व्रीहितुल्यस्तस्यैवोष्मा व्यापृतः सर्वदेहे ॥ स जीर्णकारी वदन्ति केचिद्वैश्वानरीं दीपशिखामथान्ये । नीबारश्चूकप्रतिमां च पीतां कुक्ष्युद्धवोह्याम्ल-रसोऽयमग्निः ॥
49. *Caraka*, *Sūtrasthāna*, 25, 13: रसजानि तु भूतानि व्याधयश्च पृथग्विधाः, आपो हि रसवत्यस्ताः स्मृताः निर्वृत्तिहेतवः ॥
50. *Bhelasamhitā*, *Śarīrasthāna* 4, 35 : ऊष्मा रसस्यो देहेऽस्मिन् जीवं संगृह्य तिष्ठति । रसोद्भवः पुमान् तस्माद्रसो जीवनमुच्यते ॥
51. *Ibid.*, *Śarīrasthāna*, 4th Adhyaya, pp. 86-87 (Misra's ed.)
52. *Ibid.*, verses 22, 23 (p. 89) : जाठरो जलसंभूतः पाचकः पवनैस्सह । प्रदीप्यते नृणां कोष्ठे सति स्वेन्धनपूरिते ॥ इक्ष्वाकुकोशमास्थाय यथा दीपः स्थिरेऽम्भसि । तिष्ठति स्तिमिते सक्तो न यथा चलितेऽम्भसि ॥
53. *Ibid.*, स्वेन्धनपूरिते . .
54. Cf. *Mādhava's Sarvadarśanasamgraha*, Raseśvara-darśana, 8. न च रसशास्त्रं धातुवादाद्यर्थमेवेति मन्तव्यं, देहबन्धद्वारा मुक्तेरेव परमप्रयोजनत्वात् ॥ 'Dehabandha' is in imitation of 'rasabandha' (fixation of mercury by destroying its fluidity).

55. पूर्वे. लोहे परीक्षेत, पश्चाद्देहे प्रयोजयेदिति । . . . यथा लोहे तथा देहे कर्तव्यः ।
(*Ibid.*)
56. *Rasārṇava*, पारदो गदिनो यस्मात्परार्थं साधकोत्तमैः । cf. also रसस्य पारदत्वं संसारपरपारप्रापणहेतुत्वात् ।
57. *Ibid.*, मम देहरसो यस्माद्रसस्तेनायमुच्यते ।
58. अभ्रकस्तव बीजं तु मम बीजं तु पारदः । अनयोर्मेलनं देवि मृत्युदारिद्र्यनाशनम् ॥
59. *Ibid.*, पद्मभूतात्मकः सूतस्तिष्ठत्येव सदाशिवः ।
60. *Rasaratna-samuccaya*, 6, 16 निष्कत्रयं हेमपत्रं रसेन्द्रं नवनिष्ककं ।
अम्लेन मर्दयेद्यामं तेन लिङ्गं तु कारयेत् ॥ For the other method cf.
D. M. Bose *et al.*, *op. cit.*
61. काश्यादि सर्वलिङ्गेभ्यो रसलिङ्गार्चनं शिवं । प्राप्यते येन तल्लिङ्गं भोगारोग्यामृता-
मरम् ॥
62. *Rasārṇava*: कर्मयोगेन देवेशि प्राप्यते पिण्डधारणम् । स्तश्च पवनश्चेति कर्म-
योगो द्विधा स्मृतः ॥ मूर्च्छितो हरति व्याधीन् मृतो सज्जीवयति स्वयम् । बद्ध-
खेचरतां कुर्याद्रसो वायुश्च भैरवि ॥ नानावर्णो भवेत्सूतो विश्वाय घनचापलं ।
लक्षणं दृश्यते यस्य मूर्च्छितं तं वदन्ति हि ॥ आर्द्रत्वं च घनत्वं च तेजो
गौरवचापलं । यस्यैतानि न दृश्यन्ते तं विद्यान्मृतसूतकम् ॥
63. So Śivadāsa in his commentary on Cakrapāṇi-datta ; he speaks of Patañjali not only as an authority on *lohaśāstra* but a redactor of *Carakasamhitā*. Cakrapāṇi's *Āyurveda-dīpikā* has this verse — पातञ्जलमहाभाष्यचरकप्रतिसंस्कृतैः । मनोवाक्यायदोषाणां हर्तुं ऽहि-
पतये नमः ॥ *Laghumañjūṣā* of Nāgeśabhaṭṭa quotes a state-
ment of Patañjali from his 'work on Caraka' (इति चरके पतञ्ज-
लिः). Śivarāma's commentary on *Vāsavadattā* has preserved a
verse from Bhoja : योगेन चित्तस्य पदेन वाचां मलं शरीरस्य च वैद्यकेन ।
योऽपाकरोत्तं प्रवरं मुनीनां पतञ्जलिं प्राञ्जलिरानतोऽस्मि ॥ There is also
an attempt to identify Patañjali with Caraka.
64. As for instance in *Bhāvaprakāśa*, रसायनार्थिभिर्लोकैः पारदो रस्यते
यतः । ततो रस इति प्रोक्तः स च धातुरपि स्मृतः ॥
65. The eighteen Siddhas (Sittars) in the Tamil tradition are as follows : Agastya (Agattiyar), Tirumūlar, Bogar, Gorakkar (Gorakṣanātha), Sattai-muni, Nandiśar, Konkoṇar, Kamala-muni, Iḍaikkāḍār, Sundarāṇḍār, Roma-muni, Brahma-muni, Maccha-muni (Matsyendra ?), Varāha-muni, Kūrma-muni,

Punnakkiśar, Kailāsanāthar and Kunkannār. (Cf. A. V. Subramania Aiyar, *The Poetry and Philosophy of the Tamil Siddhars*, 1957, p. 72 fn.). It is, however, doubtful if all these were historical personages.

66. Like *Muppuvaippu*, *Muppucunṇam*, *Pannirkāṇḍam*, *Vālaisūtram*, *Paccaivēṭṭu-sūtram*, *Amudakalaijñānam*, etc.



MIND IN BHELASAMHITA*

Of the early medical authorities in India Caraka and Suśruta achieved great celebrity, and have held the field in Āyurveda till our own day. Although the problem of their historicity has still not been laid at rest, the *Samhitās* ascribed to them have been regarded as unquestionable authorities by all subsequent medical writers and physicians of the Āyurvedic persuasion. These two treatises merited redaction, reconstruction, annotation and commentaries by such eminent personages as Nagarjuna, Ḍalhaṇa, Cakrapāṇi and Cakradatta; even the great Patañjali is said to have commented on *Caraka-Samhitā* (1). We do not know the exact circumstances in which earlier writers like Bhela, Hārīta, Kṣarapāṇi, Jatūkarna and Parāśara belonging to the Atreya School of Caraka, and Aupadhenava, Aurabhra, Pauṣkalāvata, Vaitaraṇa and Gopurarakṣita of the Dhānvantara School of Suśruta were forgotten and their works lost. Caraka himself has written that Bhela and other disciples of Atreya wrote their own 'tantras' (2). How did they all disappear? There is an intriguing statement by Vāgbhaṭa, who mainly favours Caraka and Suśruta although he cites the views of Bhela and Hārīta in his *Aṣṭāṅghaṛdaya* :

ऋषिप्रणीते प्रीतिश्चेन्मृतत्त्वा चरकसुश्रुतौ ।

भेलाद्याः किं न पठ्यन्ते तस्माद् ग्राह्यं सुभाषितम् ॥

It becomes clear from this reference that already about 1200 A. D. Bhela and other pre-Caraka authorities were no longer consulted by medical students, whose studies were confined to Caraka and Suśruta. The reason suggested by Vāgbhaṭa is not, however, clear.

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Āyurvedic tradition makes *Caraka-Saṁhitā* a reconstruction of an earlier work by Agniveśa (as is evident from the colophon इत्यग्निवेशकृते तन्त्रे चरक प्रतिसंस्कृते); and this Agniveśa was a disciple of Ātreya, who in his turn was a student of Bharadvāja. It is impossible to identify who this Bharadvāja was, and about Ātreya we are not sure if the mere Ātreya, Kṛṣṇātreya, and Punarvasu Ātreya that are referred to in the *Saṁhitās* of Caraka and Bhela were different persons or were different names of the same person. Cakrapāṇi, the commentator on Caraka, however, refers to an old tradition that it was the same person (3). Whatever the truth, both Caraka and Bhela cite his views with a hush of reverence and frequently affiliate themselves with his school of thought. Expressions like इत्याह भगवानात्रेयः, इति हस्माह भगवानात्रेयः occur again and again. Ātreya must doubtless have been a very great master of medicine, and naturally the therapeutic medicine. *Kāyacikitsā* in this country is claimed to be his formulation. There is a suggestion that he was a Buddhist; but we cannot be sure. He had several students like Agniveśa, Bhela, Hārīta, Kṣarapāṇi and Jatūkarna, each of whom, according to Caraka (4), prepared a corpus embodying the master's teachings. While these works have been lost, it is fortunate that Bhela's corpus (*saṁhitā*) has survived the ravages of time, albeit in a mutilated and fragmentary manner.

Due to an unknown reason, Bhela (as others) lost favour with the physicians and his compendium ceased to be studied. This explains the unfortunate circumstance that we have today but a solitary manuscript of *Bhela-saṁhitā*, that too incomplete and worn out. This manuscript, written about 1650, in Telugu characters was discovered in the Tanjore Palace library (Burnell's catalogue, No. 10773) and Hoernle got it copied in 1905. Asutosh Mookerjee got the manuscript again copied twice, and these transcripts formed the basis for the first edition

Bhelasamhitā in the *University of Calcutta Journal of the Department of Letters* (Vol. VI) in 1921. Aufrecht had noticed another manuscript of this work in a Lahore collection (*Catalogus Catalogorum*, No. 416), but subsequent search for it by Hoenle was futile. A manuscript of the same work was announced among Kieth's finds in Turkistan. However, the Tanjore Mss. is our principal material. In recent years, the Chowkhamba Vidyabhavan of Banaras has brought out another edition of *Bhelasamhitā*, based principally on the Calcutta Edition but giving better readings and emendations (ed. Girijadayalu Sukla, 1959).

As the principal manuscript of Bhela that has reached us is badly damaged, especially in its initial portions (the first three sections and a part of the fourth section are missing), it is difficult to identify the author's personal details, philosophical leanings or religious affiliations. In the portions that are extant *dēvapūjā*, *svastyayana*, *bali*, *māṅgalyahoma* are found prescribed, thereby suggesting that the author belonged to the Vedic tradition : but we cannot be very certain. He makes an explicit reference to a contemporary prince, Nagnajit of Gāndhāra (5), whom *Śatapatha-brāhmaṇa* (6) and *Aitareyabrāhmaṇa* (7) also mention, equally specifically. Bhela therefore lived during the early Upanishadic period, several centuries before the present era. Vedic tradition as we know it in the classical period had not as yet got crystallised when Bhela lived. There is close agreement between Caraka's views and Bhela's views on several important details of medical theory and practice, and therefore it is likely that Bhela also subscribed to the early Sāṃkhya of the Pañcaśikha type.

The general orientations of Bhela with regard to the basic ideas of Āyurveda are the same as those of Caraka and Suśruta : the theory that the organism is made up of five elements (*pāñcabhautika* theory), the concept of component parts (*dhātus*),

the notion of the basic modes of being (*guṇa*), the factors of equilibrium and sources of disturbance (*doṣas*), and the pathogenesis. But there are some notions which appear peculiar to Bhela. The fragmentary nature of the manuscript is all the more regrettable when we find that even in the extant portions there are highly interesting suggestions. An attempt at partial reconstruction may, however, be made.

Bhela's ideological position seems to be based on the type of Sāṃkhya that was prior even to Caraka. He speaks of a strongly materialistic nature (*prakṛti*) which is seven-fold: the five ultimate constituent elements (*mahābhūtas*), the consciousness that is unitary (*mahat*) and the unmanifest (*avyakta*). To this conglomeration he adds the nature of things (*svabhava*) and time in the sense of seasons (*kāla*) as causative agents. All organisms are produced from them, and return to them at death. The senses, the sense-objects as well as the understandings arising from their contact do likewise (8). The human being is composed of six material elements, five of them being the elements (space, air, fire, water and earth) and the other the unmanifest *brahman* (9). Bhela employs the expression *puruṣa* only in the sense of a human being, as is the case with the later Vedic texts. We may note in this connection that Caraka takes the word to mean pure consciousness, in line with later Upanishadic thought ; he equates this with *cetanā*. Bhela uses the word *cetanā* in a different sense ; for him it is not the idealistic pure consciousness, but the concrete organic awareness invariably associated with vital functions. That is why he locates *cetanā* in the heart (10). It would appear that Bhela regards understanding (*buddhi*) as a function of this *cetanā*. The unmanifest *brahman* that Bhela speaks of as involved in the human being probably refers to the consciousness which is not tied to the organism. For he refers to the settling down of mind and understanding in the *brahman* at the time of death when the material components return to

the respective elements (11). The expression *brahman* occurs in another context : while dealing with the phenomenon of sleep, Bhela thinks that it is an arrangement of *brahman* (*brahmaṇa vihitā purā*) : what he means probably is that it is an old order established by nature. There is also a reference to *bhūtātmā*, the elemental soul involved in transmigration.

Bhela's employment of the expression *buddhi* is clearly in the sense of understanding, determinate and concrete. And it is a function of *citta*, which is more general but indeterminate although concrete. It is *citta* that is responsible for all understanding (*buddhi*), for all action in the individual, for all his feelings. *Citta* and *cetanā* are interchangeable expressions for embodied consciousness that supports the individual's individuality, identity and uniqueness : this is the function that is centred in the heart. Bhela distinguishes between *buddhi* as understanding and *manas* as mind. Mind, according to him, is localised in the brain ; and Dasgupta is right when he says that this is a unique view in the field of Sanskrit literature (12). Mind's centre is said to be the area between the head and the palate (*śirastālvantaragatam*). It concerns itself with all senses ; and due to its location it can apprehend all details obtained by the sense organs. Both the senses and the mind alike are sustained by the *citta* situated in the heart (13). The understanding (*buddhi*) in the form of judgments arises when the mind 'knows' (*viditam*) the *citta* and the choice of action is actualised (14). Here, 'knowing' may mean inward direction or introspection. Bhela is here discussing the problem of motivation in action. Mind initiates the consideration of the object with regard to its desirability, urgency, and possibility ; understanding is in reality an evaluation and decision-making. It is called 'buddhi' because it instructs (*bodhanam*) the man about what to do and how. In its *citta* aspect (aspect of undifferentiated consciousness) it is in fact the 'embodied soul' (*śarīrī*) , the

highest spirit (*paramātmā*), and the main director of all behaviour (15). Mind's field is more limited: it is responsible for cognitions.

There is an interesting discussion in *Bhelasamhitā* on what he calls *unmāda*, which is a general expression for mental ailments (Nidānasthāna, sections 7 and 8). Bhela is definite that these ailments are all bodily in origin, confined to the body, and harm the body itself, even as fire destroys the very things that support it (16). This somatopsychic approach is remarkable, considering the age in which Bhela lived. The disturbances (*doṣas*) which occur in the area between the head and the palate, viz., the brain, will first affect the mind and immediately it is transmitted to the *citta* (basic consciousness which is also vital), and when *citta* is thus touched understanding (*buddhi*, judgment) is destroyed: the person would then not know what to do and what not to (17). There is also an attempt to fix the causes of such disturbance in the *citta-manas* complex : grief, anger, excessive delight and insecurity (loss of wealth) are mentioned as causes (18). As a result of this disturbance sets in insanity. The individual so disturbed is preoccupied, he cries without a reason, he laughs all on a sudden, he becomes reticent, he is excessively sleepy, he loses energy and enthusiasm, he is frightened, he feels helpless, or he is irritable (19). It is interesting that Bhela recommends various ways of shocking the mental patient like caning, whipping, confronting him with elephants or snakes, surrounding him with fire, and throwing cold water on him. Bhela has also a theory : shocks such as these would intensify the disturbances in the mind because of fear, and fear may set the mind in order even as it throws it out of order (20).

Equally interesting is Bhela's treatment of diarrhoea as a psychosomatic ailment : disturbances in the *doṣas* could be occasioned by fear or grief, and they are treated by reassurance

by friends or wise folk in whom the patient has trust; relief is to be obtained by relaxing the mind (21).

The problem of the manner in which the mind can enter into contact with the vital and pure consciousness has been raised by Bhela. How does the mind cognise the objects that are presented to the senses? Bhela answers that the bodily fire (*kāyāgni*) has five varieties, one of which is perceptive (*ālocaka*). This is considered to be one of the functions of fire-element in the body known as bile (*pitta*). According to Bhela, this function is two-fold : vision-specific (*cakṣurvaiśeṣika*) and understanding-specific (*buddhi-vaiśeṣika*). The former occasions knowledge by bringing the mind into contact with *citta* (--Bhela uses the expression *ātmā* here--) and also projecting the mental details on the plane of consciousness. This makes visual experience properly structured so that different details are both separately apprehended and integrated. This function is centered in the eye, as it is the principal sense-organ. The latter is located in the area between the eyebrows ; it grasps the subtle details that one has apprehended, organises what one has grasped, integrates what one has organised, with reference to past experience, remembers what is past and imagines what is in the future. This function is involved in planning our actions, focussing our mind, and gathering our thoughts (22).

In his discussion on sleep Bhela points out that when sensefunctions cease mind also ceases so far as perceptions are concerned; in this condition mind settles in the undifferentiated consciousness (*citta*) in the heart. The individual being (*jīva*) is overcome by *tamas* (quality of inertia, inactivity, clouding, darkness) and then the sense organs gradually withdraw themselves from their activities. It is at this time that the food eaten is digested ; with phlegm (*śleṣman*) entering the heart the streams from the eyes and ears are arrested. Heavy sluggishness

enters into conciousness and this is called sleep (*nidrā*). Nature arranges sleep for all beings because it wards off anxiety, dissatisfactions and fatigue (23).

The earliest medical treatise available to us, *Bhelasamhitā*, is refreshingly original and bold : it is a great pity that the complete work is not available.

REFERENCES

1. So Bhoja and Cakrapāṇi, Cf. Nageśa-bhaṭṭa's *Laghumañjūṣā* cites,
आप्तो नामानुभवेन वस्तुतस्तस्य कात्स्नेन निश्चयत्वात् रागादिवदपि नान्यथावादी
यः स इति चरके पतञ्जलिः ।
2. *Caraka-Samhitā*, Sūtra-sthāna, 1
अथ भेलादयश्चक्रुः स्वं स्वं तन्त्रानि च ।
श्रावयामासुरात्रेयं सर्षिसंघं सुमेधसः ॥
3. Cakrapāṇi on *Caraka*, Cikitsā-sthāna, 11,32
कृष्णात्रेयः पुनर्वसोरभिन्न एवेति वृद्धाः । Also Bhela, 16 कृष्णात्रेयं पुरस्कृत्य
कथाश्चक्रुर्महर्षयः ।
4. *Caraka-Samhitā*,
5. *Bhela Samhitā*, 15, 1 (p. 32)
गान्धारभूमौ राजर्षिर्नग्नजित्स्वर्गमार्गगः ।
संगृह्य पादौ पप्रच्छ चन्द्रभागं पुनर्वसुः ॥
6. *Śātapatha-brāhmaṇa*, 8,1,4,10
अथ हस्माह स्वर्जिन्नाग्नजितः नग्नजिद्धा गान्धारः ।
7. *Aitareya-brāhmaṇa* 7, 35 नग्नजिते गान्धाराय
8. *BS, Vimāna-sthāna*, 4, 9-11
प्रकृतिं वै विजानीयात्तस्या वक्ष्यामि लक्षणं ॥ ९ ॥
अव्यक्तं च महान्धैव महाभूतानि पञ्च च ।
पुराः प्रकृतयः सप्त स्वभावः काल एव च ॥ १० ॥

तेभ्यो भवन्ति भूतानि नान्येव प्रतियान्ति च ।

इन्द्रियाणीन्द्रियार्थाश्च बुद्ध्यः पञ्च तास्तथा ॥ ११ ॥

9. Ibid., षड्धातुरेवायं पुरुषो भवति । धातवः पुनः पञ्चभूतानि ब्रह्म यदव्यक्तं ॥
10. Ibid., Sarīra-sthāna, 7, 3
हृदयमेकं चेतनायतनं । दश प्राणायतनानि, यद्यथा मूर्धकण्ठो हृदयं गुदो नाभिर्वस्तिरोजः शोणितं मांसमिति ॥
11. Ibid., 6, 23, quotes a verse and explains it,
भिद्यमाने शरीरे वै धातुर्धातुं नियच्छति ।
मनोबुद्धिश्च सर्वेषां ब्रह्मणि प्रतितिष्ठति ॥
12. Dasgupta, S. N. *A History of Indian Philosophy*, II, p. 340-341
13. BS, Cikitsā-Sthāna, 8, 4
स मनः प्रभवं चापि सर्वेन्द्रियमयं बलं ।
कारणं सर्वबुद्धीनां चित्तं हृदयसंश्रितम् ॥ ४ ॥
14. Ibid.,
विदितं मनसा चित्तमालम्भो लभ्यते ततः ।
ततो वृद्धिः प्रभवति कार्याकार्यविचारिका ॥ ६ ॥
15. Ibid.,
सा बुद्धिः परमात्मा च स शरीरी प्रकीर्तितः ।
यथाकृती कर्मकरः क्रियां योजयते नृषु ॥ ८ ॥
16. Ibid., Nidāna-Sthāna,
एवं शरीरजा दोषाः शरीरे पर्यवस्थिताः ।
शरीरमेव हिंसन्ति पावकः स्वामिवाश्रयम् ॥
17. Ibid., Unmāda-Cikitsitādhyāya, 8 (p. 157)
ऊर्ध्वं प्रकुपिता दोषाः शिरस्ताल्वन्तरे स्थिताः ।
मनः संदूषयत्याशु ततश्चित्तं विपद्यते ॥ १० ॥
चित्ते व्यापदमापन्ने बुद्धिर्नाशं निगच्छति ।
ततस्तु बुद्धिव्यापत्त्या कार्याकार्यं न बुद्ध्यते ॥ ११ ॥
18. Ibid.,

शोकात्कोपात्तथा हर्षाद्व्याणां च विनाशनात् ।
चलिते चित्तमनसि मदमाशु निगच्छति ॥ १३ ॥

19. Ibid.,

प्रध्यायति प्रस्वपिति रोदिति ह्यनिमित्ततः ।
हसत्यकस्मात् निद्रालुरल्पवाङ्मनित्यमुत्सुकः ॥ १४ ॥
त्रस्तः शरीरदीनाक्षिक्रोधनो निरपत्रपः ।
पुरस्तादवलोक्य च न यथावृत्त एव च ॥ १५ ॥

20. Ibid.,

वित्रासयेयुर्वैद्यास्तं त्रासनैस्तु पृथग्विधैः ॥
त्रासास्तीव्रा हि कुर्वन्ति चित्तस्य विकृतिं भयात् ॥
भयमेव तु चित्तस्य स्थानयानार्थमुच्यते ॥ १६ ॥

21. Ibid., Atisāra-Cikitsitādhyāya, 10.

भयाद्वा यदि वा शोकाद्योतिसारः प्रवर्तते ।
यः कुप्यति ततो दोषस्तस्य कुर्याच्चिकित्सितम् ॥
नित्यमाश्वासयेयुस्तं सुहृदश्च विपश्चितः ।
मनः प्रहृष्टं कुर्याच्च तदा सम्पद्यते सुखी ॥

22. Ibid., Śārīra-sthāna, 4,

अत्रोवाच भगवानात्रेयः - तत्रालोचको नाम वर्षाशीतातपप्रवृद्धः । स द्विविधः -
चक्षुर्वैशेषिको बुद्धिवैशेषिकश्चेति । तत्र चक्षुर्वैशेषिको नाम य आत्ममनसोः
संनिकर्षात् ज्ञानमुदीरयित्वा चित्ते चित्तमाधाय संस्वेदजाण्डजोद्भिज्जजरायुजानां
चतुर्णां भूतग्रामाणां लक्षणसंस्थानरूपवर्णस्वरैरुच्चावचानां पुष्पफलपत्राणां
रूपनिवृत्त्यर्थमेकैकस्य द्वयोः पात्रयोः सर्वेषां वा युगत्प्रणिपतितानां
वैशेष्यमुत्पादयतीति ॥ बुद्धिवैशेषिको नाम यो भ्रुवोर्मध्ये शृङ्गाटकस्थः
सुसूक्ष्मनार्थानध्यात्मकृतान् गृह्णाति, गृहीतं धारयति, धारितं प्रत्युदाहरति, अतः
तं स्मरति, प्रत्युत्पन्नं कृत्वाऽनागतं प्रार्थयति, जातमात्रश्च पुनरनुपदिष्टस्वभावः
मातुः स्तन्यमभिलषति, ध्याने प्रत्याहारे योजनाश्च बुद्धिवैशेष्यमुत्पादयति ॥

23. Ibid., Cikitsā-sthāna, 25

तमसा हि समाक्रान्ते जीवे दिवससंक्षयात् ।
इन्द्रियाण्यस्य कर्मभ्यः क्रमाद्धि विरमन्त्यथ ॥

भुक्तेन पच्यमाने च श्लेष्मणा हृद्रतेन तु ।
 विवृद्धेन निरुद्धेषु चक्षुः श्रोत्रवहेषु च ।
 शारीरमानसैश्चैव तैस्तैरुक्तैरुपद्रुतैः ॥
 एवं क्रियास्तसंज्ञानां तन्द्राविश्यति तामसी ।
 एवं सर्वेषु भूतेषु निद्रा नामोपजायते ॥
 चिन्ताशोकश्रमहरी ब्रह्मणा विहिता पुरा ।
 श्वपतस्तस्य देहेऽस्मिन् प्राणापानौ सहेन्द्रियैः (?) ॥

The Conception of Stress in Indian Thought*

1. The Theoretical Aspects of Stress in Samkhya and Yoga Systems

It would probably be helpful to provide a preliminary statement concerning my own interest in the problem of stress, and thereby define the framework for my approach. As a post-graduate student in the Mysore University three decades ago working under Dr M. V. Gopalaswamy, my area of special interest was physiological psychology. I was naturally drawn towards Walter Cannon's work on Homeostasis.¹ The concept of the constancy of internal environment appealed to me ; and it was but a step to move from the physiological environment which Cannon and Claude Bernard talked about to psychological environment. When later I was working at the Indian Institute of Science Hans Selye's work on systemic stress became an absorbing interest.² Involved as I was in the problem of personality, the coping mechanism in Hans Selye's work appeared to me as significant. I followed his applications of stress concept to psychology which he made in 1955 before the American Psychological Association.³ I was at that time in this place, known then as All India Institute of Mental Health, and I conducted several studies which sought to interpret TAT responses based on the ideas of field stress and personality coping.⁴

During the Calcutta session of the Indian Science Congress, I was drawn into discussion with an American scientist who presented a paper on stress and who rejected that pain or anxiety was the motivating force behind stress, and who disregarded the role of culture in stress. I held different views, and argued in particular that culture played an important role not only in the perception of threat but in determining the coping behaviour. The discussion on threat induced a stress in me, and I attempted to define the cultural involvements in stress by exploring documented Indian thought which provided the essential cultural framework. My purpose was to develop a comprehensive conceptual model which was culturally specific to our country. This is how I began my investigations into the concept of stress in Indian thought.

Let me also mention that while I am greatly influenced by the work done in America on homeostasis and systemic stress, I try to

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keep as far as possible this influence at a distance. We are often carried away by stray or superficial correspondances, and seek to read modern scientific thought in ancient works, or ancient thought in modern scientific works. This would be unjust for ancient thought as well as modern work. I believe in keeping the contexts distinct, although I admit it may not be possible to divert oneself entirely of influences.

Now, what do I mean by ancient Indian thought? I propose to confine the scope of this expression to organized traditional thought known as 'the systems' or *darśanas*. In particular, the *Sāṃkhya*, *Yoga* and the *Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika* systems will engage my attention in these talks insofar as they have contributed the fundamental ideas of *Āyurveda* concerning health and disease. I may add that we do not expect to find in these thoughts the physiological or psychobiological details that we are now acquainted with. But it is not impossible to discern in the speculations contained in these systems ideas that would be supremely relevant to contemporary discussions in the areas of human physiology and psychobiology. It shall be my concern in these talks to communicate to you the background ideas constituting the Indian view of stress not only in disease but in normal life as well.

And what do I mean by stress? I have, of course, at the back of my mind, stress as was de-fined at the inter-disciplinary conference at the University of Illinois, Urbana (1967).⁷ But I am aware that this definition would be inappropriate and anachronistic when we are considering stress in the context of ancient Indian thought. Apart from the technical connotation that the word has come to acquire since 1954 when Hans Selye used it,⁸ the English word as an aphetic form of distress has been in vogue at least since 1513; even then it meant overpowering pressure of an adverse force, as for instance 'the stress of weather'. Around 1630, we find the association of 'stress' with 'storm', signifying the condition of things compelling strained effort. The word was primarily used to describe an external event, and only later it suggested metaphorically an inner, mental condition.

We have two Indian words which correspond not only with the word 'stress' in common use but also to an extent, with the word in its technical sense. And they are primarily descriptive of internal conditions. The two words are *kleśa* and *duḥkha*: the former word has been crystallized in the *Yoga* framework to refer largely to the stressor aspect, and the latter in the *Sāṃkhya*, more as the phenomenon of stress itself. I shall devote some time to discuss the significance of these two words.

But before I do that, let me recall to your minds the essential dimensions of the problem of stress in our present day discussions : cognitive structuring, threat, emotional involvements, organic reactions and coping activity. I shall have occasion to show that these dimensions are also to be found in the discussion on stress in ancient Indian thought, and what is more important, that these dimensions are to be seen here in a new light. My purpose in these talks is not merely in the nature of a historical exercise; it is to present the ancient Indian contribution as an alternative way of thinking about stress, as helpful in developing a comprehensive conceptual model of stress, culturally specific to India, so that mental health care here may have an effective framework.

There are two Sanskrit words *kleśa* and *duhkha* as synonymous with stress. The word *kleśa*, derived from the root *kliś* (*upatāpe*, 'to torment', 'to cause pain', 'to afflict') means an afflicted state, a condition of pain. *Bhagavad-gita*^{12,5} uses the word in the sense of effort (*śrama*). The word has been used in the *Svetāśvatara-upanishad*¹¹ in the sense of hindrances or afflictions. Patañjali crystallizes the technical connotation of the word while dealing with *kriyāyoga*.⁹ It bears elaboration on this reference, for it not only comprehends all the essential details of stress that we are studying now but shows a way to integrate them.

As defined in this context, the *kleśas* are not themselves mental processes, but are in the nature of a hindering load on the mental processes (*na hi kleśāḥ pratyaya-mātrāḥ, pratyaya-mātrā hi vṛttayah, kleśāstu chittasya malam*).¹⁰ The analogy given here is that of the cataract on the eye (*yathā chakshas timiram*). The cataract is extraneous to the eye, and its presence interferes with the normal function of the eye. But it can be removed and the normal function of the eye restored. Likewise, the *kleśa* gets into the mental processes, but could be taken out of them. Bhoja's *Rāja-mārtanḍa* (which is an annotation on the *Yoga-sūtra*) explains that the *kleśas* are so called because they produce agitation which is of the nature of obstructions or hindrances.¹¹

Vyāsa's celebrated commentary on *Yoga-sūtra* spells out the dimensions of *kleśa* with remarkable clarity.¹²

"The *kleśas* flooding the mental processes deepen the authority of the aspects (*guṇas* : *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*). They organize a pattern of changes. They hasten to produce a stream of reactions and stimulations. The *kleśas* and the reactions becoming interdependent, they together press towards the consequences of the responses". The implications of this pregnant passage are brought out by the glossator, Vāchaspati, in his *Tattva-vaiśārādī*. The idea of 'the authority of the aspects' needs to be briefly explained. The *guṇas* are aspects of existence, universal ingredients of all things and events. They are three-fold : *sattva* representing the aspect of occurrence, awareness, and tranquility ; *rajas*, representing action, energy and excitement ; and *tamas* standing for inhibition, inaction, and exhaustion. Although they are aspects, they are by themselves incapable of their respective functions. The functions are made possible by the involvement of intentionality which in the Sāṃkhya ideology is identified with the association of *prakṛti* and *puruṣa*. When this intentionality is overpowered by the *kleśas*, the functions of the *guṇas* are not only made possible, but are emphasized. The *kleśas* occur only in and through the mental processes. The *sattva* cognizes the presence of *kleśa*, the *rajas* stirs the organism to activity, and the *tamas* sets limits to such activity. The *sattva* provides the cognitive structure, the *rajas* energy for action and emotion, and the *tamas* the necessary exhaustion. Such is the 'authority of the aspects' (*guṇādhikāra*).

Vyāsa's commentary points out that the 'authority of the aspects' is always there in an organism, and that the 'authority' of the *klesas* only deepens it (*draḍhayanti*). The 'deepening of the authority' is explained by the glossator as 'the power to initiate action of each of the aspects' (*kāryāraṃbhāṇa-sāmarthyā*).

In other words, the *kleśas* operate as effective stimulators for a series of reactions which are to be understood as above the normal threshold. The reactions are in this sense extra-ordinary ; the activity is intensified under the influence of the *kleśas*, which have the demand character.

The 'pattern of changes' (*pariṇāma*), which the *kleśas* are said to organize, is explained by the glossator as the recurrent changes in the relative strength and proportions of the three aspects (*sattva, rajas, and tamas*).¹³ The changes are rendered constant and continuous (*ava-sthāpayanti*). The pattern is figuratively spoken of as the 'stream' (*srotā*) of reactions, which are brought forth, like the river which swells after a heavy downpour of rain at the source. Hence the significant expression 'un-namayanti', used by the commentator.

The sequence of stimulations and performances assumes a stream-like character because of their 'common location and uniform direction, with reference to the individual (or what we now call the focal organism). This is in the nature of a constraint. Vyāsa while referring to the interdependent character of the *kleśas*, emphasizes the mutual facilitation (*parasparānugraha*) of the demands. Each *kleśa* having a specific demand, augments the other *kleśas* having likewise specific demands, in the same situation. The pattern of changes that emerge in the wake of these demands erase the specificity of these demands, and brings into being a generality of demand, which will be capable of achieving the consequences of performances (*karma-vipāka*). The consequence is unitary ; hence the employment of singular terminal for the compound word in Sanskrit.

It is important to note that in the Yoga text, the purpose is to provide a conceptual model in the framework of common human life, regardless of individual differences. The passage quoted above refers to the general predicament of man in whom

the *kleśas* have begun to operate as stressors. The idea of an organization of these individual stressors to constitute a major stress so as to produce the consequence of performance (*karma-vipāka*) is implied here.

However, the glossator introduces a new idea in this context : he takes interdependence and mutual facilitation (*parasparānugrahatanā*) to refer to the interaction between the *kleśas* and performances.¹⁴ While this idea is strictly not justified in the commentarial statement (for it speaks only of interdependence among the *kleśas* themselves), it does mark an improvement in the conceptualization of stress. The demands engender performances, and performances in their turn arouse other demands ; so that the aforementioned stream is maintained. The stream is an ongoing system, where the load of the *kleśas* to be handled becomes “normal”, normal in the sense that the focal individual’s integrity is preserved without much difficulty.

We can see that in the above treatment, *kleśa* is viewed as an intervening variable. The stimulus and response aspects are comprehended in it. The Yoga manuals look upon it more as a stressor than as the phenomenon of stress itself. The word in Sanskrit for stress seems to be more properly *duhkha* ; it describes an organismic state involving the experience of emotions, and characterized by an urge to escape or avoid (*jihāsā*).

Patañjali’s *Yoga-sūtra* adds a new dimension to the discussion on stress by classifying the *kleśas*, which are really innumerable, into five sequential phases arranged in two levels.¹⁵ The fundamental cognitive failure, called *avidyā* or non-cognition, constitutes the first of the levels : it is the ground for the other level comprising four types of *kleśas*. We may pass over the former, as its significance is essentially metaphysical ; it may

be looked upon as phenomenological stress. Of interest to us here are the four types of *kleśas* at the other (viz., transactional) level. They are termed *asmitā*, *rāga*, *dvesha* and *abhiniveśa*. They are technical words borrowed from the Sāṃkhya thought, and have rather stylized connotations.

Asmitā is literally 'I-am-ness' (ego-involvement) and is defined in the text as the assumption of uniformity (*ekātmata*) between the potency of being the apprehender (*drk-śakti*) and the ability to apprehend (*darsana-śakti*).¹⁶ The commentarial explanations make it clear that the expression signifies precisely self-appraisal of an aroused organism. In the conceptual model provided in the Yoga-text, this intra-individual stressor indicates personal involvement in the situation. Rightly does an annotation, *Maṇi-prabhā*, describe this factor as 'the knot of the heart' (*hṛdayagranthi*), or the core crisis implying evaluation of one's own ability to intend effectively in the situation. The philosophical considerations, however, tend to describe this self-evaluation as laden with ignorance and error (*bhrānti*), and herein lies the crisis.

The consequent phase of self-appraisal is intentionality (*rāga*, literally 'attachment', or 'approach'), defined in the text as anticipation of satisfaction (*sukhānuśayī*).¹⁷ The commentarial explanations emphasize the positive priming of the individual (*sukhā-bhijñā*), the facilitation of memory traces (*sukhānumṛti*), and the *need-dominance* (*gardha*).¹⁸ It is a *kleśa* or stressor in as much as it involves the evaluation of the environmental details, and tends to press on the individual to make approach responses. Intentionality (*rāga*) defines the situation for the individual, and necessitates a fresh evaluation of one's own needs and abilities *apropos* the situation ; it provides the direction for behaviour. It is worth reminding here the finding of R. H. Rahe that a stressor need not necessarily be unpleasant or noxious but any event

requiring adjustment and accommodation may be a potent stressor.¹⁹

The next phase in the sequence is called in the text *dvesha*, which literally means 'aversion'. The commentary of Vyāsa emphasizes the areas of correspondance between *rāga* and *dvesha* : both involve priming of the individual (one positively, and the other negatively), facilitation of the memory traces (pleasurable in the former case, and painful in the latter), and the need dominance (the need to obtain in the former and the need to avoid or eliminate in the latter). Vyāsa provides suggestive synonyms for *dvesha* : intense repulsion involving the tendency to strike (*prati-ghā*), alarm or anxiety when confronted with inimical objects (*manyu*), urgency to remove (*jighāṃ sā*), and anger (*krodha*). It is obvious that at this stage the individual perceives threat either to ones own integrity (or self-esteem, *asmi-tā*) or to ones need-dominance (*rāga*). This involves not only reevaluation of ones own ability and the extenuating conditions in the situation on hand, but the role of emotions appropriate in conflict, competition, or antagonism.

It may be seen that it is this phase which broadly corresponds with the stage of initial shock (or alarm) in Hans Selye's model. It will be conceded that the analysis in the *Yoga-sūtra* takes into account the psychodynamics that precedes this stage. The conceptual model provided by the Indian text thus becomes more meaningful.

The final phase in the *Yoga-sūtra* series is called *abhiniveśa*, literally 'devoting oneself entirely to something' (*abhi+ni +viś*). The literary employment of the word has meanings of 'urgency to action'²⁰ 'firm resolve',²¹ 'application of mind'.²² In the Yoga-context it is the ever-present urge in all living beings to survive as individuals (*ātmāsīh*).²³ Patañjali describes it as 'constitutional and natural' (*sva-rasa-vāhī*) ; the annotator (Bhoja) explains that

it is constitutional or natural in the sense that no provocation is required for its operation (*nimittam antarena*).²⁴ More specifically, the Yoga manuals take the expression *abhiniveśa* to signify fear of death (*maraṇa-trāsa*), defensive reactions.

The modern student of stress may be tempted to find in this phase a correspondance with Hans Selye's third stage, viz., exhaustion. But this phase of *abhiniveśa* does not indicate a collapse of the adaptive mechanism as the stage of exhaustion implies, but marks the beginning of the behavioural response pattern or what the stress analysts would call coping behaviour.

The three earlier phases are all sequential cognitive appraisals : *asmitā* is self-appraisal, *ragā* is object appraisal, and *dvesha* is threat-appraisal. They represent the increasing relevance of transactional cognitive processes to life-situations, and also the increasing role of energy-dynamics. In self-appraisal, it is more or less purely cognitive ; in object-appraisal, intentionality is more cognitive than energetic ; but in threat-appraisal the alarm is more energetic than cognitive, and involves emotions and organic changes.

All these three phases help in what may be called the arousal mechanism and reality-testing, but they are only preparations for deliberate adaptive behaviour. It is true, however, that some behavioural response is involved in each of these phases, but it is only in the fourth phase that behaviour can be described as 'coping activity'.

It is to be noted that the final phase, viz., *abhiniveśa*, lacks the specificity that we find in the three earlier phases : self-specificity in *asmitā*, object-specificity in *ragā*, and threat-specificity in *dvesha*. *Abhiniveśa* (which literally means arousal) is general adaptational activity. It is not an attempt to suggest here a correspondance between this and Hans Selye's general

adaptation syndrome (GAS). The two are entirely divergent in their implications, expressions, and frames of reference. The non-specificity of *abhiniveśa* is mentioned only to emphasize that the fundamental *kleśa*, *avidyā* is also non-specific. *Avidyā* (literally 'noncognition') is the opposite of the correct appraisal of self and its encounter with the object. In the absence of such correct appraisal (*samyag-jñāna*), ego-involvement (*asmitā*) emerges as a specific subjective factor (the opposite of discriminative knowledge of self as distinct from the body-complex, *viveka-khyāti*) ; and from this, the object-appraisal (*rāga*), and the threat-appraisal (*dveṣha*) emerge as specific transactional factors (the opposites of indifference or neutrality, inhibiting positive or negative orientation, *mādhyaṣṭha*). The consequent *abhiniveśa* reverts to the original non-specificity, although discrete behavioural activities are specific with regard to the self, object and threat.

Although *avidyā* is a *kleśa*, it is outside the transactional plane, and hence not subject to the variant modes of specific occurrence as the other four phases are. The modes mentioned in the *Yoga-sūtra* (2,4) are four : 'dormant' (*prasupta*), 'tenuous' (*tanu*), 'intercepted' (*vicchinna*) and 'operative' (*udāra*). The dormancy of the *kleśa* as a stressor consists in its being a mere potency. It is compared to the condition of a seed which has the potentiality to grow into a tree, given the facilitating circumstances. Any mental process has the possibility of emerging as a stressor, but not in the absence of conditions which induce stress and favour such emergence. Some mental processes, however, have strong predispositions to operate as stressors as soon as conditions become favourable. This predisposition is referred to by the expression 'dormancy'. It becomes operative in the normal course of events, given time and the conditions.

‘Tenous’ or ‘thin’ (*tanu*) stressors are those mental processes which are no longer dormant but which have been held in check by other and more powerful stressors. They operate, but lack intensity or urgency. Their demand character is weak; the load or press is light. ‘Intercepted’ (*vicchinna*) stressors are those that lack continuity, owing to conflict with other stressors. The subjective demands and the situational demands alternate in their pressure, and the mental processes with strong predispositions to become stressors sometimes operate and sometimes lie dormant, depending upon other mental processes that facilitate or overpower, and upon the varying need-dominance. They cease to be actual stressors when they lie dormant, but they do not lose their demand character.

‘Operative’ (*udāra*) stressors are so called because they have risen ‘above constraints’ (*ut+āra*). They are stresses in the sense of response-patterns which are calculated to achieve the intentions and eliminate threats. They presuppose not only need dominance but favourable conditions (such as strong predisposition, absence of other and competitive stressors, and conflicting need applications). The demand character of the stressors here find their fullest expression in overt behavioural modes.

The conceptual model of stress provided by the *Yoga-sūtra* is thus broad-based ; and it comprehends the cognitive structuring, emotional state, and adaptive reactions. It also presents the outlines of the strategy called ‘kriyā-yoga’ which is calculated to reduce the number and intensity of the stressors (*kleśa-tanūkarāṇa*) and to facilitate relaxed conservation of mental energy devoid of tension (*samādhi-bhāvanā*).²⁵

It would have become apparent by now that the conceptual model of stress presented here concerns itself with cognitive processes much more than their modern counterparts. It may

be mentioned in passing that R. S. Lazarus, who is mainly responsible for the increasing interest that psychologists are taking in the problem of stress, attached great importance to cognitive processes, although he could not identify them clearly or comprehensively. The *Yoga-sūtra* model relies on the cognitive appraisals of the self, the object and the threat. But to understand the rationale of this emphasis on cognitive processes we have to turn elsewhere.

For instance, we get valuable clues in this direction from Vātsyāyana's commentary on Gautama's *Nyāya-sūtra*. His words constituting the introductory passage is quoted : "cognitive appraisal of the object (*artha-pratīpatti*) is impossible without the employment of the instruments of cognition (*pramāṇa*) ; and without the cognitive appraisal of the object, efficient behaviour (*pravṛtti-sāmarthyā*) is impossible. Indeed, we employ the instruments of cognition, and appraise the object ; and having appraised, we either intend to obtain the object (*artham abhīpsati*) or to avoid it (*jihāsati*). When such intention to obtain or to avoid is there, motivation for specific effort (*samīhā*) operates. Efficiency of behaviour is in terms of relating the effort with the desired consequence (*asyāḥ phalena abhisambandhaḥ*). And it is only when the individual puts forth effort that he obtains the object that he desires, or avoids the object that he dislikes. The object that the man encounters is either pleasure and the means of pleasure, or pain and the means of pain. One whose behaviour is associated with the intention to obtain or to avoid is the cogniser (*pramātā*) ; that by employing which he cognizes is the instrument of cognition (*pramāṇa*) ; that which is thus cognized is the object (*prameya*) ; and that which enables the cogniser to appraise the object is cognition (*pramiti*). Among these four factors is comprehended the significance of the object (*artha-tattva*)."

There is hardly any need for commenting on this lucid explanation. Cognitive appraisal constitutes the functional framework for the conceptual model of stress, not only in the *Sāṃkhya-Yoga* system, but also in Nyāya, Vedānta and Buddhism. The threat-appraisal is described, in all these systems, as due to phenomenological cognitive processes (principally erroneous self-appraisal, and perverted object-appraisal). While the coping mechanism consequent upon this threat-appraisal is normal human behaviour, these systems suggest that the coping activities themselves are laden with stress, because of the initial error in the cognitive appraisal of the self *avidyā*). Counteracting this error is the practical aspect of these systems. It calls for the coping behaviour of a different kind, called *sādhana* in Sanskrit. An important involvement in this coping behaviour is cognitive re-appraisal of the self, of the object, and of the threat.

II. The Practical Involvement in Gīta and Āyurveda

Bhagavad-gītā provides an excellent illustration of stress and of how it is to be handled. In fact, the significance of this text consists only in this. The theme is wellknown, and is simple. Arjuna, the normally efficient man of action collapses when exposed to the anticipated shock of being involved in what he thinks is an immoral act (viz., war). The coping mechanism which uniformly supported him in numerous similar situations previously has now proved altogether inadequate. He makes negative self-evaluation, confesses to confusion, and admits of organic and psychological changes which threaten his very survival, and which are symptomatic of stress effects ; and he pleads that he is incompetent adequately to encounter the challenge. He seeks to gain safety by avoidance behaviour ; but his responses are anxiety-related, and it is a clear case of 'exhaustion'.

Kṛṣṇa discovers that Arjuna's cognitive appraisals of himself (viz., the righteous and valiant warrior), the object (viz. the war) and the shock (viz., the immorality of it) are both unrealistic and inopportune. Kṛṣṇa reinforces Arjuna's coping mechanism that is about to collapse, and enables him to recover his usual efficient adaptive mechanism. The strategy that he adopts is to provide Arjuna an opportunity for cognitive re-evaluation of his own self, the object and the anticipated shock. It might appear strange that Kṛṣṇa proceeds to philosophize when Arjuna feels despondent in a situation of crisis. It might also appear that the bulk of the teaching of Kṛṣṇa is irrelevant so far as the questions of Arjuna are concerned. But it must be remembered that in any stress situation, cognitive processes play an enormously important role in perceiving the threat as well in coping with it. Arjuna's real problem was not that his personal resources were unequal to the demands of the situation, but his exaggerated and inappropriate sensitivity to an imagined interpersonal situation.

The stress in which Arjuna was involved was in fact derived from cognitive inadequacy. He was unable to distinguish between his own self-appraisal and the demands of the immediate situation. He was emotionally disturbed and was thus prone to evaluate the object (viz., war, the immediately relevant event) as a life-stress (e.g., loss of the loved ones), and as a personal disaster. His appraisal of the threat (viz., sinfulness of war) induced him to an attempt at withdrawal from the situation as an unrealistic overt behaviour, without however correcting his errant self-appraisal or object-appraisal. Withdrawal from task performance owing to subjective stress (which was in his case symptomatic of cognitive confusion) would not have been an effective coping mechanism, for it was a task that was assigned to him, and was not self-generated.

Arjuna lacked a cognitive framework in which the self in its ideal appraisal and the task-as-behaviour requirement could both be accommodated without conflict. This was because the normal sequence of stressors leading to effective adaptive behaviour was reversed in his case. It may be borne in mind that in the Sāṃkhya-Yoga context, the fundamental *avidyā* (non-cognition leading to phenomenological stress) leads to *asmitā* (self-appraisal), *rāga* (object-appraisal), *dvesha* (threat-appraisal) and *abhiniveśa* (coping orientation) in order. It was mentioned that the last phase is non specific, and is preceded by three phases (constituting reality-testing), each of which is specific. The Yoga manuals indicate that the non-specific non-cognition (*avidyā*, phenomenological stressor) expresses itself in terms of three specific stressors leading to the general adaptive urge to survive, and finally to effective overt behaviour²⁶ In Arjuna's case, the general adaptive urge to survive (*abhiniveśa*) got afflicted (thus blocking effective overt behaviour), because of the overpowering influence of the non-specific non-cognition of reality. The three intervening stages (self-appraisal, object-appraisal and threat-appraisal) were bypassed, thus preventing reality-testing.

Arjuna in his eagerness to justify his withdrawal from the task-situation tries to test reality by reversing the normal sequence of three intervening stages. He first seeks to evaluate threat (viz., the shock of sinfulness involved in war conceived wrongly as a self-generated task), then the object (viz., war as an unwarranted interpersonal stress and not as a response to a situational demand), and finally self (viz., as unrelated to the situation and devoid of role-status). His error thus consists in setting up cognitive processes leading to non-specific non-cognition, from where he started. It was, in other words, a futile coping behaviour. Kṛṣṇa's teaching corrects this error, and in so doing gives primacy to self-appraisal. Hence the need on his part to philosophize. It may also be noted that the task-

based stress can be relieved only by effective appraisal processes ; otherwise, it affects the performance process.

The main import of *Gītā* is to redefine the major aspects of stress in life-situations : self-appraisal, object-appraisal and threat-appraisal. In this, it adopts the conceptual model provided by the *Yoga-sūtra*. It brings out the importance of the individual's perception of himself in his role-status and of the objective environment, including the tasks as assigned and as accepted. It provides a new framework for the coping behaviour, where the task performance is made independent of the anticipation of outcome.

Anticipation of outcome can be a stressful intervening variable, and may vitiate the efficiency of task-behaviour. Its stressor-character is intensified in the absence of the three-fold appraisals (of Self, of the object and of threat). Kṛṣṇa teaches that non-anticipation does not necessarily mean withdrawal from task performance ; on the other hand, it may induce more effective performance.

The strategy adopted in the *Gītā* thus seeks to focus attention on the reality of stress in life-situations, and on the value of enlightened appraisals of oneself, of the task-based environment, and of the threats inherent in it. The text crystallizes the Indian point of view regarding the importance of cognitive processes in minimizing role-conflicts and eliminating tensions between evaluations, anticipation and performance processes.

The other word relevant to the concept of Stress is *duhkha*. The exact origin of the Sanskrit word is obscure. The orthodox grammarians insist that the correct form of the word is *dushkha* (*dus + kha*). There is a suggestion that the word is a modification of Prākṛit expression *duhstha* (meaning 'ill-standing'), the opposite of *Sustha* 'well-standing') which is modified as *sukha*.

The unit *kha* in the compound refers to the axle-hole of a chariot or cart ; *duhkha* is where the axle-hole is bad and does not allow easy or swift movement of the wheel, while *sukha* is having good axle-hole which facilitates smooth and swift movement. It is interesting to note that the word *sukha* has always been employed in *RgVeda* in association with the chariot.²⁷

Whatever the early associations, the expression 'duhkha' in due course came to acquire the significance of 'trouble' (*pīḍā*), 'hindrance' (*bādhā*), 'suffering' (*ārti*). The earliest of systems, the Sāṃkhya, made it the starting point of its inquiry. Buddhism, which was derived from the Sāṃkhya focussed its attention on the four-fold aspects of *duhkha* : its nature, causation, elimination and method. All the systems of philosophical thought in India presuppose emergence of *duhkha* from bondage, which in its turn originates from ignorance ; the purpose of philosophical thought as well as religious action is the obtainment of wisdom in order ultimately to avoid *duhkha*.

The Sāṃkhya system takes *duhkha* to signify the stress that the individual experiences in the course of his interaction with the world around him. The well-known tripartite division of *duhkha* into personal (*ādhyātmika*), situational (*ādhibhautika*) and environmental (*ādhidaivika*) is a contribution of the Sāṃkhya thinkers.²⁸ Personal stress is occasioned by physiological (*śārīra*) and psychological (*manāsa*) stressors : the former illustrated by the imbalances between the three basic constituents, *vāta*, *pitta* and *kapha*, resulting in diseases ; and the latter illustrated by emotional states like lust, hatred, greed, fear, jealousy, depression and so on.

Situational stress is caused by unwholesome interpersonal transactions (conflicts, competition, aggression, exploitation etc.) and exposure to dangers from wild animals. The third kind of stress is occasioned by a composite group of environmental

stressors such as natural calamities (extreme cold, sun, storm, lightning etc.) and supernatural agents (possession by spirit, demon, imp, goblin etc.).

Personal stress is so called because it can be handled by 'internal expedients' (*āntaropāya-sādhyatvāt*) : physiological stress by internal medicine, and psychological stress by relaxation in agreeable company, fulfilment of desires and so on. The handling of the other two kinds of stress involves external expedients like cultured behaviour, interpersonal adjustment, and safety measures (for situational stresses) and the employment of charms, amulets, spells and drugs.

It is conceded by Gauḍapāda, the commentator on *Sāṃkhya-Kārikā* that all stress is mental. But he argues that the nature of the stressor (viz., the source of stress) determines whether the stress is personal, situational or environmental. Some stresses are purely psychological (*mano-mātra-janya*), while others have non-psychological sources (*amānasa*).²⁹

The liability of the individual to stress is universal and continuous ; but the incidence of stress depends upon stretching of the stressor beyond the limits of endurance. The expression in *Sāṃkhya-kārikā* for this state is *abhighāta* ('directed striking'), which is explained by Gauḍapāda as "unbearable relationship" (*asahya-saṃbandhah*) ; and by Vāchaspati as "directed and adverse relationship (*Pratikūlatayā abhisambandhah*) with the power of awareness." The latter commentator also mentions that the stress experienced subjectively by the individual is incidental to the differential and sequential changes of the *rajas* aspect (*rajah parināma-bheda*).

Basic to the Sāṃkhya thought (and thus to the entire Indian thought) is the notion of the three-fold *guṇas* (a word of obscure origin, meaning aspects of existence likened to intertwined

strands in rope) which constitute the psychological field of experience : (1) *sattva* (from the root. 'as', "to be", hence meaning 'being' or 'the Ideal state of being'), comprehending all cognitive processes which appraise the being (*sarvo bodhah*); (2) *rajas* (literally meaning "dust", from the root 'rañj', 'to colour', hence meaning 'passion') comprehending all activity (*sarvā chestā*), signifying change or becoming, and (3) *tamas* (from the root 'tam' 'to distress', 'to cause anxiety', *tāmyate anena*, hence gloom) comprehending all inhibition and resistance (*sarvā sthithi*), tending towards withdraw or offset.

The three *guṇas* are in different contexts taken to suggest respectively cognition, conation and retention ; pleasure (*sukha*), pain (*duhkha*) and delusion (*moha*) ; approach (*rāga*), aversion (*dvesha*) and ignorance or indifference (*madhyastha*) ; ego-sense (*asmitā*), emotions (*rāga-dvesha*) and the urge to survive (*abhiniveśa*) ; goodness, wickedness and dullness ; cheer, anger and gloom ; humility, aggression and sloth ; and wakefulness, dream and sleep.

The three aspects are universal as well as particular in their connotation ; they are essential to the material world as well as to individual life ; and they are the ingredients of the individual, of his environment, and also of the transaction between the individual and the environment. The original or natural condition of *prakṛti* is the perfect balance or equilibrium of these three aspects ; *prakṛti* is, therefore, defined as *guṇā-samya*. But the phenomenal and transactional world illustrates only the disturbance of these aspects (*guṇa-vaishamya*). There is continuous struggle among these *guṇas* for dominance and incidental to his struggle are stimulation and reaction, attraction and repulsion, excitation and suppression. When cognitive processes are on the ascendant, both performances and exhaustion are on a low key ; when performances are ongoing,

cognitive processes and exhaustions are on a low key ; and when exhaustion has set in both, cognitive processes and performances are not significant. There is concurrent co-operation and conflict, and hence stress. And incidental to this stress are the pairs of stimulation and reaction, attraction and repulsion, excitation and suppression. When one of the aspects is on the ascendant, the other two recede to the background, but no one aspect can be in ascendance for long. The change thus is continuous and unceasing. Thus stress is inherent in the order of the universe.

The three *guṇas* may be taken to represent respectively perceptions (appraisal, cognitive processes), performances (normal adaptive activities) and resistances (exhaustion, inhibition, fatigue, forgetting). The modern student of stress may be tempted to read the three-fold aspects of Hans Selye's model of systemic stress here : 'alarm' in *sattva* (perceptions), 'adaptation' in *rajas* (performances), and 'exhaustion' in *tamas* (resistances). But the correspondance may not be more than superficial. In the Sāṃkhya framework, besides other differences in the conceptual model, stress is not a consequence of the stage of exhaustion (*tamas*), but is a manifestation of the adaptive behaviour (*rajas*). Hence Vāchaspati's emphasis on the differential and sequential changes in *rajas* (*rajaḥ-pariṇāma-bheda*) as major contributions towards stress.

The three *guṇas* together are responsible for the existential, the experiential, the evaluative and the transactional dimensions, each of which may be regarded as an operative motivational source of stress. Human life is itself the consequence of stress, and, therefore, all human perceptions and performances are functions of particular stresses, which are all so many expressions of the fundamental stress, viz., *duḥkha*. If the general stress (bound up with the existential and experiential dimensions

of life) is the ground, the individual stresses (evaluative and transactional dimensions) are figures thereupon, and may be looked upon as 'elevated stresses' (*udāra-kleśa*). And if the ground-stress signifies the basic anxiety of life, the figure-stresses are situational feelings of conflict, inadequacy, helplessness, ignorance and so on.

The situational stresses are the ones that are sought to be avoided or eliminated in normal transactional life, and they are the ones that call for coping behaviour. The Sāṃkhya thought, committed as it is to the ultimate human destiny of complete withdrawal of the phenomenal involvement (called *apavarga*), has focussed attention on the avoidance of the ground-stress (the *duhkha* proper) on the part of the principle of consciousness, viz., the *purusha*. No performance is involved in this stress-avoidance ; the coping activity is entirely in terms of cognitive appraisal of the isolate and independent character of the *purusha* (*viveka*). The figure-stresses, however, demand performances. Yoga and Ayurveda, as emergent and practical dimensions of Sāṃkhya, have applied themselves to the avoidance of figure-stresses.

Āyurveda, the Indian system of medicine, relies on the Sāṃkhya school for its general theoretical orientation, but builds up an elaborate ideology with regard to what we have called the figure-stresses. In the conceptual model adopted in Āyurveda, the three *guṇas* are represented by their intra-organismic counterparts, *pitta*, *vāta* and *kapha* (called the *doshas*) ; and the Sāṃkhyan notion of *prakṛti* as the perfect equilibrium of the three *guṇas* occurs here as the construct of health or *svāsthya* (a variant form of *su-stha*) as the perfect balance of the three *doshas* (*dosha-sāmya*).³⁰

The concept of *dosha* is a focal issue in Āyurveda. Its significance is all-important, for it adequately comprehends the

concepts of health, the explanations of disease, and the planning of treatment. Unfortunately, it is at present widely misunderstood and misrepresented, for the traditional conceptual model has been lost sight of. The word *dosha*, which generally signifies 'defect', 'fault', 'vice', 'offense', 'harm', or 'morbid element', derived from the root *dush*, which means 'to alter', 'to corrupt' (*dush vaikrtye*). When, however, the word is used in a technical sense in Āyurveda to refer to the three intra-individual counterparts of the Sāṃkhyan *guṇas*, it cannot have any of the above meanings. The differential patterning of the three factors is fundamental to the physical constitution, psychological processes, health and disease.

Health (*svāsthya* or *ārogya*) is defined in the Ayurvedic texts as the perfect balance of the three *doshas* (*dosha-sāmya*) ; and disease (*vyādhi*) as the imbalance in the *doshas* (*dosha-vaiśāmya*). *Dosha* is a neutral concept as far as health and disease are concerned. Its function is not only 'to corrupt' or 'to defile' and thus bring about disease (as the etymological significance of the word would suggest, *duśhyate anena it*) ; but it also builds up, and sustains the psychophysical constitution (and hence also called *dhātu*). In fact, the early employment of the concept was in a positive sense, and it did not have morbid associations.³¹ The three factors are involved in the normal human constitution and are responsible for all performances. *Dosha* is alike involved in prevention of stress and production of stress.³²

But human life, as envisaged in the Sāṃkhya thought, is itself a departure from the equilibrium of the three *guṇas* ; and therefore their counterparts in the individual cannot be expected to be in perfect balance at any time. It is only the soul, unsullied by the psychophysical constitution (called by Charaka *paramātmā*) that is altogether unalterably balanced (*nirvikāra*).³³ The transactional individual who is called in Āyurveda by terms such

as '*karma-purusha*', '*samyoga-purusha*' and '*rāśi-purusha*', is characterised by a differential and unstable patterning of these three factors, and is thus naturally liable to distress and disease. Disease (called variously *roga*, *vyādhi*, *āmaya*, *ātāṅka*, *vikāra* etc.) is defined as the association of pain with the transactional individual ('*tad duhkha-samyogā vyādhayah*' as Suśruta has it), while association with pleasure (*sukha*) is called health.³⁴

Pleasure and pain are both experiential concepts, and are consequences of particular patternings of the three intraorganismic factors. The 'balance' of the three occasioning the experience of pleasure for the transactional individual is only balance within the framework of the basic imbalance of the factors (which expresses itself as life). It is natural that such intraorganismic 'balance', poised precariously over the organismic imbalance and transacting delicately with environmental 'imbalances', is frequently tipped. There are factors within the individual and outside him that upset this 'balance'.

Āyurveda also suggests a classification of stressors ; it distinguishes four sets of factors that are capable of disturbing the functional 'balance' : aggressive attacks like injuries from outside (*āgantū*), physiological disorders of organic changes brought about by the disturbances of the three *doshas* (*sārīra*), psychological processes like emotions (*mānasa*), and natural events like hunger, thirst, aging etc. (*svābhāvika*).³⁵ But a disease is said to be impossible without the disturbance of the *doshas*.³⁶ Thus, whatever the factor that brings about the diseases, the *doshas* are immediately involved in the disease phenomenon.

The expression *dosha* here signifies the intraorganismic factor that has become overpowering or errant ; but before it becomes errant, it is a *dhātu*. Because it is liable to turn errant, it may be described as a potential stressor. It is in this sense that the

expression *dosha* is employed to refer to the essential factors in health as well as in disease. Health is the situation where no *dosha* has become overpowering ; hence they are in a state of functional balance, and the load on the organism is practically nil. Disease, on the other hand, signifies the aroused condition of the organism, when one *dosha* or the other, two or all three *doshas*, has/have become errant, thus upsetting the balance and putting functional load on the organism. It is an extra-ordinary situation.

Āyurvedic texts make a normative distinction between healthy or 'wholesome' (*hita*, literally "well established", "organized") and unhealthy or 'unwholesome' (*ahita*) styles of life the former corresponding with 'happiness' (*sukha*) and the latter with misery (*duhkha*).³⁷ The distinction is derived from the presence or absence of distress (*kleśa*) that demands avoidance or elimination (or in the modern parlance the defensive or coping behaviour).

Āyurveda prescribes a code of conduct called *svastha-vṛtta*, conducive to the wholesome style of life and also a regimen for the sick called *ātura-vṛtta*. The former is defensive coping (*rakshaṇa*) involving anticipatory and preventive processes to preserve the condition of functional balance. It enumerates and defines all the potential stressors in the normal interaction between the individual and his environment, and prescribes differential strategies to avoid them. The stressors are here regarded as intra-individual, and the strategies are meant to prevent their becoming critical (viz., productive of actual stress). Suśruta, in fact, describes this as 'preventive medicine' (*anagatabādha -pratishedhaniya -chikitsita*).³⁸

The latter on the other hand, involves extra effort (*saṁīhā*) to eliminate the stress by augmentation of the deficient (*vardhana*), reduction of the excessive (*kshapaṇa*) and the pacification of the excited (*praśamana*).³⁹

There is another concept in Āyurveda concerning the involuntary adaptive mechanism of the body, i.e., *sātmya*.⁴⁰ *Bhaishajya-ratnāvalī* explains : “Whatever process that is good for oneself is *atmya* ; and whatever abides agreeably with this is *sātmya*.⁴¹ The concept relates to adaptability of the body with regard to particular articles of food, tastes, seasons, place of residence, and exposure to sensory stimuli of particular intensities. Even if the articles of food etc. initially evoke unpleasant effects on the physiological constitution, by the regular use of these articles, one gets habituated to them, and their effect on body would no longer be harmful; ; in fact they may produce pleasant effects.⁴² One of the definitions of the Sanskrit word is “Whatever conduces to the happiness of the individual (*sukhajanakam*)”. I propose to translate the Sanskrit word as ‘copeability’.

But there are physiological limits of tolerance levels in the physiological constitution, beyond which the impact would be unsuitable, unfavourable, or harmful to the body (this situation being called *asātmya*).⁴³ Failure of the organismic adaptability to excessive, violent or inadequate sensory impingement (*asātmyendriyārtha-saṁyoga*) is given as one of the causes of ill-health.⁴⁴ The sensory objects in such an event function as stressors ; they are subjectively felt as stressful stimuli, or stimuli that a demand character beyond the individual’s capabilities. It is not necessary that conscious awareness of this imbalance (or cognitive appraisal) should be present. However, there is a variety of habituation known as *oka-sātmya* (‘abiding adaptability’) which correspond to addictions, and are characterized by a subjective demand.

The concept of *sātmya* further implies that if the individual is exposed to a wide spectrum of stimuli (e.g. several tastes in the articles of food) and has adapted his body to it, he is better

equipped to transact effectively with the environment, resist stress, and to live long. This observation suggests that the organism has the inherent ability to assimilate and neutralize the stressors, and thus prevent the transformation of even intense stimuli into stressors and avoid the harmful effects of such transformation. It is, then, not exactly a case of preventive coping, but rather prevention of the need for coping behaviour. It is a case of reduction of the dissonance between the force and the resistance opposed to it, and is thus a defence mechanism. It eliminates the 'alarm' element from the potential stressors, and thus makes special effort in adaptation unnecessary.

The depth and spread of the insights provided by the ancient thinkers in this country concerning stress and how to handle it is impressive. The philosophical and religious texts deal with the fundamental problem of life-stress and suggest strategies to cope with it by essential cognitive reorientations and spiritual practices. But the problem of handling the stresses in everyday life, in the contexts of community, neighbourhood, family, domestic life, occupation, education and so on, has also been considered. Passages in Rāmāyaṇa (e.g. Kacchit-sarga), in Mahabharata (the portions of 'Raja-dharma' and 'Moksha-dharma') in Bhagavata, and in several Puranas, as also in the *smṛti* manuals, deal with the practical aspects of situational stress. There are also didactic works dealing with *Nīti*, and *Subhashitas* that tell us about the coping technique that are suited to our culture. There is need to compile these passages and texts, for it would help crystallize the peculiarly Indian outlook on the problem of mental health.

The understanding of the nature of stress is also in evidence when we consider the scheme of four-fold human values (the *purushārthas*) and its involvement in planned life (the *āśrama*

scheme) ; acquisition of the instruments of wholesome life (*artha*, wealth in its general sense) in the early stages of life (*Kaumara* or *Brahmacharya* involved in studies and training), fulfilment of bodily, mental and social needs (*kāma*, desires) in youth (*yauvana*, or *grhastha*, involved in family and community life), effective withdrawal from active involvement in family and social transactions but equipment for guidance and counselling (*dharma*, wise conduct) in old age (*vārdhakya*, or *vānaprastha*) free from commitments and responsibilities devoted to the higher calls of life, but available for others in the family or community to offer advice and instruction), and total withdrawal from all aspects of practical life, being devoted wholly to the final goal of all life (*moksha*, liberation from the misery of life) in extreme old age (characterized by the *saṁnyasa* stage).

It is interesting to note that all the early works on the subject prescribe only the first three stages of planned life (*brahmachāri* as student, *grhastha* as house-holder and *vānaprastha* as a non-participant guide in the family or community), corresponding to the first three values (*artha*, *kāma*, *dharma*) together called *tri-varga*. The renunciatis condition (*saṁnyasa*) was historically a late concept in the social scheme, accommodating the fourth value (*apavarga*, literally 'outside the group of values', or *moksha*). We do not come across *saṁnyasins* in the Veda, in the Vedānta, in the classical upanishads, the Gita, in Rāmāyaṇa or Mahābhārata. They find mention only in the puranas, the *smṛti* texts and literary works of comparatively recent date.

The early enduring emphasis in India has always been on family life, and on normal social values. An Indian finds his fulfilment only within the family framework. The recognition of the role of family in achieving mental health of the individual or in causing distress to him can be found almost ubiquitously in philosophical, religious, legal and literary works in our

country. Family life is itself a coping mechanism for personal stresses ; and when the family itself provides stresses, the individual's coping behaviour naturally breaks down. And it cannot be reinforced unless the family stresses are also reduced. Involvement of the family and reeducation of the family in the efforts to treat mental cases are basically Indian concepts. It is but proper, therefore, that a big effort is being made at NIMHANS to recognise the role of family in causing as well as curing mental illness.

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9. *Yoga-Sutra*, 2, 1-3
10. BHOJA'S RAJAMARTANDA, 2,2.
11. te cha bādhana-lakṣhaṇam paritāpam upajanayanth kleśa-pada-vāchyā bhavanti
12. te syanda-mānā guṇādhikāraṁ draḍhayanti; pariṇāmaṁ avasthāpayanti; kārya-kāraṇa-srota unnamayaanti; parasparānugraha-tantrībhutvā karmavipākāṁ cha abhinirharanti.
13. Guṇānāṁ vaiśamyas-rupam pariṇāmaṁ; punah punah pariṇamayanti.
14. Karmabhiḥ kleśah, kleśaiś cha karmāṇi.

15. *Yoga-sutra*, 2,3 and 4.
16. drk-darśana-śaktyor ekātmāta (ibid., 12; 67.)
17. Sukhanuśayi rāgaḥ (2, 7).
18. Vyāsa-bhāṣhya, 2,7: sukhābhijñāsyā sukhānusmṛti-pūrvah sukhe tat-sādhane va gardhah.
19. Levi, L. (ed) : *Emotions: Their Parameters and Measurement*, New York (1975).
20. Avaśyam hrtavyam ityādi-rūpo-‘dhyavaśāyah’.
21. dṛdha-saṁkalpa.
22. Mano-niveśa
23. *Vyāsa-bhāṣhya* : sarvasya prāṇinah iyaṁ ātmāśih nityā bhavati ‘mā na bhūyaṁ’, bhuyasaṁ’.
24. *Yoga-sutra*, 2, 9.
25. *Ibid*, 2,2.
26. *Vyāsa-bhāṣhya*, 2, 4 Sarvā eva amikleśāḥ avidyābhedāḥ ;
27. 8, 58, 3 (sukhaṁ rathaṁ sushadaṁ bhūrivāraṁ) ; 5, 30, 1 (sukharatham iyamānam haribhyām) ; 5, 60, 2 (sukheshu rudra maruto ratheshu) ; 5, 5, 3 also *Atharva-veda*, 5, 14, 5(13) (sukho rathā iva vartatām).
28. *Gauḍapāda-bhāṣhya* on *Sāṁkhya-kārikā*, 1 ;
29. *Ibid*. Yadyapi sarvaṁ eva dukkhaṁ mānasam eva, tathāpi mano-mātra-janyatvājanyatvābhyāṁ mānasatvāmanasatva-vibhāgaḥ.
30. Śarīra-dūshanād doshā dhātavo deha-dhāraṇāt. cf. *Charakasamhitā*, 4, 4, 34 where the correspondance between *guṇas* and *doshas* is brought out.
31. *Charaka-samhitā*, 1, 1, 57 vāyu pittam kaphaścheti śārīro doshasaṁgrahaḥ; cf.also Vāgbhata’s *Aṣṭāṅga-hṛdaya*, 1, 6 vāyuh pittaṁ kaphaś cheti trayo doshās samāsataḥ; vikṛtā-vikṛtā dehaṁ ghnanti te vartayanti cha.
32. *Aṣṭāṅga-hṛdaya*, 1, 20 rogastu dosha-vaishamyāṁ dosha-sāmyam arogatā ; cf. *Charaka-samhitā*, 1,9,4 vikāro dhātu-vaishamyāṁ sāmyaṁ prakṛtir uchyaṭe; cf. also *ibid* 4, 4, 34, tatra trayah śarīra-doshāvata-pitta-sleshmānah; te sarīram dūshyanti.
33. *Charaka-samhitā*, 1, 1, 56 nirvikārah paras tu ātmā.
34. *ibid.*, 1, 9, 4 sukha-saṁjñakam ārogyam vikāro dukkhaṁ eva tu.
35. Sārṅgadharma-samhitā 1, 1, 5. The order given here is ‘svābhāvika-yāyikāntara’. Āḍhamalla’s commentary explains: (1) the natural stressors (*svābhāvika*) are inherent in ones nature, like hunger, thirst, aging and death; (2) the accidental or adventitious stressors

(*āgantukā*) are due to external factors like injury caused by wild animals; (3) bodily or physiological stressors (*kāyikā*) caused by wrong food, drinks etc, like cough, cold, fever etc., involving the disturbance of the three *doshas* and of blood; and (4) internal or psychological stressors (*āntarā*) derived from emotions like lust and anger and involving intoxication, insensibility, insanity, possessions etc.

36. *Aṣṭāṅga-saṁgraha*, 1, 22, na dosha-vyatirekeṇa rogānubandhah.
37. *Charaka-saṁhitā*, 1, 1, 41 hitāhitam sukham dukkham āyuh.
38. *Suśruta-saṁhitā* (chikisitā-sth.), chap.24.
39. *Rasa-vaiśeshika-sūtra*, 4, 67 Nṛsimha's comm. Svastha-vṛttam hi nāma labdhasya phalasya anapāyitvena rakshanam; āturavṛttam hi nāma alabdhasya ārogyākhyasya phalasya lābhāya samīhā. cf. also ibid., 4, 68.
40. cf. *Suśruta-saṁhitā* (Sutra. sth.), 20, 9 and 35, 40 ; *Charaka-saṁhitā*, 3, 20.
41. Ātmano hitam karma ātmyam ; ātmyena saha vartate iti sātmyam.
42. *Suśruta-saṁhitā* (sūtra-sth.), 35, 41 : yo rasah kalpate yasya sukhāyaiva nishevate tat satmyam iti nirdiśet.
43. *Charaka-saṁhitā* (sārīra-sth.), 1, 127, asātmyam iti tad vidyād yan na yāti sahātmatām.
44. *Ibid.* (sārīra-sth.), 1, 98, asātmyārthāgamāś cheti jñātavyā dukkha-hetavaḥ. cf. also sutra, 11, 43. asātmyendriyārtha saṁyogah prajñāparādhah, parināmaś cha trayas trividhakalpā hetavo vikārāṇām.

Tantra and Consciousness*

The purpose of the paper is to focus attention on a little known aspect of the aspect that was developed by the mystic Siddhas in the early centuries of the Christian era. The contribution of the 84 siddhas, among whom Nāgārjuna is counted, has become obscure, owing to the large scale destruction of the Yoga-tantra literature stored and taught in the Nālandā University, when it was attacked and burnt down by the Turushka raiders around 1205 A.D. The continuity of the Yoga-tantra literary tradition in India has been broken for a couple of centuries. But Tibet has preserved this phase, the traces of which are no longer extant in India. The Tibetan translations of the writings of the Siddhas help reconstruct the missing links in Indian Yoga-tantra tradition.

The Tantra Theory

1. One of the Siddhas who was intimately associated with the Yoga-tantra theory and practice in Nālandā was Mahāpaṇḍita Nāḍapāda (or Nāropā), whose death occurred in 1039 A.D. Student of another Siddha, Tilopā, he passed on the mantle of this tradition to his Tibetan student, Mārpā, whose disciple was the famous Tibetan poet-saint Milarepa. Nāropa wrote as many as 25 works in Sanskrit, 23 of which are available in Tibetan translations. Only one of his works is extant in its original Sanskrit : a constructive commentary on the *Kālachakra-tantra*, entitled *Sekoddesa-Tikā*. There are many glosses and annotations on this work in Tibetan; and the lamas of the Kargut-pa sect have preserved oral explanations pertaining to this manual.

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Nāropā's text is valuable for the insights it provides on the Yoga-tantra outlook on the actual and potential dimensions of human consciousness, as also on the technique of actualisation of Being-Awareness which forms the main theme of the Kālachakra system. In Nāropā's words, 'Ka' refers to the physical equipment of man (*kāya*), 'la' to the energy system (*prāṇa*), 'cha' to the mental processes (*chala-chitta*) and 'kra' to the orderly restraint of these ordinary and outward extensions (*Krama-bandha*). He also involves the condition of wakefulness with the physical body, deep sleep with the energy system, and dream with the mental processes. Their restraint is calculated to bring about the 'natural' condition of tranquil bliss (*sahaja-sukha*). Further, there is an identification of the psychic centres corresponding to the above: head with wakefulness, throat with dream, heart with deep sleep and navel with the 'natural bliss'.

2. Tantra has many meanings, and this is conceded by the Tantrik texts themselves. Excluding the meaning of 'expository manual', all the other meanings operate within the framework of Yoga. The Tibetan word for Tantra is *rGyud*, which derives its meaning from the *Guhya-samāja* interpretation of Tantra as "reality defined by consciousness" (*Prabandham tantram ākhyānam*): it comprehends three dimensions of reality viz: the inalienable awareness which is none other than Being (*prakṛtiḥ asamhāryaphalam*), the ground for constructions of the transactional world (*ādhāra*), and the actual modes of constructions (*Upāya*).

Tantra as an expository manual informs us about this continuity of consciousness (*Chitta-srota*, in Tibetan Sems-rgyud). Tantra as practice helps us actualize this continuity in one's own being.

Basic to Tantra of the Siddha or Vajrayana tradition is the idea of 'bodhichitta' which originally signified 'intention for

enlightenment', but the meaning of which was later crystallized as 'consciousness inclining spontaneously to its own inalienable nature' (i.e., content-less flow, in Tibetan (gtsosems), symbolized by the mystic seed-syllable 'Hum'. *Bodhichitta* abides in every one of us in its twin aspects: (1) ordinary consciousness, soiled by actions and agitated by thoughts, and (2) the aspect that is hidden and beyond phenomenal involvements, utterly tranquil and unaffected, "ever washed bright". The former aspect is identified in *Guhyasamāja* with *manas* (Tibetan = yid =), or mind, and the latter with *chitta* (Tibetan Sems), or consciousness.

The purpose of Tantra as a practical discipline is to transform the former into the latter, for the former is characterized by stress (*kleśa*) while the latter is experienced as bliss (*sukha*). The agitated waters of the mind need to be stilled before the jewel of consciousness that lies hidden beneath it can be perceived. The waters cannot be stilled by being beaten or stirred violently. The art of letting mind alone so that it can naturally settle in silence and stability forms the core of the *Sādhana* advocated by the Siddhas.

3. The perception of contentless but energetic consciousness as a result of the natural stilling of the constructional mind is referred to as *Vipaśyana* or clear vision (Tibetan *rig-pa*). The mystical model for the enduring vision of this stable and creative consciousness (*Chittavajra*, Tibetan *bdorjesems-dpa*) is technically known as 'mahāmudrā'. It is the great seal of discernment impressed upon the ordinary transactional dimension of consciousness. The Tibetan word for 'Mahāmudrā' is 'Phyag-rgya', which brings out the detail of 'grasping' (*phyag*) before an impression (*rgya*) can take place. Consciousness is 'grasped' as stable, beyond the possibility of agitation by sensations or thoughts. And impression refers to the creativity of consciousness. It is beyond the scope of thoughts which tend to

become stereotyped, and can affect a breakthrough by its inherent energy.

‘Mahāmudrā’ is defined as the essential and unagitated consciousness (*nishpanda-gati*) which both *is* and *has effects*. Herbert V Guenther following the Guhya-Samāja text distinguishes between the static and dynamic aspects. The former is consciousness as mere existence, the source of our being, our inalienable awareness. The latter seals man’s existence in the world, in the sense that he is no longer ‘a cog in the machine’. Mahāmudrā, thus, enables one to operate in the world from the deepest layers of one’s being, and thus steer clear through the illusions and stresses incidental to transaction from superficial levels. When our being is impressed by the stable and inalienable awareness, our transactions acquire extraordinary energy, which is referred to as *Vajra-sattva*. When the energy suffuses the three dimensions of being (body, speech and mind), the resultant integration is hidden in the sense that it is deep down one’s own being. This is actually what ‘guhya-samāja’ signifies.

The core instruction of ‘mahāmudrā adepts is: “Cast aside all clinging, and the Essence will at once emerge.” (Lama Kong Ka). The first part of the message has a three fold involvement - equilibrium, relaxation and naturalness. Equilibrium (*sāmya*) is the balance of the three dimensions of transactional consciousness, body, speech and mind. The physical equipment must be loosened (*kaya*); verbal expressiveness must be solved down by regulated breathing (*prana*); and mind is trained not to rely on any object or thought.

Relaxation (*viśrāma*) is refusal to be distracted by sensations or thoughts. It is described as letting the sense-organs and mind to function unloaded and therefore unagitated. Naturalness (*sahaja*) is to make no effort; not to grasp at anything, nor to

reject anything ; it is to be spontaneous. 'Non-effort' has an important role in the 'Mahāmudrā' practice; it also presupposes refraining from the tendency to correct the wandering thoughts. The great handicap for the practitioners is said to be constant anxiety about distractions, obstacles and progress in practice. The 'mahāmudrā' manuals suggest methods by means of which daily activities can be pressed for meditational ends.

The three (equilibrium, relaxation and spontaneity) together are meant to facilitate the encounter with the 'void' (*śūnyatā*) which is not the negation of existence but empty of discriminating thoughts.

"Like a cloudless sky, the sphere is broad and free from obstruction,"

"Like a waveless ocean, consciousness is steady, without discriminating thoughts,"

"Like a bright lamp on a windless night the consciousness is clear, bright and stable."

Lama Kong Ka suggests: "Let the ordinary mind remain in its own natural state. If mind adds or subtracts anything to this, then it is not ordinary mind, but it is mind-object (*yu*). The practice correctly make not the slightest intention and effort to practice; and yet not be distracted for a single moment."

4. Nāropā's text insists that for effective 'Mahāmudrā' practice, it is necessary to understand by actual experience how the energy (*prāṇa*), the web of veins through which the energy flows (*nāḍī*), and the psychical collocations (*bindu*) function. Towards this end the yoga of six limbs (*Ṣaḍaṅga-yoga*) is prescribed as the only means of this transcendental attainment (*lokottarasiddher asādhārāṇa-kāraṇam*).

Six-fold Yoga

In the Tantra crystallised by the Siddhas, three *yogas* are recognised as successive stages: (1) *Kriyā-yoga-tantra*, where reliance is almost exclusively on external rituals; the purpose is to cleanse the physical body; (2) *Charyā-yoga-tantra* where reliance is equally on external rituals and internal meditations; the purpose is to cleanse the inner constitution dominated by verbalizations; and (3) *Yoga-tantra* - where the reliance is almost exclusively on internal meditations; the purpose is to cleanse the inner constitution dominated by thoughts. The third stage has two phases, the first being penultimate (where meditative stabilisation still depends on external modes) and the second being ultimate (*anuttara-yoga-tantra*), where meditative stabilization is spontaneous and blissful. This stage involves the complete cleansing of body, speech and mind altogether.

The 'six-fold yoga' finds its relevance and fulfilment in the third of the above stages. The six limbs mentioned in *Guhyasamāja tantra* and explained in *Sekoddeśa-tikā* are named: *pratyāhāra*, *dhyāna*, *prāṇāyāma*, *dhāraṇā*, *anusmṛti* and *samādhi*, in order. The names as well some of the involvements bear correspondence with some of the eight limbs of classical yoga (*omitting yama, niyama and āsana*, and adding *anusmṛti*). But the correspondence is more superficial than fundamental; the sequence of the limbs is also significantly variant.

(1) *Pratyāhāra* means withdrawal of the sense-functions from their respective spheres both within the body and outside the individual. Concomitantly, it is the turning of thoughts to one's own essential and inalienable nature (*sūnyata*). It involves the effective suppression of intentionality from transactional consciousness and elimination of subject-object polarity.

(2) *Dhyāna* is intense contemplation on the reflexive image (*bimba*) of the essential and inalienable nature (*śūnyata*). It takes the forms of (a) discussive thinking (*vitarka*) in order to comprehend the true nature of body, speech and mind (*guhya-traya*); (b) exploratory thinking (*vichara*) in order to ascertain the exact nature of all three; (c) mounting pleasurable interest on the cognitive content generated in the previous phase (*prīti* or *ratī*); (d) deepening of the pleasurable interest (*sukha*), and (e) one-pointed or unitary consciousness (*eka-chitta*), which results from the entire absence of object-subject co-ordinates (*grāhya-grāhaka-sūnya-lakshya*).

(3) *Prāṇāyāma* is the regulation of breathing in order to integrate the vital energies (*prāṇa*) with the individualised consciousness. It implies the recognition that breath is constituted by the five primary elements (earth, water, fire, air and *ākāśa*). And the practitioner at this stage rejects the right-left polarity of the breathing process (*idā-pīngalā vāmadakṣiṇā, lalanā-rasanā*, male-female) and allows the vital breath to course right in the variously called *sushumnā*, *avadhūti* and *chāṇḍālī*. The practice of *vajra-japa* ('om' while breathing in, 'Hūm' while retaining the breath and 'Āh' while breathing out) is recommended in this context.

(4) *Dhāraṇā* is the stabilization of the energy-loaded consciousness (*niruddham ratnam dhārayet*) in the navel region which is regarded as the centre of individuality, or alternately, in the middle of forehead, which is the centre of cognitive awareness. It is at this stage that *vajra-sattva* enters into the individual rendering his being stable and irradiant.

(5) *Anusmṛti* is mindfulness concerning the visions or reflex images that flash forth in the region of consciousness (*nimittodgraha*). This is supposed to generate the true

understanding of the nature of phenomenal existence (*samvṛti-darśana*).

(6) The final phase of *Samādhi* is actually profound contemplation, from which the liberating knowledge arises, The consummation of this knowledge is the final and irreversible destruction of all veils (*āvaraṇa*) that make the individual ignorant of, and involved in, phenomenal transactions. The individual's consciousness here is no longer discrete states of awareness bound by relationships and harassed by stresses. It is no longer automatic, stereotyped and relational. It is identical with one's own being, and is described as unperishable bliss (*akshara-sukha*).

This is not only the highest object of human existence, but it is the inalienable essence of consciousness. Hence its relevance for the Tantra.

Gītā as a Guide for Life

Bhagavadgītā has been regarded since very early times as a guide for life in all its aspects. Although a part of the epic Mahābhārata, it has always enjoyed an independent status, as a śāstra or system of thought consisting of theoretical positions and practical applications. It has also been regarded as one of the three major scriptural bases or prasthānas (with the Upaniṣads and the Vedānta-sūtra as the other two)

All the āchāryas have prepared commentaries on Gita and have extolled the text as the very essence of the Vedic corpus ('samasta vedārtha-sāra') and as an Upaniṣad in its own right.

It is like a mirror ; every student will find therein a reflection of his own interests, attitudes, experiences and aspirations. The greatness and popularity of the text consists in its utter simplicity and in its direct relevance to common human problems, individual as well as collective.

The traditional approach does not take the background of the Gītā as a historical event but rather as an allegory. Sri Rāghavendratīrtha in his Gītā-vivṛti explains that Kurukshetra, the battlefield, is really the human body (nr-śarīram) the Pandavas are the forces of virtuous spirits or gods (punyābhimāni-devas) while the Kauravas represent the forces of evil and sinful spirits (pāpābhimāni-asuras), both sets of forces located in the body.

Arjuna symbolizes the soul of man (Jīva or pratibimba), while Kṛṣṇa is the inner controller (antaryami or bimba). Arjuna, to whom the Gītā was delivered is the common man, full of ego, inhibitions desires and conflicts. He represents the person of ordinary intellect and usual interests and inclinations.

But he loved Kṛṣṇa and had faith in him. Love and faith are necessary to understand the import of Gita. Encouraging Arjuna to fight was only a ruse (vyāja); the real intent is a call to understand life in all its aspects, to appreciate it in its depth, and to lead the life of peace, content and fulfilment.

Kṛṣṇa in the Gita repeatedly calls upon Arjuna to understand him not as a person but as a principle ('yo vetti tattvatah'). The principle is the divine presence in each one of us; Kṛṣṇa's teachings are really 'the still small voice of awakened conscience' Kṛṣṇa is the Brahman of Vedanta, the sole reality which projects and preserves the world while also abiding in our hearts as the steady light in which we think, speak, act and move about.

Ignorance of this simple and yet profound truth is responsible for our anguish and anxiety, symptoms of our phenomenal involvement. To know it is to be freed from this predicament. The Gita tells us how we are bound and also how we can be freed. This is the value of this remarkable book.

Kṛṣṇa is thus our teacher, the teacher who is within each one of us as our benefactor, and also the teacher of the whole world ('kṛṣṇam vande jagad-gurum') The vision of Kṛṣṇa in this character is to be had in the Gita. And a total surrender to Him (śaranāgati) and a firm faith that He will guide us through our life are obvious rewards of this vision.

In the pages that follow are selections from the Gita which illustrate the point that Kṛṣṇa is the principle of sole reality, absolute and transcendental as well as a beneficent guide for the devotee. The words uttered by Kṛṣṇa are in fact that voice of the Real beckoning us to look within and wade through appearances to reach reality.

The Gīta itself says that this vision of the Lord is impossible to be had through our normal transactional perceptions.

न तु मां शक्यसे द्रष्टुमनेनैव स्वचक्षुषा ॥ (11,8)

It is therefore that Kṛṣṇa offered to provide. Arjuna with eyes that were divine, so that the glorious vision of the all-encompassing Lord that transforms our mortal lives can become possible :

दिव्यं ददामि ते चक्षुः पश्य मे योगमैश्वरम् ॥ (ibid)

The purpose of studying Gīta is to strive for this vision, and thereby feel that life has been worthwhile. Kṛṣṇa of the Gīta is not only the Lord of all the worlds, and the object of all our religious and spiritual endeavour but a dear friend to all creatures, knowing whom one achieves everlasting peace.

भोक्तारं यज्ञतपसां सर्वलोकमहेश्वरम् ।

सुहृदं सर्वभूतानां ज्ञात्वा मां शान्तिमृच्छति ॥ (5.29)

(1)

अनन्यचेताः सततं यो मां स्मरति नित्यशः ।

तस्याहं सुलभः पार्थ नित्ययुक्तस्य योगिनः ॥ (8,14)

Easily approached am I by him who thinks of me without a break and without a thought of nothing else, and who is altogether integrated in his life and aspires to reach me (the yogin)

अनन्याश्चिन्तयन्तो मां ये जनाः पर्युपासते ।

तेषां नित्याभियुक्तानां योगक्षेमं वहाम्यहम् ॥ (9.22)

I shall take good care of those that think of me all the time, without a break or distracting thought, and who preserve in reaching me.

(2)

ज्ञेयं यत्तत्प्रवक्ष्यामि यज्ज्ञात्वाऽमृतमश्नुते ।

अनादिमत्परं ब्रह्म न सत्तन्नासदुच्यते ॥

सर्वतः पाणिपादं तत्सर्वतोऽक्षिरिरोमुखम् ।

सर्वतः श्रुतिमल्लोके सर्वमावृत्य तिष्ठति ॥

सर्वेन्द्रियगुणाभासं सर्वेन्द्रियविवर्जितम् ।

असक्तं सर्वभृच्चैव निर्गुणं गुणभोक्तृ च ॥

बहिरन्तश्च भूतानामचरं चरमेव च ।

सूक्ष्मत्वात्तदविज्ञेयं दूरस्थं चान्तिके च तत् ॥

अविभक्तं च भूतेषु विभक्तमिव च स्थितम् ।

भूतभर्तृ च तज्ज्ञेयं ग्रसिष्णु प्रभविष्णु च ॥

ज्योतिषामपि तज्ज्योतिस्तमसः परमुच्यते ।

ज्ञानं ज्ञेयं ज्ञानगम्यं हृदि सर्वस्य धिष्ठितम् ॥ (13, 12-17)

This indeed is what must be known : the supreme Brahman, without origination, who can neither be described as being or as non-being, but knowing whom one attains to the deathless state.

It is all encompassing, with hands and feet, eyes and heads, faces and ears everywhere. Devoid of all sense-organs, it activates and enlivens all organs of sense; disinterested in any thing, yet it supports all things. Bereft of all phenomenal involvement, it nevertheless experiences all phenomena. It abides with in all

beings and also outside them; it moves not, and also moves. Being extremely subtle, it remains unknown to any one. Although near at hand, it is yet far off.

It is the same (undifferentiated) in all separated things (of the world); it is only seemingly different. It is what sustains all beings, the devourer of all things as well as their progenitor. This indeed is what must be known.

It is the true light of all lights, beyond darkness. It is truly the knowledge; it is also what must be known, the object of knowledge, It is established in the heart of all.

यदादित्यगतं तेजो जगद्भासयतेऽखिलम् ।

यच्चन्द्रमसि यच्चाग्नौ तत्तेजो विद्धि मामकम् ॥

गामाविश्यं च भूतानि धारयाम्यहमोजसा ।

पुष्णामि चौषधीः सर्वाः सोमो भूत्वा रसात्मकः ॥

अहं वैश्वानरो भूत्वा प्राणिनां देहमाश्रितः ।

प्राणापानसमायुक्तः पचाम्यन्नं चतुर्विधम् ॥ (15, 12-14)

The brilliance of the sun which illumines and enlivens the whole world and the lustre of the moon and fire are in truth my own (expressions). I enter into the earth and support all beings with my own power. Becoming soma, the presiding deity of all vegetation with sap, I nourish the herbs that heal. Becoming the stomachic fire (Vaiśvānara), I dwell in the body of all living beings; and associated with inhalations and exhalations, I digest the fourfold food that is eaten.

अजोऽपि सन्नव्ययात्मा भूतानामीश्वरोऽपि सन् ।

प्रकृतिं स्वामधिष्ठाय सम्भवाम्यात्ममायया ॥ (4,6)

Although unborn and unchanging in My nature and lord of all living beings, I employ My own creative energy (ātma-māya) and use the primal stuff of phenomenal existence (prakṛti), which too belongs to me to appear in the world (for the sake of devotees and aspirants).

यद्यद्विभूतिमत्सत्त्वं श्रीमदूर्जितमेव वा ।

तत्तदेवावगच्छ त्वं मम तेजोऽशसम्भवम् ॥ (10, 41)

Know for certain that whatever and whoever in the world shows uncanny power, unusual prosperity or inexplicable strength, it is owing to the manifestation of a part of my own glory.

तत्रैकस्थं जगत्कृत्स्नं पश्याद्य सचराचरम् ।

मम देहे गुडाकेश यच्चान्यद् द्रष्टुमिच्छसि ॥ (11, 7)

The entire world, with all its constituents which are inert or alive, is seen by Arjuna as stationed in but a part of the Lord's body; and whatever else one desires can also be beheld in that body.

(4)

रसोऽहमप्सु कौन्तेय प्रभास्मि शशिसूर्ययोः ।

प्रणवः सर्ववेदेषु शब्दः खे पौरुषं नृषु ॥

पुण्यो गन्धः पृथिव्यां च तेजश्चास्मि विभावसौ ।

जीवनं सर्वभूतेषु तपश्चास्मि तपस्विषु ॥

बीजं मां सर्वभूतानां विद्धि पार्थ सनातनम् ॥

बुद्धिर्बुद्धिमतामस्मि तेजस्तेजस्विनामहम् ॥

बलं बलवतामस्मि कामरागविवर्जितम् ।

धर्माविरुद्धो भूतेषु कामोऽस्मि भरतर्षभ ।

ये चैव सात्त्विका भावा राजसास्तामसाश्च ये ।

मत्त एवेति तान् विद्धि न त्वहं तेषु ते मयि ॥ (7,8-12)

I am the flavour in water, the light in moon and sun, the mystic syllable OM in all the Vedas, the sound in space, and valour in men; the fragrance in earth, the heat in fire, the life in all beings, and the austerity in ascetics.

I am the eternal and primieval source of all beings, I am the intelligence in intelligent folk, lustre among lustrous people; the strength in strong people, freed from desires and passion. Among the people, I am the desire that does not outrage virtue.

Whatever are the conditions of phenomenal life, happy and good, passionate and active, or unhappy and wicked, know that they all alike proceed from me. They exist only in me; but I do not abide in them.

(5)

कविं पुराणमनुशासितार-

मणोरणीयांसमनुस्मरेद्यः ।

सर्वस्य धातारमचिन्त्यरूप-

मादित्यवर्णं तमसः परस्तात् ॥ (8,9)

One should meditate on Him, the most ancient of seers, who is also the governor (of the universe), subtler than the subtlest, ordainer of all things, beyond our thoughts, dazzling like sun, and beyond the darkness (of phenomenal existence).

अव्यक्तोऽक्षर इत्युक्तस्तमाहुः परमां गतिम् ।

यं प्राप्य न निवर्तन्ते तद्धाम परमं मम ॥

पुरुषः स परः पार्थ भक्त्या लभ्यस्त्वनन्यया ।

यस्यान्तःस्थानि भूतानि येन सर्वमिदं ततम् ॥

(8,21 and 22)

He is altogether unmanifest and imperishable; he is the supreme objective, they say, for having approached him, no one returns (to the phenomenal world of becoming) That indeed is the highest abode of Godhead.

This supreme Person is to be reached only by devotion, which is exclusive and intense. All beings abide in Him, and by Him is this entire world pervaded through and through.

सर्वभूतस्थमात्मानं सर्वभूतानि चात्मनि ।

ईक्षते योगयुक्तात्मा सर्वत्र समदर्शनः ॥

यो मां पश्यति सर्वत्र सर्वं च मयि पश्यति ।

तस्याहं न प्रणश्यामि स च मे न प्रणश्यति ॥ (6, 29-30)

The wise one who has attained integrity in life will perceive that his own self (viz., Kṛṣṇa) dwells in all beings, and that all beings abide in his own self; and he looks at all the world with perfect equanimity.

For one who sees the Godhead (Kṛṣṇa) everywhere, and who sees all things in the Godhead (Kṛṣṇa) Godhead (Kṛṣṇa) is never lost; and he is not lost to the Godhead (Kṛṣṇa) either.

(6)

Arjuna attains the vision of Godhead as all (Visva-rūpa)

अनेकवक्त्रनयनमनेकाद्भुतदर्शनम् ।
 अनेकदिव्याभरणं दिव्यानेकोद्यतायुधम् ॥
 दिव्यमाल्याम्बरधरं दिव्यगन्धानुलेपनम् ।
 सर्वाश्चर्यमयं देवमनन्तं विश्वतोमुखम् ।
 दिवि सूर्यसहस्रस्य भवेद्युगपदुत्थिता ।
 यदि भाः सदृशी सा स्याद्भासस्तस्य महात्मनः ॥

(11, 10-13)

The marvellous vision of Godhead had numerous aspects like countless months, eyes, divine decorations celestial weapons, garlands and unguents of supernatural character. It struck wonder in every way, this vision of God as infinite and all-encompassing. It was as if a thousand suns had at once appeared in the firmament; the vision was of such blinding brilliance.

(7)

ईश्वरः सर्वभूतानां हृद्देशेऽर्जुन तिष्ठति ।
 भ्रामयन्सर्वभूतानि यन्त्रारूढानि मायया ॥
 तमेव शरणं गच्छ सर्वभावेन भारत ।
 तत्प्रसादात्परां शान्तिं स्थानं प्राप्स्यसि शाश्वतम् ॥

(18,61-62)

The Lord abides in the heart of every being; it is he who moves all beings about, even as puppets mounted on a mechanical device, by His unfathomable and creative power known as māyā. Seek refuge in Him with all your heart. It is

by His grace that one will attain the imperishable state of blissful peace

मन्मना भव मद्भक्तो मद्याजी मां नमस्कुरु ।
मामेवैष्यसि सत्यं ते प्रतिजाने प्रियोऽसि मे ॥

सर्वधर्मान् परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं ब्रज ।
अहं त्वा सर्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि मा शुचः ॥

(18, 65-66)

(Kṛṣṇa assures Arjuna) Think always of Me, devote yourself to Me, make Me the object of all your rites, and surrender yourself to Me. I promise you in all earnest that you will surely reach Me, for you are indeed dear to Me.

Abandon all thoughts of rules and regulations of conduct in daily life and make Me your sole refuge. I Will deliver you without fail from all sins and obstracles to spiritual progress. Worry not on this account.

(8)

अहं सर्वस्य प्रभवो मत्तः सर्वं प्रवर्तते ।
इति मत्वा भजन्ते मां बुधा भावसमन्विताः ॥

मच्चित्ता मद्गतप्राणा बोधयन्तः परस्परम् ।
कथयन्तश्च मां नित्यं तुष्यन्ति च रमन्ति च ॥ (10, 8-9)

The wise, full of thoughts of Me, know that everything proceeds from Me, and that by Me are all things enlivened. They focus all their thoughts on Me, and their very life is settled in Me. They discuss among themselves, enlightening each other, talking about Me all the time, and thereby enjoying their lives in contentment.

यतः प्रवृत्तिर्भूतानां येन सर्वमिदं ततम् ।

स्वकर्मणा तमभ्यर्च्य सिद्धिं विन्दति मानवः ॥ (18,46)

One achieves spiritual perfection by worshipping, through all his activities, Him who prompts all activities of all beings and by whom all this is permeated.

मयि सर्वाणि कर्माणि संन्यस्याध्यात्मचेतसा ।

निराशीर्निर्ममो भूत्वा युध्यस्व विगतज्वरः ॥ (3,30)

Dedicate into Me all that you do giving up the thoughts of ego and ownership, and with your attention settled on the inner reality. Abandoning all desires and ego-involvement, fight (viz., go through your life) without fever (viz., passion)

Yantras - An Introduction

The use of mystical designs and magical diagrams, known in India as 'Yantras', is of great antiquity, not only in India but in all countries. Among the early archeological finds are included specimens of such designs and diagrams, which were neither strictly utilitarian nor solely decorative in function. Even before religion became organized and institutionalized in the primitive society, visual representations of magical intentions and ideas were employed, along with charms and spells. They were meant to compel events in an occult manner, events of individual significance as well as of collective import. Intentions included warding off evil, overcoming danger, compelling rain, driving away pestilence, blocking hailstorm, increasing fertility of the soil, ensuring success in hunting or in expedition, restoring health, prolonging life, recovering lost property, defeating the enemy, confounding the opponent and securing objects of love.

Reason which helped the development of science and technology also brought into being magic and religion. It would be anthropologically unsound to describe scientific thinking as rational and religious thinking as irrational. The crudest of magical procedures were also based on the reasoning faculty. It was human reason that generated the ideas of God, of the spirit, and of the relation that one bore to the other as well as the ideas of matter and energy and the measurements thereof. Even as technology is based on the desire to control the physical world within and around us, magic is based on the desire to control the spiritual world within and around us.

It is unfortunate that the word 'magic' has acquired a connotation which few modern minds would relish. It is equally unfortunate that all that goes under the banner of science and technology passes as unquestionably and eminently worthwhile.

It is made to appear that magic is sustained on superstitions and illusions, while science rests on solid facts which are demonstrable and incontrovertible. However, the student of the history of science is very well aware that science rests not on facts but on assumptions and that these assumptions with their implications and applications are by no means immutably fixed or altogether incontrovertible.

The word 'magic' originally meant the wisdom of the eastern mystics ('magus' or 'magi' denoting members of the Persian priestly class). The word is probably derived from the Sanskrit 'magha' which means not only a class of people (cf. the lexicon *Medinī*) but 'great wealth' (cf. *Ṛgveda*, 7,21,7 endowed by the chief of the gods Indra who possesses it in plenty, hence called *Maghavān*) and 'best medicine' (in the feminine form of the word cf. the lexicon *Dharanī*). The word 'magha' is cognate with 'mahat' (from *maghash*) which means undifferentiated consciousness (*buddhi* as distinguished from individualized consciousness or ego, *ahamkara*, and objective consciousness or *manas*) Magic is thus actually an aspect of knowledge which concerns consciousness; it seeks to understand the dynamics of consciousness, to train consciousness and to apply it to secure personal and collective welfare.

It is true that the word magic has come to signify the art of controlling external objects, of compelling events, and of projecting objects and events which lack solid reality. Magic is usually related in our minds with witchcraft, sorcery, charlatanry, *abracadabra*, illusions, hoax and make-beliefs. This magic appears as an enemy of science and as an outrage on decency. The blame is not altogether unfounded either. Centuries of magical practices and generations of magicians have contributed enormously to justify this denunciation. It cannot be denied that magical ideas and practices have thriven mainly on the gullibility

and ignorance of people, inviting exploitation by cheats and rogues.

But to condemn magic on this score would be like denouncing service and technology, pointing at the explosives, pollutants, poisons and other hazards that they have brought into being. Magic for illicit and unscrupulous gain is not the essential or original aspect of magic. There is no denying that magic being basically a practical discipline, is an art and has a utilitarian overtone. Religion is the theoretical side, the counterpart of science, and magic is one of its applications, even as technology is an application of science. Reason has its foundation in reason, based on experience and intuition. The reason that it upholds may be of a different kind than what science insists on, but it is nevertheless valid human reason which has stood mankind in good stead for countless generations that have gone by and which is likely to hold sway over humanity for countless generations to come. Magic as an applicative art works within the framework thus set by religion, and formulates its own special variety of reason to supplement what religion works by.

Religion seeks to 'relate' (as the etymological significance of the word demands) individual consciousness to the undifferentiated consciousness. This it seeks to achieve in a variety of ways, depending on the culture of the people, geography of the place and the history of the community. Thus there are variant idioms characteristic of religions, each of them providing the outfit of a distinct subculture. Magic as the practical outcome of religion seeks to involve the undifferentiated consciousness within the field of individual consciousness. If religion is interested in raising the individual to a higher plane (called spiritual in a general sense), magic is interested in bringing down the denizens of this higher plane to the normal work-a-day world. Religion expects to smooth out the odd

angularities of the human being and to break down the sharp boundaries that delimit the outlook of the lay folk, and thus to 'undifferentiate' the individual. Magic, on the other hand, expects to 'differentiate' the amorphous and nebulous spiritual world, thus individualizing the undifferentiated. Religion is a move towards generalization and the universal, while magic moves in the direction of specification and the individual.

Religion appears more rational than magic, in as much as it proceeds from the known world of the individual, a world which is concrete (in the sense of being amenable to sense-perception), verifiable, familiar and possessing of what may be called public reality. Magic, however, proceeds from an abstract world the reality of which is rather assumed then perceived, the reality which may properly be described as private. Religion starts with normal reason and works its way upwards to beyond common reason whereas magic starts with what is beyond common reason, and comes down eventually to a world of common reason. Thus, magic when viewed from the standpoint of common reason has a ring of the irrational. This is also the reason why fooling, deceit, tricking and exploitation abound in the field of magic. It is indeed a world of 'make-believe', as far as lay reason can make anything out of it.

But magic, in its original and essential sense, has its own rationale, its own reason, its own logic, its own idiom. It rejects the ultimacy of the objects of sense-perception, and the exclusive reality of the contents and methods of the world of our common experience. It posits a world which is invisible but real, abstract but effective, subtle but manageable; and argues that the world which is visible, concrete and gross is but a small aspect of this world. Are there not organs and details in our body which are not only invisible to us but of which we are altogether unaware? And then science discovers extremely subtle

ingredients of the human constitution the presence of which can neither be experienced nor verified by us. They do not belong to the world in which we live, move and function. Religion points to the world within the individual, which we are normally not aware of, the inner world of consciousness. And magic points to the world within the world, which again we are not normally aware, the outer world of consciousness. When we speak of 'the individual in the world', we prefer to ignore the inner world of the individual's consciousness as well as the world of consciousness outside the individual. We tend to look upon the individual as a detail of the world, partaking of its character of concrete reality. The abstract world within the concrete individual and the abstract individuals within the concrete world are alike lost sight of.

Magic is in reality an attempt to map this abstract world and delineate the abstract individuals. The tantrik ideology of the human being as constituted by several 'chakras' (mūlādhāra, svādhīsthāna, maṇipūra etc.) is an illustration of this endeavour. It is unprofitable to seek to identify the presence of these 'chakras' within the anatomical and physiological constitution of man, or to work out correspondances between the text-specific 'chakras' and the observable organs and functions of the body. The 'chakras' are in reality centres of an abstract world within the individual, altogether inaccessible to our normal perception and even common reason. The well-known 'śrī-chakra' is likewise a map of the abstract cosmos that comprehends both the abstract world within the individual and the abstract individuals within the concrete world.

This world of magic is indeed a network of energies, forces and vectors. It is more dynamic than the world we are normally acquainted with. The constructs of space and time are not the same in the two worlds; the logic of events too is different.

The language that man has developed during his career on this planet is thoroughly inadequate to describe the abstract world of magic. The linguistic habits that man has acquired in order to transact effectively in this concrete world are found to be irrelevant, if he should convey his innermost experiences and his intuitive apprehension of the inner world of spirit. But that is the only tool that man is acquainted with, in order to communicate with his fellow-beings.

In accordance with the needs of the concrete individual living in a matter-of-fact world, language also becomes necessarily concrete and practical. Those who are familiar with the world of magic and would desire to communicate with others, would perforce have to use this *sense* language, but make some alterations and evolve some rules of the game. The *mantra*, for instance, apparently makes use of the language that we all use, but the intentions contained in it are more suggestive than explicit, more esoteric than actual, more private than public. The *mantra* is rather in the nature of a caricature.

In the Tantrik framework, the *mantra* has its own grammar, its own semantics, its own mnemonic ideology. The tantra looks upon the Sanskrit alphabet as the network of abstract and primordial sound units, each sound-unit (or letter) being a specific energy. The abstract forces that work within the individual and in the world outside are amenable to influences from these sound-units. The energetics of the individual are thus sought to be augmented, enhanced, corrected and rendered effective by the employment of the *mantra*. Not any mantra would work for any individual, of course; the sound-units need to be matched with the energy dynamics specific to each individual. The selection of a *mantra* for the individual is made considering his constitution, physical as well as mental, cultural milieu, inclinations and needs.

Another medium of magic (viz., the Tantra) is the *yantra* or visual representation of the energies, forces and vectors that operate within the individual at the abstract level and are present as the invisible world within the world that we know of. The *yantra* is naturally very closely related to the *mantra*, for both are attempts to delineate the world of undifferentiated consciousness that comprehends both the individual and the physical world around him. The *mantra* utilizes the verbal symbols while the *yantra* makes use of graphic designs. Even as the entire linguistic behaviour of man is reduced to the essential and undying sound-units (bīja-aksharas) in the *mantra*, the whole of the visible world available to man is reduced to the essential and universal form-units (such as the point, the circle, the triangle, the square) in the *yantra*.

Magical spells and mystical diagrams in some form or other have always been parts of human heritage. In India, the seals recovered from the sites of the so-called Indus valley civilization (dating back to more than three thousand years before Christ) leave no doubt that the cult of the mystical diagrams was prevalent among those people. There are also references in the Vedic lore, especially in the Atharva collection, to the use of charms, spells and mystic diagrams. Magic in these texts were coercive as well as curative; it was employed for securing welfare as well as for undoing evil. Numerous berbs were used along with spells. The curious concoction of medicine and magic that we find here is not an isolated phenomenon; it was prevalent in all cultures.

In the Atharva collection can be found the two-fold division of magic: benevolent (atharva) and malefic (angiras) The former division included the rites that were meant to secure health, happiness, welfare (śāntika, paushtika etc.) of the individual as well as the community, while the later division was illustrated

by sorcery and witchcraft (abhichāra, ghora, maraṇa, yātu, kritya etc.) However, it was the former division that was regarded as significant and worthwhile. The later division was indicated because according to the Atharvanic ideology, the subtle and invisible world was peopled by malevolent spirits, which cause disease and distress, discomfort and embarrassment. Many of them are named: Chanda, Asāyi, Koka, Durnāmā, Arjunī, Grāhī, Nirṛti, Sadānvā, Ugra-jihvā, Malimlucha, Pramāli, Kakūrabha and so on. There are passages indicating how they can be propitiated, and thereby soften and turn favourable.

The benevolent magic, envisaged in Atharva-veda, is essentially folk in character. Situations in which it is indicated include self-defence, protection of house and property, health of oneself and cattle, success in enterprise, house-warming, consecration of newly constructed tank etc., safety of household, safe delivery, recovery of lost property, obtainment of knowledge, improvement of memory, enhancing physical charm, exorcism, gain of wealth, commanding good luck, winning affection, prevention of natural catastrophe and avoidance of accidents. Besides spells, various charms from herbs (apāmarga, rohini, darbha, audumbara, palasa etc.) and animal products (antelope's horn, tiger's paw, wild boar's tooth etc.) and metals (copper, iron, gold etc) were prepared and employed. Designs and diagrams drawn on the ground or wall, or on leather or metal were also used for magical benefits.

Many of these have survived till our own days, and are prevalent among the people, especially of the rural parts. They have been incorporated in popular Hinduism, and are extensively used although the sophisticated Indian thought shuns them. The benevolent magic (śānti, pacification of evil spirits so that the individual is happy; pausṭika, nourishment of the individual, viz., fulfilment of normal needs; bhesaja, cure of diseases and

restoration of health) has become very much the part of lay religion. Spells and charms are extensively employed to secure health, wealth and happiness, along with the worship of divinities and the performance of sacrifices and other rituals according to Vedic prescriptions.

The malefic magic (sorcery, withcraft, black magic e.g., *vaśikaraṇa*, attracting the affection of people by coercion; *stambhana*, arresting the movement or speech of opponents; *vidveshana*, causing enmity and illwill among friends; *ucchāṭana*, throwing out enemies by occult influence, *marana*, causing death) is naturally frowned upon by the sophisticated folk and is not resorted to by common folk. It is confined to small and secretive pockets in the countryside, and the practitioners of this art are invariably regarded as wicked; they are objects of fear and revulsion and are treated almost as outcasts.

They claim, of course falsely, to exercise influence over spirits of all sorts (mostly imps and goblins, demons of disease and disaster, bearing frightful names and having hideous forms), and to be able to pressurize them favourably or otherwise on behalf of their clients. The interesting detail in this context is in the large and variegated repertoire of spells, charms, designs and diagrams that the practitioners of this dark and dangerous art possess. While many of these spells are little more than jibberish and most drawings plainly nonsensical, it must be conceded that some of them are highly significant as verbal or visual representations of intense and violent emotions.

Buddhism and its Misrepresentation

It is amazing how errors, once they get into the books of school children, tend to endure, despite revisions and corrections in the learned circles. Most of the adult knowledge is indeed firmly fixed on juvenile information, with an irrational resistance to accept anything to the contrary.

Among the many perversions of Indian history introduced into textbooks for the edification of young Indians by the British historians, the account of the Buddha and his gospel is the most remarkable. That subsequent research has consigned many details of this account into the region of myths does not bother the lay fold or the textbook-writers.

Not many know, for instance, that the well-known life of the Buddha has little foundation in the early records. It is mainly derived from two romantic poems in Sanskrit (Buddha-charita of Aśvaghosha and Lalita-vistara of unknown authorship) which are prepared fully six hundred years after the Master's death, and a still later legendary work in Pali (Malalankara-vatthu). It was Sir Edwin Arnold's poem *The Light of Asia* (1879) that provided the model for the conventional biography of the Buddha. But what value, other than the literary, this poem had seems to be a concern of no one!

The early references to the Master's life in the Pāli canon are both meagre and scrappy. But they are enough to show that the popular accounts are not altogether correct. To cite an example, we read in the Mahasacchaka-sutta that the Master left home even as a young lad, as yet unmarried, and while his parents (both father and mother) were dissuading him with tear-wet faces. There is no mention here of his young wife Yashoda, his new-born son Rāhula, the three signs, departure from home

in the dead of the night unknown to anyone but his trusted horse and charioteer, the aid of the gods and so on.

The old accounts highlight his having learnt Yoga under two masters, Ārādha-Kālāma and Rudraka-Rāmaputra, and his severe austerities in the Uruvilva forest for seven years, in the company of five ascetics to whom he later communicated his discovery (in the form of the First Sermon). Much of the canon pertains to the years of his active ministry, when he delivered sermons (sutta) and discourses (geyya), explained the doctrine (veyyakarana), recited the poems composed by himself (gātha), instructed with solemn utterances (udāna) and sayings (iti-vuttaka), told stories of piety (jātaka) and extraordinary events (abbhuta-dhamma), and analysed the themes of his teaching (Vedalla).

This nine-fold teaching was later (several centuries later) regrouped into three 'boxes', called 'Tri-piṭaka', one dealing with monastic conduct (vinaya), the second with doctrinal matters (sūtra) and the third with finer points of metaphysics and psychology (abhidharma).

It is commonly supposed that the Pāli Tripiṭaka is the only authoritative one, or at least the earliest one. But we now know that there were several Tripiṭakas, and that the Pāli one is by no means the oldest. During the days of Aśoka, there was a Magadhi canon, from which seven sermons are named in the Edicts (and which incidentally are not to be traced in the Pali Canon). Around the century prior to the Christian era, there were eighteen schools of Buddhism, each with its own Tripiṭaka (in Sanskrit). Fortunately, we have Tibetan and Chinese versions of some to these.

The Pali canon was, however, the first Buddhist literature to come to the notice of the European scholars; and even when,

decades later, they came to know of the Tripiṭaka in China and Tibet, they imagined that the Pali canon was earlier than the Sanskrit one. How they reached this remarkable conclusion is not explained. But the Pāli Tripiṭaka was prepared in Sri Lanka, during the early centuries of the Christian era, and reached India only in the fifth century (when Buddhaghosha brought it from Sri Lanka). And even after that date, it never became known widely here until the Mahabodhi Society of Ceylon started its missionary work in India around 1892.

Because of the exclusive reliance on the Sri Lanka version of the Pali canon and owing to the ignorance of Tibetan and Chinese versions of the Sanskrit canon, several misconceptions have arisen. One of them refers to the role of the Buddha in the Indian tradition. He is projected as a revolutionary, a rebel, an iconoclast, and a social reformer. This projection has little canonical foundation.

While it may be that the Buddha had a mission in life and zealously addressed himself to the community in which he lived and moved, it is doubtful if he ever believed that he had a new message to give. He repeatedly calls his teaching (*dhamma*), even in the Pali canon, 'old' (*porana*), 'eternal', 'eternal' (*sanantana*), and 'taught by the ancient sages' (*isi-ppavedita*). He is content to describe himself as a discoverer of an old and once prosperous city, which had fallen into disuse and got submerged in a dense jungle, and was thus forgotten by the people. He only discovered it, in fact rediscovered it, cleared the overgrowth, and showed the path that led to the city, so that people may reach it the more easily.

This explains why in the Indian tradition, Buddhism has always been recognized as a viewpoint' (*drishṭi*) and a practical discipline (*yoga*). It was never accorded the dubious status of an independent religion, as it came to acquire in Sri Lanka,

Burma, China and Japan. It is another historical perversion that Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism were regarded by the British administrators as religious denominations that divided the Indian population into so many disparate and warring factions. This was obviously politically motivated, although historically and factually incorrect.

The 'disappearance' of Buddhism from India is a problem that is totally irrelevant. For, when did it 'appear' in India, as it did in Sri Lanka, Burma, China or Japan? Even during the palmy days of Aśoka, it was not an independent religion. His edicts make no mention of Buddhism as such, although the emperor was undoubtedly influenced by the Buddha's teachings. It was one of the numerous sects that constituted the nameless religion of the masses (called generally by the blanket expression 'sramaṇa-brahmaṇa' in the edicts). The Buddha did not at any time represent a break in the continuity of Indian tradition.

In India, Buddhism was always a cult formed round the historical figure of the Buddha. It is this person, constituting the first jewel, that was the distinguishing detail of the cult. No other teacher in India had this magnificent personality, and no teacher has made as powerful an impact upon the entire population as the Buddha did. The impact, however, was not resisted here (as it was in China and Japan) because what he taught did not upset the essential religious tradition.

It is in this context that the status of an avatar of Viṣṇu was accorded to him. He was looked upon as one who fulfilled a divine mission (as they did in China, Japan and Tibet), and not merely as a mortal teacher (as they did in Sri Lanka and Burma). It was not an accident that the famous Bodhi-Gaya temple (the place of the Buddha's enlightenment) was solely managed by the Vaiṣṇava Mahants until 1949, despite the legal battles that the Mahabodhi Society initiated in 1892, inspired by Dharmapala (David Hewavitarane) of Sri Lanka.

Even when a cult got formed in India with the Buddha as the central figure, it was more like the amorphous and pluralistic Mahāyāna that gained currency in China, Korea, Japan and Tibet. In fact, if archaeological and literary evidences suggest anything, it is that the original Indian Buddhism was more or less like the later Tibetan Buddhism. The worship of the Mahāyāna deities like Avalokita, Manjusri and Tāra-bhagavati was prevalent all over the country in the early Christian centuries.

It is a historical inaccuracy to describe Mahāyāna as a degenerated form of Theravāda (the so-called Pāli Buddhism found in Sri Lanka), and as bearing an impact of Hinduism. The fact is that Mahāyāna itself is Hinduism, and the Tripiṭaka versions preserved in Tibet and China fully bear this out. Mahāyāna texts and practices, as we can glean from the Tibetan sources were exactly as Hinduism is today, both in its vague scriptures and variant practices. And Mahāyāna texts were composed in first century B.C., while the Pali canon (on which Theravāda is based) does not date earlier than the second century A.D. The question of degeneration therefore, does not arise.

It is incorrect to suppose that Theravāda was the early form of Buddhism. In fact, Theravāda was not strictly Indian at all, as Mahāyāna was.

The early disciples of the Buddha belonged to three different groups, as can be seen from canonical references, both Pāli and Sanskrit. There was those who were intensely attached to him and were drawn so completely to his teachings that they came to live with him, like himself, and in constant touch with him. They were of course ascetics and mendicants (śramaṇas or bhikshus). It was an accepted practice during those days that a teacher of celebrity had his own Gana or Sangha

('community of followers'). The Buddha's teaching was mainly meant for them, as suggested in the First Sermon itself.

The second group consisted of householders following different cultic practices, who not only admired and honoured him but assimilated his teachings, without however feeling the need to forsake their own cults. There was nothing odd about it, for the Buddha himself recognized the value of ancestral cults (as Asoka also did later).

The third group contained people who were as intensely drawn to the Master as the first group but were not tempted to renounce their homes, and who did not feel compelled to stay within their own cultic confines as the second group did. They made the Buddha the focus of a new cult that was in the offing. And they sought the guidance of the first group, naturally enough.

It is to be noted that the Buddha did not encourage conversions in the later sense of the term. The mendicants, of course, were 'inducted' into his own monastic order or Gana (even this was by a simple and informal welcome *Ehi bhikkhu*, 'come, brother!') and taught the specific method of liberation that he had discovered (and which alone constituted the distinction of Buddhism from other disciplines). For the householders, the Buddha had nothing unusual or especial to offer; the moral code that he recommends was an age-old one and an integral part of the Indian tradition. We find an echo of it even in the Edicts of Asoka. Even the condemnation of sacrifices and inane rituals was an Upanishadic heritage. And the Buddha himself acknowledges this.

It is important to recognize that there was no such thing as a Buddhist community of lay-folk in India either during the Buddha's days or immediately after his passing away. There

were only the mendicants of his Gana (Sangha), who devoted their lives to spiritual practice. And they were supported by lay folk irrespective of cults. Even the Edicts of Asoka do not suggest the existence of a specifically Buddhist laity. It is true that the impact of the Buddha's teachings was increasingly felt, and the third group of disciples (mentioned earlier) succeeded in bringing into being a cult. But that was a couple of centuries later.

It has not been sufficiently recognized that the main teaching of the Buddha was a form of Yoga, and that he has a positive contribution to make in this regard. The Tibetan schools recognise this fact, as also some of the Chinese and Japanese schools such as Zen, Kegon and Jodo. The Buddha left the rest of the religious and philosophical structure untouched. The claim that he taught a Godless and Soulless religion can hardly be substantiated by a close examination even of the Pāli canon.

The suspicion of Rhys Davids and the evidences adduced by Ananda. K. Coomaraswamy that what the Buddha really taught was not 'Anātma-vāda' (rejection of Ātman) but a confirmation of the old upanishadic doctrine of Ātman, the mass or passages collected by Jennings to show that Buddhism and Vedānta do not differ in essentials, and the argument of Pischel that Buddhism rests firmly on Samkhya and Yoga have yet to reach the lay folk and enter into our text-books.

Matricheta, a poet of the first century A.D. has spoken of the Buddha in the opening verse of his *Adhyardha-śataka*, and this reflects the Indian outlook excellently: 'One, in whom all the virtues exist all the time and in whom no defect of any kind obtains, it is but fair and natural (*nyāyyam*) that my mind dwells on him, adores him, and takes him as the ideal.'